

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND REPRESENTATION POLICY

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THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART

Student Engagement and Representation Policy

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1. Introduction

1. Student engagement through partnership working is integral to the culture and quality of Glasgow School of Art's (GSA) education and wider student experience. This policy sets out how student engagement operates across the GSA, setting our expectations for how we engage and support students to have a voice in their educational experience, and how we work proactively and in partnership to respond to student feedback in our commitment to continual enhancement.
2. This policy has been co-created with the GSA Students' Association (GSASA) acknowledging the vital role partnership plays in supporting student engagement between both the GSA and GSASA.
3. GSA and the GSASA hold joint ownership and responsibilities for supporting, developing and championing students' voices through our representational roles, structures and mechanisms, including the Students' Association itself as a representative body of GSA students.

1.1 Scope

4. This policy relates to student engagement and representation for students on undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes, as well as expectations for student engagement within student-facing professional services.
5. This policy outlines GSA's commitment to working in partnership with students as described within the Student Partnership Agreement and should be read in tandem with this document.

1.2 Principles of Student Engagement and Representation

6. This policy sets the expectation that students should have a meaningful and impactful voice in all decisions which impact their learning experience whilst studying at the GSA. Our approach to student engagement is informed by the following key principles:
 - a. Students are experts in their learning experience and provide a valuable, meaningful, and impactful contribution to how we teach, support, assess, and guide learners during their studies at the GSA.
 - b. Students are represented at all levels of the GSA, ensuring a strong and meaningful student voice in all decisions which impact their learning experience.
 - c. All students have the right and opportunity to provide constructive feedback on their experience of studying at the GSA.
 - d. Student feedback and contributions should be appropriately considered and responded to, ensuring that where students do contribute, they are informed of how their contribution is used by closing the feedback loop.
 - e. Where students provide feedback or requests for change which are not deemed feasible or appropriate this should be explained to students.
 - f. A range of mechanisms, structures, and representative roles are available to all students so that they can engage with and contribute at all levels of the organisation and are designed to meet the needs of our diverse student body.

- g. Students who are engaged in representational roles are provided with appropriate training, support and guidance to enable them to succeed.

2. Student Representation

- 7. A key mechanism for student engagement is the provision of student representation across the GSA. Student representatives provide a collective student voice as well as a student perspective in key forums, committees and projects.
- 8. Students are collectively represented at institutional level through the GSA Students' Association by elected Sabbatical Officers, who are informed by the collective views of students through the Student Representative Council.
- 9. Institutional student representation is also supported through student representation on committees and working groups which hold responsibility for quality assurance and enhancement.
- 10. Representation at School, Department, and programme level is undertaken through elected Class Representatives at Student Staff Consultative Committees and appointed School Officers at School Boards of Studies.
- 11. Where student representatives are members of a committee or group, they are full and equal members with access to all committee business and the right to comment and contribute to business as any other member. The only exception to this shall relate to confidential matters which would be raised by the convenor of the committee or group. This should be explained to the student(s) in advance of the meeting and handled as a restricted agenda item.
- 12. Engagement of students in wider enhancement activities at School level is supported by the appointed School Officer.

2.1 Student Representation on GSA-level Committees and Working Groups

- 13. GSA's Student Partnership Agreement commits GSA to ensuring that students are active members of all of GSA's decision-making committees and working groups related to learning, teaching, and the student experience.
- 14. Student representatives on committees are typically drawn from Class Representatives through a process of self-nomination and selection coordinated by the GSA Students' Association and Learning and Teaching Team. Student Representation on the Board of Governors and Academic Council is governed by separate procedures aligned to each body.
- 15. All students on committees are provided an induction by the Chair and Secretary and provided with appropriate support to ensure their effective engagement with committee business.
- 16. Students on GSA-level committees and working groups, except for the GSASA Sabbatical Officers, are appointed to offer their expertise, perspective, and lived experience of being a student at the GSA, and not as a representative of a student constituency.

2.2 Class Representatives

17. Class Representatives are elected students with responsibilities for representing the views, opinions and experiences of students on their programme of study. Class Representatives are elected at each year of study on a programme, representing the views of students for that year group and attend the Student-Staff Consultative Committee.
18. At least one Class Representative is elected per stage of the programme.
19. Class Representatives are voluntary positions providing opportunities to gain experience in advocacy, as well as professional skills through engagement with committees and representational activities.
20. Class Representatives are responsible for:
 - a. Gathering student views on their learning experience and providing feedback to academic and professional service staff to inform enhancements.
 - b. Working in partnership with their peers, academic and professional service staff to identify changes and improvements in response to student feedback.
 - c. Working in partnership with their peers, academic and professional service staff to report back to students on the outcomes of their feedback, closing the feedback loop.
21. Class Representatives are expected to make every effort to represent the opinions of their peers even if these do not coincide with their own views. They are supported by their Programme Leader to ensure they have appropriate means of gathering those views.
22. Class Representatives also have an important role working in partnership with their Programme Leader to ensure that the students they represent are informed of how their feedback has been used and where appropriate actions have been taken.

2.3 Student Staff Consultative Committees

23. Student-Staff Consultative Committees (SSCCs) are student-centred, programme-level committees which bring together Class Representatives and academic staff to discuss the student learning experience.
24. SSCCs are a valuable forum for discussing student feedback, providing opportunities for student representatives and staff to identify good practice, consider areas for development and work in partnership to identify and take forward enhancement.
25. SSCCs are enhancement and solution-focused, allowing staff and students to discuss matters of mutual importance and identify appropriate actions to respond to student feedback and close the feedback loop.
26. SSCCs should include all Class Representatives for a programme, the Programme Leader and appropriate representation from the programme team and, where necessary, members of professional services. A full remit and membership of the SSCC is provided in Appendix 1 of this policy.

27. Where issues cannot be resolved at SSCC, or relate to wider School or institutional matters, these should be raised at the Board of Study by the Programme Leader.

2.4 School Officers

28. School Officers are employed and remunerated students within each Academic School and one across Postgraduate Research who work in partnership with staff on the development and delivery of enhancement projects each academic session.
29. School Officers play a crucial role in involving students in enhancement activities and offer valuable insights based on their first-hand experience as GSA students. While they provide a direct and informed student perspective, they are distinct from student representatives.
30. School Officers are appointed based on skills and experience to co-lead the design and facilitation of consultation activities with staff and students, contributing to data collection and analysis from consultation activities and support reporting to institutional committees and working groups where appropriate.
31. School Officers are recruited and inducted by the Learning and Teaching Team in partnership with Academic Schools and the GSASA, with ongoing support and guidance by a dedicated School-based line manager.

2.5 Students on School Boards of Studies

32. School Boards of Studies hold responsibility for the quality of the student learning experience and as such have appropriate student representation to ensure students have an active voice in decisions which impact that experience.
33. School Officers are ex-officio student members of the Board of Studies, with equal access to all committee business and the right to comment and contribute to business as any other member, and are appointed to provide a student perspective on the business of the Board and on enhancement activities.

2.6 School Forums

34. School Forums are a space for students, student representatives, academic staff and student-facing professional support services to discuss matters of mutual interest and concern and provide an opportunity for students to engage with matters relating to the wider student experience.
35. School Forums are held twice per academic session, during a time where all students within the School should be enabled to take part.
36. School Forums are coordinated and delivered in partnership by the School Officer and a nominated member of staff within the School, ensuring the forum is facilitated in partnership.

3. Roles and Responsibilities for Student Representation

37. Student engagement and representation is a partnership between staff and students with each having key responsibilities to ensure effective mechanisms, processes and support for students to engage and provide feedback.

3.1 Student and Student Representative Responsibilities

38. Students are active members of the GSA community and engaged in their learning, as such have the opportunity to engage with feedback opportunities, providing constructive feedback which helps identify good practice, as well as supports development and enhancement.
39. Student representatives have a responsibility to make every effort to attend relevant meetings and committees, representing the views of the students they are elected by, even if these views do not coincide with their own.
40. Student representatives should engage with appropriate training and support to ensure they can be effective in their role and develop their skills and experience.

3.2 Programme Leader Responsibilities

41. Programme Leaders are responsible for ensuring that students are aware of how they can provide feedback on their learning experience. This includes:
 - a. ensuring that elections are held for Class Representatives at the beginning of the academic session, normally within the first two weeks of semester 1, and providing the names and contact information of Class Representatives to the GSASA and Learning and Teaching Team to offer training.
 - b. ensuring that students are made aware of their Class Representative(s), including contact details, and that Class Representatives are supported in contacting the students they represent. This should include updating Programme Canvas pages with information about Class Representatives.

3.3 Heads of School Responsibilities

42. Heads of School are responsible for the effective organisation and management of SSCCs across their School and the appropriate representation of students on School Boards of Studies.
43. Heads of School are responsible for nominating key staff to work with School Officers to support the delivery of partnership enhancement activities.

3.4 Committee Convenor Responsibilities

44. Committee Convenors and Secretaries are responsible for ensuring that student members are appropriately inducted and supported as full members of the committee. Convenors should also actively encourage student representatives to contribute to committee business and support students to bring forward items for consideration by the committee.

3.5 Learning and Teaching and GSA Students' Association

45. The Learning and Teaching Team and GSA Students' Association are responsible for the joint management and coordination of student representative elections and appointments, including training and development. The Learning and Teaching Team also have a responsibility for supporting academic and professional service staff in their engagement and partnership working with students.

3.6 Responsibilities for supporting Student Representatives who disengage

46. It is recognised that on occasion a student representative may disengage from their role leading to issues with communication and quoracy. In these instances, the appropriate

member of academic staff responsible for that representational role should contact the student about their engagement and offer support.

47. If the student representative wishes to withdraw from their role, the appropriate member of staff responsible for that representational role should make arrangements where practicable for a replacement representative to be elected and inform the Learning and Teaching Team and GSASA.

4. Closing the Feedback Loop

48. Closing the feedback loop is crucial to ensure students know they are heard, listened to, and that their feedback is valued. Therefore, in engaging students or seeking feedback, consideration should be given as to how students' contributions will be considered, responded to and the outcomes communicated to students.

5. Other opportunities for Student Feedback

49. All courses should offer at least one opportunity for students on their course to provide informal feedback on their learning experience. This can be in the middle of a course or at the end.
50. The Student Experience Survey (SES) and National Student Survey (NSS) operate annually and offer an opportunity for all undergraduate and postgraduate taught students to feedback on their learning experience. In line with the GSA Student Surveys Policy, all feedback is anonymised, and respondent anonymity is protected in published results which are made available to students and staff on the Intranet.

Appendix 1. Student Staff Consultative Committee Remit and Membership

THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART

Student-Staff Consultative Committee: UG and PGT Remit and Membership

Report to: Board of Studies

Student-Staff Consultative Committees (SSCCs) are student-centred, programme level committees whose primary function is to capture, consider and respond to student feedback to enhance the student learning experience. SSCCs reporting to the Board of Studies ensures a strong and meaningful student voice is considered within each Academic School.

1. Remit

1.1 To discuss student feedback on the programme.

1.2 To receive updates on School and GSA-wide actions and enhancements in support of the student experience.

1.2 To consult in the development of programme amendments.

1.3 To identify and discuss enhancements to the student learning experience.

2. Membership

- Elected Class Representatives of the programme(s) for which the committee is responsible.
- Programme Leader(s) or nominee (Convenor)
- Representative from Design History and Theory (DHT), Fine Art Critical Studies (FACS), or, any other relevant subject heads as appropriate.

Other members may be co-opted from within and out with the programme or school, such as;

- Head of School
- Academic Development Lead
- Representative from professional support services when relevant to the business of the committee.
- Student President and Vice-President, and Student Engagement Coordinator of the GSA Students' Association when relevant to the business of the committee.

The School shall provide secretarial support for the Committee.

3. Frequency of meetings

The Committee will meet at least once per semester.