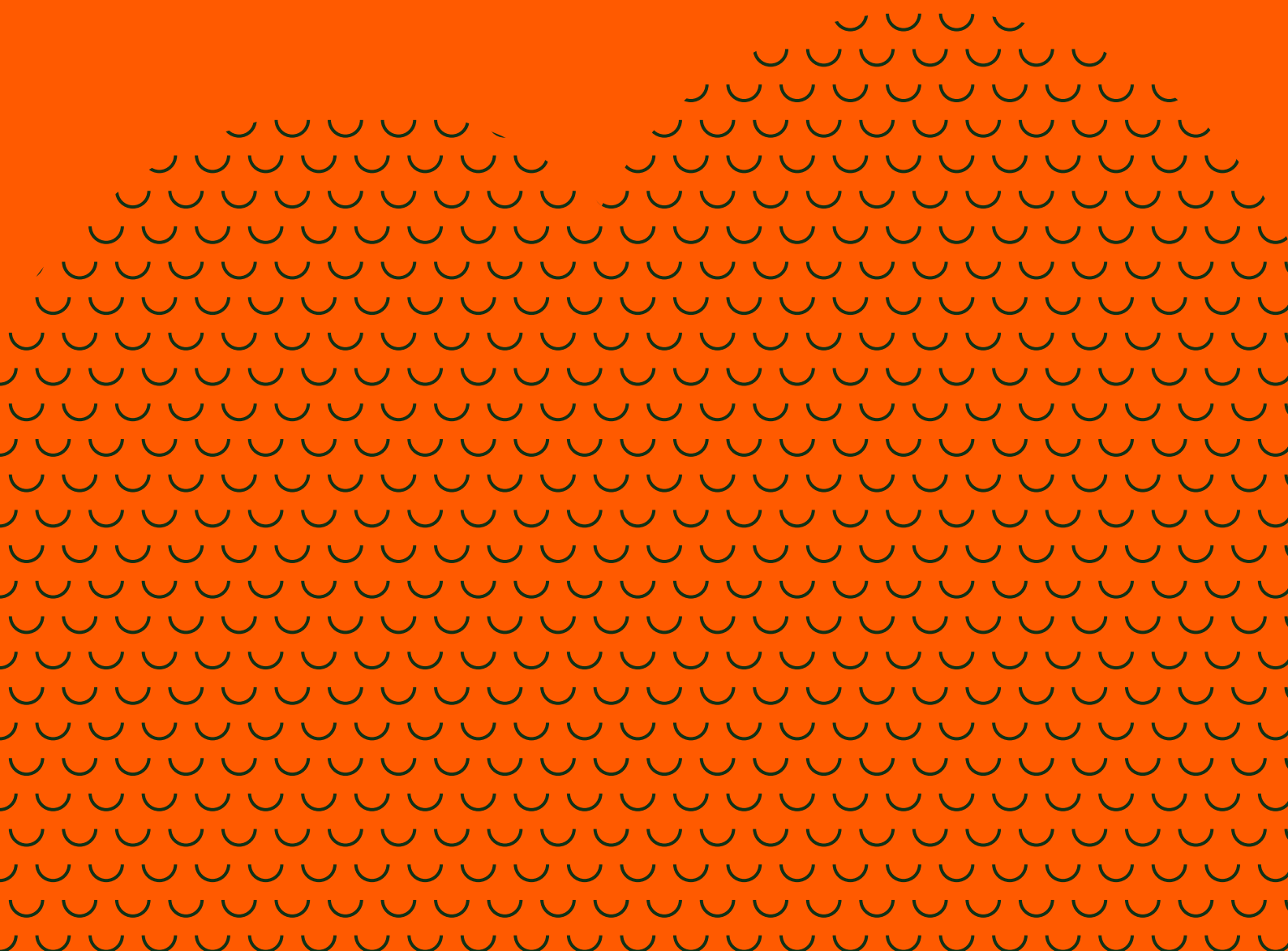


**STAFF GUIDE TO
STUDENT
REPRESENTATION
AT BUCKINGHAMSHIRE NEW UNIVERSITY
2024-25**



Contents

- 03** **Introduction from the Vice Presidents Education and Welfare**
- 04** Key Dates
- 05** Representation Structure at BNU
- 06** School Officers
- 07** Supporting Your Student Reps
- 09** Expectations for Student Reps, University Staff, and the Students' Union.
- 10** Recruiting Student Reps
- 11** Training and Development
- 12** Closing the Feedback Loop
- 14** Bucks Students' Union Elections
- 15** Other Opportunities
- 16** Management of Student Reps
- 17** Contact Information

Introduction from the Vice Presidents Education and Welfare

Partnerships between staff and students are key for a thriving academic community, when the Student Rep system works well it is a massive benefit to everyone involved.

Reps provide feedback on the experiences of students on your course and in your School, which can offer insight and opinion with a fresh and innovative perspective.

Reps are there to work closely with University and Union staff to bring a positive, student-led change that will have an impact both for their cohort and for future students on the course.

This year we aim to build on our previous work and achievements, extend support and improve the representation system in all corners of the University; this will only be possible with ongoing support from a receptive and engaged academic team.

The ground-level engagement with every student at BNU makes the student experience what it is. We are very much looking forward to working with you all towards what we know will be another successful year.

Please do not hesitate to get in contact if you have any questions.

Best Wishes



Vice President Education
and Welfare
(High Wycombe)
Harry Tomlinson (he/him)
harry.tomlinson@bnu.ac.uk



Vice President Education
and Welfare
(Uxbridge and Aylesbury)
Bethany Jackson (she/her)
bethany.jackson@bnu.ac.uk

Key Dates

September Cohort

Elections nominations	Monday 30 September - Friday 18 October 2024
Elections voting	Monday 21 October - Friday 25 October 2024
Coffee Sessions	Monday 11 November - Friday 22 November 2024
Winter break	
PCM Period 1	Monday 20 January - Friday 31 January 2025
Coffee Sessions	Monday 10 February - Friday 21 February 2025
Spring break	
PCM Period 2	Monday 21 April - Friday 2 May 2025

January Cohort

Elections nominations	Monday 6 January - Friday 25 January 2025
Elections voting	Monday 27 January - Friday 31 January 2025
Coffee Sessions	Monday 10 February - Friday 21 February 2025
Spring break	
PCM Period 1	Monday 21 April - Friday 2 May 2025
Coffee Sessions	Monday 12 May - Friday 23 May 2025
Summer break	
Cohort meetings (PCM 2)	Monday 21 July - Friday 1 August 2025

April Cohort

Elections nominations	Monday 7 April - Friday 25 April 2025
Elections voting	Monday 28 April - Friday 2 May 2025
Coffee Sessions	Monday 19 May - Friday 31 May 2025
Cohort meetings (PCM 1)	Monday 28 July - Friday 1 August 2025
Summer break	
Coffee Sessions	Monday 11 August - Friday 22 August 2025
Winter break	
Cohort meetings (PCM 2)	Monday 20 October - Friday 31 October 2026

Representation Structure at BNU

Student Reps

We have a network of over 250 student reps, providing a credible student voice to feedback to the University. Student reps can instigate change, minimise miscommunication between staff and students, ensure that assumptions are not made about the student experience and improve their course for future years. They are elected by their peers to be the voice of their course and are the first point of contact for the students they represent. They are in post for the academic year and must be re-elected each year if they wish to continue the role.

Student reps are assigned one of two pathways. **Standard** pathway reps are students on full-time undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in Art, Design and Performance, Aviation and Security, Business and Law, Creative and Digital Industries, and Human and Social Sciences. **Condensed** pathway reps are made up of 4 groups: students on part-time programmes, distance learners, students on foundation programmes, students who complete placements, including all programmes in Health and Social Care Professions and Nursing and Midwifery

Student reps are trained and supported throughout the year by the Students' Union and are rewarded up to £100, funded by The Big Deal. To receive the reward, reps must comply with a series of requirements including completing training, attending a coffee session with their Course Leader (standard pathway only), submitting feedback from their cohort and attending Programme Committee Meetings (PCMs), and participating with the Students' Union 'Rep Conference'.

School Officers

School Officers collate information on the student experience in their school, by liaising with student reps to gain an understanding of the areas for improvement affecting students across the range of courses, alongside areas of good practice, and feeding this back to the Students' Union and University. They also help the Representation team throughout the year with various admin tasks associated with representation, including promoting feedback collection and communicating regularly with student reps.

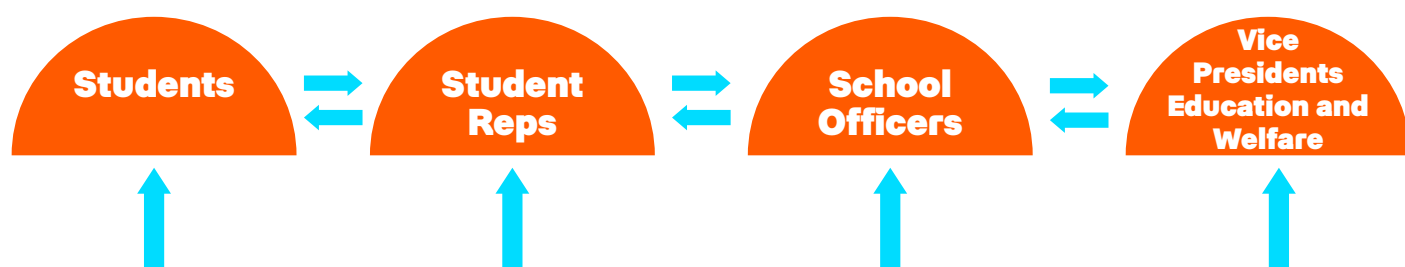
There is at least one School Officer across the seven larger Schools: Art, Design and Performance, Aviation and Security, Business and Law, Creative and Digital Industries, Health and Social Care Professions, Human and Social Sciences, and Nursing and Midwifery. School Officers are rewarded up to £350, as well as extra support from the Students' Union, and additional training and development opportunities.

Elected Officers

Each year, elections are held for our elected officer positions. The four officer positions (Union President, Vice President Achievement and Belonging, and two Vice President Education and Welfare roles) are full-time paid positions, typically BNU graduates or students wishing to take a year out from studying and form our officer team to help deliver the student experience we are so passionate about.

Our elected officers shape and influence the academic and co-curricular life of students at BNU, from the quality of your experience and adequate support for your wellbeing to ensuring inclusivity and developing our student-led communities. Officers are voted in by the student body, and as such are accountable to them. They act as the primary representatives of students at the University, sitting on the highest decision-making bodies. All roles offer an individual the opportunity to direct the work of the Students' Union meaning you can make the changes you and your peers want to see.

As you can see, the arrow goes both ways, meaning information should be reported back to whoever raised it, closing the feedback loop. This two-way communication ensures concerns are addressed, and keeps those providing feedback engaged, leading to more effective solutions



Support from the Representation team

School Officers

School Officers collate information on the student experience in their school, by liaising with student reps to gain an understanding of the areas for improvement affecting students across the range of courses, alongside areas of good practice, and feeding this back to the Students' Union and University. They also help the Representation team throughout the year with various admin tasks associated with representation, including promoting feedback collection and communicating regularly with student reps. School officers also meet on a termly basis with their Head of School to discuss any feedback received from the reps within the school.

There is at least one School Officer for each of the seven largest schools: Art, Design and Performance; Aviation and Security; Business and Law; Creative and Digital Industries; Health and Social Care Professions; Human and Social Sciences; and Nursing and Midwifery. School Officers are rewarded financially, as well as extra support from the Students' Union, and additional training and development opportunities.

Schools without a School Officer can access support from the Representation team.

Our officers for 2024-2025 are:



Erin Cook (she/her)
Art, Design and Performance
(Performance)
erin.cook@bnu.ac.uk



Laura Eustration (she/her)
Art, Design and Performance
(Art and Design)
laura.eustration@bnu.ac.uk



Ritamary Benny (she/her)
Aviation and Security
ritamary.benny@bnu.ac.uk



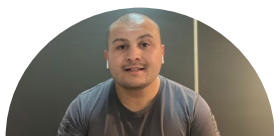
Peter Ashiagbor (he/him)
Business and Law
peter.ashiagbor@bnu.ac.uk



Euan McGinness (he/him)
Creative and Digital Industries (Digital)
euan.mcginness@bnu.ac.uk



Con Macadam (he/him)
Creative and Digital Industries (Creative)
con.macadam@bnu.ac.uk



Sam Brooks (he/him)
Health and Social Care Professions
sam.brooks@bnu.ac.uk



Kaitlin Pearce (she/her)
Human and Social Sciences
kaitlin.pearce@bnu.ac.uk



Hannah Ward (she/her)
Nursing and Midwifery (Uxbridge)
hannah.ward@bnu.ac.uk



Daniela Leonard (she/her)
Nursing and Midwifery (Aylesbury)
daniela.leonard@bnu.ac.uk

Supporting your Student Reps

Elections

Nominations

During this period, we actively promote available student rep positions by visiting classes to introduce the opportunity, explain the role and responsibilities, and highlight the rewards. Interested students must complete an online nomination via the SU website, return a nomination form to the Students' Union, or email **surepresentation@bnu.ac.uk** with the following details before the deadline.

- Full name
- Student ID
- Course and Level
- Preferred email address

Our guidance is generally no more than one student rep to around fifty students, which is in line with the principles laid down in the University's formal documents (point 4).

Student representation is vital for gathering insights into the student experience, with research showing that engagement with student reps supports retention, achievement, and satisfaction.

Evidence suggests that elections are more likely to be contested when a Students' Union team member has addressed the class, emphasising the importance of these visits.

What do you need to do?

- Contact the Students' Union at **surepresentation@bnu.ac.uk** to arrange a five-minute lecture shoutout.
- Promote the student rep opportunity to your students by circulating or sharing information provided regarding the elections

Online elections

All Student reps are democratically elected through an online election hosted at bucksstudentsunion.org/vote

Elections must take place via the Students' Union website – we cannot accept voting that has taken place in class as we are not present to ensure this has been done fairly and democratically. Additionally, there is always a second option to 're-open nominations' if the students do not wish to vote for a candidate, so there is the opportunity to utilise their voice.

It is crucial that all students know about these elections and take the opportunity to vote and make their voices heard.

What do you need to do? Publicise the elections by sharing information provided by the students' union and, wherever possible, allow candidates an opportunity to speak to their voters during this time. Historically, reps with the highest voter turnout receive much more feedback from their peers.

Training

All student reps are contacted about a mandatory training session, which forms part of their financial reward. This session covers the basic information required to make a confident start in post. At the end of every training event, students are asked to fill out a written feedback form; sessions are frequently adjusted to ensure that future reps receive the most appropriate training.

Generally, the session will contain:

- An in-depth introduction to the role and responsibilities
- Overview of University committees and the broader student representation system
- Exploration of methods for gathering and presenting feedback
- Guidance on signposting students to additional support services

Training is held both in person and online. Student reps who are elected or co-opted later in the academic year will be directed to an online training programme.

What do you need to do? Ask your elected rep if they have heard about training

Coffee Sessions (Standard Pathway reps only)

Coffee sessions are held twice a year. These sessions provide a valuable opportunity to build a strong working relationship with your student reps, ensuring open communication and the prompt resolution of any issues. These meetings will be organised by the student reps.

Coffee sessions are a great opportunity to build a working relationship with your student reps and discuss any positive or negative aspects of their student experience so far. There is also an opportunity to follow up on actions set during Programme Committee Meetings (PCM) or Cohort Meetings to ensure they're on track. For example, any issues carried over from the previous year or concerns from the start of the course. You can also address any unresolved issues from the most recent meeting. Student reps will receive a free coffee voucher alongside some prompt questions to guide the session. It's recommended to hold these with all reps across each year group to ensure efficient use of time.

What do you need to do?

Aid your reps in setting up a meeting and engage with their questions and discussions during the coffee session.

Your Voice Feedback

'Your Voice Feedback' captures the views and opinions of your students and is one of the most important aspects of the student rep role. This feedback is organised into several categories, following the same structure as the National Student Survey (NSS), and prompt questions to aid the reps in collecting feedback.

This feedback is submitted ahead of the meeting to be moderated by the representation team and triage any issues effectively. This also allows all attendees to be aware of the feedback that will be raised.

What do you need to do?

Allow reps to publicise themselves and collect feedback in class wherever possible.

Programme Committee Meetings (PCMs)

These meetings are key responsibilities for student reps and serve as the primary forum where feedback is presented from reps directly to staff. These meetings occur twice a year and attendance contributes to a rep's financial reward.

All student reps and academic staff within the department, library, and IT representatives, along with a member of the Students' Union, usually from the Representation team, are invited to participate to ensure all areas of the student experience are represented.

As mentioned, feedback is circulated before the meeting for all attendees to read.

What do you need to do?

Ask your reps if they are aware of when their PCM is. Read through the submitted feedback before the meeting and prepare any responses or resolutions if necessary.

Expectations for Student Reps, University Staff, and the Students' Union.

THE STUDENTS' UNION WILL:

- Set key dates and provide information to students and staff
- Hold at least one meeting per term giving all Reps the opportunity to discuss common issues
- Deliver training and any additional support required throughout the year
- Provide publicity materials for staff to use in class
- Provide continuing training opportunities online
- Gather and analyse online student feedback
- Provide regular newsletters for Student Reps
- Administer online elections.

ACADEMIC AND PSE STAFF SHOULD:

- Actively support the collection and discussion of feedback at Coffee Sessions and Programme Committee Meetings
- Familiarise themselves with information and guidance about the Student Rep system sent via email and available on the Union website
- Communicate the opportunity to students in class using Students' Union materials and actively encourage participation
- Direct students to nomination forms bucksstudentsunion.org/representation or via email to surepresentation@bnu.ac.uk
- Invite the Students' Union into a class in the first three weeks of the academic year to talk about standing to be elected as a Student Rep and obtain nominations.

STUDENT REPS SHOULD:

- Complete an online nominations form during the nominations period at bucksstudentsunion.org/vote or via email
- Campaign to get students to vote for you during the Student Rep election period
- Complete Rep training
- Partake in two Coffee Sessions a year with their Course Leader
- Gather feedback from the students they represent before attending a Programme Committee Meeting (PCM) using the Your Voice form and submit online 2 weeks before the PCM
- Read regular Union e-newsletters to keep up-to-date with Students' Union campaigns
- Attend additional training where appropriate
- Communicate student feedback to committees and committee responses back to students, closing the feedback loop

The above demonstrates the relationship between University staff, students and the Students' Union.

Recruiting Student Reps

The Big Deal funds almost 250 student reps across the University. The exact numbers of representatives will differ between courses and schools, and methods of recruitment differ between courses and modes of study, as detailed further below. Students and staff alike can search our database of reps at bucksstudentsunion.org/yourvoice/student-reps/find-your-rep/. Please contact your local member of the representation team for any further information or to arrange a meeting.

Undergraduates (UG)

Most student reps will be democratically elected from undergraduate courses, with a ratio of about one rep per fifty students, in accordance with university guidelines.

Evidence suggests that these positions are best filled when promoted in class by a Students' Union representative. Interested students must complete a nomination form, either online at bucksstudentsunion.org/elections, by returning a nomination form to the Students' Union, or by emailing surepresentation@bnu.ac.uk. Nominations will be open for at least two weeks.

After the nomination period, all candidates will be listed on the SU website for an online election. Each election also includes a 're-open nominations' (RON) option, to ensure students have an option to vote for at least two candidates. Elections are run using an 'order of preference' voting system.

Once voting has closed all candidates are informed of the results of their election.

For pre-qualifying nurses, representatives will be elected from each personal tutor group instead to represent the large cohort.

Postgraduates (PG)

Most postgraduate student reps will be democratically elected from their courses. We recognise that some programmes, such as distance learning courses, may not typically have student reps, but we believe it's important to offer the opportunity if the group finds it beneficial. If a course does not require a student rep, feedback will be collected through alternative methods.

Training and Development

The Students' Union is committed to supporting our student reps, ensuring they are full prepared for their role and throughout the year through a variety of initiatives.

Additional skills training programme

The Students' Union's **extensive additional skills training programme provides reps with an opportunity to enhance and develop their skills.** The exact content of the programme varies each year to reflect the current requirements of the student body. Past sessions have included **Public Speaking, Negotiation Skills, and CV Writing.** Sessions are delivered by a mixture of Students' Union staff, University staff, and external training providers.

Student reps are also encouraged to make the most of a range of opportunities to contribute to other University Committees and procedures for which further training and support is provided.

Leadership Academy

As one of the top Students' Unions in the country, Bucks Students' Union has hired many BNU graduates within its management and staff. One of our key strategic priorities is 'Employability and Life After University,' and to support this, we've created The Leadership Academy. This bespoke development programme helps students gain leadership skills through training, courses, and opportunities, all provided free via The Big Deal. We recruit students early in the academic year, with the programme starting in November. Course teams can nominate students, and students can also self-nominate by applying to **sutraining@bnu.ac.uk.**

Rep Recognition Scheme

The Rep Recognition Scheme was introduced in 2016 as an accreditation system that allows student reps to track their progress through the year, alongside keeping a record of their involvement in other avenues of the Students' Union's offer such as society or sports team, volunteering, campaigning, or attending an additional skills training session. Points can also be achieved through their engagement with the wider community, such as registering to vote or raising money for charity.

The scheme consists of four levels of accreditation – Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Platinum. When a rep achieves platinum accreditation, they are invited to our annual Union Awards event dinner and presented with a prize and certificate by the Vice Chancellor as further recognition of their hard work.

Closing the Feedback Loop

To ensure the highest level of turnout and engagement at Programme Committee Meetings, please think about the following guidelines.

Notification of meetings

PCMs should be held as set by the University's registry team and the Students' Union. The exact time and location of the meeting should be sent to **programme.committees@bnu.ac.uk** a minimum of 10 working days before the meeting. If possible, details of the second meeting should be agreed and noted at the first meeting.

Student reps are required to submit their PCM feedback on the Students' Union website using the Your Voice Feedback Form before the meeting, for this to be circulated to the academics attending beforehand. Please include this in your email to remind reps of their responsibility.

Notification of meeting dates and times of any other meetings requiring the attendance of a student rep or school officer should be emailed to **surepresentation@bnu.ac.uk** with at least 15 working days' notice, except in exceptional circumstances. The relevant meeting papers should be sent to the individual(s) or **surepresentation@bnu.ac.uk** a minimum of 10 working days in advance of the meeting to be circulated amongst the appropriate student reps.

Minutes/attendance records of meetings

As agreed with the university, the secretary of the PCM will:

- Source the most appropriate meeting date within the assigned window
- Circulate the meeting invite and any pre-submitted feedback
- Take a record of meeting attendance, including any submitted apologies
- Prepare the action sheet, and the record of good practice, either during or directly after the meeting
- Allow the Chair two days to approve
- After this time upload to 'Programme Committee Meetings (PCMs)' Teams
- Notify committee members and the following when the action sheet has been uploaded:
 - Students' Union
 - Head of School if they were not present at the meeting
 - Any individual against whose name and action is recorded who is not a member of the Committee

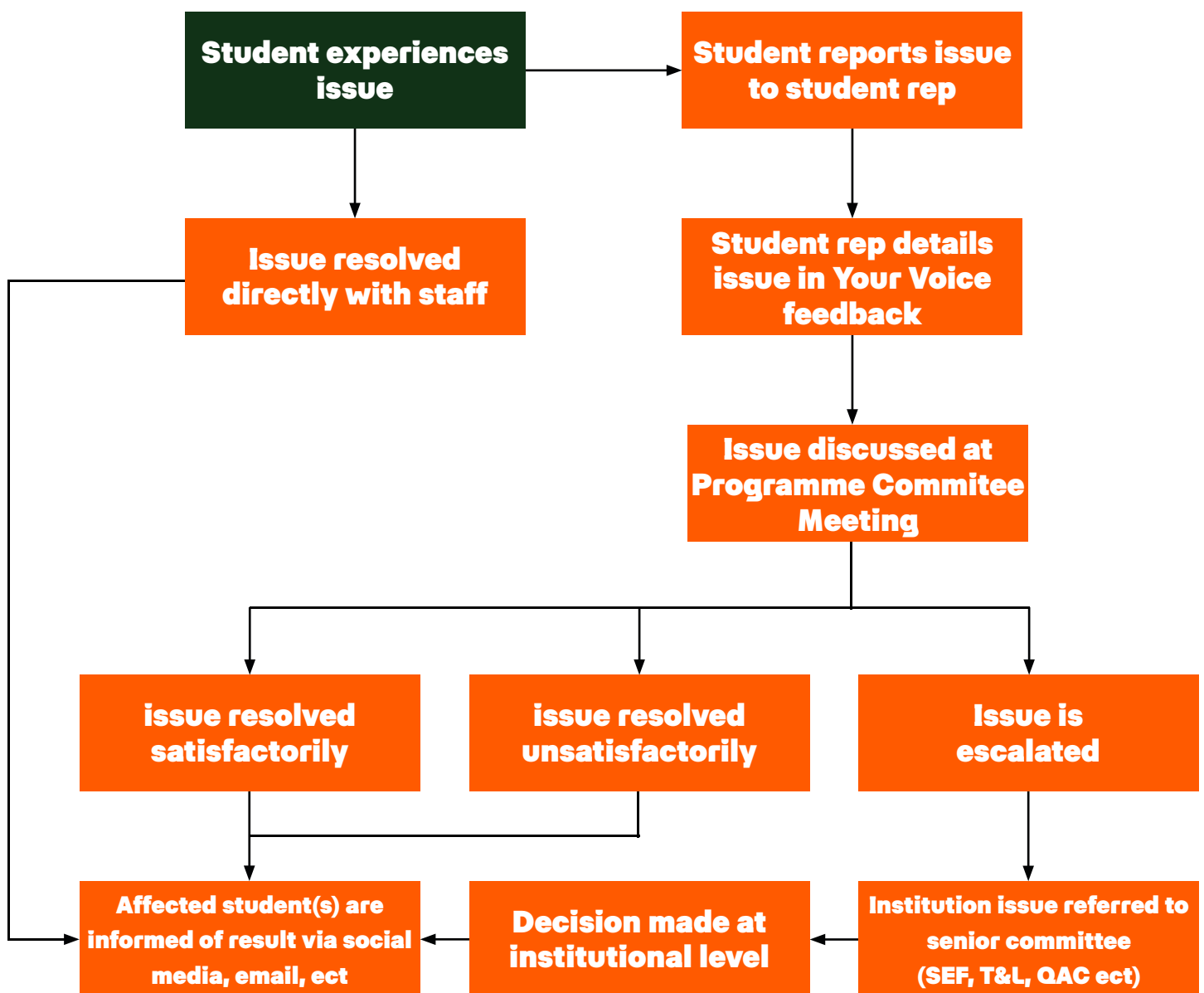
Closing the Feedback Loop

Following Programme Committee Meetings, student reps are requested to update their peers on how their feedback is being acted upon, to demonstrate that their voices are being heard and to encourage continued engagement and further improvements within the school.

Any staff member with assigned actions following the meeting is expected to progress or complete this before the next meeting, updating any relevant parties.

Any thematic issues are highlighted by our School Officers and Representation team, and are progressed to higher committees if required, for example Teaching and Learning Committee, Student Experience Forum, or Senate.

Progression of Student Feedback



*Informal student feedback is captured and reported through various forums and committees between the representation team, elected officers, and advice centre

Bucks Students' Union

Elections

Bucks Students' Union elections are our annual democratic event held in March. During this period, students can nominate themselves for various leadership roles within the Union. After submitting a nomination, candidates present their plans in a manifesto and campaign to secure votes from the student body.

These elections are crucial as they determine who will serve as our four full-time, elected officers for the upcoming academic year. All students have the power to decide who will lead their students' union.

While the elected officer roles attract the most attention, other important student leadership positions also play a significant role, including four student trustee positions. More information about these and other roles is available on the next page. Taking on one of these roles is an excellent way to become more involved with the students' union,

enhance a student's leadership skills, and contribute to improving student life at Bucks. Other positions up for election include committee roles, student reps, and more!

For more information about the elections, to express interest in a role, or to discuss nominating yourself, please email

surepresentation@bnu.ac.uk.



Other Opportunities

Full-time Elected Officer

Appointment method: cross-campus election

Becoming one of our elected officers offers a unique opportunity to be a part of the Students' Union leadership team. They are full-time paid positions and are BNU Graduates or students who wish to take a year-long break from their studies. At Bucks, there are four Officers: President, Vice President Education and Welfare (High Wycombe) Vice President Education and Welfare (Uxbridge and Aylesbury) (VPEW) and Vice President Achievement and Belonging (VPAB).

Elected Officers shape and influence the academic and social life of students at BNU. Having been elected in a cross-campus ballot, elected officers are answerable to the student body. They act as primary representatives of students at the University, sitting on the highest decision-making bodies.

Student Trustee

Appointment method: cross-campus election

Student Trustees are part of the team driving the strategic direction of the Union by sitting on our Trustee Board. As a registered charity aiming to improve the education of students at BNU, the Trustee Board has final sign-off on the Union's biggest plans. Working alongside our four Elected Officers and External (Lay) Trustees, you will ensure that we meet our objectives and continue to operate responsibly in the best interest of our members.

As well as sitting on the Trustee Board, there is also the opportunity to get involved with other committees and update students regularly on your work. Up to four students are elected each year, with one of these positions reserved for a student who studies at the Uxbridge campus.

Student Voice Officer

Appointment method: interview

Student Voice Officers work alongside our full-time elected officers and staff to ensure the Union meets its objectives and continues to operate in the best interests of its members. Students from all backgrounds including a range of ethnicities, ages, genders, levels and modes of study, and academic schools are encouraged to apply.

Student Voice Officers plan and lead campaigns to enhance the student experience, especially for the groups they represent. They participate in Union and University committees, communicate with key stakeholders, and give feedback on reports regarding Union operations. Additionally, they promote and support Students' Union events, ensuring a high-quality experience for all members.

School Officer

Appointment method: interview

School Officers are employed to assist the Representation team in a range of tasks within their respective school. School Officers take on more responsibilities including attending Education Forum, planning the Union's employability festival STRIVE, as well as communicating with Student Reps on a regular basis. School Officers are also paid for the work they complete. We currently have School Officers who cover the seven biggest schools with the opportunity to receive a financial award up to £350

Management of Student Reps

For the representation system to be efficient and effective, the Union must guarantee consistent levels of representation are maintained for students. For this reason, we have split up the reward payment to relate to certain aspects of the role that are particularly crucial, as set out on page 19. As a Student Rep, you are elected by your peers and as such are answerable to them.

Remedial Phase

A) If two pieces of work are not completed in a row, such as not attending training, and your first PCM, a member of the Representation Team will contact you. We understand that you will have multiple priorities while at university, and it can be difficult to manage. We will always look to encourage you and help get you back on track where we can, with additional training or one-on-ones, we are always here to support you where we can.

B) Students have the right to remove their rep if they do not feel they are effectively representing them. If a group of students wish to start this process, they must complete the student rep removal form on the SU website, having 1 proposer and 4 seconders (5 signatures in total). On the very rare occasion this happens, a meeting should be held within 10 working days, with the five signatories, the relevant School Officer, and Student Engagement Coordinators to discuss the reason for submission, investigate their concerns more closely and decide at this point if any further action needs to be taken.

If they don't wish to meet, then it will be difficult to progress their complaint without more evidence.

Should a complaint be made against you, you will be given the chance to answer the complaint, and the Union will seek to mediate between the parties: quite often it is a simple case of misunderstanding that leads to such complaints. Following this, the initial review will be made.

Initial Review

The Student Engagement Coordinators and two School Officers not connected to the case review the evidence available and decide to either dismiss the case, suggest more training, and support, or take it higher. If the decision is to take it higher, it then goes to a formal review.

Formal Review

The Formal Review is conducted by the Student Experience Manager and the VPEWs. The case would be reviewed, and the rep can attend if they wish, accompanied by a supporter (not a legal representative). They decide to either dismiss the case, suggest more training and support, or remove the rep. The rep would have the right of appeal if the decision was removal from the position.

Appeal

The right of appeal can be to any two members of the Students' Union's Senior Management Team (CEO, Deputy CEO, Head of People and Development, Head of Communications and Marketing, Head of Finance, President or Vice President Achievement and Belonging).

Contact Information

Instagram: **@BucksRep**

Facebook: **Bucks Rep**

X: **@BucksRep**



Vice President
Education and Welfare
(High Wycombe)

Harry Tomlinson (he/him)
harry.tomlinson@bnu.ac.uk



Vice President
Education and Welfare
(Uxbridge and Aylesbury)

Bethany Jackson (she/her)
bethany.jackson@bnu.ac.uk



Deputy CEO

Matthew Kitching
matthew.kitching@bnu.ac.uk



Student Experience
Manager

Lucy Ryan (she/her)
lucy.ryan@bnu.ac.uk



Student Engagement
Coordinator (High Wycombe)

Will Deeley (he/him)
will.deeley@bnu.ac.uk



Student Engagement
Coordinator (Uxbridge)

Tash Neal (she/her)
natasha.neal@bnu.ac.uk