CHECK LIST

- Attend training! It’s on Saturday the 19th October. At training you’ll get your half price hot drinks booklet for use in the S.U. This year they can only be used when you bring your own cup - part of the union’s environmental efforts.

- Meet your Head of Department, convenor and department officers (the support staff who organise the meetings). Find out when your department meetings are. Discuss as a dept rep-group who will attend, and how as reps you’ll stay in touch.

- Your name dept/degree and year will go onto S.U website so students know who their rep is. Tell us if you DO NOT want your name to appear.

- Make yourself KNOWN! Make an announcement to your class. Send an email to say ‘hello’ to your peer group. Student mailing lists: inet.soas.ac.uk

- Check if your department is being reviewed (see ‘CDR’). All departments should be discussing their most recent SEC (course evaluation survey) at an early department meeting.

- Attend skill-shares, and other activities to develop your role and skills. Submit your reports to the SU and keep informing students about what you have been doing. We will prompt you...

FOLLOW @SOASREPS

SOASUNION.ORG/REPS
CDR: Comprehensive Department Reviews
Each term a department or centre goes through a review by a panel that includes visiting academics, researchers and other experts in the relevant field. These ongoing reviews provide constant checks.

Reps play an important role in the run up, to ensure students views are involved throughout. The whole student group are asked to be involved.

Under review in 2019/20:
School of Arts
School of Law
IFCELS
School of Finance and Management

Your Term One Reports
At the end of term one an online form will go out for all reps to write up a short report.

The reports coincide with Student Outcomes Committee who oversee quality, so the reports will help input to that committee, and improve on taking issues from your reports to getting them dealt with in effective and timely interventions in the schools decision-making structure.

*A second round of hot drinks vouchers can be collected after your rep report is complete.

Visit soasunion.org/reps for updates
The first thing to make sure of is that your student peers, your department and the S.U all know who you are and how they can reach you.

From there it’s all about good communication: the dept will tell you about meetings, students will tell you about concerns & the S.U will listen to your concerns and support your efforts.

What is a student rep?

Student Reps are elected by their peers in each department to liaise with students, academic staff and the Students’ Union to ensure the students voices heard in all decision-making.

This is done by attending department meetings, working with reps in other courses and year groups, and reporting back regularly. Occasionally reps help involve students in the schools’ review processes. Reps deal with issues that come up on their programmes, facilities and learning resources, concerns about the library and much more!

A: Tell everyone!

- Introduce yourself - in a core lecture or over department email.

B: Talk to people!

- Gather student feedback - ask questions!
- State student views and needs at department meetings, and forums.
- Get involved in the Periodic Programme Review, (PPR).
- Make sure that the department inform you of meetings
- Keep students informed of decisions, and what you are doing.

C: Liaise...

- … with the S.U and other reps. Tell us the issues in your department.
- Get to know your Head of Department and other academics.

D: Campaign...

- … on issues of concern to your group of students. Tie in with Students Union Education Campaigns, and SU Educational Priorities.

What’s changing this year?

The process of reviewing each department one-by-one is called the ‘Comprehensive Departmental Reviews’ (CDR), and is in its second year. Reports on the reviews from last year are only just out. It’s important reps are given time to engage. Reps of departments due for review (see pg1), will be updated as soon as dates are known!

The staffing structure of SOAS went through enormous change over the last two years. This restructure is over now, but the impact of change still resonates as many staff are new or in different roles, and many roles are re-defined. Help us to be aware of any impact from students viewpoint by feeding back.

The S.U priorities are online, and a key one will be improving academic support, after the change from ‘personal tutor’ system to some part ‘welfare tutors’ and some ‘academic advisors’. There is so much variance across departments we want to know what is going on, and we need reps help to know what is working and what is not!
Confidentiality

Treat all information related by individual students as confidential unless the student specifies otherwise. Explain that any notes you take about an issue are confidential (and keep them safe), and get the consent of the student prior to consulting anybody else. Whenever you discuss a case with anybody (lecturers, other staff, Students’ Union etc.) you are not to mention the student by name. Staff have a responsibility not to require you to tell names, or pass on any information to other members of staff, (including the staff members involved in the case).

Always be clear in advance: there is NO absolute confidentiality, if the issue is really big or compromising you should seek advice.

Don’t hesitate to seek help... from the S.U
Advice Caseworker, Susanna Momtazuddin:
Email: suadvice@soas.ac.uk
Call: 020 7898 4983

Referral

Don’t be bullied
You should never feel that you must offer every student an instant answer. Don’t guess! You are not expected to have detailed specialist knowledge about everything that might come up. For instance, it is sometimes better to refer a student to the Students’ Union, Student Welfare Officers or Student Counsellors, rather than risk giving misleading advice which could do harm.

Sensitivity
Refer students on sensitively. Just telling them to go somewhere else may give them the impression that you are moving an unpleasant burden on to someone else. You can e.g. be there to introduce the student to the other agency.

Communication

LECTURES
Make announcements
NOTICEBOARDS
Ask for space on the department notice board if there is one
E-MAIL / INTERNET
Use the S.U. website for other reps; gather your own list of e-mails for your course mates, or use the school system (ask your department).
SOCIAL MEDIA
Set up groups to discuss, set up a separate profile to use for rep business
REP NEWS-EMAIL
Will be coming out as soon as reps start sending in reports!
UGM: (UNION GENERAL MEETINGS)
At least once per term
You can do a report or put forward motions
QUESTIONNAIRES / FEEDBACK SLIPS
Get S.U assistance to carry these out. Ask Antonia (ab93)

TEAMWORK

The S.U holds rep reports from past years. Ask for any background information, e.g. notes, minutes, reports, examples of initiatives, useful contacts, tips for future reps, outcomes of issues raised ... whatever Reps tell us about.

Reps’ can often learn from the past, build on previous initiatives while avoiding repetition. Dip into the file to see the history of previous reps’ activity, successes and frustrations.
You can also approach reps from the other year groups - see the website for names, and meet up.
Time Management

Prioritise your time – your studies of course come first. It is better to get two things done well than ten things done badly, so don’t try to take on too much!

Good planning is key. A diary will help you plan ahead and balance the meetings with study, and having fun!

Meeting up with other reps over a coffee to go through an agenda before a meeting will make a huge difference, saves time, and means you get to the meeting prepared.

Negotiation

... aim for win-win

Many of the situations you’ll be in are about negotiation - whether its students trying to negotiate with you to get you to do something as their rep, or you trying to get your Head of Department or committee to do something.

Try to look at the situation from their point of view as well as your own; what are your shared interests?

Try making a list of things (people/committees/school priorities/survey results) that are in your favour, and list things that could be a force against (limited resources/people).

Step back and think about how you could shift the obstacles onto your side - talk it thorough with colleagues!

Committee Skills

Learn from the past

• Talk to former reps, ask questions of other members and look at past papers
• Check the S.U’s files; make notes as a reminder and record what happened for future reps

Be prepared

• Read the agenda - start with the list of items and choose what to look at in more depth
• Meet other reps before department meetings and work together
• Canvas students’ views, (and talk to academics too)
• Talk to the more approachable academics on the committee - make contacts

Participate

• If you are unclear about anything, ask for clarification from the chair.
• If you are raising problems try to suggest solutions, and if you agree with something, say so!

Be assertive

• Believe that you have rights and you have something worthwhile to contribute. Break the ice - make sure you speak within 10 mins/15mins of your first meeting - it will be easier after that!
• Use notes to remind you of what you want to say – feel free to write all over your agenda!
• Avoid interrupting others and do not let others interrupt you
• Do not get into discussions with just one person
• Don’t become aggressive or emotional even if somebody is rude or patronising. If you are treated badly raise it with the chair and the S.U
• Make your doubts and disagreements known
• Make notes of the discussion and anything agreed - follow up important ones with an email

Feedback

• Feedback to students the results of any meetings.
• In particular, publicise your victories!
**WHAT ISSUES TO TAKE UP?**

It may help you to start with some basic questions from which to prioritise.

Then make an action plan so you know what you are doing. Ask the S.U and fellow reps for support.

**Course content**
- Are students finding problems with the content?
- Is there enough accessible information?

**Teaching methods**
- Are lectures clear? Do the seminars help?
- Are the handouts useful - hardcopies and online?

**Resources for studying**
- For example, reading lists and study packs
- How do students find the library / IT provision

**Facilities**
- Are the rooms accessible and appropriate in size?
- Do they have what’s needed (Panopto, projector etc)?

**Course assessment**
- Is the process made clear?
- Are there common problems experienced with assessment?

**General department issues**
- Provision of courses, courses not running. Timetable clashes
- Periodic Programme Reviews - is your department being reviewed this year? Talk to the SU early on about how to involve students

Action Plan Forms are found at the back of this booklet. Ask for further copies from the S.U or find online soasunion.org/reps

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**ISSUES NOT TO DEAL WITH**

**Personal Issues**
Reps are NOT counsellors and should not feel obliged to try to help students with personal issues.

The best course of action in such a situation is to refer the student to the school welfare officer. Advice on making a referral, page 3.

**Formal academic complaints**
Formal procedures exist for complaints by a student against an employee of the school, (e.g. academics).

Guidelines for formal academic complaints procedures are available in the school Undergraduate, Postgraduate Taught, and Postgraduate Research Handbook. You can find these on the school website.

Students’ considering or wishing to lodge a formal academic complaint, who want help or advice should see the Students’ Union Advice Caseworker - Susanna Momtazuddin.

Student Reps are not the appropriate people to handle these complaints, or to give advice on them.

**What About Class-Complaints?**
If you identify academic issues affecting several students - maybe even a whole class - and you want something done, you can make an appointment to talk it through with Susanna, the union’s advise worker, and figure out a way forward. Numbers can strengthen a complaint.

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**S.U Advice Caseworker**
Susanna Momtazuddin, sm141@soas.ac.uk

**Student Advice and Wellbeing**
Senate House, lowerground; 020 7074 5015
Welfare Officer, International Student Welfare, Disabilities Officer, Counsellors and the Mental Health & Wellbeing Advisor.
See: www.soas.ac.uk/studentservices OR .../disabilities .../counselling .../welfare
Arguably the best way of ensuring you are able to fulfil your role as a rep is to take care of yourself! Self-care means different things to different people. Broadly speaking it is about understanding what the causes and effects of burn-out are in order to establish how you can build self-care strategies that work for you. It is also important to think about the ways in which you as a rep can support other’s self-care.

**Self-love v. Self-care**

What does self-love and self-care mean for you?

What are the differences?

Where do the two overlap?

‘Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare’

- Audre Lorde
**Communication**

One of the most vital elements of rep-ing is liaising with students. It grounds your authority as a student representative. It is also frustrating when you don’t get the feedback you need; when you send out emails but don’t hear back, and then the department asks you ‘so, what do the students think about this?’ We can help!

**Email:**
You can email your year group of your department. **Check you don’t** miss anyone on a course, but who has another ‘home’ department.

**Class Announcements:**
Face-to-face contact is the best. You can occasionally take a class vote, or arrange an after-class chat to get feedback.

**Googledocs:**
You could set up a form for questions or feedback. It can be kept anonymous to allow candid comments; it can be categorised (e.g. by course unit). You can periodically check it and feedback to everyone.

**FaceBook:**
Students have often set up a FB page for their cohort. Don’t rely on this alone – not everyone uses it and those who do may not want to mix FB with studies.

**Polls / Survey:**
The SU can help you run a poll online, if you want to gauge a quick opinion.

**WhatsApp:**
Some reps in smaller cohorts have used this to discuss and feedback.

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**Work out your preferred communication methods with your cohort**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department staff</th>
<th>Other reps</th>
<th>Student peers</th>
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Student Mailing Lists: inet.soas.ac.uk.
SAFER SPACE POLICY

SOAS Students’ Union safer space policy is intended to help SOAS be a supportive, non-threatening and inclusive environment for all who participate. We want our spaces to be welcoming and engaging, and we encourage everyone, both from the SOAS community and beyond, to be proactive in creating an atmosphere where the safety of others is validated. In this spirit, we are survivor-centric and survivor-oriented, and all forms of violence, abuse, harassment and discrimination will not be tolerated.

Everyone entering SOAS Students’ Union spaces is asked to be aware of their language and behaviour, and to think about whether it might be harmful to others. We will interrupt oppressive behaviour, which we define as any conduct that demeans, marginalizes, rejects, threatens or harms anyone on the basis of ability, activist experience, age, cultural background, education, ethnicity, gender identity, immigration status, language, nationality, physical appearance, race, religion, self-expression, sexual orientation, status as a parent or other such factors.

By entering SOAS Students’ Union and/or participating in SOAS SU events and activities, you agree to abide by the following guidelines:

- Respect everyone’s identity and background, including pronouns and names. Do not assume anyone’s gender identity, sexual preference, survivor status, economic or immigration status, background, health, etc. Also, respect the space and others who are using it.
- Respect everyone’s physical and emotional boundaries. Check in before discussing topics that may be triggering (e.g. sexual abuse, racism, physical violence or encounters with police). Get explicit verbal consent before touching someone.
- There are varying opinions, beliefs, experiences and privileges in our space. Collectively we recognise the power dynamics that exist here. Be aware of the space you take up, your assumptions and prejudices and allow space for all voices to participate.
- Be responsible for your own actions; be aware that your actions have an effect on others, despite what your intentions may be. Think about how they might be influenced and who they might exclude or harm. Listen and reflect on your behaviour if someone tells you it is causing harm.
- Respect peoples’ opinions, beliefs, experiences and differing points of view, as well as different ways of learning and interacting. Call in, not out. When someone behaves in a way that challenges your values, do your best to invite them into awareness rather than dismissing, shaming, or shunning them.
- Be an active bystander - support others in upholding the guidelines listed here. Take collective and individual responsibility for creating a safer space for everyone. There will be occasions when people will be asked to move back and give space for others, or step out of certain spaces entirely.
- There is zero tolerance to verbal and physical violence and abuse under any circumstances. Disruptive individuals may be asked to leave the space.

The SOAS SU staff members are empowered to enforce these rules. If you cannot abide by the guidelines mentioned above, SOAS SU reserves the right to ask you to leave.

If you experience harassment, abuse, or sexual assault, or someone is interfering with your participation or presence at an event or in a space, please approach a Welfare Contact or a SOAS SU staff member whom you feel comfortable talking to in person or via email. They are here to help with any conflicts arising from the violation of our policies.

We welcome the continuing discussion about and improvement of this safer space policy. It has been guided and inspired by the agreements at Soul Fire Farm, a movement committed to ending racism and injustice in the food system.

To find out more, please email Valeria, Co-President for Welfare & Campaigns, on welfare.campaigns@soas.ac.uk
Handling Dept Meetings

Who is going to be there?
Do I need evidence for what I want to raise?
Who is likely to support me - other reps? Lecturers?
What if I’m put on the spot?

Before
During
After

Issues coming from students or classroom experiences

Issues coming from the department or school
ELECTED OFFICERS - elections are annually in spring

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democracy &amp; Education</td>
<td>Maxine Thomas-Asante</td>
<td><a href="mailto:democracy.ed@soas.ac.uk">democracy.ed@soas.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welfare &amp; Campaigns</td>
<td>Valeria Racu</td>
<td><a href="mailto:welfare.campaigns@soas.ac.uk">welfare.campaigns@soas.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equality &amp; Liberation</td>
<td>Youssra Elmagboul</td>
<td><a href="mailto:equality.liberation@soas.ac.uk">equality.liberation@soas.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities &amp; Events</td>
<td>Peadar Connolly-Davey</td>
<td><a href="mailto:activities.events@soas.ac.uk">activities.events@soas.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Affairs Officer</td>
<td>Malena Antich &amp; Ciro Puig</td>
<td><a href="mailto:academic@soas.ac.uk">academic@soas.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PGT Officer</td>
<td>Nidah Kaiser</td>
<td><a href="mailto:su.masters@soas.ac.uk">su.masters@soas.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PGR Officer</td>
<td>Paulien Broens</td>
<td><a href="mailto:su.research@soas.ac.uk">su.research@soas.ac.uk</a></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The Co-Presidents are full-time elected representatives of SOAS students. They are there to help. You may want help to collect evidence of student experience of the course, as evidence of to back you up in raising issues, for example conducting surveys.

The Union can also work to table issues at an institution-wide level, which you may have drawn attention to and are tackling at the course level.

STAFF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Representation &amp; Research Coordinator</td>
<td>Antonia Bright</td>
<td><a href="mailto:abg3@soas.ac.uk">abg3@soas.ac.uk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice Caseworker</td>
<td>Susanna Mumtazumma</td>
<td>sm141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance and Communications Coordinator</td>
<td>Jack Di Francesco</td>
<td>jd126</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SUPPORT ALL YEAR

The Students’ Union

Publicity
We publicise reps role and impact to all students. We publish your notices on the website and via all-student emails, and maintain space on the web for reps. You can also report back through Union General Meetings.

Training
The union provide training for reps. Whenever you join in, we'll offer training.

Meetings
Rep breakfast drop-ins are informal spaces for any reps to talk, share, ask questions etc. We will also run skill-shares and other training events to bring the team together and share insights later in the year; let us know what you want covered.

Guides / publications
You are reading our Rep guide, produced by the Union. There is alot of information breaking down the union in the S.U Handbook and website.

FREE hot drinks
One of the benefits Student Reps receive are free hot drinks in the Union shop. You will get a booklet of vouchers once you attend training, and a second round when you do your first term report. Because the S.U has committed to improved environmental impact you have to use your own cup (no disposables!). Meet fellow reps over a tea or coffee to plan your next meeting.

Reference
The union will issue references signed by the Union and a senior member of the University staff for those course reps who request one. We only require evidence during the year that you were an active rep - usually based on your attendance at meetings and two completed reports at term 1 and at year end.
Outside support
We have links to the NUS (National Union of Students), and other colleges in Britain, which may provide experienced advice on course rep issues. The NUS have various resources online which could be of use.

http://www.nus.org.uk

The Student Engagement Partnership (TSEP)
https://www.nusconnect.org.uk/the-student-engagement-partnership-tsep/being-a-course-rep
From the TSEP website ‘about us’: “The Student Engagement Partnership (TSEP) was established formally in 2013, but arose from many years of work across UK HE sector agencies supporting different areas of student engagement. In the mid-2000s a cross-sector working group for student engagement was convened; as the need for a co-ordinated approach to support the sector with this area emerged and following the 2011 publication of the government white paper Students at the Heart of the System, the National Union of Students and HEFCE agreed to jointly fund TSEP for three years, with additional project linked funding from QAA and AoC.

As a staff unit housed by the National Union of Students we provide research, resources, events, training and consultancy to support providers with their student engagement activity. ...”
EDUCATIONAL PRIORITIES

Every year the Students’ Union develops a number of educational and non-educational priorities. These reflect the manifestos of the co-presidents and ongoing strategic priorities of the Students’ Union. The SU priorities provide a mechanism through which to maintain the accountability of the co-presidents we work to deliver on the objectives.

This year’s SU priorities are:

EDUCATIONAL

Fight for Collective Ownership of Learning Experiences
Reduce Racial Attainment Gap
Promote Inclusive Teaching
Counter the Cutting of Modules on Africa
Provide Extracurricular Educational Opportunities

NON-EDUCATIONAL

Ensure Complaints are Thoroughly dealt with at SOAS
Tackle Sexual and Gender Based Violence within the SOAS community
Actively Counter the Climate Emergency on Campus
Improve and Encourage the Use of Support Services
Implement More Creative Democratic Participation Mechanisms
Reform SU Governance Structure
Showcase Student Talent

NOTES
**Decisions: Students’ Union**

**The UGM**
(Union General Meeting)
The policy-making body of the S.U. **All students** can attend, submit motions, speak in the debate, ask questions and vote.

**Students’ Union**
Exec / Trustees
4 x full-time
15 x part-time roles
(some job-sharing)

**Research Student Association**
RSA, PGR Officer, a Rep from each faculty

**Student Reps**
for every dept: (approx 180 in all)
Research, Masters, UG and Special Programmes
Supported by S.U officers and staff

**NUS Delegates**
2 elected in Oct

**Board of Trustees**
Supreme policy-making body for the school. (2 Co-Presidents)

**Other school committees** are attended by S.U Exec officers (e.g. Student Experience, Estates, Equalities...)
They can raise issues of concern to reps.

**Halls / local forums / other external liaison**
Informal meetings throughout the year:
- with the Director
- with each Dean

**NUS Zones liberation campaigns**

**The Postgraduate Research Officer** is an SU trustee, and attends the school Research Committee, with one other research student rep

**Department meetings**
Student-staff forums
Reps / SU
Breakfast drop-ins, skill-shares, training events

**NUS Conference**
Annual, Spring 2020
Decolonising SOAS
A Quick Guide for Student Reps

What is 'Decolonising SOAS'?
This has been a campaign in the School since 2015/16, and is now also the name of a Working Group within the School (funded, recognised and reporting to various committees). SOAS made an official public commitment to a Decolonising SOAS Vision¹ in 2017.

What was the public commitment?
SOAS will continue to address the need for decolonisation by:

- Supporting further recognition and debate about the wide, complex and varied impacts of colonialism, imperialism and racism in shaping our university,
- Embedding within our policies and practices a deeper understanding that these impacts produce and reproduce injustices and inequalities within education,
- A stronger commitment to actively make redress for such impacts through ongoing collective dialogue within the university and through our public obligations,
- The provision of institution-level support to embed this understanding in SOAS's contribution as a public university in the service of the wider world.

This entails a commitment to:

- A curriculum review process that addresses the preceding bullet points, challenges Eurocentrism and develops a toolkit to support further critical, nuanced and ongoing review of our teaching.
- Student systems and pedagogy that seek to redress access, engagement and attainment gaps caused by structural inequalities at all levels of study.
- Human Resources policies which seek to redress pay, workload, status and career path differentials for groups of staff subject to structural inequalities.
- A research agenda which enables us to take forward a range of questions related to decolonisation.
- Practices of reflective intellectual collaboration with institutions and researchers from the Global South as co-producers of knowledge.
- Forms of public engagement within London, the UK and the world which support ongoing conversations about the past, present and future significance of imperialism and colonialism.

What has the Working Group actually done?
You can see our past action plans, budgets, minutes etc here². Highlights of our work so far include:
- The production of a Decolonising SOAS Learning and Teaching Toolkit with recommendations for how to think about module and programme design
- Contributions to training of academic staff in the School on the toolkit and other aspects of inclusive teaching
- Training and discussion in other institutions in the UK and abroad
- Events and thinking on Research
- Creation of a Public Engagement and Outreach Fund for community-based projects
- Public engagement in debates on decolonisation in education and other sections
- Engagement with School committees on School policy
- Collaboration with students and the SU about their priorities

¹ https://www.soas.ac.uk/decolonising-soas/
² https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1hSduvGEnuGTo7AjFtbVX7iRemVzMeAlj?usp=sharing
What does this mean for students?
Our key recommendations in terms of student-facing work so far include:

- **Decolonising the Curriculum:**
  - Reflecting on how colonial / Eurocentric thinking has shaped fields
  - Ensuring a diversity of authors on reading lists in terms of demographics
  - Ensuring a diversity of perspectives on issues, particularly those rooted in the regions of study
  - Ensuring an intellectual/philosophical diversity of authors covering multiple positions within debates

- **Anti-racist teaching and learning**
  - Reflecting on the ways in which racialised inequalities can manifest in the classroom
  - The encouragement of teaching styles that empower students more equally around class participation, assessment, engagement and relationship to the material
  - The engagement with, understanding of and closing of the racialised attainment gap at the Departmental level

We are also in support of efforts to create better support systems for students, especially where there may be barriers to accessing support.

What can student reps do?
Student reps have an incredibly important role in reminding/encouraging Departments to take forward the agenda concretely, in voicing concerns of students and in identifying areas where improvements might be possible. We would encourage you to:

1. Join the Decolonising SOAS Working Group Google Group (you’ll get our emails, papers, invitations to our meetings/events and opportunities to bid for funding for your own project)
2. Inform students in your Department about what this is all about
3. Collect feedback from students about their views / experiences
4. Engage the academic staff in your Departments around questions of the curriculum and student experiences in the classroom – you may be able to give feedback at Staff-Student Forums for example, in Department Meetings, and in one-to-one settings
5. Share ideas for events / projects that you’d like to see in your area
6. Ensure that you understand the complaints mechanisms for when things have gone wrong

Some final considerations
It is important that we recognise that the term ‘decolonisation’ and many of the substantive points are subject to contestation and debate, and that these need to be embedded in specific contexts and conversations, including with due regard for academic freedom.

These issues are or can be very sensitive and/or emotionally charged for all concerned. Discussing them takes skill, tact, precision and patience. Try to hear people out, do ensure that your feedback/engagement is always as specific and constructive as possible, and that multiple points of view are included as relevant and valued. Do listen carefully to academic staff perspectives about why programmes, modules and teaching are currently the way they are as part of the dialogue and feedback.

Contact details
Chair of the Decolonising SOAS Working Group 2018/19: Dr Meera Sabaratnam (Politics Dept) (ms140@soas.ac.uk)

Website: blogs.soas.ac.uk/decolonisingsoas | email: decolonisation@soas.ac.uk
Twitter: @DecoloniseSOAS | Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/DecolonisingSOAS/
The School is structured academically into five schools, ten departments and five centres. ’Centres’ which run degree programmes are normally all postgraduate only.

There should be a regular departmental meeting for all staff, AND at least a student rep per undergraduate year, + a masters rep + MPhil and PhD. ALL reps should be invited to a staff-student forum too.

IFCELS (International Foundation Courses & English Language Studies)
- ELAS (English Language & Academic Studies)
- ICC (Undergraduate foundation programme)
- FDPS (Postgraduate foundation programme)
Each section has course reps and an overall-rep.

Language Centre
Communicative Language diplomas, Teacher Training diplomas and certificates, other language tutoring and short courses.

Foundation (NEW in 2019/20)
- Social Sciences, Arts & Humanities
- Business, Management, Economics & Law
<table>
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<th>Jargon Buster</th>
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If you have more jargon to add to this list send it in, for future reps! Email reps@soas.ac.uk
The Revised Code of Practice (2017/18)

This Code Of Practice is designed to outline how the Student Representative System within SOAS works, and the responsibilities of the School, the Students' Union (SU) and Student Representatives (reps) themselves. The underlying principle behind having student reps is to make sure student voices are heard to improve development of the curriculum and the student experience in SOAS. They are also a vital resource for the School to monitor quality and make constant improvements.

The aim of this Code of Practice is to ensure that every student in SOAS is covered by a rep, preferably from their own programme and year group, able to provide feedback and represent them in departmental meetings, quality assurance processes and elsewhere. These reps will, in turn work with the representatives in the SU to ensure students' voices are heard at all levels of the institution.

1. Role of the Student Representatives (Rep)

1.1. To gather students’ views in order to make sure that they represent the views of the students and not just their own.

1.2. To articulate students’ views in Department meetings and in other committees where they have been elected to represent the students.

1.3. To inform students of the major issues discussed in any meetings they have attended.

1.4. To act as an intermediary between the staff and students, and the SU and students.

1.5. To attend SU training and other relevant meetings as organised by the SU, and give regular feedback on their work as rep.

1.6. To refer cases of discrimination, sexual harassment or personal problems to relevant bodies.

1.7. To promote the equal opportunities policy of the School.

1.8. To inform their head of department, department support staff and the SU if they are unable to continue in their role as a Student Representative.

1.9. To aid the department and SU in ensuring the attendance of fellow students at the department’s Periodic Programme Review, and engagement in the process.

1.10. Reps agree to have their name included on the SU-run reps website, and their name / soas email to be accessible to SOAS students and staff for student representation purposes.

2. Responsibilities of the Departments

2.1. To organise democratic elections for at least one Rep per course per year group; this can be delegated to the Student’s Union to run online elections, by agreement in advance of term one.

2.2. To inform the Reps of Departmental meetings by e-mail at the same time as all other full members of department meetings.

2.3. All elected reps should be welcomed to department meetings. If unavoidable, (and only with explanation and the agreement of reps), the number of reps at a department meeting can be restricted to no less than the following: at least one Undergraduate first year, interim year and final year from each course; one student rep from each year of Undergraduate Study, Postgraduate Taught and an MPhil and PhD rep wherever possible. Departments must send the list of student
representatives they have invited to meetings to the SU for confirmation. Reps will be full members of Departmental meetings with the same status, rights and responsibilities as other members.

2.4. To ensure that Reps meet with the Head of Department or Learning and Teaching Coordinator at least once a term outside the staff meetings.

2.5. To consult Reps about any changes in course structure, teaching methods, assessment methods, and engage Reps in discussions regarding the creation or withdrawal of courses and programmes. This includes inviting student reps to learning and teaching working groups and teaching away days.

2.6. To listen to the Reps and act upon the information disclosed where appropriate.

2.7. To accept that Reps have no obligation to disclose individual names when articulating the view of the students.

2.8. To maintain absolute confidentiality when Reps inform them to do so. This includes an obligation not to disclose any information.

3. **Election Protocol**

3.1. The department and the SU have a duty to ensure elections are transparent and democratic. This means they must be accessible to all students on a particular course.

3.2. The SU will meet with the department before the beginning of each academic year to confirm the arrangements for the elections. Elections may be run in-class by the department, at an all-student meeting arranged by the department (e.g. for returning students and/or where no core course exists), online by the SU or an alternative arrangement agreed by the SU and the department.

3.3. At the start of every course, rep elections are to be held within first three teaching weeks in a manner appropriate to the size and structure of the class. The details of the nominated student should be reported to the Head Of Department, the Department Manager or other relevant department support staff, and to the SU Representation Assistant. A central list of all student reps will be maintained by the SU.

3.4. The role of Reps, the benefits of being a Rep and the time, place and method of the election are to be communicated to students on a separate occasion prior to the election; the SU and Head of Department, Department Support Team Leader and course convenor should agree before the beginning of the term how they will communicate this information with students.

3.5. The period of office for the rep will be one year. Students continuing into second, third and subsequent years will be asked to either endorse the current rep or elect a new one and conduct a handover. A core lecture or a department ‘welcome back’ meeting early in first term would provide the best opportunity.

3.6. A rep may resign at any point, and must let the Head Of Department, SU and Department Office know. In the case of a rep standing down a new election should be arranged.
3.7. In the case of there being no suitable core course to carry out a further election, it should be done online. Elections are a joint responsibility of the SU and the department.

3.8. Should any student or member of staff have complaint about a rep, they are to submit the objection in writing to the Head of Department and the SU, who will consider the complaint under the SU Complaint procedure.

3.9. Motion of no confidence in a Rep after the first 72 hours from the election can be called by ten percent or six (6), whichever is lower, of the represented students and/or the staff of the Department. The Head of Department will liaise with the Department Office and the SU to ensure that a meeting for a vote of no confidence is organised.

3.10. The quorum for a meeting where the vote of confidence can be moved is two thirds of the represented students.

3.11. The rep is to be relieved of his/her duties and the selection of a new Rep is to proceed if the majority of students give a vote of no confidence in the Rep.

4. Responsibilities of the School

4.1. To ensure that Reps are fully utilised during quality assurance inspections by external agencies.

4.2. To actively encourage and support the departments in implementing ever more effective and democratic student representation.

4.3. To ensure that the rep certificates, prepared by the SU, are signed by a senior member of staff.

4.4. To meet half of the costs of the materials the SU prepares for the Rep system provided that the School receives a prior notice of any such materials.

5. Responsibilities of the SU

5.1. To prepare a Student Rep Guide and regularly updated website containing and information on student rights, reps’ rights and responsibilities and the School’s and the S.U’s decision-making and complaint procedures.

5.2. To advertise the role of Reps and encourage students to stand for a Rep’s position.

5.3. To provide training for the reps.

5.4. To support and advise the reps whenever appropriate.

5.5. To actively develop and improve tools of communication between reps, students and the S.U.

5.6. To tackle issues at the institutional level, which the Reps are tackling at the course level, where appropriate.

5.7. To issue certificates for Reps who have satisfactorily fulfilled their role for the academic year.

5.8. To actively encourage and support the Heads Of Departments and the School in implementing ever more effective and democratic student representation.

5.9. To run fair and accessible elections for reps online and to communicate the outcome of these elections with elected reps course group and the department.
## Numbers / Contacts

### Students’ Union offices

**staff + officers**

*(Main building, ground floor)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antonia Bright</td>
<td>Representation &amp; Research Coordinator</td>
<td><a href="mailto:reps@soas.ac.uk">reps@soas.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>020 7898 4998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maxine Thomas-Asante</td>
<td>Co-President Democracy &amp; Education</td>
<td>democracy.ed</td>
<td>020 7898 4995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valeria Racu</td>
<td>Co-President Welfare &amp; Campaigns</td>
<td>welfare.campaigns</td>
<td>020 7898 4934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youssra Elmagboul</td>
<td>Co-President Equality &amp; Liberation</td>
<td>equality.liberation</td>
<td>0207 898 4997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peadar Connolly-Davey</td>
<td>Co-President Activities &amp; Events</td>
<td>acitivities.events</td>
<td>020 7898 4994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malena Bastida and Ciro Puig</td>
<td>Academic Affairs Officer (job-share)</td>
<td>academic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nidah Kaiser</td>
<td>PGT Officer</td>
<td>su.masters</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Paulien Broens</td>
<td>PGR Officer</td>
<td>su.research</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Anna Dodridge</td>
<td>General Manager</td>
<td>ad88</td>
<td>020 7898 4996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susanna Mumtezuddin</td>
<td>Welfare Advice Caseworker</td>
<td>sm141</td>
<td>020 7898 4983</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jack Di Francesco</td>
<td>Governance &amp; Communications Coordinator</td>
<td>jd126</td>
<td>020 7898 4992</td>
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### Students’ Union offices

**(Main building, ground floor)**

See also: soasunion.org/reps & www.soas.ac.uk
<table>
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<th>Schools</th>
<th>Lead / sections</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department of Economics</td>
<td>Head of Dept</td>
<td>Dr Elisa Van Waeyenberge</td>
<td>ew23</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dir. Learning &amp; Teaching</td>
<td>Dr Satoshi Miyamura</td>
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<td>Dir. Student Experience &amp;</td>
<td>Dr Sophie Van Hullen</td>
<td>sv8</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dept Manager</td>
<td>Catherine Farinhas-Grey</td>
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<td>Christian Davantin</td>
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<td>East Asian Languages &amp;</td>
<td>Head of School</td>
<td>Dr Griseldis Kirsch</td>
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<td>Nicole De Rosario</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finance &amp; Management Studies</td>
<td>Head of School</td>
<td>Prof Gary Schwarz</td>
<td>gary.schwartz</td>
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<td>Dept Manager</td>
<td>Richard Story</td>
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<td>Dept Student Officer</td>
<td>Anya Kropfitsch</td>
<td>sfm</td>
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<tr>
<td>History, Religions &amp;</td>
<td>Head of School</td>
<td>Prof Ulrich Pagel</td>
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<td>Philosophies</td>
<td>History</td>
<td>Dr Andrea Janku</td>
<td>aj7</td>
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<td>Religion &amp; Philosophies</td>
<td>Dr Sian Hawthorne</td>
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<td>Dept Manager</td>
<td>Mat Schofield</td>
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<td>Karen Philpott</td>
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<td>Interdisciplinary Studies</td>
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<td>Head of School</td>
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<td>Global Media Comms; CISD</td>
<td>Dr Dina Matar</td>
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<td>Dir Learning and Teaching</td>
<td>Dr Awino Okech</td>
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<td>Languages, Cultures &amp; Linguistics</td>
<td>Head of School</td>
<td>Dr Nana Sato-Rossberg</td>
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<td>Maxine Brown-Faragallah</td>
<td>max.brown</td>
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<td>Lasharne Anderson</td>
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<td>Yvonne Henry</td>
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<td>Student Officer (UG)</td>
<td>Monwara Seetul</td>
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<td>Foundation Year Officer</td>
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MEETING PLANNER

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Issues to raise:

Notes:

Date:
Issues to raise:

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Date:
Issues to raise:

Notes:
ACTION PLAN FORM

ISSUE:

DETAILS:

LEAD PERSON:

RESEARCH NEEDED:

DESIRED OUTCOME:

ACTION PLAN:

TIMESCALE: Urgent / Month / Year End

SUCCESS?

FEEDBACK/FOLLOW UP

Signed: Dated:

Use this to keep a check on actions, and in correspondence with the SU. This information will also be relevant in your term one or end-of-year reports.
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ISSUE:

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