



The Department of Health Sciences

THE ROLE OF THE DEPARTMENT REPRESENTATIVE

Overview

The University of York Students' Union (YUSU) and the Graduate Students' Association (GSA) recruit a number of Department Representatives to represent the views of students on a Departmental level. The Department Representative leads the Course Representatives within their own department to co-ordinate and strengthen the student voice, and takes a lead on representing students on strategic departmental issues.

They work closely with Course Representatives to consult with students and represent these views to the University through meetings and committees, as well as through YUSU/GSA, to improve the academic experience for all students in their department. Importantly, the Department Representative will make sure that all changes and improvements that happen as a result of feedback will be communicated to students.

Support is available from a number of places to help the Department Representative be effective in the role, including:

- fellow Department Representatives
- YUSU Academic Officer
- YUSU Student Engagement Team
- GSA Representation Advice and Welfare Co-ordinator
- Chair of the Board of Studies/Chair Postgraduate Teaching Committee and Head of Department
- Student and Academic Services Manager

Department Representatives will have a variety of different skills; they will be respectful, confident, passionate about their degree and department, be tactful and a great communicator and motivator. During their time as a Department Representative, they should expect to develop team leadership, public speaking, and interpersonal skills as well as playing a critical role in making their department better.

Role Profile

- The Department Representative will:
 - Work with Course Representatives to consult students in the department; actively seeking out students' views on decisions that affect them - and listening to any issues.
 - Speak on students' behalf on issues and when decisions are being made at meetings within the University and through YUSU/GSA's democratic structures.
 - Let Course Representatives know the outcome of discussions within a reasonable timeframe, so they can inform students; using social media to promote these so that students can find out what changes were made in the department.

- The Department Representative will work with:
 - Course Representatives: Supporting Course Representatives to consult and represent students at the Student-Staff Forum and access training.
 - YUSU/GSA Academic Officer: Working in a team led by the Academic Officer to identify issues that span across the University and to work on them together
 - Other Department Representatives: Working as a team with the Department Representatives across the University to share information and ideas.
 - Academic Societies: Meeting regularly with the academic societies in the University, to gather student opinion, and to promote their activities to students.

- The Department Representative is supported to do this by:
 - YUSU/GSA Academic Officer and Full Time Officer Team: Who will provide support and advice on academic issues and will offer opportunities to join academic campaigns.
 - Chair of the Board of Studies/Graduate School Board and Head of Department: Who will work in partnership with the Department Representative to improve learning and teaching in the Department.
 - YUSU/GSA Student Engagement Team: Who are responsible for supporting the Department Representative in the role throughout the year, providing help, advice and training.

Skills

- In order to fulfil the role, the following skills and experience will be needed:
 - Be passionate about the department and keen to be actively involved in its activities.
 - Be able to communicate and motivate confidently and effectively, but also receptive and a good listener.
 - Be able to work respectfully, confidently, tactfully and without bias.

- The skills and benefits gained:
 - Playing a critical role in making the department better for students
 - Development of support and motivational skills when providing leadership to the Course Representatives
 - Improvement of communication, public speaking, interpersonal, and team working skills
 - Increase employability
 - Gain in-depth knowledge and understanding of the University and Union
 - Be in a position to bid for a campaigns fund to fund projects and events to make the University better for students

Time Commitment

Approximately 1 hour per week average during term time.