Student Representation Policy

Introduction

1. Newcastle University’s Student Representation Policy is a collaboration between Newcastle University, its students and the Newcastle University Students’ Union (NUSU). The aim of the policy is to ensure that every Newcastle University student is represented in the University’s decision-making processes and that every student can contribute to the enhancement of their programme and learning experience.

2. This Policy is to be used by the University, NUSU and Student Representatives to guide the operation of Student Representation. This Policy applies to Undergraduate, Postgraduate Taught and Postgraduate Research students. This Policy will be made available to all students.

3. This document is to be implemented in conjunction with the Student-Staff Committee Constitution and Terms of Reference, Roles and Responsibilities: Course Representative and the Role and Responsibilities: School Representative documents. It is also supported by the Student-Staff Committee Schedule of Business, Student-Staff Committee Model Agenda, Staff Facilitator Role Description and the Student Representation Good Practice document.

Purpose and Key Principles

“In a University with a culture of ‘Working Together’, the education we offer is a joint endeavour involving all members of our University community, founded on principles of respect, mutuality and shared responsibility between the members of this community.”

(Newcastle University Education Strategy)

4. This Policy outlines the joint commitment between the University and NUSU to ensure that every Newcastle University student is represented in the University’s decision-making processes and that every student can contribute to the enhancement of their programme and learning experience. It is based on a shared responsibility for promoting an environment which empowers the student voice and a shared interest in promoting good practice in representation.

5. For the purposes of this Policy, ‘Student Representation’ is defined as those formal processes and structures that:

   a) Allow the student voice to be represented effectively at all levels of the University for the purposes of enhancing programmes of study and improving the student learning experience.

   b) Provide a mechanism for feeding back the outcomes of this representation.

6. The running of the Student Representation System is a joint commitment between the University and NUSU. As such, responsibility for the monitoring and evaluation of the Student Representation
System rests with the University Education Committee (UEC) Taught Programme Sub-Committee and Postgraduate Research Student Sub-Committee with support from the Learning and Teaching Development Service (LTDS) and NUSU.

7. In meeting this responsibility, the University and NUSU recognise that an effective Student Representation System will be student-led. Student Representatives will be expected to take responsibility for ensuring that the issues and concerns of the students that they represent are addressed appropriately and that actions and subsequent outcomes are communicated to the wider student body.

8. In meeting this responsibility, the University and NUSU recognise that the role of Student Representative is a prestigious one that provides individual Representatives with opportunities for personal development and the acquisition of valuable graduate skills. Training will be provided for all Student Representatives.

9. In meeting this responsibility, Heads of Academic Units will appoint a named Staff Facilitator to support and advise the Student Representatives in their Unit.

The Student Representation System

10. All students will be represented by Student Representatives on every programme of study, in every Academic Unit across all campuses and at University level as follows.

   a) Programme level:

      i. Course Representatives will attend the relevant Student-Staff Committee (SSC) within their Academic Unit. SSCs are encouraged to consider the appropriate number of Course Reps to ensure a representative and effective meeting. It is suggested that where possible, the total number of attendees is not greater than 20.

      ii. SSC Student Chairs (and Student Secretaries where there is interest) will lead the SSC and attend the appropriate Board of Studies (BoS) or School Postgraduate Research Committee meeting. Where appropriate, Course Reps are welcome to attend the BoS in place of Student Chairs and Secretaries.

   b) Academic Unit level:

      i. Taught School Representatives (one Undergraduate and one Postgraduate Taught position per Academic Unit) will attend the appropriate Faculty Education Committee.

      ii. Research School Representatives (one per Academic Unit) will attend the appropriate Faculty Postgraduate Research Committee and the PGR-Sub Committee of University Education Committee (UEC).

   c) University level:

      i. School Representatives will attend the NUSU Education Executive Committee (EEC) chaired by the NUSU Education Officer.

      ii. The Education Officer and one Postgraduate School Representative will attend UEC.
(See Fig. 1 for an organisational hierarchy of Newcastle University Student Representation Also see Student Staff Committee Constitution and Terms of Reference, and Roles and Responsibilities: School Representative).

Key logistical points

11. Academic Units will provide NUSU (rdm.union@ncl.ac.uk) with the name of each SSC’s Staff Facilitator by the first working day of October.

12. The appointment of Course Representatives reporting to the SSC will be facilitated by the Academic Unit. Ideally, Course Representatives would be elected by the student cohort that they represent, with elections facilitated by the Academic Unit. See: Guide to Electing Academic Reps.

13. Academic Units will provide NUSU (rdm.union@ncl.ac.uk) with the names and email addresses of Student Chairs, Student Secretaries (where appropriate) and Course Representatives as soon as possible to ensure sufficient time for all to be trained before the first SSC meeting of the year. For programmes starting in September, this should be no later than the first working day in November.

14. All Student Representatives must participate in induction training provided by NUSU to help them fulfil their role and Academic Units will encourage these Representatives to attend training.

15. Student Chairs (and Secretaries, where applicable) will be elected by the student members of those Committees.

16. SSCs will pass items for action to BoS via the Student Chairs and Secretaries. If an SSC identifies issues that cannot be addressed at the Academic Unit level these items will be reported to the relevant Faculty Education Committee or Faculty Postgraduate Research Committee via the relevant School Representative.

17. All School Representatives from each Faculty will meet prior to Faculty Education Committee/Faculty Postgraduate Research Committee meetings to identify issues to be raised based on feedback from SSCs and to consider the agenda. If School Representatives identify issues that cannot be addressed at Faculty level, then these issues will be reported to the Education Officer at EEC.

18. EEC will pass items for action to UEC via the Education Officer and Postgraduate Officer, who will be UEC members.
Figure 1. Organisational hierarchy of Newcastle University Student Representation.
The Student Representation Policy originally was approved by ULTSEC, April 2009, with revisions approved by UEC in July 2011, March 2014, July 2019 and June 2020. In March 2017 revisions were approved by SESC.

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<td>• Heads of Academic Units.</td>
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<td>• Staff Facilitators, SSC.</td>
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<td>• Chair, School Postgraduate Research Committees.</td>
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<td>• All Newcastle University students.</td>
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<td>• <a href="mailto:ltds@ncl.ac.uk">ltds@ncl.ac.uk</a>, x88491</td>
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<td>• Students’ Union Representation &amp; Democracy Manager, <a href="mailto:rdm.union@ncl.ac.uk">rdm.union@ncl.ac.uk</a>, 0191 239 3983</td>
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