

Imperial College Union
Representation Policy

A Paper By the Deputy President (Education) and the Deputy President (Welfare)

Introduction

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.
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.

Statement of intent

3. The Union is committed under its Constitution to
 - i. Advance the education of its members and promote, without prejudice, their welfare at all times.
 - ii. Represent the needs and interests of its members to Imperial College and external bodies.
4. The Union furthers these aims with the provision of a network of academic representatives drawn from the Full Members of the Union, administrated, trained and supported by the Union.
5. These obligations extend to the representation of all registered students of Imperial College, regardless of their membership of the Union.

Definitions

6. 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.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. The use of the word 'representative' throughout this document refers to both academic representatives and welfare representatives.
10. The words 'representative' and 'rep' are interchangeable and carry the same meaning.
11. The word 'student' denotes a currently registered student of Imperial College, regardless of membership of the Union or additional occupations.
12. The word 'constituency' denotes that group of students that a representative is bound to represent.

General principles of representation

13. 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.
14. A representative shall strive to represent the views and experiences of their constituency as accurately and fairly as possible.
15. 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.
16. A representative may express their personal view on a matter, but must not present their personal views as the views as their constituency.
17. A representative must maintain a constant dialogue between themselves and their constituency.
18. A representative must maintain transparency in their activities at all times.

Duties of Imperial College Union

19. 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).
20. 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.
21. The Union shall strive to fully populate the representation structure every academic year and following a position being vacated.
22. The Union shall provide funding for representative activities, subject to budgetary constraints. The funding is allocated by the Representation and Welfare Board on which all students have direct or indirect representation.
23. The Union shall provide basic use of rooms within its premises for representative activities at no charge to them.
24. The Union shall provide resources, including computing, printing, photocopying, phone and fax services, though a charge may be made for these.

Duties of representatives

25. Representatives are expected to comply with the Union Constitution and its regulations and policies.
26. 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.
27. 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.
28. 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.

Roles

29. An exhaustive list of positions is maintained in Appendix 1, which may be amended by the Deputy President (Education) but must be ratified at the next Representation and Welfare Board.
30. An exhaustive list of faith societies is maintained in Appendix 2, which may be amended by the Deputy President (Welfare) but must be ratified at the next Representation and Welfare Board.
31. There are five categories of academic representative. These are as follows:
 - i. The President,
 - ii. The Deputy President (Education),
 - iii. The Faculty Academic Affairs Officers, as listed in the Appendix.
 - iv. The Departmental Representatives, as listed in the Appendix.
 - v. The Year, Course, Section and Group Representatives, as listed in the Appendix.
32. There are six categories of welfare representative. These are as follows:
 - i. The President,
 - ii. The Deputy President (Welfare),
 - iii. The Faculty Welfare Officers, as listed in the Appendix,
 - iv. The Departmental Representatives, as listed in the Appendix,
 - v. The Year, Course, Section and Group Representatives, as listed in the Appendix,
 - vi. The Union Welfare Officers.

Role descriptions

33. The duties of the President, Deputy President (Education) and Deputy President (Welfare), Faculty Academic Affairs Officers and Faculty Welfare Representatives are as detailed in Regulation Three of the Constitution.
34. The Departmental Representatives shall:
 - i. Be the representative to the Union and the College for the students in their respective Department or Division.
 - ii. Co-ordinate the activities of the other representatives in their Department or Division.
 - iii. Faithfully represent the views and experiences of the students in their Department or Division to the following and any other committees, institutions and associations:
 - i. Their Faculty Academic Affairs Committee
 - ii. The Staff-Student Committee of their department
 - iv. Feed back all relevant decisions and information to students in their Department or Division.
 - v. 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.
 - vi. Promote the activities of their departmental society as requested by the Chair.
 - vii. Act as returning officer in the election of Year, Course, Section and Group Representatives as requested by the Deputy President (Education).
 - viii. Submit termly reports detailing all activity in their capacity as a representative to the Faculty Academic Affairs Committee.
 - ix. Submit documentation as required by the Documents and Submissions Section of this policy.
35. The Year, Course, Section and Group Representatives shall:
 - i. Be the representative to the Union and the College for the students in their respective constituency.
 - ii. Co-operate with the other representatives in their constituency.

- iii. Faithfully represent the views and experiences of the students in their constituency to the following and any other committees, institutions and associations:
 - i. Their Departmental Representative's Committee
 - ii. The Staff-Student Committee of their department
 - iv. Feed back all relevant decisions and information to students in their constituency.
 - v. Promote the activities of their departmental society as requested by the Chair.
 - vi. Act as returning officer in the election of Year, Course, Section and Group Representatives as requested by the Deputy President (Education).
36. The Union Welfare Officers shall consider the entire student body of Imperial College to be their constituency.
- i. The Environmental Officer shall:
 - i. Be responsible to the Deputy President (Welfare),
 - ii. Engage students in the environmental activity of the Union,
 - iii. Represent the views of students on environmental issues to the Representation and Welfare Board,
 - iv. Liaise with the Energy and Efficiency Manager of Imperial College,
 - v. Liaise with the Environmental Society, and Environmental Representatives for Halls of Residence,
 - vi. Organise Green Week, usually held in November, to inform, engage and promote, relevant environmental issues to the student body.
 - ii. The SHAG Week Coordinator shall:
 - i. Be responsible to the Deputy President (Welfare),
 - ii. Represent the views of students on Sexual Health and Guidance (SHAG) issues to the Representation and Welfare Board,
 - iii. Liaise with the Imperial College Health Centre and the Terrance Higgins Trust,
 - iv. Liaise with Medsin,
 - v. Organise SHAG week to inform, engage and promote, relevant SHAG issues to the student body.
 - iii. The International Officer shall:
 - i. Be responsible to the Deputy President (Welfare),
 - ii. Engage students of all nationalities in Union activity,
 - iii. Represent the views of students on international, cultural and ethnic issues to the Representation and Welfare Board,
 - iv. Liaise with the Overseas Societies Committee, the Interfaith Officer and the Equal Opportunities Officer.
 - v. Organise campaigns celebrating diversity and/or against discrimination on the basis of race and ethnicity, including one day of One World Week.
 - iv. The Disabilities Officer shall:
 - i. Be responsible to the Deputy President (Welfare),
 - ii. Engage students with all disabilities in Union activity,
 - iii. Represent the views of students on disability issues to the Representation and Welfare Board,
 - iv. Liaise with the Senior Disabilities Advisor of Imperial College,
 - v. Liaise with the Equal Opportunities Officer,
 - vi. Organise campaigns specifically related to students with disabilities, including one day of One World Week.

- v. The LGBT Officer shall:
 - i. Be responsible to the Deputy President (Welfare),
 - ii. Engage students of all sexual orientation in Union activity,
 - iii. Represent the views of students on LGBT issues to the Representation and Welfare Board,
 - iv. Liaise with Imperial 600, the LGBT network for Imperial College Staff,
 - v. Liaise with IQ and the Equal Opportunities Officer,
 - vi. Organise campaigns specifically related to LGBT students, including one day of One World Week.
- vi. The Gender Equality Officer shall:
 - i. Be responsible to the Deputy President (Welfare),
 - ii. Engage students of all genders in Union activity,
 - iii. Represent the views of students on gender equality issues to the Representation and Welfare Board,
 - iv. Liaise with the Women in Science, Engineering and Technology society, and the Equal Opportunities Officer,
 - v. Organise campaigns specifically related to gender equality, including one day of One World Week.
- vii. The Interfaith Officer shall:
 - i. Be responsible to the Deputy President (Welfare),
 - ii. Engage students of all faiths in Union activity,
 - iii. Represent the views of students on faith issues to the Representation and Welfare Board,
 - iv. Liaise with the Chaplain of Imperial College,
 - v. Liaise with Imperial College Union's faith societies and encourage them to have an Interfaith representative on their committee,
 - vi. Liaise with the Equal Opportunities Officer,
 - vii. Organise campaigns specifically related to interfaith, including one day of One World Week.
 - viii. To form and chair an Interfaith Committee, the membership of which shall include one Interfaith Representative from the faith societies as in Appendix 2, who have Interfaith Representatives.

37. 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.

Structure

38. The Union operates a chain of responsibility for all matters relating to academic representation. This is as follows:
- i. The President,
 - ii. the Deputy President (Education),
 - iii. the Academic Affairs Officer of the Faculty or School,
 - iv. the Departmental Representative,
 - v. 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.
39. The Union operates a similar chain of responsibility for all matters relating to welfare representation. This is as follows:

- i. The President,
 - ii. the Deputy President (Welfare),
 - iii. the Faculty Welfare Officer,
 - iv. the Departmental Representative,
 - v. 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.
40. Individuals in the above sections are responsible to those above them in the list for the representation of students. Academic Affairs Officers and Faculty Welfare Officers are additionally responsible to their Faculty Union President in the case of undergraduates or the Graduate Students' Association Chair in the case of postgraduates.
41. Figure 1 shows the structure of representatives.
42. Departmental Representatives and Year, Course, Section and Group Representatives shall attend all Staff-Student Committee Meetings held by their department.
43. 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.
44. The final meeting of the Departmental Representative's Committee, the Faculty Academic Affairs Committee and the Representation and 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.
45. 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.

Training and forums for academic representatives

46. 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.
47. This shall include welfare training for Department and Year, Course, Section and Group Representatives.
48. The Deputy President (Education) shall publicise the training sessions appropriately and provide resources such as handbooks for reference throughout the year.
49. There shall be at least one Undergraduate Academic Forum and at least one Postgraduate Academic Forum held during the academic year.
50. The Deputy President (Education) is responsible for organising these forums, and shall publicise them to all representatives at least four weeks before the date of the event.
51. Each forum shall be attended by all undergraduate or all postgraduate representatives. If a representative is unable to attend, they must notify the Deputy President (Education) in writing at least one week in advance.
52. 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.

Training for Faculty Welfare Representatives

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

54. The Faculty Unions and the Graduate Students' Association (as defined by Regulation Five of the Constitution) are responsible for supporting the efforts of Academic Affairs Officers and Faculty Welfare Officers in their representative endeavours. The Representation and Welfare Board shall allocate appropriate funds to Faculty Unions to this end. Full Members may also apply to the Board for funding for specific representative activity.

Recruitment

55. All academic representatives should normally be elected according to Regulation Four of the Constitution. Those in the constituency who are also Full Members of the Union may stand. All members of the constituency may vote, other than for Union Welfare Officers, who are elected by the Representation and Welfare Board.
56. The Deputy President (Education) is ultimately responsible for the population of the academic representative structure.
57. The Deputy President (Welfare) is ultimately responsible for the population of the Faculty Welfare Officer and Union Welfare Officer positions.
58. Subject to any other regulations, representatives may indefinitely stand for re-election.
59. The Sabbatical Officers, the Faculty Union Presidents, the Graduate Students' Association Chair and the Academic Affairs Officers may not hold more than one representative position concurrently.
60. The positions of President, Deputy President (Education), Faculty Union President, Graduate Students' Association Chair and Academic Affairs Officer may not be held by more than one person.
61. 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.
62. 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.
63. Elections for all representatives, other than those for taught postgraduate courses or the first year of undergraduate courses, should be held in the Spring Term before the start of the academic year.
64. First year representative positions and taught postgraduate course representative positions must be filled as soon as possible after the start of the new academic year.
65. Representatives shall be elected per academic year. Their term of office shall last for up to one year, and cease on 31 July.
66. The Deputy President (Education) is expected to 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.
67. The Deputy President (Education) is expected to 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.

68. Union Welfare Officers shall be elected in the Summer Term by the members of the Representation and Welfare Board.

Documentation, submissions and presentations

69. Departmental Representatives shall provide the following information to the Deputy President (Education) in a timely manner:

- i. 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;
- ii. 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;
- iii. The minutes of all Staff-Student Committee meetings that have taken place in their department;
- iv. Brief details of any other communication between representatives and College staff.

70. 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.

71. The Deputy President (Education) shall compile termly 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 Representation and Welfare Board and College's Quality Assurance Advisory Committee termly.

72. The Deputy President (Education) shall coordinate and display a presentation to College's Strategic Education Committee annually, as an opportunity to highlight serious concerns.

73. 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.

74. 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.

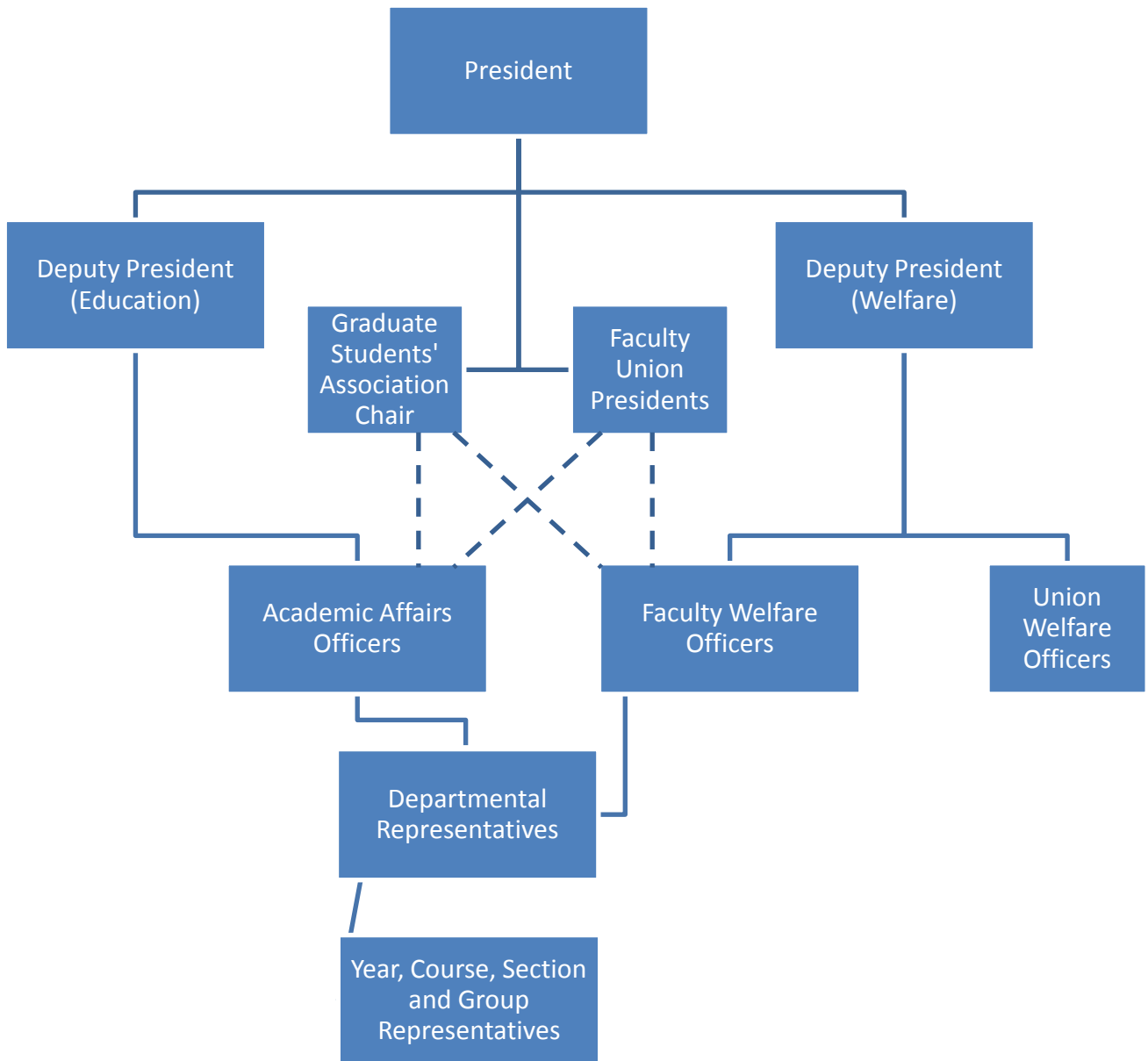


Figure 1. Representative structure