



Code of Conduct for Academic Representatives

This code of conduct outlines the expectations and responsibilities for all academic representatives and applies to all forms of communication, for both face-to-face engagement and digital engagement.

'Academic Representatives' include Course Reps, School Reps and any other position where a current student is representing the views of their peers. The election may have been an official online, cross campus ballot or more informal show of hands, Zoom poll, email vote or co-option from a smaller group. Alternatively, students may have been selected through self-nomination.

This code of conduct applies to all academic representatives, and it is not possible to opt out of any part of it. By undertaking the role, reps have agreed to abide by these standards.

UPSU has separate policies relating to Full-Time Representatives (Sabbatical Officers) and for staff.

Academic representatives are required to adhere to this Code of Conduct whenever they:

- Conduct any business on behalf of UPSU.
 - Carry out the duties to which they have been elected or appointed.
 - Act as a representative of UPSU or of the students at the University of Plymouth.
-

Expectations of Representatives

All academic representatives are expected to proactively undertake the duties of the role to which they hold, thereby providing effective representation for the student body.

As a student representative, it is expected that you will:

- Engage with any training sessions or support mechanisms, such as your one-to-one meeting, or rep drop-ins.
- Proactively collect student feedback and report back outcomes of any relevant meetings or conversations.
- Attend both University and UPSU meetings relevant to the role.
- If it is not possible to attend a meeting, apologies must be sent as far in advance as possible.
- Complete any written or verbal reports as necessary within a specific role.

A Representative must:

- Treat others with respect.
- Adhere to the [Memorandum and Articles of Association, Byelaws and policies](#) of UPSU and all University of Plymouth regulations and policies, including, but not limited to the university [Student Code of Conduct](#).
- Act in the best interests of students whilst having a regard for relevant advice provided by the Board of Trustees, representatives, and staff of UPSU as well as that of the University of Plymouth.
- Ensure appropriate use of UPSU resources.

A Representative must not:

- Disclose any information given in confidence without prior consent.
 - In the case of concern for an individual's safety please contact the [Advice Centre](#).
 - Conduct themselves in such a manner that could be regarded as bringing UPSU or University of Plymouth into disrepute.
 - Abuse their position to secure advantage for themselves or disadvantage for others.
-

Expression of personal views

All UPSU representative roles are leadership positions and holders of these posts are expected to lead by example.

We recognise that postholders may come under increased scrutiny so require that;

- When raising role related issues reps should identify themselves in the most appropriate way, this may take the form of adding their role title to their university email signature or having a relevant, appropriate social media handle.
 - Personal social media profiles and accounts should not be used for role related activity.
 - Personal views or opinions should not be shared on role related platforms and reference to elected role should not appear on personal accounts.
 - All role related messages and content created or shared by reps should be considered with accessibility, diversity and inclusion in mind.
 - Any content on a personal platform that may constitute a hate crime should be reported to the university using the [speak up tool](#) as soon as possible.
-

Declaration of Interests

All elected representatives must declare a conflict of interest at the earliest opportunity.

Interests that could be declared may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a) Employment at any business that has dealings with, or is seeking to do business with, UPSU.
- b) Membership of, or position of authority in any club, society or association group that is being discussed.

- c) Membership of, or position of authority in any public body, company, charity, trade union or professional association.
 - d) Affiliation with any individual or group whose principal purpose includes the influence of student opinion.
 - e) Association with any company, firm or other body under contract from UPSU to provide goods, services or works.
 - f) Personal relationship with any member of UPSU staff or Sabbatical Officer or that is involved in the areas mentioned above.
 - g) Personal relationship with any student that is involved in the areas mentioned above or holds an elected role that scrutinises their work as a representative.
-

Conduct of Others

If a representative or student would like to report that a representative is not adequately fulfilling their role, or has not complied with this Code of Conduct, then they can contact the Student Voice Department who will explain the processes for raising a concern.

Reporting other issues that are not in relation to the effectiveness of representatives can be done through the [University Speak Up tool](#), or [UPSU Members Disciplinary Procedure](#), as appropriate.

Commented [(CA1): Alternatively, could this be something like 'If a student has a concern around the conduct of an academic representative, they can get in contact with the Student Voice team at UPSU, who can advise with the next steps'? This avoids raising the issue of the Accountability Board, and areas where we might be running counter to the current byelaws?

Support and Accountability

Failure to meet the obligations of a representative may, depending on the severity of the infringement, result in the following support or accountability measures being adopted. This is not an exhaustive list, but may include:

- The matter being raised at a one-to-one meeting with a member of staff or Sabbatical Officer, with a conversation about how we can better support you in the role.
- Being issued with a censure - a formal expression of disapproval which will be recorded in any meeting minutes.
- Being issued with a vote of no confidence instigated by students, if this is upheld then you will be removed from office.
- A membership disciplinary following relevant UPSU process.

UPSU operates a 'two strike' system, whereby failure to carry out elected duties, without a valid reason, constitutes a strike. After two strikes the representative in question will be contacted to see how the SU and the University could support them in their role.

The university complaints procedure and UPSU Membership disciplinary procedure have their own sanctions and outcomes which run independently of this code.

- UPSU offers full support and guidance for all reps. If you feel that you may be unfairly disadvantaged by any of these rules, please do contact studentvoice@su.plymouth.ac.uk to discuss this further.