

**GUIDES 2010/11**

**eusa**  
Edinburgh University  
Students' Association



**EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION**  
**CLASS REP GUIDE**



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**By Students.  
For Students.**



# WELCOME

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It's my job to ensure that your academic needs and concerns are forcefully represented across the university. But even as a full-time officer, I'll never spot every one of the areas which can be improved to better your experience of studying at the University of Edinburgh. That's why your role is absolutely crucial.

Where there aren't enough copies of a particular book in the library; where there are significant omissions in the content of your courses; or where your lecturers aren't offering you the full benefit of their academic expertise or teaching experience, it's your responsibility to listen to your classmates, pester course organisers and inform your school reps. Your Students' Association can only represent students when it knows what you'd like to see changed – and you are the driving force behind that.

To help you, we've secured the help of SPARQS (Student Participation in Quality Scotland) to provide training sessions during October and February for you to learn more about your role, meet other class reps, and go away better equipped to build strong productive channels of communication between staff, students and the Students' Association. Please sign up for one of these opportunities at [www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/voice/representation/classreps/training](http://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/voice/representation/classreps/training)

Thank you for volunteering as a class representative. Your rewards throughout the year will, I hope, be the vital changes you effect in the academic experience of your class and not to mention the personal skills gained from the training opportunity and the network you will create. If you do have any questions or concerns, please get in touch by emailing me at [vpaa@eusa.ed.ac.uk](mailto:vpaa@eusa.ed.ac.uk) or popping by the EUSA Office at Potterrow.

Good luck for the year ahead.

Stevie Wise  
**Vice-President Academic Affairs 2010/11**

## WHAT IS A CLASS REP?

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Class reps are the official representatives of a class or year group. As a class rep you are the one who can create change and improve your course for you and your classmates. You can do this by hearing from your classmates, attending meetings and representing their views.

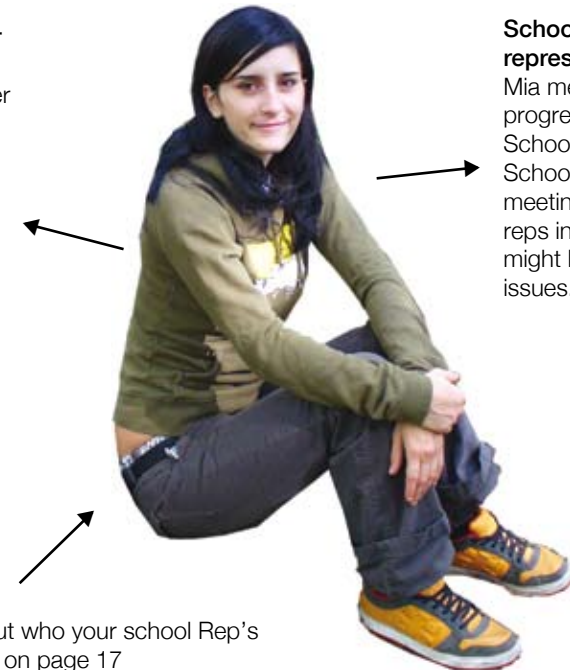
**Mia**, a Class Rep for Economics 1 receives emails from some of her classmates that they do not find the 1st year challenging and interesting enough. She uses her mailing list to email all students in Economics 1 to see how widespread this is and finds 60% say it is not challenging enough and 40% say it is too difficult.

### Course Organiser

Diane shares this information with her Course Organiser who finds ways to include more advanced and interesting material in the course for those who can manage it.

### School representative

Mia mentions this progress to her School Rep in the School Council meeting – as other reps in the school might have similar issues.



You can find out who your school Rep's e-mail address on page 17

# YOUR ROLE

**Your role involves gathering views, issues and suggestions from your classmates and updating the class on any progress you have made.**

## How?

- Use different ways to reach out to your classmates and be available for them to contact you.
- Ensure you're gathering a balanced selection of students' views – not just your own and a friend's!
- Don't forget to report back to them about progress you have made.

**Represent student views to your Course Organiser, department or subject area**

## How?

- Raise issues with your Course Organiser in person or by email when they arise.
- Attend and participate in Staff Student Liaison Committee meetings.
- Attend and actively contribute to departmental meetings, or any other meetings to which you are invited.

**Represent issues to your School Rep (particularly issues you think might be school-wide)**

## How?

- Email or speak to them about issues and respond to their requests for info. School Rep email addresses are at the back of the guide.
- Attend their School Council meetings if they hold them.
- Come along to the Students' Association fortnightly academic meetings – Teaching and Learning and Academic Services – to help direct the work of the Students' Association policies.

Classmates may approach you with an individual or personal issue – they may for example be unhappy about a mark they got or might be struggling because of personal difficulties.

In these cases, refer students on to their Director of Studies and to the Advice Place – who offer individual academic advice for students (e.g. university appeals process, complaints etc).

If you have any ideas about how the Class Rep system itself can be more effective – and how courses could better seek and incorporate student views – let your Course Organiser and School rep know!

# COMMUNICATE

The key to being a successful Class Rep is effective communication – with your peers on your course, with your Course Organiser and with your School Reps.

## TALK

Ask your lecturer if you can introduce yourself at the start of a lecture. Do a quick 'shout-out' in a lecture before you have a student-staff liaison committee (SSLC) to remind everyone to speak to you about any issues they are having. Speak to classmates informally and in tutorials too as sometimes some of the biggest issues can come out over a coffee!

## EMAIL

Ask admin staff in your school or department for a mailing list of all the students you represent or ask them to forward emails on for you. A quick email to introduce yourself at the start of the year will provide your classmates with an easy method of contacting you if issues arise. Email can be a very quick and easy method of communication with your Course Organiser too.

## ADVERTISE

Ask your school or department office to pin up your name, photo and contact details on their notice board.

## WEB

You can make yourself and your contact details known to classmates on whichever web tools are used by the course or group you represent – whether this is a site on the School website, a WebCT message board, wiki or you could also create your own facebook group to use as a discussion forum.

Unlike an informal chat e-mails can serve as a useful record to look back at later. Why not follow up an informal communication with a reminder email.



## WHAT CAN YOU ACHIEVE?

Below are some ideas of what other class reps have done in the past and what you can do in your role as class rep.

- Improve the availability of reading materials for your course
- Suggest a social event or trip for staff and students
- Bring a paper to a School committee requesting exam scripts are released for Honours years, working together with your school reps and/or VPAA to make this happen
- Help set up a peer-support or 'buddy' system in your subject area
- Input into the way a course is redesigned by giving your views on the content and structure
- Get the heat turned down in a boiling computing lab
- Encourage lecturers to use innovative teaching methods – videoing lectures, making more use of WebCT, using different assessments or using remote control 'clickers' in lectures to make them more interactive



Remember that success as a representative isn't measured by the number of meetings you attend – it's about what you do to help improve the student experience.

## GAINING SKILLS & EXPERIENCE

You can get a lot out of being a Class Rep; and generally the more you put in the more you'll get out of it. Just some of the skills and experience you can gain:

- Participation in meetings
- Communication skills
- Practice in assertiveness
- Practice in negotiation
- Public speaking skills
- Knowledge of the workings of the University

For those Class Reps who are motivated to get more involved in academic representation, there is also the opportunity to influence the work of the Students' Representative Council by feeding ideas into academic sub-committees and helping run academic campaigns.

As an active class rep, you can influence University policy and help make the Class Rep system more efficient. If you are proactive and achieve change as a Class Rep this looks great on your CV, and shows that you've done more than just a degree at University.

### TIP

Keep a record of the training you have done and examples of how you are gaining these skills as this could be handy for use on your CV or in job interviews.



# GETTING STARTED

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When you first become a Class Rep it's easy to have no idea where to start or what to do. Below is a to-do list to get you started:

## 1. INTRODUCE YOURSELF

Your Course Organiser, your classmates, and School Reps need to know who you are. Use some of the methods highlighted in the 'Communicate' section above to let them know how to contact you.

## 2. BOOK YOURSELF A TRAINING SESSION

The Students' Association provide a number of training sessions for new class reps during October and February. They are held both at Kings Buildings and Teviot and are fun and interactive – as well as a great way of getting to know fellow class reps and other student representatives.

To book a session visit [www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/voice/representation/classreps/training](http://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/voice/representation/classreps/training). If you have any questions feel free to get in touch by e-mailing [class.reps@eusa.ed.ac.uk](mailto:class.reps@eusa.ed.ac.uk) or calling 0131 650 2656.

## 3. JOIN EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY CLASS REPS FACEBOOK PAGE

Check who your School Rep is (e-mail addresses are at the back of this guide), and take a look at some of the resources available for reps. If you've got ideas for something you'd like featured or reported, just let your School Rep know using the online contact form or the address at the back of this guide.

Take a look on The Course Reviewer ([www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/reviewer](http://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/reviewer)) to find out if any reviews were submitted last year for the courses that you are representing. This may

# GETTING STARTED

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give you a flavour of student opinions (but bear in mind course structure and delivery might have changed since last year).

Find out what issues have come up on your course in the past. Check the school/department website for past Student-Staff Liaison Committee minutes, or ask administrators in the school/department office for these.



# KEY TERMS

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## STAFF STUDENT LIAISON COMMITTEE (SSLC)

A meeting attended by Class Reps and academic staff from the subject-area or School. While not all parts of the University call their meetings SSLCs and some have different formats, these meetings are always for students to raise issues and suggest recommendations to improve their courses.

## EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION (EUSA)

All students at Edinburgh University are members of the Students' Association. It represents your views to the University, local community and government through the Students' Representative Council (SRC) and provides services such as the Advice Place, as well as bars, cafes and shops.

## SCHOOL COUNCIL

A combination of Class Reps, School Reps and ordinary students. This is a forum for students to share their experiences and decide how to take issues forward in their School. These meetings are arranged by school reps.

## SCHOOL

The University is organised in 21 different Schools and each School has two elected School Reps (with the exception of Medicine where the two SRC reps represent students on the MBChB course rather than mapping directly on to a school).

## SCHOOL REPS

Elected to represent students on school-wide issues. They sit on Students' Representative Council and School-wide committees and hold School Council meetings. Key contacts for Class Reps – contact them via contact forms on the EUSA website or using the email addresses at the back of this book.

# KEY TERMS

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## COURSE ORGANISER

A member of academic staff who co-ordinates the course. He/she is the best person for students to liaise with regarding issues relating to your course.

## ACADEMIC SERVICES & TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMITTEES

The Students' Association has two academic meetings each fortnight:

### Academic Services Committee

Discusses student perception and experience of physical teaching resources - libraries, lecture theatres, computing labs, cafes etc and ideas for improving services at the university.

### Teaching and Learning Committee

Discusses student experience of teaching and learning at the university, ideas for improved lectures and tutorials etc.

School Reps go along to these meetings but Class Reps can also attend. Check [www.eusa.ed.ac.uk](http://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk) for meeting times or call 0131 650 2656.

## VICE-PRESIDENT ACADEMIC AFFAIRS (VPAA)

The VPAA is a full-time student officer responsible for representing students on University-wide committees and initiating University-wide campaigns. You will hear from the VPAA from time to time throughout the year by email to find out if you want to get involved in campaigns, suggest topics for her to work on during her year in office etc. Email Stevie at [vpaa@eusa.ed.ac.uk](mailto:vpaa@eusa.ed.ac.uk) or call and ask to speak to her on 0131 650 2656.

## THE ADVICE PLACE

A confidential and professional service run by the Students' Association. They provide advice and information on everything from housing, finances, sexual health, to individual support for students seeking to lodge academic appeals.



## EUSA HELP & RESOURCES

<p><b>EUSA Website</b> School Council web pages; information on SRC sub-committees and campaigns; class rep resources</p>	<p><a href="http://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/representation">www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/representation</a></p>
<p><b>Vice-President Academic Affairs</b> For any info about campaigns, how to get involved in the Students' Association.</p>	<p><a href="mailto:vpaa@eusa.ed.ac.uk">vpaa@eusa.ed.ac.uk</a> 0131 650 2656 or ask to speak to Stevie at EUSA Office Reception (Potterrow).</p>
<p><b>EUSA Staff</b> For any questions about training and support; for class rep posters; and for further information.</p>	<p><a href="mailto:class.reps@eusa.ed.ac.uk">class.reps@eusa.ed.ac.uk</a> 0131 650 2656. Ask to speak to Rachael King.</p>
<p><b>The Advice Place</b> Useful for referring students on to. There are offices at Potterrow, Kings Buildings and Moray House.</p>	<p><a href="mailto:potterrow.advice@eusa.ed.ac.uk">potterrow.advice@eusa.ed.ac.uk</a> 0131 650 9225</p>



### SCHOOL REP EMAIL CONTACT

**Contact your School Rep** to pass on issues related to the whole school or to get information about your School Council meetings. Find School Council websites

## KEY CONTACTS

at: [www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/schools](http://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/schools). Email addresses are below (emails sent to these addresses will go to both reps) -

### College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Arts, Culture & the Environment: [ACE.reps@eusa.ed.ac.uk](mailto:ACE.reps@eusa.ed.ac.uk)  
 Divinity: [Divinity.reps@eusa.ed.ac.uk](mailto:Divinity.reps@eusa.ed.ac.uk)  
 Business School: [business@eusa.ed.ac.uk](mailto:business@eusa.ed.ac.uk)  
 Economics: [economics@eusa.ed.ac.uk](mailto:economics@eusa.ed.ac.uk)  
 Education: [Education.reps@eusa.ed.ac.uk](mailto:Education.reps@eusa.ed.ac.uk)  
 History, Classics & Archaeology: [HCA.reps@eusa.ed.ac.uk](mailto:HCA.reps@eusa.ed.ac.uk)  
 Law: [Law.reps@eusa.ed.ac.uk](mailto:Law.reps@eusa.ed.ac.uk)  
 Literature, Languages & Cultures: [LLC.reps@eusa.ed.ac.uk](mailto:LLC.reps@eusa.ed.ac.uk)  
 Health in Social Science: [Health.reps@eusa.ed.ac.uk](mailto:Health.reps@eusa.ed.ac.uk)  
 Philosophy, Psychology & Language Sciences: [PPLS.reps@eusa.ed.ac.uk](mailto:PPLS.reps@eusa.ed.ac.uk)  
 Social & Political Science: [SPS.reps@eusa.ed.ac.uk](mailto:SPS.reps@eusa.ed.ac.uk)

### College of Science and Engineering

Biological Sciences: [BioSci.reps@eusa.ed.ac.uk](mailto:BioSci.reps@eusa.ed.ac.uk)  
 Chemistry: [Chemistry.reps@eusa.ed.ac.uk](mailto:Chemistry.reps@eusa.ed.ac.uk)  
 GeoSciences: [GeoSci.reps@eusa.ed.ac.uk](mailto:GeoSci.reps@eusa.ed.ac.uk)  
 Engineering & Electronics: [EngElec.reps@eusa.ed.ac.uk](mailto:EngElec.reps@eusa.ed.ac.uk)  
 Informatics: [Informatics.reps@eusa.ed.ac.uk](mailto:Informatics.reps@eusa.ed.ac.uk)  
 Mathematics: [Mathematics.reps@eusa.ed.ac.uk](mailto:Mathematics.reps@eusa.ed.ac.uk)  
 Physics and Astronomy: [Physics.reps@eusa.ed.ac.uk](mailto:Physics.reps@eusa.ed.ac.uk)

### College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine

Medical Schools: [Medic.reps@eusa.ed.ac.uk](mailto:Medic.reps@eusa.ed.ac.uk)  
 Veterinary Medicine: [Vet.reps@eusa.ed.ac.uk](mailto:Vet.reps@eusa.ed.ac.uk)



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