

STUDENT VOICE

“Speak up and speak clearly. I want to hear what you have to say because it matters. Let's listen to each other and respect one another's opinions. Although they may be different, wisdom allows us to be responsible for our own feelings and actions.”

— Felicia Johnson

Preamble

1. As a College, we believe that:
 - a commitment to hearing both loud and quiet opinions, views, ideas and beliefs is vital to the social mobility of all our students; and
 - encouraging and listening to a wide range of voices and opinions is the foundation of the development of our academic community.
2. Therefore, as a common standard for all our work we will engage students so that they can participate as representatives, decision-makers and give us feedback.
3. We recognise that this feedback might be difficult or controversial, and as an academic community, we shall strive by teaching, education, scholarship and research to promote respect for all opinion and debate that positively contributes to enhancing the College.
4. We are committed to ensuring we have robust representative structures at all levels of College governance and to giving opportunities for feedback. We will also ensure we offer suitable training and support to help students make a meaningful contribution to governance and the educational advancement we seek.

Principles

5. The College works with students and our wider academic community to define, promote and develop opportunities for educational advancement.
6. The College and Students' Union are jointly committed to operating and supporting an effective system of student engagement to ensure that students get suitable opportunities to be heard, give feedback and participate as representatives and decision-makers.

7. The College and Students' Union are jointly committed to operating and supporting an effective system of student representation at all levels of College governance so students can give their input on its quality and enhancement.
8. The College operates and supports a clear and democratic system of choosing student representatives. This enables students to participate meaningfully in discussions and forums by collecting and representing the views of the students more broadly.
9. The College is committed to providing training and developmental support to students so that they can take a full and useful role and work fruitfully with the rest of our academic community.
10. The College keeps a record of student input and how we respond to it. It is important that our academic community has access to, and is aware of, issues discussed in previous years.
11. The College monitors and reviews the effectiveness and impact of the opportunities for student engagement. It is committed to participating in evidence-based, information-sharing discussions about things that affect educational advancement.
12. The College and Students' Union are jointly committed to ensuring we have effective feedback mechanisms, with suitable support for those participating.

Procedures

13. At the core of the student voice are our student representative and committee structures. These provide forums for discussing key issues, updates and improvements. We also use, monitor and react to community-wide feedback opportunities. These include the National Student Survey and Student Perception Questionnaires. In addition, students can give us feedback through many formal and informal channels.
14. For each programme on each campus, a student representative post is available for nomination. Representatives will act as a conduit to discuss matters affecting the student experience.
15. The College will co-ordinate elections each November. Representatives should be elected by their peers in a democratic process in line with relevant guidance.
16. The College will promote and advertise representative elections via existing reps, GSM Learn, posters and other media.

17. We provide support to election candidates, including the co-ordination of their written presentations to the student body. The College will ensure this information is available to all students via different channels.
18. Elected representatives must represent the interests of their fellow students. They should aim to ensure they consider the views of all students.
19. Representatives must be anchored to formal decision-making structures in the College. This ensures that feedback and information exchanged and discussed is tied to the correct College governance committee.
20. Further theme-specific student forums, chaired by student representatives, will be in place on each campus. They discuss input and ideas in a free and open exchange of views. They also collate and disseminate information. Current themes include groups on Equalities, Democracy, New Initiatives and GSM Communities.
21. Student representatives meet the Student Engagement Team several times throughout the year to, amongst other things; discuss feedback collated from forums and the wider student body. Issues raised through student representatives are resolved through a number of channels, including the formal committee meetings they are members of, and informal discussions amongst the representatives and the Student Union President.
22. Each term for each programme a student programme forum will meet. It will include student representatives and other members of the academic community. There will be updates, input and discussion of information on a wide range of matters. Documented feedback on updates will be available after these meetings.
23. The College will ensure the Students' Union receives the names and contact details of all student representatives.
24. We will promote participation in student surveys such as the National Student Survey and Student Perception Questionnaire. This will ensure each student has the opportunity to give specific feedback on a range of matters.

Legal and regulatory context

25. We have developed the code by reference to Chapter B5 of the QAA Quality Code (Student Engagement). This aims to help colleges provide effective methods of student engagement.

Schedule (not part of the policies and regulations):

Responsible Officer: Provost

Approved by: Board of Directors and Academic Board and GSM London Students' Union

Version: 1.0

Date: 24 February 2016

Monitoring and Review Body: Academic Board and GSM London Students' Union

Effective From: 1 April 2016

Next Scheduled Review: April 2017