Introduction and Scope

1. Student engagement has a number of definitions. For the purpose of this section of the Quality Manual, the definition included in QAA's UK Quality Code for HE advice and guidance has been adopted:

    The participation of students in influencing and improving their educational experience. This is related to the participation of students in quality assurance and enhancement processes, which includes, but is not restricted to, representation of the student view though formal representation mechanisms.

2. The UKQC notes that a holistic approach will include students engaging in their own learning as active partners in the learning process. This involves improving the motivation and investment of students to engage in learning and to learn independently. This is covered in the St George's, University of London Strategic Vision under the Education and Student Experience strategy.

Students as Partners in Student Engagement

3. It is St George's policy:
    - to engage students fully as partners in the development of all policies and procedures relating to the quality of its programmes of study
    - to actively seek student feedback on all aspects of their experience of learning, teaching and assessment and in using that feedback to enhance the experience of current and future students

Student engagement processes

4. St George's engages with students in a number of ways and at a number of levels. This section of the Quality Manual focuses on the student engagement processes that all programmes are required to adopt, support and implement. These are:

    - Student Representation System (paragraphs 9-15)
    - Student Advisors (SAs) (paragraphs 16-17)
    - Course Committees (paragraphs 18-20)
    - Student-Staff Committees (paragraph 21-23)
    - Student Online Teaching Survey (SOLTS) (paragraphs 24-27)
    - Unitu (paragraphs 28-30)
    - The National Student Survey (31-37)
    - The Student Experience Survey (paragraphs 38-39)
    - The Postgraduate Research Experience Survey and the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (paragraphs 40)

5. Additional processes and/or one-off initiatives may be used to allow St George's to learn more about the individual or collective student experience. As a point of principle, approaches to obtaining student opinion should be systematic and strategic. They should

be designed to allow St George's to plan targeted action to improve the student experience. Where initiatives are planned, they should be authorised in advance by the Course Director/Course Committee to ensure that the purpose is consistent with the guiding principle and that the outcomes of the innovation can be disseminated via the Course Committee, through the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC), the Student Experience Monitoring and Advisory Group or through any other appropriate forum.

6. The expectations of this section of the Quality Manual apply equally to students enrolled on St George's programmes offered by collaborative partners. The views of students on collaborative programmes will be sought, individually and collectively, on learning, teaching and assessment. Students will also be involved in decision-making committees and groups. The means by which these expectations are achieved may vary depending on the nature of the collaboration (see section E of this Manual on Collaborative Provision).

7. Other engagement activities, including extracurricular activities, include student ambassadorships, peer assisted learning and volunteering. These activities do not fall within the scope of the Quality Manual.

8. Governance arrangements through the Student Experience Monitoring and Advisory Group, the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee and the Education & Students Strategy Committee are outlined in paragraphs 42-44.

Student Representation System

9. Student Representatives play a central role in promoting the student voice at St George's. They do this by providing a link with staff by representing the views of the students on any aspect of the student learning experience. Representatives actively seek out student views and work with staff to resolve any programme-related issues identified by students. They do this informally and formally, primarily by representing students at the Course Committee and Student-Staff Committee meetings.

10. The Representation System is run by the Students' Union (SGSU) with the support of St George's. Representatives on most programmes are elected through the Students' Union and the SGSU-elected reps put forward the views of their cohort in the Course Committee and Student-Staff Committee meetings organised by the University.

11. The Students' Union may not organise elections for Representatives on Continuing Personal and Professional Development programmes. If there are no SGSU-elected reps, the responsibility for ensuring that students are able to participate effectively in Course Committee and Student-Staff Committee meetings rests with the teaching teams. In these instances, the teaching team will need to encourage students to elect or select those students that they would wish to represent them. Where this is the case, the names of the student/year representatives may be made available to the Students' Union for information on request.

12. Representatives on part-time programmes might find it difficult to find time to commit to the role. Students can be consulted about the arrangements that they might find helpful,

such as flexibility in the timing and conduct of meetings. Typically, Course Committee and Student-Staff Committee meetings will be held on the day on which teaching takes place so that students are able to attend.

13. It may not be feasible for distance learning programmes to arrange Course Committees or Student-Staff Committees where students and staff are present. This type of programme should define and publish arrangements, based for example on the use of discussion boards and other electronic media.

Preparation of student representatives

14. Induction and training, coordinated by the Dean for Welfare and Student Support, is offered to Students' Union sabbatical officers. If possible, induction and training events will be timed so that outgoing sabbatical officers can contribute to the preparation of their successors.

15. In addition to the sabbatical officer training, the Students' Union runs training programmes for all officers of the Union and Year Representatives, in collaboration with the Student Experience Team. The training programmes prepare students for their roles (in terms of canvassing the views of other students; their role in Course and Student-Staff Committee meetings; their role on Unitu; and reporting back to their peers). Year representatives can be provided with an overview of current issues by senior staff as part of their Students' Union training. St George's staff attend the Students' Union Senate on request or when views on a specific issue are sought. The Head of Student Services and Student Experience Team are St George's points of contact available to work with the Students' Union in the preparation of SU officers and Year Representatives.

Student Advisors

16. Student Advisors (SAs) are students who are recruited to work on specific projects at St George's and are paid an hourly rate for the tasks and activities that they are involved in. They work closely with staff and other students to create and implement meaningful change within programmes and the University at large. Academic leadership for SAs rests with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) and with operational support provided by the Centre for Innovation and Development in Education (CIDE). Examples of projects include reviewing the content and design of modules and providing reflective insights and recommendations on aspects of the student experience.

17. The appointed Student Advisors are expected to complete a certain number of tasks and activities to ensure progression of the project that they have been assigned to and these may fall under the following categories:
    - Initial training
    - Participation in workshops and forums
    - Canvassing students' views and conveying change and innovation to them
    - Providing informed insights, critical perspectives and creative thinking of the student body

Course committees

18. Each programme is responsible for setting up a Course Committee. The Course Committee is a forum in which staff and students are able to discuss issues about the general health of a programme and share ideas about ways in which the programme might be improved. Depending on the structure of the programme, there may also be sub-committees for subsidiary parts of the programme such as a module or year. A description of the way in which the Course Committee system operates should be included in each programme handbook. QAEC has issued a policy statement on course committees that is available for inclusion in programme handbooks (Appendix H1: Student Involvement in Course Committees).

19. Course Committees hold formal meetings. They are chaired by a senior member of staff, agendas are published, supporting papers are distributed in advance of meetings and minutes are kept. Each programme can decide:
    ♦ the level at which the Course Committee meetings will be held (e.g. module, year of study, whole programme);
    ♦ how students are (s)elected (see paragraphs 10-11);
    ♦ who has responsibility for setting up meetings, for distributing agenda papers and for follow-up work (including the authorship, approval and distribution of minutes);
    ♦ the timing and frequency of meetings;
    ♦ the role of course committees in programme monitoring.

20. There may be instances where representatives are asked to withdraw from a meeting, for example when the progress of individuals or the topics of examination papers are to be discussed. These sessions will be presented as reserved business on the agenda papers and in the minutes.

Student-Staff Committees

21. Student-Staff Committees (SSCs) are usually held on a termly basis meeting a minimum of three times per year. Their primary purpose is to receive feedback from Year Representatives (who will collect feedback from students on the programme); discuss matters relating to the programme and wider student experience; identify areas of good practice; and identify matters that could be addressed and recommend actions to improve the student experience. This will inform effective programme and University level action planning. The Associate Dean for Student Experience is responsible for policy in relation to SSCs including the timing and purpose of meetings.

22. The SSC is chaired by a nominated student representative who will work with the staff sub-chair (usually the Course Director or nominee). Attendees should normally include representation from the course team, student representatives for each year cohort and the Students' Union.

23. SSCs should record and track actions relating to matters arising using templates provided and updates on progress with actions should be received at subsequent meetings. SSCs are asked to report and make recommendations to the Course Committee on matters relating

to the programme and to the Student Experience Team on matters relating to the wider University student experience.

Student Online Teaching Survey (SOLTS)

24. The Student Online Teaching Survey (SOLTS) invites students to provide feedback on each module (or period of study) with a taught element throughout their programme of study. The survey is a requirement for all programmes. The survey has been designed to gather feedback from students on every aspect of the module, including the content, delivery and assessment, as well as the effectiveness of individual teachers. The Associate Dean for Student Experience is responsible for the coverage of the survey which will usually comprise of 10 standard questions using a standard Likert scale.

25. For those programmes that do not have a conventional modular structure, the Course Director will be responsible for identifying the periodicity at which student feedback will be sought.

26. The Student Online Teaching Survey is administered internally by the Student Experience Team. Module survey results and teachers' feedback is shared with the module leader and teaching staff receive their own feedback and the module survey results. Module leaders are responsible for sending a reflection of the feedback and proposed actions to all students on the module. Course Directors are responsible for integrating insights gained from the results into programme level action planning.

27. Reports will be provided for the Education & Students Strategy Committee (ESSC) on completion rates, areas of good practice and actions that require strategic intervention.

Unitu - student voice platform

28. Unitu is an online platform that enables individual students, student representatives and staff to raise issues, suggest ideas and open a discussion about any programme -related and university-wide matter.

29. The Unitu platform enables individual students to post messages on a private message board that is accessible to others on the student's programme and similar programmes. If the content of the message receives traction amongst the student online communities, the student representative will migrate the message to a public board for staff to pick up and respond to as appropriate. The Unitu platform therefore allows issues that matter to students to be raised in a transparent way and for a real-time solution to be developed following consultation between staff and students.

30. Academic leadership for Unitu rests with the Associate Dean for the Student Experience and with operational support provided by the Student Experience Team. All students must be able to access Unitu and programme teams are expected to work with the Associate Dean and the Student Experience Team to facilitate access to the platform.

The National Student Survey (NSS)

31. All final year undergraduate students are invited to complete the National Student Survey (NSS). The NSS is conducted annually between January and April and the results are made available to participating Institutions in the following July. The NSS is conducted by Ipsos, an independent market research company, with operational support delivered by the Student Experience Team.

32. The Director of Planning (or nominee) will undertake the initial detailed analysis of the findings of the NSS. The results and the supporting analysis are distributed to relevant senior staff and the Student Experience Team for further analysis and reporting.

33. The results, supporting analysis and reports are submitted to relevant Committees and Groups, including Executive Board, the Education and Students Strategy Committee (ESSC) and the Student Experience Monitoring and Advisory Group.

34. ESSC receives the NSS results, analysis and reports for the institution as a whole and for each subject area when it meets in the autumn term. ESSC can make recommendations for institutional responses, actions and projects to be carried out to address arising issues. The Student Experience Monitoring and Advisory is responsible for monitoring all NSS follow-up work.

35. Responsibility for addressing the subject-level NSS findings rests with the teams that deliver the programmes covered by the NSS. These teams are expected to discuss the results at Student-Staff Committees to explore the meaning of the results and formulate the outcomes of that analysis into actions.

36. Professional directorates that offer services that impact on the student experience are also expected to formulate Action Plans.

37. Actions taken in response to the NSS must be included in the Annual Programme Monitoring Report.

The Student Experience Survey (SES)

38. All non-final year undergraduate students are invited to complete the Student Experience Survey (SES). The SES is administered internally by the Student Experience Team. It is usually conducted annually between February and April (alongside the NSS). The SES results are analysed and distributed in the same way as for the NSS (see paragraphs 32-37).

39. Most professional directorates run user satisfaction surveys and use the results of these surveys to plan the delivery of the service. In many instances, the SES can be used to capture student views about service provision. Where this is not practical, responsibility for the administration of supplementary surveys rests with the Director of Service. This responsibility includes the timing and frequency of the survey, survey design and the arrangements for processing the survey results and disseminating outcomes and actions to staff and students.

Postgraduate Research Experience Survey and Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey

40. St George's participates in the biennial Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) and the annual Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (PTES). These surveys are administered by Advance HE and the Student Experience Team support the operational delivery. The Deputy Head of the Graduate School (Taught Postgraduate Courses) will have oversight for PTES and the Deputy Head of the Graduate School (Research Degrees) has the equivalent responsibility in relation to PRES. The Student Experience Team will distribute survey results, undertake analysis and produce reports in collaboration with the Graduate School. The Graduate School will produce Action Plans and include actions in Annual Programme Monitoring Reports.

Governance - Student Experience Monitoring and Advisory Group, Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee and the Education & Students Strategy Committee

41. All aspects of Student Engagement are overseen, monitored and delivered under the aegis of the Student Experience Monitoring and Advisory Group (SEM&AG).

42. SEM&AG is responsible for advising on strategic direction, resourcing, reputational and policy matters related to student experience and engagement institution-wide. It coordinates and evaluates student experience interventions and student engagement across all institutes, centres and departments.

43. SEM&AG is a key advisory, monitoring and action planning group that reports into the Education & Students Strategy Committee (ESSC), to which it is accountable. SEM&AG is responsible for development, implementation, evaluation and monitoring of the quality assurance processes that underpin effective student engagement. In this regard, SEM&AG is accountable to QAEC.

Forms and guidance notes

44. The following guidance notes are available from the Quality and Partnerships Directorate:

Appendix H1: Student Involvement in Course Committee