

## **Staff Student Liaison Committees**

### **Guidance for Chairs and members**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

- (a) Participation and feedback from students are central to effective quality assurance of courses and programmes and Staff Student Liaison Committees are a key forum for student engagement in the School.
- (b) Effectiveness of SSLCs relies on the participation of students and the visibility of outcomes. Examples of good practice include high levels of student representation and engagement in meetings.

#### **4.2 General Guidance**

- (a) The Departmental Tutor is responsible for arranging a termly meeting of the departmental undergraduate SSLC. For taught graduate and research students' SSLCs a member of academic staff would normally organise the meeting e.g. a Programme Director or the Doctoral Programme Director. Administrative staff from the Department would normally service the Committee.
- (b) Smaller Departments may wish to combine taught Masters' and research students' SSLC meetings.
- (c) It is open to the SSLC to agree that a student or member of staff should chair the meeting and act as secretary.
- (d) The meeting will receive copies of the minutes from the previous meeting. In presenting the minutes, the Chair should give an account of what actions have been taken since the last meeting on items/actions which do not appear on the agenda as separate items. This is particularly important for new members of the SSLC who do not know the history surrounding some issues.
- (e) The Secretary shall ensure that discussion and decisions are communicated with other Departments where they affect students studying programmes outside the home Department
- (f) The Academic Registrar's Division will review SSLC minutes and contact Departments in order to facilitate onward referral of items which may be of School-wide interest. Chairs are welcome to contact the Head of the Student Services Centre in this regard.

#### **4.3 Agenda items and indicative business**

- (a) It is expected that the agenda will include items which provide the opportunity for students to discuss all aspects of teaching and their research. This can include comments on the quality of teaching in lectures and classes, as well as Library, IT or other support services. It can include positive comments, criticisms or suggestions for improvement which are a key feature of SSLCs: However, meetings should also include regular items as in (b), (c) and (d) below. Please note that issues relating to individual student cases are outside the scope of SSLCs.
- (b) Regular agenda items for Michaelmas Term meetings should include:
  - the terms of reference, membership and Guidance for members and Chairs of SSLCs;

- External Examiner comments from Part C of the External Examiner report on Undergraduate and Taught Graduate programmes. (n.b. this was requested by the QAA as an outcome of the Institutional Audit in 2011);
  - orientation feedback;
  - update on proposals and effectiveness of programme and course changes;
  - use of feedback meetings/office hours;
  - NSS participation (for final year Undergraduate students);
  - International Student Barometer survey (ISB) – when LSE has participated;
  - Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) – when LSE has participated.
- (c) Regular agenda item for Lent Term meetings:
- mechanisms for feedback to students on work.
- (d) Other regular agenda items to be included at appropriate meetings
- new course/programme proposals;
  - proposals to modify a course/programme;
  - TQARO course survey results (after assuring no risk to confidentiality);
  - TLAC survey results.

#### 4.4 Membership

- (a) There should be at least one student representative per year of each programme. Where possible, this principle should be interpreted in relation to the number of students in each programme and department.

*Illustration: Department X has two programmes: A with 60 students (20 per year) and B with 30 students (10 per year). As a minimum, Programme A might have 3 representatives (one per year) and Programme B might have 1 representative on the SSLC.*

This model can be varied, for example, all students on small programmes may be invited to attend and the above model can be scaled up for very large programmes.

Membership should include representatives from Joint, Dual and Double degree programmes.

- (b) Staff membership is not prescribed but would normally include the following:
- Departmental tutor (undergraduate);
  - Programme director/research students tutor;
  - Departmental manager;
  - Departmental administrator and/or minute-taker.

The Chair may invite other academic staff teaching on the programme to attend.

#### 4.5 Election of student members

- (a) The Departmental Tutor or other designated senior staff member in the Department with responsibility for convening the SSLC is also responsible for arranging student membership.
- (b) Student representatives should normally be elected to the SSLC. However, this may be difficult for first year students who do not know each other. Where an election isn't possible, selection by appropriate staff may be necessary.

- (c) It may be helpful to publicise the role via departmental social media or other means before the start of the year.
- (d) Where possible programme representatives should be elected/selected by the end of week 4 in the Michaelmas term. All students should be aware of the opportunity to become a programme representative and the procedure should be clear and transparent.
- (e) Elections should be publicized in a number of ways e.g. at Departmental Orientation, by e-mail or on the departmental website.
- (f) Names and email addresses of programme representatives should be sent to the Student Services Centre by the beginning of Week 6 in Michaelmas term.

#### 4.6 Frequency of meetings and notification

- (a) A minimum of one meeting should be scheduled in Michaelmas and Lent terms and an additional meeting should be scheduled in the Summer Term if required. Members may agree to hold a 'virtual' meeting in the Summer term if necessary.
- (b) SSLC meeting dates and times should be publicly displayed on the departmental website and publicised via Moodle or by other methods at least one week in advance of the meeting. It is recommended that an administrator should also send an email to all students taking a programme in the department to alert them to the meeting. Dates and times of SSLCs should be confirmed as early as possible in the year.

#### 4.7 Timing of meetings

- (a) SSLC meetings should precede the relevant meeting of the Student Consultative Forum to allow items to be referred from SSLCs to the Forum. The Undergraduate and Taught Graduate Fora meetings take place in week 8 of Michaelmas term and Week 7 of Lent Term. Summer term meetings may be held at the discretion of the Deans. The Research Students' Consultative Forum usually meets in Week 9 of Michaelmas term, Week 7 of Lent term and Week 2 of Summer term.
- (b) The following schedule for sending minutes to the Secretary of the appropriate Forum will ensure that SSLC items can be included in the Forum agenda.

Term	Undergraduate	Taught Graduate	Research
Michaelmas	Week 7	Week 7	Week 8
Lent	Week 6	Week 6	Week 6
Summer	Often a 'virtual' Forum meeting. (SSLC minutes may not be required)	Week 3 (SSLC minutes may not be required)	Week 1

#### 4.8 Minutes

- (a) SSLC minutes should be forwarded to the Secretary of the appropriate Consultative Forum before they are ratified by the Chair. This allows issues to be raised promptly and reduces delays in taking action. Contact details can be found at the following websites.

[Research Students' Consultative Forum](#)

[Undergraduate and Taught Graduate Consultative Fora](#)

- (b) SSLC minutes are ratified at the following SSLC meeting and should then be available to all students electronically. This can be by a variety of methods e.g. posted on the SSLC section of the departmental website or via Moodle.

#### **4.9 Monitoring**

The Academic Registrar's Division will review the operation of SSLCs every three years to ensure that SSLCs are operating within this guidance and to give an opportunity for sharing good practice. The outcomes of the review will be reported to the Student Affairs Committee. The first review will be in the 2014-2015 academic year.

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