STUDENT PARTNERSHIP POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Contents

Student Partnership Policy

Purpose

1. The University aims to support students to work in partnership with staff to shape their student experience as part of a positive academic community. Student partnership includes student representation systems, student partnership in decision-making; working with the Students' Union; module evaluation; student surveys; student voice; student engagement in quality processes and student led projects and initiatives.

2. The Student Partnership Policy is informed by best practice in higher education; guidance provided by the Scottish Funding Council and Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland (SPARQS). This policy aims to provide opportunities and the conditions for students to contribute to a positive student learning experience, fostering an engaged and connected academic community with a clear sense of belonging.

Principles

3. The key principles upon which this policy is based are:
    a. **Student partnership** at the heart of our quality and enhancement approach
    b. **Co-ownership and responsibility** for our academic community
    c. **Clarity** of roles, responsibilities and expectations on staff and students
    d. **Consistency and equity** of processes and access to representation and student voice.

Scope

4. This policy applies to students on all the University's taught programmes, at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

Definitions

5. **Academic Reps**: Students who volunteer to represent their cohort and commit to active participation in the Staff Student Voice Committee process.

6. **Early Module Check-in:** Pulse surveys that take place at around week three or four of a module delivery and offer students the opportunity to provide initial feedback and facilitate early actions to improve student experience.

7. **Module Surveys**: A formal opportunity for students to provide feedback on their experience of a module via an online survey platform. Staff are required to reflect upon and respond to feedback via the survey platform and discuss actions with students.

8. **Sabbatical Officers**: The Students' Union Sabbatical Officers are elected annually from the student body. The full-time roles are Union President; Vice President Education; Sports President and Vice President Communities.

9. **The Staff Student Voice Committee:** The Staff Student Voice Committee (SSVC) provides an opportunity for Academic Reps and academic staff to openly and constructively discuss and act on issues relating to learning, teaching and student experience.

10. **Volunteer Officers**: Volunteer Officers are elected part-time student volunteers with specific remits. They are members of the Students' Union Executive Council, alongside Sabbatical

Officers, representing and championing the rights and views of the student body. Roles may include Housing Volunteer Officer, Sustainability Volunteer Officer and International Volunteer Officer.

Part 1: Student Representation

Students will work in partnership with the University in shaping their experience and learning at the University by engaging with student representation, through our Students' Union.

Student democracy - Sabbatical Officers and Voluntary Officers

11. All enrolled students will be eligible to vote in the Students' Union annual elections to appoint Sabbatical Officers and Volunteer Officers. Training and support for Sabbatical Officers and Volunteer Officers will be provided by the Students' Union with input from the University.

12. Sabbatical Officers will provide leadership for the Union and provide support and advice to students, in collaboration with the Union staff. They will help to deliver the Students' Union strategic plan, projects and campaigns based on their manifestos. They will also be trustees of the Union and sit on the Union's Executive Council.

13. Volunteer Officers will contribute to delivering change projects and campaigns agreed with the Students' Union.

University committee representation

14. One or more Sabbatical Officers will represent the student body (ex officio, as members of the Students' Union executive) on:
    a. Faculty and University governance committees including (but not limited to): University Court, Academic Council, Education Committee, Student Experience Committee and Faculty Education & Student Experience Committees.
    b. Discipline level committees relating to the University's regulatory framework; and
    c. other University committees and working groups as required for time to time.

Faculty Officers

15. The Students' Union in consultation with Faculties will appoint Faculty Officers in semester two for the period of one academic year. This role attracts an honorarium. Training is provided by the Students' Union with input from the University.

16. Faculty Officers can be appointed to represent undergraduate students, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research students. The role may be offered on a job share basis when deemed necessary by the Students' Union and Faculty Associate Deans of Learning and Teaching (ADLT). Faculty Officers will be members of the Faculty Education and Student Experience Committee (FESEC) and will provide leadership to Academic Representatives in their relevant Faculty.

17. Faculty Officers may be called upon to participate as panel members of internal Periodic Subject Quality Reviews, Periodic Collaborative Provision Quality Reviews and Periodic Professional Services Quality Reviews as part of University quality processes. Details of the process are available in the Quality Monitoring and Evaluation policy.

18. Faculty Officers will be responsible for:
    - Working as a team in the faculty, providing opportunities for Academic Reps to meet, discuss issues, and share ideas.
    - Providing leadership and support a sense of community for the Academic Representatives in their Faculty.
    - Attending Faculty Education and Student Experience Committee and Students' Union meetings and other fora (from time to time) to provide student feedback.

Academic Reps

19. Academic Reps are the foundation of student academic representation at the University. They will gather feedback from their cohort on their learning experience and liaise with staff and students, to help improve the student experience and outcomes.

20. Academic Reps will represent a cohort of students in their division and year group. Recruitment for the role will be carried out on this basis, with the Students' Union and relevant University Staff ensuring there is appropriate coverage across programmes.

21. Academic Reps volunteer for the role through the Students Union website. Academic Rep recruitment is open from week two to week five of semester one of a given academic year. When no Academic Rep has been identified, the Head of Division will seek to identify a student who is willing to take on the role. Similar arrangements will be made for programmes starting in January.

22. The Academic Rep position is unremunerated and voluntary, and formal training is provided. Where Academic Reps fulfil the conditions of their role, they will receive recognition on their academic transcript. Attending training by the Students' Union is an essential condition for the role to be formally recognised.

23. Students are encouraged to become Academic Reps where there are vacancies, to engage in rep training and to fulfil the role by actively representing their cohort.

24. Academic staff should support the process of appointing Academic Reps and encourage students to come forward.

25. The Students' Union will lead the Academic Rep process in partnership with Faculties, to recruit and support Academic Reps each semester.

26. Academic Reps will be supported by academic staff to ensure they have opportunities to communicate with and gather feedback from the student cohort. Staff will also work with the Academic Reps to resolve issues which arise from time to time for the cohort and work with the reps to communicate to the wider cohort as effectively as possible reflections and actions arising from feedback from students, closing the feedback loop.

27. Governance and annual review of the effectiveness of the process will be the responsibility of the Student Experience Committee.

Part 2: Student voice

28. The University will ensure students have formal opportunities to feedback on their experience. Student feedback gathered through these processes is used to inform improvements to student experience, curriculum development, assessment, work-based learning/placements and teaching quality.
29. Students will be encouraged to engage constructively with surveys and other feedback opportunities to inform enhancements to the student experience.
30. Staff will respond to feedback from students in a timely manner, identifying actions that will be taken and/or advising why it may not be appropriate or feasible to do so.

Informal Feedback

31. Staff will seek and engage with constructive feedback and dialogue with students, to inform immediate and longer-term enhancements. In turn, students should always be supported and feel at ease in providing feedback.

Early Module Check-in

32. Early module check-in surveys offer new students the opportunity to provide feedback on their early experience in the module. The results will be shared with those teaching on the module, Module Co-ordinators, Faculty and University senior management. Academic staff are required to take action, when necessary. Policy on Student Module Evaluation Surveys.

Module evaluation

33. The Module Evaluation Questionnaire captures student feedback on their experience of a module via an online survey platform.
34. Module Co-ordinators are required to promptly respond to feedback, advising on actions to be taken.
35. Associate Deans for Learning & Teaching oversee the survey process in each Faculty. Further details of the principles and process can be found in the policy on Module Evaluation Surveys. The procedure for staff is available on the Staff Module Evaluation Resources SharePoint site and student guidance is available on the website.
36. Governance and review of module survey processes and outcomes will be provided by the Student Experience Committee.

Institutional and National Surveys

Student Experience and Satisfaction

37. The University participates in external sector benchmark student experience surveys including the National Student Survey (NSS), the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES), the International Student Barometer (ISB) and the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES).
38. Survey arrangements will be led by Policy and Planning and considered by the Student Voice Sub-Committee and Student Experience Committee.
39. Results from all student surveys and associated action plans will be monitored at the Student Experience Committee.

Staff Student Voice Committee

40. The Staff Student Voice Committee (SSVC) facilitates dialogue between staff and Academic Reps. The Head of Division and Students' Union are responsible for ensuring adequate representation exists for each programme and cohort of students.

41. Meeting of the Staff Student Voice Committee
    a. The meeting will take place twice a semester. A template agenda and action template format is available here. Actions must be uploaded to the SharePoint site and monitored via the Faculty Education and Student Experience Committee.
    b. Academic Reps will provide feedback from students related to their learning experience, with staff giving feedback in response, as well as jointly agreeing actions.
    c. Academic Reps and staff will jointly consider outcomes from student surveys and related action plans. This will focus on responses from Module survey responses and also relevant actions arising from NSS, PTES and PRES.
    d. When relevant, staff will present proposals for new curriculum related topics-modules, programmes etc, to seek student feedback as part of ongoing curriculum development and quality processes.

42. It is recommended that the roles of Chair and Secretary alternates between academic staff and Academic Reps. Guidance for the Chairs is provided here. It is also recommended that the roles of the Chair and Secretary are filled by one of each type of attendee – staff member and Academic Rep.

43. Academic Representatives will be given access to summary results of student surveys and encouraged to give insight.

44. Where issues cannot be resolved locally, academic staff should refer to their line manager or relevant senior colleague for guidance and/or escalation, and students should be advised accordingly. Similarly, Academic Reps should contact relevant Faculty Officers and the Students' Union.

45. It is not always possible or appropriate to action all student feedback. Where this is the case, the cohort should be advised of the rationale.

46. The outcomes and actions from the meetings will be reported to:
    a. Faculty Education and Student Experience Committee (FESEC);
    b. The student cohort by the Module Co-ordinator/Programme Director/cohort lead as relevant;
    c. The Faculty Officer, VP Education, and relevant staff of the Students' Union;
    d. All action trackers will be uploaded to the Student Partnership Guidance and Repository SharePoint site and also form part of the evidence which informs Annual Programme Review and Periodic Subject Quality Reviews.

47. FESEC will monitor the outcomes and actions from Staff Student Voice Committee meetings and take action as needed. The Education and Student Experience Committees will receive the minutes of the FESEC to provide oversight.

If any member has concerns about the process, they should immediately bring such concerns to the attention of the Deputy Principal (Student Experience) and Students' Union.

Capturing diverse student voices

48. The University will monitor student voice processes to ensure all students with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 have equitable access to student voice processes. Where appropriate and feasible, institutional student voice surveys and the Academic Rep process will capture demographic data of participants. Outcome/review reports will reflect aggregated demographic data on participants and any differential outcomes from student feedback, to inform enhancement activity.

Part 3: Contribution to the academic community

Students will be responsible partners in the academic and wider community. By positively contributing to these communities, they will enhance their own skills and experience and the experience of others.

Student Partnership Agreement

49. The Students' Union and the University will work in partnership on a range of student experience activities and annual priority projects are captured within a Student Partnership Agreement.

50. The Student Partnership Agreement will run for periods of three years and specific priorities for each year will be jointly identified between the University and the Students' Union.

51. Annual reports on work carried out under the Student Partnership Agreement and an end-of-cycle triennial review on the effectiveness of the process will be reported to the Student Experience Committee.

Quality Review and Enhancement Activity

52. Students will work in partnership with the University in delivering quality review and enhancement activity at all levels:
    a. Programme and module reviews rely heavily on student feedback gathered through the processes described in this policy.
    b. Faculty Officers will be panel members of Periodic Subject Quality Reviews.
    c. Sabbatical Officers and other students will be part of the groups who prepare and respond to external review by the QAA and other external professional bodies.

53. QAA Scotland's Tertiary Enhancement Programme (STEP) activity will be delivered in partnership with students, both in respect of governance arrangements and in delivering projects.

Student behaviours contributing to a positive environment

54. All students will contribute to a positive learning environment through complying with our Student Charter which sets out the behaviours expected of students. All students and staff should expect to be treated with respect as described in the Respect at Work and Study Policy.

Student-led activities

55. Students will be encouraged to lead projects to improve the student experience both facilitated by the Students' Union and independently. Examples include Faculty Officer projects, the Vice Chancellor's Fund or Stirling Fund supported projects and projects under the auspices of the QAA.

56. Within the Students' Union, the RATE Teaching Awards, STEER Peer Mentoring scheme have an impact on promoting a positive student experience. In addition, Sabbatical, Volunteer and Faculty Officers will lead projects based on their manifesto priorities, in collaboration with the University or independently on behalf of the Students' Union. The Students' Union will report on these activities through the Student Experience Committee, at least on an annual basis.

57. The Students' Union and clubs and societies will work closely with the University to inform and participate in the delivery of student life activities.

Extra-curricular activities

58. Student Union sports clubs and societies contribute to student experience, by upholding University values and nurturing positive behaviours.

59. A range of opportunities are available to students who wish to undertake voluntary activities around the University and in the local community to enrich their experience. Achievements in this area may be recognised through the My Stirling Award.

60. A range of opportunities for students are presently annually to engage in paid roles supporting learning, teaching and student experience. For example, as Student Ambassadors, Student Residence Assistants or Wi-Fi Wizards.

Appendix 1: Procedure for Staff Student Voice Committees

1. The University of Stirling is committed to working in partnership with the student body and Students' Union to deliver the best possible Student Learning Experience. The aim of the Staff Student Voice Committee (SSVC) is to provide a consistent and effective approach to capturing the student voice and evidence that student feedback is acted upon, when this is feasible.

2. The Students' Union and Head of Division (or suitable nominee, e.g. Divisional Learning and Teaching Officer) are responsible for ensuring that Academic Reps are appointed for programme clusters and/or cohort of students. Where a representative has not volunteered, the Programme Director should seek to identify an academic representative who is willing to capture students' views on their learning experience and participate in the SSVC.

3. Meetings of the Staff Student Voice Committee
   a) Meetings will take place twice a semester. Dates will be confirmed by faculties at the start of the semester. Attendance and apologies should be notified three days in advance of the meeting. The meeting can take place on campus or online. Hybrid meetings are not ideal for participation and should be minimised.
   b) A standardised template agenda and action tracker will be used for each meeting. Items for the agenda should be submitted to Divisional Office at least three days before the meeting.
   c) The role of Chair and Secretary for the SSVC should alternate between staff and students, by agreement.
   d) Staff members will share feedback and actions from previous semesters at the first meeting.
   e) SSVC members will be given access to summary reports from student surveys to consider and inform discussion on actions to improve student experience.
   f) Academic Reps should gather feedback from students related to their learning experience. Where students wish to voice concerns, this should be notified to the Divisional Office at least three days in advance.
   g) During the meeting, Academic Reps are to be encouraged to suggest improvements arising from feedback/student surveys and discuss related action plans. When relevant, staff will share proposals for programme and curriculum development and seek student feedback as part of ongoing quality enhancement processes.
   h) A standardised minute template will be used for each meeting. At the end of the meeting, the minute, along with the action tracker, should be agreed by all and shared with the Divisional Office to be circulated to members and uploaded to the Student Partnership Guidance and Repository SharePoint site.
   i) SSVC members have a responsibility to share outcomes with the relevant stakeholders.

4. Monitoring and Escalation
   a) Where issues cannot be resolved locally, academic staff should refer to their line manager or relevant senior colleagues for guidance and/or escalation, and students should be advised accordingly. Similarly, Academic Reps should contact relevant Faculty Officers and the Students' Union.
   b) It is not always possible or appropriate to action all student feedback. Where this is the case, the cohort should be advised of the rationale.

c) Faculty Education and Student Experience Committees (FESEC) will monitor the outcomes and actions of SSVCs and take action as needed. The Education and Student Experience Committees will receive the minutes of the FESEC to provide oversight.

d) If any member has concerns about the process, they should bring such concerns to the attention of the Associate Dean of Learning and Teaching and Students' Union.

5. The composition of the SSVC is:

	Composition	Category	Representing
1	Head of Division or Nominee	Member	Faculty
2	Academic Reps	Member	Student Body
3	*Programme Directors/Module Coordinators	Member	Academic staff
4	**SU (inc. Faculty Officers, VP Education, staff members)	Attendee (by request)	SU

*The Programme Director/Year lead will confirm appropriate members of staff in advance.

**Students' Union staff and Student Officers are welcome to attend any SSVC meeting and should notify the Divisional Office three days in advance, SU representatives are not obligated to attend.

ANNEX 1: Responsibilities

The Head of Division or their nominee is responsible for ensuring that the procedure is embedded within the programmes assigned to the Division.

1. The Academic Representatives' role is to:
   a. Prepare in advance by consulting with their cohort and be prepared to discuss what is going well alongside any concerns or issues that need attention.
   b. Attend and actively contribute to the SSVC, sharing feedback constructively and contributing to solutions and enhancements.
   c. Provide feedback and updates as required on actions and share outcomes.
   d. Engage with the Students' Union Faculty Officer, if they need support.

2. Faculty Officers will be responsible for:
   a. Working as a team in the faculty, providing opportunities for Academic Reps to meet, discuss issues, and share ideas.
   b. Providing leadership and support a sense of community for the Academic Representatives in their Faculty.
   c. Attending Faculty Education and Student Experience Committee and Students' Union meetings and other fora (from time to time after discussion with the SU) to provide student feedback

3. Academics are responsible for:
   a. Sharing updates and noting changes and actions taken from the previous year at the beginning of semester.
   b. Supporting the Academic Reps to gather feedback.
   c. Responding to student feedback and encouraging students to contribute to enhancements and solutions.
   d. Communicating actions to be taken to the cohort.

4. Faculty Professional Services staff are responsible for:
   a. Confirming and notifying members of SSVC dates.
   b. Preparing and circulating the SSVC agenda and any associated papers.
   c. Receiving and confirming attendance and any apologies.
   d. Uploading the minute and Action Tracker to the Student Partnership Guidance and Repository, and circulating to members.

5. The role of the Students' Union is to:
   a. Oversee recruitment of Academic Representatives and maintain records to be shared with University, Faculty, Divisional staff.
   b. Provide training to Academic Representatives and Faculty Officers to fulfil their duties effectively.
   c. Provide support, information, and guidance throughout the year to Academic Representatives.
   d. Ensure Academic Representatives and Faculty Officers are carrying out their duties as required and to take appropriate action to address any concerns raised.

ANNEX 2: Staff Student Voice Committee Workflow

Student Partnership Guidance and Repository - Home

Pre-meeting

Confirm and Notify Members of SSVC Dates

(Faculty Professional Services)

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SSVC Agenda and Papers Prepared and Circulated (including preparation of any pro-formas circulated in advance of meetings)

(Faculty Professional Services with Academic Staff)

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Attendance and Apologies noted to SSVC Chair

(Faculty Professional Services)

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During meeting

SSVC Chaired by Academic Staff or Academic Representative

(Academic Staff/Academic Rep)

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Minute and Action Tracker Agreed and Sent to Faculty Professional Service Contact

(Academic Staff/Academic Rep)

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Post-meeting

Minute and Action Tracker Uploaded to Student Partnership Guidance and Repository SharePoint Site and Circulated to Members, Confirming Date of Next SSVC

(Faculty Professional Services)