

# ACADEMIC REPS: Course Rep Handbook



## Welcome

Congratulations and thank you for becoming a Course Rep, you have been entrusted to represent the views of every student on your course. Course Reps form an integral part of the academic representation system at Solent University to ensure the academic interests of every student are represented.

## Why Academic Reps are Important

- Every **student** has a champion representing their academic interests at Solent University
- **Solent University** can use student feedback to develop its academic programme
- The **Students' Union** is able to better identify and respond to student issues

## Academic Representation System

There are three types of student representatives championing the academic interests of students at Solent. **Course Reps** are responsible for representing students within their individual courses, while **School Reps** work with Course Reps within their school to represent students on issues affecting multiple courses.



Both Course Reps and School Reps are supported by the **Head of Student Education** who is elected by student annually to be a full time student representative in the **Students' Union**. They work with both Course Reps and School Reps to represent students on severe and university wide issues.



## What's a Course Rep?

Course Reps are elected by students to represent them on their course. They are the first line of defence for student representation and consult with students to identify any issues provide feedback to the university.

## Course Rep Responsibilities

- Consult with students for feedback
- Resolve issues affecting their course
- Give feedback and raise issues to the university
- Represent students at university meetings

## Key Meetings

- Course Committee (2 a Year)
- Course Review (1 a Year)
- Student Forums (2+ a Year)

## University Responsibilities

- Elect Course Reps and send their details to the Students' Union
- Regularly meet with their Course Reps and address their feedback
- Ensure meetings are communicated out to relevant students and courses
- If a Course Rep is struggling, direct them to the Students' Union for support

## Students' Union Responsibilities

- Provide training and ongoing support for Course Reps
- Ensure that feedback raised by Academic Reps is listened to and addressed
- Ensure Academic Reps are invited to appropriate meetings
- Intervene in and support Academic Reps addressing severe issues
- Elect, train and support School Reps
- Maintain the Academic Rep website



## University Meetings

As a Course Rep you will be invited to a number university meetings. It's important that before these meetings that you gather feedback from every student on your course to ensure you can effectively represent their academic interests.

### Course Review

**Composition:** Course Reps, Course Leaders, Lecturers

During Course Review meetings you look back at the previous academic year to assess how courses have gone and how it can be improved for future years. An Action Plan is produced in these meetings of how this will be achieved. Course Reps play a vital part in the process by providing student feedback. This will typically take place in the autumn.

### Course Committee

**Composition:** Course Reps, Course Leaders, Lecturers, Library, Students' Union

Course Committees are the main formal space where Course Reps can raise feedback and update on update on issues. It's also an opportunity for Course Reps to input into decisions affecting their courses. A Course Committee guide can be found at:

[www.solentsu.co.uk/academicreps](http://www.solentsu.co.uk/academicreps)

## Students' Union Meetings

As Course Reps you will be invited to take part in a number of Students' Union meetings, discussions and other opportunities. Course Reps are not required to attend all of these meetings. These are extra opportunities for you to shape your academic experience.

### Student Forums

**Composition:** Student Reps

Forums are a gathering of student reps to gather feedback and discuss a variety of different issues. Course Reps will be invited to any forum relevant to their course. Often these forums will be run by School Rep, other student representatives or the Students' Union.

### Student Council

**Composition:** Student Officers, Sabbatical Officers

Course Reps are not required to attend Student Council but may do so if they wish. Student Council is where student representatives discuss issues put them by other student, voting on whether or not it should become Students' Union policy to combat these issues. You can submit an issue to Student Council at:

[www.solentsu.co.uk/change](http://www.solentsu.co.uk/change).

**IF YOU CAN'T MAKE A MEETING, SEND ANOTHER STUDENT IN YOUR PLACE.**  
They don't have to be a Course Rep. It's more important that your course is represented.

## Gathering Feedback

**Talking** to you course is the simplest way of gathering feedback Ask your lecturer to borrow the class for five minutes either at the start or end and talk to them.

**Social media** also provides another great tool to reach your course mates. Create a survey or post a poll in your course groups. You can also ask your Course Leader to email this out.

**Paper polls** are another way of reaching students in their lessons. Leave a bit of paper at every place in your class and get students write feedback on them for you to gather up at the end.

### HAVE YOU ASKED ABOUT...

- Teaching & Classes
- Assessments & Deadlines
- Support with Work
- Resources and Equipment
- Course Organisation
- Timetabling

**CONSIDER:** Social Media    Emails    Polls    Surveys    Talking



## School Reps

Similarly to Course Reps, the fundamental role of School Reps is to represent students. Rather than focussing on a specific course they represent students on school wide issues affecting multiple courses. They work with the Course Reps of their school to identify and tackle these issues.

### School Rep Responsibilities

- Consult with Course Reps for feedback
- Resolve issues affecting multiple courses
- Give feedback and raise issues to the university
- Represent students at university meetings
- Provide a social programme for Course Reps

### How School Reps Can Support You

- Supporting With School Wide Issues
- Providing Advice
- Organising Social Events

Your School Reps can be contacted via: [www.solentsu.co.uk/academicreps/coursereps](http://www.solentsu.co.uk/academicreps/coursereps)

## Head of Student Education

The Head of Student Education is your elected student representative for all academic matters. They work full time within the Students' Union representing your academic interests and supporting the Academic Rep system. Their main focus is on challenging and university wide issues. They can also provide additional support and put pressure on the university at the highest levels.

### Head of Student Education Responsibilities

- Working full time in the Students' Union
- Supporting the Academic Rep System
- Training and supporting Academic Reps
- Ensuring every student is represented

### How Your Head of Student Education Can Support You

- Supporting With Difficult Issues
- Providing Advice
- Putting Pressure on the University

Your Head of Student Education can be contacted via: [su.education@solent.ac.uk](mailto:su.education@solent.ac.uk)

## Academic Rep Awards

### Student Voice Champion of the Month

**Eligible:** All Student Reps, University Staff

Each month we will celebrate the success of a different person who has championed student voice and stood up for your academic interest at Solent University. Any Student Rep or member of University Staff is eligible to receive this award. Both students and staff can nominate students for this award through the Academic Reps webpages on the Students' Union website.

### STAR Awards

**Eligible:** Academic Reps

As a Course Rep you can complete your bronze, silver and gold STAR Awards. These are for all Academic Reps that achieve the requirements outlined on the Academic Rep webpages. The Students' Union will monitor your progress and let you know if you complete any of the awards. You can also self-assess and let us know if you think you should receive one.

Don't forget to keep us up to date with your wins and achievements as a Course Rep! You can record wins and complete award nominations at: [www.solentsu.co.uk/academicreps](http://www.solentsu.co.uk/academicreps)

## Common Problems

**Timetabling:** A widely reported issue is timetabling, suitability of rooms and too long or too short breaks between lectures. If your room is not suitable for your course its best to talk to your Course Leader who can try and book an alternative space. Changes to the overall timetable are difficult to arrange as there are so many courses to schedule in and only a finite number of lessons. Again, raise



this to your Course Leader who will do their best to fix this. Generally the university will try to keep courses lessons bunched onto as few days as possible to benefit students who have to commute in.

**Assessment & Deadlines:** If deadlines for multiple modules on your course have become bunched all on the same or similar dates raise this with your lecturers. Normally the university is flexible when this occurs. If unsuccessful escalate it to your Course Leader and also raise it in your Course Review and Course Committee meetings.

**Feedback Quality:** When the quality of feedback from assignments is not to the standard students on your course would like you should in the first instance raise it with the staff member in question. If it does not improve escalate it to your Course Leader or Programme Leader. Your Head of Student Voice can help you with these discussions with staff if you are uncomfortable having them.

#### **Resources & Staffing:**

Lecture resources and slides not being made available to students before or after lectures a frequent problem you can tackle similarly to feedback quality. In the first instance raise it with the staff member in question. If it does not improve escalate it to your Course Leader or Programme Leader and bring up in Course Committee meetings. Staffing issues with individual staff members are a slightly different issue and should not be brought in in Course Committee meetings. Raise them first with your Course Leader, or if about them your Programme Leader. Your Head of Student Voice can help you with these discussions with staff if you are uncomfortable having them

#### **Computer Software:**

If your course has an issue accessing the right programmes or software you should talk to you course librarian in the Mount-Batten Library. They can advise you on whether that software is available anywhere else around campus or in the library. If not, the can look to making it more available. You should also raise it at both your Course Review and Course Committee meetings.

#### **Wider Issues:**

Any issues beyond your course or feedback on the wider university (e.g. more study space, better access to food on campus, etc...) should be raised to your School Reps or the Students' Union. Through your Student Council you can raise issues and set Students' Union policy to lobby the university to implement or change. You can do this at: [www.solentsu.co.uk/change](http://www.solentsu.co.uk/change)

**For any issue you can get support from the Students' Union.**

### **Support Available**

The entire Academic Representation system is supported by our online Academic Rep platform with tailored support resources for Course Reps, School Reps and university staff. Here students and staff can report issues and get support directly from the Students' Union.

[www.solentsu.co.uk/academicreps](http://www.solentsu.co.uk/academicreps)

Academic Reps are not responsible for dealing with personal issues affecting individual students and should instead direct them to either their Course Leader, the [Academic Advice Service](#) for all academic issues or the [Student Hub](#) for anything non-academic.

For all enquiries about the academic representation system, to get additional support or to ask questions please contact the Students' Union's Representation Team.

[student.reps@solent.ac.uk](mailto:student.reps@solent.ac.uk)

