

Student Representation Handbook

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OWNER
Student Services Team

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Introduction

Regent College London is committed to engaging with our students as partners in the management and continuous improvement of our higher education programmes. One of the ways we do this is by giving all students opportunities to provide feedback about their learning experiences. Individual feedback is not, however, enough on its own; we also encourage and support formal structures of student representation where students can come together to debate and develop informed views about the College's performance. We involve students as partners in our academic governance - the framework of committees that govern the College's academic activities.



This handbook deals with student representation in the College, including the different student representative roles and how representatives are elected and involved in our decision-making. It has been co-created by staff and students, and applies to all higher education provision regardless of level or awarding body (Pearson or one of our university partners).

Principles

This handbook is based on the following principles that have emerged from discussions with students and staff involved in student representation:

✓ Student-centric

Students should be regarded as valuable decision-makers and partners in their education.

✓ Representation of the student body

Every effort should be made to ensure fair and equal access to engagement opportunities by all members of the student body.

✓ Community awareness

All students should be aware of who their representatives are and how they can communicate with them.

✓ Properly resourced

Students and staff must be given adequate time and resources to engage meaningfully in partnership work.

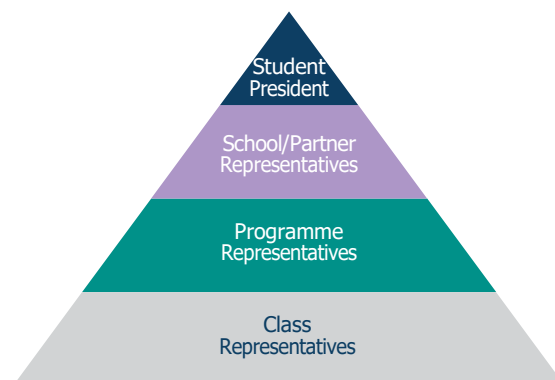
✓ Accessible and transparent

Processes and decisions should be clearly explained, and student representatives should be accountable to their peers.

✓ Responsive, adaptable and developmental

We should regularly review and adapt, and adopt good practices from elsewhere, to ensure we are continuously developing.

How the student representative structure is organised



The most senior student representative in the College is known as the Student President. The Student President is a member of the College's Academic Council and is in close and regular contact with the College's senior management to represent students' views. More information about the Student President's role appears below.

The Student President is supported by School Representatives from each of the schools that provide higher education courses (currently four).

These School Representatives are supported by Class Representatives and further by Programme Representatives from every higher education programme (or groups of similar programmes). From among the Class Representatives, Partner Representatives self-nominate, for each of the partnerships we have with awarding bodies.

A Student Council is convened by the Student President twice within each academic year to gather together the views of the Programme Representatives, Partner Representatives, and those that filter through from Class Representatives. Any special interest concerns, such as Equality and Diversity, College Policy updates, Sexual Harassment and Discrimination procedures, overall academic perspectives, or any other concern that students feel need to be relayed to the College's management, can be debated at this forum. A member of the Student Services Team will be available to attend these meetings in order to note the chief concerns of students and assist the President in formulating next steps.

More information about all of these roles appear below.

Student involvement in academic governance

Academic governance is the framework of committees, policies, systems and processes that govern the College's academic activities.

Academic governance is different to corporate governance, which the Board of Directors is responsible for. (Corporate governance is concerned with issues like the College's finances, risk management and legal compliance.)

The most senior academic committee of the College is called Academic Council. Academic Council is responsible for determining the College's academic governance framework and the policies, regulations and procedures within it. It is chaired by the Principal and has three student members, which would normally be the Student President and two others.

Dealing with the details of every single policy and procedure is too much for one committee to manage. So, Academic Council has a number of sub-committees to support it, most of which also have student members. Student representatives are aligned to specific committees within the representation management system.

Academic Planning and Portfolio Committee (APPC) oversees all the programmes the College offers to make sure they are financially sustainable and aligned to the College's strategy. If the Committee thinks there is a gap in the College's portfolio, it could recommend the development of a new programme or partnership. Because APPC is primarily concerned with financial issues it does not have student members.

Equality, Diversity, Access and Participation Committee (EDAP) oversees the College's approach to promoting equality and diversity among staff and students, and access and participation by groups of students who are underrepresented in higher education. EDAP has two student members.

Learning and Teaching Enhancement Committee (LTEC) oversees the College's approach to maintaining and enhancing the quality of learning, teaching and assessment across all of our higher education provision, with a particular focus on programme design and delivery, and students' learning experiences. LTEC has two student members.

While APPC considers the financial and strategic benefits of new programmes, Programme Approval and Review Committee (PARC) looks after the academic elements of new programmes, asking questions like whether new programmes are at the right academic standard and does the College have sufficient resources to deliver them properly. PARC has two student members.

Student Voice Committees oversee each School's approach to student representation and provide a forum for student representatives and senior staff to collaborate in making improvements to students' learning experiences. Each School has a Student Voice Committee and the membership includes all of the student representatives from within that School, and from their number specific student representatives are asked to participate.

Course Boards and Programme Committees are responsible for the performance of individual courses or programmes (or groups of similar courses or programmes). The relevant Programme representative is a member of the board or committee.



Role Descriptors

STUDENT PRESIDENT

The role of the Student President is to represent the views of all the College's students, both within the College's academic governance structure and in regular informal discussions with senior managers.

The Student President is expected to:

- ✓ Provide overall leadership for the student representatives at the College and be an advocate for student representation.
- ✓ Keep up-to-date with students' views across the College.
- ✓ Organise and lead regular meetings with School, Programme, and Partner representatives about student representation and students' learning experiences.
- ✓ Oversee the elections of Programme Representative with support from the Student Services Team.
- ✓ Act as the lead Student Representative in meetings with College staff, including Academic Council.
- ✓ Be involved in discussions with the College's awarding bodies and attend partnership meetings and developmental sessions if and when required.
- ✓ Support the planning and organisation of student activities and events with help from the Student Services Team.
- ✓ Actively communicate with all students (in collaboration with other representatives) about student representation, enabling students to bring issues and concerns to representatives' attention.
- ✓ Convene a Student Council Meeting twice within each academic year, with help and assistance from the Student Services Team.

This role would suit a student who:

- ✓ Has previous experience of being, or engaging with, Programme or School Representation and ideally is currently in their second or final year of degree.
- ✓ Is a confident public speaker who can relate to people from different expertise and backgrounds, as well as lead discussions and analyse themes and trends.
- ✓ Can work as part of a team and who may be looking for a future career which involves representing people, special interest groups, public inquiries or organisations.
- ✓ Has good organisational skills.
- ✓ Is able to handle sensitive information confidentially.
- ✓ Is committed to student representation.
- ✓ Is motivated and enthusiastic about improving the quality of students' learning experiences.
- ✓ Wants to develop and expand their knowledge and have a better understanding of the College and higher education in general.

Expected time commitment

On average you will spend around 2 hours a week on the role. Some weeks may be more demanding than others.

Election(s) frequency

Once per academic year.

Length of representation

A maximum of two academic years but will need to be re-elected after the first year.

SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVES

The role of the School Representative largely mirrors that of the Student President, but at a School level. Therefore, the School Representative will be expected to:

- ✓ Provide leadership for the programme representatives in the School and be an advocate for student representation.
- ✓ Keep up-to-date with students' views across the School.
- ✓ Organise and lead regular meetings with Programme representatives about student representation and students' learning experiences.
- ✓ Meet regularly with the Head of School and other senior academic staff.
- ✓ Support the Student President in meetings with College staff and be a member of one or more of the College's committees.
- ✓ Support the planning and organisation of student activities and events alongside the Student Services Team.
- ✓ Actively communicate with all students in the School about student representation, enabling students to bring issues and concerns to representatives' attention.
- ✓ Coordinate the views of Programme Representatives and Partner Representatives, and also those that come from Classroom Representatives, to present to the Student Council.

This role of School Representative would suit a student who:

- ✓ Has been a Programme Representative (although this is not a requirement).
- ✓ Is a confident public speaker who can relate to people from different backgrounds.
- ✓ Is looking for a future career which involves representing people, special interest groups, public inquiries, or organisations.
- ✓ Is motivated and enthusiastic about improving the quality of students' learning experiences.
- ✓ Is looking to become a future Student President.

Expected time commitment

On average you will spend around 1-2 hours a week on the role. Some weeks may be more demanding than others..

Election(s) frequency

Once per academic year.

Length of representation

One year.



PARTNER REPRESENTATIVES

Partner Representatives are elected to lead the representation of all the programmes we run in partnership with a particular awarding body. There are currently several partnerships in operation, so several Partner Representatives are needed.

The role of the Partner Representative reflects that of the School Representative, but focuses on all the provision we run in partnership with a particular awarding body, rather than all the provision in a particular School. Therefore, Partner Representatives will be expected to:

- ✓ Keep up-to-date with students' views across all the programmes we run in partnership with the awarding body.
- ✓ Take part in regular meetings with Programme Representatives about student representation and students' learning experiences.
- ✓ Support the Student President in meetings with College staff and be a member of one or more of the College's committees.
- ✓ Be involved in discussions with the awarding body.
- ✓ Support the planning and organisation of student activities and events.
- ✓ Actively communicate with students about student representation, enabling students to bring issues and concerns to representatives' attention.
- ✓ This role would suit a student with the same skills as for the School Representative role.
- ✓ Liaise with the awarding partner as necessary, and act as the conduit for student views to the partner, and from the partner to the Regent College student body.

Expected time commitment

On average, in combination with the Programme Representative role, you will spend around 1-2 hours a week on the role. Some weeks may be more demanding than others.

Election(s) frequency

Once per academic year.

Length of representation

One academic year.



PROGRAMME REPRESENTATIVES

The role of the Programme Representative is to understand and represent the views and interests of all students (in all years or cohorts) on a particular course or programmes (or group of courses or programmes).

As such, the Programme Representative will be expected to:

- ✓ Develop ways of identifying the views and interests of all students on the programme, via the Class Representatives with support from the Student Services team.
- ✓ Engage in all meetings of the relevant Programme Committee or Course Board and the School Student Voice Committee.
- ✓ Attend appropriate training and meetings as organised by Student Services.
- ✓ Engage in discussions with other representatives, including the Student President, School Representative, Partner Representative and Class Reps, about areas of common interest or concern.
- ✓ Develop and implement ways of providing feedback to students to ensure they are aware of how they are being represented.

The role of PR would suit a person who:

- ✓ Is looking for a future career which involves representing people, special interest groups, public inquiries, or organisations.
- ✓ Is motivated and enthusiastic about improving the quality of students' learning experiences.
- ✓ Is looking to become a future School Representative or Student President.

Expected time commitment

On average you will spend around an hour a week on the role. Some weeks may be more demanding than others.

Election(s) frequency

Every intake.

Length of representation

Varied (duration of programme or per academic year).



CLASS REPRESENTATIVES

Elected to cover established Courses within Class groups at the start of the academic year, the class representatives are the lifeblood of the representative system. They operate purely to draw together the views of the students as a whole and bring those views to the Programme Representatives and the Partner Representatives. They are elected to listen to the issues that concern their fellow students, and to make those issues known. Each class representative operates independently within the class group, and has a link to the School and Partner Representatives to progress issues. The time commitment for this role is within class time, with a little extra to speak with the full representative body. The role suits those who cannot simply sit back when issues are raised, and who want to make vocal student concerns. All class representatives also have their own MS Teams chat group where they can address the college management, and they can take issues directly to the academic team delivering the classroom experience (online or in-person).

STUDENT COUNCIL

The Student Council will be led by the Student President, and will meet at least two times within an academic year, or more often if particular concerns are being raised. The Student Council is not a formal committee, but an opportunity for the Student President, the School Representatives, the Partner Representatives and the Programme Representatives to come together to document any proposals or procedures that they would wish to bring to the attention of the Academic Council, or any other body within the Regent College wide structure. It will also provide an opportunity for the concerns of Class Representatives to be given a wider platform, particularly if they impact the whole student body. The Student Council requires no formal Regent College Staff presence, but a nominated attendee from the Student Services Team will help facilitate its operations.

Principles for student representation

✓ All students should be given the opportunity to become a student representative.

✓ All programmes or courses (or groups of similar programmes or courses) should have a Programme Representative.

✓ All representatives will be identified and elected through a formal nomination and election process.

✓ Meetings of College committees involving student representatives must be scheduled at times when students can attend.

Please note: student representatives may be taken into other students' confidence in their role, regarding emotional, financial, sexual harassment, bullying, or general misconduct behaviour or accusations. In such incidents representatives should seek guidance from the Student Experience Team or make a report to their own CSO to allow further investigation by the College.



Elections

All student representatives are identified through a formal nomination and election process, as set out below.

The process for the election of the Student President will be run separately to the process for the election of the other representative roles. The Student Services team will instigate the process and act as the returning officer.

This is to allow:

- ✓ Class Representative nominations and elections are held at the start of each academic year, given that start dates are different for different programmes. The outcome of each election shall be announced to those students that are represented. Class Representatives will be elected within the class, with a visit from a member of the Student Services Team to facilitate the nomination and election, as necessary.
- ✓ Programme, Partner and School representatives are elected at the start of each academic year running September to September.
- ✓ Elections take place in week 3 at the start of each academic term in the class (online or in-person) by the student services team. We aim to ensure that each class has a classroom representative in place to follow through on student concerns.
- ✓ In the event of a tie, the voting shall be reopened and votes recast by all students.
- ✓ School Representatives will preferably be elected from amongst the cohort of Programme Reps, although it may be that a Class Rep is put forward to be elected as School Rep. Expertise gathered at any level will of course influence voting outcomes.
- ✓ Elections will continue to take place online via MS Teams when they are not carried out in person as for instance, within the classroom for Class Representatives.

In all processes:

- ✓ Nominations shall be sought from all constituents in a period of not less than fifteen working days. For these purposes, 'constituents' means those who are eligible to stand for a particular role.
- ✓ Candidates must nominate themselves, but can be nominated by other class members. Candidates must confirm their willingness to stand for election.
- ✓ Candidates will be invited to provide a supporting statement describing why they would like to be a representative and what they would hope to achieve. In the event of the Student President election, these statements will be shared with all constituents.

Where the number of candidates is equal to the number of vacancies, the candidates shall be duly elected. Where the number of candidates exceeds the number of vacancies, there shall be an election for Class Rep and for Student President as follows:

- ✓ Elections shall be by secret ballot of constituents.
- ✓ The Student Services will organise for the secret ballot to be undertaken electronically.
- ✓ The voting period will not be less than five working days.
- ✓ In the event of a tie, the outcome shall be determined by consideration of statements submitted by the Student Services Team.
- ✓ The outcome of the election shall be announced by the Student Services team to all students. Dates for election within each cohort of students will be notified to the elective body in advance.



Training and support for Student Representatives

The College recognises the importance of providing support and training for all Student Representatives and staff to equip them to fulfil their roles effectively.

Representatives will be offered training to a set schedule of delivery, normally starting in Week 5 of each academic session, as new representatives come on board. Representatives can also expect support from senior academic staff and also more broadly by Regent College managerial staff members.

Student Representative of the Month

Each month CSOs working with Student Representatives will make nominations for levels of participation and engagement from their known representatives.

Based on those nominations the Student Voice Team, including the Director of Students, selects the winner of a small voucher of appreciation.

Development

This Handbook will be reviewed and revised annually by the Student Services team. Revisions will reflect both good practice developments within the College and nationally as well as findings from monitoring and evaluation.





Contact us

To contact Student Services, the 'One Stop Shop' for all student requests.

Please use any of the following communication methods below:

TELEPHONE

020 3870 6666

EMAIL

Studentservices@rcl.ac.uk

LIVE CHAT ON REGENT DIGITAL

Regent Digital Mobile Application - Myday