

Queen Mary Academy

Fostering Collaboration between Students
and Staff: Student Representatives and
Staff perceptions of Student Voice
activities

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Executive Summary

This report focuses on formal student voice activities in higher education institutions and examines the roles and responsibilities of student representatives, recruitment processes, benefits, challenges, and collaborations between staff and students. The aim of this project was to map and learn more about the opportunities to engage with students' voice that already exist at Queen Mary, University of London and to learn more about what students think about their role in student voice projects.

This study employed a mixed-methods approach with two parts: a survey to a select group of Queen Mary staff; and interviews of current or recent student representatives. The staff survey was a scoping exercise to learn about the various forms of student voice opportunities that exist at Queen Mary. Twelve staff responded to the survey, representing eleven schools. The student interviews aimed to gather in-depth insights into the experiences of student representatives from different faculties, schools and departments, and various full-time roles within the university. Out of the 34 student representatives invited, five learners from five different schools (representing all three faculties) took part in the interviews.

The findings indicate that both staff and student representatives have varied experiences in formal student voice activities, with many reporting successful and meaningful engagements. However, there are inconsistencies in the frequency of activities and recruitment processes, as well as the way in which many student voice activities are carried out, signalling a need for clarity, accessibility, and standardization in selecting and working with student representatives. For example:

- Only a third of survey respondents reported that their SSCLs were co-chaired by student representatives.
- Fewer (25%) reported working with the SU VP related to their faculty.

Of note from the interviews was that learners stated that the dearth of perceived personal benefits to the student representatives, combined with the notion that opportunities to make change are limited, deterred students from applying for student voice roles. Overcoming personal anxieties and balancing responsibilities with academic demands were mentioned as additional challenges.

The report recommends several measures to foster a culture of inclusion and participation in formal student voice activities:

1. Clarify student voice roles and establish training for specific skill sets
2. Streamline recruitment processes for student representatives
3. Encourage co-chairing of student-staff liaison committees
4. Support pathways for continued personal and professional growth
5. Strengthen collaboration with Student Union Vice-Presidents

Though limited in terms of participants, the findings provide valuable insights on various aspects of formal student voice activities from two sets of stakeholders and point to some preliminary recommendations that may further the development of successful staff-student collaborations.

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Introduction

The aims of this project are to map and learn more about the opportunities to engage formally with student voices that are currently in use at Queen Mary, University of London and to learn more about what learners engaged in these activities think about their role in student voice projects.

The rationale for this specific project is two-fold. First, it is an extension of work the Queen Mary Academy already does to support members of staff to co-chair Student Staff Liaison Committees (SSLCs) with learners. To provision further training development (either of learners or staff) the Academy sought to learn more about the experiences of staff currently involved with formal student voice activities done in collaboration with Queen Mary Student Union (QMSU) representatives, course representatives, and SSLCs. Second, the questions posed in this study reflect issues that have been raised in conversation with senior leaders and student representatives about clarifying the responsibilities of such student roles and the challenges learners face in student voice activities.

This project was undertaken as part of the Queen Mary Academy's Learner Intern Programme. This programme undertakes scholarship and development projects in partnership with our diverse learner population to better support innovative education at Queen Mary while also providing learners opportunities to further develop a wide range of employability skills.

Background

In addition to being a priority for government regulators like the Office for Students (2022), student participation in academic decision-making is vital for creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment (Flint and O'Hara, 2013). Student representatives play an important role in promoting student voice and ensuring that student concerns are considered. The recruitment and support of student representatives are crucial factors in promoting student participation and creating a shared sense of responsibility. Effective recruitment strategies are necessary for identifying and engaging students who are interested in representing their peers. A study by Baron *et al.* (2012) identified the importance of creating a clear and transparent recruitment process that is accessible to all students. This process should include information about the roles and responsibilities of student representatives, as well as the benefits of being involved in academic decision-making. In addition, it is essential to provide students with the necessary support and training to perform their roles effectively.

Creating a shared sense of responsibility amongst student representatives is essential for promoting student voice and ensuring that learner concerns are considered. Carey (2013) identified the importance of creating a cohesive and engaged group of student representatives who are committed to working together towards a common goal. This can be achieved through regular meetings, training sessions, and team-building activities. Providing opportunities for student representatives to share their experiences and feedback with each other can also help to create a sense of community and shared responsibility. Hence, the recruitment and support of student representatives are essential for promoting student participation and creating a shared sense of responsibility in academic institutions. Effective recruitment strategies and comprehensive support mechanisms are necessary for identifying and engaging interested students and providing them with the necessary skills and training to perform their roles effectively. Creating a cohesive and engaged group of student representatives who are committed to working together towards a common goal is essential for promoting student voice and ensuring that student concerns are considered.

Student representation is an essential component of higher education institutions (HEIs) as it provides a means for students to voice their opinions and concerns, participate in the decision-making process and contribute to the development and improvement of the institution. However, research has shown that student representation in HEIs is currently facing some challenges. For instance, students may lack awareness of their representation

bodies, the roles and responsibilities of representatives, and the processes for engaging with them (Lizzio and Wilson, 2009). Furthermore, there may be limited opportunities for students to participate in student representative bodies, leading to reduced representation and inadequate student input in the decision-making process. Inadequate student representation can also lead to the misalignment of institutional policies with students' needs, preferences and expectations. A study by Ashwin and McVitty (2015) found that many institutions lack clear guidelines on student representation, leading to confusion among students and representatives alike. Therefore, there is a need for HEIs to establish a clear framework for student representation that includes guidelines for engagement, training and support for representatives, and opportunities for student input in decision-making processes. By doing so, HEIs can create a more inclusive and participatory environment that benefits both students and the institution.

Student representatives play a critical role in ensuring that the student voice is heard and that institutional policies are aligned with the needs of the students. However, to be effective in their roles, representatives require specific skills, knowledge, and competencies. Research has shown that providing training opportunities and mentorship programs can help enhance the effectiveness of student representatives. Training programs can cover topics such as communication skills, leadership skills, decision-making skills, and conflict resolution. A study by Mercer-Mapstone *et al.* (2017) found that training programs for student representatives were associated with an increased sense of efficacy and improved performance in their roles. Mentorship programs can also be beneficial, as they provide an opportunity for representatives to receive guidance and support from experienced representatives or faculty members. In addition to enhancing the effectiveness of student representatives, training and mentorship programs can also help promote student engagement and involvement in the decision-making process. By providing representatives with the skills and knowledge needed to effectively advocate for student needs and concerns, HEIs can create a more inclusive and collaborative environment that benefits all stakeholders (Meeuwissen *et al.*, 2019).

Methods

This study employed a mixed-methods approach with two parts: a survey to a select group of Queen Mary staff; and interviews of current or recent student representatives. The entire project was reviewed and received ethics approval from the Queen Mary Ethics of Research Committee (QMERC23.028).

The staff survey was a scoping exercise to learn about the various forms of student voice opportunities that exist at Queen Mary. This consisted of an electronic survey sent to school and institute education managers (or their equivalent), based on consultation with faculty leaders who confirmed that most formal student voices activities are managed at this level. There are 19 schools and institutes¹ at Queen Mary, so 19 survey participants were invited in the first instance. These managers were identified using public staff information. The survey also gave education managers the opportunity to identify other staff who manage these relationships to allow for snowball sampling. In most instances staff responded directly to alert us when other staff were better suited to respond; in those cases the identified staff were invited to participate as well. The survey was disseminated using Queen Mary's online survey tool (JISC surveys). A copy of this survey is attached to this report as Appendix A. Surveys were anonymous; though survey participants were asked their school and role, this data was only recorded to report on the sample's representation of Queen Mary's three faculties.

The student representative interviews were designed to learn more about how those occupying these positions perceive learners' roles in student voice activities. Interview questions were designed to learn more about how learners are recruited to roles, what supports and training they receive, their understanding of the responsibilities attached to these roles, and how they perceive the staff-student relationship in student voice opportunities. A consultation with the QMSU Head of Student Voice and Insights led to some slight revisions, to ensure questions

¹ For the sake of brevity, schools and institutes will hereafter collectively be referred to as schools.

did not overlap significantly with a concurrent evaluation project being undertaken by QMSU itself. A copy of the final interview schedule is attached to this report as Appendix B. Interview participants were recruited from the list of those currently serving as members of the QMSU and/or those holding a recognised student representative role (e.g. programme/course reps, SSLC co-chairs) with the help of QMSU. Those currently or very recently serving in their roles were chosen as potential participants due to ease of access and under the assumption that they will be able to give an up-to-date account of these roles.

Interviews were conducting online to facilitate recording and transcription. They were conducted by the project's learner intern to allow for peer-peer communication and to mitigate possible power imbalances inherent in staff-student discussions. As with the survey, school names were collected only to ensure that the data collection reflected as much of the university as possible. To ensure no responses could be traced to respondents via publicly available information, references to schools and/or programmes were removed from the data before analysis and reporting.

The open text survey responses and the student representatives' interviews were analysed using a thematic approach. Responses and verbatim transcriptions were systematically coded into categories and organized into overarching themes. This process aimed to extract meaningful insights, perspectives, and challenges faced by staff and student representatives in their roles and collaboration with each other, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of student voice activities at Queen Mary.

Results

Staff survey

Twelve staff responded to the survey, representing eleven schools. Seven of those schools were from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences; the four remaining responses were split evenly between the Faculties of Medicine and Dentistry, and Science and Engineering. The staff survey asked questions about work with SSLCs, course representatives, and student union vice-presidents (SU VPs). There was also the opportunity to report other corresponding student voice activities that do not fall into those categories. The responses demonstrate a range of approaches when dealing with various formal mechanisms for engaging student voice. This was first evident the relationships with SU VPs. While all respondents reported working with course representatives and having an SSLC (which are primarily populated by course and school representatives) only 25% of respondents (3) reported working with the SU VP related to their faculty. Those who do consult with them on issues raised by representatives or invite them to promote representative roles. Those who do not work with SU VPs list a number of reasons for not doing so including:

- an understanding that the VP role is focused on faculty-level discussions;
- an approach that assumes school and course representatives feed information up to their respective SU VPs; and
- a lack of awareness of who they are, their responsibilities and their relationship to the schools.

Equally there was a great deal of diversity in the types of staff who serve as the main contacts for these student partners, which included education managers, senior tutors, student support and experience teams (includes directors, managers, coordinators and officers). When discussing SSLCs, the same roles were mentioned in relation to those who occupy the staff chair positions, with the occasional addition of academic and/or programme directors.

Only a third of the respondents reported that their SSCLs were co-chaired by student representatives. When asked why students did not co-chair, not everyone gave a reason, and those who did indicated it was mostly due to ease of administration. Those with student co-chairs were split in terms of how they described those experiences. Some reported it was empowering for learners to chair and therefore encouraged participation. Others felt that learners either did not want or were unprepared for such roles. There was confusion over who was responsible for ensuring learners were ready to take on chairing duties.

There appears to be slightly more consistency in the frequency of meetings across the various types of student voice activities. A number of staff reported meeting with their various student voice liaisons once a semester. This was the frequency reported for half of the SSLCS and one third of those who met with course representatives. The remaining responses were split between those who met twice a semester, and those who either did not know how frequently meetings were held or who met as required.

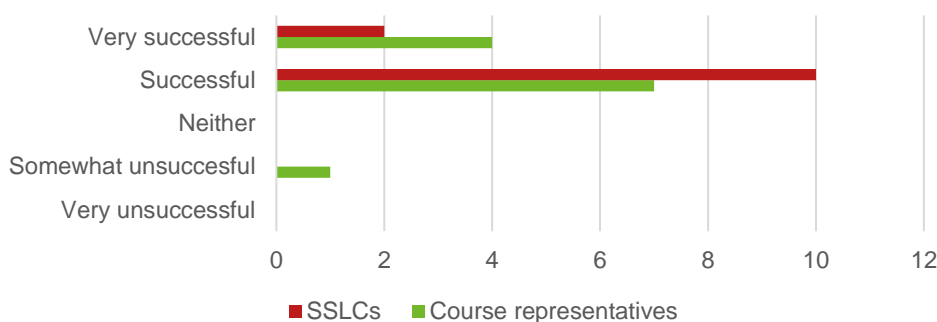
Despite most respondents reporting that their SSLCs were comprised primarily of course representatives, there were slight differences in the way they described the responsibilities of learners in these roles. The language used to describe course representatives tended to focus on their relationship to their peers and their role in collecting learner feedback and delivering it to staff. Their roles, per these descriptions, are understood as data sources in relaying the needs of the community. In some instances they were also responsible for outreach and events. Though that was also reflected in SSLC descriptions, the latter occasionally also included reference to joint action in terms of SSLC learner members being a part of policy and procedural change. However, in response to how they work with SSLC learner members, tasks still focused on the gathering and presentation of feedback, and then subsequent feeding back of SSLC meeting outcomes to the relevant learner communities. Most of the other student voice activities described by respondents fell into the same categories of either feedback collection or disseminating information. These included:

- town halls
- pizza lunches
- focus groups
- anonymous surveys (some related to NSS); and
- informal coffee chats.

Some counted academic advising sessions as student voice activities, asserting that learners may raise issues with their advisors and tutors that are then relayed to those managing student experience.

When asked to rate the success of their work with course representatives and student SSLC members, respondents were quite positive (Figure 1). The three respondents who reported also working with SU VPs were similarly positive.

Figure 1-Rating success of formal student voice opportunities



Upon reading the free text comments associated with these ratings, however, a different picture emerges. Even those reporting high levels of success in their work with course representatives wrote that success was often very dependent on the individual learner holding that role. More training was frequently cited as a need:

We have some Course Reps who appear to be very engaged insofar as they have a lot of opinions on the programmes and operation of the school. However, I'm not convinced that they have a) the correct training on how to interact with staff in an SSLC meetings b) the skills to know how to interact with other students on their programme (other than their friends) and to collate decent feedback in order to offer evidence-informed feedback and suggestions at the SSLC.

Similar issues arose in the responses regarding the success of SSLCs specifically, as did the difficulty of address larger structural issues with students who only occupy their roles for only one year:

We are able to deal with easy fixes quickly which pleases students. Larger more systemic things are identified and discussed but take longer to work through.

Student interviews

Out of the 34 student representatives invited, 5 students took part in the interviews; these five interview participants represented all three faculties (FMD: 2, SE: 2, HSS: 1) and were all from different schools. During the interviews, participants described their roles as student representatives, shedding light on the diverse responsibilities they held. Among the student representatives, there were course representatives, part-time officers, and full-time officers. Their roles involved tasks such as addressing classmates' concerns (especially course representatives), leading discussions, organising events, and gathering feedback. The variety of roles represented indicates the diverse ways in which learners engage in representing their peers and contributing to the university community.

The recruitment process for student representatives varied among the participants. One participant, for example, was voted in as a course representative having campaigned with another student to become a co-occupant of the role. Another student mentioned the annual student union elections as a well-known opportunity, with nominations and clear instructions provided. One of the participants, on the other hand, was recommended by a friend and created a manifesto before being voted as a course representative. One student found out about the opportunity through a university email, but there were few candidates interested, and details about the process were unclear.

"My advisor mentioned to myself and the rest of my cohort that there was a role at the beginning of this academic year. So, I cannot remember what the process is, but I found it through a link or something. And then I was just able to put myself forward."

Participants highlighted numerous benefits associated with being a student representative. One was developing transferable skills such as communication, leadership, and networking, which was highlighted by all participants. Through their roles, participants reported building connections with peers, academic staff (course representatives), and senior university leaders (full-time officers) in the university, fostering a sense of community and collaboration. Strengthening connections within their cohort was emphasised as a way to create a comfortable learning environment. Engaging as student representatives as a means of personal development opportunities and a chance to contribute to the university community was mentioned by 80% (4) of the participants, thereby enhancing their overall university experience.

"It is a real all-rounder kind of job. You learn about report writing and surveys and data and conversing with the students and getting feedback and then how to present that to people"

within the university and how to how to engage people in that process. If there is a goal that you want to achieve or an outcome you want to achieve, you are mapping out that entire process from start to finish of how we can get to that.”

The student representatives expressed their experiences of collaborating with academics and staff in addressing student feedback. They reported that issues raised by students were noted and then incorporated into SSLC action plans for review. Support from academics and staff was accessible through email and forums, facilitating communication between student representatives and academic stakeholders. In some instances (2), genuine co-creation and student engagement initiatives were observed, suggesting a positive partnership between learners and academic staff. However, other (2) student representatives reported limited contact and engagement with academic staff, indicating a potential area for improvement in terms of communication and collaboration.

“From our perspective, you know, we think XYZ are important things that the senior team should be focusing on, but they might be looking at it from a different perspective and thinking ABC are important to focus on instead. So, you are not always going to agree on these things.”

The interviews revealed several challenges faced by student representatives in their collaboration efforts. One common challenge was obtaining comprehensive feedback from their fellow students for evaluation purposes. Three participants mentioned the difficulty in reaching professors or receiving timely responses to their queries, which hindered their ability to address student concerns effectively. Maintaining professional relationships between student representatives and senior university leadership was identified as another challenge. It was suggested that bridging the gap and establishing effective communication channels between student representatives and university leaders would contribute to more meaningful collaboration and decision-making processes.

The student interviews revealed an interesting finding regarding the frequency of contact with staff and the quality of experience as student representatives. It was observed that the frequency of contact with staff did not always determine the overall experience of the student representatives. Some participants who had regular contact with staff reported positive experiences, while others who had less contact with staff had even better experiences. This suggests that the quality of the interaction and engagement with staff, rather than the frequency alone, plays a crucial role in shaping the student representatives' experience. Effective communication, meaningful collaboration, and genuine support from staff were identified as key factors contributing to a positive experience, regardless of the frequency of contact. Furthermore, 80% of student representatives mentioned limited contact and engagement with academic staff when it came to addressing specific issues.

“I felt that the more I reached out to my colleagues, the lesser help I was getting from the staff. Their defensiveness and unwillingness to consider other's views made it hard to reach effective solutions.”

The interviews revealed various forms of support available to student representatives. Participants mentioned programmes and opportunities for personal skill development, which helped them enhance their leadership, communication, and organising abilities. Recognition programs such as "Course Rep of the Month" were also mentioned, providing a sense of appreciation for the efforts and contributions of student representatives. The university and the students' union were identified as key sources of support, providing resources, guidance, and opportunities for student representatives to contribute to university-wide initiatives. This support played a crucial role in enabling student representatives to fulfil their responsibilities effectively.

On the other hand, the interviews also highlighted several limitations and obstacles that hindered student involvement in representation roles. Some participants perceived that student voice roles entailed significant responsibility and commitment, which they felt deterred some learners from participating in student voice

activities. The lack of perceived immediate benefits for current representatives was also identified as a potential deterrent. Others stated that the dearth of perceived personal benefits to the students representatives combined with the notion that opportunities to make change are limited discouraged learners from applying for student voice roles. One participant expressed a concern that the inability to enact change on behalf of the feedback their peers provide meant learners were less likely to take on student voice roles over a concern that their peer relationships would be impacted. Overcoming personal anxieties and balancing responsibilities with academic demands were mentioned as additional challenges.

Discussion

The main point of intersection between the staff and learner responses was the array of experiences both parties have while taking part in formal student voice activities, which means for all of the challenges to successful student voice activities they face, many participants on both sides of the relationship described very successful and meaningful experiences. Some of the inconsistencies may not be as integral to success as initially suspected. For example, when the staff survey results were first analysed, the inconsistency in the frequency of various student voices activities was identified as a possible cause for concern. However, when reviewed alongside the learner interview responses, the quality of engagement between staff and student voice participants appears to be a more important factor in the development of collaborative student voice activities. The diversity of responses from both groups highlights the need to investigate whether more consistency contributes to more meaningful engagement between student representatives and academic staff to ensure effective collaboration and address student concerns more comprehensively. It is possible that formal meetings are less important than addressing communication gaps more generally to ensuring that student representatives' opinions are genuinely valued and incorporated into decision-making processes emerged as key areas for improvement.

The variation in other factors may be of greater cause for concern. Student representatives described very different recruitment processes that implied varying levels of commitment and planning for those taking on these positions, and staff themselves had quite varied understandings of how learners come to occupy various student voice roles. These varied recruitment processes demonstrate the need for clarity, accessibility, and standardised procedures to ensure a fair and transparent selection of student representatives. Another concerning factor was the array of responses from staff in their recounting of their student colleagues' responsibilities, which feels connected to the concerns raised by learner participants about the training they may or may not receive for their roles. While interview participants do highlight training opportunities, it is unlikely (given their other concerns of balancing varying commitments) that they have the capacity to do training for all the activities they may be expected to take on in these roles (e.g. meeting chairing, event planning, community development and facilitation). Moreover, some of these responsibilities may be in conflict with one another. Student representatives who also chair or co-chair SSLC meetings could experience a conflict between representing their peers' voice while maintaining an impartial chair role.

It is worth noting that training does exist for both for staff and students who chair SSLCs, though both sets of respondents seemed to access these training inconsistently. The optional training module for staff (available on QMplus) focuses on helping staff participants better understand the principles of co-creation and the creation of balanced partnerships with their student counterparts. Student training, on the other hand, focuses more on the mechanics of chairing a meeting, and less on the development of the relationships and communities who take part in said meetings.

Recommendations

Based on the data collected from the survey and interviews, the following are recommendations that could form the basis for a framework that would help foster a culture of inclusion and participation in formal student voice activities. These recommendations aim to further develop a supportive environment that values and incorporates learner input in decision-making processes and ensure that all learner voices are genuinely valued and considered. All relevant stakeholders, including staff teams responsible for supporting student voice projects and the QMSU, have a role to play in the development and delivery of these recommendations.

1. Clarify student voice roles and establish training for specific skill sets

Currently, formal student voice roles are so diffuse that promotion to potential participants, training and support is challenging. Schools should review their expectations for student voice partners and consider whether one representative is able to perform all required tasks. Creating different portfolios and splitting tasks may alleviate some of the conflicts that arise in these roles and make them more palatable to those concerned about work load. A better defined list of skills one can expect to gain through the experience would also help recruit suitable candidates to the roles and allow for more specific training and development opportunities.

2. Streamline recruitment processes for student representatives

The current differences in how learners are recruited and/or run for student representative roles signal different expectations to potential participants. Stakeholders should work together to develop clear and standardised procedures for recruiting candidates and selecting student representatives, ensuring fairness and transparency. Potential new representatives should also be provided with accessible information and support throughout the recruitment process to encourage wider participation.

3. Encourage co-chairing of student-staff liaison committees

The current SSLC training resource for staff is clear about the benefits of co-chairing SSLCs with learners, and should be more widely promoting throughout Queen Mary, perhaps even made required training for anyone involved in the organisation of SSLCs. Student SSLC training should be reviewed to better compliment staff training in order to help student co-chairs develop the necessary skills to effectively chair meetings and facilitate interactions between with staff and their fellow students.

4. Support pathways for continued personal and professional growth

This recommendation is closely connected to the first. Like graduate attribute projects that help learners map their academic work to skills that will support their continued develop and employment goals, better articulating the skills gained through student voice activities will help potential participants understand the benefits of dedicating time to these projects. This could include more recognition and appreciation activities like the "Course Rep of the Month" initiatives described by some of the interview participants. Student voice participants may also benefit from mentorship and opportunities to network more broadly through the student voice community.

5. Strengthen Collaboration with Student Union Vice-Presidents

A surprising finding from the staff survey was the lack of interaction with and awareness of the SU VP representing their faculty. Increased awareness and understanding among staff about the role and responsibilities of SU VPs may strengthen overall relationships between schools and QMSU. Staff should

endeavour to facilitate regular communication and collaboration between staff and SU VPs, inviting them to relevant discussions and involving them in decision-making processes.

Limitations and Conclusion

The primary limitation of this study is the small size of the samples. While 100% participation would have been ideal in the case of the staff survey, the limited sample size is of particular note in the case of the interview participants. While there was breadth in terms of schools, faculties and types of roles, the variation of experiences uncovered in this small sample indicates more data collection is warranted. Nonetheless, the findings presented here provide valuable insights on various aspects of formal student voice activities from two sets of stakeholders, including the roles and responsibilities of student representatives, recruitment processes, and the benefits and challenges of collaborations between university staff students. Given the importance of effective student voice projects, these findings point to some preliminary recommendations that may further development of successful staff-student collaborations.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Staff Survey

Page 1 - Information

1. What is the name of your school/institute?

Page 2 – Student Union Vice Presidents

2. Does your school/institute work with the Student Union Vice President related to your faculty? Y/N

If yes

- a) Describe how your school/institute works with the Student Union Vice President related to your faculty. <open text>
- b) What is the job title of the person who serves as the main contact for the relevant Student Union Vice President? <open text>
- c) Approximately how often does that person meet formally with the relevant Student Union Vice President?
 - Once a week
 - Once a month
 - Once a semester
 - As needed
 - Don't know
 - Other
- d) How would you describe the responsibilities of the relevant Student Union Vice President? If you feel you are unable to answer this question because you are not their main contact, please write "not main contact"
- e) Generally speaking, would you describe your school/institute's relationship with the relevant Student Union Vice President as successful? Success is deliberately vague so that you can define what success would look like in this instance.
 - Yes, very successful
 - Yes, somewhat successful
 - Neither
 - No, somewhat unsuccessful
 - No, very unsuccessful
- f) Explain your response.

If no

- a) Is there a reason why?

Page 3 – Course representatives

3. Does your school/institute have course representatives? Y/N

If yes

- a) How are course representatives recruited? <open text>
- b) Describe how your school/institute works with its course representative. <open text>
- c) Approximately how often course leads meet formally with the course representatives?
 - Once a week
 - Once a month
 - Once a semester
 - As needed

- Don't know
 - Other
- d) Outside of the course leaders, are course representatives connected central contact within your school/institute? Y/N

If yes

- I. What is the job title of the person who serves as the main contact for the relevant Student Union Vice President? <open text>
 - II. Approximately how often does that person meet formally with the course representatives?
 - Once a week
 - Once a month
 - Once a semester
 - As needed
 - Don't know
 - Other
- e) How would you describe the responsibilities of a course representative in your school/institute? If you feel you are unable to answer this question because you are not their main contact, please write "not main contact"
- f) Generally speaking, would you describe your school/institute's relationship with course representatives as successful? Success is deliberately vague so that you can define what success would look like in this instance.
- Yes, very successful
 - Yes, somewhat successful
 - Neither
 - No, somewhat unsuccessful
 - No, very unsuccessful
- g) Explain your response.

If no

- a) Is there a reason why?

Page 4 – Staff-Student liaison committees

4. Does your school/institute have a Student-Staff liaison committee (SSLC)? Y/N

If yes

- a) How are student SSLC members recruited? <open text>
- b) Describe how your school/institute works with its SSLC. <open text>
- c) Approximately how often does the SSLC meet?
 - Once a week
 - Once a month
 - Once a semester
 - As needed
 - Don't know
 - Other
- d) What is the job title of the person who serves as the main contact for the SSLC? <open text>
- e) How would you describe the responsibilities of the SSLC? If you feel you are unable to answer this question because you are not their main contact, please write "not main contact"
- f) Generally speaking, would you describe your school/institute's SSLC as successful? Success is deliberately vague so that you can define what success would look like in this instance.
 - Yes, very successful
 - Yes, somewhat successful

- Neither
 - No, somewhat unsuccessful
 - No, very unsuccessful
- g) Explain your response.
- h) Is the SSLC co-chaired by a student and a staff/academic?

If yes:

- i. Is the co-chairing model successful? Success is deliberately vague so that you can define what success would look like in this instance.
 - Yes, very successful
 - Yes, somewhat successful
 - Neither
 - No, somewhat unsuccessful
 - No, very unsuccessful
- ii. Explain your response.

If no:

- i. Why not?

If no

- a) Is there a reason why?

Page 5 – Other opportunities to engage the student voice

- 5. Are there other formal opportunities within your school/institute that you would describe as “student voice” activities? Y/N

If yes

- a) How are students recruited to this other student voice activity? <open text>
- b) Describe this other student voice activity. <open text>
- c) Approximately how often does this other student voice activity occur?
 - Once a month
 - Once a semester
 - As needed
 - Don't know
 - Other
- d) What is the job title of the person who serves as the main contact for this other student voice activity occur? <open text>
- e) How would you describe the responsibilities of the students who take part in this other student voice activity occur? If you feel you are unable to answer this question because you are not their main contact, please write “not main contact”
- f) Generally speaking, would you describe this other student voice activity occur as successful? Success is deliberately vague so that you can define what success would look like in this instance.
 - Yes, very successful
 - Yes, somewhat successful
 - Neither
 - No, somewhat unsuccessful
 - No, very unsuccessful
- g) Explain your response.
- h) Are there other formal opportunities within your school/institute that you would describe as “student voice” activities? Y/N (repeat 3 times)

If not - End of survey

Appendix B – Student Interview Schedule

1. Can you tell us a bit about your role as a student representative?

[Probe for details]: Can you give us some specific examples of the tasks and responsibilities you have taken on in these projects? How do you work with the other team members, such as faculty advisors or industry partners?

2. What was the process like for you to become a student representative, and how did you find out about these opportunities? Was it from a member of staff and how was your experience collaborating with them?

[Probe for details]: Can you describe what motivated you to get involved and what you hope to gain from this experience? What inspired you to become a student representative?

3. What do you think are the benefits of being a student representative?

[Probe for details]: Can you talk about how this role has helped you build new skills, knowledge, or relationships? How has being a student representative impacted your personal and professional growth? What do you think sets this type of experience apart from other activities or opportunities you have been involved in?

4. How do you think your collaboration with the academics/staff within your role has contributed to the inclusion of your peers' voices at Queen Mary?

[Probe for details]: Can you give some specific examples of how you have been able to make a difference? How have you been able to bring a unique perspective or voice to the team? How have you worked with others to achieve common goals and overcome obstacles?

5. What have been the challenges you've faced when working closely with the university staff on co-creation projects?

[Probe for details]: Can you describe some of the difficulties you have encountered while working on these projects? How have you addressed these challenges, and what support have you received from others? How have you balanced your role as a student representative with other academic or personal commitments?

6. How do you think student representatives can be better supported in pan university initiatives?

[Probe for details]: Can you suggest some ways that institutions or organizations can provide more resources, training, or recognition for student representatives? How can communication and collaboration be improved among the different stakeholders involved in these projects? What kind of feedback or guidance would be most helpful for you as a student representative?

7. What do you think could be improved in the recruitment process for student representatives in student voice activities? (Student-staff relationships)

[Probe for details]: Can you discuss some of the limitations or obstacles that may prevent students from applying or getting involved in these projects? How can the recruitment process be more inclusive, accessible, or effective in attracting a diverse pool of student representatives? What kind of information or support would you have appreciated during the recruitment phase?

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