

HOW TO BE AN EFFECTIVE REP ONLINE

Student Representation
following the move
towards blended learning



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[Updated February 2022]

Strathclyde
Students'
Union



WHO IS THIS GUIDE FOR?

This guide was initially created for the use of Programme Reps at Strathclyde during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Following the suspension of face-to-face teaching, the Representation team felt it was important that Reps have a guide on how best to support students during this challenging period. As we move towards a return to campus, in-person and blended learning, this guide has been updated to reflect this.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF A REP?

During a time like this, it can be easy for Reps to take on a number of issues. However, it is important to remember that Reps continue to only deal with academic issues. If your peers are struggling with matters such as finance or accommodation, the best action you can take is to signpost them to a service such as the Advice Hub (see last page).

Make sure that peers know that you are their Rep and they can come to you with any academic issues.



PROGRAMME REP STRATEGIES

Communicate...

If your class/course has not already done so, set up a Facebook or WhatsApp group, or even a Discord server. This provides an easy and accessible way for classmates to communicate any issues they are facing and get help from those who may have already faced the same issues.

Enquire...

Enquire about any issues your peers are currently facing, particularly around online teaching and assessment. Many students may feel anxious about the uncertainty of how their exams will be carried out to suit the current circumstances (whether they will still be online or not), so it will be worthwhile to get some thoughts on this.

Signpost...

Be aware of available resources and services within the University and Strath Union that are available to help students with any financial, mental health, or accommodation issues. The Advice Hub is running virtual appointments, and the Strath Union website has a live chat function that can help with any queries you or your classmates may have.

Problem solving...

As noted in the Programme Rep handbook, dealing with a problem sent to you by a student normally starts with asking them how they would like the problem to be resolved, and then taking the appropriate action to see this resolution achieved, such as communicating with lecturers. You could simply email your lecturer the student's concerns, or arrange a virtual or in-person meeting you would feel this beneficial.

Teamwork...

Don't forget to keep in contact with other Reps in your network. Solving problems together is easier and gives you a different perspective. Feel free to start a discussion on the Rep class page on MyPlace to get advice from your fellow reps.

Closing the feedback loop...

Make sure that any changes that do occur out of your work are efficiently communicated back to the students on the course.



QUESTIONS TO ASK PEERS

- How are you finding blended teaching so far? Are you satisfied with the number of face-to-face activities for each class? Are you having any technical or accessibility issues with the online activities?
- Are there any back-to-back online and in-person activities? Are they well spaced out, or do they cause attendance problems?
- Are you satisfied with the available online alternatives to in-person activities?
- Are teaching and support staff arrangements communicated clearly?

Remember to ensure that scheduled SSLC meetings still occur digitally. As some people might feel uncomfortable meeting in person, or may still need to self-isolate, this ensures that everyone is able to participate.

TIPS FROM A REP: DANA STODDART MSC INFORMATION AND LIBRARY STUDIES



'Keep the channels of communication open, and be open to communicate with your fellow students however they feel most comfortable. You're all in this together. Be honest if this new situation is proving to be a struggle, but remember to stay positive!'

WORKING FROM HOME TOP TIPS

Considering the current situation, some of us may still find themselves working from home - for just a couple of days a week, for short periods of time, or indefinitely. Even after all this time, it can be a hard thing to adjust to. Here are some good strategies from the staff at Strath Union!



GET EXERCISE

Visit the NHS Live Well site for easy exercises to do from home



CONNECT

Keep in touch with friends on social media



GET A ROUTINE

Stick to a routine similar to what you would do regularly



AVOID DISTRACTIONS

Home may have many distractions, try to avoid these



SET UP YOUR SPACE

Create a dedicated working space when working from home



MAKE A PLAN

Plan out what you want to do each day - try making a list!

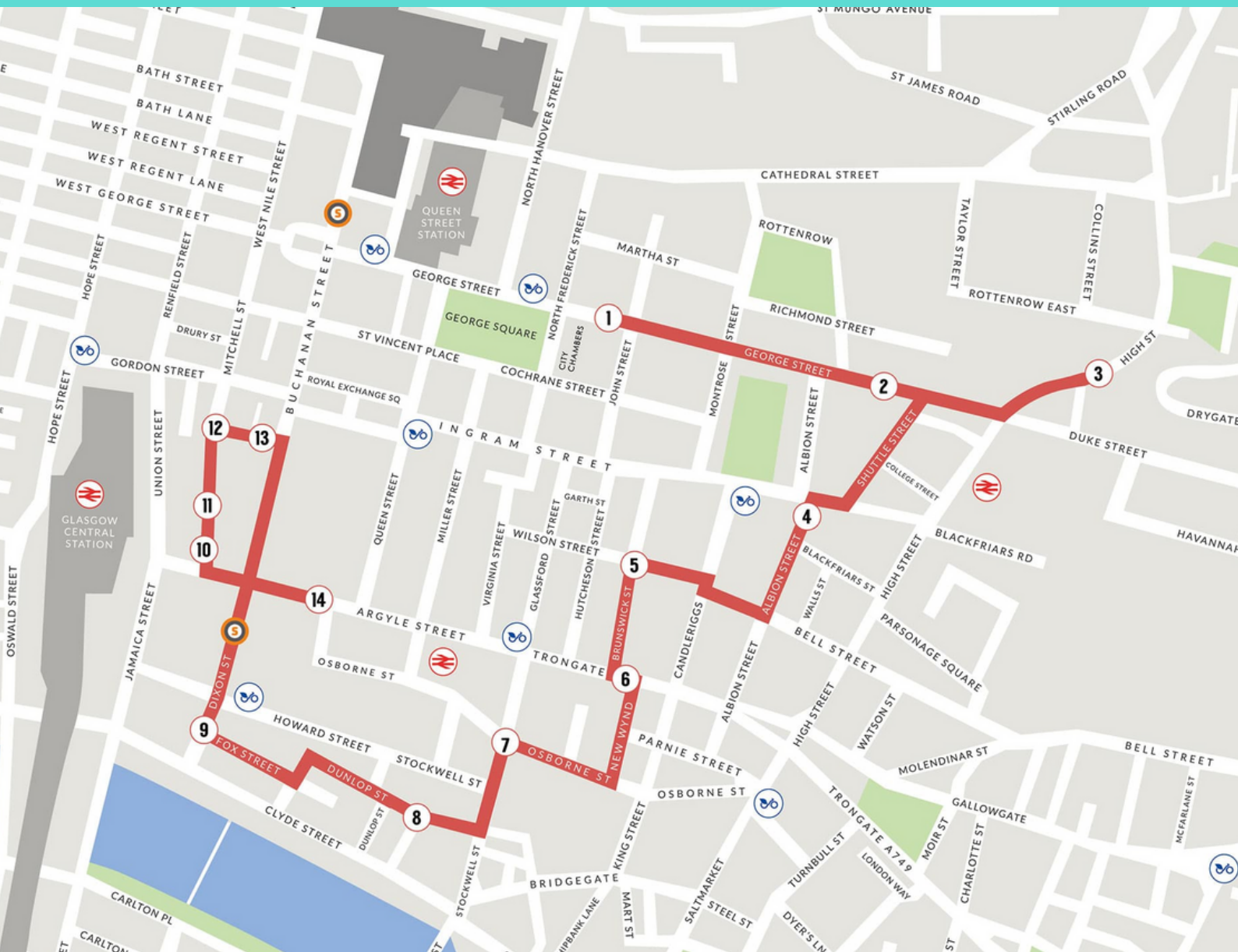
SETTING UP YOUR DIGITAL SPACE

Before getting down to work, take some time out to organise and clean your workspace. You will find yourself using this area a lot more than you regularly would have pre-Covid, so try and customise it to what works best for you.

Try sitting in a location that has a lot of natural light and a source of fresh air. You can also try improvising a standing desk to avoid long periods of sitting down. Different things suit different people, so try and make your space your own!



STAYING HEALTHY



If you are not self-isolating, it is a good idea to go outside and get fresh air during the day.

Why not take the opportunity to walk the famous Glasgow Mural Trail? In fact, many of the murals are close to the Strathclyde campus.

You can find the full walking route at www.citycentremuraltrail.co.uk or you can use the route on the map above, which starts by George Square.

When walking, remember to follow Public Health advice and maintain a respectful distance between others.

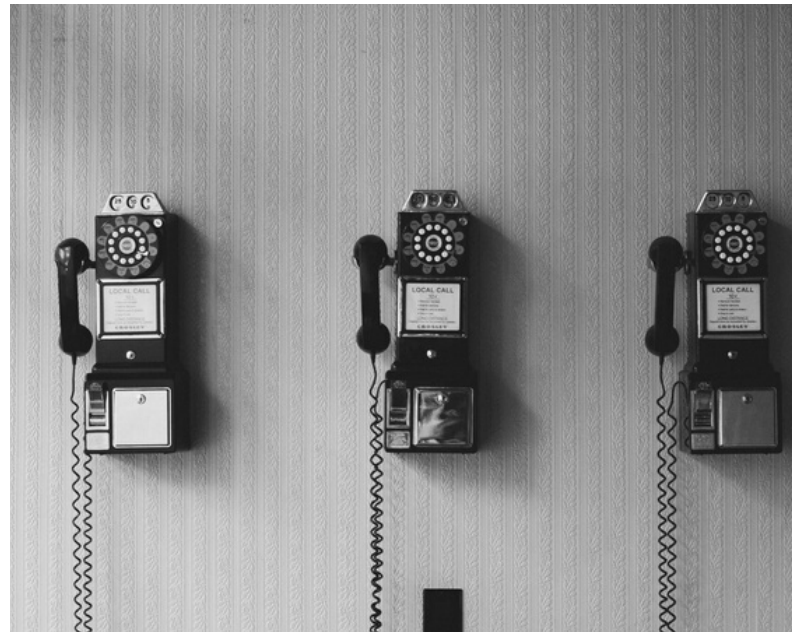
HOW CAN I CONTACT THE REP TEAM?

The Representation Team may be working from home, but we are still here to support your role in enhancing the student experience! You can get in touch with us via:

Email: strathunion.rep@strath.ac.uk

Remember you can still log volunteering hours for Programme Rep activities that you do from home (e.g. attending a Zoom meeting) - visit www.strathunion.com/volunteering/





ADVICE HUB

Due to the ongoing situation with COVID-19 the Advice Hub service moved online. Please follow the link to book an online appointment:

www.strathunion.com/advice/arrangeappointment/

Faculty Reps & student exec

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The Student Exec can be contacted here: www.strathunion.com/voice/studentexec/