



# Course Reps Guide

Hello everyone, welcome to your interactive student guide, one of your vital resources this year as your role as Course Representative. As a course rep you play an important representative role for your fellow course colleagues.

The essential link you provide between the University and the Union means issues of common concern can be raised by union representatives at the highest levels of the University decision making

The course rep is really important in encouraging fellow students input into the learning and teaching of their course. Student input is an essential element of the Universities systems for quality assurance and quality enhancement of learning and teaching.

This interactive guide compliments other resources that you have at your disposal. These include various training events; Course Rep forums where you can air concerns and issues to the Students Union representatives and

University Staff members of **your** choice. We have designed a brand new multi functional website to provide resources you need. For example frequently asked questions and explanations of common concerns or issues. You will also be able to use the forum to interact with other Student representatives across the University.

As a Student Rep, you will be a major player within LJMU life, not just on a personal, social level but you will be given the opportunity to influence the future of your course. As a course rep, you will be able to voice the opinions of your fellow course mates to the university. These views will not only be heard but also acted upon. Your opinion counts! Without student input, problems in the course will persist. .

If you need any information, or need to contact me throughout the year, then please call me on 0151 231 4903, or e-mail at [LSUVPECA@livjm.ac.uk](mailto:LSUVPECA@livjm.ac.uk), or come up to my office on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of the Students Union, the Haigh Building.

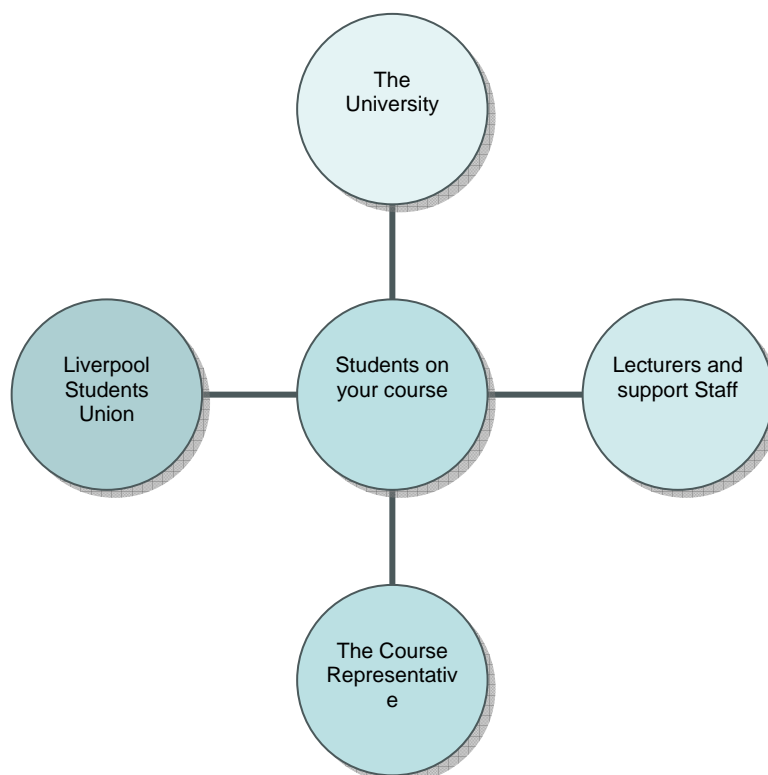
So best of luck from myself, and everyone here at the Students Union on your new role, a role that I am sure you will find challenging and exciting.

See you at our next course rep forum

Andy Halpin, VP Education & Community Action.

# Responsibilities for Course Reps

For a Course Rep system to be effective it has to combine and work in partnership with the five main stakeholders shown below



It is important that the course rep communicates regularly with those being represented and is crucial that students, staff and LSU know who their course reps are. How you operate as a course rep will vary very much depending on current issues on your course, your own time availability and how much your peers use you. As a starter – you can expect to do some of the following:

- Identify student issues and needs
- Making these issues and needs known in the relevant forums and meetings.
- Consulting, involving and reporting back to students.
- Attend and participate in forums and meetings.
- Liaise with other reps and LSU.
- Campaign on relevant issues, e.g. Top up fees, improvements to facilities

## **Some Frequently asked questions to start you off:**

### **What do I do as a course representative?**

- Speak to people in your class and build up a general picture of what people think of the course. What do they like about the course? What would they like to see improved? How well are they learning? And, what do they think of the teaching?
- Represent these views at school board of studies meetings with staff and other course representatives from your department of study. Most course meetings happen twice a year.
- Keep the Union updated as they can help you work with other course representatives if an issue arises that affects your course and similar courses.
- Try to be pro-active. Not all departments are as forthcoming with information as they should be and sometimes it will be up to you to chase up on things.
- If students tell you about bigger issues that affect your university or college then please try and pass these onto relevant people – especially the Union. We recommend strongly that you not advise on personal problems; refer the students to the Advice Centre on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of The Students Union.

### **What support can I get from LSU**

- **Advice, support and guidance** – I will always be available to discuss any problems or issues that course reps have encountered, and offer the relevant advice, support and guidance.
- **Training** – Full Training will be provided via our Evolve trainers.
- **Social Events** – Organised event to bring everyone together to enjoy themselves as a 'bit of a blow out'. Also why not look in to forming a Course Rep society, to organise more regular events?!
- **LSU Web Page** – Our new and improved Website, thanks to our boys in marketing, is now up and running, and this will be your best resource. Updated regularly, with a message/forum board, as well as problem solving papers.
- **Accreditation** – LSU will produce certificates for those Course Reps that can demonstrate that they have fulfilled their role and duties during the year.

### **How big is my time commitment going to be?**

Firstly, you can attend the course representative training session run by LSU, this lasts no more than two and a half hours and will give you all the relevant information that you need to undertake your role as a course representative. It also allows you to meet with other course representatives in an informal setting.

After your trained you will be required to gauge the opinion of the people on your course and you will be expected to attend course meetings to feed these points onto your department. Other than that you can spend as little or as much time being a course representative as you like!

## Where can I find out what all the jargon means?

Don't be put off by the amount of acronyms and jargon used in meetings. If you don't understand a term, the best thing to do is ask for clarification from the chair. Sometimes acronyms are used like they're real words and even the people who use them forget what they really stand for – so chances are there are others in the meeting who are confused too. Try visiting this link for a glossary of academic terms:

<http://www.ljmu.ac.uk/lid/litweb/glossary/index.htm>

## Helpful Hints

- Referral – You should never feel that every student who comes to you should be given an instant answer. There are going to be occasions for some of you, where a matter of a serious nature arises, and at these times you need to pass the students on to the relevant department. It is most likely that you will need to refer them to the advice centre at the Students Union, where there are trained, advisors, who have the relevant experience and willingness to help the students. You can help students by letting them know where it is, 1<sup>st</sup> floor of the Haigh Building Students Union, and helping them to book an appointment, on 0151 231 4942.
- Confidentiality – Unless you have the student's permission, you must ensure that all complaints are confidential. This will gain you the trust and respect, which is vital as a course rep. There are some cases where you feel that a student may be at risk, and you have to break confidentiality, but hopefully these situations will remain few and far between.
- Communication – Advertise yourself within the department by speaking in lectures to make yourself known, or ask at the Students Union for a poster that is available for you to put your picture and details, and put it on a relevant noticeboard in your department.
- Finally, if you have any doubts at any stage, please contact me at anytime, on 0151 231 4903, [lsuvpeva@livjm.ac.uk](mailto:lsuvpeva@livjm.ac.uk), or come up and see me on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of the Haigh.