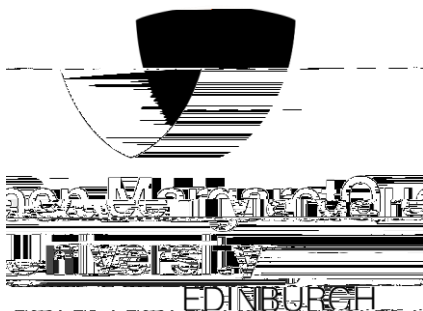


# CLASS REPS' GUIDE

for students at collaborative  
partner organisations







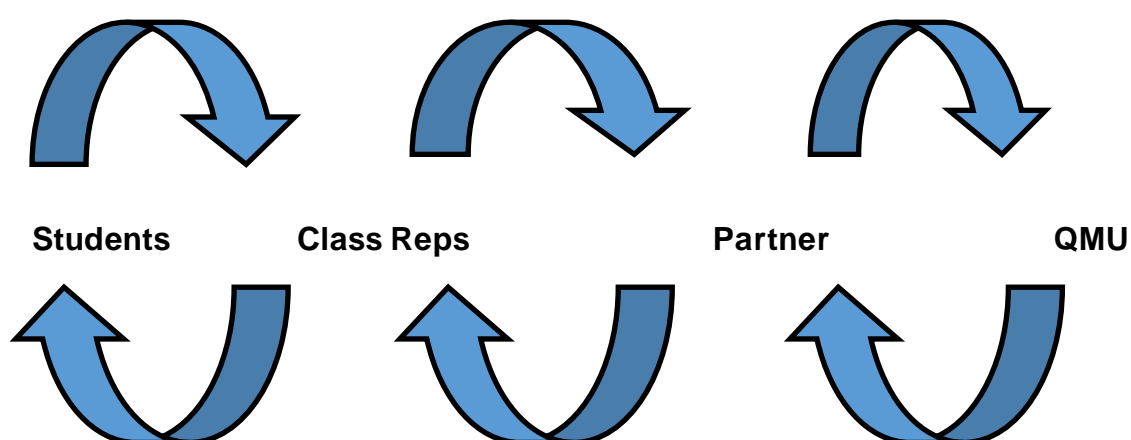




## 2. QMU and partner organisations

QMU works with a number of partner organisations to deliver academic programmes. Normally, the partner organisation is responsible for teaching and student support. The partner also marks assessments. This means that as class reps, most of your interaction will be with the partner organisation.

QMU requires partners to put in place effective representation systems to ensure that if students have a concern it is listened to and responded to. The University follows up on this by reading minutes of student staff committees, requiring reports on student feedback and asking partners to explain what actions they are doing to take in response.



You may also have the opportunity to speak to QMU staff directly when they visit your organisation. This may be through a separate meeting with students or as part of the Joint Board of Studies. Joint Boards of Studies are committees that include staff and students from the partner organisation, alongside staff from QMU. Their purpose is to take an overview of everything that is happening with the programme and resolve any problems that might have arisen.

QMU also offers students the chance to provide anonymous feedback direct to the University through an online survey.

### 3. What do Class Reps do?

Being a Class Rep is a fulfilling job. You'll get to know your peers and feed back their views to your lecturers, getting an insight into university learning and teaching enhancement practice.

The purpose of Class Reps is to speak on behalf of the class as a whole about issues which affect all or most of the students. This is important for two reasons. Firstly, if





## PART 2: HOW TO BE AN EFFECTIVE CLASS REP

### 1. Communicating with your classmates

- Take 5 minutes at the start of the course to make a brief announcement or ask a question. Liaise with your programme tutors to establish time at the start or end of a lecture.
- Use Social Media e.g. set up a Facebook or Whatsapp group for the class

## 2. Develop effective feedback

So you've gathered your classmates' views on the programme. Now make sure it is effective before bringing it to your lecturer. Effective means it is accurate, balanced, constructive and depersonalised.

Accurate: Make sure the details are correct

Balanced: when you need to highlight a negative fact/statement present it in an objective way

### 3. Develop solutions

Examples of how student feedback makes a difference

Below are some examples of issues that have been brought up by class reps, and the

## PART 3: REPRESENTATION AT QMU

Class Reps are members of various academic committees at programme and School level. These are: Student Staff Consultative Committees, Programme Committees and Joint Boards of Studies.

### 1. Internal Committees

#### Student Staff Consultative Committees (SSCC)

Each SSCC covers one or several related programmes. The remit is to discuss issues raised by students about their learning and teaching experience. This may be about modules, timetable, organisation, course communication, assignments and feedback. SSCCs offer Class Reps the opportunity to discuss their class experience in a positive and constructive manner.

SSCC normally meets once each semester around week 5 or 6. Arrangements (dates, times and room bookings) for SSCCs can vary. You should work with the Programme Leader to agree responsibilities for organising and chairing meetings, booking rooms and taking minutes. If you don't hear anything about a meeting being arranged or if for some reason you think it is important to hold a meeting sooner, you are encouraged to contact the Programme Leader.

SSCC meetings are student led and follow a simple agenda. A template is provided in Appendix 1 on page 22. They can be chaired by the Programme Leader or a Class Rep. Membership is made up of all class reps from the programme and two or three key academic staff.

Class Reps are encouraged to take part actively in setting the agenda and participating in the discussion. It is essential that the academic staff are made aware of the class views so the programme can be enhanced continuously. Class Reps should make sure they feed back to their class after any SSCC meetings and follow up on agreed actions. You could update classmates at the next lecture. Ask the lecturer if you can take a few minutes at the start or end of the class. You can use the SSCC action plan template to record what has been raised, what the response is and any agreed actions. See Appendix 2 on page 25.

Minutes from SSCC should be passed on to the Programme Committee which normally take place 1 or 2 weeks after SSCC. This ensures that a broader group of staff can be made aware of any items discussed and consider solutions.

You are also encouraged to let your Programme Leader know about any major issue as early as possible to allow a quick resolution. It is possible to request an additional SSCC is held (extraordinary meeting) if an issue is urgent and the date of the next planned SSCC is some time away. Discuss with the Programme Leader first to work out the best way to address the issue.

### Programme Committees

Programme Committees can cover one programme or several related programmes. Their purpose is to provide a structured forum for discussing issues relating to the quality of individual programmes, including changes to the overall programme, individual modules and action plans. Student and staff involvement allows for shared consideration of key decisions affecting the programme(s), and identification and sharing of good practice (things that are working well which can be shared more widely).

Programme Committees meet once each semester around 2 weeks after the SSCC. This is to allow issues that cannot be dealt with at SSCC level to be raised at Programme Committee level. Minutes of SSCC meetings are considered by the Programme Committee.

The Programme Committee is chaired by the Programme Leader. Membership is

fair and consistent and that standards at QMU are comparable with programmes at a similar level elsewhere. All UK universities are required to have External Examiners for their taught programmes. Students can request copies of reports through [ExternalExamining@gmu.ac.uk](mailto:ExternalExamining@gmu.ac.uk).

A template agenda for Programme Committees is provided in Appendix 3 on page 26.

## 2. Joint Boards of Studies

Every partnership has a Joint Board of Studies which meets once or twice per year to oversee the programme (or programmes) in the partnership. This meeting is an important link between the partner and the university. Minutes from the Student Staff Consultative Committee and Programme Committee are considered by the Joint Board and student representatives have the opportunity to raise any issues that have not yet been resolved.

Minutes from the Joint Board of Studies are passed to the School Academic Board at the University so that senior managers are kept well informed of the progress of collaborative programmes.

Sometimes university staff will ask to meet with a group of students before the meeting of the Joint Board of Studies to allow more time to talk about your experience on the programme. This may include a mixture of class reps and other students. As with all meetings, it is important to be clear about when you are talking about your own experience only and when you are relaying views that are shared by the cohort as a whole.





- All QMU students experience a transformative journey through outstanding learning and teaching and co- and extra-curricular opportunities that enable

example, there are actions relating to creating opportunities for students to gain experience and skills related to the workplace. As class reps you can ask programme leaders how they plan to do this in your programme (or how they already do this).

The Strategy is available in full at the following link: <https://www.qmu.ac.uk/about-the-university/quality/quality-enhancement-and-external-context/quality-enhancement/>

Feedback on the Strategy is very welcome and can be sent to the Dawn Martin, Secretary to the Student Experience Committee: [dmartin1@qmu.ac.uk](mailto:dmartin1@qmu.ac.uk)

## 5. Programme review

Every programme has to be reviewed to check it's still up to date and appropriate. Although staff may make small changes as they go along, if they want to make significant changes it has to be done through programme review. Normally, reviews happen every 5 years.

At QMU we generally review individual courses or a group of courses.

As part of the review process evidence on how well things have gone over the previous 5 years is collected. It is essential that student opinion is included in this evidence. The Programme Leader will look at module evaluation forms and minutes of Student Staff Consultative Committees. It is good practice for the Programme Leader to consult with current students as part of the review. This might be done through a questionnaire, focus groups or meetings with Class Reps. You have a role to play in encouraging students to participate in this process. This helps to make sure student views are taken into account when redesigning the programme.

The review is a considerable task for the Programme team with a number of steps as follows:

The Panel will always meet current students on the day of the review event. Class Reps are often asked to attend. This is a very important part of the review process and you are strongly encouraged to attend if you can. Panels want to hear students' honest experience of the course and in particular any priority areas for development. It helps if you can talk to some of your class mates beforehand so you can present as balanced a view as possible.

Based on all the evidence they have received, the Review Panel will then set conditions and recommendations for the staff team to meet. If a serious issue is

## PART 4: PARTICIPATING IN MEETINGS

Meetings can seem quite formal and need to follow certain rules of etiquette so that everyone gets a chance to have their views heard. Remember everyone is treated as equal. Here are some tips.

### BEFORE THE MEETING

Find out how the committee works e.g. how to add an item to the agenda

Check the agenda items, time and location and read documents

Speak to your class to identify any issues that need to be raised

If you chair the meeting (e.g. SSCC)

### DO

Share information about each agenda point with staff/students prior to the meeting – this helps people to be prepared and saves time.

Go through the agenda in order. It may help to tick off each point once you have covered it so you know where you are.

Give everyone a chance to speak.

Make sure you have all agreed what action – if any – is to be taken in response to a particular issue. Not all issues will need to have an action, of course. Often a compromise may be reached, whereby the Programme Leader is asked to monitor a situation to make sure it doesn't become an issue eventually.

Check the minutes afterwards – the Chair is expected to do this.

### DON'T

Let people talk over each other or interrupt. If necessary, you can ask people to raise their hands if they want to speak.

Let the discussion go on too long on any one issue. Other people will have things they want to bring up and it isn't fair if they run out of time at the end. If you feel people are starting to repeat themselves or go off on tangents, gently bring them back to the original point, sum up the arguments and ask for suggested actions.

Talk too much yourself! The role of Chair is more about facilitating others than holding forth with your own opinions.



(This allows staff to share information about University, School or programme



## APPENDIX 2 – TEMPLATE SSCC ACTION PLAN

This can be used to record any agreed actions or responses to items raised at SSCC. It can then be shared with all students in the next class and/or on the programme Hub site.

<b>Date of SSCC: Programme:</b>		
<b>Item discussed</b>	<b>Response and/or agreed action</b>	<b>Person responsible and agreed timescale</b>

## APPENDIX 3

### TEMPLATE PROGRAMME COMMITTEE AGENDA



**SCHOOL OF**

**PROGRAMME COMMITTEE  
PROGRAMME TITLE**

**Date  
Time  
Venue**

**Convener  
Secretary**

#### **A G E N D A**

- 1 Welcome and apologies
- 2 Determination of any other business
- 3 Minutes of previous meeting
- 4 Action status sheet and matters arising from the previous meeting not elsewhere on the agenda

- 6.2 Other changes  
(For example: changes to programme specific regulations, attendance requirements, staffing)
  
- 7 SSCC minutes  
(The Programme Committee should consider any issues referred from the SSCC and also identify the mechanism by which actions are to be reported back to students)
  
- 8 Other student issues  
(Student representatives should be invited to raise any issues not covered in the SSCC minutes)