STUDENT VOICE CODE OF PRACTICE

1. INTRODUCTION

This Code of Practice sets out the joint approach between the University and Student's Union to delivering a system for student representation across academic and professional services to ensure student voice is embedded into all areas of the student experience.

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Code of Practice is to set out the joint approach to providing an effective and impactful system for student representation through student voice representatives (SVRs) and other fora to inform staff and students with guidance on how these systems should operate and be utilised.

Staff and students should follow this Code of Practice when dealing with matters relating to Student Voice Representation. This Code of Practice is designed to:

i. Ensure that student voice is embedded in matters relating to the student experience;
ii. Ensure staff understand the process and procedures relating to student voice representation and SVRs;
iii. Ensure SVRs have a fair opportunity to make change, and feel empowered and supported to do so;
iv. Outline the responsibilities of the Students' Union, the University, staff, and students in the overall running of student voice representation.

1.2 Scope

This Code of Practice applies to students undertaking Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught programmes, including apprenticeships, Foundation Year, and online-only courses.

Postgraduate Research Students (PGR) are represented through the Keele Doctoral Academy (KDA) with training provided by the Keele Postgraduate Association (KPA). Details of PGR representation can be found in the Postgraduate Research Code of Practice.

Definitions

- SU – Students' Union

- KPA – Keele Postgraduate Association
- HoS – Head of School
- SDE – School Director of Education
- FDE – Faculty Dean of Education
- PD – Programme Director
- SAM – Senior Academic Mentor
- SVR – Student Voice Representative
- SSVC – Student Staff Voice Committee
- SEC – School Education Committee
- FEC – Faculty Education Committee
- FSVC – Faculty Student Voice Committee
- USVC – University Student Voice Committee

2. ROLES FOR STUDENT VOICE REPRESENTATION

2.1 Student Voice Representatives

2.1.1 Recruitment of Student Voice Representatives

Recruitment of Student Voice Representatives (SVRs) is controlled and administered by the Students' Union, who will decide any alterations to the mechanisms for recruitment and the deployment of SVRs per programme in consultation with schools as part of an annual oversight process.

Recruitment will commence before the start of the academic year (AY) and close within a month of the start of the AY. This will be advertised through the Students' Union, within school induction activity, and through any other appropriate channels.

Students will put themselves forward through an online platform hosted by the Students' Union. Once the recruitment period has closed, the Students' Union will form an appointment panel consisting of:

i. Education Officer (Chair)

ii. Development and Democracy Officer (or Nominee)

iii. Membership Services Manager (Student Voice)

The appointment panel will sift through applications, judging them against the person specification provided to students when they apply. In cases where a sufficient application has been submitted, and there are free spaces within a programme, they will endeavour to appoint the student.

By default, each programme will be entitled to four SVRs per level of study. If a school deems this to be an excessive or insufficient number, they should liaise with the Student Voice team before the end of the recruitment period who will adjust the entitlement if deemed appropriate.

Once the initial recruitment of SVRs is completed, applications will reopen with recruitment held on a rolling basis with the appointment panel meeting monthly. The SU will work with schools to target advertisement for programmes and levels of study where there are vacancies.

2.1.2 Training of Student Voice Representatives

Training of Student Voice Representatives is provided by the Students' Union, consisting of a mix of online modules and, where possible, in-situ training events.

The SU will work with relevant directorates within the University to ensure SVRs gain a holistic understanding of the services available and allow them to feed into representation on a university-wide scale.

SVRs will be expected to complete their core online training prior to their first SSVC meeting. For the SVR role to be recognised on a student's HEAR, an SVR must achieve a score above 90% on their end of training test.

2.1.3 Removal of Student Voice Representatives

Student Voice Representatives can be removed through the following mechanisms, with the final authorisation being given by the Students' Union and the appropriate Membership Services Manager:

i. Through receipt of an intention to resign from the SVR.

ii. Following gross misuse of their position and privileges as part of the Students' Union Member Code of Conduct.

iii. Following failure to attend or send apologies to two consecutive SSVC meetings and a request from the school. Exceptions will be made where SVRs may be on placement or other additional study.

iv. Request from the University following a decision from a Risk Assessment Panel in line with Regulation B1.

2.2 Lead Voice Representatives

Lead Voice Representatives (LVRs) act as the liaison between a programme's cohort of SVRs, the SU and Education Officer, and will support the school in school-wide initiatives and projects – including being a member of the School Education Committee. It is expected that they will form part of Faculty and University level processes or initiatives through involvement in appropriate committees (e.g., FSVC) and governance structures.

2.2.1 Recruitment of LVRs

Each school is entitled to one LVR who will be recruited as part of the initial SVR recruitment process. Students will be given the option to express an interest in

being considered for the position and will be asked to provide additional information in response to a separate LVR person specification. The LVR will be selected by the appointment panel as outlined in 2.1.1.

2.2.2 Responsibilities and Support

LVRs will be expected to complete bi-annual reports outlining their personal development within the role, highlighting the work they have been involved in, any problems arising within the school, and other appropriate reporting as necessary. Reports will be submitted to the Student Voice team and Education Officer.

2.2.3 Removal of LVRs

Removal of LVRs will follow the same route as described for the Removal of SVRs in 2.1.3. Any request for removal of LVRs must be made to the Student Voice department prior to notification of the LVR.

2.3 Student Voice Champions

Student Voice Champions are members of university staff who will hold a strategic role in supporting the continued development of student voice, and who will be the primary contact between the SU and the University for administrative and information-dissemination purposes.

2.3.1 Recruitment of Student Voice Champions

Within academic schools, it is expected that this position be either the SDE, SAM, or appropriate faculty-specific role holder; within Professional Services Directorates, it is expected that an appropriate member of staff is identified, and that the SU is informed of whom.

2.3.2 Responsibilities and Support

The Student Voice Champion will be expected to ensure that if applicable key meetings such as SSVCs are happening according to the schedule outlined in Section 3.1, or that student voice is being captured through appropriate channels and fora when decisions are made which have a material impact on the student experience.

They will be supported by 'Tools for Staff' which is a series of resources and guidance produced by the Students' Union which will include key dates, contacts, and other information as well as templates for agendas and minutes. It is expected that the Student Voice Champion will share this resource with academic and professional services staff who are involved in supporting student voice within their area.

3. Student Representation within Academic Schools and Faculties

Schools are expected to involve students within decision making when decisions being made will have a material impact on the student experience, or on student outcomes. This may include but is not limited to developing assessment and feedback strategies, designing new modules, designing and embedding employer engagement. This should be done through SVRs and meetings such as SSVC in the first instance, but schools are encouraged to seek wider feedback through mechanisms outlined in section 3.3.

3.1 Student Staff Voice Committees

Student Staff Voice Committees (SSVC) are the core mechanism for student voice and partnership within schools and should be attended by all student voice representatives within a programme as well relevant academic members of staff ensuring there is an equal balance in committee membership. Further guidance on composition of SSVCs can be found in the Student Staff Voice Committee Terms of Reference found in 'Tools for Staff'.

Secretariat support for SSVCs should be provided by School PSS with minutes and actions arisings being recorded, and should be shared with both SVRs and students, as well as the SU for record-keeping. Actions and issues arising from SSVC will form part of the reporting into FSVC.

There should be no less than one SSVC per semester, with schools aiming to hold four SSVCs no later than November, February, April, and May. In setting the agenda it is recommended that schools bring strategic items for discussion e.g., induction activity feedback in the November meeting, as well as discussing the set items provided in the 'Tools for Staff' guidance.

It is expected that all SSVCs should be chaired by a student. There is no requirement that this be a particular SVR, and schools are encouraged to ensure every SVR has an opportunity to express an interest. The academic co-chair will provide support to the student chair.

SSVCs should be open meetings, with wider students allowed to attend as observers. There is no expectation that student observers are allowed to contribute; this is left to the discretion of the chair.

3.2 Student Representation on School Committees

It is expected that the school's LVR be appointed as a full member of the School Education Committee. Schools should consider also inviting students from other relevant student groups to their SEC e.g., PGT, Apprenticeship, Clinical Programme.

It is expected that schools should invite an SVR to any relevant committees within the school, for example on an EDI steering group. This can be done as part of the business of the first SSVC of an AY.

3.3   Examples of Other Opportunities

There are a number of other opportunities that schools can consider when engaging with their SVRs and wider student body, including:

• **Town Halls**: all-student town hall style discussions, which may focus on a particular topic or may serve the opportunity for wider students to contribute views directly.

• **Focus Groups**: small group meetings to discuss topics – these could be chaired (or co-chaired) by an SVR with support from the school.

• **Coffee Mornings/Informal Drop-ins**: schools could put on a coffee morning or informal drop-in lunch session on a fortnightly basis, allowing both for students to meet each other and academic members of staff, but also to provide an informal basis for feedback to be given.

3.4   Faculty Student Voice Committee

Faculty Student Voice Committee (FSVC) is designed to bridge the gap between school-level student voice discussions (through SSVC) and university-level discussion (through USVC). Its purpose is to ensure that SSVC feedback that can be actioned and resolved at a faculty-level can be done so effectively, whilst providing a reporting mechanism upwards and downwards for student voice. It should also serve as a forum for discussion of emerging themes and issues raised across the faculty.

Secretariat support for FSVC should be provided by the faculty's PSS with minutes and actions arisings being recorded, and these should be shared with both the relevant membership, as well as the SU for record-keeping.

FSVC will produce two reports from its minutes and actions arising, with academic issues being fed into FEC where they will be resolved and non-academic issues which cannot be addressed at a faculty-level being fed into USVC for wider discussion. Issues which have a university-wide scope will also be taken to USVC.

It is expected that FSVC will be co-chaired, with the Dean of Education forming the academic chair and the Education Officer (or nominee) forming the student chair. Further information for the composition, remit, and scope of FSVC can be found in its Terms of Reference (see Annex A).

4. Student Representation within Professional Service Directorates

It is important for directorates to involve student representation within governance structures to ensure the lived experience of students is directly driving innovation and that services are responding to the needs of students.

4.1 Utilising Student Voice Representatives

Where directorates wish to engage with students, either in the development of new ideas or projects as part of consultation or evaluation, they should contact the SU or Education Officer. The SU will then support the directorate to liaise with relevant LVRs/SVRs across faculties and relevant student groups. Engagement with students might take the form of a survey or focus group activity. Whilst it is not required, it is encouraged for directorates to consider a student representative on relevant working groups or 'task and finish' groups.

4.2 User Groups

Where services have direct users e.g., within the library, or dyslexia and disability support, it is encouraged that directorates create a user group. There is no requirement for these to be made up of SVRs and it is best practice to engage with a wide range of students. The SU can provide support for directorates to recruit and support students on these groups.

4.3 Professional Services Group

Professional Services Group (PSG) will regularly invite relevant elected student representatives to discuss matters arising as part of a continued and proactive approach.

5. University Level Representation

Representation at a university level is achieved primarily through the elected sabbatical officers of both the SU and KPA. They should be invited to committees relevant to their portfolios (or in the case of the KPA, matters affecting postgraduate students).

University Student Voice Committee (USVC) is the principal committee for capturing student voice at a university-level. This will be attended by relevant senior leaders within the university, the sabbatical officers of both the SU and KPA, as well as student representatives as nominated by the SU. USVC will also host an action log to allow student representatives to raise matters and for the university to respond in an agile way.

Where wider-scale consultation is required, there is several fora which should be considered and utilised:

• **Keele100**: large scale meetings consisting of LVRs, SVRs and other relevant student groups and stakeholders. Examples of relevant topics might include

induction, decolonising the curriculum, sustainability, and blended learning. Support to run these shall be provided by the SU and KPA. Keele100 will be overseen by USVC.

• **Pulse Surveys**: regular pulse surveys can be developed in consultation with the SU and KPA to target a particular topic which may not be as easily discussed in a large-scale meeting or where there may be a sensitive topic. These can inform a set of recommendations. Examples of relevant topics might include academic preparedness, cost of living, accommodation, student support.
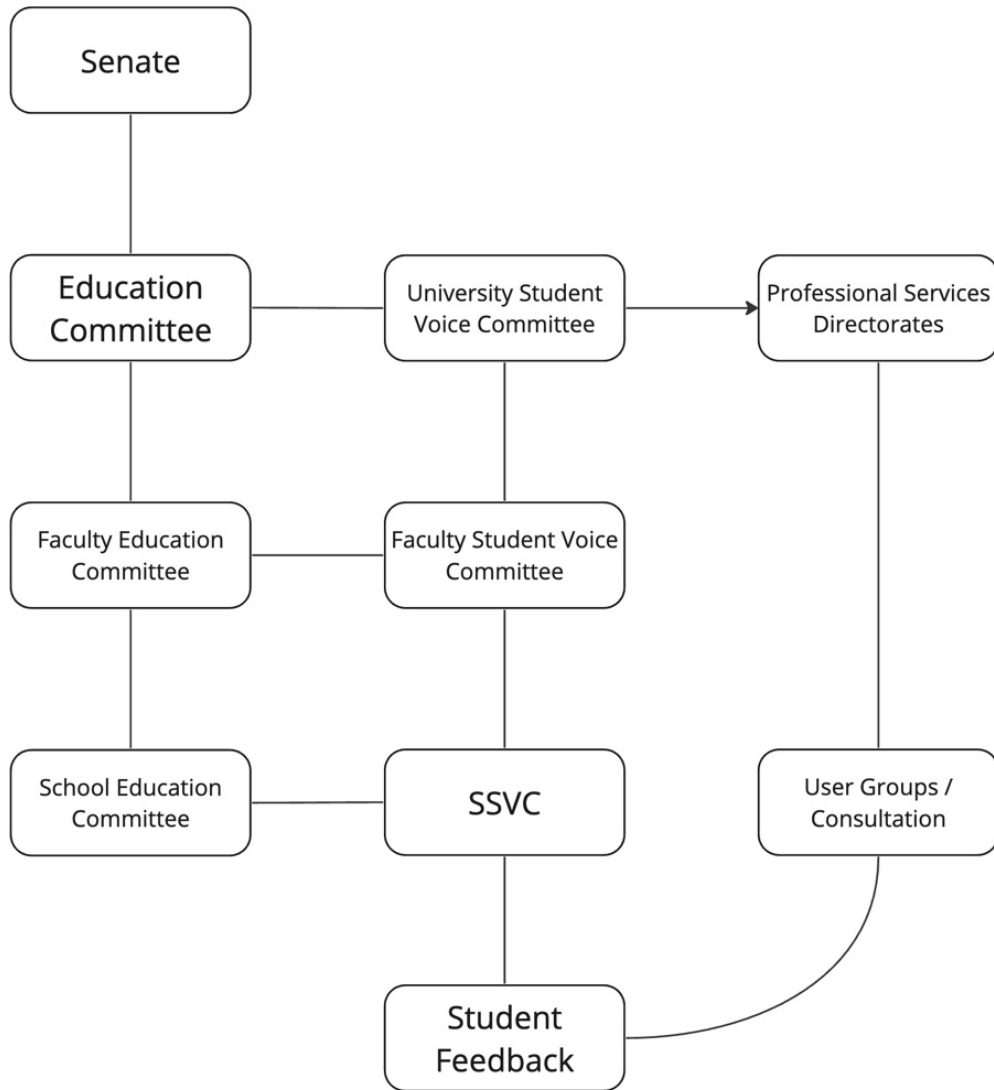
6. Reporting Mechanisms

Reporting of student voice is achieved through a series of formal and informal mechanisms, as follows:

i. Students feedback through their SVRs to inform discussion at SSVC, or through direct involvement in User Groups or Consultations in relation to Professional Services.

ii. Minutes of SSVC together with the input of the LVR inform discussion within SEC – with local issues arising being actioned, and feedback being used to inform strategic discussion.

iii. LVRs then take larger-scale issues, or recurrent issues to FSVC to facilitate discussion at a faculty level. Issues relating to Education which can be resolved at a faculty-level are taken to FEC in a report authored by FSVC. LVRs have the chance to feed into FEC discussion through invitation, as appropriate, and through feeding into the SU Education Officer report.

iv. If an issue cannot be resolved at a faculty-level, or it has wider impacts on the student experience beyond the faculty, it should be raised as part of the business of USVC. USVC will then refer issues either to the Education Committee or to the relevant Professional Services Directorate.

v. Matters which require Senate attention or approval will be taken through the relevant reporting mechanism, through the SU and/or KPA Report or through the Education Report.

It is important that this is a cascade model, with relevant information and actions being reported downwards to close the feedback loop. This will be the responsibility of the parties raising the item.

The mechanism for reporting student feedback can be visualised below:

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          │  Senate  │
          └────┬─────┘
               │
┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────────┐
│  Education   ├───┤ University Student├──▶│ Professional Services│
│  Committee   │   │ Voice Committee   │   │    Directorates      │
└──────┬───────┘   └────────┬─────────┘   └──────────┬───────────┘
       │                    │                        │
┌──────┴───────┐   ┌────────┴─────────┐              │
│Faculty       ├───┤ Faculty Student  │              │
│Education     │   │ Voice Committee  │              │
│Committee     │   └────────┬─────────┘              │
└──────┬───────┘            │                        │
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┌──────┴───────┐   ┌────────┴─────────┐   ┌──────────┴───────────┐
│School        ├───┤      SSVC        │   │   User Groups /      │
│Education     │   │                  │   │   Consultation       │
│Committee     │   └────────┬─────────┘   └──────────┬───────────┘
└──────────────┘            │                        │
                   ┌────────┴─────────┐              │
                   │    Student       ├──────────────┘
                   │    Feedback      │
                   └──────────────────┘
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7. Oversight and Evaluation

There shall be an annual process of oversight and evaluation of both the Student Voice Representatives system, and of student-voice mechanisms and structures. This will draw together senior colleagues from across the University, SU, and KPA. It is suggested this form part of USVCs schedule of business.

8. Summary of Roles and Responsibilities

	Role	Type	Responsibility
i.	Student	Student	Put themselves forward to be an SVR or LVR.
			Provide feedback to their SVRs relating to matters of student experience.
			Contribute to User Groups or consultations relating to Professional Services.
			Contribute to wider University fora e.g., Keele100 or Pulse Surveys.
ii.	Student Voice Representative	Student	Act as the representative for their cohort of students, collecting and championing their feedback constructively in a professional manner.
			Work in partnership with relevant staff to innovate and improve the experience of students within their programme.
			Contribute to wider opportunities within Faculties and the University – including in Professional Services.
iii.	Lead Voice Representative	Student	Act as the representative for their cohort of students, championing their feedback constructively in a professional manner. SVRs
			Work closely with the school to lead on innovating and improving the student experience across their School.
			Liaise with the Education Officer and Student Voice team to contribute to the continued improvement of the SVR and representation system.
			Contribute through membership of SEC, FSVC, and putting themselves forward for membership to wider groups e.g., USVC or Working Groups.
iv.	Student Voice Champion	University - Both	Act as the initial point of contact for the Students' Union in relation to SVRs and disseminate information to relevant colleagues in a timely manner.
			Ensure that SSVCs are arranged across the school, and that actions are reported and completed as appropriate.
			Support the LVR to effectively fulfil their role across the school.

	Role	Type	Responsibility
v.	Directors of Education	University - Academic	Ensure that LVRs are invited to SEC and that they are supported to effectively contribute to committee business. Champion student engagement in strategic development across Education within the school. Contribute as a member of Faculty Student Voice Committee.
vi.	Heads of School	University - Academic	Provide appropriate oversight that student voice is being listened to and actioned within their school, and to involve students in appropriate strategic conversations.
vii.	Programme/Module Leaders	University - Academic	Act on student feedback arising from SSVC, working in partnership with SVRs to address these.
viii.	Other Academic Staff	University - Academic	Support SVRs through acknowledging and actioning feedback raised at SSVCs as appropriate.
ix.	School Based Operational Administrators	University - PS	Provide secretariat support to SSVC and ensure that minutes and actions are published to SVRs, Students, and forwarded to the SU.
x.	Faculty Operations Managers	University - PS	Oversee that appropriate PSS resource is available to support SSVCs on a school-by-school basis. Provide appropriate secretariat support to Faculty Student Voice Committee.
xi.	Heads of Faculty Operations	University - PS	Provide appropriate oversight so that effective and sufficient support is provided to SSVC and FSVC. Champion student engagement in strategic developments across operations which impact on the student experience within the faculty. Contribute as a member of Faculty Student Voice Committee.
xii.	Student Experience and Support Officers	University - PS	Contribute as a member of Student Staff Voice Committee. Liaise with SVRs within the school to respond to local issues surrounding student support.
xiii.	Student Experience and Support Managers	University - PS	Champion student engagement in strategic developments across student support which impacts on the student experience within the faculty. Contribute as a member of Faculty Student Voice Committee.

	Role	Type	Responsibility
xiv.	Directors of Professional Service Directorates	University - PS	Champion student engagement in strategic developments across their directorate which impact on the student experience. Provide appropriate support and resources to allow for direct student feedback within the directorate e.g., through creation of User Groups or through wider consultation.
xv.	Chief Operating Officer	University - PS	Champion student engagement in appropriate strategic developments across the university which have a material impact on student experience and student outcomes. Provide appropriate oversight that student voice is being listened to and actioned within professional services.
xvi.	Student Voice Department	SU	Provide day-to-day support for SVRs and LVRs on operational matters and provide advice and guidance as necessary. Support the recruitment and training of SVRs, meeting appropriate timescales. Liaise with Student Voice Champions and School- based PSS to maintain the effective running of SSVC. Oversee wide-scale administrative functions such as maintaining records, uploading role to HEAR, and providing compensation to LVRs.
xvii.	Sabbatical Officers (excluding Education Officer)	SU/KPA	Champion students across the University through engagement with appropriate governance structures and senior leaders. Contribute to and lead strategic discussions at a university level through membership of University Student Voice Committee and Senate. Support SVRs and LVRs to contribute to SU projects and campaigns, and directly engage with representatives in everyday work.

	Role	Type	Responsibility
xviii.	Deans of Education	University - Academic	Champion student engagement in strategic development across Education within the faculty. Work alongside the Education Officer to ensure that LVRs can fulfil their role in an effective manner across the faculty. Support wider student engagement through allowing LVRs to attend FEC as appropriate and ensuring that feedback brought to FEC by FSVC is reported and actioned appropriately. Contribute as Chair of Faculty Student Voice Committee.
xix.	Executive Deans	University - Academic	Champion student engagement in all strategic development across the faculty. Contribute as a member of Faculty Student Voice Committee.
xx.	Pro Vice Chancellor (Education)	University - Academic	Provide appropriate oversight that student voice is being listened to and actioned across the university, and to involve students and their representatives in appropriate strategic conversations. Work closely with the Education Officer and other Sabbatical Officers to ensure that there is continued improvement of student voice and engagement. Ensure that items arising at USVC are actions to the appropriate committee or directorate. Support the Education Officer and Sabbatical Officer to effectively fulfil their roles.
xxi.	Education Officer	SU	Act as a figurehead of the SVR system and student representation. Champion student engagement in all areas of the university and support and empower students to engage in all areas of the student experience. Support and work closely with the LVRs to ensure they are effectively supported to fulfil their roles and ambitions.

9. REVIEW, APPROVAL & PUBLICATION

- To be reviewed every 3 years, or earlier as necessary, by Keele SU
- To be approved by Senate
- Location - University Policy Zone

10. ANNEXES

ANNEX A – Faculty Student Voice Committee Terms of Reference

11. DOCUMENT CONTROL INFORMATION

Document Name	Student Voice Code of Practice
Owner	Keele SU
Version Number	1.0
Equality Analysis Form Submission Date	May 2023
Approval Date	21 June 2023
Approved By	Senate
Date of Commencement	01 September 2023
Date of Last Review	[Day/month/year]
Date for Next Review	01 September 2026
Related University Policy Documents	NA
For Office Use – Keywords for search function	

ANNEX A - Faculty Student Voice Committee Terms of Reference

Faculty Student Voice Committee

Scope: To foster strong partnership working between the faculty and student body and to ensure that the student voice is used to enhance the student experience.

1. (a) Terms of Reference

i.   To facilitate liaison between senior faculty staff and students.
ii.   To enable staff and students jointly to seek to improve the quality of the student experience within the faculty.
iii.   To act as a consultative forum in the development of faculty-specific academic policy and strategy.
iv.   To raise issues and consider solutions relating to the student experience where these have not already been addressed through existing committee structures.
v.   To consider evidence-based student matters, seeking to resolve matters that fall within the remit of the committee. Evidence-based issues should indicate the scale of consultation, and the impact of any changes on the wider student body.
vi.   To consider joint actions and promote partnership initiatives within the faculty, which fall within the agreed policies and procedures of the University and which either do not require additional funding or for which funding has been agreed by the appropriate body/officer.

The Committee will seek to act on matters informed by evidenced reports of issues arising. Reports will be brought forward by both the Students and University for the consideration of the Student Voice. The Committee has the right to refer matters and put forward recommendations to appropriate University committees, in particular the Faculty Education Committee and University Student Voice Committee, for consideration at the discretion of the Chair.

The Committee is required to report to each subsequent meeting of the University Student Voice Committee, briefly setting out the nature of its discussions and highlighting actions that require further discussion.

2. (b) Constitution

University Representatives
Executive Dean for the Faculty (ex-officio)

Faculty Dean of Education (academic chair)

Directors of Education

Head of Faculty Operations (or nominee)

Student Experience and Support Manager

Additional co-opted staff as appropriate.
Student Representatives
Education Officer
Vice-President of Keele Postgraduate Association
Lead Voice Representative from each School

Secretary: Faculty Operations Office

(c) Sub-Committees
None

(d) Principal management information needs

Report from LVRs on School related student voice activity
University reports as appropriate/required

(e) Frequency and timing of meetings
At least two times a year, with up to four meetings a year normally in November, February, April and June to precede University Student Voice Committee.