



STUDENT ENGAGEMENT LEADS
***A BRIEF GUIDE
TO ACADEMIC REPS***



THE ROLE OF REPS

Reps are there to represent their peers and are encouraged to use a variety of methods for raising valuable feedback, to represent the academic interests of the student body. They will work with you and other key staff members in their School or Department to make positive change. How you choose to do this is up to the Reps and the staff involved. There are some formal mechanisms, such as Subject Committees, but also a conversation after a taught session, or an email can be very effective, a strong partnership can be established whichever method you choose.

MEETINGS

Subject Committees Meetings are the cornerstone of the partnership between staff and Student Reps. Many schools choose to have their Subject Committees co-chaired by a staff member and their School Rep, demonstrating the collaborative approach to improving the all aspects of teaching and learning. Formal guidance for these is available from LALT if you would like to know more. Reps will bring any feedback that they have gathered from students and work together with staff members to come up with creative solutions and initiatives.

Reps also attend Rep Hubs in the SU with the Vice President Education, Georgia Petts. Here, Course Reps and School Reps share ideas and concerns with each other and Georgia so that they are able to support each other with developing a range of solutions and creative ideas to make positive change on campus. Georgia also updates Reps with current SU projects and campaigns, helps Reps share ideas and tips of how to gather feedback from students and what to do with this, and identifies trends in student feedback across campus.

COURSEMATE

As with many aspects of 21st Century living, students are often looking for quick and easy ways to share their thoughts and ideas, 24 hours a day. For some, they will choose to do this via email, but we have also introduced a tool to help, whilst also supporting Reps and making sure they get all the details they need in that initial contact. For Course specific ideas, we have Coursemate. We also have SUGgestions for campus wide ideas.

Coursemate allows students to anonymously submit their ideas and feedback about all aspects of their course, from resources to teaching delivery. This is about the positive aspects of learning too, as well as encouraging them to be constructive when they have a concern or idea. All comments are checked by SU staff (for inappropriate or offensive content, and the use of names), and once approved, are assigned to the relevant School Rep. Your School Rep will then will work with relevant staff and Course Reps to develop ideas and implement change.

The link for this platform is:

lincolnsu.com/coursemate

**The system is anonymous to Students, Reps and University staff. Selected SU staff can access names and contact details in cases where comments need further explanation, or where comments have breach the student code of conduct. Any comments that names individuals, or are deemed offensive/inappropriate will not be published. Names cannot be shared under any circumstances.*

THE ELECTION PROCESS

The SU team will be in regular contact with Student Engagement Leads and other key stakeholders. We will check with Student Engagement Leads before each election period (March and October) how many Reps they would like for each programme/year group. We ask that Programme Leaders pass on any changes that they would like, such as combining courses for representation, or changing the number of Reps required, to their Student Engagement Lead.

All details will be confirmed on a shared One Drive list created by SU staff. We will note courses, number of Reps, election dates and any specific requirements (such as grouping together smaller cohorts, or elected by tutor group). Names of elected Reps are added to this list once elections have been completed.

All elections are held at lincolnsu.com/elections. Students log in and self-nominate. They do not require anyone to second their nomination. The nomination site is only visible to students, and students will only see elections that they are eligible to nominate themselves for, or vote in.

Every nomination is different. Some students write manifestos and have photos. Some simply click the nominate option. Neither is right or wrong, there are options for these if students wish to include them, but they don't need to for Course Reps and PG Reps.

As School Reps and College Officers represent larger groups of students, we do ask that they include these. It helps them be more recognisable once they are elected too.

All students who are members of the SU and part of that cohort/group will be eligible to nominate and vote. To make it easier, both parts of the election take place at lincolnsu.com/elections.

To vote, students select the election they are interested in, see all the candidates, and then have their say by choosing their preferred candidate. RON - stands for Re-Open nominations – is an option in every SU election. If a student doesn't have a preference for any of the candidates, they can vote RON if they wish.

We use STV (Single Transferable Vote) for all SU elections. This means that students should select number one for their first preference, the candidate they most want to be their Rep. Number two for their second preference, and so on. They do not have to give every candidate a number, but this is advised. 'Spoilt vote' is very similar to abstaining, but for STV elections, this means that if the student has no preference or not enough information to make an informed decision – the system will register this as a vote, but it will not count towards the result. Votes cannot be removed once submitted as they are done so anonymously. Candidates can vote, staff and those outside of the selected cohort/group cannot.

All candidates will be emailed following the close of the election to inform them of the result. Staff will be notified via the shared One Drive list.

Elected Reps hold their post for one Academic year, for September starting Undergraduate courses, this will mean Reps are in place from July 1st (if elected in March) or once elected (if elected at the start of an academic year) until 30th June of the following year. February starting courses, or other start dates, this is one calendar year from date of election.

All elections queries should be directed to:

elections@lincolnsu.com



REP TRAINING

Once elected, all Reps are invited to take part in training with the SU. This is delivered online. For the 2020/21 Academic Year, Reps are trained on the following topics:

REP ROLE

- Subject Committees – and contacting staff outside of these meetings. Not mentioning individuals by name and being constructive with comments
- Rep Forums
- Contacting your Student Engagement Lead
- The VP Educations role and plans for the year

FEEDBACK

- Coursemate
- SUGgestions
- Areas of feedback and how to address these
– *key contacts and signposting*
- Communication

YOUR SU

- How we can support students
- The Student Leader Team
- How we are funded
- SU Advice Centre
- GDPR and using the SU Skills Log to track employability skills developed during their studies and work experience. There is also a brief module on COVID precautions.

FAQ'S

Do Reps have to be elected each year?

Yes. Students can nominate themselves again each year, but they do need to be re-elected.

We selected someone in class, why are they not listed as a Rep?

All Reps must be elected through the SU. This is mainly done online through the website, but occasionally can be conducted by a member of SU staff in a taught session. If no official election was held, the student will not be listed as a Rep.

What training do Reps get?

This is all delivered online by the SU. Modules for 2020/21 include:

- Rep Role
- What to do with Student Feedback
- Your SU
- GDPR
- Skills Log (for tracking employability skills)

Once a Rep has completed all of their training, they will be marked in light blue on the One Drive list.

Who are my Reps and how do I find out?

All Reps names will be added to a shared One Drive by a member of SU staff, following any elections. There is a list for each School. If you do not have access to your School's list, please email:

esmy@lincoln.ac.uk



Why do we have Reps?

Reps are there to represent their peers. This is not a replacement for students interacting with staff if they have feedback, but is designed to streamline this process. Reps can give the thoughts and opinions of their cohorts at committee meetings, as well as giving staff an idea of how widespread an opinion is, and what suggestions students have to any potential issues. Some students prefer to raise their feedback about their University experience anonymously, and Reps allow for this. From a staff perspective, you can ask your Reps for ideas and opinions and they will raise this with the cohort outside of teaching time and using a variety of methods, such as Social Media.

How are Reps elected?

In line with the Representation Charter – a Service Level agreement between the University of Lincoln and Lincoln Students' Union
– all Reps are elected through the SU website and are elected each year.

What do Reps do?

- Attend Subject Committees
 - Attend Rep Forums in the SU with the VP Education
 - Gather feedback from their peers
 - Raise student feedback, positive and constructive to relevant staff
 - Work with staff to resolve student feedback
 - Feedback to their peers on the outcomes of ideas and issues raised
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KEY TERMS

Course Rep elected for an Undergraduate Course

WBDL Rep Reps for Work Based Distance Learner Programme, very similar to Course Reps, but their training is more specific

PG Rep elected for PGT Courses and PGR cohorts (*usually by School due to nature of study and as there are smaller numbers of students*)

Senior Reps Collective name for School Reps, College Officers and PG Officers

Vice President Education (VP Education) An elected Student Leader in the Students' Union. This is a full time fixed term post. Student Leaders are elected each year in Term two. New Student Leaders start in July of each year. A Student Leader can only hold Officer for a maximum of two years. (*in any post, at any one institution*)

KEY CONTACTS

Georgia Petts

Vice President Education

education@lincolnsu.com

Hannah Coleman

Senior Manager for Student Voice – Deputy Chief Executive

hcoleman@lincoln.ac.uk

Liz Wylie-Smy

Admin Support - Academic Representation Co-ordinator

esmy@lincoln.ac.uk

Elections queries

elections@lincolnsu.com

School Reps – see list on SU website -

lincolnsu.com/change-and-represent/academic-representation/resources