STUDENT COUNCIL REPORT 25/26 – NOVEMBER 2025
VICE PRESIDENT EDUCATION

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MANIFESTO & PRIORITIES UPDATE:

1. Addressing the Quality and Consistency of Academic Feedback

Improving the quality and timeliness of feedback remains one of my top priorities this term. This project began in response to a long-standing concern identified through the National Student Survey (NSS) and Course Surveys, where students have consistently reported dissatisfaction with the quality and timeliness of feedback.

Although the University's policy sets a 20-working-day turnaround for assessment feedback, students across several programmes have reported delays and inconsistencies in how feedback is delivered. Practices vary significantly between Schools, resulting in differing student experiences.

Last academic year, I delivered a presentation at the Partnership Board, attended by the Vice-Chancellor and his exec, highlighting three years of student feedback data on assessment and feedback. The presentation was well received and led to the University taking the issue forward as a priority area. Following this, with the support of the Deputy Registrar, a dedicated Feedback Working Group was established, including all College Deans and School Directors of Learning and Teaching.

The working group meets fortnightly and has already agreed that a more consistent and structured approach is needed across all Schools. Discussions are ongoing about developing a standardised feedback template, aligned with marking rubrics, to ensure that feedback is clear, personalised and actionable for students. However, as methods of delivering feedback differ widely across Schools, this work is being undertaken carefully to ensure fairness and relevance across disciplines.

To make this project more comprehensive, we also launched a student expectations survey over the summer through the Student Consultation Panel and Rep training sessions. The purpose of the survey is to better understand what students value most in feedback and what they consider to be effective and timely communication. The results are now being analysed and will inform the creation of university-wide guidance for consistent feedback practice.

As an interim step, we are encouraging module leaders to clearly communicate expected feedback timelines and link to existing resources, including the Feedback Guidance Video and the Feedback Tracker, to improve transparency for students. After Teaching Block 1, the Students' Union will conduct another survey to evaluate how effective these communications and tools have been in improving the student experience. Programme Reps will be briefed in advance to help support this work.

It is important to note that these actions are part of an interim improvement plan, as the current Blackboard system has limitations in delivering more integrated solutions. However, from next academic year, students can expect to see a newly structured feedback system that ensures greater consistency, improved timeliness, and enhanced quality of feedback across all Schools.

2. Making Timetabling and Exam Scheduling More Accessible

Timetabling continues to be one of the most persistent challenges faced by students. Issues such as class scheduling conflicts, assessment bunching, and insufficient gaps between exams have been repeatedly raised through student feedback, particularly via Lead School Reps and Student Consultation Panels.

I have raised these concerns at LTSEC (Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee) and in discussions with various university stakeholders to ensure the issue is prioritised at a strategic level. While there is an existing Timetabling Steering Group in place, its work is primarily operational, focusing on delivery rather than long-term reform.

Following these discussions, the Chair of LTSEC and the Deputy Registrar have agreed to establish a new Strategic Timetabling Group, which I will be part of. This group will take a broader, data-informed approach to analysing the systemic challenges behind timetabling and assessment scheduling and develop coordinated actions accordingly.

The goal is to ensure that timetables are communicated earlier, assessments are spaced more fairly, and that the needs of commuting, part-time, and international students are properly considered. I am currently awaiting updates on the formation and first meeting of this group.

3. Supporting Student Employability and Future Pathways

Enhancing student employability has been a key focus this term. Alongside with the other Presidents, I am co-organising the UWE Career Fair, scheduled for 10 February 2026 from 11-4pm at SU 1 and SU2 building, to connect students with inclusive and ethical employers. The event will include:

- Employer stalls from across faculties,
- Workshops on Green Skills, AI, and translating soft skills into employability,

We are carefully selecting employers that do not invest in arms, oil, or gas industries, ensuring with the Students' Union's commitment to sustainability and ethical practice. This approach reflects student values, as shown in national sustainability surveys. Students will still have access to diverse and high-quality opportunities as we have invited employers with similar skills to those companies but do not invest in those industries.

This fair will mostly focus on graduate employability, however, we have also called UWE as an employer who gives part time jobs to students and covering students who are in their 1st/2nd year of study.

4. Strengthening the Student Voice Across UWE

This term, I've focused on strengthening and expanding the impact of our Student Rep System to ensure that all students feel their voices are heard and acted upon. Building on work I began last academic year, I've continued to develop the Postgraduate Research (PGR) representation model in collaboration with the Representation Manager, PGR Lead Representative, and the Doctoral Academy. The model has now been approved by LTSEC and is designed to ensure that PGR students who often have distinct academic and pastoral needs, receive more consistent and effective representation across the University.

To help foster community among research students, we held the first-ever PGR Welcome Fair in October, featuring information stalls, a research poster showcase, and a Q&A panel. The event provided a valuable opportunity for research students to connect with one another, discover available support, and feel a stronger sense of belonging within the PGR community.

From last year, I have also been working closely with the Representation Team and the Student Voice and Academic Policy (SVAP) Team through re-imagining representation project to restructure the entire Student Rep system, including training and the Reward and Recognition scheme, as the previous model had become vague and inconsistent across Schools. These changes have helped create a clearer, more engaging and more accessible structure for both new and returning Reps.

As part of our improved Reward and Recognition Scheme, I worked with Commercial Services to introduce a 15% discount for Student Reps at SU cafés and bars. A small but meaningful way to acknowledge their contributions to enhancing the student academic experience.

Our first Student Rep Conference of this academic year saw an incredible turnout, with 272 Student Reps in attendance in person and online.

5. Building Community and Strengthening Collaboration with Student Leaders

This term, I've been focusing on building stronger collaboration between Student Reps, Academic Societies, and Student Leaders to create more cohesive and engaged academic communities.

I will be continuing to work with different Presidents, Part-Time Officers (PTOs), Lead School Reps (LSRs), and Student Reps (SRs) on a range of collaborative projects throughout the year. One of the major ongoing projects is the Career Fair, which I'm leading alongside the other Presidents. In addition, I'll be working closely with the Vice President Societies to strengthen connections between Academic Societies and Student Reps within their respective programmes.

The aim is to establish more academic societies, create additional opportunities for Reps to collect feedback, and address the concern raised by several LSRs about a lack of student engagement in some programmes. By linking Reps and societies more closely, we can encourage joint events and create informal spaces for students to share feedback. Where programmes do not currently have a society, Reps will be supported to help establish one, ensuring every course has a platform for engagement and representation.

Another key piece of work has been connecting the International Officer with relevant university stakeholders and groups to strengthen representation and advocacy for international students. Collaboration has also extended to working with the PGR Lead Rep on the development of the new PGR Representation Structure, ensuring that postgraduate research students' voices are equally recognised within our wider representation system.