

Establishing Professional Relationships with Staff



Student Resource

For the purpose of this document, "committee" refers to any governance or decision-making body with membership from both students and staff. This may include, but is not limited to: working groups, steering groups, councils, and boards.

As a student representative your relationship with academic staff will be different to the one you may have as a student. It is important early on that you are provided with a clear understanding of the requirements of your role on the committee and what is expected of you.

You will be attending the same meetings where you will be working collaboratively towards solutions and are on equal terms in decision-making.

Initially this may require some adjustments but remember your voice and input as a student is valued. Both academic staff and student members of committees have a common goal to improve the student experience and the operations of the University.



Keep in mind: Students and staff perspectives may come from different angles. Be respectful of various viewpoints but be true in representing your views and those of students generally.

Tips to get you started:

- Try to **communicate** with the committee chair you will be working with, soon after your appointment as a rep.
- Read the **Terms of Reference** for the committee/ working party and seek out clarification if need be. This includes when and how often meetings will be held.
- Committees will vary in their **purpose** and **structure** so try to be across these early on. What is the scope of the committee and what type of issues and information does it deal with?
- Be **professional** and **reliable**. That is, be punctual to meetings, follow up actions that have been set and stay informed.
- Ask questions of staff as they will have greater **experience**.
- Ensure you know the established means of communication with the staff you are working with. **Respond promptly** to requests or inquiries.