Course Rep Training

Alice Churm
Policy and Change Coordinator
alice.churm@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk
Course Rep Training

- Introducing Oxford SU
- 'Meet' Your Sabbs
- Introducing the University
- 'Meet' Your Divisional Reps
- What is My Role as a Course Rep?
- Representation and How To Do It
Oxford SU is the representative body for all University of Oxford students and our direction and ideas are led by our student members.

Every matriculated student (and non matriculated ContEd students) are automatically members of Oxford Students' Union.

We are lead by six elected student representatives. They all work in their individual remits, work of the manifestos they were elected on and run projects attaining to the key issues for students.
Sabbatical Officers

President
Anvee Bhutani
president@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk

VP Charities & Communities
Aleena Waseem
vpcandc@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk
Sabbatical Officers

VP Access & Academic Affairs
Safa Sadozai
vpaccaff@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk

VP Graduates
Devika
vpgraduates@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk
Sabbatical Officers

VP Women
Oluwakemi Agunbiade
vpwomen@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk

VP Welfare & Equal Ops
Keisha Asare
vpweo@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk
Oxford Students' Union runs a free, confidential advice service that can offer impartial advice on a range of issues for students.

Any student is free to reach out to the advice service. Some of the main issues that they deal with are housing, mental health and wellbeing, financial, and academic.

In your role you may be faced with a personal issue from students that sits outside the remit of the course rep. Although you can flag the general issue to the university, it is always a good idea to signpost students that are struggling with specific personal issues to our advice service.

www.oxfordsu.org/support/studentadvice/
advice@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk
Support for Course Reps

Course Reps are a really important part of Oxford SU and you do on the ground work to promote our goal of representing the student voice!
We offer lots of different ways for you to get involved, and for us to offer support to you in this role.

Training and Development
Policy Support
Communicating Your Roles and Your Wins
Connection to the wider student representative network
Support with Paper Writing or Reading
Navigating the University and Institutional Memory
Coordinating Course Reps (in our teams group)
Advice Service and Wellbeing Support
Register as a Course Rep

Scan here to let Oxford SU know that you are a course rep. Through this you will be added to our course rep mailing list and teams group. This will give you access to further training, insight and resources!
Introducing The University

The structure of Oxford University is very complicated – you do not need to be too concerned with this structure.

It is just interesting to know how and where change is made.

Many of the university and divisional committees have student representatives on them so students can influence change across the structures.
Representatives

- Student Officers
- Divisional Representatives
- Course Representatives
- The Student Body

Structures & Mechanisms

- University Committees
- Divisional Boards
- Joint Consultative Forum
- Department Committees
- JCC / GJCC

- Course evaluations
- Informal feedback
- Consultation with reps
Divisional Representatives

Divisional Representatives do student representation on a divisional level. They attend the Divisional Boards and Student Forums to represent the views of the wider student body within their division.

They liaise with course representatives in their division to get a picture of student sentiment to present this to the university.

They also sit as part of our Students' Union democratic structure as members of our Student Council. They also work closely with our more education focused student officers to present the divisional issues to them.
Divisional Representatives
Humanities Division

Undergraduate Div Rep
Vihan Jain
ug-humanities@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk

Postgraduate Div Rep
Anwar Omeish
pg-humanities@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk
Divisional Representatives
Social Sciences Division

Undergraduate Div Rep
Otto Barrow
ug-socsci@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk

Postgraduate Div Rep
Yanelle Cruz Bonilla
pg-socsci@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk
Divisional Representatives
MPLS Division

Undergraduate Div Rep
Victor Vescu
ug-mpls@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk

Postgraduate Div Rep
Isabel Creed
pg-mpls@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk
Divisional Representatives
Medical Sciences Division

Undergraduate Div Rep
Nicola Sharp
ug-medsci@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk

Postgraduate Div Rep
Alexander Grassam-Rowe
pg-medsci@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk
Continuing Education Representatives

Matriculated ContEd Rep
James Jaewon Kim
mat-conted@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk

Non-Matriculated ContEd Rep
Dimitri Debord
nonmat-conted@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk
What about Colleges?

Course Reps and Div Reps represent academic issues on a university departmental level. Although you can raise college based issues to departments or divisions, only colleges have the ability to make change on this.

JCR / MCR Reps have influence in their colleges to campaign for change on a collegiate level.

Getting to know your own colleges Academic Rep can be useful and liaising with them on this can be a really affective way to a two tiered approach to change.

www.oxfordsu.org/representation/common-rooms/commonroom-support/academicofficers/
What Do I Do As A Course Rep?

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

academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/student-engagement-and-representation
What Do I Do As A Course Rep?

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.

academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/student-engagement-and-representation
The dream structure is that Course Reps can feed into Div Reps that can feed into Sabbatical Officers and vise versa!

Sabbatical Officers and Divisional Reps have lots of influence across the University and Divisions, and sit on many different committees so collaboration on projects and areas of work is key to making change.
Academic Forum

An open event for all course reps, divisional reps and sabbatical officers to discuss key academic issues across the university.

Course Reps will be able to submit issues to be added to the agenda in the advance as well as response to Sabbatical Officer and Divisional Rep updates. An opportunity to share university wide concerns and find shared issues or best practice across the university.

2nd Week & 6th Week Hilary Term
2nd Week & 6th Week Trinity Term
17:30-19:30 on Teams
Sign up on Oxford SU website
What is Representation?

- You are acting on behalf of students in your department and faculty.
- You do not necessarily have to pass on what each individual things - not least because this would be impossible!
- You sometimes will have to use your judgement to decide what is best for your students on your course.
- Often this can involve balancing conflicting views.
- This should always be done through proper consultation with your students.
- At the end of the day, you are responsible for your course of peers and represent the cohorts' views on issues.
Structure of Representation

Listening and Gathering Information
Be it through surveys, social media or simple after class chats gathering students opinions is the bread and butter of being a course rep!

Issue Selection
You must discern what issues should be pointed to a university member of staff, which issues can be passed on to your college common room colleagues, and which issues can be referred to the Oxford SU Advice Service.

Building a Case
How many students has this affected? Is this a problem elsewhere in the university? Do we have any previous data on this issue? Should you engage any other student reps on this? Engage with your Div Rep or Sabb on this!
Feedback to the University
Present your case to the University in the appropriate forum (JCC/GJCC, Departmental Meetings) or refer up to colleagues to take this higher (Div Reps on Divisional Boards, Sabbs on University Committees) Get a clear sense of what the university will commit to on this issue and who is responsible for taking this action further. Keep this communication channel open and make sure the university know if the issue hasn't changed.

Feedback to Students
Don't forget to keep your peers up to date on this issue! Often issues may take a while to get resolved, or there is a legitimate reason something can't be changed. Ensure that students are aware of this and your communication works both ways. This helps students see the work you are doing and build trust with you in the future!

And Repeat..!
Gathering Information

To be an effective Course Rep you need to be able to gather the thoughts and feelings of your fellow students. To do this you need to make sure you are known and accessible to students. Your department should help you get your name out there to your peers, but be active and vocal about your role.

Students may not know what sort of issues they can bring to you. Giving regular updates on your work to your peers will help them paint a picture of what the role you do entails.

Get creative with how you ask students for feedback; surveys, anonymous submission forms, in person drop ins, casual end of class chats. Feedback can be found everywhere.

Don't forget what came before you - lots of information gathering has already been done. Look and see if the information you're looking for is already out there e.g. previous meeting minutes, departmental reviews, student surveys like the Student Barometer. If you need support please ask!
You have the power to influence yours and your peers experience on departmental course issues. Anything related to the department, the course content, assessments, academic experience etc. sits within what you have the power to make change on. For example, campaigning for a more diverse curriculum, or for more resources in departmental spaces would come under the course rep remit.

You can even work with other representatives, such as sabbatical officers or divisional reps to influence bigger issues such as university policy, or issues that affect more than just your department.

You do not have to take responsibility for personal welfare or wellbeing issues. If a student comes to you with an issue that is of a personal nature, you should refer them to either Oxford SU Advice Service, or the University's Student Wellbeing Services.
Being an Effective Course Rep

Always turn up prepared to meetings having read the any pre-reads! Sometimes it is helpful to note where you want to make comments. If there is anything you don't understand, just ask questions!

Make sure you have gathered thorough student feedback, and built up your case as much as possible. The more prepared you are, the better you can present your arguments.

If relevant for what you are working on talk to key stake holders outside of meetings, engage with previous research and data, write papers, and talk to your other reps!
Questions?

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