



STUDENT REP CO-ORDINATOR *handbook*

2014/15

Cardiff University Students' Union
Undeb Myfyrwyr Prifysgol Caerdydd



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Thank You!

Firstly, we want to begin by saying Thank You! Whether you've been supporting Student Representatives for years or whether you're brand new to the role we would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all that you do for Representatives and the student experience here at Cardiff.

LEILA HUGHES, SRC FOR THE BUSINESS SCHOOL.
WINNER OF STUDENT REP CO-ORDINATOR OF THE
YEAR AT THE ENRICHING STUDENT LIFE AWARDS.



Over the past couple of years, the Students' Union and Registry and Academic Services have been working closely to enhance the Student Representatives system. We have increased awareness of the rep system, have trained more students than ever before in their Schools and have a recognition system with the Skills Development Service. With your help, we also continue to celebrate the achievements of staff and students at the Enriching Student Life Awards.

This handbook aims to cover the key things you need to know as an SRC, ranging from the requirements of your role, the students' role, and key dates for this academic year. Your help is crucial as an SRC, from the election of representatives to ensuring that we receive the Student-Staff Panel minutes.

If you have any questions at any point, please contact the Student Engagement Officer Bethan Foweraker at: **FowerakerB@Cardiff.ac.uk**

Thank you again and do please keep in touch.

Key Dates

Student Rep Co-ordinators

September -

- Student Rep Co-ordinator (SRC) briefing – all SRCs required to attend.

Enrolment Week & Week 1

23/09 & 4/10 -

- Explain the role of Student Academic Representatives during induction (or arrange for the Student Voice Team to come along to talks)
- Explain the process for nominating and electing Student Academic Representatives

Between 13/10 & 24/10 -

- Elections held and names of Student Academic Representatives sent to: studentreps@cardiff.ac.uk
- *Note: Postgraduate Student Rep names may be received later if necessary.*

As soon as Reps are Elected -

- Arrange a training session with the Student Voice Team – studentreps@cardiff.ac.uk

By the 7th of November -

- One School Chair appointed for each Student- Staff Panel either through training or by the School no later than this date.

Throughout the year -

- Send minutes of Student-Staff Panel minutes to the Student Voice Team

Student Academic Reps

Training in Schools -

- (to be arranged with the Student Voice Team via studentreps@cardiff.ac.uk and SRC)

Chairs and Secretary training -

- 19th of November 1pm onwards

Speak Week -

- February the 9th-13th

Student Academic Rep Conference

- February the 12th

More dates of meetings and events related to the rep system can be found here: cardiff.ac.uk/studentvoice/about/students/when/



What Are My Key Responsibilities?

SRCs act as the central point for the organisation of the student representative system within schools. Without the role of the SRC, Cardiff as an Institution would not be able to effectively co-ordinate the 1,000 student academic representatives we have. The specific role and responsibilities are detailed below, but if you are new to being a SRC and want to know more please email the Student Engagement Officer, **Fowerakerb@cardiff.ac.uk** to arrange a meeting:

SRC Annual Briefing

We hold an annual SRC briefing in September, during which we bring all co-ordinators together to update you on any changes to the system and share best practice between Schools. Attendance is essential so that we know all Schools are aware of the strategic nature of the system.

Publicity

As SRCs, it is expected that you co-ordinate the publicising of the rep system within your School. This can be achieved by arranging the Student Voice Team to come into your School to talk to your students, ordering posters provided by the Students' Union, promoting the role through the student handbooks and directing students to our Student Voice pages - cardiff.ac.uk/studentvoice. We also expect you to publicise the contact details of Student Academic Reps to students so it's easier for them to receive feedback.

Appointment and Election

As an SRC, it also your role to co-ordinate the appointment and election of Student Academic Reps, more information on this follows in the booklet.

It is also your responsibility to send the names of Student Academic Reps and the School Chairs to the Student Voice Team **studentreps@cardiff.ac.uk** by the annual deadlines, outlined in this booklet.

Student-Staff Panel Meetings

You are responsible for ensuring that all Student-Staff Panels take place by co-ordinating the arrangements for them, including arranging meetings and the appointment of panel Chairs and Secretaries. We would expect you to work with the students to help to identify agenda points for the meetings and ensuring that reps are put on the appropriate committees within the School. We also ask for all minutes to be sent to the Student Voice Team.

Training

The Student Voice Team will train your students in their School. All we need from you is an ideal time, date and room booked, that your students will be free, and ensure that your students are aware of the training.

What Is A Student Academic Rep?

Cardiff Students' Union and Cardiff University work in partnership to ensure that the student voice is heard and taken seriously at every level. As a Student Academic Representative, they play a vital role in this by attending Student-Staff Panels in Schools, and acting as a link between members of staff and fellow students. It's their job to tell the School and the University what they like and don't like about Cardiff University so that we can continue to do the things they like and improve on the things they don't.

Why is their role so important?

They are one of over a thousand Student Academic Representatives at Cardiff University, representing over 28,000 Cardiff Students in total. As a representative, their role is to ensure that all students know what a Student Academic Representative is and know how to make use of the system.

What's expected of them?

As a Student Academic Representative, they will play a vital role in representing the Student body by attending their Student-Staff Panels and communicating with the Students' Union on other academic issues, acting as the link between you and your peers.

From seeking student feedback, they can pass this information on to members of staff, either through informal meetings or during a Student-Staff Panel. Through this role, students have direct input into their area of study and can improve their overall student experience.

Their main responsibilities are to:



- Represent the views and opinions of their fellow students:
- Help make decisions to improve both the academic and the wider student experience of students in their School:
- Signpost student to the various support and advice services available to them.
- Develop the skills and knowledge to support their role.

The Role of Chair & Secretary

The appointment of a Chair and Secretary should be agreed at the first SSP meeting of the academic session. A Student Academic Rep should always take the post of SSP Chair. The Secretary to the SSP can be either a staff or student member, as agreed by the panel although it's preferable for a staff member to act as Secretary to the panel so that all students can contribute fully to the discussion and ensure continuity of note taking from one academic session to another.

School Chairs

Each academic session, schools should appoint an undergraduate and a postgraduate School Chair from each Student Staff Panel.

SRCs should ensure that the names of School Chairs are communicated to the Student Voice Team as soon as the first SSP has taken place and the election for the Chair has been held, preferably by the end of Week 6 of the Autumn Semester.

Following the appointment of a School Chair and Secretary being made, the Student Voice Team will contact them to provide additional training for their role which is scheduled for the 19th of November. The chairs will also be invited to termly College Forums, dates of which can be found here: cardiff.ac.uk/studentvoice/about/students/when/

Your Student Voice Co-ordinators



Sophia



Tom

The Role of Chair & Secretary

The Chair's role is to:

Before the meeting:

- Collect agenda items from Student Academic Reps.
- Agree an agenda with the supporting member of staff at least 5 days in advance of the meeting.

During the meeting:

- Bring the meeting to order and regulate the conduct of the meeting.
- Feedback to the Panel about the College Forum.
- Follow the agenda and regulate the amount of time spent on each item, leading the panel towards a decision.
- Ensure that agreed actions are assigned to a named person and implemented within an appropriate timescale.

After the meeting:

- Check all minutes are a correct record of the meeting prior to circulation.
- Send a pro forma, short report to the Student Voice Team.
- Attend the next College Forum.
- Attend any meetings your School asks you to attend.



The Secretary's role is to:

Before the meeting:

- Book a room for the meeting.
- Make sure all members of the Panel are aware of the date and venue of the meeting.
- Circulate the agenda once it had been approved by the student chair and the supporting member of staff.

During the meeting:

- Make brief notes of discussions including key decisions and actions agreed by the Panel, the person responsible for the action and the deadline.

After the meeting:

- Draft the minutes as soon as possible following the meeting. Once the minutes have been agreed by the chair and a supporting member of staff, circulate all minutes to the Panel within ten working days of the meeting.
- Make the minutes available to all students by placing them on notice boards / Learning Central.



Appointment & Election

Responsibilities of Schools:

- To make clear to students the processes for nomination, election and appointment of Student Academic Representatives.
- To ensure that election and appointment processes are carried out annually and are transparent, timely and accessible.

It is important that all Student Academic Representatives are appointed through a democratic election process that takes place annually.

Existing Student Academic Representatives can continue as reps in the following academic session but an opportunity must be provided on an annual basis to enable other candidates to put themselves forward for election.

Holding Elections

One of the easiest methods to conduct elections is via email. Candidates for the position could be asked to write a short paragraph on why they wish to become a rep which could then be emailed out to

the cohort with them replying with their vote. Alternatively, schools could set up a simple online survey for the elections process, for example by using Bristol Online Surveys (BOS).

How Many Representatives Should We Appoint?

To ensure that all groups of students within each School are represented, each programme within the School should normally have at least one Student Academic Representative for each year of study. It is at the School's discretion to decide on the annual number of postgraduate research but there should be a minimum of two per School. Some schools may decide to appoint all PGR students onto their appropriate internal student consultative committees. For larger year groups, we recommend at least one representative per 50 students.

All Student Academic Representatives should be elected by the end of Week 4 of the Autumn Semester. This ensures that reps can be trained prior to their first Student-Staff Panel.

SRCs should notify the Student Voice Team of the names of Student Academic Representatives using the proforma (to be circulated in advance by Registry) no later than the end of Week 4 of the Autumn Semester.

If you have any questions or require assistance with the election of representatives, contact the Student Voice Team – **studenreps@cardiff.ac.uk**

How can I support our representatives?

Schools can facilitate communication between representatives and the student body through the provision of the following basic resources:

- An electronic or physical noticeboard, including information about Student-Staff Panels (SSPs);
- An area on Learning Central (or equivalent), to include an archive of SSP minutes, key contacts, etc;
- Access to relevant lists of student email addresses (though noting that use of these lists by Student Academic Reps should be confined to rep business only – see Section on Data Protection, below);
- Time for occasional ‘shout outs’ at the beginning or end of lectures.
- Ensuring that a time slot is arranged with the Student Voice Team to come and train the Student Academic Representatives prior to their first SSP.
- Placing photographs of Student Academic Reps on School noticeboards or on Learning Central can help to raise the profile of reps.
- In relation to the use of other students’ data by Student Academic Representatives, reps should be provided with access to email addresses for the specific programmes and cohorts which they represent.

Data Protection Issues

Student Academic Reps should be made aware by their School that their names, Student ID numbers and University email addresses will be forwarded by University Registry to the Students’ Union for the purposes of inviting them to training and development events and, on occasion, to request that they provide feedback about the operation and outcomes of the representative system within their School.

Student-Staff Panels & Beyond

Where Should The Student Feedback Go?

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Responsibilities of Schools:

- To make clear the purpose of the meetings to which Student Academic Representatives are invited, and how these fit into the wider-decision making structures in the School.
- To 'close the feedback loop' by ensuring any outcomes are communicated clearly to all students, so that students can see that the representative system is effective and that their contribution is worthwhile.

Student-Staff Panels (SSPs) provide a formal channel for students to meet with staff and to discuss issues related to their educational experience. They also provide an opportunity for the School to consult with students and receive feedback on new proposals.

- Each School must have at least one SSP for undergraduate and one for postgraduate.
- Schools may wish to hold several separate SSPs due to the range of programmes of study
- SSPs will meet at least once per semester and should not be scheduled at times which coincide with other School meetings or teaching commitments.
- The annual schedule of meetings should be circulated to all School staff, the Student Voice Team and students at the start of the academic session.

The terms of reference and membership of SSPs should be made clear to all students and staff, and should be reviewed annually.

When a programme is delivered entirely by distance learning, or involves significant

placement periods, an appropriate mode of discussion (e.g. through the use of online discussion boards) should be established. It is strongly advised that the first set of Student-Staff Panels are organised by week 6 in order that the names of the School Chairs can be communicated to the Student Voice Team.

Membership of a Student-Staff Panel:

It would be desirable if Directors of Teaching and Learning, Student Rep Co-ordinators, subject librarians, Senior Personal Tutor, Heads of Year and a member of administrative staff could be in attendance during these meetings to ensure that the relevant people are present to respond to student queries.

Agendas and minutes

The Chair and a supporting member of staff (normally the SRC) should agree an agenda for each meeting, which should be circulated to members of the panel at least five days in advance of the meeting. It is the responsibility of Student Academic Representatives to encourage students to suggest items to place on the agenda for SSPs, and to submit these to the Chair. Schools may wish to facilitate this process by means of an email reminder to reps and/or via School noticeboards. The SRC should also help to identify issues for the agenda with particular reference to the suggested agenda items for SSPs, available on the connections page.

Minutes of the meeting should be distributed to all members of the panel within **ten working days of the meeting**. Minutes and action points should be made available to all students, via noticeboards or in electronic format. Student Academic Representatives should also feed back any information or decisions made at meetings to fellow students, preferably in the form of a brief set of key points which can be communicated by email. In all cases, it is important that the record of decisions and actions made at SSPs are accurate and have been agreed by both student and staff members of the panel. It is also the responsibility of the SRC to ensure that all minutes are forwarded to the Student Voice Team, in order that issues of importance within the wider content of the University and Students' Union can be considered.

A template of the recording of minutes, and the main decisions records can be found on the Student Voice webpages.

Links to School decision-making structures

Current Senate regulations state that at least one student representative (normally the chair of the Student-Staff Panel) should attend the relevant Board of Studies. Any matters raised by the student representative at this meeting should then be fed back to the next Student-Staff Panel.

In addition to inviting Student Academic Representatives to discuss SSP matters, schools are strongly encouraged to invite reps to stay for discussion of all open business

at School committees (i.e. all items other than those involving named members of staff or students). Inviting reps to attend discussion of all open business provides a further channel of communication between staff and students and Reps can offer a valuable perspective on issues affecting students.

Links to the Students' Union and the University

Membership of the Students' Union College Forums will be comprised of the School Chairs appointed within each Student-Staff Panel. These forums, which meet three times a year, enables the Students' Union to identify any cross-School issues within a College or wider student experience issues being highlighted by School Chairs and to raise these issues at a higher level within the University. The Student Voice Team will take responsibility for inviting School Chairs to these meetings.



Emma McKeogh
Student Voice Manager

✉ McKeoghE@cardiff.ac.uk

☎ 029 2078 1435

Training

Responsibilities of Schools:

- To be aware of the content of training delivered annually by the Students' Union and the University.
- To refer to the Student Academic Rep Handbook in supporting the role and development of Student Academic Representatives.
- To arrange a training session for their Student Academic Representatives through the Student Voice Team as soon as possible.

The University and the Students' Union aim to provide comprehensive training for Student Academic Representatives. This training is delivered during the Autumn Semester and includes:

- An overview of how the representative system operates in schools and the University;
- An outline of the roles, responsibilities and expectations of reps;
- The types of issues which reps may come across and what they should do about them;
- How reps should collect and communicate evidence from students;
- Conduct of meetings (with particular emphasis on Student-Staff Panels).

Training is complemented by information contained within the Student Academic Rep Handbook available at **cardiff.ac.uk/studentvoice** and sent electronically to all Student Academic Reps upon election. They also have access to a learning central module and the student voice pages.

Where Can I Find Out More?

If you would like to know more about the Student Academic Rep system at Cardiff, or are looking for more recourses, please contact:



studentreps@cardiff.ac.uk



cardiff.ac.uk/studentvoice



cardiffstudents.com/reps