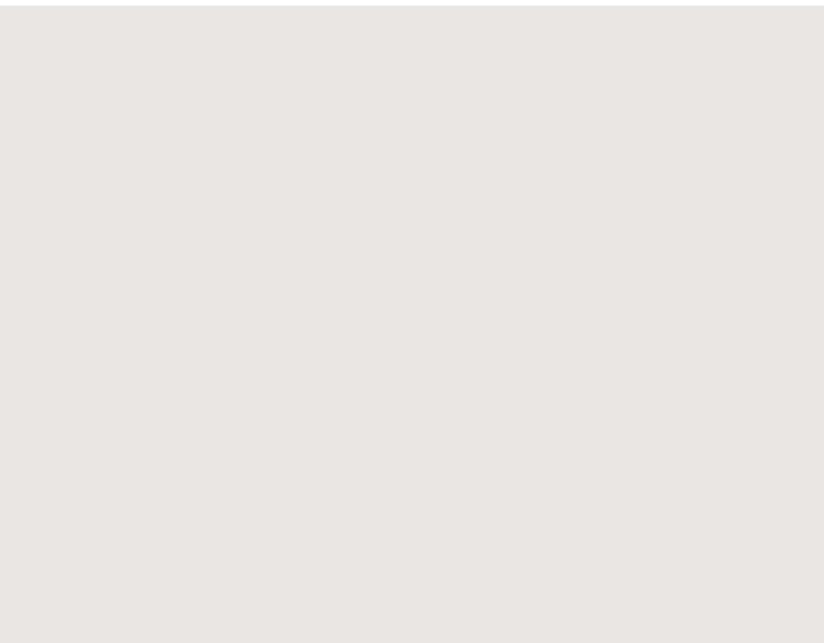




The Student' Union Guide to Being an Effective Class Rep 2019/20





Message from Pierre Yimbog, TU Dublin Students' Union President

Hey everyone!

First of all - on behalf of the team thank you and well done for being elected as Class Rep. It's a big STEP you've taken within TU Dublin SU and TU Dublin to put yourself forward for such a role and just know that all the staff and elected officers are here to support, advise and guide you all the way.

The important thing for you to know is - you are the VOICE of your class and the bedrock of your Students' Union in how we reach out and represent students.

Class Reps are the main point of contact for your Union to interact and effectively represent the student body and you have the responsibility to remain engaged with us so that we can do that! As a result, Class Reps are very influential by being able to improve the learning experience of their peers at University PROGRAMME COMMITTEES, improving college facilities and developing initiatives at Students' Union CLASS REP MEETINGS as well as organising events for your class to network and class hoodies. You have the opportunity to make a difference and this is the perfect chance as a new University and Students' Union!

The benefits of being Class Rep are endless, as you will develop yourself both personally and professionally in ways that will make your degree stand out amongst the crowd due to the experience, training and skills you gain. If you want to make it all worthwhile, make sure to engage and immerse yourself in all the training opportunities and initiatives to improve your skills.

If there's anything more I can say is - enjoy it! You get the most out of the role as Class Rep as much as you put in, so make sure to make it an experience that was worthwhile. I wish you the very best this year, both in your role as Class Rep and your studies, and myself and the team are really looking forward to working with you throughout the year.

Pierre

**President,
TU Dublin Students' Union**

An Important Hello
TU Dublin Students' Union
President: Pierre Yimbog

Foreword from Daniel Sogaolu, VP for Education

Hello and welcome!

Once again congratulations on being elected as Class Rep, one of the very important positions here in TU Dublin and my sincere appreciation for taking this amazing opportunity to represent the students of your class ensuring the Student Voice is heard here in TU Dublin. Class Reps form an integral part of the Union and are one of the largest and most influential groups of volunteers within TU Dublin!

You have taken the STEP and I want to assure that your role in TU Dublin is valued by everyone in TU Dublin - you have the chance to enhance the student learning experience here both within the academic learning environment and outside of the classroom, with adequate support from TU Dublin staff and TU Dublin SU.

The role provides an amazing opportunity for you to develop your skills beyond the limits of your career path, also rewarding as you get involved in assisting others to provide solutions to challenges and a great addition to your graduate profile. Essentially, the role is only as effective as you make it and it's up to you to get the most out of it.

TU Dublin SU is always here to support you in your role and your class, so I urge you to please engage and utilise all trainings and resources we provide to you to properly equip you for the role and keep in touch with us throughout the year. We want to make sure you have the best experience here in TU Dublin by helping you deal with issues that come up in your class, providing solutions as swiftly as possible and recognising your achievements as a "CLASS" rep!

TU Dublin Students' Union 'Top Rep' Awards

Every year our Class Reps do amazing work for their class, but there are some Reps that absolutely go above and beyond for their class, and we want to celebrate it! To do this, we have the Top Rep Awards. Every year we open it up to the students to nominate their Rep to make sure that they get the credit that they deserve.

TU Dublin Students' Union will let you know when the nominations open in March / April 2020.

All the best in your role and with your studies!

Daniel

Vice President for Education

TU Dublin Students' Union - City Campus

Daniel
Sogaolu

VP
Education

Foreword
Message

Welcome from Professor Mike Murphy

I am delighted to have been asked to write this welcome address for the TU Dublin Students' Union Class Representative Handbook. On behalf of the TU Dublin and in my role as Academic Registrar, I want to take this opportunity to sincerely thank you for taking on the role of Class Representative. I hope that you will find it to be both a rewarding and beneficial experience.

In the national context, the activity of Class Representatives fulfils an important dimension of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012, which specifies the involvement of learners in the quality assurance processes of Higher Education Institutions. In the wider European context, the role of learners is enshrined in the various declarations that comprise the Bologna process. In this regard, Class Representatives play their part in realising the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). But at a more pragmatic and important level within TU Dublin, your role as Class Representative enhances student engagement in the academic decision making of TU Dublin.

TU Dublin prides itself on the openness of communication between staff and students. We value and encourage the student voice - we want our students to be proud and engaged members of our TU Dublin community. In his foreword to the Report of the Working Group on Student Engagement in Irish Higher Education, Professor Tom Collins stated that "it is axiomatic that higher education institutions (HEIs) in democratic societies have a responsibility to model democratic practices in their decision-making and routine functioning". Programme Committees are essential components of the academic routine functioning of TU Dublin, and your participation on these important committees helps to discharge this responsibility.

Making our educational programmes better, with students as co-creators of their own learning and promoting student engagement by enabling students to feel part of a learning community, are core elements of what it is to be a Class Representative. Class Representatives bring forward issues that require the attention of programme chairs and academic management. They are full members of the Programme Committees responsible for the monitoring, continuous development and improvement of our academic programmes. Your role is further enhanced by the provision of professional training and the active support and empowerment by the Students' Union,.

I noted at the beginning that I hope that being a Class Representative will be rewarding and beneficial. Indeed some aspects of the role may prove challenging. But I hope that in that challenge you find your voice and discover personal growth through your engagement on the Programme Committee.

I wish you success in your role.

Professor Mike Murphy,

Academic Registrar

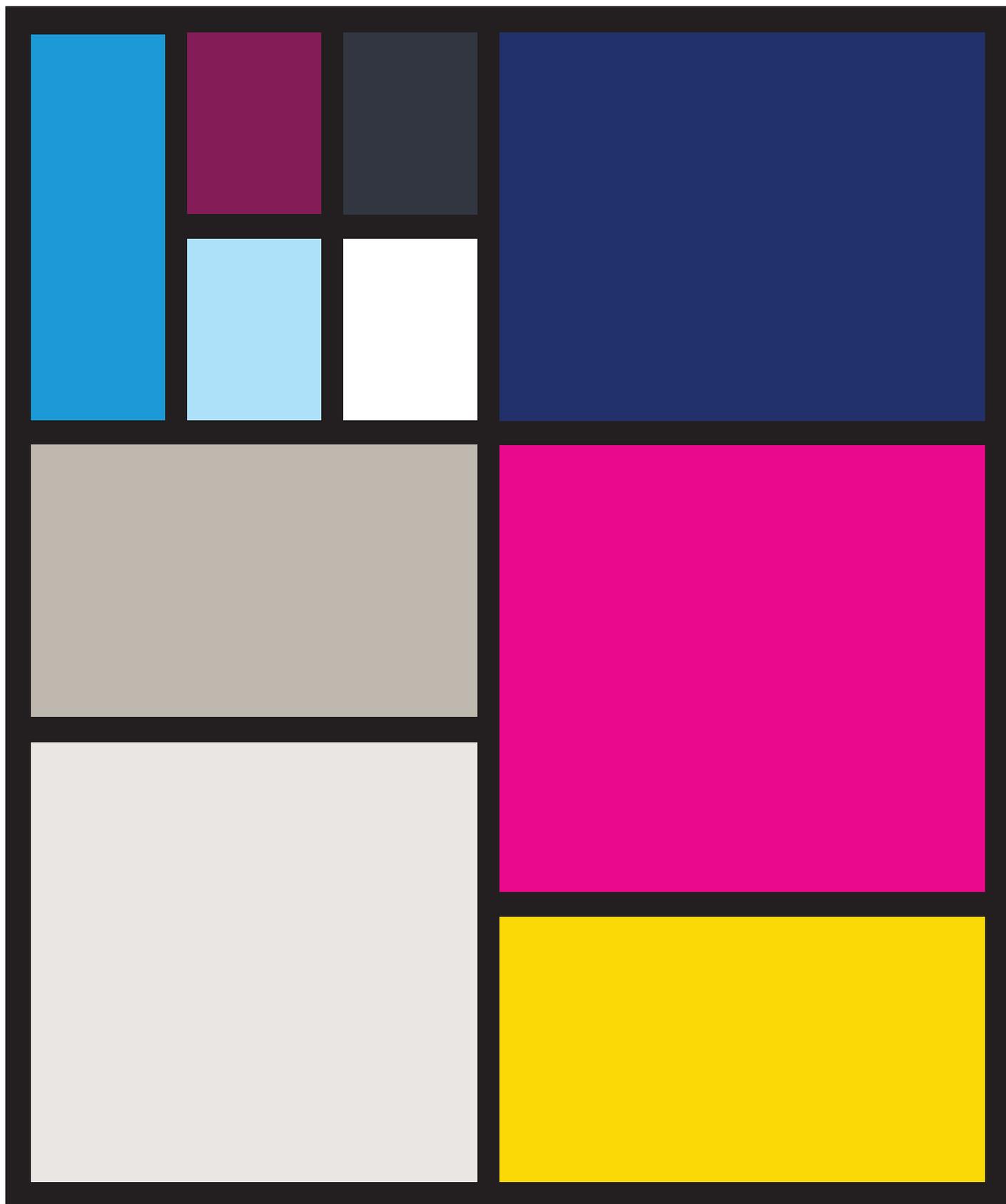
Director - Academic Affairs, Digital & Learning Transformation

TU Dublin - City Campus

Professor
Mike Murphy

Academic Registrar
Director - Academic Affairs, Digital & Learning Transformation

Welcome
Message



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Who's Who in the SU?

TU Dublin Students' Union

Is the representative body of students within TU Dublin and is wholly independent of the university. Every registered student in TU Dublin is automatically a member of the Students' Union. A proportion of the Student Contribution Charge per student is allocated to TU Dublin Students' Union on an annual basis.

Class Reps

Are the foundation on which TU Dublin Students' Union is built. Each class is entitled to one Class Rep who is usually elected by the class at the start of each academic year. The Class Rep is the person who represents the interests and concerns of the class to the Students' Union locally to the academic staff and especially to the Programme Committee.

School Reps

Act as a liaison between the Class Reps and the School. Each School is entitled to one School Rep who are elected by Class Reps. School Reps automatic members of our Student Council.

Student Council

Is where all TU Dublin Students' Union policy is debated and agreed and where the TU Dublin Students' Union Programme of Work detailing the services and activities that will be undertaken on behalf of students is approved. The total membership is 101 and consists of the President of the Union, the Deputy

Presidents, and Vice Presidents (9), the Part Time Officers (13), School Reps (30) and Student Councillors (48) who are elected at the Class Rep Meetings. Student Council Meetings will be held at least 7 times during the academic year.

Student Councillors

Are elected by Class Reps on each of the main sites i.e. Blanchardstown Camus - 12; City Campus - 21 and Tallaght Campus - 15. Their role is to hold the Officers to account and to propose, debate and agree TU Dublin Students' Union policy.

College Officer

Is the Chairperson of the Class Rep Meeting (CRM) and their core function is to elect Class Reps and support the development of local democratic structures and engagement with students on their campus. Each of the 6 TU Dublin City Campuses are entitled to elect a College Officer and these elections normally take place alongside the Sabbatical Officer Elections in March each year. All registered students can vote in these elections.

The College Officers for 2019/20 are

- Aungier Street:Mel Sexton
- Grangegorman:Ian Kelly
- Bolton Street:Samuel Berry
- Kevin Street:To be elected
- Cathal Brugha Street:Fionn Collins
- Rathmines and BIMM:Aoife Meagher

Post Graduate Officer

Acts as a liaison between postgraduate & research students with TU Dublin and the Students' Union. Any registered student studying at level 9 or above or a Research student may run for election for this post. The election takes place in tandem with the annual elections and all postgraduate and research students may vote.

Full Time Officer

Represents students' interests at the Governing Body, Academic Council, Academic Boards etc., where they lobby for improvements in services for students, and work to protect students' rights and entitlements. Elections for these positions usually take place in March and all registered students are entitled to vote by secret ballot.

The Full-Time Officers for City Campus this year are:

- President:Pierre Yimbog
- Deputy President:Rebecca Gorman
- Vice President for Education:Daniel Sagaolu
- Vice President for Events & Engagement:Barry Egan
- Vice President for Welfare & Equality:Moya Browne

Role and Function of Class Reps

What are the fundamental parts of your role?

Class Reps are the essential link between:

Students

Your Programme of Study

TU Dublin

Your Students' Union

We need you to be an active member of TU Dublin SU. We need you to help us improve programme quality and the overall student experience for all students.

Class Reps gather feedback from their class and express their views to TU Dublin and the Union, and bring more feedback back to their class. This flow of information is crucial as it enables TU Dublin Students' Union to be responsive to student needs and in turn this strengthens the power of the Union to lobby for improvements.

As a Rep, you are an important point of contact for students to get the info on all TU Dublin Students' Union Activities, campaigns and events, so you should stay informed and keep your finger on the pulse.

Each Class Rep is also a member of the Programme Committee. Students need to have a say in how their programme is run; and when Reps attend these meetings they can raise issues, give feedback and make suggestions. Reps can flag problems and assist in resolving them, and in doing so improve the quality of the programme and the overall learning experience of all students.

Responsibilities of the Role

In order to be successful and effective in your role, there are a few tasks you should do throughout the year. Training and support will be provided by the Students' Union.

1. Get Trained and Prepare for the Role

Familiarise yourself with this handbook and register for our Class Rep training events held throughout the year. Keep an eye on your email for updates from your Students' Union on events and meetings coming up to meet other reps and learn from them.

2. Identify yourself to the Students you Represent

Students need to be aware of who you are and how they can contact you, so if they have any class issues, they know they can contact you. You can introduce yourself in front of the class, make a group chat, email your class, and introduce yourself during coffee breaks.

3. Find the Student Handbook for your Programme

Your handbook is an up-to-date source of information for your programme. Become familiar with it, in particular focussing on modules, to ensure your class is receiving the high-quality education you signed up for in TU Dublin.

4. Identify the Issues and the Needs of the Students in your Class

You represent the opinions of your Class and what you say should be representative of your entire class. As a Class Rep you must identify the issues

in your class, not just some individual opinions. The sooner you start gathering information from your class, the more time you have to find solutions!

5. Represent the Needs of your Class, even if you don't agree with them

As a representative for the Student Voice, what you say should reflect the needs of your class as a whole. Consult with your entire class so you can represent the majority effectively.

6. Attend and Actively Participate in your Programme Committee Meetings

The Student Voice is an essential part of these meetings to ensure that students can receive a top-quality programme during their time here. Make sure you are adequately prepared for these meetings, and use your voice if you recognise any issues that can be brought to this meeting.

7. Liaise with your Students' Union and Attend your Class Rep Meeting (CRM)

Your Student Union officers rely completely on student feedback to be informed on issues that emerge so that we can represent the needs of the students effectively. Come to Class Rep Meetings to make sure your voice is heard, and meet other Class Reps and discuss common issues and needs you all have.

8. Work in Partnership with Other Class Reps on Wider Issues

The Student Voice is so much stronger when we can work together, especially when many classes have the same issues. The more individuals there are asking for change, the more likely this will happen. Attend your Class Rep meeting and engage with the other reps; you never know when common issues can be worked on as a larger group. Your Officers will also be there to help you along the way!

9. Refer Larger Issues to your Students' Union

As a class rep, there are limits to your role, and you aren't expected to solve every problem that arises. When there are some issues you can't deal with (welfare, exam appeals, grants etc.), refer students on to our Advice Service - check tudublinsu.ie to find out where your SU office and who your Student Advisor is.

10. Reflect on Meetings you Attend and Bring Feedback to your Class

Report back to your class to show your value as a Class Rep; you can get stuff done! Make sure your class is up-to-date from meetings and they know what is going on in TU Dublin and TU Dublin SU. You can really improve the learning experience in TU Dublin, and your class needs to know about that.

Dealing with Class Problems

It's hard to predict what issues/problems you and your Class may emerge; lack of adequate resources is an ongoing issue in higher education and TU Dublin is no exception!

Examples you might encounter include:

- classroom facilities
- Library services

printing/photocopying
lecturing standards/issues
programme workloads
getting effective feedback on continuous assessments and exams
equipment issues
timetabling issues
health and safety
site issues
welfare queries - although problems come in all shapes and sizes

Remember, you are not expected to be an expert in these areas, and you should refer a student to the appropriate service to best deal with the issue. If in doubt contact your local Student Advisor in your local TU Dublin Students' Union Office or Advice@tudublinsu.ie (see Useful Supports for Reps p.17).

When speaking to your class you will become aware that some aspects that your classmates may see as negative / positive may not be your opinion. It's important when raising an issue with academic staff (and the Students' Union) that you give details and context and indicate that this is the opinion of (some) members of the class.

The following questions will assist you in collecting more information and hopefully get a better grasp of the issues you want to communicate.

What is the issue? Try and spell out as simply as possible what is right or wrong about the course.

Why is it an issue? E.g. 'It affects teaching quality or impacts on the students' ability to learn'.

How do you know it's an issue? What complaints/comments have been made, what students have spoken to you (here you are attempting to provide evidence for what you are saying)?

Where is this issue? Is it in one module or programme or year?

Who does the issue affect? Just certain groups or streams, the entire year or certain cohorts (males, females, part-time or international students, mature students...)?

When is it an issue? Should the academic staff/School be aware of deadlines or timescales around the issue which may affect it?

After you have the facts follow these four steps:

1. Assess the Situation

It will be up to you to determine the key issues and order of events. Once you have this information confirm with the class what you understand to be the most important issue.

2. Identify Objectives

Ask your class what they hope to achieve by raising an issue, and what their preferred outcome would be. This will assist you in determining a strategy.

3. Agree Objectives with your Class

Decide what action is to be taken and by whom and set timelines. In terms of developing a strategy you should consider:

Should the person/issue be referred elsewhere?

Can you take it up informally with staff or should the issue go to the Programme Committee?

If you need to raise it at a Committee, must you submit a report in advance?

Should it be discussed first with the TU Dublin Students' Union Officers/staff? And do you need any support, advice and/ or representation from TU Dublin Students' Union if you feel the matter is outside your remit.

4. Provide Feedback

It is important to keep your class informed of progress. It can be frustrating if the feedback cycle is broken, which will end up making your job more difficult.

Keeping a Record

It is important to keep a record so you can follow up any issues. The best way of keeping records is through email. Whenever you email a query or request to someone in the TU Dublin you should copy (cc) the relevant TU Dublin Students' Union officer, this helps us to keep records of students' concerns.

Why do you need to keep a record?

TU Dublin Students' Union officers can start identifying recurring issues and try to address them proactively.

TU Dublin Students' Union can't always act on one complaint but it doesn't mean the issue isn't serious. Recording several complaints will strengthen our hand when we raise your concerns at TU Dublin committees.

It allows us to track issues from year to year, and help the officers and staff see what different types of training reps need.

TU Dublin Students' Union can represent students' needs better.

Always remember that you are committing yourself once it is in writing, so be careful what you say. If you need someone to check over an email or document, Students' Union staff will be happy to help.

Programme Committees

Each programme in TU Dublin is overseen by a Programme Committee. The Committee is made up of all the staff teaching on the Programme and senior academic staff such as the Head of School and Heads of Department, and at least one Class Rep from each year of the programme. This committee's main task is to ensure that the Programme is delivered with what has been approved and set out in the Programme Document and is compliant with TU Dublin policy and procedures.

The Programme Document is the formal document that describes the Programme as it has been approved by academic and industry experts. It contains the information on every aspect of your Programme. It explains what the lecturers should be doing, why they're doing it and how they should be doing it. The learning outcomes of each module, methods of assessment and how the programme is administered are listed as well as the marks and standards and regulations for the assessment etc. Your Programme Document should be available online from your School, in Library section of www.tudublin.ie or in hard-copy in the library on your local campus.

As a member of the Programme Committee, it is important that you understand that you represent your classmates views, not just your own. In order to express what your class thinks you need to find out what their opinions are. The Staff know that they have a duty to listen to you, take your opinions and suggestions on board and respond to them appropriately.

Here are some simple steps to help you get the best out of these meetings:

Before the Meeting

Consult Your Class! As the Rep, you have a responsibility to your class - if you aren't representing their perspective, then their issues won't be addressed. Programme Committees are not very time consuming as they generally only meet two or three times a year. Minutes, agenda and other documents should be emailed to you in advance. You should also be given the chance to add items to the agenda; this is your chance to raise issues that have been brought to you, as the Rep, by students.

Be sure that the class are clear on your role and remind them what it is that you do and do not do.

Read the agenda before the meeting and discuss with your class. Write down any comments you plan to make, and read the minutes from the previous meeting (this should be available from the chairperson).

Ask your last year's Rep (if possible) to learn about any ongoing issues and how meetings operate.

Know when and where the meeting is and turn up on time - or send apologies if you can't attend.

During the Meeting

Participate effectively! Pay attention, make notes, contribute, and ask

the chairperson to explain if there is anything you don't understand – don't be afraid to ask questions or speak up.

Make your point clearly and positively – but do not be confrontational.

Don't agree to anything you are unsure of. If necessary ask to defer the decision to allow you to consult with your Class so you can make an informed decision. If the decision isn't deferred to allow this, then make sure you object strongly and that this is noted in the minutes. Remember you represent your class on the committee, decisions you agree to may be difficult to reverse.

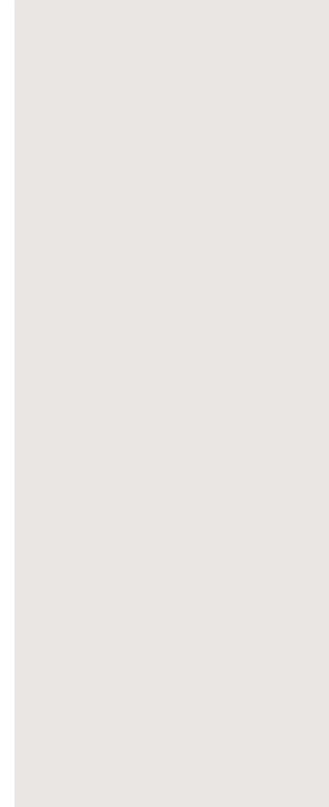
After the Meeting

Provide feedback on the discussions and outcomes to your class.

Class Reps

TU Dublin Students' Union

Programme
Committees



Developing Your Skills

These guidelines, tips and tricks are all designed to help you become effective in your role as Class Rep and to ensure you can meet any challenges and enjoy the experience. If you want a bit of advice in dealing with any aspect of your role you can ask Daniel – VP Education, your College Officer, School Rep or any staff member (see www.tudublinsu.ie) for contact details and other useful info.

Communication

One of the things Class Reps experience as a difficult part of their job, is finding an effective way of communicating with their class. Whatever method you use to communicate it is useful to bear in mind these three points:

1. Why should students communicate with their Class Rep?

Some students don't communicate with their Class Reps because they don't understand what a Class Rep does. You will need to explain what you do - students can approach you with positive and negative feedback about their course, and you will pass the information onto the relevant staff (Programme Chair, Tutor).

2. What difference does speaking to a Class Rep make?

If students don't believe that the Class Rep system works, or that it cannot make a difference to their learning experience, then a vicious circle starts with students feeling that the system doesn't address their concerns. This affects how representative you can be of your class at meetings. It is important that you encourage students to comment, and that you provide information about what has happened at meetings and the issues that you have raised on their behalf. This means that you can demonstrate to others that speaking to a Class Rep can make a difference.

3. How should I communicate with my Class?

Here are some suggestions which are aimed at helping you find out information as quickly and easily as possible. Remember the sooner you start communicating with your Class the more information you will gather:

Use social media and set up a class Facebook / Whatsapp group.

Give everyone a sheet of paper and ask them to write one thing they think is going well about the programme and one thing they think could be going better. At the end of the class collect all the suggestions and use in discussions with your Programme Chair. You should hold an 'open discussion' before the Programme Committee meeting. This will enable you to discuss with your classmates any issues that the School/Programme Committee wants to raise, as well as issues you have been asked to raise.

Don't underestimate the potential of coffee-breaks and chats before and after lectures. It is only natural that issues about your programme will crop up as it is one of the things everyone has in common.

The best way to discover the views of your class is to be accessible and encourage them to approach you. Listening skills are very important, try not to interrupt people when they are talking to you. Make notes and then ask for clarification if you don't understand any items.

Negotiation

It is important to develop your communication and negotiation skills. Informal routes can sometimes be the most successful approach to finding a solution. Try to solve problems at local level where possible, i.e. first speak informally to lecturers on the module/ programme. Waiting to raise an issue at Programme Committees may not be effective as these only meet once a semester and towards the end of it.

So don't wait until the Programme Committee meeting, your class wants to get problems dealt with as soon as possible, therefore most times it's probably best to approach the Programme Chair or Head of School to discuss the problem and find a solution.

Check in with the class for a few minutes before or after a lecture to ensure that you have a clear understanding what the issues are. If an issue is particularly controversial, it is advisable to prepare a report to present at the Programme Committee. TU Dublin Students' Union can provide assistance with this.

Negotiation is all about compromise. If no one compromises an agreement will not be reached. Try to make a compromise first so you will be in a position to remind the opposition that you made the first move and now it is their turn. Always have a bottom line, beyond which you are not prepared to go.

Reflect on the situation once the negotiations are over as it will give you a chance to evaluate and hopefully learn from your successes and any mistakes as well

Class Reps

TU Dublin Students' Union

Developing Your Skills

Class Parties and Alternatives

Dublin is a crazy culturally diverse city, with lots of different places to go. Every class and course is different and as a Class Rep, you can organise an event your class wants to do. Some classes might just want a night out, another might like something more low-key like a meal or a trip to the cinema, some might not drink alcohol. The most important thing is to listen to your class and try to organise something that most students would like to go to! The last thing you want is to organise a fab time and no one shows up, so listening is key.

Here's some tips and tricks on how to organise a successful outing for your class.

Nights Out

1. *Find out what kind of music and scene your class are into. Is it pop music or techno? Do a poll in your facebook chat to determine where the majority would like to go.*
2. *Pick a night where you know your class won't have to get up early the next morning for a lecture, this will keep you in good books all around, with your class and your lecturers!*
3. *Organise a fab pre drinks! Find out who lives close to town in your class and see if they can host.*
4. *If there's a couple of people who commute to college who would have to leave early, try suggest they rent an apartment for the night! The more people who go in on it, the cheaper it is, and it could also be a great place to host predrinks.*
5. *Get in contact with the club venue or a promoter for the venue to see if they can get you on guestlist, cheaplist or to reserve an area for you inside! They might also be able to get you drink deals.*
6. *Watch the time - the last thing you want is to miss the guestlist window and everyone has to pay in full price.*
7. *Recommend to everyone to have a plan to get home safe, if people live in the same direction it's smart to share taxis and it's cheaper.*

Low Key Nights

1. Low key nights could mean anything to a trip to the cinemas, a meal or a few quiet ones.
2. Chat to your class about what they would like to do, someone could have a great idea that no one else has thought of it!
3. If you decide to head to the cinema - try to go on a student deal night, most popular cinemas have them. Do a poll to decide what film and maybe pool in some money to grab some snacks in Dealz or a €2 store!
4. Meals out are a brilliant way to socialise and have an experience while doing so. Dublin is known for having a massively diverse culture and this definitely includes food! Most people know what they like, so chat about what kinda places people might like to go and get some suggestions. Ring well ahead of the date planned, and see if they have any group deals. Lots of places do set A La Carte menus or

group booking menus.

5. There's a ton of cool places in town for chill pints, a few board games and maybe a pizza. Best thing to do is to book a space with the pub, which is always free!

Alternatives

You are spoiled for choice within Dublin City, and there's no shortage of alternative group things to do! Here's a couple of alternative night and day things to do with your class - just to shake things up!

<https://www.clockworkdoor.ie/> - a cafe where the only thing you pay for is your time!

<https://accentslounge.wordpress.com/> - Dublin's most popular late night cafe - comfy chairs and coffee til the late hours!

<https://dublin.ie/learning/articles/museum-dublin-the-dead-zoo/> - The Dead Zoo! Learn about animals lost in time!

<https://www.dublinozoo.ie/> - The (Live) Dublin Zoo - great student deal and in the run up to Christmas they have a fantastic light show called The Wild Lights!

<https://www.visitdublin.com/see-do/shopping/markets> - Dublin has tons of markets with plenty of local vendors and great food stalls!

<https://www.visitdublin.com/see-do/details/st-michan-s-church#53.347458|-6.275396|13> - St. Michans tombs - some local history and scary tombs!

Ice Skating - through the months of November through to January there are loads of pop up Ice Skating rinks in Dublin!

<https://www.funderland.com/> - Also in the lead up to Christmas, funfairs pop up too! The most popular would be Funderland in the RDS.

<https://ghostbus.ie/> - Dublin is rich in history and definitely haunted! There's a bunch of walking ghost tours and ghost bus tours!

Class Reps

TU Dublin Students' Union

Class Parties

