Strategy

Higher Education Student Engagement

2018 – 21

Higher Education Directorate

UCW | UNIVERSITY CENTRE WESTON

Document approved by:					
HEDMT	Student Engagement	HEBS	HEMT	HE CPD	CMT
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Background and Context

Background and National Context

The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) UK Quality Code sets out the expectations that all higher education (HE) providers are required to meet, the expectation is that:

> "The provider engages students individually and collectively in the development, assurance and enhancement of the quality of their educational experience".

The Office for Students (OfS) regulatory framework for higher education in England public interest governance principles (that are applicable to all registered providers) states that for student engagement:

> "The governing body ensure that all students have the opportunities to engage with the governance of the provider, and that this allows for a range of perspectives to have influence".

The National Union of Students (NUS) has recognised that there are different levels of engagement – consultation, involvement, participation and partnership. University Centre Weston (UCW) seeks to ensure that student engagement is real and meaningful and seeks to encourage the commitment to students as partners in learning.

It is recognised that students have a positive impact on quality enhancement and quality assurance processes and engaging with students can also have a positive impact on the motivation and achievement of students. The Higher Education Academy's (HEA) 'What Works?' research clearly articulates the impact that active student engagement has in developing a strong sense of belonging. This in turn has a positive impact in terms of student retention and success. Engagement and belonging is especially important at an early stage and should encompass both academic and social engagement.

This strategy has been developed in collaboration between students, staff and the Student Experience and Engagement Officer in agreeing the content, devising and writing of the document.

Purpose & Scope

UCW is committed to recognising that its students are 'partners in their learning', ensuring the high quality of its higher education provision and continuously enhancing the student experience. As a result the contribution of students is valued and it is recognised this can improve quality and satisfaction. To this end UCW engages with students in a real and meaningful way to inform future developments, strategy and operational management. A crucial part is to receive student feedback, and ensuring that it is addressed fully and appropriately.

This strategy sets out UCW's commitment to engaging with students on higher education programmes. The strategy applies to all programmes regardless of the awarding partner they are linked to. The document outlines the opportunities for student engagement and the processes in place to respond to any issues.

Principles

UCW and its awarding partners actively encourage students to fully participate in the outlined processes in order that they take responsibility to contribute to the enhancement of the student academic experience. Where students engage constructively with student involvement processes there is scope for improvement. This is for mutual benefit, leading to greater understanding between all parties and the opportunity for problem solving, along with assessing and shaping learning.

It is understood that students should not be penalised for voicing their opinions or making suggestions. It is acknowledged that student engagement can only be sustained if students know there are appropriate opportunities for them to raise their opinions without fear and feel these are being duly considered and action is being taken where possible. However, it is accepted that not every proposal can be implemented, but it is vital to make students aware of limitations or restrictions and provide full and reasoned feedback in response to all issues raised.

Working with students as partners underpins continuous improvement of HE provision and optimising the student experience. UCW is committed to:

- Empowering students to be partners in their learning as they are experts in the student experience;

- Making sure that the students are part of developing proposals as well as responding to them;

- Engaging students who are often unheard, including: mature students; part-time students and student parents;

- Helping students develop the skills and confidence to be actively involved in the organisation of their own learning and student experience, regardless of their mode of study, age, disability, race, gender, religion, sexuality or transgender status;

- Each programme is expected to engage with the strategy to enable all students to have the opportunity to participate and have their views represented.

Link to UCW Strategic Plan

Student engagement constitutes an explicit element of the HE Strategic Plan 2017-18 to 2019-20. The following is an extract taken directly from the section related to student engagement:

In order to provide "an outstanding higher education experience, enabling success and inspiring ambition" UCW recognises that its students are 'partners in their learning'. The student voice should be heard. Students should be involved in development, review and monitoring of higher education provision. There should be student representation at key committees and at all levels.

Student involvement is reflected in the following Strategic Aims:

- To provide a positive, vibrant student experience characterised by excellence in learning and teaching, and a supportive, nurturing learning environment.

- Through excellence in quality assurance, effective governance and academic management, ensure that standards and the student experience are safeguarded.

- To collaborate effectively with university partners, employers and key stakeholders in the development of new provision and the sharing of best practice.

The commitment: To underpin the Strategic Aims through student involvement at all levels, UCW will:

- Ensure that there is student representation at key decision-making committees, programme teams and liaison committees, and that student issues and concerns are heard at each of these.

- Listen and respond to student opinions, providing feedback on any actions taken by UCW using a range of media.

- Students are to be involved in the development of programmes, ensuring that programme development and modifications reflect a student perspective and influence.

- Scrutinise the outcomes of the NSS and target those areas where students have highlighted issues. Following this analysis, the HE Directorate will intervene where students have signified concerns. The HE Directorate will then monitor and review effectiveness of improvement measures using subsequent student NSS feedback.

- A standing agenda item at Higher Education Board of Study will relate to student engagement and feedback.

The effectiveness of student engagement will be assessed through five key performance indicators:

- For Annual Provider Review, the outcome for UCW is judged as "Meets requirements. No action required" for quality and standards matters.

- NSS overall satisfaction to be in the top quartile sector-wide by 2019-20

- NSS satisfaction for "The teaching on my course" to be in the top quartile sector-wide by 2019-20

- NSS satisfaction for "Assessment and feedback" to maintain the top quartile sector-wide by 2019-20

- NSS satisfaction for "Academic support" to maintain the top quartile sector-wide by 2019-20

Student Voice

UCW has instituted three formal processes by which the student voice is captured. These were commenced in 2009 and are now an embedded part of the quality process and the student experience. They are:

- Staff Student Liaison Committees (SSLCs) which enable two way communication between staff and students and focuses on academic, programme related matters;

- Student Representative Committees (SRCs) which encourage discussion around cross-UCW matters, including the development and review of policies and procedures, the overall student experience including social events and other non-academic issues;

- Evaluation forms (including module evaluations, National Student Survey, Student Satisfaction Survey and induction questionnaire) which enable feedback on particular elements of the programme / student experience.

UCW also recognises there is an informal route for encouraging student voice and student engagement and actively promotes an "open door" approach within faculties and the HE directorate.

UCW undertakes to ensure that students are kept fully informed of the outcomes of their involvement, activity and feedback. This is done through a range of methods including the first agenda item on all SSLCs and SRCs being an update on actions from previous meetings, the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) which include Student Representative Committee meeting minutes and the Student Voice Quality Improvement Plan (QIP).

All students should have the opportunity to be involved in quality enhancement and assurance processes in a manner and at a level appropriate to them. Examples of where this should occur include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Staff Student Liaison Committees (SSLCs)

- Student Representative Committees (SRCs)

- Module Evaluations

- Annual Reviews / Annual Programme Monitoring Reports

- Programme Development

- Programme Team Meetings

- Representation at key committees including Higher Education Board of Studies and Higher Education Curriculum and Quality Committee

- Quality Focus Groups

- Periodic Reviews

Student Opportunities

All students will be provided with the opportunity to undertake a number of paid roles and volunteer opportunities during their time at UCW. Examples of these roles include:

- Student Representative

- University Representative

- Peer Mentor

- Freshers' Angel

- Event Representative

- Student Ambassador

- Student Governor

UCW undertakes to recognise students who actively participate and support measures which improve and contribute to student engagement and involvement. Students will have the opportunity to take part in a rewards scheme which leads to recognition of their contribution through a certificate. Student Representatives will also be eligible to be nominated by their peers and lecturers for the Student Representative of the Year as part of the annual UCW Awards.

Training

Students will be provided with appropriate training and support which will enable them to act as full partners in their learning. Student Representatives will receive additional training and support in how to act effectively in that role. The Student Experience and Engagement Officer will ensure

that the student body is made aware of student engagement opportunities and therefore involved in all aspects of higher education at UCW.

In addition staff training and awareness will take place to assure that UCW staff fully understand the Student Engagement Strategy and actively support student involvement in all aspects of their programmes.

Review

The strategy will be reviewed every 3 years with the next formal review in 2021.

Appendix 1 – Staff Student Liaison Committees Membership & Terms of Reference

The Role of Staff Student Liaison Committees (SSLCs)

Staff Student Liaison Committees (SSLCs) fit within the wider Higher Education Student Engagement Strategy. They primarily focus on academic, programme related matters and demonstrate UCW's commitment to receiving and acting upon the views of students studying on higher education programmes in order to continue to enhance and improve the provision itself and the student experience. SSLCs can be held with Representatives of the year of study or with the whole student group of an academic year. The first meeting of the academic year must be held with all member of the group.

A. Membership

Student Experience and Engagement Officer

Student Representatives

University Representative (as appropriate)

Whole student group (as appropriate)

In attendance:

Link Tutor (minimum of one meeting per year)

Programme Team

Representatives from the HE Curriculum and Quality Team

Representatives from the Faculty

Representatives from the Higher Education Library Plus Team

There should be a minimum of 2 student representatives invited to attend, meetings will be organised by year of study, these representatives should be elected by their peers on an annual basis. However, it could be decided to include additional students e.g. having specific part time student representatives for each year or even including the whole group.

The course coordinator should usually be present, along with a minute taker (normally from the faculty administration team). Additional staff - including support staff, module leaders, HE Partnership Manager or partner university representatives - could be in attendance if there are relevant agenda items, but ideally staff would not outnumber the students in attendance.

B. Terms of Reference

The remit of SSLCs will include:

- To provide a two way channel of communication between staff and students and the partner HEI related to the student learning experience

- To highlight best practice, along with constructively critiquing the programme
- To review and evaluate the teaching methods, content, assessment and quality of individual programmes
- To discuss External Examiner Reports / Module Evaluations / Annual Programme Monitoring Reports and make recommendations as appropriate
- To consider the outcomes of National Student Survey data and the reasons behind it
- To have a formal channel for raising and addressing issues or concerns.

C. Quorum

3 members as a minimum and a minuting secretary.

D. Meeting Cycle

There should be a minimum of three meetings per year to be held in October, February and May (September cohort) or February, May and October (January cohort). One meeting should occur within the first 6 weeks of the academic year and others should occur prior to the Student Representative Committee meetings. Additional meetings could be arranged as necessary as requested by the student representative or awarding body.

Dates and times of SSLC meetings should be published in advance via notice boards, email circulation, the Virtual Learning Environment etc.

E. Other Notes

The Student Experience and Engagement Officer will Chair the meeting. The Chair will prepare a draft agenda (see samples below) but students or staff may request for items to be included in the agenda prior to the meeting.

The Chair should ensure all students are given the opportunity to contribute and the meeting is not dominated by any individual student / year group. Essentially meetings should be student focused and led and the outcomes and responses to any issues raised should be widely circulated.

Minutes of meetings will be prepared (by the minute taker) and presented at the following meeting for formal approval of accuracy and monitoring actions. All agreed actions recorded in the minutes should be clearly assigned to named individuals responsible for the specific action. These will be forwarded to university contacts where appropriate and the Student Experience and Engagement Officer, who will collate any issues in the overall Student Voice Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) presented at each Higher Education Board of Studies. Minutes should be made available to all students via the VLE. Feedback on actions will be addressed at the subsequent SSLC meeting.

Programme Coordinators are responsible for ensuring that a minimum of three meetings are arranged each year, dates are published in advance, appropriate students attend and minutes are taken then passed onto the Student Experience and Engagement Officer.

Appendix 2 – Staff Student Liaison Committees Agenda Templates

DRAFT AGENDA 1

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Staff Student Liaison Committee
Programme
Date – Oct / Nov (September cohort), Feb / Mar (January cohort)
Time
Venue

1. Introduction & Apologies

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting / Feedback on Actions Completed from Previous Meetings (Year 2 Foundation Degree)

3. Role of the Student Representative

4. Annual Programme Monitoring Report and Action Plan

5. Overall Organisation & Management (Are timetables clear, accurate & working, are any changes communicated effectively, are handbooks clear / helpful)

6. Student Support (Tutorial Support, Academic Support, Central Support Services)

7. Facilities and Resources (Library, Computer & Specialist Facilities & Resources)

8. Teaching and learning – students to comment on each module delivered to date

9. Higher Education Library Plus (Resources, HE.LP Sessions, 1:1 sessions)

10. Any other business

11. Date of next Meeting

    Closed Section (students and HE Student Experience and Engagement Officer)

12. Student Experience and Engagement Officer to speak to students confidentially (omitted from the minutes if requested by students)

Staff Student Liaison Committee
Programme
Date – Feb / Mar (September cohort), Apr / May (January Cohort)
Time
Venue

1. Apologies

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting / Feedback on Actions Completed from Previous Meetings

3. National Student Survey and Student Satisfaction Survey (Discussion on previous year's results and action plan. Highlight importance of students participating)

4. Teaching and Learning – students to comment on each module delivered to date

5. Assessment and feedback (Is feedback prompt & helpful in providing guidance regarding improvements)

6. Student Support (Tutorial Support, Academic Support, Central Support Services)

7. Higher Education Library Plus (Resources, HE.LP Sessions, 1:1 sessions)

8. Any Other Business

9. Date of Next Meeting

   Closed Section (students and HE Student Experience and Engagement Officer)

10. Student Experience and Engagement Officer to speak to students confidentially (omitted from the minutes if requested by students)

**Staff Student Liaison Committee
Programme
Date – Apr / May (September cohort), Oct / Nov (January cohort)
Time
Venue**

1. Apologies

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting / Feedback on Actions Completed from Previous Meetings

3. Review of Guest Lectures / Lecturers offered throughout the year

4. Personal Development (Has the Confidence, knowledge and communication skills of students increased during the academic year)

5. Module Evaluations (Students to be reminded of importance of completing evaluations)

6. Teaching and Learning – students to comment on each module delivered to date

7. Assessment and feedback (Is feedback prompt & helpful in providing guidance regarding improvements)

8. Student Voice (Have students have the right opportunity to feedback on the course, is it clear how students' feedback has been acted upon)

9. Higher Education Library Plus (Resources, HE.LP Sessions, 1:1 sessions)

10. Discussion regarding any Minor / Major modifications planned for the course

11. Any Other Business

    Closed Section (students and HE Student Experience and Engagement Officer)

12. Student Experience and Engagement Officer to speak to students confidentially (omitted from the minutes if requested by students)

Appendix 3 – Student Representative Committee Terms of Reference

The Role of Student Representative Committee

Higher Education Student Representative Committee fit within the wider Higher Education Student Engagement Strategy. The Student Representative Committees focus on cross UCW issues affecting all higher education students, and demonstrate UCW's commitment to receiving and acting upon the views of students studying on higher education programmes in order to enhance the overall student experience.

A. Membership

HE Student Experience and Engagement Officer (Chair)

Assistant Director HE: Academic Registry

HE Partnership Managers (as appropriate)

Y1 Student Representatives x2 from every course

Y2 Student Representatives x2 from every course

Y3 (Part time) Student Representatives (as appropriate)

BA / BSc / MSci Student Representatives x 2 from every course

Student Governor

UWE Student Representative

BSU Student Representative

All student representatives (2 per year group from each course) should be invited to attend the Student Representative Committee. These representatives should be elected by their peers on an annual basis at the start of term.

B. Terms of Reference

The remit of the Student Representative Committee will include:

- To enable a two way channel of communication between staff and students related to the student experience
- To review and evaluate cross UCW events and activities including Induction & Enrolment, Fresher's Week, Social Activities etc.
- To monitor UCW's progress towards achieving the KPIs related to student engagement
- To review the effectiveness of the Student Engagement Strategy and supporting processes
- To provide the organisation with a group to consult regarding new proposals, strategies, policies and procedures effecting higher education students

- To highlight best practice, along with constructively critiquing the UCW structures and procedures
- To discuss facilities and resources available and make recommendations for the future as appropriate
- To have a formal channel for raising and addressing issues or concerns that students consider were not adequately addressed through the Staff Student Liaison Committees

C. Quorum

The majority of attendees should be student representatives. The decision to postpone the meeting due to lack of student attendees will be at the Chair's discretion.

D. Meeting Cycle

There should be a minimum of three meetings per year to be held in October, February and May. Additional meetings could be arranged as necessary as requested by the Student Representatives, HE Student Experience and Engagement Officer, or other appropriate HE Directorate Staff.

Dates and times of meetings should be published in advance.

E. Other notes

Meetings will be chaired by the HE Student Experience and Engagement Officer who will prepare a draft agenda but Student Representatives may request for items to be included in the agenda prior to the meeting.

Students who are unable to attend may provide written comment / feedback, either on agenda items or under any other business. This should be submitted in advance to the HE Student Experience and Engagement Officer to be brought to the meeting.

Minutes of meetings will be prepared (by the minute taker) and presented at the following meeting for formal approval of accuracy and monitoring actions. All agreed actions recorded in the minutes should be clearly assigned to named individuals responsible for the specific action. These will be forwarded to the HE Student Experience and Engagement Officer / Assistant Director HE: Academic Registry who will collate any issues in the overall Quality Improvement Plan presented at Higher Education Board of Studies. Minutes should be made as widely available as possible to all students.

The HE Student Experience and Engagement Officer is responsible for ensuring that a minimum of three meetings are arranged each year, dates are published in advance, the agenda is finalised, refreshments are organised, appropriate students attend and minutes are taken and then passed onto the relevant staff / students.

Appendix 4 – Evaluation Terms of Reference

The Role of Evaluations

The various evaluation opportunities adopted by the UCW fit within the wider Higher Education Student Engagement Strategy. They enable anonymous student feedback on particular elements of the programme / student experience and demonstrate UCW's commitment to receiving and acting upon the views of students studying on higher education programmes in order to continue to enhance and improve the quality of provision.

A. Terms of Reference

The purpose of Evaluations is to enable all students to:

- Provide feedback relating to individual modules studied within their programme
- Constructively critique, review and evaluate the teaching methods, content, assessment and quality of individual programmes
- Highlight best practice related to all aspects of student experience
- Comment anonymously on a range of key issues
- Feedback on particular elements of their student experience e.g. Induction / Freshers' week
- Provide UCW with key data and information regarding student satisfaction and progression on completion, which can be used to inform change and can be highlighted within key documents and publicity materials.

B. Evaluation Cycle

The various evaluation forms must be completed by all programmes across the institution and students must be given time to complete the forms in lessons. This can be facilitated by the Higher Education Directorate if appropriate. There are four main forms of evaluation carried out throughout the year:

- Induction Questionnaire will be completed by students in October each year
- Module Evaluations will be carried out by all students as each of their modules is completed. All students in all year groups are required to complete these evaluations
- National Student Survey (NSS) will be facilitated during January / February with all graduating foundation degree and three year honours degree students
- Student Satisfaction Survey will be completed by all other students during February / March

C. Other Notes

Each programme is expected to engage with the listed evaluation methods in order to enable all students to have the opportunity to participate and have their views represented. It is essential that all students participate as it is an integral element of the Student Engagement Strategy, and is included within our responsibilities within the partnership agreements with our HEI partners.

The Assistant Director HE: Academic Registry will ensure all questionnaires are made available by the most appropriate means, monitor results and ensure feedback regarding significant issues is included in the Student Voice Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) presented at Higher Education Board of Studies. These issues will, where necessary, also be highlighted to Heads of Faculty / Director of HE / Head of Quality. If evaluations have not been completed this will be communicated to Heads of Faculty / Programme Coordinators.

Programme coordinators should analyse results from module evaluations and consider feedback from the National Student Survey and Student Satisfaction Survey, ensuring these are discussed at SSLCs and all relevant information is included within their Annual Programme Monitoring Report. Where appropriate action plans should be created in conjunction with heads of faculty and a copy sent to the HE Directorate.

Module Evaluations, National Student Survey and Student Satisfaction Survey results should also be discussed during Programme Management Team meetings. This will enable clarification of issues, but also enables staff to provide feedback to students regarding changes implemented as a result of their comments which is an essential element.

Useful Documents

QAA The revised UK Quality Code for Higher Education

Office for Students Securing student success: Regulatory framework for higher education in England

NUS Student Engagement Toolkit

What Works? Student Retention and Success

UCW Get Involved booklet

Bath Spa University Student Engagement Strategy

UWE Bristol Student Engagement Framework