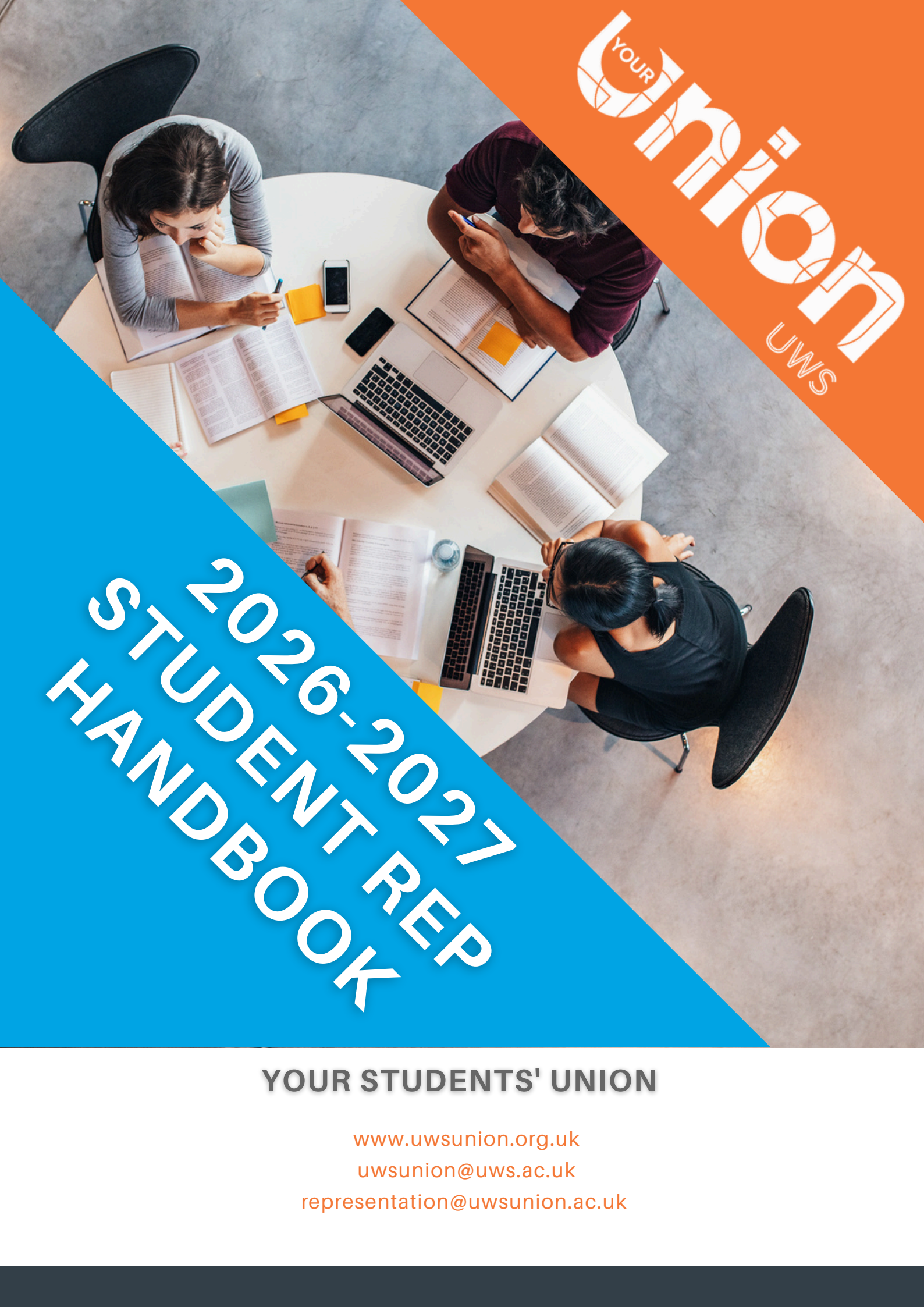




YOUR
Union
UWS

2026-2027 STUDENT REP HANDBOOK

YOUR STUDENTS' UNION

www.uwsunion.org.uk

uwsunion@uws.ac.uk

representation@uwsunion.ac.uk

WELCOME FROM YOUR VP EDUCATION



Hi everyone, and welcome to our amazing community of Student Reps!

My name is Akriti Shyam, and I'm your Vice President Education for 2026/27. I am a full-time elected officer at the UWS Students' Union, working to make sure student voices are heard and acted upon across the University. I am also studying for a Master's in Business Administration at UWS. Before becoming VP Education, I was a Student Buddy and President of the Indian Society, so I know first-hand how getting involved can open doors, build confidence, and help you make friends and connections that last well beyond university.

First of all, a huge thank you for becoming a Student Rep! You've signed up for an exciting opportunity to make a real difference, develop valuable skills, and help shape the student experience for your classmates. As a Rep, you'll be the link between students, the Students' Union, and the University, sharing ideas, raising issues, celebrating successes, and helping make positive changes happen.

One of my biggest priorities this year is making sure students can see that their feedback leads to real action, and that's where you come in. Through conversations with your classmates, Faculty Forums, Campus Forums, and other opportunities to share feedback, you'll play a key role in improving the UWS experience for students across all campuses.

The good news is that you're not on your own. The Students' Union team and I are here to support you with training, guidance, and opportunities to develop your confidence, leadership, and communication skills. My advice? Get involved, ask questions, share ideas, meet other Reps, and enjoy the experience! Being a Rep is a fantastic opportunity to make friends, build skills for your CV, and create positive change for students.

Thank you again for stepping up and taking on this important role. I'm really excited to work with you throughout 2026/27, and I can't wait to see what we achieve together!

Best wishes, Akriti Shyam Vice President Education UWS Students' Union

Stay connected! Follow us on social media:
Instagram: @uwsunionvp

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STUDENT REP KEY DATES 2026-2027

[Click here for up to date
information for your
campus or faculty](#)

September	Term 1 starts SU: Election starts for Vice Presidents Faculty (this year only)
October	SU: - Rep Training - In person / Live online interactive training facilitated by the Student Union Rep Team - First round of Campus and Faculty Assemblies held by Student Union - Department Reps elected from pool of Course Reps facilitated by the Student Union Rep Team - Election concludes for Vice Presidents Faculty (this year only) UWS: Term 1 Student Staff Liaison Group held
November / December	SU: - Second round of Campus and Faculty Assemblies held by Student Union - Rep Training Self Study module made available to Reps (who did not attend in person training) UWS: - Student Staff Liaison Group continued - Department Board held - Faculty Board held
January	Term 2 starts SU & UWS: Student Partnership Conference
February	SU: - Rep Training - In person / Live online interactive training facilitated by the Student Union Rep Team - Third round of Campus and Faculty Assemblies held by Student Union
March	SU: - Elections voting period for Student Presidents, Vice Presidents Faculty and University level PGR Reps - Fourth round of Campus and Faculty Assemblies held by Student Union - Rep Training Self Study module made available to Reps (who did not attend in person training) UWS: - Term 2 Student Staff Liaison Groups held - Department Board held - Faculty Board held
April	SU: - Student Union Big Awards Ceremony held - Course and Department Reps invited to complete Rep Evaluation Survey from Student Union UWS: - Term 2 Student Staff Liaison Groups continue - Department Board held - Faculty Board held
May	Term 3 starts
June	SU: - Rep Training Self Study module made available to Reps (who did not attend in person training) - Handover period for outgoing Student Presidents, VP Faculties and PGR Reps UWS: - Term 3 Student Staff Liaison Groups held - Department Board held - Faculty Board held - UWS Learning and Teaching Conference
July / August	SU & UWS (via Student Rep Working Group): Review of Representation from previous year including development of Representation guidance documents and resources SU: Induction and training for newly elected Student Presidents, VP Faculties and PGR Reps



STUDENT REP TRAINING AND SUPPORT ON BRIGHTSPACE

New Brightspace for Reps - 'Student Rep Training'

Your main source of information and communication with other reps throughout the year will be the Brightspace for Rep called 'Student Rep Training'. This is where you will access all training and development opportunities exclusive to Reps.

You can also use Brightspace to message other reps, ask questions about your role, keep up to date on all things Rep related and create a community of Reps to support each other.

The Rep Training provides an introduction to the role of course rep, key models you use and is designed to help you perform the rep role well.

Training takes place in person on campus or live online at various points during the year which you can sign up to via Brightspace Student Rep Training. There will be an online module available all year round for those who can't attend in person, the first live sessions will be held in October 2026 with more to follow.

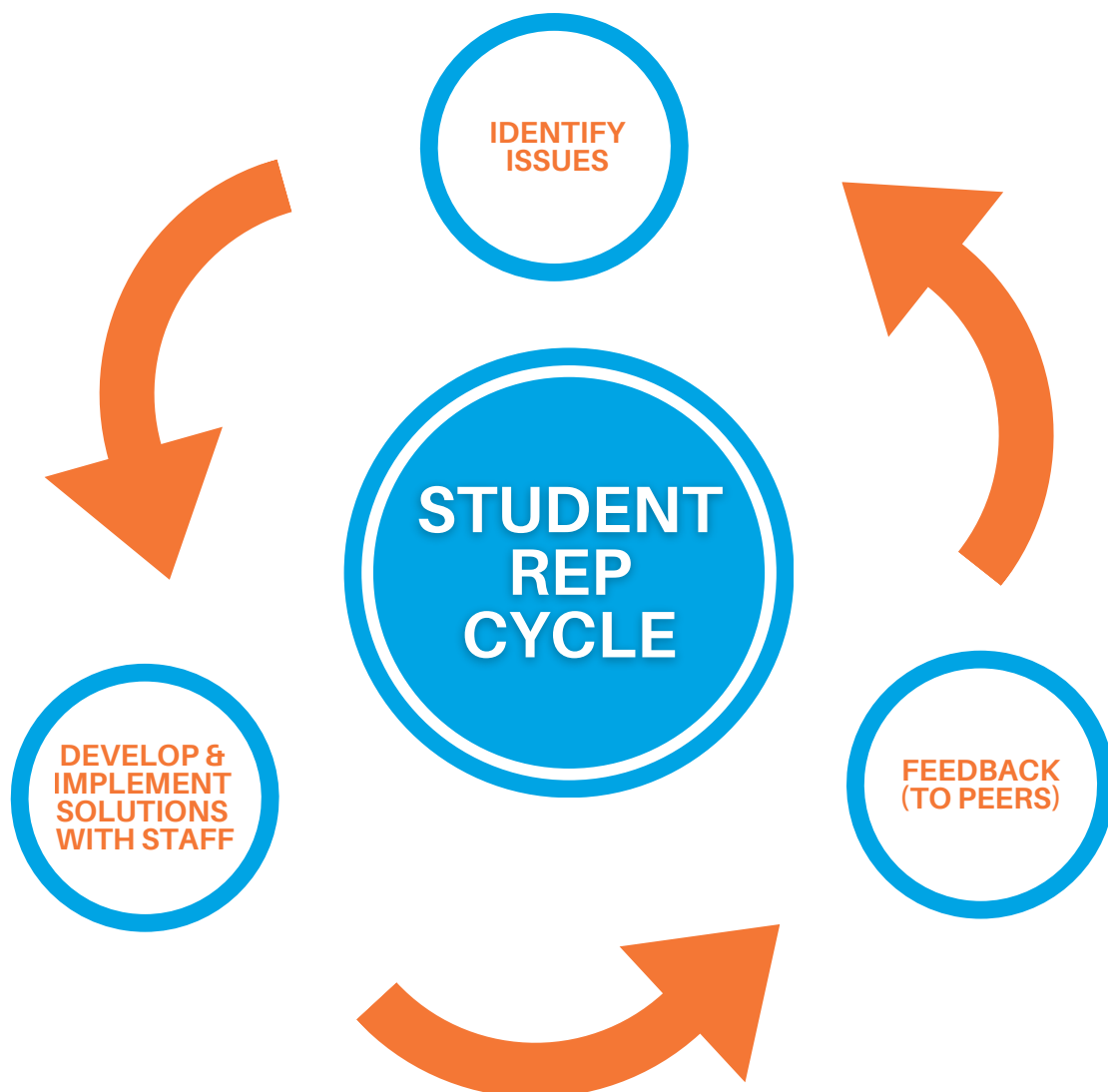
Skills development self study modules:

In addition to Rep Training, there are additional self study modules available on Brightspace to help you enhance your skills, not only will these help you become a better rep, they are also great transferable skills for the workplace. Additional training includes:

- Developing meeting skills and chair training for those Chairing Student Staff Liaison Group meetings
- Various communication modules from UWS Careers
- Selection of MS Form templates for gathering feedback
- Introduction to Leadership and Mentoring

THE ROLE OF A STUDENT REP

1. To improve the student learning experience in partnership with UWS and Your Students' Union
2. To represent your classmates' views and opinions in relation to learning and teaching
3. To provide both positive and negative feedback to staff
4. To act as a communication channel between students and staff



UWS Representation Structure 26/27

Student Presidents

The President and Vice-president Education are paid full time student leaders working at the highest levels of UWS.



University-Level PGR Reps

These students sit on UWS level committees, and gather information from other PGR reps.

- PGR Senate Rep
- Doctoral College Board Reps
- Research Enterprise and Advisory Committee Reps



Vice Presidents Faculty

One VP Faculty per Faculty are paid part time. Represent taught students within each Faculty and work together with Department reps and Student Presidents.



Department Reps

Two Department reps per Department talk to reps to see what's happening in taught courses for their Department and keep VP Faculties informed.



Course Reps

The biggest group of reps at UWS, keeping Department reps informed and gathering opinions from fellow students studying on their course.



PGR Reps

These reps gather information from peers studying similar topics to them and feed up to the university level reps.



Students!

Students of all levels are experts in the learning experience and get involved by informing their reps of their experiences.



REMIT OF A STUDENT REP

- As a student rep, you are concerned with the **academic learning experience** of the students you represent.
- While you may agree that the coffee offerings on campus could be better, as a student rep you are **not** responsible for improving this! BUT please get someone to tell us about it!

Your Union, Your Community,
Your Voice – Everything Matters

If you or your classmates have something you want to tell the Union, or have an idea to improve UWS – Tell us!



REP TASKS

- Gather student opinion.
- Provide feedback to staff and students.
- Attend meetings with UWS staff.
 - Course reps: staff-student liaison group (SSLG) meetings
 - Department reps: Department boards
 - VP Faculty: Faculty boards and other relevant UWS committee's
- Present student views at meetings.
- Develop solutions to issues.
- Pass issues on to Your Union.
- Attend the Faculty Forum to discuss issues important to students.

GET AND STAY IN TOUCH

- Send a mass email through our website.
- Look out for messages arriving from the students you represent.
- Make use of social media.
- Take time at in-person or online gatherings to remind students you're their rep and to get their feedback.



hello!



GATHERING STUDENT OPINIONS

Let your peers know you're available to hear their feedback.

- Send occasional emails throughout the term. Include updates on meetings you've had with staff.
- Take a minute or two at the beginning or end of classes (with your lecturer's permission) to touch base.
- Consider setting up an open-ended survey to use as a digital comments box.
- Consider making yourself available to your peers on social media.

Make sure the opinions you gather are relevant and representative.

- If a small number of students have raised an issue, create a poll or survey to distribute and gauge the level of agreement.
- Remember that the feedback you gather should only be about their *academic experience* at UWS.

PROVIDING FEEDBACK TO STAFF

Staff are here to work with you to improve UWS for everyone.

- Pass opinions you've gathered from your peers to staff in your meetings (SSLGs, Department boards, or Faculty boards).
- Consider emailing or arranging a meeting with staff if you feel something cannot wait until the next scheduled SSLG or board meeting.
- **Use the following guide on effective feedback to foster positive and productive relationships with staff members.**

STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Curriculum

Course content; course design and development ;optional and compulsory modules; learning outcomes; placements; study abroad opportunities; inclusive curriculum; sustainability in the curriculum.

Resources, Environment and Technologies

Library; IT; Virtual Learning Environment (VLE); learning spaces; course resources; digital technologies such as equipment and software; external learning environments; study spaces.

Learning and Teaching Delivery

Teaching methods; mode of study; independent and group work; contact time; class sizes; staff development; inclusive learning and teaching practices; peer learning.

Progression and Achievement

Induction; support between levels of study; individual academic progress; personal and professional development; employability; transitions to further study; articulation; recognition of achievement.

Assessment and Feedback

Assessment methods; frequency of assessments; marking criteria; consistency of marking; formative assessment and feedback; authentic assessment; quality and timeliness of feedback; assessment and feedback support.

Community and Belonging

Learning community; social opportunities; peer support; sense of belonging; community spaces; inclusive communities; student-led communities; local community engagement.

Student Partnership

Student representation system; student partnership in decision making; students' association; course evaluations; student surveys; student voice policies; student engagement in quality processes; hearing diverse student voices; student-led projects and initiatives.

Support and Guidance

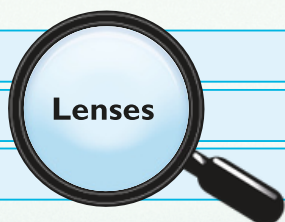
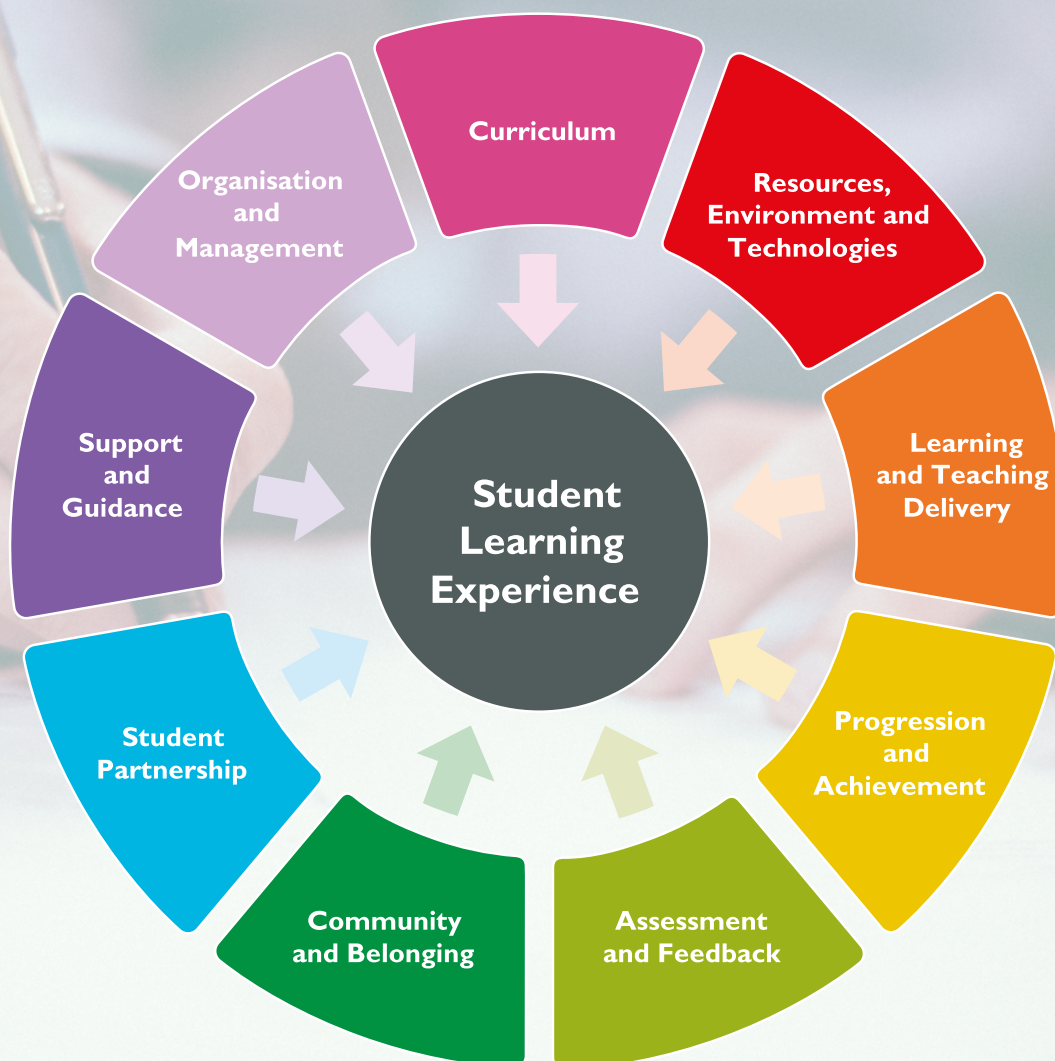
Academic support; personal support; disability services; mental health and wellbeing services; support for diverse student groups; financial support; support for students with additional needs for learning.

Organisation and Management

Admissions processes; communication; timetabling; student administration; governance; transport; accommodation; complaints and concerns; equality, diversity and inclusion processes and policies; equality monitoring.

TALKING ABOUT YOUR LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Our partners at SPARQS (Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland) have created this diagram to help you formulate questions to ask your course mates and articulate your experiences in meetings with staff. These nine categories capture the elements that make up your learning experience; use them to identify and communicate positives, problems, and solutions.



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Mental Health and Wellbeing

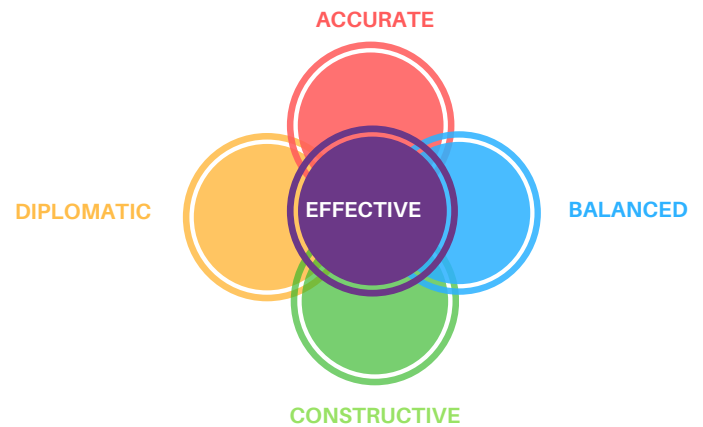
Sustainable Development

You can find out more about using this model on the SPARQS website

[Student Learning Experience Model](#)

THE A, B, C, D OF EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK

Provided by Student Partnerships in Quality
Scotland (sparqs)



A is for Accurate

- Include objectively verifiable information.
- Use facts and figures to support your points.

X I have spoken to some of my class, and we think that there is not enough practical work on the x module.

✓ I have had a discussion with my class group, and we agreed by show of hands that 18/21 feel that there is not enough practical work on the x module.

C is for Constructive

- Present possible solutions to problems.

X As a class, we never know what we are supposed to be doing from week to week in our x module classes.

✓ The class is keen to have a plan of work and assessments given to us at the beginning of each semester in our x module classes.

B is for Balanced

- Remember to include the positive with the negative.
- Pay attention to how you present criticism.

X The whole course is really not well put together and the assessments don't fit well with the teaching.

✓ The theory elements of the course are taught well, are interesting and understandable to the majority (17/20) of the class. However, the same number would like more practical assessments to help us feel confident that we can perform the tasks well.

D is for Diplomatic

- Avoid personal attacks.
- Be specific about modules instead of naming staff members.

X Mr Smith is a terrible lecturer who never gives assessments back on time.

✓ The return of assessments in our x module classes is always too late for us to learn from our mistakes for the next assessment.



PARTICIPATING IN MEETINGS

There are three stages to participating in meetings: **before**, **during** and **after**.

BEFORE A MEETING

- Find out when, where, and how meetings are going to take place. Check out page 16 for helpful contacts in your school.
- Find out what your classmates think about their learning experience.
- Speak to other reps to get their perspectives and share information.
- Ask for items to be put on the agenda. Get in touch with the chair or secretary and let them know what topic you want to discuss.
- Read any papers that have been sent around as well as the previous meeting's minutes. They will remind you if you need to follow up on anything.

DURING A MEETING

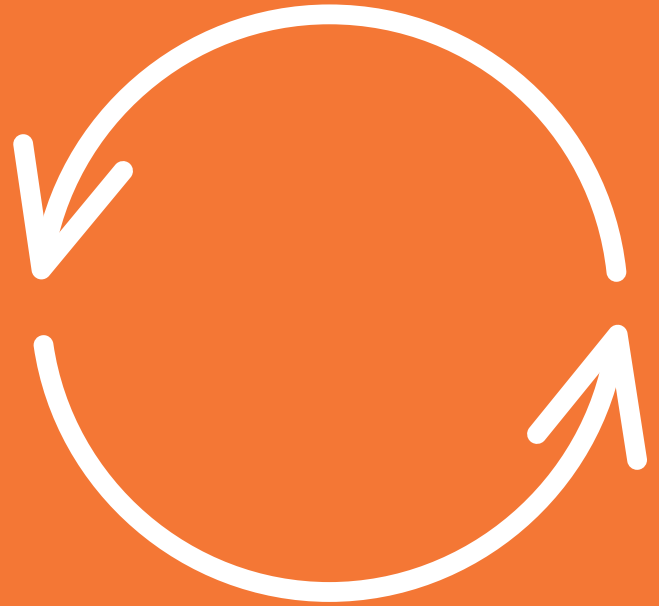
- Take notes. This will help you to follow up later.
- Remember the A, B, C, D of effective feedback.
- Ask questions if you don't understand something.
- Support other reps in the meeting.

AFTER A MEETING

- Report back to your peers.
- Check over the minutes.
- Do any actions that you are responsible for.
- Follow up on any areas of concern.
- Ask yourself: did you achieve what you wanted to achieve? If not, what are you going to do about it?

CLOSING THE FEEDBACK LOOP

Remember to report back to your peers after meetings. You are the link between them and staff, so always communicate the outcomes of meetings. You can do this in person, by email, or on social media forums.



PASSING ISSUES ON TO YOUR VP FACULTY OR YOUR UNION

Faculty Forums are open forums, led by the relevant Vice President Faculty, where Reps and students can discuss their academic experience, identify priorities and influence change within their Faculty.

Attendees include:

- All Student Reps Student Presidents
- SU Support staff
- Faculty Staff leads
- Academic Societies

In addition, all students are invited to attend

To find out more about all our student voice forums and how you can get further involved, click on Representation below

[REPRESENTATION](#)

KEY CONTACTS

Your Students' Union is here to support and represent students across all campuses and is made up of elected officers and support staff. The Student Union Support team and the Student Presidents are those you are most likely to engage with or contact.

If you are unsure what to do about something, need advice, or think that something is bigger than you as a rep can deal with get in touch with one of the team

STUDENT UNION SUPPORT SERVICES



Representation Team

Your representation team supports reps, especially regarding training, student voice mechanisms and policy creation. They work to ensure the representation systems run smoothly.

You can contact them at representation@uwsunion.org.uk



Student Societies and Engagement Team

Your student engagement team is here for anything student societies and volunteering related! Contact: societies@uwsunion.org.uk.

If you'd like to book any of our spaces for student activities: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScDUZWjqjD599kVLY7fOK_LGqxnD_IDwAmxbICKfMqv_DnAKQ/viewform



Advice Service Team

Our advice service provide information, advice, representation and advocacy to students. They deal with issues of extenuating circumstances, appeals, complaints, plagiarism and disciplinary issues, fitness to practice, hardship, personal issues and hate crime, student health, and accommodation advice. You may want to refer students to an advice worker if they are having individual issues which are not your responsibility as a student rep. You can contact the team at advice@uwsunion.org.uk





FACULTY CONTACTS

If you have a problem or a query within your Faculty, there are people that you can contact.

COURSE LEADERS AND PERSONAL TUTORS

In every Faculty, your course leaders are those who deliver your courses, so they are your key partners in improving the courses and dealing with any issues. However, they also want to hear what they're doing well so they can keep doing it! You can get in touch with them any time in your role as a rep.

If you don't feel you can approach a course leader about something, you can also speak to your personal tutor or the Faculty Key Contacts listed below, who all work closely with your teaching teams and Students' Union to support reps. You should email both staff named below when contacting your Faculty.

FACULTY OF CREATIVE ARTS, BUSINESS & SOCIAL SCIENCES (CBSS)

Fiona Gibson-Green and Sarah Black

Fiona.Gibson-Green@uws.ac.uk, Sarah.Black@uws.ac.uk

FACULTY OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CARE (HESC)

Elizabeth Richmond and Sarah Black

Elizabeth.Richmond@uws.ac.uk, Sarah.Black@uws.ac.uk

FACULTY OF COMPUTING, SCIENCES & ENGINEERING (CSE)

Michelle Taylor and Elizabeth Richmond

Michelle.Taylor@uws.ac.uk, Elizabeth.Richmond@uws.ac.uk

WHERE TO GO FOR HELP

Sometimes, your peers may come to you with problems or situations that are not related to your role as a rep. In these situations, you shouldn't try to give advice yourself. Instead, refer people on to other support services in the university.

Plagiarism and disciplinary issues
Extenuating circumstances
Financial difficulties
Fitness to practice issues
Emergency financial hardship needed
Personal issues and hate crime
Raising a formal complaint

Students' Union Advice Workers

advice@uwsunion.org.uk

Careers advice
Counselling
Study Skills support
Disability services
Financial Advice
International or EU student issues (such as visa or
Brexit queries, settling into life in the UK, trips and
tours, work during and after
study)

UWS Hub Services

hub@uws.ac.uk

Urgent issues that can't wait until the next SSLG
meeting with staff.

If you feel comfortable, get in touch with your
course leader or personal tutor and talk to them
directly. If you don't feel comfortable, then contact
the union at uwsunion@uws.ac.uk

Any other issues

If you're not sure what to do or need extra help,
email representation@uwsunion.org.uk

REWARDS FOR BEING A STUDENT REP

Being a rep is great experience.

You could gain CV-worthy experience in:

- communicating with peers and staff
- negotiating
- problem solving
- research
- networking
- organisation
- time management.

There are also ways that you and your achievements as a rep can be formally recognised.

UWS Union Certificate of Participation

The Certificate of Participation is one way we can recognise the work you do as a Rep which you can show employers.

To gain a certificate you must meet the following criteria:

1. Complete student rep training. This is situated on the Rep Teams site, with a live follow-up session that you will need to sign up to.
2. Participate in student council and meetings with staff, either in person or engaging in absentia by providing written feedback to the Chair.
3. Complete a reflective survey on your experience as a Rep. The link to this will be sent to all Reps at the end of the Academic Year.

Student Rep of the Year Award

Every year the union recognises the excellent work of staff and students at our Big Awards ceremony. You can be nominated by your peers or even nominate yourself. Our shortlist last year had first-time student reps on it, so even if you've just started, why not aim big? Maybe we'll see you collecting an award in March!

UWS Volunteer Recognition Award (VRA)

The UWS Volunteer Recognition Award is an initiative to recognise volunteering activity undertaken by students in addition to their studies, this can include being a Rep.

To find out more about this award, please visit - [VRA information](#)

The UWS Award

The UWS Award is designed to boost your employability and provide recognition for the activities you participate in outside of your studies, this includes being a Rep.

To find out more about this award and to register your interest, please visit the UWS Careers Website here - [UWS Award](#)

