



Student Representation Policy

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Effective from 1st September 2022

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1.0 Introduction and Purpose

1.1 Student representation is a shared agreement and partnership approach between University of Manchester Students' Union (Students' Union) and the University. The wider principles of this partnership are set out in the University/Students' Union Memorandum of Understanding.

1.2 This document sets out the policy and procedure relating to student representation at the University of Manchester (University) and has been written in partnership with the Students' Union.

1.3 The aim of this policy is to ensure that all students, no matter what they are studying, are effectively represented and have a voice on matters relating to their education and student experience. It also aims to ensure a consistent approach (where possible) to representation across departments and Schools.

2.0 Scope and Definitions

2.1 This document covers Student Representatives (Student Reps) at a School and course/programme level, primarily focused on Course Reps and School Reps.

2.2 Other forms of student representation are captured in the Student Partnership Agreement, as agreed by the Union-University Relations Committee (UURC). The representation of Post Graduate Researchers (PGR's) is covered in the Postgraduate Researcher Student Representatives Policy and therefore this Policy relates to Undergraduate and Post Graduate Taught (PGT) students only.

3.0 Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 It is important that Student Reps are clear on their role and our expectations of them, to ensure that they can be effective on behalf of their peers.

3.2 Student representatives provide feedback and engage with staff on making positive change at the appropriate level.

3.3 Course or programme level representatives (Course Reps):

3.3.1 These are students who represent their peers within their course or programme year-group (e.g., a student representative for 1st year Chemistry students).

3.3.2 Course rep positions on a specific programme are open to any students studying that programme. In some cases, a course rep may represent more than one specific

cohort (e.g., a 2nd year studying French and German could represent 2nd year French and German students, 2nd year French students, or 2nd year German students).

3.3.3 Course reps are the first port of call for students to provide feedback and raise issues at a course/programme level, they attend regular Student Staff Liaison Committee meetings (SSLC's) to report on this feedback to staff members and close the feedback loop with their cohort (please see paragraph 5.7).

3.3.4 It is the responsibility of course reps to:

- Attend Students' Union general training and specific training within Schools or programmes;
- Be in regular communication with the students they are representing, either through email, face to face sessions, Teams, or social media;
- Listen to feedback from their peers and relay this at the appropriate level;
- Attend relevant meetings (SSLCs, Faculty Forums, student-focused committees) to provide an insight into the student experience and work with staff to improve the student experience;
- Work with staff to find solutions, address challenges and feedback progress to their peers; and
- Follow the Students' Union Members Code of Conduct.

3.4 School level representatives (School Reps):

3.4.1 These are students who help to coordinate course reps and represent their peers within their School (e.g., a School Rep for Health Sciences).

3.4.2 School Rep positions in a specific School are open to any returning course rep who represents a course within that School.

3.4.3 School Reps meet regularly, before School level meetings, with Course Reps to coordinate the feedback received at course level and channel this up to the School level.

3.4.4 It is the responsibility of School reps to:

- Attend Students' Union general training and any specific training within Schools or programmes;
- Be in regular communication with the Course Reps within their School; either through email, face to face sessions, Teams, or social media;
- Host meetings for Course Reps within their School to pull together feedback from different areas, relaying this feedback at an appropriate level;
- Attend relevant meetings to provide an over-arching insight into student experience within the School and work with staff to improve School-wide student experience; and
- Work with staff at the University and Students' Union to find solutions, address challenges and update their peers on progress of issues; and
- Follow the Students' Union Members Code of Conduct.

3.5 As the representative body for students, the Students' Union is well placed to provide support for student reps and works with University staff in partnership to provide and support the student representative programme.

3.5.1 It is the responsibility of the Students' Union to:

- Actively engage with the University in this process;
- Ensure the programme is accessible to all students;
- Administer the recruitment/selection/election of reps;
- Provide initial and ongoing training;
- Maintain an accurate record of representatives and submit information to the HEAR on active reps;
- Communicate regularly with representatives; and
- Provide support in engaging with the feedback process.

3.5.2 It is the responsibility of the University to:

- Actively engage with students and the Students' Union in this process;
- Provide the Students' Union with accurate and up to date information relating to courses and student representatives;
- Ensure reps can communicate with their cohort;
- Support the administration of appropriate staff and student meetings; and
- Recognise and respond to student feedback through representatives (closing the feedback loop - (please see paragraph 5.7).

4.0 General Principles

4.1 Student Reps are responsible for representing the best interests of their peers, including the varying needs and perspectives of different students. To enable this, they gather feedback, both positive and negative, from their peers about their University experience. They share this feedback with staff at the University and Students' Union, and work in partnership with them to share good practice, explore issues, suggest solutions, and bring about positive change.

4.2 Student representation enables students to make a meaningful contribution to quality assurance, and to enhancing teaching and learning and the student experience. Student Reps should have the opportunity to feed into developments affecting their student experience at a course, School, Faculty, and institutional level.

4.3 Student representation allows the voices of all students to be captured and heard, irrespective of where they are studying, how they are studying (e.g. on campus, flexible and distance learning programmes), their level of study or their discipline.

4.4 The Students' Union has a fundamental role in overseeing and coordinating student representation structures at the University of Manchester. The Students' Union and University will work in partnership to ensure that all students at the University are effectively represented at a course/programme/School level.

4.5 Student Reps are important and valued student leaders within the Students' Union, and form a crucial part of our wider representative work.

4.6 Every programme/discipline area should have Student Reps. Ideally these reps will be elected by their peers following processes set out by the Students' Union, however we understand that this may not always be possible and sometimes alternative forms of recruitment may be necessary (see Appendix 2).

4.7 Schools should be fully engaged in student representation and committed to working in partnership with the Students' Union to deliver an effective representation programme. This includes clear leadership within the School, formal processes in place (as set out in this document) and meaningful engagement with the Students' Union.

4.8 Student Reps should be fully engaged and active in their roles and be clear on what is expected of them as representatives (including maintaining a dialogue with their peers; being representative of their cohort; being empowered to be partners in decisions about the student experience; ensuring they are fully prepared for meetings, etc.). A role description for Student Representatives is provided in Appendix 1.

4.9 Methods should be in place within programmes/discipline areas/Schools to ensure speedy resolution of student issues brought up through the student representation procedures (see 3.5.2).

4.10 Student Reps are valued volunteers and should be recognised and rewarded for their contribution, both within and outside of their School.

5.0 Guidance for Process

5.1 Selection and election of representatives

5.1.1 The detailed process for this is included in Appendix 2.

5.1.2 All students should be given a fair and equal opportunity to become a student representative.

5.2 Structure

5.2.1 Each programme year group should have at least one student representative. Where there are large numbers of students, there should be enough representatives to allow for useful and accessible representation, and where there are small numbers of students the representative could be from a related programme.

5.2.2 Each School or programme area responsible for supporting representatives should use their experience and knowledge to determine an appropriate number of representatives with the Students' Union.

5.2.3 Each School should work with the Students' Union to elect a minimum of one School Rep (ideally four School Reps) to perform the role as set out in 3.4.

5.3 Training and Mentoring

5.3.1 The Student's Union provides a central training programme which covers the basics of a general student representative role. This should then be supplemented by specific programme or School training delivered by the University in partnership with the Students' Union.

5.3.2 Mentoring opportunities should be offered where experienced reps mentor new reps in their first year.

5.4 Conduct and Discipline

5.4.1 Student representatives are expected to conduct their role in line with Students' Union Members Code of Conduct, the University's Regulation XVII: Conduct and Discipline of Students and the Student Representative role profile (see Appendix 1).

5.4.2 The Students' Union Education Team will address any concerns raised over representative conduct through informal meetings with representatives, staff and/or students before passing the issue over to a formal process via the appropriate channel.

5.5 Recognition

5.5.1 The Students' Union and University recognise the time commitment of all our volunteers, including student representatives. The Students' Union is responsible for recognising this commitment through the Step Up and Lead component of the STELLIFY award. If a student rep is classed as active in their role, they will have this recorded on their HEAR and receive a PDF certificate from the Students' Union.

5.5.2 Alongside this, student representatives have access to extra opportunities such as taking part in focus groups, developing skills through the Student Leaders Conference, and being recognised as part of our annual Education awards.

5.5.3 The Students' Union encourages Schools and programmes to take the opportunity to recognise and thank student representatives at a local level (e.g. a letter of thanks from the Head of Department).

5.6 Inclusivity and Accessibility

5.6.1 The University and Students' Union will work in partnership to ensure the representation programme is inclusive and accessible to all students.

5.6.2 Student representatives can be supported in attending University meetings by Students' Union staff.

5.6.3 In meetings involving student representatives, the agenda and papers should be prepared in an accessible format a week in advance.

5.6.4 The Students' Union will work with Schools and programmes to identify concerns with demographic representation of students.

5.7 Feedback Loop

5.7.1 To 'close the feedback loop' is to complete the final stage in the feedback process, in which after Student Reps pass on feedback from students to staff, they then feedback the staff response to students. For example, students comment that lectures need breaks between them, this is fed back by reps at a meeting with staff, and staff decide include a 10 minute break next semester. In this case, closing the feedback loop would involve Student Reps contacting their cohort to inform them of the plan to schedule breaks in the next semester.

5.7.2 Alongside SSLC meetings, Student Reps should have access to informal discussions with relevant academic staff members to address issues as they arise.

5.7.3 If issues are not satisfactorily resolved, Student Reps should feed this back through the Students' Union via School Reps or Faculty Officers, and through the University via Head of Department and the Student Complaints procedure when appropriate.

Version amendment history: Student Representation Policy		
Version	Date	Reason for change
Principles and Guidance for Student Representation, version 1.0	Sept 2013	Creation by Teaching and Learning Support and UMSU, approved by TLG
Student Representation Policy 2.0 – implementation from September 2022	May 2022	Changes to internal processes, including addition of School Rep. Change of name from Principles and Guidance for Student Representation' to 'Student Representation Policy'.

Document control box	
Policy / Procedure title:	Student Representation Policy
Date Approved:	May 2022
Approving body:	TLSG/Senate
Implementation date:	September 2022
Version:	2.0
Supersedes:	Principles and guidance of Student Representation at Manchester
Previous review dates:	2012/2013
Next review date:	May 2026
Related Statutes, Ordinances, General Regulations	Regulation XVII: Conduct and Discipline of Students
Related Policies:	PGR Representation Policy
Related Procedures and Guidance:	The University/Students' Union Memorandum of Understanding The Students' Union Members Code of Conduct
Policy owner:	Head of Student and Academic Services (SAS)/ Associate Director Education and Advocacy UMSU (Laura Pike)
Lead contact:	Associate Director Education and Advocacy UMSU (Laura Pike)/ Teaching and Learning Manager (Policy), Teaching and Learning Delivery Team, Division of Student and Academic Services <i>For any queries or questions relating to this document, please direct your email to teaching-policy@manchester.ac.uk</i>

Appendix

Appendix 1 – Student Representative Role Description

As a Student Representative, you are a student leader and **work in partnership with the Students' Union and University Staff** to represent the views and experiences of your peers. Reps work formally and informally at different levels, providing an essential link and **ensuring student voice is key** in University decisions.

The representative programme is co-owned by the Students' Union and the University so you will have the chance to work with other student leaders including the Students' Union Executive Officers to act on feedback, run campaigns or influence policymaking.

Our Expectations

As a rep, you are expected to:

- Complete general Students' Union Student Rep training and specific School or programme training.
- Regularly contact your cohort (other students on your course) to introduce yourself and gather feedback.
- Work with Staff, the Students' Union and other reps to act on feedback and enact change.
- Use existing data to suggest improvements to student experience.
- Attend regular Staff-Student meetings to deliver feedback and propose change.
- Attend Faculty level feedback meetings (i.e. Faculty Forum).

Support for You

There is a dedicated team in the Students' Union available to support you with each aspect of your role, along with staff contacts in each programme who help to facilitate the Staff-Student meetings you will attend.

This support includes:

- Methods for gathering feedback or engaging your peers;
- Financial support for representation-related events;
- Room bookings;
- Training;
- Contacting students in your cohort.

Opportunities for You

As a Rep, you are one of our student leaders which gives you an opportunity to learn and practice new life skills that can improve your employability, such as organisation, research, and leadership qualities. You will also **be the first to hear about extra opportunities** to shape and change the Students' Union and University.

This can include:

- Networking opportunities.
- Representing your School at events or meetings.
- Taking part in disciplinary boards or panels.
- Sitting on accreditation boards.

Who Reps Work With

Reps have a strong tie with the Students' Union Executive Officers, to ensure that important issues feed into the decision-making processes of the Students' Union.

They also work with:

- The students they represent, to find out their views;
- Other Student Reps in their School to coordinate work;
- Staff and academics in their Department or School to represent students' views;
- The Students' Union Education Engagement team;
- Reps across the University, for example in Union committees.

A number of reps have since gone on to represent distinct groups of students at Students' Union Senate through Part-Time Officer roles or even full-time paid Executive Officer roles, using their experience as a Student Rep for their course to help them in their role.

Becoming a Student Rep

Undergraduates, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research students are all eligible to become reps – it is important that we have good representation across all courses at the University to represent your voice at each level.

The representative role is a voluntary one, and sign-up for the role usually opens in March through the [Students' Union website](#). Some courses or departments handle their own recruitment, and this may include an election process, you will get more details of this when you go through the recruitment form.

Being an Active Student Rep

As a student leadership role, being a rep counts towards the Step Up and Lead aspect of STELLIFY.

To have this role recognised as part of this, you must:

- Complete training;
- Attend all SSLC meetings, or give apologies if you are unable to attend;
- Gather feedback from a group of students (i.e. through surveys, drop-ins, emails messages or focus group sessions);

- At least one of:
 - Return feedback to students, updating on progress of actions (i.e. through update emails, blogs, “you said, we did” infographics);
 - Report on key successes of your role (i.e. through producing reports, submitting key successes to the SU Education team);
 - Work with other officers or reps to achieve a goal (i.e. through attending Faculty Forum, attending consultation sessions).

Appendix 2 – Selection and Election of Student Representatives

The Students' Union encourages programmes to consider different roles within the representation structure to allow as many students as possible to engage. When considering how many representatives to allocate to a programme or discipline area, Schools should consider:

- a. The potential workload for the student representatives.
- b. Students' ability to know who their representative is and contact them.
- c. How easy it will be for representatives and students to contact each other (including issues such as the number of core lectures; the geographical distribution of the student body; and programme or discipline identity)

If there needs to be a selection process, this should be through an election run by the Students' Union using the single transferable voting method.

The Students' Union process begins in Semester 2 (March) to find student representatives for the following academic year where possible (i.e. years 2+). First year reps, PGT reps and any gaps from previous recruitment will be filled with a process starting in Semester 1 (October). All representatives should be elected by week 4 of the semester in which they will be active.

There are two options for working with the Students' Union to elect your representatives:

Option 1 (preferred)

- Students' Union sets out start and end dates for representative recruitment
- Recruitment is hosted on the Students' Union platform (SUMS)
- School or programme staff receive updates and information on student representatives
- Recruitment can be re-opened if needed
- Election held on Students' Union platform

Option 2

- School or programme sets out start and end dates for representative recruitment
- Recruitment is hosted on the Students' Union platform (SUMS)
- School or programme staff receive updates and information on student representatives
- Recruitment can be re-opened if needed
- Election held on Students' Union platform



