

TOP TIPS FROM PAST ACADEMIC REPS

Being an Academic Representative is a rewarding but sometimes challenging role that requires skills, knowledge and passion. But how can you be an effective and successful Academic Rep?

Below past reps have shared their insights and advice on how to make the most of your role!

1 INTRODUCE YOURSELF

"For future course representatives, I recommend introducing themselves to students as quickly and in as many ways as possible, letting students know who you are, how to contact you, and that they can message you freely. This will help other students feel comfortable reaching out to reps. I also recommend reading all UUSU emails as there is valuable information in there that can be easily overlooked if emails are not checked frequently."

2 PROMOTE YOUR ROLE

"I think for future reps it is especially important to promote your role as soon as you volunteer to be a course rep and use your initiative to seek out student opinions surrounding the course as many will not come directly to you. It is important to stay connected with your course director and the Academic Rep Coordinator, as they will keep you right if you have any queries."

3 CREATE A GROUP CHAT

"Make a group chat for both the whole class and for the reps so that communication is so much easier and simpler than email. It also makes it less formal, so people are more comfortable to approaching you with any problems."

"Create a Snap Chat group chat completing informal and post regular class things, this always helped if we had room changes or to notify people, we had coursework due plus it was good craic for organising social gatherings."

4 GATHER FEEDBACK

"I would advise to be as open with your fellow students as possible, reach out to people if you have a feeling they need help, check in with people and make yourself approachable so people feel comfortable coming to you with problems or concerns!"

"Start gathering feedback early!"

"Create anonymous forms for feedback if people are hesitant to message into a group chat."

"Keep a close ear to what's happening around you and a broad perspective to those you may not agree with. Get in contact with one of your fellow reps if possible."

"When taking on the role, its important to take the issues of all your peers to ensure that everyone is having an enjoyable experience on the course."

5 COMMUNICATE REGULARLY

"I would advise future course reps to communicate regularly with their classmates and course director and communication makes things so much easier when there are any problems. A very good contact to have been your course director, mines helped me with a lot of things and did the best to guide me in the right way possible. I would also recommend going to different course rep workshops and communicating with the UUSU as they are quite helpful."

"Make sure to communicate as you might think you're the only person who feels a certain way but this isn't necessarily true."

6 GET INVOLVED

"Be more active with the UUSU, I wish I were. Many of the events I saw were online, so I did not go as I struggle to interact online, I am a more in-person person. Now I wish I went."

"Take on as many of the training initiatives as you can."

"Involve yourself in the course-based societies."

"Put yourself out there and create opportunities alongside your fellow reps."

7 USE YOUR VOICE

"My advice would be to future reps would be to speak up, no one judges you, your opinions and they will listen to any negative feedback and try and resolve this quickly as there is always room for improvement. Reach out to staff and the UUSU as they are a great resource and always willing to help you with whatever it is you need."

8 ASK FOR HELP

"A piece of advice that I would give is that there is no shame in seeking help, and that your year tutor or the UUSU as they are there to help you with your responsibilities no matter how daunting they may be. I would also advise to maintain a healthy balance between your class rep role and your coursework or exams, as it is easy to become overwhelmed by the two if there is not careful planning or organisation beforehand."

9 HAVE FUN

"Do take the role seriously, but don't be afraid to have fun!"

"Push yourself out of your comfort zone!"

"Enjoy the experience!"

"I saw the opportunity as an extra something to put on my CV that would make me stand out amongst others when applying for graduate jobs next year."



TOP TIPS FROM YOUR STUDENT VOICE TEAM

1 DON'T FEEL YOU HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL YOUR SSCC

Bringing up an issue at the earliest opportunity either with staff in your department or the Students' Union can often ensure issues are on the journey to resolved and isn't left until your next meeting.

2 MIX-UP THE WAY YOU ASK FOR FEEDBACK

Whether it's social media, emails, circulating a notepad at the start of a lecture for others to provide their comments, or just talking to students before and after lectures, there are loads of ways you gather feedback. Find at least 2 ways that work for both you and the students you represent.

3 WORK WITH YOUR FELLOW REPS

Meeting and talking with other reps in your school/department is a great way of getting feedback from larger number of students. You can also share the workload and compare notes to really get an understanding the issues and solutions that could be raised.

4 TRACK THE PROGRESS OF YOUR FEEDBACK

By keeping a record of the issues students have raised and the progress made; This will help you to feedback the correct outcomes, actions or remind you to follow up on unresolved feedback.

5 SHARE THE DATES OF YOUR SSCC

Make sure students are aware of the meetings; by sharing the dates students will see that you're actively involved, but will also know they have an opportunity to provide feedback.

6 TELL US ABOUT YOUR SUCCESSES

We know many reps work hard to influence positive change on their courses but it's equally important to make sure others are aware of these. Make sure the students you represent, faculty reps and staff at the Student's Union are all in the loop! You can also fill in [this form](#) to let UUSU know of your great work!

7 STAY FOCUSED

Be alert throughout the entire year for issues and feedback. There may be peaks and troughs in engagement but remember to be creative and do what's best for you and the students you represent!

8 ATTEND TRAINING AND SEEK SUPPORT WHEN NEEDED

Don't be afraid to ask for help where needed, and if you're unsure of who to speak to;

Contact the Academic Representation Coordinator by emailing:
n.browne@ulster.ac.uk