

## Student Representative Role Description

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**Role:** Student Representative

**Duration:** One academic year (October – September)

**Number of posts available:** **Foundation Year:** 1x per 50 students, per Foundation Year Pathway.  
**Undergraduate:** 1x per 50 students, per year of study.  
**Taught Postgraduate:** 1x per distinct taught postgraduate degree programme(s).  
**Postgraduate Research:** (where possible) 1x MPhil and 1x PhD Representative per academic department.

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

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### Summary of Role

Student Representatives work with students, staff and the Students' Union to ensure that the views and opinions of their academic community are represented in module and programme level decision-making processes within their academic department. As a Student Representative you will work closely with students to gather their feedback and ensure this is effectively communicated to module and programme convenors, who you will work with to develop novel solutions to student concerns. Being a Student Representative is a real opportunity to make a meaningful impact on the quality of your academic community's learning experience and to develop a range of transferable professional skills for the future workplace. There is also scope for Student Representatives to pursue a broad range of interests, both academic and otherwise, via Student Liaison and Interest roles. If this sounds exciting to you, please read more below.

### 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 end of October in T1 at the start of the academic year after you have completed the Student Representative Training Program.

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

### Core Responsibilities

#### Collecting and Reporting Module and Programme-Level Student Feedback

As a Student Representative you will be responsible for the collection and collation of student feedback from modules and programmes within your academic department and for reporting this feedback to module and programme convenors, who you will work closely with to develop solutions to problems students are facing. Student Representatives may be invited to participate in student consultation and review processes regarding potential changes to modules and programmes within their academic department. Ensuring that the student voice is fairly represented in these processes is a key part of this role.

**Frequency:** Ongoing throughout the academic year. **Time commitment:** Around 1 hour per week (max) during term time.

### **Working in partnership with the School-level Student Representatives**

Each academic department has one School-level student representative role available, which may be shared by multiple individuals or undertaken on an individual basis. Student Representatives work closely with the holder(s) of this position to ensure that module and programme-level feedback feeds into and is put at the centre of the School-level decision-making and feedback forums that School-level Representatives attend, such as Departmental Meetings and the monthly Student Feedback Panel (SFP). For more information on School-level Student Representatives please visit [www.soasunion.org/rebs](http://www.soasunion.org/rebs) or email [rebs@soas.ac.uk](mailto:rebs@soas.ac.uk)

**Frequency:** Ongoing throughout the academic year. **Time commitment:** 1-2 hours per month during term time.

### **Students' Union Forums and Priorities**

As a Student Representative you will be asked to engage with and bolster the engagement of your academic community with SU forums and campaign priorities across a broad range of areas, including democracy and education, equality and liberation, welfare and campaigns, and events and activities initiatives. Student Representatives will work in partnership with the SU Officers and Co-Presidents to ensure and support the successful delivery of and student participation in projects, activities and campaigns relating to these priority areas throughout the academic year. For more current information on S.U Forums and Priorities, please visit: [www.soasunion.org](http://www.soasunion.org)

**Frequency:** Ongoing throughout the academic year. **Time commitment:** 1-2 hours per month during term time.

### **Listening to Students and Signposting Support**

As a formal channel of communication between students and staff at the module and programme level within an academic department, Student Representatives will be supported by the Students' Union to effectively listen to and escalate student concerns and signpost available support where suitable to do so. Student Representatives are not expected to provide support directly and more information on this can be found in the *Student Representative Handbook* available [www.soasunion.org/rebs](http://www.soasunion.org/rebs)

**Frequency:** Ongoing throughout the academic year. **Time commitment:** Varies, but approximately 1-2 hours every other week.

## **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 to successfully undertake the role.

### **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 your interests 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* available at [www.soasunion.org/reps](http://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**, which is available at [www.soasunion.org/reps](http://www.soasunion.org/reps). This is your one-stop-shop for contacts and ongoing support and guidance during your time in 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](mailto: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](mailto:reps@soas.ac.uk)

## Professional Development and Recognition

As a Student Representative you will be directly involved in the operation of and enhancement to the student experience within your academic department at the module and programme level. You will gain an in-depth knowledge of how the university is run and get to work with students, the S.U and academic and professional services staff 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 (via either a Student Liaison or Special Interest role) throughout the academic year.