

Section 8: Student Voice

This section should be read in conjunction with other resources available on the [University website](#).

Responsibility of teaching staff

- 8.1 Teaching staff hold the primary responsibility for educational quality and good academic standards at the University of Westminster. The design and delivery of modules provide the framework for the student experience. Continuous self-monitoring of delivery is central to the achievement of good quality delivery. Collaboration between colleagues at School level enhances the ongoing review process.

Heads of School

- 8.2 Each College is organised on the basis of complementary disciplines within the overall subject of its title. Each subject specialist team is organised into a School; some are single subjects, others represent cross-disciplinary subjects.
- 8.3 Responsibility for providing management and leadership for the teaching and research staff within these subject specialist units lies with the Head of School. Specifically, this encompasses management of academic quality of delivery, and monitoring student achievements, within the University's framework of policies and processes for quality assurance.
- 8.4 The generic job description of the Head of School includes responsibilities for managing and monitoring the quality assurance of courses, modules and other educational programmes provided by the School, and to ensure the provision of academic and pastoral support for students studying programmes in the school. Heads of School are members of the College Executive Group.
- 8.5 The Head of School's specific responsibilities for taught courses will reflect the scale and character of the courses, but would normally encompass:
- **Assessment**
(including liaison with internal and external examiners, and arrangements for the scrutiny of all draft coursework and examination requirements)
 - **Monitoring and review**
(including the aggregation of student feedback for analysis by the course teaching team; supporting the continuous improvement process; and coordinating the preparation for course cyclical review, external review and/or re-accreditation).

Course Leaders

- 8.6 Within the Statutes and Principles of the University approved by Privy Council in 1992, the appointment of a member of staff as leader of the course or named award programme is specified, with the responsibility of ensuring that:

- the course or programme meets its specified aims and objectives;
- it is conducted in accordance with the appropriate regulations and academic administrative requirements.
- it meets the requirements of the University's Education Strategy;
- documentation is provided for monitoring and review.

8.7 The role of the Course Leader may vary within and between Schools to reflect the level and mode of the course. However, the responsibilities of the Course Leader would normally encompass:

- **student induction and support;** including course-specific induction, organisation of elections for student representatives and arrangements for student voice activity; and overseeing the effectiveness of the Personal Tutorial System for students registered for named awards within the course scheme in consultation with the School Senior Tutor.
- **course definition;** keeping an overview of the consistency between subject-specific aims and learning outcomes and the aims and learning outcomes for core and subject-specific option modules; ensuring that assessment criteria for each module are published for reference by students, teaching staff (Part-time as well as Full-time), external examiners and external accrediting agencies; and updating and circulating the Course Handbook, in accordance with the requirements specified in Section 6.

Course representatives

8.8 Course representatives will be elected annually by their peers at the beginning of each academic year for undergraduate and postgraduate courses. Course Representatives are expected to collect feedback from students on their course and present this feedback to course leaders at contact points throughout the academic year. Such activity can take place at Course or Module level. At least two contact points per semester are expected and the format of these events should be determined jointly by course representatives and course leaders. Contact points can allow for digital methods of communication, which can be more inclusive of the diverse student population. Whatever the format, the primary task is to consult actively and provide timely feedback on the outcome. Details of the student voice activity are expected to be available on the course Blackboard site.

8.9 A summary of agreed action points and progress against them should be made available to all students on the course and the Students' Union (SU). This can be submitted by the course representatives or Course Leader or nominee. The Course Leader is responsible for ensuring this is available.

Note: [A template](#) is available from the UWSU

8.10 Any urgent issues are not expected to wait for a student voice activity. The Students' Union work with Course Representatives and Course leaders to determine how urgent issues are raised outside of formal interactions with Course Representatives. Appropriate course management structures should be used. In addition, Course leaders can refer concerns about matters unrelated to learning and teaching (e.g. estates issues, library resources etc.) directly to the appropriate service as soon as they are made aware.

- 8.11 For other urgent issues course leaders can refer these to senior colleagues who work with the Students' Union to find an appropriate solution. All students can channel their comments through their tutor or another member of teaching staff, but the view the elected course representative(s) puts across is much more likely to be seen as presenting the case of the student group as a whole. Constructive criticisms of the way the course is run or the facilities available may be reported to the College Teaching Committee, and University-wide issues highlighted in this way are likely to be followed up at a senior level precisely because it is recognised that they provide an overview of student opinion.
- 8.12 All course representatives are expected to undertake training provided jointly by the Students' Union and Quality and Standards.
- 8.13 All course representatives are expected to adhere to the University Student Code of Conduct and Academic Representative Code of Conduct. Where expectations are not met the Students' Union will hold discussions with Quality and Standards and can jointly decide to remove a student from representing the student body. In addition, such action may also be the result of any Student Code of Conduct decisions

School Community Representatives

- 8.14 School Community Representatives will also be appointed. School Community Representatives will meet with the Head of School at least every semester and provide feedback on behalf of the Course Representatives. A minimum of two (one Undergraduate and one Postgraduate) and a maximum of four School Community Representatives will be appointed for each School, one of which must be a postgraduate student. School Community Representatives will be appointed jointly between the Quality and Standards Office and the SU through an interview process. School Community Representatives will sit on the College Teaching Committees and the Student Voice Forum and are expected to complete regular reports on their activities.
- 8.15 All School Community Representatives are expected to undertake training provided jointly by the Students' Union and Quality and Standards.
- 8.16 All School Community representatives are expected to adhere to the University Student Code of Conduct and Academic Representative Code of Conduct. Where expectations are not met the Students' Union will hold discussions with Quality and Standards and can jointly decide to remove a student from representing the student body. In addition, such action may also be the result of any Student Code of Conduct decisions

Consultation

- 8.17 Each course must have a formal meeting process for consulting with and gathering feedback from student and staff representatives and this should be advertised to students on the course's BlackBoard site. Consultation by group e-mail can be very effective. Whatever the format, the primary task is to consult actively and provide timely feedback on the outcome. A summary of agreed action points and progress against them should be made available to all students.
- 8.18 In addition to the formal meeting process students can comment through a Student Voice platform, sharing feedback and ideas for change.

- 8.19 If general student comment highlights a problem, potential or actual, it should be reported to the Course Leader (without identifying the individual source of the comments) by a student representative; the Course Leader may be in a position to resolve the matter or may need to refer it to the Head of School, Head of College, or manager of the relevant service, for resolution. If comments relate to the approach taken by individual staff members, they should always be referred to the Head of School, who will meet the students concerned and later with the staff member. If it is not possible to resolve the issue, the Head of College will be asked to convene a further meeting with the staff member to identify appropriate action. Any such meetings, with staff or students, will remain confidential as far as possible.
- 8.20 Aspects of study not covered by student representatives are:
- personal problems of individual students
 - academic difficulties of individual students
 - allegations of unfair or inappropriate treatment by staff or other students.

These sorts of issues should be handled confidentially (as private concerns) and, with the advice of the Course Leader, they should be referred to the appropriate staff member such as the student's Personal Tutor, the Head of School, the Head of College, the University of Westminster Students' Union (UWSU), or the Wellbeing and Advice Service.

- 8.21 Student voice activities are not the appropriate process for dealing with potential student complaints about an individual member of staff; the University has a student complaints procedure for this purpose, details of which are available on the [University website](#).

Student Surveys

- 8.22 All students are invited to complete a Student Module Evaluation (SME). Satisfaction scores and comments are made available to the Module Leader to share with the module teaching team. It is expected that the Module Leader will reflect on the outcomes of the SME in their Module Leader Report and identify necessary modifications or enhancements from the SME feedback. Both qualitative and quantitative module results will be made available, beyond the module teaching team, to the relevant academic managers in the College as determined and formally agreed with the Deputy Vice Chancellor by the Head of College. Quantitative SME data will be provided to Colleges to enable this information to be reviewed and considered by appropriate University, College, School and subject groups.
- 8.23 The annual National Student Survey (NSS) is a census of all UK students in their final year of an undergraduate course. The results are available on the [Office for Students Website](#).
- 8.24 Postgraduate students receive an equivalent questionnaire. International students receive several tailored surveys throughout their studies. The satisfaction scores and comments from internal and external student experience surveys will be made available to the relevant academic managers in the College as determined by the Head of College. Colleges are required to identify actions for improving the student experience and to monitor their effectiveness in partnership with the Teaching Committee.

8.25 Student Voice is represented through the academic governance of the University. The Student Voice Forum is Co-Chaired by the President of the Students' Union and includes all School Community Representatives on its membership. In addition, University committees such as Academic Council, Teaching Committee, College Teaching Committees and Court of Governors have University of Westminster Students' Union representation.

8.26 **Cyclical Review Processes**

In addition to the annual processes Curriculum Assessment Check-ins, Learning, Teaching and Assessment Refresh events and Internal Scrutiny Panels will normally involve the panel meeting privately with a group of students. Normally a Student Advisor from an independent College forms part of the Panel. Student Panel Advisors are appointed by the Quality and Standards Office, normally drawn from the pool of School Community Representatives or by an expression of interest from experienced and trained course representatives. Note: For Collaborative provision please refer to Section 11.