

Academic Representative Roles

Introduction

Student representation is at the heart of decision-making at the University of Worcester and is vital in helping shape and improve the experience of students at the University. Worcester Students' Union and the University of Worcester work together in partnership to ensure that all students have the best academic experience possible. We are committed to listening and responding to student feedback and aim to enhance the overall learning experience for current and future students.

The Academic Representation System consists of three levels: Course Reps, Department Reps and the Vice President Education. The three levels of representation enable us to ensure there is student representation across the University's structure of academic matters. Course Reps work at the Course level, Department Reps work at the Department/School and College level 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 Reps

A Course Rep is an elected student volunteer who represents their course mates by acting as their voice at meetings with University staff. The number of Course Reps depends on the size of each course. Course Leaders have the responsibility for ensuring that student elect their Course Reps and that the Course Reps are listed on SOLE so that everyone can easily find out who their representatives are.

Course Rep Role Description

Course Reps will need to establish and maintain communication with the Students' Union's Vice President Education, their Course Leader, their Academic Representation Coordinator (ARC) and the Department Reps.

Their key task is to represent students' views at course-level, attending and making positive contributions to the Student Staff Liaison Committee meetings (SSLCs). Course Reps are not expected to solve problems first-hand, but they are expected to work with staff to develop solutions to issues identified by the students they represent. To close the feedback loop, Course Reps are also expected to communicate outcomes resulting from feedback with their cohort.

To fulfil their roles, Course Reps will be expected to:

- Attend and participate in appropriate training sessions provided by the Students' Union and the University or undertake online training via www.worcsu.com where this is not possible.
- Establish effective communications with students, other Course Reps in their Department or School, Department Reps and the Students' Union.
- Attend and contribute to meetings for Course Reps arranged by Department Reps, ARC or other members of staff.
- Attend and contribute to the Rep Forums, chaired by the Vice President Education and also attended by Department Reps, the Pro Vice Chancellor Students or Provost and invited members of university staff, ARCs and/or other guests.
- Help to promote the National Student Survey and the University's internal student survey to encourage students to participate and express their views on their student experience.
- Help to promote the Student Academic Representative system.
- Prepare for, attend and contribute to SSLCs, ensuring that students' views are expressed, and their interests represented.
- Ensure that messages or questions for students from the Students' Union are relayed and that responses are fed back to the Students' Union.

Benefits

Course Reps perform a vital role in ensuring that students' ideas and concerns are voiced at course level and that students can influence the quality of the learning experience for current and future students.

The experience and skills Course Reps acquire will enhance their employability and contribute to their personal development. Course Reps should be able to demonstrate that they have had meaningful experience of:

- Communicating with a variety of stakeholders including students and academic staff
- Organisation skills
- Diplomacy
- Negotiation
- Consultation and research
- Making and delivering engaging presentations
- Teamwork
- Problem-solving
- Higher education policy and practice
- Students' Unions

- Quality assurance and enhancement
- Participation in formal committees and other forums

You can use our [Employability Guide](#) to further explore how you can demonstrate the skills and experience developed in your Rep role.

Recognising Volunteering

Course Reps are volunteers – they are not paid for undertaking their role. This does not mean, however, that what they do is not valued or recognised. All Course Reps are encouraged to record their activities, including attending training sessions and meetings, in one or more of the following ways:

Online V-Record: The Students' Union allows Course Reps to receive acknowledgement for the volunteering that they do (which includes any other volunteering you do in addition to being a Course Rep). The Students' Union offers recognition certificates at five stages for any student completing the V-Record:

20 Hour Award - Recognition of Volunteering

50 Hour Award - Achievement in Volunteering

100 Hour Award - Merit in Volunteering

200 Hour Award - Distinction in Volunteering

300 Hour Award - Excellence in Volunteering

500 Hour Award - Exceptional Attainment in Volunteering

Reps awarded 50 hours or higher will have it recorded on their Academic Degree Transcript. Hours can be logged via the SU website: www.worcsu.com/volunteer

Rep Journals: It is always encouraged that Reps feedback to the Students' Union as well as the University. Your feedback will help the Students' Union to identify trends and issues that would need to be raised with the University or wider. The Students' Union can also share Rep successes from these journals. Course Reps should try to complete a journal every time they have attended a meeting and ideally once a month.

Journals can be found here:

www.worcsu.com/yourvoice/rep/coursereps/hub/journal/

Training Opportunities: Training and support will be provided by the Students' Union with support from Schools to help prepare Course Reps for their role in Course-level committees and meetings. As well as training, Course Reps are also able to attend a Rep Conference that hosts an array of skills-based and development sessions.

Department Reps

Department Reps represent the views of students at Department and College level. They create an essential link between Course Reps and senior members of staff within their School and College. Normally, Department Reps are appointed from students who have had experience of being a Course Rep. Applications are invited each year ([HERE](#)) and short-listed candidates are selected through an interview process involving the Students' Union and the University.

Department Rep Role Description

The role of Department Rep is to act as a channel of communication between Course Reps, the Academic Representation Coordinator (ARC), the Students' Union, senior members of staff within the Department/School and the University, and to undertake other duties as listed below. Department Reps need to represent a broad range of student views from a variety of courses across the Department, not just from one course.

Department Reps are expected to share the workload and are responsible for:

- Regular communications with their Course Reps, the designated ARC and the Students' Union.
- Arranging and chairing at least one meeting per semester of Course Reps in their Department providing a forum for feedback and the discussion of issues relevant to the student learning experience.
- Attending and contributing to Department and College level meetings. These include SSLCs.
- Attending Rep Forums, chaired by the Vice President Education.
- Attending Education Council with the Vice President Education.
- Ensuring that the Department is represented at Student Council by taking part in the election of Student Councillor. This is done in the first Education Council of the academic year where all Department Reps will be able to nominate themselves (to a vote) for the role of Student Councillor.
- Attending other feedback events where necessary.
- Helping to promote the National Student Survey and the University's internal student survey in order to encourage students to participate and express their views on their student experience.
- Helping to promote the Academic Representative system.
- Contributing to the delivery of induction talks and training for Course Reps, in collaboration with the Students' Union.
- Representing the Department and College and helping with a range of activities related to student recruitment and retention and improving the student experience.

Benefits

Department Reps have the opportunity to contribute to and have a positive impact on the student experience across their Department and College; increase their confidence by working with a broad range of academic and support staff; gain valuable insight into the inner workings of their department; gain experience of working on academic issues and learn and develop excellent and transferable skills to enhance their employability such as:

- Communicating with a wide range of stakeholder and decision-makers, including students and academic staff
- Organisation skills
- Diplomacy
- Negotiation
- Consultation and research
- Making and delivering engaging presentations
- Teamwork
- Higher education policy and practice
- Students' Unions
- Quality assurance and enhancement
- Participation in formal committees and other forums

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Payment and Recognising Volunteering

Department Reps are entitled to an annual bursary allowance of £300 in recognition of their commitment, subject to satisfactory completion of a report each semester. This payment is made per semester.

Alternatively, Department Reps can claim volunteering hours for the work that they do should they choose not to receive the bursary payment.

Training and Development Opportunities

Training and support will be provided by the Students' Union and the Departments to help prepare Department Reps for their role in committees and meetings.

Department Reps will have opportunities to be involved in other activities which assure and enhance the quality of the educational experience, such as course

approvals and periodic reviews. Appropriate training will be provided and Department Reps taking part in these activities will be paid for their involvement. For further information, see www.worcsu.com or contact the Vice President Education.

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