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Student Staff Forums – A new Approach to LCFs

**Introduction:**

Learning Community Forums (LCFs) currently represent a key vector by which course reps are able and expected to engage in the feedback process at the University of Nottingham. These liaison committees are supposed to allow for course reps and academic staff to hold discussions geared towards curriculum development and co-creation. However, there is a tendency for them to become bogged down in operational and administrative discussions and complaints, and there are no clear lines or plans of communication which allow for the SU to hear the voices of students who attend these meetings.

This paper sets out a proposed alternative approach to these style of meetings, with the aim of making them more aligned with their intended purpose; offering alternative channels for legitimate concerns around more minor issues; and developing clear lines of communication with the SU and other relevant departments within the university to create a more streamlined feedback experience, with an easier approach to closing the feedback loop. It also sets out the expectations of facilitators and organisers when setting up meetings, highlighting areas of essential practice, alongside areas which can be adapted to suit the needs of individual faculties and subject areas.

Please direct any questions relating to the contents of this paper to:

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**Executive Summary:**

The focus of this paper is on the proposed alternative approach to staff-student liaison meetings. When devising this proposal, it was important that the key principals of **Accessibility** and **Adaptability** were adhered to. This ensures that the format which is taken allows as many students and staff as possible to feed in to discussions whether they can attend meetings or not, and also allows the format and structure of these meetings to be adapted to the needs of individual faculties and subject areas.

It was also important whilst devising this approach to ensure that the tenets of UoNSU’s Academic Representation Transformation (ART) Project were adhered to throughout. These are:

* Consistency
* Closing the Feedback Loop
* Collaboration
* Postgraduate Voice
* SU Engagement
* Sustainability

The primary aim of altering the format of these meetings is to refocus their purpose towards creating collaborative solutions to challenges faced by subject areas and faculties, and to facilitate a space in which these solutions can be discussed and co-created by staff and student representatives.

A brief summary of the new approach is as follows:

* A period of discussion and agenda setting which takes place before the meeting in an online or physical space. This will allow for any minor queries or points to be addressed, and for more substantive points to be taken forward to the main meeting.
* A hybrid meeting, taking place in the same Teams space, which can be attended either in person or remotely online.
* A period of discussion following the meeting which will take place in the same space. Those students and staff not able to attend the meeting when it takes place can continue to engage with the discussion by watching the recording and leaving comments and feedback.

A more detailed explanation of this new format is laid out in the main body of this paper. It is hoped that this format with expanded accessibility and opportunities for interaction will ultimately further the partnership focused goal of creating a more complete and closed feedback loop for staff and student representatives at the University of Nottingham.

**Introduction/Background**

In response to the observed decline in student engagement with the academic representation system, during the academic year 22/23, a subgroup of the collaborative Student Voice Steering Group (comprising both the Students' Union and the University), known as the Academic Representation group, was tasked with enhancing the existing academic representation approach across the University.

Consultation was undertaken with current Student Reps and University staff, along with benchmarking activity reviewing Academic Representation structures as comparator Russell Group Universities. A number of key challenges with the existing Academic Representation structures were identified, most notably:

* A lack of consistency in student / staff engagement, feedback structures and delivery across Schools and Departments, with no clear feedback pathway for Faculty and Education Rep feedback to the University. However, due to the variation in departmental / school structures and sizes, a “one size fits all” model is unlikely to be successful;
* Student understanding of the Rep System is poor, with pockets of good practice. Declines in volunteer engagement post-Covid have also led to declines in Faculty and Education rep engagement.
* Sharing of best practice is limited across Schools and Departments, and Students’ Union engagement with staff delivering representation structures at course level is an area for development;
* Existing Rep recruitment structures create barriers to participation, particularly for Postgraduate students and Undergraduate students on smaller or non-traditional courses. Learning Community Fora (LCF) structures exacerbate this challenge, and often focus on operational or transactional problems, rather than co-development of solutions.

Changes to the delivery of Academic Representation were therefore proposed to address these challenges, focussing on student representative roles/recruitment and meeting structures in the first instance. The proposals focus key principles (to meet cohort and School needs for flexibility) whilst ensuring consistency via minimum standards, process flow charts and model structures.

The proposed model received approval from both the Student Voice Steering Group and then Teaching and Learning Committee.

As a result of this the Student Voice Steering Group is requesting authorization to amend the Quality Manual (QM) to align it with the requirements of this new academic representation model.

**Consultation**

The following parties and stakeholders have been consulted to date on the proposed changes to the Academic Representation system at the University of Nottingham:

1. **Education and Student Experience staff members** within the Faculties of Arts, ESE staff members with the Faculties of Arts, Engineering, Medicine and Health Sciences, Science and Social Science.
2. ESE Managers and Senior Managers: new proposals were presented and feedback used, leading to the principles-based approach to allow for individual School/Department differences;
3. Faculty-based Academic Staff: the proposals shared by ESE teams to gauge responses, with no concerns outside of questions of clarification;
4. RAA/FLT: quarterly meetings to outline changes and how information can be distributed to wider staff co-hort. Any feedback would be brought to subsequent meetings for further clarification
5. **University and Students’ Union Committees**
6. Education & Student Experience Network presentation by the SU
7. Student Voice Strategy Group presentation by the SU
8. Academic Representation Group presentation by the SU, membership comprising of several University Staff members across all faculties, and Education Reps (Senior Course Reps)
9. Student Engagement Committee (subcommittee of the Students’ Union Trustee Board)
10. **Academic Reps** were consulted in academic year 2022/23 to develop the new proposal.
11. 5 focus groups were carried out with total attendance of 93 (8.9% of Rep cohort). These groups focused on the following areas of development:
12. Recruitment – 23 attendees
13. Training – 16 attendees
14. LCFs/meeting structure – 14 attendees
15. Incentivisation – 23 attendees
16. General Development – 17 attendees
17. **Course Rep Training Feedback** was collected upon completion to further develop the offering.
18. 431 Responses (41% of trained Rep cohort)
19. **Academic Council** was used to discuss these changes with Senior Course Reps (Education Reps), and Faculty Reps
20. External consultation for industry trends via **Alkhemy Consultancy**.
21. Assessment of other institutions on their Academic Voice offering including
22. Recruitment
23. Training
24. Meeting Structures
25. Incentivisation

**Proposal**

There are two key areas of development that have been identified

**Recruitment of Course Reps, Senior Course Reps and Faculty Reps**

*Existing Practice*

Currently, the majority of course reps are recruited via the Students Union, utilising a voluntary model introduced in 2020. This model is considered sector best practice and is well used by other Russell Group and comparator institutions (e.g. Birmingham, Sheffield). Education and Faculty Reps are currently recruited by the Students’ Union via cohort elections.

Training and development for representatives at all levels is provided by the Students’ Union, along with access to support to articulate skills and employability. Some Schools, Departments or divisions provide additional training and development to Reps within their cohort(s).

The previous structure is as follows:

* Course Reps – Course Reps would gather feedback from students directly through physical and digital means. Any student can sign up to be a Course Rep and would be recognised after attending training. None of this changes in the new system
* Learning Community Fora – Course Reps would be in attendance to raise issues to staff they had collected directly from students. There was no requirement to submit feedback in advance or feedback to be moderated through a senior role. These issues would be taken by the staff that were invited and then solutions would be fed back in the next meeting in the next term. Meetings were required as once per term
* Education Reps – Each School/Department had one Education Representative to represent the experiences of Undergraduate Students at School/Department meetings. Between ½ and 2/3 of these roles would be empty due to the differing in purposes, meeting invitations and engagement between schools/departments. There was no PGT or PGR representation at School/Department Level.
* Faculty Reps – Each Faculty has three Faculty Representatives; one UG, one PGT, one PGR to represent the experiences of their students from feedback escalated from Education Reps. Around 1/3 to ½ of these roles have remined empty due to the significant workload and lack of compensation for the role.

As noted above, there have been challenges engaging students in Education and Faculty Rep roles – mirroring wider trends in volunteer engagement driven by Covid and the cost-of-living crisis and reflecting challenges around the purpose and function of Education Rep roles. In addition, a number of paid Faculty- or University-level student engagement roles have also developed, offering a more attractive role to students that the elected, volunteer Faculty or Education Rep role.

*Proposed Change*

The proposed changes to student representative recruitment are focused around supporting increased student participation in student representative roles, removing barriers for non-traditional and under-represented student groups and provided a clear purpose for each level of representative.

The Education Rep role will be removed and replaced with a new Senior Course Rep role, with a defined purpose in the Student Staff Forum meeting and numbers based on school, department or division need. Senior Course Reps will be recruited by the Students’ Union from the existing pool of Course Reps.

The proposed minimum standards for Departments & Schools are:

* All student representatives are recruited & trained by the Students’ Union, with rep data shared with schools, departments or divisions in a timely manner. Additional training and development may be provided by a School, department or division.
* Undergraduate Course Reps are required, and the existing voluntary recruitment system operated by the Students’ Union will remain in place.
* Postgraduate Course Reps are not required, though may be recruited based on departmental/school need
* Minimum levels for Senior Representation are as follows:
* A minimum of one Undergraduate *Senior* Course Rep recruited per Department/School
* A minimum of one Postgraduate *Senior* Course Rep recruited per Department/School
* A minimum of one *Faculty* rep recruited per Faculty.
* Senior Course Reps & Faculty Reps are recruited through application via the Students’ Union.

It is proposed that Faculty Reps are paid by the Students’ Union moving forwards, to recognise the commitment required to engage in this role. Final confirmation of funding for this option is awaited. The Faculty of Science has also chosen to fund a paid trial for Senior Course Reps in the 2023/24 academic year.

1. **Meeting frequency and structure**

*Existing Practice*

Currently, Academic Representation takes place in [Learning Community Fora (LCFs)](https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/qualitymanual/student-engagement-and-representation/learning-community-fora.aspx). As per the Quality Manual, these meetings should meet at least 3 times in a 12 month period, with a minimum of one LCF per school, department or division. LCFs often combine both Undergraduate and Postgraduate representation into one meeting, though there is no consistent practice on this matter.

Template LCF terms of reference, report and agenda documents can be found within the Quality Manual, which Schools are expected to follow. LCF minutes and reports should be published clearly for students and must be taken into consideration via the appropriate monitoring process.

Based on consultation, existing practice was judged to be administratively burdensome and focus LCF meetings on transactional feedback discussions, rather than co-developed solutions. Reporting lines to the Students’ Union were unclear, and collation of annual data for relevant monitoring processes was challenging within the current resource envelope.

*Proposed change*

Learning Community Forums (LCFs) will be redeveloped into **Student Staff Forums (SSFs)**. These will meet at least three times per academic year.

The membership of these meetings will consist of Senior Course Reps and relevant University staff such as Directors of Teaching. Senior Course Reps will be expected to collate key areas of feedback from Course Reps before the Student Staff Forum meeting, and to co-develop the SSF agenda with relevant School staff. This will ensure that meetings are focused on collaboration and resolution, with clear workflow pathways to both Senior Course Reps and Staff. **Model Process Flow Charts and Structures are found below.**

A clear **Action Plan** should be developed and shared within 30 days of each SSF meeting, with progress on actions to be updated termly. Template documents will be provided, with the aim of reducing administrative burden and supporting easier closing of the feedback loop.

Each term, Senior Course Reps will update the SU with areas of success and development. allowing for better resource deployment and sharing good practice. In addition, there will be an annual survey for Senior Course Reps to complete to summarise the year and further provide data to identify where improvements can be made.

The termly and annual reporting will be used as a metric of success for the variations in delivery that may be found across Schools/Departments. This will allow identification of areas where more support is required and instances of best practice which can then be shared across the University.

**Overview of Approach - the “30 Day Guarantee”**

This area of the proposal focuses on the nature of the meetings themselves, and how they can be improved. It also details how these meetings can be made more accessible, particularly to students who may be studying in a non-traditional manner, or who struggle to make time to attend extra-curricular meetings.

The ’30 Day Guarantee’, put simply, ensures that students are informed about the actions agreed are distributed in a timely fashion to the student body. Updates to the Actions from previous meetings should also be added as well as any updates distributed again at the end of each Term. Below is a proposed timeline to departments/schools that can be utilised but is flexible based on the requirements of each department/school.

The basic structure is as follows:

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| **Timeline** | **Purpose** | **Platform** |
| 14 days before meeting - day of meeting | * Gather topics for discussion from the feedback collation by Course Reps
* Suggest topics for discussion and for gathering feedback
* Submission of feedback or talking points
* Invitations sent to relevant staff based on discussion topics
* Any immediate actions can be made and removed from agenda, with communication to parties involved of changes
 | * Microsoft Teams channel
* Standardised Action Tracker Template provided by the SU
 |
| Day of Meeting | * Meeting takes place
* In person format decided by staff and Reps based on what would be the most engaging
 | * In person, with Video Conference access
 |
| Up to 30 days after the meeting | * Action tracker to be distributed to representatives & students (minutes are not required)
* Any outstanding questions can be answered by reps
* Reps unable to attend or who think of further points can continue the discussion
 | * Microsoft Teams channel
 |

This is a suggested approach, and all of its aspects are flexible, such as the timing, platform(s) used, and the exact format of the meeting. Some of the general benefits of an approach like this include:

* **Accessibility:** Allowing people to engage both online and in-person enables more students to attend. Students do not need to come on campus to attend if they happen not to be there that day, or can attend virtually if they don’t have time to make it to the meeting location due to classes etc. Having a long window to engage with the meeting also enables contributions from students who cannot fit the time of the meeting into their schedule, and helps to ensure the voice of the students that they represent can still be heard. Staff who cannot attend the meeting can also engage with points raised after the meeting has taken place.
* **Feedback Loop:** By enabling staff and students to engage with and respond to the content of the meeting after it has taken place, in a forum that is accessible to everyone who would have been invited to the meeting, it is easier to close the feedback loop. Information can be responded to publicly, and can be accessed by students and staff at a time which is convenient for them. Any points which are not addressed in the timeframe can be carried forward to the next meeting (if appropriate), or taken for discussion in another forum. SU staff and officers can also be present in these spaces, allowing them to monitor discussions and trends without needing to be available for all meetings.
* **Adaptability:** Gathering discussion points prior to the meeting allows for institutional and faculty staff to ensure that the most appropriate staff are present ahead of the meeting, and allows for greater flexibility in when meetings can be organised for. This removes the need to gather a large group of staff for meeting when it might not be necessary. In the event that key staff cannot attend, they are still able to respond to points that relate to their remits following the meeting in the same way that student reps can continue to participate. The timeframe is also entirely adaptable, and the windows at each side of the meeting date do not need to be limited to 14 days, nor do they have to be the same length. A 14 day window should, however, be used as a minimum, in order to give sufficient notice that a meeting will be taking place, and to allow sufficient time to respond to points or engage after the fact.
* **Reporting:** The Students’ Union will be centrally collecting Action Trackers through Senior Course Reps so that trends can be identified and escalated up to Faculty Representatives, Education Officer, and Postgraduate Officer where appropriate. The Students’ Union will also report trends to the Academic Representation Group and develop annual reports that are distributed to Teaching & Learning Committee where needed. This structure is already outlined in the Terms of Reference of these meetings.

**Meeting the aims of the ART Project:**

It is key that any alternative approach to these meetings is in step with the improvements sought by the ART project. This approach meets the objectives of the ART project as follows:

* **Consistency:** Whilst this approach has capacity for flexibility, the underlying principles of the approach to these meetings should remain the same, namely: that student reps are given an expanded window in which to engage with these meetings; that these meetings are hybrid; and that advanced agenda setting will allow for these meetings to retain their intended purpose (i.e. moving away from being a complaint-focused forum).

The standardised Action Tracker will also be integral on reporting and identifying areas of development within Academic Voice

* **Closing the Feedback Loop:** By expanding the timeframe in which these meetings can be engaged with, staff are enabled to respond in the same digital forum that the meeting has taken place in. This centralises the responses to queries and feedback and allows them to be accessed by all reps, whether they attended the initial meeting or not. Additionally, the presence of SU staff in these spaces also allows for responses to be monitored.
* **Collaboration:** Ideally, the advanced agenda setting allows faculties to ensure that relevant staff are present for these meetings (i.e. estates staff can be present where necessary). Having relevant staff present will allow challenges to be tackled in a collaborative manner, and the extended window to engage with these meetings also allows for a border spectrum of staff and reps to collaborate on solutions.
* **Postgraduate Voice:** Through the approach to increased flexibility in regards to these meetings, it would be hoped that it is easier for PGR/PGT students to engage in the process, where they might otherwise be unable to attend due to the nature of their studies or commitments. SU presence in these discussion forums also helps to ensure that PGR/PGT voices are not overlooked or ignored when collaborative solutions are being sought.
* **SU Engagement:** By having the SU present in the digital forums where meetings are taking place, the need for SU staff and/or officers to have availability to attend meetings is eliminated. SU staff/officers can attend meetings in-person or virtually, or can watch meetings back after the fact. Additionally, SU staff/officers can observe and engage with any other discussions taking place, and can record any trends in feedback or discussion topics across faculties.
* **Sustainability:** Accessibility; ease of engagement; and the feeling that feedback is listened to and acted upon are key factors in ensuring that the academic rep structure can be made sustainable. It is hoped that this approach to key liaison meetings can help to construct a sustainable culture within the academic rep system, alongside other developments.

**Practicalities and Preparation:**

This section of the paper breaks down in further detail the preparation required in order to initialise this approach by staff who will be responsible for the administration of the system going forward. It highlights areas which are adaptable to the needs of individual faculties and subject areas, and also underlines those areas which must remain consistent across all faculties in order to maintain the aims of the system, as well as the long term sustainability of this approach.

*Use of Microsoft Teams:*

An overarching “Team” should be set up initially, which can then house all of the channels that will be required for meetings by the various faculties and subject areas. The Team will be “owned” by the Faculty, with delegated authority given to the SU (Admin Rights). The Faculty will be responsible for ensuring that meetings are arranged, advertised, recorded, and circulated to the student representatives and staff who might be in attendance. The SU will provide standardised documentation and templates for these spaces.

Teams allows for each channel to be its own private space, so that only appropriate staff and reps will have access to the discussions, documents, and recordings which are stored in each. Depending on how each faculty would like to approach their structure, it may be appropriate for there to be a general faculty-wide channel for discussions and meetings alongside the channels for individual subject areas.

Administration of a meeting should be handled as follows:

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| **Action** | **Responsible** | **Timeframe**  | **Notes** |
| Notice posted in the channel that a meeting is due to take place. | Staff responsible for administration of meeting (Staff Admin) | **At least** 14 days prior to the date of the meeting | Any other channels of communication used to notify reps about meetings should also be used at this time. |
| Call for agenda points for meeting shared in the channel | Designated Staff Co-Chair or Staff Admin | **At least** 14 days prior to the date of the meeting |   |
| Reps share potential points for discussion, and any relevant feedback or complaints they have received | Student  | During the window before the meeting takes place | Senior Reps are responsible for ensuring feedback is received by Course Reps. This can be done via Teams or other direct contact methods |
| Staff respond to any actionable points of feedback, detailing follow up or resolutions | Relevant Staff | During the window before the meeting takes place | Unless there is a good reason, or the need for a wider discussion, points resolved or responded to should not be taken forward as agenda points. |
| Appropriate departmental and university staff invited to attend meeting | Designated Staff Co-Chair (or Staff Admin) | During the window before the meeting takes place, allowing for as much notice as possible | Relevant staff can be judged based on the topics being taken forward for discussion at the wider meeting. |
| Agenda for meeting confirmed | Designated Staff Co-Chair | Around 24 hours prior to the meeting | This should be any unresolved points, larger points for discussion, or challenges with opportunities to generate collaborative solutions |
| Meeting takes place | Relevant StaffSenior RepsAny Course Rep who wishes to attend | Day of meeting | Meeting should be recorded, take place in the Teams channel, and be made available to view after the meeting‘Any other business’ should be used for urgent matters only. Any item not on the agenda which does not have a time constraints will be moved to the next cycle |
| Student reps notified that meeting has taken place and been recorded | Staff Admin | Day of meeting |  |
|  Action Logcirculated to reps and saved in Teams channel – Action Tracker Template used |  Staff Admin | ASAP following meeting  |  |
| Reps and staff unable to attend review recording of meeting and meeting notes | StudentsRelevant Staff | During the window after the meeting takes place |  |
| Reps and staff leave comments with any follow ups or discussion points  | StudentsRelevant Staff | During the window after the meeting takes place |  |
| Student Reps to follow up with any requested feedback or contributions that arise from meeting discussions | Students | During the window after the meeting takes place | This may include delivering feedback on co-created solutions, or providing guidance around any potential next steps raised by staff |
| Staff to respond to any points raised, detailing solutions, or follow up actions | Relevant Staff (Organised Through Staff Co-Chair) | During the window after the meeting takes place | This allows for the closure of the feedback loop, by having staff confirm solutions and resolutions, or providing detail on why something cannot be changed |
| Student Reps to feed back to cohort on points raised and any resolutions or next steps | Students | During the window after the meeting takes place |  |
| Discussion on meeting closed | Designated Staff Co-Chair | During the window after the meeting takes place, but after **at least** 14 days have passed following the meeting |  |

In order to maximise the effectiveness of this approach, other examples of good practice might be:

* Ensuring that student reps are sent timely reminders about deadlines around the meeting i.e. 24 hours before the agenda will be finalised, 24 hours before the discussion on a particular meeting will be closed.
* Ensuring that, even if points are not resolved prior to a meeting, that only relevant and substantive items are taken forward to the agenda. For example, a broken air conditioning unit is a valid point to raise in the Teams space, but is unlikely to warrant a discussion at the meeting, even if Estates staff are unable to attend on the day or respond prior to the meeting.
* Ensuring that student reps raise all points for discussion prior to the meeting wherever possible. This helps to ensure that the meeting can remain focused on collaborative solution building, and does not become a “complaints forum”.
* Allowing a window of time during the meeting to raise any points which have come to the attention of the rep at short notice i.e. following the publication of the final agenda. Anything not immediately time sensitive will be moved to the next feedback cycle
* Prioritising good faith engagement: student reps should feel listened to as part of these meetings. Their suggestions should be used during discussions to build collaborative solutions to larger challenges. If reps suggest proposals that are unworkable, or if a solution cannot be reached for a problem, then time should be taken to explain why something is not possible.

*Flexibility and Sustainability*

It is recognised that different subject areas and faculties will have tried and tested approaches to gathering feedback from students, and to building collaborative solutions to challenges that this system does not wish to interfere with. As such, this system is designed to be as flexible as possible, with as few “red lines” as possible.

In order to ensure that this system is sustainable, and that all reps are given equal opportunities to feed in and create solutions regardless of faculty or department, the following areas must remain consistent across all areas:

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| **Area** | **Rationale**  |
| Use of Teams channel for discussions | The use of the teams channel allows for a number of improvements in terms of accessibility to the system, such as the ability to engage with discussions regardless of attendance at the actual meeting. It is also a convenient way to share notes and files that are relevant to meetings, and helps Reps to know where they can find documents when they need to go back and review something. Teams also allows for SU staff and officers to check in with faculties and departments to see what areas of discussion are arising, and to build a picture of any issues which may be shared across multiple areas.  |
| 14 day windows | Again, ensuring that reps are aware of meetings **at least**  14 days prior to them taking place, and can engage for **at least** a further 14 days after the meeting maximises the accessibility of the system. It ensures that all communication will be timely, and creates a more helpful environment for staff who will know in good time if they will be required to attend a meeting. |
| Hybrid Meetings | Ensuring that all meetings take place in an environment which has VC accessibility means that students and staff do not need to be present on campus to attend and engage, further increasing the accessibility of these meetings. It is also a straightforward means of recording discussions, and has seamless integration with your Teams channel, meaning that recordings can be published automatically without further work from staff.  |
| SU Access | It is important that SU staff and/or officers can be present in discussion channels to monitor feedback, and build a picture of the main areas of discussion across faculties at the university. This also makes it easier for SU officers to attend and engage with meetings when the opportunity arises, which gives them a clearer picture of student opinion to feed in to senior committees.  |
| Action Tracker | The standardised template for tracking feedback, resolutions and ongoing discussions will ensure that there is transparency with all parties involved and that there is standardisation of data. This will be combined with Termly and Annual reporting practices to identify areas of excellence and development and enable support to be given where required. |

Aside from these points, meetings can be as formal or as informal as is deemed appropriate, adopting a structure that staff and reps feel is most conducive to collaborative working and co-creation of solutions. Environments and meeting spaces can also be selected in line with whatever is most suitable, as long as there is a means to engage via VC.

*Teams Space: Other Good Practice*

Faculty and department teams can also use the Teams space for other good practice, based on feedback and suggestions from previous rep cohorts:

* Consider a “biography” space within your channel, where you can include information and pictures of the staff who will be meeting with reps. Reps have fed back that this would make them feel more comfortable in advance of meetings, and would make it easier for them to engage and take part, particularly if they are new reps meeting staff for the first time.
* Use the channel as a space to store important documents and notes, so that reps can refer back to them easily throughout the year.
* Continue to engage with the Teams space away from meeting cycles, and encourage the use of the space as a “one stop shop” for reps to raise quick queries or points of feedback throughout the year.
* Similarly, encourage staff to respond to these points or to offer solutions, and also to make use of the space to ask questions of reps and gather quick points of feedback throughout the year. Simple polls and surveys can be integrated directly into the channel, allowing for “one click” responses to gather fast, quantitative data as required.

**Feedback Loop Flow Chart:**

Ultimately, the purpose of this new approach is to ensure that, wherever possible, the feedback loop is being closed more effectively. This ensures that student reps feel their voice is being heard, that they and their contributions are being valued; and that they feel there is a purpose to engaging with these meetings. Even if solutions cannot be reached, it is still valuable to communicate why that might be the case. This flow chart summarises how the feedback loop might be closed in various ways using this meeting approach.



Ultimately, it is key that staff respond to points of feedback, so that student reps can go back to students and inform them of the impact that their feedback has had.

**Conclusions and Contact Details:**

We would welcome any feedback on the proposals as set out in this paper. Please contact the appropriate person at the details below.

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