

Regent College London

Student Representative Handbook

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1. Introduction

Congratulations on being elected a Student Representative at Regent College London (RCL). Being a Student Representative can be, alongside your studies, a demanding yet very rewarding role. Student Representatives tend to stand out amongst their peers as leaders and individuals that can be relied upon and to act as spokespeople.

Regent College London depends on the relationships that it has with its Student Representatives to aid the communication flow between senior management, academic staff and the wider student body in order to enhance the overall student experience. This works both ways. Student Representatives are asked to inform the College of issues and concerns that the student community faces (as well as providing feedback on the positives things) and vice versa. Staff at Regent College London will endeavour to disseminate information back to the student population through Student Representatives and other communication routes such as Regent Connect and Regent Portal. Constant development of the communication channels between senior management, academic staff and students is critical to RCL and the realisation of its desire to provide all its students with the best possible learning experience. RCL aims to continually enhance the student learning experience as a result of your input and full participation.

Lastly, we would like to welcome you to your role as a Student Representative of RCL and wish you all the best with your new responsibilities and duties. We recognise that a handbook can never be definitive in the advice and guidance that it offers. If you have any questions or queries or simply need some advice please don't hesitate to contact a Student Support and Welfare Officer.

2. Student Representative System and Appointment

At the beginning of each academic year or term the Student Support Officer working with Cohort Leaders, Programme Leaders and key administrative staff will organise and run classroom-based elections for student representatives. RCL has adopted an approach where there are two student representatives for each cohort of students.

Once Student Representatives have been elected we would like to have a photograph of each representative, College email address for contact and short biography so that these can be posted at appropriate places at the College. This will help ensure that all students will know who their Student Representatives are.

3. Benefits of being a Student Representative

There are many tangible benefits of being a Student Representative and looking after the interests of students on your course and/or cohort/student group. You may represent student views in formal venues such as at meetings of Academic Board and Course/Programme Board, which take place a number of times a year. First and foremost Student Representatives will enhance their ability with key transferable skills as they undertake their role. Transferable skills are highly attractive to future employers. These skills include:

- Communication (written and verbal)
- Presentation and public speaking skills
- Time Management
- Teamwork

- Negotiation
- Networking
- Organisation and planning

All of this looks great on a CV and could realistically give you a head start over competition when applying for jobs in the future.

Ultimately, the role of a Student Representative offers you a sense of achievement resulting from being central to representing the views of students to senior management, formal committees or boards, and academic and administrative staff at RCL. The role also promotes your own self-development and helps you understand more about how a higher education organisation works.

4. Role and Responsibilities of Student Representatives

As mentioned previously, one of the most important tasks of Student Representatives is to communicate any issues and concerns of your fellow students to staff at the College and to decision-making committees, such as Academic Board. Raising an issue or concern will result in discussion of the matter, an action formulated and agreed to address or resolve the concern. It is the responsibility of staff at RCL to report back to you and the student body concerning actions taken to help resolve a matter that has been raised. It must be remembered that it is not always possible to resolve issues fully and to your satisfaction every time, for example, resource constraints may mean that not everything you would like to see can be achieved.

Your role and responsibilities typically span a broad range of matters from resource issues and the quality of teaching to social events.

Key tasks of the Student Representatives include:

1. Proactively aiding the continual improvement of the learning environment at the College by attending and contributing to discussions at Academic Board, Course/Programme Board and Student Representative Committee meetings
2. Gaining and providing feedback of the views of all the students that you represent.
3. Attending meetings of all Student Representatives that take place once each semester
4. Contributing to the development of the student section of the Course Quality Monitoring Report for your course.
5. Identify good practice and issues that affect the student experience.
6. Ensuring that you are representing views of other students and not just your own view on matters to do with the learning and social experience at Regent College London.
7. Representing students at external meetings with the Quality Assurance Agency, Pearson (HND students) and our University partners.

5. Briefing and Training for Student Representatives

The Student Support and Welfare Manager and a member of the Student Support team will provide briefing and training on the role of the student representative and how to effectively represent students. The following areas related to RCL should be covered in your training sessions:

- Key student-facing policies and procedures from the Quality Manual, including Attendance Policy, Extenuating Circumstances Policy and procedure, Complaints Policy and procedure, Academic Appeals Policy and procedure, Academic Good Practice and how to avoid Plagiarism, Prevent Policy, Student Pastoral Care Policy, Equality and Diversity Policy, Freedom of Speech Code of Practice
- Management and committee structures. Committees and Boards with students as full members: Academic Board, Course/Programme Board, Equality & Diversity Monitoring Group, Student Representative Committee, Quality Committee.
Committees and boards that do not have student membership: Assessment Board, Senior Leadership Team Meeting, Finance Meeting.
- Key external organisations: Pearson (HND) and University partners (Foundation, degree and top-up programmes), the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), Office for Students (OfS), Department for Education (DfE), Student Finance.

To help you to fulfil your role effectively the following areas of training will be provided:

- The role of the student representative and methods for finding out and representing views of students
- How to represent and communicate with the student body being represented
- Hints and tips about public speaking and communication techniques
- Effective contribution to formal committee and board meetings

6. Some Guidelines

Student Representatives should consult with their wider student group regarding issues and problems that have arisen concerning academic and learning experience matters. These issues should first be taken to the Student Support and Welfare Manager or a member of the Student Support team, where a solution can be sought. If a matter is more urgent and cannot wait until the next meeting of the Academic Board you should meet with the Student Support and Welfare Manager. Attempts will be made to sort the matter out as quickly as possible.

In the case of problems that are more profound and need the attention of senior management, the issues should be relayed to the Programme Leader/Director of Studies or Academic Dean or, in their absence, the Principal.

Wherever possible, an informal solution should be explored prior to an issue being brought to a committee meeting. This can be informally discussed, depending on the nature of the issue, with your Cohort Leader, Programme Leader/Director of Studies, Student Support and Welfare Manager or Academic Dean.

7. A Guide to Committees and Boards at Regent College London

7.1 Academic Board

Academic Board is the most senior board in the College and deals with all aspects of academic and learning experience matters. It is chaired by the Principal of RCL and normally meets three times a year. Academic Board deals with matters at the level of the College, which include such items as academic standards, course quality monitoring reports, teaching and learning strategy, assessment strategy, policies and procedures relating to academic matters and learning resources strategy.

A maximum of two Student Representatives from each campus are members of Academic Board. Student Representatives are entitled to raise issues and concerns about any aspect of the general learning environment at RCL. It is hoped that issues and concerns raised by students are addressed informally and do not need to be raised at Academic Board. For a matter to be raised by a Student Representative at Academic Board may mean that it has not been resolved to the satisfaction of students by informal means or that it is a College-wide matter that students wish to raise at the highest level.

A typical agenda for Academic Board should normally include a list of those attending, apologies, minutes and resulting actions from the previous meeting and any other agenda items suggested by members of the board.

In preparation for a formal meeting, such as Academic Board or Course/Programme Board, you should make sure that you:

- consult with the students that you represent, and have noted the issues and concerns, if there are any, that they wish to raise. Perhaps this is best done at the end of a teaching session with permission of the lecturer
- organise your thoughts regarding the matters that are important to your fellow students. Think about the conclusion you would like the committee should reach and how you are able to influence the decision making process.
- plan your time effectively in preparation of the meeting.
- know when the meeting is to take place, at what campus, time and room the meeting is to be held in

Before the meeting the minutes of the previous meeting of Academic Board will be circulated. Double check the minutes against your notes and ensure that nothing has been overlooked. Providing you are happy with the content of the minutes you will be able to report the outcome of the meeting and any resulting actions to the students you represent. This may be best done at the end of a teaching session to the group of students you represent.

7.2 Course Board

Course Board is a formal board that meets three or four times a year and reports to Academic Board. Course Board membership includes Student Representatives. It has oversight of the HND Business courses and considers a number of summary reports, such as Course Quality Monitoring reports, observation of teaching reports, and results of student feedback obtained through the student survey. Student Representatives have the opportunity of raising matters that they wish to bring to the attention of members of staff responsible for course management.

7.3 Programme Board

Programme Board is a formal board that meets three or four times a year and reports to Academic Board. Programme Board membership includes Student Representatives. It has oversight of the University accredited programmes and considers a number of summary reports, such as Course Quality Monitoring reports, observation of teaching reports, and results of student feedback obtained through the student survey. Student Representatives have the opportunity of raising matters that they wish to bring to the attention of members of staff responsible for course management.

7.4 Senior Leadership Team Meeting (SMT)

The Senior Leadership Team meeting takes place on a monthly basis. Its purpose is to ensure that the College is operating properly and in accordance with the requirements of Pearson (the HND awarding body). Our University partners and the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education. The membership includes: Principal, Academic Dean, Cohort Leaders, Directors of Studies/Programme Leaders, Head of Academic Standards & Quality Enhancement, Finance Controller, Human Resources Manager, Head of Library & Learning Resources, and Head of Admissions, Marketing & University Partnerships. Student Representatives are not members of the Senior Leadership Team. However, matters raised by Student Representatives both at the regular termly Student Representative Committee meeting, Course Board, Programme Board, Academic Board and at other times by both Student Representatives and students more widely are considered and actions taken to resolve matters.

8. Student Representative Committee meetings

The Student Representative Committee meets on a termly basis and consists of all Cohort Student Representatives. There are two Student Representatives for each cohort. The role of Student Representatives on this Committee is to:

- seek views about the role of the Student Representative and how you could be supported in your role
- feedback issues raised by class Student Representatives and other students who wish matters to be brought to the attention of the College management staff
- up-date you on any matters related to the College as a whole
- have an open discussion about how the operation of the college could be further enhanced
- discuss social events and activities that you would like to see happen

These meetings will not have formal minutes taken, however, notes of views expressed, ideas for enhancement of the student experience and suggestions for social events will be recorded. The notes of these meetings will be considered at a subsequent meeting of the Course Board and Academic Board. College Higher Education Management Meeting. Meetings take place on a termly basis and may include the Principal, Academic Dean, Head of Academic Standards & Quality Enhancement, Directors of Studies/Programme Leaders and Cohort Leaders.

9. A brief word of Warning

Student Representatives should not get involved with advising other students on personal matters or individual grievances, since, if the advice is later deemed to be unhelpful, wrong or seen to have exacerbated a situation, complaints could be raised against the Student Representative. In these circumstances, or if in any doubt, please make students aware that the Student Support Officers are here to help. Where personal or sensitive issues are a cause for concern RCL can advise or offer guidance on a one-to-one basis.

10. Enjoy the role of Student Representative

All of the staff at Regent College London hope you enjoy the role of being a Student Representative. It is an important role and one that is crucial to ensuring that all students have a 'voice' within the college. The role is challenging and demanding and requires that you give time to being an effective representative. Through you, students are listened to and wherever possible action taken to further enhance your learning experience whilst studying at Regent College London.

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