

2 Starting up an FE SU: Completing the Voice Loop

Having a rep system up and running is a great start – but you need to build quality practice into your system to make sure it's sustainable and gets you the results you need. Completing the voice loop is a description of the journey from a student raising an issue to the institution and then responding to the issue to both the individual student and the wider student body.

Why should you do this

There are many reasons why you should want a high-quality voice loop in place but the main one is to build a relationship of trust with your student body. If your student body trusts that you will listen to them then they are more likely to come to you with issues about the quality of their education.

The issues that students are initially likely to raise will be ones that your institution doesn't deem to be of great significance or alternatively doesn't have the power to change.

It's important to realise that the way students feel responded to about the first issue they raise will have a big impact on their trust in your institution. For example, if a student raises a problem about the price of food in the canteen and gets a response that doesn't properly explain where the power lies to change the price, they may feel like they've been ignored therefore it is unlikely they are going to tell you about other problems in the future.

Alternatively, if you respond in a way that explains why the food is the price it is and how the student can influence decisions about the price of food, then you have shown them that you can be trusted to care about what they've said and trusted to respond fully.

The biggest mistake people making when responding to student feedback is to think the most important thing to achieve is creating a response that students will like – what you should be doing is asking yourself how your response builds trust and raises the possibility of the student coming back to you when another issue arises.

Key Partners

- Senior management
- Quality Manager
- Students

How to

- **Recording issues** - Build a method for recording all the issues, questions and points raised through your student rep's system. You can do this in a spreadsheet, database, on paper or any other method that works for you.
- **Process** - As part of this recording process, you will also need to build in a way of recording where each point needs to go in the institution for a response and how you will then have that response communicated back to the students.

- **Responses** - Work with senior management to build understanding of those who will need to respond to student feedback about the process they need to go through to shape that response.
- **Communication** - Develop a simple communication method of feeding back to students. Students should be aware of when to expect responses and remember to celebrate your wins!

Next steps – How to grow from here

- Once your system is embedded and there is a good understanding from the institution about how feeding back to students is treated you can start refining and building upon your system.
- You can look at ways to reduce the time between a point being raised by a student and that student getting a response.
- If you are getting a lot of points raised that fall under a particular staff members remit for response, you could arrange reps to meet with that member of staff so the responses can be heard quicker.
- If there are reoccurring issues, prepare responses for these referring to your recordings of previous responses
- Ask questions and share good practice on the [NUS FE Staff Workplace group](#)

Useful Resources

- [The Student Engagement Partnership resources](#)
- [Learner Voice Framework](#)