

NUA Students' Union
Student Representatives Information Guide

2020-2021



Contents

1.0	Introduction	3
2.0	Role and Responsibilities of a Student Representative	4
3.0	Student Representative Training and Support.....	6
4.0	Working Agreement	7
5.0	Student Representative Elections.....	8
6.0	Committee Structure and Student Feedback	11
7.0	Deans Forums	12
8.0	Student Reps Group.....	13
9.0	Post Graduate Taught (PGT) Board of Studies	14
10.0	Research Degrees Committee	16
11.0	Other Committees	17
12.0	Committee Attendance	19
13.0	Evidence and Feedback.....	20
14.0	Advocacy and Representation	22
15.0	Breaches and Disputes	27
16.0	List of contacts/NUA departments	28

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose and Scope

Norwich University of the Arts Students' Union is committed to promoting the student voice and ensuring that feedback is constant, open, valued and meaningful. The student voice is integral to the decisions made by the Students' Union and helps to develop the overall student experience at Norwich University of the Arts by contributing to all levels of the University's committee structure. Democracy is at the heart of all Students' Union activities and Student Representatives play a key role in ensuring this is upheld.

1.2 Purpose of Policy

The purpose of this Policy is to formalise our commitment to the student voice, specifically outlining how we intend to elect, train and support Student Representatives in their role.

This Policy outlines how the Students' Union works in partnership with Norwich University of the Arts to ensure that the overall student experience is developed to a high standard. It also serves as a reference tool for all students and staff to identify best practice in how student feedback will be collated, presented, reviewed and actioned.

2.0 Role and Responsibilities of a Student Representative

2.1 The role of a Student Representative

Student Representatives communicate the views of students to Norwich University of the Arts (NUA) Senior Management, Course Leaders and Tutors. They provide feedback on a range of topics about the student experience which is used to inform decisions made by NUA and influence change. They also provide feedback to their fellow students about NUA activities, decisions and developments helping to keep students informed.

Two Student Representatives from each year group and course are elected annually by their peers. All NUA students are eligible to run for a Student Representative position and by being involved develop key skills such as effective communication, time management and good organisation.

Student Representatives will usually undertake their responsibilities for one academic year. However, it is possible for Reps to be re-elected each year and carry out their responsibilities for the duration of their university life.

2.2 Responsibilities of a Student Representative

The main responsibilities include:

- Liaising with NUA students about their university experiences and collecting open and honest feedback before each committee.
- Noting the actions and discussion points from each committee and reporting back to students within two weeks of the meeting taking place.
- Liaising with the relevant Course Leader/Course Administrator to hold informal student feedback sessions before and after committees.
- Actively listening to student opinions, ideas and suggestions to identify common themes and issues.
- Obtaining evidence where appropriate to demonstrate student concerns and queries.
- Providing both positive and constructive feedback to the University and Students' Union, ensuring that the collective views of students is accurately represented.
- Attending and participating in two Deans Forums and three Student Rep Group meetings each year.
- Attending training provided by the Students' Union to help Reps undertake their role.

- Working with fellow Student Reps in different years to represent the opinions of all students.
- Electing the Faculty, Quality, Employability and Digital Enhancement Student Reps to University sub-committees, on behalf of the corresponding year group.
- Electing the members of the Students' Union Steering Committee on behalf of the corresponding year group.
- Informing the Students' Union of their withdrawal from the role or any prolonged absence from university.
- Being friendly and approachable at all times, ensuring that students feel able to provide feedback about their experiences.

3.0 Student Representative Training and Support

3.1 Student Rep Training

It is a mandatory requirement for all Student Reps to attend training on how to carry out their role, delivered by the Students' Union. This normally happens in October once all Student Rep elections have taken place. Specific arrangements for the training during the 2020/21 academic year, will be decided accordingly with the Covid-19 Government guidance. The training can last up to a full day and is planned into each course timetable so that all Reps are available to attend. The aim of the training is to enable all Student Reps to carry out their role effectively during their elected period. Topics covered during the training include:

- Meeting other Student Reps
- Obtaining evidence and making recommendations
- Preparing for committees
- Updating students on University decisions and activities
- Effective campaigning
- Working together
- Case studies

The training day will also provide all Student Reps with the opportunity to nominate for additional Rep roles (See Section 11.0) and to carry out elections for those positions.

3.2 Student Rep Handbook

The Student Rep Handbook is a short reference guide which contains key information about the role of a Student Rep. The Student Rep Handbook is designed, created, printed and updated by the Students' Union and is issued to all Student Reps at the Training Day.

3.3 General Enquiries

Student Reps can contact the Students' Union for general enquiries and support by emailing: srg@nua.ac.uk. Alternatively, they can organise an informal meeting with the Students' Union President by emailing: su.president@nua.ac.uk or coming into the Students' Union Office in St Andrew's House Basement (open Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm.)

4.0 Working Agreement

4.1 Purpose of the Working Agreement

The Working Agreement outlines the partnership between the Student Representative, the Students' Union and the University and identifies the commitments and responsibilities of all parties.

4.2 Responsibilities of the Quality Management Team

NUA's Quality Management Team (QMT) will commit to the following responsibilities as part of the Working Agreement:

- To set up the online systems for nominations and elections to take place.
- To liaise with the SU President regarding the process of all elections and by-elections.
- To cascade the results of all elections to the relevant stakeholders.
- To publish the results of all Student Rep elections and by-elections.

4.3 Responsibilities of the Students' Union

NUA Students' Union will commit to the following responsibilities as part of the Working Agreement:

- To promote the Student Rep elections to students and any other relevant stakeholders.
- To train and support all Student Reps in their role.
- To monitor the activities of the Student Reps, providing support as required.
- To liaise with the QMT to ensure that the elections happen every year as planned and are conducted fairly, equally and accessibly.
- To be the main liaison with all Student Reps, answering any queries or questions as appropriate.

4.4 Responsibilities of the Student Representative

Student Reps will be required to commit to the role responsibilities as outlined in Section 2.0 of this document.

5.0 Student Representative Elections

5.1 Management of Student Representative Elections

NUA's Quality Management Team (QMT) manage the election processes but are held to account by the Students' Union to ensure that the elections remain democratic, fair, accessible and equal.

The nomination and election process is carried out via a centralised voting portal on the NUA intranet enabling students to cast digital votes. The system is set up and managed by the QMT.

Nominations and elections take place on an annual basis and two student reps per year group and course are appointed. Every April, nominations and elections for continuing students are conducted (for the following academic year) and every September nominations and elections take place for Year 0, Year 1 and PGT courses (for the same academic year.)

5.2 Purpose of Student Representative Elections

NUA students are responsible for electing the people that they feel will represent their collective views and interests the best. As only two Rep positions are available per year and course, it is possible that a number of students will want to take on the role and elections help to fairly determine which candidates the students want to represent them.

5.3 Nominations

The nomination period will normally be one week in duration. Nominations are open to all NUA students and there isn't a limit on how many nominations will be accepted for each course and year group.

To nominate, students must complete the online Self Nomination Form. All sections of the form must be completed in order for the nomination to be accepted. All nominations will be uploaded onto the voting portal by the QMT ready for the next stage of the election process.

An example Self-Nomination Form can be found below:

The screenshot shows a web form titled "Course Representatives 2018-19" with a "Print All" button in the top right. Below the title is the section "Self-Nomination Form" with a printer icon. A link reads: "Please read the Course Representatives Role Description before completing the Self Nomination Form". The form contains the following fields: "Full Name *" (text input), "Student Number *" (text input), "Course *" (dropdown menu), "University Email address *" (text input), and "Contact Telephone Number *" (text input). A "Confirmation *" section follows with five checkboxes and their corresponding statements: "I have read the relevant role description and understand what being a student representative entails", "I meet the eligibility criteria set out for Student Representatives", "I am aware my name will be posted on the intranet during the election period", "That the information on this form is correct to the best of my knowledge", and "That this data can be shared with NUAs Students' Union". At the bottom are two buttons: "Save and Submit" and "Save for later".

5.4 Voting

The voting portal will be open for a duration of one week and will be accessible via the intranet and VLE. All NUA students can access the nominations for their course/year group through the portal and cast an electronic vote for their preferred candidate.

A “first past the post” system is used meaning that the two students with the highest number of votes in each course/year will be elected. **Note:** If only two nominations are received for each position then these candidates will automatically become Student Reps by default.

5.5 Announcing Election Results

The QMT will announce the winners at the end of the election period via email. A full list of elected Student Reps will also be published via the Students' Union intranet page which is accessible to all staff and students:

<https://my.nua.ac.uk/Interact/Pages/Content/Document.aspx?id=5765>

5.6 By-elections

By-elections can take place for a number of reasons including:

- a Student Rep withdraws from the role part way through the year
- vacancies not being filled during the normal nomination/election period
- a student Rep takes a long term leave of absence from their studies

In these circumstances, the QMT will prepare a by-election in collaboration with the Students' Union and will notify the relevant courses and year groups when this occurs. The process for by-elections will follow the same format as the normal Student Rep elections process.

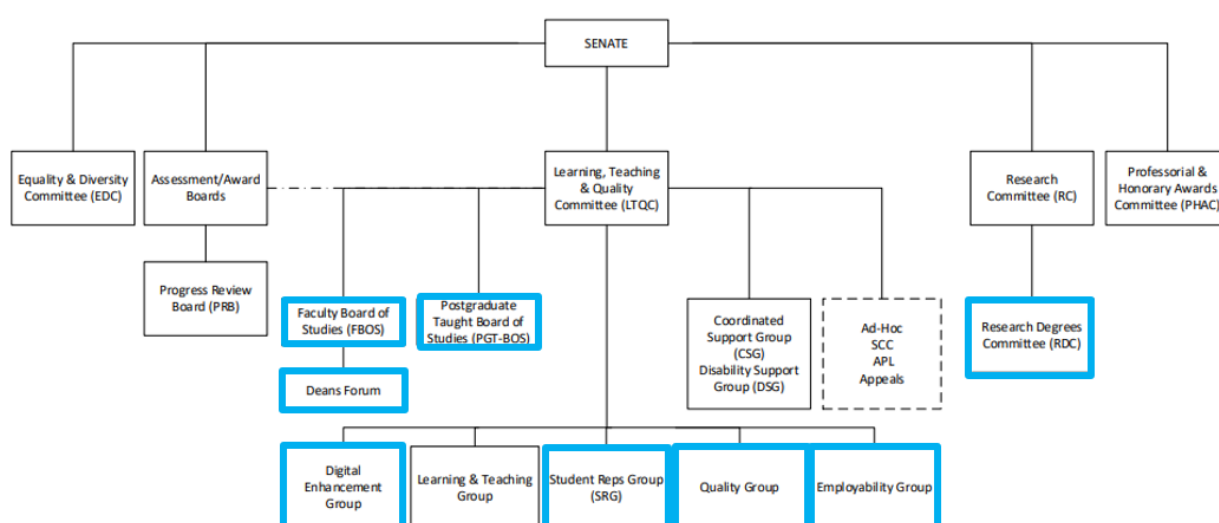
5.7 Elections for Faculty Board of Studies (FBOS) and Sub-Committees

Elections for FBOS, Quality Group, Employability Group and Digital Enhancement Group will take place in October once all Student Reps have attended a training session. The details of these elections will be confirmed to Student Reps at the start of the 2020/21 academic year.

6.0 Committee Structure and Student Feedback

6.1 NUA Committee Structure

The flowchart below represents NUA's Committee Structure and all highlighted boxes represent committees which include student representatives as members. The actions and minutes recorded at each committee feed into other committees including Senate, which is the most senior committee. The Students' Union President is also a member of many NUA committees to represent the collective student voice. This structure ensures that student feedback is reviewed and considered at all levels of the University.



6.2 Terms of Reference and Membership

Full Terms of Reference and membership lists for all committees can be found in Annex A of the QME Handbook, available via the NUA Intranet.

7.0 Deans Forums

7.1 Purpose of Deans Forums

Deans Forums provide Student Representatives with the opportunity to discuss and feedback on their course, particularly focusing on organisation, management and planning.

Deans Forums meet once per term and it is mandatory for all undergraduate Student Representatives to attend these meetings to ensure that student views are represented.

7.2 Preparing for Deans Forums

Student Reps will be notified of the Deans Forums schedule by the Convening Secretary at the start of each term. The Convening Secretary is normally a member of the NUA Course Administration Team.

Ahead of each Deans Forum Student Reps are required to prepare discussion notes identifying the strengths of their course as well as areas for development. In the notes Student Reps must summarise feedback from fellow students and provide additional evidence where necessary to support the claims made. The notes should also include ideas/suggestions on how to improve the areas for development.

7.3 Participating in Deans Forums

Student Rep feedback is a standard agenda item for all Deans Forums and Reps will be required to participate in informal discussions to present their notes and any evidence obtained. The Chair will assign actions where appropriate following the discussion.

Student Reps are required to make notes during the Deans Forum about any updates to previous points raised and feed this back to students within two weeks of the meeting.

8.0 Student Reps Group

8.1 Purpose of Student Reps Group

To provide Student Reps with the opportunity to discuss the overall quality of the student experience including, but not limited to, campus facilities, accommodation, activities/events and NUA services.

Student Reps Group is the only meeting which invites Reps from all courses and year groups to meet together.

The Group convenes once per term and it is mandatory for all Student Representatives to attend to ensure that student views are represented. SRG could be held via Microsoft Teams, and in this case, a meeting invite will be emailed to all Student Reps.

The Students' Union President will give an update on all SU activities at Student Reps Group and will often ask for feedback on activities and future plans of the Union.

8.2 Preparing for Student Reps Group

Student Reps will be notified of upcoming meetings by the Convening Secretary at the start of each term. The Convening Secretary is normally the Academic Registrar's Administrator.

In advance of the meeting Student Reps are encouraged to liaise with other students about their wider university experiences ready to feedback at Student Reps Group and wherever possible obtain evidence to support the claims made.

8.3 Participating in Student Reps Group

All Student Reps will be required to informally present their feedback regarding the overall student experience to the Group. Further discussion may occur and the Chair will assign actions where appropriate.

Student Reps are required to make notes during the meeting about any general updates and feed this back to students within two weeks of the Student Reps Group taking place.

9.0 Post Graduate Taught (PGT) Board of Studies

9.1 Purpose of PGT Board of Studies

For Post-Graduate Student Reps to feedback on their course particularly focusing on organisation, management and resource planning.

PGT Board of Studies meets twice per year and it is mandatory for all PGT Student Representatives to attend these meetings to ensure that student views are represented.

9.2 Preparing for PGT Board of Studies

PGT Student Reps will be notified of upcoming meetings by the Convening Secretary via email. The Convening Secretary is normally a member of the NUA Course Administration Team.

Ahead of each PGT Board of Studies Student Reps are required to complete a Student Rep Report which can be requested from postgrad@nua.ac.uk. The template acts as a tool to prompt student discussion around the strengths of the course as well as areas for development. On the report PGT Student Reps must summarise feedback from fellow students about their course and provide additional evidence where necessary to support the claims made.

Once completed the Student Rep Report must be submitted to the Convening Secretary in accordance with the timescales they specify.

9.3 Participating in PGT Board of Studies

PGT Student Rep feedback is a standard agenda item for the PGT Board of Studies and Reps will be required to present their report and any evidence obtained. The Chair will assign actions where appropriate following the discussion.

Student Reps are required to make notes during the Committee about any updates to previous points raised and feed this back to students within two weeks of the Committee taking place.

9.4 Committee Papers

The Convening Secretary will contact PGT Student Reps via email if they are required to collect and read any papers for the Committee. They will also advise when the papers are ready to be collected and from which location. PGT Student Reps will normally collect the papers ahead of the meeting (approx. one week before) and ensure that they are read in full. This will help to prepare the Student Reps for any agenda items that they will need to discuss.

10.0 Research Degrees Committee

10.1 Purpose of Research Degrees Committee

For the Research Student Rep to feedback on their programme particularly focusing on organisation, management and resource planning.

The committee convenes twice per year and it is mandatory for the Research Student Representative to attend to ensure that student views are represented.

10.2 Preparing for the Research Degrees Committee

The Research Student Rep will be notified of upcoming meetings by the Convening Secretary via email. The Convening Secretary is normally the Research Administrator.

In advance of the meeting the Research Student Rep is encouraged to liaise with other research students about their programme ready to feedback at the committee and wherever possible obtain evidence to support the claims made.

10.3 Participating in the Research Degrees Committee

The Research Rep will be required to informally present their feedback regarding the programme to the Committee. Further discussion may occur and the Chair will assign actions where appropriate.

The Research Rep is required to take notes during the meeting about any general updates and completed actions and feed this back to students within two weeks of the Research Degrees Committee taking place.

10.4 Committee Papers

The Convening Secretary will contact the Research Rep via email if they are required to collect and read any papers for the committee. They will also advise when the papers are ready to be collected and from which location. In this instance, the Research Rep must collect the papers ahead of the meeting (normally one week before) and ensure that they are read in full. This will help to prepare the Research Rep for any agenda items that they will need to discuss.

11.0 Other Committees

Student Reps can nominate themselves to become a Faculty Rep (11.1), a member of the Employability Group (11.2), a member of the Quality Group (11.3) or a member of the Digital Enhancement Group (11.4) as an optional extra role. Nominations and elections for these roles will take place during the Student Rep Training sessions at the start of the academic year (See Section 3.0) and will be overseen by the Students' Union. Information on each Committee are detailed in the following sections.

11.1 Faculty Board of Studies (FBOS)

FBOS meets twice per year to review the academic quality and standards within each faculty. It is mandatory for the elected Faculty Reps to attend this committee to ensure that student views are represented.

Faculty Reps will not need to collect any feedback ahead of the committee but will be required to discuss various agenda items and make recommendations for improvement based on their knowledge as an NUA student and from attending Course Committees.

Faculty Reps will also be required to collect and review the committee papers ahead of the meeting to ensure they are fully briefed.

11.2 Employability Group

The Employability Group meets on an ad-hoc basis to review the employability and career services of NUA for students. Key areas of activity discussed include the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education Survey (DHLE,) live briefs from the Ideas Factory, NUA employability programmes and employer engagement.

It is mandatory for the elected Employability Reps to attend this committee to ensure that student views are represented about these services.

11.3 Quality Group

The Quality Group meets on an ad-hoc basis to review the quality processes and outcomes of NUA courses. Key areas of activity to discuss include approval and review events, annual course reviews, external examining and student voice procedures.

It is mandatory for the elected Quality Reps to attend this committee to ensure that students have input on the University's quality enhancement processes.

11.4 Digital Enhancement Group

The Digital Enhancement Group meets on an adhoc basis to review the University's digital learning resources and conduct assessments of their impact. Key areas of discussion include the NUA Intranet, Moodle & VLE platforms, E-vision and any other resources that may enhance teaching and learning at NUA.

It is mandatory for the elected Digital Enhancement Reps to attend this committee to ensure that student views are represented about these resources.

12.0 Committee Attendance

12.1 Committee Attendance

Students Reps are required to attend all of the committees that they are members of as identified within this document.

12.2 Apologies

There may be occasions when it isn't possible for a Student Rep to attend a committee. In this circumstance, Student Reps are required to email the relevant Convening Secretary stating their apologies and the reason for the non-attendance. This should always be done as far in advance as possible to enable the Convening Secretary to inform the Chair of the committee.

12.3 Monitoring Attendance

A register of attendance will be filled in by the Convening Secretary during the meeting. Student Reps' attendance is recorded within all committee minutes and absences will be noted.

Regular non-attendance will be reported to the Students' Union President to investigate and follow up with students.

13.0 Evidence and Feedback

13.1 Collecting feedback from students

It is the Student Reps responsibility to regularly obtain feedback from students regarding their experiences at NUA. Face to face, open and honest discussion is the most effective method of obtaining feedback from students, but it is possible for other communication methods to be used if the Rep feels it is appropriate. Examples include organising an informal meeting in the student lounge or at the end of lectures, using the VLE, social media and email.

For all committees, feedback can be recorded and presented informally through note taking and verbal updates.

13.2 Collecting evidence

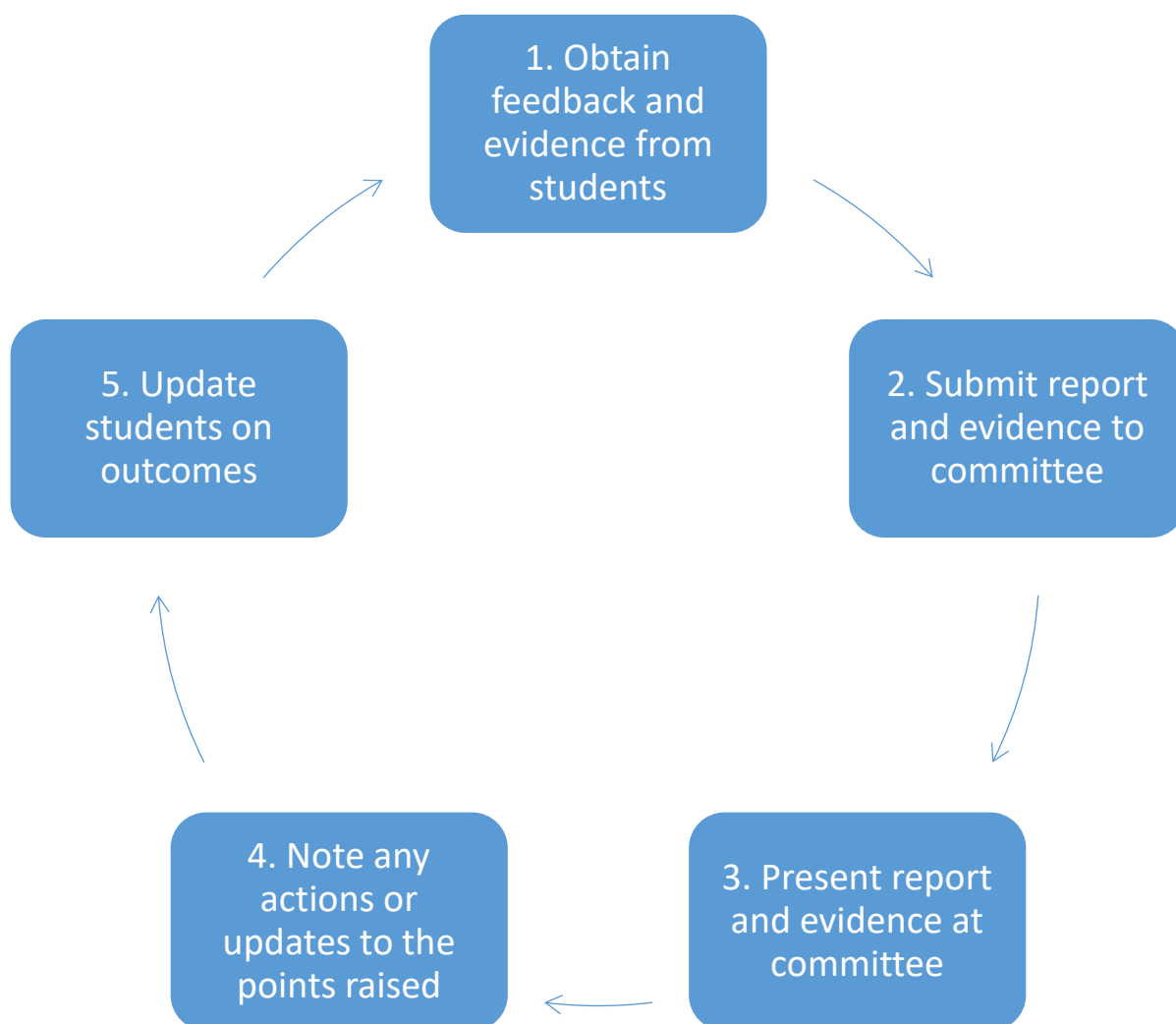
To support the claims made by students it is useful to obtain evidence. This helps to demonstrate that the points are factual and could include videos, photos, data, documents, emails and other research.

13.3 Providing updates after committees

Student Reps must feedback any updates or developments to students within two weeks of a committee taking place. This can be done in a number of ways including delivering updates at the end of lectures, organising update sessions, email, social media and the VLE.

13.4 The Student Rep Feedback Cycle

The diagram below demonstrates the steps Student Reps must take when giving and receiving feedback:



14.0 Advocacy and Representation

14.1 Advocating between committees

Student Reps do not have to wait for formal committees before raising an issue. They can advocate at any time using a range of informal channels to notify the University of students' issues and help to obtain resolutions. Informal channels include:

- Discussions with Tutors (about course related issues)
- Meetings with Course Leaders (about course related issues)
- Discussions with NUA Staff (about specific NUA products/services)
- Meetings with the Students' Union President (about any student issue)

14.2 Reporting Course Related Issues

Depending on the urgency and type of course related issue raised, Student Reps can utilise the following options to feedback about the student experience:

Option One – Discussion with Tutor

Option Two – Meeting with Course Leader

Option Three – Meeting with Students' Union President

Option Four – Report at next Course Committee Meeting

It is generally expected that Student Reps will liaise with the relevant Tutor or Course Leader in the first instance to have an informal discussion about the issues raised and to propose ideas for resolution. If a resolution can't be sought then the Students' Union President can be contacted to provide additional support, guidance and representation. Wherever possible Student Reps should obtain evidence to support any claims made by students (see Section 13.)

14.3 Reporting Non-Course Related Issues

Non-course related issues include general campus facilities, University activities and University services such as accommodation. Depending on the urgency and type of issue raised, Student Reps can utilise the following options to feedback about the student experience:

Option One – Meeting with Students' Union President

Option Two – Meeting with relevant NUA department

Option Three – Report at next Student Reps Group

It is generally expected that Student Reps will liaise with the relevant NUA department in the first instance to have an informal discussion about the issues raised and to propose ideas for resolution. If a resolution can't be sought, then the Students' Union President can be contacted to provide additional support, guidance and representation. Wherever possible Student Reps should obtain evidence to support any claims made by students (see Section 13.)

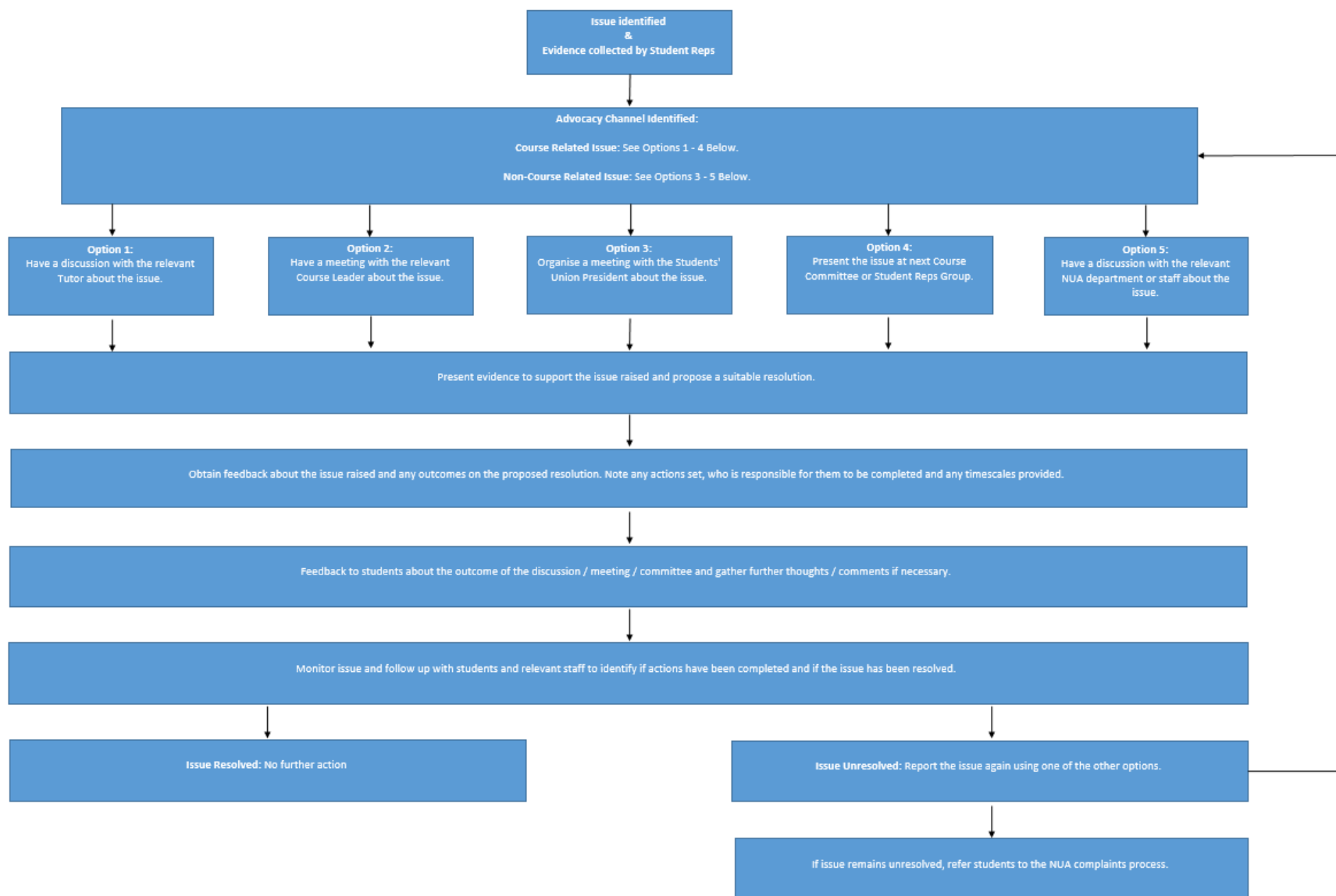
14.4 Complaints

Effective advocacy and representation should limit the number of formal complaints raised. However, students have the right to raise a formal complaint at any time as indicated within Section K of the NUA Student Regulations and Procedures, available via the Intranet. Students can also seek information, advice and guidance from the Students' Union regarding the complaints process.

14.5 Advocacy Flowchart

An Advocacy Flowchart has been developed to provide an overview to Student Reps on how to report issues. This can be found overleaf.

Advocacy Flowchart:



15.0 Breaches and Disputes

15.1 Reporting Issues

Any issues relating to the attendance, performance or conduct of a Student Rep can be reported to the Students' Union President via email (su.president@nua.ac.uk) or face to face.

15.2 Resolving Issues

The Students' Union President will be responsible for investigating and resolving any issues raised. Depending on the nature of the issue the Students' Union President may take the following steps:

- Organise an informal discussion with the Student Rep about the issue raised
- Implement additional training and support for the Student Rep
- Conduct a new Working Agreement with the Student Rep

Note: If student conduct breaches any NUA policies and procedures then the issue will be referred to the Academic Registry Department to investigate.

16.0 List of contacts/NUA departments

Students' Union

SU President: su.president@nua.ac.uk

SU Administrator: su.administrator@nua.ac.uk

Student Support

Support: support@nua.ac.uk

Accommodation support: M.Marshall-Nichols@nua.ac.uk

Course Administration

Course admin: courseadmin@nua.ac.uk

IT Support

Support helpdesk: ServiceDesk@nua.ac.uk