STUDENT VOICE REPRESENTATIVES

ENHANCING OUR ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

STUDENT VOICE REPRESENTATIVES HANDBOOK

2017 - 2018

Keele UNIVERSITY
Congratulations on becoming our first ever Student Voice Representatives! For those of you who have been a StAR before you will know the commitment you have made is vital for KeeleSU; it allows us to have the best people possible to representing their peers and making positive change that will not only benefit you and everyone else on your course this year, but also paving the way for a better deal for students for years to come.

My name is Jeff Saddington-Wiltshire and I am your Education Officer for this academic year. This summer, along with the Student Voice department, I’ve been busy making sure that our Student Voice Representative programme is best placed to make sure you get the most out of your time as a Student Voice Representative.

Academic representation is more important to KeeleSU now than ever before (and it was already a big deal to us!) thanks to the fact that we are now judged nationally by the National Student Survey on our ability to represent the voice of our students. Thanks to the hard work of all our representatives last year, we were really pleased to see that KeeleSU ranked third in the country!

As a Student Voice Representative this year, you are now a huge part of ensuring students are getting their voices heard! You will often be the first point of contact for students with queries and suggestions. It’s crucial that the students on your course know who you are and how they can give you feedback to take to the school. You will also need to ensure that any decisions made by your school are communicated back to students; this may sound like a lot to take on, but don’t worry, you will be supported by your Lead School Rep, the Student Voice department and myself as your Education Officer.

As always, we are all here to make sure you can do the best job possible. If you have any problems, then please do not hesitate to contact me. We can’t wait to get started and hope you leave training energised, engaged and excited for the year ahead!

Best wishes, and best of luck,

Jeff

Contents

Jargon Buster ........................................ 1
Student Voice Reps 101 ..................... 2 - 3
Get The Message Out ......................... 4
What’s in it for Me? ........................... 5
Training & Events ............................. 6
Lead School Reps .............................. 7
Referring Issues ............................... 8
Student Voice Wins ......................... 9
For the next few weeks, you may find yourself a little confused with all the acronyms, names and language we use here; especially if you’re new to the role. There’s been a lot of change this summer, which could lead to some confusion when it comes to the names of meetings, departments and even Student Voice Reps themselves! Don’t worry! There are always people around to help, but hopefully this Jargon Buster will help you with some of our more complicated language. If there’s anything we’ve missed off this list, don’t be afraid to come and ask us!

### General

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SVR</td>
<td>Student Voice Representative (used to be StARs)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SSVC</td>
<td>Student Staff Voice Committee (the old Student Staff Liaison Committees)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minutes</td>
<td>Formal notes taken at meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agenda</td>
<td>A formalised list of things to talk about at a meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>FE</td>
<td>Further Education (College and beyond, 16+ education)</td>
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<tr>
<td>HE</td>
<td>Higher Education (University and beyond)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEF</td>
<td>Teaching Excellence Framework (a way of ranking Universities)</td>
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<td>NSS</td>
<td>National Student Survey</td>
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### University

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ILAS</td>
<td>Institute of Liberal Arts School</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPIRE</td>
<td>School of Politics and International Relations and Economics</td>
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<tr>
<td>HUMS</td>
<td>Humanities and Social Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>KMS</td>
<td>Keele Management School</td>
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<td>SSPP</td>
<td>School of Social Science and Public Policy</td>
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<td>LLU</td>
<td>Language Learning Unit</td>
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<td>KPA</td>
<td>Keele Postgraduates’ Association</td>
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<td>CEC</td>
<td>Clinical Education Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sus Hub</td>
<td>Sustainability Hub</td>
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<tr>
<td>SLTC</td>
<td>School Learning and Teaching Committees</td>
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### KeeleSU

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<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NUS</td>
<td>National Union of Students</td>
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<tr>
<td>SLTAs</td>
<td>Student Lead Teaching Awards (awards run by the Union to honour Uni staff)</td>
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<tr>
<td>AGM</td>
<td>Annual General Meeting</td>
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<td>UGM</td>
<td>Union General Meeting</td>
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### Organisations

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<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>HEFCE</td>
<td>Higher Education Funding Council of England</td>
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<tr>
<td>QAA</td>
<td>Quality Assurance Agency</td>
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What's Expected of Me?

Gathering Feedback:
It’s extremely important that you gather feedback from your peers before going to Student Staff Voice Committee (SSVCs). It’s important to remember that it’s your job to get the voice of students on your course heard, not your own opinion; you’re called a Student Voice Representative for this very reason! Find out more about ways to gather feedback on the next page or online.

Going to Student Staff Voice Committees:
There will be up to four Student Staff Voice Committees (SSVCs) per year and you should try and attend all of them. They will be attended by academic and support staff and SVRs from every level of your programme. These are formal meetings with a set agenda and minutes. As a Student Voice Representative, it’s important that you make sure that an SVR chairs all of these meetings; If you’re interested in becoming a chair, you will be given information during training and online. If you cannot attend an SSVC due to a prior commitment or illness, you should send apologies to the chair and staff administrative lead for Student Voice Representatives within your school.

Responsibilities After the Meeting:
After the meeting you should update students on your programme on how the meeting went, focussing on whether any of their issues were resolved and what they want you to do next. You should also ensure students are able to see meeting minutes as soon as these are available.

What Am I Supposed to Do?
In short, as a Student Voice Representative, you have been elected to represent your fellow students by gathering their views, attending Student Staff Voice Committees at least once a term and then telling everyone in your year what happened at the meeting.

Effectively, you are a vital and important link between staff and students! You have the responsibility of making sure your lecturers and course leaders know what the students want and use your skills, knowledge and resources to make sure it happens.
**Where Does Feedback Go?**

Minutes (the formal notes) taken at SSVC meetings are then passed on to staff in your academic department so that any small issues can be addressed quickly. Minutes also pass to the School Learning and Teaching Committees (SLTCs) where they will be considered at a higher level. The Students’ Union also receive copies of the minutes. If you feel like an issue isn’t being resolved, despite it being raised at a number of SSVC meetings, then contact Jeff Saddlington-Wiltshire, Education Officer.

**Who Do I Represent?**

It’s great that Keele University has so many options for students to study a variety of subjects but this can make things confusing for Student Voice Representatives!

Student Voice Representatives can be single and dual honours so if a dual honours student wishes to raise an issue with a for one programme, they should go to the SVR for that programme. Equally, students with an issue in an elective should go to the SVR for the course which owns that elective. This means as a Student Voice Representative you could be representing students from across the University!
Communicating with students on your course is one of the major parts of being a Student Voice Representative:

One of the main questions we get asked is how to actually canvass student opinion and make sure you are communicating properly. The first thing to remember is that everything needs to be communicated back to the students on your course.

Think of it like this:

Here are some suggestions of how you can gather student opinion before going to meetings and feedback what happens in the meetings to your course mates:

- Organise a course WhatsApp group or Facebook page. This is often a good way to get instant feedback and students can post their issues as they come up. Please feel free to add Jeff to your groups for students to talk directly to their Education Officer.
- Use the Student Voice Representatives website to send out emails to all students on your course. The website has a really simple email function, only SVRs have access to this function so make sure you make use of it!
- Hold a coffee morning, forum or drop in session. This should be at a time where as many students can attend as possible (why not hold it after a core lecture?)
- Create a short survey to capture student feedback. Websites like Survey Monkey are easy to use and share
- Share good ideas with your fellow Student Voice Representatives
HEAR

HEAR stands for the Higher Education Achievement Report. One feature of the HEAR is to recognise the co-curricular activities students take part in at University and provide a factual account of them in the form of an online transcript. Being a Student Voice Representative is recordable on the HEAR. You need to have attended training and at least one SSVC (but we’d like you to attend all of them!) and have held the position for at least one semester.

Volunteering

Student Voice Reps are by their very nature volunteers; however, many of our SVRs don’t claim the time they spend as an SVR as volunteer hours! SVRs are able to log their hours and work towards one of our volunteer awards. For information on how to register and record your hours, visit keelesu.com/volunteering

You can claim volunteering hours for:
- Time spent in training
- SSVC Meetings (you can claim up to an hour and a half preparation time for every SSVC you attend)
- Student Voice Representative Forums

The first award you can claim is bronze, which recognises 25 hours of volunteering. You are able to combine the hours spent as a Student Voice Rep with other volunteering opportunities to work towards an award.

Awards

Could you be our Student Voice Representative of the Year? We recognise those SVRs who have gone above and beyond in our annual KeeleSU Awards. Each year students and staff can nominate SVRs and (even more good news!) these awards are HEAR recordable! Look out for information on how to nominate yourself and others in Semester 2!

Student Voice Representatives Reception

This lovely event happens early in Semester 2. It’s a chance for all SVRs to get together to discuss issues and receive an update from the University and KeeleSU. Best of all, complimentary food and drink will be provided. You’ll receive an email invitation to this event early next semester.

Whilst an effective SVR will greatly benefit students on your course, we also want to ensure that it is a rewarding experience for you!

Being a Student Voice Representative, there are lots of ways to recognise your hard work and let it build towards something bigger!
KeeleSU will host an annual Student Voice Conference at the start of term. All SVRs should attend the conference, or one of the follow up training sessions.

If you have previously been to the Student Voice Conference, then you only need to attend the morning. In addition, there is an online training course which will be launched in November this year. You must complete SVR training in order for your position to be recognised on the HEAR.

Additional Training Dates
For those unable to attend the conference, we have three additional opportunities to attend training. The location of these training dates will be confirmed on the website.

Student Voice Forums
During the academic year, there will be a number of Student Voice forums. These will be specifically for SVRs and will be hosted by your Lead School Reps (see next page) and Education Officer. All SVRs should aim to attend these as they give your Lead School Reps important information to bring up at. Attending these meetings counts as volunteering!

Student Sustainability Representatives
We’re looking for reps who not only want to improve courses for their peers, but for the wider world too! There will be an opportunity to become a Student Sustainability Representative, a rep who looks for ways to green their course and get involved with sustainability initiatives.
To sign up or find out more, email Sarah, the Sustainability Project Officer: s.j briggs@keele.ac.uk.

Union General Meetings
A great chance to influence change at KeeleSU is by attending our Union General Meetings. These meetings give the Union a chance to find out where students are up to and often we pass important policy that reflects the way we run as a Union. As representatives it would be great if you could come to these meetings! Plus, there are free curly fries and free pop for all who attend!

Our First meeting is the Annual General Meeting and it’s happening on:
Monday 13th November 2017
5pm - 7pm
For future dates, please see: KeeleSU.com
The role of Lead School Voice Representatives

- To gather the views of Student Voice Representatives
- To read the minutes of all SSVCs (Student Staff Voice Committees) within their school to seek out any ongoing issues and to keep abreast of updates within their Schools
- To attend School Learning and Teaching Committees (SLTC) as a Student Representative
- To submit short reports to KeeleSU Student Voice, which will be submitted to Faculty Learning and Teaching Committees (FLTC) (NB: to attend FLTC meetings only if invited to speak about a particular subject)
- To organise forums (1 per semester) for Student Voice Representatives within their school
- To work with Schools on any relevant projects, events or committees which require student representation (such as reviews of Schools, ie Internal Quality Audits and validation events)
- To meet once per semester with the Education Officer and Student Voice department to update on work completed

Benefits of becoming a Lead School Voice Rep

We recognise that being a Lead School Voice Rep is a big commitment and as such there will be additional rewards for these reps such as:

- Lead School Voice Rep Hoodies and other freebies
- Free entry to a number of KeeleSU Events
- Vouchers for KeeleSU Outlets
- Additional Volunteering Awards

How to become a Lead School Voice Rep

Please fill in the application form on keelesu.com/voicereps. This will ask you a few details about why you’re interested and what you think you’d bring to the role. These applications will be reviewed by the Student Voice department, the Education Officer and Staff within your school.

The appointment of Lead School Voice Representatives will be confirmed on the week beginning 6th November and training will take place on the 9th November.
Advice and Support at Keele (ASK)

Luckily, KeeleSU has a fantastic free and independent advice centre, so when it’s something you can’t take to an SSVC just ASK. ASK help students with a whole range of things that life throws at you, from academic appeals, complaints, health and conduct and fitness to practice meetings to taking leave of absence, changing course, and progress and lots more besides. So if you have a problem you can’t solve, just ASK.

KeeleSU.com/ask for web info and live chat 01782 734800. Open weekdays 10am-12.30pm 1pm-4pm and until 7pm Wednesdays.

Complaints

We would also recommend that any serious complaints around a staff member are not taken to SSVC. You are encouraged to suggest improvements to teaching practices but if possible, feedback should not be personal. If a student wishes to make a complaint about a member of staff, we would recommend that they speak to ASK or your Education Officer.

In case you’re unsure of what issues you might be dealing with at SSVC meetings here is a list of common issues for SVRs:

- Resource problems
- not enough books in the library for a module or unsuitable teaching rooms
- Online resources
- Notes not being uploaded to the KLE
- Teaching practise
- Inaccessible presentations, confusing teaching styles
- Course organisation
- Excessive module content, confusing structures, unclear deadlines, timetabling problems
- Assessment and Feedback
- Not receiving timely and clear feedback, not feeling prepared for assessments, too many deadlines at once
- Ideas for improvement and curriculum development
- Staff will value any suggestions students have to make enhancements on programmes
- Positive feedback - Let staff know what students have enjoyed and what has worked well so best practise can be shared!
We’d love to hear about the positive changes you are making by attending SSVC Meetings!

To encourage you to share your good news stories we are introducing ‘Student Voice Wins’. This is a form on the KeeleSU website where you can tell us what you’ve done. All wins, no matter how big or small, will be entered into a monthly prize draw to win prizes such as Alton Towers tickets, vouchers and gifts. We’ll also be sharing good news stories in our Student Voice newsletter!

Previous Wins

To give you an idea of the kind of things Student Voice Reps have improved in the past here are some examples of previous wins:

“I got a week’s deadline extension on an essay after delays. It was great to be able to help my peer & relieve some stress.”

“Simply getting a microphone in lectures so students could hear better!”

“I urged the school to give feedback on coursework assignments which were really long overdue and they eventually did”

How to Submit Online

It’s really simple to submit a win. Simply scroll to the bottom of the Student Voice Reps homepage on keelesu.com and enter your name, Student Voice Rep role and win!
Key Contacts:

Please direct all Student Voice Representative related queries to this Student Voice Representatives email: su.voice@keele.ac.uk

KeeleSU:
Jeff Wiltshire, Education Officer
Email: su.educationofficer@keele.ac.uk
Tel: 01782 733 703

HEAR contact in relation to Student Voice Representatives:
Emma Hedges, Student Voice Manager
Email: e.hedges@keele.ac.uk
Tel: 01782 733 821

KPA for Postgraduate related Student Voice Reps:
Ieuan Smith, KPA President
Email: kpa.chair@keele.ac.uk
Tel: 01782 734 227