UCL Academic Manual 2018-19
Chapter 9: Quality Review Framework

Section 6: Student Academic Representation

6.1 Introduction

1. UCL Regulation for Management 11.1 provides as follows: *"In each academic Department [1] there shall be at least one departmental Staff-Student Consultative Committee (SSCC). Each Staff-Student Consultative Committee shall meet at least twice in each academic year. The Head of Department shall ensure that the constitution and the procedures of this Committee are acceptable to the staff and the students of the Department or Faculty. The minutes of each meeting of each such Consultative Committee shall be forwarded to Academic Services."*
2. The purpose of student academic representation is to enable partnership working between students and staff throughout UCL. Through their representatives, all students' voices should shape and influence the work of their departments, their faculties, and UCL.
3. Arrangements for academic representation are overseen by the Student Academic Representation Steering Group, with membership from UCL departments, faculties, professional services, and the Students' Union. The Student Academic Representation Steering Group reports to Research Degrees Committee and Education Committee.
4. Academic representation at UCL is conducted in partnership with the Students' Union, who shall:
   i) Ensure effective promotion of representative roles together with faculties and departments. Provide induction training for representatives, and further opportunities which support them in their role.
   ii) Ensure information is available to students and staff on who holds representative positions, and to provide contact information where appropriate.
   iii) To provide guidance for both students and staff, including relevant information, support, and examples of best practice.

6.2 Committee Structure and Process

1. Each Department shall normally have one SSCC. A Department may wish to establish a separate SSCC for postgraduate or research students where the membership of the Departmental SSCC would otherwise be too large.

2. Meetings with representatives at a programme level, though encouraged, do not constitute SSCC meetings, except in the case of inter-departmental programmes (see 6.9). Departments should avoid complex SSCC structures that disperse students' voices.
3. The minutes of SSCC meetings and feedback from representatives should be a standing item for discussion on the agenda of the Department's Teaching Committee (and/or doctoral-education equivalent).
4. The Department should ensure that its calendar of committee meetings facilitates timely discussion of issues raised by SSCCs.

6.3   Appointment of Representatives

1. Departments should appoint representatives for each of the following:
   i)   At least one representative for each year-group in each taught programme of study. Where appropriate, each representative may instead be appointed to represent a linked cluster of taught programmes.
   ii)   At least one representative for early years research students (students in their first or second years) and for later years research students (students in their third year or beyond), or the equivalent periods for part-time research students.
   iii) For programmes offered on a part-time basis, there should be at least one part-time representative for the programme.
2. Programmes with large year groups should consider appointing more than one representative per year group. Departments with a small number of programmes should consider appointing representatives for different pathways or specialisms within that programme.
3. All representatives should be members of an SSCC; the role should not be split between multiple students, nor should different representatives be invited to attend different meetings of the same SSCC.
4. All representatives should normally be appointed by process of election, except where this is not possible or there is insufficient interest in the role. Elections should include a 'Re-Open Nominations' (RON) option to encourage and support the accountability of representatives to the students they represent.
5. The appointment of representatives should be completed by the close of the October appointment schedule which is agreed and circulated by the Student Academic Representation Steering Group in advance of each academic session. The details of representatives should be reported to the Students' Union via the designated contact in the Faculty.
6. Should a representative step down during their term of office prior to the term two reading week, the representative should be replaced by any method approved by the SSCC Co-Chairs.
7. The SSCC may choose to co-opt additional representatives to ensure a diverse membership which can effectively reflect students' views and perspectives.
8. Any co-opted or replacement representative's details should be reported to the Students' Union via the Faculty in the same manner as during appointment of the Student Academic Representatives in October.
9. All departments should take steps to ensure their representatives attend training arranged by the Students' Union as part of taking up their role.
10. The term of office for each representative is 12 months from the date of their appointment in October, or the end of their studies, whichever is sooner. At the close of each students' term of office, the role should be re-elected.
11. Any representative appointed at a later date through replacement or co-option will also end their term of office in October. SSCC meetings in advance of the October appointment of representatives may utilise the returning membership of the SSCC.

6.4   Staff Student Consultative Committee Meetings

1. SSCC membership in each department will be set following consultation between students and departmental staff but must include the following:

i) Head of Department (or Deputy)/Programme Director/Senior member of academic staff
ii) At least one member of staff responsible for undergraduate students
iii) At least one member of staff responsible for taught Masters students*
iv) At least one member of staff responsible for research students*
v) All student academic representatives in the department
vi) Where relevant, a committee member of an academic society based in the department

   May not be required where there is a separate committee graduate or research-student SSCC.

2. Each SSCC will have joint Co-Chairs, one student and one staff member, who are responsible for agreeing each meeting's agenda. The student Co-Chair should be the Lead Department Representative, who will be appointed by a process specified by the Student Academic Representation Steering Group.
3. Departments will nominate a member of professional service staff responsible for each SSCC, who will act as secretary. SSCC minutes should clearly indicate who has attended, and their role in relation to the Committee.
4. Staff membership of the SSCC should not form a majority.
5. An SSCC should meet a minimum of at least three times in each academic year (typically once per term). The Co-Chairs will be responsible for assessing whether further meetings would be useful.
6. The agenda shall be circulated to all SSCC members normally at least one week before the date of a meeting of a Committee. The agenda should also be made available to all students via a Department webpage, Moodle or any other appropriate method.
7. Where the Co-Chairs agree, the agenda points in 6.5 can be adapted to suit any SSCCs that have more specific needs, particularly postgraduate SSCCs.
8. The unconfirmed minutes of an SSCC meeting, as approved by the Co-Chairs, should be displayed to all students via a Department webpage, Moodle or any other appropriate method within ten working days of the meeting. These minutes should also be emailed to sscc@ucl.ac.uk within this timeframe.

6.5   SSCC Terms of Reference

1. To act as a focal point of student engagement and partnership in the Department, bringing staff and students together to celebrate successes, to reflect on challenges, and to jointly identify priorities for change in the future.
2. To report on priorities and agreed actions to the Department Teaching Committee (and/or doctoral-education equivalent), and to make recommendations where appropriate.
3. To ensure joint student and staff discussion at least once during every Academic Session of:
   i) Information relating to internal and external systems of accountability, to include:
      a) Professional, statutory and regulatory body reports and Department responses to recommendations
      b) External examiners' reports and Department responses to recommendations
   ii) Teaching (including dissemination of good practice and programme/module evaluation)
   iii) Outcomes of student evaluations e.g. Module surveys, NSS, and action plans arising from these
   iv) New and revised programme developments
   v) Assessment and feedback
   vi) Organisation and management (including timetabling and Departmental processes)
   vii) Learning resources (including library, IT and other teaching/learning resources)
   viii) Employment, employability and personal development
   ix) Personal tutoring
   x) Student-led projects or events, including UCL ChangeMaker projects

xi) The effectiveness of the SSCC and the actions of the Students' Union and Departments in response to it

xii) The priorities and actions of the Department Teaching Committee (and/or research-education equivalent)

xiii) Opportunity for the Department Representative to report on meetings they have attended at the Faculty level

4. To facilitate greater communication between students and staff, and report key actions, discussions and recommendations to the wider student body.
5. To identify and address areas of concern to students and staff.
6. To identify and disseminate examples of good practice.
7. To enable the engagement of students through their representatives with processes to enhance students' experiences, such as the Annual Student Experience Review, and the development of strategies to support research students' experiences.

6.6   Lead Department Representatives

1. The Department will be responsible for the appointment of the Lead Department Representative through a process specified by the Student Academic Representation Steering Group.
2. The Lead Department Representative(s) will be responsible for leadership of the SSCC, ensuring the effectiveness of students' voices in influencing and shaping their learning experiences.
3. The Lead Department Representative(s) should be invited to join their Departmental Teaching Committee (and/or doctoral-education equivalent). Other student representatives may also be invited where appropriate.
4. Where appropriate, the Lead Department Representative can be called upon to attend departmental and Faculty meetings to represent the SSCC. They can also take chair's action to approve changes to policies and documents that require action before an SSCC can be convened. Where such action is taken, the Lead Department Representative must be allowed time to consult with the SSCC to gain wider student feedback and the chair should provide a full report to the next formal SSCC meeting.
5. Any Faculty with only one Department is not required to appoint a Lead Department Representative. For such faculties, the duties of the Lead Department Representative should be carried out by the Faculty Representative(s).

6.7   Faculty Representatives

1. The Students' Union will be responsible for the election of Faculty Representatives for each Faculty.
2. The Faculty Representative(s) will be responsible for the leadership of representatives in the Faculty, ensuring the effectiveness of students' voices in influencing and shaping their departments. They will also represent their Faculty in institution-wide forums and the Students' Union.
3. The Faculty Representative(s) should be invited to join their Faculty Teaching Committee (or doctoral-education equivalent). Other student representatives may also be invited where appropriate.

6.8   Faculty Academic Representative Forums

1. Each faculty should operate a forum which brings together faculty staff, Faculty representatives, and the Lead Department Representatives (or their nominee) from each SSCC in the faculty.
2. The purpose of this forum will be to identify shared priorities within the faculty and any action required to address such priorities, and to involve students with faculty decision-making. The Faculty Teaching Committee, Faculty Research Degrees Committee and/or the Faculty Representatives may additionally wish to utilise the forum as a sounding board where they identify a need for greater student involvement with particular matters.

3. A staff lead for the forum should be established, who should be a member of the Faculty Teaching Committee and/or the Faculty Research Degrees Committee. The staff lead and the Faculty Representatives will be responsible for agreeing the agenda and format of each meeting.
4. This forum should meet at least twice each year.
5. Faculties may wish to operate more than one forum to cover different levels of study.
6. The format of this forum is not required to be a committee meeting, and creative approaches to considering business are encouraged, i.e. workshop-style items.
7. A record of each meeting should be taken and circulated to attendees. This may be in the form of summary notes rather than formal minutes.

6.9 Interdepartmental Degree Programmes

1. Degree programmes that are inter-departmental (with contributions from more than two Departments) are required to have a separate, programme-based, SSCC. UCL's Regulations for Management 11.2 and 11.3 provide as follows:

    11.2 Subject to the provisions of Regulation 11.3 below, there shall be, for each combined studies degree programme operating within UCL and involving more than two Departments of UCL, an SSCC, which shall meet at least twice in each academic year. The academic staff responsible for the co-ordination of such a degree programme shall ensure that the constitution and procedures of this committee are acceptable to the staff and students involved in the degree programme. The minutes of each meeting of each such committee shall be forwarded to Academic Services.

    11.3 Where the academic staff responsible for the co-ordination of a combined studies degree programme operating within UCL and involving more than two Departments of UCL consider that it will not be appropriate for a separate Staff-Student Consultative Committee to operate for the degree programme in question, those staff shall ensure that the views of students following the programme can be expressed instead either through (i) the Staff-Student Consultative Committees of the Departments concerned, as prescribed in Regulation 11.1, or through (ii) an annual meeting which all students following the programme shall be invited to attend, or through both (i) and (ii).