



Student Academic Reps (StARs)

Introduction

The University of Worcester and Worcester Students' Union are committed to ensuring that students have opportunities to engage in and influence their academic experience at all levels throughout the institution. It is essential that students' views can be represented through from course level to Board of Governors. Student Academic Reps (StARs) represent students on their course and in their year of study.

All courses should have at least two StARs representing students on each year of the course, unless alternative arrangements reflecting the structure and delivery of the course have been agreed. Such arrangements should be approved by the Institute Quality Committee and reported to the Students' Union and the Academic Quality Unit. Course leaders have responsibility for ensuring that students elect their StARs and that the StARs are listed on SOLE, so that everyone can easily find out who their representatives are.

Role description

StARs will need to establish and maintain communications with the SU's Vice President Education, their course leader, the StAR Coordinator for their Institute and the Institute Reps. Their key task is to represent students' views at course level, attending and making a positive contribution to the Course Management Committee. Effective representation requires StARs to consult with students, presenting findings both at Course Management Committees and to course leaders in between meetings; feeding back to students and helping to develop solutions to problems identified by students.

In order to fulfil their roles, StARs will be expected to:

- Attend and participate in appropriate training sessions provided by the Students' Union and the University, or undertake online training via www.worcsu.com where this is not possible
- Establish effective communications with students, other StARs in their Institute, Institute Reps and the Students' Union
- Attend and contribute to meetings for StARs arranged by Institute Reps, StAR Coordinator or other members of staff
- Attend and contribute to the StARs Forum, held twice a semester, chaired by the Vice President Education and also attended by Institute Reps, the Pro Vice Chancellor (Students) and invited members of University staff and/or other guests
- Help to promote the National Student Survey and the University's internal student survey in order to encourage students to participate and express their views on their student experience
- Help to promote the Student Academic Representative system
- Prepare for, attend and contribute to Course Management Committees, ensuring that students' views are expressed and their interests represented
- Ensure that messages or questions for students from the Students' Union are relayed and that responses are fed back to the SU

Benefits

StARs perform a vital role in ensuring that students' ideas and concerns are voiced at course level and that students can influence the quality of the learning experience for current and future students. The experience and skills StARs acquire will enhance their employability and contribute to their personal development. StARs will be able to demonstrate that they've had meaningful experience of:

- Communicating with students and academic staff
- Organisation
- Diplomacy
- Negotiation
- Consultation and research
- Making presentations
- Teamwork
- Problem-solving
- Higher education policy and practice
- Students' unions
- Quality assurance and enhancement
- Participation in formal committees and other forums

Recognising volunteering

StARs are all volunteers – they are not paid for undertaking their role. This does not mean, however, that what they do is not valued or recognised. All StARs are encouraged to record their activities, including attending training sessions and meetings, in one or more of the following ways:

Online V-Record: The Students' Union allows you to receive acknowledgement for the volunteering that you do (which includes any other volunteering you do in addition to being a StAR). You are able to log your hours easily online in order to achieve awards for 20 hours, 50 hours, 100 hours or 200 hours of volunteering – any awards above 50 hours are also recorded on your HEAR. You will also be invited to our annual volunteering awards ceremony in May. To start logging hours now, visit the Students' Union Website – www.worcsu.com/volunteer/

StARs Accreditation: We have developed an accreditation scheme exclusively for StARs, with bronze, silver and gold awards available for students prepared to record and reflect on their activities. All student achieving StARs accreditation will have this acknowledged on their Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR), which is issued to all students with their degree certificate. For further information on the HEAR, see <http://www.worc.ac.uk/careers/1610.htm> Guidelines for StAR Accreditation are available from the Vice President Education and on the SU website www.worcsu.com

Worcester Award: Time spent undertaking StARs activities can count towards the Worcester Award, which is open to all students who want to demonstrate their employability and show the skills and experiences they've acquired. For further information, see <http://www.worcester.ac.uk/discover/the-worcester-award.html>



Institute Representatives

Role description

In order to ensure that students' interests are represented at Institute level, Worcester Students' Union and the University of Worcester recruits a number of Institute Representatives in each Institute. Normally, Institute Reps are appointed from students who have had experience of being a StAR. The role of Institute Rep is to act as a channel of communication between StARs, the StAR Coordinator, the Students' Union, senior members of staff within the Institute and the University and to undertake other duties as listed below. Institute Reps need to represent a broad range of student views from a range of courses across the Institute, not just from one course.

Applications are invited each year from the pool of current StARs and short-listed candidates are selected through an interview process involving the SU and the University.

Opportunities and benefits:

Institute Reps have the opportunity to contribute to and have a positive impact on the student experience across their Institute; increase their confidence by working with a broad range of academic and support staff and gain a valuable insight into the inner workings of their Institute; gain experience of working on academic issues and learn and develop excellent transferable skills to enhance their employability. Institute Reps are entitled to an annual allowance of £300 in recognition of their commitment, subject to satisfactory completion of a report each semester.

Institute Representatives are expected to share the workload and are responsible for:

- Regular communications with their Institute's StARs, the designated StAR Coordinator and the Students' Union
- Arranging and chairing at least one meeting per semester of StARs in their Institute, providing a forum for feedback and the discussion of issues relevant to the student learning experience
- Ensuring that the Institute is represented at Student Council by arranging the election of a Student Councillor
- Attending and contributing to Institute-level meetings including the Institute Quality Committee, Learning and Teaching Committee and Institute Board, or, when this is not possible, making arrangements for StARs to represent students' interests on these and other Institute committees/working groups
- Attending the StARs Forum, chaired by the Vice President Education and held twice each semester
- Attending progress meetings with the Vice President Education
- Attending other feedback events where necessary and subject to other commitments
Institute Reps may have

- Helping to promote the National Student Survey and the University's internal student survey in order to encourage students to participate and express their views on their student experience
- Helping to promote the Student Academic Representative system
- Contributing to the delivery of induction talks and training for StARs, in collaboration with the SU
- Representing the Institute and helping with a range of activities related to student recruitment and retention and improving the student experience

Training and development opportunities

- Training and support will be provided by the Institute to help prepare Institute Reps for their role in Institute-level committees and meetings
- Institute Reps will have opportunities to be involved in other activities which assure and enhance the quality of the educational experience, such as course approvals and periodic reviews. Appropriate training will be provided and Institute Reps taking part in these activities will be paid for their involvement.

For further information, see www.worcsu.com or email the Vice President Education vpeducation@worc.ac.uk.