

Staff Guidance

**for supporting Academic
Representatives**

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Welcome!

A short introduction from the Students' Union

At the Students' Union (SU) we are a registered charity, independent of the University. As soon as students start their studies, they automatically become a member of the SU. Our primary goal is to assist students in maximising their university experience by participating in various activities, acquiring new skills, providing support and representation, and ensuring that they enjoy their time at the University.

We now have over 500 Academic Representatives across the University who have been chosen by their peers to represent their views so we are very glad you want to help support them too! Academic Representatives will collaborate with you and advocate for change based on student feedback, which will then actively contribute to improving the quality of education at the University of Central Lancashire!



Hello!

Charlotte Vice President Education

As the Vice President of Education, I am thrilled to embark on a journey that emphasises the significance of working in partnership and highlights the pivotal role of academic representation through our Students' Union.

In today's ever-evolving educational landscape, the complexities of teaching and learning go far beyond the confines of the classroom. Our commitment to excellence necessitates a comprehensive approach that embraces collaboration at its core. We understand that the most effective outcomes arise not from siloed efforts, but from the synergy that results when educators, administrators, students, and support staff join forces in a unified front.

Central to this collaborative spirit is the concept of academic representation through our esteemed Student Union. As the conduit between students and the academic institution, the SU plays a fundamental role in ensuring that student voices are not only heard, but also integrated into the decision-making processes that shape their educational journey. This partnership is a testament to our dedication to cultivating an inclusive and participatory environment that fosters growth, innovation, and a true sense of belonging.

Student Voice Staff Team

The Student Voice Staff Team are a group of full time staff who work with elected representatives to support them in representing the voices of students. We utilise our knowledge, experience and skills from our lives to work towards student centred change.

Steph Street-Lomas

Advocacy & Insight Manager

Steph (she/her) is the Advocacy & Insight Manager. She has previously served as a Course Representative, School President, and Education Officer. In addition, Steph has volunteered with the National Union of Students and the Quality Assurance Agency. She also led the Academic Integrity Collective, successfully lobbying for a law criminalising essay mills.



Becky Best

Academic Voice Co-ordinator

Becky (she/her) is the Senior Academic Voice Co-ordinator. Her role is to co-ordinate academic representation within the SU. She is the Volunteer Manager for all School Presidents and Course Reps. Becky is passionate about empowering representatives and is responsible for supporting them to make positive changes. Becky works closely with each School ensuring they are listening to student feedback. Becky has a varied work experience in education and the third sector. Becky is also a UCLan Alumni!

Krupa Raithatha

Campaigns & Policy Co-ordinator

Krupa (she/her) is the Senior Campaigns and Policy Co-ordinator for the Students' Union, her role is to facilitate Student Council, coordinate student led campaigns including officers and liberation representatives, and support policy mechanisms. Krupa has 20 years' experience of working in activism and has an in-depth knowledge of P/politics.





Joe
VP Welfare

Luke
VP President

Sophie
VP Activities

Charlotte
VP Education

Representation at the SU

Full time elected Officers

UCLan SU is led by 4 Officers who are elected by students to represent the interests of the whole student community, as well as the smaller communities that our students identify with. The officers include: President, Vice President Education, Vice President Activities and Vice President Welfare. They listen to the voice of students (constructive feedback, concerns and praise) and campaign to make positive change both on campus and for students nationally.

Students' Council

Your Students' Council is made up of voluntary, elected Student Reps and your Full Time Elected Officers. Every member of the Students' Council represents the views of a different community at UCLan, and are elected by students, for students every year.



School President

Roles & Responsibilities

What is a School President?

School Presidents are students who are elected by students in their school, to represent the academic interests and overall student experience of their School. There are two School Presidents per School.

Why should students stand?

The role as a School President is crucial in ensuring that students' opinions are heard and acted upon at every level across the University. School Presidents and academics collaborate to advocate for change based on feedback.

How long is it for?

A School President is elected for one academic year. This is done at our main elections in the Spring term, unless a role remains vacant. This will then move to a by election.

What do they need to do?

Attend training with the Students' Union at the start of the academic year.

Work with the other School President, Course Reps and Staff in their School on resolving feedback.

Stay in regular contact with the Students' Union through your VP Education and Becky, Senior Academic Voice Co-ordinator

Work closely with the other School President elected in their School - one of whom attends Students' Council at the Students' Union.

Chair the Student Feedback Review meetings between Course Reps and staff (up to 3 meetings per year) to review progress on actions and discuss more strategic topics about the courses in your School.

Moderate the private area of the Unitu online student voice platform alongside Course Reps and SU staff, to escalate feedback to Staff.

Refer students with non-academic concerns to University Services or SU.

What is in it for students?

Networking opportunities

Access only events

Socials

Rep Conference

Training

Problem solving skills

Greater employability

Negotiation skills

Working closely with staff

Time management skills

Organisation skills

Professionalism

Meeting management skills

Working with students

Higher Education Achievement Transcript

(Connected to your degree certificate)

A photograph of three young women in a social setting. The woman on the left has red hair and is smiling. The woman in the middle is eating popcorn from a red and white striped container. The woman on the right has brown hair and glasses, is wearing a dark jacket, and is laughing. They are surrounded by large balloons in shades of pink, blue, and white.

Course Rep

Roles & Responsibilities

What is a Course Rep?

A Course Rep is a student elected by their course mates to represent their course mates' feedback on their academic interests.

Why should students stand?

By serving as a Course Rep, students gain a sense of ownership over their academic experience as they have the power to influence positive change and steer the direction of their course for future years.

How long is it for?

A Course Rep is elected for one academic year. If the role is for longer this will be communicated with you at election. If for any reason the student cannot continue, they need to let us know.

What do they need to do?

Feed back the outcomes of meetings to students on your course.

Gather feedback from students on your course and communicate it to staff.

Moderate the private area of the Unitu online student voice platform alongside other Course Reps and SU staff, to escalate feedback to staff.

Attend Student Feedback Forums (2-3 times per semester) to raise feedback on behalf of students and create shared solutions with staff.

Stay in regular contact with the Students' Union through your VP Education and Becky, Senior Academic Voice Co-ordinator.

Attend relevant training with UCLan Students' Union

Attend the Student Feedback Review with staff (once per semester) to review progress on actions and discuss more strategic topics about the course.

Refer students with non-academic concerns to University Services or SU.

What is in it for students?

Networking opportunities

Access only events

Socials

Rep Conference

Volunteer role

Problem solving skills

Greater employability

Negotiation skills

Working closely with staff

Time management skills

Organisation skills

Meeting management skills

Working with students

Professionalism

Higher Education Achievement Transcript

(Connected to their degree certificate)

Elections

Election of School Presidents

School Presidents are elected as part of the main Students' Union elections which is held in the Spring term. We encourage staff to promote students to vote in the SU elections, but they cannot show preference to one candidate over others.

We elect two School Presidents per year - one who has a seat on the Students' Council and one who does not sit on the Council. School Presidents are trained in September by experienced staff and are not encouraged to take on the role until after this training.

Election of Course Reps

Course Representatives are elected in a process facilitated by Academic Staff as agreed by the University. This should happen every year, unless agreed with the SU. Where Course Reps are to be elected for longer periods of time - they must be asked yearly if they wish to continue. The general rule is 1 rep per 50 students on the course.

This generally needs to happen within the first 3/4 weeks of the academic year. Before the election, discuss the role of Course Reps and the benefits and explain how students can submit their nomination.

Different types of elections

An in-person election

On the day of the election, double check names of those nominated (that they still want to go for the role) and if anyone else would like to stand for the role.

If contested (more candidates than Course Rep positions), allow each candidate to speak for a couple of minutes about why students should vote for them. Read out any statements submitted in advance.

Ballots can be done on balloting sheets, or run via mentimeter. Each student gets one vote including the candidates.

Count up the votes and inform the candidates and students of who the elected Course Rep(s) is/are. Thank all the students for standing.

If uncontested - a vote doesn't necessarily need to occur but you should check with the group that they are happy for the candidate to take up the role.

An online election

Please review the video from Unitu on the UCLan SU website - Staff hub to understand how to run an election using Unitu.

How to make elections fair

It is in all our interests that our elections are fair, accessible, and includes **all student voice**. So here are some ideas to consider and some recommended actions you can take to progress towards greater equity within the election process. If uncontested - a vote doesn't necessarily need to occur but you should check with the group that they are happy for the candidate to take up the role.

Collecting nominations is a simple activity. It is worth considering how you will do this (if briefly) to ensure that every student has an equal opportunity to stand for election.

Email

You may wish to ask students to email you to put themselves forward. This allows those less vocal in a group-setting a little more ease in nominating. Part of the reason we are moving away from online elections is to remove some of the steps, and "distance", in the process. Students are busy and they may forget, or even give up, whilst you wait for their nomination. Despite it being an easy and fair way of collecting nominations, this is not without its flaws.

In-person

Asking members of the group to put themselves forward in the classroom is an obvious solution. However, we would not recommend doing this as though you may elicit a nomination (due to the collective pressure on the group to have a representative), many students will not nominate themselves in this situation. They may feel that a stronger candidate has already nominated themselves or that they cannot speak up in-front of the whole group.

Other means

Without extending this guide too much, it is up to you how you generate nominations. Other techniques include: asking students to speak to you at the end of a session after introducing the role, or asking them to prepare to put themselves forward on a future date (when the vote is due to take place), or giving them the option to email you or put themselves forward on the vote date.

Whatever you choose to do, please consider that not every member of your group is not immediately comfortable putting themselves forward. Being Course Rep can be an extremely valuable opportunity for students to develop their skills, their career prospects, and themselves. It is important that everyone has the chance to take it on.

If you have any concerns about running an election - then please speak to the Advocacy and Insight Team for support.

Course Rep elections

We will get in touch with the successful reps to introduce ourselves and ensure they are fully trained and supported in their role.

Academic Staff are asked to notify the Schools Operations Manager of any Course Representatives who have been elected. Your School Operations Manager needs the students full name, course name, email address, student number, whether they are full time/part time, undergraduate/postgraduate, their campus and date they were elected as a Course Rep.

The School Operations Manager will then let us know who has been elected on a monthly basis.

But we also want to know about those who stood for election and were not successful. This is because we want to thank them and empower them to get involved in other areas of the Students' Union! It would be a shame to waste their energy!

Thank you so much for getting involved in democracy! By this facilitation you are:

Helping students to understand how important their voice is in their education.

Empowering students to see the strength in partnership.

Supporting students in feeling seen, heard and valued.

Celebrating Reps

We wholeheartedly appreciate students who have decided to spend their free time representing the views of students and we want to ensure that they are recognised for their efforts! Student Representatives are able to have their volunteering logged on their **Higher Education Achievement Record** which forms part of their transcript. At the end of the traditional academic year, we also host Celebration Week, where we celebrate our volunteers too!

This year, we are launching a **rep newsletter** on a monthly basis to update reps, students and university staff on all things representation. As part of this we will be asking for reps, staff and students to shine the light of representatives who have gone above and beyond to create a difference. You can nominate a School President, Course Rep or a member of Student Council by emailing coursereps@uclan.ac.uk

Student wellbeing

If a representative is not engaging with you, or is not acting in a way that meets the expectations defined in the appropriate role description or University regulations, then please contact **Becky** on coursereps@uclan.ac.uk

We will then liaise with the individual students to understand if:

There is a wellbeing concern which has impacted upon their engagement with the role.

They feel they need more training to understand their remit more.

They are receiving the communications sent to them.

They feel supported in carrying out their remit.

There are barriers preventing them from engaging.

And in some cases, if we need to consider the removal of a rep due to significant conduct issues.

Please have patience with them, as volunteer manager I take rep wellbeing seriously and will communicate, where appropriate, on the decision made and any actions that have been agreed moving forward.

How do I support reps?

Be open to feedback:

Make it clear to Academic Reps that you want to hear the views of students.

Continue to liaise with Academic Reps: If you cannot respond to feedback at the time it is given, make sure that you close the feedback loop to ensure Course Representatives feel empowered in creating change.

Advocate the effectiveness of Student Voice: You can encourage students to speak to their Academic Reps and utilise Unitu for giving feedback, praise, raising questions or suggestions, if they have an idea.

Help Academic Representatives to reach students: Academic Reps are not given access to the email data of every student on the Course/School – if asked, please support them by sending an email out on their behalf.

Empathise with School Presidents and Course Reps: They are students who are doing this on a voluntary basis and trying their best to do a good job, whilst juggling their studies and their personal lives.

Give Academic Representatives a platform:

Please provide the opportunity to have 5 minutes at the beginning of the lecture to introduce themselves and discuss Student Voice activities.

Treat Academic Reps as partners:

Treat Reps as equals in discussions so that they feel confident to come forward with feedback.

Recognise their efforts: Academic Reps feeling valued by the course/school team really goes a long way to motivating them. Thank them and let us know at the Students' Union when a Rep has gone above and beyond in their role so we can celebrate them too!

Help Academic Reps close the feedback loop: If a rep provides constructive feedback from their course mates, remember that they can be part of closing the feedback loop. Thank them for bringing it to your attention, do not hold it against them personally and feed back any actions so they can close the feedback loop for the students.

Make Academic Reps feel seen, heard and valued: Students look up to Academic Staff, if you engage with the reps and the process, they will feel validated in their efforts and continue to excel in the role.

Understand the remit of Academic Reps: Please remember that representatives are not there to communicate bad news on behalf of the School, where they ask that you close the feedback loop - please support them in doing so.

Provide information for Academic Reps to explain why things can't change: If you cannot respond to the feedback in the way students have requested, explain why and provide another option for students to consider.

Wellbeing support

If you have any concerns about a representative e.g. they are not engaging with you in the way expected, or they are not acting in a way that meets the expectations defined in their role description or University regulations, then please contact Becky on coursereps@uclan.ac.uk

As Volunteer Manager I take rep wellbeing seriously, we can work together to ensure all reps feel supported and empowered in their role.

Safety & security of students

It is not the responsibility of the rep to get involved with students' personal problems. Encourage reps to signpost the student to someone who is professionally trained to help them. To do otherwise may be detrimental to their safety, security and experience which is a lot of responsibility for a volunteer.

Responsibility of staff

There may be times when you ask reps to relay some news to students on your behalf, please ensure the rep feels comfortable in doing this. Their role is to represent academic student voice on their course, and close the feedback loop on it. They are not a 'bad news bear', nor should they be giving advice that should come from a staff member who will understand the reasoning behind it.

We encourage representatives to understand where their priorities lie. Students own personal wellbeing and academic studies will always come before their volunteering commitments. If students are unsure of anything we are always **available to help** out.

Contact Info

Whilst School Presidents will have their own personal student email accounts, they will also have their School President email addresses after they have been trained.

Arts & Media	Harley Keasey* Andra Pavalache	pres-aam@uclan.ac.uk
Business	Muna Gharti-Magar	pres-bus@uclan.ac.uk
Engineering & Computing	Peace Ekeh* Iain Simposon	pres-eac@uclan.ac.uk
Health, Social Work & Sport	Vacancy Vacancy	pres-hswas@uclan.ac.uk
Law & Policy	Harry Snelson* Tilly Wilson	pres-lap@uclan.ac.uk
Medicine & Dentistry	Khansa Irfan* Aditi Rane	pres-mad@uclan.ac.uk
Nursing & Midwifery	Naomi Oghenevona Okiti	pres-nam@uclan.ac.uk
Pharmacy & Biomedical Sciences	Misbah Patel* Syeda Silma Sobha	pres-pabs@uclan.ac.uk
Psychology & Humanities	Maryam Khan* Anya Mitchell	pres-pah@uclan.ac.uk
Veterinary Medicine	Molly Martin* Georgia Holt	pres-vet@uclan.ac.uk

*Students who sit on a council seat

