

Student Voice Policy

1. Purpose

This policy sets out Walbrook's approach to supporting an effective student voice across all higher education provision. An effective student voice is core to our institutional strategy and is also a regulatory requirement. In particular, this policy directly supports the Student Experience pillar of the Walbrook Institutional Strategy 2026–2031, whose strategic intent is to deliver outstanding experience and excellent outcomes to students, including a strong student community and sense of belonging and responsive academic and pastoral support. The policy establishes the structures, roles and responsibilities through which students can represent their interests, contribute to decision-making, and influence the quality of their educational experience.

This policy should be read alongside the Student Charter, which sets out the mutual rights and responsibilities of Walbrook and its students and forms the basis of the partnership between them. The Charter records Walbrook's commitment that elected student representatives will sit on all relevant deliberative committees, and the corresponding commitment from students to support representatives by providing feedback that improves the quality of learning and teaching.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

1. All registered students of Walbrook, whether studying on campus or online.
2. All staff involved in programme delivery, student support, governance and committee administration.
3. All formal and informal mechanisms through which student feedback and representation are gathered, including programme-level liaison meetings, institutional committees, the Student Council, and peer support forums.
4. All references to "student" herein refers to all learners on higher education awards at Walbrook, including apprentices.

3. Legal and Regulatory Context

Walbrook recognises that supporting the student voice is both a strategic priority and a regulatory obligation.

Education Act 1994: where a students' union or association exists, the Act requires it to be democratically run, accountable to its student members, and operated independently of the institution's control. This protects students' rights to free association and representation, ensuring that any representative body is not simply a mouthpiece for university management.

Regulatory expectations: while there is no statutory requirement for an institution to maintain a separate representative body, the absence of effective structures for student representation and institutional voice creates a risk of failing to meet regulatory expectations regarding meaningful student engagement. Walbrook's approach is designed to meet these expectations in a manner proportionate to its size and student population.

4. Guiding Principles

1. Student voice is heard at every level: from individual programmes through to institutional governance.
2. Representation is proportionate: structures reflect the size, maturity and composition of Walbrook's student population and will scale as the institution grows.
3. Engagement is inclusive: mechanisms accommodate both campus-based and online students, recognising their differing needs, availability and modes of engagement.
4. Feedback leads to action: outcomes of student engagement are captured, reported and fed into annual review and quality assurance processes.
5. Independence is safeguarded: as representative structures develop, Walbrook will put in place processes (such as ring-fenced funding and clear terms of reference) to demonstrate their independent operation.
6. Voice extends beyond representation: this policy focuses on representative structures and their input into formal committees through the institutional hierarchy, but Walbrook also recognises and triangulates wider sources of student voice, as set out in Section 5.4.

5. Structures for Student Voice

5.1 Programme Level

Every programme will hold staff-student liaison forums. Each programme will have one or more elected or nominated student course representatives. Outcomes from programme-level liaison meetings will be recorded and fed into the annual programme review process.

5.2 Institutional Level

Wherever possible, every formal committee, group, programme validation panel and periodic review will include student representation. The current institutional decision-making structure incorporates student representation, and this policy formalises the mechanisms by which that representation is recruited, supported and sustained.

5.3 A Representative Body

All UK higher education institutions maintain some form of representative body for their students. There are two recognised models:

- An independent entity, normally constituted as a charity, which most clearly demonstrates independent operation and allows the institution to distance itself from the body's actions.
- A structure embedded within the institution, which can support student-led services efficiently in a smaller institution, provided that appropriate safeguards (such as ring-fenced funding and clear governance) are in place to demonstrate independence.

The large majority of UK higher education institutions operate an independent charitable students' union. Some smaller providers operate an embedded structure. An effective representative body, in either model, typically supports the student experience directly — for example through advice on complaints and appeals — reducing the burden that would otherwise fall on institutional staff.

Given Walbrook's current size, and that a significant proportion of its student body studies online and is largely composed of working adults with limited capacity to engage in traditional union activity, Walbrook has adopted an embedded model in the first instance, delivered through a dedicated Student Council team. This approach will be reviewed and may evolve toward greater autonomy, or to an independent entity, as the student population grows and the structure matures.

5.4 Other Sources of Student Voice

In addition to the representative structures set out above, Walbrook recognises the wider sources of student voice identified in Guiding Principle 6, including internal and national survey data, learning analytics, library usage, social media contributions, employability data, co-creation activity, outcomes from the complaints and appeals process, and behavioural indicators such as attendance, engagement and withdrawal statistics.

Registry is responsible for co-ordinating the triangulation of these sources with the outcomes of representative-structure engagement, working with the relevant institutional teams who own individual data sources including Student Engagement, Library, Marketing. Themes and trends identified through these sources are reported on a quarterly basis to LTQC with an action plan, and incorporated into the annual report as referenced in Section 9., alongside the representative-structure outcomes

Individual sources remain governed by their own relevant policies and processes, including the Complaints and Appeals Policy. This policy does not supersede those arrangements; it ensures their outcomes inform Walbrook's overall understanding of student voice alongside representative-structure activity.

6. The Student Council Team

Walbrook will establish a Student Council team, supported by Student Services. The team is responsible for:

1. Recruiting and training student course representatives.
2. Co-ordinating student representation on institutional committees.
3. Organising social events for campus-based students.
4. Facilitating online peer support forums.
5. Co-ordinating Student Council meetings.
6. Co-ordinating meetings between Student Council leads and the Executive team.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Provost	Maintain oversight of the student voice structure; meet regularly with Student Council leads; ensure outcomes inform institutional strategy.
Director of Students	Manage and resource the Student Council team.
Student Council Team	Deliver the functions set out in Section 6; including support recruitment, training and ongoing development of representatives and to act as the primary point of co-ordination for student representation.
Student Course Representatives	Represent the views of their peers at programme-level liaison meetings and, where applicable, on institutional committees.
Programme Teams	Convene programme-level liaison meetings; record and act on outcomes; feed findings into annual review.
HE Services Team	Oversight of internal student survey management.

Committee Chairs / Secretaries	Ensure student representation is sought and supported on relevant committees, panels and reviews.
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8. Phased Development

Recognising that Walbrook is a relatively small and growing institution, the student voice structure will be developed in phases:

- Phase 1 (current): establish the Student Council team within Student Services, embed programme-level liaison meetings, and secure student representation on institutional committees.
- Phase 2: as the student population and the structure mature, review the level of autonomy afforded to the Student Council, including its funding, governance and operational independence.
- Phase 3: evaluate whether a more independent or formally constituted representative body (for example, a charitable students' union) is appropriate, in light of institutional size, student demand and regulatory expectations.

Progress against each phase will be reported to LTQC as part of the annual review referenced in Section 9.

9. Monitoring, Review and Reporting

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Provost, or sooner in response to regulatory change, significant growth in student numbers, or material change to the institution's delivery model. An annual report on student representation activity, including outcomes from programme-level liaison meetings and Student Council activity, will be presented to LTQC.

10. Related Policies and Documents

- Student Charter
- Complaints Policy
- Appeals Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Programme Handbooks
- Walbrook Institutional Strategy 2026–2031 (Student Experience pillar)
- Education Act 1994

11. Document Governance

Policy Owner	Provost
Approving Body	Academic Board
Approval Date	12 August 2026

Implementation Date	1 October 2026
Review Date	Annually – next review September 2027
Version	1.0
Related Documents	Walbrook Institutional Strategy 2026–2031 (Student Experience pillar); Student Charter; Complaints and Appeals Policy; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy; Programme Handbook