

Imperial College Union
Representation Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Representation Policy sets out the rights and responsibilities of the Union, student representatives, relevant Union activity and individual members. It also sets out the method of administration of student representatives.
- 1.2. This policy binds the whole Union, but is aimed in particular at representatives, their constituencies and parts of the Union with responsibility for representatives.

2. Statement of Intent

- 2.1. The Union is committed under its Constitution to:
 - 2.1.1. Advance the education of its members and promote, without prejudice, their welfare at all times.
 - 2.1.2. Represent the needs and interests of its members to Imperial College and external bodies.
- 2.2. The Union furthers these aims with the provision of a network of academic and welfare representatives drawn from the Members of the Union, administered, trained and supported by the Union.
- 2.3. These obligations extend to the representation of all registered students of Imperial College, regardless of their membership of the Union.

3. Definitions

- 3.1. A '*representative*' is an individual, nominated from a larger group, who is responsible for conveying the views and experience of members of the group to a third party, and conveying information from a third party to members of the group.
 - 3.1.1. The use of the word *representative* throughout this document refers to both academic representatives and welfare representatives.
 - 3.1.2. The words *representative* and *rep* are interchangeable and carry the same meaning.
- 3.2. The word '*academic*' denotes a focus on the learning or research interests of a student, including wherever such interests may have an effect on the student's welfare.
- 3.3. The word '*welfare*' denotes a focus on the pastoral interests of a student, including wherever such interests may have an effect on the student's education.
- 3.4. The word '*student*' denotes a currently registered student of Imperial College, regardless of membership of the Union or additional occupations.
- 3.5. The word '*constituency*' denotes that group of students that a representative is bound to represent.

4. General Principles of Representation

Passed by Union Council
30 April 2013

- 4.1. The Union is committed to ensuring that all students have equal and effective access to representation, from as soon as possible after their enrolment until they cease to be registered.
- 4.2. A representative shall strive to represent the views and experiences of their constituency as accurately and fairly as possible.
- 4.3. A representative should take into account both the views and experiences of the majority and of the minority of their constituency. When required, they should express the full range of views.
- 4.4. A representative may express their personal view on a matter, but must not present their personal views as the views of their constituency.
- 4.5. A representative must maintain a constant dialogue between themselves and their constituency.
- 4.6. A representative must maintain transparency in their activities at all times.

5. Duties of Imperial College Union

- 5.1. The Union shall provide a safe environment, free from harassment and discrimination, for all students to express their views on academic and welfare matters (according to the Equal Opportunities Policy).
- 5.2. The Union shall strive to maintain a representation structure that suitably and dynamically reflects the structure of faculties, departments, programmes and research groups at Imperial College, and is acceptable to representatives, other students and academic staff.
- 5.3. The Union shall strive to fully populate the representation structure every academic year and following a position being vacated.
- 5.4. The Union shall provide funding for representative activities, subject to budgetary constraints. The funding is allocated by the Education & Representation Board, the Communities & Welfare Board and, ultimately, the Executive Committee, on which all students have direct or indirect representation.
- 5.5. The Union shall provide basic use of rooms within its premises for representative activities at no charge to them.
- 5.6. The Union shall provide resources, including computing, printing, photocopying, phone and fax services, though a charge may be made for these.

6. Duties of Representatives

- 6.1. Representatives are expected to comply with the Union Constitution and its Bye-Laws and policies.
- 6.2. Representatives are required to conduct themselves in a fair and democratic manner. They hold a responsibility not to discriminate among members of their constituency or unreasonably interfere with their learning.
- 6.3. Representatives are ambassadors for the Union and the College, and must conduct themselves in an appropriate manner, and not bring the Union or the College into disrepute.

Passed by Union Council
30 April 2013

6.4. No monetary charge shall be sought from students for representation. No representatives may solicit or receive financial or material gain in return for their activities, other than by the resolution of the Executive Committee.

7. Roles

7.1. An exhaustive list of positions is maintained on the Union website, which may be amended by the Deputy President (Education).

7.2. There are five categories of academic representative. These are as follows:

7.2.1. The President,

7.2.2. The Deputy President (Education),

7.2.3. The Constituent Union Academic Affairs Officers,¹

7.2.4. The Departmental Representatives,

7.2.5. The Year, Course, Section and Group Representatives.

7.3. There are six categories of welfare representative. These are as follows:

7.3.1. The President,

7.3.2. The Deputy President (Welfare),

7.3.3. The Union Welfare Officers

7.3.4. The Faculty Welfare Officers,

7.3.5. The Departmental Representatives,

7.3.6. The Year, Course, Section and Group Representatives,

8. Role descriptions

8.1. The duties of the President, Deputy President (Education) and Deputy President (Welfare), Constituent Union Academic Affairs Officers and Constituent Union Welfare Representatives are as detailed in the Union Bye-Laws.

8.2. All representatives are subject to Regulation Seven of the Constitution, and are liable for the implementation of disciplinary and complaints procedures therein following misconduct under the regulations in this policy or otherwise.

8.3. The **Departmental Representatives** shall:

8.3.1. Be the representative to the Union and the College for the students in their respective Department or Division.

8.3.2. Co-ordinate the activities of the other representatives in their Department or Division.

¹ In this document, Constituent Union Academic Affairs Officer (UG) and Faculty Academic and Welfare Officer (PG) are interchangeable terms. Some Constituent Unions may use other terms to define their AAOs.

Passed by Union Council
30 April 2013

- 8.3.3. Faithfully represent the views and experiences of the students in their Department or Division to the following and any other committees, institutions and associations:
 - 8.3.3.1. Their Faculty or School's Academic Affairs Committee
 - 8.3.3.2. The Staff-Student Committee of their department
- 8.3.4. Feed back all relevant decisions and information to students in their Department or Division.
- 8.3.5. Hold meetings of a committee known as the Departmental Representative's Committee at least twice per term with the Year, Course, Section or Group Representatives for that Department or Division.
- 8.3.6. Promote the activities of their departmental society as requested by the Chair.
- 8.3.7. Act as returning officer in the election of Year, Course, Section and Group Representatives as requested by the Deputy President (Education).
- 8.3.8. Submit termly reports detailing all activity in their capacity as a representative to the Faculty or School's Academic Affairs Committee.
- 8.3.9. Submit documentation as required by the Documents and Submissions Section of this policy.
- 8.4. The **Year, Course, Section and Group Representatives** shall:
 - 8.4.1. Be the representative to the Union and the College for the students in their respective constituency.
 - 8.4.2. Co-operate with the other representatives in their constituency.
 - 8.4.3. Faithfully represent the views and experiences of the students in their constituency to the following and any other committees, institutions and associations:
 - 8.4.3.1. Their Departmental Representative's Committee
 - 8.4.3.2. The Staff-Student Committee of their department
 - 8.4.4. Feed back all relevant decisions and information to students in their constituency.
 - 8.4.5. Promote the activities of their departmental society as requested by the Chair.
 - 8.4.6. Act as returning officer in the election of Year, Course, Section and Group Representatives as requested by the Deputy President (Education).
- 8.5. The Union Welfare Officers shall consider the entire student body of Imperial College to be their constituency.
- 8.6. The **Ethics & Environmental Officer** shall:
 - 8.6.1. Be responsible to the Deputy President (Welfare),
 - 8.6.2. Engage students in the environmental activity of the Union,
 - 8.6.3. Represent the views of students on environmental issues to the Communities and Welfare Board,

Passed by Union Council
30 April 2013

8.6.4. Liaise with the Environmental Society, and Environmental Representatives for Halls of Residence,

8.6.5. Liaise with the Operations and Commercial Service Managers of the Union

8.6.6. Be partially responsible for the maintenance and implementation of the Environmental Policy and any operational policies attached to it

8.6.7. Organise a termly fairtrade steering group.

8.6.8. Organise and support environmental awareness campaigns as appropriate to inform, engage and promote, relevant environmental issues to the student body.

8.6.9. Organise any conferences, summits or events related to student green activities.

8.7. The **International Officer** shall:

8.7.1. Be responsible to the Deputy President (Welfare),

8.7.2. Facilitate the engagement of students of all nationalities in Union activity,

8.7.3. Represent the views of students on international, cultural and ethnic issues to the Communities and Welfare Board,

8.7.4. Liaise with the Overseas Societies Committee and the Interfaith Officer.

8.7.5. Organise and support campaigns based on international issues and/or racial equality

8.7.6. Organise any conferences, summits or events to discuss the needs and issues facing international students.

8.8. The **Disabilities Officer** shall:

8.8.1. Be responsible to the Deputy President (Welfare),

8.8.2. Facilitate the engagement of students with all disabilities in Union activity,

8.8.3. Represent the views of students on disability issues to the Communities and Welfare Board,

8.8.4. Liaise with the Head of the Disability Advisory Service of Imperial College,

8.8.5. Organise and support campaigns on disability issues

8.8.6. Organise any conferences, summits or events to discuss the needs and issues facing disabled students.

8.9. The **LGBT Officer** shall:

8.9.1. Be responsible to the Deputy President (Welfare),

8.9.2. Facilitate the engagement of students of all sexual orientation in Union activity,

8.9.3. Represent the views of students on LGBT issues to the Communities and Welfare Board,

8.9.4. Liaise with Imperial 600, the LGBT network for Imperial College Staff,

Passed by Union Council
30 April 2013

8.9.5. Liaise with IQ,

8.9.6. Organise and support campaigns specifically related to LGBT issues

8.9.7. Liaise with IQ to organise LGBT History Month

8.9.8. Organise any conferences, summits or events to discuss the needs and issues facing LGBT students.

8.10. The **Gender Equality Officer** shall:

8.10.1. Be responsible to the Deputy President (Welfare),

8.10.2. Facilitate the engagement of students of all genders in Union activity,

8.10.3. Represent the views of students on gender equality issues to the Communities and Welfare Board,

8.10.4. Liaise with the Women in Science, Engineering and Technology society,

8.10.5. Organise and support campaigns specifically related to gender equality

8.10.6. Organise any conferences, summits or events to discuss the issues facing gender equality.

8.11. The **Interfaith Officer** shall:

8.11.1. Be responsible to the Deputy President (Welfare),

8.11.2. Facilitate the engagement of students of all faiths in Union activity,

8.11.3. Represent the views of students on faith issues to the Communities and Welfare Board,

8.11.4. Liaise with the Chaplain of Imperial College,

8.11.5. Liaise with Imperial College Union's faith societies and encourage them to have an Interfaith representative on their committee,

8.11.6. Organise and support campaigns specifically related to faith issues

8.11.7. To form and chair an Interfaith Committee, the membership of which shall include one Interfaith Representative from the faith societies, who have Interfaith Representatives.

8.11.8. To maintain a mailing list of all faith society Chairs for us in communicating upcoming events, issues and dates of particular importance to different faiths.

8.11.9. Organise any conferences, summits or events to discuss interfaith issues.

8.12. The **BME Officer** shall:

8.12.1. Be responsible to the Deputy President (Welfare),

8.12.2. Facilitate the engagement of all BME students in Union activity,

8.12.3. Represent the views of students on BME issues to the Communities and Welfare Board,

Passed by Union Council
30 April 2013

8.12.4. Organise and support campaigns specifically related to BME issues

8.12.5. Organise any conferences, summits or events to discuss the needs and issues facing BME students.

8.13. The **Campaigns Officer** shall:

8.13.1. Be responsible to the Deputy President (Welfare),

8.13.2. Organise and support campaigns approved by the Communities and Welfare Board and Union Council.

8.13.3. Organise any conferences, summits or events to discuss the needs and issues facing students as a result of these campaigns.

9. Structure

9.1. The Union operates a chain of responsibility for all matters relating to academic representation. This is as follows:

9.1.1. The President,

9.1.2. the Deputy President (Education),

9.1.3. the Constituent Union Academic Affairs Officer,

9.1.4. the Departmental Representative,

9.1.5. the Year Representative in the case of undergraduates, the Course Representative in the case of taught postgraduates, or the Research Group or Section Representative in the case of research postgraduates.

9.2. The Union operates a similar chain of responsibility for all matters relating to welfare representation. This is as follows:

9.2.1. The President,

9.2.2. the Deputy President (Welfare),

9.2.3. the Union Welfare Officers

9.2.3. the Constituent Union Welfare Officer,

9.2.4. the Departmental Representative,

9.2.5. the Year Representative in the case of undergraduates, the Course Representative in the case of taught postgraduates, or the Research Group or Section Representative in the case of research postgraduates.

9.3. Individuals in the above sections are responsible to those above them in the list for the representation of students. Academic Affairs Officers and Constituent Union Welfare Officers are additionally responsible to their Constituent Union President.

9.4. Departmental Representatives and Year, Course, Section and Group Representatives shall attend all Staff-Student Committee Meetings held by their department.

9.5. Representatives-elect shall shadow the incumbent holder of the position at all remaining meetings that relate to the position, having gained permission from the chair of each committee.

Passed by Union Council
30 April 2013

9.6. The final meeting of the Departmental Representative's Committee, the Faculty or School's Academic Affairs Committee and the Education & Representation or Communities & Welfare Board shall be used by incumbent representatives to give a thorough briefing to representatives-elect concerning the events and developments of the past year.

9.7. Where representatives are unable to attend a meeting, they should send apologies to the chair of the committee as soon as this is known, and instead submit a brief written report.

10. Training and Forums for Academic Representatives

10.1. The Deputy President (Education), assisted by the Deputy President (Welfare) and Membership Services Team, shall hold training sessions for all academic representatives. Attendance is compulsory for all representatives, regardless of their previous experience.

10.2. There shall be one training session at the beginning of the year for UG reps, and one for PG reps.

10.3. This shall include welfare training for Department and Year, Course, Section and Group Representatives.

10.4. The Deputy President (Education) shall publicise the training sessions appropriately and provide resources such as handbooks for reference throughout the year.

10.5. There shall be at least one Education & Representation Board held each term.

10.6. The Deputy President (Education) is responsible for organising these Board meetings, and shall publicise them to all representatives at least four weeks before the date of the event.

10.7. The agenda for the forum shall be set by the Deputy President (Education) with assistance from the Membership Services Team. The agenda should promote discussion on topical issues relevant to learning.

11. Training for Faculty Welfare Representatives

11.1. The Deputy President (Welfare), assisted by the Membership Services Team, shall hold training sessions for all Constituent & Union Welfare Officers. Attendance is compulsory for all representatives, regardless of their previous experience.

11.2. The Constituent Unions are responsible for supporting the efforts of Academic Affairs Officers and Constituent Union Welfare Officers in their representative endeavours. The Communities & Welfare, Education & Representation Boards and Executive Committee shall allocate appropriate funds to Constituent Unions to this end. Members may also apply to the Board for funding for specific representative activity.

12. Recruitment

12.1. All academic representatives should normally be elected according to Minor Election Bye-Laws of the Constitution. Those in the constituency who are also Members of the Union may stand. All members of the constituency may vote.

12.2. The Deputy President (Education) is ultimately responsible for the population of the academic representative structure.

Passed by Union Council
30 April 2013

- 12.3. The Deputy President (Welfare) is ultimately responsible for the population of the Constituent Union Welfare Officer and Union Welfare Officer positions.
- 12.4. Subject to any other regulations, representatives may indefinitely stand for re-election.
- 12.5. The position of Departmental Representative may be held by up to two people, particularly for large constituencies. The Returning Officer should consult the outgoing holders of the position and departmental staff to determine if the election of two representatives is appropriate.
- 12.6. Any other representative position may be held by up to three people, particularly for large constituencies. The Returning Officer should consult the outgoing holders of the position and departmental staff to determine the appropriate number of representatives to elect.
- 12.7. Elections for all representatives are held when the Deputy President (Education) and President decide when it is most appropriate.
- 12.8. Year representative positions and taught postgraduate course representative positions must be filled as soon as possible after the start of the new academic year.
- 12.9. Representatives shall be elected per academic year. Their term of office shall last for up to one year, and cease on 31 July.
- 12.10. The Deputy President (Education) may delegate the recruitment of undergraduate Year Representatives to the undergraduate Departmental Representatives, who shall run elections appropriately and report the results to the Deputy President (Education) for central administration.
- 12.11. The Deputy President (Education) may delegate the recruitment of postgraduate Course Representatives and Research Section or Group Representatives to the postgraduate Academic Affairs Officers, who must negotiate with Directors of Postgraduate Studies to ensure that all positions are filled. Academic Affairs Officers shall then report the results to the Deputy President (Education) for central administration.
- 12.12. Union Welfare Officers shall be elected in the Summer Term by campus wide secret ballot.

13. Documentation, submissions and presentations

- 13.1. Departmental Representatives shall provide the following information to the Deputy President (Education) in a timely manner:
- 13.2. Undergraduates: A completed New Year Representatives form, specifying the personal details of the Year Representatives and the names of the personnel involved in chairing and clerking Staff-Student Committee meetings;
- 13.3. Postgraduates: A completed New Postgraduate Representatives form, specifying the personal details of the taught Course Representatives, all research Group or Section Representatives, and the names of the personnel involved in chairing and clerking Staff-Student Committee meetings;

Passed by Union Council
30 April 2013

- 13.4. The papers of all Staff-Student Committee meetings that have taken place in their department;
- 13.5. Brief details of any other communication between representatives and College staff.
- 13.6. The Deputy President (Education) shall store, electronically or otherwise, the details of all representatives for the year, assisted by other representatives or Union staff where necessary, and distribute them appropriately.
- 13.7. The Deputy President (Education) shall annually compile documents summarising the procedure and outcomes of Staff-Student Committee meetings that have taken place. They shall submit the document as a report to both the Education & Representation Board and College's Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee annually.
- 13.8. The Deputy President (Education) shall coordinate and display a presentation to College's Strategic Education Committee annually, as an opportunity to highlight serious concerns.
- 13.9. The Graduate Students' Association Chair shall submit regular reports of representative activity to meetings of the committees of both Graduate Schools as requested by the Directors of the Graduate Schools.
- 13.10. Undergraduate Academic Affairs Officers shall submit an annual report to the Faculty Teaching Committee for their faculty on their representative activity, when requested by the chair of the Committee.