

## **Code of practice for student representation**

The University and Students' Union are jointly committed to operating and supporting an effective system of student representation throughout all levels of University governance, thus ensuring that students have input on quality and enhancement at City University.

This code is underpinned by a number of principles; non-negotiable aspects of the approach to representation systems. Implementation of these principles is essential in ensuring that the system is robust and that there is appropriate parity of experience across the University.

Additionally, the code of practice expands upon the principles and encompasses good practice guidelines which provide more detail and build on evidence of effective practice from both within the University and from the wider HE sector. The various roles that representatives undertake are outlined at the end of this document.

### **Principles**

- For each programme of study, a committee or equivalent forum should exist to provide an opportunity to discuss matters impacting upon the student experience.
- For each School, a committee or equivalent forum should exist to provide an opportunity for students to participate in wider discussions about the student experience. These forums should have significant student representation and will report to University Student Affairs Committee.
- Student committees (or equivalents) must be anchored to formal decision-making structures within the Schools. This is essential in order that action can take place and, where action is not possible, that there are clear structures for these issues to be escalated.
- Representatives must be elected by their peers to represent the interests of their fellow students, and special consideration should be given to ensuring that the views of all students are represented including research students, part-time students, and those students on combined/ joint/ multi-disciplinary programmes.
- The election of programme representatives will be timely, democratic and operated according to Students' Union guidance.
- Mechanisms must exist to record student input and respond on action taken, or not taken. A written record is vital to maintain some continuity from year to year, to demonstrate responsiveness to matters raised and to ensure that new representatives can be aware of issues discussed in previous years.
- Student representatives must be supported in gathering relevant information, and in the dissemination of information to the wider student body.
- Student representatives should be encouraged to take an active role in all meetings and where they cannot attend, they should be invited to submit a written report for the meeting.
- Students will be recognised, valued, and rewarded for undertaking this role.
- The Students' Union should be provided with the names and contact details of all student representatives and the Schools should actively encourage engagement of the representatives with the Students' Union.

## **Good Practice Guidelines**

### **School/Department Level**

It is recommended that Schools/Departments:

- Brief all students on the role of representatives and to give them opportunity to stand for election within 3 weeks of commencing the academic year.
- Provide details of the elected representatives, including names and contact details, to the Students' Union within 4 weeks of the start of the academic year.
- Ensure appropriate committees are in place and elected student representatives, including representatives as defined in the Students' Union Constitution - i.e. programme representatives and the School Representation Officer (SRO) - are invited to attend these meetings.
- Invite SROs and programme representatives to the School Student Affairs Committee (or equivalent) and other School-level committees, as appropriate.
- Work alongside the Students' Union in promoting training for representatives and the use of the Student Representatives Handbook.
- Ensure that the views of student representatives are recorded, reported and acted on as necessary, and feedback is offered on progress.
- Identify a member of staff to act as a student representative liaison for both student representatives and the Students' Union.
- Assist the student representatives in contacting the student body so that they may request information from the students on issues relating to the University and the student experience.
- Assist representatives with disseminating information to the wider student body.
- Support and encourage representatives to actively participate in meetings by:
  - Ensuring meetings are, as far as possible, at times that are suitable to the representatives.
  - Briefing students on the purpose of the committee and providing them with the terms of reference and a written record from previous meetings of issues raised and actions taken.
  - Giving the representatives the opportunity to submit papers/agenda items.
  - Circulating agendas and papers in good time.
  - Providing briefings on any complex issues or issues of particular importance to the students.
  - Providing the representatives with the contact details of a member of staff to whom they can approach for support in relation to their role (i.e. the committee Chair and/or Secretary).

### **University Level**

The University should:

- Maintain appropriate policies and frameworks to support student input, and will make relevant resources available to support representation systems.
- Work with the Students' Union in identifying an appropriate incentives scheme for SROs and programme representatives.
- Produce a handbook for student representatives in conjunction with the Students' Union, the funding of which will be shared.
- Invite Students' Union elected officers, including the Sabbatical Officers and SROs, to attend the Student Affairs Committee.

- Promote the participation of student representatives in committees by giving the representatives the opportunity to make verbal and written reports.
- Encourage chairs and secretaries of committees to be available for students to discuss any issues in advance of the meeting to ensure they understand all relevant information.
- Ensure that the views of students are recorded, reported and acted upon as necessary.
- Work in partnership with the Students' Union and maintain oversight for and development of arrangements for student representation throughout the University.
- Monitor governance arrangements to ensure involvement of students is facilitated at all appropriate levels.

### **Students' Union**

The Students' Union should:

- In partnership with the University, maintain oversight for and development of arrangements for student representation.
- Produce a handbook for student representatives in conjunction with the University, the cost of which will be shared.
- Provide training for student representatives.
- Provide on-going support and guidance to student representatives.
- Report annually to the University on the experience of student representatives and to identify any issues of concern.
- Work with Schools in providing adequate support for their student representatives.

### **Students**

It is recommended that student representatives:

- Speak for the students that they represent – to actively seek out the views of those students.
- attend meetings
- Work with programme teams, Schools, and the Students' Union to circulate information to the wider student body.
- undertake training provided by the Students' Union
- Provide feedback to the Students' Union and the University on their experience of the representation systems.

Approved: September 2009