GUIDANCE NOTE ON STUDENT/STAFF LIAISON COMMITTEES (SSLCS)

Purpose

1. This guidance note is intended to support students and staff in the operation of Student/Staff Liaison Committees (SSLCs) and should be read in conjunction with the policies on:
   - Quality management and enhancement processes at the University of Reading;
   - Student Academic Representation.

Role and reporting structure

2. The student-staff partnership facilitated by SSLCs involves the consideration of good practice, issues and concerns raised by students and the co-delivery of enhancement activities, with staff and students jointly responsible for the process and outcomes. SSLCs provide a rich opportunity to nurture the sense of academic community within the School/Department and are intended to empower students and staff alike. The outcomes and actions agreed by SSLCs will be taken forward by students and staff via a number of mechanisms, including, for example, student-led working groups which could report either to the SSLC or to the relevant Board of Studies (BoS).

3. SSLCs report to the relevant BoS and in some cases it may be appropriate for an SSLC to report to School/Department staff meetings or a School/Departmental teaching and learning committee. Updates on actions arising out of the SSLCs will be reported to the next meeting of the SSLC (or directly to Course Reps where a swift response is appropriate), and from there to the student body.

4. The outcomes of any points raised at the SSLC and addressed by the BoS or elsewhere should also be reported onwards to the School Board for Teaching, Learning and Student Experience (SBTLSE).

Requirements for operating SSLCs

5. Every School or, if appropriate, every Department within a School where a broad range of programmes are studied, should operate a SSLC. Schools may exercise discretion in running SSLCs according to their individual needs and existing structures; for example, it may be
appropriate to operate separate undergraduate and postgraduate committees or to operate a separate SSLC for each programme.

6. SSLCs are intended to empower and be inclusive of the broad student body. Where programmes are delivered at an international branch campus, arrangements should be made to operate one or more SSLC(s) according to the needs of, and existing structures in, Academic Sections.

7. SSLCs should be fully accessible and Schools/Departments should consider measures to facilitate part-time, distance/flexible learning and placement students’ attendance at, or contribution to, meetings, including attendance on a virtual basis or contribution via electronic discussion boards.

8. The School/Department should communicate its arrangements for operating SSLCs to the Academic Representation Coordinator in the Students’ Union to assist in the coordination of elections, training and support for Academic Reps.

**Membership and Terms of Reference**

9. The standard membership of an SSLC is:
   - Programme Directors
   - Head of Department/School (as appropriate)
   - School/Department Director of Teaching and Learning (as appropriate)
   - Course Reps
   - Programme Administrators
   - A Secretary appointed by the relevant Support Centre Manager/the Henley Dean’s Office

**Standing Invitations:**
   - A Representative from the Library
   - A Representative from Careers
   - A Representative from IT
   - The Programme Directors for Joint Programmes
   - A Representative from Study Advice

10. Student representation on SSLCs is normally fulfilled by Course Reps; alternates are permitted on SSLCs when Course Reps are unable to attend. In addition, and where appropriate, a member of the School/Department’s academic society may attend in lieu of the Course Rep.

11. The Terms of Reference of SSLCs are:
   - To provide a formal channel for students and staff to meet in order to discuss the operation of programmes;
   - To keep under review the aims and objectives of programmes;
   - To review issues relating to teaching and learning, including assessment and feedback, module evaluation, curriculum development and student support;
• To receive and review copies of External Examiners’ reports; and
• To consider other matters including health and safety and resources, such as equipment and library provision and, where applicable, receive reports from academic societies.

Setting up and running the meetings

12. Each SSLC should normally meet at least twice each academic year. The University publishes standard two-week windows for meetings of SBTLSEs; BoS and SSLCs should meet sufficiently in advance of SBTLSEs in order to facilitate reporting across the committees.

13. Standard agenda templates for undergraduate and taught postgraduate programme SSLCs are available in section 2a of the Guide to Policies and Procedures. The templates suggest a range of issues for consideration by the SSLC and opportunities for students and staffs to jointly consider and drive forward quality assurance and enhancement matters and data. The templates are not intended to be restrictive or a barrier to engagement and enhancement, and should be adapted and expanded as appropriate. A good practice guide for servicing committees is available on the Governance Zone webpage (under Committees/Reference Documents) and includes guidance on preparing agendas and writing minutes after the meeting.

14. All committee members, including Course Reps, should be given the opportunity to contribute to the agenda and receive the final agenda in advance of the meeting, so they can canvass opinion of their peers prior to the meeting. Course Reps should have access to appropriate facilities in connection with the work of SSLCs, including the option to contact all students via the SSC or the Henley Dean’s Office.

15. Course Reps can chair SSLC meetings, upon completion of Chair training facilitated by the Students’ Union during the Autumn Term. It is recommended that the first SSLC meeting of the academic session should be chaired by a member of staff.

16. The relevant staff member in the Student Support Centre/Henley Dean’s Office is responsible for taking and distributing the minutes of SSLC meetings to the student cohort. Minutes should usually be made available to all students in the School/Department within two weeks of the SSLC meeting. Minutes should be made available electronically, either by email or (preferably) via publication on the School’s Blackboard site, and should be shared with the Academic Representation Coordinator in the Students’ Union.