



# School Rep Handbook

2023/2024

**Arts**  
Students'  
Union

[arts-su.com](https://arts-su.com)

# Welcome!

## **We're so thrilled to have you on board as a School Rep.**

**Whether you're a new School Rep or returning for another year, thank you for devoting time and energy to represent students at the University of the Arts, London.**

You're part of a community of School Representatives across all UAL Colleges (CCW, CSM, LCC, LCF). In your role, you'll work with school/department staff, SU Staff, Course Reps, and Elected Officers to help make student experience at UAL the best it can be.

We in the Representation & Democracy Team (Rep & Dem for short!) are here to support you. We've created this handbook so that you can find all the information about being a School Rep in one place.

We hope that you can easily find what you're looking for here, but if you still have questions or worries about being a School Rep, please don't hesitate to contact us at [schoolreps@su.arts.ac.uk](mailto:schoolreps@su.arts.ac.uk).

Best wishes,  
Arts SU Representation & Democracy Team





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# Your Role

**As a School Rep, you represent students across all of the courses within your school/cluster. Your role is vital to ensure that students' views and feedback are part of decision-making processes at the school level.**

You'll help influence positive change by gathering feedback from students, attending meetings, raising feedback and suggesting actions. By the end of your term, you'll have developed useful skills while improving the academic experience for current and future students.

There are 24 School Rep positions, with 2 from each school/cluster and 6 from each college.

The role is flexible and fits around your studies with no prior experience necessary. Our Arts SU staff team will provide you with all the relevant training and support you need.

## What's the difference between a Course Rep and a School Rep?

**A Course Rep represents students at course level.**

Once recruited, Course Reps gather feedback from peers on their course and represent students at Course Committee Meetings. They also attend Student & Dean Forums and ad-hoc meetings with key UAL staff throughout the year. Arts SU recommends each course to have at least two Course Reps.

There are over 1000 Course Reps at UAL!

# School Rep Expectations

- Attend training sessions held by Arts SU.
  - Introduce yourself to students, UAL staff and Course Reps – everyone should know who you are and be able to approach you!
  - Gather a balance of positive and negative feedback about the experiences of students in your school/cluster.
  - Attend meetings, including Boards of Study, Student & Dean Forums and College Officer Meetings, to gather information and raise feedback.
  - Report back on actions or outcomes of feedback to the students you represent, as well as to the Students' Union.
  - Where appropriate, signpost students to relevant staff or services when an issue may be more personal to the individual, or the query is not feedback related.
- **Inclusivity** – you're representing the thoughts and feelings of *all* students in your school/cluster. Do your best to ensure student feedback is shared and valued.
  - **Communication** – you'll be in regular communication with students, Course Reps, university staff and Arts SU.
  - **Collaboration** – share ideas with reps, staff and Arts SU to improve the student experience.

## In return, the SU will:

Provide training and resources to professionally develop and support you in your role.

Be a source of support and advice where needed.

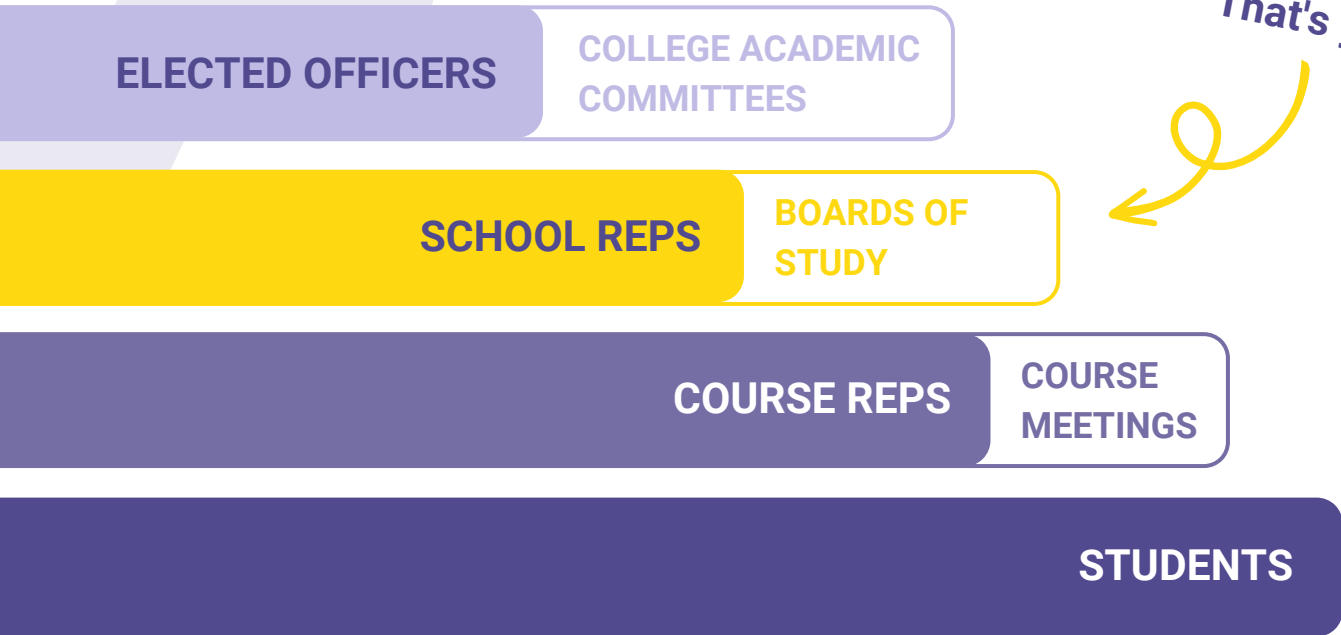
Provide opportunities to build a social and creative network with other reps.

Give you adequate notice of Students' Union organised meetings we'd like you to attend.

Keep you in the loop with regular newsletters throughout the academic year.

Ensure your contribution to the academic experience is recognised.

# How do School Reps fit in?



**As a School Rep, you're part of a larger system of representation at Arts SU and UAL.**

The chart above shows the different levels of representation and the main meetings they attend to raise feedback with UAL staff.

At the bottom of the chart are students, who are the base of the representative structure. Students raise feedback to their Course Reps, who share students' ideas or concerns at Course Committee Meetings. Course Reps then share their feedback with School Reps, who take their thoughts to Board of Study. Finally, School Reps share feedback with Elected Officers, who raise issues at the College Academic Committees.

The feedback structure is not always linear. For example, sometimes Course Reps contact Elected Officers directly, but it helps to visualise the different layers of representation.

Arts SU will organise a number of opportunities throughout the year for Course Reps, School Reps and elected officers to meet and socialise with each other.

# School Rep Training

**Arts SU provides group trainings to equip you with the knowledge and skills needed for the role.**

Training typically takes place before the end of Summer Term and at the beginning of the following Autumn Term. Additional optional training modules will also be provided during the academic year.

## What's covered:

### **Role and Responsibilities:**

Key aspects of the School Rep role

### **Collecting feedback:**

How to gather feedback from students

### **How and when to share feedback:**

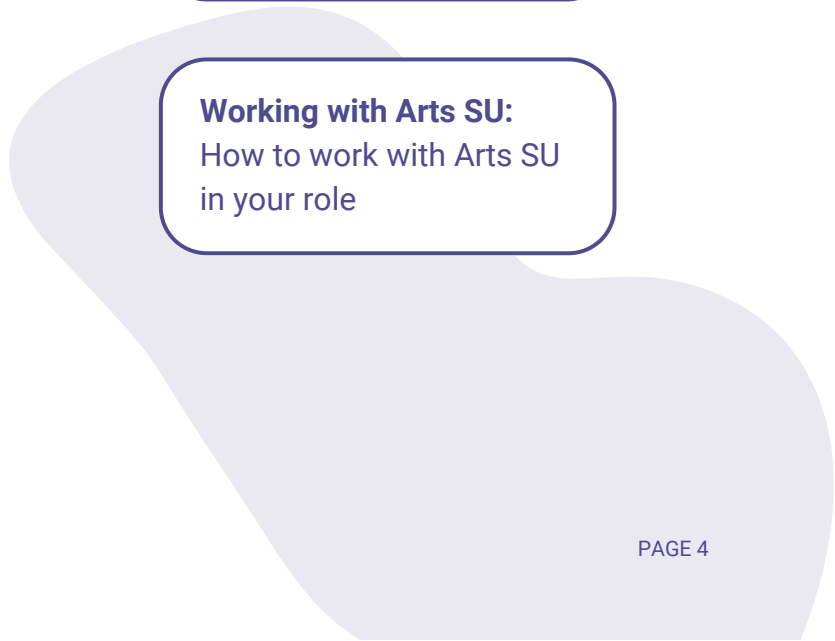
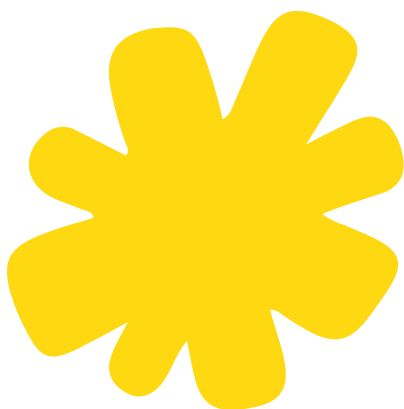
Where, when and how to feedback to staff and Elected Officers

### **Collaborating with other Reps:**

How to work with fellow reps in your role

### **Working with Arts SU:**

How to work with Arts SU in your role



# The Feedback Loop

The feedback loop is the flow of feedback from students, to reps, to staff, and finally, back to students.

Closing the feedback loop (by sharing the results of feedback back to students) is core to your role. Carrying out all the steps ensures that students' thoughts and feelings are valued, and reps are held accountable.

1

## Speak to students

Speak to students in your school/cluster and identify feedback they have about the course, school or University.

2

## Raise feedback with staff

Share feedback with the most relevant staff member. Include: what's working well, where there are issues and maybe even suggest solutions to resolve them.

3

## Feedback to students

Share the outcomes of your discussions with staff back to the students. This includes instances when changes are still being considered or are not as easy to implement as first thought.

It is crucial if School Reps are to be seen as effective that students know who you are and what you can achieve.

Suggested solutions can often focus on a positive outcome and may include ideas not considered by staff.



# Gathering Feedback

**Whether a School Rep or Course Rep, in order to effectively represent your peers, you'll need to gather feedback from them.**

There's no one right way to collect feedback, so test out a few different things and see what works for you.

## Suggestions

Ask lecturers or course admin if they're able to share an email with students on your behalf, including how they can contact you.

Create and circulate surveys/polls using Google Forms or Microsoft Forms.

Ask lecturers for five minutes at the beginning/end of class to speak to students about their experiences.

Let students know a convenient time and place when you're available for a chat.

Create a WhatsApp group or Teams chat to stay in touch with other Reps.

Let students know when you have meetings coming up which you can take their feedback to.

# What should I be gathering feedback on?

If you are looking for conversation starters, or areas to gather feedback on, think about:

## School-Level

- Have you felt welcome in your school/department building(s)?
- Have there been opportunities for cross-course collaboration?
- Are the School/Department structures and processes clear to you? How could they be improved?
- Do you know who your Dean is?
- If you could give your Dean feedback, what would you say?
- Do you feel a sense of community in your school/department? Why/why not?
- What kind of school/department-wide events would you like to see?

## Teaching / Learning & Assessment

- Have you encountered anything you didn't anticipate?
- Are there any changes you think should be made to enable you to enjoy or get more out of your course?
- How do the expectations of students, the learning outcomes and course content match-up?
- What do you think of the teaching quality on your course?
- Are the learning outcomes for assessment clear and understood?
- Do tutors provide you with timely feedback on your work?
- Do you find this feedback useful?

## Course Organization and Management

- Does your school/programme share information on how they respond to student feedback?
- Have you had any problems with your timetable?
- Is there clear communication between students and staff when changes are made?
- Is information relating to extensions and extenuating circumstances easy to find?
- Are course texts and related resources readily available?
- What is your experience of using Blackboard and Moodle?
- Are there any changes you think should be made to enable you to enjoy or get more out of your course?

## Learning Resources / Student Experience

- Do you have access to resources (books, materials, computers, workshops, software) that you need?
- Are any additional course costs clearly shared in advance and explained?
- What is your experience of using Blackboard and Moodle?
- Are the University's support services useful?
- Do students know how to access student support services?

**You're the expert** - what do you or other students think is going well? What could be improved? Is there anything which you find frustrating, or think could be done in another way?

# Meetings

As a representative of students in your school/cluster, you should make every effort to attend the meetings outlined below. If you have a conflict and cannot attend, please let a member of the Rep & Dem Team know.

## Board of Studies

**Function:** These meetings focus on the academic policy of the School. They are part of a system of University committee meetings ensuring the standards and quality of courses (see chart below). Attendees identify academic and organisational issues to bring to the College Academic Committee meetings.

**Frequency:** 3 times a year or once per term

**Organised by:** UAL Quality Teams

**Attended by:** School Dean, Associate Deans, Quality Teams, and School Reps

**School Rep role:** Raise and help to address any feedback affecting course reps and students within their school/cluster.

## UAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

COLLEGE ACADEMIC COMMITTEES

COLLEGE OFFICERS

BOARDS OF STUDY

SCHOOL REPS

COURSE COMMITTEES

COURSE REPS

# Meetings

## College Officer Meetings

**Function:** bring together all School Reps from the same College with their College Officer to connect and co-create ways to improve student experience at the school level.

**Frequency:** 3 - 6 times per year, or up to 2 times per term

**Organised by:** Arts SU

**Attended by:** School Reps, College Officers, EQCs

**School Rep Role:** Share any successes and challenges within role, hear updates from College Officer, brainstorm ways to address challenges.

## Student & Dean Forums (SDFs)

**Function:** bring Reps and school/cluster Dean together to discuss issues affecting their course and academic experience.

**Frequency:** Twice a year. Once per Autumn and once per Spring Term.

**Organised by:** Arts SU in collaboration with School Dean

**Attended by:** School Deans, School Reps, Course Reps, College Officers, EQCs, and occasionally other UAL staff (e.g. staff from the Careers office)

**School Rep Role:** Listen to Course Rep feedback and note any trends to bring to Board of Study.

# What School Reps don't do

**It's important to look after your wellbeing and establish clear boundaries when undertaking the role of School Rep.**

You're **not** expected to:

- get involved with students' individual problems, academic difficulties or individual complaints. This includes allegations of harassment, discrimination, or victimisation that arise from personal disputes between students and staff or other students.
- advise on formal procedures including extensions, extenuating circumstances, academic misconduct, academic appeals and individual complaints or disciplinary procedures.
- respond to financial and funding queries, including student finance and debt.
- respond to health issues, whether related to housing, employment, immigration or wellbeing.

Issues like these require expertise and in-depth knowledge in order to ensure the most appropriate advice and guidance can be provided.

**If a student brings any of the above issues to your attention, please refer them to the Arts SU Advice Service, Student Services or other appropriate services as required (contact details can be found near the end of this handbook.)**

# Support

**It's essential that you know how to access support if and when you need it.**

This is in many ways why Arts SU exists. We are a registered charity, independent from UAL and supported by a staff team working purely for the benefit of its students. Your needs and interests are also represented by our 6 Elected Officers.

**Examples of things that School Reps typically might seek support with include:**

- Breakdown of communication between representatives and staff
- Feeling overwhelmed by student feedback and/or complaints
- Confusion about how to raise feedback with staff
- Worries about how the role might be impacting your studies
- Lack of engagement or feedback from students
- Uncertainty or anxiety about how to deal with a particular issue

**If you're experiencing a problem that isn't listed here, we want to hear from you.**

## Who do I contact if I need support?

### Representation and Democracy Team

[schoolreps@su.arts.ac.uk](mailto:schoolreps@su.arts.ac.uk)

We can support and advise on any aspects of the role involving the collection and sharing of feedback.

Examples can include: breakdown in communication with other reps, students and/or staff.

### Arts SU Advice Service

[advice@su.arts.ac.uk](mailto:advice@su.arts.ac.uk)

[www.arts-su.com/advice](http://www.arts-su.com/advice)

The Advice Team supports students with difficulties of a more individual nature. The team provides advice on academic and housing issues and can link students to a range of university student services.

Examples can include: if you need to signpost a student for assistance with an appeal or complaint. They can also assist with formal group complaints.

# Tips for being an effective School Rep

## **Don't feel you have to wait until Boards of Study**

Raising feedback at the earliest opportunity either with staff in your school/cluster or the Students' Union can help resolve issues earlier.

## **Mix-up the way you ask for feedback**

Whether its social media, emails or just talking to students before and after lectures, there are loads of ways to gather feedback. Find at least two ways that work for both you and those you represent.

## **Work with your fellow reps**

Meeting and talking with other School Reps or Course Reps is a great way of getting feedback from a larger number of students. You can also compare notes to get an understanding of the issues and solutions needed.

## **Tell us about your successes**

We know many reps work hard to influence positive change, so let us know what you're up to! We love a share wins with our members.

## **Attend training and seek support when needed**

Don't be afraid to ask for help where needed, and if unsure of who to speak to, email [schoolreps@su.arts.ac.uk](mailto:schoolreps@su.arts.ac.uk).

# Arts SU Elections

**Arts SU uses elections to decide who represents students. Nominations open in early January with elections held in March each year for the following academic year.**

## Why should students vote in SU Elections?

Elections are about deciding who will represent and make decision on behalf of students in the coming year. Even if they don't realise it, every student has a vested interest in the outcomes of the elections, because our Elected Officers will represent them on a variety of issues covering the student experience.

The question is, why wouldn't you vote!

For more information visit:  
[www.arts-su.com/elections](http://www.arts-su.com/elections)

### Elected Officer Roles

These full-time paid roles take place outside of studies, either during a sabbatical year or soon after graduating. They are collectively responsible for promoting and defending the rights of students, campaigning on issues, and promoting involvement in Union activities.

### School Rep Roles

If you enjoy your time as a School Rep, you can stand again for another term. Or, you can help identify other students to stand for election.

### Delegates

Delegates attend the National Union of Students (NUS) Conferences as a representative of UAL students. Delegates receive training and the SU covers their travel, food, and accommodation.



# Useful Contacts

## Arts SU Elected Officers

[www.arts-su.com/yourvoice/officers](http://www.arts-su.com/yourvoice/officers)

**Camberwell, Chelsea and Wimbledon Officer** ccwofficer@su.arts.ac.uk

**Central Saint Martins Officer** csmofficer@su.arts.ac.uk

**London College of Communication Officer** lccofficer@su.arts.ac.uk

**London College of Fashion Officer** lcfofficer@su.arts.ac.uk

**Community Officer** communityofficer@su.arts.ac.uk

**Union Affairs Officer** unionaffairs@su.arts.ac.uk

## Representation and Democracy Team

[www.arts-su.com/yourvoice](http://www.arts-su.com/yourvoice)

**Course Rep Queries** coursesreps@su.arts.ac.uk

**School Rep Queries** schoolreps@su.arts.ac.uk

## Student Communities Team

[www.arts-su.com/yourcommunities](http://www.arts-su.com/yourcommunities)

**Sports** sports@su.arts.ac.uk

**Societies** societies@su.arts.ac.uk

**Arts Active Programme** artsactive@su.arts.ac.uk

## Arts SU Advice Service

[www.arts-su.com/advice](http://www.arts-su.com/advice)

**Contact an Advisor** advice@su.arts.ac.uk

**Companion Scheme** companionscheme@su.arts.ac.uk

For free, confidential and impartial advice on academic (including university policies and procedures) or housing and accommodation matters.

## University Support Services

[www.arts.ac.uk/students/student-services](http://www.arts.ac.uk/students/student-services)

**General Queries** student.services@su.arts.ac.uk

**Health and Wellbeing Advice** studenthealth@arts.ac.uk

**Counselling Service** counselling@arts.ac.uk

**Disability Service** disability@arts.ac.uk

For advice and support on various aspects of student life including money, personal issues, stress, anxiety and mental health concerns and queries related to disability.

# Key Terms

## Colleges/Institutes/Programmes

- **CCW:** Chelsea, Camberwell, & Wimbledon
- **CSM:** Central Saint Martens
- **LCC:** London College of Communications
- **LCF:** London College of Fashion
- **CCI:** Creative Computing Institute
- **FTTI:** Fashion Textiles and Technology Institute
- **FAD:** Foundation Diploma

## Meetings

- **SDF:** Student & Dean Forum
- **COM:** College Officer Meeting
- **BoS:** Board of Study
- **AMM:** Annual Members Meeting
- **CAC:** College Academic Committee
- **Minutes:** the notes taken at meetings
- **Chair:** the person who facilitates the meeting

## General

- **PD:** Professional Development
- **PG:** Post-Graduate
- **UG:** Undergraduate
- **NUS:** National Union of Students
- **NSS:** National Student Survey
- **EC:** Extenuating Circumstance
- **CL:** Course Leader
- **EDI:** Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
- **HPL:** Hourly paid lecturer
- **KPI:** Key Performance Indicator



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