



University of  
St Andrews

## Student Academic Representation

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1.1	Changes to Associate Provost titles	Updated	Emily Feamster, Academic Policy Officer, Principals Office	August 2021

# UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS

## STUDENT ACADEMIC REPRESENTATION POLICY

### STUDENT STAFF CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES

#### **Role**

The Student Staff Consultative Committees (SSCC) operate at School level and provide a forum for students and staff to communicate and for staff to respond to student concerns over the provision of learning and teaching and organisational issues such as module content, teaching methods, examples of good practice, assessment criteria, resources and feedback. The SSCCs allow students to raise their concerns and for staff to respond as appropriate.

#### **Composition and Structure**

School Presidents will chair SSCCs within their School and ensure that all Schools convene at least one SSCC in each semester. The structure and organisation of the SSCC may vary between Schools but should always comprise both undergraduate and postgraduate representatives and staff members from the School. Staff may typically comprise the Director of Teaching, Module Coordinators or any relevant members of staff that the School deems desirable.

Schools have the flexibility to convene separate SSCCs for different levels of study or disciplines. Schools with large cohorts of postgraduate students may convene separate postgraduate SSCCs – in these instances, it is up to the discretion of the School President who will chair. However, as School Presidents should be engaged with the postgraduate community, they should always be invited to attend this SSCC.

In the School of Modern Languages, where there are multiple SSCCs for different languages, the language Convenors will chair and organise the running of these committees. If the Convenor is unavailable to chair, the School President will chair in their place. These Convenors are elected during the Students' Association Spring elections, as the School Presidents are.

#### **Minutes**

All SSCCs should be minuted and a copy of the minutes should be forwarded to the relevant Teaching Committee. At the start of each academic year, the School President will agree with the School on the arrangements for minute-taking and subsequent approval and publication. Minutes should be approved as quickly as possible for distribution to the school. Approved minutes of each SSCC meeting should be made widely available to students through the School website, School President email and/or Moodle.

## SCHOOL PRESIDENTS

### **Role and Remit of School Presidents**

The role of the School President is to represent the students within their School. The broad aim of the School President system is to improve communications and cooperation between students and staff, for the mutual benefit of both. The School Presidents will act as a fundamental link between the sabbatical officers of the Students' Association (particularly the Director of Education) and the class representatives. School Presidents also line-manage the class representatives in their school. The School President role is entirely separate from the role holder's degree or academic performance.

### **Election**

School Presidents are elected on an annual basis in semester two during Students' Association elections. They will assume office in July and serve until the end of semester two of the following year.

There will be one School President for each School except for the School of Philosophical, Social Anthropological and Film Studies, and the Music Centre.

*Eligibility:* Any undergraduate full-time student at Honours level is eligible to stand for election. Honours level is defined as any student taking the majority of their modules at 3000, 4000, or 5000 level.

Students must be on a graduating programme (i.e. not a Junior Semester Abroad or Junior Year Abroad student). Students are only eligible to stand for the School from which they will graduate, and this will be defined according to the degree intention stated on their Student Record. In the case of Joint Honours, the student can choose to stand for election in either but cannot stand for both.

*Rules:* The date of the election, rules concerning campaigning, and any appeals process will be determined by the Students' Association Director of Wellbeing and the Elections Committee in advance of the election and the Students' Association will take responsibility for conducting, overseeing and ratifying the School President elections.

*Voting:* Voting will take place online, and will happen together with Students' Association elections in March. Any student taking any module within a given School has a vote in that School President election. Voting will be credit weighted. The system of single transferable vote will be used, as with all Students' Association elections.

Postgraduates are eligible to vote and taught postgraduate students will be given the same credit weighting as undergraduates. PhD students and other research postgraduates will be assigned the equivalent of 120 credits full-time, and 60 credits part-time. For multiple Schools these credits will be split evenly between Schools.

## **Responsibilities of School Presidents**

- To act responsibly and appropriately as a role model to other students (in a non-academic sense – the grades of the School President are not relevant to their role).
- To run class representative elections within the School with support from the Director of Education.
- To line-manage the elected class representatives in their school, and Convenors if applicable.
- To promote the class representative system and organise a class representatives forum within the School at least twice every semester.
- To chair every SSCC within the School (with the few exceptions noted above) and set the agenda for all SSCC meetings in advance, preferably in consultation with the Director of Teaching or appropriate members of staff, and the class representatives.
- To hold as many SSCCs per semester as is practical and relevant for ensuring all students are appropriately represented.
- To attend every School Presidents' Forum and Education Committee meeting, unless reasonable apologies are given.
- To support the centrally managed Teaching Awards organised by the Students' Association and encourage all students within their School to nominate members of staff.
- To provide careers information for students through events, talks, panels, or otherwise, through consultation with staff in the school and in the Careers Centre, and class representatives.

## **Training**

It is the responsibility of the Director of Education to coordinate centralised training of all School Presidents. The purpose of the training is to ensure that the School Presidents will approach their roles in a conscientious and constructive way. A handbook will also be provided on an annual basis by the Director of Education to provide all School Presidents with information, contact details, and advice. Training will normally be supported by CAPOD.

In-School training will also be taken with a handover between the outgoing and the incoming School Presidents. It is not the responsibility of the School to train the School Presidents, but it is expected that the Director of Teaching will meet with the newly elected President to welcome them into the role.

## **School Presidents' Forum**

Every School President, the PG Academic Convenor, and both Faculty Presidents<sup>1</sup> must attend every School Presidents' Forum, which will normally be chaired by the University Rector. The Director of Education will chair in the Rector's absence. An agenda will be set in advance by the Director of Education and the Vice-Principal for Education (Proctor). At least two forums will be held each semester which will be attended by the Vice-Principal (Proctor) and the Assistant Vice-Principal (Dean of Learning & Teaching). Each Forum will have at least one representative from the University.

Modern Language convenors do not attend School Presidents' Forum.

The approved minutes of each meeting will be published online on the Students' Association website. Any action points from the forum, alongside updates from the Director of Education, will be sent out to all School Presidents immediately following the forum.

## **Relationship with School Staff**

School Presidents should strive to establish a constructive working relationship with staff in the School. School Presidents should meet with the Director of Teaching on a regular basis, but no more than once a month unless mutually agreed. The School President should not make unreasonable demands upon staff time or resources.

The School President should also be invited to the Teaching Committee as the default student member. If the Director of Teaching and/or Head of School are happy for the School President to attend any other meeting within the School, such as the Staff Council, then they may be invited, but this will be at the School's discretion.

## **Confidentiality**

Any confidential or sensitive information to which the School Presidents become party over the course of their duties, particularly regarding information concerning individual students or staff members must remain confidential. Any breach of confidentiality should be regarded as a breach of the University's Student Confidentiality policy.

## **Communication with Students**

The School President has the explicit permission of Registry to contact all students within their School. This communication should come from their non-

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<sup>1</sup>Faculty Presidents are elected by undergraduate students in the respective faculties, and replace the former Student Representatives on Academic Council, ensuring that Senate representation articulates more effectively with other mechanisms such as the School Presidents Forum.

personal email accounts (e.g. biologyresident@st-andrews.ac.uk). Email communication to all students within the School should normally be no more frequent than once a week to avoid 'spamming', and information contained within these communications should always be appropriate, constructive and reveal no confidential information. In the School of Philosophical, Anthropological and Film Studies, School Presidents should only email the department of which they are the elected representative.

School Presidents should pass on any relevant information to students that they receive from the University/any external bodies and should not keep this information to themselves for any personal gain.

School Presidents are also permitted by Corporate Communications to set up informal communication with students through social media (such as Facebook and Twitter). School Presidents have a responsibility to ensure that any sites are regulated for inappropriate or slanderous content.

## **Funding**

The Students' Association shall award a sum of money on an annual basis specifically for School Presidents to use. This money will be awarded on a discretionary basis upon application to the Director of Education. Examples of use could include producing a School newsletter or putting on a coffee afternoon for students. School Presidents can also apply to the Students' Association's Employability Fund to help with School careers events.

## **Role of Director of Education**

The Director of Education shall support and co-ordinate the activities of School Presidents. If any student wishes to raise any complaints or concerns about any School President these should be directed to either the Students' Association or the School. If any staff member wishes to raise any complaints or concerns, these should be directed to the School's Director of Teaching in the first instance who will be expected to consult with the Director of Education.

The Students' Association may withdraw the position of School President where there is evidence of dereliction of duty, conduct unbecoming to the post or violation of any of the University's policies. Any appeal against this decision can be submitted to the Rector who will liaise with the Students' Association and School and reach a judgment based on any evidence presented. If the office of School President becomes vacant through dismissal or resignation, the Director of Education will appoint a successor from amongst the Honours class representatives within the School, or organise an election amongst the class representatives, at his/her discretion. One of the Postgraduate Executive Representatives or the relevant Faculty President will take over the School President's responsibilities until the Director of Education appoints a new School President.

## CLASS REPRESENTATIVES

### **Role**

Class representatives are at the core of the student academic representation system at the University of St Andrews. Class representatives sit on their School's Student-Staff Consultative Committee (SSCC) to present student opinion. Class representatives consult with their classmates and advocate on issues such as the curriculum, learning resources, the learning and teaching process, assessment and feedback, student progression and achievement, guidance and support, and quality enhancement and assurance. They work closely with their School President and are trained and supported by the Students' Association.

### **Elections**

Class representatives will be democratically elected by as much of the eligible constituency as possible during Semester one. School Presidents will be responsible for organising class representative elections within their School with support from the Director of Education. The Director of Education will centrally set a date for class representative elections and will communicate the elections timeframe to all School Presidents and Directors of Teaching by August.

### **Responsibilities of Class Representatives**

- To attend every relevant SSCC meeting within their School.
- To consult with their classmates and raise any issues brought to them at the SSCC.
- To attend class representative forums organised by their School President and raise any issues they feel appropriate at this forum.
- To keep any sensitive information discussed at SSCCs and class representatives forums confidential.

If class representatives fail to attend class representative forums, or SSCCs, the School President reserves the right to organise a co-option to appoint a new class representative for that module/year group.

### **Training**

The Director of Education will be responsible for organising a training session for all class representatives, normally with support from CAPOD. A class representatives handbook will also be provided on an annual basis by the Director of Education to provide information, contact details, and advice.

### **Role of the School President**

The Students' Association and the School may withdraw the position of Class Representative where there is evidence of dereliction of duty, conduct unbecoming to the post or violation of

any of the University's policies. Any appeal against this decision can be submitted to the Director of Education who will liaise with the School President/the School and reach a judgment based on any evidence presented. If the office of Class Representative becomes vacant through dismissal or resignation, the School President will organise an election/co-option to replace them.

## POSTGRADUATE REPRESENTATIVES

Postgraduate students have their own postgraduate representatives. The election process for School Presidents by the entire student body (including postgraduate students) remains unaffected by this fact. Postgraduate representative roles include:

Postgraduate Taught Representative (PGT Rep)	Academic representatives elected by the Taught Postgraduate student body. They work closely with their School President on academic representation for Taught Postgraduate Students
Postgraduate Research Representative (PGR Rep)	Academic representatives elected by the Research Postgraduate student body. They work closely with their School President on academic representation for Research Postgraduate Students.
Postgraduate Executive Representatives: (PG Executive Rep)	Postgraduate representatives elected from existing Postgraduate Representatives in each School (one from PGTs and one from PGRs). These representatives will sit on PG Executive Forum, chaired by the PG Academic Convenor.
Postgraduate Academic Convenor (PG Convenor)	Students' Representative Council member elected to represent postgraduate interests within the Students' Association and University on Academic issues. The Postgraduate Convenor functions as the liaison between the Postgraduate Executive Reps, the Postgraduate Society and the University.

### **Election process**

Postgraduate Representatives are elected by the postgraduate student body together with other class representatives within the timeframe set by the Director of Education. Each School must have at least one Postgraduate Research and one Postgraduate Taught representative.

The election process takes place electronically at the same time as the undergraduate class representative elections, for PGTs. For PGRs, this can be done later if necessary, in accordance with degree starting dates. School Presidents are responsible for the election



process, as with undergraduate class representative elections. Prior to the election, the Director of Education will provide information about the role of Postgraduate Representatives and Postgraduate Executive Representatives.

Once the elections for the Postgraduate Representatives have taken place, the elected Postgraduate Representatives then elect Postgraduate Executive Representatives from among their number in week 4 (one from PGT and one from PGR). If there is only one PGT representative and one PGR representative in a school, these representatives are automatically elected to the Executive role.

To ensure communication, the School President is granted emailing rights to all postgraduate students within the School.

The Postgraduate Convenor is elected during the Students' Association elections in March and will take office on 1 July of the same year. The holder of this position sits on the Students' Association Students' Representative Council with voting rights.

### **Training and transition**

The Postgraduate Convenor and the Director of Education will organize postgraduate specific training in week 4 or 5 of Semester one, normally with support from CAPOD. They will also produce a handbook for Postgraduate Representatives.

### **Duties within the Schools and the Students' Association**

#### **Postgraduate Forum**

Twice per semester all Postgraduate Executive Representatives meet to discuss current issues at a Postgraduate Executive Forum. The Postgraduate Convenor will set the dates for all Postgraduate Forums in the following year by August. The Postgraduate Convenor convenes and chairs these Forums.

The Director of Education will attend every Forum. The Proctor (or one of the Associate Provosts), the Assistant Vice-Principal (Dean of Learning & Teaching) and the Assistant Vice-Principal (Provost) will attend at least one of these Forums per semester.

#### **School Student Staff Consultative Committee**

Postgraduate Representatives attend the Student Staff Consultative Committee in their School if it is an undergraduate and postgraduate meeting. If it is a postgraduate specific SSCC, it is up to the discretion of the School President whether they will continue to chair, as they can allow their Postgraduate Executive Representatives to chair in their stead. The School President will attend both undergraduate and postgraduate SSCC meetings, regardless of whether they are chairing or not.

## **School Council**

The Postgraduate Executive Representatives attends the School Council.

## **School Learning & Teaching Committee Meetings**

The Postgraduate Taught Representatives are encouraged to consult with the School President prior to School's Learning & Teaching Committee meetings if they are not members of the School's Learning & Teaching Committee.

## **Student Library Users Group/Expansion Roles**

Both undergraduate and postgraduate representatives can run for several 'expansion roles' in their schools, in addition to their class representative role. These are: social representative, careers representative, secretary representative, and library representative. The library representative for the school will attend the Student Library Users Group unless they have good reason to send apologies, in which case the School President will attend instead.








All expansion role holders are expected to attend CAPOD training. They will also ensure they represent both undergraduate and postgraduate students in their school in meetings with the relevant University units (the library, the careers centre, and CAPOD).

# Academic Representation Structure

## Students' Association Level




### SCHOOL PRESIDENTS' FORUM

A FORUM FOR STUDENTS TO DISCUSS UNIVERSITY WIDE ACADEMIC ISSUES WITH THE UNIVERSITY. MEETS TWICE A SEMESTER

-  Director of Education
-  Faculty Presidents
-  PG Academic Convener
-  School Presidents
-  Proctor
-  Dean of Science
-  Dean of Arts & Divinity





### PG EXECUTIVE FORUM

A FORUM FOR PG STUDENTS TO DISCUSS UNIVERSITY WIDE PG ISSUES WITH THE UNIVERSITY. MEETS TWICE A SEMESTER.

-  PG Academic Convener
-  Director of Education
-  PG Executive Reps
-  Proctor
-  Provost
-  Pro-Dean PGT
-  Pro-Dean PGR

### EDUCATION COMMITTEE





A COMMITTEE FOR SCHOOL PRESIDENTS TO DISCUSS ACADEMIC AFFAIRS ACROSS SCHOOLS. SETS THE S. A. EDUCATIONAL PRIORITIES. MEETS WEEKLY.

-  Director of Education
-  Faculty Presidents
-  PG Academic Convener
-  School Presidents

## School Level

### STUDENT STAFF CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

A COMMITTEE FOR ACADEMIC REPRESENTATIVES TO DISCUSS FEEDBACK WITH MEMBERS OF TEACHING STAFF. MEETS ONCE OR TWICE A SEMESTER.

-  School President
-  Class Reps
-  PG Reps
-  School Teaching Staff

### CLASS REP FORUM

A PREPARATORY MEETING FOR THE SSCC, AND A PLACE TO DISCUSS INITIAL FEEDBACK BETWEEN ACADEMIC REPS. MEETS A COUPLE TIMES A SEMESTER.

-  School President
-  Class Reps
-  PG Reps

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1.0	Changes to titles/contact details to reflect decanal restructuring	Updated	-	February 2021
1.1	Changes to Associate Provost titles	Updated	Emily Feamster, Academic Policy Officer, Principals Office	August 2021