1.   Student Voice Committees

Contents

1.1   Purpose

The purpose of Student Voice Committees (henceforth SVCs) is to ensure there is an effective channel for formal communication between students and staff in each School or Institute, through which students can reflect and give feedback on their programme of study and wider aspects of their student experience. SVCs are an integral part of QMUL's systems and procedures for co-creating with students, assuring academic standards and enhancing the student experience. Issues and actions identified through the SVC should be monitored and reported back to the SVC for review. If necessary, actions from SVCs should also be added to the School/Institute's relevant action log or equivalent documents, such as the NSS Action Plan, Student Experience Action Plan (SEAP), Taught Programmes Action Plan (TPAP) or PGT equivalent, and raised at other committees as required.

SVCs form one part of the mechanisms through which Schools/Institutes can capture student feedback. The SVC function should be considered as part of this system and students may need advice on the most appropriate fora to raise queries and concerns, from either their School/Institute or the Students' Union. School/Institutes are also required to facilitate SVCs to satisfy quality assurance measures.

1.2   Scope

This procedure covers all students, part time and full time, undergraduate and postgraduate, taught and research including those on distance learning or collaborative programmes. It does not cover non-award-bearing continuing education.

1.3   Documents and guidance for staff and students

QMUL has an agreed agenda and minutes template for SVCs which Schools/Institutes are expected to use unless there are clear academic reasons for using an alternative format agreed by the relevant Dean for Education. In such circumstances this must be approved each academic year and should be made known to the Students' Union and the Directorate of Governance & Legal Services (DGLS). These documents can be accessed from the DGLS web page: https://www.qmul.ac.uk/governance-and-legal-services/quality-assurance/student-feedback/
- Agenda template
- Minutes and action plan template

Students can also access comprehensive information, guidance and advice about the course representative system on the Students' Union web page at http://www.qmsu.org/coursereps. The Students' Union will provide newly appointed representatives with a comprehensive handbook and provide continuous training throughout the academic year. As such, course representatives are under joint governance of Queen Mary Students' Union and Queen Mary University of London as stated in the Students' Union Bye-Law 10.

1.4   Terms of reference

The SVC is constitutionally advisory to the Head of School/Institute .
SVCs should have a clear remit. Senate recommends the following should be included in all SVC Terms of Reference:
To consider and discuss matters relating to:
- Feedback given to Course Representatives by their course/cohort.

- The content and organisation of programmes of study and any proposed changes, including planned new programmes.
- Results of module evaluation questionnaires.
- Consideration of external examiners' reports.
- Results student surveys such as NSS, UKES, PTES and PRES where appropriate
- Results of first destination statistics.
- The provision of academic facilities and general School/Institute/QMUL facilities.
- School/Institute social activities that enhance skills development and community cohesion.
- Provision for student welfare including the operation of the personal tutor/ academic advisor system.
- Arrangements for course and other relevant inductions and study skills provision.
- Local monitoring of academic standards through consideration of the School/Institute's relevant action log or equivalent documents, such as those described above (section 1.1), which are used for tracking actions relating to the enhancement of teaching, learning and the student experience.
- Initial consideration of the commendations and recommendations of Periodic Review reports followed by regular reports on action taken in response.
- Any other matters on which the SVC wishes to express a view, such as strategic developments being planned by the school/institute.

1.5   Membership

Student membership *Non-compulsory to attend	Staff membership *Non-compulsory to attend	Chair
UG (inclusive of Joint Honours) - *HSS & S&E -* • All UG Course Reps for the School (approx. 1 per 30 students, per programme) • School Representatives* *Medicine & Dentistry -* • All UG Course Reps for the School (approx. 5 per year of course) **PGT -** • All PGT Course Representatives for School/Institute (approx. 1 per 30 students, per programme) *HSS & S&E* • Faculty PGT Representative* • School Representatives* *SMD* • Institute Representative*	• Head of School / Institute Director or nominee (ex officio) • Senior tutors, Programme leads or equivalent. • Other academic staff as requested by chair(s)* • Secretary (a member of staff must be appointed by School/Institute) – to be communicated to QMSU and Faculty Education Manager. • Other Professional Services staff (e.g. library) as agreed by SSLC*	To be agreed by SSLC. All SSLCs are to employ a co-chairing policy: • A staff co-chair, usually the HoS or appointed nominee. • A student co-chair, appointed by members at the first SSLC of the year. • Junior and Senior MBBS Rep and Dental Rep serve as student co-chairs MBBS and BDS SSLCs. Appointment of a student co-chair is compulsory for all Schools/ Institutes, unless adequate reason can be provided to QMSU not to do so. Training for co-chairs would be provided by QMA for staff and QMSU for students.

n.b. Normally, the total number of staff members attending an SSLC/SVC should not exceed the number of Course Representatives in attendance. The number of staff members invited should be calculated with consideration given to the number of Course Reps in the membership.

1.6   Election of student members

Student members of an SSLC/SVC should be elected by the respective student constituency, i.e. their course or programme. Elections should be conducted in accordance with Queen Mary Students' Union Bye-laws.

1.6.1 Process for Course Representative Elections
- Course Representatives are elected annually and hold the office for one academic year, unless a dismissal or resignation of a Course Rep takes place in line with Queen Mary Students' Union Bye-Law 10.
- Election of Course Representatives will follow a process laid out by Queen Mary Students' Union, in line with their Bye-law.
- Queen Mary Students' Union will set the dates for Course Representative Elections. These dates are communicated to Schools and Faculties.
- If a position is unfilled, Queen Mary Students' Union will usually call a by-election to recruit a Course Rep. If this is unsuccessful, Queen Mary Students' Union work with the school to permit them to recruit a Course Rep via alternative means, including but not limited to co-option or 'in-house' election, in line with Queen Mary Students' Union Bye-laws.
- School and academic staff may only run an 'in house' election, or co-option of Reps, with approval from the Students' Union for each instance.
- Schools will be required to provide the details for any courses requiring a Rep for election to the Students' Union, in good time if requested ahead of an election period.
- Queen Mary Students' Union are responsible for general promotion of Course Reps Elections to all constituencies of students.
- Schools are responsible to advertise the elections in lectures, via email and QM+, as well as other identified methods, to students if an election is taking place for that programme.
- School Representatives (a part-time Student Council position elected annually during the Students' Union elections in Spring) will meet with their cohort of course reps during the year in a student only meeting in addition to SVC meetings.
- Special provisions and alternate processes may be implemented to support operational needs within Schools or the Students' Union; or where alternative processes are needed to support the student voice. These will be agreed between the Students' Union and Course or Programme or School and reported to EQSB as part of the annual report.

1.7   Organisation of meetings
1.7.1 Briefing of student members

For SVCs to be effective their role must be made known to the student community and their members must feel able to participate fully in meetings. The Students' Union and QMUL will therefore endeavour to advertise the Course Representative system to students as well as provide them with avenues to collect feedback and be contacted (e.g. emails).
The Head of School/Director of Institute or delegated person such as the SVC Chair should ensure that Course Representatives are provided with written or oral briefings; these briefings could involve participation by experienced Course Representatives. Details of the SVC(s)

should be included in locally produced student handbooks and reference of these should be made to the committee during student induction.

Training is also organised by the Students' Union; more information can be provided by the Students' Union's Education Coordinator and the relevant Executive Officers for each Faculty.

1.7.2 Frequency and timing of meetings

SVCs should meet at least once each semester with the expectation that two meetings per semester is best practice. Some SVCs arrange their meetings to take place over a buffet lunch in order to encourage attendance and this practice, where possible, is commended. If the meeting is held virtually, alternative options should be explored by the School or Institute.

Dates of meetings should be agreed by the SVC and publicised widely in advance at the start of the year – normally by the Head of School/Director of Institute or delegated person such as the SVC Chair and/or the Secretary to the SVC. Dates may be changed if needed later in the year, but this should be communicated at least 1 week in advance of the original date or new date, whichever comes first.

1.7.3 Agendas

QMUL has an agenda template for use in SVC meetings. This ensures that schools and institutes cover all the areas required by the university and external agencies such as the Quality Assurance Agency or Office for Students. All items should be included at every meeting, with the following exceptions:
- Approval of terms of reference and membership - first meeting of the year only
- New students' arrivals experience – first meeting of the year. However, if there is a subsequent entry period, this item should be re-considered as appropriate

The agenda should be distributed to all members at least 1 week in advance of the meeting and displayed to all staff and students, e.g. via noticeboards or on QMplus pages.

Student representatives should be given sufficient time to propose other items for the agenda, canvas views and opinions from the cohort for the meeting as well as report back on outcomes. Schools and Institutes are expected to support representatives in engaging with the cohort by allowing time for representatives to address students at the beginning or end of teaching sessions or via email (such as a providing a distribution list or sending emails on the representatives' behalf) or by using QMplus pages and any other relevant methods.

1.8 Minutes, Annual Reports and Follow-up
1.8.1 Minutes and Action Points

The minutes should be completed promptly after the meeting and include an action points table – a template is provided by QMSU. Minutes must be sent to the Students' Union within four weeks of the meeting taking place. ARCS publish the confirmed SVC minutes at http://www.arcs.qmul.ac.uk/qmintranet/quality-assurance/SVC/SVC-2019-20/. Minutes must also be published by Schools/Institutes on the relevant QMPlus homepage and a repository of previous minutes maintained.

It is expected that the minutes or an oral report from the SVC are considered at every meeting the School or institute's Education/Teaching and Learning Committee (or equivalent) to ensure that SVC's recommendations can be reviewed and acted upon promptly.

The minutes of SVC meetings are not deemed to be confidential. However, where sensitive or confidential information need to be recorded these specific items may be marked as confidential. In this case a non-confidential version of the minutes of the meeting should be published. Where detailed discussion of the teaching of a particular module takes place, some SVCs may choose to exclude the identity of the teacher concerned from the minutes although the discussion should still be noted.

It is the School/Institute's responsibility to ensure that the minutes and action points from SVC meetings are available to all students to review. This can be done in a variety of ways either using noticeboards or electronic methods such as an SVC or course page on QMplus but should be placed where the documents are easily accessible to the cohort.
Students should also be informed about the actions being taken to address the concerns raised. It is recommended that this is done via student communications for more general issues. Specific concerns relating to a particular programme or module may be addressed on the relevant QMplus page or forum.

1.8.2 Annual Report

At the end of the academic year each SVC should produce a short annual report of its work. These reports should be co-completed by staff and student members of the SVC, most suitably the Chair and Student Co-Chair. These reports should consist of the following:
- Table showing all action points raised over the year and the current status of actions (e.g. closed, ongoing etc.) – this should be the collated actions points table from each set of minutes.
- Short commentary on any actions that are incomplete or ongoing to explain why this is the case.
- Any good practice or positive developments arising from the SVC that the School/Institute would wish to highlight.
- Any trends identified over the course of the academic year.
- Any actions or issues that will be carried over into the next academic year.

1.8.3 Internal reporting

Each School/Institute annual report will be considered at the appropriate faculty advisory groups with responsibility for teaching, learning and the student experience. The Faculties will produce collated annual reports for discussion at Education Quality and Standards Board and Senate.

1.9 Roles and Responsibilities

There is a separate document which outlines each stakeholder's roles and responsibilities. Please see this for more information.