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Congratulations on being elected as a Student Rep! We really appreciate your hard work and are looking forward to working with you!

As a Student Rep you are now part of a history of engaged Sussex students. Students have contributed to University committees from the beginning, and the University and Students’ Union are committed to listening to the student voice at every level. As a Rep, you will be involved in the development of the University of Sussex and provide an essential link between the Union, the University and the students. Your knowledge of what it is really like to study at Sussex will prove invaluable.

Your input is essential to the Rep Scheme and we are always looking for ways to improve in order to best suit the needs of students. You can feed into how the Rep Scheme works through focus groups, Rep Team meetings, and even working on the Rep Conference at the end of the year. We’re here to support you as a student and a Rep. We have lots of experience between us and understand both the benefits and challenges of the role, and we’re keen to help you get the most out of it. The opportunity to work with fellow Reps and students can be incredibly rewarding and we would like to thank you for your commitment. This scheme provides a really exciting network, and we hope that you meet some new people and enjoy the social side of this experience as well!

We provide all the essential training required, so as long as you’re enthusiastic and approachable you have nothing to worry about! This handbook, along with the Students’ Union and University websites are a brilliant resource for you to use. Also feel free to get in touch with the Student Rep Team at any point, we’re happy to help.

We look forward to meeting you and we hope you enjoy your experience as a Student Rep!

Bethan Hunt, Education Officer - Students’ Union
Clare Mackie, Pro Vice Chancellor - Teaching and Learning
What do Reps do?

Identify problems and/or areas of good practice

Talk to other students on your course to find out what they think about their modules and their course, the learning environment, resources, teaching methods, assessment timings and feedback etc. Make it easy for people to contact you as their representative. See the section on communication for ideas. Remember, being a Student Rep is not just about identifying problems. It is also about identifying areas of good practice within the University in order to make sure that these continue and expand.

As a Rep and an engaged student, you will also have your own ideas about what needs addressing and how things could change. Of course it’s ok for you to raise these as long as you provide evidence and reasoning for your ideas and you don’t abuse your position in order to push an agenda that does not reflect the wider views of your cohort. See the sections on boundaries and conduct for more advice.

Put your findings into action

This means attending appropriate committee meetings, raising issues and working with relevant staff to find solutions. It is important to take an active role in meetings in order to communicate any issues you may have. See sections on how to get the most out of meetings and more about your role. If you’re having trouble, contact a member of the Student Rep Team from the Key Contacts page.

Provide good feedback

Let your coursemates know what you’ve been doing on their behalf. Communication works both ways and it’s always nice to know what you say has been acted on. This applies even if the answer is not what you or your fellow students wanted or expected. It is up to you to determine what the best way of feeding back is but generally the rule is face to face if it’s a personal issue, via an email to your department if it’s to a group of students or directly at a lecture/seminar. Remember to let the University know about your concerns – they can’t improve if you don’t tell them what the problem is. Keep in touch with other reps in your School, and with the Students’ Union.
“Listening to the student voice is an integral part of how we in the University develop our teaching and learning and the wider student academic experience. By representing the views of your fellow students, you allow us to understand how different issues affect students and to respond effectively, helping us to identify good practice and to make changes. As Reps you represent the diversity of students at Sussex and are part of the strong tradition of independent student views at Sussex, and we very much welcome you and appreciate the time you are able to give to your role as Rep.”

Prof. Clare Mackie
Pro-VC Teaching and Learning
Talk to other Reps in your school to find out if there are any live or ongoing issues, especially from those who have already taken your module or course.
Helpful hints and tips

Gathering ideas

• Talk to your cohort
• Be observant
• Look at recent student feedback such as NSS data for your school
• Talk to other Reps in your school to find out if there are any live/ongoing issues, especially from those who have already taken your module/course
• Talk to Reps in other schools and find out what’s going on for them – you’ll be surprised how different things are in other disciplines. Could your school or department learn from somewhere else?

Forming arguments

• Deciding what you are going to say and how is good preparation for any meeting.
• Talk things through with your fellow Reps or other students
• Get as informed as you can by seeking information informally through School staff
• If you need more evidence consider using Survey Monkey or a similar canvassing tool to back up your argument with student views that you can refer to officially.
Helpful hints and tips

Feeding in

- You can do this yourself at your termly School Student Experience Group and Board of Study meeting.
- You can also attend the University-wide Student Experience Forum, although only Chair Reps make an official report to this group.
- You can pass issues on to your Chair Rep to raise in the Student Experience Forum and to the Reps or councillors in your school who sit on wider University and Students’ Union committees.
- Feed in may also be more informal communication to individual members of staff either in person or via email.

Feeding back

- Coordinate with other Reps in your school to send an email out to your whole cohort updating them on what issues you have raised and what the outcomes were.
- Update any social networking sites after each meeting or development.
- Let your Chair Rep know if you run into difficulties, or come across something you think might affect a wider range of students.
- Keep a record of what you raise and what the outcomes were. You can use this as a point of reference and it will be really useful for the next year’s Rep in the same position.
Keep a record of what you raise and what the outcomes were. You can use this as a point of reference and it will be really useful for the next year’s Rep in the same position.
What issues can Reps help with?

As a Rep you are elected principally to represent your cohort’s views on academic matters. These are issues directly related to your experience of teaching and learning but may also include wider issues that affect your studies.

Here are some examples of the kinds of issues reps might raise. This is a starting point for issues to look out for and think about. It is not an exhaustive list and you may become aware of issues that do not obviously fit into those categories.

Teaching resources
Availability of lecture rooms, lecture facilities, room facilities, disabled access etc

Teaching methods
Do students have the opportunity to experience different learning environments such as small seminar groups as well as lectures? Do lecturers make use of a variety of teaching methods such as board-work, lecture room technology etc, as appropriate? Do the teaching methods used exclude students with specific learning difficulties?

Study resources
Availability of books and other resources in the library, access to workstations, laboratory facilities etc.

Course content and structure Does the course match the description in the course handbook? Do lectures and seminars focus on the important topics? Have changes been made to the course without warning or consultation? Is the workload distributed reasonably throughout the course? Are the feedback mechanisms clear and appropriate?
Hidden course costs
Have students been given adequate information about the costs of photocopying, attending field trips, laboratory charges etc. Are charges reasonable?

Access to facilities after hours
Does the University campus provide adequate services to part-time students and students who need facilities outside 9am-5pm?

Issues concerning placements
Where students have professional placements as part of their course (e.g. medical, social work, education courses), do they have adequate support from the University during the placement?

Communication of issues
Are students aware of what is happening in the University and Students’ Union and are they happy about the way this information is disseminated?

Comparisons between schools and/or departments
Sometimes students hear of an area of good practice within another school of study or department and want their Student Rep to get it introduced in their own school or department.

Where possible try to assist students to resolve issues and complaints initially informally and subsequently formally as appropriate.
What should Reps not deal with?

As a Rep you will need to be clear about where your duties start and end. The clue is in the title, it’s all about representing students’ views and interests. You are not there to shoulder anyone else’s problems or as a source of information for students about their course.

You are not here to help with students’ individual problems except when they raise more general concerns that might affect others. If a student wants to discuss the following, you will need to refer them on to a more appropriate source of help:

**Individual student performance:**
It is not a Rep’s role to represent students in relation to their marks. Students who have concerns about their grades should speak in the first instance to their Academic Advisor. If unsatisfied with the response, they can be referred to Support and Advocacy at the Students’ Union, who can advise on whether a student has grounds for an academic appeal or complaint.

**Allegations of harassment or bullying:**
Students who allege that they have been bullied or harassed should be referred to Student Life Centre.

**Formal Complaints:**
As a rep you may hear lots of complaining and it is your role to listen. However, if a student wants to make a formal complaint to the University or Students’ Union they should be referred to the official procedure and may wish to seek advice from Support and Advocacy at the Students’ Union.

**Personal problems:**
If a student has personal problems you can refer them to the Student Life Centre. www.sussex.ac.uk/studentlifecentre
If a student has personal problems you can refer them to the Student Life Centre.
Student Rep Agreement

We want your experience as a Student Rep to be enjoyable, productive and beneficial for you, for the students you represent and for the University. Here we aim to set out what you can expect from us and what we expect from you in your role. We ask you to confirm your agreement with the following principles as part of your training and induction process.

What you can expect as a Rep

- To undertake your role in a supportive, positive environment.
- To receive a comprehensive induction into your role and to be provided with named contacts for support.
- To have opportunities to provide feedback on your experiences as a Rep, and for this feedback to be taken seriously. The Student Rep Team holds weekly meetings which are open for reps to attend by appointment. The Rep Team will also make termly efforts to gather feedback from reps on their experience of the Scheme.
- To be treated with respect, courtesy and fairness regardless of your age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, socio-economic background or any other inappropriate distinction in line with Students’ Union and University of Sussex equalities policies.
- To receive recognition and thanks for performing your role. You will be asked to record your activities as a rep and the Student Rep Team will give you details of how this can be exchanged for a record of achievement at the end of your term.
- To be kept informed of all relevant information and opportunities regarding your role. This includes the timely circulation of papers and meeting times/locations for all meetings that you are entitled to attend, as well as information regarding training, consultation, or other initiatives in which reps are involved.
- To be able to call other reps to account for their conduct and, accordingly, to be called to account for your own by your cohort, fellow reps, School or Rep Team.
What we expect of you as a Rep

- To support the principles, aims and objectives of the Student Rep Scheme as they are set out on the Student Rep website.

- To understand the responsibilities and boundaries of the role as they are set out in this handbook, the Student Rep Role Description and your initial training.

- To attend one initial training sessions in the autumn term providing you with support and information about your role as well as your initial School Rep induction or ‘inaugural meeting’.

- To attend your School Student Experience Group each term and any other committees to which you have been elected and to send your apologies and a written report to any meetings you cannot attend.

- To actively work to become aware of issues of concern amongst the students you represent and to communicate these issues via the appropriate channels to the University and Students’ Union.

- To represent the diversity of students in your cohort, conducting yourself in a professional and respectful manner in line with the Students’ Union and University of Sussex equalities policies.

- To remain communicative with your cohort and key contacts via email including letting your key contact know as soon as reasonably practicable if you no longer wish to be a Rep.
Campaigning issues and the role of the Students’ Union

Part of the role of the Students’ Union is to lobby the University on a wide range of issues, both academic and non-academic. When Reps raise academic issues that are very important or affect a large number of students, the Students’ Union will also want to raise these with the University through its elected officers. The Students’ Union Education Officer is part of the Student Rep Team and works with Reps to ensure academic issues are raised jointly through the most appropriate and effective channels.

As engaged and active students, reps sometimes wish to raise non-academic issues that they feel strongly about. The Students’ Union will offer guidance about how to take forward wider issues in a way that takes account of your role as a student Rep.

If you are one of the Student Reps who are elected to sit on Students’ Union Council, you will be speaking on behalf of the students in your school. As well hearing the view of Reps from other schools and the main Union officers, you will be asked to vote on various Union matters from approving officer reports to agreeing new campaigns. In doing so you should bear in mind that you represent your school. Elected Union Councillors will receive training on the role.

Under all circumstances, when acting as a student Rep, rather than an individual student, you are there to represent your cohort in the diversity of their opinion. If you feel strongly about an issue in the University and you want to build a campaign around it, you need to be clear that the issue falls within the Rep role and that you have the support of your cohort. You need to gather the views of your fellow students and represent these views through appropriate channels.
What have Student Reps achieved?

‘Being a Student Rep this year has allowed me to be successful in a number of different areas. For example, I was able to help change an entire module which had been very problematic this year into a much better one for next year’s students, as well as help change the first year geography field trip to a much more fun and interactive, activities-based one. I would also say that one of the biggest successes regards my own personal gain from the whole experience. I have gotten to know so many different members of staff and met so many different people who have helped shape my first year of uni in such a positive way.’

Emma Muench, Year 1 Global Studies rep, 2014

‘I brought up the importance of research space and a desk for every individual research student regardless of whether part-time or full-time. I have entered into discussion about supervisory support for doctoral students in Doctoral school meetings. I have raised awareness of research students’ innovations during the year, such as their setting up new study groups.’

Postgraduate Research student rep, 2012

‘Being a rep has allowed me to attend meetings and be part of the students’ and lecturers’ environment. The feedback that I have had is that my enthusiasm to change things and to make a difference has improved BMEC.

I have also had a chance to be on the validation panel to oversee the introduction of a new MSc. I have met an array of diverse, intellectual people who have helped me grow and I have been of service to the business school and my fellow students, by voicing concerns and helping to change things at grass roots.’

Eleonora Abascal, Business and Management Postgraduate Taught rep, 2013
‘Having a close knit group of only 20 students it was possible to deal with all our problems on an informal level in our lectures, which were more seminar sized. We set up a Facebook group that people voiced and discussed problems on and was often helpful. I am looking forward to getting involved next year and hope I can be a good addition to Mathematics first year as a student rep with experience of the university and its workings.’

Ross McKenzie, Foundation Yr Mathematics rep, 2013

‘Communication between Reps and the School has been great. Reps are often consulted by the School about issues like the provision of the placement year, school strategic plan, NSS and the marking guidelines for tutors. Reps have been trying to work in partnership with the School. As a result, a student-led induction might be implemented next year. I have also expressed my opinions, on behalf of my cohort, on the structure of the academic year and am looking forward to seeing possible changes happen next year.’

Hazel Tong, Year 3 Psychology rep, 2014

‘I participated in the first Student Rep Conference and had the opportunity to hear from PG reps how they felt the rep scheme could change. I also was instrumental in communicating the needs of my PG cohort to my instructors.’

Lindsay Debach, English Postgraduate Taught rep, 2013
So, apart from the enormous sense of satisfaction, you may be wondering what you get in return for all your hard work.

We want to make sure that being a Rep is not a thankless task and also that you make the most of the experience you have gained as a Rep in your future endeavours.

Valuable skills and experience for your CV
It’s a tough employment world out there. You can use your experience as a Rep to boost your chances.

Communication skills
This is a big one for lots of employers. From presenting information in meetings and lectures to writing reports and emails, you’ll learn a lot about putting your point across effectively. You will also be able to demonstrate experience of effective listening in order to gain the fullest picture of the situation.

Organisational skills
You will need to develop effective time management and organizational skills to make sure you can fit in your work and your Rep commitments.

Networking skills and confidence
The University is an enormous organisation with numerous layers of management. To be an effective Rep you’ll need to develop useful contacts in order to raise issues at the appropriate level and get your voice heard. These contacts may help you in both a representative and a personal capacity. The stronger and more numerous your contacts are within the University, the more people you may be able to ask for references.
Did you know that the University has a Careers and Employability Centre specifically focused on helping you get the kind of work that you want? Check out their website:

www.sussex.ac.uk/careers

You can also find information here about Sussex Plus - an online resource where you can collate and present your skills and experience to help you stand out from the crowd:

www.sussex.ac.uk/careers/sussexplus
Effective communication is the backbone of good representation. Try to be varied and persistent in your efforts to canvas student opinion. Here are some tips to get you started...

**Ask to do “shout outs”** at the beginning/end of lectures to introduce yourself to your peers.

**Talk to people** make sure they know you’re their Rep and listen to their concerns. This could be before lectures or even in your social spaces.

**Publicise your email address** this makes it as easy as possible for students to contact you quickly. You can even ask staff to help you send emails to all the students you represent.

**Social networking sites** (Facebook and Twitter). See our tips below for best practice using these.

**Notice boards** use your department notice board to update students regularly by posting new minutes, contact details, etc. You could even be creative and make your notice board a place where people can leave feedback.

**Hold “office hours”** make yourself available for people to come and speak to you at a set time and place.

**Pigeonholes** check if there is a pigeonhole available to you in your department or school so that students can leave messages for you.

**Use online surveys** to gather opinions/data such as SurveyMonkey - The Students’ Union is keen to help Reps generate your own alternative survey data.

Check the Reps website for further information: http://www.sussexstudent.com/represources
Points to remember

- You are there to represent the views of your peers, these may not necessarily reflect your own, but you are asked to present the majority opinion or a balanced range of feedback.

- A wide range of support is available to help you perform your role to the best of your ability.

- Making improvements to the student experience requires research, patience, persistence and co-operative working.

- Communicate as often as possible, particularly before meetings.
Social networking tips

It is very likely that you will use Facebook and other social networking tools to communicate with your cohort and other reps. While this is an excellent and effective tool that we encourage you to use, it is really important that you consider the following carefully:

• Not everyone uses Facebook! This is a real fact. How are you going to ensure that you don't exclude those whose use of the tool is less or different to your own?

• When you are on Facebook are you in a public space or a private space? Are you still a student Rep in this virtual environment? Given that this distinction is blurred it’s best to consider that all such communication is public and therefore subject to your Student Rep agreement.

• Q. How is expressing an opinion on Facebook different to expressing a view in a pub? A. The pub isn’t recording everything you say and exposing it to an unlimited audience of your peers and colleagues.

Our advice is to play it safe; create a separate profile for your ‘Rep self’ and conduct all your Rep Facebook business using that. Whether you choose to do this or use your personal profile for everything, you should remember that all communication that others can see or hear can be considered public and can have an impact on how you are perceived in your role.
Hints & tips on using social media to publicise yourself and gather interest:

- **Find out from existing reps in your school if there is already a Facebook group for your cohort. If there isn’t we would strongly recommend setting one up.**

- **Find useful information to share - the University, lots of its departments and the Students’ Union have social media profiles. You could share the content they post to help keep students informed.**

- **Add your social media links to the bottom of your emails so that people can easily contact you.**

- **Post questions and discussion topics prior to Student Rep meetings to gauge opinion and gather feedback.**

- **If you have role-specific profiles try to post regularly so people don’t forget about you then get overwhelmed!**
Further Rep opportunities

Once elected to their post, Reps can put themselves forward for positions on committees and meetings to represent the student voice in more formal settings: in their School, in the wider University and in the Students’ Union. The process for doing this begins shortly after the Rep elections at each School’s Inaugural meeting. These positions offer an excellent opportunity to become more involved as a Rep by understanding and taking part in how the University and the Union work.

Student Reps are chosen early in the year to hold a wide range of positions including:

**Chair Reps**

Reps in each school must elect a Chair Rep who will:

- Chair the School Student Experience Group.
- Attend the University-wide Student Experience Forum to represent the views of your school.
- Help ensure that Reps are aware of meetings and encourage attendance.
- Help co-ordinate rep activities and communications within their School.
- Provide a point of contact for the Student Rep team and the school for the receipt of feedback and for raising any concerns.

The Chair Rep will usually be elected at their school Inaugural Rep meeting, which is held shortly after the main Rep elections.

**Students’ Union Council**

For the first time in 2014, Reps in each school will elect the students, known as “Union councillors”, who will join elected Officers and others from different parts of the union, on the Students’ Union Council. The school’s Reps on Council will:

- Meet 3 times a term as the full Council, forming a forum where reps from all schools can swap experiences.
- Come face to face with the Union’s elected officers, hear about their activities and challenge their decisions.
- Raise issues arising from students in the school.
- Help form the Union’s stance on academic and non-academic issues.

Union Councillors are also elected shortly after the Rep elections. At the first council meeting, in November, a Chair of Council will be elected from among the Reps on Council.
School-level committees

In each school, all Reps attend the School Student Experience Group and school Meetings. Many reps will also attend the Board of Study relevant to their degree. Details of these can be found in the section “Committees and Meetings”.

In addition, there are other meetings within your school where a smaller number of Student Reps sit. These are elected by the Reps in the school at the first meeting of the year. These include, in each school, the School Teaching & Learning Committee and School Research Degree Committee. (In BSMS there is a similar structure but with different names.)

University-level committees and Senate

As well as the Reps elected to bodies within the school, there are a number of University-wide committees which contain Student Reps as members. Any Student Rep can put themselves forward for these positions, and Reps vote on who will fill each one.

For example, the topmost academic committee is Senate, chaired by the Vice Chancellor and with all Heads of Schools among its members. Five Student Reps sit on Senate as full voting members, along with the Union President and Education Officer. These Reps are voted on by Student Reps as a whole.

Of course, it’s very important that the Reps who hold these positions play a full part in the committees they’re on, otherwise the student voice is diminished.

You can read more about the committees by going to http://www.sussexstudent.com/represources and following the links.

Link up with the Student Rep Team

If you have any ideas on how the Student Rep scheme itself could be improved, just contact one of the team. There is an annual Rep get together towards the end of the academic year, where your feedback would be very welcome and will help make next year’s Student Reps even more effective! Finally, if you’re still be on campus in October 2015, you could be a Rep Facilitator, helping to train another batch of Reps.
Committees and meetings

A big part of the Student Rep role is attending meetings and/or committees to represent students. This section guides you through how meetings work and how to prepare. Understanding this will help you get on with the important part: getting the student voice heard!

What committees do Reps attend?

Within your school, the School Student Experience Group (SSEG) is a key meeting for Reps and senior members of School staff that all Reps are expected to attend. The meeting is chaired by an elected Chair Rep and may meet termly or, in some Schools, four times over the first two terms. In BSMS the equivalent is the Student Affairs Sub-Committee (SASC).

‘Student experience’ is a broad term that covers a wide range of issues affecting students’ experience of teaching and learning. Issues discussed at recent SSEGs include:

- New appointments; Space/social space/study space; Assessment and Feedback; Printing; Library resources; Workshops/open seminars; Study Direct; Student Surveys/NSS action plans; Careers/Work Experience; School Communication/blogs/Social media; IT/clusters/software; Lecture capture; Lab Training; Estates/building issues/access; Timetabling/exams/teaching; School social events; Submission and return of coursework; Academic advising; Induction and re-induction; staff training; Book bundles/swaps; Uploading of teaching materials; Assessment schedules

Within schools, each subject area or department has a Board of Study which oversees how individual courses are delivered, managed and their quality assured. These are the committees dealing most closely with Student Reps’ academic subject area and relevant Reps are expected to attend. Staff contacts in your school can confirm Board of Study subjects and Rep membership.

Issues discussed include: proposed changes to existing modules/assessment/teaching patterns; proposals for new modules; module evaluation questionnaires; feedback; reading packs/learning resources; module content.

Often, one of these school-based committees will want to raise an issue for discussion across the whole University. In that case, the school will place the item in a report to the relevant University-level meeting. For example, items raised at an SSEG can be included in a report to the University School Experience Forum (SEF), where the school’s view can be presented, perhaps by the Rep from the school who attends that meeting. Reps can also raise issues within the Students’ Union, by talking to elected Officers or getting a Rep on the Union Council to request an item on the council agenda.
What are committee meetings like?

Some committees are more formal than others; school level meetings will be less formal than University level ones, of which Senate is the most formal of all. No need to sweat about them though as Student Reps will get briefings before university level committees to support their participation and this guide, plus your training, should tell you the rest.

For the higher level committees, a lot of the business consists of reports from committees lower down the hierarchy. It is important to realise this: to get a matter raised for discussion at a higher committee, you need to start lower down, probably within the school, and make your case bit by bit, persuading more people at each stage. But in practice, very few of the issues Reps want to pursue need this approach: most reps are not seeking to revolutionise campus, but just to get some simple improvements done.

Key Players: the Chairperson

The Chair of any committee is a key person on any committee. They have a lot of influence, both in putting the agenda for the meeting together and once the meeting starts. They are responsible for the flow of the meeting, ensuring all agenda items are covered within the timescale and that everybody gets to say their bit. This is usually the person to whom you address any questions so it is good to sit where they can see you! When you would like to say something to the meeting you will need to indicate this to the Chair by raising your hand slightly.

Key Players: the Secretary

The Secretary of a committee is usually a member of staff and not a voting member of the committee. They are responsible for sending out committee papers and keeping minutes during each meeting. This is the person you would contact if you want an item added to the agenda prior to the meeting.
Meeting structure

It is important to understand that, for most committees, the agenda (list of items to be dealt with) is fixed before the meeting. If you want to put a new matter on the agenda, you need to ask the committee’s secretary plenty of time before the date of the meeting, how to go about it. For further advice contact the Student Rep team.

You may also want to look at some real examples of agendas for various different committees so you know exactly what to expect. The link below will take you to a list of committees in the University. You can click on them and view minutes and agendas from past meetings.

Most formal meetings have an agenda something like this.

- Apologies for absence: If you know you can’t make a meeting it is always worth sending the secretary apologies. It is both professional and helpful to the timing of the meeting to know whether people are attending or not.

- Minutes: Notes of the last meeting are checked for accuracy.

- Matters arising: Action points from the last meeting not covered elsewhere on the agenda are discussed.

- Reports: The bulk of most meetings consists of items submitted in advance, and for each one, there is likely to be a document containing the main points that are going to be discussed. If the report is to be voted on, the paper will make it clear what decision is to be made.

- Any other business (AOB): This appears on some agenda papers and is supposed to be used to make brief points that couldn’t be raised earlier in the meeting and can’t wait until the next meeting. It can be used to ask for an item to be included on the next agenda.

At the less formal meetings, there may be a specific point on the agenda set aside for Reps to raise issues. If there isn’t, why not ask the secretary if this could be added in future?
It is important to understand that, for most committees, the agenda (list of items to be dealt with) is fixed before the meeting.
How to get the most out of meetings

Before a meeting...

• Understand the purpose of the meeting: the issues it can and cannot discuss. This will help you raise issues that are appropriate to the level of the meeting and within its remit to discuss. Use Sussex Direct to find previous agendas and meeting papers.

• Look through the agenda and minutes so that you can collect student feedback on issues to be discussed.

• Find out who the committee secretary is and let them know of anything you would like to bring up so that they can put it on the agenda.

• Make notes of points you might want to raise or any questions.

• Identify the main points of interest for you and identify outcomes you would like from the meeting.

• Always explain an absence: if you are unable to attend, always send apologies to the secretary.

• For university-level meetings: attend one of the Students’ Union briefing sessions where a member of staff will talk through the agenda, papers and relevant issues.

During a meeting...

• Be punctual.

• Know who is who: you’ll find members of the committee more responsive to you when you address them by name.

• Listen to others’ views.

• Be concise when making points.

• Give examples to illustrate your points.

• Never be afraid to ask.

• Do not be scared to put the opposing view.

• Have a positive attitude: you are more likely to be listened to if you present solutions to problems than if you are just seen as complaining about everything.
After a meeting...

- Feedback: it is absolutely vital that you feedback to the students in your School and/or department exactly what happened at the meeting.

- Carry out any action points you have been allocated.

- Organise: file away your committee papers carefully for next time.

- Spread the word: where you come across an issue you believe affects more than just your department (i.e. the whole school or university-wide), let the Students’ Union Education Officer know as soon as possible.
Key contacts: the Student Rep team

The Student Rep Team brings together staff members from the Students’ Union and the University’s Academic Development and Quality Enhancement (ADQE) section, and Bethan, the elected Education Officer.

We are your first contact for anything you want to know about the Rep scheme and how it works.

**Students’ Union Education Officer**
Bethan Hunt
Email: education@sussexstudent.com
Phone: 01273 873324
Office: 1st floor, Falmer House

**Student Representation Coordinator**
John Warmington
Email: john.w@sussexstudent.com
Phone: 01273 678319
Office: 1st floor, Falmer House

**Representation & Democracy Administrator**
Andy Chapman
Email: andrew.c@sussexstudent.com
Office: 1st floor, Falmer House

**Academic Development and Quality Enhancement Officer**
Stuart Fahey
Email: S.Fahey@sussex.ac.uk
Phone: 01273 876552

**Academic Development and Quality Enhancement Manager**
Clare Wolstenholme
Email: C.L.Wolstenholme@sussex.ac.uk
Other helpful contacts

**Academic Advisors**
Everyone is allocated an academic advisor when they start at Sussex. To find yours go to Sussex Direct -> Study Programme.

This is particularly helpful with…
Questions about your course / Modules / Changing courses / Assessments

**International Office**
Friston Building
www.sussex.ac.uk/international
(01273) 67 8422
international@sussex.ac.uk

**Doctoral School**
For postgraduate research students
Falmer House
www.sussex.ac.uk/doctoralschool
(01273) 87 7767
doctoralschool@sussex.ac.uk

**Housing Office**
Bramber House
www.sussex.ac.uk/residentialservices
(01273) 67 8220
housing@sussex.ac.uk

**Student Life Centre**
Personal problems / understanding University procedures / student funding / thinking about leaving or taking a break from study / complaints / discipline / mentoring

Ground Floor, Chichester 1
Open Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm
www.sussex.ac.uk/studentlifecentre
(01273) 87 6767
studentlifecentre@sussex.ac.uk

**The Students’ Union**
Professional advice and representations on issues including academic appeals, academic misconduct, and complaints to the University.

Support & Advocacy, 1st Floor, Falmer House
www.sussexstudent.com/advice
(01273) 87 7038
advice@sussexstudent.com

**Education & Welfare Officers**
The Students’ Union Education and Welfare officers can lobby the University to change their policies and procedures – on issues that may affect students both collectively and individually.

education@sussexstudent.com
(01273) 87 3324
welfare@sussexstudent.com
01273) 87 3354
Jargon buster

You will come across a lot of specialist language, or ‘jargon’, while finding your way around the University's processes. This guide is intended to make some of the language a bit clearer.

ADQE

AOB
Any Other Business. Any Other Business is the section at the end of many meetings, where an item can be brought up that has not appeared on the agenda.

Cluster (also known as area of study).
The Schools are grouped together for certain purposes into three clusters, for example one UG Student Rep from each cluster is elected to sit on Senate. The clusters are:
Arts (English; History, Art History and Philosophy, Media, Film and Music);
Sciences (Engineering & Informatics, Mathematical and Physical Sciences, Life Sciences, Psychology and for many purposes Brighton and Sussex Medical School)
Social Sciences: (Business, Management and Economics, Education and Social Work, Global Studies, Law, Politics and Sociology)

Cohort
A cohort is the group of students that a Rep represents. For example, 2nd year English students, or Physics & Astronomy. A Rep is required to bear in mind the interest of their cohort when acting as a Rep.

DoSE
Director of Student Experience, within each School at Sussex, this is a staff position who takes an interest in students’ experiences of their education

Head of School
The senior academic appointed to lead the school. The head of BSMS is called the Dean.

HEI
Higher Education Institution, such as a university or BSMS

NSS
The National Student Survey is completed by all final year undergraduate students at all universities in the UK. Questions are asked on a range of topics, such as quality of teaching, assessment and feedback, facilities and the Students' Union. The University uses the survey results and comments to improve the quality of education. If you are challenged to provide evidence of student opinion in your meetings, the NSS gives hard data which can be broken down to school level. University-wide data
is also available. It can be a very powerful tool to back up issues you want to raise. www.sussex.ac.uk/nss

PG
Postgraduate. PG students are either PGT or PGR, see below for further information.

PGA
Postgraduate Association. A body within the Students’ Union that aims to represent the postgraduate community at Sussex - http://www.sussexstudent.com/pga

PGR
Postgraduate Research. Student researchers studying for an MPhil or DPhil or PhD degree.

PGT
Postgraduate Taught. These students are most often studying for an MA or MSc course.

PVC
Pro Vice Chancellor, one of the VC’s deputies.

QAA
Quality Assurance Agency. An external body that inspects, reports on and ensures the quality of all HEI’s in Britain.

SEF
Student Experience Forum, a University-wide committee that Student Reps can attend.

Senate
The top University decision making body on academic issues. Chaired by the Vice Chancellor, attended by many senior faculty, Students’ Union President and Education Officer, and by 5 Student Reps.

SSEG
School Student Experience Group. Each School holds one every term and all reps from the School should go. Reports from this go to the SEF.

TLC
Teaching & Learning Committee. Each school has one and there is a central University TLC which makes decisions.

UG
Undergraduate.

VC
Vice Chancellor. The academic head of the University.