

Section 8: Student Engagement

This section should be read in conjunction with other resources available on the [University website](#).

Responsibility of teaching staff

- 8.1 Teaching staff hold the primary responsibility for educational quality and good academic standards at the University of Westminster. The design and delivery of modules provides the framework for the student experience. Continuous self-monitoring of delivery is central to the achievement of good quality delivery. Collaboration between colleagues at School level enhances the ongoing review process.

Heads of School

- 8.2 Each College is organised on the basis of complementary disciplines within the overall subject of its title. Each subject specialist team is organised into a School; some are single subjects, others represent cross-disciplinary subjects.
- 8.3 Responsibility for providing management and leadership for the teaching and research staff within these subject specialist units lies with the Head of School. Specifically, this encompasses management of academic quality of delivery, and monitoring student achievements, within the University's framework of policies and processes for quality assurance.
- 8.4 The generic job description of the Head of School includes responsibilities for managing and monitoring the quality assurance of courses, modules and other educational programmes provided by the School, and to ensure the provision of academic and pastoral support for students studying programmes in the school. Heads of School are members of the College Executive Group.
- 8.5 The Head of School's specific responsibilities for taught courses will reflect the scale and character of the courses, but would normally encompass:
- **assessment**
(including liaison with internal and external examiners, and arrangements for the scrutiny of all draft coursework and examination requirements)
 - **monitoring and review**
(including the aggregation of student feedback from local sources of student evaluation and the University module feedback questionnaire for analysis by the course teaching team; preparing the annual self-monitoring report; and coordinating the preparation for course re-validation, external review and/or re-accreditation).

Course Leaders

- 8.6 Within the Statutes and Principles of the University approved by Privy Council in 1992, the appointment of a member of staff as leader of the course or named award

programme is specified, with the responsibility of ensuring that:

- the course/programme meets its specified aims and objectives;
- it is conducted in accordance with the appropriate regulations and academic administrative requirements;
- it meets the requirements of the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy;
- documentation is provided for monitoring and review.

8.7 The role of the Course Leader may vary within and between Schools to reflect the level and mode of the course. However, the responsibilities of the Course Leader would normally encompass:

- **student induction and support;** including course-specific induction, organisation of elections for student representatives and arrangements for engagement activity; and overseeing the effectiveness of the Personal Tutorial System for students registered for named awards within the course scheme in consultation with the School Senior Tutor.
- **course definition;** keeping an overview of the consistency between subject-specific aims and learning outcomes and the aims and learning outcomes for core and subject-specific option modules; ensuring that assessment criteria for each module are published for reference by students, teaching staff (PT as well as FT), external examiners and external accrediting agencies; and updating and circulating the Course Handbook, in accordance with the requirements specified in Section 6.

Course representatives

8.8 Course representatives will be elected annually by their peers at the beginning of each academic year for undergraduate and postgraduate courses. Course Representatives are expected to collect feedback from students on their course and present this feedback at to course leaders at contact points throughout the academic year. Such activity can take place at Course or Module level. At least two contact points per semester are expected and the format of these events should be determined jointly by course representatives and course leaders. Contact points can allow for digital methods of communication which can work well in including a wider variety of the student population. Whatever the format, the primary task is to consult actively and provide timely feedback on the outcome. Details of the engagement activity are expected to be available on the course Blackboard site. A summary of agreed action points and progress against them should be made available to all students on the course and the Student Union.

8.9 Any urgent issues are not expected to wait for a student engagement activity. The Student Union work with Course Representatives and Course leaders to determine how urgent issues are raised outside of formal interactions with Course Representatives. Appropriate course management structures should be used as appropriate. In addition, Course leaders can refer concerns about matters unrelated to learning and teaching (e.g. estates issues, library resources etc) directly to the appropriate service as soon as they are made aware.

8.10 For other urgent issues course leaders can refer these to senior colleagues work with the Student Union to find an appropriate solution. All students can channel their comments through their tutor or another member of teaching staff, but the view put across by the elected course representative(s) is much more likely to be seen as

presenting the case of the student group as a whole. Constructive criticisms of the way the course is run or the facilities available may be reported to the College Teaching Committee, and University-wide issues highlighted in this way are likely to be followed up at a senior level precisely because it is recognised that they provide an overview of student opinion.

School Representatives

- 8.11 School Representatives will also be appointed. School Representatives will meet with the Head of School at least each semester and provide feedback on behalf of the Course Representatives. A minimum of two (one UG and one PG) and a maximum of four School representatives will be appointed for each School, one of which must be a postgraduate student. School representatives will be appointed jointly between the Quality and Standards Office and the SU through an interview process. School Representatives will sit on the College Teaching Committees and the Student Experience Committee and are expected to complete regular reports of their activities.

Consultation

- 8.12 Each course must have a formal meetings process for consulting with and gathering feedback from student and staff representatives and this should be advertised to students on the course's BlackBoard site. Consultation by group e-mail can be very effective. Whatever the format, the primary task is to consult actively and provide timely feedback on the outcome. A summary of agreed action points and progress against them should be made available to all students.
- 8.13 If general student comment highlights a problem, potential or actual, it should be reported to the Course Leader (without identifying the individual source of the comments) by a student representative; the Course Leader may be in a position to resolve the matter or may need to refer it to the Head of School, Head of College, or manager of the relevant service, for resolution. If comments relate to the approach taken by individual staff members, they should always be referred to the Head of School, who will meet the students concerned and later with the staff member. If it is not possible to resolve the issue, the Head of College will be asked to convene a further meeting with the staff member to identify appropriate action. Any such meetings, with staff or students, will remain confidential as far as possible.
- 8.14 Aspects of study not covered by student representatives are:
- personal problems of individual students
 - academic difficulties of individual students
 - allegations of unfair or inappropriate treatment by staff or other students.

These sorts of issues should be handled confidentially (as private concerns) and, with the advice of the Course Leader, they should be referred to the appropriate staff member such as the student's Personal Tutor, the Head of School, the Head of College, the University of Westminster Students' Union (UWSU), or the Counselling and Advice Service.

- 8.15 Student engagement activities are not the appropriate process for dealing with potential student complaints about an individual member of staff; the University has a student complaints procedure for this purpose, details of which are available on the [University website](#).

Student Surveys

- 8.16 All students are invited to complete a Student Module Evaluation (SME) at the end of each module. Satisfaction scores and comments are made available to the Module Leader to share with the module teaching team. It is expected that the Module Leader will reflect on the outcomes of the SME in their Module Leaders Report and identify necessary modifications or enhancements from the SME feedback. Both qualitative and quantitative module results will be made available, beyond the module teaching team, to the relevant academic managers in the College as determined and formally agreed with the Deputy Vice Chancellor by the Head of College. Quantitative SME data will be provided to College's to enable this information to be reviewed and considered by appropriate University, College, School and subject groups.
- 8.17 The annual National Student Survey (NSS) is a census of all UK students in their final year of an undergraduate course. The results are available on the [Unistats website](#).
- 8.18 Postgraduate students receive an equivalent questionnaire. International students receive a number of tailored surveys throughout their studies. The satisfaction scores and comments from internal and external student experience surveys will be made available to the relevant academic managers in the College as determined by the Head of College. Colleges are required to identify actions for improving the student experience and to monitor their effectiveness in partnership with the Teaching Committee.
- 8.19 Student engagement is represented through the academic governance of the University. University committees such as Academic Council, Teaching Committee, College committees and Court of Governors have University of Westminster Student Union representation. In addition, the Student Experience Committee (see section 1) is Co-Chaired by the President of the Student Union.

Revalidation

- 8.20 In addition to the annual processes course revalidation will normally involve the panel meeting privately with a group of students. In addition, normally a Student Advisor from an independent College forms part of the Panel. More information is available in the revalidation section.

Note: For Collaborative provision please see Section 11