

Q&A about student influence and student councils

What is a student council?

A student council is a unit within the student union that organizes all students at their respective department so that students can affect their education and study situation. For example, the Student council at the Department of History organizes all students on bachelor and master level at that department. Every department also has a PhD student council that organizes the PhD students.

What does a student council do?

Their main objective is to make sure that student's voices are heard and that students can affect their education and study situation. They organize meetings where students can meet and discuss issues related to their education and where students form strategies for how they can push for change. Student councils are also electing student representatives to the decision making and preparatory groups within their department.

What can a student council affect?

Student councils can affect almost everything, for example issues regarding the quality of the education, how courses and programs can be improved, seminar culture, course literature, examinations, and the courses connection to work life.

Are student councils doing other things than working with student influence?

Yes, the student councils can arrange social events and study groups for example. They can apply for funding from the Student Union office to arrange bigger projects, for example film festivals, writing retreats, courses for students in academic writing and Excel. So, you can also get involved with your student council if you would like to arrange projects and social activities for students.

How is a student council governed?

A council is run by a board that usually consists of a chairperson, vice chairperson, treasurer and secretary. They plan the council's activities and meetings and make sure that the council stays active and operational. The board is elected once a year at the annual meeting.

How do I join a student council?

All students at a department have right to attend, speak and vote at their local student council's meetings. To get involved with your council you can contact them through their e-mail, social media or Athena page (if they have one) and ask them about upcoming activities. If your council has an Athena page you can follow it for information about upcoming events. For contact information to the different student councils you can visit SUS' website.

What are the benefits of joining a student council?

By joining a student council, you get to affect your education. You also get experience and merits for your CV. If you choose to take on a role as a student representative you will receive payment for your commitment. Lastly, by being part of a student council you learn more about the department and university and establish contacts with people within your future industry.

Do I have to pay to get involved with a student council?

No, it is free of charge to join a student council and students who sign up to be a student representative and attend meetings in the department's decision making and preparatory groups actually earn money. You also get paid for being the chairperson of a student council (450 kr every semester).

What is a student representative?

A student representative is a student that has been elected by their local student council to represent all students at the department in a decision making or preparatory group. For example, the department board, a program council, or an education committee. Different departments have different groups.

How do I know which decision making and preparatory groups that I can be a student representative in?

There are lists of all groups [here](#) where you can see all groups that students can be represented in. If you want to know which groups that have vacant positions at your department, you can contact your student council.

What does a student representative do?

A student representative attends the meetings of the group they have been elected to. At the meetings they represent all students and contributes with a student perspective in discussions and decisions. Usually the student representative discusses upcoming meetings with their student council beforehand to decide what the representative should bring up. After the meeting with the departmental group the representative report back to the student council on what they discussed and if any decisions were made.

I want to become a student representative in a group, what do I do?

You can begin with contacting your student council and ask what positions that are available. You can then nominate yourself by e-mailing the student council and preferably come to the next meeting where they will elect you. If there are no available positions at the moment you can wait until the annual meeting when they vote anew for all positions. Remember that all students have right to nominate themselves for all positions.

How much time does it take to be involved with a student council?

You can decide for yourself how involved you would like to be. You can for example be a part of the student council board or be a student representative which requires more work. Another alternative is that you only attend the student council meetings. The councils usually have one meeting every month. If you feel that you don't have the time to attend the meetings, you can keep in contact with your student council through Athena or e-mail. It is entirely up to you how active you would like to be.

What is required of me to become a student representative?

To be a student representative doesn't require any specific experiences or merits. All students can contribute with the student perspective so don't hesitate to apply. There is also a training for student representatives available where you can learn more about student influence and what it means to be a student representative [here](#). There is a Swedish version [here](#).

What do I need to do if I want to become a member of the board of my student council?

The board of the student council is elected at the annual meeting. However, if there are free positions in the board they can be filled at regular meetings. Contact your student council if you want more information about whether the board has free positions or when they will have their annual meeting.

I have more questions about student councils and student influence, who can I ask?

You can always ask your student council, or the student ombudsmen at the Stockholm university Student Union office. You can contact the ombudsmen through studentombud@sus.se.