



Strathclyde Students' Union & University of Strathclyde

Student Academic Representation Policy

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0. Glossary

Strath Union

The common term to denominate the University of Strathclyde Students' Association.

StrathReps

Collective term for students who represent their peers on matters affecting their student learning experience at Strathclyde at programme, subject, class or module level. In line with [the Student Learning Experience Model from sparqs](#), their scope in representation includes curriculum design; resources, environment and technologies, learning and teaching delivery, progression and achievement; assessment and feedback; community and belonging; student partnership; support and guidance; and organisation and management. In this regard, student representatives are partners in enhancement, not complaint-handlers, and work collaboratively with staff to improve the student learning experience implementing the student voice in the decision-making of the university with the support of Strath Union.

Student Executive Officers

Students democratically elected annually to represent all students within specific areas of their student learning experience. These representatives work full-time in this role at Strath Union, taking a formal break from their studies or commencing immediately after completing their studies.

Faculty Representatives

Students elected to represent all students within a faculty at undergraduate (UG), post-graduate taught (PGT), and postgraduate research (PGR) level.

Programme/Subject Representatives

A nominated student that represents students within a specific programme or year of study. This includes part-time, distance-learning, and online students.

Post-Graduate Research (PGR) Representatives

Student who represents postgraduate researcher students within a department, research group or other international research structures within their faculty.

Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC)

A formal committee bringing together students and staff to discuss and act on feedback related to the student learning experience within a specific programme, department, research area, faculty and other potential structures.

Strategic Alliance Framework

Annual joint agreement developed between the University Executive Team and the Student Executive Officers, outlining a shared intention of working in partnership and identifying opportunities for collaborative work to achieve impact and value for the student community.



1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Student Academic Representation Policy sets out a shared commitment between the University of Strathclyde and the University of Strathclyde Students' Association (Strath Union) to deliver an effective, inclusive and transparent system of student academic representation.
- 1.2 The policy formalises student academic representation as a core element of the University's quality assurance and enhancement processes and as a key mechanism through which student voice informs and effectively influences decision-making at all levels at the University of Strathclyde and Strath Union.
- 1.3 This policy establishes the roles, responsibilities and expectations of the University, Strath Union and student representatives, and establishes clear channels for communication, partnership work, and feedback.
- 1.4 The policy builds and complements existing joint agreements between Strath Union and the University of Strathclyde, including the annual [Strategic Alliance Framework](#) (SAF).
- 1.5 This policy aligns and builds from national legislation, frameworks, and sector guidance on student voice and partnership in Scottish higher education, including the Scottish Quality Enhancement Framework (QEF) and the principles and practice promoted by sparqs. It reflects Scotland's enhancement-led approach to quality and governance, and the expectation that students are active partners in shaping their educational experience.
- 1.6 Bahrain Campus is outside of the scope of this policy.

2. The Student Academic Representation System

2.1 General structure

- 2.1.1 The Student Academic Representation System at the University of Strathclyde is a semi-structured partnership framework that enables students to become active collaborators in shaping their learning experience through elected or appointed student representatives.
- 2.1.2 Student representation operates at programme, department, faculty and institutional level.
- 2.1.3 The purpose of the system is to:

- Ensure and empower student voice and engagement in decision-making concerning the students' learning experience at the University, respecting the democratic structures of Strath Union;
- Support continuous enhancement of learning, teaching, and assessment; and to
- Promote a culture of partnership, mutual respect and empowerment between student and staff.

2.1.4 As its basis, this system functions through student academic representatives gathering feedback from their peers and working in partnership with Strath Union and the University's staff to improve teaching, assessment, learning resources, and the overall academic experience (see Figure 1).

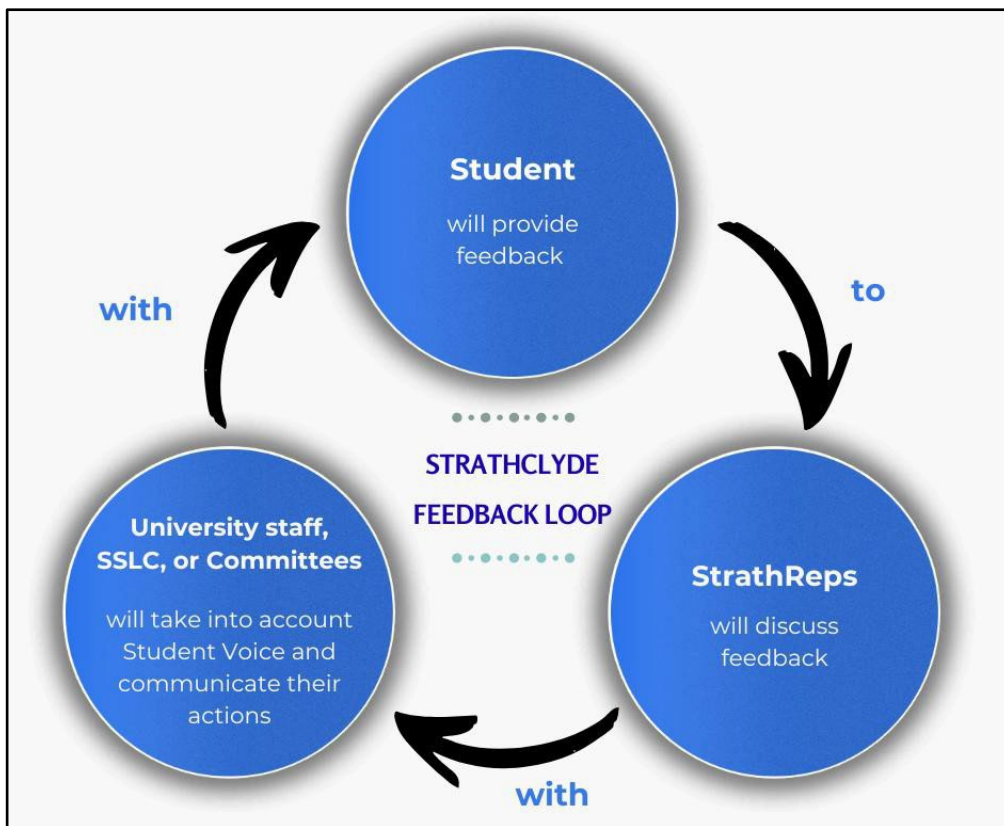


Figure 1: The elementary framework of Student Academic Representation at the University of Strathclyde.

2.1.5 The system aligns with the annual academic cycles, with periodic recruitment, training, engagement and evaluation. While the core principles apply across the University, there are slight variations between the different levels of study and student representation. Table 1 presents the general cycle for representatives for Undergraduate (UG) and Postgraduate Taught (PGT) programmes. The

representation of Post-graduate Researchers is outlined in Section 2.2, and Faculty and Institutional Representation is outlined in Section 2.3.

Table 1: Annual cycle and key milestones of the Student Academic Representation System

| Phase | Milestone actions | Timeframe | Notes |
|--|--|--|--|
| Pre-start of the Semester | Sharing of contacts, links and resources for the new academic year between the Union and the University | Before week 0 | Strath Union provides the induction and recruitment materials. The Education Enhancement team will ensure the input of the Strath Union on the teaching checklist. Faculties and their departments will share induction resources with students and relevant staff and provide their key contacts responsible for student voice to Strath Union. |
| Start of programme (January and September starts) and the start of each academic year | Recruitment of programme and department representatives University staff registering student representatives with Strath Union | Week 0-3 | Department and teaching staff lead the recruitment of programme representatives and send the contacts of representatives to Strath Union. |
| During Semester 1 and 2 | Training of student representatives Student representatives start their roles SSLCs take place Union and University collaborate to act upon student representatives' feedback | Week 3-11 from each semester | Strath Union leads the training of student representatives. Department and faculties partner, engage and act actively within the student representation system. |
| End of the Semester 2 | Recognition and provision of certificates to student representatives Evaluation of the academic year Teaching Excellence Awards and STAR Awards | Week 11 in semester 2 until the end of the academic year | Strath Union along with departments and faculties review student voice across the academic year and report to QAC. |



2.1.6 The roles, responsibilities, and expectations of University staff, Strath Union staff, and StrathReps within the student representation system are defined in the accompanying guidelines that support this policy.

2.2 Postgraduate Research Representation

2.2.1 Postgraduate Research (PGR) representation recognises the distinct nature of postgraduate research study compared to Undergraduate (UG) and Postgraduate Taught (PGT), including higher level of study, different study cycles, reduced or absence of taught experience, potential work supporting and teaching UG and PGT students.

2.2.2 PGR Representatives are nominated or elected within departments, research groups, or faculties, as appropriate.

2.2.3 PGR Representatives work in partnership with the PGR directors, research groups, departments, respective Associate Deans (PGR), faculties, Strathclyde Doctoral School and Strath Union to represent issues relating to PGR student experience. These includes research design; resources, environment and technologies; RPD / Development; progression and achievement; reviews and feedback mechanism; community and belonging; PGR partnership; support and guidance; and organisation and management (Strath Union's adaptation of Student Experience Model from sparqs to PGR studies).

2.2.4 PGR representation arrangements will align with University's doctoral governance and will be reviewed regularly in consultation with Strath Union and PGR representatives.

2.3 Institutional and Faculty Level Representation

2.3.1 At the institutional level, students are represented through elected student officers and representatives of Strath Union. Elected student officers include elected full-time Executive Officers, and twelve faculty representatives (one UG, PGT, and PGR representative per faculty), and Equality Officers.

2.3.2 Elected student officers hold seats on key University committees, depending on the cohort and area of the student learning experience that they represent and their annual appointment to different working group and committees. This active involvement of student representatives ensures an inclusive and holistic approach to the student learning experience putting students at the core the university's decision-making.



2.3.3 Student Executive officers are elected annually through democratic elections run by Strath Union and may serve a maximum of two academic years in the same sabbatical role.

2.3.4 Faculty Representatives are elected by students within their faculty and level of study. Elections for these roles take place annually and are managed by Strath Union.

3. Guiding Principles

3.1 Student representative roles are recognised as official representative positions by the University of Strathclyde and Strath Union.

3.2 All UG and PGT students will have at least one Programme/Subject Representative and one Faculty Representative for their level of study. More than one Programme Representative will be expected within large cohorts.

3.2.1 In the case of UGs and PGTs, the number of representatives needed per programme year will depend on the number of students within it. While not mandatory, the recommended ratios are the following:

- 1 - 49 students – one to two reps
- 49 -100 students – three reps
- 101-149 students – four reps
- 150+ students – five reps

3.3 PGRs will at least have a PGR representative at research group or department level.

3.4 Representation processes will be fair, transparent, inclusive, and accessible to all eligible students, including election of representatives.

3.4.1 All fully registered students in membership of Strath Union are able to stand for election for student academic representative positions for which they meet the criteria, whether it is belonging to the programme they represent or any other applicable criteria.

3.5 The Student Academic Representation Policy should be reviewed in collaboration between the University of Strathclyde and Strath Union every five years.

3.6 Removals of student representatives due to lack of engagement, disciplinary outcomes and any other acceptable grounds require the communication and approval of Strath Union. Removal and appointment of new student representatives ensure students continue to be adequately represented during the entire academic year.



4. Roles and Responsibilities of the University and Strath Union

4.1 Strath Union is committed to:

- Overseeing and supporting the student academic representation system through which student academic representatives can act upon and engage student feedback to improve their overall experience at the University of Strathclyde;
- Providing training, guidance and ongoing support to StrathReps; and
- Running annual elections for sabbatical and faculty level representatives

4.2 The University of Strathclyde is committed to:

- Maintaining active communication with Strath Union, including information of elections, contact details of student representatives and sharing minutes from SSLCs;
- Engaging and acting upon student feedback in order to monitor and enhance the quality of the student learning experience;
- Respecting and valuing the input of student academic representatives at relevant meetings and discussions;
- Appointing or electing students as programme/subject and department-level representatives; and
- Ensuring at least one Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) per department per semester. For these committees:
 - All programme/subject representatives of each department should receive an invitation and have access to the SSLC agenda at least a week in advance;
 - Programme representatives should have access to the minutes of previous SSLCs; and
 - Departments should share the minutes of the SSLCs to Strath Union.

4.3 For the adequate functioning of the student academic representation system, certain responsibilities need to be carried out by specific members of staff from both Strath Union and the University.

4.3.1 At Strath Union, the Senior Management Team and the Voice Team are responsible for the implementation and delivery of Strath Union work on academic representation.

4.3.2 At the University of Strathclyde, the responsibility of implementing and delivering the academic representation system is shared among multiple members of staff, depending on the level and type of student academic representation.

4.3.2.1 The University of Strathclyde is committed to assign staff members responsibilities at all levels of the student representation system to ensure Student Voice within its decision-making structures. The details of this assignation of responsibilities are outlined in Table 2.

Table 2: Commitment of roles and responsibilities towards the student representation system by the University of Strathclyde

| Level of study | Level of Representation | Responsible members of staff | Assigned Responsibilities |
|----------------|--------------------------|--|--|
| UG and PGT | Programme and Department | <p>Teaching staff and programme directors</p> | <p>Teaching staff is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting and promoting effective student representation within their teaching capacity. • Promoting the visibility of student representatives within the cohort they represent, which includes adding programme representatives to key communications and MyPlace pages. <p>Programme Directors or other relevant teaching staff are further responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring the timely recruitment and appointment of student representatives in accordance with agreed processes between Strath Union and the University. • Supporting and promoting effective student representation within their programme. • Ensuring that student voice mechanisms operate effectively and that feedback is considered within the programme, including all its modules. |
| | | <p>Department administrative staff</p> | <p>The designated Departmental Administrative Lead is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing Strath Union, within agreed timelines, with up-to-date contact details for relevant departmental staff responsible for student representation. • Providing contact details for all departmental student representatives within agreed timelines and provide updates when necessary. • Supporting the effective administration of the representation system at departmental level, |

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| | | | including the share of meeting minutes of each SSLC. |
| | | Department oversight assignee | Each Department must designate at least one academic staff member responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversight and support of UG and PGT SSLCs. • Ensuring that student voice is embedded within departmental governance and quality processes. |
| | Faculty | Faculty oversight assignee | Each Faculty must designate at least one senior member of staff responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic oversight and coordination of UG and PGT student voice within the Faculty. • Support the visibility of student representatives within the Faculty. • Working in partnership with Faculty student representatives and the Strath Union to enable effective student representation within the Faculty. • Ensuring student voice informs Faculty-level decision-making and quality enhancement processes. |
| PGR | Programme, research area and department | Supervisor and directors | PGR Directors are responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting and promoting effective student representation within their supervision and oversight capacity. • Promoting the visibility of PGR representatives within the cohort they represent. |
| | | Department assignee | Each Department must designate at least one academic staff member responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring the timely recruitment and appointment of student representatives in accordance with agreed processes between Strath Union and the University. • Oversight and support of PGR SSLCs (or equivalent forums). • Supporting PGR student representatives and ensuring PGR student voice is integrated into departmental governance structures. |
| | Faculty and Graduate Schools | Faculty and Graduate School assignee | Each Faculty must designate at least one senior member of staff responsible for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic oversight and coordination of PGR student voice within the Faculty. • Working in partnership with PGR Faculty student representatives to enable effective representation within the Faculty. • Ensuring PGR student feedback informs Faculty-level governance and research related decision-making. |



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| <p>UG, PGT and PGR</p> | <p>Institution</p> | <p>Deputy Associate Principals</p> <p>Director of Education Enhancement</p> <p>Director of Student Experience</p> <p>University Secretary</p> | <p>These roles are collectively responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting Student Representatives in University committees and institutional governance • Providing institutional oversight of student representation and student voice structures. • Ensuring alignment between student voice activity and institutional governance and internal and external quality assurance frameworks. • Working in partnership with Strath Union and institutional student representatives to support effective representation at university level. • Ensuring that institutional decision-making appropriately includes and responds to student feedback. |
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4.3.2.2 The University will share with Strath Union the responsible staff for the student academic representation at the department, faculty and institutional level each June, before the start of each academic year. If there are staff changes concerning responsibilities around the student academic representation, it should be communicated to Strath Union as soon as possible.

5. Data Protection and Information Governance

5.1 Personal data relating to student representatives will be handled in accordance with applicable data protection legislation and any documented Data Sharing Agreements (as applicable).

5.2 Personal data will be used solely for the purposes of supporting student academic representation and will be shared only with relevant staff, student representatives and partners where necessary. Only the minimum personal data necessary will be disclosed on University and Strath Union platforms, to enable students to identify their representatives, e.g. student representatives' full names and the cohort they represent.

6. Review and Monitoring

6.1 The University, in partnership with Strath Union, shall undertake an annual review of the Student Academic Representation System. This review will evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the Student Voice through both quantitative and qualitative measures and will inform ongoing enhancement and development of the framework.



6.2 This policy will be reviewed jointly by the University and Strath Union every five years, or sooner where required.

6.3 Ongoing monitoring will ensure the system remains effective, inclusive, and aligned with sector best practice.