



University of  
**Southern  
Queensland**

# **Student Senate Guidelines**

Support for Learning

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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.
- 2.2. One Support for Learning staff member is to be appointed to the Student Senate as a non-voting member. The primary role of the Support for Learning 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 a 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 a 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 undertaking a leave of absence are not eligible
- 3.4. Participation in the Student Senate must not conflict with academic studies.
- 3.5. 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 Support for Learning staff member is advised
- 3.6. 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 six weeks, beginning at the mid-end of December
- 4.2. Nominations must be received by 5pm on the Friday of the close of nominations. No late nominations will be accepted
- 4.3. At the Support for Learning 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 Support for Learning staff in extenuating circumstances
- 4.5. Nominations can only be made via the applicable online nomination form each year, available on the UniSQ Website
- 4.6. Nominations not made through the online nomination form will not be accepted
- 4.7. Where more nominations are received than there are available positions, an election will occur to determine which students will comprise the Student Senate
- 4.8. Any student unsuccessful in the election will have the opportunity to be placed on a waiting list and be called upon to join the Student Senate if a position becomes available after the formal nomination round.
- 4.9. If vacancies become available one month out or during a formal nomination round, all students including previous unsuccessful election candidates on a waitlist, must formally re-apply for a position on the Student Senate
- 4.10. If positions are not filled during the formal nomination round, and no waitlist students are available, Students can apply via adhoc nominations

## **5. Process of Student Senate Elections**

- 5.1. Where more nominations are received than there are available positions, an election will be organised
- 5.2. The Student Partnership Officer will act as the Returning Officer for the elections
- 5.3. All members of the student body at the time of elections, will have the right to vote for the members of the Student Senate
- 5.4. The election period will run for a period of two weeks

5.5. The election must start within one week of formal nominations closing

## 6. Terms of Office of the Student Senate

- 6.1. The Co-Chairpersons 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
- 6.2. The Co-Chairpersons 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, 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.

### 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

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

## 8. Appointment to a Co-Chair Position

- 8.1. Students will have the opportunity to nominate for a Co-Chair position at the first meeting
- 8.2. Members can nominate for multiple positions but can only be appointed to one Co-Chairperson position. If more than one person nominates for a position, this will go to a vote in the formal elections. The student with the most votes will win the position.
- 8.3. Where a Co-Chairperson position is vacant, Student Senate members may nominate for a position. If more than one person nominates for a position, a secret ballot will occur at the next scheduled meeting. The student with the most votes will win the position.
- 8.4. Voting for the role can only take place if quorum is met.
- 8.5. Where a tie occurs, another vote will occur where only the tied nominees can be voted for.

## 9. Undertaking of Representational Duties

- 9.1. 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 Senate Services Officer within two (2) business days either side of the scheduled meeting. Failure to respond within this timeframe will result in a warning, unless there are extenuating circumstances

- 9.2. 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
- 9.3. Student Senate members are expected to submit agenda items and reports ten (10) business days prior to a scheduled meeting
- 9.4. Student Senate members have a responsibility to maintain their eligibility as defined in Section 3 and are required to advise the Chair or Support for Learning Team 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 12
- 9.5. 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
- 9.6. 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, and ensure that appropriate consultation and communication occurs
- 9.7. Duties are undertaken for the defined term of one year for general members and one year and three months for the roles of Co-Chairpersons, as outlined in the University of Southern Queensland Student Membership Term (Appendix 1)
- 9.8. 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 Support for Learning Office may remove Student Senate members who fail to complete all training requirements within this time frame
- 9.9. Student Senate members must undertake their primary representational duties as well as Co-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 12
- 9.10. Student Senate members are encouraged to grant permission for their image and 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
- 9.11. Attend Student Senate events and activities, including but not limited to open forums
- 9.12. 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 12 defines the process of Resignation, Removal & Replacement of Student Senate Members who fail to undertake representational duties.

## **10. 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. UniSQ Student Senate TOR and Guidelines....
- e. Cultural Capabilities Training
- f. Workplace Health and Safety

## 11. Quorum

- 11.1. Quorum for the Student Senate will be 50% of all voting members
- 11.2. If a quorum is not met, the meeting will proceed without voting taking place.
- 11.3. A special meeting or a flying minute will be called by a Chair when decision of the Student Senate is required prior to the next scheduled meeting.

## 12. Resignation, Removal & Replacement of Student Senate Members

- 12.1 A member of the Student Senate can elect to resign from their position through submission of a formal resignation via email to the Student Partnership Officer

### Removal and Ineffective Service

- 12.2 A member of the Student Senate who has been unable to provide effective service, as per Section 9 Undertaking of Representational Duties, may be removed at the discretion of the Senate Co-Chairs and Support for Learning Staff.
- 12.3 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 9. Undertaking of Representational Duties
  - c. Is unable to attend two (2) or more consecutive Student Senate meetings or events, without notifying the Senate Services Officer within two (2) business days either side of the scheduled meeting time unless there are extenuating circumstances
  - d. The Senate member accumulates two (2) or more warnings
  - e. Is accused of any breach and/or misconduct allegation

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.

### Warnings

- 12.4 A warning for ineffective service can be given for any of the following conduct:
  - a. a Senate member does not complete the required compulsory training sessions within one month of the commencement of their term of office
  - b. a Senate member does not attend or respond within two (2) business days either side of a meeting or event
  - c. a Senate member breaches the 'Student Senate Guidelines'
  - d. a Senate member breaches the UniSQ 'Student General Conduct Policy'
  - e. a Senate member engages in discrimination, bullying, harassment, or sexual misconduct
  - f. any other conduct the Support for Learning Team deems as ineffective service

## 13. Conflict of Interest

- 13.1 Staff members, observers, and Student members of the Student Senate must comply with the [Conflict of Interest Policy](#)
- 13.2 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
- 13.3 If a conflict of interest is identified, the Student Senate Members must notify the Support for Learning staff member and work together to determine the appropriate strategy for managing the conflict

13.4 If a conflict of interest is identified during a meeting, that member will not have voting rights for the item in question. The conflict must be documented in the meeting minutes

## 14. Meetings of the Student Senate

14.1 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

14.2 Minutes are to be kept by the Senate 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 Senate Services Officer

14.3 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

14.4 Conduct of Meetings

- a. The Co-Chairs shall preside at all meetings of the Student Senate
- b. The Senate 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

14.5 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 Senate Services Officer

14.6 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 11 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

14.7 Notification of Meetings

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

- b. Senate Services Officer is to circulate the agenda to Senate members five (5) business days prior to the meeting
- c. A reminder email will be sent two (2) business days prior to the meeting

## **15. Reporting**

- 15.1 An annual report must be sent to the University of Southern Queensland Council via the Vice Chancellor and Provost in February each year
- 15.2 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

## **16. Professional development opportunities**

- 16.1 Support for Learning will provide all Student Senate members with exclusive access to LinkedIn Learning
- 16.2 Support for Learning where available will provide Student Representatives with a limited number of exclusive professional development opportunities to attend external national leadership conferences
- 16.3 Support for Learning where available will provide Student Representatives with a limited number of external professional development opportunities and training opportunities
- 16.4 Support for Learning where available will provide Student Representatives with a limited number of internal professional development and training opportunities

## **17. Review**

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



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