



UNIVERSITY OF  
PORTSMOUTH

# STUDENT VOICE POLICY – VALUING STUDENTS’ VIEWS AND OPINIONS OPERATIONAL ANNEX

September 2019

This Operational Annex is a supplementary document to the Student Voice Policy - Valuing Students' Voice and Opinions (herein called the 'Student Voice Policy') which can be found at [www.port.ac.uk/accesstoinformation/policies/qualityassurance/studentfeedback/filetodownload,18293,en.pdf](http://www.port.ac.uk/accesstoinformation/policies/qualityassurance/studentfeedback/filetodownload,18293,en.pdf).

The Student Voice Policy was last approved by Academic Council 25 June 2019 (minute 45.15 refers).

If you are external to the University and you have any questions about the Policy please contact the University's Academic Standards, Quality and Partnerships team within the Department for Student and Academic Administration at [asqp@port.ac.uk](mailto:asqp@port.ac.uk).

If you are internal to the University please contact your Faculty Associate Dean (Students).

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# Student Voice Policy – Valuing Students’ Views and Opinions: Operational Annex

## 1. MODULE SATISFACTION QUESTIONNAIRES AND UNIVERSITY OF PORTSMOUTH COURSE QUESTIONNAIRES

- 1.1. In order to enhance the mechanisms used to gather, evaluate and respond to student feedback, the processing of institutional and all module-level questionnaires will be conducted in conjunction with one or more external suppliers. The primary advantages being:
  - faster, more efficient processing of questionnaires;
  - more consistent and systematic evaluation and reporting of outcomes;
  - more effective benchmarking at module and course/institutional-level.
- 1.2. Module Satisfaction Questionnaires (MSQ) and University of Portsmouth Course Questionnaires (UPCQ) will be administered centrally in conjunction with Faculties who will delegate as appropriate within their structures. Faculties, in liaison with the Department for Student and Academic Administration, will need to identify a named administrator and academic members of staff responsible for Student Voice per School<sup>1</sup> to be responsible for liaising with the centrally-based Survey Team (see Section 4).
- 1.3. Schools will use an online version of the standard UPSQ and MSQ surveys which are agreed annually by the University’s Student Experience Committee (SEC). In order to enable systematic comparisons of outcomes surveying will need to take place during blocks of time around the end of teaching for a module/course. The exact windows for the completion of questionnaires will be reviewed and agreed annually by the SEC.
- 1.4. The online questionnaires should be administered during a taught session by the Module Coordinator/Course Leader, with the option for students to complete the survey later if they wish or were absent. It is not the intention that the online questionnaires would only be administered via email. The aim is to hear the opinions of all of our students. Modules and courses not achieving representative feedback should be noted by the Associate Dean (Students) (AD(S)) and Head of School<sup>2</sup>, particularly when this occurs on two or more consecutive occasions, so that a plan of action can be agreed.

- 1.5. Standardised reports on the outcomes of MSQs and UPCQ will be returned promptly to Module Coordinators and Course Leaders, including a copy of all the text-based student comments. Heads of School, Associate Deans (Students) (AD(S)s) and Associate Deans (Academic) (AD(A)s) will have access to all reports in their entirety. School Associate Heads (Education) or equivalent and Course Representatives who are members of the School’s Student Voice Committee (SVC) will have access to reports owned by their School, including the text-based student comments.
- 1.6. Module and course-level results, and the owners’ response to the outcomes, should be made available internally in Moodle, or via appropriate means, for students and staff within 20 working days of publication.
- 1.7. Further feedback to students on the outcomes of the MSQs and UPCQ should be provided to new and continuing students at the beginning of Teaching Blocks and in SVCs as appropriate. This might take the form of a templated ‘You said We did’ campaign. Outcomes and intended actions in response can also be communicated to students through means of emails and newsletters, which will be particularly important for off-campus students. Reference to outcomes and actions should be included in relevant module/course handbooks.
- 1.8. The UPCQ and the MSQ will have an overall satisfaction question, alongside a range of other questions stretching across both types of questionnaire, which will draw on the NSS and other relevant national surveys.
- 1.9. The Benchmark scores for Overall Satisfaction rate and the Quality Index are set through the Annual Monitoring Process. Benchmark scores will be used for evaluating outcomes. A ‘traffic light’ system will be used for reporting scores on modules or courses which will be set in line with the Annual Monitoring thresholds. Any course or module with scores in the red should be identified as a ‘cause for concern’ and should be subject to further critical scrutiny by the Head of School<sup>3</sup> and will be considered through the Annual Monitoring Process. The central Survey Team will produce an annual module/course-

<sup>1</sup> School is used to refer to School, Department or Subject grouping as appropriate.

<sup>2</sup> Head of School is used to refer to Head of School, Department or Subject grouping as appropriate.

<sup>3</sup> This may be delegated as appropriate within the School, for example to Associate Head (Education) or equivalent. The Head of School is responsible for reporting through the Annual Monitoring Process.

level Quality Index Summary report at School and Faculty levels.

- 1.10. The centrally produced annual report on MSQ and UPCQ outcomes should be considered locally by Faculty Education and Student Experience Committee (FESEC). At University-level this report will be considered by University Education and Student Experience Committee (UESEC), Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) and SEC as applicable.
- 1.11. Outcomes of UPCQs and MSQs may form part of staff Performance, Development and Review (PDR) discussions, in which the focus should be on the full range of scores, including excellent results as well as outcomes presenting cause for concern, and evidence that Course Leaders have engaged with their UPCQ data and Module Leaders have engaged with their MSQ data. Evidence of high quality teaching performance over a period of time taken from UPCQ and MSQ reports can also be used to support claims for recognition and reward for excellence in learning and teaching. The outcomes will also form part of the Annual Monitoring process.
- 1.12. Module Coordinators and Course Leaders are responsible for reviewing the outcome of MSQs and UPCQ, and for sharing results with other staff contributing to the delivery of the module/course. MSQ results, along with any proposed actions to be taken, where appropriate, in response to concerns and issues raised, and UPCQ outcomes, should be considered by Course Leaders in the Annual Monitoring process. MSQ outcomes for all modules owned by a School should be considered by Heads of School in the Annual Monitoring process.
- 1.13. Summary data for consideration at School and Faculty-level will be available through EvaMetrics in a dashboard and a range of apps that allow staff to access and analyse their data. Relevant summary data should be presented for consideration at appropriate points in time by FESEC meetings. University-wide summary data should be annually reviewed by QAC.

#### **Module mid-point review**

- 1.14. A module mid-point review should be take place for all year-long modules around half-way through the module. Consolidation Weeks could be used for this purpose.
- 1.15. The mid-point review can take different forms. For example, a short time can be set aside during a lecture or whole group teaching session to discuss with students their experience of the

module up to that point. Alternatively, the review may take place on the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). Each Faculty/School should agree the form(s) of module mid-point review to best meet the needs of their students and staff. A consistent approach across a range of modules is desirable.

- 1.16. Mid-point reviews should be scheduled to take place, as far as possible, so that the outcomes can be reported in a timely way to SVCs. Consideration by SVCs should include whether the midpoint reviews have taken place and whether any key issues have arisen from a particular round of reviews.
- 1.17. Outcomes of mid-point reviews, including any immediate action taken by the Module Coordinator and the module teaching team, should be fed back to students via the VLE, and in teaching sessions, as appropriate, as soon as practically possible after the mid-point review and in all cases following SVCs, even if the report is that no issues had been raised.

#### **Postgraduate Research Student Experience Surveys**

- 1.18. The Postgraduate Research Student Experience Survey (PRES) and University of Portsmouth MRes Postgraduate Research Experience Survey will be centrally administered in cooperation with the Graduate School. The content of the University of Portsmouth MRes questionnaire will be reviewed and agreed by the Graduate School in consultation with the SEC.

## **2. STUDENT REPRESENTATION**

- 2.1. An Academic Representation Framework Code of Practice has been jointly produced between the University and Students' Union and forms part of this Operational Annex (see Section 6).

#### **Course Representative system**

- 2.2. As far as possible, there should be continuity of academic representation across years. Continuing terms of office should be considered the norm for full-time undergraduate students taking on the role as either Level 4 or Level 5 students and progressing through into the next level of study. However, student course members should have an opportunity to endorse, or not, existing Course Representatives to continue in their role beyond their first year. An Accountability and Removal process is in place and forms part of this Operational Annex (see Section 7). Furthermore, there should be an

opportunity for any student to seek to become a Course Representative at the start of any year of their course. Academics with responsibility for Student Voice in Schools<sup>4</sup> should ensure that local procedures are in place to facilitate an annual changeover of Course Representatives so far as it is required.

- 2.3. Elections of Course Representatives should be scheduled in a timely way to ensure that they can undertake training. Course Representative training will be provided in collaboration by the Students' Union (UPSU) and the University, and should begin as soon as possible in the first Teaching Block. Continuing Course Representatives will be encouraged to provide mentoring support for those new to the role.
- 2.4. Online resources for Course Representatives, jointly produced by the Students' Union and the University, will be made available for all Course Representatives. This will be additional to the provision of training workshops organised and run by the Students' Union in partnership with the University.
- 2.5. The responsibilities of the academics responsible for Student Voice, working with administrative staff as appropriate, should include facilitation of Student Voice Committees, liaison with Student Voice Committee Chairs, coordination of Course Representative elections, support for Course Representatives' training through cooperation with the Students' Union, and guidance for established Course Representatives taking on a mentoring role with less experienced fellow Course Representatives (see Section 4).
- 2.6. Schools must support Course Representatives by enabling consultation with peers through a notice board, by allowing time in classes for consultation, through means of the VLE, and by providing reasonable administrative support if required.

#### **Student Voice Committees (SVCs)**

- 2.7. The role of SVCs and indicative agendas, which are reviewed annually and updated as required, can be found in the University's Annual Monitoring documentation.
- 2.8. SVCs should address the experience of students taught in other departments/cognate areas that are involved in delivering a significant shared

curriculum by including such matters as an agenda item.

- 2.9. The Student Chair will be provided with administrative support by the Faculty/School, and training for this role will be offered by the University in partnership with the Students' Union.
- 2.10. SVCs are required for each School or cognate area. A comparable mechanism should be used in cases where students are not on campus.
- 2.11. SVCs should consist of representatives of all years/Levels of a course or set of courses. A rolling term of office covering different years of study should be the norm for full-time undergraduate students taking on the role as either Level 4 or Level 5 students.
- 2.12. Staff membership of SVCs should be limited to ensure that students clearly form a majority.
- 2.13. As far as it is feasible, SVCs will be chaired by a Course Representative. It is expected that this will be the case with all SVCs for campus-based courses.

#### **Faculty Representatives**

- 2.14. A Faculty Representative and a Deputy Faculty Representative will be elected annually from the student body within each Faculty. The nominations and elections will be conducted by the Students' Union with AD(S)s responsible for promoting the election within their respective Faculties.

#### **Faculty Student Forum**

- 2.15. The Faculty Student Forum provides an opportunity for Chairs of SVCs and the Faculty Representative and Deputy Faculty Representative to meet with the AD(S). As far as possible, SVCs should be scheduled to meet prior to the Faculty Student Forum and therefore to feed into the Faculty Student Forum.
- 2.16. Meetings of the Faculty Student Forum should take place at least twice each academic year, with reports made to Faculty Education and Student Experience Committee.
- 2.17. The University-wide calendar of timings for the opportunities for students' views and opinions to be heard enables good partnership-working, and for the student voice to effectively feed into

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<sup>4</sup> This responsibility will be delegated as appropriate by the Faculty/School and would normally be carried out by an Associate Head (Education) or equivalent role in each School, working in conjunction with Department of Student &

Academic Administration (DSAA) Faculties administration staff in Schools overseen by DSAA. Those carrying out this responsibility have previously been referred to as Student Voice Coordinator (Academic), and were supported by a role referred to as Student Voice Coordinator (Administrative).

the relevant committees. This is set out in this Operational Annex (Section 8).

- 2.18. Participants in Faculty Student Forum meetings should endeavour to focus on common issues.

#### **Faculty Education and Student Experience Committee (FESEC)**

- 2.19. FESEC meetings should feature, as standard agenda items, feedback from the Faculty Representative and School academics responsible for Student Voice, and a report from the AD(S) on matters arising from meetings of SVCs and the Faculty Student Forum.

#### **Research Degree Students**

- 2.20. The views of research degree students are made known through annual appraisals by contacting supervisors and student representatives on School, Faculty and University-level committees for research students. In addition, a summary of the results of the annual Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES), and MRes Postgraduate Research Experience Survey, undertaken by the Graduate School with analysis carried out centrally by the Survey Team, and any associated external benchmarking surveys for research degree students, will be discussed at the Graduate School Management Board, with actions followed up through the University Research Degrees Committee and Faculty Research Degree Committees. It is recommended that these reports are considered by Faculty Executive Committee or FESEC as appropriate.

### **3. STUDENT SURVEY AND REPRESENTATION MECHANISMS FOR COLLABORATIVE COURSES**

- 3.1. Use of the standard MSQ by collaborative partners is desirable, along with the use of similar means to inform students about outcomes and possible actions being taken to address any concerns arising from the feedback. Comparable means to seek student views should be used if the University procedures are not employed. Where reliance is placed on a partner institution's own procedures for gathering and responding to module-level feedback, the effectiveness of such arrangements will be considered during the process of collaborative review.
- 3.2. All partner institutions should hold local SVCs or equivalent, where student views can be represented by elected representatives. All taught collaborative courses must report to a Board of Studies at the University of

Portsmouth. Partner institutions may choose to hold separate/additional Board of Studies meetings at their own institutions with student representation.

- 3.3. Where feasible, the attendance of a Partner Student Representative from a local partner institution would be welcome at the Student Representatives and Senior Management Committee. Partner student representatives more generally will be encouraged to voice concerns through the submission of comments electronically for consideration by this Committee and where appropriate by the relevant Faculty Student Forum.

### **4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 4.1. The following roles and responsibilities have been approved by UESEC:

#### **The SEC is responsible for:**

1. Reviewing and evaluating the organisation and management each year of the Module Satisfaction Questionnaire and the University of Portsmouth Course Questionnaire.
2. Annually agreeing the structure and content of the above questionnaires.
3. Annually agreeing participation by the University in any external surveys.
4. Considering any proposal to conduct a University-wide or cross-University survey where the sample size is >250 students or the student sample is taken from more than one School or Central Service. This is delegated to the Student Survey Request Group a sub-group of the Committee.
5. Appraising the effectiveness of the training and support provided for Student Representatives.
6. Considering the effectiveness of the operation of Student Voice Committees, Faculty Student Forums and Faculty Education and Student Experience Committees for ensuring that the student voice is heard within the University.

#### **Associate Deans (Students) are responsible for:**

1. The oversight of the Student Voice Policy in their Faculty.
2. The operation of the Faculty Student Forum.
3. Feeding back to Schools, Faculties, the Student Representatives and Senior Management on relevant items.

#### **Heads of School are responsible for:**

1. The implementation of the Student Voice Policy within their School.

**Academics with responsibility for Student Voice are responsible for:**

1. Ensuring, with AD(S)s, that members of academic staff are familiar with the Student Voice Policy and Operational Annex.
2. Overseeing, in conjunction with administrative staff as appropriate, the election of Course Representatives.
3. Ensuring, in conjunction with UPSU and with administrative staff as appropriate, that SVC Chairs are trained and supported in their roles.
4. Ensuring, in conjunction with administrative staff as appropriate, that SVCs are operated in accordance with University policy and that the SVC minutes are sent to the Student Voice team at UPSU: [studentfocus@upsu.net](mailto:studentfocus@upsu.net).
5. The overall organisation, promotion and administration of student surveys within their Faculty/School, with AD(S)s, and with the support of named administrative staff who liaise with the central Survey Team. This will include:
  - a) Ensuring that all modules and courses are scheduled for survey, that module, course and student lists for each survey phase are checked and amended as required, and agreeing the survey window with the central Survey Team.
  - b) Ensuring that summaries of the module/course feedback are published along with a report on actions that will be taken as a consequence of the feedback concerned. This will normally be via the appropriate Moodle module.
6. Overseeing the operation of mid-module reviews.
7. Reporting to the appropriate Board of Studies on:
  - a) The overall operation of the Student Voice Policy within the School.
  - b) Any matters particularly arising from the Student Voice Policy.

**The central Student Survey Team are responsible for:**

1. All the background configuration of EvaSys and EvaMetrics in preparation for each survey as follows:
  - a) Setting up survey period dates, creating departmental folders, creating questionnaires, and ensuring the TEL team have created links to Moodle.

- b) Extracting the module and course data from the Student Records System, formatting and forwarding to Schools for checking and confirmation.

- c) Finalising target lists for modules, courses and students for online surveys.

- d) Creating email templates, scheduling and sending emails to students and staff from the [studentsurveys@port.ac.uk](mailto:studentsurveys@port.ac.uk) email address.

2. Schedule tasks, including initial and reminder emails. Dispatching module and course reports to owners and designated recipients listed on the student records system.
3. Setting up and administering access to the EvaSys system for AD(S)s/AD(A)s, Heads of School, Heads of relevant Central Services, and academics with responsibility for Student Voice.
4. Administering the 'Closing the loop' reporting from EvaMetrics, including sending reports with reflections and preparing the for the TEL team to include in Moodle, and reporting to AD(S)s where there are reports with no reflections at the end of each phase.
5. Providing summary reports of the data as required and possible.

## 5. OTHER SURVEYS

- 5.1. UESEC has agreed that any survey involving University of Portsmouth students where >250 students are involved, or the survey spans more than one School/Central Service, must seek approval from the Student Survey Request Group. This is intended to ensure that students are not overloaded with requests that might impinge on their involvement in mandatory internal and external student surveys.

**To seek permission to carry out a survey please contact [surveyrequests@port.ac.uk](mailto:surveyrequests@port.ac.uk) to request the required form. The views of the Student Survey Request Group will then be sought. The information required includes:**

1. Rationale – why is this survey important?
2. Target Group – is it all students, undergraduates, postgraduates, etc.?
3. Target Number – what number of responses are you seeking?
4. Your preferred dates to administer the survey.

5. Survey Type – is this a user survey or is it more research in nature (see paragraphs below for further advice on characteristics)?
6. Survey Methodology – how will students be approached, who will approach them, how will they be selected, how will they respond to the questionnaire (paper, online, Moodle, Survey Monkey, Google, Board of Studies (BOS)), how will the data be analysed?
7. Dissemination – how will the outcomes be disseminated to the wider University community, and to students?
9. The need for ethical approval has been considered, and if required has been obtained, or is being sought.
10. Potential outcomes are commensurate with the burden on participants and the University of Portsmouth.
11. Third parties must accept the decisions of the Student Survey Request Group if using the student data provided by the University, or conducting the survey on University premises.

#### **Student Survey Request Group criteria for decision-making**

- 5.2. Requests will be considered twice a month, and for a request to be considered it must be submitted to [surveyrequests@port.ac.uk](mailto:surveyrequests@port.ac.uk) by the first or third Monday of the month. A decision will be communicated within ten working days of the Monday deadline.
- 5.3. The Student Survey Request Group will consider requests against the following criteria:
  1. Undergraduate students are not normally expected to require access to >250 students, or involve more than one School. If an UG project is being considered beyond these parameters, then a request should be made by their supervisor to the Student Survey Request Group with a suitable explanation as to why it is necessary.
  2. The survey includes informed consent, including information about data protection.
  3. The survey is targeted at the population that the data is needed from.
  4. The timing of the survey does not overload students.
  5. Data does not already exist.
  6. Is the request part of an agreed, funded study?
  7. The method of survey approach has been carefully considered from the perspective of participant choice and ease, e.g. can a postcard invitation be used instead of an email?
  8. The survey, as a method of collection, is clearly justified.

- 5.4. If the survey is considered to be research, as opposed to user evaluation (by the survey owner, or the Student Survey Request Group), then any approval to proceed given by the Student Survey Request Group is conditional on ethical approval being granted. To aid the decision-making process **characteristics of user and research type surveys are given below.**

#### **Characteristics of user (evaluation)-type surveys**

- 5.5. Normally data for such surveys will be:
  - Anonymous.
  - Collected only after respondents have been fully informed of the purpose and nature of the survey; the uses of the data, and persons having access to that data.
  - Destroyed within one year of collection.
  - Used only with the intention of improving a service or student numbers.
  - Prospective or retrospective (before or after having engaged with service).
  - Targeted only to the population for whom the service is applicable.

#### **Characteristics of research-type surveys**

- 5.6. Normally data for such surveys will be:
  - Linked to other data that has been sourced from University databases (e.g. demographic information, grades).
  - Shared with other parties (other than those collecting the data – whether external or internal to the University).
  - Used for an external publication.
  - Confidential rather than anonymous.
  - Kept for longer than one year.
  - Used for purposes other than improving a service or student numbers.
  - Targeted beyond the population for whom a service is applicable.

#### **Gaining ethical approval**

- 5.7. For those undertaking surveys categorised as ‘research’ they should, in addition, contact their Faculty Ethics Advisor before sending to

the Student Survey Request Group, to consider whether permission will be given for the survey approach to be made to students.

## **6. ACADEMIC REPRESENTATION FRAMEWORK CODE OF PRACTICE**

### **1. Introduction**

The Academic Representation Framework is a partnership between the University of Portsmouth and the University of Portsmouth Students' Union.

The Academic Representation Framework is necessary to ensure that students are able to engage in collegial learning, and to contribute to, and share ownership of, the structure, quality, and enhancement of their academic experience.

This document has been created to outline the shared, core principles of the framework, and responsibilities of each party involved: the University, the Union, and students.

There are four levels of academic representation within the Academic Representation Framework:

- Student Academic Representatives (Course Representatives) are appointed to represent particular courses and year groups, and are the first point of contact for any course issues.
- Student Voice Committee Chairs or nominated Course Reps from each Student Voice Committee (SVC) who takes course or wider issues to a higher level.
- Faculty Representatives support Course Representatives and represent courses within a wider Faculty remit.
- The Vice President Education & Democracy supports Course Representatives and Faculty Representatives, and to represent all students at a senior level on any educational matters.

### **2. Academic Representation Framework Board**

The Academic Representation Framework is led by the Academic Representation Framework Board (ARFB). This is comprised of staff from the University and the Union, and Student Academic Representatives. Please see Annex A for membership. The Board has administrative responsibility for the delivery, maintenance, and development of the Framework.

As well as the ARFB, there are a number of key stakeholders who are necessary to support the delivery of the Framework. These are:

1. Student Academic Representatives
2. Course Leaders

3. Academics responsible for Student Voice with support from administrative staff

In addition, all University students, academic staff and relevant support services will be expected to engage with the Framework.

### **3. Academic Representation Framework Roles & Responsibilities**

#### **3.1 Student Academic Representatives**

The responsibilities outlined for Student Academic Representatives applies to all four levels of representation.

- 3.1.1. To gather student opinion and present this in an appropriate and objective form to the University and Union.
- 3.1.2. To act as an impartial and comprehensive representative of the entire cohort.
- 3.1.3. To attend meetings as appropriate to the relevant level of representation.
- 3.1.4. To use and promote the Student and Student Academic Representation Tool (StART) as the primary platform for student feedback.
- 3.1.5. To provide constructive feedback to the University and Union, and to work with relevant staff to reach solutions to student issues.
- 3.1.6. To feedback to students any responses regarding issues raised and other matters discussed.
- 3.1.7. To engage with training and events hosted by the Union, University, and senior Student Academic Representatives.
- 3.1.8. To engage with the Union's democratic processes.

#### **3.2 The University of Portsmouth Students' Union**

- 3.2.1. To act as shared data controllers with the University of Portsmouth, and to hold centralised data for Student Academic Representatives as outlined in the Course Representatives Data Protection Statement.
- 3.2.2. To provide centralised core training and development opportunities for Student Academic Representatives, including digital training.
- 3.2.3. To analyse trends in StART submissions and meeting minutes to promote the impact of Student Academic Representatives and support them with issues they may encounter.

- 3.2.4. To co-lead Student Academic Representation Framework inductions for new staff, in particular Course Leaders, academics responsible for Student Voice, Heads of Schools, and Associate Deans (Students).
- 3.2.5. To lead and coordinate the Academic Representation Framework Board.

### 3.3 Course Leaders or Equivalent

- 3.3.1. To support the election of Course Representatives in a fair and democratic manner, providing equal opportunity to all students.
- 3.3.2. To follow the Accountability & Removal Policy to ensure high standards of representation.
- 3.3.3. To support the data collection and protection procedures for Course Representatives.
- 3.3.4. To provide an appropriate platform for Course Representatives to engage with their cohort directly.

### 3.4 Academics responsible for Student Voice

In addition to the roles and responsibilities outlined in Section 4 responsibilities include:

- 3.4.1. To facilitate the election of Course Representatives in a fair and democratic manner, providing equal opportunity to all students.
- 3.4.2. To ensure names and contact details of Student Academic Representatives are available on Moodle and where practical be placed in a physical location in each School.
- 3.4.3. To arrange Student Academic Representative meetings, and ensure the dates and documentation are accessible to all students.
- 3.4.4. To provide a School-level Academic Representation Framework Induction to all Student Academic Representatives.
- 3.4.5. To act as a key point of contact for Student Academic Representatives.
- 3.4.6. To facilitate the election of School Representatives.
- 3.4.7. To co-lead Academic Representation Framework inductions for new staff, in particular Course Leaders, academics

responsible for Student Voice, Heads of School, and Associate Deans (Students).

- 3.4.8. To ensure Student Academic Representatives have access to documents relating to academic quality, such as reports and action plans from the NSS, PTES, PRES, External Examiners, EQUIP, UKES, etc., where appropriate.
- 3.4.9. The academics responsible for Student Voice should be an Associate Head (Education) or equivalent.

### 3.5 Student Voice, Administrative Support

- 3.5.1. The academics responsible for Student Voice are responsible for ensuring and identifying<sup>5</sup> staff to support the key administrative tasks below are undertaken:
- 3.5.2. To collate details of Student Academic Representatives and ensure they are held by the Union.
- 3.5.3. To maintain Student Academic Representative data on the centralised database, including attendance at Student Academic Representative meetings.
- 3.5.4. To ensure names and contact details of Student Academic Representatives are available on Moodle and in a physical presence within the School.
- 3.5.5. To arrange Student Voice Committee (SVC), Faculty Student Forum (FSF), and Faculty Education & Student Experience Committee (FESEC), and ensure the dates and documentation are accessible to all students.
- 3.5.6. To ensure that meeting minutes, particularly those of SVCs, are shared with the Union.
- 3.5.7. To ensure feedback mechanisms, particularly the Student Academic Representative Tool (StART), are available and promoted on Moodle.

### 3.6 Heads of Departments

- 3.6.1. To assign and support academics responsible for Student Voice.

### 3.7 Associate Deans (Students)

- 3.7.1. To sit on the Academic Representation Framework Board to ensure the delivery,

<sup>5</sup> Faculties/Schools/DSAA will delegate as appropriate within their structures.

maintenance, and development of the Framework.

- 3.7.2. To co-lead Academic Representation Framework inductions for new staff, in particular Course Leaders, academics responsible for Student Voice, and Heads of School.

### 3.8 University & Union Students

- 3.8.1. To ensure that the Code of Practice and related documentation is adhered to.
- 3.8.2. To develop and enhance working relationships to facilitate the Academic Representation Framework.
- 3.8.3. To support each other in recognising and implementing effective practice.
- 3.8.4. To adhere to the spirit of the Code of Practice by recognising the importance of Academic Representatives and engaging with the Framework.

## 4. Annex A: Membership of the Academic Representation Framework Board

- 4.1 Membership will comprise the following:
  - 4.1.1. Dean of Learning and Teaching
  - 4.1.2. Minimum 2 Associate Deans (Students)
  - 4.1.3. Student Focus Coordinator
  - 4.1.4. Student Focus Manager
  - 4.1.5. Student Focus & Advice Administrator (minuting)
  - 4.1.6. 2x Faculty Representatives
  - 4.1.7. Vice President, Education & Democracy
  - 4.1.8. Union President

## 7. ACADEMIC REPRESENTATIVE ACCOUNTABILITY AND REMOVAL PROCESS

### Introduction

#### Purpose of the Policy

This policy has been created to give guidance to students and staff to ensure the effective work of Academic Representatives, to hold them to account in this voluntary role, and to identify when they should be removed from post. Therefore, the policy is designed to:

1. Highlight Academic Representatives' accountability and the support they will be given from the University of Portsmouth Students' Union (the Union) and the University of Portsmouth.
2. Standardise processes for handling:

- concerns and complaints in relation to ineffective work by an Academic Representative;
  - removal of an Academic Representative and filling the subsequent vacancy;
  - appeals raised by an Academic Representative who has been removed.
3. Student Academic Representatives are defined in Academic Representation Framework Code of Practice.
  4. For the purpose of clarity, this procedure applies to all Student Academic Representatives with the exception of the UPSU Vice President Education & Democracy. Procedures for accountability and removal for this position are outlined in the UPSU Student Complaints Procedure.

### Background

Effective student representation is crucial in maintaining and enhancing the student experience, and ensuring the rights and needs of students are communicated to both the Union and the University. Academic Representatives exist to ensure that the student voice is heard at all levels within the University and Union.

Furthermore, Academic Representatives are a reflection of both the Union as an organisation, and the University as an institution, and must conduct themselves accordingly; they are also expected to fulfil the expectations of the role to the best of their ability.

Lastly, Academic Representatives are elected into position, and are therefore accountable to the students whom they are elected to represent, as well as their Course Leader and academic staff. Having a formalised process in place will allow the Union to consistently respond to and resolve cases where the effectiveness of Representative(s) is called into question.

## 1. Academic Representative Accountability and their Support

### 1.1 Academic Representative Support

- 1.1.1 The Union supports Academic Representatives throughout the year, from initial training to individual support and advice. The Union is committed to ensuring that all Academic Representatives feel confident and supported in their roles.
- 1.1.2 The Union supports Academic Representatives through:

- 1.1.2.1 promoting the importance and purpose of the role to all students;
- 1.1.2.2 providing training on the role, how to access support, and guidance on how to be effective as an Academic Representative;
- 1.1.2.3 arranging engagement opportunities to build an Academic Representative community;
- 1.1.2.4 encouraging Academic Representatives to support bringing positive changes into their university life;
- 1.1.2.5 collating Academic Representatives' feedback to serve as the basis for identifying recommendations for future actions;
- 1.1.2.6 ensuring recognition and reward of Academic Representatives, primarily through Excellence Awards and ensuring the role is included on the individual student's Higher Education Achievement Record.

## 1.2 Accountability

- 1.2.1 Academic Representatives are responsible to, at a minimum, all students in the same year group and course as themselves.
- 1.2.2 Academic Representatives are expected to treat the role in a responsible manner in all interactions. They need to be prepared to represent the views of students on their course regardless of their own personal beliefs/opinions.
- 1.2.3 Academic Representative accountability, as outlined in the Academic Representative Role Description, implies acceptance of responsibility by them in addressing students' concerns related to academic issues, which include, but are not limited to, the quality of the course in general, learning and teaching methods within the course, assessment methods and feedback, provision of study skills support, learning resources, facilities, and study space, general student support and/or supervision.

## 2. Concerns and Complaints

### 2.1 Grounds for Concern

The following list serves as grounds for concern of the ability to act as Academic Representative:

- 2.1.1 failure to effectively represent the relevant student cohort;

- 2.1.2 lack of attendance, without apologies, at 2 or more required meetings, including Student Voice Committee (SVC), Faculty Student Forum (FSF) and Faculty Education & Student Experience Committee (FESEC) or less than a 75% attendance rate with apologies;

- 2.1.2.1 It is the responsibility of the academics responsible for Student Voice to ensure that non-attendance is noted within the minutes by the Chair or Secretariat of each meeting.

- 2.1.3 failure to meet the expectations outlined in the Academic Representative Role Description;

- 2.1.4 breach of the Academic Representation Framework Code of Practice;

- 2.1.5 breach of confidentiality;

- 2.1.6 course cohort evaluation of the Academic Representative's work through a biannual representation survey, with an unsatisfactory score from two thirds of their representative cohort.

- 2.1.7 This list is not exhaustive, and it remains at the discretion of the academics responsible for Student Voice as to whether these grounds warrant the recording of a formal concern.

### 2.2 Grounds for Complaint

The following list serves as grounds for complaint about Academic Representatives:

- 2.2.1 continuation of behaviour addressed in a formal concern;

- 2.2.2 abuse of position as an Academic Representative.;

- 2.2.3 unacceptable or abusive (physical or mental) behaviour towards other students or members of staff;

- 2.2.4 the Academic Representative is expelled from the Students' Union, as outlined in Clause 11.4 of the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the University of Portsmouth Students' Union;

- 2.2.5 the Academic Representative is excluded from the University of Portsmouth, as outlined in Withdrawal of Services and Exclusion;

- 2.2.6 the Academic Representative chooses to leave the University of Portsmouth;

- 2.2.7 a formal complaint about the student is upheld by the University.

2.2.8 This list is not exhaustive, and it remains at the discretion of the Accountability & Removal Panel as to whether these grounds warrant the recording of a formal complaint and/or removal. The Panel will consist of the relevant Course Leader, Faculty Representative, and Vice-President Education & Democracy or assigned representative.

### 2.3 Raising a Concern or Complaint

2.3.1 Should a student or member of staff have a concern or complaint about their Academic Representative's fulfilment of the role, this should be addressed to the Academic Representation Framework Board who will pass it on to the relevant staff. See the Academic Representation Framework Code of Practice for details of the Board.

### 2.4 Handling of Concerns and Complaints

2.4.1 If an Academic Representative fails to carry out their role, as outlined in the Academic Representative Role Description, then they are preventing their cohort from having adequate academic representation.

2.4.2 The Accountability & Removal Panel will take the decision on the removal of Academic Representatives from their role.

2.4.3 Academic Representatives are able to appeal any decision, as outlined below.

2.4.4 If a complaint or concern is raised by a student or a member of staff about their Academic Representative, meetings with the relevant parties will be sought to reach an amicable solution. Support and assistance will be offered to the Academic Representative in question. The University and the Union will explore the issue and determine what actions can be taken:

2.4.5 Concerns will be addressed as follows:

2.4.5.1 concerns will be addressed and recorded by the relevant academics responsible for Student Voice;

2.4.5.2 if there is a belief that an Academic Representative is failing to meet the responsibilities of the role, the academics responsible for Student Voice will contact the Academic Representative and arrange to meet

them within 14 days of a concern being raised;

2.4.5.3 the academics responsible for Student Voice will investigate the concern and, if it is upheld, will arrange a second meeting to formally address the concern;

2.4.5.4 the meeting will look at the support, advice or training that the Academic Representative can be given to ensure that they are effective in their role, including support from the Union and the cause of any issues;

2.4.5.5 any concern will be formally recorded by School administrative staff, whether upheld or not.

2.4.5.6 Complaints will be addressed as follows:

2.4.5.7 complaints will be addressed and recorded by the relevant Accountability & Removal Panel;

2.4.5.8 if there is a belief that an Academic Representative is continuing to fail to meet the responsibilities of the role, the academics responsible for Student Voice will contact the Academic Representative and arrange to meet them within 14 days of a concern being raised;

2.4.5.9 the academics responsible for Student Voice will investigate the concern and, if it is upheld, will arrange a second meeting with the Accountability & Removal Panel to formally address the concern;

2.4.5.10 the meeting will look at the support, advice or training that the Academic Representative has been previously given, any additional support to ensure that they are effective in their role, including support from the Union, and the cause of any issues;

2.4.5.11 if there is a belief that the Academic Representative is unfit to fulfil the role, said Representative may face removal in accordance with Clause 3: Removal of an Academic Representative;

2.4.5.12 if the Academic Representative does not respond to the meeting request or fails, without good reason, to attend the meeting this will result in the Academic Representative being removed from their position and a

new Academic Representative being elected from the course;

- 2.4.5.13 any complaint will be formally recorded by the School administrative staff, whether upheld or not.

### 3. Removal of Academic Representatives

#### 3.1 Grounds for Removal

The below are grounds for removal of an Academic Representative from their role:

- 3.1.1 an Academic Representative may choose to resign from their role on a voluntary basis after informing the Union and their Course Leader;
- 3.1.2 the Representative is found to be in violation of one or more of the grounds stated under Clause 2.2 Grounds for Complaint;
- 3.1.3 a complaint made against an Academic Representative is supported by two thirds of their representative cohort as a vote of no confidence.

#### 3.2 Removal of an Academic Representative

- 3.2.1 Each request shall be considered on a case-by-case basis by the relevant Accountability & Removal Panel.
- 3.2.2 Removal of an Academic Representative will only be considered if there is clear evidence to support the accusations made.
- 3.2.3 Any concern or complaint raised will be investigated by the Accountability & Removal Panel, and the Academic Representative in question will be given the option to informally step down from their position prior to an investigation being launched.
- 3.2.4 The Union Advice Service shall represent and support the welfare of the Academic Representative in question throughout the whole process.
- 3.2.5 The Academic Representative shall not be permitted to speak to the relevant Accountability & Removal Panel regarding the allegations, until prompted, whilst the investigation is being undertaken.
- 3.2.6 On making a decision, it is the responsibility of the academics responsible for Student Voice to inform the Academic Representative, as well as relevant University and Union staff (such

as the Chairs and Secretaries of relevant meetings, Course Leader, and Student Focus Coordinator) of the outcome.

- 3.2.7 The Academic Representative in question has the right to appeal the removal, as outlined in Clause 4, Appeals Process.
- 3.2.8 If an Academic Representative is removed from their position, they shall not be able to stand as an Academic Representative again. The student may still be permitted to run for other Union positions, including Sabbatical Officer, Student Trustee, Student Office, and non-academic voluntary roles.

#### 3.3 Filling the Vacancy

- 3.3.1 Following the removal of an Academic Representative, a new Academic Representative should be elected to fill this vacancy. This should occur within four weeks of the removal of the previous Academic Representative.

### 4. Appeals Process

#### 4.1 Grounds for Appeal

- 4.1.1 The Academic Representative in question may request for the review of a decision made by the Accountability & Removal Panel, based on:
  - 4.1.1.1 procedural violation in the removal process;
  - 4.1.1.2 bias or perception of bias;
  - 4.1.1.3 other circumstances where the Panel was not made aware of a significant factor relating to the removal of the Academic Representative from the role;
  - 4.1.1.4 fresh evidence not presented to the original panel.
- 4.1.2 The Academic Representative in question has the right to produce and submit a written appeal to [studentfocus@upsu.net](mailto:studentfocus@upsu.net), within 10 working days from the date the decision was made.
- 4.1.3 Appeals submitted by the Academic Representative should specify circumstances and justify reasons for filing an appeal.

#### 4.2 Handling of Appeals

- 4.2.1 The Union will appoint an Appeal Committee to decide whether the

decision of the Accountability and Approval Panel should be changed. Appeal Committee members are nominated by the respective faculty and may involve student representation from a senior representative such as Faculty Representative or Sabbatical Officer the Academic Representative represents, and an academic representative who has had no prior involvement with the course in question.

4.2.2 Academic Representative appeals will be managed in a confidential manner.

4.2.3 Following the conclusion of the investigation, the relevant Appeal Committee will have ultimate say as to whether to remove the Academic

Representative or not; this decision will be considered final.

## **8. UNIVERSITY TIMETABLE OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENT VIEWS AND OPINIONS TO BE HEARD**

8.1 To be drawn up each year with information received from DSAA and UPSU, e.g. dates of Faculty and Course Representatives elections and Faculty committee meeting dates. The following to be adhered to:

- Student Faculty Forum twice a year;
- SVCs to meet before and feed into Faculty Student Forum;
- Faculty Student Forum to feed into FESEC;
- Mid-module feedback – Consolidation Weeks;
- Survey windows (provided by Survey request sub-group).

