



Student Academic Reps  
Cynrychiolwyr Academaidd Myfyrwyr

Cardiff University Students' Union  
Undeb Myfyrwyr Prifysgol Caerdydd

VOTE  
ORLA  
MENTAL  
HEALTH

# POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH REP HANDBOOK 18/19

Cardiff University Students' Union  
Undeb Myfyrwyr Prifysgol Caerdydd



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# INTRODUCTION FROM YOUR VICE PRESIDENT POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS, JAKE SMITH

Hello, I'm Jake Smith, the Vice President Postgraduate Students of Cardiff University Students' Union. My role is to represent all 10,000+ postgraduate students, taught or research, at Cardiff University. I've just started my second term in the role, having been re-elected in Spring 2018.

I'm really pleased you've put yourself forward to be a Representative. Postgraduate researchers deserve a strong voice in the University and I'm looking forward to working with you to make sure that's a reality at the departmental, school and University level.

Last year I worked with Postgraduate Research Representatives to make the case to the University for changes to PGR tutoring/demonstrating and office space. The voice of Reps has made a huge difference in departments and schools across the University. My main priorities for this year are to extend the rights of, and support for, PGRs who teach, continue improving PGR office space, create a vibrant postgraduate social community and ensure that your Students' Union never forgets the Postgraduate Researchers in its membership. I hope we can work together on these priorities and I'd value your input.

Along with the Student Voice Team, I'm looking forward to supporting you in your role and maintaining a dialogue with you. We'll have the opportunity to meet and discuss issues at the regular University-wide forums, but you are welcome to contact me anytime. I'm confident that together we can improve the University experience for all postgraduate researchers.



# INTRODUCTION FROM YOUR PRO-VICE (CHANCELLOR FOR STUDENT EXPERIENCE AND ACADEMIC STANDARDS, AMANDA COFFEY

Cardiff University is really proud of the strong partnership it has with the student body. We have a long tradition of student representation at the University, as one of the ways we work with and for our students. The Academic Representation system means that students from every programme in every school can have a say in how their education and wider student experience can be enhanced. We want our students to have the best experience possible whilst they are at Cardiff University. Student Reps help to make sure that we have a strong steer about things that are working well and things that need to be improved. Being a 'Rep' means that you have the opportunity to work alongside and represent your peers, as well as enhance your skills and build your networks. Welcome to the team.

# YOUR STUDENT VOICE TEAM

Congratulations on becoming a Postgraduate Research Rep! The Students' Union is the home of the student voice at Cardiff University and we are here to support you and your academic interests. Since 2014 the Student Voice Team at Cardiff University Students' Union have managed the Student Academic Representation structure. Our team exists to recruit, support and reward academic reps across the University.

As a department, we cover a wide range of areas from academic representation, democracy, policy and campaigns. The training delivered to you as an academic rep is created by us in order to prepare you for your role as a rep. We work in partnership with Cardiff University to advocate the student voice at every level and give students the opportunity to be co-creators of their University experience.

You will receive a newsletter from us once a month outlining key information and events that are important to you. We are located on the Third Floor of the Students' Union, so please come and see us any time! We want to hear from you and anything you might need help with.

You can contact us via:



**StudentReps@Cardiff.ac.uk**



**029020 781 424/ 02920 781 434**



**@cu\_studentvoice**



**cardiffstudents.com/ reps**

# YOUR STUDENT REP COORDINATOR

You will be supported throughout the year by your Student Rep Coordinator. This is a member of staff from your school who will help organise the Student Staff Panels, support you and circulate important information and opportunities with you.

*My Student Rep Coordinator is* \_\_\_\_\_

# ROLE OF A POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH REP

As a Postgraduate Research Rep your role is to represent the views of the Postgraduate Researchers and act as a voice for them on academic and research degree-related issues or ideas. You are required to attend Postgraduate Research Rep training provided by the Students' Union, attend your school's Student Staff Panels (SSP) meetings and make yourself known to the PGRs you represent. You relay both positive and constructive comments from your peers to share with your school and college, feeding back on the impact the student voice has had and how it's led to improvements.

## CARDIFF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' UNION VALUES

**Student Leadership** - You are a leader and are supported by the Students' Union. We are here to provide training and guidance.

**Inclusion** - All reps are expected to engage with everyone they represent.

**Partnership** - The University, Students' Union, and Reps all work in partnership to make the experience at Cardiff University the best it can be.

**Diversity** - Reps are a diverse group of both students and Postgraduate Researchers that work together to remove barriers to education.

## DEVELOPMENTAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Academic Rep Conference (Autumn & Spring Semester)
- VP Education, VP Postgraduate Students & VP Heath Park Executive Committees
- Speak Week PGR coffee mornings (Feb)
- Students' Union Elections (Nov & Feb)
- Annual Review and Enhancement (ARE)
- Periodic Review
- Students' Union and University Partnership projects
- Pioneer a school project

Find out more information about developmental opportunities here:  
[cardiffstudents.com/your-voice/academic-reps/resources](http://cardiffstudents.com/your-voice/academic-reps/resources)

# ROLE OF THE CHAIR

To chair Student Staff Panel (SSP) meetings and be a key point of contact in your school for the Student Voice Team and your Student Rep Coordinator.

- Attend Chair training
- Chair the SSP
- Work in partnership with the Secretary of your SSP
- Promote professional conduct at the SSP
- Appoint actions that arise from the SSP
- With support of your SRC, set the date of your SSP, the agenda and check minutes with Secretary
- Work with your SRC to invite relevant staff members to the SSP
- Attend Postgraduate Research Representatives Forum.



# ROLE OF THE SECRETARY

To work in partnership with the Chair of the Student Staff Panel (SSP), helping organise SSPs, take minutes, and be a key contact for the Student Voice Team and your Student Rep Coordinator.

- Attend Secretary Training
- Take minutes in SSPs & keep to time
- Work in partnership with the Chair of your SSP
- Promote professional conduct at Student Staff Panels
- With support of your SRC, circulate minutes before and after meeting

- Ensure a recurring agenda item gives the opportunity to feedback from Postgraduate Research Representative Forums.
- Send minutes to [StudentReps@Cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:StudentReps@Cardiff.ac.uk) within 2 weeks of your SSP



# STUDENT STAFF PANELS

Student Staff Panels (SSPs) are the key meetings attended by all Academic Reps and staff within your School. The purpose of these meetings is to talk about ideas and areas for improvement on your research degree and general educational experience. You are expected to attend these meetings with feedback from the postgraduate research community. The role of the chair and secretary are taken on by Reps.

An agenda and minutes from the previous meeting will be circulated before the SSP. Make sure you are prepared for the agenda items. In subsequent meetings it is important that you look out for action points, you might be asked to do something by the Chair or Secretary in time for the next SSP.

The number of SSP meetings may vary throughout the year; we recommend to meet at least 3 times per year and it's important that you attend or send apologies and feedback via email or a fellow rep if you cannot; this is essential in your role.

## Got an idea or issue before your SSP?

Some issues can't wait until a Student Staff Panel. If there is a pressing issue it is worthwhile raising it with a member of staff before the meeting. If you need support in doing so, please contact:

**StudentReps@Cardiff.ac.uk.**

# MY STUDENT STAFF PANELS

My first SSP is on \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_

My second SSP is on \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_

My third SSP is on \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_

# POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH REPRESENTATIVE (PGRR) FORUM

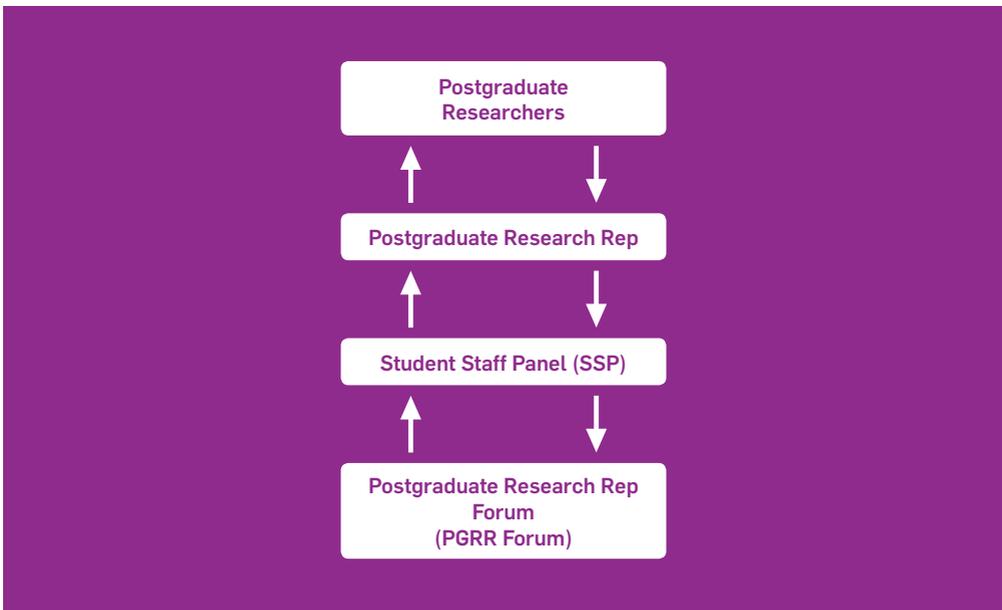
The PGRR Forum is open to all Postgraduate Research Academic Reps across Cardiff University, facilitated by Cardiff University Students' Union and chaired by the Vice President Postgraduate Students. The purpose of these meetings is to discuss any issues at a School, College or University level affecting the postgraduate research community.

The Vice President Postgraduate Students will invite appropriate University staff to the meeting. Discussions in the past have ranged from teaching and demonstrating pay for Postgraduate Researchers who teach, SIMs and progress monitoring, and PGR support to postgraduate induction.

These meetings are a great way to find out what is happening across the University that is relevant to you. If you have any questions relating to the PGRR Forum please email:

**[studentreps@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:studentreps@cardiff.ac.uk)**

## STRUCTURE & FEEDBACK LOOP



# SPEAK WEEK

Speak Week is a campaign run by the Students' Union every year in February. The purpose of the campaign is to gather feedback on Speak Week cards, from everyone studying at Cardiff University and use that feedback to inform the University on ways to improve your experience.

In 2018, we collected a record-breaking 3,425 cards equating to 7,518 comments. The campaign was a huge success due to the help of our academic reps, school staff and other volunteers!

The Student Voice Team analyse the Speak Week data and provide a report to the University on the concerns students have. Following this report, we work with the University to make the changes!

Here are some of the achievements of Speak Week so far:

- The opening hours of ASSL (library) were extended to 24 hours during term-time
- Contactless card payment facilities for University catering are campus wide
- Wi-Fi coverage across the campus has been improved

Speak Week is a great opportunity for you to engage with others and find out what changes they want to see! We will contact you around the time about volunteering or running a Speak Week event in your school.

You can find the most recent Speak Week report here: <https://www.cardiffstudents.com/your-voice/speak-week>



# THE ENRICHING STUDENT LIFE AWARDS (ESLAS)

Every year at the end of the spring term, the Students' Union hosts the Enriching Student Life Awards to celebrate the contributions both staff and students have made to the Cardiff University experience; providing recognition to those who have worked tirelessly to enhance the student experience.

The Student Voice Team will be launching the ESLAs in the Autumn Semester in the hope that every Cardiff student and staff member has a chance to submit (and receive) a nomination.

Most importantly, YOU could win an ESLA for being an Academic Rep! There is also an award for Best Graduate Tutor or Demonstrator. If shortlisted, you and the person who nominated you, get to attend the black tie event.

Rob Lloyd, a Postgraduate Researcher in the School of English, Communication, and Philosophy was the winner of the Rep of the Year for the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences for 2017/18.

Here's what Rob had to say about the experience:

*"Being part of the student rep community has been one of the most consistently rewarding aspects of my time at Cardiff, from the first-year of my BA through to my current position as the postgraduate tutor representative for PGRs in English Literature. The role allows me to articulate the experiences and insights of postgraduate tutors as part of the wider teaching focus of the department and school through attendance at various meetings. I have also collaborated extensively with the Director of Studies in reviewing module provision and content in Year One, which has given me a valuable insight into the practical pedagogies of university teaching, an experience I could only have gained in this role. Being a rep requires you to make an active contribution to the culture of the department, school and wider institution across a number of different areas of student activity, and it has been deeply rewarding to see the positive impact academic reps have had in recent years and continue to make.*



*I was very proud to win the Student Academic Rep of the Year for the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences at the Enriching Student Life Awards. It was wonderful to hear about the achievements of student reps throughout the university, and I feel very lucky to have won in this category."*

# REWARD AND RECOGNITION

Taking up the role of a Academic Rep will not only help shape the University experience for all postgraduate researchers but it will also develop skills outside of your research degree.

There are three different levels of accreditation for being an Academic Rep;

## Bronze Certificate

- Attend a training session or arrange a catch-up with a member of Student Voice team
- Attend 75% of your Student Staff Panel meetings
- Volunteer during Speak Week or Student Voice Campaign
- Attend the AGM in November or an Academic Rep Conference
- Complete the end of year Academic Rep feedback survey
- Submit an ESLA nomination

*Skills developed: Communication, decision making, and presentation skills.*

## Silver Certificate

- All of Bronze level completed
- Volunteer during Speak Week
- Attend Autumn or Spring Academic Rep Conference

*Skills developed: Committee skills, professionalism, and problem solving.*

## Gold Certificate

- All of Bronze and Silver level completed
- Attend the AGM in November and an Academic Rep Conference
- Attend University level meeting e.g. Partnership group, programme approval, ARE, focus group
- Proof of engagement with course based society (if you have one)

- Contribute to organising a campaign/project/social
- Receive an ESLA nomination from your peers or a member of staff

*Skills developed: Leadership, teamwork, and public speaking.*



## Skills Development Service Gwasanaeth Datblygu Sgiliau

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You can further develop all of these skills by attending sessions run by the Skills Development Service, on the Second Floor of the Students' Union, Park Place. You have access to a range of internally and externally certified courses and diplomas to choose from including: presentation skills, negotiation, team briefings and more.



## Cardiff Volunteering Gwirfoddoli Caerdydd

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You can also log all of your Rep volunteering hours with Cardiff Volunteering for a volunteering award. Head to their offices on the Second Floor of the Students' Union.

# IMPROVING YOUR ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Across the University there are many formal processes which come under the remit of quality assurance and enhancement. The University is guided by the QAA (Quality Assurance Agency) to ensure that the programmes of study at Cardiff University are of the highest standard possible.

## These processes include:

- **Students' Union and University Partnership Groups** – beginning 2017/18 as a result from the 2017 Student Written Submission. These are working groups dedicated to improving the Cardiff University student experience. You might be asked to be part of the student representation on these groups.
- **Annual Review and Enhancement (ARE)** – gathers together student feedback, NSS results, SSP minutes, recruitment figures, progression data and student numbers for UG, PGT & PGR – reviewed by both staff & students and recommendations made by the panel.
- **Periodic Review (PR)** – a broad review of all programmes within a school, evaluates their strategic direction and reflects upon the experiences of their students. This takes place on a rotational basis for every School every five years.
- **Programme Approval Panels** – meetings to approve new programmes being introduced in an Academic School, or alterations to existing programmes.

# THE STUDENT CHARTER

Our Student Charter defines the roles and responsibilities of students, the Students' Union and the University. Our Charter informs you of what you can expect from the University and the Students' Union and what is expected of you. As a Student Academic Rep, it's important you know these expectations and what students can do if the University does not meet your expectations.

The Student Charter is not aspirational; you can expect all of the services outlined in the Student Charter. Don't forget, there are expectations of you too. You should always seek to:

- **Raise issues at an early stage and seek advice if these are not resolved**
- **Inform the University promptly of any changes to your circumstances**
- **Raise your concerns if your Cardiff experience is adversely affected by the behaviour of fellow students or staff**
- **Seek advice immediately if your academic progress, or any other aspect of your Cardiff experience, gives you cause for concern**

Read your Student Charter here: [cardiff.ac.uk/new-students/before-you-arrive/student-charter](http://cardiff.ac.uk/new-students/before-you-arrive/student-charter).

# STUDENT ADVICE

The Student Advice centre provides advice and information, advocacy, representation and support through a free, confidential, impartial and independent service to the members of the Students' Union. You can drop in, book an appointment, e-mail or phone the team. The service also undertakes other activities and events to develop awareness of rights and responsibilities and to promote health and wellbeing of students.

If you are approached by students with any of these issues, please direct them to Student Advice:

- Academic Issues – appeals, advice on student conduct, changes to your course/terms and conditions, extenuating circumstances, revising through Ramadan, Revision Aid, Unfair Practice
- Health and Wellbeing – mental health, sexual health
- Housing – checking housing contracts, disputes with landlords, housing lists etc.

## Need Advice?

- Drop in sessions are Monday to Friday **11:00 - 14:00** (term time)
- Bookable appointments available between **10:00 – 16:00**
- Heath Campus: Advice sessions and appointments at the Heath are available on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from **11:00 – 14:00**
- To make an appointment please call us on **02920 781410** or fill in the Query form online: [cardiffstudents.com/advice](http://cardiffstudents.com/advice)

## Student Support & Wellbeing

The Student Support Centres have a range of services dedicated to helping students; appointments and drop-in times for all services can be accessed by calling Student Support on: **029 2087 4844** or by emailing: [studentsupport@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:studentsupport@cardiff.ac.uk)

## Advice and Money

Guidance on academic issues, funding advice, money skills & emergency funds and Bursaries & Scholarships. Based on the 3rd floor of the Students Union and have services at Cardigan House.

## Careers and Employability

Careers advice, guidance & information, work experience opportunities, employability skills development, access to student & graduate recruitment opportunities & events and Enterprise & Business start-up support. Located in 51a Park Place. Appointments can be made over the phone or by booking online through Careers Account.

## Counselling, Health and Wellbeing

Practical advice & support for good health & wellbeing and offers face to face & online appointments, drop-in service, workshops, self help resources and an occupational health service. Based in 50 Park Place.

## Disability and Dyslexia Service

Advice & guidance to disabled students, specialist support services and facilitates accessibility and adjustments including examination provision. Based in 50 Park Place and services at Cardigan House.

## International Student Support

Practical support for international students and offers immigration advice & assistance with visa extensions, guidance on employment regulations, financial advice and information on daily life in the UK. Based on the 3rd floor in the Students Union.

# JARGON BUSTER!

## **Annual Review and Enhancement (ARE)**

Annual quality assurance process that ensures that Schools are kept accountable for the decisions they make.

## **Campaign Officers**

A group of 10 students who are elected each year to represent liberated groups. These are voluntary, part-time positions taken on alongside the Officers' studies. The positions include: Black & Ethnic Minorities Officer, Welsh Language Officer, Mental Health Officer, Ethical & Environmental Officer, Students with Disabilities' Officer, LGBT+ Officer (Open), LGBT+ Officer (Women's), Women's Officer, International Students' Officer and Mature Students' Officer.

## **Cardiff University Students' Union (CUSU)**

An organisation independent from the University that represents the views of Cardiff students. The Union offers representation services, extra-curricular activities, nights out, day trips and part-time employment. You are automatically a member and can use any of the services provided.

## **Periodic Review (PR)**

A broad analysis of an academic schools that takes place on a five year cycle to ensure the school is meeting the expectations laid out in the QAA quality code.

## **Postgraduate Research Rep (PGRR)**

A volunteer Postgraduate Researcher who represents the view, question and comments of their cohort.

## **Postgraduate Research Representative Forums**

Meetings chaired by the Vice President Postgraduate Students, open to all PGR Representatives across the University, where School, College or University level issues can be discussed.

## **Sabbatical Officers**

This is a group of seven students who are elected each year to represent the views of Cardiff students. These positions are paid and are divided into seven separate areas: President and Vice Presidents for Education, Welfare, Postgraduate Students, Heath Park Campus, Societies & Volunteering and Sports.

## **Student Academic Rep (SAR)**

A volunteer taught student who represents the views, questions and comments of their cohort.

## **Student Advice**

Independent advice service based in the Students' Union, available to all Cardiff students. The team provide guidance on academic issues, consumer complaints, housing and more.

## **Student Support**

University run service based in 50 and 51 Park Place and the Students' Union offers hardship funds, general advice, international support and counselling services.

## **Student Staff Panel (SSP)**

Meetings that bring together Academic Reps and School staff to discuss issues affecting the student population at a local level. You are expected to attend these meetings in your role.

## **Student Voice Team**

The team that provides your training, support and provides advice specific to your role. You can contact the team if you have any suggestions or grievances with the Academic Rep structure.

Got more questions? Visit our FAQs on our website here: <https://www.cardiffstudents.com/your-voice/> or contact:

**StudentReps@Cardiff.ac.uk**

# MY OFFICER TEAM



## VICE PRESIDENT OF EDUCATION

Jackie Yip – [VPEducation@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:VPEducation@cardiff.ac.uk)

Jackie represents all students on academic issues to the University.



## VICE PRESIDENT POSTGRADUATE

Jake Smith – [VPPostgraduate@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:VPPostgraduate@cardiff.ac.uk)

Jake represents all postgrad students on the issues and policies that affect them.



## VICE PRESIDENT HEATH PARK

Jen Kent – [VPHeathPark@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:VPHeathPark@cardiff.ac.uk)

Jen represents all healthcare students with a focus on the Heath Park Site.

# FIND OUT MORE



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@CV\_STUDENTVOICE