GUSRC Class Representative Survey 2024

Key Findings Report: May 2024

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# Executive Summary

**Background**

In spring 2016, it was decided to develop and pilot an end-of-year Class Representative (Class Rep) survey to establish baseline figures and identify future benchmarks for assessing the system's effectiveness and impacts. The survey has been conducted annually since then.

**Research Objectives**
Specific research objectives are to:

* Understand the level to which their Class Rep training impacted on their capacity to fulfil their role.
* Understand the communications channels used by Class Reps
* Measure the overall impact of Class Reps on the student experience.
* Examine the range of personal development skills acquired by Class Reps during their tenure.

**Research Methodology**

As previous years an online research methodology was adopted. A final total of 947 valid responses were received – a response rate of 70% (77% in 2023). Respondents were informed that completing the survey was a condition of having their role as Class Rep certified on their Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR).

**Profile of Respondents**

A similar gender and age profile as previous years was recorded with just under two-thirds of respondents in the survey being female, 2% non-binary, and 3% preferring not to state. In terms of age half of respondents were aged 17-21yrs with a further 32% being within the 22-24-year-old age band. This year, the number of International Class Reps is almost equivalent to the number of Class Reps from Scotland (38% vs 39%). There has also been a noticeable decline in Class Reps from the EU.

**Recruitment and Training**

Nearly half of all Class Reps (46%) were elected because they were the only person to volunteer, a trend that has persisted over the last few years. The College of Arts, like last year, was again the most likely to have only one volunteer for the role. In terms of elected positions, the College of Science & Engineering had the highest percentage of elected Class Reps.

Most (84%) felt that the training from the SRC had prepared them very well for their role (83% in 2023), indicating that the training continues to be highly regarded since its delivery moved online four years ago.

**SSLC Actions**
The majority of Class Reps (69%) reported that action had been agreed upon and/or taken on issues they had raised within the SSLC meetings - a positive outcome for the format and a slight increase from last year's figure of 63%. However, one in five were unsure if action had been taken on issues they had raised within the SSLC.

In 2022, only 52% of Class Reps believed in the effectiveness of the SSLC. However, this perception has improved with 66% citing effective last year and reaching 72% this year. The Class Reps from the College of Arts & Humanities were most likely to perceive the SSLC as an effective vehicle for getting student issues actioned (76%).

**Class Rep Impact**
There is still a plethora of positive changes resulting from Class Rep input and this has been a consistent pattern over the past nine years: Improved access to course materials/resources was again the most frequently reported change (39%), followed by changes to lecture/tutorial arrangements (30%).

**Skills Development**
The transferable skills that Class Reps develop remain one of the main benefits of the role and are highly valued by respondents. This year, once again, the top skill reported was communication and listening, with over three-quarters of respondents (79%) indicating that they had developed these skills through being a Class Rep. This was followed by 63% who gained a greater understanding of university structures.

**SRC Support**
Those not requiring further support from the SRC throughout the year has risen from 43% in 2020 to 65% this year. However, those using the Advice Centre has risen from 12% to 18% in the same period. 93% of Class Reps stated the support they received from the SRC was very useful / useful.

**Communications**
Similar to last year, WhatsApp remains the most popular way of communicating with classmates (58%), closely followed by Email (54%). The use of Zoom, Teams, and Facebook has significantly declined since 2021. ‘Other’ methods declared included Instagram, Snapchat, Discord, and Google Surveys.

**The Class Rep Experience**
Similar to previous years, the majority of Class Reps (82%), praised the experience as exciting and interesting, emphasising the developmental benefits, particularly the enhancement of communication skills. Many also highlighted the opportunity to connect with peers and engage directly with university staff as valuable aspects of being a Class Rep.

For others, although they enjoyed their time, many encountered challenges that diminished their experience and made it more frustrating at times. In most cases, these challenges stemmed from the lack of engagement from their student cohort, difficulties attending meetings, or frustration with the SSLC process.

**Conclusions & Recommendations**

Again, this year’s Class Rep survey signals that the Class Rep model works well and over the nine years of evaluation some positive outcomes consistently emerged:

* The SRC training process is perceived as effective preparation. Some Class Reps noted that ongoing engagement with their peers could be more challenging given the online environment, limiting opportunities for discussion. To counteract this, it is suggested that more online and offline opportunities and spaces be developed where Class Reps can interact and collaborate with one another.
* As previous years,contributing at SSLC meetings is generally perceived as straightforward, and Class Reps typically find it easy to raise issues. To address the notable increase in agreed-upon actions being deferred however, it is recommended that the SRC consider implementing a system to ensure continuity in addressing actions raised by Class Reps each year.
* The transferable skills that Class Reps develop remain one of the main benefits of the role and are highly valued by respondents, significantly enhancing employment prospects. However, this recognition contrasts with the lack of interest in the role from some Schools, as nearly half of all Class Reps were the sole volunteer during the election.

To help resolve this issue, it is recommended that advertising and promotion of the Class Rep role be increased to raise awareness of its importance. Encouraging those who may be hesitant could involve signposting them to a named person, such as a previous Class Rep, who could address any concerns they may have and encourage participation. Making more use of digital platforms with videos and blogs discussing the benefits and impact of the role may also make an impact.

* Given the significant increase in those utilising the Advice Centre and some Class Reps unsure what support was available from the SRC it is suggested that consideration be given to strengthening the communication channels between the SRC and Class Reps to ensure timely and effective support. This could involve more regular check-ins or updates to gauge the needs of Class Reps throughout the year.

# Background & Introduction

## Background

The Class Representative (Class Rep) system plays a crucial role in Glasgow University’s Quality Enhancement activities and is an essential component of the Student Representative Council (SRC) Representative and Consultative activities.

This system enables students to voice their opinions to the academic and support staff responsible for their department regarding issues such as course content, teaching methods, and resources. The Class Rep also serves as the primary point of contact for students with concerns or suggestions related to a class or course.

Any student at the University can become a Class Rep. Elections are held within classes during the first few weeks of each semester. If multiple students’ express interest, a brief election is organised by the class lecturer or course convenor. If only one person is interested, they are automatically selected. In cases where no one shows interest, the lecturer or convenor may appoint a student to the position.

The SRC coordinates the delivery of training every year during both Semesters 1 and 2. Class Rep training is now conducted through a combination of self-study via Moodle and an online Zoom session. The training aims to:

* Help Class Reps understand how they can make an impact.
* Illustrate effective ways to discuss issues and develop negotiation skills.
* Explain available support structures for help and advice.

At the end of the training session, Class Reps complete a short evaluation questionnaire that provides demographic information and immediate feedback on the training. While this feedback is valuable and typically positive, it does not offer an opportunity for reflective insight into how the training contributed to the effectiveness of Class Reps over the year and their overall impact.

## Fit with Strategy

GUSRC’s strategy document includes the following stated objective:

*“We will ensure our democratic, representative structures are valid and accessible for all students.”*

Priority actions include:

* Working with the University to develop the class representative system to ensure it remains fit for purpose and responsive to the growing diversification of University Learning and Teaching delivery methods.
* Working together to develop and implement a system for evaluating the impact of class representatives on the student experience.

Given the above strategic aims and priority actions, in spring 2016 it was agreed that an end of year Class Representative survey be developed and piloted to establish some baseline figures and identify future benchmarks for assessing the effectiveness of the system and its impacts.

Thus, the SRC wished to use the pilot in 2016 to measure four clear research objectives which were to:

* Understand the level to which their Class Rep training impacted on their capacity to fulfil their role.
* Measure the overall impact of Class Reps on the student experience.
* Examine the range of personal development skills acquired by Class Reps during their tenure.
* Understand the communication channels used by Class Reps

## Survey Timeline

Since 2016, the Class Rep online survey has been conducted annually to facilitate comparisons, with adjustments made to questionnaire content as needed.

For the 2024 survey the timeline was as follows:

* Invitations to participate: March 18
* Reminder email: March 27
* Survey close: April 9

## Introduction to Report

Every year the questionnaire is loosely structured into five themes as detailed below, and hence forms the main structure of the remainder of this report:

Section 2 – Research Methodology

Section 3 – Profile of Respondents

**Section 4 –** **Recruitment & Training**

**Section 5 – SSLC & Class Rep Impact**

**Section 6 – SRC Support & Skills Development**

**Section 7 – Communication**

**Section 8 – The Class Representative Experience**

Section 9 - Conclusions and Recommendations

# Research Methodology

As in previous years the questionnaire was developed by the SRC and the researcher. An online research methodology was adopted as this was the most efficient and effective approach to reaching the Class Representatives.

Historically, the survey tool itself was developed using Glasgow University’s software and the IT support team. Since 2023 however data is gathered using Survey Monkey. It appeared on the My Class Rep website in addition to being sent out via an embedded link to the 1,360 Class Representatives (1,384 last year).

A total of 1,039 responses were initially received. After cleaning the data and removing incomplete responses, this resulted in a final total of 947 valid responses, corresponding to a response rate of 70% (compared to 77% in 2023). This response rate marks the second highest over the survey's lifetime.

It's important to note that respondents were informed that completing the survey was a requirement to certify their role as Class Rep on their Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR). Some Class Reps may have already completed the survey in previous years as part of their training and therefore chose not to participate again:

*\*Please note that not all responses will add to 100% because of rounding and multiple response questions. Due to routing, which enabled respondents to skip some questions, base numbers may also differ in some cases.*

# Profile of Respondents

A similar gender and age profile as previous years was recorded with just under two-thirds of respondents in the survey being female (Figure 3-1) and 3% preferring not to state their gender. In terms of age half of respondents were aged 17-21yrs (Figure 3-2) with a further 32% being within the 22-24-year-old age band.

Figure 3‑1: Gender of Class Reps

 *Base = 945 (2024); 1061 (2023); 878 (2022); 735 (2021); 721 (2020); 959 (2019); 1,022 (2018); 892(2017); 594 (2016)*

Figure 3‑2: Age of Respondents

*Base = 945 (2024); 1060 (2023); 878(2022); 735 (2021); 721 (2020); 959 (2019); 1,022 (2018); 892(2017); 594 (2016)*

This year, the number of International Class Reps is almost equivalent to the number of Class Reps from Scotland (38% vs 39%). Figure 3-3 illustrates a notable increase in international students and a decline in EU students. (\*Please note that this data could not be directly compared with the 2016 survey due to differences in how students were classified in the pilot survey.)

Figure 3‑3: Student Type

*Base =946 (2024); 1060 (2023); 878(2022); 735 (2021);720 (2020); 959 (2019); 1,022 (2018); 892(2017)*

The College of Arts & Humanities had the highest number of Class Reps, accounting for nearly a third of all representatives. Over the nine-year period covered by this survey, this College has the highest percentage of Class Reps in most years:

Figure 3‑4: College

*Base = 940 (2024); 1059 (2023); 875 (2022); 721 (2021): 721 (2020); 959 (2019); 1,022 (2018); 892(2017); 594 (2016)*

# Recruitment & Training

This section of the report considers how respondents became Class Representatives and the value of their training.

## Class Representatives Elections

To ensure an effective Class Rep system, it is essential that the recruitment and election of representatives are fair, transparent, and well understood by the student body.

Last year, nearly half of all Class Reps (46%) assumed their roles as the sole volunteer, a trend that has persisted this year. Conversely, the proportion of those selected by course conveners or lecturers has declined over the past two years. However, although the number of Class Reps elected through formal election processes has steadily increased since 2020, this year the figure has dropped from its highest-level last year (28%) to 25%:

**Figure 4‑1: Selection / Election of Class Representative**

 *Base=942 (2024); 1066 (2023); 878(2022); 735 (2021); 721(2020); 959 (2019); 1,022 (2018); 892(2017); 594 (2016)*

As in previous years, no correlation was found between student type, age, or gender and the method of obtaining the position of Class Rep. However, clear differences emerged among colleges.

The College of Arts, like last year, was again most likely to have only one volunteer for the role of Class Rep, with 63% being the sole volunteer compared to the overall average of 46%.

In terms of elected positions, the College of Science & Engineering delivered the highest percentage of elected Class Reps this year, at 31%, compared to the overall average of 25%.

## SRC Class Rep Training

The SRC provides training for Class Reps near the beginning of each semester, which is an important part of preparing for the role and equips students with the tools to address any issues that may arise.

Currently, training is conducted online through a self-study Moodle course followed by a Zoom training session.

Given some time has passed since the training, this survey is an opportune moment to assess how well the training prepared the Class Reps for their role.

According to the survey, 84% of Class Reps felt that the initial training from the SRC had prepared them very well or well for their responsibilities, representing a one percent increase from last year.

Furthermore, the percentage of respondents who did not participate in the Class Reps training has decreased from 20% in 2022 to only 10% this year. Most non-attenders had previously undergone training and were informed by the SRC that they did not need to attend again. Seven percent stated that they were not informed about the training, while another 3% cited scheduling conflicts with the Zoom sessions. These figures are consistent with last year's data.

Overall, there was little variation observed when analysing the data across different demographics:

**Figure 4-2: How well did the SRC training prepare you for the role?**

*\*Please note in 2020 training was moved online*

 *Base = 947 (2024); 1066 (2023); 874(2022): 735 (2021) 721 (2020); 959 (2019); 1,022 (2018); 892(2017); 594 (2016)*

# SSLC & Class Rep Impact

## Ease of Raising Issues at SSLC

This section investigates the ease with which Class Reps raise issues at Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) meetings. All meetings during the academic year 2021-2022 were conducted online; however, since 2022/23, SSLC meetings have been a mix of face-to-face and online formats.

Consistent with previous years, the majority of Class Reps reported little difficulty in raising issues, with 79% of survey respondents overall finding it Very Easy or Easy to raise issues. Only 2% of respondents (19 individuals) reported finding it difficult or very difficult.

Demographic analysis revealed no statistically significant variations in perceptions regarding the ease of raising issues, with consistent figures observed across different demographic groups. There were however some differences between Colleges with the College of Medical, Veterinary & Life Sciences finding it the easiest to raise issues (86%) compared to the College of Social Sciences where 70% found it easy.

Figure 5‑1: Ease of Raising Issues at SSLC

*Base = 946 (2024); 1067 (2023); 874 (2022) 735 (2021) 721 (2020); 959 (2019); 1,022 (2018); 892(2017); 592 (2016)*

Please note – only a small minority (5%) had yet to attend a meeting, either due to cancellations or scheduling conflicts. Some reported that other reps were attending instead.

Class Reps who found it difficult to raise issues at the SSLC meetings were asked to explain why via an additional comments box. Twenty-one respondents added a comment. A selection of these comments is reproduced verbatim on the following page.

As in previous years, most of the comments regarding difficulty in raising issues centred around:

* **Perceived lack of receptiveness** to recommendations and a sense that their issue(s) were not taken seriously or valued, or a perception that staff were dismissive
* **Difficulty in raising concerns** regarding a specific member of staff or course when the staff member was present. Additionally, staff defensiveness was noted to make continuing with the issue challenging:

*“Staff were not always receptive to feedback, often getting defensive and counter-acting any negative feedback that was given rather than being open to hearing opportunities for change.…”*

*“I felt very out of place in the meetings, so I felt like any input or concerns I had were unimportant…”*

*“Not very easy to speak up, sometimes felt as though head of school was shooting down anything that was said…”*

*“It felt as though the xxx course was very reluctant to accept there were issues, and repeatedly ignored our suggestions.…”*

*“I was left off mailing list until the last minute for a meeting meaning I had no time to gather feedback as I didn’t know meeting was taking place. …”*

*“No student staff meeting until early March even though I got appointed in the autumn….”*

*“The staff were oftentimes not receptive to recommendations. When raising issues, they would tell us why the issues are not issues rather than trying to understand the problem and suggest solutions.…”*

 *“Lecturers were very defensive at times and instead of taking feedback they would try to argue about the validity of the feedback…”*

*“There was often a lot of content to be covered, and since there wasn’t specifics within the meetings, I think people found their discussion points hard to integrate.”*

## Reason for Non-Attendance at SSLC Meetings

We asked respondents who had not yet attended the SSLC meetings why they had not done so.

Only 7% of respondents (69 individuals) stated that they had not attended the SSLC meetings.

Those who did not attend were evenly distributed across all demographic groups.

Consistent with previous years, the primary reasons for not attending SSLC meetings were scheduling conflicts with their timetable or other commitments. Additionally, 20 respondents mentioned that they had not received notifications of meetings or were unclear about the purpose of the SSLC meetings. Another 11 respondents indicated that they did not have any issues to raise at the SSLC.

## Action Taken on Issues Raised

The majority of Class Representatives in the survey (69%) reported that action had been agreed upon and/or taken on issues they had raised within the SSLC meetings - a positive outcome for the format and a slight increase from last year's figure of 63%. However when this figure is unpicked the chart shows that there is a large increase in actions been agreed but not being implemented until next year.

In addition, one in five Class Reps (20%) were unsure if action had been taken on issues they had raised, a slight decrease from the 24% who were unsure last year.

Furthermore, 46 respondents stated that no action had been agreed upon or taken. When asked why, the majority indicated that this was mainly because their peers in their course had not raised any issues to be taken to the SSLC:

Figure 5‑2: Action Taken on Issues Raised

 *Base= 945 (2024); 1065 (2023); 863 (2022); 712 (2021) 661 (2020); 892 (2019); 924 (2018); 892 (2017); 591(2016)*

When analysed by College, similar to last year, the College of Science & Engineering had the highest rate of actions agreed upon for issues raised, at 80%, compared to the overall figure of 75%."

## Escalation of Issues

Students were asked about any escalation procedures they followed regarding the issues they raised. Nearly two-thirds of Class Reps reported that no escalation was necessary. Of those who did escalate the issue, 26% did so with the School/College and were satisfied with the response. Only 6% raised the issue with the School/College but were not satisfied with the response.

## Impact of Class Representative

This section examines the Staff-Student Liaison Committee (SSLC) and Class Reps' perception of their impact within these meetings.

Respondents were asked if they felt that the SSLC was an effective committee for addressing student issues. As shown in Figure 5-3, in 2022, only 52% of Class Reps believed in the effectiveness of the SSLC. However, this perception improved in the following years, with 66% stating it was effective or very effective last year and reaching 72% this year.

Class Reps from the College of Arts & Humanities were most likely to perceive the SSLC as an effective vehicle for getting student issues actioned (76%).

The percentage of respondents who viewed the system as Not Very Effective or Not at all Effective remained consistent at 5%.

Figure 5‑3: SSLC as an Effective Vehicle

 *Base=939 (2024); 853 (2022); 701 (2021); 721 (2020); 959 (2019); 1,022 (2018); 892 (2017); 588 (2016*

Figure 5‑4: SSLC as an Effective Vehicle – by college

*Base=939*

## Challenges with Actioning Issues Through SSLC

Respondents who did not believe that the SSLC was effective in addressing student issues were asked to explain their reasoning. Their responses fell into five main themes:

* **Frequency of SSLC meetings:** Some Class Reps expressed frustration that many issues remained unresolved due to insufficient meetings within the semester
* **Slow pace of change:** Others were dissatisfied with the slow resolution of issues, noting that some problems persisted until the following year, leaving current students with the same unresolved issues
* **Not within their remit:** In certain cases, staff asserted that the issues raised were outside their jurisdiction, such as location of classes or timetabling issues
* **Unresponsive staff:** Certain Class Reps felt that some staff members lacked empathy and understanding of the issues, which led to a reluctance to address them
* **Unresponsive students:** Some Class Reps attributed the ineffectiveness of the SSLC to a lack of engagement from their peers, hindering meaningful change.

## Availability of University Staff Outside SSLC Meetings

In 2021, a new question was introduced to examine the accessibility of relevant university staff outside of SSLC meetings. A third of Class Reps indicated that they saw no need to raise any issues outside of the SSLC meetings themselves. Half of the Class Reps (50%) reported that they were able to contact relevant university staff outside of meetings to discuss issues without difficulty:

Figure 5-5: University Staff Support

## Changes From Class Rep Input

Class Reps were then asked about the types of changes that resulted from their input during SSLC meetings, with many reporting multiple changes over their tenure.

The chart on the following page shows a consistent pattern over the past eight years: Improved access to course materials/resources was again the most frequently reported change (39%), followed by changes to lecture/tutorial arrangements (30%), with both figures similar to last year's percentages.

In 2022, there was a notable increase in respondents reporting no changes resulting from their input, rising from 10% in 2021 to 21% in both 2022 and 2023. However, this year, that figure has decreased to 16%.

A small number of Class Reps (10% - 91 respondents) reported 'Other' changes that were not applicable to the available codes. The general theme of these other issues has been consistent over the past few years, focusing on specific course/module changes and anticipated changes that had not yet been implemented.

Figure 5‑6: Changes Resulting from Class Rep Input

# SRC Support & Skills Development

## Ongoing Support from SRC

The SRC provides all training for Class Reps and also offers ongoing support for those who need it. The survey therefore asked Class Reps about the support they received from the SRC, apart from the initial training, over the year.

Over the past four years, the percentage of respondents stating they had no further contact with the SRC has increased from 43% in 2019 to 65% this year.

Additionally, the proportion of respondents who had met or corresponded with a School/College Rep has significantly declined from a high of 57% to the lowest level ever at 23%. Those Class Reps from the College of Science and Engineering were most likely to engage with other School / College Reps (35%).

However, the number of respondents contacting the Advice Centre has risen substantially from 9% to 19% last year and remained steady at 18% this year. and those from the College of Social Sciences were most likely to use the SRC Advice Centre (21%).

Overall, 93% of Class Reps found the support they received from the SRC to be very useful or somewhat useful/okay, with only a minority perceiving the support as not useful (6%)

Figure 6‑1: SRC Support

*Base=933 (2024); 1059 (2023); 861 (2022); 735 (2021): 696 (2020); 944(2019); 1,001(2018); 878(2017); 651(2016*

As can be seen in Figure 6-1, nearly two-thirds of Class Reps in the survey (65%) had no further contact with the SRC. A supplementary question asked why this was the case.

As in previous years, three-quarters of those Class Reps who had no other contact (75%) simply felt that no other support was necessary. A further 2% stated that they were unaware what other support the SRC offered:

Figure 6-2: Reason for No Other Contact with SRC

 *Base=609 (2024); 640 (2023); 490 (2022); 735 (2021); 681 (2020); 522 (2019); 966 (2017) 860(2016*

Among the 'Other' reasons given by the 15 respondents for not having any additional contact with the SRC, no clear themes emerged. Class Reps cited a diverse range of reasons, including being in their first semester as a Class Rep, uncertainty about whom to contact, and some mentioned that no one from the SRC proactively contacted them.

## Skills Development

One of the benefits of becoming a Class Rep has always been the personal development that can result, and therefore, respondents were asked in the survey if they believed they had developed any skills through their role. Several skills have been consistently reported year after year.

This year, once again, the top skill reported was communication and listening, with over three-quarters of respondents (79%) indicating that they had developed communication/listening skills through being a Class Rep. This was followed by 63% who gained a greater understanding of university structures. Figure 6-3 below presents the full list of skills that have been developed through being a Class Rep from 2020 to 2024:

**Figure 6-3: Skills Development**

 *Base=945 (2024);1064 (2023); 860 (2022): 735 (2021); 721 (2020)*

# Communication

The key to being a successful Class Rep is effective communication. Recognising the importance of communication with peers in their role as Class Reps, the survey asked about the channels they used to communicate with their classmates and which methods were considered most effective. This section examines the variety of communication methods utilised by Class Reps, their popularity, and effectiveness.

##  Communication with Classmates & Reps

Similar to last year, WhatsApp remains the most popular way of communicating with classmates (58%), closely followed by Email (54%). The use of Zoom, Teams, and Facebook has significantly declined as methods of communication since 2021, when many were still under Covid-19 restrictions. ‘Other’ methods declared included Instagram (5%), Snapchat (4%), Discord (3%), and Google Surveys (2%).

WhatsApp was perceived as the most effective communication method (58%) followed by Email (27%).

Figure 7-1: Communication with Classmates

 *Base=917 (2024); 1067 (2023); 861(2022); 735 (2021)*

## Class Rep Systems & Process Adjustments

Given the increase in online meetings since the pandemic, the SRC decided in 2022 to include a question to investigate whether Schools had adapted their systems and processes to ensure that Class Reps could fulfil their role in an online environment.

The majority of respondents indicated that their School had adapted well. Specifically, 52% stated that their School had reached out to reps online or by email to inquire about needed support. Additionally, nearly a quarter (22%) reported that SSLC meetings had been moved online. The number of Schools conducting online Class Rep elections has been increasing every year (5% to 12%). However, 26% felt that no adaptations had been made.

Figure 7-2: School Adaptations

 *Base=930 (2024);1061 (2023); 861(2022)*

# The Class Representative Experience

## The Role as a Positive Experience

Each year, respondents are invited to share additional comments about their experience as Class Reps. Similar to previous years, the majority of comments were positive (82%), praising the experience as exciting and interesting. Respondents expressed great satisfaction with their role, emphasising the developmental benefits, particularly the enhancement of communication skills. Many highlighted the opportunity to connect with peers and engage directly with university staff as valuable aspects of being a Class Rep. Furthermore, several respondents noted the exceptional support provided by university staff. Below are some representative positive comments:

*“I thought this was a great experience, although I do believe the role of class reps could be promoted more by university staff during lectures. This may help in encouraging more engagement between students and their class reps...…”*

*“It was a wonderful experience that I would wholeheartedly recommend to others. A wonderful way to get a better insight into teaching…”*

*“It was a very positive experience that helped me to learn about the structure of my course. I enjoyed taking feedback from my peers and I felt my feedback was valued. I would definitely do it again…”*

*“We had quite a big class (entirety of my subject's senior hons cohort), but it was quite enjoyable. Although there were tensions at time, I felt that there was a feeling that the staff wanted to help us too….”*

*“I enjoyed being a programme rep, especially as I was one of two on the course, so we were able to discuss problems and potential solutions. Having a second rep made it feel like a team and emboldened me to act…”*

*“It was an honour and pleasure to work as representative of my class. I had the privilege to support and connect with my fellow classmates. As well as understanding their situations through private messages and class discussions. This allowed me to connect and communicate with the [SSLC] and properly address concerns….”*

*“I had a very positive experience as Class Rep; communication was consistent between the school and myself, and meetings were well-organised to address issues. I felt well supported by the training and knew I could ask any questions if need be. I felt issues I raised were considered well by the staff…”*

*“It was a good experience and gave me tools to gather opinions on how the semester was going in an effective way and helped me to communicate those to the staff. This experience will prove useful in a job situation for meetings for example…”*

## Challenges of the Role

For other Class Reps (11%), although they enjoyed their time representing students, many encountered challenges that diminished their experience and made it more frustrating at times. In most cases, these challenges stemmed from the lack of engagement from their student cohort, difficulties attending meetings, or frustration with the SSLC process:

*“Overall, very satisfied with the role. Having staff student feedback meetings later on in the semester would be helpful because most of the issues our class experienced came about after the meetings were done…”*

*“I really enjoyed it; I just wish that more of my classmates would have responded to my surveys and told me what they thought of the course…”*

*“It was a good experience. Although, I do think there should be more meetings in a semester and suggested changes should come into effect sooner…”*

*“There should be some way of rectifying the situation when a Co-class rep does nothing/ is uncontactable. Or we should be made aware what we can do. Love being class rep…”*

*“Being a class rep when I am a Masters student is a challenging task due to the tight packed schedule of classes and broad coursework. However, I wish I had more and suitable means to contact all the students (different students in different classes from different majors) and other reps to contribute more and effectively on behalf of specific group of students…”*

*“I found it difficult to communicate with my cohort because I was not allowed access to an email list for direct communication and therefore had to rely on my department administration to communicate with them...”*

*“There needs to be more effort made by the SRC and School + College Reps to actively engage with Class Reps about the feedback they are getting about courses. This would allow for more conjoined + coordinated approaches to SSLC meetings and School wide meetings….”*

*“I personally did not develop any team working skills, as it was difficult to connect with other class reps in my course. Although the course coordinator announced who the class reps were during a lecture, I would have found it more useful if we could have used a Teams channel or another communication method to discuss the upcoming meeting. Instead, because I felt like we were very disconnected, I had to make my own form to receive feedback from my classmates…*

*“I was acting as a PGR rep, so we had different roles/requirements from PGT or UG reps. Lots of the training does not really apply as we represent students with different study areas on different funding bodies with different programme structures…”*

*“Disappointing, was generally unable to contribute as meeting schedules did not take into account those who were unable to attend at certain times, even after those planning them were informed…”*

# Conclusions & Recommendations

Yet again this year’s Class Rep survey signals that the Class Rep model works well and over the nine years that the SRC has evaluated the Class Rep experience, certain positive outcomes have consistently emerged, and this trend continues:

**Class Rep Training**The SRC training process is perceived by the majority as effective preparation for their role as a Class Rep. Despite a slight drop in satisfaction during the pandemic and the shift to online training, Class Reps consistently agree every year that the training conducted by the SRC provides an invaluable foundation for their role.

However, with the training now conducted online, some Class Reps noted that it was more challenging to engage with others, limiting opportunities for discussion. To counteract this, it is suggested that more online and offline opportunities and spaces be developed where Class Reps can interact and collaborate with one another.

**Engagement at SSLC**

As previous years,contributing at SSLC meetings is generally perceived as straightforward, and Class Reps typically find it easy to raise issues at these meetings. In addition, it’s a positive result that University staff are usually accessible outside of meetings and offer support proactively.

There has, however, been a notable increase in agreed-upon actions being deferred until the following year, which can be frustrating for Class Reps. Many issues raised subsequently then remain unresolved for the current students, and sometimes Class Reps are left unaware of whether agreed actions were applied the following year. Although the majority still perceive this model of discussion effective the lack of knowledge around next steps is concerning.

To address this, it is recommended that the SRC consider implementing a system to ensure continuity in addressing actions raised by Class Reps each year. This could involve passing on a record of outstanding actions to new Class Reps for follow-up in subsequent years.

However, it is important to recognise the tremendous positive changes that Class Reps have facilitated across the years and the multitude of improvements resulting from their input at SSLCs, particularly in enhancing access to course materials and implementing changes to lectures and tutorial arrangements.

**Personal Development**

The transferable skills that Class Reps develop remain one of the main benefits of the role and are highly valued by respondents, significantly enhancing employment prospects. It is clear from the survey that the majority of Class Reps recognise the plethora of skills they gain during their tenure. However, this recognition contrasts with the lack of interest in the role from some Schools, as nearly half of all Class Reps were the sole volunteers during election time.

To address this issue, it is recommended that advertising and promotion of the Class Rep role be increased to raise awareness of its importance. Encouraging those who may be hesitant could involve signposting them to a named person, such as a previous Class Rep, who could address any concerns they may have and encourage participation.

Alternatively, having Class Reps leverage the digital platforms at their disposal and create informative videos featuring current Class Reps discussing the benefits and impact of the role may also make an impact. Making these resources easily accessible to potential candidates online could also increase interest and reduce numbers of sole volunteers.

**SRC Support**

Interestingly, nearly two-thirds of Class Reps did not feel that additional support from the SRC was necessary during the year. However, the significant increase in those utilising the Advice Centre indicates that further assistance has been required. Furthermore, some Class Reps were unsure what support was available from the SRC. It is suggested to counteract this lack of knowledge that consideration be given to strengthening the communication channels between the SRC and Class Reps to ensure timely and effective support. This could involve more regular check-ins or updates to gauge the needs of Class Reps throughout the year.

In summary, while the Class Rep system continues to yield positive outcomes and foster personal development, addressing challenges such as deferred actions, promoting greater participation, and improving support communication will further enhance its effectiveness.