

HANDBOOK FOR MPLS STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES



Contents

- p.2 – Role and responsibilities
- p.4 – Meet the current MPLS student reps
- p.5 – Key contacts
- p.7 – Useful resources

Role and responsibilities

Effective student representation is a vital part of the University's efforts to enhance its teaching and learning experience, and to ensure its quality.

The overall aim of a student rep is to help improve the learning experience for current and future students by being an effective voice for the student body.



What is the role of a student rep?

The primary role of a student rep is to listen to, collate and communicate the views of all the students they represent, presenting these views at meetings and to staff to bring about positive changes for the student population and the University as a whole. Student reps also work to ensure that they close the feedback loop by communicating the outcomes of any feedback back to students.

Why are student reps important?

Student reps are key to making sure that students' voices and feedback are heard and utilised by the University and the Student Union. Student reps make a real difference at programme level, but also have many success stories across their departments and beyond.

Student reps can also be helpful for referring students with individual issues to appropriate sources of help where necessary.

Responsibilities of a student rep

- Attend relevant training and networking events provided by the SU, your department and/or Division
- Attend your departmental/Divisional joint consultative forum meetings (as appropriate)

- Communicate with students and staff effectively
- Be a good listener
- Be accessible and approachable
- Gather the collective opinions of students in your department
- Be able to put across opinions and feedback honestly and diplomatically – providing both positive and negative feedback
- Discuss student concerns with relevant staff and students
- Help recommend/create solutions to problems
- Pass issues on to the relevant people (e.g. Director of Graduate Studies, Head of Department, Student Union etc)
- Contribute to institutional activities
- Share information between staff, students, Student Union and relevant committees
- Assist in the dissemination of information to students in your department
- Respect confidentiality where necessary

What you will gain from being a student rep

- CV enhancement
- Chance to improve academic standards and the teaching/training that you experience
- Networking
- Effective communication
- Active listening
- Clear presentation
- Diplomacy
- Assertiveness
- Influencing skills
- Leadership skills

Meet Daiki Tagami, PGR student rep for the MPLS Division



Daiki Tagami is a second year DPhil candidate in Statistics at Hertford College. He is the 2022/23 student representative for the MPLS Division.

My name is Daiki, and I am a DPhil student in statistics. I am doing research in the probability group and in the Big Data Institute to develop a new technique to analyze the human genome data in genome-wide association studies. I served as the departmental representative for statistics in the GJCF meetings last year, and I am very pleased to become the student representative for the MPLS division this year.

Ever since I came to Oxford, I have been delighted to work on the world's best research project with the most talented students. However, we have been hearing concerns from students regarding conference funds since last year, and we hope to prioritize in resolving the issue. We are planning to give out a survey to students soon through the Student Union, so we hope that you can fill out the survey for us to make our Oxford community better!

Aneshka Moudry, UG/PGT student rep for the MPLS Division

Aneshka Moudry is a third-year chemistry student at St Peter's College. She is the 2023/2024 MPLS Division Rep for undergraduate and graduate taught students.

Key contacts for student reps



PGR

Department:

- Director of Graduate Studies
- Department JCC Reps

Division:

- Associate Head (Research Degrees) - Professor Dimitra Rigopoulou
- Chair of Divisional Graduate Joint Consultative Forum (GJCF) –Professor Dimitra Rigopoulou
- Secretary to GJCF – Helen Beauchamp (Graduate Studies Manager)
- Divisional Training Team – Justin Hutchence (Researcher Training and Development Manager)

SU:

- MPLS Postgraduate Student Rep – pg-mpls@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk
- Graduate Vice President vpgraduates@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk

PGT

Department:

- Course Director

Division:

- Associate Head (Taught Degrees) – Professor Martin Castell
- Head of Policy for Taught Courses – Bulvinder Gurm
- Divisional Training Team – Justin Hutchence (Researcher Training and Development Manager)

SU:

- MPLS Undergraduate Student Rep – ug-mpls@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk

UG

Department:

- Undergraduate Director Studies

College:

- College Tutor or Senior Tutor

Division:

- Associate Head (Taught Degrees) – Professor Martin Castell
- Head of Policy for Taught Courses – Bulvinder Gurm
- Divisional Training Team – Justin Hutchence (Researcher Training & Development Manager)

SU:

- MPLS Undergraduate Student Rep – ug-mpls@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk

Overview of roles

The role of the **Director of Graduate Studies (DGS)** will vary from subject to subject, but they normally have overall responsibility for PGT as well as PGR students in a department. The DGS is expected to formulate policy on graduate studies, and to exercise daily oversight of graduate business. The DGS is responsible for monitoring the progress of individual students and dealing with any problems as they arise, and for handling the administrative arrangements connected with supervision, probation, change of status, extensions of time, and the submission of theses.

Course Directors may undertake some of the DGS' tasks for students on an individual course.

Divisional contacts can provide advice on policy, regulations and guidance on what support is available, and who best to contact. The academic leads will help form policy and regulation at Divisional and University level, and will represent the Division at the University level on various bodies dealing with graduates, where they will also relay the views of the MPLS student population.

The **Graduate Studies Manager** manages the MPLS Divisional Graduate Office, which is responsible for the management of all aspects of on-course graduate student administration.

The **Head of Policy for Taught Courses** is responsible for the management of all aspects for UG and PGT programme administration.

The **Researcher Training and Development Manager** is responsible for the Division's training programme for DPhil students and research staff, and supporting departments in developing researcher training.

The **Associate Head (Research Degrees)** and **Associate Head (Taught Degrees)** are both part of the academic leadership team and lead on specific key priority areas for the Division in all matters relating to graduate and undergraduate studies.

Useful resources for student reps



University policy and guidance on student engagement and representation

<https://academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/student-engagement-and-representation>

University governance and policy

<https://academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/governance-and-policy>

The University provides a range of policies and documents which reflect the agreed requirements of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, within the context of the collegiate University.

Oxford SU

<https://www.oxfordsu.org>

- SU Confidential Advice Service advice@oxfordsu.ox.ac.uk

MPLS Divisional website

<https://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk>

(Governance & committees: <https://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/about/the-division/governance-committees>)

Student Barometer

<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/life/student-surveys>

There is a huge range of data here covering learning, living, arrival and open days.

National Student Survey

<https://discoveruni.gov.uk>

A survey completed by finalists. Oxford SU can provide reps with specific course-by-course breakdowns: emailing ARO@ousu.ox.ac.uk. Results are made available publicly via Unistats.

PTES and PRES surveys

<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/life/student-surveys>

The Postgraduate Taught/Research Experience Survey (PTES and PRES) is the only national survey aimed exclusively at postgraduate students.

Support services for students

<https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare>

- Disability Advisory Service
- Counselling Service
- Sexual Harassment and Violence Support Service
- Student Resolution Service

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