**Student & Curriculum Rep Handbook**

**2021 – 2022**

**Student as Producer: Vision for Partnership**

*‘partnership working recognises that all members in the partnership have a legitimate, but different perceptions and experiences.’*QAA (2018)

Newcastle College University Centre's vision for higher education student partnership and engagement is enshrined within the concept of ‘Student as Producer’. This redefines the traditional view of a student from a consumer of knowledge to a creator and interpreter of knowledge. We seek to move beyond merely listening to the student voice, but rather empower students to drive and implement change through openness, honesty, flexibility and an agreed set of shared goals and values that lead to enhancement.

**Enhancing Partnership**

The last two academic years have seen significant changes to the Student Rep System. These changes were based on a report developed by a team of NCUC Student Fellows. This included the introduction of NCUC Forum where degree students and senior leaders meet to celebrate success and address challenges. It also involved the development of new training and guidance for Student Reps along with greater support for Student Reps throughout the year. Furthermore, the role of Curriculum Rep has also been introduced which allows Student Reps to take on more responsibility at curriculum level and also have input into UNITU, our student feedback platform. The current Student Rep is still evolving in partnership with students and there will be a number of opportunities throughout the year to get involved in co-creating a Student Rep System that benefits all.

**Congratulations on your election as a** **Student** **Rep**!

You may already have served as a Student Rep in the past, or you may be new to the role. Either way we are delighted that you have agreed to participate in this exciting and important role at Newcastle College University Centre.

Newcastle College University Centre is founded on the principle of Student as Producer. Put simply, this means you are considered partners within our higher education community and therefore your voice, opinions and input are integral to all decisions made here. As a Student Rep, it is your responsibility to represent the views of your peers and provide valuable insight on the issues that matter to you and your student community.

This guide is designed to help you to carry out your duties as Student Rep. It contains key information about your responsibilities as a Student Rep, tips on how to communicate effectively at meetings, as well as all the key dates and milestones you will be expected to achieve across the year.

As well as this guidance booklet help is always at hand via your Programme Leader and the NCUC Student Leaders team HEStudents@ncl-coll.ac.uk, all of which will be happy to give you advice on any matter.

**What is a Student Rep?**

Student Reps are elected members of each class tasked with representing the collective views their class during informal and formal meetings and forums.

As a Student Rep you are the voice of your fellow students. You have a positive role to play by enabling communication and helping to promote constructive change. You will act as a bridge between staff and students, providing feedback to both parties on issues, upcoming changes, and the future direction of the institution.

**How are Student Reps selected?**

Within the induction period at the start of the year, each class will hold an election to decide their student representative. Members of each class may nominate themselves or someone else as a potential Student Rep; if more than one student is nominated the class will vote for their Student Representative using the online polling tool Polly. Your tutor will create the poll, add all candidates to it, and set a time frame within which voting must take place. All Reps must be elected by 1st October 2021. If only one student is nominated they will become Student Rep by default.

Each class should also have at least one deputy rep. This may be the runner up in the election or, if no other students were nominated, be selected by the class tutor. If no student nominates themselves or is nominated to be a Student Rep, then the selection of an appropriate student, with their agreement, will be left to the class tutor.

**What are Student Representatives expected to do?**

The main part of the role is to gather the views of your classmates and pass these on constructively at all levels (including Group Forums, Curriculum Forums and the NCUC Forums), referring potential issues but also providing potential solutions to problems across the institution.

It is important that Student Reps attempt to represent the ideas of their classmates as a whole. This gives them more authority and credibility, and it is the only way that they can be truly representative. Student Reps must consider all students in their feedback and ensure the needs of all their classmates are met.

In short, Student Reps have the following core responsibilities:

1. To make yourself available to members of the class and to gather their views, concerns and opinions. Remember that positive comments are useful; it helps the college to recognise good practice.
2. To attend and participate in all Group and Curriculum Forums.
3. To attend and participate in other meetings, if appropriate / nominated, such as the University Centre Forum.
4. To give feedback to members of your class following meetings.

**What is a Curriculum Representative?**

Curriculum Representatives are elected members of each curriculum area. As well as attending Group and Curriculum Forums, they will be responsible for attending NCUC Forums and representing the views of, and advocating for, their whole curriculum area. In addition to this, Curriculum Representatives will responsible for completing the Curriculum Forum forms, as well as communicating all outcomes from Curriculum and NCUC Forums to their peers, via course Teams channels and any other appropriate channels. Curriculum Reps are also responsible for escalating feedback on UNITU to the appropriate channel (further training and guidance will be provided to Curriculum Reps on UNITU).

In recognition of the extra responsibilities of this role, Curriculum Representatives will receive a £200 bursary across the academic year (split into 3 payments, two of £60 and then a final payment of £70 for minuting and distributing the Curriculum Forum and NCUC Forum outcomes, and monitoring and updating UNITU accordingly). Bursaries are only paid after the successful completion of each of these responsibilities.

**How do I become a Curriculum Rep?**

As Curriculum Reps are responsible for representing the students from their entire curriculum area they must be elected by their fellow Student Reps from their given curriculum area. As with your election to Student Rep, all voting for Curriculum Reps will take place in specific Teams channels for each curriculum area using Polly.

In order to be considered eligible for election to Curriculum Rep you will have to submit an abstract of between 100 - 200 words of why you want to be Curriculum Rep and what you feel you can bring to the role. This may sound daunting – but don’t panic! Just think about what you’re passionate about, what skills you have (listening, communicating, strong debater etc.) and how you would work with staff to make a difference for both your curriculum area and the college community as a whole.

Once you’ve written your abstract you should email it to Elaine Crawford (elaine.crawford@ncl-coll.ac.uk) and state in the email which curriculum area you would like to represent. All applications must be received by**29th October 2021.**

Once all applications are received, the Research Team will create polls showing all applicants within each curriculum area. The abstract submitted as your application for Curriculum Rep will also be uploaded and your fellow students will be able to read and consider all of these before voting. All Student Reps will then have from 1st November 2021 to midday on 5 November 2021 to vote for the Curriculum Rep for their area. Student Reps will only be able to vote for the Curriculum Rep for their own curriculum area. All voting will be anonymous and each vote will only be counted once. You are permitted to change your vote within the voting time frame but your vote will still only be counted once.

The successful Curriculum Rep will be announced on 6 November 2021.

**KEY DATES**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 20th October 2021   | Rep Training and formal invitation to apply for election to Curriculum Representative  |
| 29th October 2021 | Deadline for applications for Curriculum Rep  |
| 1st November – 5th November 2021 (polls close at midday)  | Voting for Curriculum Reps opened  |
| 5th November 2021 (PM)  | Curriculum Reps announced   |

**What are the different types of forums I might attend?**

As a Student Rep you will be called upon to attend various forums across the year and each of these forums serve a slightly different purpose.

|  |
| --- |
| **Group Forum***Attended by you the elected Student Rep, your programme leader and the whole class* In a predetermined tutorial slot, you and your classmates will meet with your Programme Leader to discuss your course. Prior to this meeting, your Programme Leader will ask you as the Student Rep to collect the views of your peers to present at this meeting in a constructive manner. Anything that can be resolved by your Programme Leader will be resolved as soon as possible. As the Student Rep, you will take any issues that cannot be resolved at programme level to the Curriculum Forum to be addressed by your Head of Curriculum.  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Curriculum Forum***Attended by the Head of Curriculum and the elected Student Representatives from each class and the Curriculum Rep*Your Head of Curriculum will be given a time and date to meet with you and the other Student Reps in your curriculum area, along with the Curriculum Rep. During this meeting you will be able to raise issues that could not be resolved by your Programme Leader at Group Forum. Any issues that can be resolved at curriculum level will be, and any that can’t will be taken to the University Centre Forum by the Curriculum Rep.  |

|  |
| --- |
| **University Centre Forum***Attended by the Newcastle College University Centre Management team, the Head of Higher Education, Quality Managers and the Curriculum Representative from each curriculum area.* This is the most senior forum chaired by the Head of Higher Education and attended by members of senior management and Curriculum Representatives. In addition to this, staff from any relevant areas will also be invited to attend (for example, if facilities have been raised as a concern the Head of Estates will be in attendance).  |

**What issues can representatives raise?**

As Student Rep you must represent the views of the students who elected you. Below is a list of topics that might be raised to you however, this list is not exhaustive! If you are uncertain about an issue or how to raise it just ask! Your programme leader or any member of the NCUC Research, Scholarship and Student Engagement team will be happy to help you.

* **Teaching methods**

This could be the learning resources available to you, the delivery style and content of your lectures or how engaging you feel your course is. Think about the content of your lectures: are the tasks set relevant to your learning? Do your lectures stick to an agreed timetable? Do you feel like you’re making suitable progress in your learning?

* **Assessment**

Do you get appropriate feedback from your assessments within the agreed time frame? Is the feedback personalised and relevant to you? Do you feel you know how to improve in your next assessment after reading your feedback?

* **Tutorial activities**

Do your tutorials have enough activities to help you develop academic, personal and professional skills?

* **Resources**

Do you have all the resources you need in order to be successful in your course (including books, journal access, hardware and software)? Are these resources up to date and are there enough that everyone can use them?

* **Lecture times**

Do your lectures take place at the correct time in the correct room? Are your lectures regularly disrupted or do they run as planned in the timetable?

* **Workload**

Do you feel your work load is appropriate to your course? Are you getting enough work to ensure you are developing as a student?

* **Enrichment and Enterprise**

What enterprise and enrichment activities would you or your peers like to see on your course? What is already happening that is working well?

**How do I represent the views of others?**

On some issues you will be representing the class as a whole, whilst at other times you might be representing a small group of students from your class with a specific problem. It is important that you actively seek the opinions of people on your course, outside your own particular group of friends.

**Taking part in Forums**

Participating in forums with fellow students, tutors or senior members of staff can be a daunting and intimidating task at first; but remember as an institution we are committed to and value your input and experiences and we want to work with you to improve everything from facilities to teaching. Below is a brief overview of what you can expect from each forum and some tips on how can you can get the most out of the experience.

**Forum Overview**

* **Agendas**: Prior to each forum an agenda will be sent out. The agenda will tell you what issues will be raised during the forum and in what order. It is helpful to have looked at this in advance and perhaps prepare notes on each section so your contributions are ready to be presented.
* **Introductions:** It is likely the Curriculum Forum and University Centre Forum will be attended by members of staff and students you have not met before. At the start of the meeting the Chair, the moderator of the meeting, will begin by introducing themselves and their role at the institution and invite everyone else to do the same. Simply state your name, your level, your course and curriculum area you are representing that day.
* **Any Other Business:** Not every point you wish to raise will be included in the agenda however there will be an opportunity to mention anything else you believe to be relevant at the end of the forum, under the section “Any Other Business”. Typically, points raised here are brief and do not require extended discussion. If you feel a significant item has been missed off the agenda please email HEstudents@ncl-coll.ac.uk to have it added.

**Hints and Tips for Forum Success**

* Make sure you look at the agenda in advance and prepare any comments or thoughts you have before the meeting. When raising an issue, it is always more constructive to have at least considered potential solutions to the issue before presenting it. This will make the discussion more helpful and increase the likelihood of a successful solution being implemented.
* Allow everyone in the room a chance to speak and do not speak over others. If you wish to contribute try to make eye contact with the Chair for an acknowledgement that they will let you make your contribution. If the Chair attempts to move the discussion forward without noticing you, it is okay to interrupt (politely!) and explain you have a contribution to make. It is not easy chairing large meetings and people can be unintentionally ignored: this is never done on purpose.
* Don’t be afraid to ask questions! This is often a very valuable way of contributing and the forum should not presume that you know and understand everything.
* Try not to become confrontational. A positive and constructive attitude offers the best approach towards meetings.
* Consult the students you represent. Avoid pushing your own personal views if they are not widely shared.
* If any issues to be raised are of a personal matter or regarding a specific student or member of staff, you should bring this to the attention of the chair before the meeting, or if this is not possible, in an appropriate way during the meeting. It might be preferable not to give names publicly, but instead do this discreetly to the chair.

**Keep in Touch**

Being able to communicate effectively is one of the key elements of your role as a Student Representative. Here are some ideas:

* Minutes of the student forums - You may wish to produce a brief report on the issues and proposals which are being considered. This may be more effective, since students would be more likely to read it if it is shorter and covers issues relevant to them.
* You will be able to speak to tutors, course leaders and student support staff on an informal basis should you wish to raise any issues with them.

**Important Dates**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Before 1st October 2021  | **Student Rep Elections:** Your tutor will hold an election to select a Student Rep during induction.  |
| 1500 – 170020th October 2021  | **Student Rep Training:** NCUC Student Leaders Team will supply training to all Student Reps on this date.  |
| 1st – 5th November 2021  | **Group Forum:** Your tutor will set the date for your first Group Forum during this week. Collect the views for your classmates in preparation for this forum.**Curriculum Reps:** Voting for Curriculum Reps. |
| 15th – 19th November 2021  | **Curriculum Forum**: The first Curriculum Forum of the year will take place during this week. Your tutor will be able to inform you of the exact date. During this session you and other Student Representatives, including the Curriculum Rep, from your curriculum area will meet to discuss any issues not resolved at Group Forum.  |
| 1500 – 17001st December 2021  | **University Centre Forum:** The first University Centre Forum of the year will take place on this date. During this session Curriculum Representatives from each curriculum area will meet to discuss any issues not resolved at Group Forum.  |
| 8th December 2021  | **Student Leaders Festive Event**  |
| 18th December 2021 | Feedback shared to all Students via Teams  |
| 21st – 25th February 2022 | **Group Forum:** Your tutor will set the date for your second Group Forum during this week. Collect the views for your classmates in preparation for this forum. |
| 7th -11th March 2022  | **Curriculum Forum:**  The second Curriculum Forum of the year will take place during this week. Your tutor will be able to inform you of the exact date. During this session you and other Student Representatives, including the Curriculum Rep, from your curriculum area will meet to discuss any issues not resolved at Group Forum.  |
| 23rd March 2022  | **University Centre Forum:** The second University Centre Forum of the year will take place on this date. During this session Curriculum Representatives from each curriculum area will meet to discuss any issues not resolved at Group Forum.   |
| 2nd April 2022  | Feedback shared to all Students via Teams  |
| Date TBC April/May 2022 | **Student Leaders Awards**  |

**Other ways to participate…**

**Student Union**

The Student Union is independent from Newcastle College University Centre and is dedicated to social activities, representation, and academic support for students. You can find out more about the Newcastle College Student Union via:

Visiting their office: Ground Floor Rutherford Building

Facebook: @NewcastleCollegeSU

Email:

nclcollstudentunion@ncl-coll.ac.uk

**Tell Us Now**

Our Tell Us Now initiative allows you to provide feedback on your student experience, suggest improvements to enhance student life or to make any general enquiries. Simply email your feedback or question to tellusnow@ncl-coll.ac.uk and a member of the HE team will respond within three working days.