

# Course Rep Recruitment and Support Guide

2023/2024 



# Welcome!

**Thank you for opening up this guide!**

Course Reps play a fundamental role in the effective representation of student voice at the University of the Arts London. Staff's support of Course Reps is invaluable and ensures wide representation of student opinion. This, in turn, improves key aspects of learning, teaching and assessment.

Within this handbook, we'll lay out the role of Course Reps, how they're recruited, trained and supported. We'll specifically cover your role in recruiting reps and empowering them to advocate for the academic interests of students on their course and enhance the student experience at UAL.

We hope that you're able to quickly and easily find what you're looking for here, but if you still have questions or worries about supporting Course Reps, please don't hesitate to contact us.

At the SU we have a whole team dedicated to working with you on student representation, and you can drop us an email at [coursereps@su.arts.ac.uk](mailto:coursereps@su.arts.ac.uk), or if you'd like to speak with us directly, join our Teams drop-in sessions every Wednesday 16:00 - 17:00 and Thursday 12:00 - 13:00 until the 19th October

We'd love to talk with you.

Best wishes,  
The Representation & Democracy Team

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## What is a Course Rep?

There is a good chance you have already interacted with Course Reps in your role, but for clarity, when we talk about course reps at UAL we mean the following:

**The course rep role is a student volunteer role, in which students put themselves forward to collect student feedback and speak on behalf of other students.** Their role is vital to ensure that students' views are fed into decision-making processes at course-level as well as across the university.

Once they have raised students' feedback, course reps then work with staff and other representatives to put actions into place and address issues. By helping to influence positive change, reps improve the academic experience for both current and future students.

The role is flexible and fits around their studies and no prior experience is necessary. Our Arts SU staff team provides course reps with all the relevant training they need.

If you want to find out more about the role, then please check out the full role description on the [Arts SU website](#).

# Course Rep Recruitment Overview

## Arts SU will send course staff rep info and resources, including:

- This handbook
- Course Rep info slides
- Deadlines for Course Rep recruitment
- Link for Course Rep registration form

## Course Staff will recruit reps for their course:

- Share overview of role using Course Rep Info slides
- Set aside time for students to put themselves forward
- Have students register with the Arts SU registration form

## Questions?

Join our Teams staff drop-in sessions  
Wednesdays 16:00 - 17:00 or  
Thursdays 12:00 - 13:00  
until the 19th October

## This year, we would like Course Reps to register by:

- 11th October 2023 for all undergraduate courses
- 18th October 2023 for all postgraduate courses

## Arts SU will follow up by sending:

- The lists of students who've registered
- Training dates for reps

## Course Staff will follow up by:

- Making sure any reps that haven't registered do so
- Reaching out to reps throughout the year, especially before Course Committees and other feedback sessions

## How are Course Reps recruited?

Arts SU can't directly promote and recruit reps, as we are a small team. This is why **we ask Course Leaders to promote the rep role to your cohorts and encourage students to put themselves forward.** We really appreciate your support and will assist you in this process by sharing resources, including this guide.

It is important to note that we are not asking you to run course level elections for reps. **The Course Rep role is not elected.** It is instead open to any student who volunteers to take on the role.

## How should I promote the Course Rep role to students?

Where possible, **we ask that course teams include a presentation on student representation in an induction session.**

We have created a set of PowerPoint slides which are available on the [Arts SU website](#) for you to share info about the role and why students should get involved. (There are also a number of other resources, including the role descriptions and course rep guides, so please do check those out).

Generally, we would ask you to cover the following:

- Why course reps are important
- How course reps can benefit their course community (ideally with some examples of the positive impact previous course reps have had, or upcoming opportunities course reps might be involved with this year)
- How course reps can benefit from the role from a career and personal development perspective
- The logistical details of your course rep selection process

**Reminder:** while introducing the course rep role to first years is particularly important, as it will likely be their first encounter with the role, it is also important to remind returners!

# How many Course Reps should I recruit?

Each course should have a **minimum of two course reps per year**.

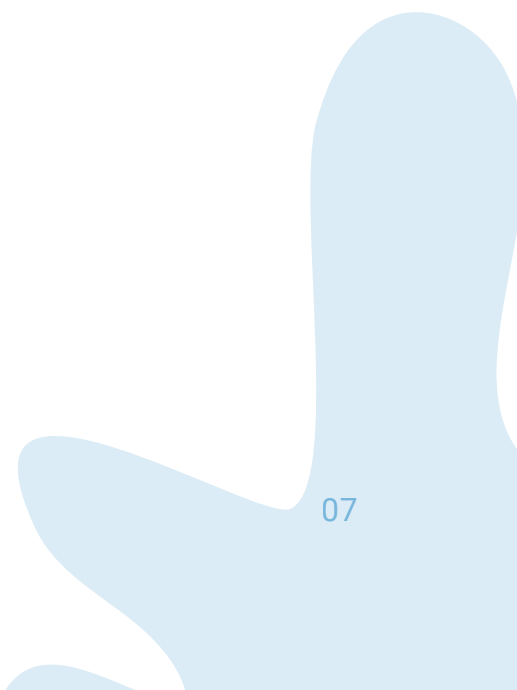
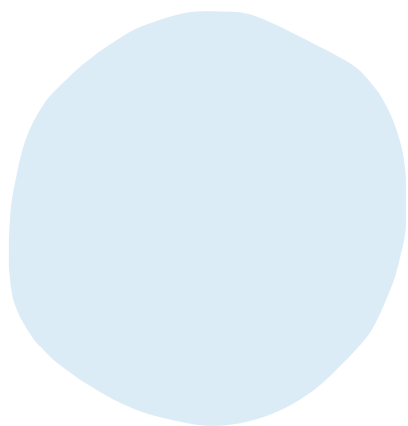
Course teams may wish to recruit more course reps at their discretion – for example if a course has a particularly large cohort or the cohort is split into groupings or streams. Generally, we **suggest a ratio of one course rep to every 25 students**.

We suggest this ratio so that reps have a manageable workload and to help ensure that a diversity of students' voices are being listened to and fed back to UAL staff.

## What to do if...

**Many students put themselves forward for the role:** we would suggest having a chat with students about why they're interested, ensuring that they understand what the role will entail.

**There isn't much interest in the role:** continue to promote the role to students. If there still isn't enough interest, you could approach students who you think would make good Course Reps and speak to them directly about the role. If this is a returning cohort, this could include speaking to previous course reps. This would just be a casual chat, as we don't want students to feel pressured into the role.



## How do Course Reps register?

Once you have recruited this year's course reps it is important they register themselves with Arts SU so we have a record of who to invite to training sessions, forums, and other course rep activities.

**This year, course reps will register themselves using this form.** You should also have received a link in an email. Please share this only with the students who are recruited and intend to be a rep, not all students.

We cannot emphasise enough the importance of the timely registration and training of course reps and its impact on their effectiveness in the role. We therefore ask you to encourage your reps to register by the following dates this year:

- **11th October 2023 for all undergraduate courses**
- **18th October 2023 for all postgraduate courses**

If your course falls outside of these timelines, please get in touch. We have a team dedicated to supporting you with this task so please do reach out where needed by emailing [coursereps@su.arts.ac.uk](mailto:coursereps@su.arts.ac.uk).

**Please encourage your reps to register with us as soon as they are recruited and follow up to confirm they have done this.** We have over 1,000 course reps to register and train so we really appreciate getting information as soon as we can.





## What training do Course Reps receive?

Arts SU provides group trainings to equip course reps with the knowledge and skills needed for the role. It covers a number of key areas including:

1. Role and responsibilities: Key aspects of the course rep role.
2. Collecting feedback: How to collect feedback from students.
3. How and when to share feedback: Where, when and how to raise feedback with staff.
4. Working with Art SU: How to work with Arts SU in the course rep role.

For training dates and times, please see the [Arts SU website](#).

After each training session we will also be hosting a social to thank reps for volunteering and to allow reps to know each other.



## Course Rep Successes

We want to celebrate the successes of our course reps' hard work. Therefore, don't be modest, **tell us (and encourage them to tell us!) about the impact they are having on improving the academic experience.**

This year we are launching a Rep of the Month Award, which also comes with a £20 voucher for each month's winners. If you think a rep deserves this financial recognition, please do remember to put them forward. More details will be on our website soon.

We will be updating our website and regular newsletters with articles celebrating their work so make sure your reps are included.

To share your reps success email:  
[coursereps@su.arts.ac.uk](mailto:coursereps@su.arts.ac.uk)

# Supporting Course Reps in the Role

We strongly recommend that you and others in your course team start a conversation with your course reps early on in the year.

We suggest discussing ways course rep partnerships have worked well in the past, what the difficulties or sticking points have been, and jointly mapping out ways of working that suit both staff and reps.

The best collaboration between course reps and course teams is rooted in a strong personal relationship, typically with the Course Leader but also with other team members. Those relationships can be nurtured throughout the year by:

- Informal catchups outside of committee spaces
- Arranging pre-meets prior to committees to go through papers
- Highlighting areas where more input from the course reps would be welcomed (especially since committees, without a briefing or prior meeting with the Chair, can be daunting spaces)
- Help them to promote themselves to students by giving them the opportunity to speak in sessions or use virtual learning spaces where available
- Provide an inclusive and supportive environment for them to share honest and potentially unvarnished (yet respectful) views and opinions about the course
- And finally, remembering it is important to be sensitive to the fact that course reps are volunteers and that they should not be expected to work as a staff member would

If breakdowns in communication or perceived performance arise please seek support from the Arts SU staff team.

# Supporting your Course Reps' wellbeing

While being a course rep is (hopefully!) an enriching and positive experience, students can also find mediating difficult feedback between staff and students stressful.

Examples of things that course reps typically might seek support with include:

- Breakdown of communication between student representatives and staff.
- Feeling overwhelmed by student feedback and/or complaints.
- Confusion about how to raise feedback with students or staff.
- Worries about how the role might be impacting their studies.
- Lack of engagement or feedback from students.
- Uncertainty or anxiety about how to deal with a particular issue.

This is not meant as an endless list and if your course reps are experiencing a problem that isn't listed here and still need support, we want to hear from them.

**If you notice course reps are under stress, please do put them in touch with us by emailing [coursereps@su.arts.ac.uk](mailto:coursereps@su.arts.ac.uk).**

If you have more significant worries about a course reps' wellbeing, please do signpost them to Student Services, and the Counselling, Health Advice and Chaplaincy Team as you would with any other student.

## Arts SU - your Students' Union

**Arts SU is an organisation run by students for students (with support from a whole team of full-time members of staff) and is independent from the university and its colleges. It's our job to support students during their time at UAL, and make sure their voice gets heard. Every UAL student is automatically a member of the students' union.**

Arts SU is led by six elected student officers, one officer representing each college as well as a Community Officer and a Union Affairs Officer. The SU exists to help each student make the most of the life-changing experiences open to them as they study and develop their creative practice. We do this by:

- Supporting their art career: with opportunities to sell their work, partner with world-leading institutions and more.
- Employing them: with paid opportunities throughout the SU from graphic design to bartending.
- Supporting them: by offering free, confidential, and independent advice during their time at UAL and the chance to create their own communities while exploring a whole range of activities.
- Representing them: students elect representatives, and we campaign with them to make change.

For more information visit: [www.arts-su.com](http://www.arts-su.com).



# Some info about Arts SU elections

We would really appreciate if you could encourage students to put themselves forward for election.

Very often you are able to see students' abilities in a way they themselves cannot. A quick chat to highlight these roles might make a huge difference to their likelihood of standing for election!

Arts SU use elections to decide who should speak for and work on behalf of UAL students on a range of issues. Nominations open in early January with elections held in March each year for the following academic year.

We encourage all students to consider standing with a variety of roles available, broadly split between two types:

- **Elected Officer Roles** – These full-time paid roles are carried outside of studies. They represent and speak on behalf of all students, are collectively responsible for promoting and defending the rights of students, campaigning on issues and promoting involvement in Union activities.
- **School Rep Roles** – These roles are carried out on a voluntary basis alongside studies. They work closely with course reps and key staff to understand students' academic and learning experiences, advocating for changes and development related to learning, teaching and the community.

## Why should students vote in SU Elections?

Even if they don't realise it, every student has a vested interest in the outcomes of the elections, because our Elected Officers will represent them on a variety of issues covering the student experience. The question is, why wouldn't they vote?

For more information visit our [elections page on the Arts SU website](#).

# Useful Contacts



## Arts SU Elected Officers

[www.arts-su.com/yourvoice/officers](http://www.arts-su.com/yourvoice/officers)

**Camberwell, Chelsea and Wimbledon Officer** [ccwofficer@su.arts.ac.uk](mailto:ccwofficer@su.arts.ac.uk)

**Central Saint Martins Officer** [csmofficer@su.arts.ac.uk](mailto:csmofficer@su.arts.ac.uk)

**London College of Communication Officer** [lccofficer@su.arts.ac.uk](mailto:lccofficer@su.arts.ac.uk)

**London College of Fashion Officer** [lcofficer@su.arts.ac.uk](mailto:lcofficer@su.arts.ac.uk)

**Community Officer** [communityofficer@su.arts.ac.uk](mailto:communityofficer@su.arts.ac.uk)

**Union Affairs Officer** [unionaffairs@su.arts.ac.uk](mailto:unionaffairs@su.arts.ac.uk)

## Representation and Democracy Team

[www.arts-su.com/yourvoice](http://www.arts-su.com/yourvoice)

**Course Rep Queries** [coursereps@su.arts.ac.uk](mailto:coursereps@su.arts.ac.uk)

**School Rep Queries** [schoolreps@su.arts.ac.uk](mailto:schoolreps@su.arts.ac.uk)

## Student Communities Team

[www.arts-su.com/yourcommunities](http://www.arts-su.com/yourcommunities)

**Sports** [sports@su.arts.ac.uk](mailto:sports@su.arts.ac.uk)

**Societies** [societies@su.arts.ac.uk](mailto:societies@su.arts.ac.uk)

**Arts Active Programme** [artsactive@su.arts.ac.uk](mailto:artsactive@su.arts.ac.uk)

## Arts SU Advice Service

[www.arts-su.com/advice](http://www.arts-su.com/advice)

For free, confidential and impartial advice on academic (including university policies and procedures) or housing and accommodation matter.

**Contact an Advisor** [advice@su.arts.ac.uk](mailto:advice@su.arts.ac.uk)

**Companion Scheme** [companionscheme@su.arts.ac.uk](mailto:companionscheme@su.arts.ac.uk)

## University Support Services

[www.arts.ac.uk/students/student-services](http://www.arts.ac.uk/students/student-services)


For advice and support on various aspects of student life including money, personal issues (including stress, anxiety and mental health concerns) and queries related to disability.

**General Queries** [student.services@su.arts.ac.uk](mailto:student.services@su.arts.ac.uk)

**Health and Wellbeing Advice** [studenthealth@arts.ac.uk](mailto:studenthealth@arts.ac.uk)

**Counselling Service** [counselling@arts.ac.uk](mailto:counselling@arts.ac.uk)

**Disability Service** [disability@arts.ac.uk](mailto:disability@arts.ac.uk)



# Thank you so much for reading this guide!

This was only a summary of how Arts SU work and how you will be collaborating with us to recruit and support this year's course reps – if you have any questions or would like to talk anything through, please don't hesitate to get in touch by emailing [coursereps@su.arts.ac.uk](mailto:coursereps@su.arts.ac.uk).

Looking forward to working with you this year.

**The Arts SU Rep & Democracy team!**