

Academic & Welfare Officer (Postgraduate)

Summary of Role

Academic & Welfare Officers (AWOs) collate information regarding academic experience from their faculties' departmental representatives. AWOs are expected to initiate change on the back of feedback and ensure the quality of all postgraduate-facing services.

Duties and Key Responsibilities

Communication:

- Attend faculty, Graduate School and College committees which typically number three to four a term.
- Proactively communicate with constituents to ensure feedback is gathered on a regular basis. This must be done as a minimum prior to each SSC and adequate time must be given for students to send representatives information. Proactively seek student opinion on any significant proposed changes by College made to courses.
- Collate feedback from students to pass on to the committee.
- Ensure information for the attention of constituent students is forwarded on in good time.
- Listen to and encourage feedback from students on an ad-hoc basis.
- Ensure they are known to their constituents and are approachable to students who wish to provide opinions.
- Contribute to discussions within meetings which affect their constituents and raise issues where necessary.
- Ensure updates are communicated to constituents and/or relevant parties within a reasonable time-frame. This includes when an issue is passed to another representative, when an issue is passed to a staff member or when a response is received. Where significant changes have been made or where an issue affects a number of students this information must be disseminated to all constituents.
- Produce clear written communication in the form of e-mails, website copy or as otherwise appropriate to disseminate information to constituents.
- Communicate any issues, queries or suggestions to improve the representation system to the Representation Coordinator to ensure the system's efficiency is maintained.
- Refer urgent issues directly to departmental staff, the departmental representative or Deputy President (Education).
- Ensure student confidentiality is maintained at all times unless otherwise agreed.
- Submit items to discuss to meeting agendas.

Knowledge:

- Awareness of the representation system structure and a good understanding of College's workings as a whole.
- Use discretion to determine whether an issue requires the attention of the representation system or College staff or whether it can be solved through alternative means.
- Where applicable refer issues beyond the representation system.
- Complete relevant training courses as required by Imperial College Union.

Collaboration:

- Collaborate with other representatives (if applicable) to collate feedback and/or suggestions.
- Liaise with course administrators and other staff members to ensure information is disseminated to relevant constituents.
- Liaise with departmental representatives or AWOs as appropriate on a regular basis to ensure student feedback is communicated to the relevant staff members.

- Establish and maintain good relationships with relevant staff members, regularly communicating relevant information provided by students.
- Proactively pursue specific goals and aims as outlined by constituents and as outlined in the representatives' election manifesto.
- At the beginning of their term in office gather information from their predecessor about on-going projects and best practice.
- At the end of their term in office liaise with their successor to ensure best practice is shared and on-going projects are passed on.

Experience:

- None required, although experience of participating in meetings may be beneficial.

Availability:

- Students should expect to attend at least one meeting a term. These are usually held at the campus where the bulk of their course is administered so should require no more travel than would be expected on a day to day basis. Meetings typically last one to two hours.
- Work relating to this position should take on average no more than a few hours a week. Work volumes will vary during the course of an academic term and will be term time only. Meetings and other work commitments during examinations will be avoided wherever possible.
- Representatives should expect to be available to constituents by e-mail and to reply within a reasonable timeframe. In person representatives should reasonably be expected to be approached or meet for a short time with constituents before or after lectures, workshops etc as required.
- It is recognised that students are first and foremost at Imperial to study or research and that this must be prioritised. Students who feel their studies are being compromised, are struggling or feel they are spending too much time filling the role should speak to the Representation Coordinator.

For more information regarding this role please contact Zoe Richardson, Representation Coordinator (z.richardson@imperial.ac.uk).