



Welcome to the UPSU Course Rep Training!

The Student Voice Team



The Hive, SU



Tracy

Representation and
Democracy Manager



Hannah

Representation and
Engagement Co-ordinator



Charlie

Representation and
Engagement Co-ordinator

Studentvoice@su.plymouth.ac.uk

By the end of the session, you will:

- Have an understanding of academic representation.
- Be confident with the role and responsibilities of a Course Rep
- Learn how to gather feedback from peers and present feedback at meetings
- Learn methods to engage your peers to provide feedback
- Know how to publicise yourself as Course Rep
- Know how to signpost effectively

What skills and qualities make an effective Course Rep?

In small groups, discuss what skills and qualities you think make an effective Course Rep.



Approachable

Organised

Good communicator

Representative

Proactive

Passionate

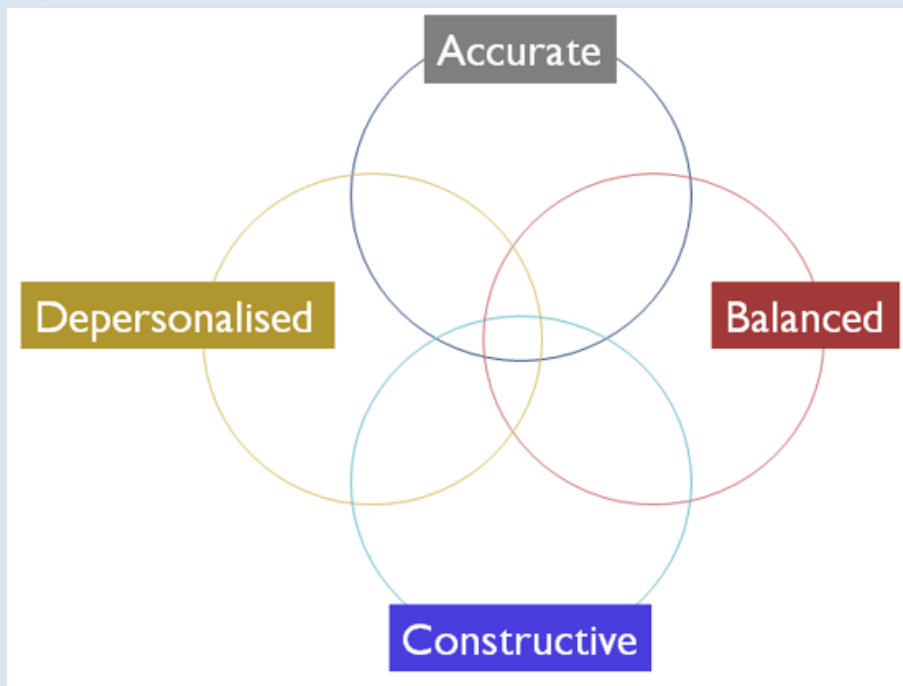
Responsibilities

- Attend the UPSU Course Rep training
- Log any feedback and any Rep achievements on the Make A Change site (as well as sharing feedback with relevant staff).
- Share any topics you would like to talk about ahead of meetings you're invited to i.e. get items added to the agenda if there is one
- To publicise yourself, and what you can do for your fellow students in your Course Rep role
- To keep on top of student concerns and gather positive **and** constructive student feedback
- Present student feedback in a productive and clear way ... come with suggested solutions
- Attend all meetings you are required to and relay the feedback you have received (and send apologies in advance if you cannot attend)

Responsibilities

- Understand the importance of anonymity and confidentiality
- Share relevant information passed on by UPSU to your cohort
- Encourage your course mates to vote and participate in UPSU Elections, referendums and general meetings that may be relevant to them regarding academic issues
- Signpost students to services within the University or UPSU when an issues arises that is not within your remit (Signposting Guide on the website)
- Evaluate the positive difference you have made over the year
- Keep in touch with your School Rep and the Student Voice Team

The A ,B ,C & D of Representation



There are four different elements to consider when thinking about representation.

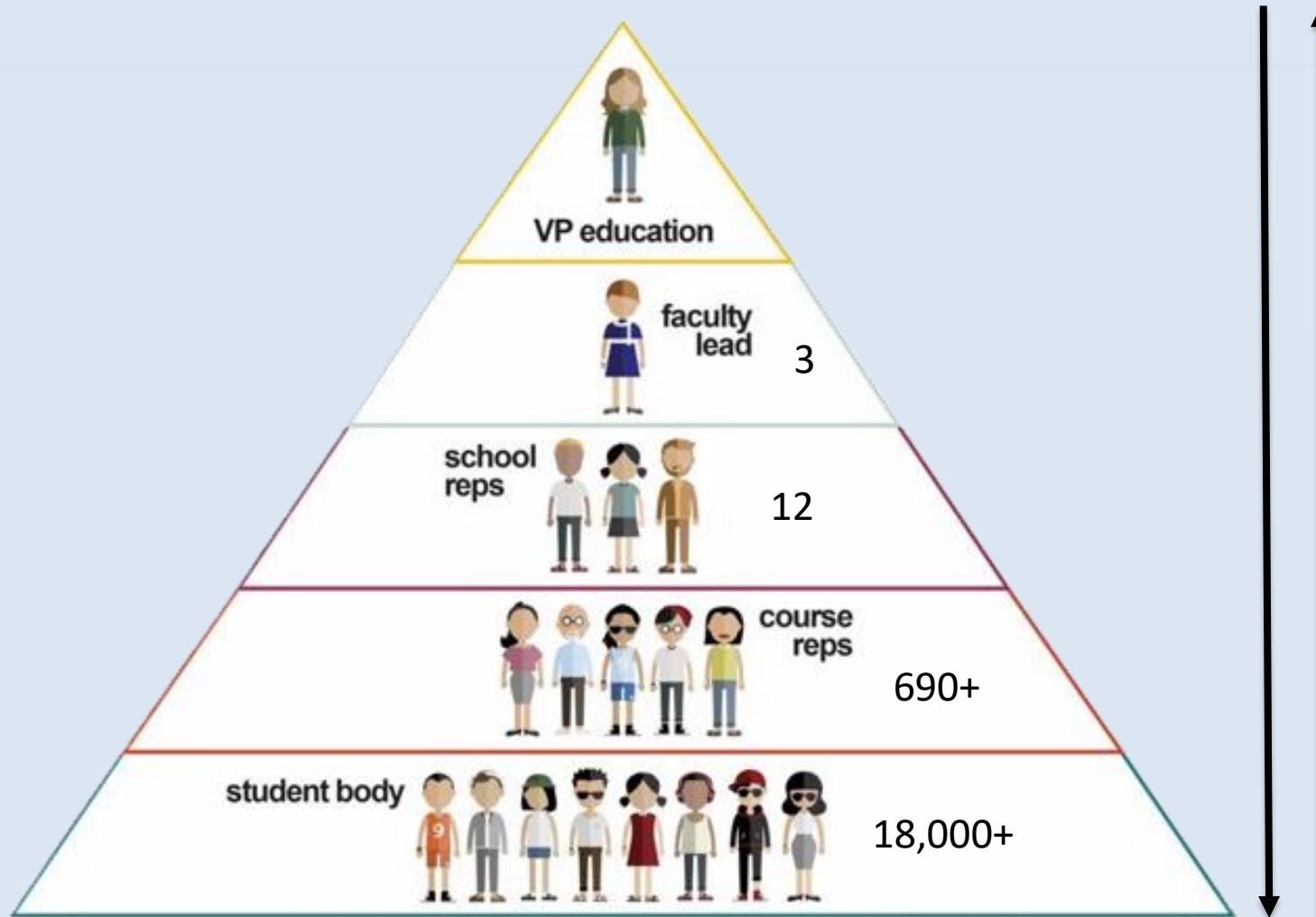
Accurate - You will need to get facts, know the full story and be as accurate as you can. It's easy to say lots of students are experiencing X issue but how many is 'lots'? What is the exact issue?

Balanced - You will need to think about whether a particular issue affects the whole student body or a particular group. Are there generalisations or assumptions being made? And are there two sides to the story?

Constructive - You will need to encourage students to think about things in depth, in a proactive and constructive way. Encourage them to look at what their options are, coming up with a best-case scenario they would like to see but also an acceptable compromise.

Depersonalised - Don't forget you are a representative, which means setting aside any personal agenda. You will need to take into consideration which 'hat' you are wearing and be clear who you are representing.

The Academic Representation Structure



Faculty Representatives



Darcie Jones

Faculty of Health
Vpeducation@su.plymouth.ac.uk



Josh Frost

Faculty of Arts, Humanities and
Business
Vpactivities@su.plymouth.ac.uk

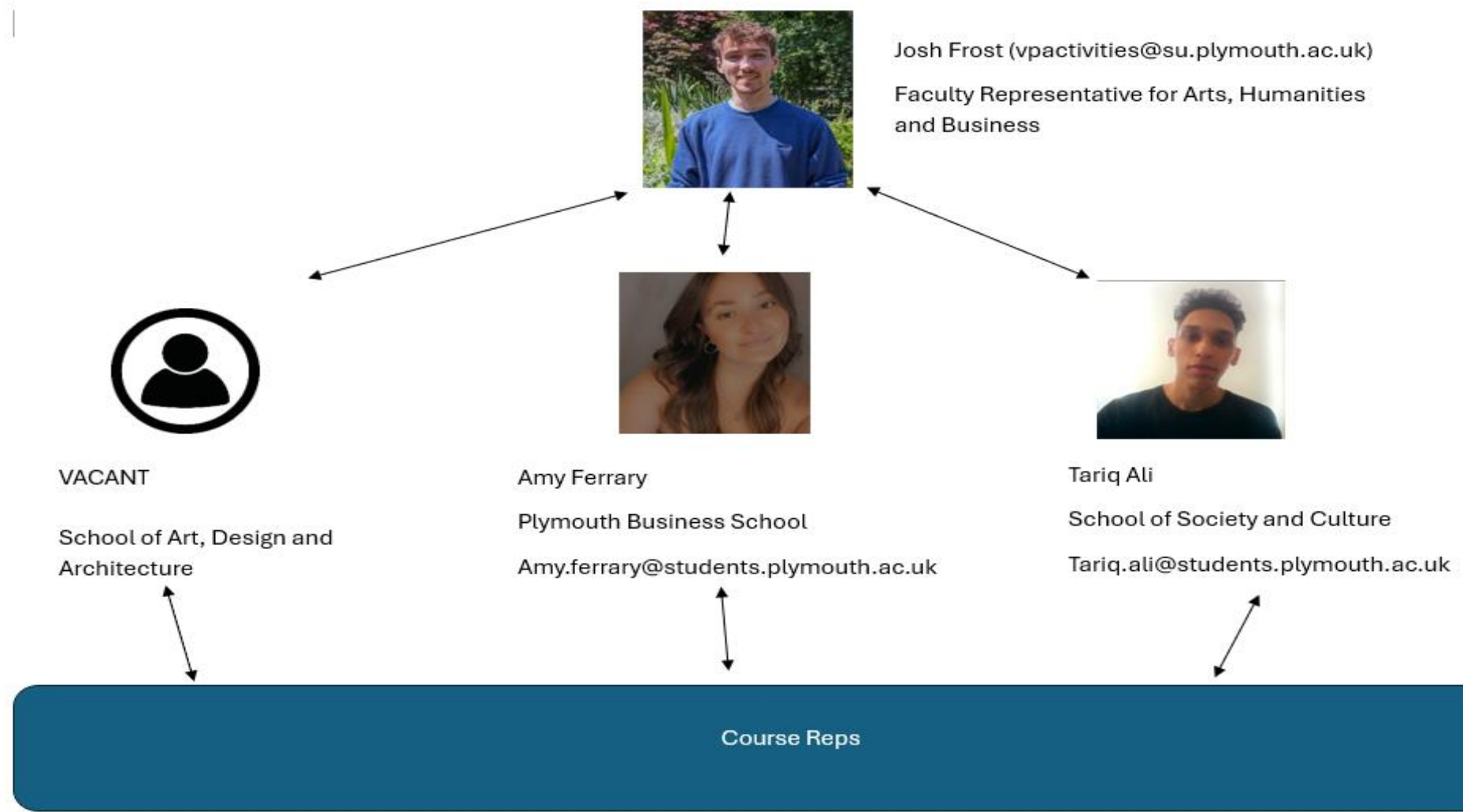


Krupa Naik

Faculty of Science and Engineering
Vpwellbeinganddiversity@su.plymouth.a
c.uk

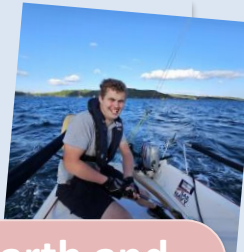


Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Business Rep Community





Faculty of Science and Engineering Rep Community



Faculty of Science and Engineering (FoSE)
Faculty Rep- Krupa Naik

School of Engineering,
Computing and Maths (SECaM)
School Rep- Maria Stefan

School of Biological and Marine
Sciences (SoBMS)
School Rep- Kate Inman

School of Geography, Earth and
Environmental Sciences (SoGEES)
School Rep - Adam Holt

School of Engineering,
Computing and Maths (SECaM)
Subject Reps

School of Biological and
Marine Sciences (SoBMS)
Subject Reps

School of Geography, Earth
and Environmental Sciences
(SoGEES)
Subject Reps

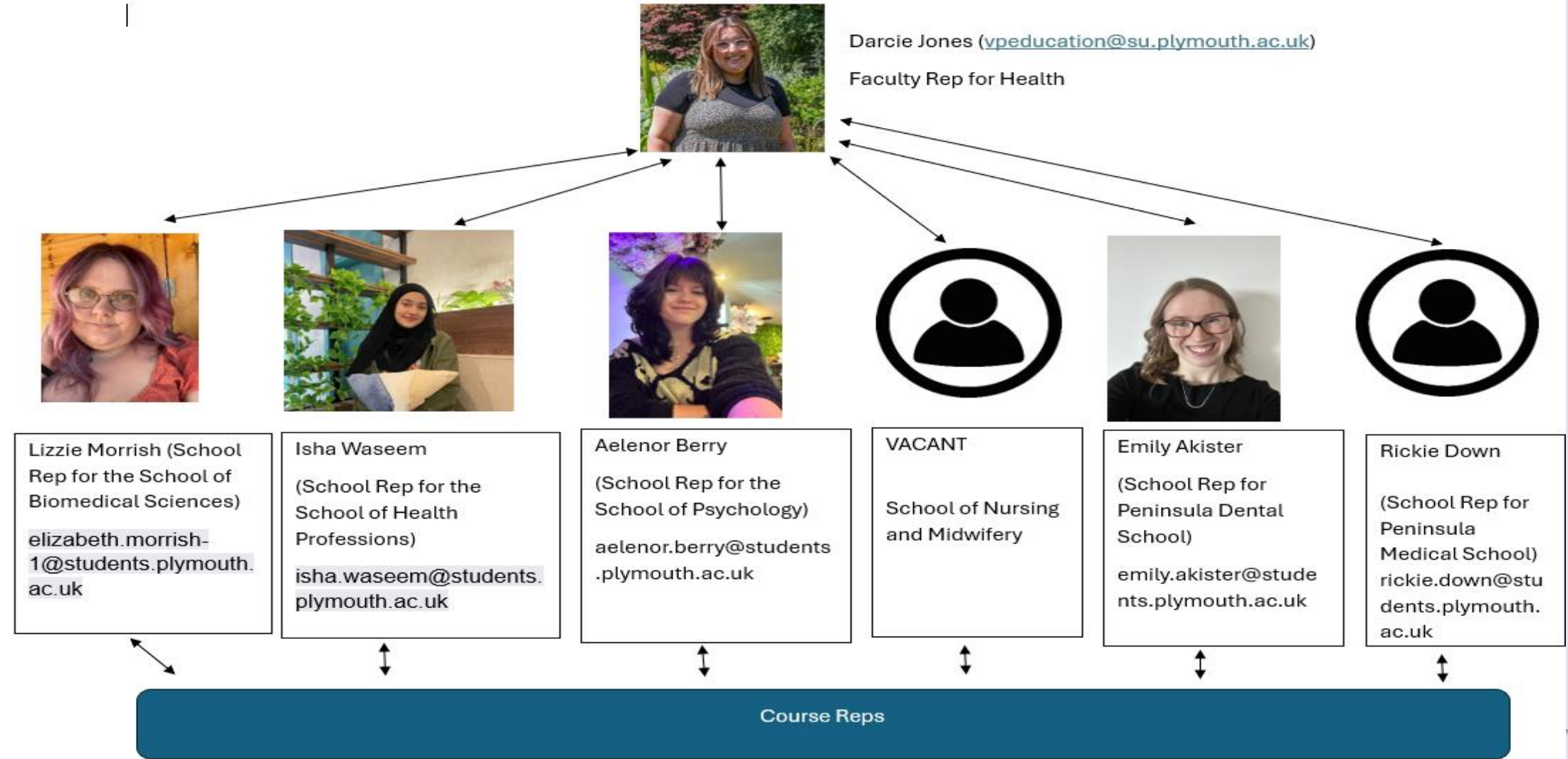
Course Reps



Subject Reps

- Within the Faculty of Science and Engineering, as well as the Faculty Rep, the School Reps and the Course Reps, there is also the Subject Rep role.
- Subject Reps cover a group of programmes within the School, such as Computing in SECaM, Geography in SoGEES and Marine Biology in SoBMS.
- Subject Reps attend their School's School Teaching, Learning and Quality Committee (STLQC) alongside the School Rep, and update on feedback from students on their programmes.
- Subject Reps will also work closely with their School Rep to gather feedback on issues within their subject areas and work together as a team to share outcomes from meetings back to students.
- The Subject Rep role is new, having been brought in towards the end of the last academic year, with this being the first full year of the role.
- Interested and in FoSE? Get in touch with Student Voice at studentvoice@su.plymouth.ac.uk.

Faculty of Health Rep Community



Creating a Community

As Course Reps, a key part of your role is to build communities;

- With people on your course – students will then feel confident giving you feedback.
- Speak to other Course Reps in your School/ Faculty – share best practices, work together to get advice from each other (you may find that another Rep has had dealt with something similar in the past and can help)
- Get to know your School Rep – they attend high level university meetings and can feed forward any feedback that needs escalating
- **Optional** : Join the Faculty Rep WhatsApp Communities (created by the Student Voice Team) - a quick way to communicate with other reps in the Faculty, as well as a quick way for us to contact you. You will be sent an invitation link .



“make a change”

www.upsu.com/representation/makeachange

Make a Change is the tool to report on feedback that you have dealt with and resolved (sharing your wins), to log feedback that you have received from people on your Course, and to share concerns that may not have been resolved.

Through submitting feedback, it becomes part of the bigger picture, helping UPSU to identify trends matters that affect the experience of students, and allows your School and Faculty Reps to escalate this to a higher level (if relevant).

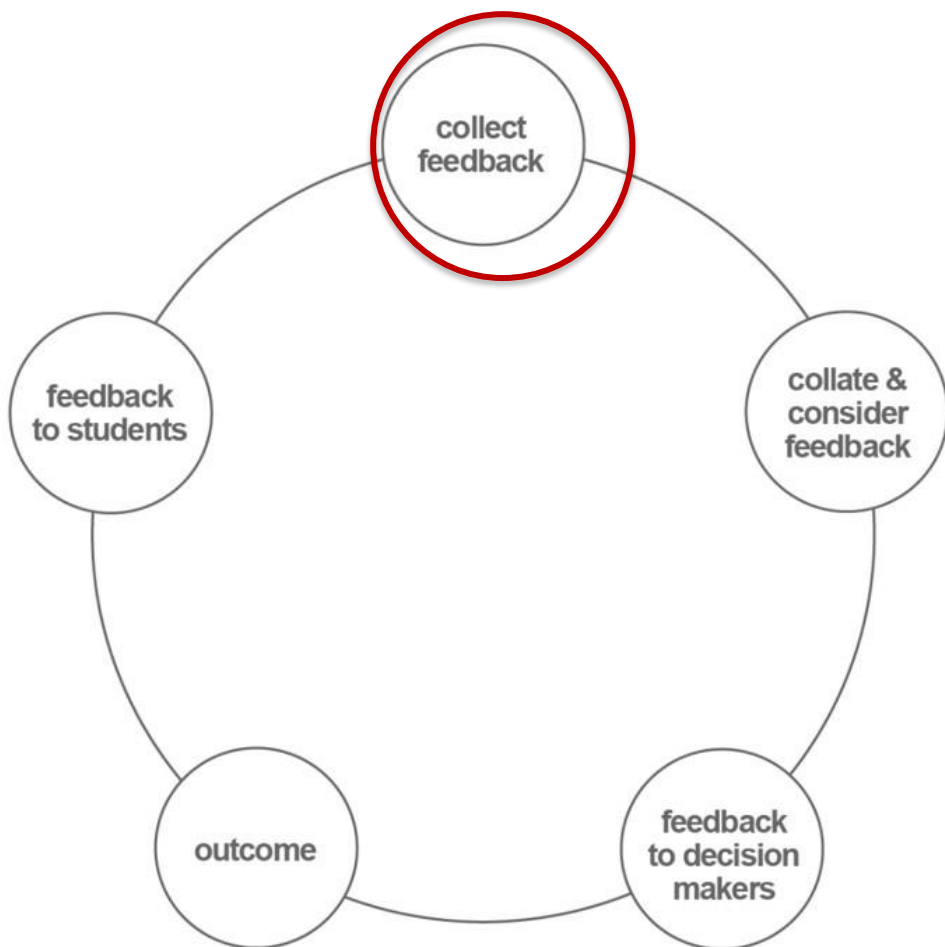
This does not replace giving your feedback to university staff but is to be used in addition to improve your university experience.

Your Rep Wins will then be celebrated in the SU Faculty Newsletters, the SU website and sometimes the Heads of School!



The Feedback Loop

Our 'Gathering Feedback' Xerte training goes into much more detail about how to gather feedback effectively.



In order to collect feedback, your peers will need to know:

Who you are

- **What** your role is (what you can and can't help with)
- What feedback collection method you will use
- **How** to contact you
- **Why** students should contact you as a Course Rep

Publicising Yourself



What methods can you think of to let people know that you are their Course Rep?

In the past, Course Reps have:

- Asked their lecturer to introduce them
- Introduced themselves in a lecture (with permission from the lecturer)
- Created posters
- Sent group emails (if you have the details of your cohort)

In-person

Emails

What methods can you think of to gather feedback?

Surveys

Group chats

For more detailed training about how to gather feedback effectively including the pros and cons of each collection method, we have a Gathering Feedback online training for you to work on at your own pace:

https://xerte.plymouth.ac.uk/xerte/play.php?template_id=8745.

Suggested Topics for Feedback

+ Curriculum

The curriculum element is all about what you learn and how that learning is structured e.g. course organisation, timetabling etc.

+ Learning Resources

e.g. library and computing facilities

Refer to the [Course Rep Handbook](#) for more example questions.

+ Learning and teaching

+ Assessment and feedback

e.g. adequately and timely feedback, fair grading, does the assessment fairly represent the course content?

+ Student progression and achievements

e.g. employability, do you understand how each module fits into the wider context of the qualification?

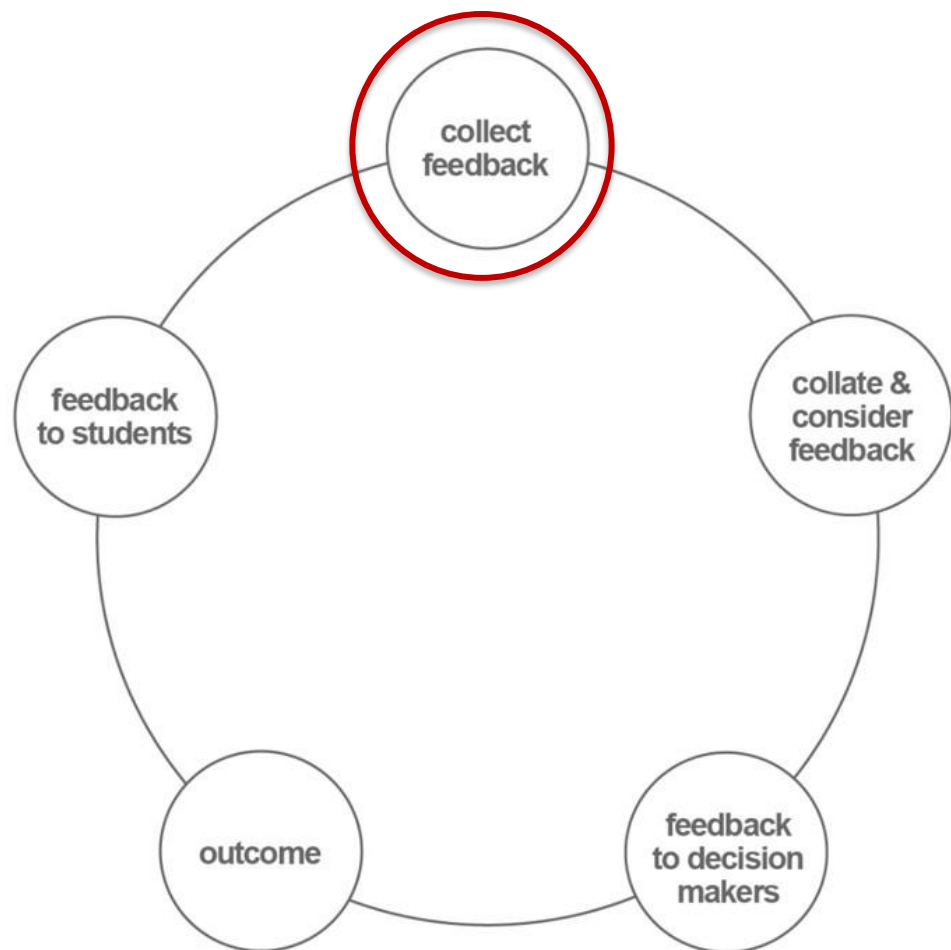
+ Guidance and support

+ Quality enhancement and assurance

e.g. are staff receptive to concerns? Do you know how to communicate issues about student experience?

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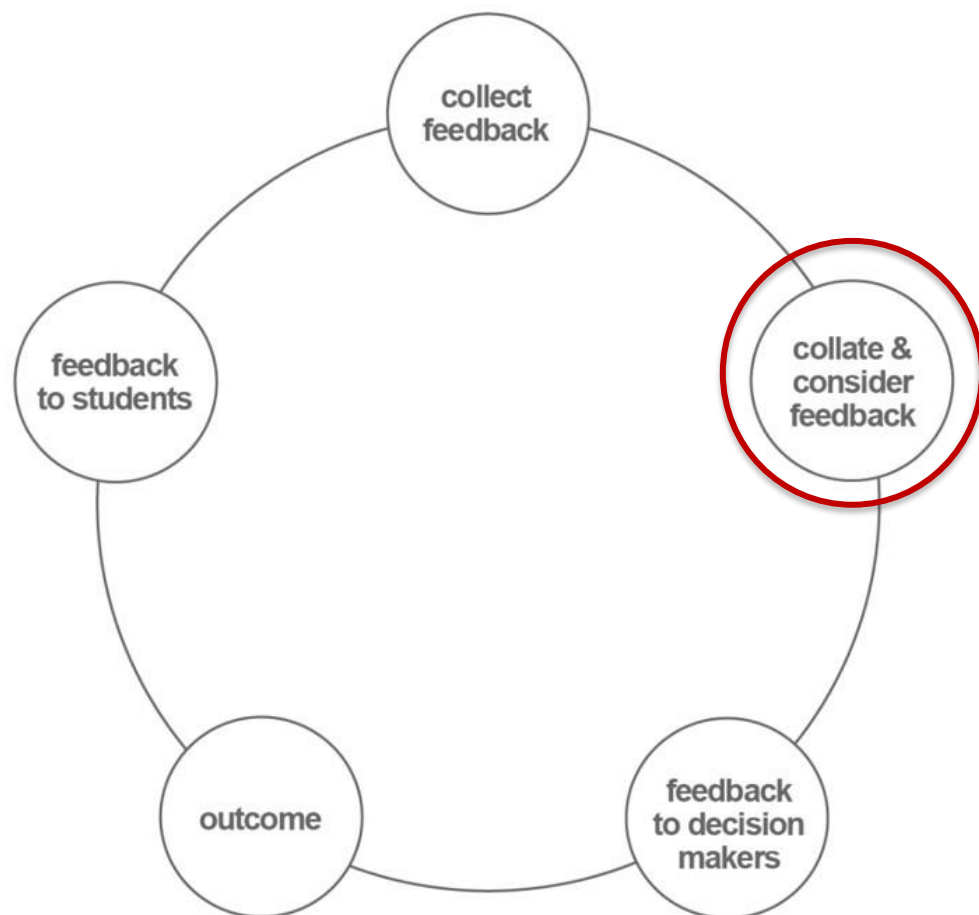


Anonymity and confidentiality

- You should never attach a person to an item of feedback (you can however give a statistic).
- If a student comes to you with a personal issue, you must keep this confidential unless this risks your or their welfare (you should refer them to the Advice Centre – which is an independent, impartial advice service ran by UPSU). **You should not try and resolve this as this isn't within your remit.**
- When presenting feedback to decision makers, remember you are a representative and although you may not agree with someone's feedback, you should not make that known to staff or students.

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Once you have gathered your feedback, you will need to bring it all together and analyse it.

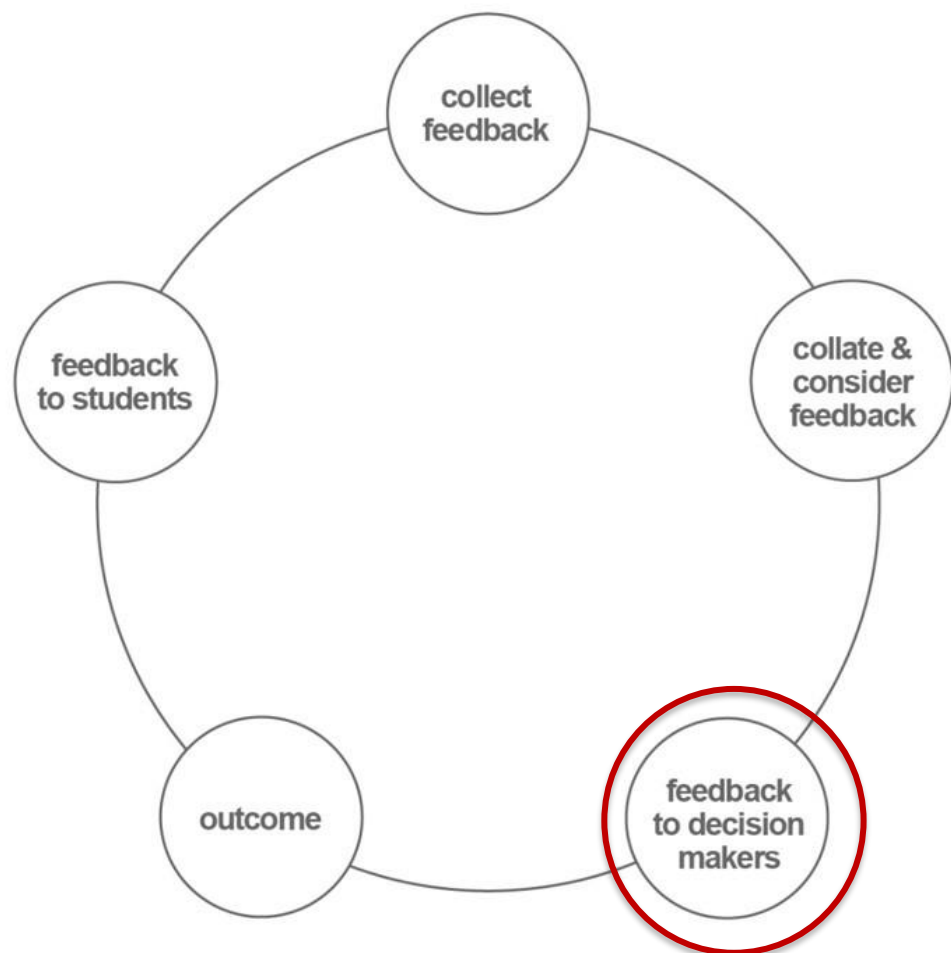
Are there common themes through the feedback?

For example, 80% of students on the course felt that assignment deadlines were too close together. This will help strengthen your argument and show evidence.

Note that this does still need to be representative and not just reporting views that you agree with.

The Feedback Loop

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When passing on feedback from your cohorts, you will need to decide where to take it for it to be acted on.

You will need to consider:

- The academic representation structure
- How many people the issue affects
- Whether the issue is urgent or not- this will then help you decide who you speak to about the issue/feedback
- Does it affect an individual, Course, Programme, School, Faculty or the entire University?

When and how to escalate feedback

School Rep

- If feedback affects more than one course within the School, or you have repeated issues that aren't resolved, speak to your School Rep. For example, students on your course may have delayed assignment feedback repeatedly without reason and you haven't been able to get any further.
- Wherever possible, come to your School Rep with as much detail, include what you've already done, so that they can help you as efficiently as possible.

Make sure to share your positive experiences with your School Rep too!



When and how to escalate feedback

Faculty Rep

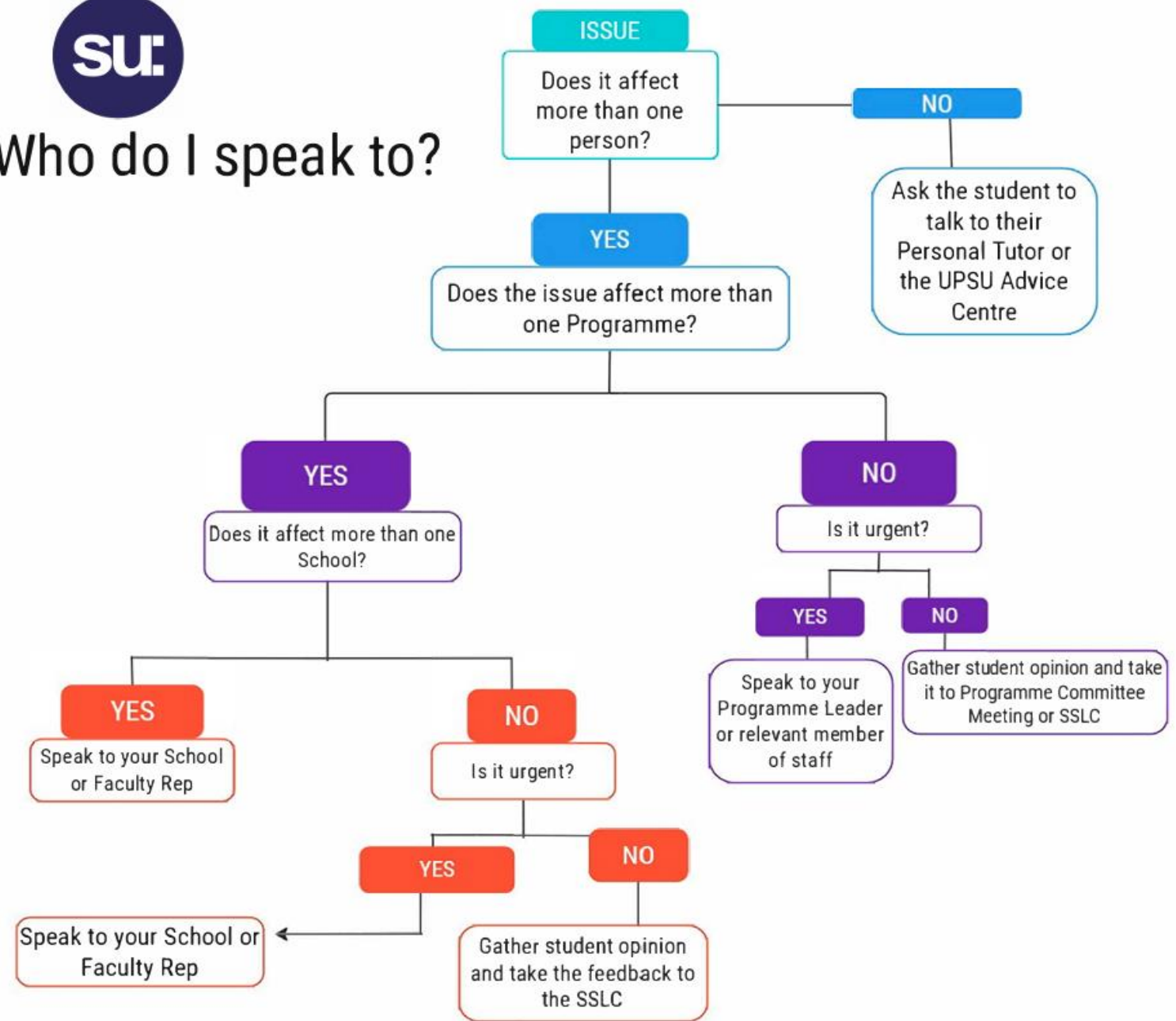
- Does the feedback affect more than one School in the Faculty?
- If so, escalate to your Faculty Rep.

- Darcie Jones (Health) - vpeducation@su.plymouth.ac.uk
- Josh Frost (Arts, Humanities and Business) - vpactivities@su.plymouth.ac.uk
- Krupa Naik (Science and Engineering) - vpwellbeinganddiversity@su.plymouth.ac.uk



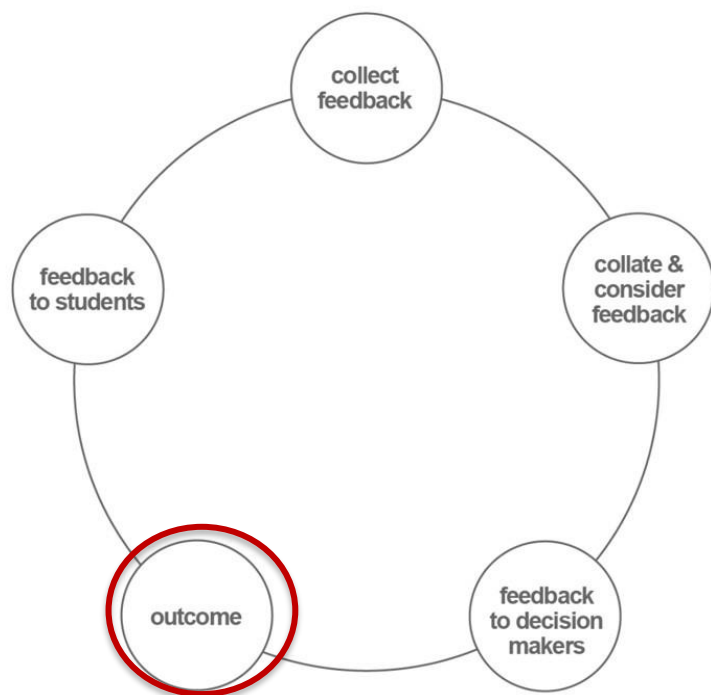


Who do I speak to?



The Feedback Loop

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When you raise feedback at a meeting, it will either be brushed to one side or staff will take the feedback on board and consider further options.

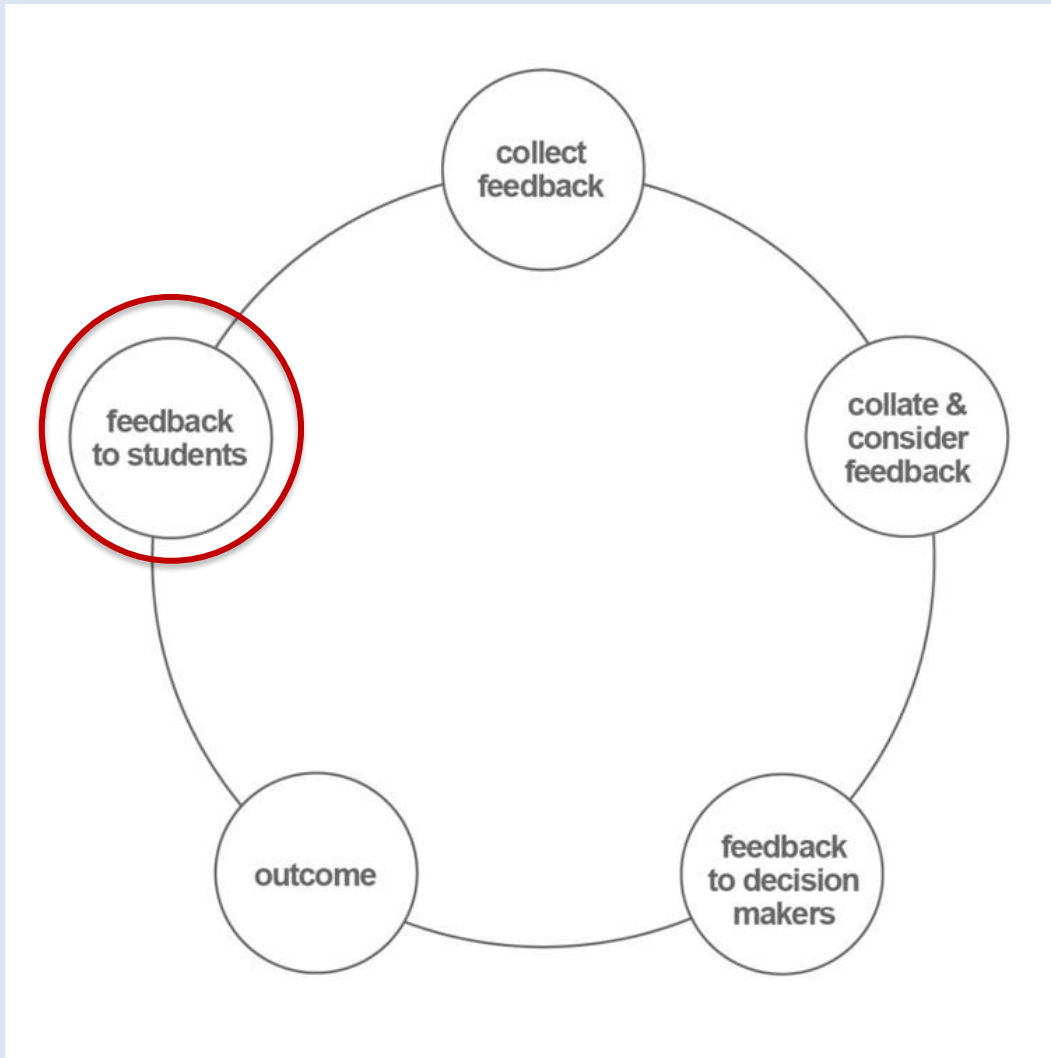
If it's brushed to one side:

- Compromise and negotiate a better outcome
- Be professional and considerate of both sides
- Come with further solutions! Feedback is more likely to be acted upon if you come with proposed solutions.

If your feedback is going to be acted upon, super! Make sure you close the feedback loop....

The Feedback Loop

Our 'Gathering Feedback' Xerte training goes into much more detail about how to gather feedback effectively.



The most important step – make sure you're letting your peers know what the result was, whether staff are going to action the feedback, or if you need to do some more information gathering.

Scenarios – What would you do?

A student has not received their student loan

Make sure you sign post this student to the UPSU Advice Centre (an independent, impartial advice service ran by UPSU). They are best equipped to advise this student about what to do.

A student approaches you with feedback that the lift in RLB is not working, as a disabled student this is preventing them from accessing lectures and workspace

Encourage the student to contact the lecturer notifying them of their absence and to ask for the recording of the lecture. Also, check out the lift service status page on Sharepoint and see if the Estates Team are aware of the lift issue.

Some students are not happy with their grades

How many students does this affect? If it is only one or two that are unhappy, suggest they speak to get further feedback from the lecturer. Direct them to the SU Advice Centre who can advise them of how to make a complaint if they are not satisfied.

If this affects the whole course and there are concerns about the quality of teaching or consistency of marking on the course, the School Rep should liaise with the VP Education and it can be taken to School/Faculty TLQC. Again, the Advice Centre can support with the complaints process.

Signposting

If students bring you issues that fall outside your role as a Course Representative, then you'll need to **signpost** them

The following are examples of what is NOT your within your remit as a rep, and where you can signpost students for support:

- Disability Support, Wellbeing Support, Financial Support – direct to the Student Hub or SU Advice
- Issues affecting International students (i.e. Visas, CAS, immigration) - direct to the Student Hub
- Money - Academic offences - Appeals - Code of conduct/disciplinaries - Thinking of interrupting - Fitness to practise - Student finance - Accommodation – signpost to the SU Advice Service

For more detailed signposting guidance, visit the Signposting Guide on the Course Rep Hub! [Signposting-Guide-for-Reps.pdf \(upsu.com\)](https://upsu.com/signposting-guide-for-reps.pdf)

Meetings

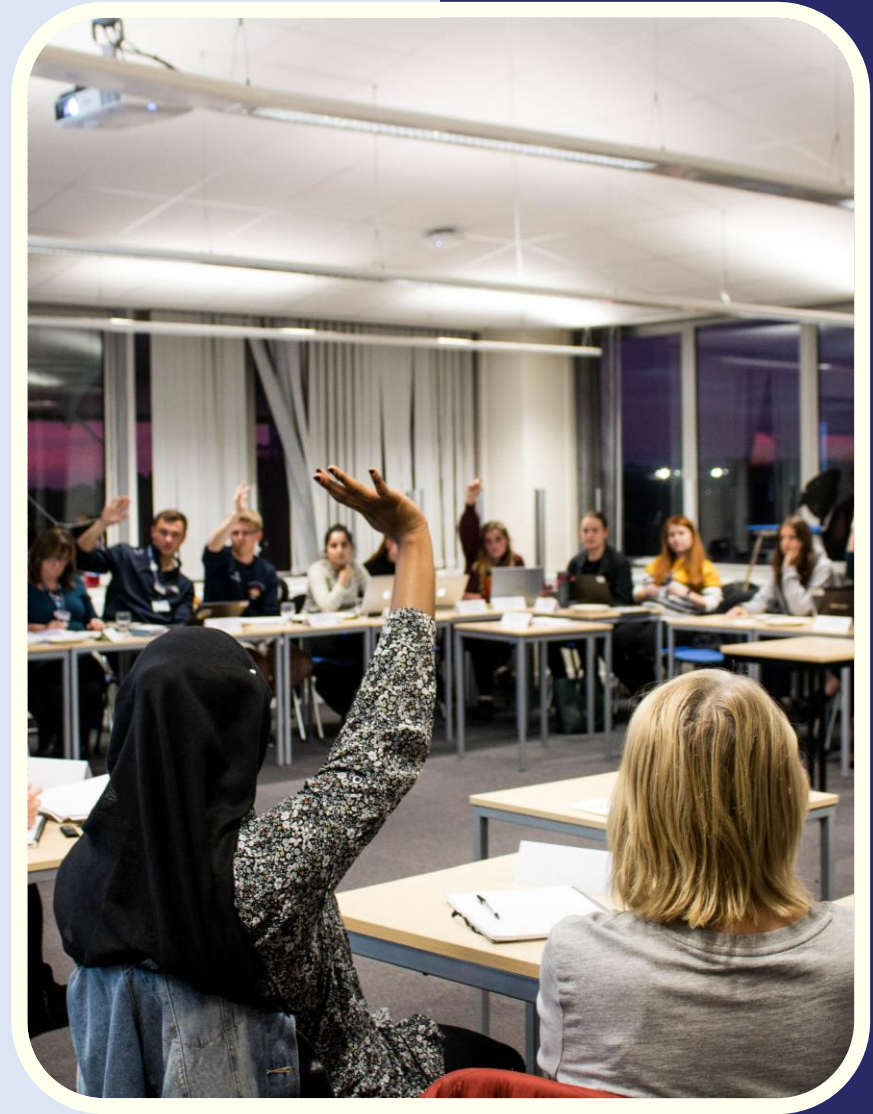
As Course Reps, you will be invited to a range of meetings dependent on your School:

- Programme Committee Meeting
- Staff-student Liaison Committee (SSLC)
- Course Rep Catch Ups (organised by the SU)
- School Catch Ups with Your School Rep

You may be invited to others dependent on your Programme.

Meeting Etiquette

- If you can't attend a meeting, let the organiser know and give a reason why.
- If meetings related to your Course Rep role are regularly being held when you have timetabled sessions, please get in touch with us at studentvoice@su.plymouth.ac.uk.
- Come with solutions!



Recognition

- End of year certificate (by request)
- Your Rep wins shared in the SU Faculty and Newsletters
- Opportunity for your peers to nominate you for the Student Representative of the Year at the SU Beacon Awards



The Course Rep Hub

www.upsu.com/academic-representation/course-reps/info/

- [Course Rep Handbook 2024-25](#)
- [Course Rep role profile](#) - Roles and Responsibilities of a Course Rep
- [Course Rep Code of Conduct](#)
- [Who Do I Speak To?](#) - A document to help you know where to take feedback.
- [Example questions](#) that Course Reps are encouraged to ask their cohort before meetings
- [Signposting Guide](#)

Detailed online training: Gathering feedback

Optional online training: Supporting the Wellbeing of Yourself and Peers, Consent eLearning and Bystander Intervention eLearning

The SU logo is a dark blue circle containing the letters 'SU' in a white, bold, sans-serif font. The 'S' and 'U' are connected at the top. The logo is positioned on the right side of the slide, overlapping a large, light blue circular background element.

SU

What next?

- Complete optional skill-boosting online training throughout the year. Remember to fill out the forms at the end of the training to get this listed on your end of year certificate.
- Look at the Course Rep Hub (including the Handbook)
- Find out when your first Course Rep meeting is
- Start engaging with students and gathering feedback
- Stay connected with your School Rep
- Join your Faculty Rep WhatsApp Community
- Get in touch with us if you have any questions: studentvoice@su.plymouth.ac.uk



Don't forget to scan the QR code to register your attendance if you have not already done so.



Any questions?