



Student panel update

Purpose

1. To update the board on the work of the student panel.

Recommendations/Decisions required by the board

2. The board is invited to note the updates in this paper.

Paper publication date

3. This report will be made available on the OfS website.

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Update

4. The student panel met for the third time of this cycle on 6 April. There were three substantive discussion sessions at the meeting: one on the statement of expectations on sexual misconduct and harassment, one on awarding gaps, and another on a potential student panel research project.
5. The first session discussed an evaluation that is underway to assess how the statement of expectations has affected provider approaches to sexual misconduct and harassment. The evaluation is being coordinated by SUMs consulting. After an introduction by Beth Cooper, Senior Officer – Access & Participation, SUMs' lead consultants Helen Baird and Ruth Buckingham joined to facilitate the discussion. When asked what areas the evaluation should measure, the panel suggested:
 - a. Student and staff awareness of the SoE.
 - b. Communication tactics around the SoE.
 - c. Complaint and investigation processes.
 - d. Support offered to students.
6. The second session explored the OfS's current practice and future direction on awarding gaps. The discussion was held to understand students' advice on tackling awarding gaps better, and how we can embed students' voices into interventions aimed at changing cultures within providers. (Sarah Howls, Head of Access and Participation) and a student panel member (Maisha Islam) co-facilitated the discussion. The panel discussed:
 - a. Examples of interventions instituted by their providers to address awarding gaps, such as the creation of an attainment gap council. This involved an institutional approach where students and staff working together to minimise attainment gaps.
 - b. The need for interventions/activities to be intersectional, acknowledging and including each individual's unique experiences and backgrounds.
 - c. What providers can do to remove barriers for students getting involved in this work, such as alleviating overcomplicated application processes.
7. The final topic discussed potential research that could be commissioned by the student panel on the OfS's strategic priorities. Various research questions were explored as well as discussing how the panel could be involved based on their areas of interest.
8. Outside of formal panel meetings, panel members participated in several other opportunities for engagement such as:
 - a. Providing written feedback on a two-page summary document for access and participation plans.
 - b. Sharing their experiences for various projects, such as case studies for the Student Engagement team, and the Discover Uni Instagram account.

- c. Attending the OfS strategy launch parliamentary event.
 - d. Participated in two focus groups about how to best promote the student panel to new applicants ahead of our next cycle of panel member recruitment.
9. The next student panel meeting will take place on 22 June 2022.