

# Course Rep Handbook

2022-23

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# Welcome!

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Hi! We are Chih-Hsiang and Hamza, your Vice Presidents for Education and Postgraduate Students at the Students' Union.

We represent your academic interests at Warwick and fight for positive change to the educational experience of all undergraduate and postgraduate students, especially those whose voices are often underrepresented or marginalised.

The Rep System is integral to the purpose of the Students' Union, which is to positively impact students' lives at Warwick and beyond. Throughout the course of the year, we'll be collaborating with you as Course, Department and Faculty Reps to bring about positive improvements within academic departments. As a community of Reps, you will have the opportunity to impact the quality and direction of teaching, learning, and academic experience here at Warwick. Moreover, what you do here could affect national Higher Education policy! In the past, the amazing work of Course Reps have led to some great achievements.

In our roles as Education Officer and Postgraduate Officer, we will support you by escalating your feedback to the University, supporting your campaigns, letting you know what we are working on and getting your views so that we can create change at a University-wide level.

So, look out for our regular newsletter to keep up with what we and your fellow Course, Department and Faculty Reps are achieving across the University and beyond.

Finally, thank you and congratulations on becoming a Course Rep! Together, we can represent student voices and improve the academic experience for all.

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# Rep Wins

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Course Reps create many changes through their SSLCs (Student Staff Liaison Committee) to improve the student experience for their cohort. Here are some achievements by SSLCs in the 2020/21 Academic Year.

## Faculty of Arts

**PGT History** – Ran drop in sessions led by Course Reps to support students

**School of Creative Arts, Performance & Visual Cultures** - Lobbied for the creation of School Level newsletters for consistency of information and School connection to students

**UG German** - Developed a confidential channel for disabled students to give honest feedback around their experiences – created from the Warwick Enable & SU Education Team Training

## Faculty of Science, Engineering & Medicine

**PGT Life Sciences** – Pub Quiz Social Event & Careers Fair

**PGT Computer Science** – Helped changed the way labs were organised based on student feedback

**UG MBChB** – Establishing a new mentoring scheme with the help of MBChB students and supporting the development of our community through newsletters

## Faculty of Social Sciences

**PGR Sociology** – Establishment of a Microsoft Teams group for students to interact and present papers to each other for peer review

**UG Law** - Hosted a digital module fair and created an SSLC Quiz which gained 300 responses for them to present to staff

**UG PPL SSLC** - Lobbied their department to hold more 'PPL-focused' events and socials

If you have achieved something great within your SSLC and want to share it with all Course Reps, email [sslc@warwicksu.com](mailto:sslc@warwicksu.com) and we can feature you in our newsletter and/or website.



# Your Role

You have been elected to represent your cohort at a course level. Depending on the size of your year group, you may have more than one Course Rep for your cohort. As the voice for these students, you will be gathering feedback, raising issues within your course/department, and generating change.

## As a Course Rep, you will be:

- Meeting and communicating regularly with your cohort to gather feedback & ideas.
- Escalating course-based feedback & ideas to Student Staff Liaison Committees (SSLCs) to co-create the curriculum.
- Informing your cohort about the changes/developments due to the feedback & to students' ideas.
- Supporting the Course/Department in promoting the completion of Module Evaluations, NSS/PTES/PRES and other feedback systems to the students you represent.
- Escalating non-course-related feedback and feedback that is not acted upon at course level through the Academic Representation Structure.

**A full role description can be found on the Course Rep Moodle and SU Website under Academic Voice.**

## Training & Support

As a Course Rep, you will have access to a wide range of training and support to develop your skills and knowledge. This will include:

- Rep Training. This will happen in Term 1 (or just after your election if you don't start in October.)
- Rep Resources. On the Course Rep Moodle and Warwick SU website, there are a range of briefings, best practice tips from fellow Reps and other resources. If there is a topic that doesn't have any resources, you can request this from the SU Education Team.
- Rep Newsletter. You will receive a regular newsletter that contains information around what the Education & Postgraduate Officers are doing, Rep wins, new resources available, and what is happening in Warwick & Higher Education as a whole.
- Events & Activities. We will be running a range of events and activities that will help you in your role as a Course Rep, have an impact on the University, and meet other Reps. You can find out more on Page 10 or on the Warwick SU website

**'We will be running a range of events and activities that will help you in your role as a Course Rep, have an impact on the University, and meet other Reps.'**



# Academic Reps Structure

The Academic Reps Structure has multiple levels of reps and meetings so that feedback can be given and change can happen.

	Representatives	University Meetings	SU Meeting
<b>Whole University</b>	<p><b>Full-Time Officers</b></p> <p>The Education Officer &amp; Postgraduate Officer are elected to represent student interests in Education and Postgraduate experience</p>	<p><b>SLEEC, AQSC, BGS &amp; More</b></p> <p>Full-Time Officers and Faculty Reps attend a wide range of meetings that change all aspects of your academic experience.</p>	<p><b>Academic Representation Council</b></p> <p>The Education Officer &amp; Postgraduate Officer sit on Academic Representation Council with the Faculty Reps to discuss University level feedback.</p>
<b>Faculty</b>	<p><b>Faculty Reps</b></p> <p>Faculty Reps are elected for each Faculty to represent student interests of their Faculty.</p>	<p><b>Faculty Executive Committees (FECs)</b></p> <p>Faculty Reps raise the Faculty level feedback given at Faculty Forums to FECs.</p>	
<b>Department</b>	<p><b>Department Reps</b></p> <p>Department Reps are elected for each department and work on Voice projects within the department and escalate Course issues to Faculty Reps.</p>	<p><b>Department &amp; Faculty Focus Groups</b></p> <p>Depending on the department, Department Reps sit on a range of committees and Focus Groups to represent student interests.</p>	<p><b>Department Catch-Ups</b></p> <p>Department Reps collect the feedback from Course Reps at Department Catch-Ups so that their voices can be escalated to the right areas.</p>
<b>Course</b>	<p><b>Course Reps</b></p> <p>Course Reps are elected per course, per year of study to represent student interests of their cohort.</p>	<p><b>Student Staff Liaison Committees (SSLCs)</b></p> <p>SSLCs are a partnership between the University &amp; Students' Union. This is where course-level feedback that Course Reps have received from their cohort can be raised.</p>	

It is important you know who your Faculty & Department Reps are as some issues cannot be solved at SSLCs and need to be raised to higher levels of the University & SU. You can find out who your Faculty & Department Reps are on the Course Rep Moodle and SU Website.



# Events & Activities

Across the Academic Year, we run a range of events & activities to support you in your role, get your voice heard in the University, and meet other Reps and socialise. None of these events are compulsory so you can attend what interests you and build your own unique Course Rep experience.

## Faculty & Department Rep Events

As discussed in the Academic Reps Structure, Department Reps will be running Department Catch-Ups regularly to gather your feedback and escalate this to the University. These are not the only times you can raise issues, Faculty & Department Reps will be running a range of activities throughout the year to hear about your opinions on particular areas of the student experience.

## Course Rep Christmas Party

After being elected, trained, and attended your first SSLC meeting; Term 1 can be exhausting as a Rep so we want to say thank you through our Course Rep Christmas Party. Free food, activities, and giveaways. We run this event in the last few weeks of Term so make sure you have your ugly Christmas sweater ready.

## Partnership Activities

We work directly with the University on filling focus groups and committees with Course Reps but sometimes these are big commitments. To make sure everyone can get involved, we run smaller Partnership Activities with the University throughout the year so you can work and chat directly with senior leaders at the University on a wide range of topics.

## SU Elections

Want to lead the whole Academic Reps System as the Education or Postgraduate Officer? Represent a community you are a part of as a Part-Time Officer? You can stand in the SU Elections! Nominations open early in Term 2.

## Union Awards & Transforming Education Awards

We want to celebrate all the great work that you have achieved as Course Reps & SSLCs as well as the great University Staff who have gone above and beyond for your learning so we run Union Awards & Transforming Education Awards. Who will win the coveted Course Rep or SSLC of the Year Award? Nominations open late Term 2 with a big ceremony in Term 3.

## SSLC Annual Reports

A lot happens in one year as an SSLC. To help you hand over to the next year and for the SU to help create an even better Reps System and better represent your interests, we have the SSLC Annual Report. These are filled out by a whole SSLC near the end of Term 3.



**'We use your feedback from training and Term 1 SSLCs to create a wide range of sessions that you want to help you become better Reps.'**



**For all events and activities, check out the Course Rep Moodle, SU Website or ask your Academic Voice Coordinator for more information.**

# Interview with a Course Rep (Ben Hayday)

## What SSLC were you a part of?

Politics and International Studies Undergraduate SSLC.

## Why did you become a Course Rep?

It was an interesting opportunity to stand in an election just a few weeks after arriving at Warwick. I knew that if I won, I would have the opportunity to champion the views of my coursemates, learn more about the University, and develop my own skills. If I hadn't won the election, I knew I would have given up very little to try.

## How did you gather feedback from the students you represented?

Face-to-face conversations, a Facebook group for just my course, and occasional emails.

## What was your biggest achievement as a Course Rep?

Securing optional core modules for students in their second year. There is now far more choice and it is possible to explore a wider variety of important topics.

## What three tips would you give to new Course Reps?

First, make sure you take the time to think about what you want to achieve. You might have some ambitious, radical proposals but make sure you don't neglect the changes that might be possible more quickly too. Put those ideas in your manifesto and it will help keep you grounded in clear goals all year.

Secondly, do not underestimate the other course reps on your SSLC. You will all have different skills, different interests and know different people. You can use that to your collective advantage.

Lastly, make sure you forge good relationships with the academic convenors and members of staff in your department. Your role requires you to work together for change and they are unlikely to respond well to one-sided unconstructive complaining!



# Gathering & Presenting Feedback

## Gathering Feedback

To effectively represent your cohort, you need to gather feedback from your peers.

Some feedback mechanisms that have been used in the past are:

- Social media groups; using Facebook or WhatsApp.
- Surveys question.
- Moodle.
- After/before-lecture discussions.

It is important to use a range of ways to gather feedback to be accessible to the diverse range of students at Warwick. Not everyone uses Facebook, likes to talk in person about issues, or attend the lectures you attend due to differences in module choices.

We encourage our reps to gather feedback in ways that allows everyone on the course to be actively involved in giving opinions and comments. Make sure that gathering feedback happens on a regular basis, and provide evidence when any constructive comments are given.

**To help, we're setting up a Microsoft Teams group for Course Reps. This is where our reps can meet, collaborate, share feedback, and communicate with students in their cohort.**

## Presenting Feedback

Before you attend the SSLC meetings, be sure to bring a balance of positive comments and an action point that can be worked upon to improve your experience of the course. Any action points need to be supported with evidence. This can range from a collection of comment feedback or even paper evidence. When you have presented your feedback, make sure that you update your cohort on developments and progress.

**'We encourage our reps to gather feedback in ways that allows everyone on the course'**



# Where to Present Feedback

As a rep, you will receive a range of feedback, some of which may concern issues of a personal nature that need specialist support. If this occurs, you will need to direct it through the appropriate alternative channels. Here are some examples of feedback that you may get and where to direct it:

SSLC Feedback	SU Advice Centre	Faculty & Department Reps
Course Books	Plagiarism	Parking
Timetabling	Changing Course	Food & Drink Outlets
Module Changes	Issues with Certain Academics	Printing Credits
Study Space	Academic Appeals	University Policies
Assessment Changes	Mitigating Circumstances	Research funding
Dissertation/Theses Resources		

If you are not sure if a student issue should be dealt with as a complaint, get in contact with the SU Education Team.

The SU Advice Centre can be contacted via:

**Email:**  
advice@warwicksu.com

**Online:**  
warwicksu.com/help-support/contact

**Call:**  
02476 572824

**Visit:**  
Advice Centre, SUHQ, 2nd floor



# FAQs

## When do we elect a SSLC Chair and/or Secretary?

Chairs and Secretaries are elected at your first SSLC meeting of the Academic Year between the Course Reps within the SSLC meeting. The Academic Convenor will organise the first SSLC and the SSLC Chair/ Secretary will organise the rest of the meetings for the Academic Year.

If you would like to become the Chair or Secretary for your SSLC, you can put yourself forward during the first SSLC Meeting. If you want to find out more about the role, you can go to the Rep Resources page of the Warwick SU website.

## I haven't been contacted about my first SSLC meeting. What do I do?

The first SSLCs of the year take place in the second half of Term 1. The Academic Convenor organises the first meeting of the year. If you haven't heard by mid-November, contact your Academic Convenor. If you do not know who your Academic Convenor is, contact the SU Education Team staff member who supports your faculty.

## How do I contact the students I represent?

If you are having trouble contacting your students, contact your Academic Convenor who can help you with a range of digital and physical ways to gather feedback from your student body. If you don't know who your Academic Convenor is, contact the SU Education Team.

## What should I do if my role as a Rep is affecting my studies/welfare?

The role of a Course Rep is very flexible when it comes to how much you can get involved. If you are feeling overwhelmed by the role, chat to your faculty support staff member in the SU Education Team either in SUHQ or via email. We will be able to help you manage your role better with a range of options.

## Jargon Buster

**Academic Convenor** – The nominated Academic Staff member who helps arrange the SSLC and ensure issues raised are given to the right areas of the Course/Department

**SU Education Team** – The staff members in the SU who ensure that SSLC runs across the University and work with the Faculty & Department Reps to escalate feedback. You can find out more about them on Page 11 (sslc@warwicksu.com)

**Minutes** – This is a record of the meeting written by the SSLC Secretary. It is not a word for word recap but ensures that all the points raised and main parts of the meeting is written down.

**Agenda** – This is an order of what will be discussed at the meeting. This is written by the SSLC Chair and helps them when running the meeting and ensures everything is covered.



# Notes

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SSLC Templates, Faculty Reports, Briefings and other important resources can be found at:

[warwicksu.com/student-voice/academic-representation/course-rep-resources](http://warwicksu.com/student-voice/academic-representation/course-rep-resources)

