



School-level Student Representative Role Description

Role: School-level Student Representative

Duration: One academic year (October – September)

Number of posts available: 1x per Academic Department (the role can also be shared between multiple Student Representatives)

For more information please contact: the Research and Representation Co-ordinator within the Students' Union - Antonia Bright (ab93@soas.ac.uk) or visit www.soasunion.org/reps

Summary of the Role

School-level Student Representatives are the 'lead' Student Representative for an academic department who work with the other Student Representatives within that department to ensure that the views and opinions of their academic community are at the centre of key Departmental and School-level decision-making processes across the School. As a School-level Student Representative you will be in a position to directly impact and improve the student experience by attending Departmental Meetings and the monthly Student Feedback Panel (SFP) and through working closely with academic and professional services staff, students, other Student Representatives and the Students' Union to support the successful delivery of a range of projects and activities related to key S.U and School-wide priority areas.

Role Requirements and How to Apply

This role does not require any previous experience. However, candidates should be interested in the student experience, be effective listeners and communicators, be able to work with a variety of individuals from a range of backgrounds and should enjoy representing and working on behalf of others in a compassionate and empathetic manner.

Student Representatives are elected into their roles via the Students' Union Online Elections system. Individual campaigning begins in September of T1, elections are held in October and roles are announced shortly after. If successful in your campaigning, your role will begin around the middle of October in T1 at the start of the academic year after you have completed the Student Representative Training Program.

Once all Student Representatives have been confirmed for an academic department, the terms of how the School-level Representative Role will be fulfilled can be determined. The role of School-level Student Representative can be undertaken on an individual basis, or can be shared between multiple Reps. It is up to the Student Representatives within an academic department to determine this, however, a consensus must be sought among the Student Representatives within that academic department.

If this role sounds like it is for you, you can nominate yourself through the [online election page](#).

Core Responsibilities

Collecting and Reporting Student Representative Feedback

As a School-level Student Representative you will be responsible for the collection and collation of student feedback from the Student Representatives from within your academic department and then for reporting this feedback at Departmental-level and School-level institutional forums. You will also be required to communicate the important information provided and key decisions made at these meetings back to your student cohort. A School-level Representative is responsible for the collation and dissemination of feedback across all years of study for their academic department, for example: *Economics Year 1 UG, Year 2 UG, Year 3 UG, Year 4 UG and Postgraduate Taught (PGT)*. The primary forums School-level Student Representatives are expected to attend are Departmental Meetings and the Student Feedback Panel (SFP), which are outlined below.

Departmental Meetings

School-level Student Representatives are required to attend the Departmental Meetings for their academic department. These meetings are held twice a term, typically last 2 hours and agenda space is always provided to discuss collated Student Representative feedback from within the department. School-level Student Representatives may be invited to attend all, or just part of these meetings and will be expected to present and discuss the feedback they have gathered.

Frequency: 2x per term, per academic department. **Time commitment:** 4 - 6 hours in total per term (max), or, 12 - 18 hours per academic year (max).

Student Feedback Panel (SFP)

School-level Student Representatives are invited to attend Student Feedback Panel (SFP) meetings on behalf of their academic department, which are held once a month during term time. SFP meetings typically last 1 hour and there is a standing agenda item to report, discuss and address collated Student Representative feedback from the various academic departments. School-level Student Representatives are expected to bring and present this feedback to the Panel's membership, work with them to develop solutions and communicate key information on this back to their student cohorts.

Frequency: 1x meeting per month during term time. **Time commitment:** If invited/requested to attend - 1 - 2 hours in total per month during term time.

Optional Responsibilities

Student Liaison Roles

There are a number of optional Student Liaison Roles for both Student Representatives and School-level Student Representatives to get involved in at SOAS. The role of a Student Liaison is to be the 'lead' Student Representative for an academic department that works to gather feedback on a particular area of the School and communicate this feedback to the relevant teams and individuals. The areas that are covered by Student Liaison Roles are: the Library Service, the SOAS Careers Service, Student Advice and Wellbeing (SAaW) and the Access and Student Success team. Student Liaisons meet once a month or term with the Head of Service or a delegated individual to discuss specific student feedback on this service area from their given academic department. There is one Student Liaison role per service area per academic department to be filled, however, this role can be shared between multiple Student Representatives on a termly, or rotating basis.

Frequency: 1x meeting per term, per service area. **Time commitment:** 1-2 hours in total per term, or, 3-6 hours per academic year

Special Interest Roles

Being a Student Representative can be a really exciting opportunity to work with and on behalf of students to enhance their experience at SOAS across a broad range of areas, not just those specified in the Student Representative Role Descriptions. In the past, Student Representatives have pursued their interests around social or extra-curricular events planning within their department, have run book clubs, worked on decolonising education, inclusion and accessibility, and sustainability initiatives and have supported many of the ongoing liberation campaigns the SU is involved in. If there is something you would like to pursue that has not been covered in this Role Description it is encouraged that you discuss this with the Students' Union at the earliest opportunity, who will be able to provide support and guidance and, if possible, include this in your election manifesto/campaign.

Frequency: Voluntary. **Time commitment:** Dependent on individual/interest

Participation Agreement, Training and Support



- As a Student Representative at SOAS there are a number of things you can expect from us and that are expected of you. Please see the *SOAS Student Representative Volunteer Agreement* at www.soasunion.org/reps for further information.
- All Reps are offered a suite of training sessions to complete, which prepare you for the role and provide additional professional development opportunities. This includes an introductory **Student Representative Training Session** and access to a suite of Optional sessions run by the School's Staff Development team, Student Advice and Wellbeing and the Students' Union.
- All Reps have access to the **SOAS Student Representative Handbook**. This is your one-stop-shop for contacts and ongoing support and guidance during your time in the role.
- Reps can access to the [Student Representative BLE \(Moodle\)](#) page for digital support, guidance and tools to help you collect and make the most out of student feedback.
- Reps receive ongoing support from the Students' Union and in particular, Antonia Bright (ab93@soas.ac.uk) – the Research and Representation Coordinator, your academic departmental professional services teams and the Students' Union Co-presidents.
- For more information on the training and support available to Student Representatives at SOAS, please email: reps@soas.ac.uk

Professional Development and Recognition

As a School-level Student Representative you will be directly involved in the operation of and enhancement to the student experience within your academic department. You will gain an in-depth knowledge of how the university is run and get to work with students and academic and professional services staff at a variety of levels from across the School. The training you will receive and the work you will undertake will strengthen and enhance your CV and the skills you will gain are directly transferable to many workplace contexts. Key competencies Student Representatives typically develop are communication skills, problem solving and solution development, public speaking and advocacy, community engagement and outreach and a broad range of professional skills, including time management, understanding and resolving conflict(s), a working understanding of equality and diversity legislation, minute taking, report writing, event planning and more.

At the end of the academic year, on successful completion of their role, **all Representatives will receive an individual Personal Reference Letter** from the Research and Representation Coordinator within the Students' Union, which outlines the training sessions you have completed and any additional responsibilities you undertook either as a School-level Representative, or via the optional Student Liaison or Special Interest roles available throughout the academic year.