

Student Voice Representative Handbook

2023 / 2024

Keele  SU

WELCOME FROM KEELE SU

Congratulations on getting appointed as a Student Voice Representative. Last year we had 315 representatives who recorded over 700 hours of volunteering. This role is integral to representing the views of your peers to ensure that students' voices are heard and acted upon. Through this role you will be able to make real change to your course and the overall student experience

Message from your Education Officer

Hi, I'm Sam Hackney. I'm your re-elected Education Officer for the academic year 2023/24. My role is to support your studies and ensure you get the most out of your time at Keele. As part of my role, I support Student Voice Representatives alongside the Student Voice department. Before becoming your Education Officer, I was a Student Voice Rep just like you! So, if you have any questions about the role don't be afraid to get in touch – no question is too big or small.

We've changed the process for Student Voice Representatives dramatically this year – moving away from elections and moving to our application system. We were blown away with the quality of applications this year and we cannot wait to work with you. I'll be working to ensure you have loads of opportunities to feed into different projects within the Students' Union and University – so we hope to see you engaging in representation beyond your school.

I hope that you enjoy completing our online training and that we see most of you throughout the year! Please remember you can reach out to me at any time.

Good luck – we're here if you need us!

JARGON BUSTER

There are always people around to help, but hopefully this Jargon Buster will help you with some of our more complicated language or acronyms. If there's anything we've missed off this list, don't be afraid to come and ask us!

General

SU	Students' Union – us!
SVR	Student Voice Representatives – you!
Minutes	Formal notes taken at a meeting
Agenda	Formal list of things to talk about at a meeting
FE	Further Education (College and beyond)
HE	Higher Education (University and beyond)
NSS	National Student Survey
TEF	Teaching Excellence Framework
APP	Access and Participation Plans
WP	Widening Participation

Meetings

SSVC	Student Staff Voice Committee
SEC	School Education Committee
FSVC	Faculty Student Voice Committee
FEC	Faculty Education Committee
USVC	University Staff Voice Committee

University

AHP	School of Allied Health Professions
SPGS	School of Social, Political, and Global Studies
GGE	Geology, Geography, and the Environment
KBS	Keele Business School
HUMS	Humanities
QA	Quality Assurance
SESO	Student Experience and Support Officer
E&S	Education & Scholarship

Organisations

OfS	Office for Students
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
NUS	National Union of Students
KPA	Keele Postgraduate Association

WHAT IS KEELE SU?

Keele SU is your Students' Union. It's led by Elected Student Officers to deliver the very best in support, representation, and student experience. We're a charity, meaning everything Keele SU does is not for profit and for the benefit of all of you.

Our Values



SUPPORTIVE

We will support you through your entire student journey, both through the good times and not so good times.



FRIENDLY

We will make you feel welcome when engaging with us and ensure we are approachable. Whether you engage with us every day or once a year, we'll be there.



PUTTING STUDENTS FIRST

It goes without saying, we're a Students' Union, we exist because of you, we'll change and flex as you need us to so we can stay relevant to you.



CREATIVE

We want you to be creative, inspired to try new things with us and become who you want to be. We also want our staff and officers to be creative, trialling new ideas to ensure we can keep up to date with what you need.

STUDENT VOICE REPRESENTATIVES: THE ROLE

What Am I Supposed to Do?

In short, as a Student Voice Representative, you have been appointed 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.

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 students want and to use your skills, knowledge, and resources to make sure it happens.

Main Responsibilities

- Complete training with the Students' Union
- Attend SSVC Meetings organised by your school
- Gather feedback from the students on your course so you are informed
- Get involved with other things in the SU – such as our Union General Meetings

Other Responsibilities

Gathering Feedback:

It's extremely important that you gather feedback from your peers before going to Student Staff Voice Committee (SSVC). 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 the ways to gather feedback in this booklet and at training.

Staff Student Voice Committees:

There will be up to four SSVC meetings 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 course. 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. You will be contacted by the staff administrative lead for SVRs within your school regarding the SSVC meetings. If you cannot attend an SSVC due to a prior commitment or illness, you need to send apologies to the chair and administrative lead.

Responsibilities After the Meeting:

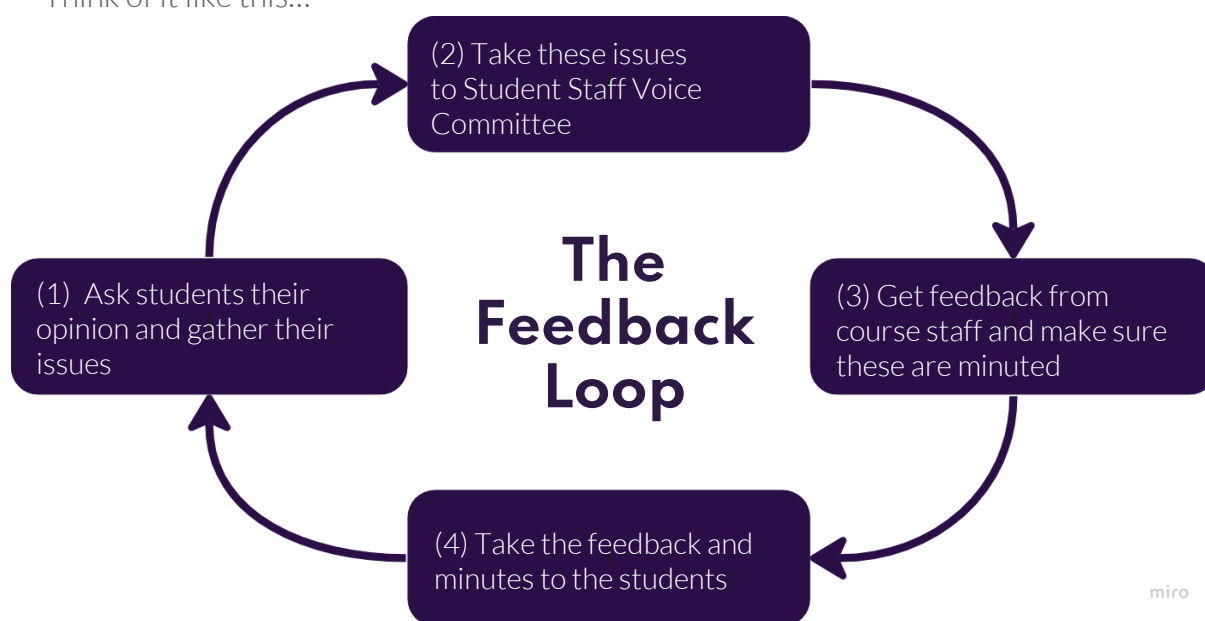
After the meeting you should update students on your course on how the meeting went, focusing on whether any of their issues were resolved and what they want you to do next.

GET THE MESSAGE OUT

Communicating with students on your course is one of the major parts of being a Student Voice Representative. It is important students are being kept in the loop, so what is happening in meetings should be communicated back to them.

Make sure the students know who you are. You could ask lecturers to include a slide at the end of each presentation that has info on who you are, what your role is, and how students can contact you.

Think of it like this...



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

- Organise a course WhatsApp group or Messenger group. This is often a good way to get instant feedback and students can post their issues as they come up. Please remember that these are not accessible to all students, so use them with other methods.
- Use the Student Voice Rep area on KeeleSU.com to send out emails to students on your course.
- Use Microsoft Forms to create online, anonymous surveys.
- Hold a coffee morning, forum, or drop-in session. This should be at a time whereas many students can attend as possible.
- Share good ideas with your fellow Student Voice Representatives.
- Make sure you check your inbox for emails from su.voice@keele.ac.uk and su.educationofficer@keele.ac.uk throughout this year – we will send updates to you.

GATHERING FEEDBACK

It's useful to ask students for feedback on a particular topic, so here are some areas that you can ask for feedback on.

Teaching

Are staff good at explaining things?
Is the subject interesting?
Has the course challenged you?

Assessment & Feedback

Do you feel prepared for assessments?
Is feedback clear and useful?

Organisation & Management

Do you feel prepared for assessments?
Is feedback clear and useful?

Learning Community

Have you worked with other students?
Do you feel part of a community? Have you worked with other students?

Module-related Issues

Do you have enough access to labs?
Are your timetabled rooms suitable?

Learning Opportunities

Have you had opportunities to:

Apply what you have learnt?
Discuss different topics?
Explore ideas in depth?

Academic Support

On a scale of 1-10, how satisfied are you with the advice and guidance that you are given?

Can you contact staff easily?

Learning Resources

Have you had any problems accessing resources e.g. In the Library

Student Voice

Has there been examples of where student feedback has been acted on?

General Questions

On a scale of 1-10 how satisfied are you with your course?

Remember that you are there to represent students – not just yourself!
It's important you use students' feedback to inform what you raise.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

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!

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 an SVR is recordable on the HEAR if you attend at least one SSVC (but we'd like for you to attend them all!) and have held the position for at least one semester.

Skills You Can Gain

- Leadership and negotiation skills
- Communicate effectively to a variety of stakeholders
- Collaborative problem solving
- Advocacy
- Lobbying for positive change for students

Awards

Could you be our Student Voice Representative of the Year? We recognise those SVRs who have gone above and beyond in our annual Keele SU awards.

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 hour! SVRs can log their hours and work towards one of our volunteer awards. For information, visit KeeleSU.com/volunteering

You can claim volunteering hours for a lot of things such as:

- Time spent in training
- SSVC Meetings (you can claim up to an hour and a half preparation for SSVC)
- Any other meeting you might attend e.g., UGM or SEC

The first award you can claim is bronze which recognises 25 hours. of volunteering.



SIGNPOSTING AND REFERRING ISSUES

Most problems students come to you with, you'll be able to raise at an SSVVC but sometimes an issue would be more appropriately dealt with elsewhere.

Sometimes a student may tell you something that isn't appropriate or effective to raise at an SSVVC meeting. This could be a serious complaint or a student needing advice on a specific issue. You are not expected to deal with personal issues yourself and you should signpost them to ASK or their SESO.

Advice and Support at Keele SU (ASK)

Keele SU has a fantastic free and independent advice centre, so when it's something you can't take to an SSVVC you can refer them to ASK.

ASK help students with a whole range of things that life can throw at them, from academic appeals, complaints, health and conduct and fitness to practice meetings to taking leaves of absence, changing course, and lots more besides.

Students can visit KeeleSU.com/ask for information as well as how to book an appointment.

Complaints

We also recommend that serious complaints about individual staff members are not taken to SSVVC.

If a student wishes to make a complaint, we recommend they speak to ASK or your Education Officer.


Student Experience and Support Officers (SESOs)

Student Services provides a hub-and-spoke model for student support within a school. Each school is assigned a Student Experience and Support Officer who is there to provide pastoral support for students.

We recommend you get in touch with your schools SESO and meet with them, so you can share any student experience issues that may arise throughout the year.

It may be appropriate for a student to contact their SESO if they are having a problem specific to themselves.


In case you're unsure of if an issue is appropriate to raise at an SSVVC either consult your Lead Voice Representative or your Education Officer!





NOTES





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

Key Contacts

Keele SU:

Sam Hackney, Education Officer

Email: su.educationofficer@keele.ac.uk

Liam Searle, Membership Services Coordinator (Student Voice)

Email: l.r.searle@keele.ac.uk

KPA for Postgraduate Related Issues

Michel Ghrayeb, KPA Vice President

Email: kpa.vp@keele.ac.uk

