

Staff/Student Consultative Committees

A. Function and purpose

1. It is a University requirement that every School and Institute must establish at least one Staff/Student Consultative Committee (SSCC). Multi-subject Schools may, if appropriate, establish separate subject-based SSCCs.
2. The effective operation of SSCCs across the University shall be the joint responsibility of the relevant Heads of School, the Students' Union and the Directorate of Academic and Student Affairs. The Head of School shall be responsible for ensuring the effective operation of all SSCCs within their School.
3. The purpose of SSCCs is:
 - (i) To ensure that Schools and Institutes receive evaluation and feedback from students on the quality of their academic provision and associated activities.
 - (ii) To provide a mechanism whereby Heads of Schools and Institutes can seek the views of students on matters of policy related to course development and review.
 - (iii) To enable discussion of areas of concern for students in terms of academic provision and related activities.
4. The competence of an SSCC relates to the quality of academic provision in the relevant school or institute. This includes curriculum, teaching and learning, as well as associated matters and activities within a School such as guidance, resources, feedback, accommodation and School communities.
5. The Head of School (or nominee) is responsible for ensuring that any matter arising from an SSCC which requires more general consideration within the University or action outside the School's remit is forwarded to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs. The Director will bring the matter to the attention of the appropriate officer or body and will monitor the action that is taken to deal with it.
6. It is expected that Schools should involve their SSCCs in curriculum review where possible: student representatives on module and programme review groups, for example, should ideally be members of a relevant SSCC. Written feedback from an SSCC can be part of the evidence used in curriculum review.

B. Membership

1. An SSCC will be made up of equal numbers of the academic staff and students of the School. 'Students' in this context means registered part-time and full-time undergraduate and postgraduate students of the University, including students in the University Colleges and in the Institutes of Theology and Professional Legal Studies.
2. The academic staff membership of the SSCC will include the Head of School or nominee.
3. Student representatives – who should include undergraduate and postgraduate students - will be elected by their peers. Heads of Schools are responsible for ensuring that elections are conducted in a fair and representational manner, and according to the election procedures of the Students' Union Constitution.
4. Heads of Schools must ensure that elections take place as early as possible in the first semester, and normally no later than the end of the third week of term.
5. Elections for student members should be operated in partnership with the Students' Union. The Union should be informed, in advance of the beginning of term, of all relevant dates relating to the opening and closure of nominations and the staging of elections.

6. The Students' Union, in partnership with Academic and Student Affairs and the Schools, shall run a promotional campaign at the beginning of each academic year, encouraging students to run for election to their SSCC.
7. Students elected to SSCCs will be known as Course Representatives.
8. The Head of School must ensure that, insofar as it is possible, all students within the School are represented at SSCC level (including, but not limited to, undergraduate, postgraduate taught, postgraduate research and international students).
9. Schools should, where possible, ensure that any societies based within the School are represented on the SSCC. A list of School-based societies is available from the Vice President Clubs and Societies of the Students' Union.
10. An SSCC may co-opt further students, in addition to the elected ones, to ensure that all areas of work are covered.
11. An SSCC can invite additional students or staff to be in regular attendance at its meetings, if appropriate, and can invite any member of the University to a specific meeting if it thinks he or she can make a useful contribution to a particular discussion. This includes, but is not limited to the Academic and Student Affairs, Estates, Information Services and Student Plus Directorates.
12. The Students' Union President and the Vice President Education shall be ex-officio members of all SSCCs.

C. Role of the School Representative

1. The students of each School shall elect a 'School Representative', who shall act as the student chair or co-chair of their SSCC.
2. The School Representative's primary role will be to channel communication from the School's students to the SSCC and the Students' Union, and vice versa.
3. The School Representative shall be a member of the Students' Union Council.
4. School Representative elections shall be managed by the Students' Union, in line with the Students' Union's Constitution.
5. The School Representative (or nominee) shall also represent the students of the School on the School Board, the School Education Committee and Academic Board. The SSCC may select other representatives to sit on these committees if the School Representative is unable to do so for any reason.
6. The School Representative shall normally organise meetings with the other chair(s) or co-chair(s) of SSCCs and, where appropriate, any societies within the School, in advance of any of the above meetings.

D. Conduct of meetings

1. The School Representative shall normally serve as the chair or co-chair of the SSCC. In Schools with more than one SSCC, the student chair or co-chair shall be appointed at the first meeting each year; the student chair (or nominee) will also sit on the corresponding Education Committee within the School.
2. It is a requirement that every SSCC must meet at least twice in each semester. Dates of meetings should be set as far in advance as possible and notified to all members. Meetings should normally take place in the four weeks preceding meetings of the Academic Board. Dates for meetings of the Academic Board are available from the Directorate of Academic and

Student Affairs.

3. Each SSCC will agree its own procedures for calling additional meetings.
4. A written agenda will normally be issued seven days before each meeting to members of the SSCC and the Students' Union. Any member may have items included on the agenda, providing they are within the committee's competence.

Each SSCC should agree its own procedures and deadlines for submission of items for the agenda and for circulating the agenda to members. Students must be notified about the meeting before the agenda is drafted, to enable any relevant items they wish to raise to be included.

5. The School shall facilitate the circulation of an email to all students on behalf of the course representative, in order to gather feedback regarding issues of concern to students.
6. The School Representative or student chair shall be responsible for liaising with the other course representatives and the Head of School (or nominee) in the preparation of the agenda for each meeting.
7. There will be, normally in written form, reports to each meeting of any relevant matters which have arisen since a previous meeting.
8. The School should ensure that student input is requested through the SSCC into draft policies or changes to procedures, prior to approval by the School and / or the University. It is also expected that Schools will facilitate regular discussion regarding the other forms of feedback that the School receives, including the National Student Survey and other relevant surveys, External Examiner reports, the Annual Programme Review and Educational Enhancement Process reports.

E. Reporting mechanisms

1. The Directorate of Academic and Student Affairs and the Students' Union is responsible for monitoring the functioning of SSCCs, and for managing the database of members.
2. Each School must return the following information to the Director of Academic and Student Affairs and the Vice President Education of the Students' Union, normally by the end of the fourth week of term:
 - The names, contact details and constituency of student members of SSCCs;
 - Schools should indicate how student members have been selected, i.e. those elected in competition, those elected unopposed, those co-opted by the SSCC or those selected by the School;
 - The name and contact details for the SSCC liaison officer;
 - The name and contact details for staff members of the SSCC;
 - The date of the first meeting.

This information should be updated throughout the year if the membership changes.

3. The School shall ensure that the work and outcomes of the SSCC are promoted as widely as possible, including, but not limited to, sections in module and programme handbooks and the School's intranet and internet sites.
4. Minutes of all SSCC meetings must be kept, and should identify any actions that have arisen as a result of the discussions. The School will ensure that SSCC minutes are normally made available within two weeks of the meeting.

These minutes (or a summary, where appropriate) should be communicated to all students and staff within the School. The School must also ensure that the minutes are communicated to the Vice-President Education of the Students' Union and the Director of Academic and

Student Affairs. Students in the School or Institute are entitled to have access to the minutes through the School website.

5. The Students' Union President will make a summary report to each meeting of Academic Board on the operation of, and matters arising from, SSCCs.
6. The Head of School should inform the SSCC at the earliest possible opportunity of any decisions taken within the School relating to academic provision.
7. The SSCC shall have the power to request the addition of an agenda item to a meeting of the School Management Board. The School Representative or student chair (or nominees) shall be entitled to attend the meeting for this item.
8. The School Representative (and student chairs, where applicable) shall provide a report, each semester, to the School Management Board regarding the work of the SSCC.
9. As far as possible, the School must ensure that students are represented on other school committees including School Boards and Education and Teaching and Learning Committees.
10. School committees with student members shall have the ability to have 'reserved business items' to discuss issues that relate to an individual or identifiable group of students and/or staff.

F. Support

1. The School shall provide an SSCC section on the School's website. This will include an archive of minutes and contact details for all representatives within the School, as well as relevant contact details for Students' Union representatives.
2. A notice-board must be dedicated to SSCCs within each School to enable communication of matters such as the provision of details of forthcoming meetings and the highlighting of issues of relevance.
3. The names of course representatives and their specific e-mail addresses should be prominently displayed on appropriate School noticeboards and websites, in order that students know who their representatives are.
4. Course representatives will be supported in order to enable the gathering of feedback from students within the School; this shall include the provision of access to 'all-student email' facilities and authorisation to address students at the beginning of lectures, tutorials and other classes.
5. Where possible, the School shall provide an online discussion forum to facilitate discussion of issues of relevance amongst course representatives and other students within the School.
6. Where possible, course representatives will have a dedicated, generic e-mail address for the purposes of SSCC work.
7. Each SSCC will have a secretary assigned by the Head of School.
8. The Head of School will appoint a student liaison officer from academic staff to provide advice and guidance with SSCC procedures and other related issues assigned by the Head of School.
9. The Students' Union, in partnership with the Directorate of Academic and Student Affairs, will produce a handbook and will organise training sessions each year for course representatives. The date(s) of this session will be communicated to Schools in advance of the beginning of term.

The Students' Union will also develop a programme of continuous training for course representatives, based upon an annual needs analysis. The Vice President Education will provide further information about these sessions, as required.

10. The Students' Union shall deliver, at least once per semester, a Course Representatives' Conference, to bring together representatives from across the University, to discuss issues affecting the institution as a whole. The Students' Union shall report the outcomes of these Conferences to the Academic Board.
11. The Students' Union shall produce a monthly bulletin regarding issues of interest to course representatives; this bulletin shall also include further information regarding new or proposed changes to University policies.
12. The Students' Union, in partnership with the Directorate of Academic and Student Affairs, shall produce an online resource centre for course representatives, including information regarding University policies and departments.
13. The Students' Union, in partnership with the Directorate of Academic and Student Affairs and the Directorate of Information Services, will provide support to course representatives with regard to preparing for SSCC meetings, accessing appropriate University papers and the use of online survey software in order to gain student feedback.

G. Resolving disputes

1. A Head of School who acts contrary to the advice of an SSCC must inform the SSCC of the action. Where appropriate the Head of School may inform the SSCC about the reasons behind this. It is good practice for Schools to seek the views of SSCCs on any major issues with implications for students before a decision is taken.
2. If there is a disagreement which cannot be resolved within an SSCC, it may appeal to the School Board and seek the assistance of the Vice-President (Education) of the Students' Union.
3. If the School Board is unable to resolve the matter, the SSCC may appeal to a special appeal panel consisting of a Dean, the Students' Union President and Vice-President (Education) and the Director of Academic and Student Affairs. The panel may seek any specialist advice, including from an external subject specialist, if required. The panel's decision will be final.