

## Wolves SU Student Representation 20/21- University Staff Guidance

### Introduction

This guide provides all the essential information needed to successfully support Student Representation at the University of Wolverhampton. It is specifically aimed for those staff members (such as Course Leaders) who are the first point of call for students, and who look to encourage student engagement for the enhancement of the learning environment.

The Students' Union are committed to supporting the following three principles in our approach to student representation at the University:

- We recognize the importance for flexibility to cater to specific course needs and encourage/ support the adoption of the guidance given in this document to suit each cohort of students and course teams.
- We aim to establish and embed a partnership approach towards course and school related feedback which sees students as co-creators in their academic journey.
- We encourage inclusive approach towards promoting student engagement in the representation structure.

The Students' Union leads the student representation provision and supports course reps who volunteer their time outside of their studies to gather views and feedback from their fellow students and communicate this information back to their departments at key meetings throughout the Academic Calendar. Along with providing a provision of School/Institute Representatives who are paid employees at the Students' Union, focusing on School level matters and improving the student experience.

The University's student representation system provides multiple opportunities for the student voice to be heard. The Students' Union facilitates the student voice through Course Representatives, School Representatives, and SU Elected Officers "Student Reps":

- 1) Course Reps- represent students within their course/subject/year group/cohort/pathway etc.
- 2) School Reps- represent students from all courses within their School/Institute.
- 3) The Students' Union Full Time Officer Team- elected representatives who represents students at University level.

### Course Representatives

The role of a Course Rep is to improve the academic experience of the current and future students on a programme at both course and modular level. This primarily covers students' academic interests but will also cover their wider campus and University experiences.

Courses should aim to have the number of Course Reps based on the criteria below, at each level of study:

*Less than 10 students= no rep required, but 1 is preferred*

*10- 100 students per discipline, per year = 2 Course Reps*

*100-150 students per discipline, per year = 3 Course Reps*

*150- 200 students per discipline, per year = 4 Course Reps*

*200+ students per discipline, per year= 5/6 Course Reps*

If it is not possible to provide the desired numbers of course representatives, the course team is asked to work with the Students' Union to ensure at least one rep has been elected for each level of study- the provision of School Representatives will support in this process.

It is important that course representatives operate autonomously and effectively; the university should ensure that course rep elections are fair and impartial and that reps are offered training from the Students' Union which suitably prepares them for their role.

### Election of Course Reps

Course Representatives are selected via an 'in-class' elections process. Typically, these are conducted by a 'show of hands' election or by a secret ballot. The Students' Union will work alongside Course Leaders to support this process- providing resources, PowerPoint slides, role handbook and induction talks about the role to encourage student understanding and engagement.

If desired, we recommend that the candidates are requested to address the cohort and explain the reason why they should be chosen as the representative. Alternatively, candidates can provide a written statement that can be circulated to the students to help with their decision making if the election is being conducted on virtual platforms.

If the number of candidates who have expressed an interest is equal to the right amount of students needed for the size of the course- it is still encouraged that the election takes place where the candidates are provided with a platform to speak to their peers and the students can still be an active part of choosing who they wish to be represented by.

If there are difficulties facilitating the election, or an absence of students who wish to engage in the role, then the Students' Union- upon request- will supply a representative to attend an convenient slot to talk about the role and aim to successfully recruit a rep during the session; by using key motivators of peer to peer communication and examples of student voice impact to aid the process.

Once a successful selection has taken place, the details of the students must be supplied to the Students' Union so the newly appointed course reps have every opportunity to benefit from the training sessions that will be available.

### Training/ Online Resources

In both Semester 1 and 2, the Students' Union will provide training sessions the course reps can attend: to brief them on their new role, give insight into the remit of a course rep and manage their expectations moving forward.

Students must book onto these training sessions via the Students' Union website.

An online introduction to the role and training, will also be provided on the Students' Union website which will be available throughout the entire academic year and does not need to be booked.

### Reward and Recognition

Course Reps will be rewarded and recognised by the Students' Union for all the voluntary work and contributions they make for the improvement of their course, learning environment and overall student experience. To showcase the skills and attributes they have attained towards their employability from engaging in the role.

Throughout the year all Reps will be encouraged to engage with all the opportunities provided by the Students' Union and University, whereby each point of engagement will be recorded and through a points based system, be equated to a level awarded at the end of the year with an accompanying certificate:

The *Bronze Award* will require Course Reps to gain 50 points

The *Silver Award* will require you to gain 110 points.

The *Gold Award* will require you to gain 180 points.

The bronze award must be achieved in order to move on to the silver and gold awards and holds the minimum requirements that must be fulfilled by a student rep in order to be successful in their role (such as attending training).

### School/Institute Representatives

School/Institute Representatives represent course reps and the wider students within their school at School level to continuously improve the student experience. They work in close partnership with Heads of School and the University to provide student feedback to key meetings along the academic calendar.

They are a paid student staff members at the Students' Union who will be appointed through interview with both the SU and University as part of the panel. A School Rep will be appointed for each School/Institute and upon commencing the post, will seek to establish working relationships with both the students and staff within their area.

One of their key priorities is to ensure the feedback loop is being closed, ensuring course reps and students have timely communication and are notified of the impact student voice can have.

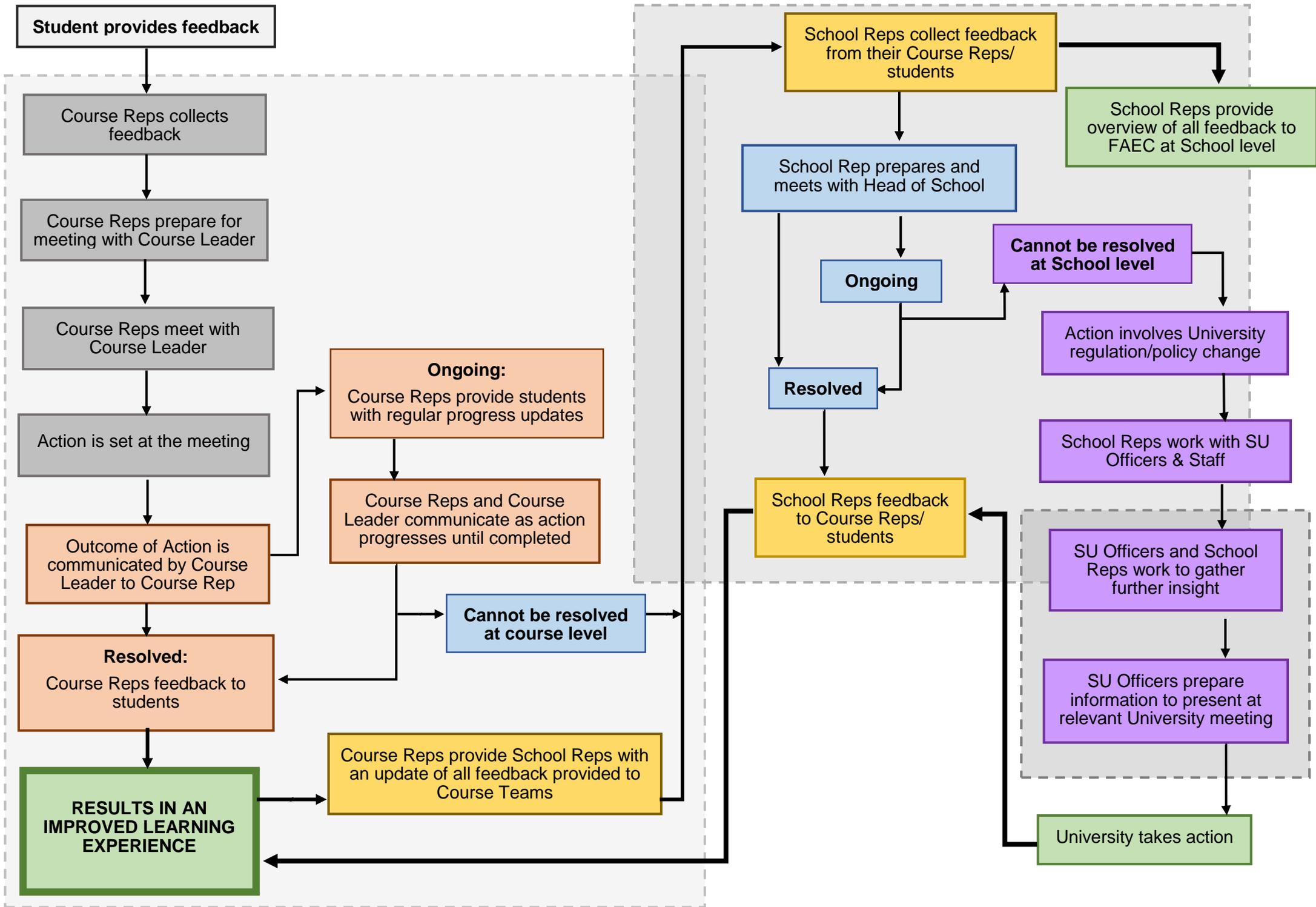
### Induction/ Training

School reps, upon appointment to post, must attend mandatory training provided by both the Students' Union and key University departments.

## Responsibilities

The below tables indicates the key responsibilities each stakeholder has as part of the student representation system.

<b>Role</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
<b>Students</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in the 'in-class' election of Course Representatives</li> <li>• Bring feedback, issues, and concerns to the attention of Course Representatives</li> <li>• Activity engage with the available student voice platforms</li> </ul>
<b>Course Representatives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend training provided by the Students' Union</li> <li>• Maintain open communication between students, course team and School Rep</li> <li>• Attend the Course Committees throughout the academic year</li> <li>• Attend Faculty Council throughout academic year</li> <li>• Engage in opportunities and the reward and recognition provided by the Students Union</li> <li>• Close the feedback loop</li> </ul>
<b>School Representatives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gather feedback from course reps and wider student body</li> <li>• Meet regularly with Head of School to discuss School level matters and any course level matters that require escalation</li> <li>• Chair the Faculty Council</li> <li>• Attend and contribute to the Faculty Academic Enhancement Committee</li> <li>• Engage in course approvals/periodic reviews</li> <li>• Close the feedback loop</li> <li>• Provide transparent communication to students</li> </ul>
<b>Course Leaders</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the course rep 'in-class' election in collaboration with the Students' Union</li> <li>• Meet with course reps and provide open communication with them about the progress of actions</li> <li>• Feedback to course rep outcomes of actions</li> <li>• Responsible for communicating to the Students' Union Voice team if they require support recruiting a course rep</li> </ul>
<b>Heads of School</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet regularly with School Representatives to discuss School level matters</li> <li>• Work with School Reps and the Students' Union to support and encourage student and staff engagement in the student representation system</li> </ul>
<b>Students' Union Voice Team</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery appropriate training to course representatives and school representatives to enable them to be successful in their role</li> <li>• Work with course team to facilitate 'in-class' elections of course reps</li> <li>• Monitor engagement levels in the student representation system</li> <li>• Reward and recognise the effort of course representatives</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for students to engage with</li> <li>• Hold and provide the course representation data upon need</li> </ul>



## Course Rep Role Description

Course reps provide a vital link between the students in their cohort, University staff and the Students' Union. They focus on the individual and shared experiences of their course in order to make positive change for their learning experience.

There should be at least 2 course reps per course\*, per level of study at the University, and focus on the following areas:

\*subject to the number of students enrolled on the course

- Ensuring courses and modules are robust and cater to the needs of students
- Ensuring continual improvement of course content
- Actively working to identify students' issues and needs
- Liaise with School Reps, University and Students' Union Staff
- Signpost students to specific services in the University and Union when needed

The Course Rep must maintain a positive relationship and strong communication with the University/ SU Staff, and their School Rep. Their key task is to represent students' views at course level by attending Course Committee meetings and Faculty Council meetings. Course Reps are not expected to solve problems first-hand, but they are expected to work with staff to develop solutions to issues identified by the cohorts they represent. Course Reps are also expected to actively participate in closing the feedback loop to with their cohorts- communicating outcomes and updates back out to them as and when necessary.

Course Reps will be expected to:

- Attend training sessions provided by the Students' Union and the University
- Attend and contribute to meetings (Course Committees and Faculty Council)
- Provide a Report each semester to the Students' Union
- Attend the Student Leaders Conferences
- Help to promote the National Student Survey (NSS) and Rate Your Module
- Help to promote the Student Representative system

The experience and skills Course Reps acquire throughout their role will enhance their employability and contribute to their personal development. Course Reps will be able to demonstrate experience of:

- Communicating with a multitude of stakeholders
- Organisation
- Diplomacy
- Negotiation
- Consultation and research

- Managing expectations
- Teamwork
- Problem-solving

Course Reps are volunteers – they are not paid for undertaking their role. Instead Course Reps can engage in the Reward and Recognition system in place by the Students' Union as a way of recognising them for the work they do and highlighting the significance and value their contributions make. All Course Reps are encouraged to engage in this system and participate in a schedule of activities provided for them by the Students' Union in order to offer an array of opportunities for them to enhance their skills and employability.

## **School Rep Job Description**

School Reps provide a vital element of the student representation structure- by representing the student voice at School/Institute level.

They seek to work with both students and staff to continuously improve the student learning experience in partnership with the Students' Union and University of Wolverhampton. To represent the broad range of student views from the courses within their School / Institute.

During the year, School Reps will be offered additional self-development and training opportunities relating to student engagement, quality assurance and enhancement and partnership work with the University. To support them in the wider role activities they have.

The key School Rep responsibilities, cover a variety of activities that look to enhance the student learning and teaching environment:

- To gather the collective opinions of students within their School and report these back to the Students' Union and University via defined channels.
- To be accessible to, and representative of students in their School.
- Attend and raise student issues and needs at Faculty Academic Enhancement Committees
- Chair the Faculty Council, which meets twice a year.
- Engage, involve and report back to students to highlight issues of concern and to celebrate good practice.
- Communicate effectively with the course to ensure key knowledge and information is shared.
- Attend Students' Union training and networking sessions
- To attend and contribute to the Student Leaders Conference
- To provide a written report at the end of each semester which accurately reflects the views and opinions of students within their School (both positive and negative).
- To work across all University Campuses

- Maintain a close working professional relationship with staff members in the School (e.g. the Student Experience Principle Lecturer)
- To engage in and contribute to University projects / initiatives which seek to improve the student experience as directed.
- To promote the National Student Survey within their School.

School Reps are paid employees at the Students' Union, who work as part of the SU Voice Team to ensure student voice is captured and actioned, in close collaboration with the University. They focus on ensuring the feedback loop is closed to students with transparent communication and look to actively promote the impact of student voice to increase engagement in student representation.