



STAFF

PACK

COURSE REP ELECTIONS

COURSE REPS

Course Reps are elected student volunteers who gather student feedback, represent the opinions of their peers to University staff, and report back on what the collective student voice has achieved.

Course Reps contribute in a significant way to overall student satisfaction, particularly within the student voice section of the NSS. They are the largest source of academic representation at Surrey, accessible to all students, regardless of level of study or course.

Many Reps praise the way in which their department have promoted their role and supported them throughout the year. We hope this staff pack helps you in continuing this partnership work throughout the year.

This year, Course Reps will have a new vital role in monitoring and gathering student feedback through MySurrey Voice, powered by Unitu. As staff, you will have integral roles in helping students and Reps make the most of this new tool, and feel listened to.

Elections for Course Reps happen twice a year; between weeks 1-3 in Semester 1 for new students, and in weeks 9-11 in Semester 2 for returning students.

If you have any questions about Course Reps, please email hannah.jones@surrey.ac.uk

TRAINING

All Course Reps will receive vital training in October, which is arranged and provided by the Students' Union, online for 2020/21.

This timetable allows for Reps to attend training in advance of their departmental meetings, and to begin gathering feedback from students.

KEY DATES

ELECTIONS TIMELINE:

WEEK 1 & WEEK 9
Nomination Period Opens.

WEEK 2 & WEEK 10
Nomination Period Closes.

WEEK 3 & WEEK 11
Election Period Opens.

END OF WEEK 3 & 11
Election Period Closes.

DURING WEEK 4 & 12
Details of elected Course Reps are passed on to the Students' Union by uploading their details on the Union website



The University of Surrey
Students' Union

COURSE REP ELECTION PROCESS

1

Electing Reps

Reps are elected in one of the election periods. For new students, elections take place in [weeks 1-3 of Semester One](#). For returning students, elections take place in [weeks 9-11 of Semester Two](#). This allows Reps time to attend training.

These dates are publicised so that each Faculty can conduct their elections at the same time - making the process clear, transparent, and accessible for all students, regardless of their course.

SEMESTER ONE -

Week 1 - Nominations open

Week 3 - Elections begin

End of week 3 - Close of elections

SEMESTER TWO -

Week 9 - Nominations open

Week 10 - Elections begin

End of week 11 - Close of elections

2

Registering Reps

Once Reps are elected, the relevant member of staff within the Academic Registry will gather the details of the elected Reps, and then upload this information to the Students' Union database.

This means that we can get in touch with the new Reps, make sure they are trained and keep in contact with them throughout the academic year.

Key Contacts -

fass-help@surrey.ac.uk

feps-help@surrey.ac.uk

fhms-help@surrey.ac.uk

Key Contacts -

ussu.vpvoice@surrey.ac.uk

hannah.jones@surrey.ac.uk

ussu.co.uk/representation

3

Advertising Reps

Once Reps are elected, we would encourage staff to contact their Reps to welcome them to the role and let them know the best way they can contact staff in the department.

As part of training we advise Reps on how they can get make sure that their fellow students know who they are and how they can contact them, but help from staff is always useful.

You could do the following:

- [Send an email](#) advertising who the Reps are for each cohort.
- Invite the Reps to [introduce themselves in lectures](#).
- Free up poster space in common rooms or department display boards for Reps to [publicise their contact details](#).

COURSE REP ELECTIONS

THOUGH MANY OF YOU WILL BE FAMILIAR WITH THE PROCEDURE FOR ELECTIONS, HERE IS AN OVERVIEW:

How should Elections be conducted?

A consistent and democratic elections process is important so that students are not required to meet different criteria to be eligible for the same role and responsibilities, and so that all students know how they can get involved and take on the role if they think they would be good at it.

The nomination deadline should be advertised publicly, and the role clearly explained during the nomination period. Every eligible student should have the opportunity to nominate themselves.

How do students nominate themselves?

Elections must be:

Fair - all eligible students must have the chance to nominate themselves

Democratic - all eligible students must have the chance to vote on who **represents them**

Consistent - all eligible students should experience the same election process

Students will be able to nominate themselves in the following way:

- 1) Visit the Union website at www.ussu.co.uk/representation/coursereps
- 2) Fill in the "Elect Me" nomination form
- 3) Upload their form using the nomination link on the Union website.

If the position is contested, the Academic Registry team will conduct a vote on Microsoft Forms. If the position is uncontested, the team will email the cohort with the name of the potential Rep to check for objections.

What if no students volunteer?

We do understand that this can happen. Through the use of promotional materials, and with your help, the Student's Union will be working hard to **promote the role of Course Rep and awareness of elections.**

As we now have more consistent elections, following the same schedule across all departments, knowledge and interest in the programme should grow. Similarly, as the election period becomes a more solid fixture in the student journey, promotion and visibility will enhance how students hear about the role.

If you are having trouble finding a volunteer, please contact your Faculty administrator, or get in touch with the Students' Union's Course Rep Coordinator, Hannah, at hannah.jones@surrey.ac.uk



ANY QUESTIONS?

LET US HELP!

HERE ARE SOME ANSWERS TO THE MOST COMMON QUESTIONS AND QUERIES WE RECEIVE ABOUT COURSE REPS.

What do Reps actually do?

Course Reps have three main responsibilities:

1. Research student opinion – Chat to the students on their course and gather as much feedback as possible, whether it is positive or about something that needs changing.
2. Represent students – They will attend departmental meetings held by the University each semester to give voice to what their fellow students have told them about the course, along with representing students on platforms such as Unitu and in informal interactions with staff.
3. Report back – Finally, they will need to let students know what has happened as a result of their feedback! This will help them see the value in sharing their opinions with Reps, and with the University.

What are the University obligations in supporting Reps?

The University is responsible for the following obligations and actions:

- Hold Course Rep elections each year
- Confirm to students that they have been elected to be a Course Rep, and outline the group of students they will be representing
- Inform the Students' Union of the details for the Course Rep
- Help Reps advertise their role to their cohort
- Facilitate representation within the Department (e.g. giving them adequate notice of upcoming meetings)
- Respond and take action on feedback posted on discussion boards on Unitu

What does the Union do to support Reps?

The Union will provide Reps with the following:

- Training sessions and resources
- Offer advice and guidance to enable them to represent their cohort effectively
- Facilitate Student Voice Forums to allow them address issues directly to the University's Senior Management team
- Promote the work of Course Reps throughout the year
- Identify issues that require involvement of senior members of University staff

What skills do Course Reps develop?

- Leadership skills
- Communication
- Team-working
- Organisation skills
- Persuasion
- Collaboration
- Meeting skills
- Time-management
- Digital literacy

All these skills will be hugely vital to students when they move on from Surrey! It's a great way to encourage volunteers to take on the Course Rep role, as personal development is very important to many students.

If you have any questions about Course Reps that we haven't covered here, please email hannah.jones@surrey.ac.uk

You can also visit ussu.co.uk/voice to find the Course Reps staff hub of resources.



ANY CONCERNS?

LET US HELP!

HERE IS SOME ADVICE ON SOME CONCERNS OR QUERIES YOU MIGHT HAVE.

Why are Reps important and why should I get involved with their work?

Communication: Course Reps are an essential link between students, University staff, and the Union. Staff can help feed back to students when there has been a response from the department to issues raised by Reps, creating a dialogue and helping students understand when immediate change is not possible.

Solve problems at the earliest opportunity: students can often notice different issues to staff, and some of these situations are easily remedied quickly with the collaboration of the department. This can mean issues are dealt with quickly, ahead of student surveys or before dissatisfaction has the chance to spread,

The Code of Practice for Student Engagement: this sets out the core ethos shared by the University and the Union of active student representation. All students should have the opportunity for their voice to be heard in the delivery of their education.

Representation, therefore, should never simply be a tick-box, and when staff and students work together in the way the Course Rep programme promotes, it becomes active and effective representation for all students.

Finally, **Reps are just volunteers!** They will need your help at times, so please keep that in mind.

If you have any concerns about Course Reps that we haven't covered here, please email hannah.jones@surrey.ac.uk

We have a Course Rep but they don't attend SSLCs or BoS. What do we do?

Please keep a record of those who do not attend and pass this to the relevant administration staff member in your faculty. If you have tried to get in contact with a Rep but had no luck, then please let us know and we can try and help out.

We will offer additional support and training where necessary, though there is a Course Rep Removal Policy in place for when Reps are not engaging.

What do we do if the Course Rep is acting unprofessionally?

This could be a sign that a Course Rep may need more training. Please encourage the student to contact the Students' Union and we will provide the help they need to become a great Rep. Alternatively, you can contact the Course Rep Coordinator, Hannah, if you have concerns.

What do we do if Course Reps are not escalating feedback on Unitu?

The role Course Reps have on the MySurrey Voice feedback platform, powered by Unitu, is to act as moderators and gatherers of student feedback posted in the private discussion boards.

This means Course Reps need to be active and engaged to pass feedback through to you. If you are concerned you have not had much feedback via Unitu, promote its usage to your students, or get in touch with us at the Union to discuss further.





The University of Surrey
Students' Union