

Code of Practice for Student Representation for Taught Students

University of Bristol and University of Bristol Students' Union

Code of Practice for Student Representation for Taught Students

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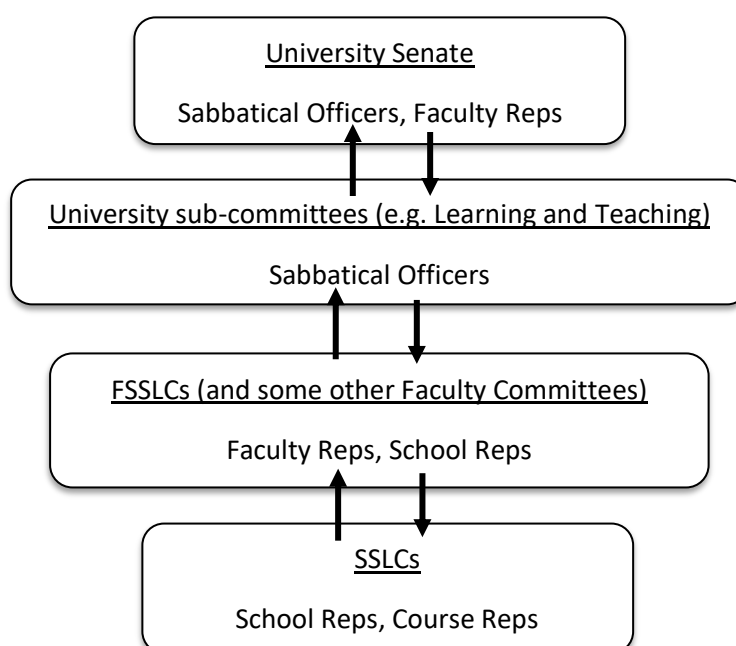
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Context and Purpose

1. The University of Bristol (the University) and Bristol Students' Union (Bristol SU) are committed to partnership between staff and students. One feature of this partnership is a system of student representation, this Code of Practice relates to those formal structures relating to taught students. The student representation system is operated in partnership between the University and Bristol SU. Effective, democratic student representation is one of the University's key commitments to its student body, outlined in the University's Vision and Strategy, and Education Strategy.
2. Student representation plays an integral role in quality assurance and enhancement. The University and Bristol SU are committed to providing effective structures for student feedback and representation to help ensure the relevance of our curricula, increase student satisfaction, and develop strong academic communities.
3. The aim of this Code of Practice ('the Code') is to ensure that every taught student at the University is effectively represented to the University and Bristol SU by a fellow student and so that through effective representation students become partners in their education, allowing a more active involvement in, and ownership of, their learning¹.

¹ The [Student Partnership Vision](#) compliments this Code and outlines the institutional vision for student representation and engagement in educational processes.

4. This Code is for University and Bristol SU staff and student representatives and is designed to help establish the working relationships within which we operate. This Code of Practice operates in conjunction with the [Bristol SU By-Laws](#).
5. This Code applies to all taught students - undergraduate and taught postgraduate. This Code stands alongside the Code of Practice for Student Representation for Research Students.
6. Further guidance and support for implementing this Code is available from the Bristol SU's Representation Team and Education and Student Success, Academic Quality and Policy Office.
7. Any requests to depart from this Code must be approved by the Associate PVC Learning & Teaching or the relevant Faculty Education Director.
8. The representation system is designed to allow student feedback to feed up from school to institutional level, and vice versa, as shown in the diagram below and within the role responsibilities set out in the section below.



Responsibilities

9. Bristol SU responsibilities:
 - 9.1. To designate a specific point of contact for student representation within Bristol SU for schools, faculties and Education and Student Success.
 - 9.2. To ensure student representatives are aware of; their role in the student representation system, in Bristol SU democratic processes, of further opportunities to act as representatives, and are able to feed into institutional level student representation processes.
 - 9.3. To co-ordinate student representative elections according to parameters set out within this Code, including the dates which are published [here](#).
 - 9.4. To ensure effective promotion of and participation in these elections at an overarching, institution-wide level and to work with schools and faculties to help achieve this.
 - 9.5. To deliver initial student representative induction training.

- 9.6. To provide optional ongoing training and support for student representatives (e.g. covering practical necessities, skills-based training, policy discussion), including faculty specific support for faculty and school-level representatives. One-to-one support and advice is available on request.
- 9.7. To arrange, for each faculty, the annual introductory meeting between the Faculty Education Directors and their student Faculty Reps.
- 9.8. To work with Education and Student Success to collate information on elections and SSLC and FSSLC minutes.
- 9.9. To ensure information is available to all staff and students on who holds student representative positions and to provide contact information where appropriate.
- 9.10. To provide guidance for both students and staff, including relevant information, support, and examples of best practice.
- 9.11. To facilitate communication with student representatives as may be required for particular initiatives.
- 9.12. To support the ongoing monitoring and review of the student representation system.
10. University: Education and Student Success responsibilities:
 - 10.1. To designate a specific point of contact for communications with faculties, schools and Bristol SU.
 - 10.2. To work with Bristol SU to ensure specific guidance and training is available for academics and support staff involved in student representation activity.
 - 10.3. To ensure the provision of suitable system/s to support the effective operation of the student representation system (for example, Blackboard³) and suitable guidance and training where required.
 - 10.4. To work with Bristol SU to collate SSLC and FSSLC minutes.
 - 10.5. To work with Bristol SU to support the members of staff running and supporting SSLC or FSSLC meetings, including contributing to a best practice guide.
 - 10.6. To support the ongoing monitoring and review of the student representation system.
11. Faculty responsibilities:
 - 11.1. To designate a specific point of contact, normally this will be the Faculty Education Manager, for communications with Bristol SU and schools who will have responsibility for communications with Bristol SU and meeting the faculty expectations as laid out in this Code.
 - 11.2. To work with Bristol SU to facilitate effective promotion of faculty representative elections.
 - 11.3. To set the dates for Faculty Student Staff Liaison meetings (FSSLC), bearing in mind the dates of school SSLC meetings and assessment periods.
 - 11.4. To invite the appropriate staff and student representatives to FSSLC meetings (see item 18).
 - 11.5. To communicate FSSLC (and where known any SSLC) meeting dates, times, and locations to the Bristol SU contact.
 - 11.6. To ensure effective servicing of FSSLC meetings, this maybe through partnership with the student representatives.

- 11.7. To make available the FSSLC minutes to appropriate students and staff, to the secretaries of school SSLCs, Bristol SU and Education and Student Success. This may be in partnership with the student representatives.
- 11.8. To provide student representatives with access to a range of mechanisms for gathering student feedback and disseminating information to their peers.
- 11.9. To provide faculty student representatives with access to relevant mailing list/s of all representatives within the school and/or faculty as appropriate.
- 11.10. For Faculty Education Directors - to attend an introductory meeting with their student Faculty Reps, organised by Bristol SU and to periodically meet with their Faculty Reps.

12. School responsibilities:

- 12.1. To designate a specific point of contact, for Bristol SU and the faculty and who will be responsible for meeting the expectations as laid out in this Code, normally this will be the Student/Graduate Administration Manager.
- 12.2. To provide, when requested by Bristol SU, the appropriate information on numbers and type of Course Representative positions to be filled in order that course-level elections may be run.
- 12.3. To work with Bristol SU to facilitate effective promotion of course rep elections and training.
- 12.4. To elect a School/Department Rep who will attend Faculty SSLC meetings to represent their School/Department; schools should notify Bristol SU of the details of this Rep upon their appointment.
- 12.5. To set dates for SSLC meetings (avoiding assessment periods) and to invite designated school staff, student representatives, Bristol SU and others as appropriate to SSLC meetings.
- 12.6. To communicate the dates of the SSLC meetings to the faculty and Bristol SU contacts.
- 12.7. To ensure effective servicing of SSLC meetings, this maybe through partnership with the student representatives.
- 12.8. To make available the minutes of SSLCs to appropriate students and staff in the school, Bristol SU and Education and Student Success. This may be in partnership with the student representatives.
- 12.9. To provide student representatives with access to a range of mechanisms for gathering student feedback and disseminating information to their peers.
- 12.10. To provide a notice board, website or similar, displaying school representative's names and contact details, dates of meetings, and anything else deemed appropriate or helpful.
- 12.11. To provide student representatives with access to relevant student mailing lists through clearly defined processes.
- 12.12. Where possible to provide student representatives the opportunity to speak briefly at the beginning/end of lectures to promote the role and the work of SSLCs and FSSLCs.
- 12.13. To assist student representatives in gaining access to rooms and offer support for holding drop-in or consultative sessions.

13. Student Representative responsibilities:

- 13.1. Course Representative responsibilities:

- a) To attend induction and undertake any further training to ensure preparation to effectively undertake the role
- b) To keep abreast of student issues and actively seek out the opinion of peers through a variety of communication methods
- c) To liaise with other representatives to gain support and share ideas, for example using Bristol SU Education Network
- d) To attend and represent views and opinions of students at SSLC meetings and other meetings as appropriate
- e) To feedback and discuss issues raised at SSLC with student peers
- f) To promote the role of Course Representative and help raise student awareness of the support the role can offer
- g) To feed key information to School and Faculty Representatives as and when required
- h) To act as a voting member of Bristol SU Student Council to help enable educational issues to be represented
- i) To be part of the student group met by members of the University Quality Team (UQT) during their periodic visits to the school
- j) To engage with the Bristol SU Liberation Officers on issues related to equality and diversity to help meet the needs of all students.

13.2. School Representative responsibilities:

School Reps are existing Course Reps who have these additional responsibilities:

- a) To represent the school on Faculty Student Staff Liaison Committee (and other appropriate committees)
- b) Through attendance at the SSLC, to keep abreast of student issues in the school
- c) To feedback information from faculty-level meetings to the school-level committee and students within the school.

13.3. Faculty Representative responsibilities:

- a) To engage with and create a community of Course and School Representatives within their faculty
- b) To keep abreast of student issues in the faculty, and actively seek out the opinion of peers through a variety of communication methods
- c) To represent the faculty's students on faculty and University level decision-making bodies
- d) To attend and chair/co-chair Faculty Student Staff Liaison Committees
- e) To feedback information from University-level meetings to faculty-level meetings and peers
- f) To engage with and assist in the recruitment of student representatives to contribute to UQT reviews
- g) To work closely with the Bristol SU Sabbatical Officers
- h) To attend Bristol SU democratic events, including acting as a voting member of Bristol SU Student Council to help enable educational issues to be represented
- i) To lead relations with staff in Faculty management positions (including attending an introductory meeting with the relevant Faculty Education Director (organised by Bristol SU) and to periodically meet with them throughout the year as appropriate).
- j) To engage with the Bristol SU Network Chairs on issues related to equality and diversity to help meet the needs of all students
- k) To attend Education Network meetings to report on and discuss any educational issues arising from the faculty and feed into the work of the Bristol SU Education Officers.

Operation & Practice

14. Elections

- 14.1. Schools and faculties should work with the current student representatives to review and agree the appropriate number and type of roles to be elected for the following year. As a guide this should normally be based around a minimum of one representative for every forty students, per year group. This information should be sent to the Bristol SU contact.
- 14.2. Schools and faculties should ensure they consider how all students are represented, bearing in mind, gender, nationality, disability, and the needs of part-time, distance learning, mature students and those with caring responsibilities.
- 14.3. Undergraduate and postgraduate taught Course Representative elections will take place across the institution during [agreed period/s](#). The election platform is provided by Bristol SU using the information provided by schools.
- 14.4. Course Representatives will be elected by their peers in their year and programme of study.
- 14.5. Bristol SU will provide generic, institution-wide publicity and support for Course Representative elections throughout the nomination and voting period, including distributing materials for use by faculties and schools.
- 14.6. Schools and faculties will be responsible for promoting nominations and elections to their students and encouraging uptake. Schools should seek to provide candidates opportunity to canvass their peers. Bristol SU should provide appropriate support to schools during the election period on request.
- 14.7. Elections will be conducted by Single Transferable Vote, and every election will be run with the option to re-open nominations (RON).
- 14.8. If, following the close of voting, the number of nominees for Course Representative positions is less than or equal to the number of places available, all nominees will automatically become Course Representatives.
- 14.9. If following the close of elections, some Course Representative positions are vacant, or should RON be elected to a Course Representative position, there shall be a by-election for that position, one week after the original election.
- 14.10. Should some Course Representative positions remain vacant after a by-election, or should RON be elected to a Course Representative position a second time, the remaining places shall be filled by the co-opting of additional Course Representatives by the existing members of the SSLC.
- 14.11. The details of those elected will be provided by Bristol SU to the designated school contacts as soon as possible after the close of the elections.
- 14.12. Schools should communicate the results of the elections to their students as soon as possible after the close of the elections so that students are aware of whom their elected Course Representatives are. Schools should ensure that this information is available throughout the year to all students.
- 14.13. Elected Course Representatives may co-opt students onto the SSLC at their discretion and should be encouraged to give thought to the diversity of students represented on the SSLC when doing so (e.g. number of p/t or international students). The details of any student co-opted on a permanent basis should be provided to the Bristol SU contact and added to the list of Course Representatives for that academic year.

- 14.14. Any Course Representative position which falls vacant should be filled by holding an additional by-election through the online system or may be filled by the co-opting of additional Course Representatives by the existing members of the SSLC.
- 14.15. If further elections are required schools should liaise with Bristol SU about arrangements. Schools should inform Bristol SU about any co-opted additional or replacement student representatives.

15. Training for Student Representatives

- 15.1. All elected Course Representatives are expected to complete initial induction training, which will be held by Bristol SU soon after each election period. Specific streams will be provided for re-elected Course Representatives, who should still attend. Additional sessions and online materials will be made available for part-time and distance students, and for those who are unable to attend.
- 15.2. Schools will assist in promoting the available training to Course Representatives throughout the nominations and election period and following the close of elections.
- 15.3. Schools should make arrangements for induction of newly elected Course Representatives into school roles and processes.
- 15.4. Bristol SU will provide optional ongoing training and support for all student representatives (e.g. covering practical necessities, skills-based training, policy discussion), including faculty specific support for faculty and school-level representatives. One-to-one support and advice is available on request.
- 15.5. Bristol SU will provide specific training and support for student chairs of SSLCs and FSSLCs.

16. School Meetings - SSLCs

- 16.1. Schools should hold Student Staff Liaison Committee meetings (SSLCs) no fewer than four times during the academic year. These meetings should normally be held either side of the three Faculty Student Staff Liaison Committee meetings (FSSLCs) in order that items can be effectively communicated between the two forums.
- 16.2. Schools may choose to hold separate undergraduate and taught postgraduate meetings where numbers and the school structure deem that appropriate.
- 16.3. Those present at the meeting should normally include, but not be limited to:
- All student Course Representatives
 - President/s (or nominee/s) of any student academic society/ies within the school (where appropriate)
 - Head of School
 - Academic staff responsible for taught programmes (e.g. School Education Director & and/or PGT Programme Directors)
 - Senior Tutor
 - Student Administration Manager and/or Graduate Administration Manager (as appropriate)
 - Subject Librarian
 - Any other appropriate staff
- 16.4. Bristol SU staff and full-time Officers will attend specific meetings where required or invited by the committee.

- 16.5. Meetings should be co-chaired by a Course Representative and a member of school staff, although they may be chaired by staff if agreed with the student representatives. The student chair may be permanent or selected on a rotating basis as deemed appropriate by the Course Representatives. Bristol SU will provide training to all student representatives who express an interest in co-chairing meetings.
- 16.6. The school will ensure there is effective secretariat provided for the committee; this may be provided in partnership with student representatives.
- 16.7. The agenda for the meeting should be set through discussion between the co-chairs.
- 16.8. Schools should provide hard copies of meeting papers for students if these are required.
- 16.9. The meeting should not engage in inappropriately personal discussion of individual staff members or students, or personal grievances. If these topics are raised, avenues to discuss these matters privately should be shared with the student(s) outside of the meeting.
- 16.10. The meetings should encourage discussion about equality and diversity and identify ways to surface relevant issues; forums about specific areas of concern should be held with Course Representatives as appropriate.
- 16.11. The first meeting of the SSLC each academic year should:
- Elect or select, from the student representatives present, school representatives to attend the FSSLC. This role should be held by the representatives throughout the year and not on a rotating basis. The details of students who will serve as School Representatives should be communicated to the faculty and Bristol SU contacts as soon as possible following the meeting.
 - Decide on a student or students to act as chair/co-chair to the SSLC.
 - Review the school's education action plan (EAP)
 - Review the quantitative and qualitative feedback from the most recent student surveys.
- 16.12. The following item should appear as a standing item on each SSLC agenda:
- Monitoring the school education action plan.
- 16.13. The following items should appear on SSLC agendas as soon as they are available (appropriate timing will depend on the school):
- External examiners' report/s and school response/s – for information (annual).
 - Minutes from the FSSLC with an oral report from School Representative/s (annual).
 - Review the implementation of the University's Policy on the Costs of Studying in relation to programmes within the school (annual).²
 - Encourage reps to take part in UQT process when the date is available.
 - University Quality Team report – for discussion.
 - Proposals for student engagement in curriculum review and enhancement and consultation on changes to programmes / new programmes (likely to appear sporadically).
- 16.14. The following item/s should appear on the last SSLC agenda each academic year:
- Review of the number and type of student representative roles on SSLC and agree the roles to be elected the following year, (bearing in mind how to represent all students – consideration of gender, nationality, disability, modes of learning p-time, distance learning etc).
- 16.15. To make available the SSLC minutes to relevant students and staff, Bristol SU and Education and Student Success.

² <https://www.bris.ac.uk/esu/facultyadvice/policy/costsofstudy.pdf>

17. Faculty Meetings - FSSLCs

- 17.1. Faculties should hold Faculty Student Staff Liaison Committee meetings (FSSLCs) no fewer than three times each academic year, giving consideration to the timing of school meetings and the ability for discussion to move between school and faculty level meetings (see Annex A).
- 17.2. Faculties may choose to hold separate undergraduate and taught postgraduate meetings where numbers and the structure deem that appropriate.
- 17.3. Those present at the meeting should normally include, but not be limited to:
 - All School Representatives in the Faculty
 - Elected Faculty Representative/s
 - Student Quality Reviewer(s) from the Faculty
 - Designated member of the Bristol SU representation staff
 - Dean
 - Faculty Education Director(s)
 - Faculty Manager
 - Faculty Education Manager
 - Faculty Librarian
 - Any other appropriate staff
- 17.4. Bristol SU full-time officers will attend specific meetings where required or invited by the committee.
- 17.5. Meetings should be chaired by the elected student Faculty Representative, with support from a member of faculty staff, although they may be chaired by staff if agreed with the student representatives.
- 17.6. The faculty will ensure that effective secretariat is provided to the committee; this may be provided in partnership with student representatives.
- 17.7. The agenda should be set by the chair of the FSSLC, in consultation with School Representatives, the Dean and relevant Faculty Education Director(s).
- 17.8. Faculties should provide hard copies of meeting papers for students if these are required.
- 17.9. The meeting should not engage in inappropriately personal discussion of individual staff members or students, or personal grievances. If these topics are raised, avenues to discuss these matters privately should be shared with the student(s) outside of the meeting.
- 17.10. The meetings should encourage discussion about equality and diversity and identify ways to surface relevant issues. Forums about specific areas of concern should be held with Course Representatives as appropriate.
- 17.11. The meeting should have available to it the minutes from the constituent school SSLCs; where appropriate, consideration of these minutes may form a standing item on the FSSLC agenda.
- 17.12. To make available the SSLC minutes to relevant students and staff Bristol SU and Education and Student Success.

Code of Practice Approved by Education Committee June 2014

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