

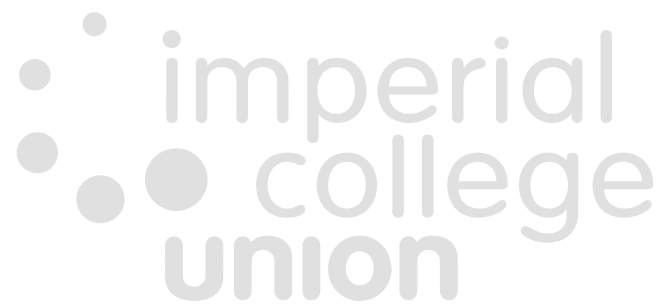


# REPRESENTATION NETWORKS

## Undergraduate & Postgraduate Representation Handbook



[imperialcollegeunion.org](http://imperialcollegeunion.org)



# Contents

- 4** **Welcome**
- 6** **The Representation Networks**
  - Undergraduate Representation
  - Postgraduate Representation
- 10** **Meetings**
- 12** **Feedback**
  - Collecting Feedback
  - Raising Feedback
  - Closing Feedback Loop
- 15** **Singposting**
- 16** **Frequently Asked Questions**
- 18** **Glossary of Terms**
- 19** **Usefull Contacts**

# Welcome

Congratulations on becoming a crucial part of the Representation Network at Imperial College Union! This is an excellent opportunity for you to empower yourself and those around you to create positive changes at the College.

Students are proud to study at Imperial, and without feedback from student representatives, they would not experience the world-class education they have today. Your role is to continue that journey and ensure that all students have the best possible time during their studies.

We know that being a rep is not always easy, and hope that this handy guide, as well as our in-person training, will support you in your role. However, if you need any support or guidance – the representation team at the Union are here to help you. Feel free to drop by and see us on the second floor of Beit, or send an email to [icu.representation@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:icu.representation@imperial.ac.uk).

Finally, we hope you have fun in this role! It's a fantastic opportunity to meet new people, develop skills and connections, and experience your course in a completely new way. We are proud to have you on board!

### **I'm Yi - Your Deputy President (Education)**

Andreea and I are super excited to be working with you this year – we've seen how much work reps can do and it is always really inspiring.

I'm an Earth Science and Engineering undergraduate and the previous Gender Equality Officer. As the Deputy President (Education), I will champion student representation at all levels, amplifying your voices and fostering inclusivity.

Your roles are crucial to providing your Department, Faculty, and College with feedback on the student experience, and without this feedback it would be impossible for us to improve. Being a rep isn't always easy, and we as a Union are here to support you.

If you have any questions or need any support in being effective in your role, please feel free to reach out – you can send me an email at [dpeducation@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:dpeducation@imperial.ac.uk), or get in touch with our Representation Team at [icu.representation@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:icu.representation@imperial.ac.uk) - or even just drop in to the office on Level 2 in the Union Building! Remember also to have fun in your role! Being a rep is immensely rewarding, and also gives you the chance to meet loads of new people, develop new skills and make new connections – make the most of it!

### **Yi - Deputy President (Education)**

Yi



### **I'm Andreea - Your Deputy President (Welfare)**

Thanks so much for volunteering your time to be a wellbeing rep – this is an incredibly important role that advocates for the wellbeing and student experience of your peers.

As Deputy President (Welfare), my goal is to support and represent the voices of all Imperial Students. In this, feedback gathered from you by Reps is crucial.

Some of the issues that are commonly brought forward by students regarding welfare include: workload, mitigating circumstances and the availability and accessibility of student support.

To advocate on these issues, it is important to advocate on both an individual level (by signposting students to our expert caseworkers in the Advice Service) and on a cohort level (by doing research and presenting reports at Student-Staff Committees/Forums).

Best of luck in your role this year! I hope you will find advocacy as rewarding as I have.

### **Andreea - Deputy President (Welfare)**

Andreea



# The Representations Networks

The Union's **Representation Network** is a body of **hundreds of academic and wellbeing student representatives** from across all Undergraduate and Postgraduate programmes and research groups at Imperial College.

Its aim is to **improve the academic and wellbeing experience** at Imperial by facilitating opportunities for students and departments to work together with the Union to address student feedback.

## **Representatives are responsible for:**

- collecting student views on issues
- raising feedback
- developing solutions
- closing the feedback loop
- signposting students

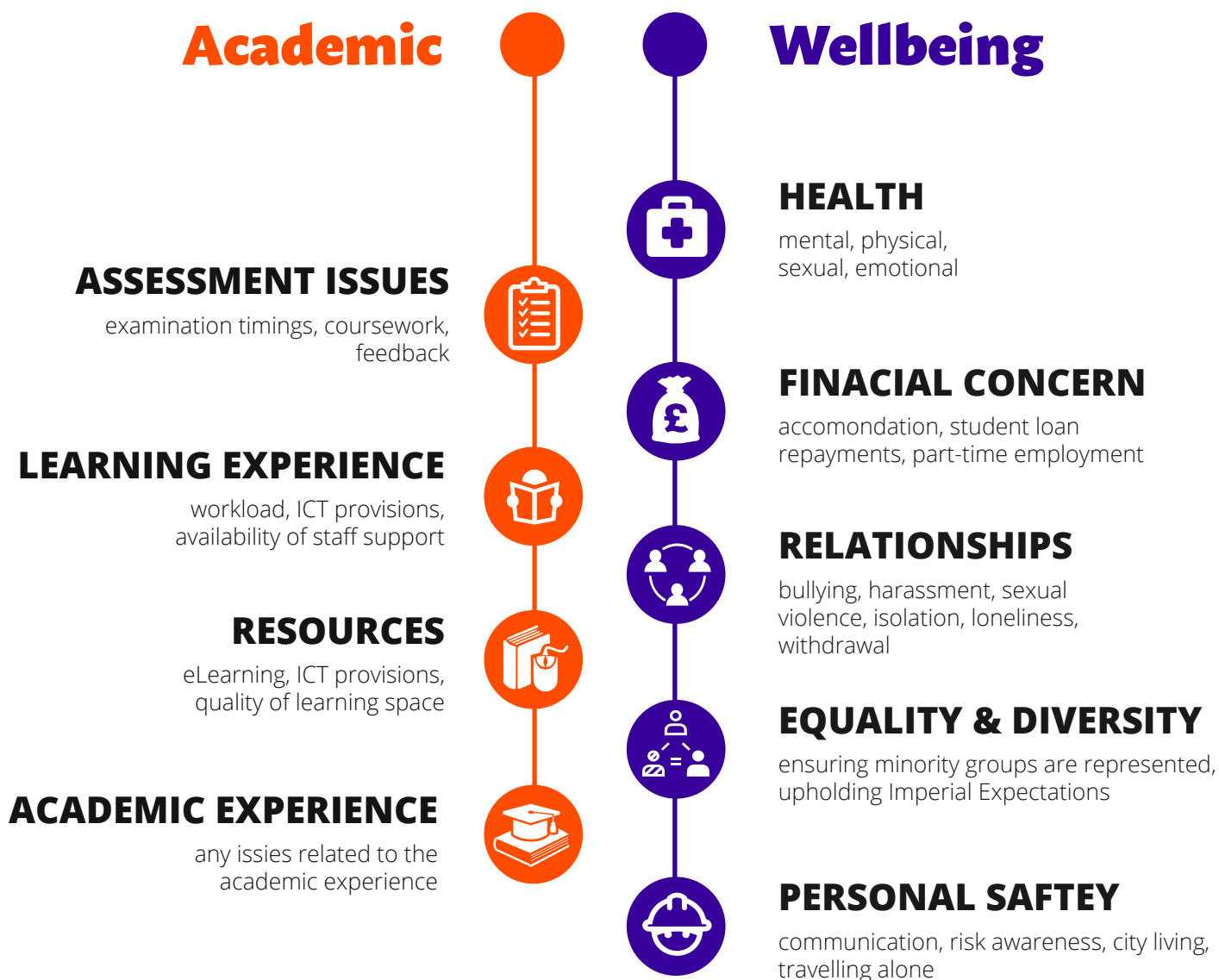
Having a network of trained student representatives ensures that feedback can be collected efficiently and accurately so that the student voice has an influence on College decision-making.



# The Representations Networks

## Undergraduate Representation

The Undergraduate Representation network is split into two different the streams, the Academic Representation network and the Wellbeing Representation network. The two Networks represent students at Imperial in different areas which are outlined in our Rep Pathways Diagram:

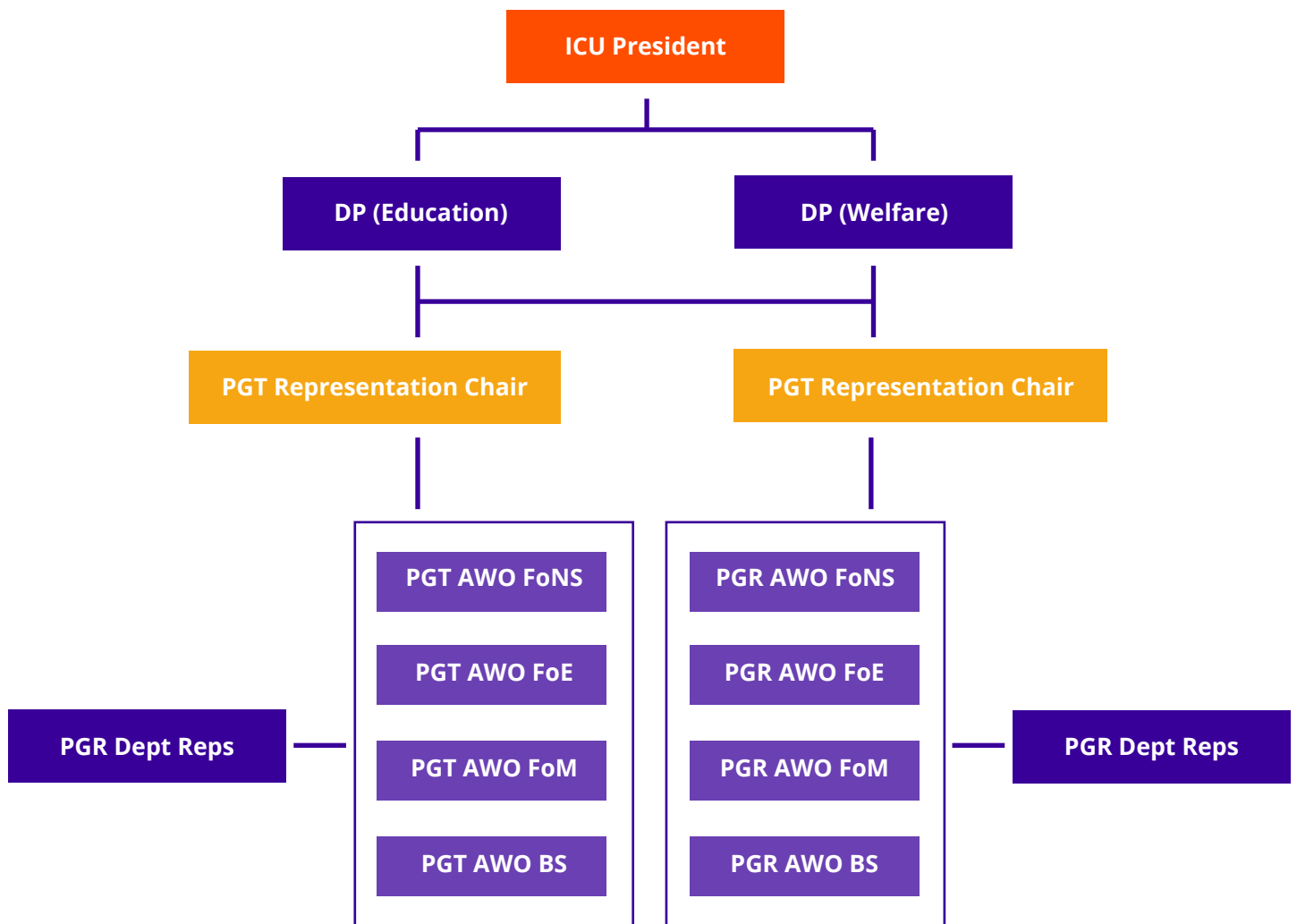


Both Academic and Wellbeing Reps will be expected to sit on student-staff committees, represent the voice of students within their cohort and be able to appropriately signpost students to appropriate internal and external support services. If it is apparent that the root of an issue raised by students is more relevant to the other network, reps should be feeding this information back to the relevant network.

# The Representations Networks

## Postgraduate Representation

The Postgraduate Representation network is split into Postgraduate Taught Representation and Postgraduate Research Representation. The Postgraduate Representation network represents all Postgraduate students with a Postgraduate Representation Chair for both Research and Taught overseeing the representation of students at all level, as demonstrated by this diagram:





# The Representation Networks

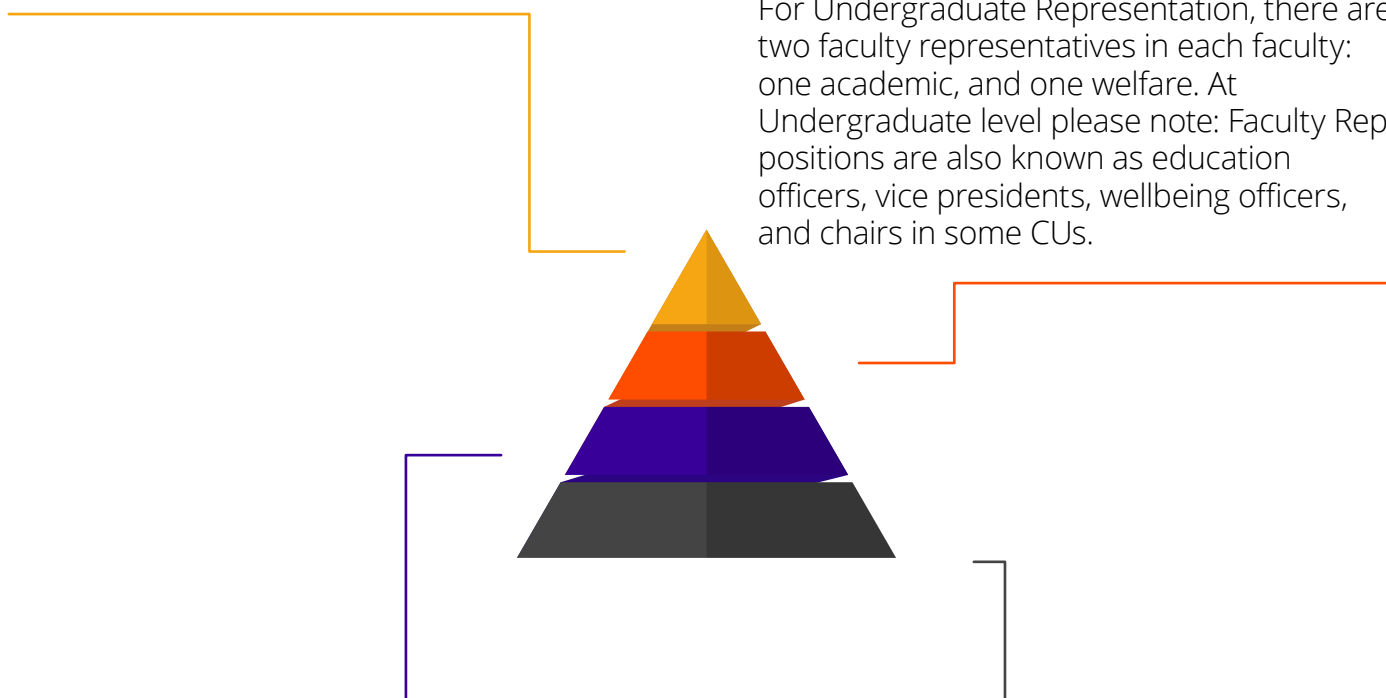
Within the Representation Network, there are 4 different levels of representation:

## Deputy President

Your Deputy Presidents are elected by students to improve the student experience at Imperial by representing your views to the College and running campaigns and projects on issues affecting Imperial students. Each Deputy President covers different areas of the student experience, so for academic issues, the Deputy President (Education) will be a key contact, and for wellbeing issues, this will be the Deputy President (Welfare).

## Faculty Representatives

Faculty Reps are the highest level of voluntary roles within the Representation Network. They represent all students in their faculty to senior staff and the Union by collating and raising feedback from department reps in their faculty. Faculty Reps lead and support Department Reps and develop the rep community. Academic and wellbeing representation is led by one rep (known as an Academic and Welfare Officer) for Research students and one for Taught students per faculty at Postgraduate level. For Undergraduate Representation, there are two faculty representatives in each faculty: one academic, and one welfare. At Undergraduate level please note: Faculty Rep positions are also known as education officers, vice presidents, wellbeing officers, and chairs in some CUs.



## Departmental Representatives

Department Reps oversee the Year Reps and represent all students in their department. They collate and, if necessary, evidence feedback from Year Reps, and raise it with departmental staff. There are usually two Department Reps per department: one academic, and one welfare.

## Year/Course/Group Representatives

These Reps are the largest group of reps in the Representation Network as they represent all students in their year group. They are expected to collect feedback from their cohort, address it with staff at programme level, and pass it onto their Department Rep – especially if it is feedback that cannot be resolved at programme level.

# Meetings

## Union Committee Structure



## Committee Meetings

	Name	Attendee	Frequency	Purpose
<b>Union Meetings</b>	Union Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Officer Trustees</li> <li>• All CU Presidents</li> <li>• Council Reps</li> <li>• Council Chair</li> <li>• Management Group Chairs</li> <li>• Liberation &amp; Community Officers</li> <li>• Faculty Reps</li> </ul>	Every 4 weeks	Represents the voice of students to set Union Policy
	Community & Welfare Forum (CFW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All UG Welfare Faculty Reps</li> <li>• All UG Welfare Department Reps</li> <li>• All PG Faculty Reps</li> <li>• DP(Welfare) (Chair)</li> <li>• CU Presidents</li> </ul>	Twice per term	Forum for issues & campaigns relating to community & welfare policy
	Academic Rep Forums	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Faculty Reps</li> <li>• All Department Reps</li> </ul>	Minimum once per term	Informal space for academic reps to discuss feedback & best practice
<b>College Meetings</b>	Faculty Staff-Student Committees / Student Staff Liaison Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deputy President (Education)</li> <li>• Faculty Rep (Chair)</li> <li>• Faculty Staff</li> <li>• Department Staff</li> <li>• Department Reps</li> </ul>	Once per term	Each faculty has their own SSCs/ SSLGs to discuss academic policy & education, feedback and advise & monitor policies and procedures
	Departmental Staff-Student Committees / Student Staff Liaison Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department Rep (Chair)</li> <li>• Department Staff</li> <li>• Year Reps</li> </ul>	Once per term	The same as faculty SSCs/ SSLGs, but at a departmental level.
	Faculty Education Committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deputy President (Education)</li> <li>• Faculty Reps</li> <li>• Faculty Staff</li> <li>• Department Staff</li> </ul>	Twice per term	To ensure best practice is implemented in learning & teaching across the faculty.
	Department Teaching Committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Department Reps</li> <li>• Departmental Staff</li> <li>• Year Reps</li> </ul>	Once per term	The same as Faculty Education Committees, but at a departmental level

# Meetings

## Engaging in Meetings Effectively

To be able to make changes, it is important that reps effectively engage in the meetings they attend. Here are some tips on what reps should be doing before, during and after meetings:



### Before

- Collate feedback
- Get clarity on what you are raising
- Think about what you want to put on the agenda
- Review the agenda - is your item on it?
- Read any papers
- Ask the Union about any papers on the agenda, or items you are raising



### During

- Be on time
- Actively listen & engage
- Take notes
- Act professionally
- Update on your actions
- Ask for updates on others' actions



### After

- Tidy up/ digest notes
- Share notes & action points with the Union
- Ensure you receive and review the minutes
- Follow up on actions
- Close the feedback loop



# Collecting Feedback

Part of a representative's role is to collect student feedback to ensure that decisions being made around the Union and College have considered the student voice. Here are some ways reps have previously collected feedback from students:

- Surveys
- Emails
- Social media
- In meetings
- Beginning/end of lectures
- Drop-in sessions

It is really important that students know how to contact their reps when they have feedback to share, so it is a good idea for reps to introduce themselves to their cohort after they have been elected.

As well as considering ways to collect feedback from students, reps should also think about how they ask questions. Sometimes, asking broad, open-ended questions can make it challenging for students to provide feedback. Reps could try to base the questions they are asking off the **Representation Network Diagram**.

## Academic Reps

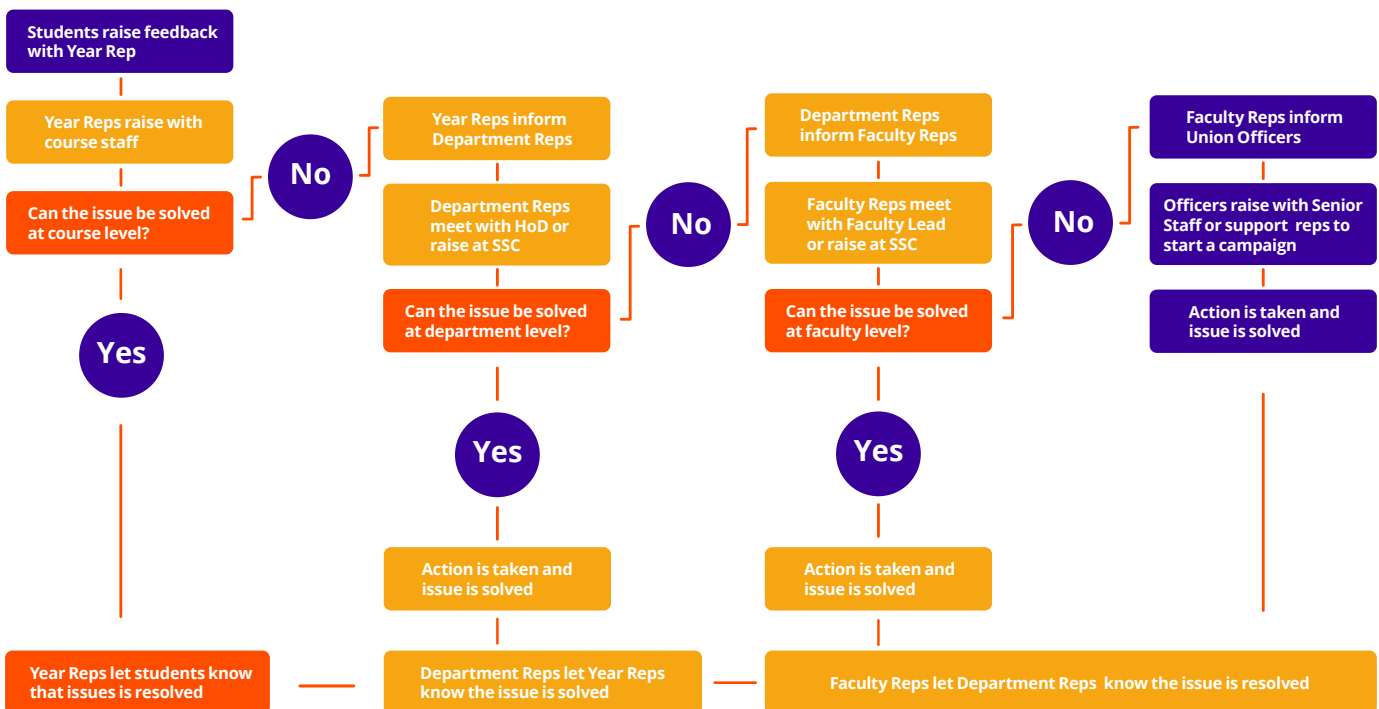
- **Can you access all the learning resources you need for your programme?**
- **Are you satisfied with the quality and timeliness of assessment feedback?**
- **How are you finding the workload on your programme?**

## Wellbeing Reps

- **Do you know how to access the financial services at the College?**
- **Do you feel that Imperial College is inclusive and representative of different communities?**
- **How do you think the provision of Wellbeing support at the College could be improved?**

# Raising Feedback

The process for raising feedback is outlined below:



When raising feedback, reps should ensure that it is being done in an Accurate, Balanced, Constructive, and Depersonalised way. You can remember this by using 'ABCD':

**A**ccurate: you should present information correctly and not give your own interpretation to ensure that students' issues can be effectively understood and addressed as appropriate.

**B**alanced: feedback should be representative of all students (the collective voice), whilst also considering the needs of different student groups.

**C**onstructive: constructive feedback is something that can be acted on, and focuses on the solutions rather than the problem.

**D**epersonalised: it is good to use examples to illustrate your point, but make sure this is presented as a group issue, rather than an individual. It will carry more weight if it is something that clearly affects many students, and does not run risk of identifying a particular student who has offered the feedback.

# Closing the Feedback Loop

Closing the feedback loop means **letting the relevant people know what actions and outcomes have resulted from their feedback**. For reps, letting students know what their feedback has resulted in ensures that they are accountable, they maintain the trust of students, and it encourages students to continue providing feedback.

## Some ways that reps can close the feedback loop include:

- Sharing outcomes in Union meetings
- Sharing any meeting minutes with students (where appropriate)
- Social media
- Emails
- Beginning/ends of lectures
- Letting the Union know any big wins so we can include it in our emails and social media



# Signposting

As a rep, students may approach you for support relating to their mental health and wellbeing. Therefore, it is important for you as reps to know the boundaries of your role, and what you should and should not be expected to deal with. This is particularly important for wellbeing reps.

## What your role is

- To listen
- To collate feedback on general wellbeing issues related to the course (e.g. work-life balance) and communicate this to the College.
- To signpost them to relevant services

## What your role is not

- To act as a counsellor or therapist to a student
- To disclose a named individual's issues to the College (or anyone else without explicit permission)

In a case where students do approach you about anything you are not expected or trained to deal with, here is a list of where you should signpost students to in these scenarios:

- **ICU Advice Service** – Free, confidential and impartial advice on academic, housing or financial issues, [advice@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:advice@imperial.ac.uk)
- **Wardening team** - Provides pastoral support for people living in halls: [imperial.ac.uk/student-support-zone/support/in-your-halls/](https://imperial.ac.uk/student-support-zone/support/in-your-halls/)
- **Counselling and mental health team** - Provides free, professional mental health support: [imperial.ac.uk/counselling/](https://imperial.ac.uk/counselling/)
- **Disability advisory service** - Supports disabled students or students with a specific learning difficulty: [imperial.ac.uk/disability-advisory-service/](https://imperial.ac.uk/disability-advisory-service/)
- **Student support fund** - For students who might need financial assistance: [imperial.ac.uk/students/fees-and-funding/financial-assistance/student-support-fund/](https://imperial.ac.uk/students/fees-and-funding/financial-assistance/student-support-fund/)
- **International Student Support** - Provide information and support on visas/immigration [www.imperial.ac.uk/students/international-students/](https://www.imperial.ac.uk/students/international-students/) or [international@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:international@imperial.ac.uk)
- **Personal tutoring** - Provides academic support to students: [imperial.ac.uk/student-support-zone/support/in-your-department/](https://imperial.ac.uk/student-support-zone/support/in-your-department/)

**Mental Health Officers** - If concerned about yourself or another student and you're not sure who to ask: [Student Mental Health Intervention Officers | Imperial students | Imperial College London](#)

• **Report and Support** - A tool that can be used to disclose incidents of bullying, harassment and sexual violence anonymously, [Report + Support - Imperial College London](#)

• **SVLOs** - Support for students who have experienced sexual violence: [imperial.ac.uk/student-support-zone/student-services/sexual-violence-support/meet-the-sexual-violence-liaison-officer-team/](https://imperial.ac.uk/student-support-zone/student-services/sexual-violence-support/meet-the-sexual-violence-liaison-officer-team/)

# Frequently Asked Questions

## **Why is student representation important?**

As a rep, students may approach you for support relating to their mental health and wellbeing. Therefore, it is important for you as reps to know the boundaries of your role, and what you should and should not be expected to deal with. This is particularly important for wellbeing reps.

## **How will I be rewarded?**

Being a rep enables you to become part of a community. It is important to ensure your hard work is recognised and rewarded, and we do this in a variety of ways. Reps will be invited to social events throughout the year organised by the Union. Additionally, we run rep reward schemes which involve Rep of the Month awards as well as our Student Choice Awards every June which include 'Academic Network Team of the Year' and Wellbeing Network Team of the Year' awards. All recipients of Rep awards will be contacted by the Union to be informed of their prizes.

## **What should I do if I can't attend a meeting or training session?**

Whilst reps should do their best to attend all their meetings and training, we understand that occasionally this may not be possible. In this case, let the person who sent you the invitation know that you can't make it as far in advance as possible. For meetings, make sure that your feedback is being picked up by someone else – you could either brief another rep who is attending the meeting, or ask someone else to attend on your behalf. For training, it is a good idea to contact the trainer to find out if there is a way for you to catch up so you stay fully informed.

## **How do I encourage students to give me feedback?**

If students don't know who their rep is, they won't be able to provide feedback. After reps have been elected, they should ask their lecturers for a few minutes at the beginning or end of a lecture to introduce themselves to their cohort. Additionally, they could also ask lecturers to send round an introductory email to let students know who their rep is and how to contact them. Students will also be more inclined to share feedback if they know that something is being done with their feedback – so remember to raise it with your programme or in meetings and close the feedback loop afterwards!



# Frequently Asked Questions

## **What should I do if I am struggling to implement a change in my programme?**

If you have tried to implement a change to your programme/department/faculty, based on student feedback, but you are finding it challenging to come to a resolution, follow the guidance on the feedback flowchart to raise it at the next highest level. You can also come and ask the representation team for any advice if you are unsure.

## **How often should I collect feedback from students?**

Year reps should encourage students to approach them with feedback whenever they have some (when appropriate – via email or beginning/after lectures). However, year reps should try and ensure they have student feedback to pass onto their department reps before any SSC/SSLG or Union meetings. Year reps should meet with their department reps before meetings, and department reps should meet with faculty reps before their meetings, so they can organise what feedback to share.

## **How many hours should I expect to spend on my role per week?**

The time commitment for all rep roles will be dependent on the number of meetings they need to attend. Your reps should expect to attend around five meetings per academic year, whereas this number will be between eight-ten for department reps and faculty reps. Meetings typically last 1-2 hours. Work relating to rep positions should take on average no more than 2 hours a week for year reps, and no more than 4 hours a week for department and faculty reps. However, this will vary during the academic year and term by term.

## **Where can I find support for signposting?**

If you receive any queries or feedback from student that you are not trained or expected to deal with in your role, make sure you signpost them to the relevant services. Sometimes knowing where to send them can be challenging, so if you are ever unsure on how to handle a safeguarding issue (or other representation issue) come and ask the representation team first.

# Glossary of terms

<b>Agenda</b>	A list of items that will be discussed in a meeting, distributed to all attendees around a week prior.
	<b>Academic Rep Forum (ARF)</b> - Chaired by the DPE, ARFs allow UG and PG departmental academic reps to meet and discuss academic issues, such as teaching delivery, exam formats and NSS departmental action plans. ARF (Taught) is for UG and PGT reps whereas ARF (Research) is for PGR reps.
<b>AOB</b>	<b>Any Other Business</b> - Any additional matters that need to be discussed that haven't already been covered in the meeting. *To note – if you think you will have AOB in a meeting, it is good practice to highlight this to the meeting Chair prior to the meeting.
<b>College President</b>	The College's top executive with the ultimate responsibility for the College's performance. Not to be confused with the President of Imperial College Union!
<b>Matters Arising</b>	Each department belongs to a constituent union that represents them, under the guidance of Imperial College Union.
<b>Meeting Chair</b>	An opportunity for questions or updates related to items in the previous meeting to be discussed.
<b>Minutes</b>	A person who is responsible for ensuring the meeting runs smoothly, on time and that everyone has a chance to speak.
<b>Officer Trustee</b>	A summary of what was discussed at a meeting, particularly highlighting actions, and who is responsible for them. A full-time, elected individual who takes a year out from studying, or after they graduate, to improve the student experience for all Imperial students by representing them to the College.
<b>Officer Trustee</b>	Documents which detail the contents of agenda items. The Chair will send round the papers for members to read prior to a meeting.

# Useful contacts

## Deputy President (Education)

[dpeducation@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:dpeducation@imperial.ac.uk)

- A full-time student representative, elected by students, who works to improve the student voice for all students at Imperial College.
- Contact about: College staff, SSCs, academic feedback, advice on representation and general concerns about your role or individuals.

## Deputy President (Welfare)

[dpwelfare@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:dpwelfare@imperial.ac.uk)

- A full-time student representative, elected by students, who works to improve the student voice for all students at Imperial College.
- Contact about: College staff, SSCs, wellbeing feedback, advice on signposting and safeguarding, and general concerns about your role..

## Representation Team

[icu.representation@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:icu.representation@imperial.ac.uk)

- Supports the Deputy President (Welfare) and Deputy President (Education), the Wellbeing Representation Network, Liberation Officers and student-led campaigns.
- Contact about: running campaigns, working with Liberation Officers, issues with College staff, training needs, general concerns about the role or individuals.

## For PG Reps only:

- Caroline Hargreaves (Senior Teaching Fellow Graduate School)

[caroline.hargreaves@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:caroline.hargreaves@imperial.ac.uk)

- A Senior Teaching Fellow at the Graduate School. Caroline champions postgraduate student representation and works closely with Academic & Welfare Officers and Imperial College Union.
- Contact about: interactions with support or academic staff, and for contacts, collaborations and cohort building.



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**Tel:** 020 7594 8060  
**Email:** [union@imperial.ac.uk](mailto:union@imperial.ac.uk)  
**Reception:** Level 2, Beit Quad

**Connect with us:**

 [ImperialCollegeUnion](https://www.facebook.com/ImperialCollegeUnion)  
   [@icunion](https://www.snapchat.com/add/icunion)