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What is Academic Representation?

RHSU definition:

 "The purpose of academic representation is to achieve positive change that improves the educational experience of students at Royal Holloway University and engages students as partners in the development, assurance and enhancement of their learning."

Recent changes to the structure

- Academic representation at Royal Holloway has four levels.

- Each level of representation has specific responsibilities and duties to make sure the system is as effective as it can be.

- Each level feeds into the one above it, and vice versa, to ensure a constant flow of information from one end of campus to the other.

- Course Reps are volunteers, and the number of reps is uncapped- anyone can become a Course Rep.

- Senior Course Reps are also voluntary and uncapped but they must have been a rep previously to take on this role.

Vice President Education

School Reps

Senior Course Reps

Course Reps
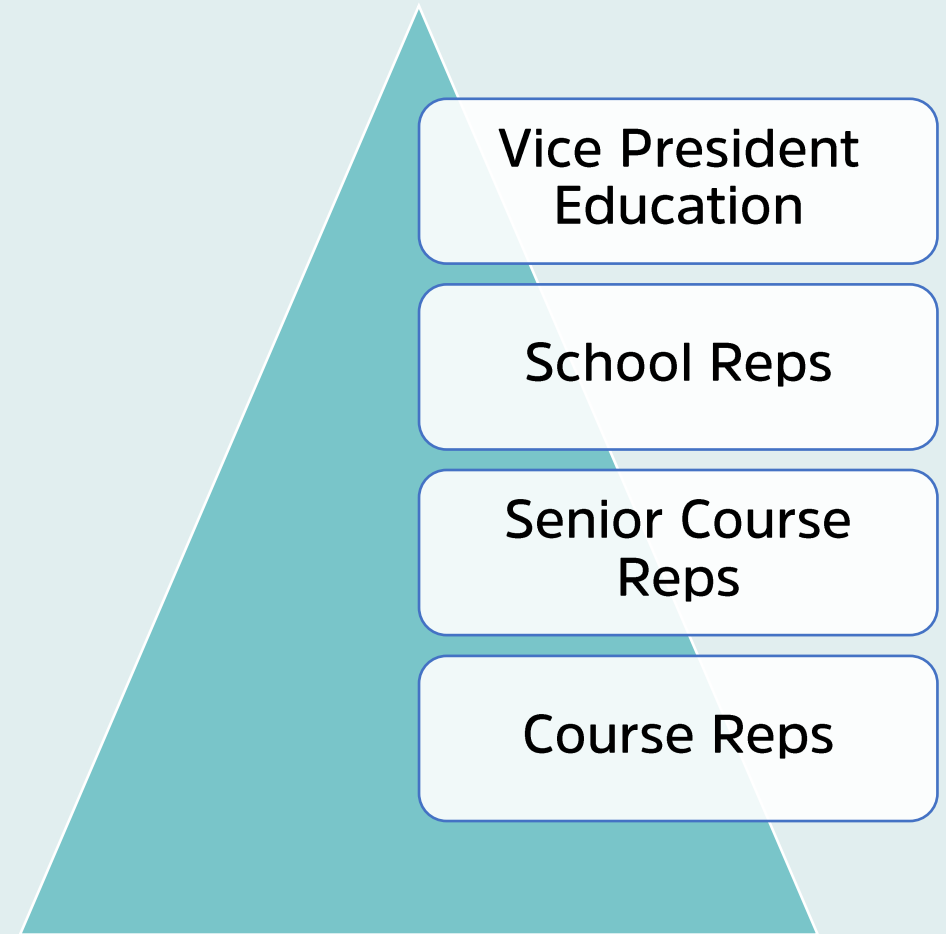
Your role as a School Rep & Key Skills

As a School Rep, you should have:

- ✓ Excellent communication skills
- ✓ An ability to listen and effectively represent students' views
- ✓ A basic understanding of education policy issues
- ✓ A commitment to diversity, equality and inclusion
- ✓ Strong relationships with students, University staff and the Students' Union

Some of the key skills you will develop:

- ➢ Teamwork
- ➢ Leadership
- ➢ Strategic thinking
- ➢ Decision making
- ➢ Problem solving
- ➢ Delegation

School Rep Responsibilities

- Work with the Education Executive and support each other as School Reps.

- Attend relevant University meetings.

- Build a good relationship with University staff who you work with in the role.

- Maintain good relationships with other academic reps, VP Education and SU Students' Union Voice Team.

- Collect feedback from Senior Course Reps and escalate relevant issues to VP Education.

- Stay engaged in the role throughout the year and act as a first point of contact for those you represent.

Don't forget that you are not responsible for looking after students' wellbeing but you can help to support them and guide them in the direction of someone who is trained and qualified to give support and advice.

Signposting

University Wellbeing - The team are not a crisis service but do provide mental healthcare to students who require support.

- Main contact- wellbeing@royalholloway.ac.uk

- Term-time drop-ins available – see the student intranet for joining information

- Counselling service – counselling@royalholloway.ac.uk

- Mental Health practitioners – mentalhealth@royalholloway.ac.uk

- Disability and Neurodiversity Support service- disability-dyslexia@royalholloway.ac.uk

- Financial Wellbeing team – moneymatters@royalholloway.ac.uk

- Multifaith Chaplaincy – chaplaincy@royalholloway.ac.uk

- International Advice team- internationaladvice@royalholloway.ac.uk

- Careers Service – careers@royalholloway.ac.uk

Students' Union Advice Centre

Email us at advice@su.rhul.ac.uk

See online advice at www.su.rhul.ac.uk/advice

Committee Meetings

Validation Meetings	School Education Committee	School Boards	Education Executive
To consider proposals of courses and explore the validity of the stated aims and learning outcomes of courses.	Contributes to the development of a School UG/ PGT education/learning and teaching strategy/education plan and policies for excellence in teaching.	The School Board invite is to all staff in the school and discusses matters relating to teaching, research and other relevant activities in the School or university.	Acts as a 'cabinet' for the Vice-President Education. It's made up of School Reps and Community Officers who can hold the VP Education to account, support the campaigns within their agenda and provide feedback on their work.
To make recommendations on the approval or re-consideration of proposals to the School Education Committee.	Drives initiatives in teaching and learning in the School, which may emerge within the School or from university and liaising as appropriate with internal university services and external networks.	School Reps may have the option to present or just attend, this might vary across the schools.	It meets 4 times per year to discuss issues related to teaching, assessment and resource provision, with the ultimate aim of improving the academic experience of students at Royal Holloway.
Academic Quality & Policy Office (AQPO) ask for a student representative and the relevant School Reps are the first to be invited.	The committee runs three times a year. The School Rep has a standing item on the School Education Committee.	Meets three times a year and the School Rep is invited to attend.	You'll have the chance to update others on your work, raise any School issues you may have and to engage in conversations about education at the University.
They take place on more of an ad-hoc basis and not a set amount of meetings in a year.	To consider any matters raised by the School Student Representative.	It's a good opportunity to get your voices heard at School level.	There will also be an opportunity to hear from the SU about any work being done that may involve School Reps.

School Board

School Board Report

- This report should be no longer than 2 sides of paper in total (including all preliminary material), with up to 3 additional pages of appendices if required.

- All reports will be starred * for information only. They will only be unstarred and discussed if this is requested by another member of School Board.

Date of Meeting	
Author's Name	
Author's Role	School Representative
Report Title	Student Voice Update
Date of Report	
Appendices? (if so, please identify their contents)	

Key achievements/items of note since last School Board:

Here is a preview of what the School Board Report paper looks like.

You will be offered to present a 'Student Voice Report', but you can choose to just sit in on the meeting instead.

As the meetings only take place once per term, it is a good opportunity to present if you have the change.

Feel free to introduce yourself and your aims in the first meeting and shift your focus towards the student feedback you've received at the next two.

School Education Committee

In the School Education Committee (SEC), there will usually be a standard agenda point in each meeting called 'Student Voice'.
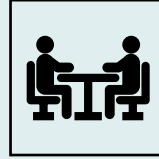
This will be your opportunity to consider any matters raised by the School and share student feedback.

It may be worth having a 'pre-meet' with the chair of the SEC to hear what is on the agenda and what would be useful to gather feedback from students on in advance.

Staff-Student Action Meetings

Course Reps and Senior Couse Reps attend the SSAM meeting for their department and level of study at least once per term and identified key members of staff should also be present.

Course Reps and Senior Course Reps should speak to students ahead of the meeting to gather any feedback they have that they would like to raise. Senior Course Reps in each department will then gather all feedback raised.

Senior Course Reps will send all feedback to an identified member of staff (secretary) at least two weeks ahead of the meeting who will add each piece of feedback onto the agenda for the meeting. The secretary should invite all attendees (Course Reps, Senior Course Reps, and staff) with plenty of notice and circulate important details such as time, date, and location along with the agenda.
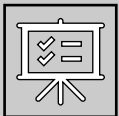
At Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught levels of study, one Senior Course Rep will chair the meeting and they will go through each agenda point and invite attendees to discuss the issue and identify solutions which will then be recorded in the 'action log'.
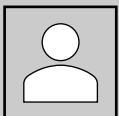
These logs are a live document which are to be hosted in an individual department MS Teams channel which will be accessible to all reps and relevant staff in that department and level of study. They should be updated regularly and it's reps' responsibility to close the feedback loop.

Collecting Feedback

There are several ways of collecting feedback and there are likely to be some that you prefer to use over others.

You could try:
- Talking informally to students and other course reps
- Hosting drop-in sessions or focus groups
- Using social media groups
- Giving classmates 5 minutes at the start or end of class
- Creating a survey/poll and asking School admin to circulate
- Using a physical feedback box
- Feedback form provided by the Students' Union

Remember that effective representation should be accurate, constructive and depersonalised!

Microsoft Forms

https://www.microsoft.com/en-gb/microsoft-365/online-surveys-polls-quizzes

Sharing Feedback

Course Reps Collect feedback from students

They share with Senior Course Reps and department staff and identify a solution

If the issue impacts the whole school, share with School Rep

School Rep will share with VP Education & Student Voice Team at the SU

Issue can be escalated to University if necessary but if not, a solution will be identified

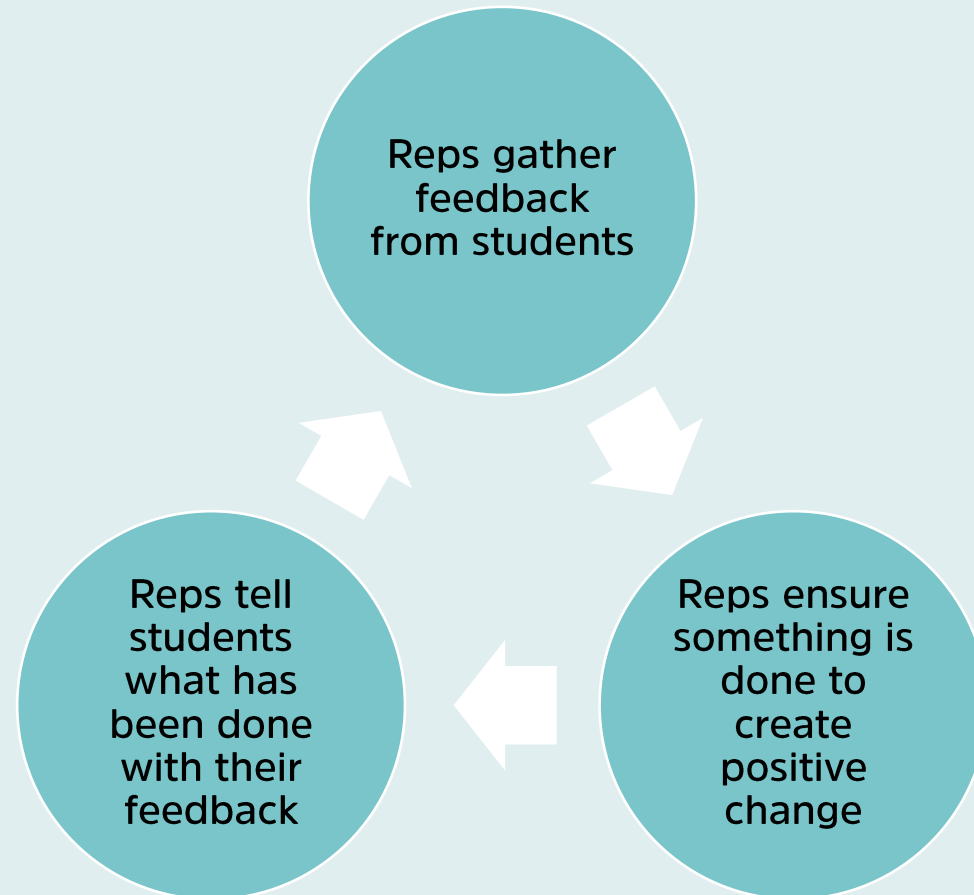Issue is acted upon, change is made and you feedback solution to impacted students

Feedback Loop

As a Course Rep, communication is key when collecting feedback to help close the feedback loop.

The feedback loop follows this structure:

Different types of feedback that can be collected

As reps, you will collect feedback on a range of issues – some of the topics that you may cover in the role might include:

Accessibility with buildings

Content discussed in a Lecture

Format of teaching

More events for the Department

Community building

Moodle issues

Exams and assignment issues
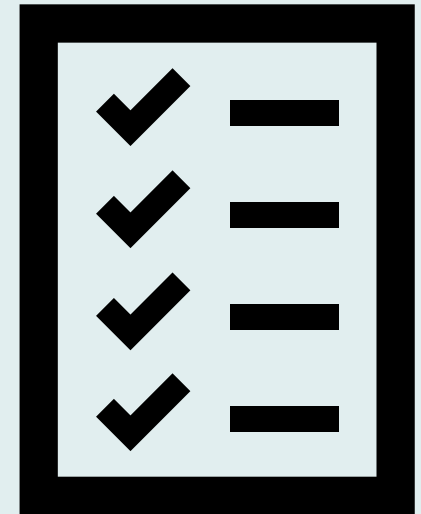
Ways of closing the feedback loop:

As reps, there are loads of ways you can close the feedback loop:

- Your Impact submission

- Sharing the outcomes with other reps in conversation

- Informing your peers in the department through messages/in class

- Regularly updating your Action Log in MS Teams

- Reply directly to the person that has given you the feedback

- Work with the School Rep to utilise their Instagram

- Create slides for lecturers to put at the start of their lectures

- Create a poster and/or a newsletter which detail what has happened at the SSAM

Ways the SU can close the feedback loop:

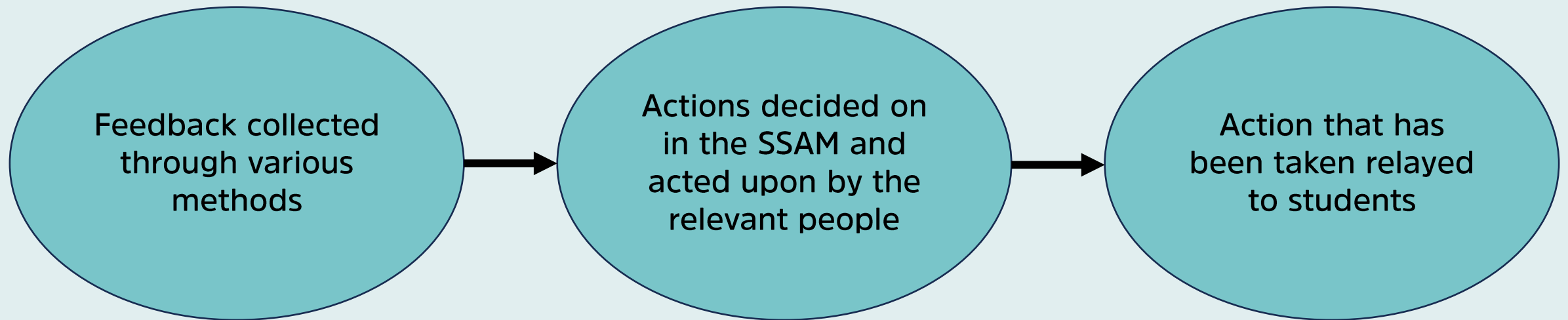Similarly, the Students' Union can help to close the feedback loop through:

- Selecting a Rep of the Month winner to share their work

- Sharing the outcomes with reps on social media

- Creating termly impact blogs on the SU website

- Uploading Action Logs onto the [Find My Rep](#) page of the SU website

What to consider when choosing how to close the feedback loop:

The method you use to close the feedback loop will depend on:
- the feedback collected
- the method of collecting the feedback
- the actions that have resulted from the feedback.

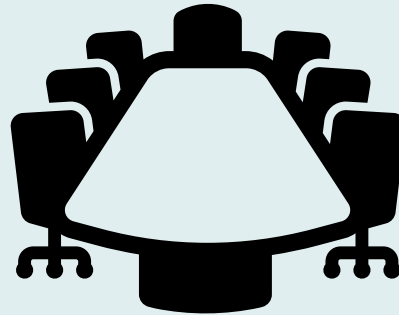Feedback collected through various methods → Actions decided on in the SSAM and acted upon by the relevant people → Action that has been taken relayed to students

Professionalism

If you are unable to attend a meeting or event, send apologies.

Reply to emails in a timely manner.

Accept invites when they are sent to you so the organiser can see who is attending.

Utilise Teams to communicate with others and keep up to date.

Complete tasks required for your role.

Read and follow the Code of Conduct.

Recognition

'Your Impact' and 'Rep of the Month' are great ways to shout about your achievements as a rep.

If there is something you have done that you want to share with the SU then you can add a 'your impact' submission to let us know.

Each month, the submissions will be reviewed and the VP Education will select someone to be recognised as Rep of the Month based off the your impact submissions we receive.

Rep of the Month winners will have a Q&A with VP Education and they will get their own news article on the SU website as well as a section dedicated to them in the monthly rep newsletter.

Rep BBQ and End of Year Awards – New for 2024

If reps have attended, or sent apologies for, at least 3 SSAM's over the year, they will receive a certificate to celebrate their work over the year and a burger and drink on the SU!

Peer Support

As a School Rep, you will regularly be in contact with other academic reps in your department throughout the year.

The SU website has a 'find my rep' page which will be updated after training has been completed.

Just type in a department and you will find the names of the reps, their role, course and year of study.

SU Support

Year long development programme:

Each term, the SU will deliver sessions on various topics which are tailored towards you and your development as an academic rep.

Previous year's sessions include:
- Navigating a typical formal meeting
- Mental health awareness
- Current issues in Higher Education
- Dealing with feedback
- Career and employability support

Day-to-day support:

- Empower you to work with your department to make change
- Provide support from/ 121 meetings with Academic Communities Coordinator/ VP Education
- Give you the tools you need to create real change around campus
- Send monthly rep newsletters directly to you
- Shout about your achievements and successes!

School Support

Facilitating opportunities and tools for School Reps to communicate with students they represent e.g. helping circulate surveys

Supporting and developing academic representation within the department

Ensuring reps feel valued, supported and encouraged to submit feedback

Proactively communicating with you as School Reps about relevant information

Maintaining effective communication with the Student Voice Team at the SU

University Staff

If you are unsure who to contact from your school:

- Use Teams to see who is added to your channel or to send a message

- School Helpdesk can point you in the right direction

- Contact the Secretary for SSAM's in your School

- If regarding a specific action, contact the person listed in the Action Log that is responsible for it

University Staff are able to help you with queries related to the SSAM's or actions.

SCR's will also need to send the collated feedback to the designated person two weeks before the SSAM's.

A good relationship with University Staff will allow you to make more positive change.

Events

Staff-Student event – an informal opportunity for reps and staff to meet and put a name to a face. Helping to build community in the School and across departments is really important and helps open communication between everyone in each Department/School.

Coffee mornings for reps to meet – you might want to use this space to catch up about what it going on for each rep and talk about the positive things which will be useful to take to some of the University meetings you sit on as School Rep.

Small rep focus groups to share feedback and work decide what will be taken to the SSAM.

Rep Fairs – the SU will organise the event but you can make arrangements with staff and reps to decide who will be at the stall and what you would like to discuss with students.

Careers/Sector related events- Departments might want to run events related to their fields with a focus on things like applying for further study and hearing from alumni about their experience getting jobs in the field etc.

Key Contacts

Vice President Education

Madelaine Gray
Email - VPEducation@su.rhul.ac.uk
Instagram - RHSUEducation

Academic Communities Coordinator

Lauryn Fleming
Email – lauryn.fleming@su.rhul.ac.uk

Student Voice Manager

Laura Black
Email – laura.black@su.rhul.ac.uk

- Student Voice Team (voice@su.rhul.ac.uk)
- Executive Dean of the School
- Vice Dean for Education and Student Experience
- School Managers
- Directors of Student Experience
- Course Convenors
- Senior Course Reps
- Use this link to search for your School's contacts

Questions?

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