

Student Academic Representation

Report 2024-2025



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Executive Summary

The Student Academic Representation scheme runs in partnership each year between Cardiff University and Cardiff Students' Union. Throughout the academic year 2024-25, student engagement improved in a range of areas. Below are some of the key highlights of the scheme in 2024-2025, based on data available throughout this report.

1029 Student Academic Reps recruited

an increase of 30 SARs from 23/24

76% of SARs completed any form of training

an increase from 71% in 23/24

510 SARs completed the end of year survey

109 SAR Chairs and Vice Chairs attended College Forums

an increase of 65 SARs from 23/24

154 SSP Minutes received

377 SAR rewards were collected

an increase of 87 from 23/24

707 Undergraduate Student Academic Reps

204 Postgraduate Taught Student Academic Reps

118 Postgraduate Research Student Academic Reps

251 Bronze certificates awarded

329 Silver certificates awarded

32 Gold certificates awarded

An overall 109 more certificates were given out to Student Academic Reps this year

There are some areas of the scheme that didn't do as well, but we will continually look to improve for the future! This includes ensuring all SAR details are submitted on time and increasing the amount of SSP minutes received as well as increasing SAR engagement across the board

Introduction

The Student Academic Representation scheme at Cardiff University, in collaboration with Cardiff Students' Union, continues to be a fundamental part of student engagement and advocacy. Each year, Student Academic Representatives (SARs) are elected across various programmes to serve as the voice of their peers, ensuring that student feedback is heard and acted upon.

Over 2024-25, the Student Voice team has worked alongside university staff to enhance the support and training provided to SARs, empowering them to effectively represent their cohorts. Regular Student Staff Panels have been key in facilitating open and constructive dialogues between students and school staff, addressing both academic concerns and broader aspects of the student experience.

This academic year has also been marked by significant achievements and challenges that have impacted the role of Student Academic Representatives. This report explores the various activities and engagements of the SARs, highlighting key areas of feedback and the impact of their work. It also outlines the ongoing efforts to improve the representation system and sets the stage for future developments.

Context of the Academic Year

Some challenges have occurred this year that have affected the academic representation system.

The Academic Future proposals at Cardiff University involve several significant changes aimed at ensuring the University's long-term sustainability and enhancing its educational and research capabilities. Here are some of the key points from the initial announcement:

- **Consultation Period:** A formal consultation lasting 90 days to discuss proposed changes.
- **Staff Reductions:** A proposed reduction of 400 full-time equivalent (FTE) academic staff.
- **School and Subject Changes:** Potential closures and mergers of schools and subjects, including Ancient History, Modern Languages, Music, Nursing, and Religion and Theology.
- **New School Structures:** Creation of new schools by merging existing ones, such as the School of Natural Sciences and the School of Data Science, Computing and Mathematics.

In response to these proposals, the Students' Union and Sabbatical Officers organised townhalls for Student Academic Representatives. These townhalls provided an opportunity for SARs to receive updates on the Academic Future proposals and to ask questions on behalf of themselves and their cohorts. Amid the uncertainty surrounding these proposals, SARs played an increasingly crucial role in feedback mechanisms at Cardiff University. With any ongoing and future changes,

the academic representation system will continue to be responsive and adaptable so that representatives can effectively feed in on the student experience.

Student Activity and Engagement

Over the academic year, SARs engage with many aspects of university life – both as a student and in their capacity as a representative. Through our end-of-year survey, SARs were able to tell us what they have been engaged in this year. At the end of the academic year there were 959 active SARs out of the total 1029 elected. Over the year SARs can step down for various reasons be it that their course has ended or for more personal reasons.

The section below focuses on how SARs have engaged with Student Voice activities over the year and some of the outcomes from their dedication. The core activities are:

- Training and Support
- College Forums
- Events
- Developmental Opportunities
- Wins
- Rewards & Recognition

Training and Support

At the beginning of the academic year, with support from the Students' Union and Learning & Teaching Academy, schools were tasked with recruiting Student Academic Reps. The deadline for recruitment of SARs was the end of teaching week 4, at this time all details of new or continuing Reps were due on the Student Voice & Experience network (SVEN).

Following recruitment of SARs, the Students' Union provided compulsory induction training for all Student Academic Reps to support them in their role. These live training sessions were held both in person, at Cathays and Heath Park, and digitally through a Microsoft Teams call. These sessions were held over teaching weeks 6, 7 & 8. 160 SARs attended an in person training session and 303 SARs attending via Teams.

For accessibility, as with previous years, a digital training module was also created so that SARs who were unable to attend any of the live sessions could still engage with the training. 143 SARs were able to complete their training through this digital module.

The training covered a range of topics including:

- Introductions

- Your Role
- Student Staff Panels and College Forums
- Gathering Feedback & The Feedback Loop
- Raising Feedback
- National Student Survey Data
- Signposting
- Development & Engagement Opportunities
- Support and Communication
- Get Rewarded and Recognised

Following training sessions, SARs were invited to collect a branded Student Academic Rep lanyard. This acted as a thank you for training but also served to increase the visibility of SARs to their cohorts. Over 200 SARs collected a lanyard this year.

As part of the enhancements from previous Academic Representation reports, electing of continuing Reps at the end of the previous academic year continued this academic period. Any continuing SARs, whose details were made known to the Student Voice Team, were given access to a modified digital module that provided them with refresher SAR training. A total of 127 Reps engaged with the refresher digital module this academic year.

In total this year, engagement with the training provided was a huge success with 76% of all Student Academic Reps engaging via any of the methods provided. This is an increase from 71% in 2023-2024 and 69% in 2022-2023.

College Forums

The College Forums serve as a crucial platform for Student Academic Representatives to discuss feedback with elected Sabbatical Officers and senior university staff. The Chair and Vice-Chair of each Student Staff Panel are invited to attend, providing updates on discussions from their last meeting and raising unresolved issues. This year, representatives and staff engaged in constructive conversations to address concerns, aiming to find solutions that would enhance the student experience for everyone. The forums also offer an opportunity for Chairs to share best practices within their college, exchanging ideas and solutions to common problems with their peers.

The five College Forums are:

- Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences Undergraduate Forum
- Biomedical & Life Sciences Undergraduate Forum
- Physical Sciences and Engineering Undergraduate Forum

- Cross-college Postgraduate Taught Forum
- Cross-college Postgraduate Research Forum

This year, the College Forums saw a significant increase in participation, with 109 attendees compared to 44 last year. The Postgraduate Research (PGR) College Forum in particular experienced notable strides in engagement. Several key issues were raised during these forums, including the need for more support for joint honours students, overcrowding in labs leading to long waits for materials, and concerns about assignment deadlines clashing. Additionally, issues with funding on some masters courses were highlighted, along with complaints about the high prices of vending machines on campus. It was also noted that there is a lack of teaching opportunities for PGR students and struggles with communication from schools regarding placements/ years in industry and years abroad.

Overall, the increased engagement and proactive discussions at the College Forums reflect a strong commitment to improving the academic and wider student experience for all students at Cardiff University.

Events and Developmental Opportunities

In response to the enhancements from last year's report, this year Student Leader sessions were implemented. With the aim of providing development opportunities for Student Academic Representatives and other student leaders.

These sessions covered a variety of topics, including effective communication, campaigning for change, interview skills, and an introduction to Mental Health First Aid. Each session was designed to equip student leaders with essential tools and knowledge to enhance their leadership effectiveness. For instance, the Neurodiversity and Communication session focused on mastering key meeting skills and creating inclusive environments, while the Campaigning for Change session provided insights into planning and executing successful campaigns. The Interview Skills workshop helped student leaders prepare for different types of interviews and manage their nerves confidently. Additionally, the Introduction to Mental Health First Aid session offered strategies for crisis de-escalation and building supportive communities. These sessions not only aided SARs in gaining valuable skills but also provided networking opportunities. The effective communication session also served as a replacement session for previous Chair & Vice-Chair training which in the past has been very poorly attended, providing broader appeal to a range of students and encouraging higher attendance.

The monthly SAR newsletter served as the primary platform to update and inform SARs on upcoming events and ways to get involved. In addition to promoting the Student Leader sessions,

the newsletter also featured other opportunities such as:

- Stand to be an Officer in the spring elections
- University social events
- Signposting and information from the Advice service
- Survey opportunities
- Job & volunteering opportunities
- and much more...

To thank and celebrate all student leaders, the Student Leader Celebration event was hosted. This fun-filled event featured a vibrant Fun Fair theme, complete with stands, games, and food stalls, creating a lively and enjoyable atmosphere. It was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the achievements of Student Academic Representatives and other student leaders. The event brought together a diverse group of leaders, including Student Champions, Sabbatical Officers, Executive Committee Members, and more. It was a day of recognition and gratitude, thanking Student Leaders, including SARs, for their hard work and dedication throughout the year.

Additionally, the Student Leader Networking Event, held during Student Volunteer Week, provided a relaxed setting for student leaders to connect, share experiences, and strengthen their sense of community. Together, these events not only acknowledged the contributions of SARs but also created a supportive and collaborative environment where student leaders could celebrate their achievements and build lasting connections.

Wins

In the 2024-25 academic year, Student Academic Reps have demonstrated exceptional dedication and effectiveness in their roles, achieving significant milestones that have positively impacted the student community. Below are just a few of the positive changes that SARs have spearheaded this year.

For instance, they aided in successfully reviving the JOMEC Society, enabling interdepartmental socials and guest lectures that supported skill growth for students. Additionally, SARs ensured that ABACWS now has a microwave and kettle for student use, and reintroduced vending machines in student spaces to provide a range of food options.

Their efforts in enhancing student life were further highlighted by the refurbishment of toilets in the Queens Building and the addition of new study spaces in Trevithick. SARs also addressed disparities in the personal tutor system and called for reconfigured anatomy lectures to better meet student needs. The School of Healthcare Sciences also now provide magnetic name

badges for mental health nurses to enhance privacy and professionalism based on SAR feedback.

Moreover, SARs from the School of Modern Languages organised extra sessions with the Student Futures team to support work placements for Year Abroad students and facilitated Year 2/Final Year networking opportunities. They created a project group to support the transition from UG to PGT, ensuring a smoother transition for postgraduate students. School-organised events in Welcome Week for final years helped reintegrate students returning from their Year Abroad and created a sense of community.

Further achievements include ensuring all computers in the MLANG Common Room are functional, deep cleaning chairs in MLANG, and addressing feedback on word count limitations. SARs also emphasised exam techniques in language classes, created Teams sites for French Year 2 and Final Year students, and facilitated student-led WhatsApp communities for Year Abroad support. Revision spaces were created in MLANG during the exam period, and changes were made to dissertation modules for consistency across departments.

These tangible achievements highlight the vital role Reps play in enabling a supportive and enriching academic environment.

Recognition and Rewards

Student Academic Representatives volunteer their time to represent student voices across their course and university. This role is inherently rewarding, offering opportunities to develop skills and experience, but it is also important to acknowledge the hard work, time and effort that goes into being a SAR.

To further acknowledge the dedication and hard work of SARs, the Students' Union implemented the Rep Rewards system. This system allows SARs to collect 'Rep points' by attending or engaging with activities throughout the academic year, such as attending training sessions, Student Staff Panels (SSPs), the Annual General Meeting (AGM), Student Leader sessions, and submitting or receiving Enriching Student Life Awards (ESLAs) nominations. At the end of the year, these 'Rep points' could then be exchanged for various rewards. A total of 377 rewards were collected this year, showcasing the active participation and commitment of SARs, as well as their appreciation for recognition of their work.

The Students' Union also provides SARs with a certificate to reward them for their dedication and work, and a way for a Rep to be able to demonstrate their time in the role. This is especially key when SARs go on to employment and want to demonstrate their voluntary roles undertaken whilst

at university. The certificate system also utilises the point system used for Rep rewards. This year, the requirement for SARs to complete the end-of-year survey to obtain a certificate was removed, significantly increasing the number of certificates awarded. This change highlighted the hard work and dedication of SARs, with 611 certificates awarded, broken down into Bronze, Silver, and Gold categories.

The requirements for achieving these certificates and the Rep rewards are as follows:

	Bronze Certificate	Silver Certificate	Gold Certificate	Rep Rewards programme
Attended induction training	Y	Y	Y	Y
Completed the end of Year survey				Y
Points needed	$15 \leq X < 25$	$25 \leq X < 40$	$X \geq 40$	$X \geq 15$

Table 1 - Point requirements for certificates and rewards

The breakdown of bronze, silver and gold awards is shown in table 3 below. This system not only recognises the efforts of SARs but also motivates them initially to engage actively in their roles and contribute to the university community.

Table 2 below highlights the engagements, by school, from the SARs this year across the various activities mentioned throughout this section. It shows fantastic engagement across the schools and activities from all the SARs this year.

College	School	Trained	Attended SSP 1	Attended SSP 2	Attended SSP 3	Total Active Reps	% Trained	Chair or Vice Chair	Attended College Forum 1	Attended College Forum 2	Attended a Student Leader Session
Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences	CARBS	52	47	36	20	76	68%	15	5	11	10
	ENCAP	32	22	19	10	36	89%	10	5	4	3
	GEOPL	25	23	21	8	34	74%	4	1	1	4
	JOMEC	26	14	11	9	37	70%	2	3	2	4
	LAWPL	60	49	47	33	79	76%	10	4	0	7
	MLANG	38	37	33	17	61	62%	14	2	2	5
	MUSIC	6	6	3	4	8	75%	4	5	3	2
	SHARE	25	15	14	10	28	89%	6	6	3	4
	SOCSI	35	28	29	27	46	76%	10	4	1	2
	WELSH	7	12	10	9	14	50%	3	2	2	0
Biomedical & Life Sciences	BIOSI	48	44	23	22	50	96%	8	6	3	3
	DENTL	14	15	11	8	24	58%	4	1	0	0
	HCARE	58	57	50	19	71	82%	8	3	1	3
	MEDIC	26	16	10	5	31	84%	6	1	0	1
	OPTOM	9	11	9	7	12	75%	5	1	0	0
	PHRMY	17	15	12	11	18	94%	4	1	0	1
	PSYCH	28	18	15	11	38	74%	4	0	0	3
Physical Sciences & Engineering	ARCHI	22	16	16	14	32	69%	5	5	0	3
	CHEMY	23	25	21	11	33	70%	4	3	2	2
	COMSC	48	42	57	15	66	73%	7	5	1	8
	EARTH	37	33	26	23	46	80%	4	4	0	4
	ENGIN	53	51	42	40	68	78%	8	3	0	1
	MATHS	29	23	18	15	30	97%	5	6	1	7
	PHYSX	16	18	15	5	21	76%	2	2	0	2

Table 2 - Student Academic Rep Engagements 2024-25



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College	School	Attended the Annual General Metting	Completed the End of Year Survey	Received an ESLA Nomination	Achieved a Bronze Certificate	Achieved a Silver Certificate	Achieved a Gold certificate	Eligible for Rep Rewards	% of School achieving a certificate
Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences	CARBS	11	27	1	16	22	1	22	51%
	ENCAP	4	18	1	11	10	4	19	69%
	GEOPL	7	16	6	9	13	0	14	65%
	JOMEC	6	15	0	5	7	2	13	38%
	LAWPL	20	38	2	23	27	2	36	66%
	MLANG	8	24	10	16	15	3	21	56%
	MUSIC	1	5	2	1	4	1	5	75%
	SHARE	5	10	3	4	8	3	10	54%
	SOCSI	5	22	3	4	25	0	21	63%
	WELSH	0	4	2	1	4	1	2	43%
Biomedical & Life Sciences	BIOSI	9	31	5	18	20	4	29	84%
	DENTL	1	13	3	4	7	0	10	46%
	HCARE	7	35	11	34	18	2	32	76%
	MEDIC	3	12	2	8	8	0	12	52%
	OPTOM	5	9	2	2	7	0	7	75%
	PHRMY	3	13	1	5	10	0	13	83%
	PSYCH	2	20	2	5	13	0	15	47%
Physical Sciences & Engineering	ARCHI	4	18	1	3	11	1	14	47%
	CHEMY	5	18	1	10	10	2	16	67%
	COMSC	10	28	7	26	19	0	24	68%
	EARTH	4	27	1	13	16	3	26	70%
	ENGIN	12	39	1	14	34	1	35	72%
	MATHS	7	18	2	10	14	2	18	87%
	PHYSX	3	8	2	8	7	0	7	71%

Table 2 - Student Academic Rep Engagements 2024-25



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School Engagement

Following the enhancements from previous years, the use of the school Compliance Tracker has continued. The tracker helps the Student Voice Team to monitor school engagement with the academic representation system. There are several key metrics that are measured using the tracker which include:

- Submission of SAR details
- Submission of SSP minutes/ minute summaries
- Total count of SARs who have completed training.
- Active SAR total

This year's compliance tracker can be seen below in table 3. There have been some significant improvements with school engagement in comparison to previous years, however there is still a lot of work that needs to be done to ensure school engagement is the best it can be.

One highlight from the data is that 14/24 schools submitted SSP #1 minutes onto SVEN before the deadline: an improvement from only 8/24 schools in the last academic year. This however is still only 58% of schools completely uploading their minutes. It is worth noting that a school will only receive a 'Yes' indicator if minutes are received from all the school's SSPs. If even one SSP's minutes are not received, this will be indicated with a 'Partial' marker. For some schools the submission rate of SSP minutes was very high but as it was not complete, it was noted as partial. The number of SSP #2 and #3 minutes received completely were also higher than the previous academic year.

Another section of the table that should be highlighted is 'SAR details provided prior to Week 4'. Unfortunately, this has decreased from the last academic year with only 4/24 schools submitting complete details by the end of teaching week 4. Late submission of details results in SARs having limited/no access to our live training sessions and key introductory messages in a timely fashion. With late submissions, it also limits the time SARs have between their training and their first SSP – the goal is to give them as much time as possible between the two to enable the SARs to use the information shared in training to support them in collecting feedback from their cohorts in preparation for the SSP.

One thing that is highlighted later in this report (Student Academic Representative Feedback, page 16) is the support that SARs have felt from their schools this year. In the end of year survey, Reps are asked 'How supported have you felt by University staff during your time as a Student Academic Rep?'. The response to this question was overwhelmingly positive with 94% who answered the question responding positively, meaning they feel 'well' or 'very well' supported by

their school. This is important for a successful academic representation system as SARs should feel supported by both their school, the university and the Students' Union alike.

College	School	SAR details provided prior to Week 4	Number of Active Student Reps	Number of Student Reps completed Students' Union Training	% Student Reps completed Students' Union Training	Minutes of SSP 1 submitted to SVEN	Minutes of SSP 2 submitted to SVEN	Minutes of SSP 3 submitted to SVEN
	Benchmark	Yes	-	-	60%	Yes	Yes	Yes
Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences	CARBS	Partial	76	52	68%	Yes	Partial	No
	ENCAP	Yes	36	32	89%	Yes	Yes	Partial
	GEOPL	Yes	34	25	74%	Partial	Partial	Partial
	JOMEC	Partial	37	26	70%	Partial	No	No
	LAWPL	Partial	79	60	76%	Partial	Partial	Partial
	MLANG	Partial	61	38	62%	Partial	Partial	Partial
	MUSIC	No	8	6	75%	Yes	Yes	No
	SHARE	Partial	28	25	89%	Yes	Yes	Yes
	SOCSI	Partial	46	35	76%	Yes	Yes	No
	WELSH	Partial	14	7	50%	Yes	Yes	Yes
Biomedical & Life Sciences	BIOSI	Yes	50	48	96%	Partial	No	No
	DENTL	Partial	24	14	58%	Partial	No	No
	HCARE	Partial	71	58	82%	Partial	Partial	Partial
	MEDIC	Partial	31	26	84%	Yes	Partial	No
	OPTOM	Partial	12	9	75%	Yes	Partial	No
	PHRMY	No	18	17	94%	Partial	Partial	No
	PSYCH	Partial	38	28	74%	Partial	Partial	Partial
Physical Sciences & Engineering	ARCHI	Partial	32	22	69%	Yes	Partial	Partial
	CHEMY	Yes	33	23	70%	Yes	Partial	Partial
	COMSC	Partial	66	48	73%	Yes	Partial	Yes
	EARTH	Partial	46	37	80%	Yes	Partial	Partial
	ENGIN	Partial	68	53	78%	Partial	Partial	Yes
	MATHS	Partial	30	29	97%	Yes	Partial	No
	PHYSX	Partial	21	16	76%	Yes	Yes	Partial
	TOTAL	4 of 24	959	734	76%	14 of 24	8 of 24	4 of 24

Table 3 - School Compliance Tracker 2024-2025

Staff Resources and Training

The Student Voice and Experience Network

The Student Voice and Experience Network Microsoft Teams channel continues to be an active space for staff within the Academic Representation system to come together, ask questions, network and share best practice. It continues to hold guidance and support documents for staff in addition to guidance on Student Staff Panels (SSPs) and recruitment resources.

Staff Training and Support

As part of the continuing development of the academic representation system support for staff, especially Student Rep Coordinators (SRCs), was at the forefront of work this academic year. The Student Engagement Team in partnership with the Students' Union provided many opportunities for SRCs to get training on their role and seek support when needed. During the annual Learning and Teaching Academy conference an in-person SRC training session was held, with an additional online session with the same content also held to be accessible to as many staff members as possible. At these sessions SRCs received the most up to date guidance and information on the representation system and were also encouraged to get involved by answering questions and sharing best practices amongst the group. The sessions covered the following topics:

- Introductions & key contacts
- Training and Workshop guidance
- Student Staff Panel overview
- Timeline of the year
- Minimum expectations
- Resources and support
- SVEN walk through

There are 56 Student Rep Coordinator roles across all levels and schools in the university, there is also many more support roles within the academic rep scheme. As only 26 attended the either of SRC training, a goal for next year will be to increase SRC and support staff engagement at these training sessions.

Student Academic Representative Feedback

The end-of-year survey provides Student Academic Reps the chance to provide feedback on their experience in the role, with both structured questions and free-text questions. The questions that make up the survey can be found in Appendix A and the data in a graphical form can be found in

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Appendix B.

The feedback from Student Academic Representatives highlights several key areas of success and opportunities for improvement in the academic representation system. The data indicates high levels of engagement and satisfaction among SARs, with specific areas identified for further enhancement.

Key Findings

Awareness: 97% of Reps learned about the Rep role through personalised communication, such as dedicated emails, lecture shout-outs, and 1-2-1 conversations with personal tutors.

Motivation: The primary reasons for becoming a Rep included representing the student voice (20%), improving course and learning experiences (17%), and giving back to support peers (14%).

Skills: 97% of Reps reported gaining key transferable skills, and 98% felt their role was valuable to the student experience.

Training: 95% of Reps felt adequately prepared for their role through training sessions, job descriptions, and school workshops. However, 2% felt ill-prepared, indicating a need for understanding of where resources may need to improve for the diverse student population

Effectiveness: 87% found the training effective, with a small percentage (2%) feeling unprepared.

Communication: 365 Reps felt they received the right amount of communication, while 84 wanted more, and 15 preferred less. Notably, 435 Reps agreed that communication from the Student Voice team was useful.

Support: 94% of Reps felt supported by their school, 95% Reps felt supported by the Students' Union and 95% found Student Staff Panels useful.

Further engagement: 93% felt College Forums were effective for addressing feedback and concerns.

Challenges

Restrictions: Common barriers to participation in SSPs included lecture timetabling clashes

(24%), illness (16%), and course requirements (16%).

Confidence: Only 60% of Chair or Vice Chair Reps felt confident in their responsibilities, with 40% feeling less confident or not confident at all.

Resolving feedback: 97% received appropriate responses or solutions from their school or university when feedback was raised, though only 29% were 'very satisfied,' suggesting room for improvement in closing the feedback loop.

Free text questions summary

Question 27 of the survey provided SARs the opportunity to leave free text to answer the question “Do you think there are any improvements that could be made to the Academic Rep Scheme moving forward?”. There were 246 individual comments left. The key themes that came from these responses were:

Training and Preparation:

- **Effective Feedback Loop:** Offering training on how to more effectively close the feedback loop can improve transparency and student engagement.
- **Pre-SSP Meetings:** The suggestion for pre-SSP meetings among student reps indicates a need for informal opportunities to discuss issues and streamline discussions, as well as providing leadership opportunities for reps.
- **More regular training:** Several SARs noted that offering more frequent training sessions would help reps stay informed and confident in their roles and grow their skills.

Challenges Faced by Reps:

- **Decision-Making Limitations:** Reps feel constrained by higher university decision-making processes, which limits their ability to effect change. This highlights the need for greater empowerment and involvement of reps in decision-making throughout the University's committee structure.
- **Recurring Issues:** Persistent issues, such as lost lecture recordings and unprepared lecturers, indicate ongoing problems that need to be addressed to improve the student experience.

Engagement and Support:

- **More Meetings and Campaigns:** Increasing the number of meetings and pushing for involvement in campaigns.
- **Continuing Development:** There is a desire for more development opportunities for continuing reps, including involvement in projects that enhance student voice. There is also

a strong desire for student representatives to have more opportunities to engage in various activities and meetings across the university.

- Interaction with School Staff: More interaction with staff and involving reps in committees or forums can provide valuable insights and opportunities for student input.
- Community Building: Organising events for reps to socialise and create a community can enable collaboration and provide peer support across the programme.

Communication and Transparency:

- More Communication Channels: There is a call for increasing the ways of communication to ensure that all student academic reps are well-informed and engaged.
- Clarity in Meetings: Making the purpose and structure of SSP/college forum meetings clearer from the outset is important. This includes knowing what should be discussed and who the decision-makers are.
- Feedback Implementation: Ensuring transparency in how feedback is implemented and providing recaps on decisions made.

Updates and progress

Before considering the recommendations for the upcoming academic year, it is vital to acknowledge and understand the work and progress that has taken place over this academic year. Every year, in partnership with university we set recommendations that have the aim to continuously improve the academic representation system. The table below shows the recommendations that were set in the academic 23/24 and the updates and progress that have been made towards them. It is important to know that the system is continually aiming to update and improve, whilst all actions may not be complete, they still have had a significant positive impact on the representation system.

Area for consideration	Feedback or data received	Actions	Updates
Increasing the visibility of the SAR role	Staff and students would like to see improvements in the visibility of the scheme and the way students are made aware of how to communicate with their rep.	The Students' Union and Student Engagement Team will work on development of new promotional material for the scheme. The Students' Union will also continue to deliver welcome talks to first year cohorts which includes a section on the student rep scheme.	The Student Academic Rep section continues to be a focus in the induction talks. Highlighting the significance of the role to new students at the University. Additionally, there have been several posts on CSU's Student Voice Instagram account to help promote Reps to wider students.
Student-Staff Panel minutes	Inconsistencies in the quality and regularity of student-staff panel minutes received by the students' union and uploaded to the SVEN team's channel.	The Students' Union and Student Engagement Team will redevelopment the basic expectations regarding minutes and summary sheets to simplify the process for university staff.	Before the start of the academic year, the SET redesigned the format of the SRC channel in SVEN to better organise guidance and resources. Taking on board feedback from staff, the AKD document is no longer required. A role description was created for SRCs highlighting the minimum requirements for completing and uploading SSP minutes and an accompanying summary.
Staff support	Staff, including SRCs, have expressed a need for improved support and communication regarding the scheme and their role.	The Student Engagement Team will reintroduce the staff workshops prior to the start of the academic year and will regularly communicate with SRCs through a newsletter.	There were two Student Rep Coordinator workshops held at the beginning of the Academic Year. On the Student Voice & Experience Network (SVEN) a monthly staff newsletter has been published.



SAR rewards and recognition	SARs responded well to the rewards and recognition system developed this year, with a 200% increase in SARs engaging with the process at the end of the year.	The Students' Union will continue to explore ways to develop the rewards and recognition programme within the financial constraints and will also look to improve communication of the rewards and recognition tools available.	Information about the Cardiff Award was shared through the SAR newsletter. Requirements for certificates were changed so more SARs could achieve an award.
Collaboration between SARs	Throughout the year and during the end of year survey SARs have highlight a desire to collaborate more with their fellow reps.	The Students' Union will redevelopment its leadership programme to provide new opportunities for SARs to meet each other and work together to develop their skills and collaborate on projects/campaigns.	Student Leader Sessions – an opportunity for Reps (and other student leaders) to come together and learn new skills & knowledge.
Staff responses to feedback	During the end of year survey SARs recommended the setting of expectations for staff responses to feedback to promote positive relationships between staff and students.	The Student Engagement Team and Students' Union will review the feedback process and if determined appropriate will develop additional guidance for staff involved in the scheme on the best ways to respond to feedback.	In collaboration with the SU, the SET updated training for Student Rep Co-ordinators and delivered 2 sessions in September 2024. The SET continued to offer 7 CPD sessions on student voice and engagement; the programme is being redesigned for 25/26. Student engagement is included in several sessions of the AdvanceHE-accredited Cardiff University Education Fellowship Programmes. The SET is developing a Student Engagement Enhancement Model which it hopes to launch at the start of the 25/26 academic year; it will include guidance and resources to support schools to respond to student feedback.



Communication between SARs and students	SARs have struggled to communicate with their students, particular in areas of large cohorts. This concern was repeated within the end of year survey and expressed as something which greatly limits their potential.	The Students' Union will also relaunch the Find Your Rep system to improve accessibility and to make it easier for students to find and communicate with their student rep.	A more effective Find Your Rep system is in development. In the meantime, it was advertised students could find their Rep by emailing the Student Voice Team.
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Table 4 - Areas for Considerations from 23/24 and updates

The table shows that across the partnership there has been significant strides from growth and improvement within the academic representation system over the year. Some of these areas for consideration will continue into the next academic year to aid with the continuous development of the system, however many of the actions will have updated, expanded or changed for this new academic year.



Looking Forward

There have been significant areas of improvement and growth within the academic representation system this year, however there are some areas of consideration to help the system evolve and grow next year. These considerations have been made considering feedback provided by SARs, recommendations from previous years and sector benchmarks.

Area for consideration	Feedback and data	Actions	Team Responsible
PGR Representation	In the end of year survey, several SARs echoed the point of needing more PGR specific support. Feedback raised to Vice President Postgraduate Students also highlighted the additional needs PGR Reps have	The Students' Union will investigate PGR resources and what we can do to support those students with their specific needs. The SU and SET will engage with schools to ensure all PGR SAR details are provided on SVEN	Student Voice Student Engagement Team Academic Schools
Community and Collaboration	Many SARs in the end of year survey asked for more networking and support in connecting Reps with one another across the university	The Students' Union will organise more activities and networking events for Reps, to provide new opportunities for SARs to meet each other and collaborate on projects together. This will include the creation and exploration of Academic Communities between SARs and academic societies.	Student Voice
SAR skill development	In the end of year survey, several SARs indicated that they would like further training opportunities. To help them build their skills & confidence and to stay informed.	The Student' Union will continue and further develop Student Leader Sessions – an opportunity for Reps (and other student leaders) to come together and learn new skills & knowledge. Sessions will look to invite external speakers to enhance knowledge and skills beyond university life.	Student Voice



Barriers to participation	186 SARs in the end of year survey expressed that there had been a barrier to them participating in SSPs this academic year.	The Students' Union and Student Engagement team will investigate SRC resources and guidance. Providing guidance on running SSPs and when SSPs could be. Additionally offering support to SARs who have missed SSPs, providing guidance on how to still submit feedback collected.	Student Voice Student Engagement Team
Communication: Reps and Stakeholders	Expressed through the end of year survey, SARs feel constrained by higher university decision-making processes, which limits their ability to effect change. SARs want involvement in decision-making throughout the University's committee structure.	The Students' Union and Student Engagement Team will investigate and review the Representation structure(s) within the SU and the University. The SU and SET will then make recommendations for any potential new pilot academic representations structures. The SU will also review the communication between Reps and stakeholders (university, SU Officers and other SARs)	Student Voice Student Engagement Team
SRC Engagement & Support	Staff, including SRCs, have expressed a need for improved support and communication regarding the scheme and their role. There have been several SRCs who are unaware they hold the role.	The SET in partnership with the SU will work to increase SRC engagement, especially at SRC training sessions they will also ensure regular communication with SRCs. The SET and the SU will also ensure that SRCs know SVEN to be the place where they can ask questions, view support & guidance and share best practice.	Student Engagement Team Student Voice



Student Staff Panel Minutes	With the currently established Student Staff panels across the schools, there should have been over 250 minutes submitted to SVEN, this year only 154 minutes were received. SSP minutes are to be shared to SVEN in line with Cardiff University Academic Regulations.	The SET and the SU will work with SRCs and schools to ensure minutes are uploaded to SVEN by providing training and guidance to staff involved in academic representation	Student Engagement Team Student Voice
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Table 5 - Areas for consideration 24/25

By implementing these recommendations, the academic representation system can continue to evolve, ensuring that Student Reps are well supported and effective in their roles, ultimately enhancing the overall student experience.



Appendices

Appendix A – End of Year survey questions.

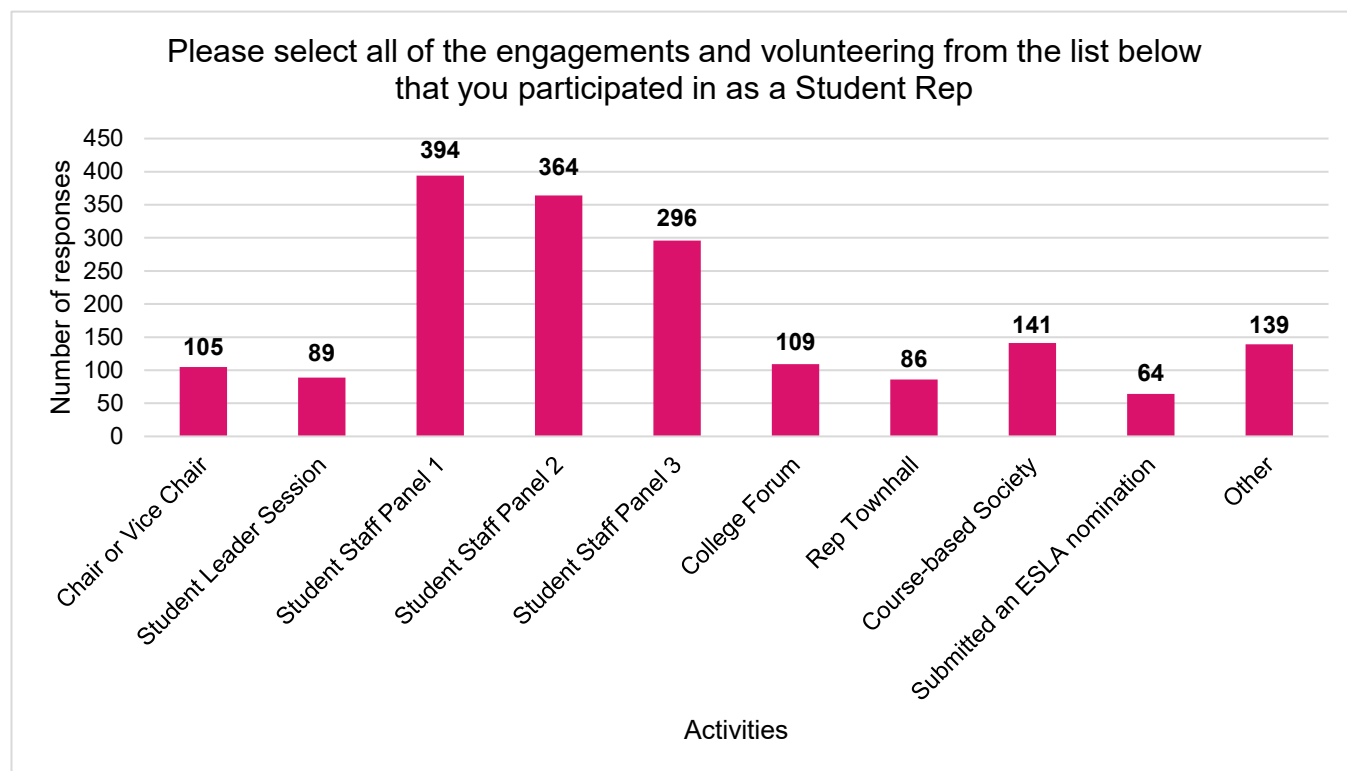
At the end of the 2024-25 academic year, like years previous, all Student Academic Reps were invited to complete a feedback survey, to gather insight into areas for potential enhancement to the academic representation scheme in future. The full list of questions asked is as follows:

1. Please provide your name.
2. What School/Department are you in?
3. What course do you study?
4. What level of study are you?
5. What year of your course are you in?
6. Please select all the engagements and volunteering from the list below that you participated in as a Student Academic Rep:
 - Chair or Vice Chair
 - Student Leader Session
 - Student Staff Panel 1
 - Student Staff Panel 2
 - Student Staff Panel 3
 - College Forum
 - Rep Townhall
 - Course-based Society
 - Submitted an ESLA nomination
 - Other
7. Please provide the details of any other activity you have participated in as a Student Academic Rep
8. Prior to this academic year, have you previously been a Student Academic Rep?
9. How did you hear about the role of Student Academic Rep?
10. What motivated you to become a Student Academic Rep?
11. When you became a Student Academic Rep, were you made aware of the role and its responsibilities?

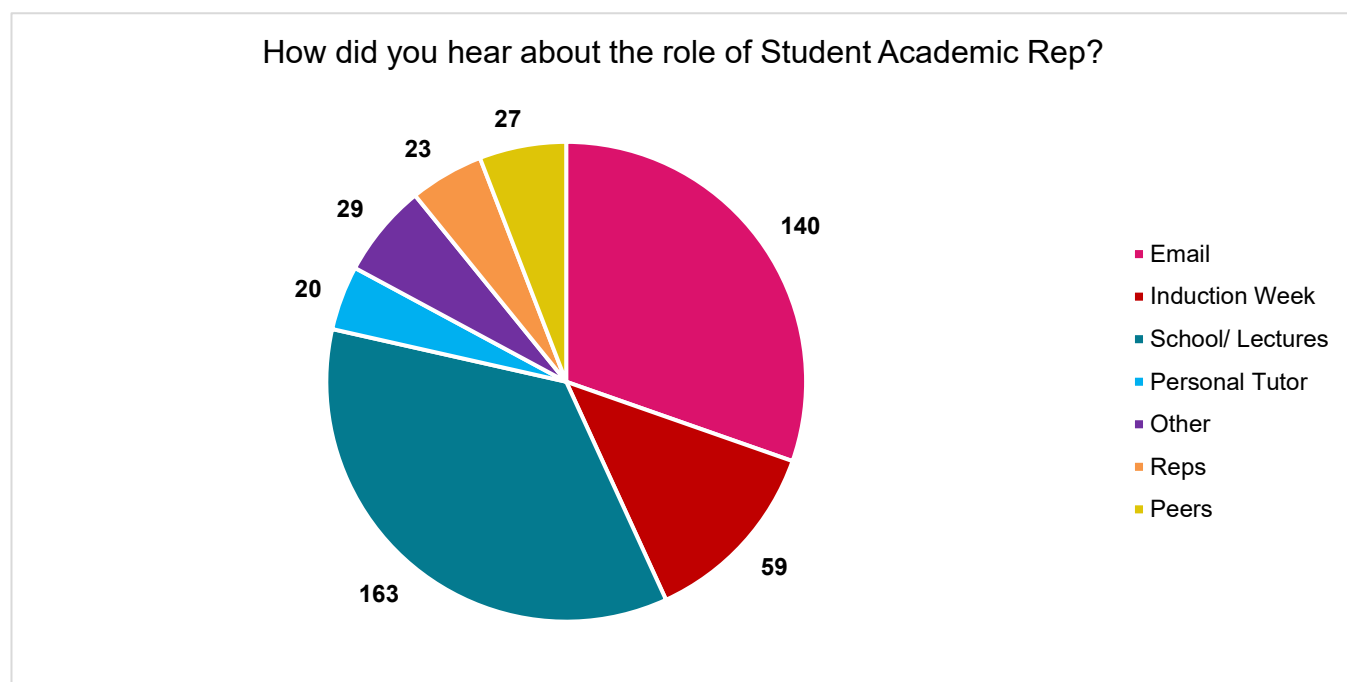
12. How well do you feel the training you received from the Students' Union prepared you for your role?
13. How would you describe the amount of communication you received from the Student Voice Team over the past academic year?
14. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
- "The communication I received from the Student Voice team was useful in helping me in my role."
15. How supported have you felt by Students' Union staff during your time as a Student Academic Rep?
16. How supported have you felt by University staff during your time as a Student Academic Rep?
17. Have you been involved with any of the following activities/services run by the Students' Union this year?
- Student Senate
 - Officer Executive Committee
 - AGM (Annual General Meeting)
 - Elections
 - Campaigns
 - Speak Week
 - Sports Teams / Clubs
 - Societies
 - Advice
 - Other
18. How useful have you found Student Staff Panels in allowing you to take forward feedback and have it acted upon?
19. Has there been anything that has restricted you from being able to attend Student Staff Panels this year?
20. Does the School provide adequate support in closing the feedback loop or communicating Student Staff Panels actions to students?

21. When feedback has been raised, to what extent, do you believe you have received an adequate response and/or solution from the appropriate university staff?
22. If you have taken on the role of Chair or Vice Chair this year, how confident did you feel in your responsibilities?
23. If you have attended a College Forum this year, how useful have you found the meetings in addressing feedback and reporting concerns?
24. Have you been asked by your School/College to sit on any additional committees across the year?
25. Do you believe your role has helped you to develop key transferable skills?
26. How valuable do you feel Student Academic Reps are to the student experience?
27. Do you think there are any improvements that could be made to the Academic Rep Scheme moving forward?
28. Do you have any other comments?

Appendix B – End of Year survey data graphics

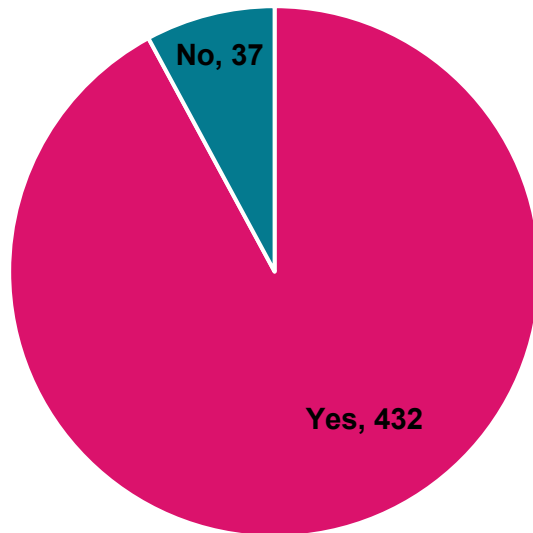


506 Student Academic Reps completed this question



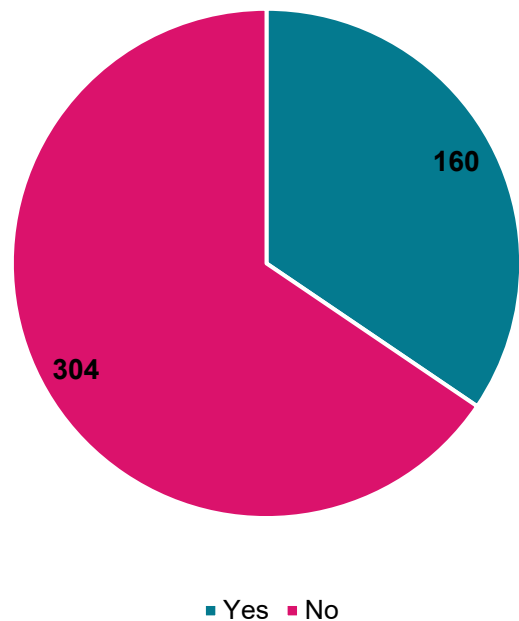
461 Student Academic Reps completed this question – The chart shows the response rate for the six most common responses

When you became a Student Academic Rep, were you made aware of the role and its responsibilities?



469 Student Academic Reps completed this question

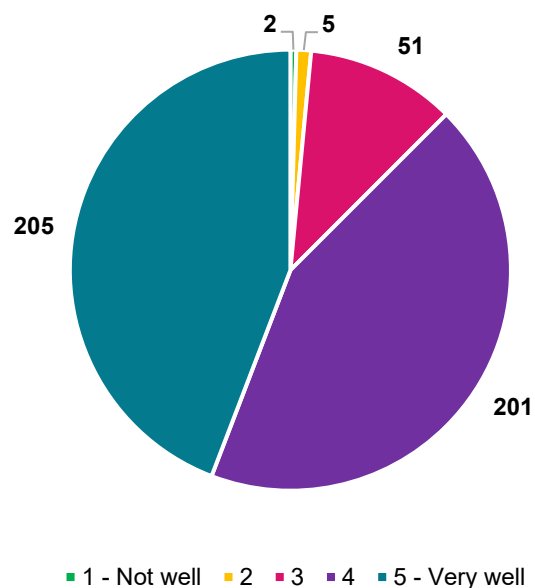
Prior to this academic year, have you previously been a Student Academic Rep?



464 Student Academic Reps completed this question

How well do you feel the training you received from the Students' Union prepared you for your role?

1- Not Well..... 5 - Very Well



464 Student Academic Reps completed this question



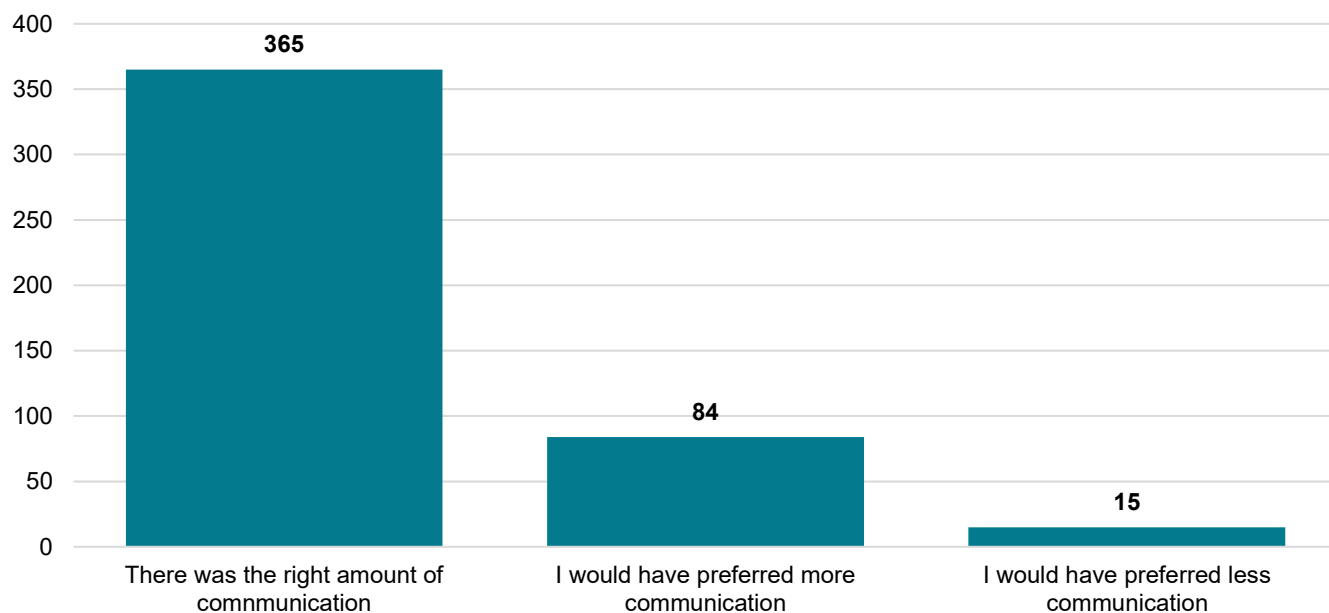
Cardiff
Students'
Union

Undeb
Myfyrwyr
Caerdydd



The heart of Cardiff student life
Calon bywyd myfyrwyr Caerdydd

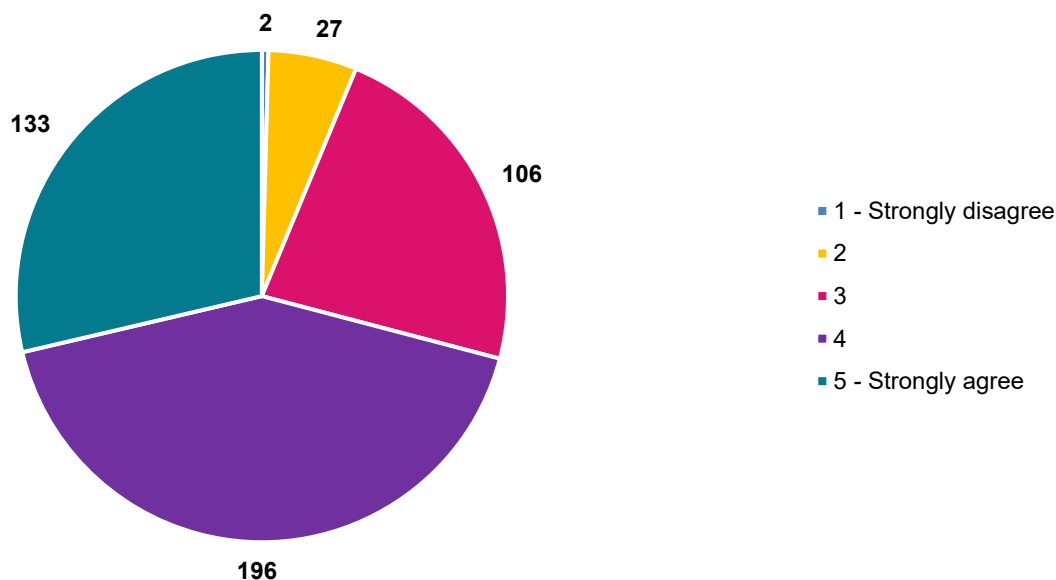
How would you describe the amount of communication you received from the Student Voice Team over the past academic year?



464 Student Academic Reps completed this question

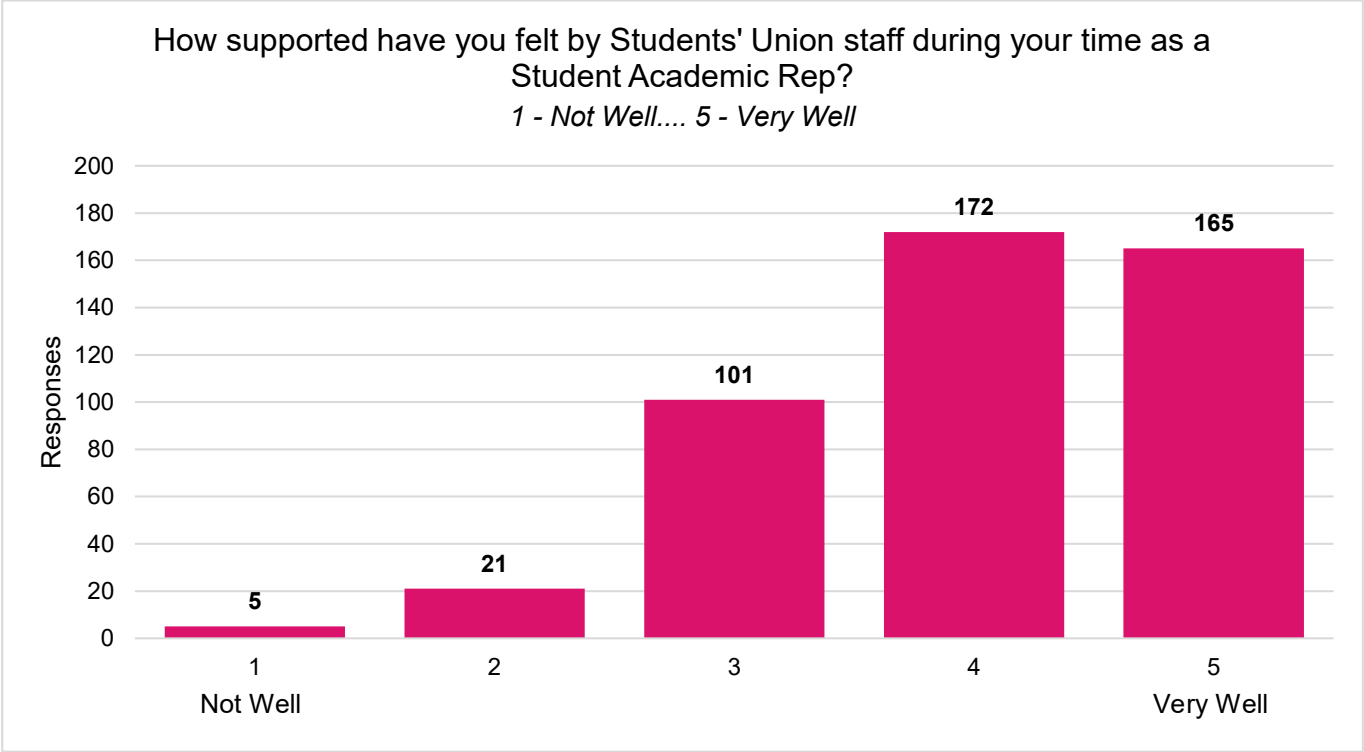
How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
"The communication I received from the Student Voice team was useful in helping me in my role"

1 - Strongly Disagree..... 5 - Strongly Agree

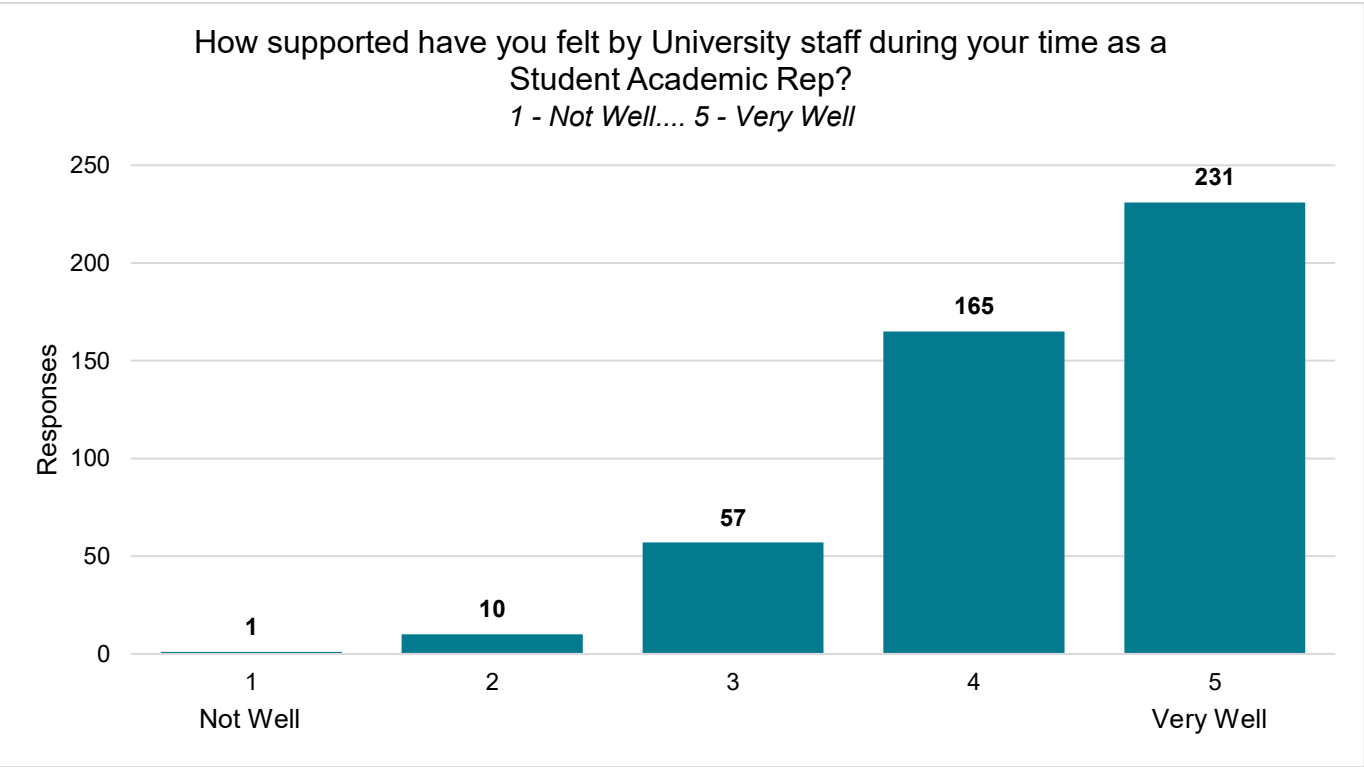


464 Student Academic Reps completed this question

31

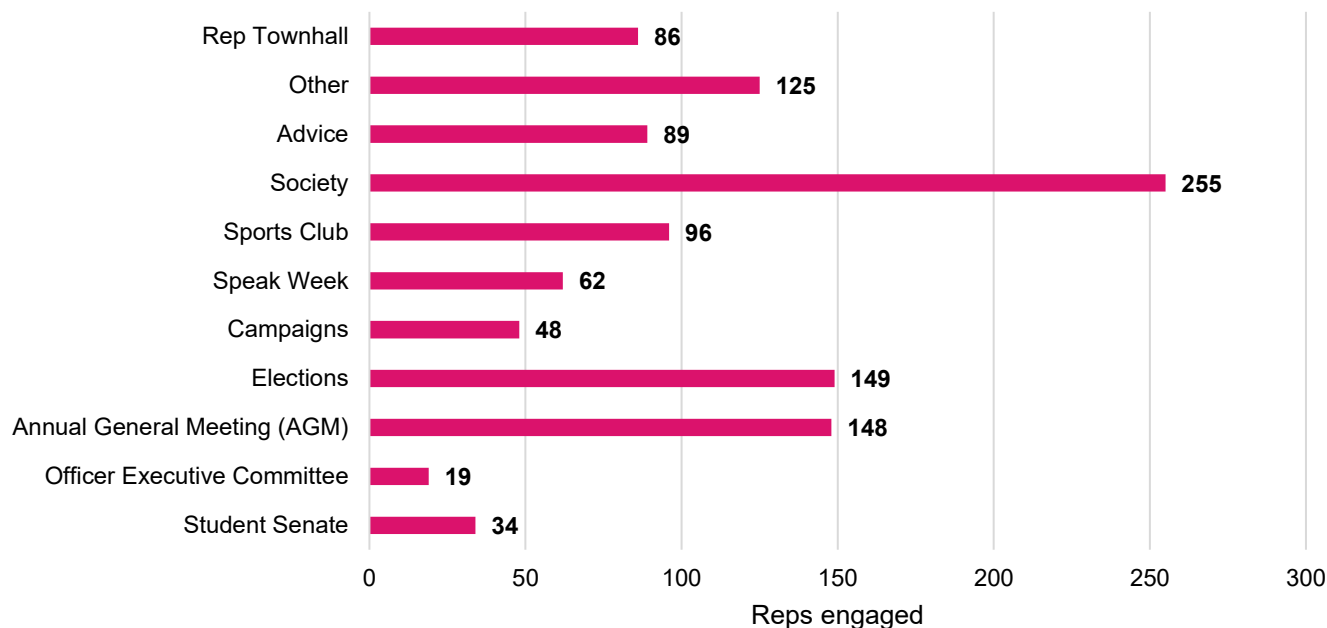


464 Student Academic Reps completed this question



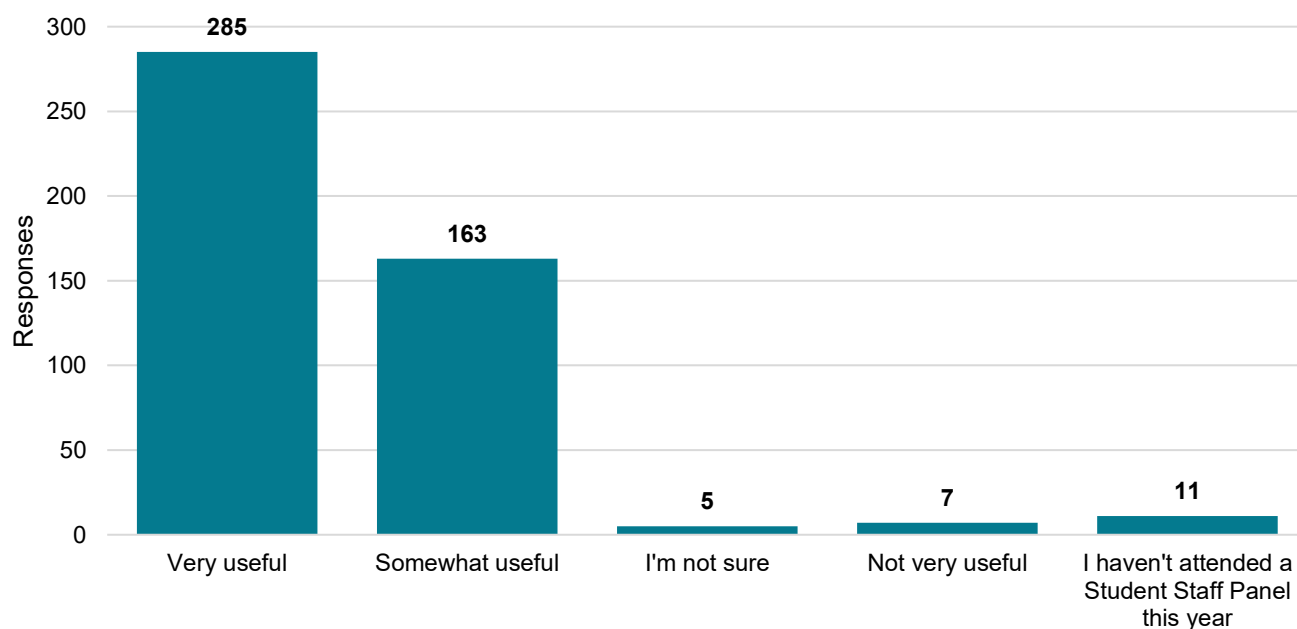
464 Student Academic Reps completed this question

Have you been involved with any of the following activities/services run by the Students' Union this year?



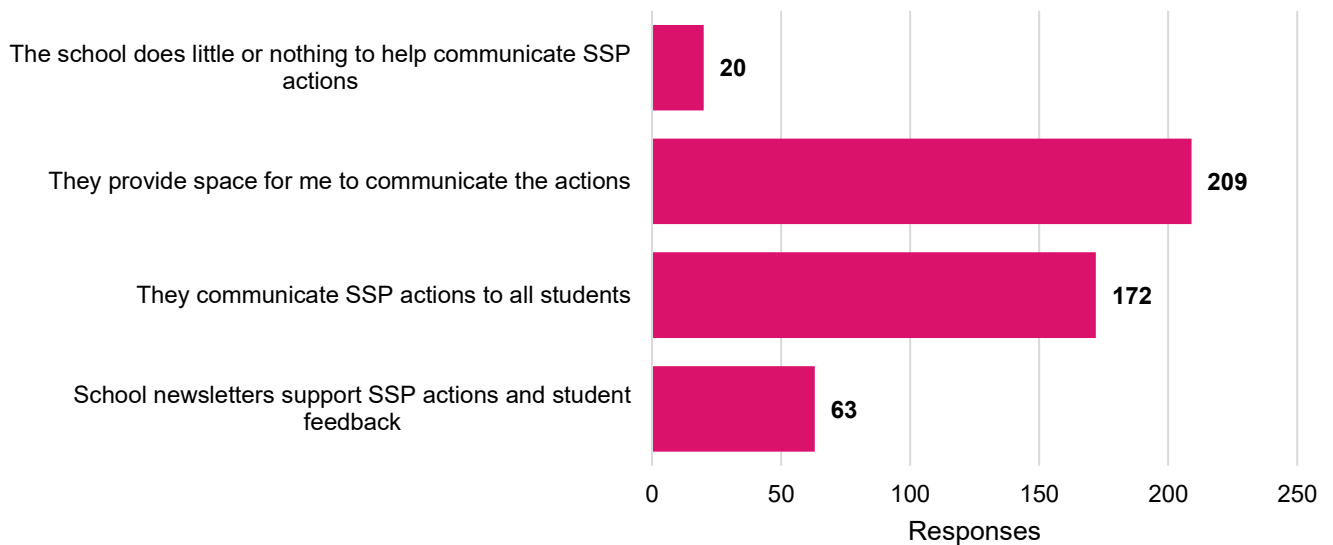
506 Student Academic Reps completed this question

How useful have you found Student Staff Panels in allowing you to take forward feedback and have it acted upon?



471 Student Academic Reps completed this question

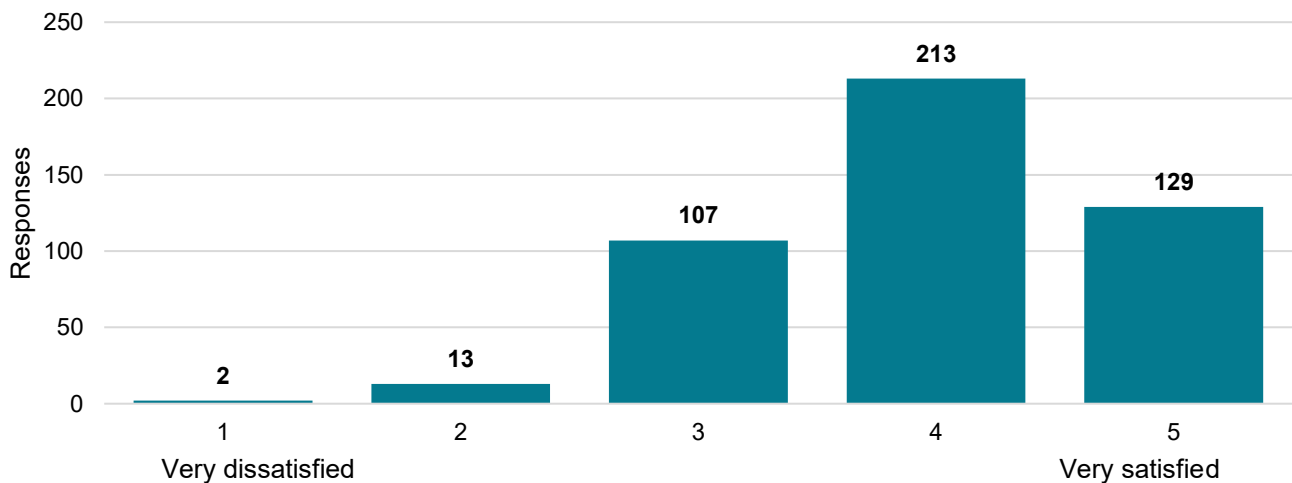
Does the School provide adequate support in closing the feedback loop or communicating SSP actions to students?



464 Student Academic Reps completed this question

When feedback has been raised, to what extent, do you believe you have received an adequate response and/or solution from the appropriate university staff?

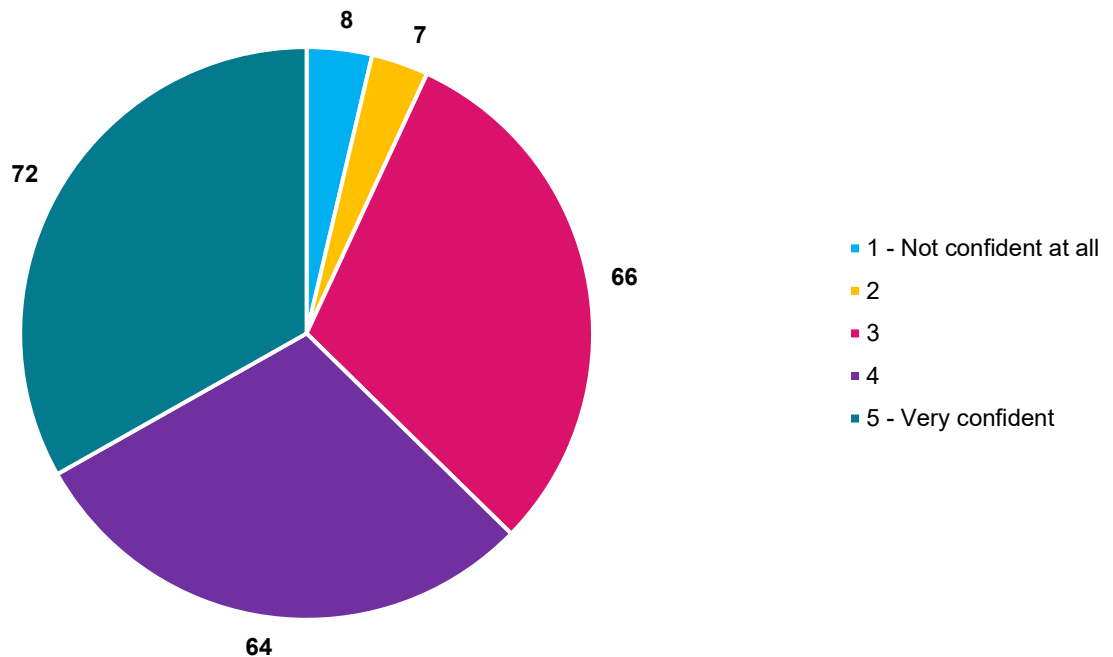
1 - Very Dissatisfied.... 5 - Very Satisfied



464 Student Academic Reps completed this question

If you have taken on the role of Chair or Vice Chair this year, how confident did you feel in your responsibilities?

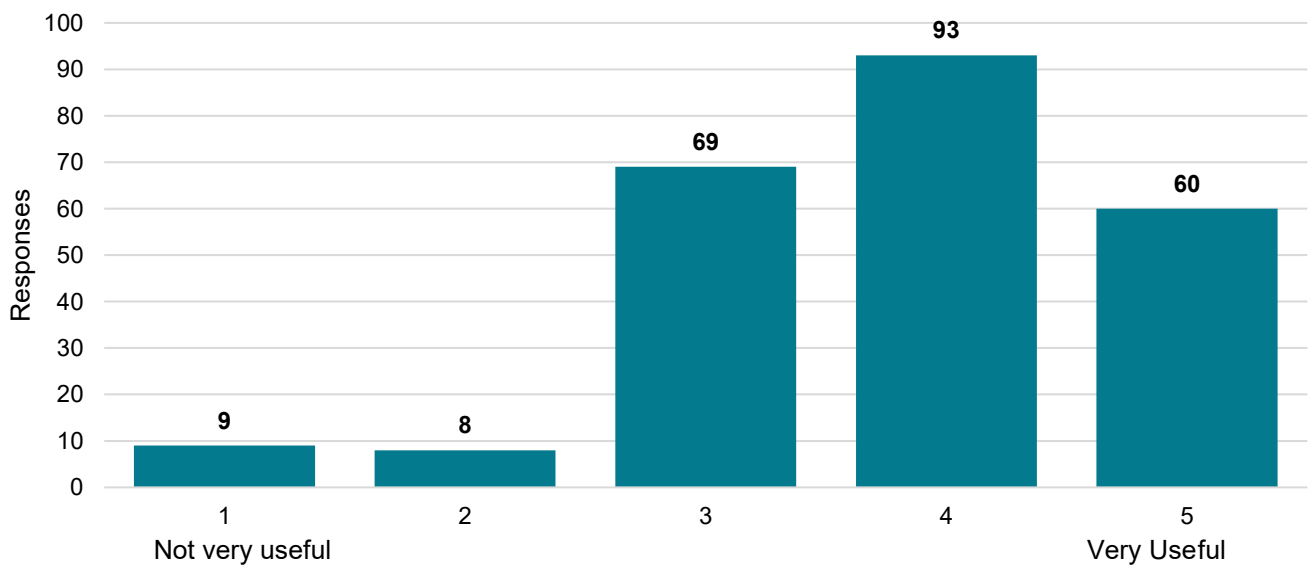
1 - Not confident at all.... 5 - Very Confident



217 Student Academic Reps completed this question

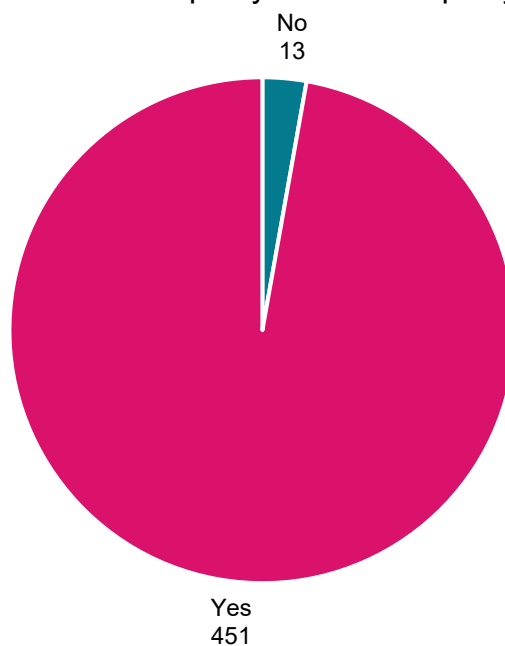
If you have attended a College Forum this year, how useful have you found the meetings in addressing feedback and reporting concerns?

1 - Not very useful.... 5 - Very useful



239 Student Academic Reps completed this question

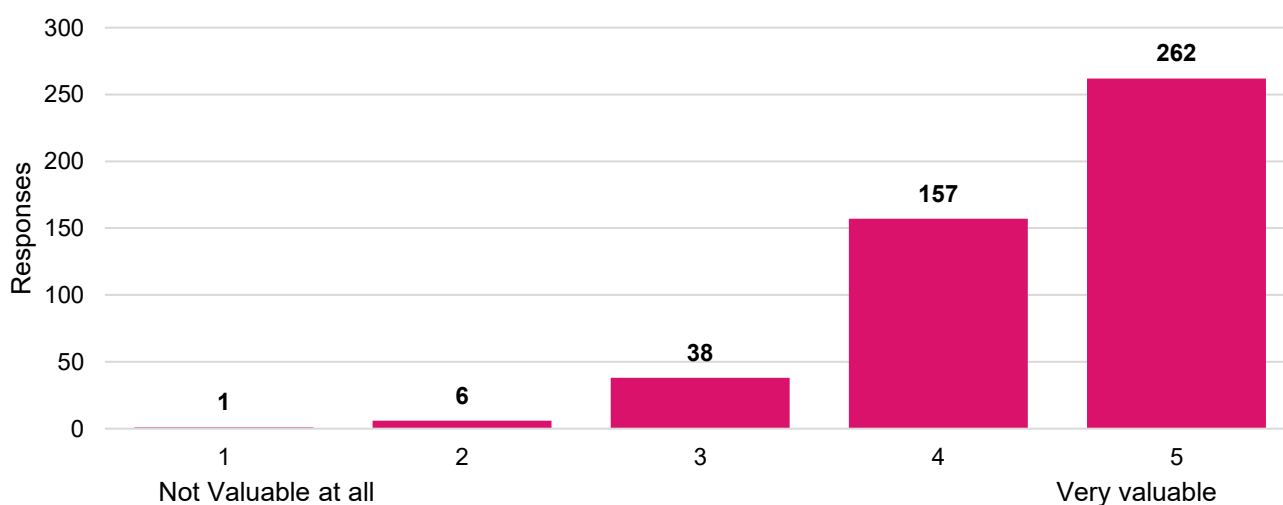
Do you believe your role has helped you to develop key transferable skills?



464 Student Academic Reps completed this question

How valuable do you feel Student Academic Reps are to the student experience?

1 - Not valuable at all.... 5 - Very valuable



464 Student Academic Reps completed this question