In-depth CR role description

Summary of role

Course Reps 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 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.

Duties and key responsibilities

Knowledge and experience required:

- No specific experience or knowledge is required for the role of Course Rep as the Students’ Union provides relevant training sessions.
- 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.

Time commitment:

- 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.
- Course Reps are expected to undertake relevant training courses provided by the Students’ Union throughout the academic year.
- Course Reps should expect to participate within at least one SSC meeting per term. SSC meetings typically last one to two hours and are usually held on campus.
- Course Reps will need to be available to their peers via e-mail and will be 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 determined by the Course Rep.

Communication and collaboration:

Communication is a vital element in ensuring that the Students’ Union representation system works with the University in a proactive way to deliver improvements to students’ experience of their programme. To make sure good communication and information flows are maintained Course Reps will need to collaborate effectively with other parties in the student representation system and across the wider University.

As such, it is important that Course Reps commit to:
Making sure that they have a strong visible presence among the student body, and have an approachable manner for students who wish to raise issues or provide opinions, so that they:

- make sure that general feedback on academic issues is gathered from students on a regular basis (Adequate time should always be allowed for students to provide Course Reps with any appropriate evidence to substantiate feedback so that issues raised at SSC are, wherever possible, evidence-based)
- Seek 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

Ensuring that student confidentiality is maintained at all times unless this is explicitly waived

Regularly contributing to departmental Staff-Student Committee (SSC) meetings, (generally held once or twice per term), contributing to discussions which affect their constituents and raising issues where necessary.

Proactively pursuing actions agreed at the SSCs to ensure a positive outcome for student experience

Ensuring that the outcome of issues raised at SSC or information from the Students’ Union is cascaded down to students in a clear and timely fashion, producing clearly written communication in the form of e-mails, social media or website copy as appropriate.

Establishing and maintaining good working relationships with staff members of the SSC, course administrators and other relevant staff members to ensure appropriate information flows between the Department and students.

Using knowledge acquired through the provided training sessions, apply discretion to determine whether particular issues raised by students should be processed through the representation system or whether they need to be resolved through alternative means, such as directly with a member of departmental staff, with the Union Education Officer or via another University or Students’ Union service.

Collaborating with Lead Union Representatives, the Students’ Union Education Officer and the Development Coordinator (Academic Representation) as appropriate to ensure that information flows regarding student feedback are maintained appropriately

Wherever possible, arranging a handover between outgoing and incoming 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 Development Coordinator (Academic Representation)

Communicating any problems with, or suggestions to improve, the representation system to the Development Coordinator (Academic Representation) to ensure the system functions effectively.