

Student Representation and Academic Quality

A Code of Practice

This document was produced collaboratively by the Director of Quality and Winchester Student Union.

This Code of Practice outlines precepts that programmes, faculties and other relevant academic groupings within the University should aspire to meet in order to allow students to be represented in as transparent and open a manner as possible. As it may not be possible (or desirable) for all to work to exactly the same structure of representation, the following precepts are described in such a way as to enable engagement with them in a number of different ways.

The Precepts:

1. Committees dealing with matters of Academic Quality (for instance, undergraduate and postgraduate Programme Committees, Faculty Quality Committees, and the Research Degrees Committee) must include student representatives in their membership.
2. Student representatives should be sought from a wide cross-section of the student community (including students from different levels of study, part-time students, mature students and students with special needs). An optimum target for student representation on undergraduate Programme committees will be two students per level of the programme, but more can serve if the committee considers it appropriate. The names of student members should be reported annually to the Representation and Development Co-ordinator of the Student Union.
3. Committees should ensure that meetings are timetabled at a time that enables a majority of student representatives to be present and dates and times of meetings should be published well in advance.
4. Student constituencies should be made aware of the identity of their representatives on relevant committees.
5. In all committee meetings with student representation, student members should be treated as full and equal members of the committee, with voting rights identical to other members.

6. However, where there are areas of committee business which require confidentiality from student representatives, Chairs should identify these, placing them either in a separate meeting or in a restricted agenda.
7. Student representatives should always be given the opportunity to put forward items for the agenda of meetings.
8. In all committee meetings, student issues (identified for instance as "Reports from Student Representatives") should be a standing item on the agenda.
9. Student representatives should make every effort to represent the opinions of their peers (even if these do not coincide with their own views) and should work with committee Chairs to ensure that they have proper means of gathering those views.
10. Student Representatives on Programme Committees (or other bodies representing constituencies of students studying in common) are expected to feed back to the students they represent (for instance, via email, participation in programme newsletters, participation in end of module Review meetings, etc.)
11. Committees themselves should also provide feedback to students at large about matters of concern to them following discussion at meetings (for instance, via email, via VLE, via programme newsletters, review meetings, through publication of papers, circulation of minutes, or via student representatives.)
12. Student representatives should be invited to participate in Working Parties or other informal groups set up by committees to conduct business where appropriate (for instance, in preparation for Re-approval of Programmes.)
13. Student representatives should act in a manner suitable for an academic committee and avoid making derogatory comments which relate to named individuals (staff or student), whether or not those individuals are members of the committee.
14. Student representatives should be prepared to abide by majority decisions made by committees.
15. Student representatives on any committee should make every effort to attend meetings or to send a substitute in their place if they are unable to attend.
16. Student representatives should inform the Chair if they are unable to attend a meeting or if they are to arrive late.

17. Committee Chairs should ensure that committee vacancies are adequately advertised to students and that, when more than one candidate is nominated for a vacancy, elections are held.
18. Student representatives at Levels 1 and 2 of undergraduate programmes should, wherever possible, be invited to continue to act as representatives the following year until new representation has been decided. Student representatives may serve more than one term of office.
19. Students wishing to terminate their committee membership should give as much notice as possible to the Chair of the committee.
20. On leaving a Committee, all student representatives should receive an acknowledgement of their work. This may be either in the form of a standard reference and/or a letter of thanks from the Chair.