

Code of Practice for Student Representation (Taught Students)

University of Bristol and University of Bristol Students' Union

Code of Practice for Student Representation (Taught Students)

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Context and Purpose

1. The University community is committed to partnership between staff and students, to form a community in which we learn and research. One feature of that partnership is a system of student representation; a formal and democratic structure which is part of the culture of partnership but not its sole feature. Whilst partnership is about the relationship between staff and students at all levels and is owned by all parties, this Code of Practice relates to the formal structures of student representation.
2. The student representation system is operated in partnership between the University of Bristol and the University of Bristol Students' Union (Bristol SU). The aim of this Code of Practice ('the Code') is to ensure that every taught student at the University of Bristol 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.
3. This Code applies to all taught students - undergraduate and taught postgraduate. Policy on representation for postgraduate research students is being developed by Bristol Doctoral College and Bristol SU.

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

4. Effective, democratic student representation is one of the University of Bristol's key commitments to its student body, outlined in the University's Vision and Strategy, and Education Strategy 2010-16.
5. This Code relates to Student Staff Liaison Committees (SSLCs) at school² and faculty level, and outlines processes for the election and ongoing support of student representatives in these fora.
6. Although student representation on school and faculty committees (e.g. Faculty Board, School Teaching and Learning Committee) is not regulated by this Code, it is expected that any student representatives on these committees are elected or co-opted Course/Programme Representatives who report back to SSLCs.
7. 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. The Code sets out the joint commitment of the University of Bristol and Bristol SU, so as to ensure that student representation is run effectively and is founded on effective practice.
8. This Code is a live document reviewed annually by the Student Partnership and Representation Group and owned by the Student Experience Committee. Implementation of the Code will be reviewed by Faculty Quality Enhancement Teams (FQET)³.
9. The Code will be shared with students through the Bristol SU website and used in the training provided to student representatives.
10. The Code will be available to staff through the Academic Registry website.
11. Further guidance and support for introducing this Code is available from the Education Support Unit: Academic Registry and Bristol SU: Student Engagement Team.
12. Any requests to depart from the Code must be approved by either the Graduate or Undergraduate Academic Director of Studies.

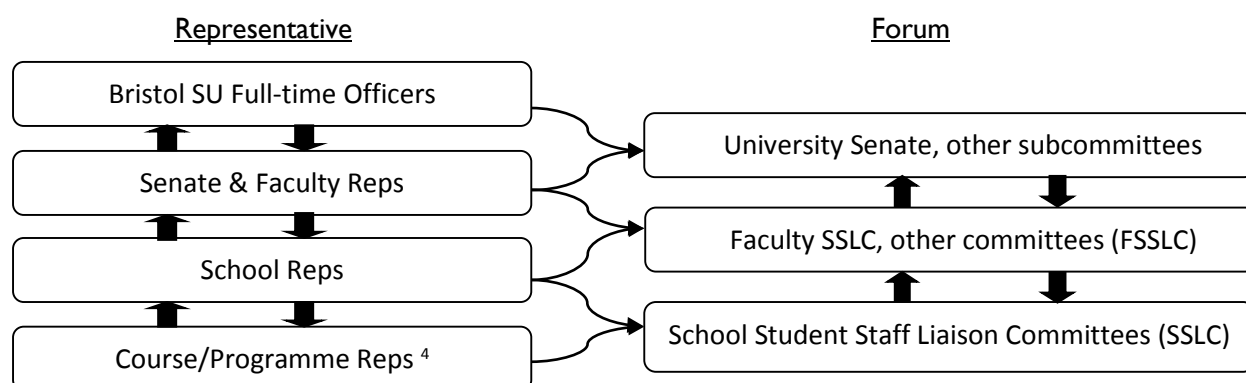
Principles

13. 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.
14. Student representation as outlined in this Code forms the spine of the University's and Bristol SU's continued work to develop means through which students can be genuine partners in their education, meaningfully engage with their educational experience and have the ability to influence its direction. Our commitment to develop student-staff partnership enhances students' engagement with their education, develops students' critical abilities and encourages students to take ownership of their learning.
15. Student representation is operated in partnership between the University of Bristol and the University of Bristol Students' Union (Bristol SU).
16. The partnership between the University of Bristol and Bristol SU to deliver student representation embodies our joint commitment to work in partnership with our students. The representation system is

² Some schools operate student-staff liaison committees at a department level; the Code is equally applicable to these, please use the guidance given here for schools.

³ www.bristol.ac.uk/esu/groups/fqet.html

designed to allow student feedback to feed up from school to institutional level, and vice versa, as in the diagram set out below and role responsibilities are set out in the section below.



⁴The Code will hereafter refer to this role as Course Rep.

Responsibilities

17. Student representation is operated in partnership between the University of Bristol and Bristol SU. In order for this partnership to be effective all parties require clearly understood roles, responsibilities and defined channels of communication in order for the partnership to be effective, the detail of which are outlined here.
18. Bristol SU responsibilities:
 - 18.1. To designate a specific point of contact for student representation within Bristol SU for schools, faculties and Academic Registry.
 - 18.2. To co-ordinate student representative elections according to parameters set out within this Code.
 - 18.3. 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.
 - 18.4. To deliver initial student representative induction training.
 - 18.5. 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.
 - 18.6. To ensure student representatives are aware of further opportunities to act as representatives, and able to feed into institutional level student representation processes.
 - 18.7. To ensure student representatives are aware of their role in Bristol SU democratic processes.
 - 18.8. To co-ordinate, in liaison with faculties, the attendance of Bristol SU full-time officers and staff at FSSLC meetings.
 - 18.9. To ensure information is available on who holds student representative positions and to provide contact information where appropriate.
 - 18.10. To provide guidance for both students and staff, including relevant information, support and examples of best practice.
 - 18.11. To facilitate University communication with student representatives as may be required for particular initiatives.
 - 18.12. To support the ongoing monitoring and review of the student representation system.

19. Academic Registry responsibilities:

- 19.1. To designate a specific point of contact for communications with faculties, schools and Bristol SU.
- 19.2. To ensure specific guidance and training is available for academics and support staff involved in student representation activity.
- 19.3. To ensure the provision of suitable system/s to support the effective operation of the student representation system (for example Blackboard) and suitable guidance and training where required.
- 19.4. To work with Bristol SU to collate information on elections and SSLC and FSSLC minutes.
- 19.5. To support to members of staff running and supporting SSLC or FSSLC meetings, including contributing to a guide to best practice. To collect and disseminate examples of best practice for University staff involved in student representation activity.
- 19.6. To liaise with Staff Development about provision of relevant staff guidance and workshops.
- 19.7. To support the ongoing monitoring and review of the student representation system.

20. Faculty responsibilities:

- 20.1. To designate a specific point of contact for communications with Bristol SU, Academic Registry and schools, normally this will be the Faculty Education Manager.
- 20.2. To work with Bristol SU to facilitate effective promotion of faculty representatives elections.
- 20.3. To collate from schools the dates of the school SSLC meetings.
- 20.4. To set the dates for Faculty Student Staff Liaison meetings (FSSLC), bearing in mind the dates of the school SSLC meetings and assessment periods.
- 20.5. To invite the appropriate staff and student representatives to FSSLC meetings (see item 26).
- 20.6. To communicate FSSLC and SSLC meeting dates, times, and locations to Bristol SU and Academic Registry contacts.
- 20.7. To ensure effective servicing of FSSLC meetings, this maybe through partnership with the student representatives.
- 20.8. To make available the FSSLC minutes to appropriate students and staff, to the secretaries of school SSLCs, and the Bristol SU and Academic Registry contacts, this may be in partnership with the student representatives and could be using Blackboard.
- 20.9. To work with the Academic Registry and Bristol SU to provide student representatives with access to a range of mechanisms for gathering student feedback and disseminating information to their peers (this may include for example Blackboard and/or face-to-face focus groups).
- 20.10. To provide faculty student representatives with access to relevant mailing list/s of all representatives within the school and/or faculty as appropriate through clearly defined processes.

21. School responsibilities:

- 21.1. To designate a specific point of contact for communications with Bristol SU, Academic Registry and the faculty, normally this will be the Student/Graduate Administration Manager, as appropriate.

- 21.2. To provide the appropriate information on numbers and type of Course Representative positions to be filled in order that course-level elections may be run.
- 21.3. To work with Bristol SU to facilitate effective promotion of school elections.
- 21.4. To set dates for SSLC meetings (avoiding assessment periods) and to communicate these to the faculty and Academic Registry contact.
- 21.5. To invite designated school staff, student representatives and others as appropriate to SSLC meetings (see item 25).
- 21.6. To ensure effective servicing of SSLC meetings, this maybe through partnership with the student representatives.
- 21.7. To make available of the minutes to appropriate students and staff in the school and the faculty and the Academic Registry contact, this may be in partnership with the student representatives and could be using Blackboard.
- 21.8. To work with the Academic Registry and Bristol SU to provide student representatives with access to a range of mechanisms for gathering student feedback and disseminating information to their peers (this may include for example Blackboard and/or face-to-face focus groups).
- 21.9. 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.
- 21.10. To provide student representatives with access to relevant student mailing lists through clearly defined processes.
- 21.11. 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.
- 21.12. To assist student representatives in gaining access to rooms and offer support for holding drop-in or consultative sessions.

22. Student Representative responsibilities:

22.1. Course/Programme Representative responsibilities:

- To attend induction and undertake any further training to ensure preparation to effectively undertake the role
- To keep abreast of student issues and actively seek out the opinion of peers through a variety of communication methods
- To liaise with other representatives to gain support and share ideas
- To attend and represent views and opinions of students at SSLC meetings and other meetings as appropriate
- To feedback and discuss issues raised at SSLC with student peers
- To promote the role of Course Representative and help raise student awareness of the support the role can offer
- To feed key information to School and Faculty Senate Representatives as and when required
- To act as a voting member of Bristol SU Student Council to help enable educational issues to be represented
- To be part of the student group met by Faculty Quality Enhancement Teams during their periodic visits to the school

22.2. School Representative responsibilities:

- To engage with and assist in the coordination of Course Representatives in the school.
- To keep abreast of student issues in the school, and actively seek out the opinion of your peers through a variety of communication methods
- To represent the school on Faculty Student Staff Liaison Committee and other appropriate committees
- To feedback information from faculty-level meetings to the school-level committee and students within the school
- To feed information to Faculty Senate Representatives as and when required
- To lead relations with staff in school management positions
- To act as a voting member of Bristol SU Student Council to help enable educational issues to be represented

22.3. Faculty Representative responsibilities:

- To engage with and assist in the coordination of School Representatives
- To keep abreast of student issues in the faculty, and actively seek out the opinion of peers through a variety of communication methods
- To represent the faculty on faculty and University level decision-making bodies
- To attend and chair Faculty Student Staff Liaison Committees
- To feedback information from University-level meetings to faculty-level meetings and peers
- To engage with and assist in the recruitment of FQET student representatives
- To work closely with the Bristol SU Sabbatical Officers
- To lead relations with staff in Faculty management positions
- To attend Bristol SU democratic events
- To assist in the preparation of an annual report on student issues and student representation within the faculty

Operation & Practice

23. Elections

- 23.1. Schools and faculties should work with the current student representatives to review the number and type of roles to be elected for the following year, and make this information available to Academic Registry and Bristol SU. This should normally be based around one representative for every twenty to forty students, per programme, per year group.
- 23.2. 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.
- 23.3. Course Representative elections will take place simultaneously across the institution during an agreed period, see Annex A. The election platform is provided by Bristol SU using the information provided by schools.
- 23.4. Nominations to stand as a Course Representative will be open for a period of no less than ten days, and voting for no less than five working days following the nomination period. Course Representatives will be elected by their peers in their year and programme of study.
- 23.5. 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.

- 23.6. 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.
- 23.7. Elections will be conducted by Single Transferable Vote, and every election will be run with the option to re-open nominations (RON).
- 23.8. 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.
- 23.9. If following the close of elections, if 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.
- 23.10. 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 student members of the SSLC.
- 23.11. The details of those elected will be provided by Bristol SU to the designated school contacts within two working days of the close of the elections.
- 23.12. Schools should communicate the results of the elections to their students within five working days of 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.
- 23.13. 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 Academic Registry and Bristol SU and added to the list of Course Representatives for that academic year.
- 23.14. 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 student members of the SSLC.
- 23.15. Course representatives who have attended neither school meetings, nor Bristol SU training by the close of Teaching Block One will be considered to have resigned their posts. Replacements should be elected through a by-election or co-opted at the beginning of Teaching Block Two.
- 23.16. 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.

24. Training for Student Representatives

- 24.1. All elected Course Representatives are expected to attend initial induction training, held by Bristol SU no later than the close of week four. Specific streams will be provided for re-elected Course Representatives, who should still attend. Additional sessions will be provided for those who are unable to attend.
- 24.2. Schools will assist in promoting the available training to Course Representatives throughout the nominations and election period and following the close of elections.

- 24.3. Online materials will be made available for part-time and distance students, and for those who are unable to attend.
- 24.4. Schools should make arrangements for induction of newly elected Course Representatives into school roles and processes.
- 24.5. 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.
- 24.6. Bristol SU will provide specific training and support for student chairs of SSLCs and FSSLCs.

25. School Meetings - SSLCs

- 25.1. 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.
- 25.2. Schools may choose to hold separate undergraduate and taught postgraduate meetings where numbers and the school structure deem that appropriate.
- 25.3. Those present at the meeting should normally include, but not be limited to:
- All student Course Representatives
 - President of any student academic society within the school (where appropriate)
 - Head of School
 - Academic staff responsible for taught programmes (e.g. Director of Teaching & Learning/Education and/or PGT Programme Directors)
 - Senior Tutor
 - Student Administration Manager and /or Graduate Administration Manager (as appropriate)
 - Subject Librarian
 - Any other appropriate staff
- 25.4. Meetings should be co-chaired by a Course Representative and a member of school staff. 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.
- 25.5. The school will ensure there is effective secretariat provided for the committee; this may be provided in partnership with student representatives.
- 25.6. The agenda for the meeting should be set through discussion between the co-chairs.
- 25.7. Schools should provide hard copies of meeting papers for students if these are required.
- 25.8. 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.
- 25.9. The first meeting of the SSLC should:
- a) Elect or select, from the student representatives present, school representatives to 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 contact and Academic Registry and Bristol SU contacts as soon as possible following the meeting.

- b) Decide on a student or students to act as co-chair to the SSLC.
- c) Decide on a student or students to attend the school Annual Programme Review (APR) meeting (where practicable).

25.10. It is expected that the following items should appear annually on SSLC agendas, the most appropriate timing will depend on the school:

- a) School NSS action plan – for discussion and to suggest appropriate amendments.
- b) Annual Programme Review Report/s - for information.
- c) External examiners' report/s and school response/s – for information.
- d) Minutes from the FSSLC with an oral report from School Representative/s
- e) Review 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).
- f) Review of representation key performance indicators.

25.11. It is expected that the following items will appear periodically on SSLC agendas:

- a) Proposals for student consultation on changes to programmes / new programmes.
- b) Faculty Quality Enhancement Team report – for discussion.
- c) School Review Report and Action Plan – for discussion and to suggest appropriate amendments to the Action Plan.

25.12. Minutes of the meeting should be available to all students within the school, and also available to the faculty, Bristol SU and Academic Registry contacts.

26. Faculty Meetings - FSSLCs

26.1. 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).

26.2. Faculties may choose to hold separate undergraduate and taught postgraduate meetings where numbers and the structure deem that appropriate.

26.3. Those present at the meeting should normally include, but not be limited to:

- All School Representatives in the Faculty
- Elected Faculty Representative/Faculty Senate Representative
- Dean
- Faculty Education Director(s)
- Faculty Manager
- Faculty Education Manager
- Faculty Librarian
- Bristol SU sabbatical officer
- Designated member of the Bristol SU representation staff
- Any other appropriate staff

26.4. Meetings should be chaired by the elected student Faculty Representative, with support from a member of faculty staff.

26.5. The faculty will ensure that effective secretariat is provided to the committee; this may be provided in partnership with student representatives.

- 26.6. The agenda should be set by the chair of the FSSLC, in consultation with School Representatives, the Dean and relevant Faculty Education Director(s).
- 26.7. Faculties should provide hard copies of meeting papers for students if these are required.
- 26.8. 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.
- 26.9. 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.
- 26.10. Minutes of the meeting should be available as soon as possible to all students within the faculty and school and also to Bristol SU and Academic Registry contacts.

Reporting and Accountability

27. Measuring Impact

- 27.1. The Student Partnership and Representation Group will set institutional student representation and engagement key performance indicators for Bristol SU, faculties and schools.
 - 27.2. Schools and faculties will be asked whether any additional performance indicators would be useful and to consider these at SSLCs and FSSLCs annually.
 - 27.3. The key performance indicators for Bristol SU, faculties and schools will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis using template forms provided and pre-populated by Bristol SU with key data to assist faculties and schools.
 - 27.4. Bristol SU and Academic Registry staff will together draft a summary document on the reports from schools and faculties for consideration by the Student Partnership and Representation Group.
- 28. Student Faculty Representatives, supported by Bristol SU and in liaison with the relevant Faculty Education Directors will compile an annual report on the student issues arising that year and whether they have been addressed or are still outstanding.
 - 29. The Student Partnership and Representation Group will consider all six FSSLC annual reports. Bristol SU and Academic Registry staff will together draft a summary document to be considered by Student Experience Committee.
 - 30. Queries or concerns about implementing this Code should be reported through the Faculty Education Directors, or through Bristol SU, to the relevant Academic Director of Studies.
 - 31. Further operational guidance for staff is available through a Staff Guide on the Academic Registry and Bristol SU websites.

Approved by Education Committee June 2014

Annex A: Student Representation Almanac 2014-15

Fixed dates

These dates are agreed and not subject to change.

Nominations open: 22nd September – 3rd October

Voting open: 6th October – 12th October

Results to schools: Between 13th-15th October

Course rep induction training: Saturday 18th October

Course rep conference: Saturday 21st February

Suggested dates

Scheduling the representation meetings in the calendar should be done to ensure that meetings of School SSLCs and Faculty SSLCs can feed information between one another. A minimum of four SSLCs and three FSSLCs should be held during the academic year. The following chart aims to provide a guide to how this might be achieved, but is in no way mandatory.

Week/s	Activity
0-1	Course rep nominations
2	Course rep elections
3	Course rep training
4-6	First SSLC
7-8	First FSSLC
9-11	Second SSLC
12-13	Second FSSLC
14-16	Third SSLC
17-18	Third FSSLC
19-21	Final SSLC