



University  
of Dundee



# Guide 4

## The Student Voice and Representation Agreement

### Guide 4: Approaches to Engagement



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To ensure that the learning experience continues to improve each year, the partnership between students and staff is critical.

This means that students and staff have to be active participants in enhancement and to help foster this it is expected that:

- A culture of engagement exists between students and staff and in which both students are partners in the enhancement of the learning experience
- Engagement culture recognises the diversity of our students and staff and captures their experience to help shape an excellent university journey for all students
- There is a focus and commitment to enhancement and change and activity is appropriately resourced to achieve this goal
- Discussions and activity should take place in an environment which promotes an open and respectful dialogue and is held in a timely manner
- Areas of success, best practise and excellence are identified, shared and celebrated
- Students to be empowered to contribute to the shape of their learning experience and to be part of the decision making framework
- Regular meetings are held between student representatives and staff outside of the framework of formal meetings to ensure a continuous conversation about the student learning experience is happening

For further information on best practise in student engagement please refer to the Student Engagement Framework developed by Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland ([sparqs](#))

### Engagement opportunities

Both students and staff have a number of routes to engage with each other which include:

- Students and Staff speaking before, during or after class about the learning experience
- Core events such as Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) or equivalent meetings
- Quality processes such as Annual Reviews and Periodic Programme Reviews (PPR's)

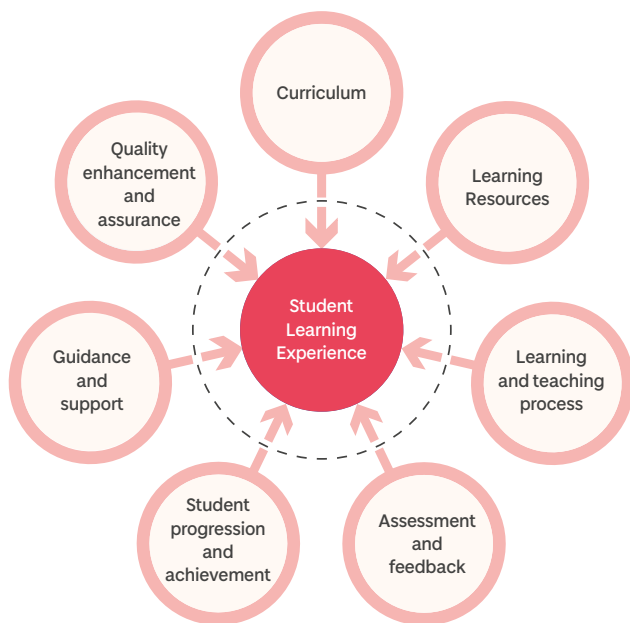
Student representatives are the main point of contact with staff to discuss matters that are important to their fellow students but this should not prevent any student or staff member taking forward points of interest.



## Student Representative tools/methods

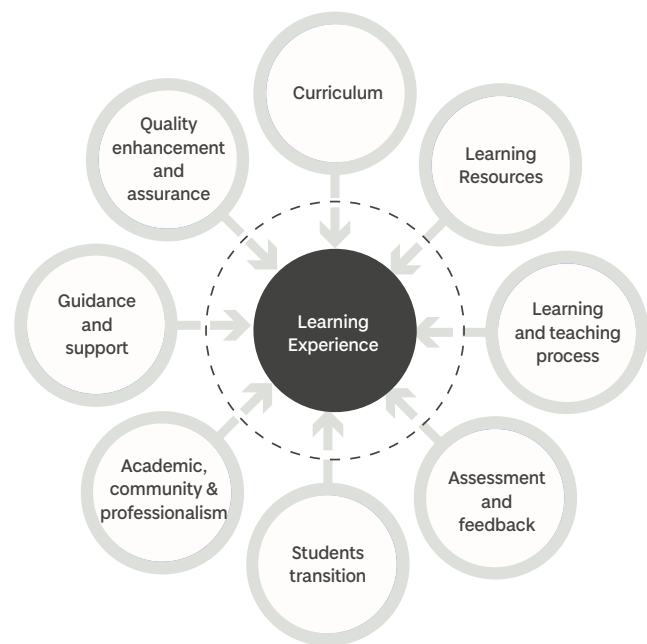
Student representatives are encouraged to use a range of different engagement tools when undertaking their roles and all training is based on the “Student Learning Experience” wheels for undergraduate and postgraduate learning.

### Undergraduate SLE'



Developed by Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland (sparqs) the Student Learning Experience tools aid student representatives to understand the key components and define what is meant by the “learning experience” and highlight the important areas that they should focus on and investigate whilst carrying out their duties.

### Postgraduate SLE'



They are encouraged to focus their efforts in the key areas outlined in the frameworks and to engage students through:

- Surveys
- Polls
- Meetings
- Events etc.

It is advised that student representatives and relevant staff work together to plan and develop an engagement approach to help ensure the student voice is being heard and acted upon.

## Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC)

The principle meeting between student representatives and staff is the SSLC.

It is recommended that there are at least two SSLC meetings per semester and all relevant student representatives and staff should be invited and encouraged to attend the meetings.

It is important that the SSLC meeting is a supportive environment that encourages discussion of both the positives and negatives of the learning experience and the identification of actions and responsibilities in a collegiate and respectful manner.

[Postgraduate](#)

[Undergraduate](#)

## Remit

SSLC meetings provide an opportunity for both students and staff to come together to jointly identify strengths and successes in the learning experience as well as areas of enhancement.

This should lead onto a collaborative effort to identify innovations and development, set a path toward improvement and celebrate success.

To help reflect on the conduct of SSLC's, DUSA has developed a workshop and tool, based on the Quality Assurance Agency Scotland (QAAS) Student Engagement Principles which can be downloaded [here](#)

The meetings should provide a space to:

- Highlight important areas of development, key quality outcomes and reports are considered and discussed
- Consider both formal student feedback gathered in module evaluations and surveys of students alongside feedback gathered by student representatives
- Seek and reflect on any aspect of the learning and general experience
- To enable students to contribute to the shape of their learning experience
- Plan and review findings of student engagement activity such as surveys, events etc.
- To discuss external examiners' reports with student representatives
- To report and make recommendations to School committees and/or any other relevant University body (e.g. the School Board, the School Learning and Teaching Committee, the School Quality and Academic Standards Committee, the Programme Board, or the University committees for Learning and Teaching or Quality and Academic Standards)

The operation of SSLC's are not limited to these defined goals and each School should consider how best to utilise this and other engagement activity to help achieve enhancement.

## Organisation and Operation

It is also recommended that the SSLC meeting should be chaired/facilitated by the School President if the SSLC is School based or the Vice President if each discipline has their own meeting.

The meetings should also be supported by the appropriate lead staff member (e.g. Associate Dean Learning & Teaching or Head of Discipline) in the School.

The School administration team should work with the student representatives to:

- Identify dates
- Book and organise appropriate venues or set up online meetings
- Invite all relevant members
- Support through collating and circulating papers
- Capture minutes of the meeting

Accessibility for the meetings should be a consideration and the use of electronic platforms can be used to facilitate engagement.

In addition, effective communication approach is necessary to allow the wider student body and staff to access the minutes as well as become aware of decisions taken and subsequent improvements made.

## Membership

Membership of the SSLC's should reflect the structure and nature of the student body and those who teach or supervise them and if required additional representation from students can be added to discuss important topics (e.g. issues that require a representative from a specific student demographic not represented by the current structure).

Staff membership should reflect the programme and/or modules to be discussed and be agreed by the relevant School committee with responsibility for learning and teaching. The staff members should be made known to the student representatives and all relevant staff members are expected to attend the meetings.

## Core membership and additional members

SSLC's should, depending on the structure, contain the following members:

- All relevant student representatives (Class Reps, Vice Presidents, School Presidents)
- School or Vice President as Chair
- Programme and module leaders
- Administrative staff
- Associate Dean (Learning & Teaching) or alternative

SSLC's can add to their membership how they see fit to ensure an enhancement driven meeting. Additional members may come from, but not limited to:

- Student Services
- Library & Learning Centre
- Professional Services
- Other student engagement. representative position
- DUSA

## University engagement with SSLCs

The University's Learning and Teaching Committee and the Quality and Academic Standards Committee will consider and respond to any issues raised by SSLCs that are reported to either committee by the relevant Associate Dean or School Presidents and/or the DUSA Executive.

## Student representation on School committees and University

### School committees

School Presidents are full members of their respective School Boards and the committees for learning and teaching and quality and academic standards. Each of the six DUSA Sabbatical Officers has responsibility for one or more School, they are full members of their designated School Board.

### University committees

DUSA representatives are members of most University committees, including:

- Court
- Senate
- Internationalisation Committee
- Learning and Teaching Committee
- Quality and Academic Standards Committee
- Employability and Enterprise Subcommittee
- Recruitment and Admissions Subcommittee
- Research Degrees Subcommittee
- University Management Group
- Student Experience Oversight Group

DUSA representatives are also invited to be part of all University working groups that relate to academic quality and/or the student experience. Relevant SRC members may also be invited to join specific meetings and working groups of Senate committees or subcommittees.



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