

University of Auckland
Class Rep Guide

**NEWLY UPDATED
FOR 2021**



student voice
CLASS REPS • BUDDIES

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Haere mai!

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 'beginners' training session during the third and fourth weeks of semester. If you have already been a class rep and attended training, then we have an advanced training session that you can attend, which focusses more on leadership and professional skill development.

Use 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.

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!

KEY CONTACTS



Class Reps Manager:

Temitope (Temi) Adelekan
classreps@ausa.org.nz

Education Vice President: evp@ausa.org.nz

Student Support Hub: advocacy@ausa.org.nz

Your Role

The 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.

The benefits of being a class rep

Being a class rep can give you cool opportunities, development and credit to help you in your work and study life in the future.

Co-curricular Recognition Programme.

Being a class representative will count towards your 'Community Engagement' path for the University of Auckland's Co-Curricular Recognition Programme. You will need to have fulfilled 40 hours in your role as a class rep to complete that path. Please refer to the co-curricular recognition programme page on the University of Auckland website for further information.

Class Representative Certificates.

To be eligible for a certificate at the end of the semester, you must complete the class rep requirements. If you fulfill all set requirements, AUSA will get in touch with you with your class representative certificate. The class representative certificate is issued to recognise your hard work, and to ensure your job is accredited.

Class Representative Celebration.

AUSA and the University host a celebration event for volunteers at the University. As a class rep, you are invited to attend every year! At the event you will receive your certificate, and there will be live music, an inspirational speaker, some lecturers and members of University management, as well as free food and drink.

Professional development: Build your CV!

The skills you gain as a class rep are really valuable! These include decision-making, communication, negotiation, organisation, leadership, and advocacy skills.

Personal development.

Being a class representative will build your networking skills and ability to empathise with others. You'll have the opportunity to make a positive difference; and these opportunities will help you learn more about yourself, how you operate and your leadership strengths.

What does a class rep need to do?



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

Gather Feedback.

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

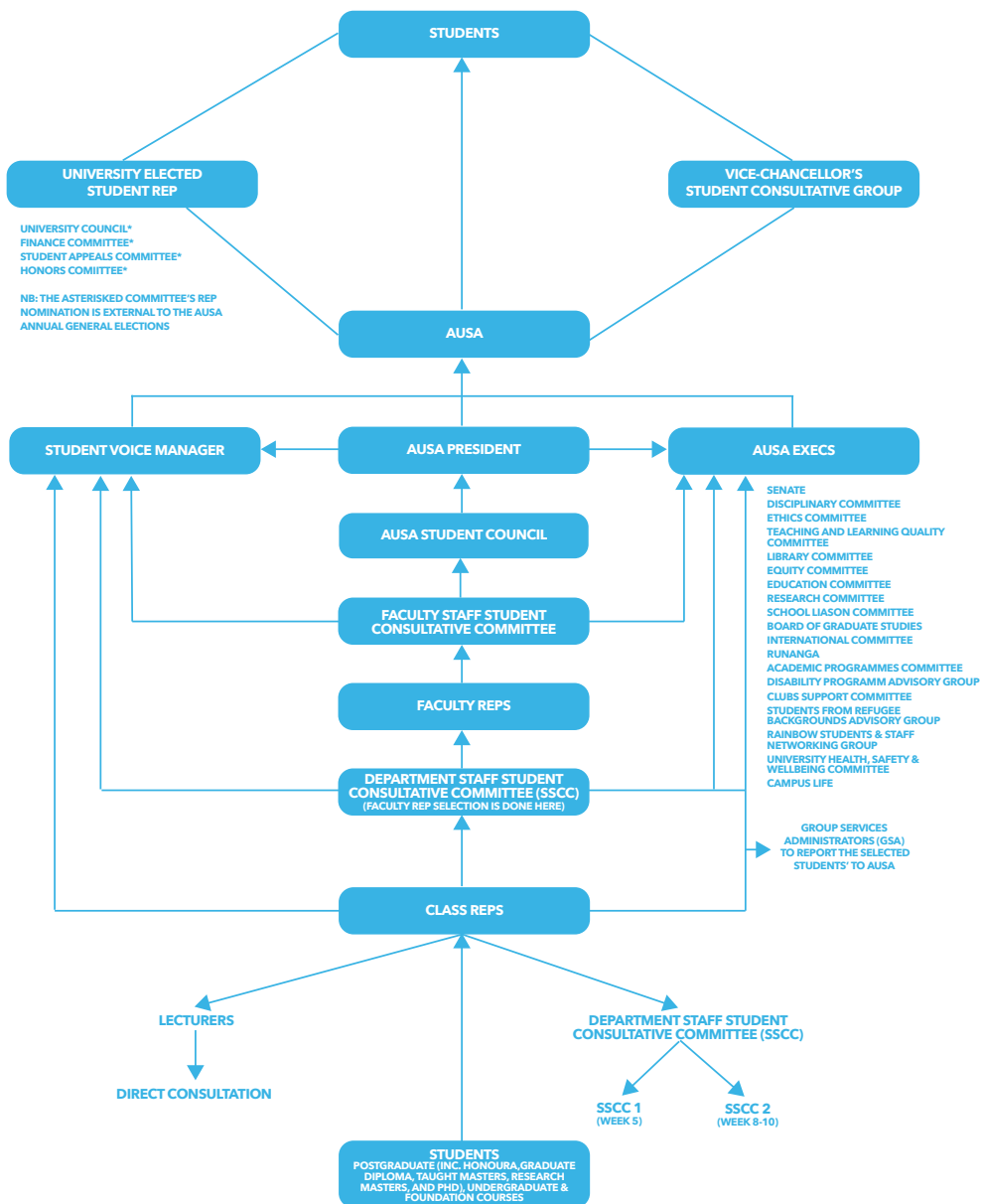
Keep on top of administration.

Being a class rep doesn't mean you have to top the class and be 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.

How class reps fit into the UoA representation structure



Getting and Giving Feedback

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!
- 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.
- Send out an email to your class, and link it in with Canvas too.

QUESTIONS 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.

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.

WHAT TO DO WHEN SOMEONE APPROACHES YOU ABOUT 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 Student Support Hub at AUSA House (opposite the main library).
- 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.

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!

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.

your course coordinator or lecturer.

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 Manager, a member of staff,

AUSA

AUSA Advocacy Service

The AUSA Advocacy Service 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. If a student approaches you about a personal or non-academic related issue, suggest that they go and speak with AUSA Advocacy Service.

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

About 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 for students to gain free advice about any legal or university problems they are facing (see above). 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 the Student Support Hub and pick up an emergency food parcel.

Hardship Grants: We give students who are

including tenancy and employment.

You can find the AUSA Advocacy Service at the Student Support Hub in AUSA House, opposite the General Library.

Real Life Scenarios - when class reps have referred students to the AUSA Advocacy Service:

- A student approached their class rep saying that they had been marked unfairly on an essay, but the lecturer wasn't responsive.
- A student got accused of cheating in their mid-semester test, but the student disputed it. AUSA Advocacy Service helped and accompanied the student to the meeting and hearings that they were required to attend.
- A student missed an essay deadline as they got really sick, but the lecturer wasn't lenient and didn't provide any extension or help.

struggling with necessary costs after some sort of unforeseen event money to help make ends meet.

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.

OTHER SERVICES

Craccum: The University of Auckland's free, independent student magazine, funded by AUSA.

95bFM: Student-owned independent radio.

UBIQ: UBIQ is an independent university-focused bookshop, owned and operated by AUSA.

FAIR • SUPPORTIVE • INDEPENDENT • CONFIDENTIAL

**We offer
advice about
your rights,
university
procedures,
tenancy
and more.**



student support hub

ADVOCACY • FOOD BANK

📍 AUSA house, 4 Alfred St, Opposite the Main Library
☎ 09 309 0789 🌐 www.ausa.org.nz ✉ advocacy@ausa.org.nz