

FINAL: School Education Committee Terms of Reference

First principles: why are we here, and what is our purpose?

The School Education Committee has two primary functions:

1. To ensure that the School delivers excellent education through a coherent and actively managed portfolio of high quality viable programmes aligned with sector and disciplinary norms that deliver the ambitions of the University's Vision and Strategy and are market relevant.
2. To ensure that the School's compliance responsibilities for Education are effectively discharged, delivering successful outcomes for its students.

The compliance responsibilities of the Committee

Ensuring that the School's education portfolio (all undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes) and student experience are delivered in a way which is compliant with relevant University policies¹, professional regulation, and legislation, the OfS B and C Conditions of registration, including:

- oversight of the provision of high quality courses (ensuring courses are up to date, challenging, coherent, effectively delivered and appropriate to the subject matter, and require students to develop relevant skills)
- the ability to ensure that there is effective engagement with each cohort of students and that students receive resources and support which are sufficient for the purposes of providing a high quality academic experience, so that those students succeed in and beyond higher education
- the ability to ensure that programmes deliver effective outcomes for students (continuation, completion and progression)
- oversight of effective, valid and reliable assessment and awards that hold value over time
- responsibility for PSRB accreditation and ensuring that reporting and monitoring requirements are met, including for any awards delivered in or through partnerships
- promoting and protecting freedom of speech and academic freedom across all taught programmes and related activities in line with the University's Code of Practice.

Terms of Reference

1. Ensure the School's education activity is aligned to the University's Education Vision and Strategy and to the continuous improvement of all education activities in the School.
2. Ensure the School's taught (UG and PGT) programme portfolio is high quality, aligned to sector and disciplinary norms, delivered to the University's academic standards (as defined in the regulations), and compliant with relevant external regulatory conditions (e.g. OfS) and legislation.
3. Ensure the School's taught (UG and PGT) programme portfolio is viable and market relevant, actively managing the closure, amendment and development of programmes and modules.

¹ Policies sit at an institutional level only and Schools do not have powers to make or amend policies.

4. Ensure the opportunity to receive an excellent and consistent academic experience is available to all students whose studies, in whole or part, are supported by educational delivery in the School.
5. Ensure adequate opportunities and mechanisms to effectively engage with the student voice on matters relating to education, programme development and academic experience.
6. Provide oversight of the student recruitment and population objectives of the School and to provide oversight of education activities at School level which influence student population and quality.
7. Oversee the organisation and management of all taught academic programmes, consistent with university policies and practice and with an appropriate level of student support, which is easy for students to identify and access.
8. Promote and protect freedom of speech and academic freedom across all taught programmes and related activities in line with the University's Code of Practice.
9. Ensure effective collaboration with the School's Research and Innovation and One University Committees.

Core Membership

The Committee members are collectively responsible for delivering the terms of reference.

Membership should be focused on key roles and not be overly large which can compromise the effectiveness of decision-making.

School Director of Education (Chair)

Deputy School Directors of Education (where these roles exist they should have a cross-School brief)

School Learning and Teaching Manager

School Recruitment Lead (if applicable)

School Assessment lead

Representative Programme Leads

Taught Student Representatives (PGT and UG)

What are the expectations of members?

Guidance and training to support members will be provided centrally.

- Understanding of the University of Sheffield's Education pillar of the Vision and its relevance to enhancing the School's programme portfolio and educational offer
- An understanding and experience of delivering high-quality, research-led programmes
- An understanding of and commitment to delivering an exceptional student academic experience
- A clear understanding of effective programme-level management
- The ability to draw in the Student Voice to inform decision-making
- Commitment to deliver against the OfS conditions of registration, specifically the B and C conditions of registration
- Ability to understand and interpret key data sets and use the insights to take strategic action to improve student experience and provide academic assurance

- An understanding of sector standards and professional accreditation requirements (where applicable)

The capacity in which members are appointed and their individual purpose and responsibility on the Committee

Accountability for education within the School rests with the Head of School and School Executive Board.

Membership of this Committee is for the purposes of effective governance of the School education and student experience portfolio. Members should act in the University's best interest and should prioritise the experience of students and the academic standards of the School as they contribute to the overall delivery of University Strategy.

The reporting lines required of the Committee and to whom assurance should be provided

The reporting routes are two-fold:

The School Education Committee reports to the School Executive Board on the fulfilment of its responsibilities; to appraise of key data, levels of regulatory compliance and to make recommendations for action. Accountability sits with the Head of School and School Executive Board.

The School Education Committee also provides evidence-based academic assurance and robust recommendations through the Faculty Education Committee. Faculties are responsible for overseeing that Schools discharge their accountabilities. The Faculty Education Committee reports to the Senate Education Committee.

What communications cascade is the Committee responsible for, and to whom?

- The Committee is responsible for agreeing with the School Executive Board, and delivering the communication of decisions to the School, including to programme leads and professional staff supporting programme delivery.
- Where there are interdependencies with other School portfolios, communication to relevant committees and/or working groups also rests with the Committee Chair and/or Secretary.

What is the annual cycle of business, schedule of meetings, and standing agenda items?

Interlinked with Faculty and Senate Education Committee's calendar of business the standard cycle of business will include:

- Review student recruitment and population trends to inform recommendations on delivery of the portfolio of programmes and modules
- Recommendations to Faculty on any new/amended programme developments (and associated modules) taking a programme-level approach
- Compliance review of Student Outcomes data (OfS B3 dashboard) and TEF data
- Insight and actions from Student Voice data (including NSS and TellUS)

- Insight and actions from Employability data (Career Confidence, MySkills, Graduate Outcomes, Labour Market insight)
- Oversight of validity and reliability of assessment and awards (including classification trends, awarding gaps)
- Reporting of PSRB (re)accreditation and quality assurance monitoring
- Annual Reflection preparation, linked with Strategic Planning, and monitoring actions
- Compliance with University education policies
- Timely and regular review of education metrics and information identifying actions for improvements and monitoring progress

Sub-committees

All School Education Committees will have a Programme and Module Oversight Sub-Committee responsible for ensuring a programme level approach, ensuring up-to-date high quality programmes, and actively managing the portfolio of modules (ToRs to follow). It will include membership from Academic Programmes Office (APO) and Student Recruitment Marketing and Admissions (SRMA).

Any other sub-committees should have a clear purpose, terms of reference and remit and operate under the direction of the parent committee and be approved and have terms of reference and membership agreed by the School Executive.

Andrea Bath, Academic Programmes Office

Updated 29 May 2024