

Academic Quality Framework

Chapter 10 Student Voice

10.1 INTRODUCTION TO “STUDENT VOICE”

Student voice is paramount, and all students are encouraged to participate in providing feedback, to improve the quality and standards at the College.¹

The College considers students as partners in monitoring and enhancing the student experience. All students are encouraged to participate and engage with the quality assurance processes.

The College considers its student voice mechanisms meet UK Quality Code theme Student Engagement:

"The provider actively engages students individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience. "

The main purposes for promoting student voice are to:

- Enhance the student experience
- Contribute to the decision-making processes
- Ensure the effectiveness of programme design and delivery
- Identify and share good practice

The Quality Assurance and Enhancement Strategy lists the mechanisms for student engagement in quality assurance and enhancement activities as one of its objectives. Therefore, the Quality Team (QT) is responsible for proposing and monitoring the effectiveness of student voice at the College.

Students are able to make their contribution to the College’s decision-making process through, student representation, surveys, consultation on programme and course modifications, new programme approval events, an open-door culture and complaints and appeals procedures.

¹ For this Chapter, ‘student’ refers to undergraduate, postgraduate and degree apprenticeship learners.

10.2 KEEPING STUDENTS INFORMED

Students are kept informed about the ways in which they may engage with the College through the [Academic Handbook](#), Student Handbook, and during annual induction sessions.

During the quality assurance induction/welcome back sessions at the start of each academic year, students are informed about how the College uses their feedback and what enhancements have been made directly in response to their comments and suggestions.

Throughout the academic year students are kept informed about how the College uses their views and feedback through 'We're listening' posters, student representatives and the student union.

The QT also make use of the Virtual Learning Environment (Canvas), with a dedicated page titled 'Student Voice' where the reports from surveys and consultations are posted.

10.3 STUDENT VOICE MECHANISMS

10.3.1 Student Representation

The College has a duty to ensure that the views of its students are represented. The College is committed to celebrating diversity and promoting equality of opportunity across all the 'protected characteristics' as defined by the Equality Act 2010. Students can become involved in a number of ways:

- Standing for election to the role of Student Representative
- Encouraging colleagues to stand for election
- Encouraging colleagues to stand for election
- Accepting an invitation to stand
- Attending as an observer
- Submitting agenda items and papers for consideration
- Providing feedback to Chairs, secretaries or QT on the effectiveness of the committee system

Every Faculty or Programme has elected student representatives. There is one student representative per cohort, per Faculty/Programme. Student representatives are expected to be fully engaged and active in their roles and be clear of what is expected of them as representatives (including maintaining a dialogue with all their subject peers; being representative of their cohort; being empowered to be partners in decisions about the student experience and ensuring they are fully prepared for meetings).

The College should take into account, when using student representatives for specific projects, the potential workload for the student representative

Students are provided with the information about Student Representation during the quality assurance inductions at the start of Michaelmas.

Each Faculty/Programme Director will be asked for nominations for year group student representatives and a vote taken by student peers, if necessary.

The Head of Faculty/Programme Director is responsible for organising the nomination and election process and to provide clear leadership and engagement.

Student representatives will be appointed for one academic year.

QT is responsible for providing training and ongoing support for all student representatives.

Communication channels are in place to ensure speedy resolution of student issues brought up through the student representation procedures.

Student representatives have the opportunity to feed into developments affecting their student experience at programme, subject and institutional level.

Student representatives provide feedback where the experience has been good, enabling this to be disseminated to other Faculties for possible inclusion in their practices.

Student representatives are eligible to sit on:

- **Teaching, Learning and Enhancement Committee (TLEC)**
TLEC has the responsibility to enhance the teaching, learning and assessment for all of the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes delivered at NCH, and reports to Academic Board.
- **Faculty Meetings**
The various Faculties are responsible for maintaining and promoting excellence in the respective academic disciplines within the College. Each Faculty ensures effective engagement with students on programme-related matters and with other Faculties on matters of common interest in teaching and research.
- **Programme Team Meetings**
For Degree Apprenticeship programmes, Programme Team Meetings are held, and student representatives attend in order to provide feedback to the Programme Director and Course Leaders.
- **NCH Diploma Team (undergraduate students only)**
NCH Diploma Team is responsible for overseeing the management of the core course and LAUNCH.
- **Student:Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC)**
The aim of SSLC is to provide a forum for students to provide feedback and evaluation that will lead to an enhancement of the student experience once resultant actions are implemented.

10.3.2 Open Door Culture

The College operates an 'Open Door Culture' for students to express their viewpoints and concerns. This enables students to speak to academics or professional staff, including the Master of the College (Master), at any point during the College open hours.

10.3.3 Steering Groups and Working Parties

From time to time steering groups and working parties will be set up to review, investigate, assess, evaluate, audit, consult, develop or implement a specific issue/development.

Where appropriate student representation will form part of the steering group or working party.

In some instances, a student may join a steering group or working party due to a particular interest or experience in the business but not stand as a Student Representative for their course or year group.

10.3.4 Focus Groups

From time to time students may join a focus group to gain more in-depth student feedback following survey results.

10.3.5 Programme/Course Reviews, Modifications, and Approval Events

All students are invited to contribute to programme and course reviews, modifications and approval events.

For new programmes, at least one student will be asked to sit on the Internal Programme Approval Panel. Please refer to [AQF Chapter 4: Programme and Course Approval and Modifications](#).

10.3.5 Complaints & Academic Appeals

The College is committed to ensuring a high-quality educational experience for its students, supported by appropriate academic, administrative and welfare support services and facilities.

The College publishes details of its complaints and academic appeals procedures in the [Academic Handbook](#).

The [Student Complaints Policy and Procedures](#) excludes certain specific complaints where the College has separate policies to deal with these:

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- [Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures](#)

10.3.6 Student Satisfaction Surveys

Students are asked to complete satisfaction surveys at the end of each course and one at the end of the programme (not undergraduate final year students – see NSS paragraph below). Student satisfaction surveys are also published for the NCH Diploma core courses and LAUNCH at the end of the academic

year.

Third year students are required to complete the National Student Survey (NSS) questionnaire. The NSS is an independent survey for all final year undergraduate students at higher education providers. The aim of the NSS survey is to provide students with a platform to report back on their whole student experience.

NSS results are published on the [Discover Uni](#) website, the official website for comparing UK higher education course data that helps prospective students to choose the right programme and University for them.

Final year students receive a separate briefing on the NSS to help prepare them to complete the survey.

Heads of Faculty/Programme Directors may use other qualitative methods (such as SSLC or Faculty meetings) to address concerns that may arise and require further understanding and investigation.

Analysis of internal surveys

The survey is designed for ease of completion. Students are asked to strongly agree /agree /neutral /disagree /strongly disagree with statements.

A traffic light system is used to identify satisfaction as follows:

- >70% GREEN
- 60% - 69% AMBER
- <59% RED

The surveys are open for a maximum of three weeks.

QT is responsible for sending out the surveys, collating and distributing results.

Analysis of NSS

The results are analysed and judgements are made using criteria as follows:

- 10%+ above national average is judged to be excellent
- 5% - 10% above national average is judged to be good
- Equalling national average is judged to be satisfactory
- Below national average is judged to require improvement

Student Survey Annual Report

The results of internal surveys and the NSS are summarised and collated into a Student Survey Annual Report by the QT, and an action plan is developed to address the areas for improvement. The report goes to Academic Board and NCHNL Board. Academic Board is responsible to approve the report and the action plan. Teaching, Learning and Enhancement Committee is responsible for monitoring the actions on behalf of Academic Board.

The approved report is published for students and staff on the College's virtual learning environment, Canvas.

As part of the induction/welcome back sessions at the start of each academic year, students attend a presentation which summarises the outcomes of the student feedback of the preceding year.

10.4 THE STUDENT UNION

The NCH Student Union (NCHSU) is a student-led organisation at the heart of the College experience. The NCHSU exists to promote the interests of the student body. It aims to:

- Engage the totality of the student body
- Bring the union closer to self-sufficiency
- Build a social hub in college

NCHSU consists of nine union officers.

Each officer is elected by their fellow students and serves a one-year term in their allocated role.

Elections are held at the end of Michaelmas for the following roles:

- Union President
- Secretary
- Welfare officer
- Diversity officer
- Societies officer
- Facilities officer
- Media & communications officer
- Events officer
- Volunteering and fundraising officer

The Student Union officers have their roles clearly defined in the NCHSU Constitution and with that, are required to act as another channel of communication with the College. NCHSU Officers represent the student body on other committees within the governance structure:

- The NCHSU President sits in on NCH at Northeastern Limited Board of Governors as an active observer. This enables the NCHSU President to be part of discussions; providing the student perspective in the strategic planning of the College.
- The Facilities Officer sits on the Health and Safety Committee and, as such, has a direct line of communication with the Facilities Coordinator and HR and Operations Manager to raise facilities matters.
- The Welfare Officer and/or the Diversity Officer sits on the Prevent Duty

Review Group and, as such, has a direct line of communication with the Prevent Officer and contributes to the oversight of the Prevent Duty at the College.

- Students are full members of the Diversity and Equality Steering Group which collaboratively across all areas of the College to promote, enhance and increase diversity and equality, both internally and externally.
- A NCHSU Officer sits on the Fair Access and Participation Steering Group which is responsible for the College's widening participation activities and OfS approved Access and Participation Plan.

In addition to these roles, the Student Union has the Office of Academic Affairs. The Office of Academic Affairs exists to have a representative who attends Academic Board, Student:Staff Liaison Committee, and liaises with the Student Representatives. The Union appoints, by the Union voting procedure, a representative of the Office of Academic Affairs.

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Approved by: Academic Board					
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2.0	May 2019	-	Head of Quality Assurance	-	August 2021
1.0	December 2017	December 2017	Head of Quality Assurance	NCH Handbook	December 2018
Referenced documents	AQF4 Programme and Course Approval and Modification; Quality Assurance and Enhancement Strategy; Student Complaints Policy and Procedures; Academic Appeals Policy; and Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedure;				
External Reference Point(s)	UK Quality Code Theme: Student Engagement; Equality Act 2010; Discover Uni				