

# Academic Student Representation Policy

**This policy is a defined policy which all Faculties are required to follow.**

## **1. Overview**

- 1.1 The University of Southampton (the University) and the University of Southampton Students' Union (Union Southampton) are committed to working in partnership to provide effective structures for student feedback and representation. The Academic Student Representation System (ASRS) provides a framework in which students can have a direct input towards decisions regarding their academic programmes. The ASRS applies to all undergraduate and post graduate taught students registered and studying in the UK.

## **2. Principles**

- 2.1 Every student at every level of every programme will have access to representation, and as a result, will be able to influence their student learning experience through their representatives.
- 2.2 The ASRS will be jointly owned by the University and Union Southampton, who will work in partnership to ensure the effectiveness of the System, as outlined in the principles and appendix below.
- 2.3 Union Southampton's VP Education and the Vice President (Education) will have overall responsibility for effective representation at a University level, exercised through Faculty Officers and Associate Deans (Education) at Faculty level, and Academic Presidents and Directors of Programmes at Discipline level. The VP Education and Vice President (Education) will maintain oversight of the implementation and effectiveness of the ASRS.

## **3. Policy**

- 3.1 Union Southampton will have responsibility for arranging the election and training of student representatives, as well as supporting them and monitoring their effectiveness. Any student wishing to take on a role as representative must be a member of the Student Union.
- 3.2 The University will provide opportunities for representatives to have input into discussion and to present student feedback in appropriate forums, both formal and informal.
- 3.3 Both Union Southampton and the University are committed to feeding back information regarding discussions, actions, and decisions from meetings to the wider student body. Wherever possible, this feedback should be delivered in partnership with the relevant academic representative[s].
- 3.4 Should there be any changes to the staffing of roles relevant to the ASRS (e.g. Directors of Programmes, Associate Deans and Faculty Academic Registrars) the Union Southampton VP Education and the relevant Faculty Officer(s) will be informed.
- 3.5 Union Southampton will be responsible for dealing with complaints about the conduct of any student representative in their role as such, with the first point of contact being the VP Education, in accordance with the procedure outlined in the Union Southampton's constitution. If a complaint is raised concerning the conduct of the VP Education, the Union President should be notified.
- 3.6 There will be (at a minimum) three Staff-Student Liaison Committee meetings (SSLC) each year at the appropriate level (discipline / academic unit level). In addition, an informal SSLC meeting as early as possible in the autumn term will be held to allow participants to meet each other and establish working relationships. Dates for these meetings will be agreed between the Academic President and the Director of Programmes (or nominee). Any proposal from a Faculty or Discipline to hold formal SSLC meetings above or below Discipline level must be agreed with the relevant Faculty Officer / Academic President(s) and discussed with the VP Education and the Vice President (Education), in order to ensure that Union Southampton maintains oversight of the election of representatives.
- 3.7 SSLCs will be co-chaired by the relevant staff member and relevant student representative. SSLCs should be free to discuss any topics relating to learning and teaching. These may include, but are not limited to, issues such as:

- quality of programmes and modules overall
  - external examiner reports (these should always be discussed at the appropriate meeting of the SSLC)
  - learning and teaching methods
  - assessment methods
  - feedback on assessed work
  - the provision of study skills support, general student support and / or supervision
  - learning resources
  - facilities, and study space
- 3.8 SSLCs must be seen as a safe space for ideas and issues to be discussed broadly, and must therefore not engage in discussion of:
- Individual staff members
  - Individual students
  - Personal complaints/grievances/appeals
- 3.9 Serious issues relating to individuals should be discussed personally between the relevant representative and staff member (e.g. Director of Programmes and Academic President). In some instances, this may require issues to be escalated to Faculty or University level, specifically when unresolved issues are about individuals involved in the discussions.
- 3.10 The last SSLC of the year in the summer term will review SSLC activity for the year, as well as considering the usual agenda items. This review, which should be minuted, will summarise the impacts that SSLC discussion has had on the programmes.
- 3.11 University staff will work with the relevant student representatives to ensure that suitable support is provided to help with the running and organising of meetings. This support will include (but is not limited to):
- Providing a member of staff to take and circulate minutes
  - Facilitating room booking on behalf of students
  - Ensuring that the relevant members of academic staff attend the SSLC
  - Making available copies of agendas and minutes for committee members
- 3.12 All minutes of SSLC meetings and other meetings involving student representatives should be forwarded by the relevant student representative co-chair (either the Academic President or Faculty Officer) to Union Southampton's Advice and Representation Coordinator (Education) ([representation@unionsouthampton.org](mailto:representation@unionsouthampton.org)) and the relevant Faculty Officer.
- 3.13 Our overseas and collaborative arrangements for student representation may vary from this policy for various cultural and political reasons. Faculties involved in collaborative provision will provide assurance to AQSC that arrangements for soliciting and engaging with student feedback are in place, and that these arrangements are appropriately linked into processes in the Faculties. The details of those arrangements are set out in the relevant Memoranda of Agreement.
- 3.14 Further guidance on student representation is available from Union Southampton via the Advice and Representation Coordinator (Education), contactable at ([representation@unionsouthampton.org](mailto:representation@unionsouthampton.org)), and/or the University via the Quality Standards and Accreditation Team, contactable at [qsa@soton.ac.uk](mailto:qsa@soton.ac.uk).
- 3.15 For more information regarding the role and responsibilities of the student representatives please see the Course Rep Handbook and Opportunity Profiles on the Union Southampton [website](#), within the [Education](#) tab.

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