



Student Rep Handbook 25/26





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Introduction

Welcome to the Student Rep Network – and thank you for stepping into this vital role!

As a Student Rep, you are part of a proud tradition of engaged students who help shape the direction of SOAS. Through your work, the Student Voice is heard at every level of the university, influencing decisions that affect teaching, learning, and the wider student experience.

The contributions of Student Reps have already led to meaningful changes – from academic improvements to broader support for students. Now, it's your turn to make a difference.

You won't be doing this alone. The Students' Union and university staff are here to support you every step of the way. This guide contains everything you need to know to get started and succeed as a Rep.



The Students' Union and the SOAS Student Voice Team support and empower students to influence positive change that enhances both their teaching & learning environment and the overall Student Experience.

SU Officers



**CO-PRESIDENT ACTIVITIES
AND CAMPAIGNS**

Safia Shaikh



**CO-PRESIDENT WELFARE
AND LIBERATION**

Zaid Altikriti



**CO-PRESIDENT DEMOCRACY
AND EDUCATION**

Sam Hardy



Who Does What?

Students' Union

Sam Hardy

Co-President, Democracy
and Education

Your main point of contact for all rep business. They run your training and triage all feedback from students to ensure the best person is dealing with it and represents issues to university senior leadership.

Antonia Bright

SU Membership
Services Manager

SU staff member supporting our Student Voice work. They are a second point of contact for queries or if you are unable to reach Sam or your College Representative.

The University

Jessica Bourne-Munns

Student Experience Officer

Jess works in the Student Experience Team and is responsible for supporting student leadership across SOAS. The wider Access, Experience and Success (AES) team ensures that student voice is embedded across SOAS through various feedback mechanisms, working closely with reps and departments to achieve this

Check out the [Representing You](#) SU Website pages to find out more about SU structure



What does being a rep involve?

Your tasks as a rep?

- Attend the Rep Training
- To publicise yourself and what you can do for your fellow students
- Log feedback from peers using the MSL Feedback module and identify trending issues
- Attend all meetings you are required to and relay feedback you have received
- Understand the importance of anonymity and confidentiality - assure students that matters are kept anonymous, do not refer to students by name and keep personal issues confidential (while adhering to the Safeguarding Policy)
- Collaborate with other Reps and the Co-President, Democracy and Education to pick up on repetitive issues
- Take part and encourage students in Surveys, Research, and focus groups that are run by/ shared via the SU and the University
- Signpost students to services within the University or the SU when an issue arises that is not your responsibility
- Evaluate the positive difference you have made over the year



Gathering Student Feedback

One of the most important aspects of your role as a Rep will be to ensure that you are able to effectively gather student feedback.

It is important to make sure that you are using a variety of different methods of communication so that you can reach as many students as possible.

Here are some suggestions for methods of collecting student feedback:

- Lecture Shoutout
- Group Email to your Programme/Department
- Face to Face Conversation
- MSL Feedback Programme
- Social media - e.g. Facebook Group, Discord Server or WhatsApp
- Microsoft Teams - Chat boxes or Drop in Sessions

How the SU will support you with your role

- Provide training to all reps.
- Provide and promote optional ongoing training and support for student reps depending on demand (e.g. Covering practical necessities, skills-based training, and policy discussion).
- Send regular email updates to all reps to keep them up to date with opportunities and events within the SU and university.
- Provide regular group or 1:1 meetings with the SU Co-President, Democracy and Education.



The Roles

Programme Rep

Programme Reps are students who have volunteered to collect student feedback and raise this to their department on their cohort's behalf. They are a vital link to ensure students are heard and that positive changes are implemented. If students have any feedback relating to their course, Programme Reps should be their first point of contact.

Responsibilities

- Represent the views of students on their course
- Give feedback to staff within the school
- Act as a liaison between students and staff
- Sit on relevant Department-Feedback Committees
- Celebrate positive changes and keep students informed of changes and developments.

Department Rep

There is one UG, one PGT and one PGR rep per department. They are responsible for coordinating the Programme Reps and acting as the main point of contact for broader feedback that may need escalating within the University. Their main purpose is to lead, motivate, and support their Programme Rep team by collecting and raising student feedback.

Responsibilities

- Lead, motivate and support your Programme Rep team to effectively work alongside your department with student feedback
- Build strong relationships with senior members of staff in the Department to Represent the views of students in your department.
- Sit on the Student/Staff Forums and Department Meetings.
- Meet monthly with the SU Co-President, Democracy and Education.
- Act as a key communication link between the S.U, the University and students



College Reps

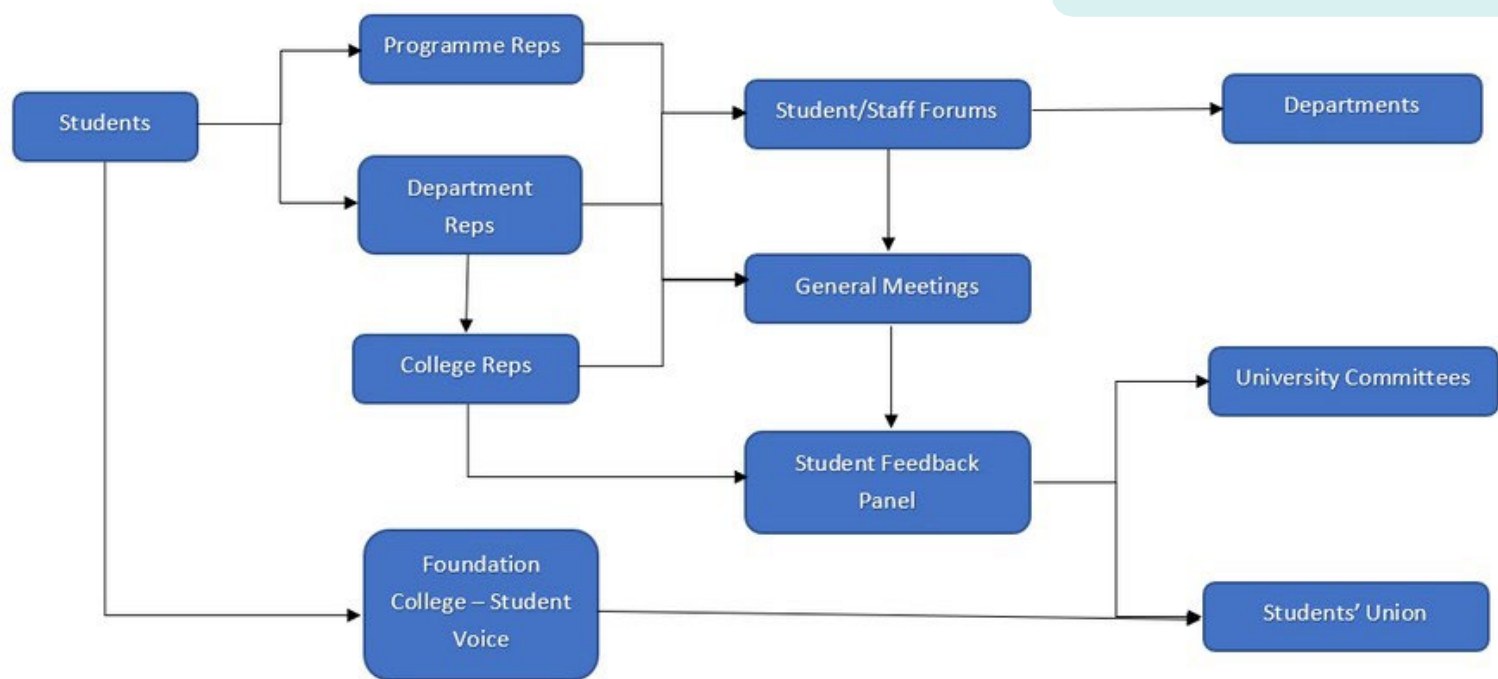
Like Department Reps, College Reps will act as the main point of contact for broader feedback within colleges, with their main purpose is to lead, motivate, and support their Department Rep team by collecting and raising student feedback and chairing/organise the College Assemblies for Reps.

Responsibilities

- Lead, motivate and support Department Reps to effectively work alongside your college with student feedback.
- Build strong relationships with senior members of staff in the college as well as the different departments that belong to it.
- Represent the views of students in your college.
- Sit on the Student Feedback Panel (SFP), College-level meetings and chair the General Meetings (GM)
- Meet fortnightly with the SU Co-President, Democracy and Education
- Create an End of Year Report at the end of the Academic Year to feed back to the SU
- Act as a key communication link between the S.U, the University, and students.



Feedback Flowchart



Meeting	Programme Reps	Department Reps	College Reps
Student/Staff forums	Attends	Attends	
Department Meetings		Attends	
Student Feedback Panel			Attends
General Meetings	Attends	Attends	Attends & take turns to chair
Co-President/Sab Meeting		Attends (once a month)	Attends (fortnightly)



Meeting Breakdown

Student/Staff Forums

This meeting will give departments and students dedicated time together as a community to discuss feedback or new areas that require student input.

Student/Staff Forums should take place the week before the department meeting to allow reps extra time to feed questions or further feedback in.

Department Meetings

These are the meetings organised by the departments in which academic staff get together to discuss department-specific matters relating to the student-academic experience, learning and teaching delivery/strategy, pedagogy, assessment/feedback, etc.

General Meetings (GMs)

All reps, including the College Reps, will attend a GM twice per year with the SU's Representation Coordinator, the Co-President for Democracy & Education, and other staff members.

Co-President/Rep Meeting

This new way of working will be supported by the Co-President, Democracy and Education throughout the year.

This focuses on school-wide issues such as administration, communications, campus services, Library, student advice, any policies or processes that affect all students.

Academic Feedback should only come to the SFP if it has not been resolved at your Department level.

Three Stages to meeting preparation



Before Meetings



- Be Prepared: bring pens, paper, water, laptop
- Research - gather and record the student views on agenda items
- Read the agenda - note any points of interest.
- Ask questions to the organiser if you are unsure of anything
- Use the Jargon Buster included in this guide
- Send your apologies to the meeting organiser if you are unable to attend.

During Meetings



- Arrive prepared, be polite and speak clearly
- Represent the views of your group.
- Listen and make notes of what's being said
- Don't Interrupt others
- Be confident - they want to hear what you have to say
- Don't be afraid if you don't know the answer - just say!

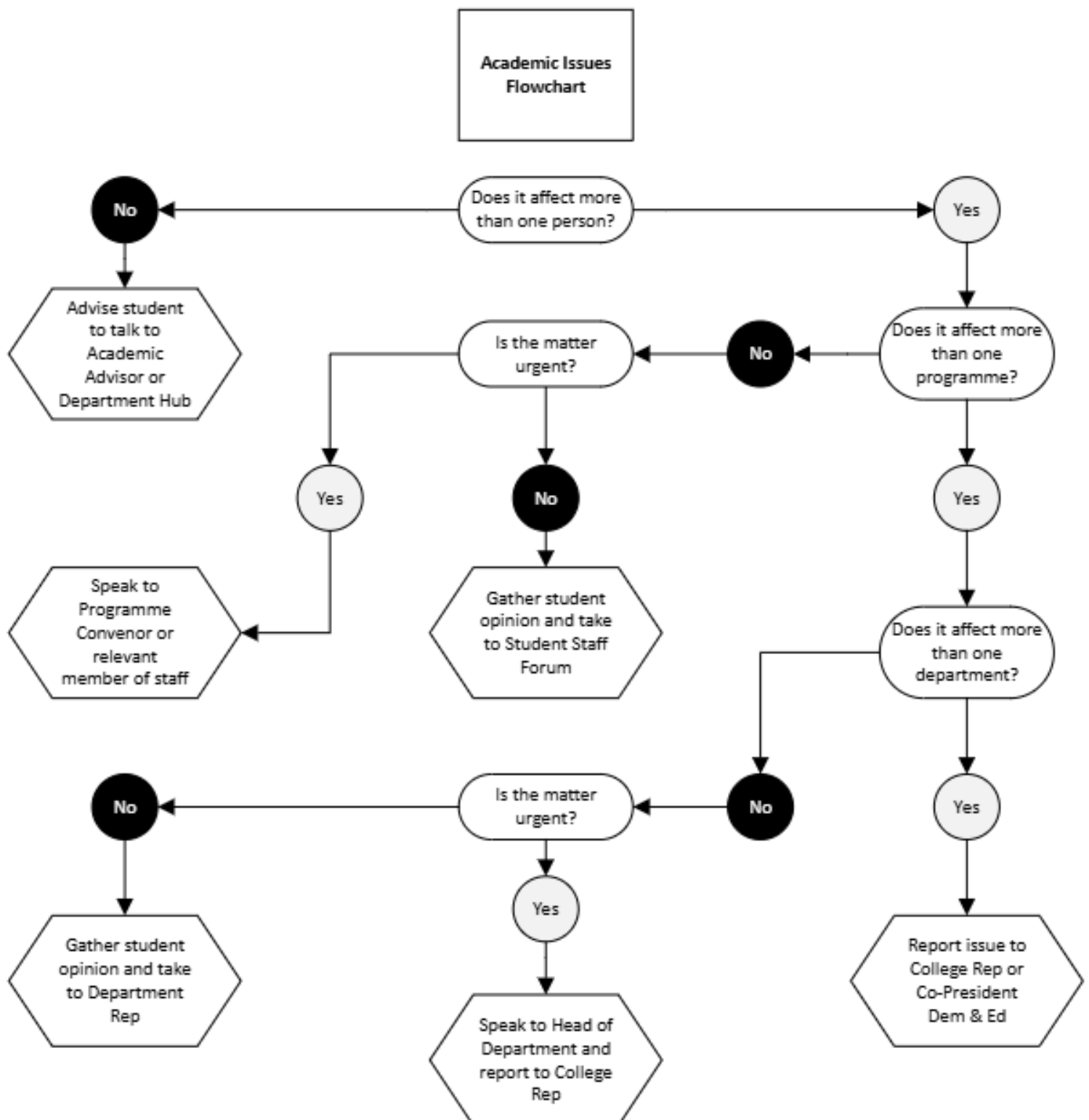
After Meetings



- Share feedback on points raised to your cohort
- Follow up anything you have agreed to
- Share best practice across the network
- Circulate the action points
- Talk to Department Reps and the SU.



Who to speak to?





What is not expected of a Rep?

Don't take on or advise students on formal academic complaints.

We recognise that sometimes things do not go to plan or work out the way we expected. That is why SOAS has the formal Student Complaints Procedure, which provides a formal channel for students to make a complaint about a service provided by the School, or other issues such as one's teaching or supervision experience. **There are other procedures that students should follow if they want to complain about harassment or appeal an academic decision.**

Reps are not the appropriate people to support students through these processes or offer advice to students on these matters. Students who want support in navigating these processes or advice about the formal Student Complaints Procedure should directly contact the S.U Advice Caseworker, **Diya Rattenpal**.

If a student comes to you regarding formal complaints, you should signpost that individual to **Diya Rattenpal**, who will endeavor to support them and provide guidance where appropriate to do so.

Don't take on personal issues students may bring to you.

Reps are not counselors and should not take on personal issues students may be facing. SOAS has dedicated services in place to help support students with these matters. Reps should signpost and refer students to these services, rather than guess at advice or solutions, which could make a difficult situation worse. **Go to the Student Advice and Well-being.**

In certain emergency situations it is worth knowing there is a **list of emergency contacts**. To access this list, please go to



Frequently Asked Questions

How do I know what meetings I should be attending & when they are?

You should be contacted by your department a few weeks prior to the meeting. If the meeting is not happening, contact your head of department.

I've been a rep before. Do I still need to go to training?

Yes, it gives us a chance to inform you about new processes within the SU and University. It also gives you the chance to meet staff and reps you may not have met before, who could become useful contacts during your next year as rep.

I cannot attend a meeting, what should I do?

If you cannot attend a meeting, make sure that you send apologies to the meeting organiser in advance. If you have Student-Led agenda items or feedback you can send that to them in advance.

A student has come to me with an individual problem, which I think others on my course are experiencing as well. What do I do?

Advise the student to seek help from their academic adviser/Department Office or Student Advice and Wellbeing. Try and collect information about whether it is also affecting others and, if it is, bring the issues up at the next Department Meeting, **but don't mention individual names**. If it is not an academic issue, seek help from the Students' Union.

How do I deal with complaints about one particular member of staff?

If appropriate, arrange a meeting with the member of staff and tactfully bring up the issue and suggest a solution during the meeting. If this is not appropriate, raise the issue with your Module Convenor or Head of Department. If this does not solve the problem seek advice from the SU's Representation Coordinator.



Gathering feedback and example questions

The following list of suggestions is by no means exhaustive and it is not necessary to collect this feedback all at once. You may find it more appropriate to collect specific feedback at certain times, such as after assessments or when students may be less pressured with workload.

You can gather feedback about any of the following topics:

Curriculum | This is all about what you learn and how that learning is structured

Learning Resources | This relates to what equipment and materials are provided that help you learn

Learning and Teaching | This is all about the transfer of information from the academic staff to you, how you process that information and apply it to real-life settings

Assessment and Feedback | This is about measuring your achievements through exams, practicals, presentations, assignments, or projects.

Quality enhancement and assurance | Quality Enhancement is how your institution and the staff that run your course are looking to improve what they are doing.

Example questions:

Curriculum

- How effectively is the course organised?
- Does the curriculum match your expectations from when you applied?
- Were learning expectations and deliverables clearly outlined?

Learning Resources

- Are there adequate library and computing facilities?
- Do you have access to the materials you need?

Learning and Teaching

- How good is the teaching?
- Are there any barriers to your learning/engagement in teaching materials?

Assessment and Feedback

- Do you receive adequate and timely feedback?
- Is the Marking Criteria clear?



Acronyms and Jargon Buster

HoD	Head of Department	AGM	Annual General Meeting
HoC	Head of Colleges	SEMs	Student Evaluation of Modules
LTC	Learning and Teaching Convenor		
DSSE	Director of Student Experience	NSS	National Student Survey
MB	Main Building	PTES	Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey
PWW	Paul Webley Wing	PRES	Postgraduate Research Experience Survey
BG	Brunei Gallery		
SU	Students' Union	NUS	National Union of Students
AES	Access, Experience, and Success Team	UoL	University of London
SAaW	Student Advice and Well-being Team	PGT / PGR	Postgraduate Taught/Research
		UG	Undergraduates
GM	General Meetings	T&L	Teaching and Learning
SFP	Student Feedback Panel	FC	Foundation College
SDM	Student-Director Meeting		



Colleges and Departments

College of Humanities (CoHUM)

ARTS	School of Arts
HRP	School of History, Religions and Philosophies
LCL	School of Languages, Culture and Linguistics
AMG	School of Anthropology, Media and Gender

College of Social Sciences (CoSS)

DEV	Department of Development Studies
ECO	Department of Economics
FIM	School of Finance and Management
POL	Department of Politics and International Studies

College of Law (CoLaw)

LAW	School of Law
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Useful Contacts

During your time as a Rep, you may need to contact people you have not met, or who are outside of your academic department. Below are key contacts or links to where you can find out the key information you may need:

College Hub Contacts

Tim Palmer | College of Humanities College Manager
tp35@soas.ac.uk

Mat Schofield | College of Social Sciences College Manager
Ms132@soas.ac.uk

Hay-Ching Tang | College of Law College Manager
ht30@soas.ac.uk

Students' Union

Sam Hardy | SU Co-President, Democracy and Education
sh160@soas.ac.uk

Antonia Bright | SU Membership Services Manager
ab93@soas.ac.uk

Diya Rattanpal | SU Advice and Engagement Manager
dr25@soas.ac.uk

SOAS, University Contacts

Jessica Bourne-Munns | Student Engagement Officer
jb140@soas.ac.uk



SOAS
University of London