

# Class Rep Guidebook

Borders College Students' Association



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# Introduction

Borders College Students' Association (BCSA) is pleased to welcome you to the Class Rep role!

Class Reps are elected by their classmates to represent the views and opinions of the class. One way that Class Reps represent their classmates is by gathering student feedback on the student learning experience. Class Reps play a vital role in the process of improving the student experience.

The College strives to meet the needs and expectations of students. The feedback gathered by Class Reps helps the College better understand student needs and listen to the voices of students. Student feedback is shared at various committees including the Student Experience Committee (SEC) which ensures students are listened to and supports their ideas to be shared and implemented.

Being a Class Rep may seem a little confusing to you at the minute but this guidebook will provide you with useful information about the role and will support you to become confident being a Rep. The guidebook will cover:

**What is Expected of Class Reps**

**The Duties of a Class Rep**

**Qualities and Skills Required and Gained as a Class Rep**

**The Feedback Cycle**

**Induction & Training**

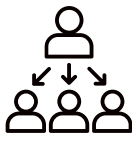
**What Happens to Feedback?**

**Useful Tips**



You can click on the buttons to visit each section

# What is Expected of Class Reps



To **represent** and share your classmates' views, opinions and feelings on their student experience especially relating to their experience of learning and teaching.



To **support** communication between your classmates and college staff.



To **share** positive and negative feedback with staff.



To work in **partnership** with the College and Students' Association to help improve the student experience.

As a representative of your class, you are supporting students to be listened to and heard. Their opinions are important to the college and the work of a Class Rep helps students shape their own learning experience.

You will also support the Students' Association to promote and share opportunities that are available to students. This can include:

- Promoting student surveys.
- Sharing new support opportunities at college.
- Joining or encouraging others to join the Support Forum.
- Supporting students to create or take part in clubs and groups.

# The Duties of a Class Rep

- Listening to your classmates.
- Gathering feedback, acting on it, and reporting back.
- Working with staff and students, with the support of BCSA, to come up with solutions to problems.
- Attending Class Rep meetings with BCSA to share the opinions of your class.
- Attending curriculum meetings to share feedback which helps inform staff about the student experience.
- You may wish to come to other meetings like the Student Experience Committee to share your feedback with college leaders.

These duties will look different for individual Reps: you may want to get heavily involved in supporting the College to improve the student experience by taking part in a range of meetings or you may only want to share your classmates' feedback. Both options are okay but it's useful to let BCSA know what you think suits you!

# Qualities and Skills Required and Gained as a Class Rep

Below are some qualities that will help you in your role. Being elected into the role will mean that you may already have these qualities but completing your duties will help you gain and build on these skills.

You are representing everyone in your class, you will hear from a wide range of students who could have differing opinions so it's important to:

- **Be kind** - This will help students trust you and feel comfortable talking about their experience of learning and teaching.
- **Be welcoming** - Some students might find it intimidating to voice their opinions so welcoming their views can encourage them to share.
- **Be inclusive** - There is a diverse range of students at college all with different life experience and different identities, this impacts their experience studying here. Hearing from a wide range of students helps create positive change for groups who may be under-represented.
- **Be open** - A student may share an idea you disagree with but you can't ignore their opinion.

# The Feedback Cycle

One of the main goals of a Class Rep is to listen to and collect the views and opinions of their classmates. This is feedback from your class on their learning and teaching experience at College.

The College gather feedback from students in a range of ways throughout the year, this includes focus groups, student surveys, classroom discussions, and from the work of Class Reps. This feedback is important to ensure that the College is listening to student voices and meeting the needs of students.

The Feedback Cycle is split into 3 sections. These sections allow feedback to be collected, used effectively, and any actions taken from feedback to be shared. Any areas of concern can be highlighted and targeted to resolve any issues. By listening to and acting on student feedback the College can be aware of the current student experience.



**Gathering Feedback** - Throughout the year the Students' Association will ask Class Reps to collect feedback and consult your class on a range of topics and questions. You can hold class meetings, approach classmates with questions, or come up with a way that works for your class to hear their thoughts.

**Acting on Feedback** - Once you have collected this feedback, you will need to share it with the Students' Association, who will pass it on to the College at the Student Experience Committee. Acting on feedback could also involve solving a class-based problem by talking to your lecturer.

**Reporting Back** - Once you've passed on this feedback it's important to let your class know that you have done this. The Students' Association will also let you know any updates on what you have shared which you can pass along to your class.

# Induction and Training

The first section of the Feedback Cycle is 'Gathering Feedback', holding a class meeting can help you gather feedback in one place and hear from a large group in a controlled way. This is also a good opportunity to report back on what you have been doing or where their feedback has gone to help close the feedback cycle.

## Holding a Meeting



You can ask your Course Tutor for some time in class to hold a meeting or meet with your classmates out of class, such as visiting The Hub for a coffee. Speak with your classmates to understand when and where would suit them and think about what would suit you - do you want to meet somewhere quiet, would a meeting in class let you hear from the most people, do you want your classmates to feel more relaxed?



Being the chair of the meeting means that you will lead the discussion and ask your classmates the questions. You can move the conversation on when someone has gone off topic or ask more questions about an issue that has come up. If you are struggling to lead the meeting you could ask your Course Tutor for some help or tips, or speak to BCSA who can come along and help out.



It is important to take notes of what your classmates tell you. You could type these out, write them down, or ask your classmates to write out their thoughts for you to create your own notes. Once you have them you can bring them to BCSA to talk about what was discussed or share them with us online.

## Compliments & Complaints

The College want to hear what is going well for your class and what students are struggling with.

The College have a complaints procedure for individuals or groups who are dissatisfied with the college's action or lack of action, or about the standard of service provided by the college or on its behalf. You can read the Complaints Procedure Guide for Students in the [Document Hub](#) on the College website.



## **Confidential Matters**

If a student shares a personal experience with you it is important to confirm that they are comfortable with you discussing this information. You shouldn't share their name or reveal who they are.

Class Meetings are a time to talk about the experience of the course and not personal feelings about classmates or teaching staff. Being respectful of people's privacy and being kind are vital skills for Class Reps.

If you are unsure what to do in a certain situation you can speak to a member of staff or your Students' Association who will give you guidance and support you.

## **When to Hold Class Meetings?**

There are 4 times in a year when we would like you to ask your classmates a set of questions to help improve the student experience at college. BCSA will get in touch with all Class Reps to let them know when to have their class meetings.

### October Questions

1. Were you told at interview what you would study and were you told about progression routes (for example, next steps after the course, career/study options, or other opportunities)?
2. When were you told about course costs (kits, cost of trips etc.) and how to access funding?
3. Were you shown how to use Teams, Canvas or course specific software during induction?
4. Do you know who your Student Support Officer is for your class and how to contact them?

### November Questions

1. Do you understand why each unit/module you're studying is relevant to completing your course?
2. Are course materials accessible to you and shared with you in a way that suits how you study? (for example, accessing a textbook at home, facilities in a workshop, working on placement?)
3. Have you been taught in different ways (for example, practical work, theory, presentation/demonstrations etc.)?
4. Do you have opportunities to work or learn in groups or learn from each other?
5. Do you have an assessment schedule and/or exam schedule and know how to access this?

### January Questions

1. In what ways do you get feedback and is it helpful for your learning?
2. Do you know how to access support if you are having challenges completing assessments? Do you know the type of support available?
3. Do you know what the assessment appeals procedure is and what would you do if you were unhappy with an assessment outcome?
4. What makes you feel safe, welcome and accepted at college and in your class?  
And do you know how to report issues or get help if you did not feel safe, welcome and accepted?
5. Are you aware of how to join or create a student club or group at college?

### After Easter Questions

These questions will ask about themes that were raised in the previous questions and will be shared with you when you are to meet with your class.

### **Acting on Your Feedback**

You will then have 2 ways to act on the feedback you have gathered. We will share an online form with you where you can share what you have collected and we will have an in-person meeting where we can discuss the experience of your class.

The in-person meeting is a chance for you to meet other class reps, discuss what students have told you, and get any support you feel would help you in your Class Rep role.

# What Happens to Feedback?

When you collect feedback from your class it is important that this is shared with the Students' Association so that we can act on this feedback.

We will take this to the appropriate committee such as the Student Experience Committee, Learning & Teaching Committee, or the Equalities and Inclusion Committee etc. We can also talk directly to individuals who can help you or your class with any issues or work with you to create a solution. We will ask you if you would like to get involved in discussing the feedback from your class with the college.

The feedback you share can help shape college life, create changes in your course for your class or future classes, improve the student experience, or celebrate what is working well and what has helped you as a group.

Whatever action is decided we will share this with you to feedback to your class and close the feedback loop. This helps keep everyone informed especially if there is work going on that you can't physically see.



# Useful Tips

- **Be Visible** - Your class must know who you are and be able to speak to you about how they feel about learning and teaching. You can share your college email with them or catch up with them on Teams if they can't catch-up in person.
- **Selfcare** - It is important that you feel comfortable talking to your classmates and don't become overwhelmed. If you begin to feel like you are struggling in the role or dealing with a tricky situation, please speak to BCSA and we can support you, signpost you, and help make the situation easier.
- **Time Keeping** - Don't wait until the last possible minute to ask your class questions because this can result in classmates forgetting their experience, feeling stressed, and issues continuing for longer as they go unnoticed. Give yourself plenty of time to meet with your class, take note of their feedback, think about any common themes or issues that come up, and have a think about any solutions that could potentially help the situation.
- **Asking for Help** - You can ask for help from your classmates, lecturer or course tutor, Students' Association and fellow Class Reps. They can help you hold a class meeting, help come up with solutions, and discuss whatever would help you in your role.
- **Signposting** - If a student comes to you with issues or concerns about things outside of learning and teaching it's important that you point them to someone able to support them - these could be questions about finances, housing problems, or their wellbeing. The Students' Association will always be able to help find the right person. You can also speak to Student Support.

If you would like to discuss being a Class Rep, share feedback, ask some questions or just have a chat then please get in touch!

Email - [bcsa@borderscollege.ac.uk](mailto:bcsa@borderscollege.ac.uk)

Visit the BCSA Office in the Student Space, beside the canteen, on the Galashiels Campus.

Speak to the Student President, a Student Officer, or the Students' Association Support Officer.