Programme Representatives Guidance Handbook for University Staff.

Academic Year: 2019-20
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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 representatives as well as the support available to you as Staff from the Union.

We want Programme Representatives to feel empowered to create a positive impact on their learning experience and provide useful and constructive feedback; we also want them to develop their skills as representatives throughout the year. Our Programme Representatives play a vital role in the checks and balances on the quality processes at City, University of London, so we want them to feel as supported and effective as possible.

We want to thank you for all the support you give to Programme Representatives, and for your continued involvement in helping us make the System better – they 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. We will be running a series of Staff Briefing sessions, to enable you to understand the training that we give to Representatives and to ask any questions you have.

If you have further queries, comments or concerns, or you would like to attend a Staff Briefing session on Programme Representatives, please do not hesitate to contact us at studentrep@city.ac.uk or 020 7040 5615.

Saqlain Riaz – Vice President of Education – vpeducation@city.ac.uk
The Representation Team – Students’ Union – studentrep@city.ac.uk
1.0 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:

- Represent students on their programme by collecting their feedback on both academic and non-academic issues.
- Report on good and bad issues affecting their cohort.
- Liaise with Staff, including Programme Directors and Course Officers regularly.
- Attend and actively contribute to Committees and meetings.
- Feedback the progress with issues, what decisions are being made and what they are doing to their cohort.
- Promote Union, University and National surveys to collect feedback (e.g. The National Student Survey (NSS), Your Voice)
- Take part in academic campaigns with School Representative Officers.
- Take opportunities provided to them by the Students’ Union and University.

*We are keen to stress that their role is to represent Students’ opinions.*

We inform them 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 and the Union’s Advice Service.

For the academic year **2019-20**, we will be introducing various additional training for our Programme Representatives following the ‘Rep Review’.
2.0 Role of Staff in the Programme Representative Scheme

In order to facilitate a successful scheme, both the University and Union have different roles to play.

Staff are responsible for:
- Facilitating the election of Programme Representatives, and providing the elected students’ information to the Union within a set timeframe.
- Ensuring that Representatives are invited to all meetings they are expected to attend.
- Ensuring that Representatives are sent paperwork for meetings in advance of meetings, and are given a chance to feed in where they can.
- Encouraging Representatives to participate in meetings and welcoming feedback.
- 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.

The Students’ Union is responsible for:
- Collating details for all Representatives onto a central database.
- Supporting Staff in the electing of Representatives.
- Organising and delivering training for Representatives and School Representative Officers.
- Providing advice and support for Representatives – including putting together templates and resources to facilitate feedback.
- Organising forums and events for Representatives to take part in.
- Providing a report to the Student Experience Committees (SEC) each term.
- Looking through meeting minutes to identify common trends.
- Carrying out a yearly review of the system and producing recommendations.
- Co-developing of a successful system of student representation with Quality Teams.
- Providing recognition at the end of each academic year to Representatives.
3.0 Elections Guidance

For the Programme Representatives System to be effective, the Students’ Union needs all Representatives to be elected to their positions. We have seen that this 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. It is our ultimate vision to be able to run these elections for you using our online systems, but this is a work in progress, and until then, we want to give you as much support as possible.

With this guide, you have been given:
- a PowerPoint slide to advertise Programme Representative Elections
- a sample nomination form
- sample ballot papers

We are also able to provide ballot boxes if required.

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 for each year group of each course.** 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.

In practice, this looks like:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1-30 students</th>
<th>2 reps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31-60 students</td>
<td>2-3 reps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-90 students</td>
<td>3-4 reps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-120 students</td>
<td>4-6 reps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120+ students</td>
<td>6+ reps</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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. We ask that you try to keep to this ratio as far as possible, although we understand it may not be possible and you may have more reps than suggested.
When to run an Election?

We ask that elections are held in the first 3 weeks of the course and the deadline for completed elections is the 10th October. This is so that you have Representatives in place for your first meetings and so we can arrange their training. This also applies to those starting their courses mid-way through the academic year.

For the first week, it is recommended that you promote the role of a Programme Representative, and talk about the election – including when it will be held and how they can put themselves forward. Then, depending on the size of your cohort, you can either hold the election within the same session, later in the week or the following week. Please remember that the deadline is 10th October, which falls in week 3.

How to run an Election

In order 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.

In order to collect nominations for the positions available, you can either have students submit a nomination form to you (in person or via email) or come to the front of the lecture. We are happy to leave this up to you to decide which route you take.

When running the election, you can elect Representatives in any of the following ways:

- **Show of Hands**
- **Ballot**
- **Email Ballot**
- **Moodle Choice**

**Show of Hands** – students come to the front of the room and make a 1-2 minute speech on why they would like to stand. When all of the candidates have made their speeches, you can ask the class to vote via raising their hands. Those with the most votes are elected.
This tends to work better in smaller – medium sized groups.

**Ballot (sample attached)** – again students can come to the front of the room and make a 1-2 minute speech on why they would like to stand. When all of the candidates have made their speeches, you can distribute the ballot papers. Students can then cast their votes for who they would like and deposit these papers with you or in a ballot box provided by the Union. Those with the most votes are elected.
This tends to work better in medium – larger sized groups.

**Email Ballot (sample attached)** – students email you a nomination form and a paragraph on why they would like to stand or hand in a copy. Once the deadline comes, you can email all students in the cohort – information about the candidates and copies of their paragraphs and ask them to vote via email their votes. Those with the most votes are elected.
This tends to work better with those courses who have distance learners, part time students and in medium – larger sized groups.

**Moodle Choice** – students email you a nomination form or hand in a copy. You can then 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. Run the election for up to a week. Those with the most votes are elected.
This tends to work better with those courses who have distance learners, part time students and in medium – larger sized groups.

**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:

- Asking the previous Representative to resume their role without consultation from the cohort.
- Appointing Representatives through the submission of an emailed ‘application statement’ with no democratic vote.
- Appointing all students that put themselves forward without any election, especially if this is above the guided ratio we have provided.

**Next Steps**

Once you have elected your Representatives, please send through their details to your Quality Officer/Key Contact using the template excel document, **please fill the excel sheet in fully**. Please ensure that you arrange all the key information such as email, and year of study etc.

Once you have elected your Programme Representatives, please invite them to introduce themselves to their cohort in a core lecture or similar. This will allow them to be recognisable in their role and an opportunity to meet all the students they are representing.

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 need further support with the running of your election, please contact studentrep@city.ac.uk.
4.0 Support Offered by the Students’ Union

The Union wants Representatives to have year round support to enable them to carry out their roles, we run/provide:

**Welcome Receptions**
In October and November, we will be hosting Welcome Receptions in each School, to bring together Representatives and the Staff in those Schools who will be working closely with them. The idea of this is to ensure that they know who they can go to, and who to expect correspondence from. It also means that when they come to attend their first meetings, they will already recognise some familiar faces.
We want these receptions to be seen as a thank you, for the work you do to support the Representatives, and to the Representatives for taking on those roles.

**Pre-Student Experience Committee Meetings**
Before each School’s Student Experience Committee Meeting, the Vice President Education and School Representative Officer will be hosting a meeting for Representatives, to take them through the meeting’s agenda and discussing any items that they wish to bring forward. We have found this a successful mechanism for ensuring that items coming forward are relevant to the committee’s aims, but also as a way of gathering feedback from those who are unable to attend.

**Programme Representative Forums**
These are termly meetings hosted by the Vice President Education, to bring together all Representatives across the University, to find out what the key issues they are facing, and what campaigns can be collectively put together to try and further these. These also provide an opportunity for Representatives to raise any concerns they are having in their role to the Union to address.

**Programme Representative Receptions**
Programme Rep Receptions are a networking opportunity for Reps to meet with each other face to face. Representatives can also speak to staff about their role and the issues, concerns or feedback that their cohort have raised throughout the academic year. These Receptions were introduced last academic year and we will continue them going forward.

**School Representative Officers**
School Representative Officers will be hosting Tea and Coffee morning within their Schools each term, as a way of providing peer support to Representatives, and to collect any feedback or issues that they may be facing.

**Reward and Recognition**
This year, we are providing incentives and recognition for Representatives. These will include but not be limited to:

- A Programme Rep Lanyard
- An end of year Certificate
- Personalised Hoodies for purchase
- A monthly Rep Newsletter
- Paid research opportunities
- Vouchers for encouraging and participating in surveys
5.0 Common Queries from Representatives

Academic Misconduct, Extenuating Circumstances and Academic Advice
The Union runs a Union Advice Service, offering independent academic advice for all students around such issues as academic misconduct and extenuating circumstances and more.
www.citystudents.co.uk/advice

University Food Outlets & CityBar
All of City’s catering and food outlets, including the CityBar, are run by a company called Sodexo or Lexington at Bunhill Row. The Union has no control over these outlets, including opening hours, prices or what they stock.

We do however, have a relationship with both providers, and hold regular meetings with Sodexo to raise students’ concerns and we tend to run events in collaboration with Sodexo in the CityBar throughout the year.

If Representatives raise an issue with the Bar or catering facilities, it’s key that these are taken on by the relevant supplier.

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.

The students that run academic societies make key decisions and take shared responsibility for the society’s activities, and all society members get to vote for the committee roles on an annual basis.

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 Representatives 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.
6.0 Key Contacts and Support for You!

There’s a whole team in the Union who are dedicated to Programme Representatives – please feel free to contact us at any time with any query, no matter how big or small. If your query is School specific, it is advised that you contact the Quality Team within your School.

Our dedicated email for Programme Representative Queries is: studentrep@city.ac.uk

To contact our Elected Students’ Union Representatives:
Vice President Education – vpeducation@city.ac.uk
Cass Business School Officer – businesssro@city.ac.uk
School of Arts & Social Sciences Officer – sasssro@city.ac.uk
School of Health Sciences Officer – healthsro@city.ac.uk
School of Mathematics, Computer Science & Engineering Officer – smcsesro@city.ac.uk
The City Law School Officer – lawsro@city.ac.uk

We offer dedicated Staff Briefing sessions to take you through our Programme Representatives training and support. The details of these will be available on the Students’ Union website, or for more information contact the Representation Team email.