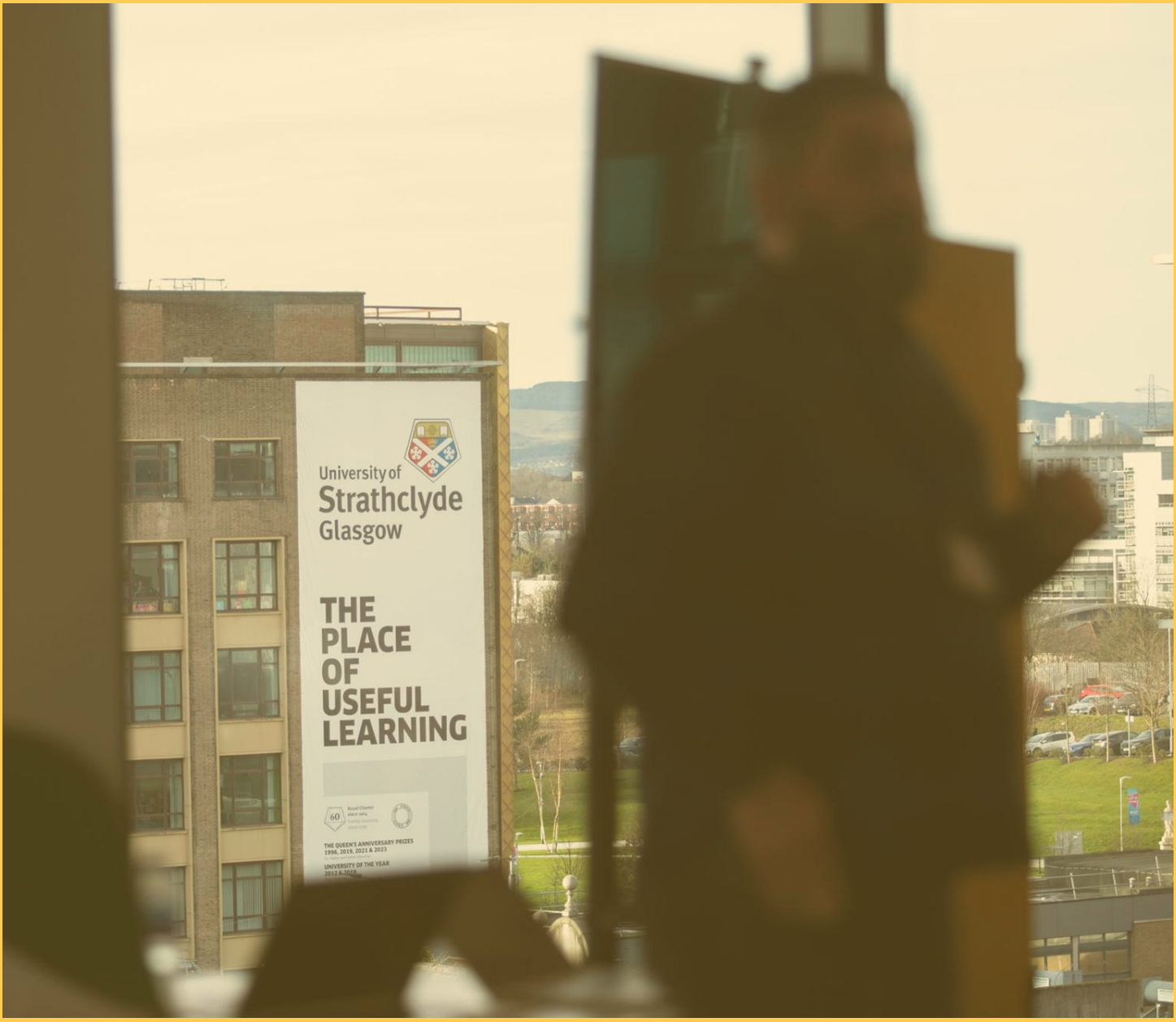


GUIDE TO STUDENT REPRESENTATION

STRATH UNION EST.1964

University of Strathclyde Glasgow

Contents

Background and purpose 1

Overview of Student Representation at Strathclyde 1

Strath Reps 2

Rep role and responsibility 2

Rep role benefits 3

Training 3

Supporting Student Voice 4

Week-by-week activities 4

Rep recruitment and management FAQs 5

Appendix 1 – Designated Contacts 8

Background and purpose

The University and Strath Union agreed a new Student Academic Representation Policy in May 2026. This policy formalises the shared commitment between the University and Strath Union to deliver an effective, inclusive and transparent system of student academic representation. Student Academic Representation is a key element of quality assurance and enhancement and facilitates the incorporation of student voice into decision-making at all levels. The system supports the idea that students are experts on their own learning experience and as such should be active partners in shaping it.

The policy also establishes clear responsibilities and expectations for student representatives, programme and department staff, faculty staff, and institution-wide staff. This guide is intended to give staff a clearer understanding of the role of student representation at the University and of the role staff play in supporting the student representation system.

Overview of Student Representation at Strathclyde

Student representation operates at programme, department, faculty and institutional level. There are three broad levels of academic student representation at Strathclyde:

Type of representative	Method of selection	Primary committee
Strath Rep (called Course Rep, Class Rep, Department Rep, Year Rep depending on department/faculty)	Elected by class cohort or appointed by staff	Staff-Student Liaison Committee (SSLC)
Faculty Rep (3 per faculty: Undergraduate, Postgraduate Taught, Postgraduate Research)	Elected by student body through Strath Union	Respective faculty's Faculty Academic Committee (FAC)
Strath Union Presidents (Student Executive)	Elected by student body through Strath Union	University-wide committees such as Senate, Quality Assurance Committee (QAC), Student Experience Committee (SEC)

In addition to this, Strath Union also elects Equality Officers who work to make Strathclyde a more inclusive place for women students, disabled students, LGBTQ+ students, international students, and students of colour.

While all student representation roles hold great importance, this guide primarily focuses on academic representation at programme and department level through Strath Reps.

Strath Reps

Rep role and responsibility

The core purpose of a rep is in its name: they exist to represent their fellow students and to collate and present the students' experiences, needs and feedback. Being a rep allows students to advocate for students' collective wants and needs, find commonalities within the student feedback, signpost students to the correct point of contact, assess the validity of feedback, and think constructively to suggest solutions. Staff have a key purpose in facilitating their engagement and success.

This system has some important advantages:

- Students often feel more comfortable approaching a fellow student with issues or feedback
- Reps can spot common issues and opinions in the feedback received and can accurately assess this feedback based on their own experience of the class, meaning they can prioritise and coordinate feedback
- Students can be actively involved in co-creating their experience at university
- Staff can liaise with a small number of trained reps in staff-student meetings rather than directly managing individual feedback from a large cohort

- Reps can liaise with higher-level student representatives through Strath Union

Reps are volunteers and are expected to commit around 10-20 hours per semester, which includes receiving training, gathering feedback from students, attending Staff-Student Liaison Committees (SSLCs), and meeting with staff and/or faculty reps where required. They also have an important role in "closing the feedback loop" and ensuring that the student cohort is aware of the changes and improvements made based on their feedback.

Where additional tasks or roles come up, should be agreed in advance with the rep while respecting their capacity as a volunteer and while giving reps the opportunity to decline. This often includes representing student voice in additional committees or projects. Reps are also be asked to disseminate information from the department back to the student cohort, however existing channels for staff communication with students should be considered as a first resort and reps may decline this.

The following tasks are outside of the rep role and should not be asked of reps:

- Engaging with issues around disciplinary action or individual complaints against students or staff
- Engaging in "casework", i.e. manage an individual student's grievance beyond signposting to the appropriate contact or service
- Managing or influencing their cohort's behaviour

Rep role benefits

Aside from developing valuable transferable skills that can set them apart in future employment – working with different stakeholders, managing conflict, and public speaking to name a few – reps also receive recognition as a volunteer by Strath Union and by the University for their contribution to the student community, get a 10% discount in Strath Union outlets, and get exclusive access to training and development opportunities (e.g. StrathReps Day)

Training

Training for Strath Reps is administered through Strath Union and consists of two parts. The first part is official sparqs training delivered online through Myplace which covers the theoretical background and skills required for being a rep. The second part is delivered in-person and builds on these skills through discussion and case studies specific to the University's context. Reps should have the opportunity to complete both parts of the training before their first SSLC meeting, which is why rep registration should be completed in good time beforehand.

Training contents include:

- The course rep and feedback cycle

- Effective communication with students
- The Student Learning Experience Model
- Effective feedback
- Strath Union support
- Signposting and resources

The training reps receive depends on whether they are on a taught course (UG/PGT) or a research course (PGR). Notably, the training is largely skills-based and reps from all faculties are trained together. **Information specific to the rep's department or faculty should be provided directly by that department.** This includes information such as the department's SSLC composition and dates, agreed ways of disseminating feedback, and any other committees with student representation the department may use.

Supporting Student Voice

Week-by-week activities

Timeframe	Actions
Week 0 and earlier	Departments share the induction and rep recruitment resources provided by Strath Union with students and relevant staff. Departments and faculties share their respective key contacts responsible for student voice with Strath Union.
Week 0-3	Department and teaching staff lead the recruitment of programme representatives and send the contacts of representatives to Strath Union Department and teaching staff provide the new representatives with department-specific information on the rep role and the dates of SSLCs
Week 3-11	Rep training takes place through Strath Union (most sessions between weeks 3-6, with additional sessions arranged based on demand) Student representatives gather feedback and may require support in reaching the student cohort Information about the department-specific student voice mechanisms is shared with new reps SSLCs take place and minutes are shared with committee members, the student cohort, and Strath Union. Strath Reps' feedback is acted upon in a timely manner and resulting changes are fed back to the student cohort in an accessible way.
Week 11 onwards	Evaluation of the academic year is undertaken by Strath Union and submitted to Quality and Assurance Committee biannually.

(semester 2 only)	Department- and faculty-wide reflection and evaluation activities are encouraged.

Rep recruitment and management FAQs

How many reps are needed?

At least one student representative is expected per year of study at undergraduate level, and per programme for PGTs.
For larger class sizes, it can be beneficial to appoint additional reps.
At both UG and PGT level, the recommended ratios depending on the size of the programme are:

- 1 - 49 students – one to two reps
- 49 -100 students – three reps
- 101-149 students – four reps
- 150+ students – five reps

For programmes that include very little contact time, such as graduate apprenticeships, special considerations may be made, e.g. establishing an open forum to gather student opinion, though it is good to put a mechanism for anonymous feedback in place in addition to this.

At PGR level, there should be at least have a PGR representative per-department or research group.

Can reps be appointed or do they need to be elected?

It's relatively uncommon that there are more volunteers agreeing to become a rep than rep spaces, but where it happens, it's good practice to let the class cohort choose their preferred reps where practicable. This is particularly true in second year and beyond at undergraduate level where students already know each other and can show a good understanding of who is most suited to represent them.
Where there is genuine concern about a student's suitability to be a rep, you are encouraged to double check with Strath Union before disallowing a student to put themselves forward.

How should rep elections be run?

Elections can be run in an informal way, e.g. by show of hands, or with a digital poll, allowing voting to be anonymous. Candidates should be able to share a few words with the class on why they would like to be a rep and potentially any projects they would like to focus on to inform the students' vote.

In order to facilitate greater engagement, it's also good to allow students to consider the role ahead of face-to-face class time – for example, by sharing the rep recruitment material on Myplace and/or asking students to put their name forward via e-mail.

How do I register a rep with Strath Union?

Once a rep has been appointed/elected, please complete the following form:
StrathReps Registration 2026/2027 – Fill in form
This form will be open for both Semester 1 and 2 of 2026/2027.

Once Strath Union receives the rep's details, they receive an introduction email with key info and are added to the Strath Reps Myplace site. This site allows them to complete Part 1 of the training, access additional resources, and connect with other reps.
As noted above, the training and resources focus on Strathclyde's and Scotland's representation system as a whole, so faculty-specific expectations and information about the SSLC dates should still be provided by the department contact.
If there are specific resources your department has developed that you would like to be featured on the Strath Reps Myplace, please get in touch with strathunion.rep@strath.ac.uk

What happens if a rep doesn't show up to SSLCs or doesn't engage with the role?

If a rep has missed an SSLC meeting without apologies, it's recommended to check in with them directly. If they have gathered feedback from students, the rep should be reminded to attend SSLC meetings and be reminded of the procedure to send apologies where they are unable to attend.
If it is clear that the rep has not been active in gathering feedback from their cohort, the rep should be asked directly if they want to continue and be made aware that if they want to continue, they are expected to fulfil the role requirements (i.e. actively gathering feedback and attending SSLC meetings). Staff can also encourage the rep to engage with the Union's training and resources where they feel it would be beneficial.

For the removal of reps, staff can exercise their judgement to remove a rep where the rep is very unlikely to complete the role requirements. Strath Union should be informed to give approval where this is the case.

What happens if a rep behaves inappropriately or is facing disciplinary action in their degree?

If there is rep behaviour that seems to stem from a lack of understanding about the role (e.g. not consulting with the student body, being overly argumentative with staff), reps can be referred for additional support from Strath Union.
Where necessary, staff should follow existing Student Discipline Procedures. The Discipline Procedure may then include a decision on the student's fitness to be a rep.

Where a rep is formally removed from their role outside of the Student Discipline Procedures, Strath Union should be made aware and give approval.

On a general note, reps should also not be indirectly penalised because of their role – i.e. outside of their role as a rep and during regular class time, they should not be held to a higher standard than the rest of the class.

How can students be encouraged to become a rep?

These are some suggestions:

- Highlight both institutional and department-level benefits for reps, where they exist (e.g. volunteer recognition and discounts at Strath Union, access to skill development, "Outstanding Contribution to Enhancing Student Experience" Prize in Physics Department) or encourage benefits to be implemented at the department level
    - Up-to-date information on benefits can be found here
- Reiterate the benefits of the rep system, including the mechanism for collective feedback and representation on decision-making committees
- Find a rep from another course willing to share their positive experience of being a rep, either through the department or Strath Union (where the class seems uninterested in the role)
- Encourage multiple students to share the responsibility between them to reduce time commitment

What if a rep withdraws from the role?

If the rep's withdrawal brings the number of reps per course/programme below the recommended amount, the replacement of that rep should be facilitated by electing or appointing another volunteer and Strath Union should be informed of the change.

I have another question that isn't covered here.

Please reach out to strathunion.rep@strath.ac.uk to receive further info from Strath Union's student representation team.

Appendix 1 – Designated Contacts

Under the 2026 policy, each department should designate:

A member of administrative staff ("Departmental Administrative Lead") responsible for communication with Strath Union, including:

- Providing Strath Union with contact details for the relevant departmental staff responsible for student representation
- Registering student reps within agreed timelines
- Providing updates when necessary
- Supporting the effective administration of the representation system at departmental level
- Sharing the meeting minutes of each SSLC with Strath Union

At least one academic staff member responsible for UG/PGT student voice, including:

- Oversight and support of UG and PGT SSLCs
- Ensuring that student voice is embedded within departmental governance and quality processes

At least one academic staff member responsible for PGR voice, including:

- Ensuring the timely recruitment and appointment of reps
- Oversight and support of PGR SSLCs (or equivalent forums)
- Supporting PGR student representatives and ensuring PGR student voice is integrated into departmental governance structures

In addition to this, teaching staff should:

- Support and promote effective student representation within their teaching capacity
- Promote the visibility of student representatives within the cohort they represent, which includes adding programme representatives to key communications and MyPlace pages

Programme directors or other relevant teaching staff should:

- Ensure the timely recruitment and appointment of student representatives in accordance with agreed processes between Strath Union and the University
- Support and promote effective student representation within their programme
- Ensure that student voice mechanisms operate effectively and that feedback is considered within the programme, including all its modules

PGR Directors should:

- Support and promote effective student representation within their supervision and oversight capacity
- Promote the visibility of PGR representatives within the cohort they represent

At the faculty level, each faculty should designate at least one senior member of staff (or two, split by UG/PGT and PGR) responsible for:

- Strategic oversight and coordination of student voice within the faculty
- Supporting the visibility of student representatives within the faculty
- Working in partnership with Faculty student representatives and Strath Union to enable effective student representation within the faculty
- Ensuring student voice informs Faculty-level decision-making and quality enhancement processes