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## Academic Representative's Role

### 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 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 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 students 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 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 (SSLC) 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.

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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 [Course Reps Training \(worcsu.com\)](http://www.worcsu.com) where this is not possible.
- Establish effective communications with students, other Course Reps in their 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 Rep Forum, chaired by the Vice President Education and also attended by Department 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 Student Staff Liaison 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 Volunteering Log:** 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>
- **Rep Journal:** It is important that our Reps feedback to the Union as well as the University. Filling in a Journal is a key way to feedback. Reps should do this at least every time that they have been to a meeting and ideally once a month. The Rep journal submission form can be found at [Online Rep Journal Entry \(worcsu.com\)](#)
- **Course Rep of the Month:** Each month students and staff will have the opportunity to nominate their Course or Department Rep for the relevant award
- **Rep Rewards:** Reps can record certain activities related to the role as a Rep through the academic year that will equate to a Bronze, Silver or Gold award at the end of the year

For more information on Rep Rewards, visit [Rep Rewards & Recognition \(worcsu.com\)](#)

### 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.

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## **Department Reps**

Department 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, Department 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 Academic Representation Coordinator (ARC), the Students' Union, senior members of staff within the 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 range of courses across the School, not just from one course.

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

- Regular communications with their School's Course Reps, the designated ARC 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 engaging in the election of Student Councillor representatives.
  - 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.
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- 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:

Department 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:

Department Reps are entitled to an annual allowance of £300 (in two £150 instalments. One per semester) in recognition of their commitment, subject to satisfactory completion of a report each semester.

Department Reps can also claim volunteering hours for the work that they do should they choose not to receive payment. All Department Reps are also encouraged to record their activities, including attending training sessions and meetings, in one or more of the following ways:

- **Rep Journal:** It is important that our Reps feedback to the Union as well as the University. Filling in a Journal is a key way to feedback. Reps should do this at least every time that they have been to a meeting and ideally once a month. The Rep journal submission form can be found at [Online Rep Journal Entry \(worcsu.com\)](http://www.worcsu.com)

- **Department Rep of the Month:** Each month students and staff will have the opportunity to nominate their Department Rep for the relevant award.
- **Rep Rewards:** Reps can record certain activities related to the role as a Rep through the academic year that will equate to a Bronze, Silver or Gold award at the end of the year.

#### Training and Development Opportunities:

Training and support will be provided by the Students' Union and the Schools to help prepare Department Reps for their role in School and College level 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, contact the Vice President Education or [studentreps@worc.ac.uk](mailto:studentreps@worc.ac.uk).