

Policy for Student Academic Representation (Taught Students)

Summary			
The policy sets out the principles for operating taught student academic representation at the University in partnership with Bristol Students' Union.			
Scope - This document applies to:			
This policy applies to undergraduate and postgraduate taught students. Student representation at school and faculty levels.			
For applicants entering in:	n/a	Applies from academic year:	2025/26
Document Control			
Owning team/s	University of Bristol: Education & Student Success: Academic Quality & Policy Office Bristol SU: Academic Representation team		
Division	See above		
Lead contact/s	AQPO: Academic Quality Manager Bristol SU: Academic Representation Manager		
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Superseded documents	Code of Practice for Academic Student Representation (Taught Students)		
Related documents	See Student Representation SharePoint		
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University of Bristol and University of Bristol Students' Union

Policy for Taught Students Academic Representation

Context and Purpose

1. Partnering with our students to build understanding of their diverse needs and co-create their high quality university experience, is a key part of the University's vision and strategy¹ to provide an inspiring education and transformative student experience. This incorporates a commitment to partnership between staff and students, a value shared by University of Bristol (the University) and the University of Bristol Students' Union (Bristol SU).
2. The University is required to conform with the regulatory framework of the Office for Students and Bristol SU, the Education Act 1994, both of which broadly expect our organisations to have systems and processes in place to work with students individually and collectively as partners in academic quality processes.
3. One aspect of this partnership is a system of student academic representation. The aim of this system, which is delivered in partnership between the University and Bristol SU, is to support every student to be effectively represented regarding academic matters by a fellow student. Student academic representation plays an integral role in teaching and learning quality assurance and enhancement, providing structures for student feedback to help ensure the relevance of curricula, increase student satisfaction, develop strong academic communities and student-staff partnership.
4. This Policy sets out the shared approach of the University and Bristol SU to the student academic representation system for taught students - undergraduate and taught postgraduate at school and faculty level. This Policy sets out the minimum requirements for student academic representation. Schools and faculties can build on this using models, formats and ideas from the good practice toolkit,² which supplements this Policy. This enables schools and faculties to work within the Policy to suit their context, disciplines and study levels.
5. Both this Policy and the good practice toolkit are designed to embed the following core principles for taught student academic representation:
 - 5.1. **Accessible and Inclusive** -
 - of benefit to all students across taught study levels and disciplines;
 - simple to access and participate in;
 - representative voice of the relevant student communities.
 - 5.2. **Collaborative** -
 - a genuine student and staff partnership where all parties have the shared goal of improving the academic experience for students;
 - a platform through which students can engage and contribute in discussions, as partners, with staff.
 - 5.3. **Effective and Meaningful** -
 - visible to and valued by staff and students;
 - a continuous process where all parties are open and responsive to feedback;
 - a mechanism to help close the feedback loop so students can see the impact of their input, or understand why actions have not been taken;
 - a mechanism to celebrate successes and demonstrate impact.

¹ www.bristol.ac.uk/university/strategy/pillars/education/

² TBC - link to good practice toolkit

Academic Rep Structure

6. The student academic representative roles at school and faculty level are as follows:
 - 6.1. **Course level reps.** Each course (programme) will have at least one academic representative elected; the exceptions are programmes with very small student numbers across the years of study where a Course Rep may represent a number of programmes. Course Reps are expected to attend School Academic Representation Forums and engage in relevant Bristol SU training and democratic processes. The [role description](#) is available on the Bristol SU website.
 - 6.2. **School level reps.** Each school will have at least one School Academic Representative. School Reps are expected to attend School and Faculty Academic Representation Forums and engage in relevant Bristol SU training and democratic processes. The [role description](#) is available on the Bristol SU website.
 - 6.3. **Faculty level reps.** Each Faculty will have elected Faculty Academic Representatives, one to cover undergraduate and another to cover postgraduate taught students. Faculty Reps are expected to attend Faculty Academic Representation Forums and engage in relevant Bristol SU training and democratic processes. The [role description](#) is available on the Bristol SU website.

Election

7. Bristol SU run twice yearly elections for student academic representative roles.
 - 7.1. **Course Reps.** Elections for first year undergraduate and postgraduate taught student Course Reps are run at the start of the academic year. Course Reps for subsequent undergraduate years of study are elected in the Spring term for the next academic year. All students registered on the course are able to stand as, and vote for, their Course Rep.
 - 7.2. **School Reps.** School Reps can be elected in the Spring term election. All students on courses owned by the school are able to stand as, and vote for, their School Rep. Where schools opt out of that process or where positions aren't filled, Course Reps will elect (or select) School Rep/s at the first School Academic Representation Forum of the academic year.
 - 7.3. **Faculty Reps.** Undergraduate Faculty Reps are elected by undergraduate students within the appropriate faculty in the Spring term election. Postgraduate taught Faculty Reps are elected by postgraduate taught students within the appropriate faculty at the start of the academic year. All students registered within the faculty are able to stand as, and vote for, their Faculty Rep.
8. Schools and faculties should work with Bristol SU to facilitate effective promotion of representative elections. Schools should provide, when requested by Bristol SU, the appropriate information on numbers, programme codes and Course and School Rep positions to be filled in order that elections may be run.
9. Where elections leave Course or School Rep positions unfilled schools should follow [the co-option process](#) set out by Bristol SU.

Student Academic Representation Forums

10. Student Academic Representation Forums³ are core to our student academic representation processes. These regular meetings between students and staff will take place at school and faculty levels (where appropriate schools may also operate them at programme/course level). They create spaces in which student feedback can be shared and discussed and staff student partnership working developed.
11. School Student Academic Representation Forums.

³ Previously known as Student Staff Liaison Committee and Faculty Student Staff Liaison Committee

- 11.1. Schools should arrange a minimum of four School Student Academic Representation Forums each academic year.
- 11.2. The first School Academic Representation Forum should take place by the end of week 6 of the academic year. This Forum should be a welcome and expectation setting social meeting. This Forum should also elect or select the School Rep from amongst the current Reps (where this wasn't determined by election, see 7.2).
- 11.3. The number of student representatives (including representative/s of relevant student academic societies) invited to each Forum should be higher than the numbers of university staff invited.
- 11.4. Student Reps should work with school staff to identify areas for discussion at the Forums. Student Reps should gather feedback from their cohorts prior to the Forum and schools should invite any relevant staff to take part in the Forum discussions.
- 11.5. It is strongly recommended that Forum discussions are co-chaired by a Rep and a member of school staff, although they may be chaired by staff if agreed with the Reps. The student co-chair may be permanent or selected on a rotating basis. Bristol SU provide training to all student reps who co-chair Forums.
- 11.6. The school will provide support to capture and share Forum discussions and any actions arising with students, staff and Bristol SU.
- 11.7. The good practice toolkit contains further information, resources and a range of fora models and formats which Reps and school staff can draw on to suit their needs.
12. Faculty Student Academic Representation Forums.
 - 12.1. Faculties should arrange a minimum of three Faculty Student Academic Representation Forums each academic year.
 - 12.2. The first Faculty Academic Representation Forum should be a welcome and expectation setting meeting.
 - 12.3. The number of student representatives (including representative/s of relevant student academic societies) invited to each Forum should be higher than the number of university staff invited.
 - 12.4. Faculty Reps should work with faculty staff to identify areas for discussion at the Forums. Faculty Reps should gather feedback from their School Reps prior to the Forum. The faculty should invite any relevant university and Bristol SU Officers and/or staff to take part in the Forum discussions.
 - 12.5. Forums should be chaired by the elected Faculty Rep with support from a member of faculty staff, although they may be chaired by staff if agreed with the Faculty Reps. Bristol SU provides chairing training to all Faculty Reps.
 - 12.6. The faculty will provide support to capture and share Forum discussions and any actions arising with students, staff and Bristol SU.
 - 12.7. The good practice toolkit contains further information and resources which Reps and school staff can draw on to suit their needs.

Training

13. Student Reps are expected to complete the online core training module provided by Bristol SU prior to attending their first Forum.
14. Student academic society reps who attend Forums should complete the core online training module provided by Bristol SU before attending their first Forum.
15. Bristol SU provide additional training, coaching and support for student chairs/co-chairs of School and Faculty Academic Representation Forums.