



BRIGHTON
STUDENTS' UNION

STUDENT VOICE POLICY

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**UNIVERSITY OF BRIGHTON
STUDENTS' UNION**

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1. Introduction and Definitions

- 1.1. This policy sets out how Brighton Students Union (BSU) employs various methods to amplify student voices within the University and engage students in democratic decision making within its organisation:
- 1.2. Course Reps: Each academic year, every course elects a volunteer Course Representative to voice student concerns and suggestions.
- 1.3. School Super Reps: At the onset of each academic year, two School Super Representatives are appointed per school. They participate in School Education and Student Experience committees, along with monthly meetings with the Students' Union.
- 1.4. Community Super Reps: Identified through research, BSU selects Community Super Representatives from student communities exhibiting diverse satisfaction or educational outcomes. These representatives contribute firsthand experiences to complement survey data during meetings.
- 1.5. Pulse Survey: BSU conducts a monthly Pulse Survey to gather student opinions and feedback throughout the academic year. To ensure fairness, the student body is divided into equal segments, with each section receiving the survey once per academic year.
- 1.6. Societies Committee Members: Representing their respective societies, committee members are democratically elected each year and offer feedback on the extracurricular student experience during termly meetings, as delineated in the Societies Policy.
- 1.7. Fulltime Officers: Each year BSU holds elections to elect its Fulltime Officers the details of how the elections are organised can be found in the Election Policy.
- 1.8. Trustee Board: The Trustee Board is the sovereign decision-making body for Brighton Students' Union. The board has student representation through the 4 elected Fulltime Officers and up to 4 recruited Student Trustees. Details of the role and functions of the Trustee Board can be found in the BSU Articles of Association.
- 1.9. Petitions & Referendum – Any student can initiate a petition on the BSU website to request a referendum in accordance with the Referendum Policy.

2. Course Reps

2.1. Responsibilities

- 2.1.1. Course Reps should:
- 2.1.2. Actively gather feedback from peers regarding their academic experience, including both areas for improvement and commendable practices.
- 2.1.3. Discuss student-raised issues with course and module leaders where necessary.
- 2.1.4. Attend Student-Staff Forums, advocating for student views, ideas, and feedback.
- 2.1.5. Collaborate with staff to address concerns and keep the Students' Union informed, seeking support when necessary.
- 2.1.6. After each Student Staff Forum, Course Reps should fill out the Course Rep feedback form to inform the Students' Union of raised issues and record their attendance. This form also facilitates recognition and rewards for their contributions.

2.1.7. Provide feedback to peers on discussions with staff and relevant communications.

2.2. Course Reps should:

2.2.1. Treat the role with responsibility, maintaining professionalism and impartiality.

2.2.2. Commit time to fulfill role requirements, including training, feedback gathering,

2.2.3. meeting participation, and communication with peers.

2.2.4. Ensure attendance at meetings or provide a written report if unable to attend.

2.2.5. Respect confidentiality when discussing student issues with third parties.

2.2.6. Inform the Course Leader if stepping down from the role during the academic year.

2.2.7. Seek guidance from staff or the Students' Union when uncertain about any aspect of the role.

2.3. **Support and Resources:**

2.3.1. BSU will offer Course Rep training sessions, including online modules and in-person sessions, to ensure awareness of responsibilities and access to support.

2.3.2. Initial points of contact at BSU for Course Reps will be provided through the Engagement Team and Education Officer.

2.3.3. BSU will establish partnerships with Course Reps, conduct regular meetings, and offer support materials, including online resources and newsletters.

2.3.4. BSU will maintain Course Rep areas on relevant platforms and ensure a strong online presence.

2.3.5. BSU will support Course Reps attending Student-Staff Forums and assist in communicating outcomes from student feedback.

2.3.6. BSU will coordinate Course Reps to gather opinions on academic issues affecting the student population.

2.3.7. BSU will consult Course Reps annually to improve the system as needed.

2.4. **Representation Standards:**

2.4.1. Where possible every course should have a Course Rep.

2.4.2. Due to the size and structure of some courses there may be instances where some Course Reps represent a collection of courses that share particular modules or classes.

2.4.3. Where there are no volunteers to become a Course Rep, BSU will work with the Course Leader and Engagement Lead to facilitate other methods for collecting student feedback.

2.5. **Election and Training:**

2.5.1. Course Reps are elected in class either by show of hands or secret ballot. The Course Leader is responsible for ensuring each year of the course has a Course Rep.

- 2.5.2. Course Reps can continue from year to year unless they opt out or a new election is needed due to dissatisfaction or a new candidate stepping forward.
- 2.5.3. Course Reps should be elected or reconfirmed within three weeks of the academic year's start.
- 2.5.4. The School Office or School Engagement Lead must email details of all Course Reps to the Students' Union at BSUEngagement@brighton.ac.uk.
- 2.5.5. Course Rep details are bulk-uploaded to the MyStudies Course Rep module during the 4th week of the academic year. Late submissions will be added as received.

2.6. **Recognition:**

- 2.6.1. Incentives and recognition schemes are available for Course Reps, including vouchers, awards and certificates.

2.7. **Complaints Procedure**

- 2.8. BSU encourages informal resolution and will facilitate conflict resolution where appropriate.
- 2.9. Any complaints regarding the conduct or performance of a Course Rep, or violations of BSU Policies and Procedures, must be addressed in accordance with the BSU Complaints Policy.
- 2.10. The Students' Union's Engagement Team is responsible for promptly investigating and addressing any complaints regarding Course Rep conduct or performance. Complaints should be initially raised with the Engagement Team at the Students' Union using the email BSUEngagement@brighton.ac.uk.
- 2.11. Throughout the complaint handling process, utmost importance is placed on maintaining confidentiality and privacy of individuals involved to safeguard the interests and reputations of all parties concerned.
- 2.12. Upon completion of the investigation, the Engagement Team will determine appropriate actions to address the complaint, which may include providing additional support, mediation, or further training for the Course Rep. If necessary, the complaint may be escalated using the BSU Complaints Policy.

2.13. **Democracy & Governance**

- 2.14. Course Reps are integral to the democracy and governance of the Students' Union. They will actively participate in the decision-making process, influence Students' Union decisions, and shape projects and campaigns.
- 2.15. Course Reps will engage with BSU Full-time Officers and staff during termly meetings. These discussions provide a platform for sharing insights into student representation, updating the progress of Union campaigns, and addressing any queries or concerns related to the wider student experience.
- 2.16. Course Reps are required to attend meetings with BSU Full-time Officers and staff three times a year.
- 2.17. The Students' Union will provide training for all Course Reps to enable them to effectively scrutinise BSU activities and contribute to shaping future plans.

3. Super Reps

3.1. Super Reps play a crucial role in our Union's decision-making process, ensuring that student voices are heard both within the union and across the university.

3.2. Responsibilities

3.3. School Super Reps: Each academic year, two School Super Representatives are chosen per school. They participate in School Education and Student Experience committees, as well as monthly meetings with the Students' Union.

3.3.1. Attend monthly Students' Union meetings to represent student opinions, share feedback, and discuss important student matters.

3.3.2. Participate in School Education and Student Experience Committees to address school-wide issues and collaborate with university staff on solutions.

3.3.3. Communicate SESEC discussions and outcomes to students within the school.

3.3.4. Attend additional meetings with university staff as needed to represent student perspectives.

3.3.5. Engage in regular meetings with Course Reps to gather feedback and ensure a comprehensive understanding of student opinions.

3.4. Community Super Reps: Identified through research, Community Super Representatives are selected from diverse student communities to provide firsthand experiences alongside survey data in meetings.

3.4.1. Attend monthly Students' Union meetings to represent their community's views, share feedback, and address relevant issues.

3.4.2. Organize regular meetings or online discussions with their community members to accurately convey student opinions in university or union meetings.

3.4.3. Attend additional meetings with university staff as needed to represent community perspectives.

3.5. Recruitment and Selection

3.6. Super Reps are recruited and compensated on an hourly basis for their efforts.

3.7. They are eligible to continue in their role from year to year, ensuring continuity and expertise.

3.8. Any openings are publicly advertised on the BSU website, welcoming applications from all students within the respective school or community.

3.9. Recruitment is managed by the Union's Human Resources team, adhering to BSU's established recruitment protocols to uphold fairness and transparency.

3.10. In the event of a Super Rep stepping down during the year, recruitment for a replacement will be promptly initiated to maintain effective representation.

3.11. Support

3.12. Super Reps will be supported by the Union's Engagement Team.

- 3.13. They will be provided with comprehensive training to ensure they are successful in their roles.
- 3.14. They will be given access to the necessary online systems such as Microsoft Teams groups to enable them to undertake their role.

4. Democracy & Governance Structure

- 4.1 The diagram on the next page illustrates the democratic & governance structures of Brighton Students' Union, emphasising student engagement and the interconnectedness of each component.

Democracy at Brighton Students' Union

This diagram illustrates how Brighton Students' Union is student-led, detailing the ways students are involved in and influence BSU decision-making. It highlights the various mechanisms students can utilize to effect change within the organisation.

