

## **Course Committee Policy**

### **Introduction:**

This policy outlines the University's expectations for Course Committees on campus and at partners. This policy applies to taught students only.

### **Terms and words we use:**

Words can be confusing. We've explained some **key words** in Appendix A (key words are in purple text).

### **What is a Course Committee?**

A Course Committee is a group of staff and student representatives (usually **Course Representatives**) who meet to formally manage and review their course, focusing on continuous improvement.

Each course or group of courses has a Course Committee (or equivalent at Partners). This includes apprenticeship courses which have a separate committee. Meetings can be in person or organised virtually (such as via Microsoft Teams).

### **What do Course Committees aim to achieve?**

Course Committees aim to continually improve the experience of current and future students and apprentices through effective staff-student collaboration. This regular review ensures that high academic standards are maintained and built upon, feeding into our **Course Monitoring** process. Course Committees also provide an opportunity for Course Representatives to gain transferable skills which employers hold in high regard.

### **What is on the agenda?**

Course Committees follow **Terms of Reference** and Agenda agreed by Staffordshire University (see Appendix B). Committees at partners will cover the same topics and use the same Agenda or a suitable alternative.

The Committee will share good practice and discuss issues raised by students/apprentices and staff concerning the student experience on each course. Plans to enhance the student/apprentice experience at course level will be discussed. Actions will be considered to resolve issues in a timely way and revisited to ensure progress has been made.

Topics include:

- Teaching on my course: Quality of learning and teaching
- Learning opportunities

- Assessment and feedback
- Academic support, personal support and guidance
- Organisation and management: Course staffing and structure
- Learning Resources and facilities
- Student experience and wellbeing
- Feedback from students, employers and external examiners (e.g. student surveys)
- Course monitoring plans and actions
- Equality, diversity and inclusion
- Work experience and career support
- Celebrating student and staff success

### **What is the membership of the Committee?**

This is flexible but the core membership should be:

- Chair: Usually the Course Director, Course Leader or Nominee
- Secretary: Administrator (Student and Academic Service)
- Student Representatives: All available Course Representatives for each of the courses included. (Ideally at least 1 Course Representative present per course)
- All relevant Course Leaders and Course Directors
- Technician, Library and Learning Support Services representatives (if appropriate)
- Staff with management or leadership oversight of the courses (E.g. Academic Practice Learning Managers) and staff that make a significant teaching contribution to the courses
- One Service User/Carer (for courses where there is a professional requirement)
- Work-Based Education Officers (for apprenticeships)
- Apprenticeship Quality Officer (for apprenticeships)

In attendance:

Other members of staff as appropriate, by invitation. For example, for courses delivered in partnership, Academic Link Tutors may attend.

*Apprenticeships - should employers attend?*

Employers' views are collected and discussed in advance of the meeting by Apprenticeship Quality Officers. Employers should not be invited to Course Committees.

*The Course Representative cannot attend – what should happen?*

The student should let the Secretary know in advance and, if possible, provide a nominated replacement. Secretaries and the Students' Union work together to ensure courses are well represented.

Members are expected to attend all Committees. There is no formal quorum; instead, the chair will decide whether the business of the meeting can be conducted based on the members present, ensuring adequate student representation.

### **When do Course Committees meet?**

Usually, at least twice a year – once per semester; they normally take place by the end of November and the end of March, for a maximum 2 hours. For courses that do not fit the standard academic calendar, 2 or more purposeful dates are agreed. Apprenticeship courses should have 3 Course Committee meetings every year.

Additional committees can be arranged if appropriate and requested in writing by a Course Representative.

### **How are Course Committees organised?**

The Secretary advises members of dates at the start of the year for each semester (agreed upon by the Chair, Students' Union and Secretary). Members will be updated if the date/s change.

Course Leaders and Course Representatives create opportunities to gather students' views in advance of each meeting. The Students' Union supports Course Representatives in understanding their role, providing training and guidance.

2 weeks prior to the Committee the Secretary reminds members of the date of the meeting, requests agenda items and gathers relevant documents to share with all Committee members.

### **What documents need to be reviewed?**

The Secretary will send out a link to all relevant documents, normally a week before the Committee. These are usually reports containing current feedback on course experience such as External Examiner Reports and Student Surveys. **Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body Reports (PSRB)** will be reviewed, where applicable.

### **What happens to the points raised in the Course Committee?**

A set of minutes and actions are produced and sent to the Chair for approval. These are then shared with Committee members. Head of Departments and Student Voice will also receive copies of minutes. Course Leaders should upload the minutes to **Blackboard** (or other local virtual platform for partnerships). Minutes and actions from Course Committees are also included in **School Academic Committee (SAC)** papers. In addition, following each round of Course Committee meetings a summary report for each department, containing good practice and areas requiring further discussion, will be produced by the relevant Head of Department and considered at SAC.

### **Will actions be reviewed?**

Course Committees are responsible for ensuring actions are completed. Any outstanding actions will be reviewed at each meeting. Where actions are completed between Committees, the action 'owner' will inform Committee members of any notable developments.

**What happens if the issues cannot be resolved at Course Committee level?**

If an issue or action cannot be resolved at Course Committee level this should be raised at the School Academic Committee (or partner equivalent) or with relevant person/s via the Chair, Subject Representative or Full Time Officer.

**What differences are there at Partner institutions?**

Partners should have a meeting using the same staffing, principles, timing and administrative measures. Partners share minutes and action plans from their Committees with their Academic Link Tutor, who will then consider them as part of the Course Monitoring process. Minutes and actions from Partner Course Committees (or equivalent at Partners) are also included in School Academic Committee papers.

**What happens for distance learning courses?**

Course Committees can be carried out via Microsoft Teams or other appropriate virtual platform using the same principles as above. Minutes and Actions should still be formally recorded and shared.

**For further training and guidance please see [Student Engagement](#) on the AQS webpage**

## **Appendix A: Key Words**

**Course Representatives:** A student representative at course level.

**Course Monitoring:** A 'live' monitoring process which draws on continuously available metrics (data), evidence and experience across courses and modules. Action plans allow teams to manage and track actions and identify recurring themes and issues.

**Terms of Reference:** The purpose, structure and scope of a committee.

**Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body Reports (PSRB):** A diverse group of professional and employer bodies, regulators and those with statutory authority over a profession or group of professionals. PSRBs engage with higher education as regulators. For example, the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC).

**Blackboard:** Virtual learning platform.

**School Academic Committee (SAC):** A school-level committee, which meets 6 times a year, and focuses on; student experience and student outcomes, portfolio development and review, quality assurance and enhancement, research and scholarship.

## **Appendix B: Terms of Reference**

Course Committees meet to consider, to review and provide formal feedback on and resolution to:

### **Student/Apprentice Experience**

- Matters raised by course representatives, students/apprentices, tutors and staff
- Matters relating to equality and diversity, and academic/personal support and guidance
- Plans for activities to enhance the student/apprentice experience at course level (including student survey campaigns, welcome week organisation and social belonging and retention events planning).

### **Course/Apprenticeship Delivery**

- Matters relating to teaching, assessment, feedback, course structure and workload
- Matters relating to work experience and real-world skills development opportunities (i.e. placements, internships, volunteering etc.) workplace learning and careers support
- The operational running and delivery of the course(s) to ensure that academic standards are maintained and enhanced during the current academic year
- The inclusive nature of course design, delivery and assessment to meet the diverse range of needs of students on the course(s)
- Proposals for course structure modification and new modules.

### **Resources and Facilities**

- The availability of relevant teaching and learning materials/equipment, buildings, library and IT provision.

### **Course Quality Management and Enhancement**

- The results from any methods of course feedback from students, including (where appropriate) National Student Survey (NSS), EvaSys and Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES), and to respond as necessary to any issues raised
- External examiner(s) comments
- Course monitoring plans, considering the actions and good practice listed
- Planning for and documentation related to course periodic review, new course approval and relevant other external review processes e.g. accreditation by a professional body, where applicable.

### **Celebrating Student and Staff Success**

- Aspects of good practice in course delivery and to facilitate sharing that with course teams
- The formal celebration of student and staff success.

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