MANAGEMENT OF PROGRAMMES – COMMITTEES AND STUDENT REPRESENTATION

OVERVIEW

QMU operates a system of programme level committees and student representation. This is an important element of our quality procedures. Through committees we can:

- Ensure staff and students are consulted about any changes to the programme.
- Hear from staff and students about any issues affecting the programme and take action to address them.

Across the university sector in Scotland there is widespread agreement that the best way to improve the quality of higher education is through listening to students. That's why Queen Margaret University requires all partner organisations delivering programmes on our behalf to support a class representative system. It is normal to recruit two representatives for each cohort of students. Student representatives (also known as class reps) can negotiate with the programme leader on behalf of their class mates. They also attend the Student Staff Consultative Committee (SSCC) and Programme Committee.

More detail on the class representative system can be seen in the Class Rep Handbook.

PROGRAMME COMMITTEES

The Programme Committee has overall responsibility for the academic quality of the programme and for dealing with day-to-day quality processes.

Programme Committees can cover one programme or several related programmes. Their purpose is to provide a structured forum for discussing issues relating to the quality of individual programmes, including changes to the overall programme, individual modules and action plans. Student and staff involvement allows for shared consideration of key decisions affecting the programme(s), and identification and sharing of good practice (things that are working well which can be shared more widely).

Programme Committees meet once each semester around 2 weeks after the Student Staff Consultative Committee (SSCC). This is to allow issues that cannot be dealt with at SSCC level to be raised at Programme Committee level. Minutes of SSCC meetings are considered by the Programme Committee. (See below for more detail about the SSCC.)

The Programme Committee is chaired by the Programme Leader. Membership is made up of module co-ordinators and other staff with teaching responsibility, as well as student representatives (also known as class reps). Minutes from the Programme Committee are submitted to the Joint Board of Studies and items may be recommended for discussion there.

Class Reps have the opportunity to comment on all proposed changes which may affect students in the class. Business relating to individual students will be 'reserved' until the end of the meeting. At this point Class Reps will be asked to leave the meeting to preserve confidentiality of these issues.

Annual Monitoring is a key activity undertaken by the Programme Committee. Each Programme Leader, in consultation with the full team, students and other stakeholders, is required to write an Annual Programme Monitoring Report (AMR) to comment on the success of the programme and identify actions and examples of good practice. The

Programme Committee reflects on this and agrees the final version which is shared with senior staff and other university committees.

Some of the business that the Programme Committee will normally deal with includes:

- Receiving the results of module evaluation and agreeing actions in response
- Receiving issues referred by the Student Staff Consultative Committee and agreeing actions in response
- Recommending changes to modules
- Recommending changes to the programme structure
- Recommending changes to programme specific regulations
- Considering possible changes to admissions criteria
- Overseeing resource needs
- Agreeing the assessment schedule
- Receiving the external examiner report and agreeing a response
- Nominating new external examiners
- Approving the annual programme monitoring report
- Monitoring the progress of actions

The Committee is meant to be a forum for discussion about the programme and how it is run. It is not just about the Programme Leader giving out information to the staff team – there should be dialogue and an opportunity to share opinions. Importantly, students should have the opportunity to be part of these discussions. This ensures that students understand the reasons why decisions are made that affect how the course is delivered.

Membership consists of the following:

- Convener - Programme Leader
- Module leaders
- Placement Co-ordinator (if applicable)
- Programme administrator
- Two students from each level of the programme

The Programme Committee will normally meet twice a year, or more often as required. A sample agenda is overleaf.

Programme committee agenda

1 Welcome and apologies

2 Minutes of previous meeting

3 Action status report and matters arising

4 Student feedback:
   a. Summary of module evaluation
   b. Student Staff Committee minutes
   c. Partner Organisation Student survey results
   d. Other issues raised by student representatives

5 Annual monitoring report
   Semester 1 – to confirm the report and actions
   Semester 2 – to follow up on progress against the actions previously agreed

6 External examiner feedback
   To consider any feedback received from the examiner, receive the external
   examiner report, and agree any actions in response

7 Assessment schedule
   To agree the assessment schedule for the following semester

8 Module changes
   To discuss any changes to modules that might be required and make
   recommendations to the Joint Board of Studies

9 Employability and extra-curricular activities
   To discuss and plan activities that help to develop graduate skills, eg journal
   clubs, seminars, field trips

10 Any other matters affecting the quality of the programme / considering any
   feedback from other sources, such as employers / responding to any
   operational issues that have arisen

Other possible items

- Validation and review preparations (for teams going through validation and review)
- Professional body issues
- Library issues
- Requests for additional specialist resources

See also:

- [Template for minutes](#)
- [Collaborations Manual](#)

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STUDENT-STAFF CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES

The Student-Staff Consultative Committee provides an opportunity for constructive discussion between students and staff about any issues that affect student learning and well-being.

The Committee will consider any matters directly related to the programme and report or make recommendations, as felt necessary, to the Programme Committee.

The membership of the Committee shall be drawn from staff teaching on the programme and student representatives. There should be more students than staff. Students should have the opportunity to chair the meeting and lead the agenda. The minutes should be agreed with student reps to confirm everybody is clear about the actions agreed for follow up.

The agenda is quite straightforward and student led:

1   Welcome and apologies
2   Minutes of the previous meeting
3   Report and follow up on actions agreed at the previous meeting
4   Student issues (this can be divided by level)

Programme Leaders may also want to use SSCCs to follow up on issues that have arisen through module evaluation or online surveys, for example to explore in more detail why some students have expressed dissatisfaction with a particular aspect of the programme.

If a query relates to a specific module it may be that the best course of action is for the students to raise this directly with the module leader. However, if the module leader doesn't resolve the issue to the students' satisfaction, they should then feel free to come back to the Programme Leader and ask them to intervene.

For guidance on how minutes should look, see the [SSCC minutes template](#).