

Programme Representatives Guidance Handbook for University Staff.

Academic Year: 2020-21

Table of Contents:

Introduction	1
1.0 Role of a Programme Representative.....	2
2.0 Role of Staff in the Programme Representative Scheme	3
3.0 Online Election Guidance for 2020-21	4
4.0 Programme Representative Code of Conduct.....	7
5.0 Support Offered by the Students' Union.....	8
6.0 Common Queries from Representatives.....	9
7.0 Key Contacts and Support for You!.....	10

Introduction

Welcome to the *Programme Representatives Guidance Handbook for University Staff*. In this guide, we aim to explain how the Programme Representative System works, the changes this year, the process of online elections, training that we offer representatives as well as the support available to you as Staff from the Union.

As you are aware; the decision has been made by the ESC that all returning students that held the role of Programme Representative in 2019/20 will have their term in office extended for the duration of the academic year. This means that any students that are returning for this year of study and held the role last year will be rolled over to become Programme Reps, without the need for election.

Programme Representatives will be incredibly important this year in creating a positive impact on courses and providing rich feedback about the experience of studying amidst a global pandemic. We want our Reps to feel empowered, supported and able improve their academic experience as they fulfil their roles.

Thank you again for all the support you give to Programme Representatives, and for your continued involvement in helping us make the System better – Programme Reps are something for both the University and the Union to proudly champion together.

We hope you find this guide useful and a tool to help you. We are constantly looking at how we can better support staff and Programme Representatives, so are always open to feedback. We will be running a series of Staff Guidance Drop-in sessions, to enable you ask questions to us in the coming weeks.

If you have further queries, comments or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us at studentrep@city.ac.uk.

Ruqaiyah Javaid – Vice President Education – vpeducation@city.ac.uk
The Representation Team – Students' Union – studentrep@city.ac.uk

1.0 Role of a Programme Representative

Training is provided to Representatives in the first term, with additional training throughout the year.

As part of this training, we inform Representatives that their role is to:

- Speak for the students that they represent – to actively seek out the views and feedback of those students.
- Collecting feedback on both academic and non-academic issues.
- Report on good and bad issues affecting their cohort.
- Liaise with Staff, including Programme Directors and Course Officers regularly.
- Attend mandatory meetings.
- Undertake training provided by the Students' Union.
- Feedback the progress with issues, what decisions are being made and what they are doing to their cohort.
- Update the Students' Union and University with feedback on their experience and information about their activity in the role.
- Promote Union, University and National surveys to collect feedback (e.g. The National Student Survey (NSS), Your Voice)
- Take part in academic campaigns with School Representative Officers.
- Take opportunities provided to them by the Students' Union and University.

We are keen to stress that their role is to represent Students' opinions.

We inform them that sometimes students may approach them with issues that concerns their welfare, academic performance or needs for extenuating circumstances.

We tell them that their role is to signpost students to the relevant support, and provide them with information about the Student Centre and the Union's Advice Service.

For the academic year **2020-21**, Programme Reps will still be able to take advantage of additional trainings throughout the year.

The Programme Representative role and responsibilities are applicable whether teaching and meetings are held online or in person.

2.0 Role of Staff in the Programme Representative Scheme

In order to facilitate a successful scheme, both the University and Union have different roles to play.

Staff are responsible for:

- Briefing all students on the role of representatives and to give them opportunity to stand for election according to our 'Election Guidance'
- Ensuring appropriate committees are in place and elected Programme Representatives are invited.
- Giving the representatives the opportunity to submit papers/agenda items. The dates and times should be agreed as soon as possible once reps are allowed.
- Circulating agendas and papers a week before the meeting.
- Encouraging Representatives to participate in meetings and welcoming feedback.
- Ensuring that the views of student representatives are recorded, reported and acted on as necessary, and feedback is offered on progress.
- Working alongside the Students' Union in promoting training for Programme Representatives and the use of the Programme Rep Handbook.
- Contacting the Union if there is an issue with or a request for attendance at a particular meeting.
- Ensuring the Union receives copies of minutes from all meetings when requested.

The Students' Union is responsible for:

- Supporting Staff in the electing of Representatives according to our 'Election Guidance'.
- Collating details for all Representatives onto a central database.
- Providing training for Programme Representatives and School Representative Officers.
- Providing on-going support and guidance to student representatives.
- Organising forums and events for Representatives to take part in.
- Providing a report to the Student Experience Committees (SEC) each term.
- Looking through meeting minutes to identify common trends.
- Reporting annually to the University on the experience of student representatives and to identify any issues of concern.
- In partnership with the University, maintaining oversight for and development of arrangements for student representation.
- Providing recognition at the end of each academic year to Representatives.

The above responsibilities are applicable whether teaching and meetings are held online or in person.

3.0 Online Elections Guidance for 2020-21

In the academic year 2020/21 the election of Programme Representatives will take place online, via the Students' Union website.

Electing Programme Reps provides students with a strong level of accountability to those that they are representing, and gives a strong sense of student ownership and engagement. We recognise that student participation can sometimes be difficult, but we are always on hand to support you through this process.

As Programme Representatives, that held the role in 2019/20, have been rolled over, the election of Programme Reps will only need to occur:

- On first year courses; or courses where all students are new to City this year.
- On courses where reps have opted out; and therefore the number of Reps on your course has dropped below the recommended number.

For context; the election process will involve you sending the Students' Union the data at the beginning of the elections period: which includes the number of positions you need to be filled, your course information and the names and details for all Reps that have nominated themselves.

We will then use this data to create the election on our website; where students can log in, see all of the candidates for your course and vote.

We will then announce the winners once the elections have closed.

Our timeline for the election of Reps:

- Students can nominate themselves to become Programme Reps from the beginning of term.
- 8th October – Course Nomination Data sheet to be sent to the Students' Union by 5pm.
- 13th October – All Elections will open on the Students' Union website at 10am.
- 16th October – All Elections will close on the Students' Union website at 4pm.
- 19th October – Results will be announced and reported back to all schools.

Key Documents:

We will be creating/sending a number of key documents ahead of the start of teaching.

These include:

- Programme Rep Nomination Form (Template)
- Course Nomination Data Sheet
- Student Nominee guidance
- Student voting guidance - "How to vote for your Reps?"

Key benefits:

The benefits the online election process is that it is democratic, can be done remotely and there is no requirement for in person interaction. Once the elections are complete, a specific Programme Rep area will be created for your course. Your students will be able to access this and see who their reps are and how to contact them. Programme Reps will also be able to use this space to contact students in order to receive feedback.

Do I need to elect Reps this year?

You will need to elect Programme Reps if you are a first year course where there will be no Reps to roll over. You will also need to hold an election for some or all positions if the Reps on your course have opted out of the roll over.

How many Representatives do I need to elect?

The ratio we advise for each Programme is **1 Representative for each 30 students +1 Rep, which ensures there is a minimum of 2 Representatives for each year group of each course.** We want to make sure that the workload is not put upon one person, it can be shared, and that the views of all years of the course are taken into consideration.

Please use the below scale to assess the number of Reps you need for your course:

- 1-30 Students – 2 Reps
- 31 – 60 Students – 3 Reps
- 61 – 90 Students – 4 Reps
- 91 – 120 Students – 5 Reps
- 120+ Students – 6+ Reps

How will I know if Reps have opted out?

We have created an opt-out form for Programme Reps to complete if they do not wish to rollover. We will send your school a list of all Reps that have completed the form and therefore the positions that will need to be filled.

My course won't have students enrolled until later in the year, what do I do?

If your course doesn't start until after the election period above, you can still use our platform to hold elections at a later date. Email us to tell us if this is the case and we will work with you to hold an election. We will need approximately 2 weeks' notice in order to have everything online ready for elections to open.

We have a January entry on our course. Is it possible to run an election in January to identify a Rep for that cohort?

Yes, an election can be carried out as per the guidance for term 1. If you need to set up an election, please email us. We will need approximately 2 weeks' notice in order to have everything online ready for elections to open.

How do we know who has been elected?

Once the elections are complete we will send a list of elected reps to each school.

Next Steps

Once you have received nominations your students, please send through their details to your Quality Officer/Key Contact using Nomination Details Excel Sheet, **please fill the excel sheet in fully** making sure to include the number of roles you need to be filled. Please ensure that you arrange all the key information such as email, and year of study etc.

Once Reps have been elected, please invite them to introduce themselves to their cohort via an appropriate method. This will allow them to be recognisable in their role and an opportunity to meet all the students they will be representing.

Where can I get further guidance?

If there is anything you are unclear of before the start of term, please email Angelo.weekes.2@city.ac.uk and Jonathan.otter@city.ac.uk to let us know.

We will also be hosting some lunchtime Staff Guidance Drop-ins every day at 12-1 during the week beginning 28th September, where you can ask us any questions directly. These will be on Microsoft Teams and the links will be sent in advance to your schools.

4.0 Programme Representative Code of Conduct

Programme Representatives are expected to follow a set 'Code of Conduct' as they fulfil their roles. This is to ensure that they are representing students, attending meetings and behaving appropriately.

If there is a case where a Programme Rep is not conducting themselves appropriately or fulfilling the responsibilities for their role you should refer to the Code of Conduct it in the first instance.

The Code of Conduct covers the key 'Expectations of Programme Representatives':

- Attendance at meetings
- Feedback
- Behaviour
- Confidentiality

There is also a procedure for the removal of Programme Representatives in the event that this is required.

The outline of the procedure is:

Stage 1:

The Programme Rep is invited to discuss the concern informally.

Stage 2:

The Programme Representative will be brought to a formal meeting with the Vice President Education and Quality Officer.

Stage 3:

The Programme Representative will have a right to appeal, in which case a panel will be formed, comprising of: members of their School, the University and the Students' Union.

If there is a case for the removal of a Programme Representative then the stages in the Code of Conduct should be followed.

The Code of Conduct and expectations of Programme Representatives apply throughout the 2020/21 academic year and are applicable to both online and in person teaching and meetings.

The Code of Conduct can be accessed via our staff resources section of the Students' Union website.

5.0 Support Offered by the Students' Union

The Union wants Representatives to have year round support to enable them to carry out their roles, we run/provide:

Ongoing support

Due to the ongoing pandemic members of the Students' Union staff will be working both on campus and remotely during the week. The Representation Team email address is the best way to contact the team to get support and advice. Reps can email studentrep@city.ac.uk and a member of the team will respond to guide and support them at any point in the academic year.

Raising feedback online

There are new and revised feedback platforms that the Students' Union are offering to Reps and all students this academic year. Our Programme Rep Issues/Wins Form has been refreshed and revised to make it easier for Reps to raise items and for us to work with and support Reps. The forms have also been split into two separate forms to increase the usability for Reps. Programme Reps can access this via our website.

Additional events and training

We will be holding additional training for our student leaders this academic year, including training around sustainability, leadership and networking. Further details about these training opportunities will be sent out to schools and Reps throughout the academic year.

Whilst it may not be possible to hold 'in person' Receptions and events for Programme Reps, they will still be able to access networking and skills events this academic year, as part of our support for Reps.

School Representative Officers

School Representative Officers provide important support for Programme Reps and can be contacted by Reps for help and advice on issues and feedback. School Representative Officers receive support from the Union to work closely with Reps and will take the feedback from Reps to the meetings that they attend within the school.

Academic Societies

At City Students' Union we have a large number of active and hardworking Academic Societies. This year, we are running a project to increase the collaboration between Academic Societies and Programme Reps, to ensure that Reps are able to communicate effectively with members of their course and to gather feedback from the society.

We will be keeping Schools, Societies and Reps up to date with this work.

Reward and Recognition

This year, we are providing incentives and recognition for Representatives. These will include but not be limited to:

- A Programme Rep Lanyard
- A Programme Rep Handbook
- A monthly Rep Newsletter
- An end of year Certificate
- Vouchers for encouraging and participating in surveys
- Paid research opportunities
- Personalised Hoodies for purchase

6.0 Common Queries from Representatives

Academic Misconduct, Extenuating Circumstances and Academic Advice

The Union runs a Union Advice Service, offering independent academic advice for all students around such issues as academic misconduct and extenuating circumstances and more.

www.citystudents.co.uk/advice

University Food Outlets & CityBar

All of City's catering and food outlets, including the CityBar, are run by a company called Sodexo or Lexington at Bunhill Row. The Union has no control over these outlets, including opening hours, prices or what they stock.

We do however, have a relationship with both providers, and hold regular meetings with Sodexo to raise students' concerns and we tend to run events in collaboration with Sodexo in the CityBar throughout the year.

If Representatives raise an issue with the Bar or catering facilities, it's key that these are taken on by the relevant supplier.

Societies

Academic Societies are student-led, course-based communities supported by the Students' Union. They have clear aims and objectives for activities that they want to hold, and the benefits that being a member bring to students include broadening their knowledge, improving employability prospects, and networking opportunities.

These groups have become a link between students and the university, and make students feel part of a community on campus. Academic societies also give students an opportunity to extend their communities outside of the classroom and create peer support networks.

The students that run academic societies make key decisions and take shared responsibility for the society's activities, and all society members get to vote for the committee roles on an annual basis.

All societies receive financial and administrative support as well as full training from the Students' Union (SU), who ensure that the society's activities are inclusive, accessible and beneficial to all who take part.

You can direct Representatives who wish to find out: what societies we have; how to join a society or start up a new society to visit www.citystudents.co.uk/societies.

7.0 Key Contacts and Support for You!

There's a whole team in the Union who are dedicated to Programme Representatives – please feel free to contact us at any time with any query, no matter how big or small. If your query is School specific, it is advised that you contact the Quality Team within your School.

Our dedicated email for Programme Representative queries is: studentrep@city.ac.uk

We also have a dedicated 'Staff Resources' section of our website, where you can access any necessary documents, including this booklet: <https://www.citystudents.co.uk/student-voice/programmereps/staffresources/>

To contact our Elected Students' Union Representatives:
Vice President Education – vpeducation@city.ac.uk

Business School Officer – businesssro@city.ac.uk
School of Arts & Social Sciences Officer – sassofficersu@city.ac.uk
School of Health Sciences Officer – healthsro@city.ac.uk
School of Mathematics, Computer Science & Engineering Officer – smcsesro@city.ac.uk
The City Law School Officer – lawsro@city.ac.uk

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