

STUDENT SENATE REFERENCE GROUP

Purpose

The purpose of the Open University Students' Association Student Senate Reference Group (SSRG) is to act in an advisory capacity to the student members of Senate and, to ensure that the student members of Senate have the benefit of online forum-based activities and online meetings in which they can draw on the diversity of circumstances, views and opinions of OU students. Consisting entirely of students and chaired by the VP Academic Student Voice, the Student Senate Reference Group volunteers come together in advance of every meeting of Senate to discuss the committee papers, raising any items that they believe will impact students.

Role of the Student Senate Reference Group member

Key Responsibilities

Pre-Meeting Preparation

- Read agenda and meeting papers – these are provided online via the Student Voice Online Forums. Those with accessibility requirements will receive printed copies.
- Leave comments, thoughts, and views on the Student Voice Forums whilst maintaining confidentiality.
- Attend meetings and contribute to discussions. **4 committee meetings per academic year** during normal office hours and it recommended to allow:
 - 5 hours to read complex committee papers in advance of the meeting and participate in an online discussion forum
 - **2 hours for the online meeting**

Participation in the Meeting

- Confirm receipt of meeting invites and send apologies if you cannot attend.
- Engage with questions and raise thoughts, ideas and concerns.
- The meetings usually last 2 hours (10-12:00) at least 6 days before the Senate meeting.

Engage outside of meetings via the Student Voice Forums

- Ask clarifying questions.
- Provide input and insights.
- Contribute to discussions and communicate respectfully with other reps.

- Using the @open email to communicate where matters are confidential.

At the meetings

- Meetings will be chaired by the VP Academic Student Voice.
 - Meetings fall inline with the meeting of Senate (once each quarter). The SSRG should aim to meet at least 3 days before Senate which.
 - Students to offer diverse perspectives for well-rounded discussions to shape and inform members of Senate.
 - Meeting notes will be taken by the Volunteer and Representation Team and a Report will be prepared by student members of Senate and it will be shared via the Student Voice Forums – SSRG Forums 2023-2025.
- o

Importance of Effective Participation

- Respond to any surveys about your role as well as contribute to meetings, forums and attend the SSRG meetings online. This information will inform the Annual Effectiveness Review.
- Engage with your fellow reps, by supporting new reps and working effectively with experienced reps which allows everyone to feel a sense of belonging.

Summary

Student Senate reference Group Members will:

- Develop confidence and key skills such as communication, collaboration, and critical thinking.
- Join a diverse and welcoming student committee.
- Empower student members of Senate to act on behalf of students.
- Shape the future of OU academic policy.

Contact information

Oustudents-volunteer@open.ac.uk