

STUDENT REP HANDBOOK

September 2020


BUCKS
STUDENTS' UNION

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Welcome

Welcome to your Student Rep Handbook! This handbook is designed to be the first port of call for information during your time as a rep, but is just one of the many mechanisms we have in place to support the work you do in representing your peers.

Representation is the core function of your Students’ Union. It is the reason we were formed and why we still exist today. In the last few years we have invested heavily in academic representation and campaigns to ensure it is given the support it requires.

Collective representation through our student reps is vital to the student body, especially since the amount

you pay to study at University has increased over the last few years, and the quality of education and experience you have at Bucks is of such importance. It’s your comments that we want, it’s you who can interact best with students from your course and find out what issues they are facing. You are vital to the running of your Students’ Union and your voice is crucial.

What you say can make changes at every level of university life. This is your best opportunity to change the way the University works and remember, we are here to help and assist you at all times and we urge you to use us to make that change happen.

Meet The Team



Tash Neal
Vice President Education & Welfare
01494 601 600
natasha.neal@bucks.ac.uk



Matthew Kitching
Membership Services Manager
01494 601 600
matthew.kitching@bucks.ac.uk



Mark Sweeney
Student Experience Manager
01494 601 600
mark.sweeney@bucks.ac.uk



Ellie Freeman
Student Engagement Coordinator
01494 605 180
ellie.freeman@bucks.ac.uk

Help is only ever a phone call or email away, please get in touch with any problems or queries.

Hello Everyone!

Welcome to your Bucks Student Rep Handbook. This guide will provide information on the different commitments as part of your student representative role which will lead you to having a successful year representing your classmates. Similarly to the Rep Election Process, I was also elected into my role as your Vice President Education and Welfare by the membership and as part of my job role I help to represent you and your peers views on what the student experience is like at Bucks. Your role as a student rep is crucial to make improvements on your course as well as celebrating the great things that are already in place. Here at Bucks Students' Union we believe that representation is at the forefront of what we do and together we can tenaciously hold the University to account on issues affecting you! I want you to know that your role as a student rep is extremely important to us within the Union and to those around you. I am part of a small staff team here to support you throughout your time as a rep and our doors are always open! Get ready to represent, good luck and enjoy!

Tash Neal

Vice President Education and Welfare
Bucks Students' Union

Your Roles and Responsibilities

As a student rep you are part of the first and largest tier of our representation system at Bucks Students' Union. As one of our network of nearly 200 reps, your feedback will go directly to University staff on academic issues, through regular Programme Committee Meetings (PCMs), ensuring that the University maintains commitment to quality education and protects your welfare, providing all of our members with easy access to the Union's representation system.

Communication

It is important that you close the feedback loop by communicating results back to the students you represent, letting your peers know what you have done with their feedback. Remember to keep us 'in the loop' through the online feedback form so that we can ensure you receive the support you require throughout the year.

Signposting

You may find that you are the first point of contact for students with issues or concerns, or general queries about the Students' Union. You are not expected to be experts but we will provide you with basic information through training, online training and within this handbook that we would like you to keep in mind for future reference.

Sustainability

In order to have an effective, sustainable representation system we need to ensure that nominations and elections are widely publicised every year so everyone knows how to get involved, how to elect their rep, and who their rep is. We need you to help spread the word during nomination and election periods, whether you are running for re-election or not.

Accountability

You have been elected by your peers to this position and, as with any of our elected officers, are accountable to them: they can call for you to be removed from your role if they are not happy with your work as their student rep!

Engagement

We've added more points of contact throughout the year than ever before as we continue to enhance our student representation offer. We're providing coffee vouchers for you to organise coffee sessions with your course leaders to discuss a range of topics, hosting designated 'Meet The Rep Team' sessions for you to have regular communication with us, running our very own rep conference for the second time and created a specific representation campaign called 'It Starts With You' encouraging students to really engage with the feedback process. We'll also continue to send out our monthly e-newsletter keeping you up to date with everything we're working on.

Collectivity

By setting your own views aside and gathering and presenting the collective views of your peers to the University, you ensure that incorrect assumptions are not made about the student experience. Collectivism is crucial and adds legitimacy and credibility to your arguments.



Protecting Your 'REP'utation

For the representation system to be efficient the Union has to guarantee consistent levels of representation are maintained for students. For this reason, **we have split up the reward payment to relate to certain aspects of the role that are particularly crucial**, as set out in the next section. Failure to meet two consecutive milestones (eg not attending student rep training and not attending your first Programme Committee Meeting without apologies) will trigger a review of your position to be carried out by the Representation team, including the Vice President Education and Welfare.

As a student rep, you are elected by your peers and as such are answerable to them. Whilst we understand that you have a number of competing priorities during your time at University and being a student rep is just one of them, we know that students take the position seriously.

On very rare occasions we do receive complaints about the conduct of student reps from the members that they represent. Should a complaint be made against you, you will be given the chance to answer to the complaint and the Union will seek to mediate between the parties: quite often it is a simple case of misunderstanding that leads to such complaints! However, if this course of action fails, you may be removed from your post should the majority of your peers who elected you agree that you are not suitably representing their views.

It is also worth noting that any reps who we believe are letting down the students they represent, will be removed from their post in line with Union policy and procedure.

Reward Payment

As a student rep you are rewarded for your contribution to the representation of your peers with a reward payment of up to £100 funded by The Big Deal. In order to receive reward payment you must meet the requirements detailed below:

- Attend student rep training or complete the online student rep training videos
- Attend first Coffee Session and complete feedback sheet
- Attend first 'Meet the Rep Team' session
- Gather feedback from your peers in time for your first Programme Committee Meeting (PCM) using the new Pre-PCM question sheet and submit one week before your PCM
- Attend your first PCM and give the collective feedback from your peers
- Feedback details of your first PCM to your peers
- Provide online feedback to the Students' Union within two weeks of your first PCM
- Attend Rep Conference
- Attend second coffee session with academics and complete feedback sheet
- Attend second 'Meet the Rep Team' session
- Gather feedback from your peers in time for your second PCM using the Pre-PCM question sheet and submit one week before your PCM
- Attend your second PCM and relay the collective feedback from your peers
- Feedback details of your second PCM to your peers
- Provide online feedback within two weeks of your second PCM to the Students' Union

We can only reward you for what you put down on your rep log sheets. **If you want rewarding for it, write it down.** If you are unable to complete some of the requirements, partial payment can be made at the representation team's discretion.

The whole payment will not be released unless all criteria are met. We do appreciate that on occasions there are legitimate reasons why you cannot complete all elements, in which case partial payment may be released (eg on submission of a comprehensive apologies form).

Payment can be made in full at the end of the year or in two parts, one released in January and the other in May, by bank transfer (the payment will appear on your bank statement as 'Bucks SU'). You will be provided with a student rep log sheet at training. It is your responsibility to complete this, collecting signatures where necessary, and returned to the Students' Union in order for us to process your reward. Completion of this form does not guarantee payment. All claims for payment must be made by the end of the final term of the academic year that you are claiming for.

Reps are, on occasion, asked to attend meetings to feedback on specific things, additional skills training sessions or extra feedback sessions.



Programme Committee Meetings

Programme Committee Meetings (PCMs) deal with academic affairs and standards for courses at a local level. This is the principal meeting for student reps and the main forum in which **you can give feedback gathered from your peers directly to the staff within your department**. There are generally two PCMs a year and these are the meetings that **you must attend in order to qualify for the reward payment**. All student reps and academic staff in your department will be invited to these meetings as well as a member of your Students' Union. Normally a member of registry staff will act as the Committee's Secretary, making sure action sheets are kept up-to-date and that everyone knows when and where the PCM is, as well as taking notes at the meeting. Remember to get your log sheet signed at the end of each meeting.

Please do not feel that this is the only forum in which you can raise issues that your peers present you with. As these meetings only take place twice a year, it is possible that you will become aware of issues that you feel need addressing as soon as possible. If this is the case please feel free to raise these during your coffee sessions with your course leader or during your 'Meet the Rep Team' sessions. **Not raising issues until your PCM means that they could in fact become more difficult to tackle; make sure you speak to a member of academic staff.**

Programme Committee Co-Chairs

PCMs are primarily for **YOU**, as student reps, to voice the collective view of the student body. To reinforce this, **all Programme Committee Meetings should be co-chaired by a student**. This means that you and your fellow reps have real ownership of the meeting.

At rep training we use a number of scenarios to recreate PCMs and give you essential experience in co-chairing meetings. In this position the student will guide the direction of the meeting, keeping an eye on the time to try and ensure all points are covered, giving everybody in the room a chance to be heard.

Your Students' Union provides extra training and support for any student interested in becoming a PCM Co-Chair.

Submitting Apologies

If you are unable to attend a PCM you must **submit your apologies at least 48 hours in advance of your PCM**. Even if you are unable to attend, we do still request that you use the **'Apologies Form'** to provide us and the PCM with the feedback and issues that you have gathered from your peers in preparation for the meeting.

This form can be found at **bucksstudentsunion.org/representation**: please be aware that you may be required to provide evidence of the reason given in this form for your absence. The Students' Union will not normally accept the persistent submission of apologies, although we do appreciate that there may be exceptional circumstances in a small number of cases.

Please note that completion of this form does not automatically qualify you for the reward payment. Any payments made are discretionary, based upon the information submitted and will, at any rate, only be a partial payment.

Programme Committee Meetings

11 Quick Tips for PCMs

Before the meeting

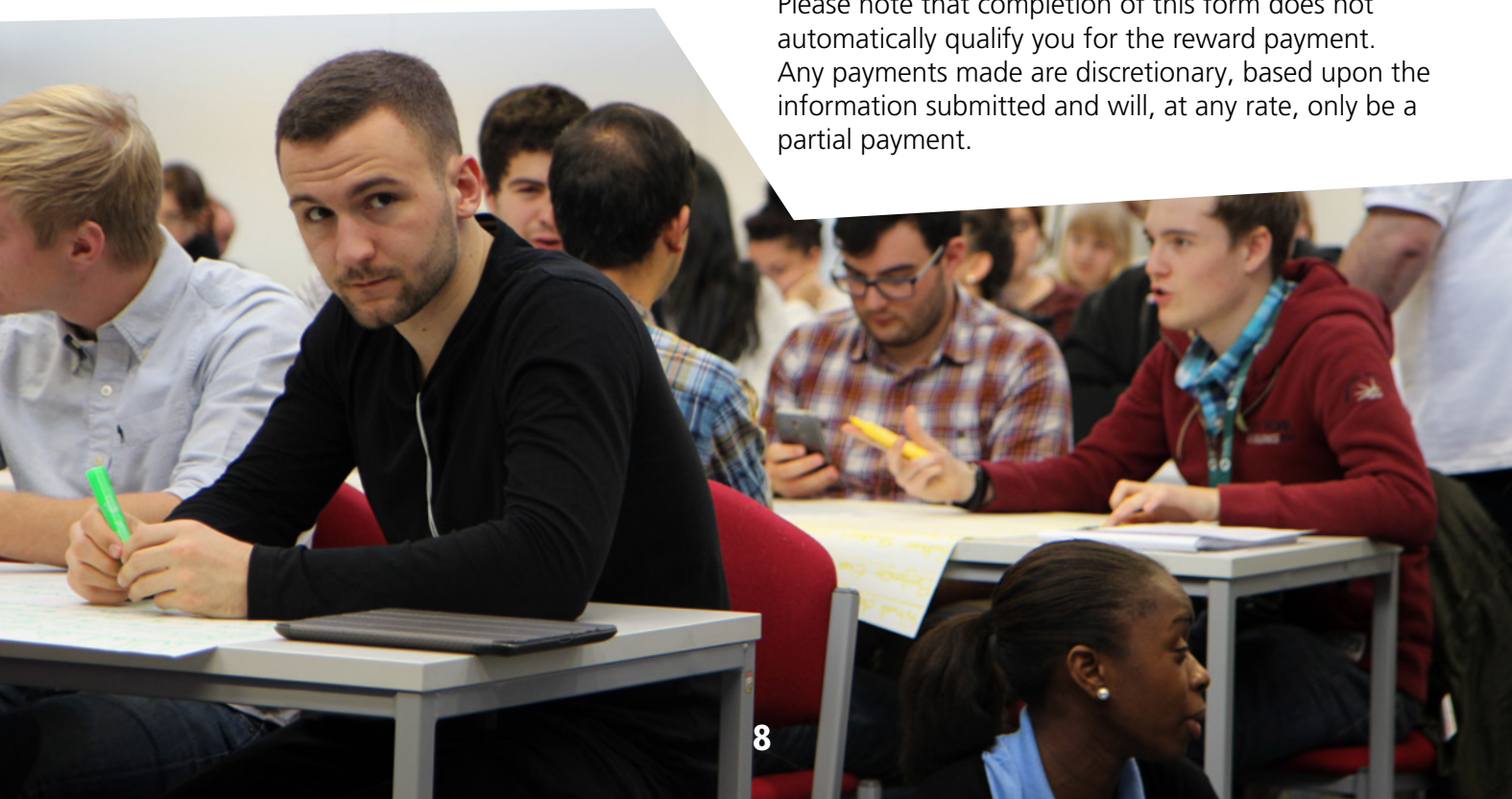
1. Speak to students on your course. Everybody should have a chance to give you feedback to take to PCMs, but don't worry, there are loads of ways to collect it.
2. Write feedback using the Pre-PCM question sheet helping to give you a real structure to the feedback you are collecting.
3. Submit your feedback from the Pre-PCM question sheet online on the Bucks SU website one week before your PCM.

During the meeting

4. Try to keep in mind good meeting etiquette (eg open body language, active listening, etc...).
5. Contribute throughout – these meetings don't come around often so make the most of it! If you don't have much to raise, you can always add your feedback in support of or contradictory to other people's points.
6. Take notes throughout the meeting in order to give detailed feedback when completing the post-PCM form.

After the meeting

7. Get your rep log sheet signed by either the Chair, Secretary or Students' Union representative at the meeting.
8. Feedback online at **bucksstudentsunion.org/representation** (remember this forms part of your reward criteria).
9. Check the minutes for any actions assigned to you / all reps.
10. Make a note of the next meeting date.
11. **Submit your signed and completed log sheet to your nearest Students' Union office.**



REP RECOGNITION SCHEME



- Bronze (100 points)
- Silver (200 points)
- Gold (300 points)

REP ESSENTIALS	POINTS FOR COMPLETION
Attend rep training in person OR complete online returning rep training.....	10
Complete online rep training (campus learners).....	5
Complete online rep training (distance learners).....	10
Attend first coffee session.....	10
Attend first 'Meet the Rep Team' session.....	10
Attend PCM 1 and Complete Post PCM feedback (OR submitted apologies form).....	15
Attend Rep Conference.....	10
Attend second coffee session.....	10
Attend second 'Meet the Rep Team' session.....	10
Attend PCM 2 and Complete Post PCM feedback (OR submitted apologies form).....	15
Involvement with the 'It Starts With You' campaign.....	10
UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY	
Attended Union Council meetings.....	5 per meeting
Suggest a recreational activity for the Union to run.....	5
Presented at Union Council.....	10
Validation student panel member.....	20
Run session at Rep Conference.....	20
Co-Chair a PCM.....	20
SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY	
Registered to vote in local area (Home/ Uni).....	20
Attended 12 hours of volunteering..... (For every 12 hours, Max. 36 hours)	20
Raised money for charity three times.....	30
MEDIA	
Join School Facebook group.....	5
Create course group chat.....	5
Share 5 Students' Union posts on Facebook.....	5
Write two articles for website/newspaper about rep issues.....	10
Tweet 10 times over one term about rep issues.....	10
Take part in one radio show about rep issues.....	10
CAMPAIGNS	
Actively participate in two local campaigns.....	20
Actively participate in one national campaign.....	30
Run one campaign.....	40
RESEARCH	
Complete the End of Year Rep Survey.....	5
Attend one focus group feedback session.....	10
NOMINATIONS	
Get 10 ELT nominations filled out by other students.....	10
Get 10 Union Awards nominations filled out by other students.....	10
Nominate a member of University staff and a student for an award.....	10
IT'S A BIG DEAL	
Attend three sports for fun sessions.....	10
Attend three recreational activities sessions.....	10
Attend three additional skills sessions.....	10
MAKE YOUR OWN WAY	
Agree your own goal with representation team.....	Negotiated value

Rep Recognition

The Rep Recognition Scheme is an accreditation like system that allows you to track your progress throughout the representation programme during the course of the year; alongside keeping a record of your involvement in other avenues of the Students' Union's offer such as being a member of a society or sports team, taking part in a Sport for Fun initiative, volunteering on a project, campaigning on both a local and national level, going on a recreational activity or attending one of our additional skills training sessions.

The Rep Recognition Scheme is broken into nine different sections, each demonstrating participation within a different area of the Students' Union and the wider community. The scheme is designed to ensure you have the opportunity to engage with as many projects and opportunities as possible during your time at Bucks and give you lifelong, career-enhancing skills.

The scheme consists of three levels of accreditation – Bronze (100 points), Silver (200 points) and Gold (300 points).

The 'Rep Essentials' section of the scheme consists of the basic requirements each rep should complete throughout the year. These should be completed by every rep in order to achieve 100 points and then be recognised as a Bronze accredited rep. Your engagement with this section of the scheme will also reflect your payment as many of these elements overlap, such as attendance at Programme Committee Meetings and Rep Conference.

There's also the opportunity to set your own goals through the 'Make Your Own Way' section of the scheme, giving you the chance to influence how you wish to improve the student experience and get the most out of your role as a student rep. Here, you can liaise with the Representation Team about a target that's not currently included in the scheme and agree on a point's value. Examples could include presenting at Society or Athletic Union Council or running your own additional skills session. Your target must be approved by the Representation Team before you complete it.

Student Reps that achieve 300 points on the scheme are recognised as a Gold accredited rep. Achieving Gold accreditation means you will receive an invitation to our annual Union Awards event and be presented with your certificate by the Vice Chancellor of the University as further recognition of all your hard work and as a thank you for the positive impact you will have made on the student experience.



Kia Wing, Creative Advertising student was a gold accredited rep for 2019-20, and had this to say about the rep recognition scheme:

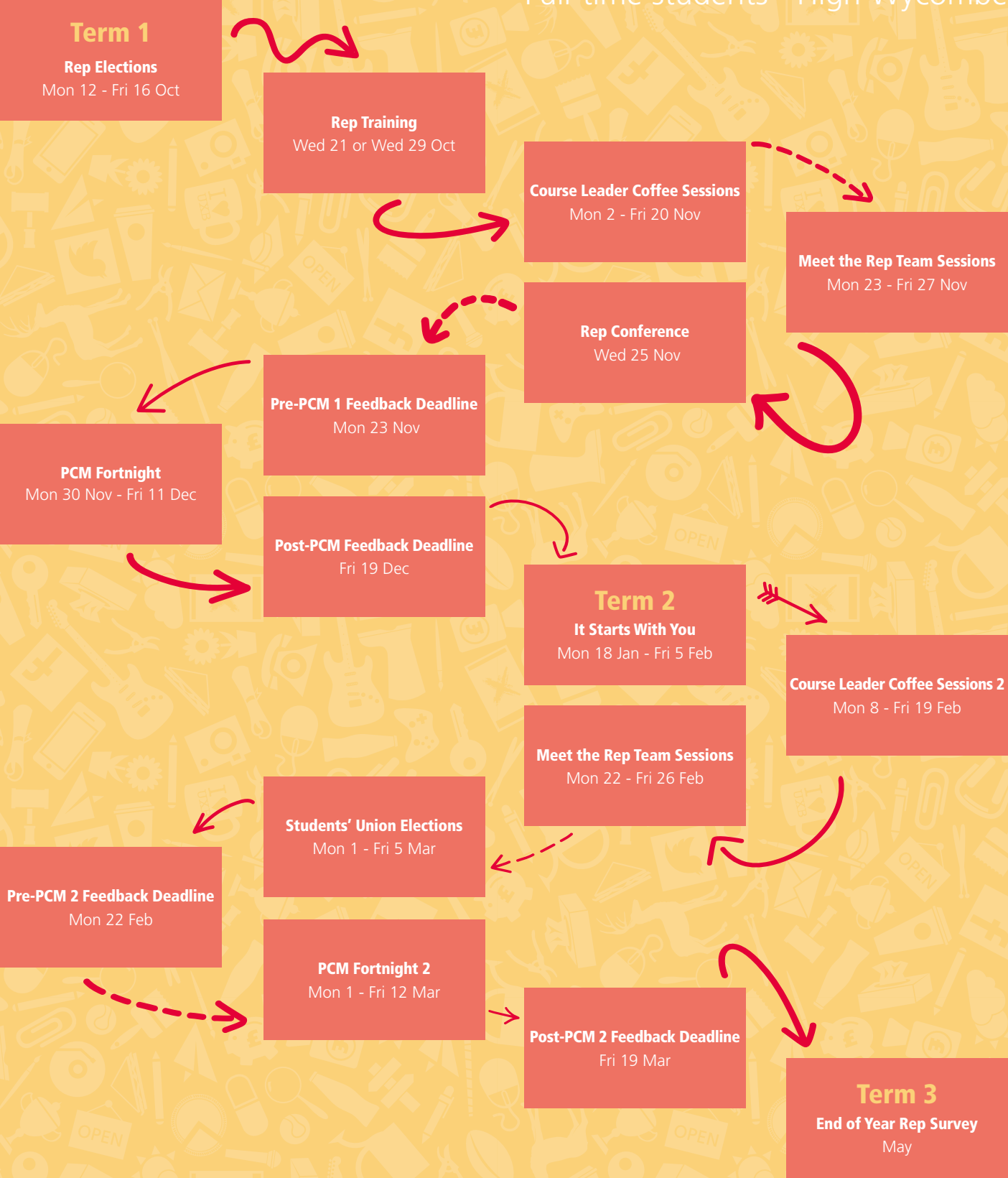
"The student representative role at Bucks was a great opportunity for me to see how change is made within the university. It's great to have an insight into how a big organisation is making positive change and putting students at the centre of their progress. It was extremely rewarding to be able to raise my peers' voices and bring their issues forward to people who can really make it happen. The Rep Recognition Scheme was a great addition to the role and was really motivating as it recognised reps who add a little something extra to the role; including writing articles for the SU newspaper; taking part in skills courses and more. Being recognised a gold accredited student rep not only felt rewarding but also gave me something a little different to set me apart on my CV, and helped me in attaining the role of School Officer for the upcoming year. I have loved being part of change-making at Bucks, and being a student rep is a great place to start!"

The Rep Recognition Scheme is a fantastic initiative that will give you so many opportunities for development and will provide you with a really rewarding experience that you can look back on with pride when you finish your role as a rep. Don't hesitate in getting involved!

You can update your Rep Recognition Scheme at any time via our website bucksstudentsunion.org This can then be found under Support > Representation > Student Reps > Rep Recognition Scheme. If you have any questions about the Rep Recognition Scheme or any issues, please email ellie.freeman@bucks.ac.uk

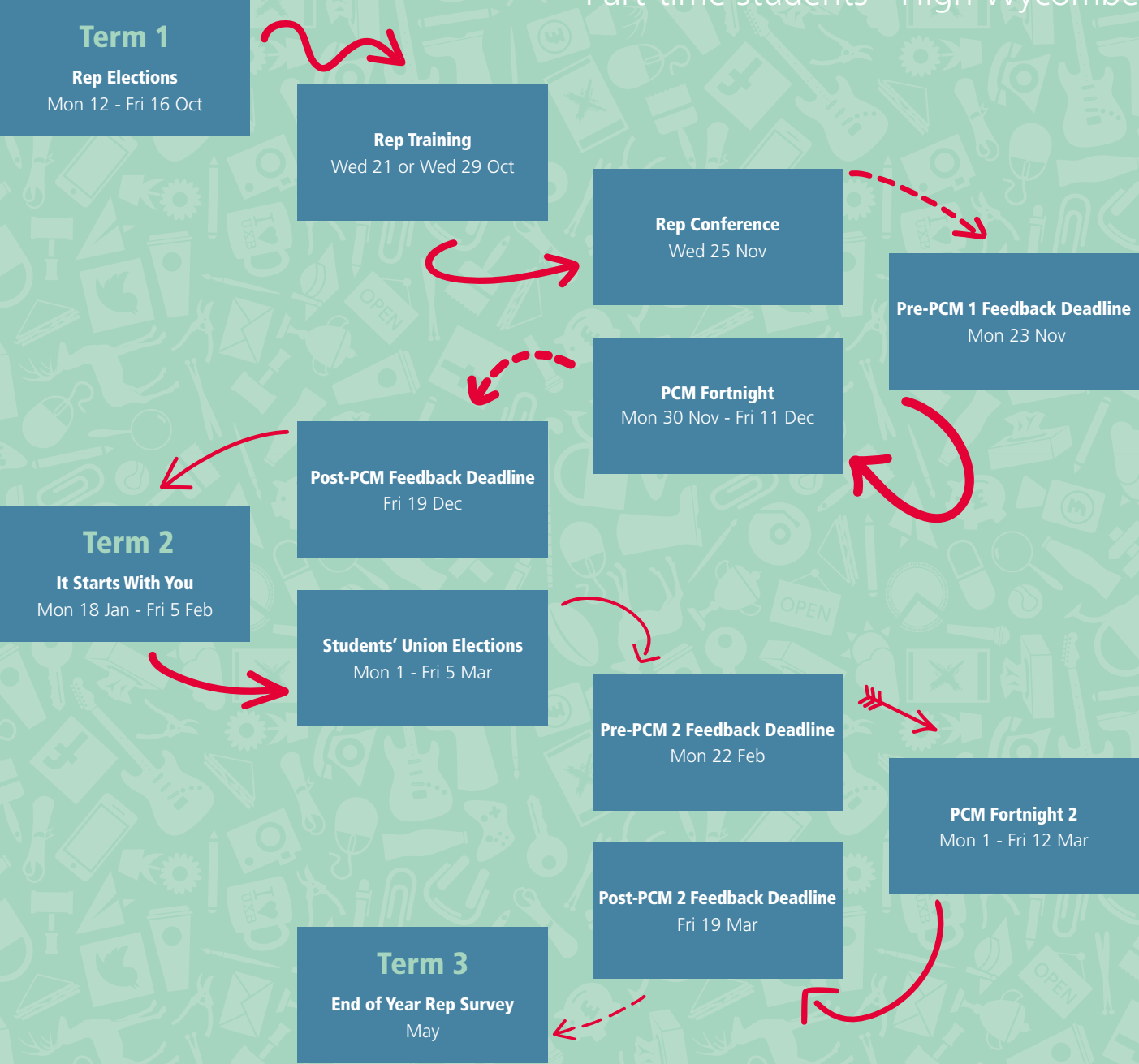
STUDENT REP TIMELINE 2020-21

Full-time students - High Wycombe



STUDENT REP TIMELINE 2020-21

Part-time students - High Wycombe



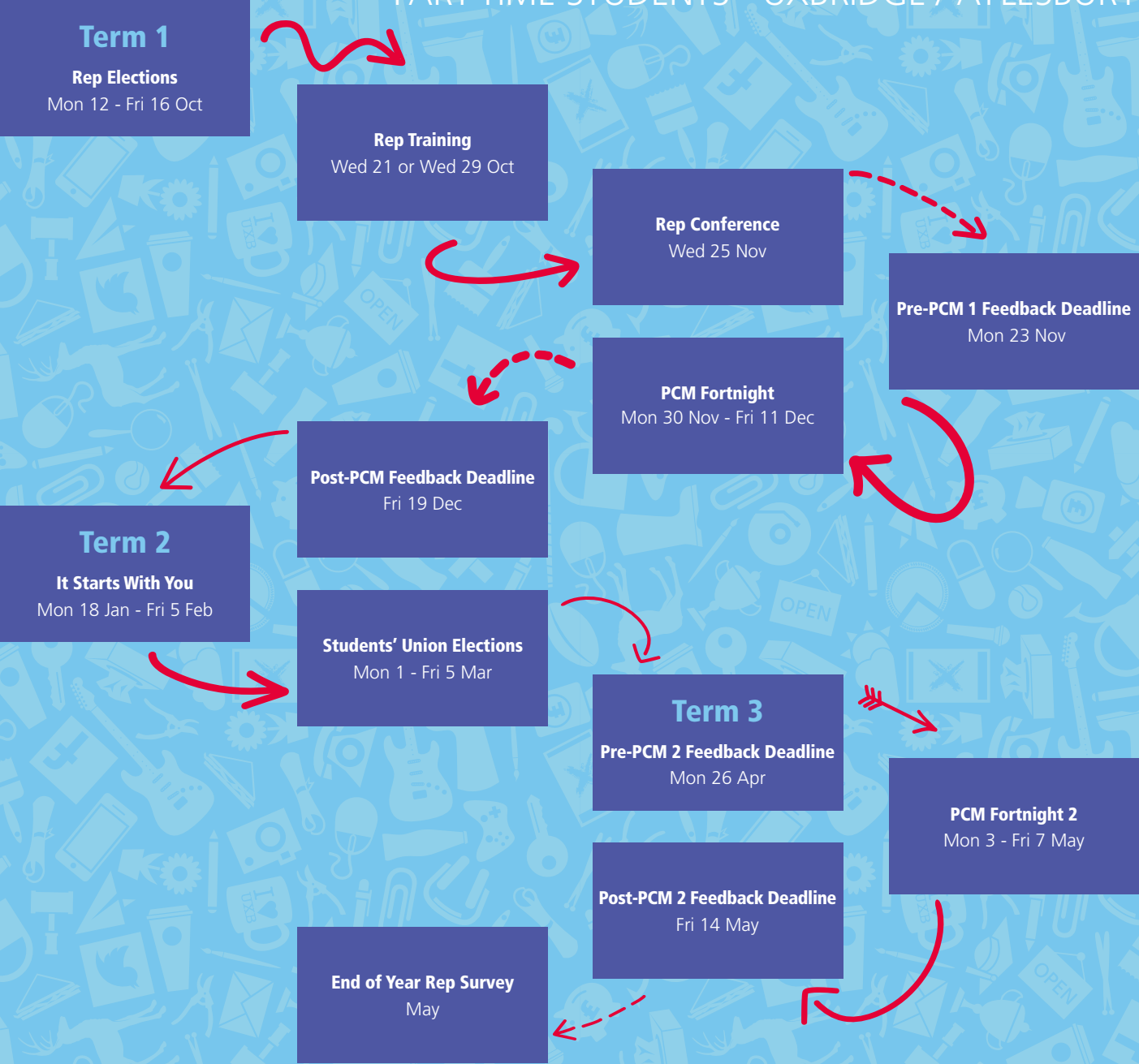
STUDENT REP TIMELINE 2020-21

Full-time students - Uxbridge / Aylesbury



STUDENT REP TIMELINE 2020-21

PART-TIME STUDENTS - UXBRIDGE / AYLESBURY



Other Support Services

As a student rep it is possible that students will approach you with problems or questions that aren't particularly related to the quality of the educational experience here at Bucks. Please remember that while we want you to talk to your peers and listen to their experiences, we don't expect you to be able to deal with everything that comes your way! As well as the Students' Union staff that are here to support you, there are a number of other services that you should know about in order to direct your peers to the most appropriate department (and take the weight off your shoulders).

More details of all these services can be found in our rep resources at bucksstudentsunion.org/representation.

Students' Union Advice Centre

The Bucks Students' Union Advice Centre can be found on the ground floor of North Wing at the High Wycombe Campus or in Room 1.02 at the Uxbridge Campus.

For more information or to make an appointment contact 01494 603 016 or suadvice@bucks.ac.uk or visit the Students' Union Advice Centre reception at either campus.

Accommodation

The Accommodation Service can be found on the first floor of North Wing at the High Wycombe Campus.

For more information contact 01494 603 063 or email accommodation@bucks.ac.uk.

Counselling Service

For more information, or to make an appointment call 01494 605 018, text 07757 101 234, email counselling@bucks.ac.uk or visit the Counselling Service reception on the first floor of North Wing at the High Wycombe Campus.

Disability Services

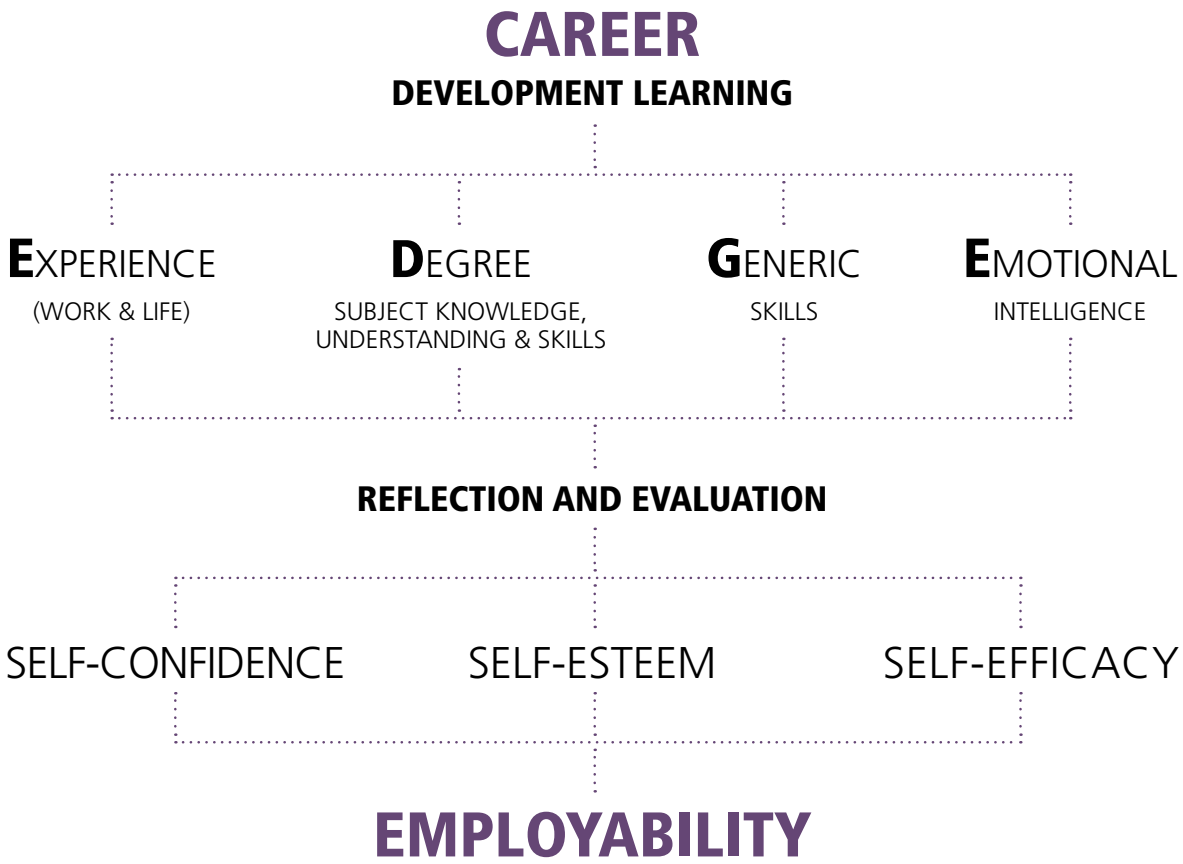
The Disability Service can be found in room N1.11 of North Wing at the High Wycombe Campus or on the second floor at the Uxbridge Campus.

For more information or to make an appointment contact 01494 605 049 or email disabilityservicemanager@bucks.ac.uk.

Employability

How does being a student rep help you?

Being a student rep allows you to develop skills which will help you in beginning your career. It is important when writing applications and attending interviews that you understand what skills you have acquired through your work with the Students' Union.



Career **EDGE** - The Key to Employability

This simple model illustrates the different components of employability. As individuals, it is important you seek to address each of them throughout your time at university. This is not just about 'getting a job'. It is about developing a successful career, whether you are employed or self-employed, and whichever field you decide to enter after graduating. This is about a life-long learning process.

Within your own subject area, consider which components may be more important than others. Talk to your tutors and people working in your sector to see which they believe to be most important, and then identify ways you can develop and gain experience in them.

Being an effective student rep provides you with an exciting opportunity to address a number of these areas, and the Students' Union's own Transferable Skills section makes it clear what specific skills you can gain.

Each term, we offer careers sessions to help you understand the skills you have gained. These sessions include: CV guidance, interview practice and job application preparation.

Other Opportunities

School Officer

School Officers head up representation in their School, liaising with student reps to ensure a sound understanding of the issues affecting students across the various courses. Gathering and reporting the feedback of student reps to the Students' Union, you will contribute to the formulation of Union policy on a number of issues covering the whole student experience. You will also provide a credible voice for these policies at a variety of high level meetings, within the Students' Union and University, influencing the whole experience of students at Bucks New University. School officers are also paid an additional reward for their work.

Appointment method: interview



Sabbatical Officer

The three sabbatical officer positions of Bucks Students' Union are full-time paid positions with a one year fixed term. They provide a unique opportunity to be part of the Student Union's Leadership Team, with the ability to shape and influence the academic and social life of students at Bucks New University in pursuit of the Union's mission to: 'make life better for students at Bucks'. As a sabbatical officer you will also be a trustee of a registered charity whose role is to improve the education of students at Bucks New University. You will have the opportunity for considerable networking both within the University and outside, particularly with other professionals and representatives in the Students' Union movement and Higher Education sector.

Appointment method: cross campus election



Student Trustee

Bucks Students' Union is a registered charity with a turnover of more than £2million a year. The Trustee Board is the highest body in the Union, with overall legal responsibility for the charity and has four places for elected students. The time commitment can be as little as a three hours a month which includes the meeting and some preparation for the meeting (reading minutes and other papers). This is a unique opportunity to work with the Students' Union's leadership to make life better for students at Bucks.

Appointment method: cross-campus election



Executive Officer

There are eight executive officer positions available at Bucks Students' Union. These are broken into two categories with four positions available in each. The first category is based around how you define as an individual and the four positions are; Executive Officer for BME Students', Executive Officer for LGBT+ Students', Executive Officer for Women Students' and Executive Officer for Disabled Students. The second category is determined on your mode of entry to the University and the four positions are: Executive Officer for International Students, Mature Students' Executive Officer, Postgraduate Students' Executive Officer and Part-time Students' Executive Officer.

The position of Executive Officer at Bucks Students' Union is a unique opportunity to be part of the team driving the direction of the Union ensuring our underrepresented students are firmly at the centre of Bucks Students' Unions planning, development and implementation of our strategic aims.

Appointment method: cross campus election



Bucks Students' Union

HW Campus - North Wing, Queen Alexandra Road, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP11 2JZ
Tel: **01494 601 600**

UXB Campus - first floor, 106 Oxford Road, Uxbridge, Middlesex, UB8 1NA
Tel: **01494 605 180**

Email: **union@bucks.ac.uk** Website: **bucksstudentsunion.org**

Bucks Students' Union is a registered charity – no. 1144820