

BCSU Staff Guide to **Course Reps**





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Welcome to Bradford College Students' Union



What is the SU?

We are a union led by students for students with a vision to play a key role in transforming the lives of students through support, representation and opportunities.

Quite simply, we are here to make student life better and we aim to do this through capturing the Student Voice. With the help of elected student officers and course representatives, we want to hear about the ideas, views and opinions of students so that we can help improve college life for everyone.

As a students' union we work with the college to ensure that students have the best experience during their time here. You can influence what happens at Bradford College using your voice.

Key contacts

Student Voice Coordinator

For any queries relating to the Student Voice please contact Mohammed Issaq in the first instance at;

StudentVoice@bradfordcollege.ac.uk

Students' Union

For any general queries about the Students' Union please visit the website; **www.bradfordcollegesu.co.uk**, or, you can email **S.Union@bradfordcollege.ac.uk**

Students' Union Officers

All current student officer information (SU President and part time Student Officers) can be found online on the BCSU website;

www.bradfordcollegesu.co.uk

or, you can email **S.Union@bradfordcollege.ac.uk**

Academic Quality & Related Teams

- Higher Education Quality: **HEQuality@bradfordcollege.ac.uk**
- General HE Award enquiries: **HEawards@bradfordcollege.ac.uk**
- HE Student Finance enquiries: **HEstudentfinance@bradfordcollege.ac.uk**
- Further Education Quality: **FEQuality@bradfordcollege.ac.uk**

Student Voice

What is the Student Voice?

The Student Voice is about listening to the views and opinions of students (with the help of course reps) to make positive changes to the learning experience of everyone!

Students have the power to influence college decision making so that they can be satisfied with their course and their learning!

Course Reps

What is a Course Rep?

Course Reps are volunteers who gather feedback from their peers and share this at departmental meetings. This is called the 'Student Voice' and is about gaining honest student feedback (**good and bad**) in order to improve teaching, learning and other aspects of the student experience.

Course Reps are responsible for gathering feedback, opinions, and ideas from other students in their groups. This feedback should be captured through a short, written report (using a template provided by the SU) and shared at formal meetings such as Learner Forums (FE) and Programme Committee meetings (HE).

Why are Course Reps important?

Course Reps play a vital role in evaluating what we do and how we do it, changes made as result of the Student Voice benefits current and future cohorts. Course Reps ensure that staff are made aware of student issues so that appropriate actions can be taken to try and resolve them.

Course reps will also be consulted by programme teams on potential changes to modules and programmes and when new provision is being proposed.

By having an effective Student Voice system in place this not only supports the college's quality provision, but also means that we have students who feel engaged, valued and listened to.

What are the benefits of being a Course Rep?

Becoming a Course Rep is a great development opportunity for students, there are many benefits and these include:

- Ability to influence others and make positive changes to their course and learning experience
- Access to ongoing training and support from the Students' Union
- The opportunity to gain valuable skills and experience
- Be part of a wide community of course reps at Bradford College
- Develop networks and friendships across the college

A photograph of three students sitting at a wooden table in a modern, well-lit room. They are all focused on their laptops. The student in the foreground is wearing large headphones. The student in the middle is looking at their laptop screen. The student in the background is also looking at their laptop. There are water bottles and a small potted plant on the table.

Electing Course Reps

How many Course Reps are needed?

Course Reps are integral to Bradford College and are vital for improving the student experience, we therefore need motivated and dedicated reps who can act as the Student Voice for their course area. Each level of a standard programme/course of study should have **one elected Course Rep, only where there are more than 50 students in a cohort should there be two Course Reps.**

Which courses require a Course Rep?

All standard FE & HE courses (where students are registered for at least one academic year) require a Course Rep. Non-standard courses (community short courses for example) don't require a Course Rep as they are unable to attend the required number of Learner Forums and close the learner feedback loop. Instead, departments should use other methods to capture the Student Voice (e.g. surveys, polls, student forums etc.) which your Student Voice Coordinator can help support you with.

Elections

It is the responsibility of tutorial staff to hold elections in tutorials at the beginning of the academic year to elect course reps.

Staff should follow the election guidance as provided by the SU and make sure that course reps are in place before end of September. In doing so, this means students have adequate time to complete the mandatory training before their first departmental meeting takes place.

It is important that there is a fair and democratic process to elect Course Reps!

Teaching staff will need to communicate all course rep information to their Head of Department (HoD) and the SU.

Course Rep Duties & Key Responsibilities

Knowledge and experience required:

- No specific experience or knowledge is required for the role of course rep as the Students' Union provides relevant training sessions.
- Course reps will be expected to become familiar with the structure of the representation system and develop a good understanding of their department's workings as a whole.

Time commitment:

- The role of course rep should involve a commitment of no more than a few hours per week. The volume of work will vary during the course of an academic year, but commitments to the role will be avoided wherever possible during the examination period.
- Course reps are expected to undertake relevant training courses provided by the Students' Union throughout the academic year.
- Course reps should expect to participate in and attend either:
 - a. Learner Forum meetings (one per term) for FE course reps.
 - b. Programme Committee meetings (one per semester) for HE course reps.
- Course reps will need to be available to their fellow students via their college e-mail account or teams and will be expected to reply to queries within a reasonable timescale with the support of student voice co-ordinator. In addition, course reps should be prepared to make themselves available to their peers for informal contact or short meetings before or after lectures/workshops etc. on a timetable determined by the course rep.
- Course reps should take part in other important Students' Union meetings and forums wherever possible.



Communication and collaboration:

Communication is a vital element in ensuring that the Students' Union representation system works together with the college to deliver improvements to the student experience. To make sure good communication and information flows, course reps will need to work with their fellow peers, the Students' Union and Bradford College staff to make sure that the course representation system works effectively.

For a full breakdown of the role and its responsibilities please see the detailed role descriptor on the SU website.

Meetings

Learner Forum Meetings – FE Course Reps Only

Each department should organise 1 Learner Forum meeting per term (total of 3 per academic year). Each meeting should be attended by elected course reps from each cohort/level for each course (this excludes non-standard FE courses such as short courses), Meetings [JR4.1] should be chaired by management from each cohort. These meetings are the main opportunity for course reps to give course specific feedback brought to them by their fellow students. They should be timetabled in advance and at times when most course reps are able to attend, try to avoid submission and exam/revision periods.

**Only FE Course Reps are required to attend
Learner Forum Meetings**

Programme Committee Meetings – HE Course Reps Only

Every HE programme should have 1 Programme Committee each semester. The meeting is attended by elected course reps from each cohort/level within that programme, the Head of School and/or the programme leader and other members of the programme team. This is a requirement of our validating bodies and is standard practice within the sector. These meetings are the main opportunity for course reps to give programme specific feedback brought to them by fellow students. They should be timetabled in advance and at times when most course reps are able to attend, try to avoid submission and exam/revision periods.

**Only HE course reps are required to attend
Programme Committee meetings.**

Student Parliament – FE & HE Course Reps

Student Parliament is a cross-campus Students' Union forum where student officers and course reps (FE & HE) meet twice a year to:

- Discuss ideas and vote on which should to be taken forward by the Students' Union
 - Discuss the student experience and how it can be improved
 - Hold elected Student Officers to account if necessary
- The dates for Student Parliament for will be posted on the SU website in the new academic year www.bradfordcollegesu.co.uk

Joint Student Council Meetings – HE course reps only

The Student Council is the highest student representative body in each department delivering Higher Education at Bradford College. There is one Student Council meeting per department in each semester. During the meeting, students will be regarded as a core part of the management team, and will share in discussions with the Head of Department, Head(s) of School and members of the College's Executive Team about the plans for the department including; areas of priority, improvement and best practice.

The Student Council is a round-table discussion based on relevant documents to be distributed prior to the meeting. Course Rep input is crucial as it provides an opportunity to fully incorporate the critical perspective of students into the department's planning and self-assessment cycle and for students to play a key role in driving improvements.

The semester 1 Student Council meetings schedule will be available at SU or HE Quality Team.

How Curriculum can Support Course Reps

- Make sure course reps are elected by the second week of September
- Encourage Course Reps to complete the mandatory training provided by the SU
- Invite Course Reps to Learner Forums/Programme Committee meetings as early as possible and send a reminder closer to the time
- Provide Course Reps with progress updates and feedback relating to departmental actions
- Remind Course Reps to complete their feedback reports (templates available through the SU) and bring with them to the meetings
- Notify the SU of any changes to Course Reps

Other Help & Support Students' Union

The SU supports Course Reps in their role by:

- Providing mandatory training
- Providing an MS Teams support channel specifically for Course Reps only
- Offering continued training and development opportunities including Mental Health First Aid training
- **Holding open forums such as Student Parliament where Course Reps can hold student officers to account and feedback on the Student Voice process etc.**



Stay Up to Date

The best way to stay up to date and find out about the latest opportunities, discounts and events is to check out our website and follow us on social media:

-  www.bradfordcollegesu.co.uk
-  [BradfordCollegePlus](https://www.instagram.com/BradfordCollegePlus)
-  [Bradford College Plus](https://www.facebook.com/BradfordCollegePlus)



Bradford College



CONTACT

s.union@bradfordcollege.ac.uk

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