



STAFF

— HANDBOOK —

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to your 2017/18 Staff Handbook for the Course Representation system!

The students who volunteer their time to enrol in the Course Rep system provide an extremely valuable insight into the authentic voice of the student body. These reps often pave the way in making change that benefits both current and prospective students in regards to their academic interests.

As the Course Rep System is a partnership between both the University and the Students' Union it is hugely important that we continue to work together, with collaboration at the centre of our processes and students at the heart of our work.

My role as Education Officer is to oversee and support the Course Reps in projects and campaigns from which their peers will benefit from. Over the years this system has provided the necessary feedback to make improvements at individual course, department and faculty level. I hope that with your help and expertise we can continue to make further improvements, and empower both our Reps and students to be champions of future change.

I look forward to the year ahead!

Davey Silver
Sheffield Hallam Students' Union
Education Officer 17/18

This handbook is designed to support staff at Sheffield Hallam University with working with Student Representatives. It gives guidelines and advice in all aspects of working with Student Representatives, including recruiting, training, supporting and monitoring Student Reps.



What is the Student Rep System?



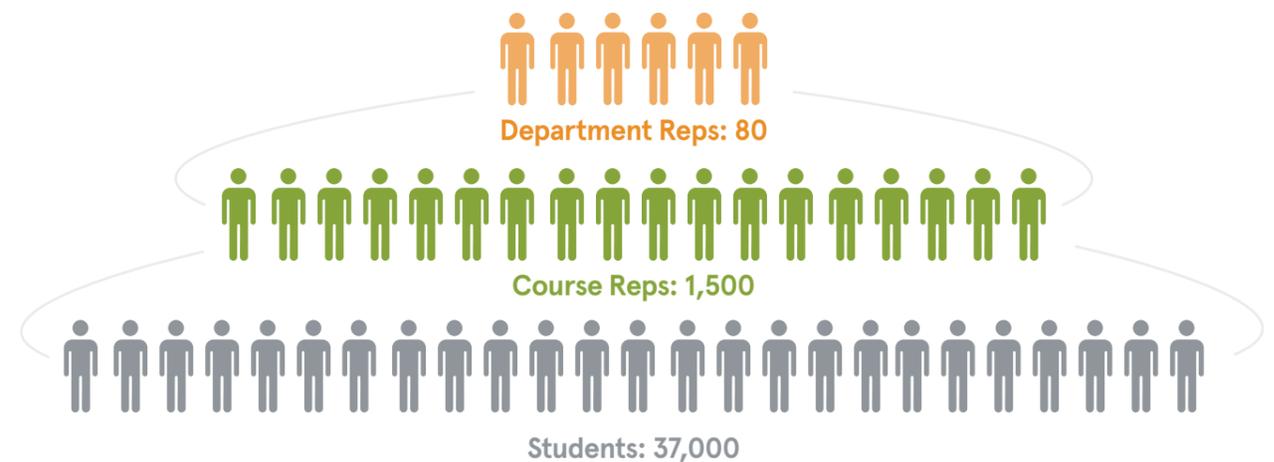
The Student Rep System plays a vital role in facilitating communications between students, staff, and the Students' Union.

Its main purpose is to provide an opportunity for students to feedback collectively to the University on academic issues, and is managed through a partnership between the University and the Students' Union.

Student Reps typically engage with a variety of topics, including: the student learning and teaching experience; assessment and feedback; academic support; learning resources; and learning environments.

The information that Student Reps provide can be used to influence decision-making at all levels of the University.

What is the Student Rep Structure at Sheffield Hallam?



The Student Rep system is made up of the following:

Course Reps: They represent students on their course. They work with their course leader and course team, and attend staff-student meetings for their course/programme/department.

Department Reps: Represent students at academic department and faculty level. Work with Course Reps to highlight issues which need to be taken forward at department level. Attend departmental, faculty, University or Students' Union committees.

The Students' Union

Education Officer

The Student Rep system is run jointly in partnership between the University and the Students' Union.



The Education Officer at Sheffield Hallam Students' Union is the lead officer for the local and national academic issues within the Students' Union and the University community. They are elected every year by the student body in the cross-campus elections and act as a student representative on a number of university boards.

The Education Officer for the 2017/18 academic year is Davey Silver. Davey will work closely with Student Reps throughout the year to listen to their feedback and represent their voices at various meetings and boards.

Key Contacts



At the Students' Union there are two full time members of staff who manage the Student Rep system. They are always on hand to help if you have questions or concerns and do feel free to come into the HUBS to visit.

Students' Union contacts:

Katie Davorn
Academic Representation Manager

e: k.davorn@shu.ac.uk
t: 0114 225 3303



Alison Worsley
Academic Interests Co-ordinator

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t: 0114 225 3450



What can the Students' Union do for Student Reps?

As an organisation, there is a lot that we can do for Student Reps. The Students' Union work closely with the University to ensure that the Student Rep system functions effectively.

Advice and Support

Student Reps can come and see us anytime for advice and guidance throughout the year. They may come to us for 1-to-1 sessions to discuss their role, be looking for pastoral support or request our attendance at University meetings for support. The guidance we provide can include, support for how best to gather feedback, organise campaigns, meeting etiquette alongside a range of other areas.

In addition, the Students' Union has a free, confidential Advice Service to help support individual students who maybe having difficulties. Primarily, they help with academic, financial and housing issues but are always able to signpost to someone who can help! More information about their service and a range of self-help resources can be found on their website www.hallamstudentsunion.com/advice_help/

Initial Training

All Student Reps are required to complete initial induction training for their role. This training is tends to be held at sessions co-run by the Students' Union and the University, but Reps can also be trained 1-to-1 with a member of Students' Union staff. Further to this, there is now online training available to those who are unable to attend in person.

Additional Skills Training

Sheffield Hallam Students' Union also offers a range of training sessions that run throughout the year that can help Reps make the most of their role. These run throughout the academic year and include sessions such as: negotiation skills, communication, public speaking, gathering and presenting feedback. More information and a calendar of upcoming training sessions can be found at www.hallamstudentsunion.com/skills_opportunities/trainingopportunities/

Student Rep Events

Throughout the year the Students' Union runs a number of events to help them fulfil their roles as well as developing their skills and encouraging them to meet each other. These begin with our Welcome Event on the 31st October at Collegiate Campus and 2nd November at City Campus, and smaller 'networking' events will run throughout the year. More information can be found at www.hallamstudentsunion.com/your_union/youreducation/studentrepevents/

Reward and Recognition

Each Month a Student Rep will be recognised as our Student Rep of the Month. Every Student Rep who completes their role for the year will be given a certificate of recognition which the Students' Union coordinates centrally. At the end of the academic year, Sheffield Hallam Students' Union organises a Student Rep Celebration to recognise the successes of the Student Rep system and award both students and staff who have stood out throughout the year

Communications

Reps are kept up to date with any information they need through the monthly Rep Newsletter and dedicated social media channels, including information about upcoming events, relevant updates and training opportunities.

What can the Students' Union do for University Staff?

Advice and Support: Staff in the Academic Representation team can provide guidance and support regarding any queries or concerns that you have in regards to the Student Representation system at Sheffield Hallam.

Events: Throughout the year, Sheffield Hallam Students' Union runs events open to any members of staff who are involved in the Student Rep system. These are often in the form of Staff Breakfasts (with free food!) where staff get together to receive relevant updates and discuss their experiences with the Rep system. These invites are sent out throughout the year.

Rep Recruitment

Recruitment process for Course Reps

Course Leaders should aim to recruit a minimum of three Course Reps per year for each course. Course Leaders can choose to recruit more Reps if they wish (for example, for courses with large cohorts). For very small courses, three Reps may not be needed. However, we believe it is better to over-recruit just in case any Course Reps give up the role during the year. It is also good to have more than one Course Rep so that they can support each other and share their workload.

- At the start of the recruitment process, all students should be informed of the role and responsibilities of a Course Rep, how the recruitment process works, how to nominate themselves and the time limit for nominations.
- All students should have the opportunity to volunteer for the role. Course Leaders should invite students to nominate themselves.
- If more students volunteer than is required, elections should be held so that students can choose who represents them.
- Elections can be held in class or online via the Students' Union website, but they should follow the principle of a secret ballot.
- The Students' Union will provide guidelines on holding fair and inclusive elections.
- Where Course Reps cannot be recruited because there are no volunteers or the Course Rep system is not suited to the type of course (for example, distance learning courses), alternative methods for consulting and gathering feedback from students should be implemented.

Recruitment process for Department Reps

Recruitment is usually facilitated by the Students' Union, in partnership with faculties. Students may express an interest in the Department Rep role directly with the Students' Union, or may volunteer via their Course Leader or Head of Department.

- Existing Course Reps may be invited to nominate themselves as Department Reps. Information on how to do this should be sent to them before the Easter holidays.
- Deadline for nominations is a few weeks after the Easter holidays.
- If more Reps than needed put themselves forward, Department Reps should be selected via election by students. The Students' Union can support/advise Faculties on organising online elections.
- Department Reps will be invited to an initial induction training session, run by the Students' Union with support from Faculty staff, to prepare them for their role. As with Course Reps, they must attend either this training or a 1-to-1 training session with Students' Union staff before they are officially confirmed in their role.

Supporting Students in Meetings

Attending meetings is a key part of the Student Rep Role. Reps are required to attend a minimum of two Staff Student Committee Meetings (SSCM) meetings a year. However where this is not possible, for example on distance learning courses, alternative procedures for collecting student feedback and engaging in a dialogue with the feedback is essential. Although students are required to attend two SSCMs a year, we suggest meeting with students throughout the year to encourage genuine partnership and dialogue with students. These can be informal meetings to encourage students to give honest feedback, emphasise that their views are valuable and to note any ongoing issues.

Below we have produced guidelines for SSCMs.

Before the meeting

Where possible, Student Reps should be given the opportunity to discuss the agenda beforehand with the Chair or Secretary. This gives them the opportunity to ensure that they are familiar with the topics which are to be discussed and to ask for clarification on the expectations for their participation in the meeting.

It is encouraged that you encourage the Student Reps to send any agenda items they wish to be discussed before the meeting.

Staff-student meetings should be fitted around student timetables where possible.

Student Reps and staff should be given as much notice of meetings as possible to maximise attendance and allow Student Reps time to collect feedback from students. Ideally, students should be informed of approximate meeting dates at their initial training/induction.

If you are a Course Leader or other staff member who works with Student Reps, we encourage you to:

- Introduce yourself to Student Reps
- Let Student Reps know how to contact you
- Encourage Reps to contact you
- Be proactive in contacting Reps to gather feedback, get their input into current issues or projects, or update them on progress



During the Meeting

Faculties should clarify how Staff-Student Committee Meetings fit into faculty committee/decision-making structures and what results from the feedback and proposals raised at these meetings.

The establishment of clear and simple mechanisms and protocols for student feedback to go from course level to higher up in the organisation;

Feedback systems should be clarified so students and staff know where to direct issues.

Consider trying out different membership and formats for meetings to make them student-friendly (for example, SBS hold module review meetings where individual staff go round and talk to groups of students about particular modules. Students log the feedback they have received and the responses from staff.)

Consider having a student chairing the meeting. (Chair's training could be incorporated into the training programme for Student Reps).

Engage students in decision-making in relation to their course/department. For example, discuss changes to policies, procedures, buildings, etc.

Develop a positive culture around student feedback and engagement - avoid 'blame culture' and defensiveness.

After the Meeting

Minutes/notes of meetings should be made available to all students on the relevant courses (e.g. posted on Blackboard course organisation sites). These should also be sent to the Students' Union.

Send the list of actions directly to the Reps after the meetings, so they can publicise it to the students they represent.

Make actions meaningful. For example, instead of "will speak to ... from ... area of the University" put "Have spoken to ... and this has been noted as a problem for this semester, however, next semester this should be sorted." If an issue cannot be addressed, explain why.

Make sure you send actions to Reps in a reasonable time-frame.

It is important to keep the Course Reps engaged once they have been recruited and attended the initial training session. To do this we recommend regular catch ups with Reps. Ideas to consider:

- Send regular emails, including the date of the next meeting and some suggestions of questions to which Student Reps could seek feedback from their peers.
- Offer hot drinks vouchers to Student Reps who come along to informal catch ups.
- Use mid-module reviews to enable Reps to raise issues of concern which it may be possible to resolve quickly/easily.



Removal Mechanisms

If students on a particular course have concerns that a Student Rep is not fulfilling the responsibilities of the role then they should contact their Course Leader or the Academic Representation Manager within the Students' Union. They will then look further into the issue to determine what action can be taken.

If a Student Rep does not attend training and fails to respond to any further contact they will be removed as a Student Rep after 14 days.

If Sheffield Hallam University or Sheffield Hallam Students' Union believes that a Student Rep is failing to meet the requirements of their role, they will be asked to attend a meeting with the Academic Representation Manager within 14 days. During the meeting, any concerns will be outlined and the Student Rep will be given opportunities to explain their situation. This will provide an opportunity to explore possible sources of support, advice or additional training which might help the Student Rep to fulfil their role.

If the Student Rep does not respond to the meeting request and fails to attend, this will result in the Student Rep being removed from their position. The position may then be made available for re-election.

For more information on this process, please contact the Students' Union.

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