



**LEICESTER  
STUDENTS'  
union**

# **Appointment of Academic Representatives**



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# Academic Representation at the University of Leicester

Academic Representation is at the very heart of the Students' Union here at the University of Leicester. The Union's Academic Representation Team supports a network of over 400 academic Course Reps and Department/School Reps operating at undergraduate, postgraduate taught (PGT) and postgraduate research (PGR) levels to ensure the voice of students and researchers is a powerful force for change.

Academic Reps work in partnership with the University to ensure that all students feel empowered to initiate positive change within their departments so that they are provided with the best academic experience possible.

## Who are Course Reps?

**Course Reps** are fellow students on each course who collect student feedback and raise issues on behalf of their peers with the relevant department at Student-Staff Committees. They are elected by their peers to represent the student body at Departmental Student Staff Committee meetings. In fulfilling their role, Course Reps actively seek the views of their peers on academic issues relating to their programme and collate the feedback for presentation at Staff Student Committee meetings. They provide a vital link to ensure student voices are heard. They are the first point of contact if students have any issues relating to their course.

**Course Reps** are expected to proactively pursue improvements to their course or research group and seek to maintain and promote examples of best practice. The Students' Union aims to have at least one elected course representative per cohort (year) of each degree programme (or, in the case of degree programmes with fewer than 50 students per cohort, each cluster of interconnected courses). For degree programmes with more than 50 students per cohort, the Students' Union aims to have at least two elected course representatives.

[More details ... Who are Course Reps?](#)

## Role Requirements

No specific experience or knowledge is required for the role of Course Rep as the Students' Union will provide relevant training. However, the following attributes are required:

- Be a good listener
- Able to speak up on behalf of others
- Be motivated and driven
- Have good organisation and time management skills

As part of their role, Course Reps will be expected to develop a familiarity with the structure of the representation system and a good understanding of their Department's workings as a whole.

## Duties and key responsibilities

- Represent the views of students on their course.
- Give feedback to those in a position of influence.
- Act as a liaison between students and staff when it comes to academic matters.
- Attend Staff-Student Committee meetings within the relevant Department/School (between 3 to 5 meetings per year).
- Work collaboratively with fellow Reps and staff to resolve issues proactively and swiftly throughout the year.
- Celebrate positive changes and keep students informed of changes and developments.

[More details... Duties and key responsibilities](#)

## Benefits of being a Course Rep

- Being part of a 400+ strong team of like-minded individuals helping to shape, and make positive changes, to student experience.
- Build strong relationships with staff and fellow students.
- Bring Improvements to both course and department
- Get access to exclusive training provided by the Students' Union.
- Gain access to Skills Development sessions, from leadership to wellbeing, developing transferable skills, such as problem-solving, negotiation, diplomacy, and time-management.
- Gain experience attending formal meetings with senior staff
- Gain accreditation which counts towards HEAR and Leicester Award
- Receive recognition from the Students' Union at events such as the annual Student Rep Awards, with the opportunity to win 'Course Rep of the Year'.

## Time commitment:

- Course Reps commit to undertaking relevant training courses provided by the Students' Union throughout the academic year. They also commit to participating in at least one SSC meeting per term. SSC meetings typically last one to two hours and are usually held on campus.
- Course Reps need to make themselves available to their peers via e-mail and are expected to reply to queries within a reasonable timescale. In addition, Course Reps should be prepared to make themselves available to their peers for informal contact or short meetings before or after lectures, workshops etc. on a timetable that they may determine
- In total, the role of Course Rep should involve a commitment of **no more than a few hours per week**. Inevitably, the volume of work will vary during the course of an academic term, but commitments to the role will be avoided wherever possible during the examination period.

## How are Course Reps Appointed?

Course Reps are selected through election by their peers. Course Rep elections are administered centrally by the Students' Union and students are encouraged to nominate themselves through the Academic Representation area of the Union website.

In order to maximise continuity of experience among Course Reps, elections are held twice a year as follows:

**Spring Recruitment** – towards the end of the second term (usually in March) elections are held to appoint Course Reps for the next academic year, i.e. for those cohorts that will be returning the following year. These elections are therefore applicable to all undergraduate students not in their final year. The reason for holding the election at this time is to get as many Reps as possible in place for the start of the year.

Key Dates:

- Nominations open during the first week of March and remain open for two weeks.
- Voting will take place Monday to Friday third week of March.
- Confirmation of the election results will take place during the last week of March, i.e. last week of spring term
- Elected Course Reps will take up their roles from the start of the following academic year

**Autumn Recruitment** – towards the beginning of the first term (October) elections are held to appoint Course Reps for new cohorts to the University, both undergraduate and postgraduate, and also to fill any gaps remaining after the Spring recruitment exercise.

Key Dates:

- Nominations open first day of term, generally last week of September.
- Nomination period first and second week of autumn term
- Voting will take place Wednesday to Friday within third week of term
- Confirmation of the election results will take place during the fourth week of term
- Elected Course Reps will take up their roles immediately

## Training, workshops and masterclasses

Course Reps have access to tailored workshops and online training, designed and delivered by the Students' Union team for CV enhancing and to improve employability.

**Training:** Initial training will consist of four online modules, designed to get reps up and running as a rep. We also host a series of events across the year to develop core skills.

**Workshops:** We organise a programme of workshops for each year. They're free to attend and each session runs twice to limit potential clashes in timetable. Example masterclasses include leadership, public speaking and how to run a campaign.

**Enhanced employability:** Being a Course Rep looks great on CV. The more you put in, the more you get out – gain accreditation through the Rep Development scheme, or use the role as a platform to get involved with the following initiatives:

- **Leicester Award:** The role of Course Rep is recognised as a volunteering activity as part of the Leicester Award, a programme which formally recognises and develops individual skills.
- **Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR Recognition):** Recognised as an accredited extra-curricular activity on the HEAR transcript, providing a written record of the engagement and volunteering undertaken during university studies
- **Student Voice Awards:** An end of year gala to celebrate the achievement of those who have gone the extra mile to represent the academic interest of their peers.

## Failure of fulfil the required duties of the role

### Summary

The Students' Union needs to ensure that all students receive appropriate academic representation during their time at the University of Leicester. It is therefore a requirement that elected Course Reps fulfil the core responsibilities and duties of the role for which they have been elected. However, the Students' Union also takes the view that students should always prioritise their education over other activities, whether that is volunteering or paid work. The role of Course Rep should involve a commitment of no more than a few hours per week, although the volume of work will inevitably vary during an academic term, (wherever possible, commitments to the role will be avoided during the examination period).

If the time commitment becomes too onerous, it is perfectly acceptable for a Course Rep to resign their position. In this case the Academic Representation team will attempt to recruit a replacement Course Rep from the current student cohort.

Additionally, where the Students' Union becomes aware that a Course Rep may not be fulfilling the core responsibilities of their role as defined within this document, the Union will initiate an investigation to establish reasons why. If the investigation determines that a Course Rep is not engaged in their role the Union reserves the right to remove such "non-engaged" Course Reps and attempt to recruit a replacement from the current student cohort.

### Detailed procedures for Removal of a Course Rep

#### Non-Engagement of a Course Rep

In nominating themselves for the role of Course Rep, students commit to participating in the core sessions associated with the role for which they volunteered.

#### **Core training sessions for Course Reps:**

Course Rep training  
Student Staff Committees

For the purpose of clarity, failure to meet these commitments will be termed non-engagement.

This will encompass:

- withdrawal from representation activities and training;
- refusal to participate in, or commit to, the core aspects of the role;
- non-involvement or non-participation in academic representations activities and events.

Where non-engagement with the Course Rep role is identified, the Union will investigate the underlying reasons hindering the student's engagement. The outcome of the investigation will be either to resolve the underlying problems and re-initiate engagement, or if this is not possible, to trigger the replacement of the Course Rep.

### **Investigation**

Where Non-engagement is identified the relevant Course Rep will be contacted in writing, (Email 1) which will include relevant details regarding the events that were missed by the representative, to request an explanation. A period of seven days will be granted for the Course Rep to respond.

If engagement is not resumed, or no response is received, a further reminder (Email 2) will be sent. A further response time of seven days will be granted.

If there is still no contact from the Course Rep, alternative attempts to obtain relevant information to identify the underlying reasons for non-engagement will be made. These may include contacting the Course Reps academic department to determine whether the non-engagement is only in relation to the Students' Union organised events whilst more informal contact is maintained with the relevant department staff.

### **Outcome**

Following the investigation, the Course Rep and their home department will be contacted with the outcome. In most cases this will be one of the following:

- The student's non-engagement related only to their role as a Course Rep and they have undertaken to re-engage with the role and will be allowed to continue for the remainder of the year.
- The student's non-engagement indicates that they feel either unable or unwilling to re-engage with the role, in which case they will be removed from the role and a replacement will be sought.
- The student's non-engagement is down to wider issues and a replacement will be sought.

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## More details ... Who are Course Reps?

- Course Reps are student volunteers, elected by their peers, for a period of one academic year.
- The Students' Union aims to have at least one elected Course Rep per cohort (year) for each degree programme. For degree programmes with more than 50 students per cohort, we aim to have at least two elected course representatives. (In the case of smaller degree programmes with fewer than 20 students per cohort, we may decide to cluster programmes and elect one Course Rep per cluster).

- Course Reps act as the first point of contact for their peers to raise any issues, concerns or queries regarding their course, and work to ensure that the University delivers the highest standard of teaching and support.
- Course Reps are the channel through which students provide feedback on their academic experience, both positive and negative, providing constructive criticism on the aspects of their academic education that could be improved and highlighting areas of good practice. They gather and collate feedback from the students on their course, identifying any concerns and considering possible improvements
- Course Reps represent their peers on the academic issues considered at departmental staff-student committees. Using the feedback they have gathered from their peers, they offer suggestions on areas for improvement within their course, including module content; methods of teaching; workload; feedback and resources, to facilitate positive change within their department to improve the academic experience at Leicester.

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## More details... Duties and key responsibilities

In order to ensure that all students receive appropriate academic representation during their time at the University of Leicester, it is a requirement that all elected Course Reps undertake appropriate training provided by the Students' Union and fulfil the minimum level of duties associated with the role. Good communication skills and effective collaboration with all other parties in the student representation system, and across the wider University, are vital to ensuring that the system works in a proactive way to deliver improvements to the student experience.

In nominating themselves to stand for election as a Course Rep, students are committing to meeting the following requirements:

- undertaking relevant core training courses provided by the Students' Union throughout the academic year;
- undertaking relevant supplementary training provided by the Students' Union throughout the academic year;
- having a strong visible presence among their cohort, together with an approachable manner for students wishing to raise issues or provide opinions;
- making themselves available to their peers either face to face or via e-mail and replying to queries within a reasonable timescale. In addition, Course Reps should be prepared to make themselves available to their peers for informal contact or short meetings before or after lectures, workshops etc. on a timetable determined by the Course Rep.
- making sure that general feedback on academic issues is gathered from their cohort on a regular basis (Time should always be set aside for Course Reps to gather appropriate evidence so that issues raised at SSC are, wherever possible, evidence-based);
- seeking student opinion on specific changes to academic programmes proposed by Departments;
- collaborating with the other Reps within their Department to collate student feedback and develop agenda items for discussion at the SSC
- establishing and maintaining good working relationships with staff members of the SSC, course administrators, other relevant staff members and Department Representatives to ensure appropriate information flows between the Department and students.



- liaising with other Course Reps to share ideas, and with Department Reps to identify issues which need to be tackled at a higher level.
- participating in **at least one** Student-Staff Committee meeting per term. These meetings typically last one to two hours and are usually held on campus;
- proactively pursuing actions agreed at the SSCs to ensure a positive outcome for student experience;
- ensuring that the outcome of matters raised at the SSC or information from the Students' Union is cascaded down to their cohort in a clear and timely fashion, producing clearly written communication in the form of e-mails, social media or website;
- ensuring that student confidentiality is always maintained, unless this is explicitly waived;
- understanding the limits of their role to ensure appropriate signposting is provided where necessary;
- using the knowledge acquired through the provided training sessions, to determine whether specific issues raised by students need to be addressed through the SSC or whether they can be resolved through alternative means, for example: directly with a member of departmental staff, with the Union Education Officer or via alternative University or Students' Union services;
- where possible, organising handover sessions for new Course Reps at the end of the year to pass on information regarding on-going issues, projects or best practice. In all cases, outgoing Course Reps should pass this information to the Academic Representation Coordinator.
- Communicating any problems with, or suggestions to improve the representation system to the Academic Representation team to ensure the system functions effectively.

## Who are Department/School Reps?

**Department Reps** are fellow students elected by their peers within each department, who collect student feedback and raise issues on behalf of their peers with the relevant Department Learning and Teaching Committee. In fulfilling their role, Department Reps actively seek the views of their peers on academic issues relating to their programmes and student experience, collate the feedback and identify emerging patterns for presentation at Learning and Teaching Committee meetings. They provide a vital link to ensure student voices are heard. They are the one of the main points of contact students have any issues relating their student experience within the department.

**Department Reps** are expected to proactively pursue improvements to their department or research group and seek to maintain and promote examples of best practice. The Students' Union aims to have at least one elected department representative per school/department. Where appropriate, based on the size of the student cohorts, or the distribution of subjects within the school, Students' Union aims to have at least two elected course representatives or one per subject.

[\*More details ... Who are Department Reps?\*](#)

## Role Requirements

Previous experience as Course Rep will be beneficial. And whilst Students' Union will provide relevant training, the following attributes are required:

- Be a good listener
- Able to speak up on behalf of others
- Be motivated and driven
- Have good organisation and time management skills

As part of their role, Department Reps will be expected to develop a familiarity with the structure of the representation system and a good understanding of their Department's workings as a whole.

## Duties and key responsibilities

- Represent the views of students in their School/Department
- Give feedback to those in a position of influence.
- Act as a liaison between students and staff when it comes to academic matters.
- Attend Learning and Teaching Committee meetings within the relevant Department/School
- Work collaboratively with fellow Reps and staff to resolve issues proactively and swiftly throughout the year.
- Celebrate positive changes and keep students informed of changes and developments.

[More details... Duties and key responsibilities](#)

## Benefits of being a Department Rep

- Being part of a 400+ strong team of like-minded individuals helping to shape, and make positive changes, to student experience.
- Build strong relationships with staff and fellow students.
- Bring Improvements to both courses and department
- Get access to exclusive training provided by the Students' Union.
- Gain access to Skills Development sessions, from leadership to wellbeing, developing transferable skills, such as problem-solving, negotiation, diplomacy, and time-management.
- Gain experience attending formal meetings with senior staff
- Gain accreditation which counts towards HEAR and Leicester Award
- Receive recognition from the Students' Union at events such as the annual Student Voice Awards, with the opportunity to win 'Course Rep of the Year'.

## Time commitment:

- Department commit to undertaking relevant training courses provided by the Students' Union throughout the academic year. They also commit to participating in at least one LTC meeting per term. LTC meetings typically last one to two hours and are usually held on campus.
- Department Reps need to make themselves available to their peers via e-mail and are expected to reply to queries within a reasonable timescale. In addition, Department Reps should be prepared to make themselves available to their peers for informal contact or short meetings before or after lectures, workshops etc. on a timetable that they may determine
- Department reps have the opportunity to attend College and University Committees meetings happening across the academic year. Commitment to these meetings should be considered based on teaching timetable availability.
- In total, the role of Department Rep should involve a commitment of **no more than a few hours per week**. Inevitably, the volume of work will vary during the course of an academic term, but commitments to the role will be avoided wherever possible during the examination period.

## How are Department Reps Appointed?

Department Reps are selected through election by their peers. Elections are administered centrally by the Students' Union and students are encouraged to nominate themselves through the Academic Representation area of the Students' Union website.

To ensure that all students belonging to a certain School/Department, regardless of their level of study, have the opportunity of putting their name forward during the nomination period, elections will take place once a year during the **Autumn Course Reps Recruitment**- towards the beginning of the first term (October)

Key Dates:

- Nominations open first day of term, generally last week of September.
- Nomination period first and second week of autumn term
- Voting will take place Wednesday to Friday within third week of term
- Confirmation of the election results will take place during the fourth week of term
- Elected Departmental Reps will take up their roles immediately

## Training, workshops and masterclasses

Department Reps have access to tailored workshops and online training, designed and delivered by the Students' Union team for CV enhancing and to improve employability.

**Training:** Initial training will consist of three online modules, designed to get reps up and running as a rep. We also host a series of events across the year to develop core skills.

**Workshops:** We organise a programme of workshops for each year. They're free to attend and each session runs twice to limit potential clashes in timetable. Example masterclasses include leadership, public speaking and how to run a campaign.

**Enhanced employability:** Being a Departmental Rep looks great on CV. The more you put in, the more you get out – gain accreditation through the Rep Development scheme, or use the role as a platform to get involved with the following initiatives:

- **Leicester Award:** The role of Course Rep is recognised as a volunteering activity as part of the Leicester Award, a programme which formally recognises and develops individual skills.
- **Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR Recognition):** Recognised as an accredited extra-curricular activity on the HEAR transcript, providing a written record of the engagement and volunteering undertaken during university studies
- **Student Voice Awards:** An end of year gala to celebrate the achievement of those who have gone the extra mile to represent the academic interest of their peers.

## Failure of fulfil the required duties of the role

### Summary

The Students' Union needs to ensure that all students receive appropriate academic representation during their time at the University of Leicester. It is therefore a requirement that elected Department Reps fulfil the core responsibilities and duties of the role for which they have been elected. However, the Students' Union also takes the view that students should always prioritise their education over other activities, whether that is volunteering or paid work. The role of Department Rep should involve a commitment of no more than a few hours per week, although the volume of work will inevitably vary during an academic term, (wherever possible, commitments to the role will be avoided during the examination period).

If the time commitment becomes too onerous, it is perfectly acceptable for a Department Rep to resign their position. In this case the Academic Representation team will attempt to recruit a replacement Department Rep from the current Course reps cohort.

Additionally, where the Students' Union becomes aware that a Department Rep may not be fulfilling the core responsibilities of their role as defined within this document, the Union will initiate an investigation to establish reasons why. If the investigation determines that a Department Rep is not engaged in their role the Union reserves the right to remove such "non-engaged" Department Reps and attempt to recruit a replacement from the current Course Reps cohort.

### Detailed procedures for Removal of a Department Rep

#### Non-Engagement of a Department Rep

In nominating themselves for the role of Department Rep, students commit to participating in the core sessions associated with the role for which they volunteered.

**Core training sessions for Department Reps:**  
Rep training  
Department Learning and Teaching Committees

For the purpose of clarity, failure to meet these commitments will be termed non-engagement.

This will encompass:

- withdrawal from representation activities and training;
- refusal to participate in, or commit to, the core aspects of the role;
- non-involvement or non-participation in academic representations activities and events.

Where non-engagement with the Department Rep role is identified, the Union will investigate the underlying reasons hindering the student's engagement. The outcome of the investigation will be either to resolve the underlying problems and re-initiate engagement, or if this is not possible, to trigger the replacement of the Department Rep.

### **Investigation**

Where Non-engagement is identified the relevant Department Rep will be contacted in writing, (Email 1) which will include relevant details regarding the events that were missed by the representative, to request an explanation. A period of seven days will be granted for the Department Rep to respond.

If engagement is not resumed, or no response is received, a further reminder (Email 2) will be sent. A further response time of seven days will be granted.

If there is still no contact from the Department Rep, alternative attempts to obtain relevant information to identify the underlying reasons for non-engagement will be made. These may include contacting the Department Rep's academic department to determine whether the non-engagement is only in relation to the Students' Union organised events whilst more informal contact is maintained with the relevant department staff.

### **Outcome**

Following the investigation, the Department Rep and their home department will be contacted with the outcome. In most cases this will be one of the following:

- The student's non-engagement related only to their role as a Department Rep and they have undertaken to re-engage with the role and will be allowed to continue for the remainder of the year.
- The student's non-engagement indicates that they feel either unable or unwilling to re-engage with the role, in which case they will be removed from the role and a replacement will be sought.
- The student's non-engagement is down to wider issues and a replacement will be sought.

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## **More details ... Who are Department Reps?**

- Department Reps are student volunteers, elected by their peers, for a period of one academic year.
- The Students' Union aims to have at least one elected Department Rep per department, though we will advertise two roles available. There are no restriction regarding the level of study of the candidates.

- Be the premier representatives of their department and work to ensure that the University delivers the highest standard of teaching and support.
- Department Reps are the channel through which students provide feedback on their academic experience, both positive and negative, providing constructive criticism on the aspects of their academic education that could be improved and highlighting areas of good practice. They gather and collate feedback from the students on their department, identifying any concerns and considering possible improvements

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## More details... Duties and key responsibilities

In order to ensure that all students receive appropriate academic representation during their time at the University of Leicester, it is a requirement that all elected Department Reps undertake appropriate training provided by the Students' Union and fulfil the minimum level of duties associated with the role. Good communication skills and effective collaboration with all other parties in the student representation system, and across the wider University, are vital to ensuring that the system works in a proactive way to deliver improvements to the student experience.

In nominating themselves to stand for election as a Department Rep, students are committing to meeting the following requirements:

- undertaking relevant core training courses provided by the Students' Union throughout the academic year;
- undertaking relevant supplementary training provided by the Students' Union throughout the academic year;
- having a strong visible presence among their cohort, together with an approachable manner for students wishing to raise issues or provide opinions;
- making themselves available to their peers either face to face or via e-mail and replying to queries within a reasonable timescale. In addition, Department Reps should be prepared to make themselves available to their peers for informal contact or short meetings before or after lectures, workshops etc. on a timetable determined by the Department Rep.
- Regularly liaise with Course Representatives, Student Union Representatives, Equality and Liberation Champions and Academic Societies within their department.
- Represent students on relevant University committees and/or forums, including Departmental/School Learning and Teaching Committee. This will include:-
  - preparing for committees, including receiving briefings and relevant consultation with students.
  - contributing proactively to the committee ensuring relevant actions are agreed/followed up on.
  - submission of a short report detailing students consulted, key actions/outcomes and next steps, including relevant communication to representatives and students.
- Attend Learning and Teaching Committee (LTCC) meetings, and represent the voice of your peers.

- establishing and maintaining good working relationships with staff members in the department, course administrators, and/ or academic staff members to ensure appropriate information flows between the Department and students.
- ensuring that student confidentiality is always maintained, unless this is explicitly waived;
- understanding the limits of their role to ensure appropriate signposting is provided where necessary;
- using the knowledge acquired through the provided training sessions, to determine whether specific issues raised by students need to be addressed through the SSC or whether they can be resolved through alternative means, for example: directly with a member of departmental staff, with the Union Education Officer or via alternative University or Students' Union services;
- Communicating any problems with, or suggestions to improve the representation system to the Academic Representation team to ensure the system functions effectively.
- Take a proactive role in talking with students, identifying their ideas/concerns and then feeding this information forward to the Union and University.
- Engage with Education Campaigns and in communicating information from the Students' Union to the students you represent.
- Promote your role effectively to the students you represent, and advertise the ways in which they can contact you.
- Be pro-active in gaining feedback from your peers, and in relaying changes and action points back to them after your LTC
- Liaise with the Academic Representation Team to give feedback or request support.