



The British University in Egypt

Student Representation Policy

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Contents

Introduction:	4
Purpose:	4
The Role of the Student Representative	4
Keys skills of the Student Representative:	5
Election of Student Representatives:	5
Student Representation Mechanisms:	5
Conduct of Committee Members	6
Committee Attendance.....	7
Confidentiality:	7
Constructive Feedback:	7
Training for Student Representatives:	7
Eligibility for Student Representatives:	8
Student Discipline and Complaints	8

Introduction:

Student Representatives are responsible for representing the best interests of their peers. Student representatives should try to reflect the needs and perspectives of all students they represent. To do this, student representatives should gather feedback, both positive and negative, from their peers about their University experience. Student Representatives share this feedback with staff, and work in partnership with them to share good practice, explore issues, suggest solutions, and bring about positive change.

BUE recognises that Student Representation can have a direct, positive, influence on the delivery and/or development of teaching and learning practices and quality assurance, as well as the broader Student Experience.

BUE acknowledges that successful student representation requires a collaborative and collegial culture in which the University and its students have a shared responsibility for promoting an environment which empowers the student voice. In other words, students and staff should work together towards common goals and positive change.

Purpose:

The intention of this policy is to support an environment where students:

- 1) Are given an opportunity to feed into the University's decision-making processes.
- 2) Can contribute to the enhancement of teaching and learning practices.
- 3) Can contribute to the overall enhancement of the Student Experience.
- 4) Can understand the operation of student representation mechanisms.

The Role of the Student Representative

Student Representatives will be expected to:

- Actively seek, and represent, the views of students to members of staff.
- Provide feedback on programme delivery and work with other student representatives and staff to develop effective improvements.
- Help identify best practice and workable resolutions to common student issues and ensure this is fed back to the University.
- Understand the difference between issues that can be resolved locally through module or programme leaders and issues that should be escalated to Faculty or University level.
- Ensure actions taken and outcomes are communicated back to their relevant student communities.
- Engage with staff in the development of projects that need student input.
- Support and promote processes to seek student feedback such as questionnaires, focus groups, module evaluations, etc.
- Liaise with the Students' Union regarding relevant matters which may come to the representative's attention.
- Represent students, as necessary, on programme and module committees and other bodies to help ensure and enhance the quality of the student experience.

Keys skills of the Student Representative:

An effective Student Representative will need a range of skills to effectively carry out their role. Candidates should be able to demonstrate either prior attainment of these skills, or a willingness to learn to develop them:

- **Verbal communication skills** – to discuss problems with fellow-students and staff and to feedback outcomes and actions.
- **Written communication skills** – representatives may be required to write brief summaries of students' views on a particular matter or provide short reports for committees.
- **Negotiation skills** – finding a positive solution for all parties involved can be challenging and will often require patience and empathy.
- **Team-working** – collaborating with other representatives and the Student Union to ensure a more comprehensive representation of your cohort and the wider student body.
- **Listening skills** – hearing the views of other students, and of staff, in order to be properly informed when acting on behalf of, and feeding back to, others.
- **Analysis and interpretation of information** – assuring that information received from students is considered to determine the best ways to address points raised and escalate them if necessary.

Election of Student Representatives:

- 1) Nominations for Student Representatives should commence from Teaching Week 1. This should be communicated to all students in lectures and via email and/or during Induction week.
- 2) Student Representatives are elected by their peers for a period of one academic year, although they can run for re-election.
- 3) Students should nominate themselves.
- 4) Ideally candidates should submit a 250-word limit manifesto as part of their nomination, although this is not compulsory. These manifestos should be shared with all students on the programme of study.
- 5) Candidates must express their interest to their Programme Leader or the relevant member of staff before the end of Teaching Week 3.
- 6) Voting, in the form of a show of hands or other methods as necessary, should be completed before the end of Teaching Week 4.
- 7) Names and contact details of all Student Representatives will be passed on to The Student Services. New student Representatives must attend a training session provided by The Student Services.
- 8) Successful candidates take up the post immediately upon completion of training.
- 9) If student representatives drop out or cannot continue for any reason, faculties should draw representatives from the student body as democratically as possible via students and existing Student Representatives; this could be by a raising of hands in a teaching session for instance.
- 10) Updated names of Student Representatives should be published by their Faculty and shared with The Student Services.

Student Representation Mechanisms:

Students will be represented at all levels of the University through the mechanisms outlined below.

Student Representatives are involved at both programme and Faculty level, whereas the Students Union

President represents at the University level.

Programme Level

Programme Representatives: are student-nominated individuals who will attend Student Staff Liaison Committees and other committees as necessary. Course Representatives should gather representative evaluations from their peers to present to their Faculty. Primarily it is the responsibility of Course Representatives to present the views of students to staff and to report back to students on outcomes of Student Staff Liaison Committees or other committees.

Faculty Level

Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC): The SSLC is a forum where staff and students meet together for discussions and consultations regarding their degree programme and any other matters relevant to the quality of the students' academic experience. If an SSLC identifies an issue that cannot be addressed at SSLC level, this item/s will be reported to the relevant Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee via the Chair of the SSLC or nominee.

Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee (FTLC): are staff-led Faculty-level committees whose primary function is the continual review and assessment of Teaching and Learning provision, quality, and delivery. If the FTLC identifies or becomes aware of an issue that cannot be addressed at Faculty-level, this item will be reported to University Teaching and Learning Committee via the Chair of the FTLC or nominee.

University Level

University Teaching and Learning Committee (UTLC): is a staff led University-level committee whose primary function is the continual review and assessment of Teaching and Learning provision, quality, and delivery. Student issues identified at the FTLC that either cannot be resolved at the Faculty-level or offer opportunities for learning at an institutional level (for example best practice, agreeable resolutions, etc.), should be taken to the UTLC for review and consideration.

Senate: is a staff led University-level committee whose primary function is an overarching responsibility to regulate and oversee the academic work of the University for both teaching and research, approve academic policies and procedures, provide assurance to governing bodies on academic quality and standards, as well as monitor the student experience and student outcomes.

Conduct of Committee Members

All committee members, both staff and students, should be guided by the common principles of collegiality and respect. All committee members should:

- Act in a way that is appropriate for a professional learning environment and respect the views and opinions of others even if they do not agree with them.
- Treat other committee members as equals regardless of position or status.
- Ensure that all voices are heard and encourage those who may feel less confident in sharing their views.
- Make every effort to foster an environment of open and respectful discourse amongst fellow committee members.
- Avoid making derogatory comments which relate to individuals, either staff or students, regardless of whether those individuals are members, or whether they are present at the committee or not.
- Abide by the decisions of the committee in accordance with agreed University regulations and structures.

Committee Attendance

Student Representatives should make every effort to attend committees or notify the committee secretary and Chair as far in advance as possible if they are unable to attend.

If a Student Representative consistently fails to attend committees of which they are a member, the Chair of the Committee should contact the student concerned and inform the Director of Student Services. The intention of this communication in the first instance should be to ensure that the Student Representative is aware of the dates and times of the committees, their responsibilities and whether they need any support or guidance in their role.

Student Representatives attending UTLC or Senate will have an opportunity to discuss relevant papers with the secretary of those meetings in advance to ensure they have an opportunity to ask any questions or clarify any issues.

Confidentiality:

Students Representatives are expected to maintain confidentiality about any information related to students or staff that they may have access to during the course of their responsibilities. Similarly, information that is confidential to BUE may not be shared beyond the campus community.

Should confidential matters arise during meetings where Student Representatives are present, the Chair of the meeting may reserve agenda items for which the Student Representative will be asked to leave so that a closed discussion among staff members of the committee can take place.

Constructive Feedback:

Student Representatives should make every effort to gather representative feedback on learning and teaching matters from their peers. It is their responsibility to present the views of students to staff and to report back to students with the outcomes of academic committee meetings.

Student Representatives are expected to present constructive feedback to the committees they attend and work actively with their faculties to find solutions to encountered problems. Where issues raised may cause concerns for different faculties, Student Representatives are encouraged to consult with other Student Representatives, as well as students from the wider student community, to collect feedback. Feedback offered should be valid and well-reasoned in relation to issues, challenges, and the work of others, and should, where possible, involve both positive and negative comments. All discourse should be open, friendly, to the point, evidence-based if possible and should avoid being oppositional or confrontational.

Training for Student Representatives:

The role of the Student Representative is a prestigious one that provides individuals with opportunities for personal development and the opportunity to build key graduate skills. The role can also be challenging, varied, and requires a range of skills. Those who are unfamiliar with aspects of University committees or liaising with staff may find this daunting in the first instance. As such, all Student Representatives must attend mandatory training provided by the Student Services team to help them fulfil their role. This training will introduce Student Representatives to the mechanisms and structures with which they will operate (predominantly committees) and train them on the appropriate means of

communicating with fellow students and staff. Being a Student Representative is a great opportunity and there is much help and support to get Student Representatives started confidently. Additional training throughout the year may also take place as necessary. The Student Services can also offer specific training on the individual skills required for being a successful student representative.

In addition to the training, there is a Student Representative training handbook available from the Student Services.

If Student Representatives are unsure about anything, they should contact the Director of Student Services or the chair of their SSLC in the first instance for further advice.

Eligibility for Student Representatives:

To be eligible to act as a Student Representative individuals must:

- 11) Have a genuine desire to engage with the student body and represent their peers in a positive and constructive manner.
- 12) Be willing to attend and take part in the various mechanisms of student representation available.
- 13) Be willing to act in the best interests of others even if the views put forward do not necessarily reflect their own.
- 14) Not have any Plagiarism, Academic Misconduct, or Disciplinary decisions prior or pending.
- 15) Not be a Repeat year student.
- 16) Have fulfilled all of his or her financial obligations to BUE and is up to date with student fee payments.

Student Discipline and Complaints

Any Student Representative who is subject to a disciplinary investigation or student complaint will be required to suspend their duties pending the outcome of said investigation. At any time, should a Student Representative be found to be acting in a way that is deemed inappropriate in relation to their role, they will be required to step down with immediate effect. These instances will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis alongside the University Disciplinary and Student Complaints policies. Faculties should elect new Student Representatives as per Section 5.9 above. For further information, please contact The Director of Student Services.