



# **Enhancing Your Course Rep Activities: A Self-Assessment Tool**

## Introduction

sparqs is committed to supporting institutions to improve their student engagement activities and mechanisms. Course reps play a fundamental role within student engagement and ultimately, the enhancement agenda.

We should rightly be proud that we have comprehensive training and support for reps in Scotland but we believe that institutions and associations are now ready to further develop their systems, procedures, policies and activities to ensure that reps play an integral part of the enhancement agenda. To that end we have developed the *Enhancing Your Course Rep Activities* series to support you in reviewing your course rep systems.

The series includes:

- Mapping Your Rep Activities Session Plan - the session helps you gather information on the strengths and weaknesses of the current system as well as any opportunities and threats. It also helps you define what a course rep does at your institution, what they have to do to be effective in their role and who is responsible for what.
- A Self-Assessment Tool - this tool breaks down the different policies and activities associated with course reps and provides a structure to identify areas for enhancement.

We recommend you use the series in the following way:

1. Set up a working group to oversee the process. The group should consist of a student officer, a course rep, a senior member of institutional staff and a staff member who is responsible for supporting the rep system.
2. Run the *Mapping Your Course Rep Activities Session* using the session plan. This can be done in two ways:
  - a. Run one session inviting a mixed group of stakeholders, such as course reps, staff who sit of staff-student liaison committees (or equivalents), officers, etc.
  - b. Run a number of sessions inviting a particular stakeholder group to each one.
3. Use the information gathered to assess how effective the course rep system is. This information should be recorded in the Self-Assessment Tool.
4. Identify areas of good practice. sparqs wants to hear what is working well across Scotland so we can share this with others.
5. Identify areas for enhancement. Your sparqs consultant can provide you with some ideas on how to improve and where to find examples of good practice.

Whilst this process can be undertaken by any institution, sparqs offers a consultancy service that provides a critical friend throughout the process which others have found useful. For more information on how we can support you please email [admin@sparqs.ac.uk](mailto:admin@sparqs.ac.uk) or call 0131 622 6599.

## How to use this document

When talking about course rep activities there is a lot to consider. To help you examine the effectiveness of your rep system we have broken it down into seven different sections. They are:

- Understanding the rep role and rep system.
- Election process.
- Preparing reps for their role.
- Ongoing support and development.
- Recognition and reward.
- Policies and procedures.
- Measuring impact.

Each section is then further broken down into different elements, for example under 'Election Process' the elements include 'There is a fair and transparent election process' and 'Staff understand the election process' amongst others.

For each element you are asked to assess its effectiveness and qualify this by stating how you know it to be true. To begin to assess how you can improve you need to know where you are starting from. Quantitative and qualitative data is invaluable here. This may be collected through surveys, focus groups, course rep meetings, staff meetings, etc.

You are then asked how you can improve each element. You may not need to, in which case please let sparqs know of your good practice! If you do we would obviously encourage you to involve reps in the whole process (there is space for you to add how they are going to be involved). Your sparqs contact can also provide you with ideas and examples of good practice from around the sector.

## Understanding the rep role and rep system

Feature	Effectiveness	How do you know this?	How can it be improved?	How are reps involved?	Deadline
Students understand the rep role and rep system.					
Staff understand the rep role and rep system.					

## Election process

Feature	Effectiveness	How do you know this?	How can it be improved?	How are reps involved?	Deadline
There is a fair and transparent election process in place.					
Students understand the election process.					
Staff understand the election process.					
Rep elections are promoted and advertised across the institution.					
There is a clear process for recording and communicating contact details of elected reps to a central database.					

## Preparing reps for their role

Feature	Effectiveness	How do you know this?	How can it be improved?	How are reps involved?	Deadline
There is an induction process in place for reps each year.					
The majority of newly elected reps attend introductory training.					
Training is clearly advertised and promoted across campuses.					

## Ongoing support and development

Feature	Effectiveness	How do you know this?	How can it be improved?	How are reps involved?	Deadline
There is an identified staff member whose role is to support course reps.					
Students have access to a course rep handbook.					
There are development opportunities available to reps.					

## Recognition and reward

Feature	Effectiveness	How do you know this?	How can it be improved?	How are reps involved?	Deadline
There are attractive and worthwhile incentives advertised to attract reps / recognise their efforts and achievements.					
The efforts and achievements of reps are celebrated.					

## Policies and procedures

Feature	Effectiveness	How do you know this?	How can it be improved?	How are reps involved?	Deadline
There is a joint statement on the role of course reps between the institution and student association.					
There is a written document that sets out the institution and associations responsibilities in respect to the rep system.					
Reps feed into the institutions enhancement processes.					

## Measuring impact

Feature	Effectiveness	How do you know this?	How can it be improved?	How are reps involved?	Deadline
There is a process in place for measuring the impact of reps' work.					
Information on reps impact is communicated across the institution.					