

## Academic Representative's Role

### Introduction

Student representation is at the heart of decision-making at the University of Worcester and is a vital in helping shape and improve the experience of students at the University. Worcester Students' Union and the University of Worcester work together 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, School 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, School Reps work at the 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.

### **Role description**

Course Reps will need to establish and maintain communication with the SU's Vice President Education, their Course Leader, their Student Engagement, Representation and Communications Coordinator (SERCC) and the School Reps. Their key task is to represent students' views at course-level, attending and making positive contributions to the Course Management Committee (CMC) meetings. 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.

In order 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](http://www.worcsu.com) where this is not possible
- Establish effective communications with students, other Course Reps in their School, School Reps and the Students' Union
- Attend and contribute to meetings for Course Reps arranged by School Reps, SERCC or other members of staff
- Attend and contribute to the Course Rep Forum, chaired by the Vice President Education and also attended by School Reps, the Pro Vice Chancellor Students and invited members of University staff and/or other guests

- Help 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
- Help to promote the Student Academic Representative system
- Prepare for, attend and contribute to Course Management Committees, 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 SU

## 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 will be able to demonstrate that they have had meaningful experience of:

- Communicating with students and academic staff
- Organisation
- Diplomacy
- Negotiation
- Consultation and research
- Making presentations
- Teamwork
- Problem-solving
- Higher education policy and practice
- Students' Unions
- Quality assurance and enhancement
- Participation in formal committees and other forums

## Recognising Volunteering

Course Reps are all 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 SU 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). Course Reps are able to log hours online in order to achieve awards for 20 hours, 50 hours, 100 hours or 200 hours of volunteering – any awards above 50 hours are also recorded on the HEAR. Hours can be logged via the SU website: <https://www.worcsu.com/volunteer>
- Worcester Award: Time spent undertaking Course Rep activities can count towards the Worcester Award, which is open to all students who want to demonstrate their employability and show the skills and experiences they have acquired. For further information, see [www.worcester.ac.uk/discover/the-worcester-award.html](http://www.worcester.ac.uk/discover/the-worcester-award.html)
- Course Rep Accreditation Scheme: In 2018-19, we are launching a new accreditation scheme especially for Course Reps. This is a chance for Course Reps to get recognised for their hard

work. For more information on the scheme and how to get accredited, visit

<https://www.worcsu.com/yourvoice/rep>

### **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 Course Rep Conference that hosts an array of skills-based and development sessions.

## School Reps

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

### **Role description**

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

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

- Regular communications with their School's Course Reps, the designated SERCC and the SU
- Arranging and chairing at least one meeting per semester of Course Reps in their School, providing a forum for feedback and the discussion of issues relevant to the student learning experience
- Ensuring that the School is represented at Student Council by arranging the election of Student Councillor
- Attending and contributing to School and College level meetings
- Attending the Course Rep Forum, chaired by the Vice President Education
- Attending Education Council with the Vice President Education
- 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 talk and training for Course Reps, in collaboration with the SU
- Representing the School and College and helping with a range of activities related to student recruitment and retention and improving the student experience

### **Benefits**

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

- Communicating with students and academic staff
- Organisation
- Diplomacy
- Negotiation
- Consultation and research
- Making presentations
- Teamwork
- Higher education policy and practice
- Students' Unions
- Quality assurance and enhancement
- Participation in formal committees and other forums

### **Payment and Recognising Volunteering**

School Reps are entitled to an annual allowance of £300 in recognition of their commitment, subject to satisfactory completion of a report each semester.

School Reps can also claim volunteering hours for the work that they do should they choose not to receive payment.

### **Training and Development Opportunities**

Training and support will be provided by the Students' Union and the Schools to help prepare School Reps for their role in School and College level committees and meetings.

School 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 School Reps taking part in these activities will be paid for their involvement.

For further information, see [www.worcsu.com](http://www.worcsu.com) or contact the Vice President Education.