



REP HANDBOOK

18/19

CONTENTS

WELCOME!	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
PROGRAMME REPS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
WHY WOULD I DO THIS?											
WHAT DO I DO?											
HOW AM I CHOSEN?											
WHAT DO I ATTEND?	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5, 6
SCHOOL REPS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7
WHY WOULD I DO THIS?											
WHAT DO I DO?											
HOW AM I CHOSEN?											
WHAT DO I ATTEND?	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
AND WHAT IF...?	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9
A STUDENT HAS A PERSONAL ISSUE											
COMPLAINTS & ACADEMIC APPEALS											
BEST PRACTICE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
AGENDAS & MINUTE TAKING											
APOLOGIES	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11
POSITIVITY											
READING, NOTING, REPORTING	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12
TIME COMMITMENT											
YEAR SCHEDULE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13, 14
ANYTHING ELSE...?	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15

Dear Student Representative,

May I take this opportunity to thank you for being a representative and, if you are new to the Royal College of Art, offer a very warm welcome to the College community.

The role you have agreed to fulfill provides a very important link between the student voice, the Programme teams and technical staff, and all parts of life at the RCA: having undertaken such a role as a student, I am aware of the responsibility you have agreed to take on in representing your fellow students, and also the great sense of reward that can come with making a positive contribution to the student experience and our commitment to working in partnership. I hope the experience of being a rep will be valuable to you now and in your future career.

I am delighted to have been invited to contribute my welcome to this handbook. The Student Union sabbatical officers, who are committed to ensuring your experience of the RCA is as positive as possible, have developed it with considerable thought and consultation. At times of change in higher education, we look to you to help in addressing challenges, enhance the student experience, and continuing to ensure that the RCA remains the #1 University of art and design in the world.

I wish you every success in your role.

Professor Naren Barfield *PhD, FHEA, FRCA*

Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost

PROGRAMME REP

Each programme elects, depending on cohort size, a number of students who will represent them. Each year of every course should have a minimum of one rep. These representatives are the channel through which feedback is relayed between students, staff and the Students' Union.

WHY WOULD I DO THIS?

First and foremost you will help you and your course get the most out of your time at the RCA. Through the relaying of information between the SU, the administration and the student body we are more likely to get problems solved quickly.

You will also gain experience and skills in communication, negotiation, teamwork, committee participation, leadership, problem solving, motivating others, organisation, lobbying, community service.

Most importantly, you get three free meals a term ;)

WHAT DO I DO?

At its most basic, reps should be able to communicate well. A good rep is able to pass on the views, concerns and academic issues of other students to the college or Students Union and relay any comments, resolutions or announcements back to their peers.

In becoming a student rep you are becoming a voice for your programme so you will need to learn to put your ego to the side and make sure you are presenting collective concerns rather than just your own.

HOW AM I CHOSEN?

Each programme chooses their reps independently and have their own methods for doing so. We would recommend a system whereby candidates nominate themselves and students vote to elect them. I.e. Democracy. Courses vary in size and methods of organisations so their may be some discrepancy but this is the fundamental basic of choosing a rep. For example, some programmes have pathways, so you may have this process within your pathway rather than programme.

WHAT DO I ATTEND?

Listed in order from the the most local to college-wide events, this is what you will need to attend:

PROGRAMME FORUM

Once a Term

ATTENDEES: Head of Programme (HoP), Tutors and all students in your course.

Programme Forums are for everyone on your course. Your HoP should convene this once a term. If you can't see it in your calendar ask your HoP for the date and ask them if they can add it to the course calendar. If there are particular points you would like to bring up, send an agenda ahead of the meeting so that your HoP knows what to expect. It is important to note that the programme forum is for discussing any issues that you are facing as students, not only programme related issues. Let your HoP know what is going on. Look at the **READING, NOTING AND REPORTING** section in best practice for advice on these meetings, having records is super useful!

HoP MEETING

Once a Month

ATTENDEES: HoP, Senior Tutor(s), Course Reps.

This is a chance for reps to relay information to and from your programme leaders more concisely. It is also an opportunity to build a good relationship with your tutors, give them a feel for how your peers are responding to the course and get any niggles ironed out. Things discussed in this meeting should inform the agenda for your Programme Forum. Once again, prompt your HoP to make sure these are scheduled.

SCHOOL ASSEMBLY

Once a Term

ATTENDEES: SU Co-President, School Dean, Course Reps.

Once a term you will meet with all reps from your school (Architecture, Arts and Humanities, Communication or Design) along with the Dean of your school and one of the SU Co-Presidents. These are a great opportunity to let us know about programme specific issues faced across your school. **LUNCH PROVIDED.**

CAMPUS ASSEMBLY

Once a Term

ATTENDEES: SU Co-President, Buildings and Estates, Course Reps.

For this assembly you will meet once a term with reps from your campus (Battersea, Kensington or White City) along with a representative from Buildings and Estates and a SU Co-President. In this meeting building specific issues relating to your particular campus will be discussed. E.g. Cafes, toilets, studio space, building access etc. **LUNCH PROVIDED.**

COLLEGE-WIDE ASSEMBLY

Once a Term

ATTENDEES: Su Co-Presidents, All Programme Reps.

The College Wide Assembly is our opportunity to relay all the most important information on activity at the RCA and within the SU as well as a chance for you to provide feedback and raise any issues facing all students. Democratic decisions are made here with each rep holding one vote. **DINNER PROVIDED.**

SCHOOL REPS

Three School Reps are elected per School. These representatives attend higher level committees within the college. This role can be an additional duty for a course rep.

WHY WOULD I DO THIS?

This is a great chance to see the inner workings of the RCA. You will have a greater opportunity to provide feedback to the college as well as garnering more information to enlighten the student body. The role is open to all students but would probably be better suited to second years who already have a fundamental understanding of the way the college works.

WHAT DO I DO?

Each rep will attend either the Senior Leadership Team or Learning and Teaching Committee. You will come away from these meetings with bags full of extra top level intelligence. You will be expected to contribute to the discussions and to feedback information at either School, Campus or College Assemblies.

HOW AM I CHOSEN?

If you are interested in becoming a school rep you should write an email with your CV and a cover letter to students-union@rca.ac.uk before 26th October detailing why you think you would be suited for the position. A decision will be made by the Co-Presidents by 2nd November. Course reps will then have the chance to vote for or against the Co-Presidents decision at the College-Wide Assembly on 12th November.

WHAT DO I ATTEND?

There are three School Reps per school and two committees to attend. One of the reps will attend the Learning and Teaching Committee with at least one of the other two attending each Senior Leadership Team meeting, preferably both would go. Should a single rep not be able to attend a meeting another should attend in their place.

SENIOR LEADERSHIP MEETINGS (SLT)

Frequency differs between schools

ATTENDEES: School Dean, HoPs, Senior Tutors, School General Managers, Technical Services Manager, SU Co-President, 2 School Reps.

This is a regular formal gathering of each schools teaching and administration team. Updates are given on the college's direction and strategy and the progress of the Work in Progress and Degree Shows. Reports are also given from Technical Services, Health and Safety Committee, IT services, the SU and college committees such as the Academic Standards Committee and Equality and Diversity Committee etc. Reps should provide a student opinion on matters arising and take notes to feedback at assemblies.

LEARNING AND TEACHING COMMITTEE

Once a term

ATTENDEES: Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost, Head of the Academic Development Office, Deans, HoPs, Student Support, a SU Co-President, 1 School Rep.

This is a subcommittee of the Academic Standards Committee which aims to oversee the development, implementation and review of the College's Learning and Teaching Strategy while identifying opportunities to enhance the quality of the student learning experience. You will contribute to the discussions and take notes to feed back at assemblies.

AND WHAT IF...?

A STUDENT HAS A PERSONAL ISSUE

Personal Tutors are the first point of contact for pastoral care. Firstly, refer a student to their personal tutor unless you feel confident you can recommend someone more relevant. It is not your job to deal with personal issues, as an act of self care to yourself don't take on the issues of others, refer them to staff who have a duty of care. If you are unsure who to tell, put them in contact with us.

Student Support are here to provide expert care in:

- Visa and Immigration Issues
- Disabilities, including Dyslexia
- Finance and Scholarships
- Housing and Accommodation
- Counselling Services
- English for Academic Purposes
- Faith based welfare support

We cannot stress enough that the above areas are not your responsibility as a rep.

COMPLAINTS & ACADEMIC APPEALS

Information on Complaints or Appeals can be found on our website at www.rcasu.org.uk/wp/appealsandcomplaints. Refer a student here for comprehensive advice. The first stage of the complaint process is called 'local resolution'. This means if possible the student(s) should raise the issue with their personal tutor or HoP to get the process started.

Appeals and Complaints can be long winded depending on their nature. If a student chooses to go down this path we would recommend they do so as quickly as possible. Firstly this gets the ball rolling but it also prevents students from exerting too much time or energy away from their studies.

BEST PRACTICE

Here are some things we would recommend you do in order to make sure you are able to fulfil your role, making it easier and less time consuming.

AGENDAS & MINUTE TAKING

Agendas are really important for keeping the flow of a meeting. If you have an agenda with a particular amount of points it makes it easier to manage your time effectively and keep the conversation focused.

We have agenda templates on our website: www.rcasu.org.uk/wp/agendatemplates

We recommend creating a shared Google Drive file and storing all your Agendas and Minutes together. Title your Agendas something like this:

Architecture - Programme Forum - Agenda - 8/10/18

When you are taking minutes simply create a copy of your agenda, change out the word Agenda for Minutes in the title and take your minutes under the relevant titles. Try as much as possible to make action points throughout to make sure things get done rather than just spoken about. If you do this as you go via a Google Doc in a Drive shared with your course you don't need to forward on the minutes as they are already in the place they need to be!

Make sure your next agenda is dictated by the minutes of the previous meeting. If one topic was extremely pertinent keep it in the agenda, if something had no discussion remove it, if a topic arose not on the last agenda make sure it's on the next one.

If you wish to make an agenda point for one of our assemblies or a college committee such as Learning and Teaching or Equality and Diversity get in touch with us and we will relay your point to the relevant party.

APOLOGIES

If you can't make it to a meeting always send an apology. This doesn't have to be elaborate and you don't have to make excuses. The following is sufficient as the body of an email;

Dear _____,

I won't be able to attend _____ next week. Please pass on my apologies.

All the best,

If you feel it is necessary to elaborate on your reasons feel free to do so but the most important thing is that you are alerting those organising the meeting or committee to your absence. Particularly with our assemblies where we will supply lunch it is a real shame to produce mountains of food if it isn't necessary.

CONFIDENTIALITY

There may be occasions on which college committees discuss sensitive matters. Reps will be expected to respect the confidentiality of the discussion. Likewise, if a student approaches you with a sensitive matter for which you have to refer them on to the SU or Student Support you are expected to be discreet. Anything divulged to you in your role as Programme Rep should be treated confidentially unless otherwise stated.

POSITIVITY

We would advise you to take a measured approach to feedback in order to maintain a healthy relationship within your course and beyond. Look at a situation from everyone's perspective and treat your peers and your tutors as a team. If you know you need to feedback something negative try to throw in a positive

READING, NOTING, REPORTING

Before you attend a meeting you should read the agenda and minutes from the previous meeting. We do not expect you to pour over them and write copious notes but it is advantageous to have an idea of what will be discussed at the meeting in advance.

While at a meeting or committee you should be taking notes. If a point is not relevant to you and your programme you do not need to note it but, remember that in your role you need to feedback to your peers. As good as your memory may be there's always something that slips through the cracks!

Subsequent to a meeting you should report your findings back to your programme. Depending on your cohort size and the structure of your course content this can take many guises. An email, a Whatsapp message, a printout on a noticeboard, an announcement in a weekly course meeting etc. In whatever way you do it you should make sure your course receives any information relevant to it.

TIME COMMITMENT

Being a rep should not be a huge time commitment. It should work out at no more than 8-10 hours a term. The key to making sure it doesn't become an overbearing task is organisation. If you keep your notes organised, report back punctually after meetings and ensure you don't go beyond the description of the role this should be a fulfilling and manageable position.

YEAR SCHEDULE

We've tried to organise this in as simple a manner as possible but we do appreciate it can be confusing so maybe take a moment to make sure you take down the right details. Don't be scared by how many dates there are! You only need to come to about a third of them. If you are unsure where a room is take a look at the 'College Rooms & Spaces - where to find them' page on the intranet.

REP TRAINING

ARCHITECTURE	1-2PM	16th Oct	Senior Common Room
ARTS AND HUMANITIES	1-2PM	16th Oct	Gorvy Lecture Theatre
DESIGN	1-2PM	17th Oct	Senior Common Room
COMMUNICATION	1-2PM	18th Oct	GH229

ASSEMBLIES

TERM 1

CAMPUS	Battersea	1-2PM	6th Nov	SAC 016
CAMPUS	Kensington	1-2PM	6th Nov	ArtBar
CAMPUS	White City	1-2PM	8th Nov	GH229
COLLEGE WIDE ASSEMBLY		6-8PM	12th Nov	Senior Common Room
SCHOOL	<i>Architecture</i>	<i>1-2PM</i>	<i>4th Dec</i>	<i>ArtBar</i>
SCHOOL	<i>A&H</i>	<i>1-2PM</i>	<i>4th Dec</i>	<i>SAC016</i>
SCHOOL	<i>Design</i>	<i>1-2PM</i>	<i>5th Dec</i>	<i>ArtBar</i>
SCHOOL	<i>Communication</i>	<i>1-2PM</i>	<i>6th Dec</i>	<i>GH229</i>

TERM 2

CAMPUS	Battersea	1-2PM	29th Jan	WOO164
CAMPUS	Kensington	1-2PM	29th Jan	ArtBar
CAMPUS	White City	1-2PM	31st Jan	GH229
COLLEGE WIDE ASSEMBLY		6-8PM	11th Feb	Senior Common Room
SCHOOL	<i>Architecture</i>	<i>1-2PM</i>	<i>12th Mar</i>	<i>ArtBar</i>
SCHOOL	<i>A&H</i>	<i>1-2PM</i>	<i>12th Mar</i>	<i>DYS111</i>
SCHOOL	<i>Design</i>	<i>1-2PM</i>	<i>13th Mar</i>	<i>Artbar</i>
SCHOOL	<i>Communication</i>	<i>1-2PM</i>	<i>14th Mar</i>	<i>GH229</i>

TERM 3

CAMPUS	Battersea	1-2PM	30th Apr	SAC016
CAMPUS	Kensington	1-2PM	30th Apr	ArtBar
CAMPUS	White City	1-2PM	2nd May	GH229
SCHOOL	<i>Architecture</i>	<i>1-2PM</i>	<i>14th May</i>	<i>Artbar</i>
SCHOOL	<i>A&H</i>	<i>1-2PM</i>	<i>14th May</i>	<i>SHC016</i>
SCHOOL	<i>Design</i>	<i>1-2PM</i>	<i>15th May</i>	<i>Artbar</i>
SCHOOL	<i>Communication</i>	<i>1-2PM</i>	<i>16th May</i>	<i>GH233</i>
COLLEGE WIDE ASSEMBLY		6-8PM	3rd June	Senior Common Room

ANYTHING ELSE...?

If you have any questions or suggestions please feel free to get in contact with us at students-union@rca.ac.uk.

If you're deciding whether to become a rep, we hope you do! If you've been elected, congratulations and we look forward to meeting you soon.