

## **2271 Code of Conduct for Course Reps**

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### **Summary:**

The Code of Conduct provides guidelines for both Course Reps and the Students' Union to follow and in case of breach, there will be a set procedure to handle it.

### **Union notes:**

- Currently there is no method in the Union to monitor the 200+ course reps in the case of a concern about a Course Representative.
- There also isn't a Code of Conduct for Course Reps to follow or to take reference to.
- Contacts have been made with other Students' Unions such as South Wales, Birmingham, Bath, Lincoln etc. and very few had very effective ways of monitoring course reps

### **The Union Believes:**

- There should be a Course Rep Code of Conduct for Course Reps, students and the Students' Union can take reference to
- With the Code of Conduct, the Union can then, in case a student breaches it, can use the Code of Conduct as a format of dealing with such cases.

### **The Union Resolves:**

- To approve the proposed Course Representation Code of Conduct and Removal Policy below which includes
  - Expectations of Course Reps
  - Expected tasks in the role
  - Nomination procedure
  - Voting procedure
  - Criteria for considering whether a Course Rep is in breach of their responsibilities
  - Removal procedure
  - Options to replace a Course Rep when a vacancy has been opened
- To create a section on the uea.su website to allow for students to raise a concern regarding their Course Rep
- To create a new bye-law for the Course Representation Code of Conduct and Removal Policy and include within the Course Representatives Handbook.
- To implement this by September 2018 before the first round of elections commence in the academic year 18/19.

## Course Representation Code of Conduct and Removal Policy

### Executive Summary

Our aim was to develop a method in which students at UEA can hold Course Representatives to account and provide a policy regarding when it is deemed a Course Representative is not fulfilling their duties or responsibilities. This document outlines a proposed suggestion of method for removal of Course Reps should they not fulfil their duties in line with the Course Representative Code of Conduct. We contacted several Students' Unions to find out their processes and what the impacts of them were. This policy will involve all students, Course Representatives, Student Partnership Officers, Student Engagement Coordinator(Representation), Undergraduate and Postgraduate Education Officers.

We recommend that this policy will be taken place starting from September 2018, or after the course reps elections have ended, and we propose that this will continue in the future unless recommended otherwise. We suggest that this policy becomes a new section in the Students' Union bye-laws and is further included in the Course Representatives handbooks.

After reaching out to multiple Unions', we have found out that very few unions we contacted had an effective way for students to hold course reps to account. Therefore, we have taken reference to successful unions and propose the following.

We suggest students have the same accountability rights as with any other elected position at UEA (SU) for their Course Representatives. This is to:

- \* Encourage students to be more engaged with their Representative
- \* Encourage students to be more aware of their surroundings
- \* Provide a structure Course Reps can refer to

We propose this is done by students going to a page on [uea.su](http://uea.su) to fill in a concern which will then be sent to the Student Engagement Coordinator (Representation) to follow up. The Student Engagement Coordinator (Representation) could then talk to the course rep in concern and create an action plan. This is to:

- \* Provide support to Course Reps if needed
- \* Help students grow and develop
- \* Help to plan how to progress

We propose that if the Course Rep has not improved or another concern about the Course Rep has surfaced after the creation of the action plan then a next

stage with the relevant Education Officer is started. If they wish to resign with appropriate reasons this will happen in the usual manner, via email to Student Engagement Coordinator (Representation).

We believe that this method of accountability of Course Reps is the most effective way for the wider student body to raise an issue with us regarding their Course Rep, and for us as a support to those students in position to understand what and why behaviors have occurred.

Introduction<sup>1</sup> The University of East Anglia Students' Union is a democratic organisation. Therefore, it is necessary that free and fair elections for Course Representatives take place to ensure that the University and the Students' Union works in the best interest of students. This is also in line with the University of East Anglia's Code of Practice for Student Representation.

## 1. Purpose<sup>2</sup>

a. The purpose of this policy is to:

- i. Outline the timings and length of elections for Course Representatives
- ii. Outline the decision making process for the number of Course Representatives on each course
- iii. Outline the process for running online elections for Course Representatives
- iv. Outline the process for co-opting Course Representatives into position
- v. Outline the roles and responsibilities a Course Representatives is expected to have
- vi. Outline the potential reasons for the removal of a Course Representative from their elected position.
- vii. Outline the process for the removal of a Course Representative.
- viii. Outline the process for filling the created vacancy.

## 2. Timeframe for the election period<sup>3</sup>

- a. The elections for Course Representatives should take place twice every academic year. Course Representatives for Foundation Year, First Year and Postgraduate taught/research are elected around September and October; Whilst returning students shall be elected around March or April.
- b. The election for the role of Course Representatives must be made up of at least two weeks of nominations, with one week of voting during each election.

## 3. Determining number of reps to be elected

- a. Prior to each election period, the Education Officers for Undergraduate and Post-Graduate and the Student Engagement Coordinator (Representation) shall have a discussion with each Student Partnership Officers to determine how many representatives are to be elected for each course.<sup>4</sup>

- b. Schools should aim to have a minimum of 1 representative per 50 students per course per year group. If demand is higher, a higher ratio is welcomed<sup>5</sup>
- c. Where Schools have a large or particularly diverse student body more representatives may be identified to ensure representation across the cohort, for example a mature student or international student representative.<sup>6</sup>
- d. The decision as to whether more representatives are elected remains at the discretion of the Student Partnership Officers. <sup>7</sup>
- e. Following this discussion, it is the responsibility of the Student Partnership Officers to communicate the outcomes of the meeting to programme leaders prior the commencement of the elections period. <sup>8</sup>

#### 4. Election process<sup>9</sup>

- a. The election for Course Representatives take place online.
- b. Online Elections will be available at the University of East Anglia Students' Union website.
- c. Students will only be able to nominate themselves or vote in the election for Course Representatives for the course that they are currently studying.
- d. All elections will use the Single Transferable Voting (STV) system and have a set of rules made available on the website.
- e. Candidates will be informed via email whether they have won or lost, within 24 working hours of the closing of the elections period.
- f. Student Partnership Officer is to be informed of the successful candidates within 4 working days of the closing of the elections period.

#### 5. Vacancies

- a. After the election period for course representatives, should vacancies remain, there will be co-opted in agreement with the School Convenor and Student Partnership Officers.

#### 6. Roles and responsibilities<sup>10</sup>

- a. Course Representatives, when formally expressing an interest in the role, should understand and acknowledge the importance and time needed to undertake the role effectively.
- b. Course Representatives should attend all mandatory training to ensure that they are prepared for the role.
- c. Course Representatives are expected to prepare for meetings by gathering student feedback
- i. Course Representatives are to gather feedback from students on their course.

ii. Course Representatives are to provide feedback through departmental and Faculty structures. They should also provide feedback to appropriate Students' Union bodies when required.

d. Course Representatives are expected to feedback to students on their course.

e. Course Representatives should attend and engage in all Student Staff Liaison Committee's in their area. If the Course Representative is unable to attend for any reason, it is expected that they would send apologies to the SSLC Secretary, and send on any issues or comments of the agenda so they can be raised by the chair.

f. If the Course Representatives feels like they can no longer fulfill the role, they should inform the Student Engagement Coordinator (Representation) who will then contact the School.

g. If a Course Representative fails to meet the requirements of the role, they may be removed.

#### 7. Reasons for the removal of Course Representative<sup>11</sup>

a. A Course Representative may be removed from their role as a Course Representative for the following reasons:

i. There is a breach of the Students' Union Code of Conduct applicable to all members

ii. There is a breach of the University of East Anglia's General Regulations

iii. If a ban from the Students' Union is placed upon the Course Representative

iv. If a formal complaint or concern is upheld by the University

v. If the Course Representative is found to have negatively used their power as a Course Representative by not representing the views of others on their course.

vi. If the Course Representative is found to have exhibited unacceptable or abusive (physically or mentally) behavior towards another student or member of staff

vii. If evidence of significant dissatisfaction with the work of the Course Representative is provided to the Education Officers (UG and/or PG)

viii. Lack of attendance without apologies at 2 or more SSLC

b. This list is not exclusive, and it remains at the discretion of the Education Officers (UG and PG) as to whether additions are able to be made to the list of reasons.

#### 8. Process for the removal of a Course Representative<sup>12</sup>

a. A request for the removal of a Course Representative must be made by a student studying the course represented by that Course Representative; the relevant School or Faculty Convenors online or in person; or in the instance of a complaint of unacceptable or abusive behaviour, by a member of University or Students' Union staff.

- b. University staff are not able to request the removal of a Course Representative on the grounds of unsatisfactory election. However if evidence is provided that the course rep is not performing in satisfactory standards and evidence is provided, removal may be considered.
- c. If the Course Representatives in concern wishes to step down because they do not feel like they are able to fulfill their role effectively, he or she should be allowed to do so by informing the Student Engagement Coordinator (Representation) via email.
- d. The Course Representatives and Student Engagement Coordinator (Representation) will discuss the concern and create an action plan to resolve the concern.
  - i. This could be simply informing the Course Representatives of the concern raised by their fellow course mates or working with the SU to provide further training.
  - ii. Discuss the possibility of a role share if possible.
- e. If no agreed steps or action plan has been made by the Course Representatives to resolve the concern or a new complaint is received regarding that same behavior attempted to be tackled previously, further actions will need to take place.
  - i. If a new concern has been submitted irrelevant to the first concern, it should be regarded as a new case.
  - ii. A concern is regarded as resolved if the actions taken to resolve the concern has been effective in solving the concern.
- f. If it seems that no signs of improvement can be seen, it becomes a decision of the Student Engagement Coordinator (Representation) on whether or not they are asked to leave their role.
  - i. If they are, the Course Representative has the right to appeal to the Education Officers (UG and PG).
  - g. Each case shall be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Student Engagement Coordinator (Representation), however the final decision shall remain with the Education Officers (UG AND PG)
  - h. If a Course Representative is removed from position, they shall not be able to stand as Course Representative again. This does not prevent them from standing for other union roles.
- 9. Process of filling the vacancy of the removed course rep
  - a. In first instance, an election would be held for that role. Any unsuccessful candidates who previously were unsuccessful in election for that role will be invited to submit a nomination, as well as the School advertising to that course. An election will then be fulfilled in the usual way.

b. Should there be only one person show interest in the position, or should the Course Rep be removed in the Spring semester then, the School Convenor and Student Partnership Officers will co-opt a student into the position if they agree on the candidate.

Reference List:

\* University of Lincoln "Policy governing the Election of academic Representatives"(P.1-3). Available at: [https://2d53b4ae7710437ef402-16882fd0dd682351953626dbea9fe405.ssl.cf3.rackcdn.com/Policy\\_governing\\_the\\_election\\_of\\_Academic\\_Representatives.pdf](https://2d53b4ae7710437ef402-16882fd0dd682351953626dbea9fe405.ssl.cf3.rackcdn.com/Policy_governing_the_election_of_Academic_Representatives.pdf)

\* University of Lincoln "Policy to Govern the removal of academic Representatives" (P.1-3). Available at: [https://2d53b4ae7710437ef402-16882fd0dd682351953626dbea9fe405.ssl.cf3.rackcdn.com/Policy\\_to\\_Govern\\_the\\_Removal\\_of\\_Academic\\_Representatives\\_1.pdf](https://2d53b4ae7710437ef402-16882fd0dd682351953626dbea9fe405.ssl.cf3.rackcdn.com/Policy_to_Govern_the_Removal_of_Academic_Representatives_1.pdf)

\* UEA|SU (2017/18) "Student Representation code of Practice" (P.7). Available at: [https://ueanorwich.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/sites/ueas\\_campaignsandpolicy/Shared%20Documents/Education%20and%20Engagement%202017-18/Course%20Reps%202017-18/CoP%20new%20paper%202017%20FINAL.docx?d=w6db317e317bd449daf7db58842282475&csf=1&e=Zw1Jc0](https://ueanorwich.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/sites/ueas_campaignsandpolicy/Shared%20Documents/Education%20and%20Engagement%202017-18/Course%20Reps%202017-18/CoP%20new%20paper%202017%20FINAL.docx?d=w6db317e317bd449daf7db58842282475&csf=1&e=Zw1Jc0)

\* University of Birmingham guild of students (2017/18) "Student Representation System Operations Manual" (P. 16). Available at: <https://intranet.birmingham.ac.uk/as/registry/policy/documents/public/studentreps/SRS-Operations-Manual-2017-18-PDF-934KB.pdf>

\* University of Essex (2018) "Academic Standards and Quality" Available at: [https://www1.essex.ac.uk/quality/student\\_representation/student\\_rep.asp#\\_ftnref1](https://www1.essex.ac.uk/quality/student_representation/student_rep.asp#_ftnref1)

\* University of York. Email by: Gabriella Morgan. "Course Reps who miss two consecutive meetings without submitting their apologies must meet with their Department Rep to explain their actions and omissions. If the Course Rep continues to fail to fulfil their duties in not making reasonable arrangements to meet with the Department Rep or attend subsequent meetings, a new Course Rep may be recruited to replace them at the discretion of both the Department Rep and Academic Officer.' We don't officially hand this out to Course Reps but we do clearly state in our training that they can be removed if they're not meeting minimum expectations. We will also send a reminder email and offer of support each term if a rep has been particularly disengaged with us. This is the first year that this has been in place and we have not yet had to enforce it."