

## **Course Management Committees and the role of Student Academic Representatives**

### **1 Preamble**

- 1.1 The following policy relates to all courses provided by the University, whether delivered by the University or through a partner organisation, and sets out the essential principles and mechanisms for assuring the effective quality management of courses.
- 1.2 The policy relates to the University strategic objective of providing an outstanding student experience and the key institutional risks of: failure to provide an outstanding experience, leading to decline in levels of recruitment, retention and achievement, and student satisfaction (2); failure to achieve (and meet the needs of) a diverse student population (3); and poor quality assessments (8).
- 1.3 The intended audience for the policy is students and academic staff. The policy is for implementation from the start of 2010/11.

### **2 Principles**

- 2.1 Students are participating partners in their learning experience and therefore should have a transparent and direct role in informing course management decisions.
- 2.2 Course Management Committees (CMC) are the formal means by which operational management and quality enhancement of courses are demonstrated across the University. Given this role, and its membership of both staff and Student Academic Representatives, the CMC is ideally situated to focus discussions which will ultimately inform the Course Annual Evaluation report.
- 2.3 This specification for the role of a CMC does not preclude the operation and function of any other formal or informal group.
- 2.4 Course Management Committees should meet at least twice per academic year during timetabled semesters to facilitate student attendance. Meetings should result in brief minutes and action points, and should be circulated following approval to Heads of Institute, students and all members of staff teaching on relevant courses.
- 2.5 Full details of the terms of reference and operation of CMCs can be found in Annex 1 below.

### **3 The Student Academic Representatives (StARs) System**

- 3.1 The following outlines the minimum requirements of the StARs system across the University. The role of StARs is available separately.
- 3.2 All awards offered by the University, wherever delivered, will involve the engagement of at least two StARs per academic level. There is no requirement that each *course* has a specific StAR and it may well be the case that a StAR represents a number of courses under a common umbrella of courses/awards determined by Heads of Institutes (or nominees) and communicated to the Students' Union.

- 3.3 In the case of existing courses, at least two StARs per level should be elected, at least four weeks prior to the end of the academic year before they take up their post.
- 3.4 For new courses, and in the case of appointing StARs for the first level of a course, at least two StARs should be elected by their peers by the end of the designated "StARs Election Fortnight".
- 3.5 Election should be through a self-nomination and peer endorsement process, ideally via a vote with a number of candidates.
- 3.6 Course Leaders should input the details of successfully appointed StARs onto the SOLE page as soon as possible, so that students can find out who their StARs are and the Students' Union can make contact with StARs and ensure they have the necessary training and support.
- 3.7 Training will be organised and provided by the Students' Union in partnership with the University. There will be at least one training event per semester, each involving at least one member from each Institute to brief StARs on specific internal structures (eg. specific responsibilities with regard to groups other than Course Management Committees). StARs are encouraged to attend training and to record their attendance at training courses as well as their activities in their role in V-Records, StARs Accreditation Records and/or as evidence linked to the Worcester Award.
- 3.8 Training will be led by the Students' Union who will also be the first point of contact for ongoing support and guidance. The Vice President Education and the Membership Services Manager have specific responsibility for supporting academic representatives.
- 3.9 There will be at least two Institute Reps per academic institute, recruited and selected by the StAR Coordinator and the Students' Union. Institute Reps will be recruited from the pool of current StARs in Semester 2, so that they can take up their roles in the following academic year.

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Author of the document: Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement, Students' Union

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## Course Management Committees

### Membership

Course Leader/Programme Manager

All academic staff who teach on the course/module leaders for modules contributing to the course\*

Student Academic Representatives\*

In the case of courses delivered by partners, the University Link Tutor

The above represents the core minimum membership; where appropriate formal membership may also include:

Employer representatives

Partner representatives

External advisors.

It may be appropriate to invite other members of the University as appropriate, for example members of ILS or Registry Services.

Good practice suggests that the CMC Chair be a rotational post, not limited to staff alone.

*\* where courses involve a large number of teaching staff and/or Student Academic Representatives, attendance at meetings may be limited for pragmatic reasons. In such cases papers, or at least an annotated agenda, and minutes (which may be largely in the form of action points), should be clearly communicated to staff and Student Academic Representatives before and after the meeting. Ultimately, it is fundamental that there should be evidence of student input and feedback to student participants.*

### Minimum terms of reference

- 1 To be responsible for the maintenance of the academic standards of the award(s) and the quality of the student experience in accordance with University policies and procedures.
- 2 To inform and consider the course Annual Evaluation report and monitor progress in relation to the Enhancement Plan.
- 3 To consider reports from external examiners, Professional, Statutory and/or Regulatory Bodies, and internal reviews, and determine responses as appropriate.
- 4 To consider feedback from students including, but not limited to National Student Survey results, outcomes of any institutional student experience survey and module evaluations.
- 5 To keep under review the course(s) and seek approval for change through the appropriate mechanisms.
- 6 To oversee the recruitment and admission of students to the course(s).
- 7 To oversee students' progress and achievement on the course(s).
- 8 To oversee overall patterns of recruitment, retention/progression and performance on the courses(s).
- 9 To monitor the progress of students, including in relation to work placements or work-based learning.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This may be delegated to an individual member of staff and/or dealt with in reserved business if it involves the progress review of named students.

## Sample Agenda for Course Management Committees

This sample agenda is intended to provide guidance on the items over and above course planning and operational issues, which are likely to appear on course management committee agendas over the course of an academic year. It ensures that the minimum terms of reference noted above are covered in any academic year. Not all matters need be considered at every meeting.

It is considered good practice to seek agenda items well in advance of each meeting from all participants, including Student Academic Representatives.

### AGENDA

- 1 Apologies for absence
- 2 Minutes of previous meeting
- 3 Matters Arising
- 4 Communications from the Chair

*It is recommended that Chairs use this item to notify the committee of a wide range of matters, eg course developments, student numbers/fees, communications from stakeholders (employers, external examiners, Professional, Statutory and/or Regulatory Bodies, etc.), University policy developments, changes to procedure/regulations etc.*

- 5 Student Matters  
*StARS might be encouraged to submit brief written reports and/or identify any items for discussion in advance of the meeting.*
- 6 Course Matters including:
  - i. Consideration of the course annual evaluation report and Enhancement Plan. *The CMC, by the very nature of its terms of references, will provide the primary information required for the writing and monitoring of the AE report and Enhancement Plan. The Enhancement Plan should be regarded as a 'live' document*
  - ii. Consideration of student feedback (National Student Survey outcomes, module evaluations, etc)
  - iii. Proposed developments of the course
  - iv. Student Progress and Performance, including in relation to work placements or work-based learning.  
*This item might take the form of reports from tutors on patterns of attendance and performance, consideration of data, etc.*
  - v. Assessment matters  
*Matters such as planning of assessment schedules, arrangements for feedback and return of assignments to students, arrangements for moderation of assessments, communications with external examiners, etc might be included.*
  - vi. Recruitment and Admissions

*Course publicity, including prospectus and course leaflets, webpages and open/visit day events, together with activities relating to widening participation and school/college liaison can all be included in this item. Consideration of the data on numbers and profiles of new students might also be included*

vii Joint Honours students.

- 7 External Report(s)  
*This item would include consideration of reports from external examiners, PSRBs or internal periodic review outcomes*
- 8 Any other business
- 9 Date and time of next meeting
- 10 Reserved business  
*This item may be used to deal with confidential and/or sensitive items of business, such as matters pertaining to individual students or matters concerning assessment setting or marking. Some members of Course Management Committees (eg. Student Academic Representatives) should not normally be present for reserved business and minutes are not circulated to Student Academic Representatives or the wider student body.*

#### Revision history

##### Version 2

Policy - Section 3	Revised by Students' Union – approved by Academic Board, October 2013
Annexe updated July 2013	Director of Quality and Educational Development
Terms of Reference	Number 2 updated, number 9 inserted
Sample Agenda	Updates to sections 5 and 6

##### Version 1

Author:	Head of QA&E; Students' Union
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