1. Welcome

First off, thanks so much for putting your hand up to be a class representative this year!

Class Reps play a vital role in the University. They ensure students’ concerns are raised, communicated and resolved within a University course. The Class Rep system allows University staff to hear constructive criticism from their students about courses, teaching and resources they provide.

There will be a compulsory training session in the 3rd week of semester. If you attended a training session in the previous year, you do not have to attend a training session in the current year.

Use about this guide to learn more about your role: what you need to do, how to be an effective representative, know where to get support. There is also a copy online at [WWW.AUSA.ORG.NZ](http://WWW.AUSA.ORG.NZ)

If you have any problems throughout the semester, or need any advice and guidance surrounding your role, be sure to get in contact with us.

All the best for your semester as a class rep!

*Jessica and Ros*

**KEY CONTACTS**

ROSLIN MACKENZIE-CRIPPS (CLASS REPS CO-ORDINATOR): CLASSREPS@AUSA.ORG.NZ

JESSICA PALAIRET (EDUCATION VICE PRESIDENT): EVP@AUSA.ORG.NZ

STUDENT ADVICE HUB: SENIORADVOCATE@AUSA.ORG.NZ
2. Importance of Class Reps

Class representatives are the most effective way of enhancing the quality of our learning at University.

The main things you do are:

**Representation.** Class reps are an important link between students and academic staff. They attend and represent students at Student-Staff Consultative Committee (SSCC) meetings.

**Support.** Class reps are the first point of contact when classmates are concerned about any aspect of the course, teaching, processes or facilities. They can also refer students onto the correct person if necessary.

**Consultation.** Class reps provide feedback to the lecturer and Education Vice President when changes need to be made, or are being made in a way that affects students. They provide constructive feedback about course content, teaching quality and assessment, and facilities.

**Improve teaching quality.** Just as lecturers are experts in what they teach, class reps are experts in how they and their classmates learn best. Class reps can direct their lecturers towards ways that will enhance student’s learning.

2b. What do I need to do now?

**Register.** If you haven’t already, make sure you have filled out the online class reps information form with your contact details. Just email CLASSREPS@AUSA.ORG.NZ if you haven’t received the link from your lecturer. The University will collect your details so that we can contact you throughout the semester.

**Meet with your course co-ordinator.** Your lecturer and/or course co-ordinator will generally be really happy to meet with you, even just casually after a lecture. Make sure they know who you are, and that you discuss how you can best work together. Your relationship with your course co-ordinator is important as they will be the first person to talk to throughout the semester for any issues that arise.

**Attend class rep training.** If you’re here already then you’re already doing a great job! This training is designed to inform you about what you need to do, and empower you to do the best job you can! Trainings also include free food and Q+A sessions with past top class reps.
3. How to be an effective class rep

Be Visible. Make sure students know who you are and how to contact you. Four of the best ways to introduce yourself are:

- Standing up in front of the class before or after a lecture
- Writing your name and contact details on the whiteboard
- Starting a Facebook group
- Asking your lecturer to put your name and contact details on CANVAS.

Communicate. It’s important to develop a good relationship with your course co-ordinator and lecturer, and to keep in touch with them through the semester. As well as giving them constructive criticism and raising any issues, let them know about positive aspects of the course delivery and assessment.

Listen. Actively listen to and seek out students’ concerns and queries. Facebook, surveys and conversations with your class are great ways of doing this.

Represent. Attend and be active in student-staff consultative committee (SSCC) meetings, and any others that arise. Email your own course co-ordinator and/or lecturer if you want to set up additional meetings.

Feed-back. Be sure to inform students about what has happened in SSCC, and in any relevant discussions you’ve had with your lecturer.

Keep on top of administration. Being a class rep doesn’t mean you have to top the class and able to answer every single question about every element of the course. It does mean, however, that you are expected to know when the deadline for assignments are, what readings are assigned for that lecturer, and what the course requirements are. Some good habits are just to frequently check announcements made on Canvas, and to note down what the lecturer says about readings and assessments on your class Facebook page.

Be approachable. Make sure students feel comfortable coming and asking you questions. Just smile and make yourself known to your classmates.

JAYDE MEAD: CLASS REP FOR 2ND STAGE POLITICS

The most important things about being a class rep are actively listening to students, responding to their emails and facebook messages as quickly as possible, and to just be nice, approachable and yourself!
4. How to use Facebook

The reality is that lots of students check Facebook way more frequently than they do Canvas! This means that setting up a Facebook page, and making sure it’s helpful and inclusive is really important.

Use the page for general course discussion, information and support

- Try and update the Facebook page after every lecture where the lecturer assigned readings or other work.
- Clarify aspects of the course by channeling feedback or conversations you’ve had with the course co-ordinator through the Facebook page
- Encourage students to post questions on the page, set up study groups, and post feedback
- Facebook is also a great way to get feedback from the course

Get feedback from your class through Facebook. This can be as easy as making a Facebook poll about some aspects of the course, or making a post asking some questions for people to respond to you about either on the page or by messaging you directly.

Facebook can also be used for more fun aspects of the course too. Share articles and interesting events that are relevant to your course; even memes that can make people laugh! Also, if you spot any valuable internship opportunities, or grants available (such as AUSA’s Textbook grants), share them as well! AUSA will send out regular emails to class reps with these sorts of opportunities that you can share!

Make sure you let your Course Co-ordinator know that you’re setting up a class page on Facebook. Depending on the lecturer, it can be a good idea for the lecturer to not be a member of the group so that students can freely and frankly contribute. But make sure to ask your lecturer before excluding them!

Try and get a list of the class so that you can add everyone. Post in the group for people to add those they know in the class. Make sure the class knows that you have set up the Facebook page and not the Course Co-ordinator.

Also take care to ensure a positive and constructive environment. This means you, as the page owner, can moderate content and can ask students to email you if there are attacks made publically on the page.

If people post information, remember to check their sources of information as content may not always be totally accurate!
5. Getting feedback

In addition to using Facebook, there are other ways to get feedback from your classmates about the course! It's also important to remember that you are a student in the class too - make sure you think critically about the course.

- Use Facebook like we suggested earlier!
- Ask your lecturer if before an SSCC meeting you can take 5 minutes of a lecture to ask for feedback from the class. Lead a discussion that enables students to tell you about their opinions.
- Don't just focus on the 'bad stuff' - if the class loves the course then tell your lecturer! For them, knowing what they're doing well can be just as helpful as knowing how to improve.

Yi Xin Heng: Consider starting a Google document, accessible to everyone (editing function) + link of the Google doc added to the description of your class’ Facebook group for easy access. Anyone can plonk down feedback at any time, which makes your job easier as well! You do not have to scramble for feedback when the Student-Staff Consultative meeting draws near. People often have opinions along the way, but when asked point blank about 'How can the class be improved?', they have a brain freeze, can't think of an answer to 'such a deep question', and do not revert to you, which is a pity.

5b. What to ask about your course

Is the course content appropriate?

- Is the content too easy, too difficult, or content you already knew?
- Was the scope of the course too limited or irrelevant?
- Was there anything else you felt should have been covered that was not?
- Was the content presented in the most appropriate format; could any other form of presentation be used?

Are teaching methods clear and effective?

- Is course content clearly communicated?
- How useful are the format, materials, and teaching used in tutorials?
- How effectively does your lecturer use Canvas?

How manageable is the workload?

- Are the number of readings, word-counts in assessments and number of assessments fair, realistic and reasonable?
- Are assessments fairly laid out across the semester?
- Does the assessment in this course match other courses worth similar points?

How easy is it to understand what you need to do in assessments?

- Are assessment criteria and instructions clearly communicated to the class?

If students don't understand the question or the task, you can ask lecturers to clarify this on behalf of students.
6. Giving Feedback

If there is a problem you have to talk to your lecturer or course coordinator about, (It’s best you don’t email negative feedback) you’ll need to deliver the feedback in the best way possible. Don’t go into a meeting making demands. Think about how you would like constructive criticism delivered to you.

Firstly, you need to be solution focused. You’re not having a meeting to vent; you’re trying to find a joint solution to a problem your classmates have raised.

Secondly, be specific. Avoid saying things like “this could be better”, think about how “it” can be better and offer improvements. You can always deliver the negative feedback in a “feedback sandwich” which places the negative in between two positive comments. This can take away some of the awkwardness of delivering the negative feedback however, you do risk the positive pieces sounding contrived in this situation.

You can also just Google “how to give constructive criticism”. Although most of the articles refer to employer-employee relationships, you can apply the suggestions to your scenario.

6b. What do do if a student approaches you with an issue

STEP 1 - DISCUSS THE ISSUE

• Listen to the student’s story and clarify any details.
• Consider if it is an isolated issue, or if it affects the majority of your class.

STEP 2 - REPORT THE ISSUE

• If the issue is personal to the student, refer them to the AUSA Advocacy Service in Old Choral Hall.
• If the issue affects many students, ask for feedback from the whole class then arrange to meet with your lecturer to discuss the results.

STEP 3 - RESOLVE THE ISSUE

• Advise lecturer of students’ views
• Seek a joint solution and course of action.
• If no solution is found, raise this issue at the next Student-Staff Consultative Committee meeting.

STEP 4 - RECOUNT THE ISSUE

• Make sure to tell your class about any developments regarding the issue.

IMPORTANT: CLASS REPS DO NOT DEAL WITH ISSUES OF A PERSONAL NATURE, HARRASSMENT/BULLYING, GREIVANCES AGAINST STAFF OR NON-ACADEMIC ISSUES. REFER THE STUDENT ON TO THE AUSA ADVOCACY OFFICE. SENIORADVOCATE@USA.ORG.NZ
7. The Student Staff Consultative Committee

All class reps need to go to the Staff Student Consultative Committee (SSCC): it’s one of the most important and main ways you can give feedback about your course.

SSCC has been around since 1968. The purpose of the Committee is to facilitate better communication between students and staff, enable students to participate with staff in setting the direction for courses, faculties and departments, and to identify areas of concern for students.

Before the meeting:
- Read the agenda that is emailed to you
- If you haven’t received any feedback from your classmates, send out a survey and consult with your class to get an idea of how the class feels about the course.

What to talk about in the meeting:
- Course content and structure
- Teaching facilities
- Study Materials
- Assessments

What to not talk about in the meeting:
- Grievances with the lecturer or staff.
- Harassment or bullying
- Non-academic issues

After the meeting:
- Be sure to report back on the responses of the SSCC or the lecturer to the issues students have raised so students can see you making progress on things that matter to them (even if only one student raised the issue).

These are all relevant things to talk about, but just not during SSCC meetings. Instead, talk to the AUSA Class Reps Co-ordinator, a member of staff, your course coordinator or lecturer.

AARON KIRKPATRICK – 4TH YEAR LAW/ARTS CONJOINT

To get feedback for SSCC meetings, actively invite it a few times on your class facebook page, take on people’s private messages and emails, and maybe create a poll or a survey (plus if you think there is an issue with the course you could simply raise it yourself if your class is not engaged since you are a student as well)

To get ready for a SSCC, I compiled all the issues I was given, either large or small, list them and then write the course of action I was going to take on them, such as email or talk in person with the lecturer, raise at the SSCC or email the head of faculty.

It’s and remain neutral in order to most effectively mediate between the student body and the lecturer / wider faculty (you are there to represent students yes, but you should always make an effort to understand your lecturer’s perspective as well and be charitable)
8. AUSA

The Auckland University Students’ Association was formed in 1891. Since then, AUSA has endeavored to represent and advocate for students at the University of Auckland as well as to provide an extensive range of services for the wider student body.

Events. AUSA runs events like O-week, Politics Week, a Ball, and stress-less study week for students. We also own your student bar, Shadows (and AUSA members get 10% off everything at Shadows!).

Advocacy and representation. We run a free advocacy service, the Student Advice Hub, for students to gain free advice about any legal or university problems they are facing. We also represent you on University Committees and who work to ensure the student voice is heard at the University of Auckland. As a class rep you fit into this structure.

Welfare. AUSA offers students:

- **FOOD PARCELS**: If you’re struggling to afford food, you can go to AUSA reception 3 times a semester and pick up a food parcel, no questions asked.
- **HARDSHIP GRANTS**: We give students who are struggling with necessary costs after some sort of unforeseen event money to help make ends meet.
- **TEXTBOOK GRANTS**: AUSA and UBS provide up to $3000 worth of free textbooks and coursebooks for students who can’t afford them at the start of the year.
- **AUSA also provides services to look after the welfare of female, Pasifika, Maori and Queer* students. All these groups have elected representatives on the Executive tasked with supporting their interests, and AUSA provided spaces on campus. We also have a delegated Parentspace.

The Student Advice Hub. The student advice hub provides advice on academic, financial or personal issues, making sure students are treated fairly and with respect. They are a student-run, free and experienced place for students to go when they need advice or support.

They can:

- Offer a safe space for students to discuss concerns, complaints or issues.
- Help students understand the university processes for complaints and grievances.
- Support students to address barriers to achieving your academic goals.
- Support students with personal issues including harassment and bullying.
- Provide students with access to financial support.
- Assist students with general legal advice including tenancy and employment.

Other Services

**LOCKERS**: Come see AUSA reception for a locker on campus.

**CRACCUM**: The University of Auckland’s free, independent student magazine, funded by AUSA.

**95BFM**: Student-owned independent radio.

**LOST PROPERTY**: Lost your phone, keys, tablet or ID card? Come see the AUSA Reception

**UBS**: UBS is an independent university-focused bookshop, owned and operated by AUSA.
9. Notes
We offer free support, advice and information to all students.

We can...

- Offer a safe space for you to discuss your concerns, complaints, or issues.
- Help you understand the university processes for complaints and grievances.
- Support you to address barriers to achieving your academic goals.
- Support you with personal issues including harassment and bullying.
- Provide you with access to financial support.
- Assist you with general legal advice including tenancy and employment.
- Refer you to other services that can help.

Student Advice Hub
Free // Confidential // Experienced // Independent

Old Choral Hall (Alfred St Entrance)
cityhub@ausa.org.nz
09 923 7299
www.ausa.org.nz