Student Representation Policy

Introduction

1. Newcastle University’s Student Representation Policy is a partnership 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 document is to be implemented in conjunction with the Student-Staff Committee Constitution and Terms of Reference and the Roles and Responsibilities: School Representative. 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

3. This policy sets out the joint commitment of the University and NUSU to run an effective system of student representation and is built on a shared interest in promoting good practice in representation.

4. This policy is to be used by the University and NUSU to guide the operation of student representation mechanisms.

5. This policy, which addresses the operational aspects of the student representation process, will be made available to all students.

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)

6. Student representation provides students the opportunity to contribute to and enhance their programme and learning experience.

7. The University is committed to responding to student feedback, at all levels, in order to monitor and enhance the quality of the student learning experience. However, student representation is defined, for the purposes of this policy, 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, and

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

8. Student representation requires a collaborative culture in which the University, its students and NUSU have a shared responsibility for promoting an environment that empowers the student/learner voice.

9. In meeting this responsibility, the University and NUSU recognise that the role of student representative is a responsible and prestigious one, and that it provides individual representatives with opportunities for personal development and the acquisition of valuable graduate skills. Training will be provided for all such representatives.

10. In meeting this responsibility, the University and NUSU recognise that a successful Student Representation Programme will be student-led. Student representatives will be expected to attend training relevant to their role, to take responsibility for ensuring that 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.

11. In meeting this responsibility, a named Staff Facilitator, appointed by the Head of Academic Unit, will provide the student-led committee with support and advice, particularly on matters relating to University policy and procedure.

The Student Representation System

12. Student representatives will be on every programme, in every academic unit across all campuses and at University level as follows:

a. Programme level: Course Representatives, as many as appropriate with a target ratio of one Course Representative for every twenty students where applicable, will be members of relevant Student-Staff Committee (SSC), and the SSC Student Chairs (and Secretaries where applicable) will be members of Boards of Studies (BoS) or School Postgraduate Research Committees.

b. School level:

i. Taught students – Taught School Representatives (one undergraduate and one postgraduate taught per Academic Unit) will be on the appropriate Faculty Education Committee.

ii. Research students – Research School Representatives (one per Academic Unit) will be on the appropriate Graduate School Committee (GSC) and the PGR-Sub Committee of UEC.

c. University level:
i. The Education Officer and School Representatives will compose the NUSU Education Executive Committee (EEC).

ii. The Education Officer and one Postgraduate School Representative will be on the University Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee (UEC).

See Figure 1 for an organisational hierarchy of student representation. Also see Student-Staff Committee Constitution and Terms of Reference, and Roles and Responsibilities: School Representative.

13. Each of these representatives will seek the views of their student constituency on all relevant matters.

14. SSCs will pass items for action to BoS or other relevant bodies via the Student Chairs and Secretaries. If a SSC identifies issues that cannot be addressed at Programme level, these items will be reported to the relevant Faculty Education Committee or GSC via the relevant School Representative.

15. All School Representatives from each Faculty will meet prior to Faculty Education Committee/GSC 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.

16. EEC will pass items for action to UEC via the Education Officer and one Postgraduate School Representative, who will be UEC members.

17. All student representatives will ensure that actions taken and their outcomes are reported back to the students that they represent.

18. Facilitated by the School, student members of the SSC will be elected by the student community that they represent.

19. Student Chairs (and Secretaries, where applicable) of SSCs will be elected by the student members of those committees. Wherever possible, elections will take place at the final meeting of the academic year for the following year.

20. SSCs will have a Student Chair and a student majority. SSCs also should elect a Student Secretary, where there is interest in this position. The named Staff Facilitator will support student Chairs and Secretaries. Academic Units will provide NUSU with the name of each SSC’s Staff Facilitator by the first working day of October.

21. All student representatives must participate in induction training provided by NUSU to help them fulfil their role. Academic Units will provide NUSU (rdm.union@ncl.ac.uk) with the names and email addresses of Student Chairs, Student Secretaries and Course Representatives by the first working day in November and will encourage these representatives to attend training. Academic Units are encouraged to supply names of Student Chairs, Student Secretaries and Course Representatives as soon as possible to ensure sufficient time for all to be trained before the first SSC meeting of the year.
22. The Taught Programme Sub-Committee and the Postgraduate Research Student Sub-Committee will oversee delivery of the principles of this policy with support from Learning and Teaching Development Service and NUSU and will be responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of the representation structure.
The Student Representation Policy originally was approved by ULTSEC, April 2009, with revisions approved by ULTSEC in July 2011 and March 2014. In March 2017 revisions were approved by SESC.
Representative of LTDS and NUSU agreed minor updates in March 2016.
Document last modified by LTDS, July 2018

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<td>• Heads of Academic Units</td>
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<td>• Staff Facilitators, SSC</td>
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<td>• Student Representatives</td>
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<td>• Directors/Heads of Excellence in Learning and Teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>• <a href="mailto:ltds@ncl.ac.uk">ltds@ncl.ac.uk</a>, x83978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<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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