

Academic Quality Assurance and Enhancement Procedure

Student Engagement in Quality Assurance and Enhancement

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1. Introduction and purpose

The aim of this policy is to ensure that every student is represented in the College's decision making processes and that students are actively involved in shaping and improving the student experience at the RVC. This policy supports the delivery of the RVC's commitment to student engagement and satisfaction as set out in its Strategic Plan and Quality Strategy:

'All students'...have a right to express their views about their learning experience, for those views to be listened to and for the College to respond where appropriate'.

[Strategy for Enhancement and Assurance of the Quality of Learning, Teaching and Assessment]

'We aim to be recognised as world leaders in veterinary science, the biological and biomedical sciences and veterinary nursing education, and the delivery of a student-focused university experience'.

[\[RVC Strategic Plan\]](#)

This policy summarises the key elements of the [Academic Quality Assurance and Enhancement \(AQAE\) procedures](#) and arrangements which exist to support student engagement activities within the College. The individual AQAE procedural chapters should be consulted for details of specific processes.

2. Scope

The RVC adopts the Quality Assurance Agency's definition of student engagement as:

'...the participation of students in quality enhancement and quality assurance processes, which includes but is not restricted to representation of the student view through formal representation mechanisms...resulting in the improvement of their educational experience'.

[The UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Quality Assurance Agency]

The RVC aims to involve all students in shaping and improving their experiences at the RVC. The College and Students' Union (SU) work in partnership to ensure that opportunities exist for students, both individually and collectively, to play a central role in quality assurance and enhancement activities.

The RVC has in place comprehensive procedures which set out opportunities for student engagement in the range of quality assurance and enhancement activities it undertakes. These activities include the validation of new programmes of study, programme monitoring, Periodic Reviews and External Examining.

All quality assurance and enhancement procedures relating to taught courses are defined and monitored by the Teaching Quality Committee whose membership includes two student representatives. Procedures relating to Postgraduate Research Degrees are overseen by the Research Degrees Committee.

3. Procedures

3.1 Promotion

Opportunities for students to be involved in quality assurance and enhancement activities are promoted in partnership by the RVC and Students' Union. Information is disseminated through a range of methods including the SU Course Representatives, Students' Union website, the RVCs virtual learning environment 'LEARN' and campus TV screens.

The Vice Principal (Students) has a specific remit to develop and promote student engagement across the RVC.

The RVC and SU have identified the importance of fostering a culture of student engagement from the very start of students' time at the RVC, and briefing sessions are conducted by the RVC and SU at the start of each the Autumn term to introduce all new undergraduates to what student engagement at the RVC encompasses and to encourage them to become involved.

Staff newly appointed as Curriculum Managers receive training by the Academic Quality Team which includes an introduction to the AQAE procedures supporting student engagement and highlights their responsibilities in actively supporting engagement activities.

3.2 Student Evaluations

Students providing feedback on the college, their course and members of teaching staff are a well-established part of the RVC's quality assurance and enhancement processes and are detailed in procedural chapter '*Student, Graduate and Employer Evaluation Surveys*'.

Evaluations enable individual students to give feedback on their course and experiences at the RVC. The results of surveys are used to enhance teaching and learning and are considered in curriculum development; staff appraisal; promotion decisions and in judging nominations for the annual Jim Bee Educator Awards.

The RVC conducts internal surveys which enable students to give feedback on their overall RVC and course experience including modules/strands and rotations. Further information on surveys can be found on the RVC website [here](#).

Student survey feedback is responded to through the publication of:

- i) **Module/Strand reviews** which should include consideration of student feedback received by whatever available means e.g. from results of student surveys provided by Academic Quality, from academic committee meetings, as reported by SU Course Representatives etc
- ii) **'Reflective Responses'** by Year Leaders (and where they do not exist Course Directors) which are required to be published for their cohort at the end of each term on LEARN, to consider and respond to student feedback as appropriate for their cohort. This student feedback could be received via SU course reps, module/strand surveys, Q and A sessions, forums and through any other informal routes.

3.3 Student Course Representatives

3.3.1 Responsibilities

RVC SU Course Representatives act as the voice of their fellow students and have 4 key responsibilities:

- To **represent** their year groups views and be proactive in collecting their feedback.
- To act as a **communication** channel between staff and students.
- To **improve** students' experiences by working with the RVC and as an active member of the SU.
- To keep their year group in the loop by **reporting** back on decisions and changes.

3.3.2 Elections

The Students' Union is responsible for managing the election of Course RVCSU Representatives at the start of each Autumn term. At least one student representative is elected for each year of each course. The RVCSU Course Representative term of office is for 4 terms in order to facilitate a handover to newly elected representatives during the Autumn term.

In relation to the Bachelor in Veterinary Sciences, one Academic Student Representative will be elected in year 1 and year 2 of the BVSc at Aberystwyth University. These representatives will attend Aberystwyth Staff Student Consultative Committee Meetings and RVC Undergraduate Medicine Course Management Committee. These student representatives will also be invited to take part in an [online] meeting each autumn term, with the RVC SU Course Representatives for BVetMed Year 1, 2 and Accelerated BVetMed. This will be organised by

the RVC Senior Academic Quality Manager (Student Engagement) in consultation with the RVC SU Vice President for Representation and Communication.

3.3.3 Training and Support Programme

A Training and Support Programme for RVCSU Course Representatives is delivered in partnership between the Students' Union and RVC. The programme is designed to help students develop skills relating to their role and provide them with ongoing support during their term of office. All elements of the Programme are supported, and as appropriate attended, by the Vice Principal (Students)

The Training and Support Programme consists of 3 core elements (Figure 1):

- Core Induction Training session: held during the Autumn term. The training aims to equip Reps with the skills and information they need to start their role. It includes specific sessions to enable existing representatives to hand over to the new reps through the use of "Handover Forms" and discussion of Academic Committee business from the preceding year.
- Induction Training Programme: conducted after the 'core' session and designed specifically for RVCSU Course Representatives to support the development of valuable skills which will help students in their role as reps and in their future working lives.
- Socials and keep in touch sessions: held throughout the year to enable Reps to catch up, discuss key issues and meet with senior College staff including the Vice Principal (Students). A monthly keep in touch session is hosted by the RVC and SU to enable the sharing of information and provide reps with up to date briefings from key RVC and SU teams/staff.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES – TRAINING AND SUPPORT PROGRAMME

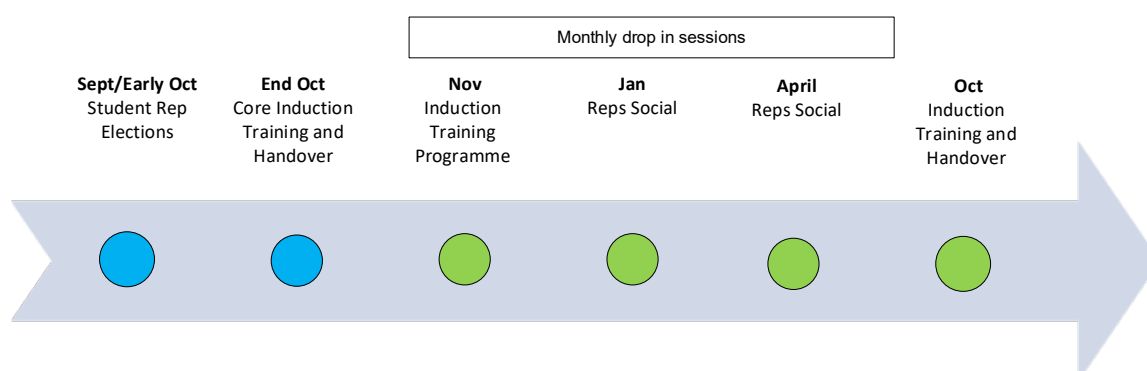


Fig 1. Student Rep Training and Support Programme

RVCSU Course Representatives are provided with resources designed specifically to support them in their role, including the Student Representative Handbook, Handover forms completed by existing representatives and relevant academic committee minutes.

3.4 RVC Academic Committees

The RVC's committee structure provides a formal opportunity for the student voice to be heard at all levels. The College's '*Academic Committee Handbook*' provides full details of committee procedures and membership. Students count as full members of academic committees (right to vote and count towards the quorum). As members of committees they present students' opinions and concerns, provide a student perspective on RVC activities and report back to their year group/the student body on issues raised and decisions made.

The Committee Secretary should alert student members to agenda items on which student input is most essential, so they can seek views more widely among their year. The Chair should encourage student participation in meetings in order to identify what is working well and make suggestions for improvements. The constitutions of RVC academic committees in Fig 2 include student representative members. All elections and appointments are managed by the Students Union.

Committee name/role	Student membership (as set out in 'Academic Committee Handbook')
Academic Board: To consider and advise the Council upon all academic matters and questions affecting the educational policy of the College, the organisation of teaching and research and courses of instruction.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SU President 2. SU Postgraduate course representative OR SU Postgraduate Officer 3. SU Undergraduate course representative OR SU Officer (Undergraduate)
Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee (LTAC): To develop and oversee the provision of a comprehensive range of excellent taught undergraduate and postgraduate courses.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SU President 2. SU Postgraduate course representative OR SU Postgraduate Officer 3. SU Vet Nursing Officer <i>* if SU President is an UG Vet Nurse student then this position will not be filled</i> 4. SU Undergraduate Sciences Officer <i>* if SU President is an UG Biosciences student then this position will not be filled</i> 5. BVetMed student <i>* if SU President is a BVetMed student then this position will not be filled</i>
Student Development Committee (SDC): To ensure that specialist student support services meet the needs of students' development and complement the formal taught or research provision for all students.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SU Vice President Welfare* 2. SU Vet Nursing course representative OR SU Vet Nursing Officer 3. SU BVetMed course representative OR SU Camden Officer if BVetMed student* 4. SU Biosciences course representative OR SU Undergraduate Sciences Officer or SU Camden Officer if UG Biosciences student 5. SU Postgraduate course representative OR SU Postgraduate Officer <p><i>* during any academic year where neither role is taken by a BVetMed student, then SU BVetMed Course Rep should be added as an additional member for that year</i></p>
Teaching Quality Committee (TQC): To assure the consistent and excellent quality of the RVC's courses and the standards of the College's awards.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SU Vice President Representation and Communications 2. SU Undergraduate course representative OR SU Officer (Undergraduate) 3. SU Postgraduate course representative OR SU Postgraduate Officer
TQCs' Student Engagement in Quality Enhancement working group: A sub-group of TQC responsible for ensuring that the college conduct effective student surveys which maximize student impact.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SU Vice President Representation and Comms 2. SU Postgraduate Officer 3. SU course representative OR SU Officer 4. SU course representative OR SU Officer 5. SU course representative OR SU Officer
TQC's External Student Survey Results working group: operates as a sub-group of the 'Teaching Quality Committee' to consider the results of two annual national satisfaction surveys– National Student Survey (NSS) and the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SU President 2. SU Postgraduate Officers (PG meeting only)
Modular Scheme Management Committee (MSMC): To manage the Colleges modular scheme in order to enhance quality, flexibility and student choice whilst maintaining academic standards.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SU Undergraduate Course Representatives OR SU Officer (undergraduate) 2. SU Postgraduate Course Representatives OR SU Postgraduate Officer
Review Annual Quality Improvement Reports (AQIR): for all courses and ensure Course Management Committee members fully scrutinise their AQIRs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. at least one undergraduate SU course representative OR SU Officer at the undergraduate meeting (autumn) 2. at least one postgraduate SU course representative OR SU Officer at the postgraduate meeting (spring)

<p>Research Degrees Committee (RDC): To assure the quality and standards of the College's Research Degrees and to make recommendations on their award.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SU Postgraduate Officer 2. three postgraduate research student representatives who together reflect the different modes and location of study
<p>College Services Forum (CSF): It provides a forum for the discussion of matters pertaining to College services, both existing services and proposals to change or provide new services.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SU Vice President Representation and Communications 2. SU Vice President Welfare 3. SU Vice President Activities and Campaigns 4. 1 SU course representative from each year of each course (as appropriate)
<p>Course Management Committees (CMCs): These are operational committees that manage the College's courses and ensure that College policies and procedures are put into practice at course level.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At least 1 SU representative for each year of each course, as set out in the committee's constitution. <i>* in addition for Postgraduate CMCs the SU Postgraduate Officers(s) to be invited to attend members, with the intention that the officers can attend when they feel appropriate/required, alongside the SU course reps.</i> <i>** in addition, for Vet Nursing CMC the SU Vet Nursing Liaison Officer to be invited.</i> <i>*** in addition, for the Biosciences CMC, the SU Undergraduate Sciences Officer to be invited.</i>

Fig 2. RVC Academic Committees, Student membership

3.5 Quality Assurance and Enhancement procedures

The RVC seeks the involvement of students through other specific quality assurance and enhancement activities.

Students play a vital role in Course Validation and Periodic Review as full members of both Validation and Periodic Review panels. Students are provided appropriate training and induction in order to be fully effective as members of the panels.

Student representatives are invited to participate in the meetings of the TQC sub-group responsible for reviewing and scrutinising the RVC's responses to External Examiners' reports. In addition, during 2013-14 the College piloted meetings between External Examiners and students from the relevant course. This pilot was warmly welcomed by both students and External examiners and where possible is now conducted each year.

Students are involved in the development of the RVC's responses to reports from relevant Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies and the Quality Assurance Agency.

3.6 Dissemination – 'closing the loop'

Through 'You Said...We Did...' the RVC recognises enhancements made to the student experience as a result of listening to feedback from students.

Actions taken in response to feedback from students are disseminated to students and staff through publication on the 'You Said...We Did...' pages of LEARN (the RVC's Virtual Learning Environment); the screens in public areas; promotional campaigns; announcements by staff or student representatives in lectures and termly dissemination campaigns.

Each item is attributed to a specific course and new items are sent to Student Reps to enable them to disseminate the results of student feedback to their year group and celebrate their involvement as partners in bringing about change.

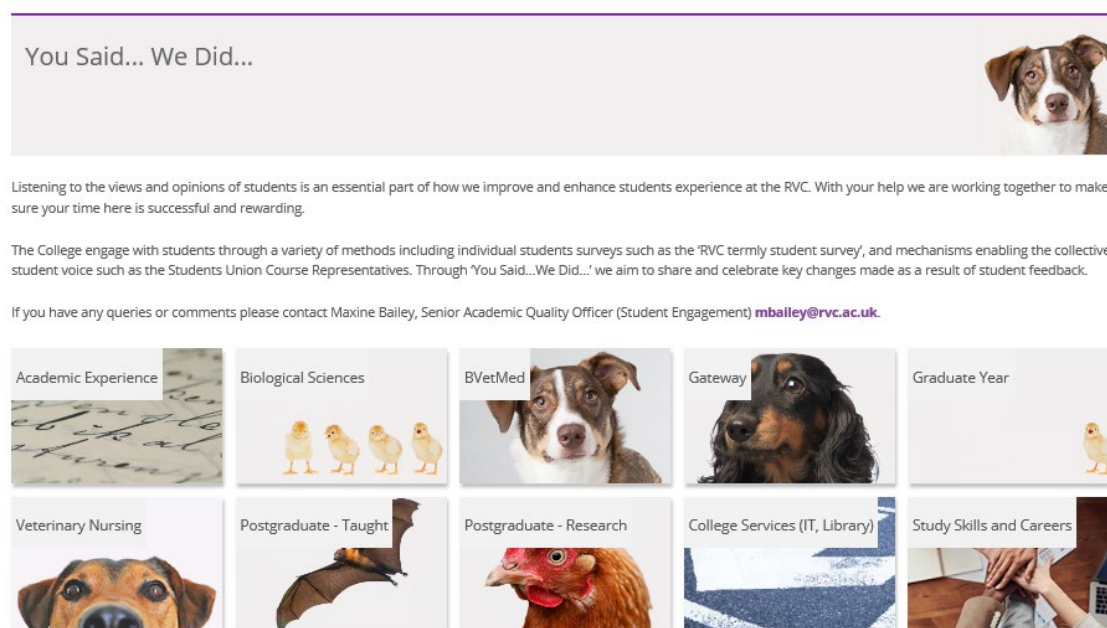


Fig 3. Screenshot of LEARN homepage for 'You Said...We Did...'

3.7 Monitoring and Review

One of the core objectives of the RVC's Quality Assurance and Enhancement Strategy is to amplify the impact of student engagement in quality enhancement. The strategy contains pre-defined performance indicators against which this can be measured. Performance against these indicators is reviewed annually by the RVC's Teaching Quality Committee and other relevant committees.

Most of these performance indicators measure the extent of engagement, rather than impact itself, but we hope that they will be indicative of the impact which will be ensured through QAE procedures. The number of You Said...We Did... entries is also a performance indicator and gives a useful measure of the volume of changes published as responses to student feedback.

As set out in the RVC Quality Strategy, the RVC regularly monitors its quality assurance and enhancement procedures to ensure that they are working effectively.

Student Engagement

1. Percentage of available student representative positions filled
2. Percentage of reps attending training events
3. Percentage of reps attending catch-up/social events
4. Attendance rates of reps at committee meetings
5. Number of items on which comments are made by students at committee meetings
6. Response rates to student evaluation surveys
7. Response rates to graduate surveys
8. Student attendance at feedback events, e.g. rotation forums
9. Response rates on NSS, PTES and PRES

Closing the Loop

1. Number of YSWD entries
2. Percentage of student module/strand surveys with low scores not receiving response through module/strand review
3. Percentage of action points from each committee meeting with no response
4. Scores on NSS, PTES and PRES

Fig 4. RVC Quality Strategy, Key Performance Indicators

4. **Associated documents and procedures**

- [Academic Quality Assurance and Enhancement procedure 'Student, Graduate and Employer evaluation surveys'](#)
- [Staff guidance – 'Year Leaders/Course Directors guide – responding to feedback from students, through student-facing reflective response'](#)
- [Academic Quality Assurance and Enhancement procedure 'Review of modules, strands, rotations, Research Project 2 and the TLiHE course'](#)