



University of
**Southern
Queensland**

Student Senate Guidelines

Students as Partners

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Student Senate Guidelines

Introduction

The University of Southern Queensland Student Senate represents the student body as the pinnacle of the student voice and has been established as the highest governing student committee.

The Student Senate has been developed in collaboration between students and staff of the University of Southern Queensland to embed the student voice at all levels of decision making, through the promotion and development of enhanced partnerships.

Purpose

The purpose of the University of Southern Queensland Student Senate Guidelines is to describe the functions and operations of the Student Senate. Including the rules and procedures for the formal nomination and election of students to the Student Senate and representational duties.

Scope

The scope of the Student Senate Guidelines details the membership, terms of office, representational duties, meeting requirements, resignation, removal and replacement of Student Senate members, conflicts of interest, and reporting.

The Guidelines are a supplement to the Terms of Reference for the University of Southern Queensland Student Senate.

Should any discrepancies arise between the Terms of Reference and the Guidelines, the Terms of Reference will take precedence.

1. Student Senate Role and Function

- 1.1. The role states to the overall purpose and responsibilities of the Student Senate which is outlined in the Student Senate Terms of Reference.
- 1.2. The function describes the specific actions that the Senate is responsible for in order to fulfill its role which is outlined in the Student Senate Terms of Reference.

2. University Staff

- 2.1. The Student Senate has no authority over university staff on any matter relating to the control or management of the University of Southern Queensland.
- 1.3. One Students as Partners staff member is to be appointed to the Student Senate as the Committee Services Officer, a non-voting member. The primary role of the Students as Partners staff member is to provide support and guidance to the Student Senate where appropriate.

3. Eligibility

A student, whether full time or part time, who is enrolled in an award program at the University of Southern Queensland shall be eligible for a position on the Student Senate.

The criteria for student eligibility:

- 3.1 At the time of nomination, students must be enrolled in an award program at the University of Southern Queensland.
- 3.2 Students are to maintain enrolment at the University of Southern Queensland for the duration of their membership term.

- 3.3 Students are to ensure they remain eligible for their role, as per the Student Senate Representative Eligibility Matrix.
- 3.4 Students undertaking a leave of absence are not eligible.
- 3.5 If a Student becomes eligible to graduate, and are not currently enrolled in another award program, they must notify the Committee Services Officer that they are no longer eligible to remain on the Student Senate.
- 3.6 Participation in the Student Senate must not conflict with academic studies.
- 3.7 Students are not recommended to undertake more than three (3) University of Southern Queensland Student Leadership roles at one time. If a student wishes to commit to more than three (3) Student Leadership roles, a discussion with a Students as Partners staff member is advised.
- 3.8 University of Southern Queensland students that are also staff members are eligible for Student Senate membership.

4. Nomination Process

- 4.1 Nominations are open for a duration of at least three weeks, beginning at the mid-end of December.
- 4.2 Nominations must be received by 11.59pm on the day of the close of nominations. No late nominations will be accepted.
- 4.3 It is at the Students as Partners staff discretion if there are vacancies to be filled, ad-hoc nominations may be accepted.
- 4.4 The nomination period may be extended by the Students as Partners staff in extenuating circumstances.
- 4.5 Nominations can only be made via the applicable online nomination form each year, available on the UniSQ Website, unless an ad-hoc nomination which may be accepted in another form, at the discretion of Students as Partners staff.
- 4.6 Nominations not made through the online nomination form during the formal nomination round will not be accepted.
 - a. Where more nominations are received than there are available positions, an election will occur to determine which students will comprise the Student Senate.
- 4.7 If vacancies become available one month out or during a formal nomination round, all students must formally re-apply for a position on the Student Senate.
- 4.8 If positions are not filled during the formal nomination round, and no waitlist students are available, Students can apply via ad-hoc nominations.

5. Process of Student Senate Elections

- b. Where more nominations are received than there are available positions, an election will be organised.
 - 5.1. A Students as Partners staff member will act as the Returning Officer for the elections.
 - 5.2. All members of the student body at the time of elections, will have the right to vote for the members of the Student Senate.
 - 5.3. The election period will run for a period of two weeks.
 - 5.4. The election must start within two weeks of formal nominations closing.
- c. In the event of a tie in the election, the Students as Partners Team will select the appropriate candidate.

6. Terms of Office of the Student Senate

- 6.1. The Co-Chairpersons, and Vice-Chair shall serve for a term of one year and one month to allow for a full hand over of duties to the incoming Co-Chairpersons, and Vice-Chair.
- 6.2. The Co-Chairpersons and Vice-Chairperson may not serve for more than two (2) consecutive terms in the same role.
- 6.3. Elected student members of the Student Senate, except for the Co-Chairpersons, and Vice-Chairperson, shall serve for a term of one (1) year and will be eligible for re-election the following year, with no restriction on the number of terms served.

7. Membership of the Student Senate

The membership of the Student Senate is outlined in the Student Senate Terms of Reference. Members are to be elected in accordance with the Student Senate Terms of Reference.

Students may only hold one voting position on the Student Senate, whether the role be elected or appointed. In the event that an appointed position cannot be filled because all eligible students already hold a position on the Senate, a student may fill the vacant appointed position but will retain only one vote.

Non-voting Members

Non-voting Members will be full Student Senate members contributing through but not limited to agenda items and discussions, however they will not have voting rights.

Observers

- d. Observers may participate as an audience member, however, are not eligible to vote.
 - a) Observers are eligible to attend any Student Senate meeting held throughout the year.
 - b) Observers can be any current University staff or student, or any person with the approval of the Senate Co-Chairperson/s
- e. Observers are required to communicate their intention to attend to the Committee Services Officer no later than two (2) business days prior to the intended meeting.
 - c) The Chair may request observers to leave the meeting when confidential items are to be discussed

Appointment to a Co-Chair Position

Students will have the opportunity to nominate for a Co-Chair position at the first meeting, or during a Student Senate Induction prior to the first meeting.

- a) Members can nominate for multiple positions but can only be appointed to one Co-Chair, or Vice-Chair position. If more than one person nominates for a position, this will go to a vote within the Student Senate. The student with the most votes will win the position.
- f. Where a Co-Chairperson position is vacant, Student Senate members, including the Vice-Chair may nominate for a Co-Chair position. If more than one person nominates for a position, a secret ballot will occur at the next scheduled meeting, or via a flying minute. The student with the most votes will win the position.
 - b) Voting for the role can only take place if quorum is met.
 - c) Where a tie occurs, another vote will occur where only the tied nominees can be voted for.

- d) During the interim where a Co-Chair position is vacant, the Vice-Chair will fill these duties but must return to Vice-Chair duties once a Co-Chair has been appointed.

Appointment to a Vice-Chair Position

Students will have the opportunity to nominate for a Vice-Chair position at the first meeting during a Student Senate Induction prior to the first meeting.

- a) Members can nominate for multiple positions but can only be appointed to one Co-Chairperson, or Vice-Chair position. If more than one person nominates for a position, this will go to a vote. The student with the most votes will win the position.
- b) Where a Vice-Chair position is vacant, Student Senate members, excluding the Co-Chairpersons may nominate for a Co-Chair position. If more than one person nominates for a position, a secret ballot will occur at the next scheduled meeting, or via a flying minute. The student with the most votes will win the position.
- c) Voting for the role can only take place if quorum is met.
- d) Where a tie occurs, another vote will occur where only the tied nominees can be voted for.
- e) During the interim where a Co-Chair position is vacant, and the Vice-Chair is filling Co-Chair duties, a replacement Vice-Chair will not be appointed.

8. Undertaking of Representational Duties

- 8.1 Student Senate members are expected to attend all meetings. If members are unable to attend, members are expected to send their apology in writing to the Committee Services Officer within two (2) business days either side of the scheduled meeting. Failure to respond within this timeframe will result in potential removal from the committee.
- 8.2 Student Senate members must read all agenda materials prior to a meeting and actively contribute to discussions and decision-making processes of the Student Senate.
- 8.3 Student Senate members are expected to submit agenda items and reports at least ten (10) business days prior to a scheduled meeting.
- 8.4 Student Senate members have a responsibility to maintain their eligibility as defined in Section 3 and are required to advise the Students as Partners Staff of any changes to their eligibility within five (5) business days. Failure to maintain eligibility requirements will result in automatic removal from the Student Senate as stated in Section 11.
- 8.5 Student Senate members are to uphold the University of Southern Queensland's values and abide by the Student General Conduct Policy at all times, on and off university property.
- 8.6 Student Senate members must act within the Senate's best interest. Members are expected to consistently play a facilitation role, present recommendations to existing committees with Co-Chair approval, and ensure that appropriate consultation and communication occurs.
- 8.7 Duties are undertaken for the defined term of one year for general members and one year and one months for the roles of Co-Chairpersons and Vice-Chairperson, as outlined in the University of Southern Queensland Student Membership Term (Appendix 1)
- 8.8 Student Senate members must complete the compulsory training requirements of the role including but not limited to Student Senate Role Induction training within one month of their commencement of term. The Students as Partners Office may remove Student Senate members who fail to complete all training requirements within this time frame, without warning.

- 8.9 Student Senate members must undertake their primary representational duties as well as Co-Chair, or Vice-Chair duties if appointed, for the full duration of their term. Refusal or failure to do so will be classed as being unable to provide effective service as per the clause Resignation, Removal and Replacement of Senate Members, Section 11.
- 8.10 Student Senate members are encouraged to grant permission for their image and university contact details to be made readily available. This will allow the student community to identify and communicate with members. The University of Southern Queensland is to ensure that personal information is handled in accordance with the Information Privacy Principles of the Information Privacy Act 2009.
- 8.11 Student Senate members are expected to attend Student Senate, and Students as Partners events and activities, including but not limited to open forums.
- 8.12 Ensure a safe and inclusive environment for all students by promoting open and non-discriminatory discussions, and by developing engagement initiatives that create opportunities for diverse student perspectives to be heard in the decision-making process.

Section 11 defines the process of Resignation, Removal & Replacement of Student Senate Members who fail to undertake representational duties.

9. General Student Code of Conduct

All Senate members should be familiar with and always comply with the following University of Southern Queensland Policies and Procedures:

- a. Student General Conduct Policy
- b. Student General Misconduct Procedure
- c. Media Engagement Policy and Media Engagement Procedure
- d. Student Discrimination, Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Response Procedure
- e. Prevention of Discrimination, Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Policy
- f. UniSQ Student Senate TOR and Guidelines
- g. Cultural Capabilities Training
- h. Workplace Health and Safety

10. Quorum

- a. Quorum for the Student Senate will be 50% of all voting members.
- b. Members who abstain from voting are counted towards the quorum if they are present at the meeting or notify the Committee Services Officer and/or Co-Chairs of their abstention during a flying minute vote.
- c. The committee resolves matters by majority vote rather than requiring unanimity.
- d. If a quorum is not met, the meeting will proceed without voting taking place.
- e. A special meeting or a flying minute will be called by a Co-Chair and/or the Students as Partners Team when decision of the Student Senate is required prior to the next scheduled meeting.

11. Resignation, Removal & Replacement of Student Senate Members

A member of the Student Senate can elect to resign from their position through submission of a formal resignation via email to a Students as Partners staff member.

Removal and Ineffective Service

Student Senate members should not expect to receive a warning prior to their removal from the committee. It is the responsibility of Student Senate members to maintain their eligibility.

A member of the Student Senate who has been unable to provide effective service, as per Section 8 Undertaking of Representational Duties, may be removed at the discretion of the Student Senate Co-Chairs and Students as Partners Staff.

- 11.1 An inability to provide effective service will be deemed to have occurred when a member:
- a. No longer meets the eligibility requirements for membership of the Student Senate as outlined in Section 3, Eligibility of Membership for the Student Senate
 - b. Fails to fulfil the roles and responsibilities of a Student Senate member as outlined in Section 8. Undertaking of Representational Duties.
 - c. a Senate member does not complete the required compulsory training sessions within one month of the commencement of their term of office.
 - d. Is unable to attend two (2) or more consecutive Student Senate meetings or scheduled events, without notifying the Committee Services Officer within two (2) business days either side of the scheduled meeting time unless there are extenuating circumstances determined by the Students as Partners team.
 - e. Is unable to attend three (3) or more consecutive meetings or scheduled events in a row, regardless of notifying the Committee Services Officer, unless there are extenuating circumstances, determined by the Students as Partners team.
 - f. Receives an allegation notice of any breach and/or misconduct.
 - g. a Senate member breaches the 'Student Senate Guidelines'.
 - h. a Senate member breaches the UniSQ 'Student General Conduct Policy'.
 - i. a Senate member engages in discrimination, bullying, harassment, or sexual misconduct.
 - j. any other conduct the Students as Partners Team deems as ineffective service.

Students who are found to be in breach of any policy or procedure will be managed with the relevant University of Southern Queensland procedure that applies.

12. Conflict of Interest

- 12.1 Staff members, observers, and Student members of the Student Senate must comply with the [Conflict of Interest Policy](#)
- 12.2 All Student Senate members and observers are required to identify potential, perceived, or actual conflicts of interest and make this known at the commencement of each meeting.
- a. If a conflict of interest is identified, the Student Senate Members must notify the Students as Partners staff and work together to determine the appropriate strategy for managing the conflict.
 - b. If a conflict of interest is identified during a meeting, the member will abstain from voting on the item in question. The conflict must be documented in the meeting minutes.

13. Meetings of the Student Senate

- 13.1 Meetings of the Student Senate are to be held at least six times per year at a set date, time, and place. All meetings are to include videoconferencing capability.
- 13.2 Minutes are to be kept by the Committee Services Officer and distributed to Student Senate members within ten (10) business days after the conclusion of each meeting. Attendance, including observer representation, is to be recorded by the Committee Services Officer.
- 13.3 It is expected that the Student Senate meeting minutes will be available to the general student body and UniSQ staff members condensed in a bulletin.
- 13.4 Conduct of Meetings:
 - a. The Co-Chairs shall preside at all meetings of the Student Senate
 - b. The Committee Services Officer must develop the agenda in consultation with Student Senate members
 - c. The agenda must be sent to Student Senate members five (5) business days prior to the meeting
 - d. Meeting minutes to be reviewed by the Chair prior to their distribution to the Student Senate members

Special Meetings of the Student Senate

- a. The Co-Chairs may call a special meeting for urgent discussions by the Student Senate at any time.
- b. Notice is to be given to the Student Senate two business days prior to a special meeting.
- c. The Co-Chairs are to prepare the special meeting agenda in collaboration with the Committee Services Officer.

Flying Minutes

- a. Where a decision of the Student Senate is required prior to or in between a scheduled meeting, the Co-Chairs may authorise a flying minute in a form of communication such as email.
- b. A flying minute request shall set out background information and contain recommendations on which Student Senate members can vote for, against or abstain. Student Senate members are to confirm their vote by online methods, or any other method as specified, by the date specified in the notice.
- c. The number of responses either for, against, or abstaining, must meet the quorum provisions as per Section 10 Quorum.
- d. A report on the outcome of a flying minute is to be provided at the next Student Senate meeting and is to be detailed in the next meeting agenda.

Notification of Meetings

- a. A meeting schedule for the duration of one year will be provided at the beginning of each term.

Committee Services Officer is to circulate the agenda to Senate members five (5) business days prior to the meeting.

14. Reporting

- a. An annual report must be sent to the University of Southern Queensland Council via the Vice Chancellor and Provost in February each year.
- b. Members of the Student Senate must also complete statistical reports and updates, and compile feedback from students. These are to be completed within ten (10) business days following the completion of all major events including but not limited to feedback events.

15. Professional development opportunities

- a. Students as Partners will provide all Student Senate members with exclusive access to LinkedIn Learning.
- b. Students as Partners where available will provide Student Representatives with a limited number of exclusive professional development opportunities to attend external national leadership conferences.
- c. Students as Partners where available will provide Student Representatives with a limited number of external and/or internal professional development opportunities and training opportunities.

16. Review

- a. All Student Senate members are expected to participate in an end of term survey and report on the success of the events and activities run by the Student Senate.
- b. The Student Senate will undertake an annual evaluation of its performance. A summary report of the evaluation shall be submitted to the Associate Provost or their nominated delegate, in February of the following calendar year.



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