



**KSU's guide to  
student representation**

**(July 2009)**



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## KSU's Guide to Student Representation

### **Forward**

Though this message we would like to congratulate you on being elected as a student rep. This demonstrates initiative and reflects the confidence your mates have shown in your ability to represent them.

As a student rep you have a key role to comment on the student learning experience and how the quality of the learning and teaching can be enhanced. Your contribution can lead to positive changes such as improved academic standards and a better student learning environment at the University.

Course commitments, a possible part-time job, and active student participation is a conjunction that requires sacrifice and commitment. Additionally it is a pathway worth trading along. As you will come to find out, the experience gained as a student rep will prove to be invaluable in the future.

The aim of this work book is to help you understand the governing structure of University and how you get to fit in it. The tips set forth in the next few pages may prove to be very handy and your endeavors for the coming months. We hope that this workbook can also help you understand your role as a student rep and will also encourage you to actively participate on University boards and within KSU.

While this handbook is a fairly comprehensive source of information, it couldn't be possible to handle all queries or questions that may be put to you during the year. Moreover as you will get to find out, student representation is no mere feat. Therefore feel free to drop by the KSU office to discuss with the Education Commission whatever may be troubling you or for a friendly chat amidst your busy schedule.

Together we have a mission; to leave university in a better state than we found it.

Best of Luck

Education office

## What is a student representative?

As a student rep, you are elected to voice the views of students for the undergraduate or postgraduate programmes within your faculty. You are to act as a channel of communication between staff and students.

A student rep's key role is to give the student's input in the decision-making framework of the University of Malta. This means that you need to be proactive (hand on / practical). Your contribution within decision-making bodies is the official view on matters that concern the students.

Your role as a student rep enables you to change the educational content of your faculty/institute/centre if you so wish! Your contribution can lead to positive changes, improve academic standards, and help to actively shape the learning environment for all students.

<b>Post</b>	<b>Student Rep</b>
<b>Purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To represent students at University Boards</li><li>• To keep students updates about major changes that concern them</li><li>• Keep informed the lecturing body and the administrative staff about relevant student views</li></ul>
<b>Responsibilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To abide by the Standing orders for the Education Commission</li><li>• To attend Board meetings and raise any relevant student issues</li><li>• To attend and contribute to the Education Commission meetings</li><li>• To liaise with other student representatives</li><li>• (See also Duties of Student reps)</li></ul>
<b>Skills developed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Listening skills</li><li>• Diplomacy</li><li>• Presentation skills</li></ul>

**Other duties of Student reps**

- Student reps are to encourage students of their faculty to use KE services such as online past papers and the "you complain you gain" online system.
- Board Meeting i.e. the faculty board meetings, the meetings of an institute / centre, or the meetings of senate and of council must be attended regularly.
- Student representatives should keep the faculty based organisation updated on matters concerning the faculties.
- Student representatives should work together in the best interest of the students.
- Student representatives have the duty to update the Education Commission with all the information required for the KE services to function efficiently.
- The student representatives, as members of the Education Commission, have the duty to keep themselves adjourned on regulations and other information, which affect the academic position of the students.
- Each student representative is to be available in order to meet the students during office hours established for the benefit of students. Such office hours together with the names, telephone numbers, and emails of the student representatives must be posted on the notice boards of the respective faculties and on the website of KSU.
- Student representatives are to take an active role in the processing of complaints by KSU.
- During the first week of every academic year, the student representatives are encouraged to hold a meeting with the students entering the course to inform such students on their role as student representatives and to guide them on the course structure, functions of university bodies and student life in general.

- The student rep is encouraged to hold a meeting every three months, in order for the students to be able to lodge their complaints and be informed of any updates related to academic matters.
- The student representatives mentioned in section 2.2 of the standing orders and in Article 19.1 of the KSU statute are obliged to submit a report on their activity, to the education commissioner in January and June before the end of each term according to article 19.2 of the KSU statute highlighting the changes and the decisions taken during the board meetings. The report drawn up by student representatives for the education commission must be available to students.
- Student Reps should keep minutes of board meetings and pass them on to the next KE Representative after termination in office.
- Newly elected student representatives are to request the minutes of past board meetings within ten working days.
- Student representatives, members of the education commission must elect the new Educational Commissioner.
- Student representative, member of the education commission must formulate the politics that guide the Educational Commission.
- Student representatives, members of the education commission must promote the politics they formulate by proposing campaigns, reports, debates or other activities that can be implemented by the executive.
- Student representatives, member of the education commission must approve the guidelines to student representatives.
- Student representatives, where permitted by the Board's Faculty, are to submit the minutes of the board meetings to the Education Commission as soon as they are available.
- In all other circumstances the student representative shall make specific minutes available to the KE Commissioner on demand.

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- When an issue, which concerns the students directly, arises during the faculty board meetings, the representatives must hold a meeting with the interested students.
- The student representative must, in a reasonable time before final examinations, make sure that any changes to final examination paper structure and assessment are communicated effectively to students, whether through the faculty or by the student rep him/herself. Should a faculty not communicate to its students regarding any changes to final examination paper structure or assessment, the student rep must communicate this to KSU immediately.
- Where the agenda of any board meeting is available prior to a meeting of the education commission such agenda should be a point of discussion for the education commission.

## **What is exactly KSU?**

### **About KSU**

The Kunsill ta' I-Studenti Universitarji (University Students' Council) is the oldest national student union in Europe. KSU was founded by Arturo Mercieca (later Chief Justice Sir Arturo Mercieca) in 1901, as the Comitato Permanente Universitario. The student union involved itself in student politics as well as national politics.

KSU represents all students attending the University, Junior College, the Institute of Health Care, Medical School and the Malta Centre of Restoration – on both a national and international level.

### **KSU Today**

Although times have changed since the organization was founded, the aim of KSU remains unchanged. Although Malta has progressed greatly since 1901, this does not reduce the importance of the contribution that each and every student can give to University and society in general. Life and University should not only consist in studying, and KSU is an ideal forum where every student can express his or her ideas regarding issues that, strictly speaking, have nothing to do with his or her studies. KSU gives the student the opportunity not only to attend, but also to form part of University.

### **Principles and Goals**

Although in itself KSU is a dynamic organization and therefore it is open for change and debate, like other organizations, it finds its roots in a set of fundamental objectives on which the organization was founded. Over the past 109 years, KSU has been working:

- To represent students in whatever issues concern them, whether it is on a national or international level;
- To serve as an official link between students and the relevant authorities.
- To achieve the democratization of education in Malta;
- To coordinate activities with other organizations;
- To cultivate an interest in students in the fields of education, socio-political and cultural issues;
- To pressure authorities into assuring the highest level of quality in Higher Education.



### **Affiliation**

On an International level, KSU is a full member of ESU – the national unions of students in Europe. ESU is the representative of 49 National Unions of Students in 38 European countries, including KSU. Through these unions, ESU represents over 11 million students and is regarded by the European Commission, the Council of Europe, UNESCO, the Bologna Follow-up Group, the European University Association (EUA) and various other stakeholders in education, as being the leading representative voice of all students in Europe.

KSU is also an official founding member of MEDNET, which is the Mediterranean Network of Student Representatives.

Visit: <http://www.esib.org/>

## **Who does what on campus?**

Unless you have previously dealt with the different structures within University, chances are you may be overwhelmed at the governing structure at University. The governing set up of the University involves a myriad of administrative and technical staff members that are elected or appointed to various boards.

### **→ Regulations**

As conferred to it by the Education Act, the University has the power to make statutes, regulations and bye-laws to administer the activities carried within it.

**Statutes** are rules made by Council and bind the whole University and the entities created by it.

**Regulations** are rules that govern academic matters and are made by Senate. They bind the whole University,

**Bye-laws** are made by Faculty Boards and govern academic matters within the respective faculty.

All statutes, regulations and bye-laws have the force of law and are thus binding.

### **→ Principle Officers of the University of Malta**

#### **Chancellor**

The Chancellor is the highest officer of the University responsible to ensure that the University conforms to the law. The Chancellor is appointed for a 7-year term by the President of Malta acting on the advice given by the Prime Minister after he would have consulted the Leader of the Opposition. The Chancellor:

- Promulgates statutes, regulations and bye-laws of governing bodies of University;
- Power to summon the Council, Senate and Faculty Boards;

### **Pro-Chancellor**

The Pro-Chancellor is appointed by the Chancellor after the Minister's approval for a term not exceeding five years.

The Pro-Chancellor shall perform the functions of Chancellor whenever the Chancellor is not available or whenever required to do so in writing by the Chancellor.

The Pro-Chancellor shall be the *ex officio* president of the Council.

### **Rector**

The Rector is the principal academic and administrative officer of the University. He is elected by the Council for a term of 5 years. The Rector has the:

- Responsibility for the daily administration of the University and is vested with the legal representation of the University;
- Authority over the teaching staff, examiners, students, candidates for examinations and University employees;
- Power to enforce discipline and the strict observance of the provisions of the statutes, regulations and bye-laws;
- Power to summon Council, Senate and Faculty Boards;
- Duty to plan and coordinate of the work of various bodies and institutions of higher education;
- The Rector shall be responsible for the day to day administration of the University, shall be the president *ex officio* of the Senate and Faculty Boards, and shall be vested with the legal representation of the University.

### **Pro-Rectors**

Pro-Rectors assist the Rector in the general day-to-day running of the University. They focus on specific aspects of University affairs. These are assisted by Rector's delegates in various areas. Pro-Rectors are appointed by the Rector for a one year term. They perform the functions of the Rector whenever required to do so by the Rector.

## **Registrar**

The Registrar is perhaps one of the officials with whom most students deal. The Registrar:

- Assists the Rector in the daily administration of University;
- Is responsible for the records of all examinations held by University;
- Must ensure the proper safekeeping of such records;
- Keeps a record of the academic activities of each student;
- Is in charge of the proper arrangements of the time-tables after consultation with the Deans of the Faculties;
- Handles any other duties as may be called for by the exigencies of the University.

## **Dean**

The Dean of a Faculty is elected for a term of four years by the academic staff of that Faculty and from among the heads of departments of that Faculty

The dean is the president *ex officio* of the Faculty Board in the absence of the Rector.

## **Deputy Dean**

The Deputy Dean of a Faculty is appointed by the Rector for a period of one year, in consultation with the Dean of the respective Faculty.

The Deputy Dean besides such other functions as may be delegated to him by the Dean, performs the functions of the Dean in his absence.

## **University Ombudsman**

The University Ombudsman has the mandate to investigate and report on any complaints by students or employees of the University on matters related to the University or complaints by persons who have been refused entry into the University, The Ombudsman may suggest redress. Despite all, complainants who have exhausted this remedy may still bring their complaint to the Parliamentary Ombudsman.

For more info see:

- <http://www.ombudsman.org.mt/uo/index.asp?pg=legislation>
- [http://www.um.edu.mt/newsoncampus/features/archive/the\\_role\\_of\\_the\\_university\\_ombudsman](http://www.um.edu.mt/newsoncampus/features/archive/the_role_of_the_university_ombudsman)

→ **Governing bodies of the University of Malta**

**Council**

As laid down in Article 33 of the Education Act, the council is the supreme governing body of the University. Its functions include:

- Administration of the University's property;
- Administration of the University's budget;
- Establishing and abolishing all posts for staff at University;
- Appointing all University staff;
- Ensure the payment of all University staff;
- Decide on promotions within Universities;

**Composition of the council:**

- President - the Pro-Chancellor (ex-officio);
- Vice-President - the Rector (ex-officio);
- 4 Representatives of the Senate;
- 2 members elected by and from the Academic staff;
- 2 members elected by and from the non-academic staff;
- 2 student representatives;
- 1 Member Appointed by the Minister of Education;
- 12 Members Appointed by the Prime Minister to Represent the General Interest of the Country;
- 1 member appointed by the Council of the Foundation for Theological Studies;

**Senate**

Senate is mainly responsible for academic matters appertaining to the University. Senate is the governing structure responsible, *inter alia*, for:

- Make regulations governing University;
- Regulating studies, documentation, research and examinations at the University;
- Entry regulations;
- Conferring degrees, diplomas or any other awards;
- Advise Council on academic matters;
- Advice the Government in the fields of learning, science and technology.

## **Composition of Senate**

- President - the Rector (ex-officio);
- Pro-Rectors;
- Deans of Faculties;
- Representatives from each of the Faculties;
- 4 Representatives from the Student Body;
- 2 Members Appointed by the Minister of Education;
- 2 Members Appointed by the Institutes;
- The Librarian (ex-officio);
- Secretary - the Registrar;

## **Faculty Boards**

Faculty boards undertake the academic tasks of the faculty. Every plan or proposal is presented to Senate and rendered binding. The following are some of the functions about which you, as a student rep, get to have a say on:

- Recommending to Senate programs of study leading to degrees or diplomas, and the conditions of admission;
- Making regulations as may be necessary for the exercise of the function of the Faculty;
- Monitoring the experience of the students in the Faculty, and the effectiveness of the systems for academic support and advice;
- Promoting collaboration in staff development, research and scholarly activity, teaching and learning, and related activities, both within the Faculty and across the institution;
- Deciding upon applications for admission for change of programs, subject to the regulations of the Senate;
- Determining policies regarding academic supervision over students;
- Monitoring the faculty-level implementation of the University's teaching and learning strategies and policies and their effectiveness;
- Making such recommendations to Senate as the Faculty may deem expedient for promoting the efficiency of the University as a whole and the respective faculty in particular;
- Submitting to Senate names of candidates for both earned and honorary degrees and diplomas.

### **Composition**

- President - Rector (*ex officio*);
- Vice-President - Dean of Faculty (*ex officio*);
- Heads of all the departments in the faculty;
- Representative of each department of the Faculty elected by and from among the academic staff of the department;
- 2 student reps elected by and from among the students of the faculty;
- 2 members appointed by the Minister to represent the interests outside the Faculty and who, in the opinion of the Minister, can give an effective contribution towards the good administration of the faculty;

### **The Education Commission**

This commission is one the commissions within KSU. In line with the KSU statute, the Education Commission:

- Drafts the KSU policy with regards to education
- Puts in practice a system of academic complaints
- Maintains adequate relations with institutions and other bodies with academic interest on and off University campus
- Take any initiative, organize any activity and create any other project it deem falls under the academic sphere
- Assure a more active representation of students in all academic fields

### **Composition**

- President - Education Commissioner
- Education Coordinator
- KSU through the President or Secretary General
- 2 student reps elected on the University Council
- 4 student reps elected on Senate
- 2 student reps elected on each Faculty Board
- 2 student reps elected on the Junior College Board
- 2 reps of each Board of an Institution or a Centre which has a hundred (100) students or more and which offers undergraduate degrees

## What can you achieve?

Your role as a Student Rep entails academic representation. The following are some ideas of what can be achieved:

Reinforce good practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If something has worked particularly within the faculty let the Board know - the only way that staff find out what you like is if you tell them!</li></ul>
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Different assessment format</li><li>• Fellow students may prefer different weightings given to different course years</li><li>• Prompt and/or in-depth feedback on assessed work</li></ul>
Teaching methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You may suggest positive ways for lecturers to improve student learning</li></ul>
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Suggest the resources needed or bring to the attention of the Board that resources are missing. Even though the Board has no direct responsibility for these resources they can ensure that the student views are forwarded to the relevant authorities</li></ul>
Social Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You may organise a social event that brings together members within the faculty</li></ul>



**What makes you a good student rep?**

A successful Student Rep is one that is visible and accessible to all students. You will need to advertise your presence and your services to those you represent, you must also consider ways in which students can get in touch with you if they have any issues which they would like you to raise on their behalf.

Keep in mind that you will represent a diverse group of students with different needs, so you must ensure that you are available and accessible to all student groups. Part-timers are students too!

<b>Ideas to develop good practice</b>	
<b>Pigeon holes</b>	Let staff and students know where to send your mail. Setting up a box next to the faculty office may be a good idea. You could turn it to a comment box as well
<b>Notice board space</b>	Ensure that you have access to notice board space within your faculty. This space can be used to display issues for discussion for all students to see. You may also want to display your photograph in this space so that fellow students can see who their reps are
<b>Feedback</b>	When possible, talk to the students you are representing. Time between lectures may be the right time.
<b>Use services available</b>	KSU provides access to photocopying and printing facilities that may help you publicize issues that you want other students to know about.
<b>Informal meetings</b>	It is always worth talking to staff on an informal level; small problems can often be resolved in this way.
<b>Emails</b>	Keep students posted by sending emails with new developments within the faculty.
<b>Regulations</b>	Make sure you are aware of the rights and responsibilities of the members of the University community. It is important that you are aware of the content and meaning for students.

## **How to be an effective rep ...**

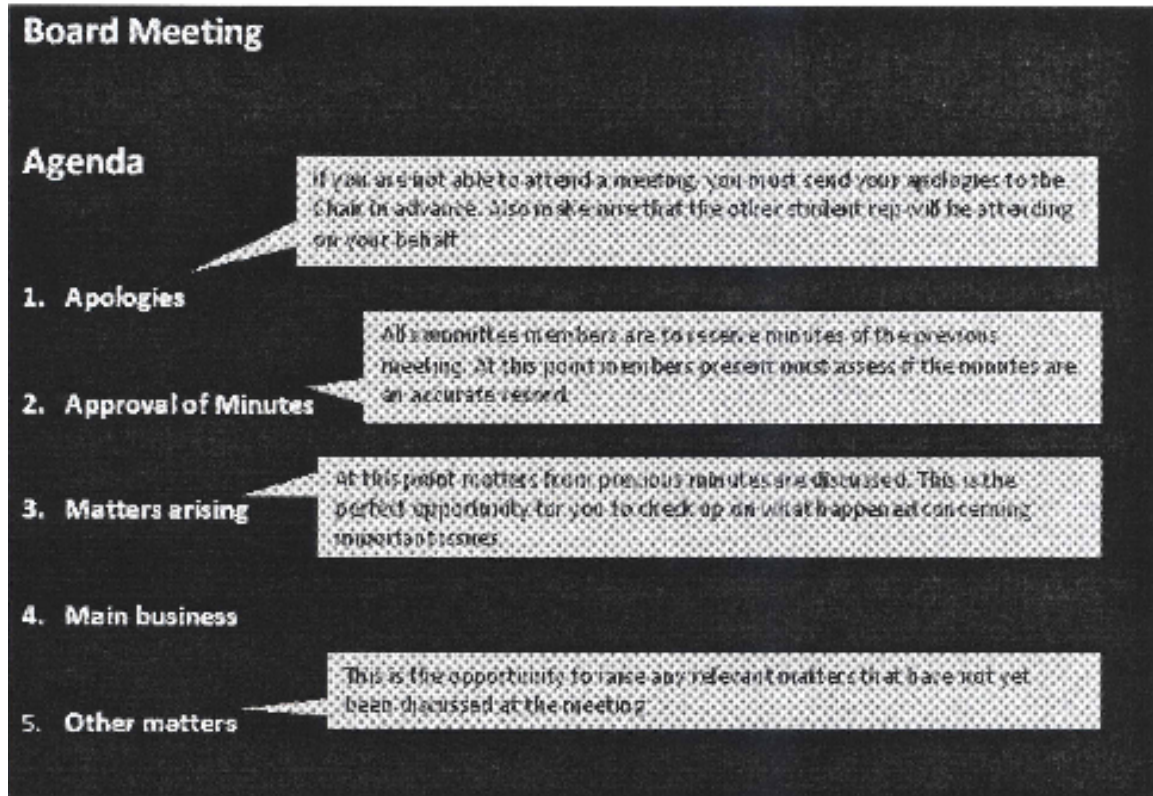
You will soon learn that meetings are the heart and soul of the University and the way it runs. If you want to make significant changes on any major issues, you need to be prepared to go through the often long process of meetings.

### ***Preparation for the meeting***

- Note down the date, time and location of all meetings you are expected to attend on your diary. Missing meetings not only reflects badly upon you, but also upon students' representatives in general.
- Read the agenda and papers before the meeting perhaps highlighting areas that affect you and your colleagues.
- Seek the views of fellow students where possible.
- Make research on technical issues this gives more credibility to the point you are trying to make.
- Dress appropriately.

### ***During the meeting***

- Be punctual. If you are late or miss a meeting at the late minute send your profuse apologies to the Chair or you may not be taken seriously in the future
- Don't be afraid to speak or ask relevant questions - don't be intimidated. You have as much right as the most senior person to be there and to say what you think
- Raise your hand to attract the Chair's attention
- Speak clearly
- Remember that time is money - speak concisely and only speak when you have something valuable to say
- Listen actively - people may try to sneakily smother important information amidst a mass of irrelevant detail



***Tricks of the trade***

- **Make sure you discuss matters and agree with the other student rep.** It looks bad when you and your fellow student rep disagree on what students think
- Seek to **obtain the support of the rest of the students** and prove it to Faculty a petition is potentially a very good idea. However, don't overdo it. Use this tool wisely
- **Informal Lobbying** - seize every opportunity to pass your message through and to get support from potential 'allies'
- **Find out who the members of the committee are and what they are like**
- **Meeting up key and influential board members** - setting up a meeting with members on the Board may allow you do raise an issue and argue the case in a less formal environment
- **Try to discover counter-arguments to yours** - seek to discover the arguments against your proposal. This enables to argue your case at the actual Board meeting
- **Sit where the chair of the meeting can see you at meetings**
- **Don't lose your temper** - if your argument is well prepared there is no need to get wound up
- Keep other students informed - **tell** them what you have achieved. Otherwise your fellow colleagues might think faculty reps are irrelevant

## **KSU, how can it help YOU?**

KSU stands to represent all undergraduate and graduate students in the University. The University recognizes KSU as the representative body of the students and consults with KSU to find out the needs of the students. All students are automatically members of KSU.

### **Support**

KSU Education Commissioner and Coordinator can provide support and help you in providing individual student support, preparing papers for meetings or by helping you establish contact with relevant people. Don't be afraid to ask! KSU is there to help you take forward your initiatives

### **Information**

The Education Commissioner and Coordinator are likely to be updated and informed about recent policies, at University, national and international level. They will be able to point you in the right direction or give you that information to take the issue on yourself within your faculty.

### **Services**

KSU provides a number of services that may come in useful:

- Fixed-line telephone service
- Photocopying - A3, A4, Black & White, double-sided, etc ...
- Desktop Publishing services
- Board room

**Important names**

Professor John Rizzo Naudi - Chancellor

Professor David J. Attard - Pro- Chancellor

Prof Juanito Camilleri - Rector of the University

Dr Mary Anne Lauri - Pro-Rector for Student and Institutional Affairs

Professor Richard Muscat - Pro-Rector for Research and Innovation

Professor Alfred Vella - Pro-Rector for Academic Affairs.

Ms Grech – Registrar

Prof Charles Farrugia – University Ombudsman

Mr. Dione Mifsud - Coordinator of the Counseling Unit

Mr. Anthony Mangion – Director Library Services.

Mr. Carl Grech – KSU President

Ms. Daniela Bartolo - member of the Academic Affairs Committee of the European Students Union (ESU).

## **Final word**

We hope that this brief document will help you to understand and carry out effectively your important role as a class rep. If you have read through the document, you will realize that you have a significant party to play in the running and development of the university. We are grateful to you for giving your time and energy to work with us in the process of student representation.

KSU Education office  
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