Overview Guidance of Faculty Student Academic Representation

Introduction

The following is to provide guidance on the overall process of Academic Representation at Faculty level for relevant staff. Any questions regarding the following information can be sent to the Students’ Union Academic Representation Coordinator at: scott.dawson@sheffield.ac.uk

Overview

Faculty Student Staff Committees (FSSCs) or equivalent as agreed between the Students’ Union and 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. Often during their first Student Staff Committee (SSC) of the year.

In partnership with the Students’ Union and with active participation of students, it is the responsibility of the Faculty Director of Learning and Teaching (or similar position as agreed) to ensure that there is effective faculty level student representation. This means that the FDLT 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 operation of the Faculty can be discussed.

• Communicate with the Students’ Union Academic Representation Coordinator and the relevant Students’ Union Faculty Academic Representation Facilitator to ensure information, dates and support are 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 where required.
1. How should Faculty Student Staff Committee meeting operate?

FSSC meetings should follow processes similar to Departmental Student Staff Committees (SSC). A standing agenda and membership of the FSSC can be defined and agreed by the Faculty to suit local context. 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 wide faculty. Ensuring best practice is shared across the departments.

- For the Faculty to update Faculty Representatives of 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 projects such as away days that require input.

- Faculty Representatives to be provides the opportunity to attend wider Faculty Committees. These include Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee and similar as deemed appropriate.

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 designate member of 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 defined by the FSSC and Faculty. However, it is important the opportunity for student feedback, engagement, connectivity and collaboration 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 Faculty Meetings
- Updates from each Departments Faculty Reps

Section B

Discussion topics to gain student ideas and feedback. Below are some ideas for discussion topics:

- ‘Diversity within the curriculum’
- ‘How to engage students in programme level approach’
- ‘Reflections on the strategic direction of the Faculty’

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:

- November
- December
- February (post exams)
- April (prior to or after Easter Holiday)
- June (reflection session on the years activity)

Ideally, FSSCs should dovetail with Departmental Student Staff Committees. This means that SSCs run prior to the FSSC, so that Faculty Reps can provide effective updates.
3. Election process of Faculty Representatives

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

- The election for Faculty Representatives for 2019/20 will ideally take place at the first Departmental SSC of the academic year. For most departments this will be in late October/Early November.

- From 2020/21 onwards, UG Faculty Representatives will be elected in the final SSC meeting of the previous academic year. This means Faculty Reps for 2020/21 will be appointed in May/June 2020.

- 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 of the following year.

- 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 and shared with Faculty Staff accordingly.

4. Training of Faculty Representatives

Once elected, the Students’ Union in partnership with the University will provide training for Faculty Reps. This session will be ideally 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 that has taken place within the Faculty over the last year.

5. Contacts for Faculty Representatives

Faculty Representatives will have 3 clear contacts to support them in their role:

- The Students’ Union Academic Coordinator
- The Students’ Union Academic Rep Facilitator Team
- A member of the Faculty Leadership Team

General guidance and self-help info will be provided on the SU webpages.