

REP- RES- ENT.

+



**Student Academic Representation
Code of Practice**

+ In- tro- duc- tion

Introduction

The Student Representation (SAR) System at the University of Cumbria has a twin track purpose. It has a key part to play in terms of quality assurance process and maximising the student experience as it creates the opportunity for students to express their opinions, and the opinions of their peers on this issues which impact on their learning experience.

The SAR system provides an invaluable platform from which student opinion and data can be collected and acted upon. It provides staff with the opportunity to ask students directly for their views. It can provide an effective route of communication between faculty members, the Students Union and the students. It symbolizes the notion of working with students as partners as it provides them with the chance to have 'ownership' over their own student experience.

The students are nominated and selected by their peers through a democratic election process. Following this, SAR's attend Programme Quality Committee (PQC) meetings where they can air any academic concerns or comments raised by students in their cohort.

The formal forum for SARs is the PQCm but feedback can be gathered from various sources such as module evaluation questionnaires, questionnaires provided by the representation facilitator on blackboard, student designed questionnaires and informal discussions between staff and students.

At present, each programme has two elected SAR's for each year group. It may become apparent that having a representative for each 25 students may be a more efficient way of running the system.

The purpose of this Code of Practice is intended to be used by Faculties to provide a framework of formal meetings between staff and students.

+ Faculty Responsibilities.

Faculty Responsibilities


- There should be a key contact in SAMIS in each of the Quality Groups and a staff member who is responsible providing information and liaising with the SAR's about PQC's. They will also be responsible for liaising with the Representation Facilitator providing the details of SAR's following elections and nominations.
- Dates of the PQC meetings shall be set as early as possible and advertised to SARs so they can check they are available. If more than 75% of SAR's cannot attend the meeting shall be rescheduled to ensure there is not more staff than students.
- SAR's should be given full access to relevant facilities to ensure that they can keep students informed of the decisions and actions of the PQC as well as the achievements of their SAR. This can be done through mailing lists, blackboard, distribution lists and notice boards.
- SAR's should be given information by staff about the dates of training that the Students Union has arranged and if they do not attend the introductory training they will not receive recognition at the end of their time as a SAR. Upon completion of training they will receive a Student Academic Representative certificate. All training is provided to support SARs with their role, guidance on what the role entails and networking opportunities to meet other reps across the campuses.



+ Student Academic Representative Responsibilities

Student Academic Representative Responsibilities

- SAR's should gather student opinion, feedback and academic comments and deliver this information during PQC's.
- SAR's should advertise themselves to their peers and staff and make it clear that they are available to receive comments, they should do this through posters, notice boards, lectures and group emails.
- If a SAR cannot attend a PQC meeting they should send their apologies at the latest 24
- SAR's should present constructive feedback to staff and work in conjunction with them to deliver academic excellence.
- SAR's must attend the introductory training session and all following training sessions. If they cannot attend they must send apologies.
- If a SAR no longer wants to carry on with their duties they must send an email to their programme leader and the Representation Facilitator letting them know that the post will need to be filled.



Rep- re- sen- ta- tion Fac- ili- ta- tor Responsibilities

Representation Facilitator Responsibilities

- The Representation Facilitator along with support from the Students Union will offer training and support to all SARs
- The Students Union and the Representation Facilitator will provide the SAR's with a handbook designed to inform them about their role. They will also provide Staff Guidance and support. The Representation Facilitator will maintain the blackboard site, and with help with programme leaders will maintain the database of SAR information.
- The Representation Facilitator will act as a point of liaison for all staff members in relation to the Student Academic Representation System.
- The Representation Facilitator will collate comments arising from PQC's and data collected regarding student numbers and produce an annual report. They will also act as a link between SAR's and the elected Sabbatical Officers in the Students Union.
- The Representation Facilitator will organise regular meetings with the Representation and Democracy Manager, The Sabbatical Officers, the General Manager and AQS to discuss issues so that communication remains effective within the SAR system.



Guidelines

Guidelines for the Student Academic Representation System

- The Representation Facilitator and the Students Union will plan the training for SARS over the summer before the start of the academic year 2011/12. The training information and dates will be passed on to Faculty Staff
- Information about the SAR system will be included in the Fresher's Packs that will be sent out to the new students.
- A massive advertisement drive will be run by the Students Union during Fresher's Week raising awareness of the scheme for both current and new students.
- The Representation Facilitator will try and come and speak to students in as many lectures as possible within the first week of lectures to advertise the scheme. This job may also be delegated to current SAR's.
- Elections for SARS will take place within the first two weeks of term. This will take place through a democratic process. All SARs should have been elected within the first month of term to ensure training can take place prior to the first PQC.
- As soon as the SAR is elected the academic staff member will email the Representation Facilitator letting them know who the SAR is for their course. This must be done within the first month of term. Staff who do not email the details will be asked to provide them.
- The Representation Facilitator, Faculty Staff and the Students Union should inform all SARs to attend the training sessions as organised by the Students Union. The compulsory first training session will run in October and all other training sessions will be advertised in advance so SARs can book their places. All sessions attended will be placed on their certificate at the end of their time as a SAR.

- Each Quality Group shall have at least three PQC's where staff and students may meet for discussion and consultation about school programmes and other matters relevant to the quality of the students academic experience. They will take place over the academic year during term time and will not collide with holidays or placements.
- The minutes from these meetings shall be produced and sent out to all members including the Representation Facilitator as soon as possible so that actions where applicable can be taken on the comments raised.
- Joint programmes should have a SAR from both programmes.
- Information about becoming a SAR should be included in departmental handbooks and induction material. It can be arranged that the Representation Facilitator or any former or existing SAR will give a presentation to students at any point throughout the academic year.
- Any changes to SAR's details should be reported to the Representation Facilitator as soon as possible.
- Any SAR that is not complying the rules of the code of practice, or rules of the faculty shall be reported to the Representation Facilitator who will offer more training and support.
- All programme leaders should disseminate the University of Cumbria's Students Union SAR induction material to all staff that are involved in recruiting SAR's.



Age- enda & Minutes

Agenda & Minutes of the Meeting

- SAMIS shall call for agenda items at least two weeks prior to meetings and circulate the agenda at least a week before the meeting. Part time students and distance learners will be offered the chance to submit a written report which gives the opinions of their programme. The Representation Facilitator will correlate comments and data from discussion boards from distance learners and will feed this into the agenda.
- Every member of the PQC has the right to submit items for the agenda and submit papers for discussion. It is important that all members understand that academic issues are the main priority of the PQC.
- It is important that the Agenda shall contain student issues and staff issues.
- SAMIS will keep full minutes of every meeting, including notes of actions required. The minutes shall be circulated to every member of the PQC and forwarded to the next PQC. A copy shall be displayed on every notice board in the Faculty and/or on blackboard. Minutes shall be distributed no more than four weeks after the meetings have taken place so it can be verified that action points have been followed up and so the SARs can feed back to their peers.
- The Representation Facilitator should receive copies of all PQC minutes to ensure they are kept informed of the issues being raised, and be informed of all PQC's taking place throughout the year.
- Student Issues should be placed at the beginning of the agenda in case students need to leave early.

+ Provisions

Provisions for Student Representatives

- Training is provided for all SAR's and details can be obtained from the Representation Facilitator.
- All SAR's are provided with a handbook.
- There is a Student Academic Blackboard site which is dedicated to SARS.

