



**Undeb
Myfyrwyr**
PCYDDS

**UWTS'D
Students'
Union**

LIMITED EDITION

COURSE REP Handbook



CONGRATULATIONS on being elected as a COURSE REP!



We are excited to have you onboard with our work to ensure that UWTSD students have the best possible experience during their time as a student here. This handbook is a resource for you during your time as a Course Rep – use it well!

If you have any questions, drop us an email at **studentvoice@uwtsd.ac.uk**.





Course Rep Overview

#1



Course Rep **CHECKLIST**

This handbook will help you get set up as a Course Rep, and to do so, the below are things to complete to ensure you are prepared, ready to get going, and know what support and resources are available to you.

- ☐ **Read your Course Rep Handbook**
- ☐ **Create an account on our Website**
- ☐ **Attend training sessions**
- ☐ **Be visible**
- ☐ **Prepare**
- ☐ **Keep a Record of your Achievements**
- ☐ **Feedback, feedback, feedback!**
- ☐ **Stay in touch, and ask for help when you need it**

What is a Course Rep?

Student Voice is at the heart of all we do, and Course Reps are integral to our partnership approach in embedding this in decision-making at all levels of UWTSD. Feedback is essential for the continuous improvement of the student experience at UWTSD, and your position as Course Rep is vital in making sure the views and experiences of students are heard.

As a Course Rep, your role is to canvas students on your course, to find out what they think, and to represent their views. You will be an essential and valued link between students, the Students' Union, and the University, representing the Student Voice at Student Staff Committees (SSCs), and providing insights for quality processes.

The role of the Course Rep

As a Course Rep you are expected to:

- Promote your role and responsibilities to others on your course, so you become a friendly face and point of contact for anybody with feedback for the University.
- Consult students on matters of their academic interests, finding out what they think of things such as feedback and assessment, course structure, and learning and teaching.
- Represent the views of students at Student Staff Committees, Annual Programme Reviews, and Institute-level reviews where applicable.
- Relay meeting outcomes to students on your course, to make sure they are informed of how their feedback is being implemented.
- Where necessary, to signpost students to more appropriate Students' Union or University services so that they are effectively supported.
- Actively engage with Student Voice Reps for your Institute.



In order to thrive and enjoy your role as Course Rep, it is important that you:

- Participate in compulsory training run by the Students' Union.
- Familiarise yourself with the Students' Union and the University services so that you can refer more complex issues.
- Attend informal meetings run by the Student Voice Reps and the Students' Union.
- Stay connected with the Students' Union to report on progress and any areas you need additional support with - help us to help you!

The role of the Students' Union

The role of the Students' Union is to support you in your role as Course Rep. We are here to guide you, to answer any questions or concerns you have, and to empower you in your role. We offer you training, help you to promote your role, and assist you in raising issues when you are unsure of how or where to go.

The Student Voice Reps work in partnership with senior staff at the University to create solutions and make your voices heard. In the feedback structure, this is the next step up from a Course Rep, and a great thing to consider after your term as a Course Rep!

A Student Voice Rep is a key student representative for matters related to the Academic Experience at Institute level. They work with other Student Voice Reps and the Course Reps in their department and wider institute to ensure that feedback is heard, is shared, and is actioned at all levels of the University reporting system. It is the next level in ensuring the student voice is represented at key meetings.

The Students' Union collects information from all SSCs to make sure that when there are themes impacting the experience of students, we can all come together to take action. At the same time, there may be positive themes coming from SSCs, and we work to help all Course Reps celebrate when things are going well on courses.

The role of the University

The role of the University is to provide you with opportunities to give feedback about your experiences, such as through organising Student Staff Committees (SSCs) for you to attend. The University has a commitment to ensuring student voice activity is embedded in all aspects of its planning, and to acknowledge its importance in enhancing and improving the student experience. The University also have a role in creating an inclusive culture where you are given the opportunity to raise ideas and issues, and where the views of students are treated with respect.

Although Course Reps are student representatives, for our system to be effective, academic staff have a vital role to play in ensuring reps are elected for all courses, and this collaborative partnership is key for the student voice to be recognised at all levels.

Academic Representation Structure

Your role plays an integral part in the representation of students' academic experiences at UWTSD. Feedback is shared at various levels within the University meeting structure.

Information sharing happens through the following structure (see diagram)

Though the feedback provided circulates from students all the way through to your elected Presidents, it is important to recognise the cyclical nature of feedback loops, which means that updates received at each level also are shared back to the level that initially provided the feedback.

How to Be a Course Rep

You have been elected as Course Rep by your classmates to act and speak up on behalf of students on your programme. Your role is to find out what students on your course think about their academic experiences, and to relay that information to the University and Students' Union so that they can make positive changes. It is important during your time as Course Rep that you do not only give your own opinions, or those of your friends - your responsibility is to relay all opinions presented to you in your role as Course Rep, whether they align with your own or not.

You must actively engage, canvas, and represent your whole group, even if this means you do not necessarily agree with the opinions you are presenting. Remember that if you are ever unsure or uncomfortable in presenting any student feedback, you can contact one of our Student Voice Team for advice: **studentvoice@uwtsd.ac.uk**.

All Students

Individual Level



Course Reps

Programme Level



Student Voice Reps

Institute Level



Presidents

University Level



Student Staff Committees

#2

Student Staff Committees

Student Staff Committees (SSCs) are important meetings with university course and programme staff that you attend as a Course Rep – sometimes they are known by a different name; however, the principles remain the same. At least three SSCs take place during the year. These are formal meetings that are minuted, which means that the student feedback you present at the meeting will go on record. This means that there is evidence of discussions and agreed action points for all in attendance to be able to refer back to

Things for you to consider as the Course Rep

Preparing for an SSC

- Find out the dates and times of the meeting – prioritise attending these as much as possible around your academic duties as a student
- Collect student feedback in advance – use the agenda as a guiding tool for any additional questions to ask your fellow students
- Read the minutes from the previous meetings – note what student feedback and actions have been discussed before
- Write down specific questions and points you wish to voice in the meeting

During an SSC

- You are representing all students in your cohort at these meetings so conduct yourself professionally
- Give feedback constructively – provide ideas for solutions
- Be respectful – especially if there is a disagreement on a matter; treat others how you wish to be treated

- Take notes and ask questions - if you do not understand something, ask for clarification and staff will always be happy to explain further

The Agenda (what to expect)

- Updates from Staff
- Annual Programme Reviews
- Module Feedback
- Have your notes ready to ensure your voice is heard!

After an SSC

- Close the feedback loop by updating students on the outcome of the SSC and any potential actions that have been assigned
- Link in with the Students' Union Student Voice Team as well as your Student Voice Rep with updates or concerns for extra support



No
Graffiti
Offenders will
be prosecuted

HIP HOP

PRETTY SHITTY CITY

53

Supreme
HELL OPEN
OBEY
preme

melgroove

TSMT

TSMT

TSMT

LLA REM.. BIL

Feedback Loop

#3

The Feedback Loop

The feedback loop is a continuous cycle of communication between yourself, key stakeholders in the Students' Union, and the University, which ensures that information is shared, is discussed, is followed through on, and is actioned where appropriate. It is about driving forward improvements to the student experience.

Key components of the Feedback Loop

Student Feedback

- Issues, ideas, and positives raised by course mates

Course Rep Communicates with Staff

- Student feedback is taken to relevant staff via SSCs

University Action

- You work in partnership with staff to address the feedback you have given

Course Rep Communicates with Students

- Keep course mates updated with where their feedback has gone and what action is being taken
- It is important to keep the loop going, even if feedback has stalled in the communication process

Students Experience Change

- Action leads to an improved student experience

Student Feedback

- The cycle starts again – student feedback continues to be collated, particularly in relation to how students feel about any recent changes made as a result of prior feedback

- It is really important that Course Reps and University Staff work together to close the feedback loop – the Students' Union Student Voice Team is there to support with this as well.

Things to consider as a Course Rep

Unsure of how to promote yourself? There are numerous ways you can get yourself out there, and engage with your course mates; however, here are some starting suggestions:

- Ask lecturers if you can make brief announcements in class - Introduce yourself, outline your role and goals, and how you can be contacted
- Ask to put your contact details on programme noticeboards or forums on Moodle
- Talk directly with students as much as possible – this is the most effective way to get yourself out there!
- Use the Students' Union – if you have an idea about how to boost engagement and you need some support in setting it up, get in touch with the Student Voice Team!
- Consider writing a blog post for the Students' Union website to share success stories and raise your profile as a Course Rep



Student Feedback

Sometimes students may not be forthcoming with feedback; however, that does not mean that they do not have things to say, and it is important to get both positive and constructive feedback as it all contributes to change. Use the method of feedback collection that suits your student group best and will give you the data and insights you are looking for:

- Lectures - ask if you can have five minutes at the start or end of class without the lecturer present to talk with everyone together
- Speak to students individually before/after a class
- Online forums
- Host a focus group
- Anonymous surveys
- Opinion Polls
- Module evaluation surveys - encouraging participation in these will benefit your cohort as this information goes to SSCs as well!

When asking questions to students, make sure to ask open questions. Consider how you would like to be represented. If you were asked "Do you have any feedback?" would you be able to answer that question, or would you need to consider a topic of discussion?

Unsure of How to Resolve Issues?

The Student Voice Team in the Students' Union are here to give you as much help and support as you need. Your Course Rep training will equip you with the information you need to effectively resolve issues, and the below can help get you started:

An issue affecting students on your course

- If pressing, do not wait until the next SSC to raise concerns – tackle time-sensitive issues by addressing them directly with your programme team

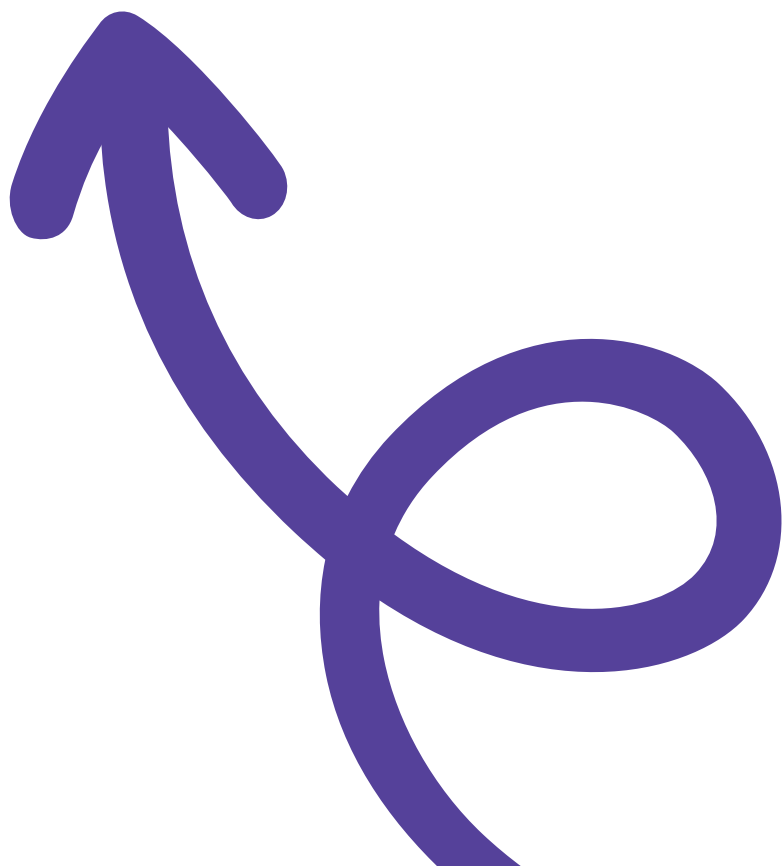
- If an issue is brought to you but not time-sensitive, it is still important feedback, and you can collate it with other feedback and take it to the next SSC
- Follow up with students and follow up with staff - close the feedback loop!

An issue affecting students across the University

- If issues raised with you impact students outside of your programme as well, raise this with Student Voice Reps and elected Presidents (Sabbatical Officers) - in sharing this feedback, it can then be raised at appropriate University level meetings where high-level issues are addressed

An issue involving individual staff members

- It is important that when you are giving feedback, that you do not name or publicly criticise individual members of staff or students
- If approached with concerns about an individual staff member, seek advice from the Student Voice Team and potentially the wider Students' Union to handle this sensitively and discreetly for all parties involved



Gynrychiolydd
MYFYRWYR

HELO, Rwy'n • HELLO, I'M A

STUDENT
Representative

Undeb
Myfyrwyr
Yr Ysbyty
uwtsd
Students'
Union

@uwtsdunion
uwtsdunion.co.uk/rep

Boundaries & Signposting

#4

You can help with...



- Study resources (such as availability of books, computer labs, laptop loans, library resources, Moodle, etc.)
- Curriculum and course content issues
- Communication between University Staff, Students' Union Staff, and Students
- Timetabling issues
- Placement concerns
- Hidden course costs that the University may be unaware of
- Issues of course structure (e.g. block teaching or work distribution)
- Assessments and deadlines
- Teaching methods and resources
- Accessibility

You cannot help with...



- **Welfare concerns** - signpost to Student Services
- **Formal complaints** - signpost to the Students' Union (send an email to **unionadvice@uwtsd.ac.uk**)
- **Individual student cases** such as allegations of academic misconduct, non-academic misconduct, appeals, or extenuating circumstances - signpost to Students' Union Advice Team (send an email to **unionadvice@uwtsd.ac.uk**)
- **Allegations of harassment or bullying** - signpost to the Students' Union
- **Individual student performance** - signpost to Course Staff
- **Complaints against staff members** - signpost to the Students' Union

The Boundaries of Your Role and Signposting

As a Course Rep, you will find that students at times feel more comfortable approaching you with issues than approaching a Union or University member of staff. It is important to be clear on what you can and cannot help them with. You will be a point of contact for any course-level issues; anything outside of those boundaries and parameters, please signpost to support services or contact the Student Voice Team.

It is okay to not know all the answers – anything you are unsure about, contact the Students' Union or the Hwb Helpdesk, depending on the concern you are raising.

Key Contacts

The Students' Union Team can be seen at www.uwtsdunion.co.uk/team, however, below are key contacts that will benefit you in your role.

Student Voice Team (studentvoice@uwtsd.ac.uk)

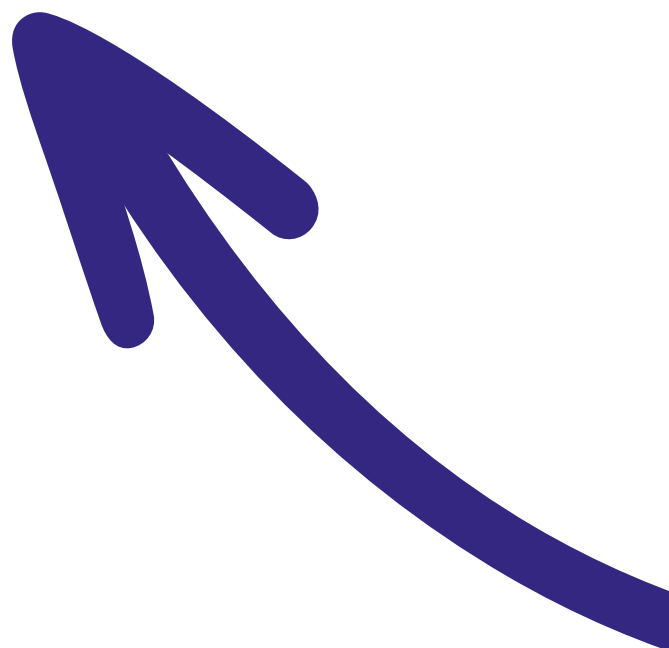
- Student Voice Manager
- Student Voice Coordinators

Sabbatical Officers

- Group President
- Lampeter Campus President
- Swansea Campus President

Other Student Reps

- Course Reps
- Student Voice Reps



Useful Terms

Academic Office	The department responsible for the development and management of the University's academic regulatory framework, quality assurance, and enhancement and academic experience procedures
Agenda	A document shared before the meeting which outlines what will be discussed during that meeting
Chair	The person that leads a meeting and ensures that it stays on track for timing and follows the agenda
Institute	This is the name for the grouping of Academic Disciplines into their 'homes'
IMH	Institute of Management and Health
IEH	Institute of Education and Humanities
IICL	Institute of Inner City Learning
WISA	Wales Institute of Science and Art
NSS	National Student Survey (a survey sent to all undergraduates in their final year of study across the UK)
Minutes	A record of a meeting



Useful Terms

PTES	Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey (a survey sent to all Postgraduate Taught Students)
PRES	Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (a survey sent to all Postgraduate Researchers)
President / Sabbatical Officer	A student who has taken a year out of their degree (or just graduated) elected by all students to represent student interests on a full-time basis (for a year; maximum of 2 years)
Part-Time Officer	An elected volunteer who campaigns with and represents students whilst studying; each position has specific responsibilities
Signposting	Directing students to appropriate services rather than tackling issues that are not your responsibility
Student Voice Reps	Appointed students who work directly with Course Reps to ensure that feedback from academic disciplines is shared with Institute management
Students' Union Advice Service	A free, confidential, and independent from the University service that sits within the Students' Union available to all UWTSD students





**Undeb
Myfyrwyr**
PCYDDS

UWTSD
**Students'
Union**

**www.uwtsdunion.co.uk/rep
studentvoice@uwtsd.ac.uk**