



COURSE REP GUIDE

2016/17

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WHAT IS A COURSE REP?

We rely on course reps to be active campaigning members of the Students' Union who work towards the goal of improving the student experience.

You are our ears to the ground, working to resolve local departmental issues such as feedback standards or the facilities available to the students and much more.

Additionally, informing the department about what works well, what the students on your course have enjoyed and what should be built upon in the future is just as useful.



As a course rep your role is to express the collective view of the students on your course and ensure that this view is heard by those in a position to effect change. This may involve lobbying your course leader and head of department for more resources, faster feedback, better timetables, or improved facilities. It may be telling the officers of the Students' Union that the students you represent think that Union and the University should be doing more for them.

On occasion, you may be required to represent a view you do not necessarily agree with, but if it is the view of the students, then it is your responsibility to articulate this to the best of your abilities.

TOP TIP

Email - Collect email addresses from students on your course, to allow you to send them an update of work you have completed to-date and enable you to ask if they are having any problems or to collect thoughts on what is going well.

YOUR STUDENTS' UNION

The Students' Union is a representative body for the students – run by the students, for the students. The Students' Union aims to promote the welfare and equality of the students at Glyndŵr University, and is there to offer support to anyone who has any concerns while they are studying at the University.

As an enrolled Glyndŵr University student, whether you are studying at the Glyndŵr University campus, at a partner institution or on placement as part of your programme of study, you are automatically a member of the Students' Union. If you wish to opt out of membership, please contact the Students' Union.

The Students' Union will play a vital role in your time at Glyndŵr University. As well as offering advice, guidance and information, it also helps and encourages students to run and participate in sports and societies.

The Students' Union is an autonomous, self-governing body. The President and Vice-President are the two full-time sabbatical officers elected into office annually by the student body, with a maximum term of office of two years.

As a student representative, you have the opportunity to engage in the promotion and development of the Students' Union as well as participating towards policy change within the Union, the Institution and nationally through the NUS.

Your point of contact as a course rep is Marc Caldecott, Representation and Democracy Co-ordinator.

CONTACT DETAILS

Representation & Democracy Co-ordinator	Marc Caldecott	Marc.Caldecott@glyndwr.ac.uk	01978 294404
President	Emily Karim	supresident@glyndwr.ac.uk	01978 293225
Vice President	Travis Davies	suvp@glyndwr.ac.uk	01978 293296
Student Adviser	Kim Lloyd	suadvice@glyndwr.ac.uk	01978 294453



Welcome to the Student Rep Handbook! This handbook has everything you need for information and tips on becoming an effective rep. Congratulations on being elected as the representative of your cohort. It is vital that the University receives and acts upon feedback from students in order to ensure that your student experience is the best it can possibly be.

Representation is the core function of the Students' Union. It is the reason why we were formed and why we still exist today. With student fees increasing it is vital that the quality of education you receive is equal to the amount you pay. Student rep feedback will make changes at all levels of the University and you play a vital role in that.

The Students' Union is there to help and support you throughout your journey as a student rep. You will be vital to the running of the Union and your voice is crucial. I look forward to working with you over the next year and wish you all the best in your studies!

Emily Karim
President of Glyndwr University
Students' Union



Congratulations on being elected as a course representative, where you will play a key role in helping the University to gather student feedback. As Deputy Vice-Chancellor with particular responsibility for the quality of our academic provision here at the University, I work closely with the Students' Union to ensure that together we continue to develop student learning opportunities across all courses. Your role as a course rep is vital in this respect. By gathering the views of students you can help influence improvements at course and university level, shaping future developments and ensuring that we offer the best possible opportunities for all students to succeed in their studies.

I am delighted that you have taken on this important role and look forward to meeting you during course rep training.

With best wishes for the year ahead

Dr Claire Taylor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor

YOUR COURSE REP DUTIES INCLUDE:

- Attend induction training and take advantage of further training opportunities.
- Gather opinions and feedback from your peers.
- Listen to what students tell you and present their views in a constructive, clear way - even if you don't agree!
- Ensure that your personal views don't impact on your ability to represent your peers.
- Attend Student Staff Consultative Committee (SSCC) meetings to talk to staff about what's working well, what might need changing and any new ideas you might have relating to your course.
- Pass on any topics you would like to discuss in the meetings to the organiser so they can be added to the agenda (and remember to pass on your apologies if you can't attend, it's good practise to send a replacement too.).
- Communicate with other Course Reps and School Reps to pick up on recurring issues.
- Give feedback! Make sure your fellow students know the outcomes of any issues they asked you to raise.
- Update the Students' Union on any changes that you make.



Important: From time to time students may approach you with sensitive and personal issues. Please do not try to resolve these issues and refer students to Kim Lloyd, Student Adviser at the Students' Union.



THE STUDENTS' UNION IS EXPECTED TO:

- Provide initial training to help you be an effective Course Rep, alongside additional training opportunities throughout the year.
- Organise networking events for you to meet your fellow Course Reps and School Reps.
- Hold events or meetings with Reps throughout the year to ensure lines of communication are maintained between Officers and the University.
- Be on hand to help you out with anything related to your experience as a Course Rep, so feel free to pop in and ask whenever you need it.



THE UNIVERSITY IS EXPECTED TO:

- Provide information about meetings, dates/ times and venues to SSCCs and committees well in advance.
- Provide documentation when relevant, such as agenda and minutes for your meetings (which you have a right to).
- Recommend appropriate members of staff to refer student issues to.
- Consider all feedback presented by Reps.
- Act on feedback where appropriate.



TOP TIP

Flyers / posters -Flyers are a good method of communication to use if there has been a development and you would like the students on your course to know. They are also a good way to advertise your contact details. If you would like to print flyers or posters for notice boards, contact your programme leader who should be able to assist you.

TO DO LIST

Meet with the Representation and Democracy Co-ordinator at the Students' Union. They will be your mentor and support throughout. Usually you will meet them during training.

Have you got the dates for all of the Students Staff Consultative Committee (SSCC) meetings of the year? If you can't attend one, organise replacements early and brief them with oral reports.

Ensure you attend training sessions or visit the Students Union Website for our online training. Training information is on the last page of this guide.

Have access to module feedback, external examiners reports, and NSS data? Your personal tutor/programme leader can provide you with these.

Have access to all of your students, including off-campus, mature, International, home, part-time, distance learners. Also, have a communication method to get through to all of the above through:

- E-mail distribution list
- Space on the departmental notice board for pictures, current issues, contact details and feedback
- Pigeon hole in the department (This will become handy for any anonymous comments, completed questionnaires, or a way for the department to leave papers of interest for you (make sure you publicise this if new at your meetings))
- Internet forum
- Facebook group
- Weekly drop-in sessions
- Updates through dept. societies etc

Examine your NSS Results. Do you think that they accurately represent the issues that your students currently face? What has your department performed well in? And what does it need to improve? You can contact the Representation and Democracy Co-ordination at the Students Union to help you with this.

WHAT IS THE NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY (NSS)

The **NSS** is a high profile annual census of nearly half a million students across the UK. Conducted annually since 2005, it is an established survey and produces useful data to help institutions and students' unions identify areas of success and areas for enhancement.

The NSS is completed by final year students and gives a chance for students to give feedback on their student experience through a scoring method on areas such as module delivery, assessments and assessment feedback etc. The results of this survey go public and are used to determine where the University will sit in the University league tables.

During an SSCC meeting, students will have the opportunity to see the previous year's NSS scores from their course and suggest ways for the course to improve for the future.



WHAT IS AN EXTERNAL EXAMINER REPORT

The external examiner report will:

- Advise the University on whether the academic standards of all of its awards are consistent with the standards of similar awards elsewhere;
- Provide an external evaluation of the effectiveness of academic regulations and an external monitoring of the consistent and fair application of those regulations and associated procedures.



CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE (SSCC)

WHAT IS A STUDENT STAFF CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE?

SSCC meetings are a chance for students to discuss the quality of their learning experience. Meetings are usually held twice a year at the end of semester one and two and you should know the dates and location of the meetings at the beginning of the year. The meetings can take place in many ways such as face to face or on Moodle.

WHAT CAN BE DISCUSSED?

Although there is a set agenda at SSCC meeting, it also gives you the chance to for you to feed back to staff about your course, shape changes for future enhancement of the course and also the University's strategic decision making. You should contact the chair beforehand if you wish to include anything on the agenda.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER AN SSCC?

Minutes of the meetings are normally published two weeks later and are available on Moodle. The course leader or relevant staff members will follow up any issues and will notify student representatives of any outcome or changes. It is then expected that the student representatives will feed these outcomes back to students through various methods discussed earlier in this handbook and will assist the department in any 'you said, we did' campaigns.

WHO CAN ATTEND?

- The meeting will be chaired by a programme leader or principle lecturer within the school. SSCCs must not be chaired by your programme leader.
- Student Representatives on your programme
- All enrolled students on your programme are entitled to attend
- Course and module leaders from the programme(s) covered in any SSCC may attend
- A member of the Students' Union can be invited when necessary

TOP TIP

Drop-in session - Organised well in advance and well-publicised, drop-in sessions are a good way to meet your course mates face-to-face to discuss issues or collect feedback.

TOP TIP

Informally asking students how they are getting along: This is a tried and tested method!

Simply ask students or your course how they are finding things and whether they've had any issues. Make sure to ask lots of students, not just those you know.

SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR AN SSCC

Below each point are some questions you may wish to ask at an SSCC meeting.

1. Feedback/update on actions completed since the previous meeting
2. Review of external examiner reports and responses
3. Review of NSS results and responses from the course/department/University

4. Curriculum

- How relevant is the content to potential further study?
- Is it preparing you for future employment?
- Are the learning outcomes being met?

5. Learning and Resources

- Is there a fair balance between self-study lectures, seminars and lab/workshop sessions?
- Are core texts easily available?
- What teaching methods would you find most useful.
- Are the hand-outs received to a good standard?

6. Assessment and Feedback

- Is enough relevant information given on plagiarism?
- Is there a fair divide between exams and coursework?
- Do you understand the criteria for assessment and methods used?
- What feedback do you receive? Is it prompt, effective and useful?

7. Teaching and Learning

- Should there be more lectures, labs or tutorials?
- Are the size of the seminars and lectures appropriate?
- Is the quality acceptable?
- Do you have enough regular contact with academics?

8. Student Support

- Do students know staff well enough to feel comfortable approaching them?
- Do students feel well supported by their personal tutors?
- Do students regularly meet with their personal tutors?

9. Quality and Standards

- Is evaluation on student feedback acted upon?
- Did you receive any information about what the department or course have done in light of student feedback?

10. Any other Business – It is at this point that programme leaders should leave the room so that students can discuss any other issues.

WHAT ARE SCHOOL REPS?

School Reps are elected by students from within the School to gather the wider views of the student population through liaising with course reps.

- School Reps will become full members of Student Council which decides on Union policy, mandates people to put policies into action and ensures the elected officers are representing students effectively. Student Council also discusses topics raised by students, from political debate down to the smallest areas of University life. It is the most important forum for debate and discussion, and will have a major influence on the direction and development of the University and Students' Union in the coming years.
- School Reps run academic campaigns on issues important to you!
- School Reps are also members of a number of school level committees as student members to provide the student voice at a school level.
- There will be opportunity for you to meet with your School Rep through organised sessions arranged by the Students' Union. For more information please visit: www.wrexhamglyndwrsu.org.uk or email marc.caldecott@glyndwr.ac.uk

TOP TIP

Short speeches at the start and end of lectures: To reach as many students as possible, you could ask your lecturer for five minutes before or after a core lecture to give students information or ask for input or feedback.

GET INVOLVED IN THE SU

From time to time the Students' Union may contact you to support them with campaigns or events. Getting involved with the Union gives you the chance to meet other students while supporting your Union to fight for a better student experience. There are a number of societies that you may be interested in and if you contact us we can support you to find the right society for you.

Whilst we will endeavour to fully support you during your time as a course rep, we understand that things do not always go to plan which may impact on your responsibilities. If you are unable to continue to be a course rep please let the Students' Union know so that we are able to find a replacement.

TRAINING DATES

Wrexham

Monday 17th October: 3pm-5pm
(C118)

Tuesday 18th October: 9am - 11am
(B34)

Wednesday 19th October:
1pm-3pm (K107)

Thursday 20th October: 1pm-3pm
(K107)

Thursday 20th October: 6pm-8pm
(C11)

Monday 31st October: 1pm-3pm
(C118)

Tuesday 1st November: 3pm-5pm
(K117)

Wednesday 2nd November:
1pm-3pm (K108)

Thursday 3rd November:
3pm-5pm (K117)

Friday 4th November: 10am-12pm
(C112)

Monday 5th December: 3pm-5pm
(C118)

Tuesday 6th December: 3pm-5pm
(K117)

Wednesday 7th December:
3pm-5pm (K117)

Thursday 8th December: 3pm-5pm
(K117)

Friday 9th December: 1pm-3pm
(K109)

Regent Street

Monday 24th October: 12pm-2pm
(R21)

Northop

Monday 31st October: 10am-12pm
(FM LR2)

London

Tuesday 8th November:
2.30pm-4.30pm (120)

Wednesday 9th November:
2.30pm-4.30pm (120)

Training sessions for partner colleges will be made available - please contact the Students' Union of more information.

Alternatively, please visit our website for online training options.

Course reps (excluding partners) must visit the course rep section on our website, and sign on to which session they are going to attend.