**Student Staff Partnership Forums**

**Attendance and Membership of Student Staff Partnership Forums**

* The membership of SSPF is set out in the [Terms of Reference](https://ses.leeds.ac.uk/info/22168/student_support-related_policies/672/student_staff_forums).
* In addition to School and Course Reps (also known as Programme/Year Reps/ Student Leaders) inclusion of other local student leaders has proven beneficial in some Schools: eg. society president/ committee, student champions, Peer/PAL mentors, etc.
* SSPFs should be open to Interdisciplinary and Joint Honours Course Reps, regardless of whether or not they are parented by the School. LUU can support Schools wishing to set up an Interdisciplinary or Joint Honours forum with examples of best practice.
* In some areas, the establishment of Course Rep positions to represent students who are not classroom based (eg. Study Abroad/ Placement) has helped to improve representation on SSPF. LUU is open to the modification of Rep roles to ensure the Representative opportunities are accessible (eg. role-shares allowing students with less time to access the positions).

**Gaining and Maintaining Engagement**

* Staff and students benefit from an atmosphere of open communication and encouragement, established early-on (for example, through an introductory meeting with new Reps).
* It is helpful to set expectations early, and to explain and agree how feedback is acted upon in a local context. This includes supporting Course Reps by introducing students to all responsibilities of the role upon recruitment. It is also important that staff attending SSPF are familiar with its format and the expectation that it is a student-led and -centred meeting.
* Establish that School Reps and Course/Programme/Year Reps should raise concerns with Programme Leaders, their DSE, or SES (as appropriate) between meetings to inform them of any issues that can be resolved right away, or forewarn them of what to expect in SSPF. Examples of good practice can be seen in the SSPF case studies here [LINK].
* It is recommended that SSPF dates for the year are set up early-on, and that (where possible) these avoid weeks already cluttered by other meetings eg. School Taught Student Education Committees (STSEC).
* Consider a plan for meeting with/briefing Reps who are in timezones which may exclude their attendance.
* It is valuable to have a space for SSPF/Student Representation on Minerva, where agendas, minutes and actions taken are uploaded.

 **Pre-SSPF Meetings and Agenda Setting**

* Agendas should be set in advance by School Rep and the Director of Student Education (DSE) (or other relevant member of staff), after consultation with other students attending the meeting. Responsibility for this should be assigned at the start of the year.
* Points on the agenda can include consultation on proposed school changes, provided that the time allows for this after listening to the students in attendance on their priority topics.
* It is good practice for students to meet prior to SSPF, to discuss priorities and identify issues that can be resolved outside SSPF. In some schools this meeting includes a Student Education Service (SES) member of staff, who helps to identify where problems are easily resolved.
* If the agenda is extremely full, or if students raise issues irrelevant for SSPF but important for their student experience, additional meetings can be organised on these specified topics.

**Roles in SSPF Meetings**

* **Administration:**  A staff member should support the organisation and booking of these meetings, including sending invitations, and disseminating the agenda and minutes. Ideally at least one member of staff will have student representation as part of their remit.
* **Chair:** A student should chair or co-chair the meeting. Ideally, this will be a School Rep - these students receive special training for this role, and are ideally situated to funnel concerns appropriately.
* **Note taking:** A staff-member should have responsibility for taking notes and providing a clear set of actions arising from the meeting. These notes should clearly indicate who is responsible for each action point.
* **Facilitation:** In some instances, a student or staff facilitator may be required to help ensure that the conversation is not dominated by individual voices or specific courses. This can be especially important when UG and PGT students share the same SSPF, but have very different concerns. LUU can provide facilitator training and advice.

**Post-Forum, Closing the Feedback Loop:**

* The actions and outcomes from the meetingshould be disseminated to all students.,
* If a specific group of students have raised a particular issue or query, the Reps and appropriate staff representation should agree who will feedback the outcomes from the meeting.

It is important to close the feedback loop. Some areas have found success by making simple tables and diagrams which inform students of outcomes.

**Effective Facilitation on MS Teams and Blackboard Collaborate Ultra:**

* Ground rules should be agreed and communicated to students in advance. These may include:
	+ Muting the microphone and using the chat function to ask questions
	+ Raising a virtual hand when you have a contribution
	+ Speaking only when prompted or when relevant on the agenda
* It is useful to have a facilitator who watches the chat, and supports the chair to raise points identified there.
* In the first SSPF, dedicate some time to ice-breakers to help everyone feel comfortable. It is helpful to keep these activities relatively neutral.
* Ensure that all students are given an opportunity to talk if they want to - acknowledge that there may be more silences and pauses than in a usual meeting.
* Upload resources (eg Agenda) to the chat so that Reps can easily access them.
* Acknowledge that Reps may face various challenges, including their environment, lack of continuous access to a laptop, PC or mobile device, and remote starters may face unstable platforms, poor bandwidth, and challenges with the high cost of data in other countries. Collaborate with your Reps to find solutions that work for them.