Code of practice for student engagement

Academic year 2018/19

Contents

Introduction

1.   This *Code of practice* sets out the principles and practices as to how the University, the Students' Union and the student body work together to engage students in quality assurance and quality enhancement processes in relation to their learning and the learning environment. It works on the premise that students are not simply passive recipients of the delivery of their education, rather they are encouraged to become active in shaping their own experience and those of others. The *Code* has been informed by the Expectation and Core and Common practices in the QAA *Quality Code.*[1]

2.   The *Code* has been produced as part of the University's quality framework and will be reviewed on an annual basis by the University Learning and Teaching Committee.

Applicability of the *Code*

3.   The *Code* applies to all students studying at the University campus and at a distance for University awards. It does not apply to students studying on University validated programmes at the Associated and Accredited Institutions (AIs), although AIs are encouraged to use this *Code* to inform their own policies and practices for student engagement.

Principles of student engagement

4.   The Partnership Agreement describes how University staff in academic and support departments and the Students' Union work closely together to ensure a high quality learning experience/environment within a supportive and safe community. The Agreement sets out the encouragement for students to provide feedback on their experiences either individually or via elected student representatives.

5.   Using the Agreement as a foundation, the following principles underpin the University's ethos of student engagement and are reflected in the processes described in this document:

  (i)   students are partners in their educational experience;

  (ii)   all students have the right and the opportunity for their voice to be heard in the delivery of their education;

  (iii)   the student voice is valued;

  (iv)   students are assured that their feedback is provided without detriment to their individual academic progress;

  (v)   the University will facilitate opportunities for formal and informal student engagement;

  (vi)   students are represented at all levels of the University's academic governance structure;

  (vii)   student engagement processes take account of the differing needs of a diverse student body;

  (vii)   students who take on particular roles as reps and panel members are trained to do so and provided with ongoing support in these roles;

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[1] The UK Quality Code for Higher Education is currently undergoing substantial revision; a set of revised Expectations and Practices were published in March 2018. The full Code, including the advice and guidance that underpins the Expectations and Practices, is due to be published in November 2018.

(ix)   the University will feedback to students on the outcomes and actions taken in response to their feedback, for example resulting from NSS, PTES, PRES, University of Surrey survey and MEQs.

Types of student engagement

6.   The University utilises a range of mechanisms to engage students. These operate at institutional, Faculty, School/Department, programme and module level and are a combination of formal and informal activities. The following table provides an overview of the various types of engagement at each level which are discussed in more detail under thematic headings below.

Level	Type of activity
Institutional	- SU representation on academic governance committees - University of Surrey Students' Union Partnership Committee - SU representation on panels convened under the regulatory framework - student panel members for validation and review - SU Student Voice Forum - National Student Survey (NSS) - Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES) - Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) - University of Surrey Survey - membership of ad hoc working groups - engagement with professional service areas - informal feedback in discussions with senior management, including the Vice-Chancellor
Faculty	- SU representation on Faculty Learning and Teaching Committees - elected representation on Faculty Research Degrees Committees - informal feedback in discussions with Executive Dean of the Faculty
School/Department	- Staff/Student Liaison Committees (if not at programme level) - student representatives on Boards of Studies (if not at programme level) - PGR Student Engagement Forum - informal feedback in discussions with Head of School/Department
Programme	- Course Rep system - Staff/Student Liaison Committees (if not at School/Department level) - student representatives on Boards of Studies (if not at School/Department level) - student views input to Annual Programme Review considered at Board of Studies - discussion regarding major and minor modifications to programmes - meetings with periodic review panels - meetings with PSRBs and Industry Advisory Panels - informal feedback in discussions with Programme Leader

Module	• Module Evaluation Questionnaires (MEQs)
	• discussion regarding major and minor modifications to modules
	• informal feedback in discussions with Module Leader

Academic governance structure

7.   Formal opportunities for student engagement operate via the academic governance structure (see diagram on the following page). In addition there is Students' Union representation on Council. Students are members of all academic governance committees from Senate down to Staff/Student Liaison Committees (with the exception of Boards of Examiners, the Admission, Progression and Examination Sub-committee, and the Student Progression and Awards Board (SPAB)). Representation at University level committees, sub-committees and Faculty Learning and Teaching Committees is through Students' Union sabbatical officers. For other committees representation is via elected student representatives. There are student representatives on the following committees within the academic governance structure:

Senate and its sub-committees

• University Learning and Teaching Committee (ULTC)
• University Research and Innovation Committee (URIC)

ULTC sub-committees

• Quality and Standards
• Student Experience
• Regulations Steering Group

PTY Forum

URIC sub-committees[2]

• Doctoral College Board

Faculty committees

• Faculty Learning and Teaching Committees (FLTCs)
• Faculty Research Degrees Committees (FRDCs)

School/Department committees

• Boards of Studies (BoS)
• Staff/Student Liaison Committees (SSLCs)
• Postgraduate Research Student Engagement Forum (PGRSEF)

8.   Terms of reference for committees can be found in the *Code of practice for academic governance*.

9.   Chairs of committees will manage the items of business so that there are sufficient opportunities for students to make their views heard.

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[2] Two other sub-committees also report to URIC, the Research Management Committee and the Research Integrity and Governance Committee; these are not concerned with student matters and so are not included in the scope of this Code of practice.

Senate

University Learning and Teaching Committee (ULTC)

University Research and Innovation Committee (URIC)

Regulations Steering Group

Quality and Standards Sub-committee

Student Experience Sub-committee

Student Progression and Awards Board (SPAB)

Doctoral College Board

Research Management Committee

Regulations Working Group

Validation and review panels

Academic Integrity Officers Forum

Research Integrity and Governance Committee

PTY Forum

Faculty Learning and Teaching Committees

Admission, Progression and Examination Sub-committee (PGR)

Faculty Research Degrees Committees

Access and Participation Advsory Group

Boards of Studies

Postgraduate Research Student Engagement Forum

Staff/Student Liaison Committees

Boards of Examiners (UG & PGT

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University of Surrey Students' Union Partnership Committee

10.   This Committee deals with finance and resourcing matters and therefore sits outside the academic governance structures but it is mentioned here for its role in agreeing SU finances which are used by the SU to support the Course Rep system.

Students as panel members

11.   In addition to the formal governance structure, students also participate in processes that arise out of the regulatory and quality assurance framework. These are as panel members on appeals, complaints, disciplinary panels and panels for validations and periodic reviews.

12.   The presence of students on panels is enshrined in the *Regulations* and *Codes of practice*. Students are equal members of the panel upon which they sit and are given the opportunity to participate fully in all panel discussions. Further details of the composition of regulatory-related panels can be found in the *Regulations for panel hearings*. The role description for the student panel member for validations and periodic enhancement events can be found in the Roles and responsibilities section of the *Code of practice for programmes lifecycle processes*.

The Course "Rep" system

13.   The University and the Students' Union work in partnership on the Course Representation system, following the principles listed under paragraph 5 in this *Code of practice*. The Voice Zone of the Students' Union remains responsible for Course Reps and the development of the system, led by the Vice President Voice. The University is responsible for administering Course Rep elections, and organising SSLCs and Boards of Studies, on which Course Reps are the official student representatives. The Students' Union is responsible for training opportunities, providing support to Reps over the academic year, and producing and disseminating Course Rep promotion and recruitment materials. While these responsibilities are distinct, there is a shared responsibility between the Union and University to collaborate in areas where necessary, such as advertising of elections and successes of the program, in order to promote the importance of the student voice.

14.   Course Rep elections take place twice each academic year (in weeks 2 – 4 of semester 1 for new students and in weeks 9 – 11 of semester 2 for returning students). To ensure Reps can attend training with the Union before attending SSLCs, elections must follow this timetable in each School/Department. Elections are organised by individual academic Schools/Departments either in lectures or online. Elections must follow a fair, transparent, and democratic process. There is at least one member of staff in each Faculty with responsibility for the coordination of the Course Rep system – this member of staff communicates regularly with the Students' Union and is responsible for ensuring that the register of Course Reps (held in full by the Students' Union) for each Faculty remains up to date. See Appendix 1 for the role description for a Course Rep.

15.   The Vice-President, Voice is the Students' Union representative responsible for Course Reps, supported by full-time staff and part-time elected Union officers. The Union produces promotional materials to encourage students to become Course Reps, runs training sessions following elections to enable Reps to be effective in their roles, and communicates with Reps throughout the year. The Union makes a commitment to supporting and recognising the efforts of Course Reps; and therefore ensures the Voice Zone and the wider Students' Union are representing the issues brought forward by Reps and championing their successes. The Students' Union also processes individual Reps' applications to be recognised on the Higher

Education Achievement Record (HEAR), and maintains the criteria for this award through the University Learning and Teaching Committee (see Appendix 3).

The Students' Union Student Voice Forum

16. The Students' Union holds a minimum of three Student Voice Forums each year. Student Voice Forums offer an opportunity for students to meet and discuss issues across the student body. Senior members of University management invited by the Students' Union are expected to attend Student Voice Forums, which are chaired by the Students' Union Vice-President Voice. The Students' Union keeps a record of these meetings and works in partnership with the University to ensure that Reps are aware of outcomes. Course Rep attendance at Student Voice Forum is an essential part of the criteria for inclusion in the HEAR.

17. Following the Voice Forum event model, the Students' Union will also hold targeted Forums for distinct groups of the student population where necessary. These include Faculty Voice Forums hosted twice a year with senior members of staff within each Faculty, designed to specifically discuss Faculty-wide issues, and a Postgraduate Researcher Voice Forum.
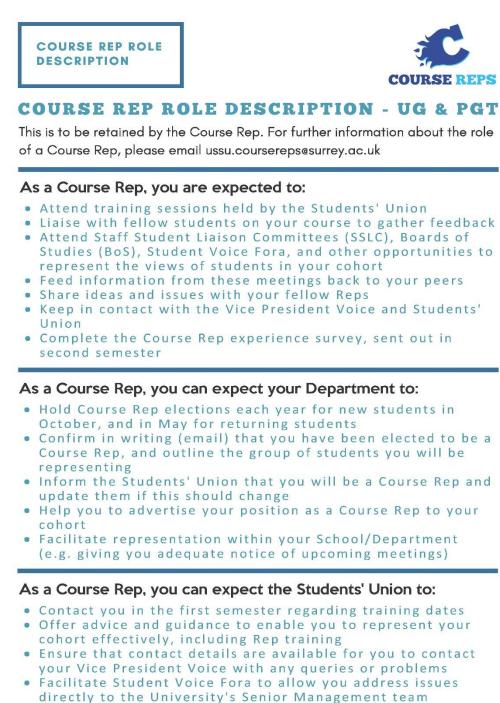
Informal opportunities

18. Students also have many informal opportunities to engage with staff. There are regular meetings between individual University senior managers and officers of the Students' Union. At Faculty level, the Executive Deans usually hold meetings with student representatives once per semester to gauge student opinion on a range of topics. Schools and Departments also provide similar opportunities.

Student surveys

19. The student voice is heard anonymously through the opportunity to participate in a number of surveys. These are national surveys such as the NSS, PTES and PRES. Internally students are asked to feed back on their experience at modular level via Module Evaluation Questionnaires (MEQs) and the University of Surrey survey.

20. It is University policy that Schools and Departments do not survey students in addition to the above surveys in order to avoid "survey fatigue". Student views outside formal surveys can be sought via the academic governance structures, through ad hoc focus groups and via the Students' Union who can conduct their own surveys.

21. The outcomes of surveys are relayed back to students in a number of ways. NSS and PTES results and action plans are considered at Boards of Studies and FLTCs as are MEQ results. Students are able to view examples of improvements the University has made in direct response to student feedback through web pages and various channels for student communication.

22. The results of the PRES are shared with postgraduate research students and students have the opportunity to contribute to the development of action plans emerging from the survey. The results are shared with students primarily through the Postgraduate Research Student Engagement Fora or other dedicated meetings. The results are also discussed at the FRDCs and the University Research Degrees Committee, all of which have student representation.

23. Appendix 4 shows the timescales for the various survey periods and release of data for the range of student surveys that the University participates in/operates together with information on how the results are disseminated and actions reported.

Appendix 1 – Role description for a Course Rep

COURSE REP ROLE DESCRIPTION

COURSE REPS

COURSE REP ROLE DESCRIPTION - UG & PGT

This is to be retained by the Course Rep. For further information about the role of a Course Rep, please email ussu.coursereps@surrey.ac.uk

As a Course Rep, you are expected to:

- Attend training sessions held by the Students' Union
- Liaise with fellow students on your course to gather feedback
- Attend Staff Student Liaison Committees (SSLC), Boards of Studies (BoS), Student Voice Fora, and other opportunities to represent the views of students in your cohort
- Feed information from these meetings back to your peers
- Share ideas and issues with your fellow Reps
- Keep in contact with the Vice President Voice and Students' Union
- Complete the Course Rep experience survey, sent out in second semester

As a Course Rep, you can expect your Department to:

- Hold Course Rep elections each year for new students in October, and in May for returning students
- Confirm in writing (email) that you have been elected to be a Course Rep, and outline the group of students you will be representing
- Inform the Students' Union that you will be a Course Rep and update them if this should change
- Help you to advertise your position as a Course Rep to your cohort
- Facilitate representation within your School/Department (e.g. giving you adequate notice of upcoming meetings)
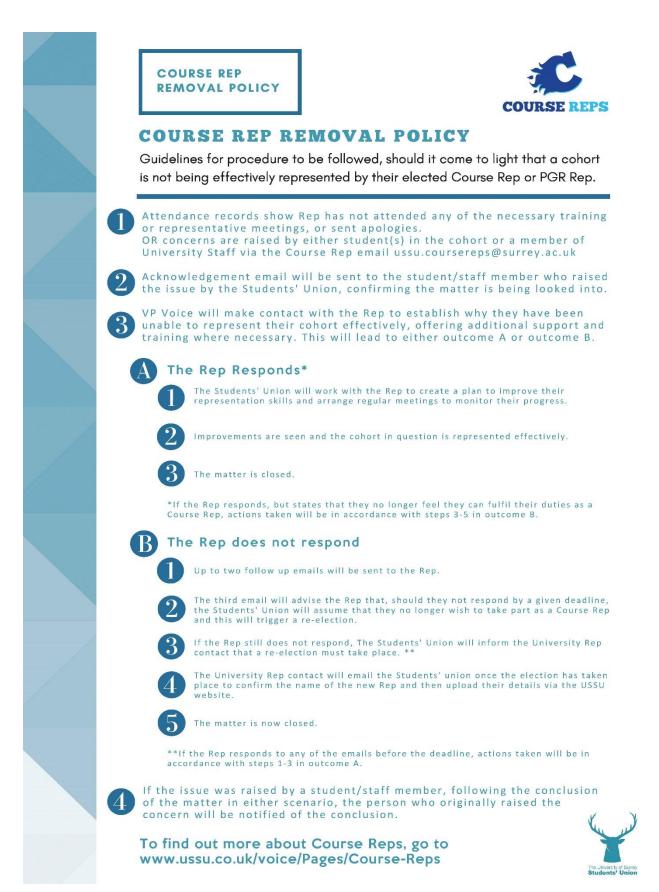
As a Course Rep, you can expect the Students' Union to:

- Contact you in the first semester regarding training dates
- Offer advice and guidance to enable you to represent your cohort effectively, including Rep training
- Ensure that contact details are available for you to contact your Vice President Voice with any queries or problems
- Facilitate Student Voice Fora to allow you address issues directly to the University's Senior Management team
- Recognise and reward the work of Course Reps throughout the year
- Identify and provide support for issues that may require the involvement of senior members of University staff

To find out more about Course Reps, go to
www.ussu.co.uk/voice/Pages/Course-Reps

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COURSE REP ROLE DESCRIPTION

COURSE REP ROLE DESCRIPTION - PGR

This is to be retained by the PGR Rep. For further information about the role of a PGR Rep, please email ussu.coursereps@surrey.ac.uk

As a PGR Rep, you are expected to:

- Attend training sessions held by the Students' Union
- Liaise with fellow PGR students in your School/Department to gather feedback
- Attend Student Engagement Fora, Student Voice Fora and other opportunities to represent the views of PGR students in your School/Department
- Feed information from these meetings back to your peers
- Share ideas and issues with your fellow Reps
- Keep in contact with the Vice President Voice and Students' Union
- Complete the second semester Course Rep experience survey

As a PGR Rep, you can expect your Department to:

- Confirm in writing (email) that you have been elected to be the PGR Representative for your School/Department, and outline the group of students you will be representing
- Inform the Students' Union that you will be a PGR Rep and update them if this should change
- Help you to advertise your position as a PGR Rep to your School/Department
- Facilitate representation within your School/Department (e.g. giving you adequate notice of upcoming meetings)
- Arrange for an election to take place when required, to ensure continuity of PGR representation

As a PGR Rep, you can expect the Students' Union to:

- Contact you in the first semester regarding training dates
- Have a representative attend all Student Engagement Fora, or meet with the chair afterwards
- Offer advice and guidance in your role, including Rep training
- Ensure that contact details are available for you to contact your Vice President Voice with any queries or problems
- Facilitate Student Voice Fora to allow you address issues directly to the University's Senior Management team
- Recognise and reward the work of outstanding PGR Reps
- Identify and provide support for issues that may require the involvement of senior members of University staff

To find out more about Course Reps, go to www.ussu.co.uk/voice/Pages/Course-Reps

Appendix 2 – Course Rep removal policy

COURSE REP REMOVAL POLICY

COURSE REPS

COURSE REP REMOVAL POLICY

Guidelines for procedure to be followed, should it come to light that a cohort is not being effectively represented by their elected Course Rep or PGR Rep.

1 Attendance records show Rep has not attended any of the necessary training or representative meetings, or sent apologies.
OR concerns are raised by either student(s) in the cohort or a member of University Staff via the Course Rep email ussu.coursereps@surrey.ac.uk

2 Acknowledgement email will be sent to the student/staff member who raised the issue by the Students' Union, confirming the matter is being looked into.

3 VP Voice will make contact with the Rep to establish why they have been unable to represent their cohort effectively, offering additional support and training where necessary. This will lead to either outcome A or outcome B.

A The Rep Responds*

1 The Students' Union will work with the Rep to create a plan to improve their representation skills and arrange regular meetings to monitor their progress.

2 Improvements are seen and the cohort in question is represented effectively.

3 The matter is closed.

*If the Rep responds, but states that they no longer feel they can fulfil their duties as a Course Rep, actions taken will be in accordance with steps 3-5 in outcome B.

B The Rep does not respond

1 Up to two follow up emails will be sent to the Rep.

2 The third email will advise the Rep that, should they not respond by a given deadline, the Students' Union will assume that they no longer wish to take part as a Course Rep and this will trigger a re-election.

3 If the Rep still does not respond, The Students' Union will inform the University Rep contact that a re-election must take place. **

4 The University Rep contact will email the Students' union once the election has taken place to confirm the name of the new Rep and then upload their details via the USSU website.

5 The matter is now closed.

**If the Rep responds to any of the emails before the deadline, actions taken will be in accordance with steps 1-3 in outcome A.

4 If the issue was raised by a student/staff member, following the conclusion of the matter in either scenario, the person who originally raised the concern will be notified of the conclusion.

To find out more about Course Reps, go to www.ussu.co.uk/voice/Pages/Course-Reps

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Attendance records show elected Rep has failed to attend any of the necessary training or representative meetings or sent apologies.
OR
Concerns are raised by either a student(s) from their cohort or a member of University Staff.

VP Voice will email the Rep.

Rep DOES NOT respond.

Rep DOES respond.

Up to two follow up emails are sent to the Rep allowing them time to respond. A 3rd email is then sent, setting a response deadline.

Rep asks to step down from position.

Students' Union works with the Rep to improve their representation skills.

Rep still DOES NOT respond.

Re-election is triggered. Students' Union will ask the University Rep Contact to confirm the name of the new Course Rep.

Matter is closed.

Appendix 3 – Criteria for inclusion of activity in the HEAR

Course Reps exist to represent the views of all students across all courses and at all levels. It is crucial for students' future prospects that active student leaders who take on volunteer roles during their time at Surrey are able to verify and articulate the skills they have developed. To commend their hard work in improving the student experience across the University, the Students' Union recognises the role of Course Rep on a students' HEAR.

To ensure that Rep contribution is monitored and scrutinised by the Union, and that the benefits of the Course Rep system are felt in terms of quality and standards across the University, specific criteria must be met in order for a Rep to have their role included on their HEAR.

<u>**Criteria:**</u>

1. Be elected by a majority

To attain Course Rep status on the HEAR you must be an elected representative voted for in a fair and balanced election by the members of the student community which you represent.

Evidence required: Correspondence from Faculty Course Rep contact confirming an election took place.

2. Attend Course Rep training

There will be training sessions for new and continuing Course Reps in the early weeks of Semester 1. This may also be fulfilled with acceptable and pre submitted apologies – so that online training can be arranged and completed by the student.

Evidence required: The Students' Union will take attendance at training; the Course Rep is responsible for filling in the attendance form or sending apologies before the training unless in exceptional circumstances. For online Course Rep Training: successful completion of the online training material.

3. Attend all Student Voice Fora

This may also be fulfilled with acceptable and pre submitted apologies.

Evidence required: The Students' Union will take attendance at the Forum; the Course Rep is responsible for filling in the attendance form or sending apologies before the assembly unless in exceptional circumstances.

4. Complete and submit the Course Rep Experience Survey about your time as a Course Rep.

Reps will be asked to complete a survey at the end of the academic year, the data from which can then be used by the Students' Union to review and enhance the Course Rep system.

Evidence required: survey to be completed. Completion will be monitored by the Students' Union.

<u>**Review process**</u>

In order to be considered for recognition on the HEAR, Reps must meet all four of these criteria. The Students' Union will monitor which Reps have successfully met these criteria over the academic year, and will collate a list of Reps who will receive recognition of their role on the HEAR.

Appendix 4 – Survey dates, results dissemination and action reporting

Note: In 2018/19 the University will be participating in the trial of a taught postgraduate feedback survey being undertaken by the Office for Students (OfS) and therefore will not be participating in PTES

Student surveys - survey live period

	CAMPAIGN	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP
MEQs (non-standard)	-	purple	purple	purple	purple	purple	purple	purple	purple	purple	purple	purple	purple
Surrey Survey			green	green									
MEQs (standard) - Semester 1	-			purple	purple								
NSS	Speak Up!					pink	pink	pink					
PRES	Postgraduate Voice							blue	blue				
PTES	Postgraduate Voice							orange	orange				
MEQs (standard) - Semester 2	-								purple				

Student surveys - data release

	CAMPAIGN	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP
MEQs (non-standard)	-	purple	purple	purple	purple	purple	purple	purple	purple	purple	purple	purple	purple
MEQs (standard) - Semester 1	-				purple								
Surrey Survey				green	green								
MEQs (standard) - Semester 2	-								purple				
PRES - data	Postgraduate Voice									blue	blue		
PRES - free text comments	Postgraduate Voice									blue	blue		
PTES - data	Postgraduate Voice										orange	orange	
PTES - free text comments	Postgraduate Voice										orange	orange	
NSS - data	Speak Up!										pink	pink	
NSS - free text comments & analysis	Speak Up!	pink											→

Student surveys - dissemination of results			
Survey name	**Reports**	**Data source**	**Distributed to**
NSS	Results data	Strategic Planning	1. VC, Provost, VPE&S, COO, VP Marketing & Communications 2. EB and MMM members (with responsibility for distributing to teams) 3. SU CEO, President and Sabbatical Officers
	Free text comments and analysis	i-graduate researcher	1. VC, Provost, VPE&S, COO, VP Marketing & Communications 2. EB and MMM members (with responsibility for distributing to teams) 3. SU CEO and President
Surrry Survey	Results data	internal	1. EB and MMM members (with responsibility for distributing to teams) 2. SU CEO, President and Sabbatical Officers
	Free text comments and analysis	internal	1. EB and MMM members (with responsibility for distributing to teams) 2. SU CEO and President
PRES **(Postgraduate Voice)**	Results data	Quality and Strategic Planning	1. EB and MMM members (with responsibility for distributing to teams) 2. SU CEO, President and Sabbatical Officers
	Free text comments & analysis	i-graduate researcher	1. EB and MMM members (with responsibility for distributing to teams) 2. SU CEO and President
PTES **(Postgraduate Voice)**	Results data	Quality and Strategic Planning	1. EB and MMM members (with responsibility for distributing to teams) 2. SU CEO, President and Sabbatical Officers
	Free text comments and analysis	i-graduate researcher	1. EB and MMM members (with responsibility for distributing to teams) 2. SU CEO and President
MEQs	Results data	e:Vision	Not distributed. Access via e:Vision.

Student surveys - academic reports and actions (mapped against data release)

	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP
MEQs (non-standard)			Part of APR process	ULTC								
MEQs (standard) - Semester 1			Part of APR process	ULTC								
Surrey Survey - data			Part of APR process	ULTC								
Surrey Survey - free text comments & analysis			Part of APR process	ULTC								
MEQs (standard) - Semester 2			Part of APR process	ULTC								
PRES - data			Part of APR process	DC								
PRES - free text comments			Part of APR process	DC								
PTES - data			Part of APR process	ULTC								
PTES - free text comments			Part of APR process	ULTC								
NSS - data			Part of APR process	ULTC								
NSS - free text comments & analysis			Part of APR process	ULTC								→

N.B Prior to the APR process, NSS results will have been considered by Staff Student Liaison Committees and Boards of Studies.

Student surveys - non-academic reports and actions (mapped against data release)

	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP
MEQs (non-standard)			Part of APR process	ULTC								
MEQs (standard) - Semester 1			Part of APR process	ULTC								
Surrey Survey - data						SESC	ULTC					
Surrey Survey - free text comments & analysis	ULTC											SESC
MEQs (standard) - Semester 2			Part of APR process	ULTC								
PRES - data			Part of APR process	DC								
PRES - free text comments			Part of APR process	DC								
PTES - data	ULTC											SESC
PTES - free text comments	ULTC											SESC
NSS - data	ULTC							SESC (reporting on survey phase)	ULTC			SESC results overview
NSS - free text comments & analysis			SESC (9 reports)	ULTC								→