

Student Rep HANDBOOK

YOUR NAME:



CONTENTS:

WELCOME! Page 3

WHAT IS AN SU? Page 4

A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF NASU: Page 5

OUR STRATEGY: Page 6

OUR STRUCTURE: Page 7

WHAT IS A STUDENT REP? Page 8

SUPPORT: Page 9

SIGNPOSTING: Page 10

MEETINGS: Pages 11 – 12

SETTING EXPECTATIONS: Page 13

MAKING CHANGE: Page 14

COLLECTING FEEDBACK: Pages 15 – 17

TOP TIPS: Page 18

CONTACT DETAILS: Page 19

TRAINING NOTES: Pages 20 –

WELCOME!

Thank you for volunteering to be a Student Rep.

Being a Student Rep is a wonderful, rewarding and fun experience where you get to build communities and help students find their voice.

This guide will provide you all the information you need during your time in the role. However, if you are ever struggling to find an answer to your question, the Students' Union is also here to help. The SU has an open-door policy, where you can come to us for support at any time of the year.

People like you are a vital part in ensuring a positive University experience and we are so excited to work with you and seeing what you and your fellow Reps do.

Have a good year and good luck!

-Norwich Arts SU

WHAT IS AN SU?

A Students' Union ('SU') is a **student led** membership organisation, which is **independent** from the University; all students automatically become members upon enrolment, completely free of charge.

FUN FACT:

The first Students' Union was established at the University of Edinburgh in 1884. It was called the Student Representative Council.

Being student led means democracy is at the heart of what we do. The SU has two **Presidents** – these are elected annually and are the political leaders of the organisation, along side a team of elected Part Time Officers that represent the various communities at our University. They are elected on manifestos, a series of goals and objectives that guide their work in office.



Janet:
President
of Education &
Representation



Trinity:
President
of Communities
& Welfare

Your Presidents are supported by a staff team, which supports the services provided by the Students' Union:



Arran
Managing
Director



Lexie
Advice &
Representation
Project Manager



Katie
Events &
Communications
Project Manager



Patrycja
Communities
Project Manager

You can contact any staff member by emailing **studentsunion@norwichuni.ac.uk**

A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF NASU:

SEPTEMBER:

The start of the academic year is when SU engagement is at its highest. During this period, we host a range of Freshers events to welcome both new and returning students.

OCTOBER:

By-elections are held to fill vacant officer positions. Student Rep Elections also take place during this period, with training provided to all successful candidates. In addition, we celebrate Black History Month and its significance throughout the month.

NOVEMBER:

The first AARC and EDIWC meetings of the academic year are typically held this month. We also mark Disability History Month by celebrating its history, achievements, and ongoing importance.

DECEMBER:

The first SRG meeting is scheduled to take place in December, alongside another AARC meeting. As the term comes to a close, Winter Break begins, giving students the opportunity to enjoy a well-earned rest.

JANUARY :

Winterfest is launched to welcome students back from their winter break and help settle them back into their studies. Another EDIWC meeting is planned to take place also.

FEBRUARY :

Have you enjoyed being a Student Rep? Why not take the next step and run for one of our SU Officer roles? Nominations for the SU Elections open in February! This month, we also celebrate LGBTQ+ History Month. Alongside this, the SRG, AARC and EDIWC meetings are all scheduled to take place.

MARCH:

Voting week for the SU Elections begins this month, giving students the opportunity to have their say and shape the future of the SU. Another AARC meeting is also scheduled this month. March is also an important time to celebrate Women's History Month.

MAY :

The final AARC meeting of the academic year is scheduled. Stay for May offers a range of activities to celebrate students handing in. The SU Awards also take place, celebrating hardworking Student Reps and other members of the community.

APRIL:

An EDIWC meeting and an SRG meeting is planned for April. Students also get really busy this time of year as hand-in approaches in May.

JUNE, JULY & AUGUST:

The summer is a key planning period for the SU as staff prepare for the next academic year. We're still here to help with any support you may need during this time. It's also a great opportunity to start thinking about whether you'd like to nominate yourself to be a Student Rep again in September.

OUR STRATEGY:

SU's have a variety of functions, each one unique in it's structure and operations although there are some similarities. Below you can see a diagram outlining some of the things we do:



Broadly speaking, the overall aim of our strategy is to know all of our students. We aim to do this by helping you to:



**FIND YOUR
VOICE**



**FIND YOUR
PEOPLE**



**FIND YOUR
FUN**

Being a Student Rep is a great way to find your voice by building the confidence and skills to speak up and make a difference. Rather than simply identifying issues, Student Reps play an active role in shaping positive change within their course and the wider university community.

Elected by their peers, Student Reps represent the views and interests of students on their course. They act as a link between students and the university, communicating feedback to course and programme leaders, the University's senior leadership team, and the Students' Union. By ensuring student voices are heard, Student Reps help influence decisions that enhance the student experience.

OUR STRUCTURE:

Trustee Board:

The Trustee Board is the highest governing board of Norwich Arts SU. It holds legal responsibility over the organisation.

Executive Committee:

Executive Committee takes what is decided before the below actions and fulfils the work

Academic Affairs & Representation Council:

This council sees policies and makes decisions on matters regarding Education

EDI and Welfare Council:

This council sees policies and makes decisions on matters regarding EDI and Welfare

Part Time Officers:

We have a team of part time officers that covers educational and liberation remits. They work with the SU on their own campaigns as well as sit on the above councils

Student Reps:

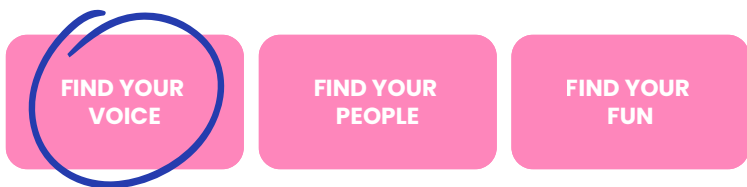
These are elected for every year group within each course and they champion student voices on academic matters. They attend Student Forums and Student Rep Groups to relay your feedback.

Society Leads:

Society Leads volunteer their time to run clubs and societies. Societies can be built on shared interest, culture or lived experience. They help us in our aim of enabling communities and help students find their people.

WHAT IS A STUDENT REP?

Student Reps speak on behalf of their year group, ensuring that students' experiences and perspectives are heard. They gather feedback from their classmates and share it with university staff and the Students' Union, attending meetings where they help shape decisions that affect the student experience. They also keep their peers informed about the outcomes of these discussions and any resulting changes. Through their role, Student Reps provide leadership, empowering students to find their voice and make a meaningful contribution to their university community.



We have Student Reps for a variety of reasons, for example:

- Representing the views of their class peers.
- Gathering feedback on teaching, assessment, resources and timetabling.
- Raising issues and suggesting improvements in meetings with Course Leaders.
- Helping shape decisions about courses and University policies.
- Communicating outcomes and updates back to students so they know what actions have been taken.
- Encouraging students to engage with their course community and feel confident sharing their views.
- Closing the feedback loop by keeping students informed about the actions, decisions, and improvements made in response to their feedback, so they can see the impact of their contributions.

SUPPORT:

As a Student Rep, the SU promises to provide the following to enable your role to run as smoothly as possible:

SUPPORT

**A VOICE IN OUR
DEMOCRACY**

**DEVELOPMENTAL
RESOURCES**

PROTECTION

A FRIENDLY FACE

ADVICE

As a Student Representative, you'll be supported every step of the way. We have an open-door policy, so if you're ever unsure how to approach something or need advice, we're here to help.

You'll have the opportunity to represent the views, concerns, and ideas of your fellow students, ensuring their voices are heard in university decision-making. The role also offers valuable personal and professional development, helping you build transferable skills such as communication, leadership, problem-solving, and teamwork that will benefit your future career.

You can raise concerns with confidence, knowing that you will be supported in your role and will not face negative consequences for representing student feedback. We're also here to provide a friendly, approachable point of contact whenever you need guidance.

Most importantly, being a Student Representative should fit around your studies. The role is voluntary, and we don't expect you to overburden yourself- if you're unable to attend a meeting or need to step back from an activity, just let us know.

SIGNPOSTING:

Content Note – this section mentions sensitive topics such as mental health, sexual assault and discrimination.

As a Student Rep, students may see you as someone they can trust. You may find that peers disclose details regarding their physical or mental wellbeing. You are **not** expected to act as a counsellor, mediator, or medical professional. If you are not the right person to help, it is perfectly appropriate to acknowledge this and signpost them to someone with the training and expertise to provide the support they need:

Students' Union

Help with matters relating to academic complaints and appeals.

Provide free, no questions asked, food and household items to students through the Community Pantry.

Provide free condoms and dental dams in the SU Lounge.

Student Support

Help with concerns regarding mental health, accommodation, finances or disability.

You Report We Support tool can be used to report an incident of sexual misconduct, harassment, bullying or hate crime to the University.

Hold a drop-in Monday - Friday during term time, 12:30pm-3:30pm.

Student Enquiries

Help with your timetable, council tax exemption certificates, student status letters, and general advice and guidance about your course.

Contact Student Enquiries for reporting absences.

Student Enquiries desk is open Monday - Friday, 9:00am - 5:00pm.

If someone discloses information to you which you find concerning, please contact the Students' Union and we can help you figure out next steps.

MEETINGS:

EDIWC:

EDIWC stands for: **Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Welfare Council.**

This is a space for community-led discussions within the SU, where all students are welcome to attend, observe proceedings, put forward motions, and take part in debate. The forum meets approximately every six weeks during term time, with additional meetings arranged where necessary to discuss urgent matters.

The purpose of EDIWC is to ensure that the SU's commitment to removing barriers to access, promoting inclusion, and celebrating diversity is actively put into practice.

It provides students with a space to discuss important issues, share ideas, and contribute to shaping the SU's work on equity, diversity, inclusion, and welfare. Through this, the committee helps ensure that the voices, experiences, and needs of all student communities are heard, represented, and reflected in the SU's work.

AARC:

AARC stands for: **Academic Affairs & Representation Council.**

This is an opportunity for students to be actively involved in the democratic decision making process within the SU. This committee meets approximately once every six weeks during term time, with additional meetings arranged when needed to discuss and respond to urgent matters.

The purpose of AARC is to identify, discuss, and prioritise academic issues that impact students, while making recommendations to improve academic policies and practices. Through collaborative with the SU, AARC aims to enhance the academic experience for all students and ensure their views and needs are reflected in academic decision making.

SRG:

SRG stands for: **Student Rep Group.**

This provides an opportunity to hear from members of the University Senior Leadership Team about the actions taken in response to issues raised by students. Student Reps are encouraged to share these updates with their peers to ensure the wider student community remains informed. Organised by the University, SRG meets approximately once each term.

The purpose of SRG is to keep students informed about important University updates, gather feedback on how these developments affect the student experience, and enable the SU to share progress, outcomes, and key issues with both Student Reps and the University's Senior Leadership Team.

Student Voice Meetings:

Student voice meetings are meetings that Student Reps have with their Course Leaders/tutors.

All Student Reps are expected to attend their specific voice meetings, which provides an opportunity for students to share feedback directly with the University and contribute to positive change where improvements are needed. These forums are typically held twice each term to ensure regular communication between students and their academics.

The purpose of Student Voice Meetings are to provide a structured process for Student Reps to raise feedback on course related issues with their Course Leaders. Course Leaders then share this feedback with Programme Directors, who work with the University to identify and agree on appropriate solutions. Progress and outcomes are communicated back to Course Leaders, who in turn provide updates to Student Reps, ensuring students are kept informed of any actions taken in response to their feedback.

COMMUNICATION:

Course Leaders are responsible for keeping students informed about Student Voice updates. This is managed through the dedicated Course Hub page on the VLE.

VLE LINK:

<https://vle.norwichuni.ac.uk/my/>

The Course Hub includes a dedicated Student Voice section, which provides information about the Student Reps for each course, dates for upcoming Student Voice Meetings, and links to the relevant Course Enhancement Plans. It also includes a link to a live Padlet document, where Course Leaders record student suggestions and feedback and, where appropriate, take action in response.

Students are unable to edit the Padlet directly; however, they can leave comments to share their views or provide additional feedback if they wish.

SETTING EXPECTATIONS:

As Student Reps, you are expected to:

- Attend Course Leader meetings at least once a term.
- Attend Programme Director meetings at least once a term.
- Attend Student Rep Forum meetings at least once a term.
- Attend the SU Academic Affairs & Representation Council at least once a term (more often if possible).
- Let the organiser know if you can't attend a meeting. Either send your feedback in writing or arrange for another student from your course and year to attend.
- Work with your classmates and other Student Reps to represent students' views when speaking with the University or academic staff.
- Collect regular feedback from other students (Both **positive AND negative**) through surveys, focus groups or informal conversations.
- Actively listen to opinions, ideas, and suggestions, at the same time as identifying common themes and issues that are important to take back to Student Forums.
- Contribute ideas and feedback to your Course Improvement Plan throughout the year to help improve the course.

A successful Student Rep:

- Will effectively communicate feedback between the student body and Course Leaders.
- Will learn to manage their time and studies around attendance of important Student Rep meetings.
- Will organise all student feedback in a way that can be fed back fluently to the University and vice versa.

MAKING CHANGE:

It's important to remember that as students, you can only comment from your own perspective, whereas the University may have additional information or a broader understanding of issues that students are not aware of.

While the University may appear reluctant to make changes, this does not mean that change is impossible. The process of moving from identifying a problem to implementing a solution is often complex. The University may recognise that an issue exists and understand the reasoning behind a proposed solution, but putting that change into practice is not always straightforward.

Change within the University is often a slow process, as proposals typically require approval from multiple levels of governance, such as the Vice-Chancellor, Senior Leadership Team, and the Board of Governors.

COLLECTING FEEDBACK:

Stage 1 – Preparation:

It's important to prepare for your meetings, taking some time with your course peers to collect feedback.

Some really good questions to ask could be:

- *What are the issues the issues that are so important to you that you would like to see the university act on?*
- *What is there in your course that you want to change, improve, and introduce?*

Evidence is as important as feedback, so make sure you have a way of showing that the feedback you are relaying is genuine. You may want to collect evidence in the form of a survey or ask students to provide quotes to back up your points. Remember that feedback can be positive too!

Most importantly, don't forget to take notes, these will be useful to refer to during your meetings.

GDPR and Confidentiality:

When you are collating feedback, or relaying it to university staff, you must never include the names of students or any information that can make students easily identifiable.

Speak in general terms when referring to specific students or points made.

You must take care to never leave your notes laying around or put documents in shared folders which can be accessed by other people.

If you are ever sending out mass emails, always BCC!

More detailed advice on GDPR can be found online.

If you are in doubt contact the SU for further guidance.

Stage 2 – Participation:

Before your meetings, take some time to prepare your feedback. The meetings are informal group discussions that give staff and students the opportunity to work together to explore ideas and identify changes that could enhance your course.

Be sure to recognise what's working well by highlighting positive feedback and the aspects of your student experience that stand out. At the same time, discuss areas for improvement in a constructive way, using the evidence you've gathered to support your points wherever possible.

If appropriate, you could suggest potential solutions to the issues you've identified. While not every suggestion will be feasible, putting forward ideas can help start productive conversations about possible ways to address them.

Finally, remember to take notes during the discussion. These will help you summarise the key points and share the outcomes of the meeting with your course peers.

Stage 3 – Closing the ‘feedback loop’:

DEFINITION:

A **feedback loop** is the process of collecting feedback, acting on it, and then communicating the outcome back to the people who gave the feedback.

An important part of the feedback loop is communicating back to students, letting them know the outcomes of their feedback. This can be referred to as **“closing the loop”**, as the feedback cycle both starts and finishes with your course peers.

This may lead on to further feedback which can be taken to the next meeting, and so on the process continues.

It is important that you try to communicate with as many students as possible.

To do this, you could ask your lecturers for 5 minutes at the start of a session to provide an update to your peers. You may however wish to make use of your course group specific group chat if you have one, or send an email to your course peers summarising the outcomes of their feedback.

TOP TIPS:

Being a good Student Rep is about listening, communicating effectively, and working collaboratively to improve the student experience. Here are some practical tips:

- Be organised from the outset. Take notes during meetings and share updates with your course peers afterwards. It's a good idea to have a Student Rep notebook, or specific google doc, where you note down what was discussed and any agreed actions.
- Listen to a range of students- try to speak to as many of your course peers as possible, not just your friends. Use different ways to gather feedback, such as conversations, group chats or anonymous surveys. Encourage quieter students to share their views.
- Represent everyone fairly by presenting the views of the whole cohort, even if they differ from your own. It's a good idea to look for common themes rather than focusing on individual opinions.
- Build positive relationships by working collaboratively with academic and professional services staff. Try to be approachable so students feel comfortable sharing feedback.
- Be reliable and attend meetings on time, letting organisers know if you cannot make one. Try to respond to emails promptly when you are able to.
- Try to be constructive with your feedback by acknowledging what's working well as well as what could be improved. Be respectful and professional, even when discussing challenging issues.

CONTACT DETAILS:

Important Contact Details to Note:

You can contact the SU at any time using the following contact details:

Lexie Cox: Advice and Representation Project Manager –
studentsunion@norwichuni.ac.uk

Janet Chase: President of Education and Representation –
pres.education@norwichuni.ac.uk

You can also find further information and updates about SRG via the Microsoft Teams group: *Student Reps Group 26-27*.

Visit our website for further information about the SU and Student Reps:

<https://www.norwichsu.co.uk/>

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

