



Students' Union Logo 1

## GUIDE TO STUDENT ENGAGEMENT & REPRESENTATION FOR ACADEMIC STAFF

Stirling's 14,000 students are represented using a three-tier model, which provides students with the opportunity to be engaged in the development of learning and teaching at an institutional, faculty and modular level. This system is jointly operated by the University and the Students' Union, with the Union overseeing the day to day running.

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*Tier 1: 4 full-time elected officers who represent all students and sit on University-level committees, sub-committees and working groups such as Court, ESEC and the Enhancement Themes working group. The VP Education takes the educational lead on student representation and engagement.*

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*Tier 2: 19 Faculty-level Undergraduate and 10 Postgraduate officers, who represent all students within their division and Faculty. Faculty Officers sit on Faculty level committees, such as Learning & Teaching Committees, as well as some Institutional working groups, and act as student panel members for Institutional-Led Reviews and Appeals.*

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*Tier 3: Hundreds of Module Reps represent students on their module, or multiple modules. They sit on Staff- Student Feedback Committees (SSFCs).*

*Programme Reps represent postgraduate taught students on specific programmes. They sit on PGT forums and committees.*

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## **FACULTY OFFICERS**

Our Faculty Officers act as lead representatives for a specific division, or group of divisions, within each academic faculty. Full-time students, they undertake this role in addition to their studies and are paid hourly for the work they do. They work in partnership with key members of staff and offer student input into divisional and faculty level learning and teaching committees. They also support the work of Module and Programme Representatives in their division or faculty and should be your first point of contact if you encounter some difficulty in liaising with your Student Representatives. You can find out who your Faculty Officer here - <https://www.stirlingstudentsunion.com/representation/courserepresentation/>

## **RECRUITING YOUR MODULE REPS (UNDERGRADUATE LEVEL)**

Module Reps are students who represent an Undergraduate module for a semester. Recruitment and rep training are facilitated online via Canvas. Academic staff should see on their module homepage, by default, a page for Module Representatives to enlist. Shortly into the semester this link will become active and students will have the opportunity to volunteer as a rep for the module. Some students may however opt to approach academic staff directly and volunteer themselves. Whilst this is perfectly acceptable they must also enrol through the Canvas page as this ensures they will be added to our online training module, which is required for accreditation.

Students can be Module Reps for multiple Undergraduate modules at a time, though we recommend they do not be a rep for more than 4 in an academic year. Depending on student numbers, guidance for the number of reps per module is as follows: up to 50 students – 1 rep, 50-100 students – 2 reps, 100+ students - 3 or 4 reps. If academic staff would like to increase this number, please contact the Vice President of Education at the Students' Union.

We'd appreciate support from all academic staff in encouraging students to enrol as representatives. The Union produced and released an animated video to support the recruitment of representatives across the University. The video can be accessed here (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kvCVBdF8ULU&t=2s>) and should be shown in the introductory lecture of all modules at undergraduate level.

## **RECRUITING YOUR PROGRAMME REPS**

Programme Reps are students who represent a Postgraduate Taught programme. We do not have Module Reps at PGT level as Postgraduate courses tend to be smaller with a higher number of specialised modules taking place in any single semester, compared to Undergraduate. As such, representation at Postgraduate Taught level is programme-based, with one or two representatives representing all students within a single Postgraduate Taught degree programme for the length of the programme, not just one semester. Training and guidance are facilitated online via Canvas. Due to the nature of programme spaces on Canvas however, we currently cannot provide access for students to volunteer directly online like Module Reps do. Instead, Programme Reps must volunteer with their Programme Director and the Programme Director must email the VP Education or Democracy and Representation Coordinator the student's name and programme they wish to be rep for. The Union will subsequently contact the student to sign them up to the training and information Canvas page. If Programme Reps are recruited by a Programme Director but are not brought to the attention of the Union, this student risks not receiving accreditation.

A programme can have multiple Programme Reps depending on student numbers, guidance for the number of reps per programme is as follows: up to 50 students – 1 rep, 50-100 students – 2 reps, 100+ students - 3 or 4 reps. If academic staff would like to increase this number, please contact the Vice President of Education at the Students' Union.

We'd appreciate support from all academic staff in encouraging students to enrol as representatives. The Union produced and released an animated video to support the recruitment of representatives across the University. The video can be accessed here (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kvCVBdF8ULU&t=2s>) and should be sent to students at the beginning of their programme. A role descriptor can also be found here

(<https://www.stirlingstudentsunion.com/representation/courserepresentation/academicreps/>)

## **WORKING WITH YOUR REPS**

The University and Union seek to develop a positive culture of representation across the institution, which sees all academic staff work in partnership with their student representatives to develop and enhance the quality of the student learning experience on their modules and programmes.

As such, we'd ask staff to ensure representatives have adequate opportunities to engage with the students they represent. There are many ways in which this could be achieved, for example providing reps with time in lectures or seminars to gather feedback from students on how the course is progressing, or gather opinion on a specific Faculty, University or Union proposal. Staff should also take reasonable steps to ensure that reps have the ability to communicate with the whole class via email or through the Canvas Discussion Board.

Module Coordinators/Programme Directors should meet with their Reps at the earliest convenience to discuss the previous year and any change made or difficulties faced so the Rep is clear of the programme and module background.

Our goal is to create a student representative system that is both effective and productive in highlighting aspects of good practice and identifying areas for development in the student learning experience. In order to achieve this, we feel it's necessary for any issues or concerns students have to be raised with staff in real-time, rather than left to fester until the next Student Staff Feedback Committee Meeting. In this respect, we encourage reps to contact academic staff in the first instance if a problem does arise, so that it can be discussed and solutions jointly identified to resolve the issue.

## **STAFF STUDENT FEEDBACK COMMITTEES**

Staff-Student Feedback Committees are a chance for all reps within a division to come together with key divisional and faculty staff to discuss how things are going. SSFC's should occur twice per semester, at times when students are in session and available to attend. Each SSCC should have a Chair and a Secretary. We would encourage Divisions to ensure that the positions of Chair and Secretary are filled by staff members to ensure that reps are able to fully involve themselves in the meeting.

There are times when a rep may be the Chair, but we would only encourage this when the student is happy to be the Chair and has also previously been a rep for at least one semester.

SSFC's are a key forum for reps and staff to discuss any issues and potential solutions that are currently effecting students, as well as to provide updates on any progress made since previous meetings, or since any other concerns were raised.

Although most of the discussion may be around any issues relating to the learning and teaching experience, there may also be the opportunity for staff to consult with Reps on any changes or proposals that may affect students in the Division/Faculty, and we would encourage you to do so.

It is imperative that all reps are sent agendas, any previous minutes, and papers for an SSFC meeting in advance, as well as giving them plenty of notice of when and where the SSFC will take place. Also, ensure that all reps are on relevant mailing lists and are attending the relevant meetings.

## **ACCREDITATION**

We believe that it is important to recognise and reward the work of the representatives across the institution. As such, we operate a system of accreditation which ensures that those reps carrying out their duties have their time as a representative formally listed on their enhanced academic transcript.

Accreditation is awarded on a semester (Module Rep) or year (Programme Rep) basis, with representatives required to meet four out of a possible six criteria during their time as a rep:

- Complete Initial Training
- Attend 1st SSFC Meeting (or PGT equivalent)
- Attend All SSFC Meetings (or PGT equivalent)
- Attend an Education Zone Meeting
- Attend a Union General Meeting
- Submit an End of Semester Report

The Students' Union oversee four out of the six criteria and so can easily gather evidence to verify attainment of these criteria. However, in order to verify that representatives have attended the relevant SSFC Meetings we ask Faculty admin staff send a copy of the attendance list to the Faculty Officer, who will ensure the rep attendance is listed on the Canvas system. If, however, there is not a Faculty Officer for the division/programme then we ask admin staff please send an attendance list to the Vice President Education so the Union can ensure they are accredited for attending.

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