



COURSE REPS

Handbook 2021-22

CONTENTS

- 3** Welcome from your VP Voice
- 4** Course Rep Responsibilities
- 8** The Feedback Structure
- 9** Meetings Explained
- 12** Top Tips
- 18** Frequently Raised Concerns
- 19** Signposting
- 20** Your Students Union
- 20** The Voice Zone
- 21** Voice Forums
- 22** Engaging with the Union
- 23** Rewards and Recognition
- 25** Next Steps
- 28** Officer Structure

Welcome from your VP Voice

Hello and Congratulations on being elected as a Course Representative!

Firstly, thank you for putting yourself forward, without people like you we could not run the Rep program. Your peers have elected you because they believe you can best represent their voice, so seize the opportunity to change things for the better!

All Course Reps have the job of representing over 15,000 students across all courses and levels of study. You'll get plenty of opportunities to use your voice to represent students. From MySurrey Voice to Student Voice Forum, from speaking directly to your peers to speaking to staff in your respective departments, you provide essential dialogue between your peers and staff at the University throughout the year.

As well as your training, this handbook is here to help you with key information you need to know to be the best Rep you can be, including contact details, the Feedback Structure and your role as a Rep.

The Voice Zone and I are here to support you, so any questions please do get in touch.

As I said, you are an essential part of the team- I wish you the best of luck for the coming year!

Megan Simmons

VICE-PRESIDENT
VOICE 2021-22

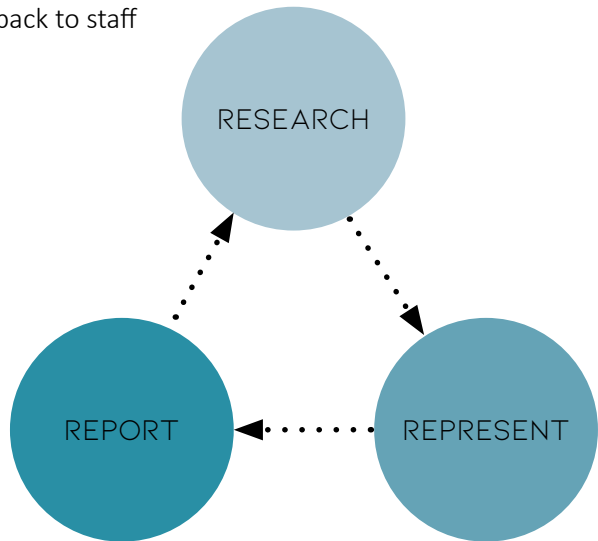
Keep in touch:

ussu.vpvoice@surrey.ac.uk



Course Rep Responsibilities

1. Research student opinions
2. Represent student feedback to staff
3. Report back to students



1. RESEARCH STUDENT OPINIONS

In order to effectively represent what other students think, you need to do your research first! Make sure students know you're there to represent them, and how to get in contact with you easily. Ask your department for their help in advertising yourself as a Course Rep – they should be willing to help. Talking to other students in person is one of the best ways to do this, but you may also want to make use of the **MySurrey Voice** platform powered by Unitu, **emails**, **social media**, contact with your **departmental society**, and **surveys**.

What next?

- Send an email out at the start of the year to your cohort introducing yourself and your role
- Find your departmental society on the Union website and get in touch with them
- Make a post on your Unitu board to introduce yourself as the Course Rep

- Ask your lecturers for 5 minutes at the start of a lecture to speak about what you do as a Course Rep and topics on which students can provide their feedback.
- Stick around after lectures so students can chat to you face-to-face
- Utilise a Course Rep email signature
- For PGR Reps, you might find it best to email out to ask for feedback, as this will reach your distance/part-time colleagues more easily

MySurrey Voice (powered by Unitu) – What is it?

MySurrey Voice is an online space where students, Reps and staff can collectively raise, discuss and resolve feedback and issues.

MySurrey Voice is structured as a discussion board, broken down into two areas. In the first area, you can privately ask questions, post ideas and raise issues between you and your classmates. If a topic attracts enough comments and likes, you will move the discussion into the public area. You will be expected to respond to feedback and escalate it where suitable within 4 working days, so you must monitor the private board carefully.



The second area is broken down into three sections (open, in progress and closed), where staff can interact with the discussion and work with you to resolve issues and develop ideas further.

Everyone on your course has access to see your Department board. This now means you have an easy and convenient way of reaching every single student in your department in one go. In the public area staff can view the posts. These will be key staff in your Department. As issues, questions and ideas are raised and discussed, staff and Reps can respond and provide updates on progress.

Both staff and students can report any inappropriate or defamatory comments on the platform. The content will be removed and disciplinary action will be taken against the individual who made the post.

You can access Unitu via the MySurrey App, surrey.unitu.co.uk and SurreyLearn.

Get posting!

Departmental Societies

This year, we are encouraging Course Reps and Departmental Societies to work more closely together to benefit you both!

For Course Reps, a close connection with your Departmental Society can help you reach more students and gather more feedback, especially from a wider pool of perspectives and experiences than you might be able to reach on your own. Societies will have membership lists that they might be able to contact when you need to gather feedback, or they might be able to invite you to events to meet other students and discuss issues impacting your course.

For Departmental Societies, a connection with their Course Rep will mean that they have a direct input into the running of the department by providing feedback through their Course Reps. This means that if students discuss their course within a society environment, the relationship between the society and Course Rep will help ensure their feedback gets to the staff who can make a change.

Most Departmental Societies will have a committee member who will have a focus on developing the relationship between the department, the society, and the Course Rep, so you should contact them as soon as you can to start making connections and gathering feedback. Find out if you have a relevant society here- ussu.co.uk

2. REPRESENT STUDENT FEEDBACK TO STAFF

Once you know what students think about your course, you then need to represent this effectively to your department. It's hugely important to keep the department informed of what students think. When you're doing this, always remember to be practical, professional, and polite! Remember you are representing your whole cohort of students, not just your own opinions.

You have a direct responsibility to escalate feedback posted on the Unitu, so you must remember to check and moderate your cohort's board. You also have a responsibility to gather any complex feedback and represent students' interests at your formal meetings, so this will rely on your communication skills and teamwork!

What next?

- Ensure you check your emails for invitations to departmental meetings (turn to “Meetings Explained” for more info)
- Make sure you know when these meetings will occur and ensure you attend or let the organiser know if you cannot be there
- Make sure you continuously check and escalate feedback on your board on Unitu
- Contact your Head of Department to introduce yourself
- Compile any complex feedback you gather into a report you can present to the meetings you attend
- Compile the feedback you gather into a report you can present to the meetings you attend
- Remember to anonymise and paraphrase any feedback you’ve gathered

3. REPORT BACK TO STUDENTS

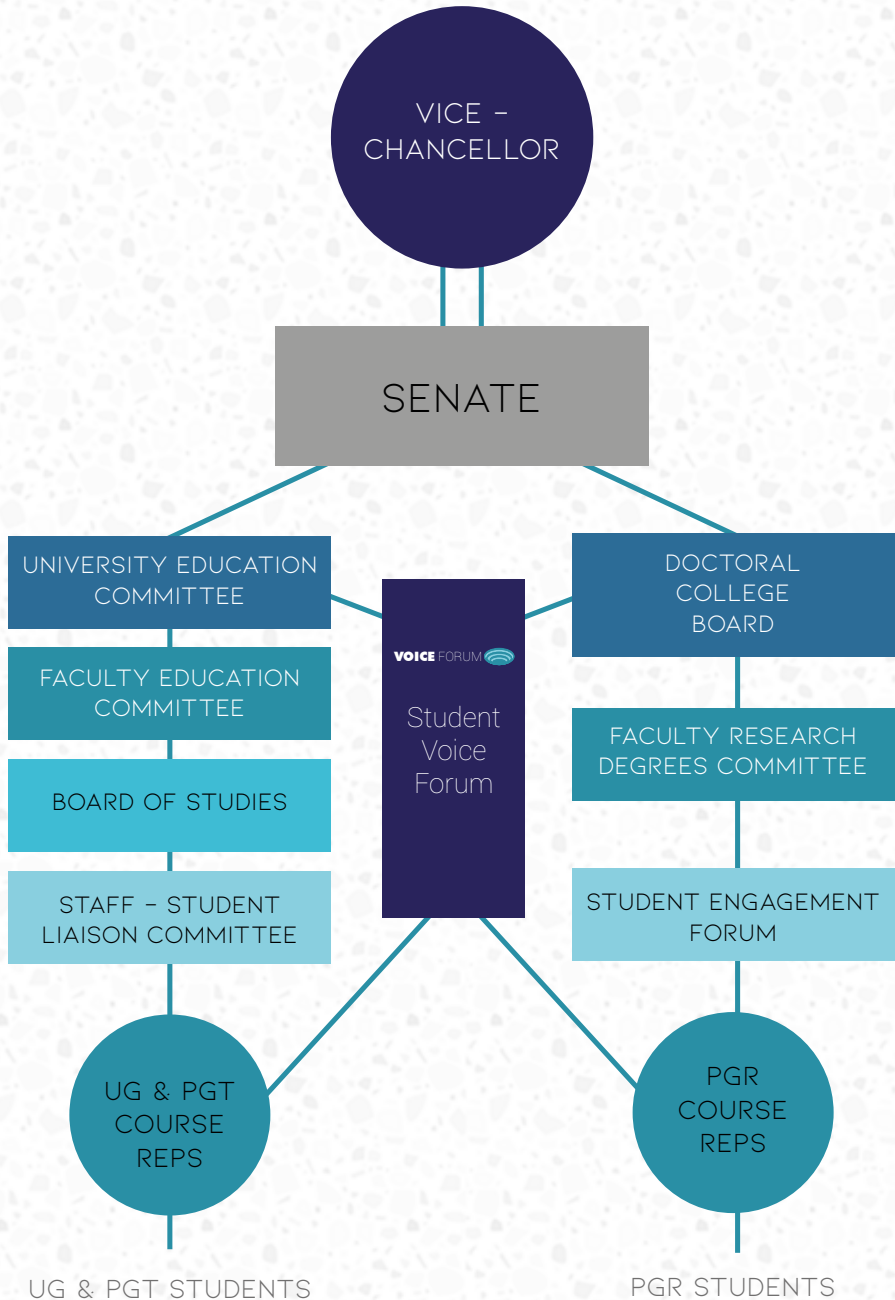
Students will only see the importance of sharing their feedback with you when they know it is being taken forward. Whenever you discuss student feedback with staff, report back students afterwards so they know that action is being taken. Get into the routine of reporting back to students following meetings – it’s just as important as telling staff what students think!

Remember just how important you are as a group of students on campus. Students need to know what you’ve been achieving, and that you’ve been representing their voices.

What next?

- Make sure you keep track of feedback raised on Unitu and chase up any updates for neglected feedback
- After your departmental meetings email out a summary so that students know their feedback was raised
- Identify action points that were agreed in meetings, and make sure you follow these up if you don’t hear about an outcome from your department by the next meeting

The Feedback Structure



Meetings Explained

As a Course Rep, you are required to attend departmental meetings with University staff and other Course Reps. These meetings are where you will be representing students, so it's vital that you know what is expected of you and what you can expect.

UG & PGT:

SSLCs – Staff Student Liaison Committees

SSLCs are run by your departments, and are attended by all Course Reps and a small number of staff. The point of this meeting is to serve as an informal forum for you to share student feedback with staff. You can usually expect to attend around four SSLCs each year; two per semester. The decisions that result from SSLCs will be reported to the Board of Studies. Before an SSLC, you should make sure you have feedback to discuss, and that you have checked your Unit board for any feedback that hasn't been completed.

BoS – Boards of Studies

You will have two Board of Studies per year. This meeting is responsible for the academic standard of your course. The membership of the Board will include all Course Reps from each programme, along with Heads of Department and other relevant staff. Although this meeting may feel slightly more formal, it's vital to attend, as this is often where decisions are made. Before a Board of Studies, you should make sure you have feedback to discuss, and that you have checked your Unit board for any feedback that hasn't been completed.

PGR:

SEF – Student Engagement Forum

The purpose of this Forum is to discuss key issues and good practice. Each SEF is attended by all PGR Reps from the Faculty, and can be attended by some relevant University staff, and a representative from the Students' Union. For these meetings, you will need to come prepared to present the views of your fellow PGRs. Before a SEF, you should make sure you have feedback to discuss, and that you have checked your Unit board for any feedback that hasn't been completed. This Forum reports directly to the FRDC via the SEF PGR Chair.

FRDC – Faculty Research Degrees Committee

The chair of each SEF will sit on the FRDC, and report up what has been discussed. The FRDC has the responsibility to **implement action plans**, so your feedback into your SEF feeds into this committee and has the opportunity to really make a difference.

MEETING SKILLS:

Here are some points to remember when preparing and attending meetings:

Structure – Departmental meetings will follow a standard official meeting structure. This means that you will be sent an agenda via email ahead of the meeting, and a record of the meeting will be taken in the form of minutes, which will be sent to you after the meeting. **You are required to attend** the meetings outlined above, but if you cannot, let the organiser know and send in your apologies that you will not be there.

Content – These meetings are your chance to represent students, so you need to come prepared. Do your research first and compose your findings into themes or issues, ensuring that you anonymise the feedback first. Formal meetings are the best chance to discuss challenging or complex feedback about the course. You should also check your Unitu board before any formal meeting. It's also important that you link up with other Course Reps so that you can present a united approach to any student issues. Think about solutions – and remember to also spend time discussing what students appreciate about their course.

ABCD OF EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK:

Remember to keep your feedback **Accurate**, and ensure that it is truly representative of what the majority of students have told you.

Feedback should be **Balanced**, and this means that it's just as important to identify what students appreciate too. Balance negative feedback out with something you can praise your department for!

Constructive feedback will help you work with your department to make improvements; suggest possible solutions to problems.

Finally, **Depersonalise** your feedback. Ensure students remain anonymous, and don't make any personal attacks on members of staff.

Course Rep Successes

Course Reps work hard every year to make changes happen for students. To give you a taste of some of the things you might be able to achieve, here are just some of the fantastic ways our Reps have been making sure all Surrey students are represented academically!

- **Deadline extensions**
- **Clearer assessment guidelines**
- **Better feedback following assessment**
- **More detailed feedback**
- **Improved course timetabling**
- **Additional course content and resources on SurreyLearn**
- **Setting up buddy schemes to support new students**
- **Writing thank you and Christmas cards for academic staff**
- **Creating a departmental blog to share PGR activity and research**
- **Helping with the design and introduction of new modules**
- **Better use of Panopto**
- **Mock and example exam questions for revision**
- **Exam preparation seminars and workshops**
- **Social events such as celebratory dinners**
- **Improved marking**
- **Employability workshops and taster sessions**
- **Campus improvements like water fountains and lockers**
- **Improvements to University services such as Disability and Neurodiversity**

Top Tips

USE MYSURREY VOICE: Gathering feedback can be tough, and reaching your whole cohort is tricky. The platform provides you with a way to monitor all student feedback about your course, and escalate it directly to staff.

This also means you don't need to wait for formal meetings to resolve immediate feedback, especially if students are providing you with their opinions on something that needs to be fixed by the department quickly. Escalate feedback on the platform to the attention of staff, and whilst you might need to wait a few days for a response, hopefully this will lead to a resolution more quickly.

DON'T ALWAYS WAIT FOR MEETINGS: You don't have to wait until your next upcoming meeting to ask your department to take action if the issue is time-sensitive. Email your Module Leader or whoever is the most relevant staff member. You may need to wait a few working days for a response, but hopefully this will lead to a resolution more quickly.

PRESENTING NEGATIVE FEEDBACK: As an elected Representative, you need to make sure you are conducting yourselves in meetings in a way that is appropriate. This means being **professional** at all times, even if you are presenting negative feedback. Remember that you can present challenging or negative feedback, but that it needs to be done in a factual and polite way. You need to pay close attention to Unitu and check that rude or inappropriate feedback is being removed, and that important feedback is worded in a professional way before it is escalated to staff.

REMEMBER YOU'RE A VOLUNTEER: Ultimately, you are volunteering your time in order to enhance the student experience. Course Reps are one of the largest groups of Union volunteers! If you have any concerns balancing your workload, tell us at the Union and we will support you. Don't forget to log your hours at www.surreyvolunteering.com, too!

COMMUNICATE YOUR SUCCESSES: Shout about the fantastic things you're achieving! We want to know about it, and so does your cohort. It is so important that students know what their representatives have been achieving and to feel like they have been 'effectively represented'. Your work hasn't finished when a problem is solved, you then must inform the cohort.

BE VISIBLE: Be consistent throughout the year with approaching your cohort. Keep posting on your MySurrey Voice board and encourage your fellow students to interact and post their feedback too. Be a presence that becomes familiar to them by continuing to get in touch with them. You'll basically be famous within your department by the end of the year if you do!

USE THE UNION: We're here to help. We can discuss tricky situations with you, and can provide support. Email hannah.jones@surrey.ac.uk if you have any concerns over the year, or ussu.vpvoice@surrey.ac.uk if you have issues that you think should be taken higher in the University.

BE SMART ABOUT WHERE YOU RAISE ISSUES: If the issue immediately needs fixing, like a problem with resources or timetable clashes, speak directly to the relevant module or course leader, as they may be able to help address your concerns quickly and efficiently.

If you think the issue is likely to be shared by your wider cohort, encourage the student to post their concern on your MySurrey Voice discussion board to see if the other students on your course agree. If they do, and the feedback is professional and appropriate, escalate the feedback to the public space on the platform for the attention of staff. You can access your MySurrey Voice board here: surrey.unitu.co.uk

If you feel that the issue needs to be discussed in detail with other Reps and University staff, gather as much information as you can from the student and from discussions on your MySurrey Voice platform, and raise the issue at your next departmental meeting, eg. your Staff Student Liaison Committee (SSLC).

If the issue isn't directly related to your course, such as campus issues, you might want to consider raising this with your Students' Union Sabbatical Officer team, or at a Student Voice Forum with senior University staff.

Effective Communication

As a Course Rep, one of the most important skills you'll need to develop will be your communication skills. How and why you communicate will depend on your audience, so here are some things to consider and some reminders for how to conduct yourself when communicating during your work as a Rep.

WITH YOUR COHORT

How might you communicate best with your fellow students? Think about how you would want to be contacted if someone was asking for your opinions on your course, and what kind of questions you'd want to be asked in order to draw out the opinions you have. What methods do your fellow students engage with most – Facebook pages, WhatsApp groups, emails, in person?

You don't need to use formal language or technical terms when you ask your peers for feedback; phrase your questions in easy-to-understand language and give as many prompts for areas of feedback as you can (such as teaching quality, resources, assessments, study space, SurreyLearn, placements, all sorts!) Remember also to use your listening skills – students will share more with you if they feel they have been listened to.

It's also important to remember why you need to communicate effectively with your cohort. As we've mentioned, you can't represent effectively if you haven't found out what your fellow students think. You also won't be able to gather feedback if it isn't clear to students what you want feedback on, and why.

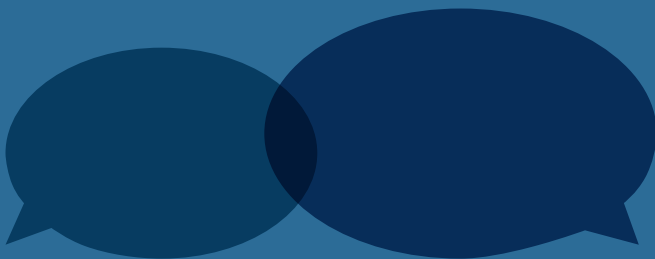
Don't forget too that you must report back to students on what has happened as a result of their feedback. Students' Union research shows that last year, whilst 72% of students know who their Course Rep is, only 35% know about the achievements of their Course Rep. We need to work together to ensure that this number increases so that all students are aware of how Reps can make a difference at Surrey!

WITH UNIVERSITY STAFF

How do you think you need to change your communication when you're in formal meetings with University staff? Your tone, language choices, and expressions may change compared to how you might conduct yourself with other students.

It's important to remember to be professional and polite, and to make requests that are practical, specific, and positive. Keep in mind that you communicate in ways other than just your words too, so if a member of staff says something you disagree with in a meeting, keep control over your physical reactions such as facial expressions so that you maintain professional communication.

As for why it is important to communicate effectively with staff members, bear in mind that staff will take you more seriously if they believe you are trying your hardest to be the best representative you can be. It's also impossible to expect staff to solve the issues that students are facing if they don't have a clear understanding of what the problem is!



Frequently Raised Concerns

UNDERGRADUATE:

Covid course changes – Covid-19 will have meant there will have been changes made to your course and your assessments. You will need to keep yourself aware of student's opinions on these changes, and communicate their opinions to your department. You can visit www.surrey.ac.uk/coronavirus/course-changes to keep track.

Feedback and assessments – These are best raised quickly and directly with the relevant lecturer, though if it is more of a widespread issue, this can be raised on Unitu, though if it is more of a widespread issue, this can be raised at an **SSLC**. It's vital that you communicate back to your cohort what has happened as a result so that they know a solution has been reached.

Resources – You may hear from students that the resources for a particular module are insufficient, or that lecture slides or captured content are not being uploaded to SurreyLearn. In these situations, you can raise these issues on Unitu, or discuss them at an SSLC.

Panopto – You may hear student feedback on whether lecture capture (Panopto) or captured content is necessary for certain modules. The University now has a policy which covers captured content, which can include:

- lecture capture to aid revision
- recordings of content created to demonstrate key concepts or develop knowledge
- links to existing educational videos

It may be that the majority of students will be in favour of encouraging your department to use lecture capture more widely, but pay close attention to what students are saying and don't make assumptions. Stats can be really helpful here; use polls to find out who is in favour of lectures being recorded and other videos being created or shared.

Wider University issues – Sometimes students may bring feedback to you on issues which affect the whole student body. This could be on something like overcrowding or issues with support services on campus.

These are the kinds of issues that would be best to raise at a University-wide meeting like **Student Voice Forum**, as you can get a response there from senior University management. These issues are not suitable to raise at departmental meetings, as your department is unlikely to have much control over these issues.

PLACEMENT REPS:

Covid course changes – Covid-19 may mean there will be difficulties faced by students out on placement. You will need to keep yourself in touch with students, and ensure that you communicate their opinions to your department.

Finances - Students out on placement may experience difficulties with finances, especially those on unpaid placements. If students approach you as a Rep about this, it's important to voice to your department that students are facing difficulties, and also to let the Voice Zone know so we can present the issue at **Student Voice Forum**.

Placement support - You may also hear about issues with support for students on placements. These are also concerns that need to be raised to the University, so let the Voice Zone know so we can communicate these issues to senior University management.

POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT:

COVID-19 course changes – Covid-19 will have meant there will have been changes made to your course and your assessments. You will need to keep yourself aware of student's opinions on these changes, and communicate their opinions to your department. You can visit www.surrey.ac.uk/coronavirus/course-changes to keep track

Course content and “crossover” – On some PGT courses, students feel that the content of the course overlaps with content taught at Undergraduate level. It's helpful to be able to identify the source of the crossover, and then present this at both **SSLC** and **Board of Studies**.

Frequently Raised Concerns

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH:

COVID-19 disruption – COVID-19 will have meant there will have been disruption to some PGRs research. If these issues haven't been resolved by your department, you may need to present these issues at a Student Engagement Forum for discussion.

Supervisors - The relationship between a PGR student and their supervisor can have a huge impact on their time here at Surrey. Whilst as Reps you are not expected to become involved in individual disputes, if you spot a trend in the feedback you are receiving from students about supervisors, please let the Students' Union know. This could be a sign of a wider problem, and is therefore something that we need to know about, so we can support students effectively.

Teaching duties - There can be some issues which arise as a result of the balance between research and teaching and some fellow students may feed this back to you. We do not expect you to settle these issues yourself, please do let the Voice Zone know. It's important that we know what PGRs are struggling with, and look at ways we can support them.

Resources – If you experience difficulties with resourcing or support, for example with specific technical platforms, you may wish to raise this at your

Student Engagement Forum. This will be a good opportunity to see if it is an issue shared with other PGRs in your faculty, and will give you collective backing to requests for additional support.

Signposting

As a Course Rep, you are not expected to be able to solve everything! Despite this, students may approach you to ask for help about problems that fall outside of your role. In these cases, you can signpost them to the relevant staff member or service. If you are unsure who to turn to, please get in touch with Hannah, our Course Rep Coordinator, on hannah.jones@surrey.ac.uk

THE STUDENTS' UNION

We can advise and support students on student-facing regulations, including appeals and Extenuating Circumstances. Students can contact ussu.advice@surrey.ac.uk and they will be contacted by a relevant member of staff.

CENTRE FOR WELLBEING

The Centre for Wellbeing provides support when personal issues are impacting on your ability to study and cope at University. The Centre can be contacted via email on centreforwellbeing@surrey.ac.uk or on 01483 689498.

MYSURREY HIVE

Advice for issues such as: Student Money, Fees and Funding, International Student Support, Registration and Administration, and can be contacted on hive@surrey.ac.uk or via telephone on 01483 686868. More information on their services is available on their website: <https://my.surrey.ac.uk/hive>

DISABILITY AND NEURODIVERSITY

Disability and Neurodiversity provide confidential support for disabled students. Visit www.study.surrey.ac.uk/study-support/disability-and-neurodiversity for more information.

DOCTORAL COLLEGE

Oversees training and development opportunities for postgraduate research students and research staff. Visit www.surrey.ac.uk/doctoral-college for more information.



LED BY STUDENTS



The Students' Union is the sole representative body for all students at Surrey. We are led by a team of elected student officers, including five full-time officers known as "Sabbaticals" – the President and four Vice Presidents.

While the President leads the strategic direction of the Union, the four Vice Presidents each lead a Zone Committee for the four key areas of the Union – Voice, Support, Community, and Activity. There are also five elected student volunteer roles on each of the Zone Committees.

Elections happen in the second semester every year and take place via an online ballot, so look out for **#SurreyDecides**.

The **VOICE** Zone

The Voice Zone is led by your VP Voice, Megan, who is the Sabbatical officer who takes responsibility for ensuring that student opinions are communicated to the University. Together with the Voice Zone Committee and two members of full-time staff, the Zone is also responsible for keeping democracy at the heart of the Students' Union, and supporting student-led change campaigns.

As Course Reps, you form a massive part of the Voice Zone. You are elected to uphold the Zone principle of giving a voice to students within your departments. You are essential in informing the work we do as a Union!

ELECTED OFFICERS

VP VOICE – **Megan Simmons** – Megan was elected on her manifesto points of improving student feedback and communications, increasing awareness of Liberation activity at Surrey, and representing your rights under Hybrid Learning. Megan graduated from her course in the School of Law, and now leads the Voice Zone.

VOICE ZONE COMMITTEE – **Michelle Ching, Sophie Aldous, Akshaya Mohan, Aleksandria Rusimova, and Hugo Montford**. Contact us at ussu.voicezone@surrey.ac.uk and read our manifestos at www.ussu.co.uk

FULL TIME STAFF

STUDENT VOICE MANAGER – **Kath Phillips** – Kath can assist with all wider Voice Zone related issues, as well as helping you understand the Union's processes of democratic decision making and our annual Union elections.

COURSE REP COORDINATOR – **Hannah Jones** - Hannah can assist with any Course Rep enquiries, provide information and support to help with your responsibilities, and advise where to take specific issues raised by your cohort.

Your Union Forums



In the Voice Zone, we recognise the importance for Reps from across the University to get together to discuss the issues that are arising in their departments. This year, these will take place in the form of two student forums; **Student Voice Forum** and **Faculty Voice Forum**. There will be three Student Voice Forums a year, and two Faculty Voice Forums.

As Reps, you are required to attend these meetings, as they are an extension of your platform to share student opinions on matters relating to the whole student body. Attendance at these Forums also forms part of the monitored HEAR criteria, unless you are a student out on placement.

STUDENT VOICE FORUM

Student Voice Forum is your chance to raise issues brought to you by students that affect the wider student body. Each Forum will be comprised of members of the student body, including Course Reps and Community Reps, and will be chaired by the VP Voice. The Union will invite members of senior University management, so each Forum will be a powerful opportunity to come together with your fellow students to communicate directly with University decision makers on the issues that matter to you.

These Forums are also the perfect way to hold the University accountable and to lobby for change. The Union keeps a record of these meetings and works in partnership with the University to ensure that Reps are aware of actions and outcomes. Arising issues will also be reported to relevant committees to inform institutional planning and management actions.

Engaging with the Union

UPDATE US VIA THE COURSE REP WINS FORM

It's important to remember that you are a part of the Union; making the voices of students heard and helping them make the changes they want to achieve. The Union needs to understand what the student body is concerned about so that we can tackle those issues at a wider level.

The most convenient way for you to do this is by filling in the Course Rep Wins Form, found on the Course Reps page of the Student Union website – www.ussu.co.uk

You can fill in the form as many times as you want, and it can be done all year round. We use these entries to inform our work, along with deciding Course Rep of the Month on the basis of who has achieved a change for their cohort that will make a difference, big or small. It's also vital for us to know what amazing things you're achieving so we can celebrate!

SUPPORT FROM THE UNION

Throughout the year, the Voice Zone is on hand to provide support and guidance for any Reps who need it.

For any enquiries, you can always email our Course Rep Coordinator, hannah.jones@surrey.ac.uk, who can help with advice relating to your role. We can also provide additional resources if you need them, or even refresher training on aspects of your role.

SURREY VOLUNTEERING

Do something good, achieve something great! It's important to remember that you are part of the Union's volunteering ethos.

For this reason, we really encourage you to register with www.surreyvolunteering.com where you can begin to record the hours you have spent volunteering as a Rep.

These hours will show on your profile, and can be used to show employers how you enhanced your degree and developed your own personal skills through volunteering for the Union as a Course Rep.



You should have received a registration link when you were elected, but if not, visit the link above to get started.

Any questions, email hannah.jones@surrey.ac.uk

Rewards and Recognition

We know how hard you all work, and we think it is important that your achievements are celebrated throughout the year, both by us here at the Union and across the University.

REP OF THE MONTH

Every month the Voice Zone vote on who will be recognised as Course Rep of the Month based on the feedback we get through the Course Rep Wins Form. The winning Rep will be awarded a £20 Amazon voucher to recognise their hard work and their achievements will be recognised on the Students' Union website, and on social media. The winners of Rep of the Month will also be included in our Rep updates.

HEAR

The Higher Education Achievement Record is a national scheme which means that students receive a record of their extra-curricular activities upon graduating.

In order to have your commitment as a Rep included on your HEAR, you just need to fulfil these simple criteria:

1. Be elected by a majority of your peers.
2. Attend Course Rep training or online training.
3. Attend three Student Voice Forums.
4. Complete your account activation on MySurrey Voice

REPS OF THE YEAR AWARDS

This year, the VP Voice and Voice Zone will be selecting our Course Reps of the Year in the following categories:

- Undergraduate Faculty Reps of the Year (1 in each Faculty)
- Placement Rep of the Year
- Postgraduate Taught Rep of the Year
- Postgraduate Researcher Rep of the Year

There is also an overall Course Rep of the Year chosen by the wider Union officer team and awarded at the Students' Union Student Awards.

SELF-NOMINATED REP AWARDS

Each year, we run self-nominated Course Rep Awards to recognise exceptional Reps. This is our way to give Reps recognition for all the hard work they put in over the course of the year. All Reps will be invited to apply for either bronze, silver or gold status. It's helpful to keep records of SSLCs and other activities if you want to apply for an award.

Bronze

- Complete Course Rep Training.
- Complete at least one online Rep Wins form
- Show attempts at communication with your cohort.
- Provide evidence of raising one student concern.
- Attend all Student Voice Forums or send apologies.
- Provide evidence of gathering feedback on MySurrey Voice.

Silver

- Complete Course Rep Training.
- Complete more than one online Rep Wins form.
- Show that you have successfully communicated with your cohort.
- Provide evidence of gathering and escalating feedback on MySurrey Voice.
- Provide evidence that you have raised student concerns and discussed the problems with staff, either at an SSLC or Student Voice Forum.
- Attended all Student Voice Forums or send apologies, and contributed at one.

Gold

- Complete Course Rep Training.
- Completed several online Rep Wins forms and engaged regularly with The Students' Union.
- Show that you have communicated effectively with your cohort on more than one occasion.
- Provide evidence of gathering and escalating feedback on MySurrey Voice.
- Provide evidence that you have raised student concerns and worked with staff to try and find a solution.
- Attended all Student Voice Forums or send apologies, and contributed more than once.
- Provide evidence that you have attended all SSLCs or sent apologies and made a contribution.

COURSE REP SOCIALS

This year we are keen to unite Reps and give you an opportunity to meet each other and socialise. We will hopefully be running a Course Rep social each semester to reward you with a chance to have fun and relax as a thank you for all your hard work and effort.

Next Steps

So now that you have all of this information about how to succeed in your role, and now you've completed Course Rep training, what's next?

STARTING OUT –

- Send an email out to your cohort introducing yourself and your role
- Do a public announcement on any social media platforms used by your cohort to announce your role and how to get in contact with you
- Contact your Head of Department to introduce yourself
- Make a post on your MySurrey Voice board to introduce yourself as the Course Rep
- Find your departmental society on the Union website and get in touch with them.
- Ask your lecturers for 5 minutes at the start of a lecture to speak about what you do as a Course Rep and what topics students can share their feedback on

- Create an email signature that you can use to advertise yourself as a Course Rep
- Visit the Course Reps hub on the Union website to check out any other resources you might find useful to help get started - www.ussu.co.uk

GET FEEDBACK –

- Make a post on your Unitu board to start to gather feedback
- Think about the topics you’ve had conversations about and use those to spark discussions with other students to gather their opinions
- Conduct a poll on Unitu to get some instant stats
- Compile the feedback you gather into a report you can present to the meetings you attend
- Link up with other Course Reps in your department to see what feedback they’ve been getting
- Remember to anonymise and paraphrase any feedback you’ve received

PREPARE FOR YOUR MEETINGS –

- Ensure you check your emails for invitations to departmental meetings (turn to “Meetings Explained” for more info)
- Also check your emails for invitations from the Union to your Faculty and Student Voice Forums
- Make sure you know when these meetings will occur and ensure you attend or let the organiser know if you cannot be there
- Check your Unitu board for existing and any neglected feedback
- Discuss with other Course Reps in your department before you attend to see what feedback they will be presenting; this will help you present a united front and avoid repetition
- Identify action points that were decided on in the meetings, and make sure you follow these up if you don’t hear about an outcome from your department
- After your departmental meetings. send out a summary so that students know their feedback was raised

Get out there and make a difference!

We cannot wait to get started this year working with you all and hearing about the amazing changes you achieve! You are the biggest source of representation for students at Surrey, and your voices really matter and make a difference. Remember just how much importance you hold in this position, and make sure you make the most of it.

Please also remember you are volunteers; we're here to support you and help you through. Don't hesitate to get in contact with us via ussu.coursereps@surrey.ac.uk if you have any general queries or need more specific advice.

You'll hear from us over the year regarding your Faculty and Student Voice Forums, along with exciting opportunities that relate to the key values of the Voice Zone. You can also always get in touch to chat to your VP Voice or either of our Voice Zone staff members, and we're always on hand to answer any questions or provide more insight into the workings of the Union.

Best wishes from all of us here at the Voice Zone for your role this year – we cannot wait to see what you manage to achieve and the improvements you make for all students!



Have a fantastic year!

The **VOICE ZONE** Team

Students' Union Officer Team 2021/22

