



**POLICY RELATING TO STUDENT ACADEMIC REPRESENTATION
(Approved, June 2009)**

A Policy

- A1** The aim of recruiting Student Academic Representatives (STARs) across the University is to ensure the effective handling of and response to student feedback, in order to bring about improvement in the quality of the student experience and develop assessment, learning and teaching within the institution. STARs are a key link with the University in voicing the views and concerns of all students. The University and Students' Union are committed to working in partnership to support the effective engagement of STARs.
- A2** The purpose of this policy is to give effect to the provisions for student academic representation in Sections A and B of the University's *Academic Principles, Regulations and Procedures*.
- A3** Section A of the University regulations requires the University to provide students with the opportunity to contribute in an informed way to scheme or course development and quality assurance, in an atmosphere in which rational debate is encouraged.
- A4** Section B of the University regulations gives effect to the general regulations above. It requires the establishment of Monitoring and Review Meetings and Focus Groups for schemes and courses. Such forums are the bodies *"representative of students and staff, responsible for the overall policy of the scheme or course, including conduct, monitoring, review and development"* (B2. 8.2).
- A5** Section B also notes the importance of the student contribution to the success of scheme or course Monitoring and Review Meetings and Focus Groups: *"The University considers the contribution made by students through their involvement in discussions on the operation and development of schemes and courses is crucial to the success of those schemes and courses"* (B3 3.6).
- A6** Section B requires procedures to establish student representation on scheme and course forums (Monitoring and Review Meetings and Focus Groups), and provisions for effective notification of meetings, thus anticipating constructive student input into scheme and course forums, which *"will receive and consider reports on other elements of the student experience and outcomes, and will make recommendations accordingly"* (B3 3.11).

B Levels of Student Academic Representation

B1 Representation is provided for students on taught programmes of study, undergraduate and postgraduate; and also for research students of the University. All STARs should be identified at the earliest opportunity in the academic year, ideally within the first three weeks of teaching. This will enable participation of students in the greatest number of committees and other forums possible.

B2 Students' Union Representation

In each academic year the University will provide membership to some members of the Students' Union's Executive and Council on a range of its Boards and Committees, including, but not limited to:

- 2 positions on the Board of Governors, which will provide Student Governor status to two members of the Students' Union's Executive
- 4 positions on both Academic Board and Academic Committee, 2 from the Students' Union's Executive and 2 from its Council

B3 Faculty Boards

Every academic year each faculty should seek 4 Faculty STARs to become full members of Faculty Board, including at least one part-time student and one post-graduate student.

B4 Scheme/Course Representation

The recruitment of Course STARs is required at each level of study for all schemes / courses of the University. Where necessary a faculty may determine, in consultation with the Registrar & Secretary's Office (RSO), whether representation will be at course or scheme level, in line with the quality assurance process. This Policy refers to 'Course STARs' irrespective of whether they have been recruited at scheme or course level.

For schemes / courses with only one student on a given level, this individual will be entitled to become a Course STAR. Each scheme or course of less than 50 students should seek at least one and not more than two students from each level of study. Schemes and courses with more than 50 students on any given level should seek representation at between 2 - 4% of the level cohort. Where the minimum and maximum band produces a fractional result, this should be rounded-off to the nearest whole. The following table illustrates the effect of the sliding scale, up to a cohort size of one hundred:

Students per course level	Min Course STARS	Max Course STARS
1	1	1
2<50	1	2
50	1	2
60	1	2
70	1	3
80	2	3
90	2	4
100	2	4

B5 Target setting for the recruitment of Faculty & Course STARS

Once student numbers for the forthcoming academic year are known, the RSO will calculate the anticipated minimum and maximum levels of scheme/course representation that will be applied. These targets will be provided to faculties and used by the RSO and Students' Union for monitoring purposes. In each faculty the Chief Operating Officer will hold responsibility for the achievement of these targets and make arrangements for the recruitment of students in accordance with procedures provided by the RSO.

B6 Research Students

Relevant University-level committees will include research students in their membership profiles, including:

- a research student member of the Research Sub-Committee
- a research student member of the Research Ethics Sub-Committee

B7 The research students of each faculty are entitled to select up to two research students to attend a University-wide Research Students Forum, which will meet at least two times a year. The purpose of these meetings is for the students to raise any general issues, concerns, views, ideas or suggestions relating to their experience as research students of the University. Each faculty should nominate two members of academic staff to attend these meetings. Meetings of the University Research Students Forum will be arranged by the RSO and will make a report to the following meeting of the University Research Sub-Committee.

C Handling Over/Undersupply of STARS

C1 The Academic Unit will hold an election for each scheme/course if the number of students wishing to undertake the role of representative exceeds the number of places stipulated in section B of the policy. Where there is an oversupply of students for STAR positions, an election will be held.

C2 All registered students in each faculty are eligible to stand for election as a Faculty STAR and to vote in relevant elections. All students registered on a scheme or course are entitled to stand as a STAR for the scheme or course and

vote in relevant elections.

C3 Procedures for voting will be provided by the RSO. The principal purpose of elections is to provide equality of opportunity and access to the University's formal quality process, rather than to achieve democratic legitimacy. However, a formal process of voting, with a confidential ballot, will be applied.

C4 Vacancies

If insufficient students express interest in the various STAR positions, as outlined in section B, it will be necessary to readvertise these positions to the relevant student cohort. If, upon the second attempt, it is still not possible to attract sufficient interest, the RSO should be notified of vacancies, and consider if the vacancy is permissible. This decision will be based upon the size of the cohort who will lack representation and evidence of the processes that have been followed to recruit STARs.

D Methods of Feedback for STARs

D1 Contact Carnegie

Contact Carnegie is a University-wide forum for engagement, open to all formal STARs, detailed in section B. The events are organised periodically by the Students' Union and each faculty is expected to be represented by a member of its Faculty Leadership Team. Representation is also expected from other relevant areas of the University, for example RSO and the Directorates of Student-Centred Change Management and Assessment, Learning & Teaching.

D2 Annual Review Meetings

Each scheme or course should organise an Annual Review Meeting twice in each academic year, in accordance with the University's Academic Regulations. The meetings will review the delivery of the scheme/course in the previous academic year. STARs who are registered on the scheme/course must be invited to attend and contribute to these meetings and facilitating attendance STARs should be considered when scheduling review meetings. The meetings provide an important opportunity for STARs to contribute to the development of schemes and courses, in line with the University's vision of placing students at the centre of our ways of working.

D3 Course Focus Groups

Each scheme or course should organise a meeting of a Course Focus Group at least twice in each academic year, once in semester one and once in semester two. The purpose of this meeting is to provide a forum in which general student issues can be raised in a relatively informal atmosphere. The Academic Unit Management Team should determine how many members of academic staff

should attend the Focus Groups.

D4 Research Student Forums

Faculties will arrange for a Faculty Research Student Forum to take place twice in each academic year. The purpose of these meetings is for the students to raise any general issues, concerns, views, ideas or suggestions relating to their experience as research students of the University. The Chair of the Faculty Research Sub-Committee should arrange for a report of the meeting to be circulated appropriately within the faculty, and, if relevant, for wider concerns to be forwarded to the RSO for wider consideration within the University.

E Procedures and Guidance

E1 In support of this policy the University and Students' Union will produce further guidance, in the form of procedural information. This will be widely circulated in a timely manner and periodically reviewed. The procedures will have the following primary aims:

- To explain and promote the purpose of Student Representation to students and staff
- To provide clear expectations to staff regarding the nature and timing of engagement with STARS
- To provide a formal framework for receiving and responding to feedback from STARS
- To provide guidance in support of the process for elections, where oversupply occurs