

Supporting New Learner Reps & Student Officers

Introduction

It is important that new Learner Reps and Student Officers are fully supported to ensure they understand their responsibilities and feel confident in their new role.

Settling in to a new role can be difficult and without support and guidance at the beginning of the year it can be really difficult for new reps and officers to 'find their feet'. Ideally, there should be a handover period between outgoing and incoming reps to share a personal experience of being in the role as well as providing a thorough update on the previous year's activities and campaigns.

But this is not always practical or possible. Many reps are only in post for one year or engage on a short-term basis, and this can make it very difficult to build a long term strategic plan or effectively build on engagement, year-on-year. Also, the timing of elections and the availability of incoming and outgoing learner reps significantly impacts on whether a one-to-one handover is possible. Often, new reps are reliant on information gathered and recorded, and passed on in a 'handover file'.

A handover file is not something that is put together by an outgoing learner rep at the end of their year in office – this vital document should be developed throughout the year starting as soon as elections are over! It's most likely that new reps will learn more about their role during the first few months so it's important to record things from the start to ensure nothing is forgotten or taken for granted at the end of the year.

In addition to the handover file, and complimentary to any scheduled handover activities, a full induction into the new role is very important and below is a comprehensive checklist to help you consider the different elements of this process. Not only will an induction help inform new reps and officers about their responsibilities and commitments, it also fosters a supportive working relationship to support continued engagement throughout the year. All learner reps and student officers need purpose, confidence and support to be effective in their roles.

Good luck!

INDUCTION & HANDOVER(FILE)

Getting going and learning from the experience of the previous years' reps

Handbook	
Job description – what is the purpose of the role	
Opportunity to meet/learn about outgoing and continuing officers/reps	
Learner Voice/SU End of Year Report from previous year	
Details of recent campaigns with evaluations of success	
Details of recent activities with evaluations	
Information relating to key external stakeholders/partners such as governors and MPs	
Contact details of recommended local companies used for events/trips	
Promote/enable new reps to promote their election into post	
Celebrate election	

INSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION

Useful and interesting information about the college/provider

A map of cross-college Learner Voice structures	
Tour of website & VLE	
Who's who? Meet the college/provider teams and departments, including Board of Governors	
"About the College/Provider" – a history and current snapshot	

TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

Developing new skills and building self-confidence in the role

The role of a learner rep	
Team building – getting to know other reps	
Speaking & listening skills	
Meeting skills	
Time management	
Engagement strategies	

Financial responsibilities (where appropriate)	
Health & safety	
Safeguarding (including e-safeguarding)	
Use of social media	

EXPECTATIONS & COMMITMENT	
What the college/provider and other students expect them to do	
Dates and locations of all meetings	
Opportunities for wider engagement, e.g. open evenings, ambassador schemes, working groups, forums, etc	
Code of conduct	

SUPPORT	
Supporting and enabling new reps to carry out their role	
College/Provider main point of contact & contact details	
Reporting problems & concerns (inc. complaints system)	
Mentoring scheme (1 st year/2 nd year or staff support)	
Internal & external networking opportunities	
Incentives and reward schemes/initiatives	