

HANDBOOK FOR MPLS STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES



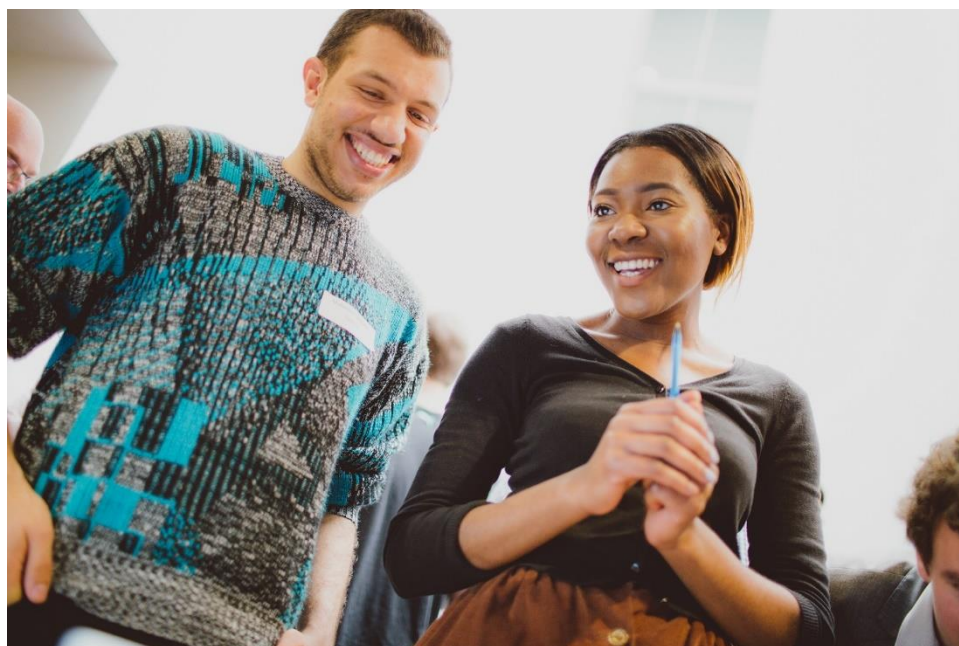
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Role and responsibilities

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 (eg 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 Bryan Kumara, PGR student rep for the MPLS Division



Bryan Kumara is a first year DPhil candidate in Computer Science at Exeter College. They are the 2025/26 student representative for the MPLS Division.

My name is Bryan and I am a Computer Science DPhil student. My research interest is in applied cryptography and I am particularly keen on how cryptographic protocols can be deployed to address real-world issues. I also serve as the 2025 DPhil Computer Science Representative for and I look forward to representing the Oxford MPLS PGR community!

Some issues I care about include ensuring that PGR students have the appropriate desk space to conduct research, developing a clearer guideline for how generative AI can be used, and address student feedback regarding conference funding.

Being part of a diverse academic community at Oxford is a very enriching experience, and I would like to contribute to the community by representing student opinions. Volunteering as a student rep is a great way to be involved in behind-the-scenes discussions that can leave a tangible positive impact for students and I've come to appreciate the complexity of university discussions alongside how to reach a constructive agreement when we have a range of opinions.

Tracey Saber, UG student rep for the MPLS Division



Tracey Saber is a fourth-year Engineering student at St Hugh's College. They are the 2024/2025 MPLS Division Rep for undergraduate students.

New Rep to be confirmed for 2025/26

Hi, I'm Tracey, a fourth-year engineering student specializing in thermofluids. As MPLS rep, I am your undergraduate contact with the MPLS administration. I also served as chair for the Engineering JCC, so I'm always here to help with any JCC-related matters!

Ajla Sacic, PGT student rep for the MPLS Division



Ajla Sacic is a Quantum Technologies student at Reuben College. They are the 2025/2026 MPLS Division Rep for postgraduate taught students.

Hi! I'm Ajla, a Master's student in Quantum Technologies. My research involves machine learning approaches to quantum error mitigation, as well as modeling quantum-physical processes such as dynamic nuclear polarization. I also tutor the Quantum Club at the Department of Physics, helping A-Level students explore the fundamentals of quantum mechanics.

As the MPLS PGT Divisional Representative, I aim to understand student needs and ensure their voices inform university policies that enhance the postgraduate experience.

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
[Student Engagement and Representation | Governance and Planning](#)

University governance and policy
[Policies | Governance and Planning](#)

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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