

**Medical
Sciences**

Jade Calder
VP Access &
Academic Affairs

Course Rep

Training

Oxford SU

What does a Course Rep do?



- **Seek out views and opinions of students you represent**
- **Take course level issues to JCC/GJCC meetings**
- **Attend other staff meetings you are invited to**
- **Go prepared to meetings by reading the papers and consult with students on issues**
- **Provide feedback and outcomes of the meetings to the students you represent**
- **Liaise with other course reps to form a picture of the views of the department student body**
- **Work on developing solutions to issues that have been raised**



Focus areas

RESOURCES

Learning spaces, libraries,
online resources

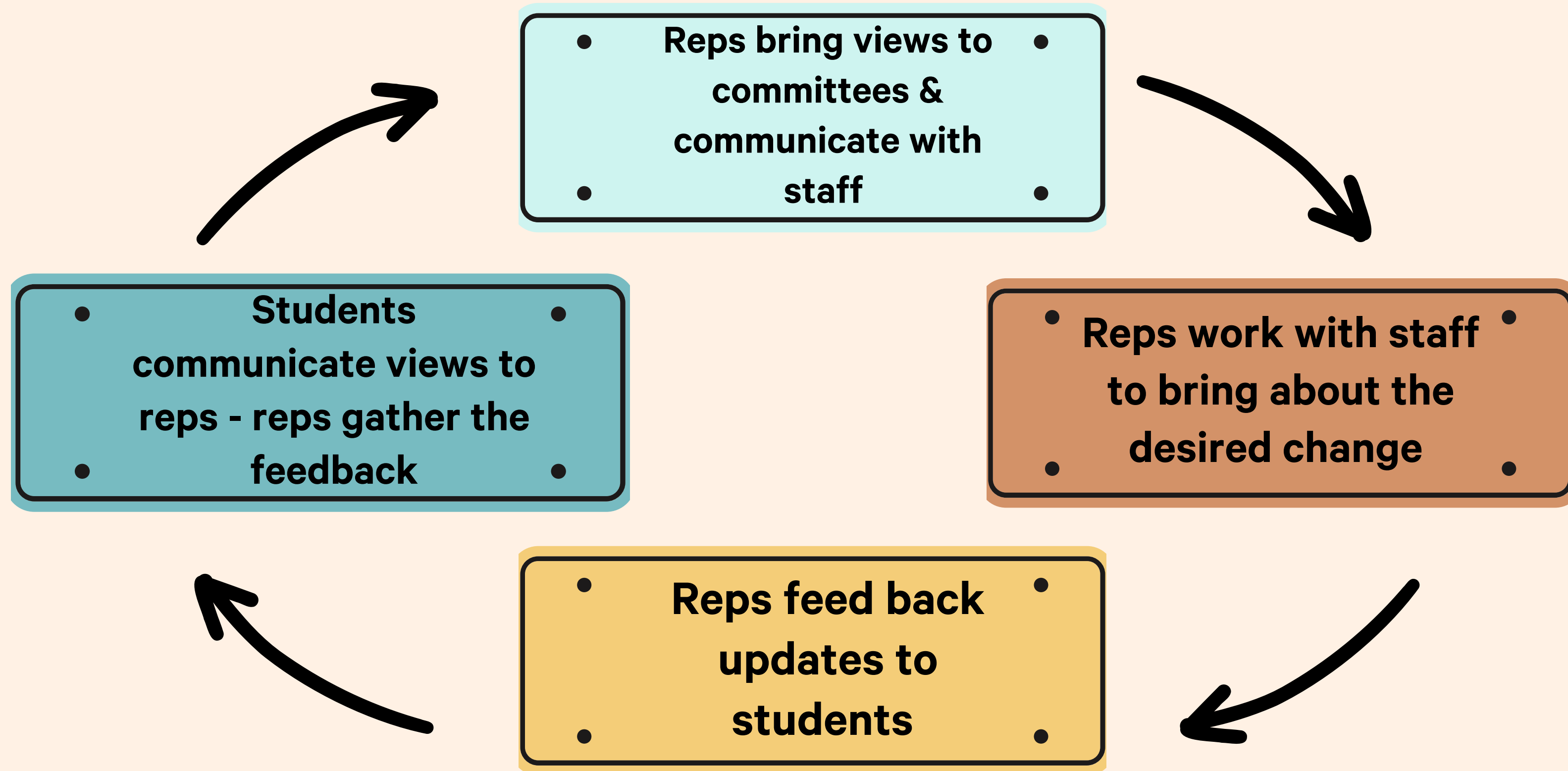
ASSESSMENT

Exams, coursework,
feedback,
assessment formats

TEACHING

Supervisors, tutors,
workload (& welfare!),
lectures, labs, learning
support

Feedback loop - let students know!



Types of feedback



- **Yourself!** - If you are a course rep it is likely in part because you care about certain issues or have certain experiences
 - However - evidence to substantiate your view is key and considering the views of other students is also important
- **Casual discussion** - conversations and anecdotes from your peers can give you an idea of the issues to have on your radar
 - Warning - again, having a wider sample size with good evidence / data is always appreciated by academic staff, and friends may not want to be quoted for a committee anecdote without permission
- **Consider alternative effective ways to gather student views!**

Collecting views



Regularly communicate with students on your course to hear their opinions - but how?

- **Send out surveys or questionnaires - but get to the point!**
 - **Surveys can give you quantitative and short form text responses, but you can go deeper with focus groups**
 - **You may want the Divisional Rep and / or the SU to help you in arranging focus groups**
 - **A discussion forum is a more casual conversation which students can attend and allows you to have a direct gauge of their views**
 - **Course group chats are also rapid and easy to use**
- **Ensure that you account for the diversity and different views of the student body - have balance!**

Effective Representation



- **Make sure that you are known and accessible to students**
 - **The department should be able to help when it comes to email communications and introducing you to the cohort**
 - **Giving regular (ish!) updates reminds students of the work you are doing and gives them an idea of the sort of issue which they can come to you with**
- **Be creative with how you seek feedback and do what you feel works for you - different cohorts and courses have their own ways in which they like to engage**
- **Ask your department for previous data / information which has been collected - institutional memory can be helpful!**
 - **E.g. Departmental reviews, student surveys, previous meeting minutes**



Remember!

**A GREAT COURSE REP IS BOTH
REACTIVE AND PROACTIVE**

**You are flexible and able to respond to
unforeseen issues as they arise**

&

**You are conscious of the existing issues
on your course and think about what can
be done in your capacity to work on them**

Divisional Reps

Course reps feed into Divisional reps at a broader level - consider which issues may not just be departmental specific

Div Reps sit on Divisional Boards

Undergraduate

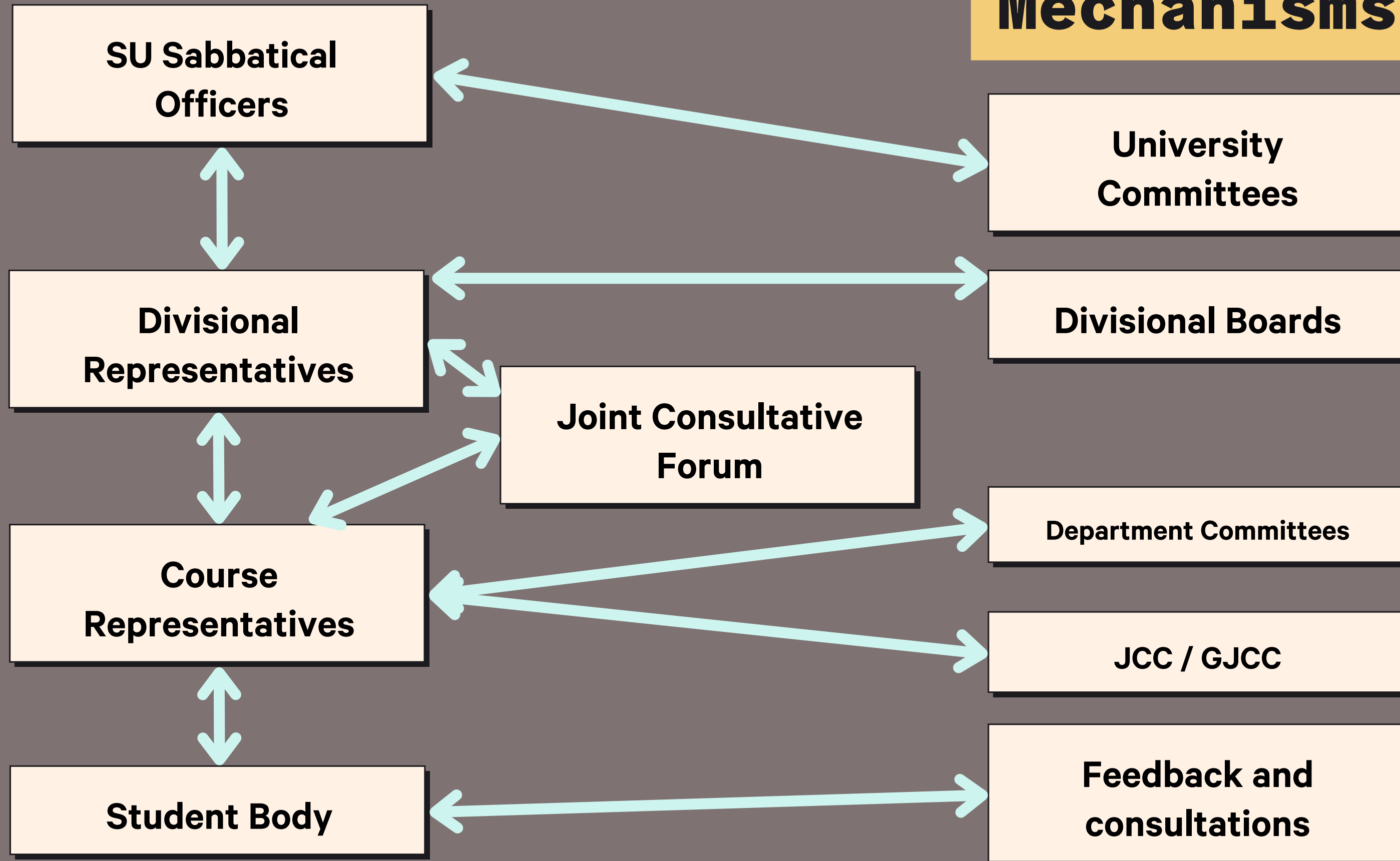
Rosie McDonald-Hill

Postgraduate

Yingshi Feng

Representatives

Structures & Mechanisms



Take a minute

**What are the key
issues?**

**Would you work on it as
a course rep or take it
to a Divisional Joint
Consultative Committee /
Forum?**

Navigating Committees



- **Make sure that you can access, read and understand any committee papers that you should have prior to the meeting**
 - **Ask the secretary if you are not sure about something!**
- **Know who the committee comprises of and what part of their role is relevant to students**
- **Remember that academic staff highly value the student opinion, even if it isn't explicitly shown**
- **Deploy student feedback and data when making points - this always helps you get taken seriously**
- **Talk to other course reps from your department beforehand to get up to speed on what issues they are working on**
- **Don't be afraid to email key staff outside committees to continue conversations about points that were raised**

MedSci Departments



- Pathology
- Paediatrics
- Psychiatry
- Primary Care
- Orthopaedics, Rheumatology and Musculoskeletal Sciences
- Population Health
- Physiology, Anatomy & Genetics
- Surgical Sciences
- Biochemistry
- Clinical Medicine
- Clinical Neurosciences
- Experimental Psychology
- Medicine
- Oncology
- Women's & Reproductive Health
- Pharmacology

How can the SU help?



- **Training and skills development**
- **Policy support**
- **Connection to the wider student representative network & campaigns e.g DisCam**
- **Support with paper writing / reading**
- **Navigating the university structure**
- **Advice Service and Wellbeing Support**

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Committees - Lobbying - Support - Advice - Community

Signposting



Remember - a course rep is an academic representation role. We are not training you to be peer supporters and do not expect you to take on serious welfare / admin / personal issues of other students

Please signpost any student who approaches you with such issues elsewhere, including:

- Departmental administrative staff
 - Ask who the best contacts are for issues relating to mitigating circumstances, welfare, suspensions etc if these are common student question
 - College welfare officers and college advisors / personal tutors / Director of Graduate Studies
- SU Advice Service (helps with academic appeals, mitigating circumstances and much more)
- Nightline
- University Counselling Service
- Disability Advisory Service



Thank You For

Listening