

Area Representative

Area Representatives have the primary responsibility of supporting the development of a student community for students living in the area they cover and, where necessary, representing their views to the Association Student Leadership Team and The Open University. You will be a member of the OU Students Association Student Leadership Team (SLT), which is made up of all the successfully elected candidates from the Students Association elections (excluding Student Trustees) and serves as the collective voice of the OU student body. The SLT work together as a team over their two-year term to advocate on behalf of students, and to champion changes that will enhance and improve the OU student experience. Each member of the SLT has an individual portfolio, which determines their area of focus. However, Student Leaders will work together to agree on their team priorities and how they want to pursue them, sharing their challenges and achievements along the way.

There are five Area Representatives, one for each of the following:

- England
- International
- Ireland
- Scotland
- Wales

Shared Responsibilities of all Elected Student Leaders

As a member of the Student Leadership Team, you become a crucial part of the Association's Student Leadership Team. Student members elect you to represent them, provide support, create a student community and uphold the mission, vision, and values of the organisation. All elected student leaders have the following shared responsibilities:

- To work as a team to support the [Association's mission, vision and charitable objectives](#).
- To truly harness the Students Association values of equality and inclusivity, openness, kindness and compassion, integrity, and collaboration.
- To attend initial onboarding sessions, the four official quarterly SLT meetings each year, monthly SLT huddles and the Association's biennial conference.
- To effectively communicate with fellow SLT members and the staff team who work in collaboration. This involves the regular use of official spaces and emails.
- Support, connect and work with other Association Volunteers and Representatives who are providing vital activities, services, and events to members.
- To be the public face of the organisation involved in raising awareness, developing promotional materials, delivering presentations and hosting student facing sessions.

- Submit regular reports and blogs regarding your role, showcasing impact and engaging members, including contributing to the production of a biennial report for Conference.
- Where possible, attend at least one Student Consultation meeting to engage with students.
- You will be committed to equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- Act openly and responsibly and be prepared to be accountable for your actions.
- Respect confidentiality in any information which has been imparted to you in confidence and recognise the importance of this - if this information relates to a safeguarding matter, you must not keep it to yourself. Speak to a member of the Volunteering and Representation team should you have concerns.

The Area Representative's responsibilities:

- Is the first point of contact and a public face of the Association to students studying in your nation and is prepared to communicate with students through a range of platforms.
- Activities in your region could include:
 - The creation of a regular newsletter designed for students in your area
 - The setting up of online or face to face meet-ups connecting local students
 - The running of Freshers events in conjunction with your national office (n/a for International rep)
 - Feeding back to the Association key achievements of students in your areas
 - Feeding back to the Association concerns specific to students in your area
- Closes the feedback loop on matters affecting students which are specific to those studying in your nation, using a range of appropriate media to ensure content is engaging and available to a wide range of students.
- Supports the delivery of training to Community volunteers, working collaboratively with a range of staff and volunteers to ensure that appropriate support and guidance is provided.
- Works with the Association Staff team regarding Nations external engagement, particularly related to devolved governments.

Key skills and attributes

The post-holder will need to possess, or be prepared to develop rapidly, the following:

- A broad understanding of area-related issues affecting students.
- Commitment to develop further skills and knowledge appropriate to the role.
- A broad understanding of the Students Association and the Open University.

Training and support will be offered to the successful candidate.

Role Specific Essential information, including time commitment

- This is a voluntary role which requires on average **5-10 hours a week**, but is busier at some times, such as during Freshers and results day.
- Candidates for Area Representative roles can only stand for their home Nation/Region where they currently reside.

Examples of meetings attended by Faculty Representatives

The nature of our Student Leader's roles is that there are always additional Association and OU working groups and committees that they will attend, as well as a range of one-off activities. We are therefore providing the most comprehensive list we are currently able to.

The list specifies scheduled meetings; additional work is typically required between these through online discussions and/or reading papers. In general, where there are face to face meetings these often take place in Milton Keynes, however, we are embracing blended working and so most meetings are hybrid or online.

Association meetings

- **Student Leadership Team Meetings** – Formal SLT meetings to agree action taken by the Association on Student-facing issues and to discuss proposals to the Board of Trustees when required. All formal business is covered in these meetings, and these are mandatory except for unavoidable circumstances.
- **Monthly Student Leadership Team catch up** – a less formal but regular opportunity for the SLT to get together to discuss current issues, ideas and generally support each other in role.

Additional meetings are arranged as and when needed to provide training, host community sessions and to get involved in delivering Freshers and other engaging student-led activities. Other Nation and Area Reps have found it beneficial to meet on a semi-regular basis, along with VP Community to share best practice and ideas.

Dates for your diary

- Start date: Following elections, this role begins 'elect' on 1st July 2024, when onboarding training sessions and handover will commence. During this time, you will have opportunities to find out more and shadow your predecessor, who will remain in their role until 31 July 2024. You will then officially take over from the outgoing role holder on 1st August 2024.
- OU Students Association Conference – Milton Keynes – Saturday 15th June (optional)
- Onboarding and Handover weekend – Milton Keynes – July 12th – 14th
- Onboarding weekend – Milton Keynes – September 13th – 15th

- SLT meet quarterly on Saturdays, dates will be agreed by the incoming President and Deputy President upon the start of term.

Timeline for your onboarding

May 10th: Election results announcement

May 13th – June 30th: Welcome pack sent out with useful information and links to e-learning

June 15th: OU Students Association Conference (you are welcome to attend, but don't worry if you can't)

July 1st: Elected candidates take up 'Elect' roles and become Students Association volunteers

July 1st – July 31st: Onboarding and handover commences

July 12th – 14th: Onboarding and Handover weekend in Milton Keynes (a weekend for training, team building, and some handover with the outgoing Student Leadership Team)

August 1st: Official take over date from the outgoing role holders

August 1st – September 30th: Further training and support to build confidence in your role

September 13th – 15th: Onboarding weekend in Milton Keynes (a weekend to come together as a team now that you've had a bit of time in the role, and develop your team priorities for the 2024-26 term)

Further information

These remits are not exhaustive and specify the core responsibilities of Elected Student Leaders. They are subject to change dependant on circumstance and ongoing developments. There may also be items that fall across remits where postholders will work collaboratively.

Remits indicate the normal assignment of responsibilities, however, where both parties are agreed, role descriptions are not intended to prevent the sharing or transfer of relevant work for good reason and in the interest of supporting one another.

All volunteers are expected to follow the Volunteer Policy and Agreement, the Values and Behaviour Policy and Code of Conduct given to them on taking up a role with the Association.

All volunteers are required to have their own IT equipment and internet connectivity sufficient to fulfil their remits. In exceptional circumstances, and for a period not exceeding six months, the Association may be able to provide the loan of a laptop.