ACADEMIC REPRESENTATION AT WORCESTER

Annual Report

2023-24

Contents

<u>The Academic Representation System at University of Worcester</u>

Our student representatives are essential in enhancing the student experience within their respective cohorts, courses, schools, and colleges. They provide invaluable insights that foster co-creation and collaboration from fresh, innovative perspectives. Working closely with university staff, these representatives spearhead student-led initiatives that benefit their peers and future students alike. At Worcester Students' Union, we believe our students are the true experts on what it means to study at Worcester (or any of our partner institutions) today. By actively seeking their input on their educational needs, we empower them to take a leading role, creating a more holistic and enriched learning experience.

How is the system structured?

The Undergraduate/Postgraduate Taught Academic Representation System consists of three levels: Course Reps, Department Reps, and the Vice President Education. Course Reps work at the Course level, Department Reps work at the Department and College Levels and the Vice President Education works at the University level.

This structure ensures that there is student representation at all levels within university decision-making.
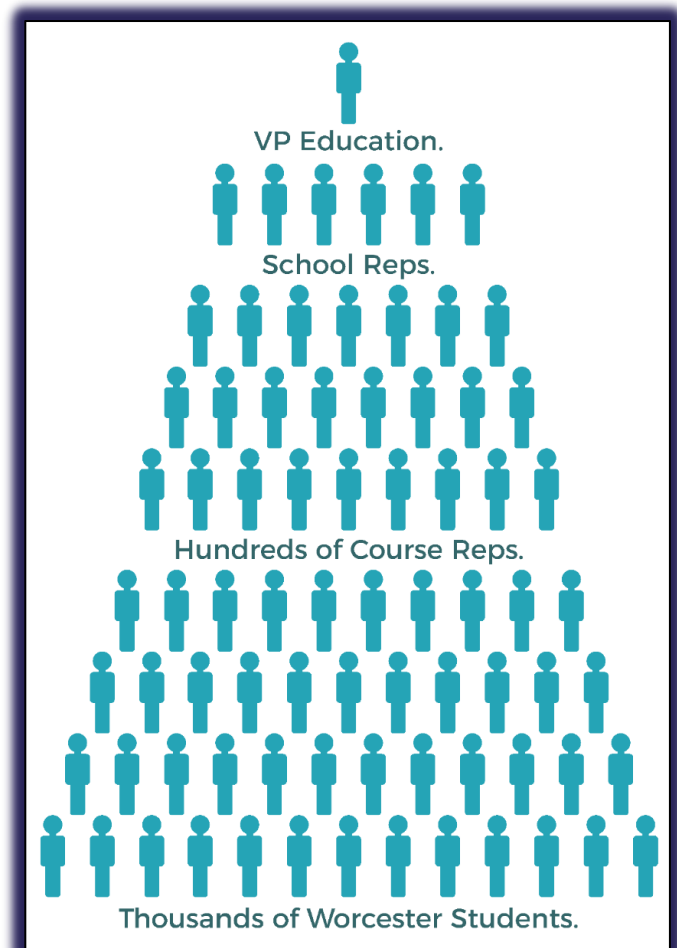
Course Rep Recruitment 2023-24

In the 2023-24 academic year, **339** Course Representatives volunteered their time to represent their peers' views and ensure the student voice was heard. This number reflects a decrease from 429 Reps in 2022-23 but a return to levels of engagement experienced in 2021-22 when we had 353 Reps in position. The number of Course Reps is determined by the Code of Practice, which specifies an ideal student-to-Representative ratio.

Department Rep Recruitment 2023-24

Department Reps create an essential link between Course Reps and senior members of staff within their School, Institute and College. This year, recruitment of Department Reps posed a challenge, with 7 of the 22 individuals being recruited after the desired deadline of early September. Consequently, additional resources were required to deliver supplemental training sessions, and several Department Reps missed the first cycle of Education and Student Council meetings. At the time of the first Education Council (October 2023) only 14 Department Reps had been recruited. A key objective for the Students' Union in 2024-25 is to achieve 100% recruitment of Department Reps by September 2024, ensuring timely training and full participation in the council cycle.

During the 2023-24 academic year, we had 22 out of 25 Department Rep positions filled, with all appointees undergoing training (100%). Additionally, there were two Department Rep roles in the new Medical School; however, these have not been included in the prior statistics for reasons detailed below. Of the 22 Department Reps, 8 were placement students, representing 36% of the group, which highlights strong engagement among placement students. Engagement levels among most Department Reps were commendable, with active participation in council and forum discussions.

Despite repeated recruitment efforts, the following Department Rep positions remained vacant in 2023-24 and will be prioritised in the coming year:

- Midwifery and CPD (also vacant in 2022-23)
- Geography & the Environment
- Psychology Postgraduate Taught

With the establishment of the Three Counties Medical School, two Department Rep roles were created for 2023-24:

- Medicine
- Physician Associates

Unfortunately, we were unable to fill these roles for this academic year. However, two Course Reps were elected within Medicine and actively engaged with staff and the Students' Union, occasionally fulfilling the responsibilities of the Department Rep role.

Education Council 2023-24

The Students' Union's Education Council oversees the prioritisation of educational policy within the Union and functions as a sub-group of Student Council (please see governance diagram below). It serves as a forum for Department Reps, Academic Society Chairs, the Vice President Education, and the President (in 2023-24 due to a vacancy in the VPE role) to collaborate, discuss, debate, and address issues affecting the students they represent. Additionally, it works to raise awareness of the academic representation system. Consultation on policy is a significant aspect of a Department Rep's role. This year, Reps were consulted on various topics through Education Council, including:

- Policy submission: Student choice for examinations
- Policy submission: Continuing Recording Lectures
- Policy submission: Progress Week Protection Policy
- Discussion topic: Personal Academic Tutors (PATs)
- Discussion topic: Reasonable Adjustment Plans (RAPs)
- Discussion topic: Timetabling
- Artificial Intelligence Workshop delivered by Helen Hope, Deputy Head of School, Sport & Exercise Science
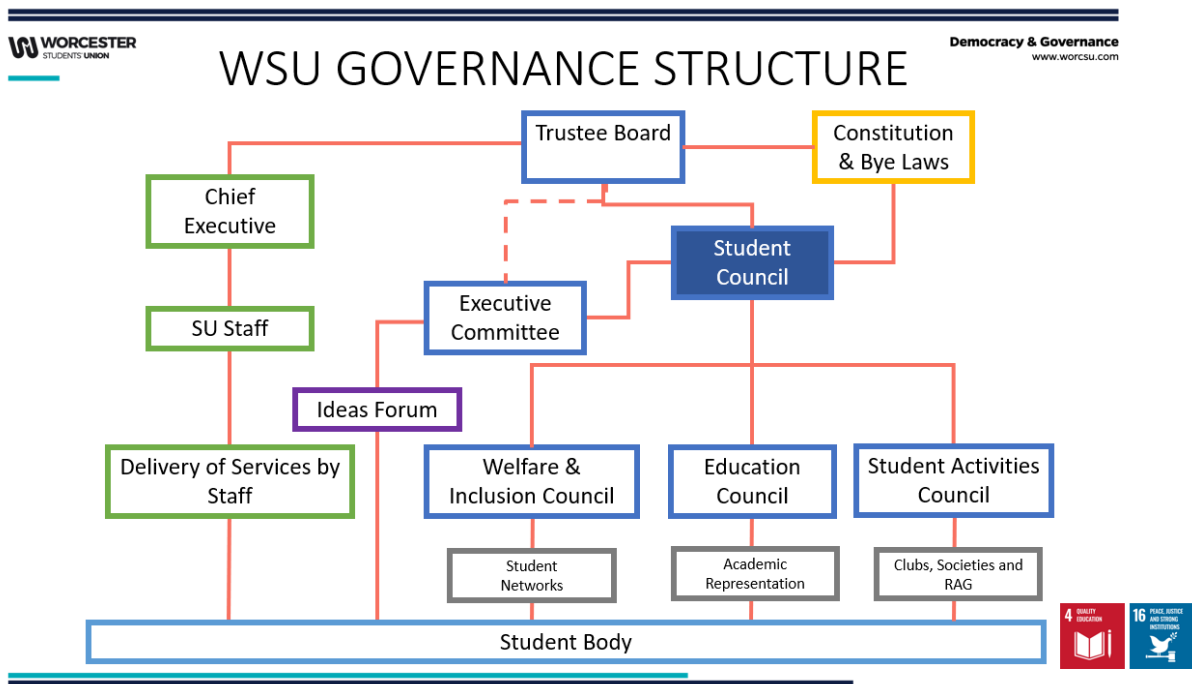
The average attendance rate across all four Education Council meetings was 48%, with meetings often failing to meet quorum. Consequently, a key priority for the Students' Union next year will be to emphasize the importance of these meetings and encourage higher attendance rates.

We have seen varying levels of engagement from Reps this year, however we have recognised a real sense of community building between the groups. This was especially prevalent in December when Reps became aware of the proposal to remove Progress Week (UW's version of a 'reading week') from the University's calendar. Our reps took it upon themselves to conduct surveys of students to ask for their feedback regarding this change and collectively received nearly 700 responses. The Reps shared the responses with the Students' Union, Timetabling team and University executives. The surveys showed an overwhelming disagreement with the idea of removing Progress Week from the calendar, with students also providing open text comments explaining why this was a decision they did not agree with. As a result, the university have reversed this decision for any current students and have promised to work with future cohorts of students to see what would benefit them most during the Progress Week period.

University Staff Support to the Academic Representation System

Support from University staff is vital to the functioning of the Academic Representation System. Every School/Institute should have a named member of academic staff with responsibility for supporting the Academic Reps within their School, Institute or Department. These are called the Academic Representation Coordinators, also known as ARCs, and Course Rep Coordinators. The ARC oversees the entire Academic Representation System within their School or Institute. They communicate with Course Reps, Department Reps, and other appropriate staff members with the aim of ensuring effective student representation. They will ensure that issues raised, and subsequent implemented changes, are fed back to Reps, while also helping Reps communicate the University response to their cohorts. They are also the first port of call for Reps who need advice and guidance regarding feedback.

Rep Demographics 2023-24

This year's data represents student engaging with these groups from Sept 2023-June 2024 and is compared with engagement last year Sept 2022-Aug 2023.

Table 1: Total Number of Course Reps between 2018-2019 and 2022-23

2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	**2023-24**
387	375	364	353	429	**339**

Table 2: Breakdown of Course Reps and Department Reps by Level of Study 2023-24

	03	04	05	06	07
UW	**8.72%**	**24.68%**	**21.01%**	**21.55%**	**24.04%**
Course Reps	6.31%	25.23%	25.53%	24.32%	18.62%
Variance from UW pop.	**-2.42%**	**0.55%**	**4.51%**	**2.78%**	**-5.42%**
Variance from UW pop. (22-23)	2.22%	1.05%	7.57%	3.72%	-14.56%
Department Reps	0.00%	9.09%	50.00%	31.82%	9.09%
Variance from UW pop.	**-8.72%**	**-15.59%**	**28.99%**	**10.27%**	**-14.95%**
Variance from UW pop. (22-23)	2.95%	-22.03%	13.83%	28.17%	-22.93%

Department Reps have a large negative variance of Level 7 (post-graduate) students of all groups when compared to the UW total (-14.95%). 75% of all students engaging in the role of Course Rep come from Level 4, 5 & 6.

Table 3: Breakdown of Course Reps by School/Institute from 2020-21 to 2023-24

School/Institute	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23		**2023-24**	
	Number of Reps	% of sample	Number of Reps	% of sample	Number of Reps	% of sample	**Number of Reps**	**% of sample**
Institute of Education	64	17.58 %	79	19.66%	88	21.05%	**61**	**17.99%**
School of Sport and Exercise Science	47	12.91 %	42	12.18%	42	10.04%	**36**	**10.62%**
School of Arts	46	12.64 %	38	13.60%	47	11.24%	**36**	**10.62%**
School of Allied Health and Community	49	13.46 %	45	13.03%	60	14.35%	**62**	**18.29%**
School of Humanities	31	8.52 %	31	9.07%	37	8.85%	**41**	**12.09%**
School of Science and the Environment	31	8.52 %	29	8.50%	25	5.98%	**13**	**3.83%**
Three Counties School of Nursing and Midwifery	36	9.89 %	43	11.05%	53	12.67%	**28**	**8.26%**
School of Psychology	22	6.04 %	18	5.67%	24	5.74%	**16**	**4.72%**
Worcester Business School	22	6.04 %	20	4.25%	33	7.89%	**30**	**8.85%**
Three Counties Medical School							**4**	**1.18%**
Joint Honours across Schools	16	4.39 %	11	2.99%	9	2.15%	**12**	**3.54%**

Table 4: Breakdown of Course Reps and Department Reps by Gender 2023-24

	Female	Male	Other	Prefer not to say
UW	**70.75%**	**28.64%**	**0.13%**	**0.48%**
Course Reps	70.57%	28.53%	0.60%	0.30%
Variance from UW pop.	**-0.18%**	**-0.11%**	**0.47%**	**-0.18%**
Variance from UW pop. (22-23)	-1.25%	0.82%	-0.14%	0.58%
Department Reps	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Variance from UW pop.	**-20.75%**	**21.36%**	**-0.13%**	**-0.48%**
Variance from UW pop. (22-23)	-8.77%	9.16%	-0.14%	-0.25%

There is minimal variance in gender with engagement in the role of Course Rep. However, there are significant variances with UW total in the role of Department Rep, with males far more likely to take up this more senior role (+21.36% variance on UW total). This variance was evident in the 2022-23 data (+9.16%) but has significantly increased.

Table 5: Breakdown of Course Reps and Department Reps by Nationality 2023-24

	Home	EU	Overseas
UW	**80.93%**	**4.93%**	**14.14%**
Course Reps	84.06%	5.18%	10.76%
Variance from UW pop.	**3.13%**	**0.25%**	**-3.38%**
Variance from UW pop. (22-23)	5.14%	0.62%	-5.76%
Department Reps	90.91%	0.00%	9.09%
Variance from UW pop.	**9.98%**	**-4.93%**	**-5.04%**
Variance from UW pop. (22-23)	11.86%	-0.33%	-11.53%

90.91% of all Department Reps are home students (+9.98% variance from the UW total). There were zero EU student appointed as Department Reps for 2023-24. The significantly lower level of Overseas students in the role of Department Reps in 2022-23 has seen a reduction of its negative variance (-11.53 to -5.04%).

Table 6: Breakdown of Course Reps and Department Reps by Ethnicity 2023-24

	White	Non-White	Unknown
UW	**74.76%**	**22.08%**	**3.16%**
Course Reps	77.78%	15.62%	6.61%
Variance from UW pop.	**3.02%**	**-6.47%**	**3.45%**
Variance from UW pop. (22-23)	9.03%	-9.72%	0.69%
Department Reps	72.73%	27.27%	0.00%
Variance from UW pop.	**-2.03%**	**5.19%**	**-3.16%**
Variance from UW pop. (22-23)	7.06%	-8.45%	1.39%

Both Course Reps & Department Reps have seen a slight increase in engagement with non-white students compared to last year. Representation of non-white students within Department Reps exceeds the UW total by +5.19%, a +13.64% swing compared to 2022-23.

Table 7: Breakdown of Course Reps and Department Reps by Age* 2023-24
*based on age at entry to academic year

	Mature (21+ years)	Young	Not Known
UW	**60.77%**	**39.03%**	**0.19%**
Course Reps	54.65%	45.35%	0.00%
Variance from UW pop.	**-6.12%**	**6.31%**	**-0.19%**
Variance from UW pop. (22-23)	-6.23%	6.58%	-0.35%
Department Reps	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%
Variance from UW pop.	**-10.77%**	**10.97%**	**-0.19%**
Variance from UW pop. (22-23)	-2.21%	2.56%	-0.35%

Department Reps have this year seen an opposite swing compared to last year, with a decrease in the proportion of Mature students engaging in these roles, resulting in a difference of -10.77% compared to the UW total.

Table 8: Breakdown of Course Reps and Department Reps by Disability Status 2023-24

	No known disability	Blind/ serious visual impairment	Deaf /serious hearing impairment	Disability, impairment or medical condition	Long standing illness or health condition	Mental health condition, such as depression	Social/communication impairment such as Asperger's	Specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia	Physical impairment or mobility issues	Two or more impairments and/or disabling conditions
UW	78.21%	0.29%	0.64%	1.54%	2.41%	6.85%	1.98%	7.42%	0.62%	0.05%
Course Reps	66.97%	1.20%	0.90%	2.70%	2.10%	13.51%	3.30%	8.71%	0.60%	0.00%
Variance from UW pop.	-11.24%	0.92%	0.26%	1.16%	-0.31%	6.66%	1.33%	1.29%	-0.02%	-0.05%
Variance from UW pop. (22-23)	-11.64%	0.34%	0.76%	0.83%	1.28%	2.11%	1.45%	4.19%	0.51%	0.17%
Department Reps	68.18%	0.00%	4.55%	4.55%	4.55%	0.00%	9.09%	9.09%	0.00%	0.00%
Variance from UW pop.	-10.03%	-0.29%	3.91%	3.00%	2.14%	-6.85%	7.12%	1.67%	-0.62%	-0.05%
Variance from UW pop. (22-23)	-2.22%	-0.20%	-0.61%	2.91%	2.25%	-5.86%	3.24%	1.19%	-0.58%	-0.10%

Across both Course and Department Reps, those engaging in these groups are less likely to identify as having 'No known disability' compared to UW total (-11.24% and -10.03% respectively). The percentage of students with mental health conditions among Course Reps is higher than the university population (+6.66%), but lower among Department Reps (-6.85%). Appointments to Department Rep positions shows a higher percentage of students with social/communication impairments than the university population (+7.12%).

Table 9: Breakdown of Course Reps and Department Reps by LGBT Status 2023-24

	Heterosexual	LGBT	Not Recorded
UW	**79.29%**	**10.81%**	**9.90%**
Course Reps	66.67%	18.32%	15.02%
Variance from UW pop.	**-12.62%**	**7.50%**	**5.11%**
Variance from UW pop. (22-23)	-5.68%	3.49%	2.19%
Department Reps	81.82%	13.64%	4.55%
Variance from UW pop.	**2.53%**	**2.82%**	**-5.36%**
Variance from UW pop. (22-23)	-30.13%	29.29%	0.84%

Both Course Reps and Department Reps have a higher proportion of LGBT students than the UW total.

Table 10: Breakdown of Course Reps and Department Reps by POLAR-4 Quintiles 2023-24

POLAR4 classifies local areas across the UK according to the young participation rate in higher education. The young participation rate is calculated by dividing the number of young people from each area who enter higher education aged 18 or 19 by the young population of that area. The areas are then ranked by participation rate and split into five quintiles, each of which represents about a fifth of the young population. The 20% of areas with the lowest participation rates are designated as "quintile 1", the top 20% are "quintile 5" and everywhere else is somewhere in between.

	0	1	2	3	4	5
UW	**13.25%**	**12.80%**	**18.36%**	**18.44%**	**18.80%**	**18.35%**
Course Reps	14.11%	7.81%	15.92%	17.72%	23.42%	21.02%
Variance from UW pop.	**0.87%**	**-4.99%**	**-2.45%**	**-0.72%**	**4.63%**	**2.67%**
Variance from UW pop. (22-23)	-2.82%	-0.17%	-0.39%	-1.99%	2.28%	3.10%
Department Reps	9.09%	4.55%	27.27%	9.09%	31.82%	18.18%
Variance from UW pop.	**-4.16%**	**-8.26%**	**8.91%**	**-9.35%**	**13.02%**	**-0.17%**
Variance from UW pop. (22-23)	-7.61%	-3.44%	4.20%	-0.30%	8.12%	-0.97%

Course Reps see the lowest proportion of engagement from group 1 students (-4.99%) compared to the UW total, while group 4 (+4.63%) display a higher proportion of engagement. Department Reps have significantly lower engagement from group 1 (-8.26%) and 3 (-9.35%) students, while group 2 (+8.91%) and 4 (+13.02%) engage at a higher rate.

Table 11: Breakdown of Course Reps and Department Reps by the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2023-24

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is a measure of relative deprivation for small areas (Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs). It is a combined measure of deprivation based on a total of 37 separate indicators that have been grouped into seven domains, each of which reflects a different aspect of deprivation experienced by individuals living in an area.

	0	1	2	3	4	5
UW	**16.88%**	**14.38%**	**14.64%**	**17.40%**	**19.79%**	**16.91%**
Course Reps	17.12%	13.51%	11.41%	19.82%	21.02%	17.12%
Variance from UW pop.	**0.24%**	**-0.86%**	**-3.23%**	**2.42%**	**1.23%**	**0.20%**
Variance from UW pop. (22-23)	-2.29%	-1.45%	-0.89%	-2.16%	2.67%	4.12%
Department Reps	18.18%	4.55%	4.55%	18.18%	40.91%	13.64%
Variance from UW pop.	**1.30%**	**-9.83%**	**-10.09%**	**0.78%**	**21.12%**	**-3.28%**
Variance from UW pop. (22-23)	-6.94%	-8.99%	3.01%	0.09%	16.23%	-3.39%

The greatest negative variances are seen for Group 1 & 2's engagement in Department Reps (-9.83% and -10.09%, respectively). Department Reps comprise of 40.91% students from Group 4, which is over double the UW total population (+21.12% variance).

Table 12: Breakdown of Course Reps and School Reps by Religion 2023-24

	Any other religion or belief	Buddhist	Christian	Hindu	Jewish	Muslim	No religion	Not Given	Prefer not to say	Sikh	Spiritual
UW	1.58%	0.57%	30.46%	4.53%	0.07%	4.23%	51.54%	1.77%	4.01%	0.99%	0.26%
Societies	2.25%	0.35%	28.25%	0.17%	0.00%	1.73%	58.93%	3.64%	4.33%	0.17%	0.17%
Variance from UW pop.	**0.68%**	**-0.22%**	**-2.21%**	**-4.36%**	**-0.07%**	**-2.49%**	**7.39%**	**1.87%**	**0.32%**	**-0.82%**	**-0.09%**
Variance from UW pop. (22-23)	1.74%	-0.13%	-2.44%	-2.94%	0.05%	-0.59%	7.04%	-2.51%	0.57%	-0.78%	-0.78%
Clubs	0.90%	0.60%	29.66%	0.60%	0.20%	1.20%	59.82%	2.91%	3.31%	0.60%	0.20%
Variance from UW pop.	**-0.67%**	**0.03%**	**-0.80%**	**-3.93%**	**0.13%**	**-3.02%**	**8.28%**	**1.14%**	**-0.70%**	**-0.39%**	**-0.06%**
Variance from UW pop. (22-23)	0.89%	-0.07%	-1.04%	-3.34%	0.07%	-1.91%	6.49%	-2.51%	2.13%	-0.72%	-0.72%
Networks	4.92%	0.00%	31.15%	4.92%	0.00%	6.56%	44.26%	1.64%	6.56%	0.00%	0.00%
Variance from UW pop.	**3.34%**	**-0.57%**	**0.69%**	**0.38%**	**-0.07%**	**2.33%**	**-7.27%**	**-0.13%**	**2.55%**	**-0.99%**	**-0.26%**

Variance from UW pop. (22-23)	5.79%	-0.52%	-19.30%	-0.58%	-0.08%	-0.99%	17.37%	-2.51%	2.00%	-1.18%	-1.18%
Course Reps	3.90%	0.60%	25.53%	2.70%	0.30%	3.30%	53.15%	3.30%	6.01%	0.60%	0.60%
Variance from UW pop.	**2.33%**	**0.03%**	**-4.93%**	**-1.83%**	**0.23%**	**-0.92%**	**1.62%**	**1.53%**	**2.00%**	**-0.39%**	**0.34%**
Variance from UW pop. (22-23)	1.75%	-0.52%	-2.38%	-1.78%	-0.08%	-2.64%	6.35%	-2.51%	2.44%	-0.63%	-0.63%
Department Reps	4.55%	0.00%	31.82%	9.09%	0.00%	4.55%	45.45%	0.00%	4.55%	0.00%	0.00%
Variance from UW pop.	**2.97%**	**-0.57%**	**1.36%**	**4.56%**	**-0.07%**	**0.32%**	**-6.08%**	**-1.77%**	**0.54%**	**-0.99%**	**-0.26%**
Variance from UW pop. (22-23)	3.00%	-0.52%	-8.50%	-4.25%	-0.08%	-3.74%	-0.52%	-2.51%	13.76%	3.37%	3.37%

There are minimal differences in data for Course and Department Reps in terms of Religion, with the only notable variances in Christian students' engagement as Course Reps (-4.93%) and students of No Religion engagement as Department Reps (-6.08%).

Both the Students' Union and the University share a strong commitment to making the Academic Representation System accessible to the diverse community that thrives at Worcester. We are dedicated to aligning the system with our shared values of inclusivity, ensuring that it accurately mirrors the existing demographics of our institution. Some of our key areas of focus for 2024-25 will include:

- Implementing targeted outreach and support programmes to encourage more female and non-binary students to take up Department Rep roles to try to redress the significant gender disparity in the role of Department Rep.
- Increase post-graduate student (PGT) representation through targeted outreach, engagement with ARCs, and addressing any barriers specific to this group.
- Provide additional training and resources to ensure international students understand and can participate in the Rep system.
- Continue providing bursary payments to encourage participation from students from socio-economic backgrounds defined by IMD and POLAR4, alleviating financial concerns related to the Department Rep role.

Supporting our Reps

Rep Training 2023-24

We believe that a major contributor to the fundamental success of the Academic Representation System hinges on adequately preparing our Reps to understand and embrace their roles through comprehensive training.

In the 2023-24 academic year, we conducted a comprehensive overhaul of our training content, ensuring it remains engaging and relevant in addressing all the needs of our Reps. We also moved to a hybird, choice approach to training this year, unlikle previous years, reintroducing in-person training as well as offering online options. Our goal in returning to in-person training was to create an environment conducive to more substantial and interactive discussions with our Reps, equipping them thoroughly for the responsibilities they will have in the year ahead.

Training dates

- Department Rep Training – Friday 15th Septmeber (AM), in-person St John's Campus
- Department Rep Training – Friday 15th Septmeber (PM), online via MS Teams
- Course Rep Training – Friday 20th October (AM), in-person St John's Campus
- Course Rep Training – Friday 20th October (PM), online via MS Teams
- Course Rep (refresher) Training – Thursday 9th November (PM), in-person St John's Campus

Engagement

Of the 22 Department Reps in post in 2023-24, all 22 engaged with training (100%) either in person or in follow-up 121 sessions if they were unavailable on 15th September (or not in post by September).

A total of 36 Course Reps attended in-person training in October and November, with a further 73 attending online training. This means a total 109 Course Reps had some form on 'face-to-face' training with us, which accounts for 32%. The remaining 230 Course Reps were provided with the recording of training and a follow up communication offering a 121 / catch-up style session.

Engagement in training, particualrly for Course Reps, is a key focus area for the Students' Union in 2024-25.

Feedback

The following feedback was gathered from Course and Department Reps who attended training this year, and will form part of our review for next years' content. We asked attendees 'How satisfieid were you with…', with a score of 1 being 'Very dissatisfied' and a score of 5 being 'Very satisfied'.

Your overall experience of the training?	*The relevance of the content deliver?*	*The pace of the sessions?*	*The delivery style?*
4.9 / 5	5 / 5	4.75 / 5	4.9 / 5

These scores were extremely positive and accommpanied with the below feedback:

'I really liked it, simple and effective on the slides. Not to much information to see, but enough to talk around and explain.'

'Nice and informal'

Feedback provided on how we can further develop training next year included:

'Would be better in person for me personally'

'Ensure tech is working e.g. QR code didn't work for me'

Rep Forums 2023-24

Rep Forums are organised by the Vice President Education. All Department and Course Reps are invited to attend. Held at least once a semester, forums can be themed around a specific topic or issue for group discussion among Reps or can be a flexible space for a variety of feedback. The Provost and relevant University staff (e.g. ARCs) may also be invited to Forums.

Semester 1

We took a different approach this year in delivering these spaces. In Semester 1 held a Rep Forum on one day, with the morning session dedicated to Course Reps, an overlapping lunchtime period where Course and Department Reps were invited to attend and network, and then the afternoon session was dedicated to Department Reps.

Topics covered during this Rep Forum included:

- Library drop off at St John's
- Facilities or rooms not being big enough for classes or appropriate spaces (feedback from Jenny Lind based courses)
- Parking issues and permit availability
- Timetabling issues
- Blackboard
- Group work and group marking

Semester 2

In Semester 2 the SU Student Voice Team, in partnership with the University, ran 9 school-based Rep Forums across one week. We held an additional Rep catch up for the two newly recruited Medical School Course Reps separately in Semester 2, meaning all 10 schools were engaged in this initiative.

These trial school-based forums aimed to provide a school or institute specific space for both Course and Department Reps to come together and share feedback, insight into their experiences and thoughts for next years' approach. Where possible each ARC from each school or institute attended as did the Provost.

Overall, they were well attended with 51 attendees across 9 forums. We had received 163 RSVP responses for these forums (90 of these were 'Yes' RSVPs), showing many Reps engaged with our communications.

Key themes that came out of the forums included:

- There were some examples of good practice in terms of engagement and communications amongst different schools including:
  - Three Counties School of Nursing and Midwifery Reps and ARC use a Teams channel to share communications and alerts which works well.
  - Institute of Education Reps shared lived experience of being a rep and a placement student, and how technology can help ensure they still feel active in their role and engaged with their cohort.
  - Allied Health and Community Reps use a Blackboard site to share communications with their peers.
- There were conversations, particularly in the School of Humanities forum, around prayer spaces on different campuses.
- Rep training review is required for 2024/25, with potential later date(s) planned to ensure all reps have an opportunity to engage if recruited after the deadline.
- Consideration given to how Reps are supported and can deal with boundaries, ensuring they do not get asked to support in areas outside of the academic rep remit.
- March in-takes can have an impact on the role/engagement or communication so this needs to be considered for 2024/25.

Student Voice Conference 2023-24

Each year we host a rep conference, but due to SU President covering the Vice President Education role in addition to their President duties in 2023-24, this year they chose to incorporate areas from both roles to create a conference focused on overall student voice. The objective of the conference was to empower our students on how to advocate for themselves and others, using their voice to make positive change in the University and wider community and being an active citizen in the wider community.

The day consisted of a series of talks, workshops and small bite learning opportunities, with the agenda as follows:

WORCESTER STUDENTS' UNION

VOICE CONFERENCE 2024

DATE: Friday 26th April 2024 | LOCATION: The Hangar

09:45
Arrival - Tea, Coffee & Pastries

10:00
Welcome! Let's talk Leadership – *Al Linforth, SU President 2022-24*

10:30
Leadership, Employability & Gen A.I. – *Helen Hope, Deputy Head of School, Sport & Exercise Science*

ACCESS BREAK 11:30-11:45

11:45
Networking, Sustainability, Employability & Lunchbreak *(NB: lunch not provided)*

13:00
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion – *Drew Humphry, Student Voice & Campaigns Coordinator, UoG SU*

14:00
Closing Remarks – *Al Linforth, SU President 2022-24*

14:30
There will be a Rep Celebration Event with free pizza upstairs in the Hangar from 14:30. We encourage all Academic Reps to attend but anyone attending the conference is welcome to come!

WORCESTER STUDENTS' UNION

We received 65 RSVPs for the conference with approximately 45 students attending and engaging with the conference throughout the day in the following spaces:

- 14 attendees to A.I. session
- 12 attendees to EDI session
- 21 students engaged with Sustainability stall
- Around 25 attended the Rep Celebration
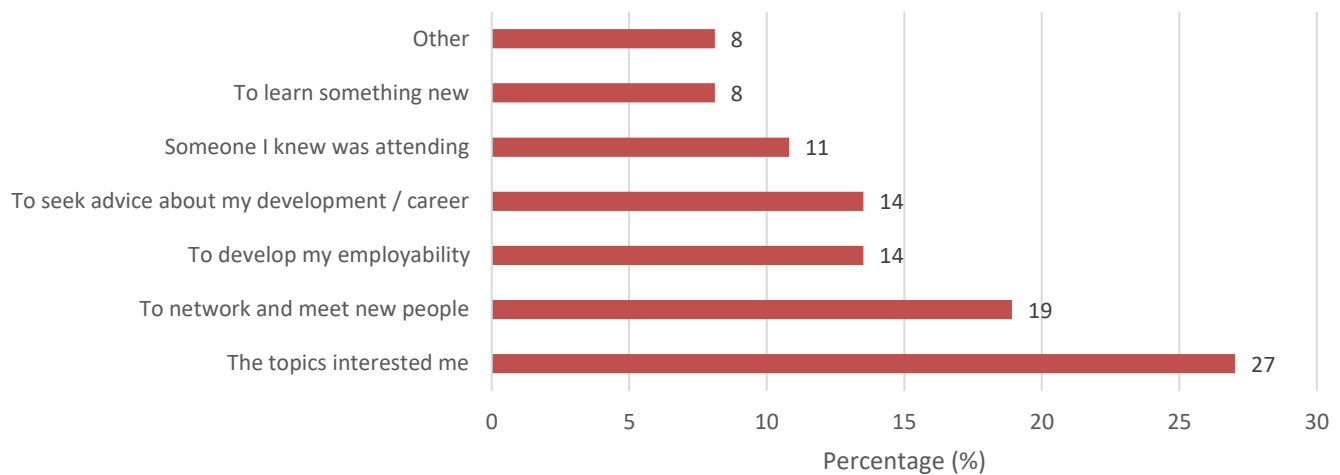
Rep Celebration Event

We hosted the rep celebration event straight after the conference to try and capture as many students as possible and reduce the commitment needed from students to attend multiple events. Ann Jordan (Provost) and Michelle Parvin (ARC) attended and supported the event by handing out the Rep Awards alongside SU President.
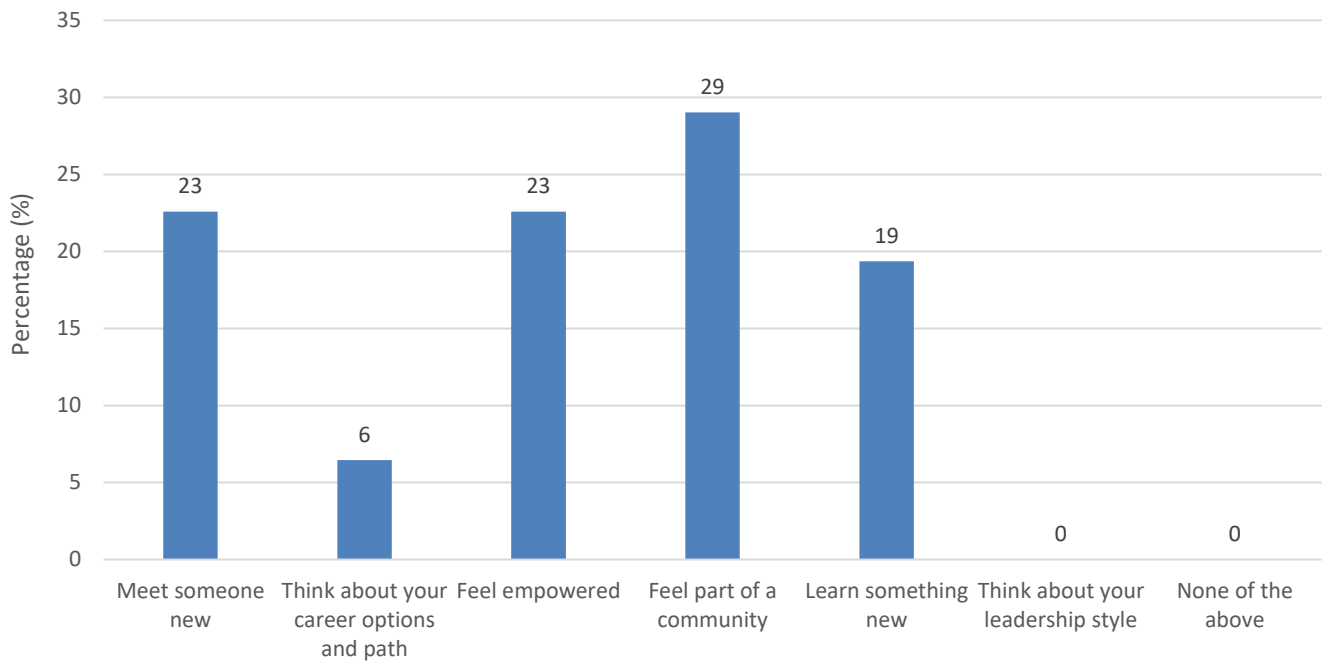
Conference feedback:

Feedback was gathered from attendees of the conference via an anonymous survey. We had good engagement with the feedback form. On average attendees scored 4.3 out of 5 (Very) for 'How likely is it that you would recommend our conference to a friend or peer?' which was very positive to see. 100% of attendees also responded to say the length of the event was 'Just right,' which is great as the agenda was intentionally reduced to address fatigue or information overload and ensure optimal engagement throughout the event.

In addition, attendees also provided the below feedback on expectations and resulting learning outcomes of the conference:

What made you attend the conference?

Category	Percentage (%)
Other	8
To learn something new	8
Someone I knew was attending	11
To seek advice about my development / career	14
To develop my employability	14
To network and meet new people	19
The topics interested me	27

As a result of attending the conference did you…

Category	Percentage (%)
Meet someone new	23
Think about your career options and path	6
Feel empowered	23
Feel part of a community	29
Learn something new	19
Think about your leadership style	0
None of the above	0

Finally, we asked attendees 'What was your favourite thing about the conference?' to which they provided the below responses:

- 'Diversity and Inclusivity event it definitely opened my eyes on issues I haven't thought of before and I thought that the layout was very engaging!'
- 'The Rep Celebration'
- 'The AI was really interesting. I have since downloaded Goblin Tools and have started using it for sending longer emails.'
- 'I really enjoyed the section about EDI, I found it very informative and learnt a lot of new things and how to address certain issues.'
- 'All seemed good, I was in lectures most of the day so could only attend the last section!'
- 'It was really good to spend time with the other Reps.'

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- 'Finally getting the chance to have my CV checked over by a professional - I have been bugging my family to do so for ages now so this was fab!'

Rep Drop-Ins

Rep Drop-In sessions were offered this year, with the SU President and Representation and Democracy Assistant. These were designed as informal spaces where Reps could come along and have a chat to a member of the SU team about their role or any student issues they were aware of within their cohorts. They ran at differing times of the day and on different days to try to be as accessible as possible to our different students' schedules. We also held a rep drop-in session after the refresher training in November to allow Reps to voice any questions they had following training and after experiencing their first few weeks in the role.

Rep Journals

All Reps are encouraged to fill in regular journals to enable the SU to monitor feedback across the University and to ensure Reps have an easy way to ask the SU for support. The SU uses Rep Journals to identify key trends and issues. Where applicable, the Vice President Education will raise issues with relevant University staff members. Reps can feedback

Journal Statistics

- **105 entries**
- **98% increase from last year**

on updates from meetings they have attended, student feedback received, updates on the impact they are having, or any issues they would like the SU to support them with.

All issues raised feed into the SU's Monthly Feedback and Intelligence Report, which helps influence the Union's educational policy and enables it to tackle issues proactively. This year we had an astonishing 105 entries which is a huge increase of 98% on the previous year (53 entries in 2022-23). This is extremely positive and shows the mechanism can work when promoted and followed up on effectively.

Recognising our Reps

Course and Department Rep Rewards 2023-24

We have completed our Rep Accreditation scheme for the second year with 21 reps receiving either Bronze, Silver or Gold Accreditation in 2023-24. We are especially excited by the number of Reps who have achieved the Gold reward this year with over double of the amount of reps receiving Gold in 2023/24 compared to 2022/23. The awards were given out by Al Linforth (SU President) and Ann Jordan (Provost) during the Rep Celebration Event, which concluded the Student Voice Conference on Friday 26th April.

Rep of the Month initiative

For the fifth year running we have continued to recognise and celebrate the hard work of our Course and Department Reps through our Rep of the Month scheme. We have received nominations from students, staff and ARCs each month, with some months having several winners due to us being unable to pick from such a high calibre of nominations.

This year we continued the tradition of a photograph opportunity for all celebrated Reps when they collected their certificates and badges which was well received. Additionally, this year we thanked our Reps for their hard work with a £5 Amazon voucher.

2023/24 Reps of the Month

MONTH	REP OF THE MONTH	REP ROLE
October 2023	Elliot Atkinson	Department Rep for English, Media & Culture
November 2023	Caysee Webster-Miles	Department Rep for Law
	Amber Rees	Course Rep
	Jess Wood	Course Rep for Allied Health and the Community
	Cozmin Popescu	Course Rep
December 2023 / January 2024	Elliot Atkinson	Department Rep for English, Media and Culture
	Kate Phillips	Department Rep for Art and Culture
	Katherine Stone	Department Rep for Allied Health and Community
	Emma Lawrence	Course Rep for Sport and Exercise Science
	Kristijonas Raibuzis	Course Rep for Biological Sciences
February 2024	Anese Ameer	Department Rep for Management and Finance
	Ellie-May Hawkins	Course Rep for Computing
	David King	Course Rep for PGCE Secondary Mathematics
	Aimee Jones	Course Rep for Criminology with Forensic Psychology
March 2024	Oliver Nightingale	Department Rep for Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and Nutritional Therapy
	Swathi Suresh	Department Rep for Pre-Registration Nursing
	Andreia Marques Da Silva	Course Rep for Arts
	Mbaliyasemaveni Ginindza	Course Rep for Allied Health and the Community

April 2024	Hannah Harrison	Department Rep for Health and Wellbeing
	Luke Marshall-Watkin	Course Rep for Business
June 2024	Nasya Henderson	Course Rep for MSc Counselling

Rep of the Year 2023-24

Towards the end of the Academic Year, we recognise both Course & Department Reps who have gone above and beyond in their roles. We shortlist our Reps and then invite them to attend our SU TeamWorc Awards evening where we announce the winners for Course Rep of the Year and Department Rep of the Year Awards.

Course Rep of the Year 2023/24 shortlist:

- Emma Lawrence
- Luke Marshall-Watkin
- Sophie Timmins

Winner: Luke Marshall-Watkin (Course Rep for Business)

Department Rep of the Year 2023/24 shortlist:

- Kate Phillips
- Katherine Stone
- Oliver Nightingale

Winner: Oliver Nightingale (Department Rep for Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and Nutritional Therapy)

Rep Testimonials 2023-24

This year we received the following testimonial from a course rep:

"Being course rep has been absolutely brilliant and I'm so glad I stepped up to do it. It not only let me take leadership of my group but allowed me to form a closer bond with my peers and form great friendships with them. I volunteered myself as a course rep to voice the opinions of my peers, making sure everyone is heard and valued. I'd like to believe I have successfully completed this to my best ability. Plus, it had no impact on my study time, allowing me to perform well in my assignments. I'm grateful for the opportunity and believe that you should never be too shy to do it. Stand up and speak up for your peers and yourselves. It's an amazing opportunity, and you'd be surprised at what you can achieve."

We also received the below anonymous feedback from our recent SU Insights Survey:

- *"It was a great opportunity to be a course representative with many opportunities to share this experience through the course rep diary/journal."*

- *"The SU has given me opportunities to grow throughout my university experience. I have been course and department rep and working with the SU has been a pleasure. I've personally seen the hard work and dedication they put into helping students. I'll always remember the help the SU have done for me."*

- *"I have had the opportunity to be a student rep, which has been amazing for my confidence and professional development."*

<u>Survey Analysis</u>

The Course Experience Survey (CES) is run by the University annually and completed by non-final year students (Level 4 upwards). Questions within the survey are largely based on those in the National Student Survey (NSS), which is completed by final year students. This year saw a 54% response rate. For direct comparison of data from previous years, statements made are based on the nine schools we had within the University in 2022-23, therefore excluding the Medical School. The Medical School will, however, be referenced throughout the below analysis.

Questions relating to the Students' Union

There are four questions in the CES that are specific to the Academic Rep System. These are as follows.

- "I know who the Course Rep is for my course".
- "Course Reps represent the interests of students on my course".
- "How well does the Students' Union (association or guild) represent students' academic interests?"

Q - I know who the Course Rep is for my course.

In 2022-23, the results saw an increase in 7 out of the 9 schools for students who knew who their course rep was. For this academic year there has been a decrease of the percentage of students who know who their course rep is in 6 out of the 9 schools.

There has, however, been a significant increase of 13% in the Three Counties School of Nursing and Midwifery with 80% responding that they know who their course rep is in comparison to 67% in 2022-23. This is particularly positive as many of the students in this school have placements and see their university peers less than those on non-placement courses.

The school of Science and the Environment has seen a decrease from 98% to 84% (14% decrease). Although a significant decrease for the school, it remains within the same range as 6 other schools. The lowest scoring school was the Worcester Business School with only 53% of students knowing who their course rep is for their course. This was also the biggest decrease from the previous academic year, 17% less than 2022-23, which we will address in 2024-25.

All other schools (Allied Health and Community, Arts, Education, Humanities, Psychology, and Sport and Exercise Science) had an average change of ±5%. The Medical School is in its first year of operating and, of those students who engaged with the CES, 100% of respondents said they knew who their course rep was.

There has been an overall decrease this academic year of 1% for that question (inclusive of the medical school data or 3% excluding it).

School	2018-19 (%)	2019-20 (%)	2020/21 (%)	2021/22 (%)	2022/23 (%)	2023/24 (%)	+/-%
Allied Health and Community	87	89	90	89	94	**87%**	**-7%**
Arts	79	91	89	83	87	**89%**	**+2%**
Education	95	95	94	92	93	**87%**	**-6%**
Humanities	64	73	79	67	81	**76%**	**-5%**
Nursing and Midwifery	90	83	84	69	67	**80%**	**+13%**
Psychology	39	52	70	84	82	**90%**	**+8%**
Science and the Environment	79	79	79	85	98	**84%**	**-14%**
Sport and Exercise Science	85	84	83	82	87	**86%**	**-1%**
Worcester Business School	39	65	67	62	70	**53%**	**-17%**

Table header spanning: **I know who the Course Rep is for my course**

School							
Medical School	No previous data					100%	
Overall	**75%**	**81%**	**83%**	**80%**	**84%**	**83%**	**1% decrease**

Q - Course Reps represent the interests of students on my course effectively.

Overall, there has been a 4% increase in satisfaction from students for this question averaging at 84% for the 2023-24 academic year. When comparing results to 2022-23 at the school level, scores for this year have increased in 4 out of 9 schools. This supports a picture of consistent, ongoing improvement as 2022-23 saw an increase on 2021-22 in all 9 schools.

The School of Arts and the Worcester Business School results remain the same. Our lowest schools with less students feeling that their course reps represent the interests of students are the Worcester Business School and the Three Counties School of Nursing and Midwifery which are both in the 70% bracket. It is also important to note the 16% increase in the Institute of Education, hopefully signifying that the Academic Representation System is strongly embedded within this school this year.

	Course Reps represent the interests of students on my course?						
School	**2018-19 (%)**	**2019-20 (%)**	**2020-21(%)**	**2021/22 (%)**	**2022/23 (%)**	**2023/24 (%)**	**+/-%**
Allied Health and Community	74	64	75	71	**89**	86	-3%
Arts	67	70	78	70	**84**	84	
Education	86	84	86	72	**78**	94	+16%
Humanities	50	57	68	62	**77**	81	+4%
Nursing and Midwifery	75	65	77	64	**75**	78	+3%
Psychology	35	38	64	67	**81**	80	-1%
Science and the Environment	57	61	66	62	**92**	86	-8%
Sport and Exercise Science	67	74	71	62	**81**	87	+6%
Worcester Business School	36	61	56	51	**72**	72	
Medical School	No previous data					100	
Overall	**65%**	**67%**	**73%**	**66%**	**80%**	**85%**	**+5%**

Q - How well does the student's union represent students' academic interests?
This question changed in 2021-22, meaning we have less data for longer -terms comparison than the other questions. As a result, we have included a table to compare only this year and last year's data as they are directly comparable.

How well does the Student's Union represent students' academic interests?			
School	**2022/23 (%)**	**2023/24 (%)**	**+/-%**
Allied Health and Community	80	83	+3%
Arts	85	83	-2%
Education	85	88	+3%
Humanities	83	85	+2%
Nursing and Midwifery	82	80	-2%
Psychology	78	86	+8%
Science and the Environment	77	88	+11%
Sport and Exercise Science	78	81	+3%
Worcester Business School	72	81	+9%
Medical School	**No previous data**	89%	
Overall	80	**84%** (with and without medical school data)	**4% Increase**

Conclusion
These results are a mostly positive picture, whilst revealing areas for improvement. There is a piece of work to be done around promotion of Course Reps and their role but, in a year where there has been a period without a Vice President Education, it is good to see some impressive results overall. To have results in all areas in the 80s is a very good basis on which to go forward and continue to provide services that students across the University levels are satisfied with.

Academic Representation Benchmarking review 2024

We use the [TSEP Academic Representation Benchmarking framework](#) to periodically review the Academic Representation System at University of Worcester. The tool enables students' unions to measure the effectiveness of their course rep systems and identify areas in which they could improve it. The tool is based on the different stages in the lifecycle of student representation as identified in the CHERI Report on Student Engagement (2008). Our aim is constant improvement with an ultimate goal of reaching the Outstanding category in all areas.

In June 2024, Director of Representation & Membership Services conducted a benchmarking review across the University-wide system. The findings were shared with the Academic Representation Oversight Group (AROG) and have been provided below.

Currently we have **6 areas in the DEVELOPING** category, with **2 areas in the ESTABLISHED** category.

2024-25 goal: We want to move the 6 areas from DEVELOPING to ESTABLISHED by the end of 2024/25. The Student Voice Team are currently working on a Development Plan to support this work which will be presented to AROG in September 2024.

Stage	Category (2023-24)	Examples
Selection	**Developing:** Students are selected for the role through an informal process such as hand-raising. The majority of roles are selected non-competitively, with students volunteering themselves. Selection is administered by institution staff, with it often taking place in the first few weeks of the academic year.	• Commonly hear students say show of hands is used rather than a secret ballot election • Occasionally hear students say they were asked to take up the role without an election process • We understand that some selections are uncontested
Expectations	**Established:** A Role Profile outlining the expectations of the role exists, but it is not always widely used. There is some publicity around the selection process and some awareness of the role and its duties.	• Role profiles for Course & Department Reps exists and is reviewed annually • Rep Handbook exists and is reviewed annually • Rep training covers expectations • We commonly hear reps say they understand their role

		• We commonly hear students say they know who their rep is, as well as this being reinforced by CES data • Some confusion over remits and how much a rep should be relied on by students (over-reliance)
Communications	**Developing:** Contact information is collated by provider staff at point of selection and sent to the union. This does not always happen in a timely or consistent manner, and there are often gaps in the system. Union and provider communications with reps occurs reasonably regularly but with no real structure.	• We (SU) see our rep data change each data set, resulting in some reps receiving more comms than others • Some reps don't receive training in a timely manner due to delayed recruitment or missing data • Rep recruitment dates often missed • No current set structure for comms with Reps, an ad-hoc approach exists
Partnership	**Developing:** Timely communications around representation occur between the union and provider, with broad areas of responsibilities agreed and mostly acted on, although there are some gaps and inconsistencies.	• Regular AROG meetings / defined reporting structure • We can improve collaborative working & expectations between SU & University
Training	**Developing:** Training is provided by the union, with around 40% of reps participating. The content covers the role and its duties, along with some basic skills development focused around these duties, such as 'skills for meetings'.	• While training numbers appear to have been high over the last few years, anecdotally we hear reps say they did not undertake the training • It is too basic (following feedback in recent Forum meeting) • We can improve year-long training opportunities / training re-caps for different intakes

Support	**Developing:** The union organises additional rep group meetings, 2-3 times a year. Attendance is moderate, but it tends to be the same individuals who participate. Interactions between reps and the relevant elected officer do occur, but tend to focus on cohort problems. Provider staff do not offer structured support for reps.	- Additional Rep meetings are organised (Rep Forums) - Attendance tends to be the same engaged individuals - Provider staff also offer rep support/meetings (established level) - We can improve year-long planning of support & events to be clearer
Inclusivity	**Established:** There is a broad understanding of the student demographics of cohorts, and some analysis of the 'representativeness' of reps in post. Selection processes, and training are considered with accessibility in mind, such as using different processes or timings and ensuring information is available in multiple formats.	- Rep demographics are reported on through End of Year Report and reports to EDI committee - SU holds semester meetings re: demographics and work around engagement/diversity; reps are a group within this - Accessibility considered in interviews (offer of different modes & reasonable adjustments)
Impact	**Developing:** Attendance at relevant meetings is moderate, with reps occasionally speaking during agenda item discussions. There is some involvement of reps in the action planning stage, and meeting minutes are made publicly available to students, although these are not often read. Students are loosely aware of their rep attending meetings, and are asked to give feedback in advance.	- SU meeting minutes made publicly available online - Pre-meeting offers to Reps by staff - Asked for feedback in advance of some meetings / prep work - Some engagement in meetings with reps, but tends to be the same engaged individuals

School of Arts

Department Reps

Art & Design: Kate Phillips

Film, Media & Theatre: Brad Law

ARC

Jess Mathews

Key Stats

36 Course Reps elected

14 Course Reps attended in-person training with remaining accessing training via recorded session

2 Department Reps trained (100%)

2 Reps awarded Rep of the Month

2 Course Reps awarded Bronze Rep Reward

1 Department Rep awarded Gold Rep Reward

1 Department Rep shortlisted for Department Rep of the Year 2023-24

Key Impacts

- The Department Rep for Art this year played a pivotal role in the reversal of the University's proposal to remove **Progress Week** from the academic calendar. They worked collaboratively and swiftly with other Department Reps from across the University to gather feedback from students, presenting it to key staff and directly contributing to a reversal of a University Board decision for the coming academic year. This Department Rep was shortlisted for Department Rep of the Year at TeamWorc Awards for their relentless advocacy on behalf of her peers, as well as winning, alongside fellow Department Reps, the **Changemaker for Student Experience Award** (awarded to the 'Progress Week Collective').
- Feedback gathered by a Course Rep highlighted a lack of cohesion between the psychology and fine art components of the joint honours course. The Rep was able to raise these concerns with staff across courses and identified the need for **better integration and alignment of learning materials** across both disciplines.
- A survey conducted by a Course Rep identified concerns about **assignment clarity** and publication on Blackboard, as well as **lecture room conditions**. These issues were raised at a student-staff liaison meeting, where action was promised on some points. The feedback was then shared by the Rep with the cohort closing the feedback loop.
- Jess Mathews (ARC) was **shortlisted for ARC of the Year** 2023-24 (Student Choice Awards) for exceptional support and communication with their reps, ensuring that they can excel in their roles and for the generosity, patience, and kindness that they exhibited throughout the year.

Institute of Education

Department Reps

Children and Families: Kate Patten

Education and Inclusion: Kristine Mendoza

Primary: Ellie Harris

Secondary and Post Compulsory: Sarah Stanley

ARC

Andy Taylor / Bronwen Duggan

Key Stats

61 Course Reps elected

41% Course Reps were Level 7/M

4 Department Reps trained (100%)

26 Course Reps attended in-person training with remaining accessing training via recorded session

1 Course Rep awarded Rep of the Month

Key Impacts

- We observed good levels of engagement from Reps in the Institute of Education during Rep Forums. A key area identified in the Semester 2 meeting was the need to enhance **engagement** with cohorts and peers in the MA Education course, aiming to raise the profile of the Students' Union.
- Rep engagement led to the implementation of a more effective system for logging meeting discussions. The **Rep Journal** link is now forwarded to course leaders, ensuring timely updates after each meeting.
- The Institute of Education in 2023-24 had the largest proportion of **Level 7 / Masters students** engage with the Rep system across the institution.
- The Institute of Education in 2023-24 saw the highest engagement amongst **placement students** across all schools, with 100% of their Department Reps being on placement this year but remaining engaged in the system.

School of Humanities

Department Reps

English, Media and Culture: Elliot Atkinson

History, Politics and Sociology: Harry Mellor

Law: Caysee Webster-Miles

ARC
Jack McGowan

Key Stats

41 Course Reps elected

3 Department Reps trained (100%)

11 Course Reps attended in-person training with remaining accessing training via recorded session

1 Course Rep awarded Bronze Rep Reward

1 Course Rep awarded Silver Rep Reward

2 Course Reps awarded Gold Rep Reward

1 Department Rep awarded Bronze Rep Reward

2 Department Reps awarded Gold Rep Reward

2 Reps awarded Rep of the Month

Key Impacts

- **Joint Honours Challenges:** Reps highlighted issues such as consistency across departments and approaches to marking references.
- **Improved Teaching Methods:** A new seminar structure involving group discussions and writing key points on the board has made lectures more engaging and effective. Positive feedback was also received for group work in another module, which broke the routine of traditional lectures.
- **Car Parking:** Reps addressed car parking concerns with staff, leading to discussions about Jenny Lind car park for student use. Students were also informed about Moore Street parking near the city campus, suggesting improved communication from the team.
- The Department Rep for English, Media & Culture this year played a pivotal role in the reversal of the University's proposal to remove **Progress Week** from the academic calendar. They worked collaboratively and swiftly with other Department Reps from across the University to gather feedback from students, presenting it to key staff and directly contributing to a reversal of a University Board decision for the coming academic year. This Department Rep won, alongside fellow Department Reps, the **Changemaker for Student Experience Award** (awarded to the 'Progress Week Collective') at the TeamWorc Awards.

School of Sport & Exercise Science

Department Reps
PE & Coaching: Nathan Charles

Sport, Management & Outdoor Education: Jo Roberson

ARC
Jaime Guinan

Key Stats

36 Course Reps elected

17% Course Reps were Level 7/M

5 Course Reps attended in-person training with remaining accessing training via recorded session

2 Department Reps trained (100%)

1 Course Rep awarded Rep of the Month

1 Course Rep shortlisted for Course Rep of the Year 2023-24

Overview of 2023-24
2023-24 saw Department Reps engaging in several activities to ensure the student body within SSES was represented throughout the academic year. This was across both undergraduate and postgraduate provision.

All SSLC meetings successfully took place in both semester 1 & 2 with Course Reps either in attendance or providing a report in their absence to still give valuable feedback to enhance the student experience. Department Reps worked hard to increase engagement through school forums across the academic year to outline student voice priorities within the school. An area of focus was to outline plans to increase NSS & CES completion and closing the feedback loop.

An area of focus for next year is for Department Reps to engage in all meetings assigned or at least some representation from the school between them (LTQE, Rep forums etc) to not only represent SSES as a school but to their peers. This gives them valuable insight into university wide policy and have an opportunity to provide their views. Also, a greater use of the Teams site for Department and Course reps to communicate.

Key Impacts
- Positive increase in scores for **Student Voice** (by +4.7%) and **Academic Representation** (by +5%) in CES. We have seen a huge increase in CES scores for both student voice and academic representation within the school and this is down to the fantastic work of our course reps and department reps in supporting the schools' priorities. 95% of students know who their course rep is, this is +9% compared to the 22_23 (86.4%). All areas have increased within these sections.
- SES course rep supported change for **progress week**.

School of Allied Health & Community

Department Reps

Social Work & the Community: Alice Mills-Adams

Health & Wellbeing: Hannah Harrison

Paramedic Science & Physicians Associates: Kathrine Stone

Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and Nutritional Therapy: Oliver Nightengale

ARC

Michelle Parvin

Key Stats

62 Course Reps elected

4 Department Reps attended training (100%)

14 Course Reps attended in-person training with remaining accessing training via recorded session

5 Reps awarded Rep of the Month

2 Department Reps awarded Gold Rep Reward

1 Department Rep awarded Bronze Rep Reward

2 Department Reps shortlisted for Department Rep of the Year 2023-24

1 Department Rep awarded Department Rep of the Year 2023-24

Overview of 2023-24

2023–24 has been a productive year with two full School Forum meetings, held in Nov and Feb, well attended with good representation across the school. Actions from each meeting were documented and responded to formally from course teaching teams. The school Blackboard site has continued to be developed in direct response to Rep feedback, with a new 'Academic Representation' area launched in March 2024. Department Reps have worked closely with the ARC to support several projects across the school, including the allocation of Learning and Teaching funding, the development of a cross-school inter-disciplinary professional development day, and the ongoing development of the school Blackboard site.

Key Impacts

- Launch and continued development of a **school-wide Blackboard** site as a direct response to Course Department Rep feedback.
- Student involvement in the allocation of **Learning and Teaching funds**.
- Engagement of international students in the '**Belong and Thrive**' research project
- Launch of The EnFA Project: **Enhancing Feedback and Assessment**. Student-led focus groups collected data that will be used to inform practice in the next academic year. This will be presented at the 2023-24 Learning and Teaching Conference.
- Michelle Parvin (ARC) was **shortlisted for ARC of the Year** 2023-24 (Student Choice Awards) for going above and beyond to support the reps and help increase engagement between Course and Department Reps by providing time and a space for reps to share their concerns and get to know each other.
- Department Rep won the **Department Rep of the Year** in WSU's TeamWorc Awards for the second year running.

Worcester Business School

Department Reps

Computing: Connor Hay

Management & Finance: Anesse Ameer

ARC

Viv Bell / Bradley Carwardine

Key Stats

30 Course Reps elected

2 Department Reps attended training (100%)

16 Course Reps attended in-person training with remaining accessing training via recorded session

3 Course Reps awarded Bronze Rep Reward

1 Department Rep awarded Bronze Rep Reward

1 Department Rep awarded Gold Rep Reward

3 Reps awarded Rep of the Month

1 Course Rep awarded Course Rep of the Year 2023-24

Overview of 2023-24

The Academic Representation System has performed effectively this year, successfully recruiting numerous representatives across most subject areas. The Department Rep for Computing has demonstrated exceptional commitment by supporting course reps, attending SSLC meetings, compiling reports, and participating in the campus catering forum. Additionally, the Head of School organised two social events featuring buffet lunches and forums for discussing the academic year, both of which were well-attended.

Key Impacts

- Establishing a **social space** in the café with books and games.
- Extending evening hours with lighting to create a more **inviting café environment**.
- Introducing a more **affordable** hot drink vending machine and microwave.
- Reps raised issues such a lack of **study rooms** on City Campus and proposed the organization of a preliminary lecture aimed at equipping students with no prior computer experience with basic skills before their courses commence.
- Putting **external visits** on the agenda (computing). In response to requests from computing reps, organising more visits, such as to Bletchley Park, is planned for September onwards.
- Course Rep (Computing) won the **Course Rep of the Year** in WSU's TeamWorc Awards.

School of Psychology

Department Reps
Performance Health and Wellbeing: Samantha Ayettey

Postgraduate Taught: VACANT

Violence prevention, Trauma and Criminology: Jamie Dowell

ARC
Naomi Lee (Performance Health and wellbeing/ Postgraduate taught)

Amy Johnson (Violence prevention, Trauma and Criminology)

Key Stats

16 Course Reps elected

2 Department Reps attended training (100%)

8 Course Reps attended in-person training with remaining accessing training via recorded session

3 Reps awarded Rep of the Month

Key Impacts
- Student satisfaction concerning **teaching methods** and the enthusiasm of lectures has notably improved. Representatives reported increased enjoyment due to the diverse range of topics and activities, including Padlet, quizzes, and videos.
- **ARC of the Year award winner:** Both ARCs from the School of Psychology were shortlisted for ARC of the Year in 2023-24 (Student Choice Awards), and Amy Johnson subsequently won this award. They were both nominated and shortlisted for their different approaches in empowering their reps to use their voice and make positive change at the University, as well as helping to build a positive and productive team of Reps within their school. Amy Johnson won the award for developing a strong network of student reps within their School, and providing exceptional support and reassurance to all of the reps they work with.
- Reps conveyed through SSLCs that a significant number of their peers had reported that staff were not posting **lecture slides online** prior to the lectures.
- As a result of advising the cohort to utilise **Padlet** on Blackboard for their enquiries, the volume of redundant emails has significantly decreased.

Three Counties School of Nursing & Midwifery

Department Reps

Pre-Registration Nursing: Swathi Suresh

Nursing Associates and Apprentices: Vimal Vinay

Midwifery and CPD: VACANT

ARC

Louise Carter

Key Stats

42 Course Reps elected

2 Department Reps attended training (100%)

9 Course Reps attended in-person training with remaining accessing training via recorded session

1 Department Rep awarded Gold Rep Reward

1 Rep awarded Rep of the Month

1 Course Rep shortlisted for Course Rep of the Year 2023-24

Overview of 2023-24

Overall engagement in the Academic Representation System has varied across the school, with Reps citing practice placements as impacting their attendance at meetings throughout the year. A Microsoft Teams group was established to promote communication among the Reps and with the ARC, which has worked well, promoting a "you said, we did" approach. Priorities included addressing the challenges faced by non-driving students traveling to placements and the increased cost of living and fuel. Positive feedback was received for live simulations in mental health nursing and the release of next year's planners. Restorative supervision was extended to all representatives to support their well-being while acting as the voice of their peers.

Key Impacts

- Department Rep for Pre-Registration Nursing was **shortlisted** for the '**Changemaker for Student Experience Award**' in the TeamWorc Awards for all their work on supporting placement students and consistently raising concerns around travel and access.
- A working group has been established to explore the lived experiences of our **international students** on placement, aiming to improve their experience.
- **SAP Projects** to be presented at L&T Conference from Sophie Timmins (Year 3 Course Rep), Benjamin Hooper and Grace Tresadern (Year 2 Course Reps).
- The introduction of **live simulation** using actors for mental health nursing received very positive feedback for its real-world applicability and usefulness in student development.
- Practice Placement and Transportation Feedback from department and course Reps highlighted **challenges faced by non-driving students** in traveling to placements where public transport routes were inadequate. This issue was escalated to the University.

School of Science & the Environment

Department Reps

Biological Sciences: Jack Edwards

Geography and the Environment: VACANT

ARC

Cheryl Jones

Key Stats

13 Course Reps elected

2 Department Reps attended training (100%)

5 Course Reps attended in-person training with remaining accessing training via recorded session

1 Course Rep awarded Bronze Rep Reward

1 Department Rep awarded Bronze Rep Reward

1 Rep awarded Rep of the Month

Key Impacts

- Following student feedback, Reps contacted relevant lecturers to address concerns about managing lecture disruptions, improving speech clarity, and providing more detailed slide information, with the aim of **enhancing accessibility** for their peers.
- Reps raised multiple issues during SSLCs this year including requesting clarity over **trips** and how they relate to the course in question, ensuring that all power points are on **blackboard** for student access at least 24hrs prior to the lecture and a request for more guidance for **assignments and writing style** expectations.
- A Course Rep played a key role in **resolution management** by facilitating a collaborative solution, where, after consulting with the module lead and other students, another student agreed to swap lab sessions.
- A Course Rep effectively addressed ongoing disruptions during lectures by raising the concern in the Rep Forum and sending a respectful but firm message to the course group, resulting in a noticeable improvement in **lecture conduct**.

Three Counties Medical School

Department Reps

Medicine: VACANT

Physician Associates: VACANT

ARC

VACANT

Key Stats

4 Course Reps elected

Key Impacts

- **Engagement with the Students' Union**: Medicine Course Representatives maintained regular communication with the Students' Union, ensuring they were well-informed about ongoing activities and developments.
- Attendance at **LTQE Meetings**: Reps participated in Learning, Teaching, and Quality Enhancement (LTQE) meetings, contributing to discussions on academic quality and improvements.
- **Padlet**: Reps implemented the use of Padlet to facilitate anonymous feedback from students, enhancing the transparency and accessibility of feedback mechanisms.
- Promotion of **Listening Lunches**: Reps actively promoted "listening lunches" among their peers.
- Focus on **Assessment Feedback**: The primary feedback from the cohort centered on assessments scheduled for January 2024.

Looking to 2024-25

As the new Vice President Education for 2024-25, I am looking forward to a busy year ahead. Here at Worcester, I would like to ensure students have the best academic experience possible and will work collaboratively with students and university staff to ensure this happens. My first few months in office have been incredibly busy, working hard to foster a positive relationship with senior university staff to be in the best possible position to represent our students when they return in September, and work to create positive change.

Our priorities over the upcoming year include:

- Increase Department Rep engagement and attendance at meetings such as Education Council and Rep Forums.
- To enhance the sense of community amongst course reps and department reps.
- Ensure that 100% of Department Reps and 50% of Course Reps are trained.
- Increase engagement with the academic representation system through raising awareness amongst the university population.

Despite having a vacancy for the Vice President Education sabbatical officer role, the academic representation system performed well over the past year. This year, I want students to know how powerful their voice is. We are an institution that really values feedback and change, and I want our students to be at the heart of the conversation. We are incredibly grateful for the hard work our reps have undertaken over the past year and appreciate the support from the University in helping us grow and enhance the rep system.

The Academic Representation System plays a vital role in improving the experience of our students, and I am very excited to be working with the amazing students who put themselves forward to be Course Reps and Department Reps. We have been working closely with the Academic Representation Coordinators (ARCs) to recruit Department Reps, which we have filled 23 out of the 27 positions throughout July 2024 which is outstanding progress. It has been wonderful to meet the fantastic candidates so far, and I can already foresee a productive year for academic reps this year. I cannot wait to see what they will achieve over the year!

Elliot Atkinson

(He/Him)
Vice President Education 2023-24