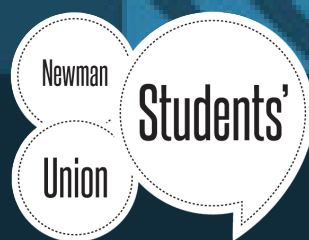


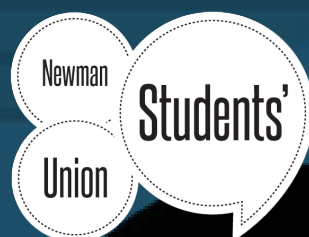
COURSE REPRESENTATION



Student Handbook

Last Updated August 2026

CONTENTS



Student Handbook

Welcome. 4

Responsibilities 9

A Guide to SSCCs 13

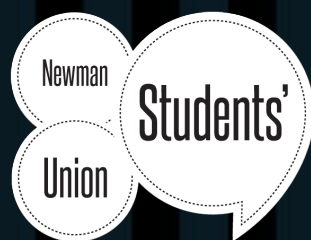
Feedback Gathering 16

**The Academic
Representation Structure.** 18

Recognition and Rewards. 20

**Contacting the Students'
Union.** 22

WELCOME



Student Handbook

Welcome and thank you for taking the time to read the Newman Students' Union Course Representative Student Handbook. Firstly we at Newman Students' Union would like to congratulate you on the start of your new role as a Course Representative. This handbook has been created to help give you a head start as a developing student leader, and so you can return to this document as a point of reference for all things Course Representation.

You are now a part of a vital community here at Birmingham Newman University, a community of individuals who want the best out of their time at university, that includes University staff, students, Officers, fellow Course Reps, and your Student Voice team at the Students' Union. Alongside this you will have the opportunity to develop a wide variety of transferable skills and earn awards which will aid you in future careers. This handbook should provide you with the basic information necessary to fulfill your role, however do not hesitate to come and speak to a member of Students' Union staff if you are feeling overwhelmed, stressed, or just a little lost, you are always welcome!

A Message from your Deputy Vice-Chancellor

I would first like to welcome each of you into your new role as a Course Representative. With many recent changes and developments in the world of higher education, your role as a Course Representative is even more fundamental to the continued improvement of the student experience at Birmingham Newman University.

As Deputy Vice-Chancellor the quality of the student experience is of the utmost importance to me. Course Representatives play a crucial role in ensuring that the University is being pro-active in its support of students and reflective growth as an organisation.



Being a Course Representative does not only allow you to make a real tangible impact to the overall university experience of your peers, it also enables you to develop your personal and professional abilities giving you a head start into your future careers. I wish you every success in fulfilling this critical role and thank you for your involvement and forthcoming contribution to the life of our University community.

Professor Richard Medcalf

Deputy Vice-Chancellor

A Message from your President

Before I became President, I used to be a course representative just like yourself. My time as a course representative played an integral role in developing the skills I use in my role day to day like gathering feedback and listening to the concerns of students. But now that's in the past, it's your turn to be the course representatives and develop as the future generation of student leaders. This role is crucial because without you, students would be without a platform or representative which would provide them with a voice in university decision making, and the opportunity to be apart of something bigger.



"It's never too late to be what you might have been."

- George Elliot.

If you have ever met me on an open day, I probably told you, "You get out what you put into university" and being a Course Rep is the perfect example of how you can get more out of your university experience. By gathering feedback, attending SSCCs, and ensuring students are involved in every aspect of their degree programme, you and everyone else will get more out of your university experience and as President I'm here to make sure that your voices don't go unheard. Thank you for your commitment to being a course representative.

Josh Rigsby

Students' Union President

A Message from your Vice-President

Firstly, a huge congratulation, on your new role as course rep. I was a course rep in my first year at university. The experience for me was more than just attending meetings or passing on information, it was more about being a voice and an opportunity to listen to fellow students, understand their experiences, and provide student feedback, helping students feel heard, seen and understood. By becoming a course rep, you can help turn student ideas and feedback into real change while developing your own confidence and professional skills.



“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world: indeed, its only thing that ever has.”

- Margaret Mead.

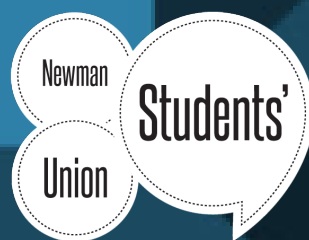
My biggest piece of advice is you don't need to have all the answers; you just need to care, listen and want to help create positive change. The role also gives you a fantastic opportunity to network with students, lecturers, university staff and the student's union, helping you build valuable relationships.

Thank you for choosing to become a course rep and I wish you all the best in this new exciting opportunity.

Natasha Davis

Students' Union Vice-President

RESPONSIBILITIES



Student Handbook

The purpose of a Student Course Representative is to accurately represent the views of students on their course with the aim of improving the quality of learning and teaching at Birmingham Newman University.

We want you to feel that your role as a Course Rep is more than simply acting as a messenger for student feedback, as the principle of being a student leader means you are capable of doing so much more than that. The collaboration between Course Reps, University staff, and the Students' Union has the power to make an incredibly positive impact on the lives of students and overall quality of education for you and your peers.

Responsibilities of a Student Course Representative:

- To collect varied and quality feedback from students on matters relating to their studies.
- To attend and engage in Student Staff Consultative Committees (SSCCs).
- To attend any required training sessions.
- To accurately signpost students where possible to University support services when provided with non-academic related feedback.
- To maintain regular communications with students, staff, and the SU.
- To represent the Union and your peers in a professional and respectful manner when acting as a student leader.
- To abide by the Newman Students' Union Code of Conduct.

As long as you fulfill all of those responsibilities you will have demonstrated a variety of professional skills that we encourage you to include on your CVs and utilise in interview settings where appropriate, these may include:

- Communication.
- Organisation and effective time management.
- Problem solving.
- Negotiation.
- Active listening.
- Working in a team.

Alongside this, University staff and the Students' Union also have responsibilities that we will all fulfill to ensure that you feel supported as a Course Rep and so that your feedback is acted on in a timely manner. For your Lecturers and Programme Leads, they should be reminded that they are responsible in ensuring student representatives are recruited for each degree programme, alongside providing guidance and support to Course Reps in their duties as student leaders.

For the Students' Union, we will ensure each Course Rep is provided with multiple training opportunities, to be available for 1-1 support, to maintain a Rep database, and to aid in the resolution of student staff conflict.

Additionally, there may arise opportunities for you to engage in representation outside of your course, via your elected officers, external political engagement, and optional Course Rep engagement events.

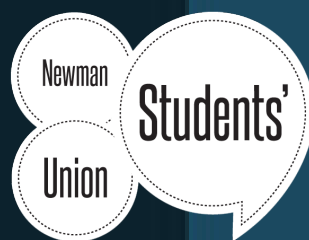
Course Representative Training

As a Course Representative it is imperative that you attend your required training. As without this you will not be registered on our system as being able to act as a representative and may disqualify you from receiving recognition for your duties.

Training will be held shortly after recruitment and before your first SSCC. You will receive an email from the Students' Union notifying you of upcoming training days, these will be held in person in the SU Atrium Office or an available teaching room. If you are unable to attend any of the dates provided, or you are on a placement we will be providing smaller online sessions, however these will be done only as a last resort, and it is highly recommended you attend one of the in person sessions.

Training will cover the basics of being a Course Rep, including how to gather feedback, what SSCCs are and what to expect. Following the completion of your training you will receive a branded Course Representative lanyard which you are not required to wear, however we would recommend that you replace your student lanyard and wear it all the time, so students are aware that you are a trained Course Rep ready to represent students. Additional training may be provided throughout the year, these will not be mandatory and are simply for you to develop skills.

A GUIDE TO SSCCs



Student Handbook

While the role of Student Course Representative is highly flexible and situational, there does exist a basic expectation of you to attend your respective Student Staff Consultative Committees (SSCCs).

An SSCC is a meeting that will occur at least once a semester, where you will be invited to attend and feedback on the variety of issues that will have been raised to you in your time as a Course Rep. This meeting will include Course Reps across all years of study and it is advised that you come to these meetings with some summarised notes to talk about, and if possible some actions that you would like staff to work on. It is important to remember that these meetings are strictly for academic feedback and anything unrelated to that should be dealt with outside of your SSCCs. In the event you do receive feedback from a student that is not related to their academics we advise you to signpost them to the 'Your Say' platform on the Newman Students' Union website where they can upload their issue for it to be sent to the appropriate support services.

If you are unable to attend for any reason it is imperative that you inform the meeting organiser of your expected absence. Ideally this should be done 24 hours before the scheduled start time, however unexpected things do happen so please ensure you let the meeting organiser know as soon as possible.

Should you need any additional support with SSCCs do not hesitate to reach out to the Student Voice and Representation Co-Ordinator Jason to book in a 1-1 meeting:

spar409@newman.ac.uk

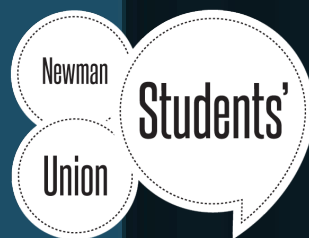
AGENDAS, ACTIONS AND MINUTES

Agendas tell you what will be coming up in the meeting you are about to attend. These should be sent out at least one calendar week before the meeting is set to take place, and Course Reps should be contacted and asked whether there is anything not on there that they would like discussed, these additions should not relate to any feedback you are expecting to provide.

Minutes and actions should be recorded by the attending member of administrative staff, or in their absence a member of academic staff. These minutes and actions should accurately reflect the discussions happening in your SSCC meetings, as such you should make sure to read the minutes and confirm that your words are being accurately reflected.

Actions are assigned tasks for meeting attendees, these are usually assigned over the course of a meeting and it should be explicitly mentioned when you or someone else has been assigned an action. If you are unsure do not hesitate to ask for clarification. Actions should be worked on in between meetings and it will be asked of you to provide an update of how your action is progressing in following meetings should you be assigned one.

FEEDBACK GATHERING



Student Handbook

One of the main responsibilities of being a Course Rep is that you should aim to be gathering feedback from your peers throughout all points of the year. This feedback should then be discussed during your SSCCs to be acted on by yourself or university staff.

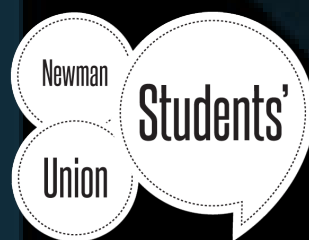
During your training you will receive some basic guidance on how to gather feedback from your peers, followed by the difference between productive and unproductive feedback. During your SSCCs you may not always have a lot of time to discuss every piece of information you have received so it is important to know how to identify the good from the bad and how to effectively turn feedback into actionable points of discussion.

Alongside your training, academic staff will be advised to support you in gathering feedback, either by giving you some time at the end of a lecture to speak to your peers, or by providing constructive advice. Additionally, you are always invited into the Students' Union to chat with a member of staff about your role and to discuss issues regarding feedback gathering.

After you have completed an SSCC meeting, it is good practice to feedback what was discussed to your peers, whether this is through Moodle, social media, email, or in-class, a simple summary of what was spoken about, what actions are being taken, and any notable discussion can go a long way in your development as a skilled Course Representative.

The Students' Union will aim to hold exit interviews with outgoing Course Reps to discuss what went well and what did not to help improve the system for future volunteers.

THE ACADEMIC REPRESENTATION STRUCTURE



Student Handbook

The academic representation structure at Newman serves to establish student voice into every level of the University experience. Course Representatives are the foundation of this system and the most direct connection to our student body however they are not alone.

The academic representation structure in order of seniority:

University Level

- Full-Time Officers (President & Vice-President)
- Part-Time Officers

School Level

- School Representatives

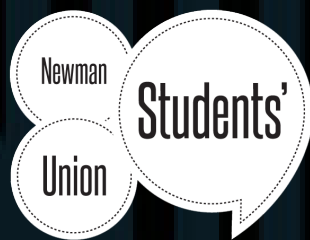
Course Level

- Senior Course Representatives
- Course Representatives

Senior Course Reps will be the ones you interact with the most, they have all the same expectations as a Course Rep with the added responsibility of chairing their SSCC meetings.

This structure is not rigid and a Course Rep can jump straight to becoming a Full-Time Officer if that is the path they wish to take, however we do recommend that you work your way through the structure if you are looking to develop your leadership skills as each level will teach you different skills and ways of approaching complex problems. If you would like to discuss this further do not hesitate to contact Jason at the Students' Union.

RECOGNITION AND REWARDS



Student Handbook

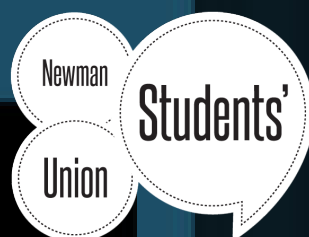
Volunteering as a Course Representative is a fantastic opportunity for you to develop your personal and professional skills, however we understand that the role can sometime be demanding and is a role which you are dedicating your own time to fulfill. as such we will be offering a variety of recognition and reward opportunities for our volunteers to strive towards in their time with us.

These opportunities include:

- Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR).
- Course Representative Lanyard
- Course Rep of the Year.
- Academic Rep Spotlights.
- Networking and Social Events.

This list is not exclusive and these opportunities will be regularly reviewed by the Student Voice and Representation Co-Ordinator to ensure they best reflect your hard work as a Student Course Representative, and that you find these rewards valuable and appropriate.

CONTACTING THE STUDENTS' UNION



Student Handbook

We understand that sometimes volunteering yourself for a leadership position can be stressful. If you are ever feeling that you need some extra support, whether that be psychological or operational the Students' Union is always open for you to come and get away from it all. If you would like tailored 1-1 support from a member of staff please contact Jason Sparkhall to organise a time to meet. We at Newman Students' Union wish you all the best in your new role and look forward to having you apart of our fantastic student voice team!

Jason Sparkhall

Student Voice and Representation Co-Ordinator

spar409@newman.ac.uk

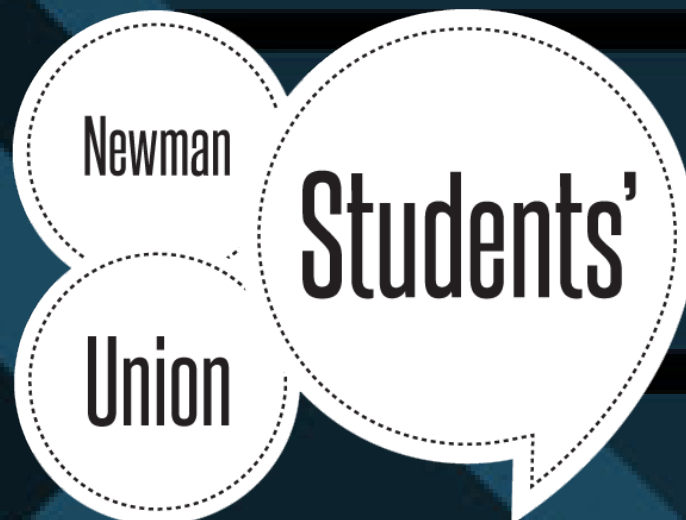
Zoe Harrison

Student Voice and Advice Manager

z.harrison@newman.ac.uk

Students' Union President

su-president@newman.ac.uk



www.newmansu.org