Overview Guidance of Faculty Student
Academic Representation

Introduction

The following is to provide guidance on the overall processes of Academic Representation at Faculty level for relevant staff. Any questions regarding the following information can be sent to the Student Union Academic Representation Co-ordinator at: scott.dawson@sheffield.ac.uk

Overview

Faculty Student Staff Committees (FSSCs) (or equivalent as agreed between the Students’ Union and the Faculty) should be convened by each Faculty, meeting ideally at least twice per academic semester. This is to ensure the student voice shapes learning and teaching at Faculty level. Student Faculty Representatives will be elected or appointed by their fellow Academic Representatives at Departmental level.

In partnership with the Students’ Union and with the active participation of students, it is the responsibility of the Faculty Director of Learning and Teaching to ensure that there is effective Faculty level student representation. This means that the FDLT (or designated Faculty contact) will:

- Work in partnership with the Students’ Union to develop and maintain effective student representation at Faculty level.
- Arrange and run FSSC meetings, agree agendas and monitor attendance. This includes designating faculty staff to provide administrative and secretarial support for the FSSC.
- Identify a key contact for Faculty Representatives so that any queries on the operations of the Faculty can be discussed.
- Communicate with the Students’ Union Academic Representation Coordinator to ensure relevant information, dates and support is in place for Faculty Representatives.
- Provide an induction to the Faculty for Faculty Representatives either individually or in collaboration with the Students’ Union.
- Invite Faculty Representatives to attend wider decision making Faculty committees.
1. How should Faculty Student Staff Committee meetings operate

FSSC meetings should follow processes similar to Department Student Staff Committees (SSCs). A standing agenda and membership of the FSSC can be defined and agreed by the Faculty. However, all FSSCs must provide the following opportunities to the students attending:

- Allow Faculty Representatives the opportunity to share ideas or concerns from their department which may relate to the wider faculty. Ensuring best practice is shared across the departments.
- For the Faculty to update Faculty Representatives on ongoing developments which may impact on the student experience, such as Programme Level Approach, teaching space or building changes.
- For Faculty Representatives to work in partnership with staff on reviews, curriculum design or wider projects such as away days that require student input.
- Faculty Representatives to be provided the opportunity to attend wider Faculty Committees. These include Faculty Learning & Teaching Committee, Impact, Engagement and Equality and Diversity/Inclusion.

A key difference between a FSSC and SSC is that an FSSC meeting is likely to be more of an informal dialogue from which Faculty Representatives can influence and collaborate with staff on a variety of topics and committees. Faculty Reps should be able to connect with others, share ideas and suggest new approaches.

2a. Suggested Membership

A provisional core membership for the FSSC could be done as follows:

- 1 UG Faculty Rep per department.
- 1 PG Faculty Rep per department.
- Faculty Director of Learning and Teaching or a designated member of the Faculty Learning and Teaching leadership team.
- Secretary to be appointed by the Faculty.

Additional staff could be included as agreed between the Faculty and Faculty Representatives.
2b. Suggested Provisional Agenda

As with membership, the agenda can be entirely defined by the FSSC and Faculty. However, it is important the opportunity for student feedback, engagement and connectivity are considered. A suggested approach is to divide the meeting into 2 sections. First, agenda items and updates. Secondly, discussion topics and student consultation:

Section A:

- Introductions
- Summary of previous FSSC actions
- Chair Report
- Reports from Faculty Reps who have attended wider Faculty Meetings
- Updates from relevant department Faculty Reps

Section B:
Discussion topics to gain students ideas and feedback. Below are possible discussion topics:

- ‘Diversity within the curriculum’
- ‘How to engage students in programme level approach’
- ‘How to write a paper for a wider Faculty Committee meeting’

2c. Number of Faculty Student Staff Committee meetings

A suggested minimum of FSSC meetings is 4 per year, 2 per semester. Depending on discussions between Faculty staff and Faculty Representatives, this could increase or decrease according to need. The following dates are possible opportunities to hold a FSSC:

- September (UG only, prior to elections of PG faculty reps and 1 year UGs)
- November
- December
- February (post exams)
- April (post Easter holiday)
- June (reflection session on the year’s activity)

Ideally, FSSCs should dovetail with Departmental Student Staff Committees (SSCs).
3. Election process of Faculty Representatives

There can be up to 2 Faculty Representatives for both UG and PG (2 UG’s, ideally 1 PGT & 1 PGR). Normally there will be a minimum of 1 UG & PG Faculty Rep.

- The election for Faculty Representatives for 2018/19 for both UG and PG will take place at the first SSC committee of the new academic year. For most departments this will take place in October or early November.

- From 2019/20 onwards, UG Faculty Representatives will be elected in the final SSC meeting of the previous academic year. This means that the Faculty Reps for 2019/2020 will be appointed in May/June 2019.

- Postgraduate Faculty Representatives will be elected in their first SSC meeting of the Academic Year. Therefore regardless of academic year, all PG Faculty Representatives will be elected in October/November and remain in post until September.

- Guidance on how to run elections for Faculty Representatives will be provided to departments, which can be tailored to the local context. The details of elected Faculty Representatives will be passed onto the SU Academic Representation co-ordinator.

- The Students’ Union will then inform the agreed Faculty Contact (such as FDLT) of the elected Faculty Representatives.

4. Training of Faculty Representatives

Once elected the Students’ Union in partnership with the University will provide a training day for Faculty Reps, led by the Education Officer and Academic Coordinator. This session will be held in November for both UG and PG. Online training will also be provided to those reps who can’t make the session on the day.

Ideally, FDLTs will arrange an informal meeting in which to greet the newly elected Faculty Representatives and provide an update on activity which has taken place within the Faculty over the past year.

5. Contacts for Faculty Representatives

The Faculty Representatives will have 2 clear contacts to support them in the role:

- The Students’ Union Academic Coordinator – (Primary Contact)
- A member of Faculty L&T leadership team with responsibility for student engagement – (Secondary contact)

There will also be general self-help guidance provided on the SU webpages.