

STUDENT COUNCIL REPORT 24/25 – FEBRUARY 2025

VP EDUCATION REPORT

KHADIZA HOSSAIN

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My manifesto objectives:

1. Increase the Effectiveness of the Student Rep System

- **Enhance Student Rep Training:**
 - Improve the content of Student Rep Training.
 - Improve the content of LSR Training.
- **Strengthen Connections:**
 - Improve the connection between all levels of student reps (course reps – LSRs – VP Education).
- **Simplify Reward and Recognition:**
 - Improve and simplify Reward and Recognition for Student Reps to increase participation and document their work at the programme level.

2. Improve the Assessment Experience

- **Partner with UWE Bristol to ensure the student voice is included in decision-making, addressing:**
 - Assessment bunching.
 - Assessment feedback.
 - Uptake of first attempt assessment.
 - Reasonable Adjustments.

3. Enhance Graduate Employability

- **Collaborate with the UWE Careers Team:**
 - Evaluate the success of careers in the curriculum
 - Support the dissemination of successful practices to other programmes.

4. Supporting student well-being during assessment periods.

- **Providing information and resources to students at a time of potential pressure.**

Updates on my objectives:

1. Increase the Effectiveness of the Student Rep System

- **1104** Student Reps are signed up so far (compared to a total of 817 sign-ups in 2023-24). **An increase of 26%**
- **832** Student Reps have completed their improved training and been added to Blackboard (compared to 585 trained Student Reps 2023-24). **An increase of 30%**

Lead School Reps:

The number of Lead School Reps recruited this academic year is 27.

LSRs successfully organised their first meetup with the Student Reps at the end of the first term the within their schools, the Reps passed on the feedback from their SRSF meetings to the LSRs. I attended two meet ups (one from CBL and one from engineering). 3 LSRs were chosen to attend Academic Board, 5 LSRs were chosen to attend LTSEC.

Student Rep Committee:

I have organized the first Student Rep Committee on 7th February with all Lead School Reps invited to attend an informal meet up with me and refreshments supplied. The aim was to encourage Student Reps from their school to discuss key issues that's happening and reiterate key messages from VP Education. 6 LSRs attended the committee. It was a great opportunity to collect feedback from each school to see if there's anything that I need to raise with relevant people at UWE.



PGR Representation:

I am working with the Director of Doctoral Academy to include PGR representation at the Students' Union Representation Structure. Earlier, we did not have a connection with any PGR reps as they were managed by the Doctoral Academy itself. Almost 800 students are pursuing Doctorate degrees including PhD. We're working together to see how we can bring all those PGR reps in our system as their structure is different than ours. At the moment, we have created a survey for key stakeholders at UWE (such as research director) to see whether they have any PGR in their committee, if they do then what is the number of PGRs they have and how they recruit them. This is more of a information gathering survey. We have successfully

received the numbers and information. We're analysing the data. After analysing, we would be contacting those PGRs to gather their feedback so that we can then make a plan/structure moving forward.

Student Rep Conference (SRC)

I chaired two Student Rep Conferences, one in November with over 200 Student Reps and Lead School Reps in attendance and in February almost 80 reps attended online and in person. Great engagement had been seen from student reps where they have interacted, asked questions and gave feedback to me and the rep coordinators.



The final Student Rep Conference has been scheduled for Tuesday 1 April with guest speakers from UWE Bristol EDI Projects team providing information on the awarding gap and decolonising the curriculum.



2. Improve the Assessment Experience

Reasonable adjustments to deadline:

On 2 October, Academic Board agreed to establish a Task and Finish Group to review the recent reduction of Reasonable Adjustments to Deadline from 14 to 7 days, effective from the start of the 2024/25 academic year. This group was formed in response to concerns raised by the Students' Union Presidents and student feedback, with the aim of balancing the needs of both students and staff. [To note: Previous detailed updates on this matter could be found in the November Student Council Report](#)

Recent updates from December 2024 – February 2025:

The group meets fortnightly (6 times at this point) and has identified several key actions and areas of focus:

- **Enhanced Engagement:** Sharing the previous work done as a draft for an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) and reviewing student engagement to include both applicants and non-applicants for RA to Deadline. However, the EIA draft had been done retrospectively in September after that policy was changed, which is concerning in many ways.
- **Data Collection and Feedback:** Gathering feedback from staff through the Learning and Teaching Forum and conducting pulse surveys for Professional Services staff.

- **Student Voice:** Planning for wider further consultation (in conjunction with Student Voice Team) and developing questions for Student Council meetings and conducting targeted outreach to ensure diverse student representation, including at partnership institutions.
- **Sector Research and Process Review:** Extending sector research, analysing application data, and reviewing a lived example of a deadline submission process to understand challenges.

The group also discussed issues such as staff capacity constraints, overreliance on uncapped resits, and patterns in RA2D usage timeframe. Recommendations include further data analysis to better understand these patterns and inviting experts from IT, Blackboard, to explore practical, inclusive solutions. The group remains committed to addressing concerns and ensuring the best outcomes for all stakeholders, fostering an equitable and effective learning environment. The timeline has a projection of any recommendations to be presented in line with a final approval decision in the May academic Board.

Delayed Feedback

[To note: Previous update on this matter could be found in the November Student Council Report](#)

Last year, I attended the **Learning and Teaching Forum**, where I raised this issue with all **College and School Directors of Learning and Teaching**. As a result, they agreed to establish a working group to facilitate discussions and explore potential solutions.

The group convened on **6th February** and included all **Directors of Learning and Teaching (DLTs)** as well as myself. During the meeting, we examined current feedback practices across different schools, recognizing that each operates uniquely.

Several key points emerged from the discussion:

- The **use of marking rubrics** in the **Business School** was highlighted as an important tool in maintaining the **quality of feedback**.
- The **language used in feedback** was discussed in relation to students' **mental well-being**, as the way constructive feedback is communicated can impact their acceptance and response.
- The **School of Arts** is planning to implement a **feedback form** alongside the primary feedback on assignments, an approach distinct from other schools which was particularly commendable for its emphasis on student well-being.
- The potential benefits of **Studiosity** were explored, allowing students to receive feedback before their formal assessment feedback. However, concerns were raised regarding possible discrepancies between **Studiosity feedback** and **actual assessment feedback**.
- Regarding the **timeliness of feedback**, I referenced **Manchester Metropolitan University's** system, which enables students to **track their submissions** in a manner similar to parcel tracking, offering greater transparency.

3. Supporting student well-being during assessment periods

Me and VP Community and Welfare ran a series of distress zones at Frenchay, Glenside and Bower Ashton campuses throughout the week commencing 27th January. Distress zones were situated in the library and provided students with a space to take a break from, studying in a supportive and relaxed environment. We had set up a 'study buddy' scheme where students can offer help and seek guidance from peer-to-peer support, whether that be in their subject or study or not. The zones had several freebies such as fidget

toys, fruits, graze bars etc for students and signposting to support services at UWE. Also, there was mindfulness activities like colouring.

4. Enhance Graduate Employability

In line with our collective goal of enhancing graduate employability, I've been collaborating closely with other presidents and working alongside the UWE Careers Team. My primary objective is to embed tailored career tools within each programme, ensuring students understand the steps needed to secure jobs in their specific fields. UWE has also launched an initiative called the "UWE Programmes," which will review each programme comprehensively from structure and assessment style to student feedback. Careers support will be embedded within this framework, and I'm actively working with the Deputy Registrar and Academic Registrar to represent the Students' Union's perspective on this development.

Additionally, I suggested a virtual career fair to complement the in-person event. This virtual fair will bring in international employers from around the world, creating valuable opportunities for students interested in pursuing careers outside the UK. This will be particularly beneficial for international students, broadening their career prospects. The Careers Team is set to hold this event in spring this year, offering a new platform for global employability.

Other things that I've been doing:

Successful lobbying with NUS

We met three MPs from Bristol (Claire Hazelgrove, Carla Denyer and Karin Smyth (PA)) at Westminster for NUS National Lobby Day. We lobbied to scrap the guarantor requirement for student housing and support Alex Sobel MP's Renter's Right Bill amendment. We discussed about tackling the rising cost of living for students, creating an ombudsman for student complaints, and supporting international students' futures. 121 sabbatical officers came to Westminster for lobbying to their MPs. It was a great success as the Renters Right Bill amendment has been successfully passed from House of Commons and now is in the House of Lord.

- This amendment does not remove the guarantor scheme; however, it stops landlords to ask for upfront rent for multiple months. This means, this amendment will cap upfront rent at 1 month (plus deposits still at 6 weeks), balances assurance and exploitation.
- Also, ends fixed term contracts and can exit on 2 months' notice, guarantors sort of don't matter because what are they guaranteeing?