



**Student Engagement in Learning and
Teaching
Staff Handbook
2017-18**

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Purpose of Academic Representation
3. Academic Representatives
 - 3.1 Recruitment of Academic Representatives
4. School Representatives
5. Meetings
 - 5.1 Course Committees (CCs)
6. Academic Societies
7. Student Led Teaching Awards

1. Introduction

This handbook seeks to provide guidance for staff who work with, and support, Academic Representatives; providing key information on their role, recruitment and the feedback mechanisms in place to ensure every representative has the opportunity to develop and succeed in their role.

More information on Academic Representation can be found at <http://www.staffsunion.com/resources/test1/Student-Academic-Representation-Policy/>

2. Purpose of Academic Representation

Academic Representation allows students to become full participants in their Learning Experience whilst studying at Staffordshire University. It is imperative to ensure students understand their importance in developing and enhancing both their curriculum and their wider student experience.

By recognising students as partners in their own education, this allows the University to constantly improve the services they provide to students and standardise good practice across the institution.

The existence and support for the Academic Representation scheme also falls in line with Quality Assurance processes as outlined in the Quality Code for Higher Education set out by the Quality Assurance Agency. This scheme is jointly supported by the University and the Students' Union. Any queries regarding this can be directed to The Students' Union Student Voice Team, or the Associate Dean Students in the relevant School.

If you would like further information or to ask any questions please contact studentengagement@staffs.ac.uk.

3. Academic Representatives

The core role of the Academic Representatives will be to gain feedback from students on an ongoing basis; with a specific focus around Course Committees. All Academic Representatives are to attend Course Committees, with the opportunity to also attend any other relevant University committees in order to provide feedback, where deemed appropriate.

After these meetings Academic reps will feedback to all students on the issues raised and any actions taken by the School. If an action is ongoing or the School or Students' Union are unable to resolve matters fully this will be communicated and explained to students at the next available opportunity. A record of actions and progress will be logged in the Course Committee meeting minutes, these will be circulated to all students on the relevant course/s for that committee.

Reps are encouraged to bring both positive and constructive feedback to these meetings. They will work with students to ensure that proactive and positive suggestions are taken forward so they can work jointly with the School to make positive change.

3.1 Recruitment of Academic Representatives

Each School and the relevant Associate Dean Students will be responsible for ensuring that staff on each Course conduct the recruitment of Academic Representatives during week 2 of teaching. There is no maximum number of representatives who can volunteer per Level of each course. However, to ensure the effective representation of all students a minimum of 1 representative per 30 students is recommended. If there are more candidates than posts to be filled, an in-class election should take place. If this is not the case, the candidates may be duly appointed without the need for an election.

Students who wish to take on these roles must complete compulsory training provided by the Students' Union in week 3 before they can take on this position as an Academic Representative. This is to ensure that students' academic interests are effectively represented through contributions to relevant committees within the University.

To ensure that each representative understands the role they are volunteering for, the Students' Union will provide a template presentation slide and video to present to students in class.

4. Department Representatives

Each Department will have one Representative; their role is to support Academic Representatives within their School and provide a link between the Students' Union, the University and the Academic Representatives.

The Students' Union is responsible for the recruitment and appointment of these volunteers. School staff are encouraged to get involved with the recruitment process of these representatives. The role will commence in September and will continue through to the end of May. Training is compulsory and will be provided by the Students' Union in week 2 of the academic diary.

Department Representatives are responsible for attendance at Student Representative Council and pre-agreed Boards and Committees which may be assigned by both the Students' Union and University at the commencement of their role.

5. Meetings

Academic Reps will be invited to attend Course Committees. These will be arranged by the School in liaison with Student and Academic Services, who will then be responsible for communicating meeting dates to Academic Reps. Dates for these will be provisional set prior to the commencement of the Academic Year, with dates confirmed at the start of each semester (once timetables are finalised).

The CC Secretary will requested agenda items from members, including Student Academic Representatives 2 weeks prior to the Committee. They will then circulate the agenda and minutes/action plan from the previous meeting at least 7 days prior to the meeting taking place. This is to ensure students have sufficient opportunity to feedback to their Academic Reps, evidence can be collated, and presented at the relevant meeting.

5.1 Course Committees (SCCs)

Student Course Committees (previously known as Course Management Committees) are formal meetings which exist to provide course management and oversight of each course grouping for quality assurance purposes. These meetings exist to ensure the academic standards of the course are maintained, that the course operates according to the approved programme specification and that the student experience is maintained and enhanced. It is vital that Academic Representatives not only attend but actively contribute to these meetings. This ensures not only quality assurance but the enhancement and development of student learning opportunities.

These meetings take place twice a year and provide an opportunity for Student Reps to feedback on behalf of their fellow students. There is a set agenda which will be followed during each CC, which can be found in the [Policy Statement for Course Committees](#). Student Reps may put forward items they wish to raise (on the agenda) ahead of each meeting.

Additional CCs may be arranged at the Student Academic Representative's written request, with the expectation that this supplementary Committee will be held within 2 weeks of the request being made.

6. Academic Societies

Student societies and clubs are an essential part of the university student experience. Academic Societies are ideal for supporting the personal and professional development of students and often represent the most engaged group of undergraduates.

Course related societies contribute significantly to student engagement, making them a superlative resource for the support and promotion of students and prospective students within the schools and departments in which they operate.

Engagement is the most effective way to positively impact on a student's sense of belonging and, therefore, retention. Academic Societies foster a sense of shared identity within their discipline which is of principle importance to the student experience. These student-led societies can thrive when their dynamic student membership are actively supported by the School and Department.

All student membership will be auto-enrolled onto Academic Societies at the start of the academic year, and each Society will be supported by a designated Student Officer and the Students' Union Student Engagement Team.

Staff can provide support from the onset by encouraging engaged students to formally organise into learning communities or by inviting students to establish a course related society. School and Department staff members should strive to facilitate meaningful student-staff interaction through which Academic Societies can help to support effective feedback amongst representatives and their peers. Ensuring regular meetings and key staff contact is conducive to co-creating strong shared objectives. An active partnership between staff and Academic Societies can support the planning and operational delivery of curriculum enhancing activities whilst also supporting employability.

Staff awareness of the opportunity to blend these academic social groups with the representation system can aid student knowledge, confidence and identity as successful HE learners with Staffordshire graduate attributes. There is no minimum number of students required to set up a society. Each new society receives £100 in funding. The society start-up form can be found on the Students' Union website.

7. Student Led Teaching Awards

The Student Led Teaching Awards give students the opportunity to recognise and showcase excellence in learning and teaching across the institution. These awards are part of the Proud to be Staffs Awards; which celebrate both students and staff alike for their contribution to the Student Experience.

There are 5 key areas where good practice is recognised: feedback, personal tutoring, interactivity of lectures, positive impact and distance learning. Find out more about previous winners and best practice here: <http://www.staffsunion.com/proudtobestaffs/>.