



University  
of Glasgow



## **University of Glasgow and Students' Representative Council**

### **Code of Practice on Student Representation**

August 2015

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## 1. Introduction

1. This document sets out the joint commitment of the University of Glasgow and Glasgow University Students' Representative Council (GUSRC) to promote an effective and coherent system of student representation. This commitment is driven by the Learning and Teaching Strategy objective "to continue to build on our strong student-staff partnership to promote student engagement with learning and enhance student success."
2. Students are represented at all levels of the University's committee structures (see Appendices 1 and 2). For the purposes of this document the following definitions apply;
  - GUSRC College Convenors represent the students of the particular College in which they are registered and are members of GUSRC Council<sup>1</sup> and Council Committee
  - GUSRC Postgraduate Convenors represent Postgraduate Taught and Research students in the particular College in which they are registered and are members of GUSRC Council and Council Committee.
  - GUSRC School Representatives represent the students of the particular school in which they are registered and are members of GUSRC Council
  - 'Class Representatives' are representatives from an individual class, course, subject or programme
  - 'PGR Representatives' are representatives of research students of the particular Graduate School in which they are registered

## 2. Principles

1. The University of Glasgow is committed to receiving and responding to student feedback in order to monitor and enhance the quality of the student experience within the institution.
2. It is important that a positive culture exists in which the academic unit makes explicit its commitment to receiving and responding to students' views and to discussing current learning, teaching and research issues with them.
3. For the purpose of this Code of Practice, the phrase "Staff-Student Liaison Committee (SSLC)" is used to describe the various academic unit committees which provide a formal opportunity for Class and PGR Representatives to give feedback to their School/subject(s).
4. The SSLC exists to provide an effective and coherent system for communication between staff and students.
5. All students have the right to representation at the SSLC.
6. The training of Class and PGR Representatives is key to the successful operation of SSLCs and responsibility for providing this lies with GUSRC, with input from the University.
7. The University will recognise and record on the student's transcript periods undertaken as a Class or PGR Representative, subject to confirmation of training having been completed, the annual feedback questionnaire on the Class or PGR

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<sup>1</sup> Elections are organised by the GUSRC and governed by GUSRC constitution

representative experience is completed and confirmation from the relevant academic unit that the term of office as a Class or PGR Representative has been completed. A student need only attend training once for this to be recognised. Training attended in the past four years is considered valid. Beyond four years, a representative will be required to attend a further training session to ensure currency.

### **3. Role of Class and PGR Representatives**

1. Class and PGR Representatives exist to represent the students in their class, course, programme, or subject. Academic units are expected to engage Class and PGR Representatives routinely in the decision-making committees and processes and to consult them, formally and informally, on decisions with an impact on the student experience. As a minimum, Class and PGR Representative should be invited to, attend and contribute to two Staff-Student Liaison Committee meetings per year. Good practice indicates effective student representation will go further than this with an effective formal and informal partnership developed between the academic unit and Class and PGR Representatives.

### **4. School/Graduate School Responsibilities**

1. Heads of academic units are responsible for ensuring that there is an appropriate mechanism in their academic unit to facilitate the election of Class or PGR Representatives. It is expected that all Class and PGR Representatives should be elected.
2. Heads of academic units are responsible for identifying a member of the academic unit to take responsibility as the Student Representation 'Contact' and confirming this with the Senate Office.
3. Student Representation Contacts are responsible for recording the elected/appointed Class or PGR Representatives and the area they represent in Student Voice by the beginning of Week 4 of each semester.
4. After the final SSLC meeting of the session, Student Representation Contacts must update Student Voice to certify that Class or PGR Representatives have completed their term of office. Student Representation Contacts will be issued a reminder to carry out this task. Attendance at Class/PGR Rep training will be confirmed on Student Voice by GUSRC.
5. Information about the student representation system and on how GUSRC can support students and their representatives should be included in student course handbooks and should be incorporated into the induction process for new staff.
6. Each School should have at least one Staff-Student Liaison Committee and hold at least one meeting of the SSLC per semester. Committee membership should include a minimum of one Class Representative for each year/level/course/programme as appropriate and the membership should be majority student where possible.
7. Each Graduate School should have at least one SSLC. Committee membership should include a minimum of two PGR Representatives from each School dependent on student numbers and geographical locations.
8. Where student numbers are high, or where the composition of students is diverse, academic units may wish to establish a Staff-Student Liaison Committee for individual courses, groups of courses, or programmes, as appropriate.

9. Depending on student numbers and geographical locations, it would be appropriate to elect or appoint Class Representatives as follows: up to 50 – 1 or 2; 51-150 – 2; over 150 – 3 or 4.
10. If a School has established SSLCs for individual courses and programmes there should also be an overarching School SSLC which will have an overview of the business considered at course and programme SSLCs and responsibility for taking forward matters identified for the attention of the School.
11. The overarching School SSLC should include student representation from individual course and programme SSLCs, and the elected SRC School Representative for that School, and should meet at least once per semester.
12. Heads of academic units are responsible for ensuring that matters raised at SSLCs are reported and, where appropriate, discussed at the School Learning and Teaching Committee, School Graduate Studies Committees or raised at College, and outcomes reported back to students via Student Voice.
13. Academic units should ensure that Student Representatives are utilising Student Voice to engage students.
14. Academic units should retain a file copy of each minute for review purposes – i.e. Annual Monitoring, Periodic Subject Review, Graduate School Review - and should publish the minutes on Student Voice shortly after the meeting.

## **5. Election of Class and PGR Representatives**

1. Information about the Class and PGR representation system should be provided by academic units as part of their induction for new students.
2. It is expected that Class and PGR Representatives are elected rather than selected or appointed. If there are insufficient candidates to merit an election, volunteers may be appointed to the role of Class or PGR Representative with the agreement of the group of students that they will represent.
3. All students have the right to stand for election to become a Class/PGR Representative and academic units are asked to ensure that part-time students are afforded the same opportunity as full-time students.
4. Academic units should ensure that all candidates are invited to present their case for election. Academic units have discretion to determine the most effective mechanism for this e.g. Student Voice, email, lecture.
5. Elections for Class and PGR Representatives should be completed by Week 3 of each semester to allow Class and PGR Representatives to sign up for Training from Week 4 onwards.
6. Support materials are provided on the Senate Office website:  
[www.gla.ac.uk/services/senateoffice/gea/studentengagement/studentrepresentationstudentvoice/](http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/senateoffice/gea/studentengagement/studentrepresentationstudentvoice/)

## **6. Student Voice**

1. Student Voice is for students and their student representatives to communicate and discuss their learning experience. It exists to promote discussion, engagement between students, their representatives and academic units, and to allow academic units to demonstrate action in response to student feedback.

2. Administratively, Student Voice also hosts the Class and PGR Representative Training System and is the vehicle for academic units to record Class and PGR Representatives for the purposes of recording the role on a student's transcript.

## **7. Provision for Class or PGR Representatives**

1. Training for Class and PGR Representatives is available through Glasgow University Students' Representative Council who work closely with a variety of partners to provide a quality training programme. Training will normally be offered in Weeks 5, 6 and 7 of each semester.
2. A Class/PGR Representative Handbook is available.
3. Class or PGR Representatives will be provided with time in lectures or seminars to consult on any issues to be raised and feedback any outcomes of issues raised previously.
4. Where materials cannot be provided electronically, academic units should provide Class and PGR Representatives with reasonable access to printing and photocopying facilities to produce materials for representative business at no personal cost.
5. GUSRC will provide clear communication routes to facilitate dialogue between Class and PGR Representatives and the representatives that make up the GUSRC council.
6. The University will provide Student Voice to facilitate dialogue between Class and PGR Representatives, GUSRC College, School and Postgraduate Conveners and students.
7. The University will record on a transcript periods undertaken as a Class or PGR Representative, subject to confirmation of training having been completed and confirmation from the relevant academic units that the term of office as a Class or PGR Representative has been completed.

## **8. Responsibilities of Class and PGR Representatives**

1. Class and PGR Representatives are responsible for gathering and presenting the views of those they represent to their academic unit and for reporting the outcomes to them.
2. Class and PGR Representatives are expected to liaise with their GUSRC School Representative, GUSRC College Convener or GUSRC Postgraduate Convenor, as appropriate, on any matters of concern or interest.
3. Class or PGR Representatives are expected to attend meetings convened by their GUSRC College Convener or GUSRC Postgraduate Convenor at least twice a year.
4. Class and PGR Representatives are expected to take a leading role in sharing information, participating in discussions and in recording issues on Student Voice.

## **9. Responsibilities of GUSRC**

1. GUSRC is responsible for providing training for Class and PGR Representatives.
2. GUSRC is responsible for providing academic units with text about the services that it offers for inclusion in student course handbooks.

3. GUSRC is responsible for the provision of a Handbook for Class and PGR Representatives with input from the University  
[www.glasgowstudent.net/about/representation/class-reps/resources](http://www.glasgowstudent.net/about/representation/class-reps/resources)
4. GUSRC is responsible for facilitating opportunities for dialogue between Class and PGR Representatives and GUSRC School Representatives, GUSRC College Convenors and GUSRC Postgraduate Convenors.

#### **10. GUSRC School Representatives**

1. GUSRC School Representatives are elected by the student body from a list of nominations received in accordance with the constitution of GUSRC.
2. GUSRC School Representatives have membership of the GUSRC Council<sup>2</sup>.
3. GUSRC School Representatives should be the point of liaison between Class Representatives and GUSRC College Convenors.
4. GUSRC School Representatives have the right to attend school meetings relevant to the student experience e.g. SSLC, Learning and Teaching Committee, Board of Studies or to appoint a deputy to attend in his/her place.
5. A GUSRC School Representative will be entitled to attend SSLCs within their area. As a matter of courtesy, Class Representatives should advise the Head of School or Chair of the SSLC of their intended attendance prior to the meeting.

#### **11. GUSRC College Convenors and Postgraduate Convenors**

1. GUSRC College Convenors and Postgraduate Convenors are elected by the student body from a list of nominations received in accordance with the constitution of GUSRC.
2. GUSRC College Convenors and Postgraduate Convenors have membership of the GUSRC Council and Council Committee<sup>3</sup>
3. GUSRC College Convenors and Postgraduate Convenors liaise with students who have been elected as School, Class or PGR representatives. They are required to convene a meeting at least twice a year with the School, Class and PGR representatives.
4. The GUSRC College Convenor and Postgraduate Convenors have the right to attend College meetings or Graduate School Committees and to appoint a deputy to attend if necessary.
5. Where the GUSRC Postgraduate Convenor is not a PGR student they are permitted to invite a PGR Representative to relevant committees
6. A GUSRC College Convenor or GUSRC Postgraduate Convenor will be entitled to attend SSLCs within their area. As a matter of courtesy, Class, School or PGR Representatives should advise the Head of School or Chair of the SSLC of their intended attendance prior to the meeting.

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<sup>2</sup> See diagram of GUSRC structure in Appendix 2

## **Appendix 1 – Guidelines on the Operation of SSLCs**

### **1. Remit and Membership of the Staff-Student Liaison Committee**

#### *1.1 Remit*

Each SSLC should have a formal written remit, which should be reviewed annually to ensure that it provides the opportunity for the discussion of current learning, teaching and research issues.

Schools and Graduate Schools are expected to publish the remit of the SSLC.

The SSLC may discuss any business relating to the overall student learning or research experience including matters raised by students and matters on which the Subject, Schools or Graduate Schools wishes to seek student views. The following topics are typical of items that can appear on the agenda of an SSLC:

- The development of new or review of existing courses/programmes
- The outcomes of student evaluation of courses and Subject, Schools or Graduate Schools responses to any issues raised
- Assessment criteria, assessment deadlines and the adequacy of feedback
- The adequacy of learning resources (eg learning accommodation, timetables, reading lists, library resources etc)
- Quality of teaching
- Student support and guidance procedures
- The research student experience
- Employability and transferable skills development
- Annual Monitoring Reports and the responses from the School/College and the University in relation to identified issues
- Internal reviews of the subject (e.g. Periodic Subject Reviews, Graduate School Reviews)
- Accreditation visits by professional, statutory and regulatory bodies
- Topics of 'discussion' from Student Voice

The SSLC should not discuss personal matters relating to individual students or members of staff. However, members of the committee should be reminded of alternative mechanisms through which such matters can be raised.

#### *1.2 Membership*

Students should normally make up the majority of the Committee.

Students should be consulted annually on whether they wish to assume responsibility for chairing the SSLC and on the method of appointing/electing the Chair. An identified member of staff should support a student Chair and may act as Vice-Chair.

The Chair and other office bearers should be elected or agreed by the SSLC at the first meeting of each academic year.

Class and PGR Representatives should NOT be appointed as Secretary of the SSLC



The Class or PGR Representatives should be published on Student Voice. Representative details may additionally be published on student noticeboards, and Subject, Schools or Graduate Schools websites to facilitate student interaction with those who represent them. Contact details and photographs should be included, subject to the permission of the relevant parties.

The staff membership should include members of staff with specific remits for Learning and Teaching and Student Support. Representatives from the Library, Careers Service, Learning & Teaching Centre, Research & Enterprise and other Student Services should be invited to attend meetings as appropriate.

## **2. Agenda and Minutes of the Meetings**

### *2.1 Agenda*

The person responsible for the production of the agenda should send a timely reminder about the forthcoming SSLC to members of the committee together with a note of the deadline for the receipt of agenda items.

### *2.2 Minutes*

Minutes should be taken at each meeting. The SSLC should identify agreed action points and assign them to specific individuals, with stated time lines/limits.

Minutes should be made available to all members of staff and all members of the relevant student body via Student Voice. Minutes may additionally be published on a dedicated noticeboard and the Subject, School or Graduate School website. Minutes of Subject SSLCs should be considered at the overarching School SSLC.

## **3. Conduct of the Meeting**

Staff should be aware that students might not be familiar with some of the commonly used jargon and acronyms and should try to avoid these where possible. Often a glossary of terms specific to the subject area can be helpful.

The Committee should agree action in response to issues raised, who will take it and by when, and receive reports on action taken at the next meeting. It is important to provide feedback to SSLCs and Class and PGR Representatives on action taken, and also on why it may not have been possible to progress an issue. In doing so, Schools and Graduate Schools can demonstrate that they are committed to the process and take students' issues seriously.

Actions and outcomes should be clearly posted on Student Voice as an 'Announcement' or as a resolution to an 'issue' which a Class or PGR Representative has raised (amending the status to 'complete').

Where an issue is 'complete' but no action is taken, this should also be announced on Student Voice with the reasons for no action clearly stated.

If an academic or Subject concern cannot be resolved at the SSLC, it should be referred to the School and/or College Learning and Teaching Committee or Graduate Studies Committee. In addition, unresolved issues which require the attention of the College or the wider University should be highlighted in the Annual Monitoring Report for the relevant course, courses or programme. Class and PGR Representatives may also raise their concerns with the appropriate GUSRC School Representative, College Convenor or GUSRC Postgraduate Convenor if they feel that an issue is not being dealt with appropriately or quickly enough.

## Appendix 2 – Student Representative Structure in the University of Glasgow

