**Academic Reps Guidance Document 24.25**

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# 1.0 Introduction

The Academic Representation System is a student-led structure that is jointly operated by the University of Warwick and Warwick Students’ Union. The system consists of three levels of representation:

1. Course level (Course Reps)
2. Faculty level (Faculty Reps)
3. University level (SU Reps -Full Time Officers)

This guidance document details the principles and structure of the Academic Representation partnership, providing role descriptors for each type of student representative and terms of reference for the bodies and committees that are established to conduct such representation.

This document is student-representative focused, and thus does not detail full terms of reference for university led committees or role descriptors for university staff, such as Academic Convenors. Full details of these roles and committees can be found in University Regulations.

If you require any support during your time as a course rep please reach out the Student Voice Team here studentvoice@warwicksu.com

# 2.0 Principles

‘Education at Warwick will be characterised by staff and students working in partnership to co-create the educational experience.’ – University of Warwick Education Strategy.

The Academic Representation System seeks to ensure that students at Warwick have a voice in their education. This voice empowers our students to not only provide feedback to their educational experience, but also be a positive force for change. Students will respond to challenges, be a critical eye to experiences, and, most-importantly, be co-creators of their education. They will be represented at every level, ensuring that the student voice is at the heart of Warwick.

The Academic Representation System thus follows these principles:

* **Student-led**

Students will be at the heart of the Academic Representation System. With support from staff from both the University and the Union, our student representatives will be the driving force of the system, with the power to make decisions, provide direction, and have their voice heard across the institution.

* **Empowering**

The Academic Representation System will empower students to make positive change and drive their co-created educational experience. Students will have the authority to contribute to discussions in an effective way, and their presence will not be tokenistic.

* **Inclusive**

Several mechanisms shall ensure that the Academic Representation System is as inclusive and accessible as possible for all student identities. Representatives shall be diverse in demographic and there shall be a variety of ways of consulting the student population to ensure that the voices of under-represented groups are heard and considered.

# 3.0 Representation Structure

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Level | Represented By | Where | Feedback Escalation |
| Module | Individual Student Feedback | Module Evaluation | Discussions with Course RepsFaculty Forums |
| Course | Course Reps/SSLC Chairs/SSLC Secretaries | Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC), SSLC Chairs Network  | Discussions with Faculty RepsFaculty Forums |
| Faculty | Faculty Reps | Faculty Education Board & Faculty Boards | Academic Forum |
| University | Full Time Officers/ Faculty Reps | Board of Graduate Studies (BGS)Academic Quality Standards Committee (AQSC)Student Learning Experience & Engagement Committee (SLEEC)\*any other meetings accordingly | Student Council & All-Student Votes (where appropriate) Academic Forum |
| SU (Reps System) | Full Time Officers | TBD | Refer to Partnership Agreement |

# 4.0 Terms of Reference of Meetings

## 4.1 Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC)

SSLC is the opportunity for face-to-face student feedback at a course level. These meetings are led by students, chaired and mediated by students and mainly for students to feedback to the University.

SSLCs do not have to be in-person or on University of Warwick campus. This is so that non-traditional learner reps can still give feedback and receive updates from academics.

Terms of Reference for SSLCs are as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| S. No. | Description |
| 1 | It meets quarterly to address various academic issues within the department, covering aspects such as teaching quality, facilities, and curriculum. |
| 2 | It shall be chaired by a student representative with another serving as Secretary, both positions may rotate based on student preference. Some SSLC chairs may also choose to pick alternative roles like EDI or Communication Officer.  |
| 3 | It acts as a liaison between students and faculty, representing the views of all students, particularly historically underrepresented groups. |
| 4 | It fulfils strategic priorities of the Student Union, collaborates on educational matters like curriculum design, and produces an annual report for university meetings, supported by an Academic Convenor and SU Voice Representatives where possible. |

## 4.2 Faculty Forums

Faculty Forums are an opportunity for chair and course reps to meet and discuss issues with their Faculty Representatives. Faculty Forums are split into two parts, feedback and chair consultations.

*Feedback*

Any course reps can come and chat with their Faculty Reps on issues that they have faced throughout their University education experience.

*Chair Consultations*

These will follow the feedback from reps as update meetings. This is where SSLC Chairs can discuss with their Faculty Reps about what has happened in their SSLCs. Faculty Reps will also update the SSLC Chairs on the developments of the changes from previous feedback. This meeting is also open to Course Reps and SSLC Secretaries.

Terms of Reference for Faculty Forums is as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| S. No. | Description |
| 1 | The Faculty Forum, comprising Faculty Reps, and SSLC Chairs, meets at least once per term to address key faculty issues and relay feedback from Course Representatives. |
| 2 | All student cohorts, including undergraduate, postgraduate, part-time, mature, international, and foundation students (Social Sciences only), are represented in the Faculty Forum. |
| 3 | The Faculty Forum handles strategic priorities, and operational tasks, with decisions documented and published on the Union website promptly. |

## 4.3 Academic Forum

Academic Forum is a body made up of all Faculty Representatives plus the Vice President of Education and Postgraduate Officer and SSLC Chairs. Its key role is to direct the strategic approach and response of the Union to academic policy and educational experience of the University. It also proposes educational policy to Student Council. Its Terms of Reference are as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| S. No. | Description |
| 1 | Academic Forum meets twice a term to address academic issues within and beyond the University, holding the Vice President for Education and Postgraduate Students accountable and receiving updates on their activities. |
| 2 | Academic Forum provides strategic guidance for lower levels of Representation, including Faculty Forums and SSLCs, and proposes policies to Student Council where necessary. |
| 3 | Academic Forum reviews policy within the education space and ensures the execution of priorities and manifesto pledges, supported by Union staff. |

# 5.0 University Committee Student Representation

Both Faculty Reps and Full Times Officers sit on a range of University Committees. The full Terms of Reference for these committees can be found in University Regulations. The main purpose of student representation on these committees is to provide student voice and positive input in discussions. Student Reps will raise feedback from other Reps, carry out Union objectives and priorities where appropriate, and provide input in the co-creation of education.

## 5.1 Faculty Education Board

There are three Faculty Education Boards to reflect each faculty within the University (Arts, Social Sciences, and Science, Engineering, and Medicine). The main purpose of the Boards is to consider faculty-level implementation of the University Education Strategy.

On each Education Board, there shall be three student representatives. Preferably, there shall be one undergraduate representative, one postgraduate taught representative, and one postgraduate research representative.

## 5.2 Faculty Board

There exists the Board of the Faculty of Arts, the Board of the Faculty of Social Sciences, and the Board of the Faculty of Science, Engineering and Medicine. The main purpose of the three boards is to regulate the teaching, research, curricula and examinations in the subjects prescribed to the faculty.

On each Faculty Board, there shall be three student representatives. Preferably, there shall be one undergraduate representative, one postgraduate taught representative, and one postgraduate research representative.

## 5.3 SLEEC

SLECC is a high-level university meeting that oversees and leads the strategic development of students learning experience. It undertakes monitoring of all aspects of student experience. The Education Office Co-Chairs this meeting and the Postgraduate Officer and Faculty Reps sit on this meeting as well. The Faculty Reps and Full-Time Officers work with the University to develop initiatives and strategies to enhance the student experience.

## 5.4 Education Committee & Senate

Education Committee is a university committee which has the primary responsibility of implementing the Education Strategy in the University. The Vice President Education and Postgraduate sit on this committee.

Senate is the main academic authority in the University, promoting and regulating the academic work of the university. The President, Vice President Education and Postgraduate sit on this committee.

# 6.0 Role Descriptors

## 6.1 Course Reps

Course Reps are elected to represent their student cohort at course level. At a minimum, there should be one rep per course per year group. They are the voice of students in meetings with staff in their department, and raise issues, provide feedback, and generate change at course level.

The role of a course rep requires around 7-9 hours per term. Their role description is as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| S. No. | Description |
| 1 | Course Reps serve as a primary mode of student representation, engaging regularly with cohorts to gather feedback and foster education co-creation.  |
| 2 | Course Reps escalate feedback and ideas to SSLC meetings for discussion and action, ensuring the closure of the feedback loop by communicating changes to their cohorts. |
| 3 | Course Reps promote student participation in academic representation systems and escalate non-course-related feedback through higher levels of the Academic Representation Structure. |

## 6.2 SSLC Secretary

The SSLC Secretary can be the course reps on a particular course. They are the administrators of SSLC meetings, from organising them to taking and distributing minutes.

The role of a Secretary requires roughly 10-12 hours per term. In addition to the responsibilities of a Course Rep, the SSLC Secretary has the following Role Descriptor:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| S. No. | Description |
| 1 | Support the SSLC Chair in organizing and conducting SSLC meetings, including setting agendas, compiling papers, and taking minutes for distribution |
| 2 | Assist Course Reps in gathering feedback from the student cohort and communicating improvements and developments made. |
| 3 | Notify all reps, relevant University Staff Members, and the Students’ Union of upcoming meetings and distribute the Annual Report to SSLC members, the Students’ Union, and Teaching Quality for archiving. |

## 6.3 SSLC Chair

The SSLC Chair is elected by course reps on a particular course. Their main role is to lead SSLC meetings, ensuring that reps are able to express feedback collated, that this feedback is acted upon appropriately, and that changes are being made.

The role of a Chair usually requires 10-12 hours per term. In addition to the responsibilities of a Course Rep, the SSLC Chair has the following role description:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| S. No. | Description |
| 1 | Coordinate Course Reps to gather feedback from student cohorts and communicate effectively. |
| 2 | Chair SSLC meetings, ensuring all issues are discussed, action points are noted, and communicate developments to SSLC members and student cohorts. |
| 3 | Attend Faculty Forums to update other reps and the Students’ Union, and support Faculty Reps and Full Time Officers in carrying out Union objectives. |

## 6.4 Faculty Reps

Faculty Reps are elected in each Faculty as part of a Faculty Group. This team works collaboratively to represent the student cohort within the faculty, dealing with faculty issues and developments. They meet with both Course Reps and Full Time Officers, are members of Academic Forum, and sit on University meetings at both faculty and institutional level.

The role of a Faculty Rep is usually around 6-10 hours per term, depending on the specific roles and duties undertaken.

The role descriptor of a Faculty Rep is as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| S. No. | Description |
| 1 | Organize and deliver Faculty Forums to gather feedback and discuss issues from Course Reps and students within the faculty, sharing best practices and supporting improvement initiatives. |
| 2 | Attend faculty university meetings to represent student views on arising issues, raise feedback as appropriate, and organize Faculty Group meetings to discuss concerns. |
| 3 | Act on Union objectives from the Academic Forum, delegate tasks to Course Reps as needed, and regularly communicate changes and developments to the student cohort while supporting the Vice President Education & Postgraduate on matters related to the academic experience. |

# 7.0 Elections

The Union is committed to a consistent and democratic approach to the election of Academic Representatives. As far as possible, all representatives across the University shall be elected in the same manner, with all students who are members of the particular course or faculty being eligible to vote. The Full Time Officers shall be elected during the Spring Election Period in line with the Union Regulations, and so this section does not apply to the Vice-President Education or Postgraduate.

At Course level, all first-year representatives shall be elected online during the Students’ Union Autumn Election period. Where this is not possible or practical, alternative arrangements shall be made and approved by the Student Voice team. Once reps are elected, the Students’ Union will share the details of reps with the relevant Academic Convenor so the first SSLC can be organised.

If Academic Convenors would like to have all their elections during the Autumn period, they will need to inform the Student Voice Team.

SSLC Chairs and Secretaries are elected in the first meeting of the Academic Year (or equivalent) by the student members of the SSLC.

# 8.0 Training

## 8.1 Rep Training

All reps within the Academic Reps Structure are required to attend rep training which is designed to ensure all Reps are able to fulfil and excel in their role descriptions.

Training will outline the main information around the rep system; discuss the support offered by the Students’ Union; and support the development of essential skills to gather and deliver feedback. This training will take place soon after Term 1 Rep Elections are completed. This training will be repeated throughout the year for reps that are elected outside the main recruitment schedule.

## 8.2 Chair & Secretary Top-Up Workshop

As well as basic rep training, all SSLC Chairs and Secretaries shall attend Top-Up Workshops to develop the skills required to fulfil and excel in their roles. It shall discuss the support available and the development of Reps. These workshops will occur around the same time as the basic training.

# 9.0 Course Rep Conference

Course Rep Conference is an annual conference for reps within the Academic Rep system. Its main purpose is skills development, knowledge expansion, and training, and shall be focussed around a particular theme. Workshops and panel sessions will be hosted by reps and external speakers and will be an opportunity for reps of all levels to meet and discuss issues across the University and within HE.

# 10.0 Students’ Union Staff Support

The Union is committed to supporting and empowering Reps to ensure they are able to fulfil and excel in their roles. In doing so, they shall be able to make long-lasting change at Warwick and beyond. The Academic Voice team at the Union, and staff members at the University, are there to support Reps, and should be utilised effectively and when needed.

## 10.1 Student Voice Advisors

The Student Voice Team have three Student Voice Advisors who support the running of the Academic Reps System at a course level. The Advisors work with the SSLC Chairs & Secretaries and the Academic Convenors on the running and administration of the SSLC meetings. They also deliver training sessions to Course Reps and support the delivery of Faculty Forums and other education-based engagement events.

# 11.0 University Staff Support

## 11.1 Academic Convenors

The Academic Convenor will be an experienced member of staff appointed by the Head of Department to support the smooth running of the SSLC through collaboration with the Course Reps. They are also responsible for ensuring that issues raised by students at meetings are considered by the relevant members of staff (whether internal or external to the department) and that the outcomes of these discussions are reported back to them at the next SSLC meeting. Academic Convenors are not required to be an academic staff member.

Academic Convenors are required to:

* Help the organisation and promotion of Rep elections
* Lead on the delivery of the co-option process
* Organise the first SSLC meeting so that the SSLC Chair/Secretary can be elected

## 11.2 Student Engagement Coordinators

Student Engagement Coordinators support the development of the Academic Reps System on a Faculty Level.

# 12.0 Expected Behaviours of Representatives

This outlines the expected behaviours for all representatives in the Academic Rep System As a representative, they are a reflection of the Students’ Union and must conduct themselves accordingly. They are also expected to fulfil the expectations of the role outlined in the Role Descriptors to the best of their ability. As reps are elected to their roles, they are accountable to the students whom they represent. If reps are not fulfilling their role according to these Expected Behaviours or Role Descriptors, they can be held accountable through the Rep Removal process.

## 12.1 Training

To be able to be an effective Course Rep, Basic Rep Training should be attended by reps before their first SSLC Meeting. If reps are unable to attend training, alternatives will be provided if requested by the rep.

To develop the skills needed to effectively chair/minute SSLC meetings, SSLC Chairs/Secretaries should attend the Chair & Secretary Top-Up Training before they organise their first SSLC Meeting.

To understand the expectations of the role and to develop the skills and knowledge for the role, Faculty Reps will be expected to attend their Faculty Away Day and Exec Training.

## 12.2 Feedback

As a Course Representative, the views that they express in an SSLC meeting should come from consultation with the students on your course. If a rep is struggling with gathering feedback from the students of the course, extra training and resources will be provided by the Union Voice Team.

## 12.3 Behaviour

It is expected that reps will conduct themselves in a professional and responsible manner whilst carrying out their role. Any incidents of bullying and harassment will not be tolerated and will be dealt through the University and/or Students’ Union procedures.

Anyone concerned with the behaviour of a rep should report this to the Student Voice Team (studentvoice@warwicksu.com) or their Academic Convenor.

## 12.4 Confidentiality

Due to the nature of how reps are perceived, reps may occasionally collect student data due to students presenting an issue to them, where the rep needs to signpost them to support. It is expected that reps will respect confidentiality and retain anonymity for the parties concerned when appropriate. Reps should make sure that:

* Information people share should be treated in confidence
* There are no assumptions that other students/staff have any knowledge of the details
* Information is not shared without clear and expressed permission
* If there is a belief that a student is at risk or a risk to themselves or others, information is only disclosed to the relevant staff.

Reps are directed to the Students’ Union to clarify confidentiality if they are unsure.

Need to consider any GDPR regulations, if applicable.

# 13.0 Review

Due to the democratic nature of this area, this is currently under review annually and be approved by the academic forum at the start of each academic year.