

Programme Representatives Guidance Handbook for University Staff

Academic Year 2024/25

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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 importance of elections and our guidelines for carrying them out, training that we offer Reps as well as the support available to you as Staff from the Union.

Programme Rep Elections will be held at the start of the new academic year across every programme of study, level of study, and year of study to recruit Programme Reps for the 2024/25 Academic Year.

Programme Representatives will continue to play an incredibly important role this year in creating a positive impact on their courses and providing rich feedback about the experience of studying at City. We want our Reps to feel empowered, supported, and able to improve their academic experience as they fulfil their roles. We also want them to develop their skills as representatives throughout the year to enable them to thrive personally, socially and professionally.

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.

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

Representation Team
City St George's Students' Union

1. 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:

- Be the key representative link between students on their course and programme academic/professional services staff.
- Represent the academic and non-academic interests of students on their programme or course.
- Attend and actively contribute to committees and meetings, such as the Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC), Student Experience Committee (SEC) and other relevant meetings.
- Proactively engage with students at a course level and collate any feedback relating to their experience.
- Present student feedback at relevant meetings in a constructive and professional way.
- Communicate key information and outcomes back to the students on your course.
- Work closely with School Assembly Members and SU Deputy President to further improve the learning experience of students.
- Attend training sessions run by City SU.
- Be a point of signposting information for students on their programme.
- Communicate regularly with the SU Representation Team on what they're working on and where they need additional support.
- Support the programme/department in promoting the module evaluations, NSS/PTES/PRES and other feedback systems to their cohort.
- Regularly engage with the GetHeard@City platform, including responding to students, escalating posts to staff, and moderating posts on their Board.

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

We inform Reps 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, The Counselling, Mental Health and Accessibility Service and the Union's Advice Service.

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

2. Role of Staff in the Programme Representative System

To facilitate a successful system, both the University and Union have different roles to play.

University 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'.
- Providing details of all elected representatives, including names and contact details, to the Students' Union by the agreed date: **Thursday 24th October, 3pm.**

- Ensuring appropriate committees are in place and elected Programme Representatives are invited with enough notice.
- Assisting representatives in contacting the student body so that they may request information from students on issues relating to the University and the student experience and assisting them in disseminating information to the wider student body.
- 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. It is encouraged to send a copy of meeting minutes to all Reps including those who may not have attended within a week of the meeting taking place.
- Encouraging representatives to participate in meetings and welcoming feedback.
- Ensuring that the views of Programme Representatives are recorded in a clear format in the minutes, and are reported and acted on as necessary, and feedback and progress of actions is offered.
- 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:

- In partnership with the University, maintaining oversight for and development of arrangements for student representation.
- 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.
- Providing on-going support and guidance to Programme Representatives.
- Organising forums and events for Representatives to take part in.
- Analysing meeting minutes to develop the termly Student Voice Report.
- Providing a report to the Student Experience Committees (SEC) each term.
- Reporting annually to the University on the experience of Programme Representatives and to identify any issues of concern.
- Providing our incentives and rewards scheme to recognise Reps throughout the year.

The above responsibilities are applicable whether teaching and meetings are held online or in person. For further information on principles and good practice guidelines on City's representation systems, please refer to the '[Code of Practice for Student Representation](#)' on City StaffHub.

3. Elections Guidance for 2024-25

Elections for Programme Representatives in the Academic Year 2024-25 is set to take place in class. Subject to course arrangements, Programme Representative elections may run online.

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. In the event where there is low engagement with Programme Rep elections, the Students' Union must be notified so that we can attend the class where necessary and conduct the Election.

With this guide, you have been given resources to support the delivery of elections:

- **Recruitment slides** to advertise Programme Representative Elections to students during core module course classes as agreed between Programme delivery staff.
- **Sample nomination form** for students to submit their nominations for Programme Reps on their course. Nomination forms can be provided to students in a printed version or in an online version.
- **Sample ballot papers** for students to place their votes for Programme Rep nominees on their course. Once nominations are collected, ballot papers can be provided to students in a printed version or in an online version.
- **Programme Rep Live Spreadsheet** to be completed in full with required details of elected Programme Representatives and returned to the Students' Union by **Thursday 24th October, 3pm**. This is to be shared with programme staff within your School for staff to populate details in one master copy.
- **A list of returning Reps** to ensure that you adjust the number of positions available.

How many Representatives do I need to elect?

The ratio we advise for each Programme is 1 Representative for each 30 students, with a minimum of 2 Representatives per cohort. This is to ensure 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 to elect for your course:

Cohort size	Reps
1 - 60	2
61 – 90	3
91 – 120	4
121 – 150	5
151 – 180	6
181+	7+ (additional 1 Rep per 30 students)

We advise that you keep as close to this ratio as you can, although we understand that it may not be possible, and you may end up with greater or fewer Reps than suggested. In cases where your ratio does not comply with this ratio, you are advised to provide details of plans for an alternative feedback mechanism on the spreadsheet.

In cases where Rep positions are vacant, e.g., a cohort of 160 students only has 4 Reps elected in Term 1, if there is interest in the 2 remaining positions, they will have to be elected in Term 2 by-elections. We advise that you avoid appointing Reps mid-way through the term as it means they won't have the opportunity to be trained. We offer training at the start of Terms 1 and 2 and therefore ask that Reps are only recruited in the election windows prior to that.

When to run an election?

We ask that elections are held at the start of Term 1 teaching in the course and the deadline for completed elections is **Thursday 24th October, 3pm**. This is so that you have Representatives in place for your first meetings and so that they can be invited to and attend the training.

There is no set structure to the two and a half weeks of Rep Recruitment. Nominations and elections can occur simultaneously, or you can have a week of nominations followed by a week of elections – whichever works best for your cohort. The only set deadline is that of the end of the election period.

Monday 30th September October to Wednesday 24th October – Rep Recruitment window
3pm Wednesday 25th October – all details of Reps to be submitted to the SU
Monday 28th October to Friday 4th November – Rep Induction Training

For courses with a January intake, there will be 3 weeks allocated to electing and training Reps (including for courses with previously vacant positions). Dates will be confirmed closer to the time.

How to run a fair and democratic election

For elections to be democratic, students must be able to put themselves forward for the role. It is imperative that elections are held every year, even if there is a returning representative running for a second time.

When running the election, you can elect Representatives in any of the following nomination and election methods on the next page. Please ensure students are briefed on what the role of a Programme Rep is during the nomination period using the briefing slides provided and inform them of the process elections will take for their programme including any key deadlines.

How not to run an election

We want our elections to be democratic, fair and successful, as such we want to avoid situations that do not reflect this.

We are aware that these may have taken place in previous academic years and hope to avoid them this year.

For example, we advise against:

- ë Asking the previous Reps to resume their role without consultation from the cohort (excluding those who already indicated they will be continuing via the Rep Rollover form).
- ë Appointing Reps through the submission of an emailed 'application statement' with no democratic vote.
- ë Appointing all students that put themselves forward without any election, especially if this is above the guided ratio we have provided.

Nomination Methods		
In-person	Email	MS Forms
<p>This method is the Union's preferred choice for in-person nominating. Students can come to the front of the room and make a 1–2-minute speech on why they would like to stand to be Rep.</p> <p>Please use this live opportunity to show the briefing slide provided in the Programme Rep recruitment resource pack before inviting students to make speeches.</p> <p><i>✓ This tends to work better in smaller-medium sized groups.</i></p>	<p>Students email in their nomination form including a paragraph on why they would like to stand to be Rep. Once the deadline is reached, you can email all students in the cohort information about the candidates and copies of their paragraphs.</p> <p><i>✓ This tends to work better in medium-large sized groups.</i></p>	<p>This method is the Union's preferred choice for online nominating. You can set up an MS Forms on Microsoft 365 to collect and view nominations online. Set up the form to allow students to enter their details and write a paragraph on why they would like to stand to be Rep. You can use this nomination template via MS Forms and access the results of all entries.</p> <p><i>✓ This tends to work better in medium-large sized groups.</i></p>

Voting methods		
Show of hands	Email	Choice/MS Forms
<p>In this method, you can ask the class to vote for the candidates who have nominated themselves via raising their hands. Those with the most votes are elected.</p> <p>Remember to send reminders that voting will take place in class to ensure maximum attendance.</p> <p><i>This method works well with:</i></p> <p><i>✓ In person nomination</i></p>	<p>You can distribute the ballot papers with candidate names in a printed form during class. Students can then complete their votes and deposit these papers with you at the front. Alternatively, students can complete their votes by returning the ballot form via email by the given deadline. Those with the most votes are elected.</p> <p><i>This method works well with:</i></p> <p><i>✓ In person nomination</i></p>	<p>You can set up an election on the course's Moodle page via Choice. Add in all the different candidates and include information about their reasons for standing below, allowing for as many responses as there are positions available. Those with the most votes are elected. Alternatively, you can use the same template on MS Forms and access results online.</p> <p><i>This method works well with:</i></p> <p><i>✓ In person nomination</i></p>

✓ *Email nomination*
✓ *MS Forms nomination*

✓ *Email nomination*
✓ *MS Forms nomination*

4. Programme Representative Code of Conduct

Programme Representatives are expected to follow a 'Code of Conduct' as they fulfil their roles. Once Programme Reps have been elected, Reps are expected to read and sign the Code of Conduct, and all signed copies should be kept on course record for the year. 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 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 if this is required.

The outline of the procedure is as follows:

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 2024-25 Academic Year and are applicable to both online and in person teaching and meetings.

The Rep Code of Conduct can be accessed via our Programme Rep Resource Hub on the Students' Union website.

5. Support Offered by the Students' Union

The Students' Union wants Representatives to have all year-round support to enable them to carry out their roles. We run/provide:

Programme Representative Events

The Students' Union will be expanding networking and social events for Programme Reps this year to meet other Reps and celebrate their roles. Reps can also speak to staff about their role and the issues, concerns or feedback that their cohort have raised throughout the academic year; this includes our Academic Impact Awards at the end of the year/term Rep socials.

Assembly Members

Assembly Members provide important support for Programme Reps and can be contacted by Reps for help and advice on issues and feedback in their School and programme. Reps and Assembly Members will have the opportunity to troubleshoot and collaborate at the termly Student Leaders Forums which will be facilitated by the SU. Assembly Members 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 and to SU Assembly meetings.

Reward and Recognition

We will continue to provide incentives and recognition for Representatives this year. These will include but not be limited to:

- Programme Rep Goody Bags
- A regular Rep Newsletter
- Programme Rep of the month prize
- An end of year certificate
- Personalised hoodies for purchase
- Training and development
- Paid research opportunities
- Vouchers for encouraging and participating in surveys.

6. Common Queries from Representatives

Academic Misconduct, Extenuating Circumstances and Academic Advice

Our Union Advice Service offers independent academic advice for all students including on academic misconduct and extenuating circumstances and more. More information can be found on www.citystudents.co.uk/advice.

SU Assembly

The SU has a 50-members Assembly structure: 32 students are elected ahead of the academic year and 12 students are appointed at the beginning of the year where elected members are proportionate to each School. The Assembly is elected and appointed to set the political direction of the Union for the year and will work closely with other student leaders to ensure that the Union priorities are being progressed and that student feedback is at the centre of Assembly meetings. This will involve Assembly Members regularly liaising with Programme Representatives from their Schools as well as with Academic Societies.

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.

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 Reps 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. Key Contacts and Support for You

We hope that following the guidance document and support we are giving this year should ensure a successful election. If you have any queries or if there is anything you are unclear of with the running of your election, please email Angelo.Weekes.2@city.ac.uk to let us know. If your query is School specific, it is advised that you contact the Quality Team within your School.

We also have a dedicated 'Programme Rep Resource Hub' on our website, where you can access any necessary documents, including this booklet. This page will be updated with additional resources including the digital Programme Rep Handbook after training takes place.

To contact the SU Officer contact for your School, please see below:

<p>Ayla Hamzayeva (President) SUPresident@city.ac.uk ayla.hamzayeva.2@city.ac.uk</p> <p>Joe Kenwright Deputy President (Tooting - Education) dpreseducation@su.sgul.ac.uk jkenwrig@sgul.ac.uk</p>	<p>School of Health & Psychological Sciences</p>
<p>Ashton Shepherd (Deputy President) ashton.shepherd.4@city.ac.uk</p>	<p>School of Policy & Global Affairs School of Communication & Creativity</p>
<p>Nasir Mohammed (Deputy President) nasir.mohammed.2@city.ac.uk</p>	<p>Bayes Business School The City Law School School of Science & Technology</p>

Thank you for your continued support