

School Rep Handbook

2022/2023

Arts
Students'
Union

arts-su.com

Welcome!

We are so thrilled to have you on board as a School Rep.

Whether you are just starting out as a representative or returning for another year, we would like to say a huge thank you for giving your time and energy to make sure the voices of students are listened to at the University of the Arts London (UAL).

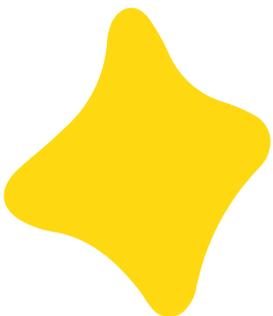
You will be joining a community of 24 School Representatives across all UAL Colleges as the voice for students. You will work with your school/department, Course Reps and Elected Officers to help make your education and experience at UAL the best it can be. We have created this handbook so that you can find all the information about being a School Rep in one place.

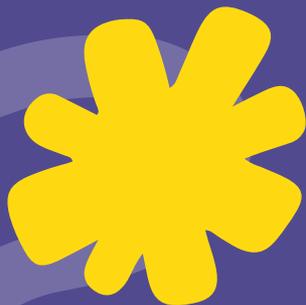
We hope that you can quickly and easily find what you're looking for here, but if you still have questions or worries about being a School Rep, please don't hesitate to contact us.

At the SU we have a whole team dedicated to working with you all on student representation, and you can drop us an email at schoolreps@su.arts.ac.uk. We'd love to talk with you.

Best wishes,

Representation & Democracy Team and your 2022/23
Elected Officer Team





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Your Role

As a School Rep you will volunteer your time to speak on behalf of other students. Your role is vital to ensure that students views and feedback are part of decision-making processes with your school/department, and across the University.

By working with school/department staff and other elected representatives to raise feedback and put actions into place, you can help to influence positive change that will improve the academic experience for both current and future students!

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

It is very much a collaborative role, and you will build positive relationships with fellow School Reps, Course Reps, staff and students as well as develop useful skills.

Expectations

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 opportunity 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.

- Attend training sessions held by the Students' Union.
- Introduce yourself to students, teaching 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/department.
- Attend Boards of Studies and Student & Dean Forums to present feedback to fellow reps and staff as well as raise feedback as necessary to staff.
- Report back on actions or outcomes of feedback to the students you represent in your department, as well as the Students' Union.
- Where appropriate signpost students to relevant staff or services where an issue may be more personal to the individual, or the query is not feedback related.

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. Understanding what you're not expected to do as a School Rep is part of this.

- You are not expected to get involved with students' personal problems, academic difficulties or individual complaints. This includes: Personal disputes between students and academic staff or individual students, including allegations of harassment, discrimination or victimisation.
- Formal procedures including extensions, extenuating circumstances, academic misconduct, academic appeals and individual complaints or disciplinary procedures.
- Financial and funding queries, including student finance and debt.
- Health issues, whether related to housing, employment, immigration or wellbeing.
- Issues like these require a different kind of 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).



School Rep Training

What is covered:

Role and Responsibilities:

Key aspects of the School Rep role

Collecting feedback:

How to collect feedback from students

How and when to share feedback:

Where, when and how to feedback to staff

Working with Arts SU:

How to work with Arts SU in your role

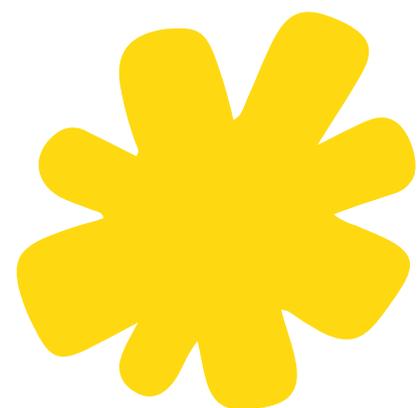
Collaborating with other Reps:

How to work with fellow reps in your role

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. The introductory summer training covers an overview of Arts SU, the expectations of the role, and an opportunity to meet and begin working with the other School Reps. The autumn training delves deeper into how you will work as a School Rep, covering how to gather feedback, the structures and processes of UAL, and opportunities to meet key staff from the university.

Additionally, the Arts SU will provide a wider range of optional online training modules throughout the year, to enable School Reps to enhance their knowledge and skills in specific areas. More information about these modules will be available at a later date.



How do School Reps fit in?

As a School Rep, you are one of many groups of students at Arts SU and UAL who help gather feedback and ideas between students.

This pyramid allows feedback and ideas to move swiftly between the different levels. School reps help to give feedback on the views of Course Reps to your school/department and the Students' Union via their College Officers.

These levels are supported by Course Meetings (attended by course reps), Boards of Study (attended by school reps) and College Academic Committees (attended by College Officers) which each feed into each other and ensure feedback is raised and dealt with where most relevant.

Arts SU will organise a number of opportunities through the year for Course Reps, School Reps and college officers to meet and socialise with each other to share feedback and develop ideas on how to improve the academic experience at UAL.

ELECTED OFFICERS

**COLLEGE ACADEMIC
COMMITTEES**

SCHOOL REPS

**BOARDS OF
STUDY**

COURSE REPS

**COURSE
MEETINGS**

STUDENTS

What is a Course Rep?

A Course Rep is someone who volunteers their time to speak on behalf of students at course level. Similarly, to School Reps, the role is flexible and fits around their studies with no prior experience being necessary.

Once recruited, Course Reps gather feedback from peers on their course and share this at course level as well as representing students on their course once/twice a term at Course Committee Meetings.

They also attend Student & Dean Forums and ad-hoc meetings with key staff from their school/department throughout the year. Arts SU recommends each course to have at least two Course Reps.

The Feedback Loop

The feedback loop is a simple way of fulfilling the role of School Rep and ensures that feedback is raised, acted upon and seen by students.

Closing the feedback loop is core to your role. Carrying out all the steps ensures that the thoughts and feelings of students are being responded to and valued.



Gathering Feedback

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

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

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

Create and circulate surveys/polls using Google Forms or Survey Monkey

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

Suggestions

Let students know a convenient time and place when you're available for a chat, this could be when you plan to be in the library or grabbing lunch

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

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

What should I be giving feedback on?

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

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

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

- 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?

Boards of Study Meetings

Frequency:

3 to 6 times a year
or 1 to 2 times per term

School Boards of Studies focus on the academic policy of the School/College. They are responsible for identifying academic and organisational issues that require action on a cross-School basis and advising the College Academic Committee about School-related matters.

In these meetings, School Reps can raise and help to address any feedback affecting course reps and students within their school/departments. Boards of Studies report to the College Academic Committees. Similar to Course Committee meetings which Course Reps, Boards of Studies meetings are organised by UAL staff, so all information about scheduling will come directly from UAL staff within your College and as a representative of your school you should make every effort to attend.

College Officer Meetings

3 to 6 times a year
or 1 to 2 times per term

Each term, the SU College Officers will convene meetings to bring together School Reps from within their College to connect with one another, share successes and challenges, and co-create ways to improve student experience at the school level.

These meetings may be in-person or online and will be organised by the college officers in liaison with the Representation & Democracy team.

Student and Dean Forums

Frequency:

Twice a year
or once in term 1 and 2

Student and Dean Forums are an opportunity to bring Reps and their school/department Dean together to discuss issues affecting their course and academic experience at school level.

Both Course Reps and School Reps are expected to attend their relevant Student and Dean Forums.

We're hoping that most of the Forums will take place in person during the 2022/2023 academic year. However, we will consider online or hybrid formats to best accommodate student needs and in light of ongoing COVID guidance.

The structure of Student and Dean Forums are designed around how reps best wish to use the time and we work collaboratively with School Deans to determine the topics for each forum to help start discussion. However, students are always welcome to bring their own topics to be discussed.

As these meetings are organised by Arts SU, information about these meetings, the topics due to be discussed and what you need to attend will be circulated in the weeks before.

Extra 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 and independent from the University of Arts, London supported by a staff team working purely for the benefit of its students.

Every student at the University is automatically a member of the Students' Union! This means you can access all the support and opportunities we provide. Your needs and interests are also represented by our 6 Elected Officers who are elected every year.

What sort of things might a School Rep need support with?

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

- Breakdown of communication between student representatives and staff
- Feeling overwhelmed by student feedback and/or complaints
- Confusion about how to raise feedback with students or 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

This is not meant as an endless a list and if you're experiencing a problem that isn't listed here and still need support, we want to hear from you.

Extra support

Who can I contact if I need support?

There are two main points of contact at Arts SU should you need them during your time as a School Rep.

If you're unsure who to contact don't worry. We all work closely together and can put you in touch with the relevant team and/or individual.

Representation and Democracy Team

schoolreps@su.arts.ac.uk

The Representation and Democracy team can support and advise with any aspect of the role which involve the collection and sharing of feedback be it involving other reps, students and/or staff.

Examples can include disputes or a breakdown in communication you may encounter with other reps, students and/or staff as well as situations where you struggle to engage students in the collection of feedback.

Advice Service

advice@su.arts.ac.uk
www.arts-su.com/advice

The Advice Service team can support any individual student with difficulties of a more personal nature and unique to them. The team provides advice academic and housing issues while able to link students to a range of university student services.

Examples can include if you feel overwhelmed by student feedback or concerns, are worried about the role impacting your own study or need to signpost a student with a query that is individual or personal to them whether it be an appeal, meeting with the university or complaint.

Top-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/department or the Students' Union can often ensure issues are resolved earlier and is not left until it's too late

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 you can 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 share the workload more and 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 but it's equally important to make sure others are aware of these

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.

Arts SU Elections

The two categories of roles:

Elected Officer Roles

These full-time paid roles are carried outside of studies. They represent and speak on behalf of all students, 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.

Arts SU use elections to decide who should speak and work for you on a range of issues while you're a student at UAL. Nominations open in early January with elections held in March each year for the following academic year.

Consider putting yourself forward for Election We encourage all students to consider standing with a variety of roles available.

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

Useful Contacts

Arts SU Elected Officers

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

Course Rep Queries coursereps@su.arts.ac.uk

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

Student Communities Team

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

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 matter

University Support Services

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



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