



Middlesbrough
College

Higher Education Student Representation

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1. Introduction

Students are the heart of any College. They are both the receivers and creators of knowledge and a College must ensure that the student experience - academic, social and supportive - is maximised for the student's benefit. In order to do this the College and the Students Union work together to ensure that excellent student representation is provided.

The processes outlined in this document describe the various mechanisms by which the College listens to the views and opinions of its higher education (HE) students and how it responds.

While we welcome comments and feedback from any of our students, the role of the **Student Representative** is key to the process and we rely upon our Student Representatives as the main conduit for receiving and feeding back on student views.

1.1. What is Student Representation?

Student Representation provides a structure to ensure that students' views are heard. Middlesbrough College is committed to receiving and responding to student feedback in order to bring about improvement in the quality of the student experience and development of learning and teaching within the institution. The underlying principle is that any student from any background on any programme should be able to contribute to and enhance his or her experience at the College.

1.2. What is Involved?

Representation covers a diverse range of activities. Student Representatives (Student Reps) are students on a particular programme of study who have been chosen by their peers to represent the interests of their peer group on the College's Higher Education boards, committees and groups:

- Programme Boards
- Academic Board
- Higher Education Working Groups (CPD & Research, Estates, Finance & Registry, Information Technology, Learning Resources Centre, Marketing.)

The College recognises that attendance at committees etc., can often clash with other commitments such as lectures, sport/social engagements and part-time work. Consequently, apart from the Programme Board, the role does not require attendance in all cases, just that the interests of the group are represented. While any Student Rep is welcome to attend these other meetings, they can be assured that their views will be presented by the Student Union President (SUP) on their behalf. Feedback from all meetings including outcomes and actions, is available on the [HE Students](#) - a Canvas course to which all HE students are enrolled and which is especially useful for Student Reps.

1.3. How is Representation Structured at Middlesbrough College?

The election of Student Reps is primarily organised by Programme Leaders. Once elected, Student Reps work with the Programme Leader, the Student Union President (SUP) and the Higher Education Office (HEO) to feed student views into key cross-College committees and meetings. The SUP is a full-time sabbatical post resourced by the College.

2. Support and Training

Administration and co-ordination of the student representation processes is shared jointly between the College and the Students' Union, with both parties contributing to the development of documentation, guidance, recruitment and training. Specifically:

- The Students' Union provides support and guidance for Student Reps. The [Middlesbrough College Students' Union page](#) on the College web-site contains information about representation.
- The Student Union President (SUP) is the first point of contact for help and support for a Student Rep.
- Programme teams can also help with signposting if required.
- The Higher Education Office will supply Student Reps with practical assistance including:
 - invitations and reminders about meetings and documentation;
 - minutes of meetings posted to [HE Students](#);
 - a timetable of meetings each year.

2.1. Committee attendance

It is important for Student Reps to contact the SUP (01642 333533) and the HE Administrator (01642 333642) in order to find out information about what is expected of Student Reps within the College.

The following sub-sections are designed to help Student Reps prepare for their role in attending Board/Committee meetings.

2.1.1. Before the meeting

- Talk to other students to get their views and comments.
- Let students know of any meetings coming up so that they can raise any issues in time.
- Make sure you read through any notes or minutes of previous meetings.
- Read the agenda and any additional papers for the meeting. If you require any further information about any of the agenda items, ask the relevant person (Chair of Committee, academic staff member, Students' Union, students you are representing, etc).
- If there are other Student Reps attending the meeting, discuss with them beforehand who will talk about relevant agenda items at the meeting, etc.

- If you can't attend a meeting, submit your apologies to the Chair and, if possible, make arrangements for another Student Rep to attend on your behalf.
- Make sure you know exactly when and where the meeting is, and don't forget to take the essentials - paper and pen, etc.

2.1.2. At the meeting

- Follow the agenda.
- Discuss any problems constructively - state any issues clearly and concisely without attaching blame to – or naming - individuals. Refer to roles (e.g. Programme Leader, Module Tutor, a 'fellow student') rather than individuals.
- Do not use the meetings to deal with individual grievances - remember that these committee meetings are to share issues and experiences common to many students, not just yours!
- Take notes of the main points of the meeting, particularly relating to who is responsible for specific issues or actions.
- Feedback any relevant information from any other meetings you have attended.

2.1.3. After the meeting

- Ensure you feedback the relevant points from the meeting to the students concerned.
- Ensure you receive a copy of the minutes of the meeting (minutes of meetings posted to [HE Students](#)).
- Identify issues which need to be followed up or actions to be taken. If you require the assistance of others in carrying out these actions, make sure you contact them as soon as possible after the meeting.

3. Student Representation Process

This section sets out the principles of higher education student representation at Middlesbrough College.

3.1. The Principles of Student Representation are:

1. Every programme should have elected Student Representatives. When considering how many representatives to allocate to a programme, Programme Leaders should consider:
 - The potential workload for the Student Representatives (consider the mode of study and size of the group).
 - How easy it will be for representatives and students to contact each other.
 - Making sure that each level of the Programme is represented.
2. Programme Teams should be fully engaged in student representation with clear leadership, formal processes (e.g. scheduling Programme Boards around student availability, module evaluation, etc.) and engagement with the Students' Union.
3. Student Representatives should be fully engaged and active in their roles and be clear of what is expected of them as representatives including:
 - maintaining a dialogue with peers;
 - representing their cohort;
 - acting as partners in decisions about the student experience;
 - ensuring they are fully prepared for meetings, etc.
4. Students should have the opportunity to elect their representatives every year and an election process should be facilitated by Programme Leaders in accordance with guidelines issued by the Students Union.
5. Methods should be in place within programmes and departments to ensure speedy resolution of student issues brought up through the student representation procedures. These methods may include informal discussions with relevant academic staff members or through bringing up issues at Programme Board meetings, etc. All issues brought to the attention of Boards, Committees and Groups are minuted and followed up until Student Reps agree the issues have been concluded.
6. All Programme Boards should take place at least once per term.
7. Student Representatives should know the appropriate method to escalate issues if these are not resolved to their satisfaction including recourse to the Students' Union, Higher Education Office, the Student Complaints Procedure.
8. Student Representatives should have the opportunity to feed into developments affecting their student experience at programme, directorate and institutional level.

9. Student Representatives will be asked to contribute to internal reviews (such as Departmental Reviews) and external reviews (such as Programme Validation Events, Institutional Approvals and QAA Quality Reviews.)
10. The Students' Union will ensure that student views are captured on at least a termly basis and fed into HE Working Groups and Academic Board. This will be achieved in the following ways:
 - a. Student reps can present views to the Student Union President (SUP) at any time, either in person or via e-mail.
 - b. The SUP, Student Reps and Higher Education Office (HEO) will hold a series of planned monthly drop-in sessions across the College where they will visit groups from each academic area and gather their views. These issues will be fed into the appropriate cross College forum and actions reported back via the VLE.
 - c. The SUP or Student Reps will present student views at monthly Academic Board meetings.
 - d. Any Student Rep that would like to attend either Academic Board or the HE Working Groups is entitled to do so.
11. Details of Student Representatives should be sent by Programme Leaders to the Students' Union as soon as possible after their election so that they can receive key contact, support and guidance information. Details and dates of all Academic Board and HE Working Group meetings should also be sent to the Students' Union for information.

3.2. Reporting

1. All Programme Boards, Academic Board and HE Working Group meetings should have a standing agenda item, to receive matters from Student Representatives. The agenda should also include a report on any ongoing actions.
2. There should be student representation on Programme Validation Committees (PVC) and outcomes should be fed-back to the student representative network.

4. Responsibilities of stakeholders in the student representation system

The following lists the responsibilities of students and stakeholders in the student representation systems at Middlesbrough College.

4.1. Responsibilities - Student Representatives

- Regularly seek out the views and opinions of students on their programme on all matters concerning their student experience.
- Bring programme-level issues and concerns to programme-level meetings for formal resolution.
- Attend and contribute to meetings with staff (e.g. Programme Boards)
- Prepare for meetings, including attending training, reading papers and consulting with students to evidence their contributions.
- Feedback the outcomes to students on their programmes.
- Liaise with Students' Union officers and staff, and with Student Representatives from other programmes.
- Keep their cohort informed of updates from HE Office and the Students' Union as necessary.
- It is good practice for representatives to keep a folder of activities and actions which can then be passed onto new representatives in subsequent years so that they can see the history behind various decisions relating to the programme and the types of issues which were raised.

4.2. Responsibilities - Students' Union

- To act as the representative voice of the students at Middlesbrough College.
- Provide information for all parties about the purpose and process of student representation.
- Provide a package of introductory and advanced training for all student reps.
- Provide a point of contact for all Student Representatives and keep in touch with them regularly.
- Provide opportunities for representatives to network with each other and Students' Union officers.

4.3. Responsibilities - Higher Education Office

- Act as a champion for student engagement and representation.
- Ensure Student Representatives have the opportunity to feed into developments affecting their student experience.
- Liaise regularly with the Students' Union. Ensure the Students' Union is provided with details of representatives as soon as they are elected (ideally by the fourth week of Term 1) and details of Programme Board, Academic Board and HE Working Group meetings via the [HE Students](#) site.
- Act as a first point of contact for Student Representatives in the College and support them as needed.

- Follow up issues raised at Programme Board, Academic Board and HE Working Group meetings and ensure actions are carried out by liaising with appropriate departments, staff and other colleagues as appropriate.
- Report back to student reps and feedback the outcomes of any actions.
- Ensure fair and well publicised elections are held annually for Student Representatives.

Revision History		
Version	Date	Detail
1.0	September 2017	
1.1	August 2018	Document edited for clarity and to homogenise presentation and implement URLs to College website HE Essential Information page.
1.2	January 2022	Checked for accuracy.