

Engaging and Connecting with other Students



Student Resource

Depending on the scope of your role you may be required to gather the thoughts and feedback of your peers to provide to your committee. If you are unsure whether this is expected of you or not it is worth checking with the Chair of the committee if your role is not clearly defined in a Terms of Reference.

If your involvement requires you to provide a representative voice of students generally, then you will need to establish your own profile and engage with your peers to understand their opinions, needs, and concerns on various matters.

You will need to collect and collate information from your peers, which means being accessible and approachable. You can do this by either engaging with them actively or passively. Most likely, you will use a combination of both approaches to be successful.

Tips for effective focus groups

- **Get the word out:** Make sure students are aware of when and where the focus group is meeting and give plenty of warning to allow for students to attend. Ask for RSVPs so you know how many people to expect on the day.
- **Get help:** Ask staff for any resources or assistance they can provide to support you, including room bookings or advertising that the focus group is happening.
- **Your audience matters:** Ensure that within the group of students invited to attend a focus group that there is a variety of perspective and diversity of voices. Determine those who may be most impacted by an issue. Provide background information before the session.

Active engagement Ideas:

Face-to-face, informally on campus. This will raise your profile, give you a feel for your peers' opinions and is a great starting point.

Email is a great mode to inform students about forums, focus groups, surveys or events. It also allows students to touch base with their reps at any given point in time.

Focus groups can be a helpful and efficient means to collect student input. Students can be brought together to discuss major changes or relevant issues and garner suggestions. If you want advice and support on organising a focus group you should contact the USASA Student Voice team.

Passive engagement Ideas:

While passive engagement may not give you an immediate insight, when planned well, this method of collecting student perspectives can provide robust **evidence and data** to present to committees.



Examples include **surveys** and **polls**.

Work with university staff to find an effective means of reaching larger groups of students and share your ideas with your committee.