**RSU Chairing Brief: How to Lead Effective Student Meetings**

What is a Chair?

As **Chair**, you lead the meeting. Your role is to make sure discussions are clear, inclusive, focused, and productive. In the context of Roehampton’s academic representation system, this typically applies to School Reps chairing School Student Voice Forums (SSVFs).

Your job is to create a space where everyone can contribute meaningfully, and student voice can be heard and acted upon.

What Does a Chair Do?

As Chair, you:

* Guide the meeting through its agenda and bring it to a close.
* Encourage respectful, inclusive conversation – no interruptions!
* Bring discussions back on track if they drift.
* Keep the meeting running on time.
* Make sure everyone, especially students, gets a chance to speak.
* Understand who’s in the room and what perspectives they bring.

You're not expected to have all the answers your role is to facilitate. Everyone shares responsibility for making the meeting successful, but you take the lead.

Preparing to Chair

Before the meeting, ask yourself:

* Who’s attending and what are their roles? (e.g., Programme Reps, academic staff, professional services staff)
* What’s on the agenda? Read all the papers in advance.
* What key points do I want to raise or emphasise?
* How will I make sure quieter voices are heard?
* How will I report back to students afterwards? (Closing the feedback loop is vital!)

Feedback Loop Tips:

* Post updates on Moodle or your course WhatsApp group.
* Share key outcomes in class or via email.
* Highlight real changes made because of student feedback.

Chairing the Meeting

During the meeting:

* Be assertive but fair. Step in if one person is dominating or the conversation is drifting.
* Keep track of time, don’t be afraid to move things along.
* Invite quieter attendees to speak: “Would you like to add anything?”
* Summarise points at the end of each topic to ensure clarity.
* Stay neutral where appropriate as your job is to enable the group, not decide everything yourself.
* Watch out for who is and isn’t participating, try to gently encourage balance.

After the Meeting

* You'll receive minutes and possibly actions (tasks to follow up on).
* Complete your actions on time as reliability builds trust and credibility.
* Most importantly, communicate back to students what was discussed and what will happen next.

Final Thoughts

Chairing can feel like a big responsibility, but you don’t need to be perfect – just prepared, fair, and confident. Roehampton SU and academic staff are here to support you. You’re helping shape the student experience and that’s something to be proud of.