**Unitu principles for effective departmental board management**

This document outlines the expectations of Unitu departmental boards as well as the roles and responsibilities for staff members who have access to a departmental board.

**1. Purpose of Unitu**

1.1 Unitu is a digital voice platform which was introduced to all St George’s students in February 2020. Unitu is an online place where students, Year Reps and staff can collectively raise, discuss and resolve both academic and student experience issues.

1.2 Unitu differs from emails or Canvas as it allows for a dialogue to be created between staff and students. This has been particularly important when creating student-friendly solutions in response to challenges posed by Covid-19.

**2. Board Admin Role**

2.1 Each departmental board is overseen by the Board Admins who are responsible for managing their respective departmental board. Their role consists of ensuring feedback moved into the ‘open’ column by Year Reps is responded to in a timely manner and/or assigned to the appropriate staff member.

2.2 When reviewing posts in the ‘open’ column, Board Admins should allocate the post to the person who is best placed to respond. For example, a query regarding resources for second year students should be assigned to the second year lead.

**3. Staff responsibility**

3.1 It is the responsibility for the Board Admin to respond to the post within five days of it entering the ‘public’ board. A response is defined as acknowledging a post, assigning to a colleague or closing a post where a resolution can be made. Once a post has been assigned to a staff member, it should be dragged to the ‘in progress’ column.

3.2 Once a post has been assigned to a relevant staff member they should attempt to make a resolution within five days. Where this is possible, the post can be dragged to the ‘closed’ column. A post should only be closed once a resolution has been given. This may not always be possible, so the staff member should comment any relevant updates until a resolution can be given. It is better to provide small updates than leave posts unanswered for a long period of time.

3.3 It is the responsibility of Board Admins and the Course Director (for programme specific queries) to chase colleagues if a post has gone beyond its ‘expected response date’.

3.4 If a post is applicable to all students eg. a Student Finance or accommodation query, the Board Admin can move the post to the University Board. If a post is difficult to resolve or covers a controversial issue you can ask for support from the Unitu Implementation Team by emailing experience@sgul.ac.uk

**4. Responding to posts**

4.1 It is worth noting that each post created on Unitu should be responded to on a case-by-case basis. However, here are some useful principles to adopt.

4.2 When providing an initial response, Board Admins and staff members should acknowledge and thank the author for creating the post. It is recommended that you sign off the post with your name to make your response more personable.

4.3 Take the time to respond to all elements of the query. For example “why have all of our assessments not been delayed” has two components, the process issues around the actual dates and the perception of the student that they should be moved, both need addressing.

4.4 Some of the most valuable content in a thread is the comments which proceed the original post. If there are any relevant queries in the comments section respond to them as well.

4.5 To allow for greater transparency, explain the actions you are taking on Unitu and/or outside of the platform. For example, “I am going to close this post as there have been no further comments other the past five days” or “I will include a more detailed response in a Canvas announcement later today.”

4.6 Once you have given your response it is good practice to leave the post open for three days to see if students have any additional feedback.

**5. Communication channels**

5.1 When communicating with an entire programme or specific cohort, announcements should be made via all student emails or Canvas announcements. This is a policy which has been adopted by the University’s Communication Team. All students will have access to emails and Canvas, whereas only 48% of students (25% of Allied Health & Nursing students) have accessed their Unitu account.

5.2 Unitu can be used as a platform to inform decision-making and listen to student views but it should not be the primary communication channel when delivering messages to an entire programme or a specific cohort of students.

**6. Reported content**

6.1 Unitu is intended to be a productive, positive, solution-orientated forum. However, rude/irrelevant/spam posts and comments have been created on the platform. If a staff member sees a post or comment which they is not appropriate for the platform they can ‘report’ it and the Unitu Moderation Group will review and take further action in accordance with [Unitu’s content policy](https://unitu.co.uk/content-policy/).