



Student Rep Handbook

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Our Students' Union

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Congratulations!

Congratulations on becoming a Student Rep! You are now a part of a community of student leaders, who amplify the student voice and create change within our programmes, departments and faculties, throughout the college and beyond. You're in for an incredibly exciting year as we work collectively to enhance the academic student experience here at King's.

The work you carry out is incredibly important in ensuring that our student community is getting the most out of their time at King's. From extending library opening hours to addressing clinical placement concerns and getting rid of hidden course costs, you really can make a difference!

We are both here to help you to achieve the changes you want to make in your time as a Student Rep, and also to help us to work collectively to highlight and change issues affecting students across the college. There are plenty of opportunities and resources available to you, so be sure to make the most of it and don't hesitate to get in touch!

We hope you have a really productive and beneficial tenure as a Student Rep, and we look forward to helping you make King's the best it can be.



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Many congratulations on being elected as a student representative for the 2016-17 academic year. Our Student Reps play a crucial role in ensuring that the views and needs of our students feed in to the key decision making bodies of the University. They act as catalysts, ensuring that students and staff come together as an academic community with shared goals and aspirations, able to see each other's point of view and acting as "critical friends" in constructive, open discussion. As a Student Rep you will have to call on a wide ranging skill-set, from diplomacy to effective communication and I am sure that the training you receive from KCLSU will prepare you well for the year ahead. Thank you for taking on this important role and I hope you find it an enjoyable and rewarding experience.

Ian McFadzean
Interim Vice-Principal (Education)

What is a Student Rep?

You are a student leader empowered to make positive, student led change within KCL. You engage with students to take their feedback to union and university meetings and work collaboratively with other student groups on projects to improve student experience at King's.

What do you do?

- You are a student leader empowered to make positive, student-led change within your school
- You engage with the students you represent to help form an active community
- You represent the views of other students to make your experience at King's better

How do you represent them?

- Actively engage to find out what issues affect students and consult on proposed changes.
- Take student feedback to College and Student Staff Liaison Committee [SSLC] meetings
- Speak on behalf of students and influence decision makers at Department, Faculty and College level
- Work collaboratively with other reps to achieve positive change on behalf of students
- Feedback decisions to fellow students and reps

Who will support you?

- VP Education (Health), VP Education (Arts and Sciences) – they attend College academic boards and ensure the issues you raise are addressed across KCL. They also support student led campaigns and initiatives
- KCLSU Student Voice team – running training, providing support, being available for advice and working with admin staff in your faculty
- Faculty staff – there will be teaching and student support staff in your school who will support you in your role throughout the year

What do you go to?

- **University meetings** – As well as SSLCs, some faculties also invite reps to other committees
- **Union meetings** – We will hold open meeting for you to share experiences, network and discuss issues
- **Socials** – non-compulsory of course!

- How long does it take?**
- Faculties differ, but rarely contain more than three committee meetings in a term.
 - Points of high commitment might be when there is a SSLC to attend and students to canvas in advance.

The Student Rep Journey

Every one of you will have a different experience as a Student Rep but there will be plenty that you have in common. Attending formal meetings, communicating and engaging with those you represent and producing a handover, for example, are all things you will do throughout the year.

Below is a typical journey you will all take. Think about your priorities, your manifesto and what students in your department are asking for to chart how yours will be unique:

Engaging with your community

Introduce yourself! Your ability to represent will only be as strong as the level of communication you have with those you represent. Get an email sent out by the faculty or do a lecture shout out and let students know who you are and how they can get in contact with you.

SSLC

This is your chance to meet with faculty staff and raise issues students have brought up to you. While this isn't your only chance to feedback to faculty, it's a great opportunity make sure you are prepared in advance and as a group, optimise your time in the meeting.

Making a sustainable difference

Some of the changes you make might not be seen until next year, but will have a big impact on your faculty for the future. Building strong relationships with the faculty, building trust with the student body and a strong network amongst reps will lead to a lasting culture of representation.

Creating Change

Many decisions are made outside of the room so don't just wait for the next SSLC. If something comes up that you think can be taken care of, get in touch with the faculty and let them know. If in doubt, you can always ask the rest of the Student Reps in your department or get in touch with your VP Education.

Building a Student Rep network

Working collaboratively amongst yourselves is going to be key so get to know each other within your department. Exchange details, tips and tactics for engagement and how you plan to best represent the students in your faculty.

Understanding Your Student Community

Each of you are responsible for representing a cohort of students. Your role is about more than waiting for an email to come through, it is about the involvement and active engagement with the students you represent.

Your role is to provide members of your student community with a voice, enabling them to be heard and then acting upon what they say. In order to be an effective Student Representative, you need to campaign on issues that really matter to your particular student body, therefore it is really important that you work incredibly closely with those students you represent in order to understand their needs, interests and requirements.

To get started, you will want to find the answer the following questions:

How many students do you represent?

Seminar/Cluster/Lab Group/Entire Programme/Department/Faculty

How often do you see all of the students you represent?

Weekly/Monthly/Very Rarely/Never

Are you in contact with any other Student Reps?

Regular/Sporadic/Never

How is your programme delivered?

Seminars/Lectures/Labs/Clinical Placement

What student representation structures currently exist?

Student Forum/SSLC/1-2-1 meetings w/Staff

What communication channels do you have access to?

Lecture Shout-Outs/Emails/Social Media/Keats

What resources do you have access to?

Budget/Contact Lists/Dedicated Campaigning Tools

Finding the answers to these questions will allow you to better understand your surroundings. It'll give you an insight into the research patterns of your student community, alongside a greater awareness of the structures and resource that are available to you. It is vital that you find the most effect ways to interact with your student community, these questions will allow you to do so.

Being a strong communicator

Engaging Your Student Community

As a Student Rep you play a crucial role in shaping the learning, teaching and research experience and environment. To be effective, involve the community is key, least of all because it helps with legitimacy, credibility, accountability and to empower the students you represent.

Communication

There are lots of ways of communicating, so don't rely on just one method of communication, remember, not everyone has Facebook.

An engaged student community is built upon a strong relationship between its members and their Student Rep. In order to be an effective Student Rep you should strive to build relationships defined by trust, mutual respect, mindfulness, strong communication and by welcoming diversity.

Being Visible

In order to be an effective Student Representative, you will want to become visible amongst your community. Allowing those around you to know who you are and how they can engage with you on a regular basis.

Communication

You will need to find the most effective means of communication. There are so many methods of communication, each of which can be used in a variety of ways. Remember, not everyone has Facebook so don't rely on just one method of communication, and never underestimate the value of a face-to-face conversation.

Useful Tools:

- ✔ Lecture Shout-Outs
- ✔ Drop-in Sessions
- ✔ Regular Emails
- ✔ Surveys
- ✔ Google forms
- ✔ Newsletter
- ✔ Feedback Form
- ✔ Keats

Be Creative

See more methods on our [Top Tips section](#).

Signposting

While you might always want to help, there are many areas that fall outside of your remit as a Student Rep. Many of these issues will be personal concerns or those requiring professional pastoral support.

If a student approaches you regarding any of the following areas look to signpost them to the correct service and/or individual:

Academic Appeals, Mitigating Circumstances, Submitting Complaints, Fitness to Practice, Bereavements, Anxiety, Stress, Depression, Disability Support, Health & Wellbeing, Careers & Employability, Housing, Money, and Visas.

KCLSU Advice is for all students of King's College London. We are here to help if you are facing any difficulties, or if you want help with KCL regulations and procedures.

KCLSU Advice is free, confidential, independent, impartial, empowering and non-judgemental.

If anyone requires advice on housing, financial matters, health and wellbeing or anything else they can access a range of other services to ensure they're getting the support you need. Below you'll find a list of useful services. If you can't find what you're looking for, contact us and we'll try and point you in the right direction.

Student Support

[The Compass](#)
[Disability Advisory Service](#)
[Nightline](#)
[Equality and diversity issues](#)
[International students](#)
[KCL Student Advice](#)

Financial Support

[King's Student Advice](#)
[Financial Advice Guide](#)
[Student Funding Office](#)
[NUS Finance](#)

Housing Support

[King's Student Advice](#)
[King's Housing Advice](#)
[KCLSU Accommodation Guide](#)
[University of London Housing Service](#)

Health and Wellbeing Support

[King's Counselling Service](#)
[King's Health Centre](#)
[Sexual health service locator](#)
[Staying Safe in London](#)
[Contraception advice](#)

Top tips for being a Student Rep

Being Effective

Effective campaigns are based upon a detailed understanding of the issue you want to change and in-depth analysis of the context in which the campaign will function.

Provide Evidence

To strengthen your case, provide evidence when presenting your thoughts, ideas and feedback. Avoid sweeping generalisations such as **“everyone wants Lecture Capture to be implemented”** instead find ways to back up your argument, with the use of polls, surveys and testimonials. **“89% of students want Lecture Capture to be implemented for the next academic year.”**

Create Change

As a Student Rep you're not just here to feedback, but also to help find a solution. You'll be provided with many opportunities to shape the outcome of your feedback with the interests of your student community in mind. **This will allow you to make the greatest impact on your community.**

Empowerment

Ensure everyone's involved in the influencing of decision making.

Be Creative

Put yourself into the shoes of those you represent. Be original, think outside of the box and ask yourself...

What hasn't been done before? How can I make myself most visible amongst my programme, department or faculty?

Be Consistent

The most effective Student Reps are those that have a consistent presence year round. Spend some time thinking about the key areas you wish to address during your tenure, and the ways in which you plan to engage with your peers.

Once you have decided upon your methods of communication and engagement be sure to publicise these and remain consistent. Consistency leads to familiarity, in order to be the most effective in your role, you should strive to become familiar amongst your student community.

Read up!

Important things are discussed and the better prepared you are, the more likely you are to identify key areas for improvements or additions.

Issues

A range of items might feature on an SSLC agenda from the development or review of modules and programmes to outcomes of student evaluation such as the National Student Survey. SSLCs are one of the best opportunities for student representatives to raise issues.

Personal matters

The SSLC should not discuss personal matters relating to an individual student or a member of staff. However, members of the committee should be reminded of alternative mechanisms through which matters of this nature can be raised [see signposting].

Key Relationships & Corridor Conversations

Much of the feedback you'll receive can be dealt with in a quick and informal manor. More often than not you'll be able to resolve the matter without the need to wait until the next SSLC.

Work with Academic Societies

Is there an academic society that the students you represent fall under? Get in touch with them and see if you can collaborate to build the community and gather feedback.

Support & Recognition

Training session

Working with staff across the faculties and student groups, we've created a set of tailored training sessions which will practically engage with your role providing you the tools you need to be an effective Student Rep.

Student Leader Network

Over the course of the next year you will have access to opportunities which have been specifically designed to further develop your skills and experiences as a Student Rep. These opportunities will take a variety of forms from online training sessions and workshops to networking events and round table discussions. They will provide you with an opportunity to develop and lead your student community, whilst providing you with a platform to succeed beyond your time at King's.

Support

Personal 1-to-1 support will be on offer throughout your time as a Student Rep, taking the form of mentoring sessions, appraisals, catch-ups and reflections. If you want some help, just [give me a shout](#).

Contact Us

If you ever have any concerns throughout your tenure, never hesitate to contact your KCLSU Student Officers or the KCLSU Student Voice Team.



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