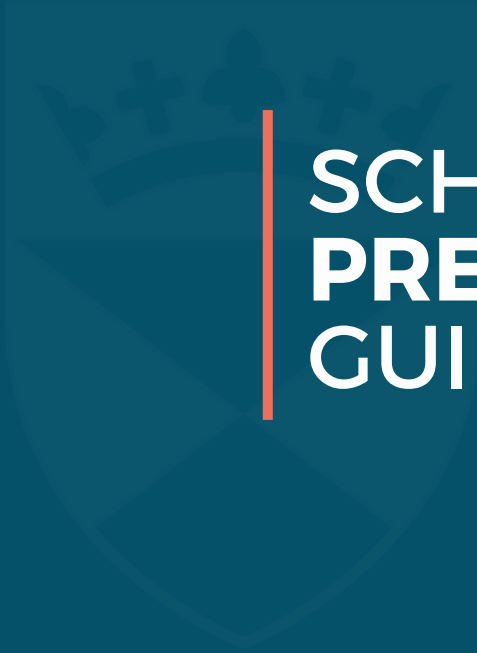




Student Voice
and Representation



SCHOOL PRESIDENT GUIDE



ROLE SPECIFICATION

The office of School President is one of the most important positions within the student representation system. School Presidents are vital stakeholders who work to enhance the student experience, they are tasked with leading the overall student voice of their academic school. Each of the eight schools elects a student to take on this senior role every year, with the elections being held alongside the DUSA executive elections.







School Presidents have a unique platform to represent their peers. They sit on key management committees and work with senior academics on a range of issues, projects and priorities. Such work includes creating a 'School Partnership Action Plan (SPAP)' each year with the Associate Dean of Learning & Teaching, which sets out a range of goals which they work towards completing. Presidents also have direct access to the Dean of the School, meaning they can vocalise any student feedback at the very top of the school management system.

School Presidents have a vast network of students and staff to work and connect with. They are supported by a committee of Vice-Presidents, each of whom have oversight of their respective disciplines. The VPs carry out similar duties and help link School Presidents to the Class Representatives. School Presidents also sit on a variety of other student-led forums such as the School Presidents Forum - which allows for close collaboration with senior University officials. They are also expected to work closely with the DUSA Executive and attend Students' Representative Council (SRC) as a sitting member for that year.

This role can be demanding, but it is undoubtedly a rewarding one. A successful post-holder will execute their role whilst balancing other commitments, particularly their studies. School Presidents gain immense experience in leadership, advocacy and project management. The skills and connections they pick up will be invaluable for any career they pursue. The role of School President is front-facing and multifaceted, which is why DUSA, and University staff, always ensure they are offered support and advice whenever they wish.



The Six Cs for Effective School Presidents

-  **Care** for those you represent and all of your work.
-  Behave and lead with **Compassion** in all you do.
-  Be **Competent** in how you operate and delegate.
-  Be open and professional in your **Communication**.
-  Show **Commitment** to students and your role.
-  Have **Courage** to reach your goals and do your best.

CORE RESPONSIBILITIES



Transmitting Student Feedback to School Stakeholders

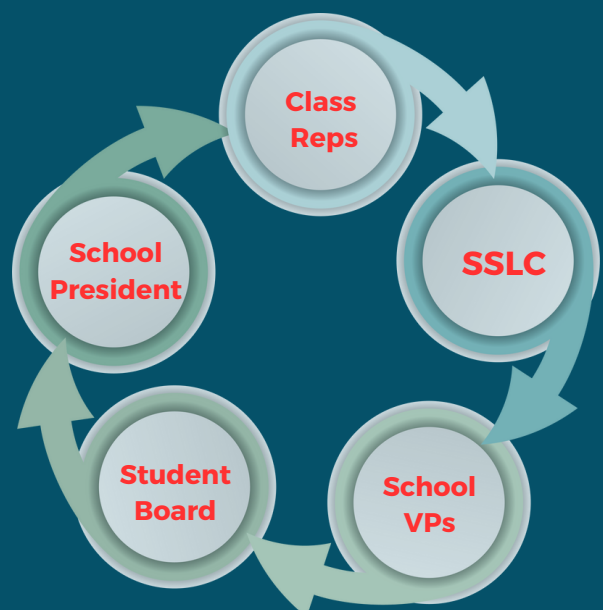
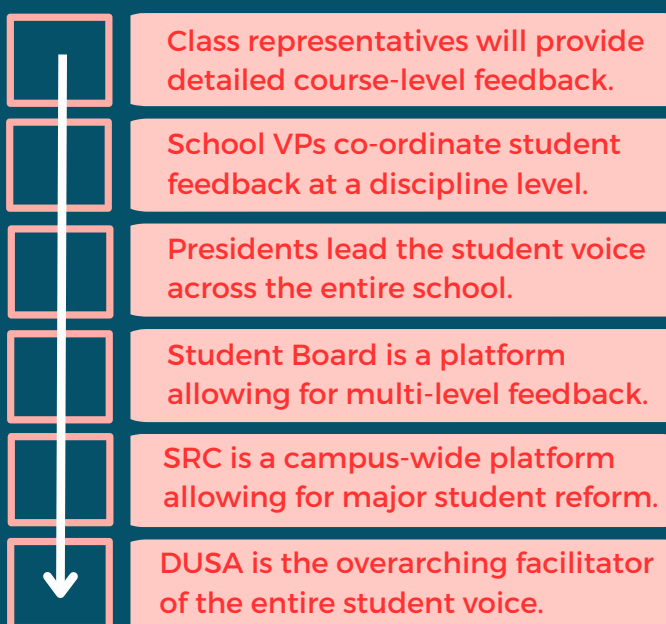
Your main responsibility is voicing the concerns and feedback of the students you represent. The most effective means of doing so is collecting data from committees at the different levels across the school community. Utilise your Vice Presidents and ensure they provide you with comprehensive summaries on a regular basis. Any information or experiences shared with you should be vocalised to the appropriate staff, be that school management, heads of departments, lecturers, SRC Councillors and DUSA.

Designing and Delivering on the Student-Staff Action Plan

Each School Presidents should develop an annual action plan in collaboration with the School Dean or Associate Dean for Learning and Teaching. This plan should outline your personal priorities as President, as well as noting measures of success, tangible outcomes and timelines for achieving all of these things. This will also serve as a useful reference guide throughout the year, particularly when you are addressing staff board.

Representing the School at a Wider Level

On top of your school-related representation, it is also the responsibility of School Presidents to act as ambassadors of their school community. Your ambassadorial duties will include voicing your student cohorts' concerns and feedback at the SRC and the School Presidents Forum. You should use these platforms to lobby for changes or new initiatives, as well as consulting the DUSA Executive to seek their support and commitment to working with you and your school. Your representative capacity at these forums is fundamental to the entire system, so it is imperative for you to relay information back to your school and students to keep everyone updated.



SYSTEMS & STRUCTURES

As a senior representative at University, you will be expected to understand the various systems and structures that allow the student voice to be heard, for motions and proposals to be implemented and for all parties to benefit from representative activity. The information below concerns university-related systems and structures. These are the most relevant platforms you will utilise in the carrying out of your representational duties. The following page details the platforms you will utilise in the carrying out of your wider student experience duties.

Student-Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC)

The SSLC is a crucial committee comprising of academic staff and course-level representatives. SSLC groups often operate at discipline level. These committees allow for class reps to voice their peers' concerns and suggest changes to things pertaining to their learning and teaching experience.

The SSLC is usually chaired by the School Vice President(s) and is open to all class reps within the specific courses to which the SSLC govern. Feedback and recommendations made within the SSLC feed up to the School President and School Management Group.

School Management Group (SMG)

The SMG is a frequent committee meeting between all heads of discipline within the school, the School Dean and the School President. SMG make various decisions on governance matters, as well as discuss the managerial matters.

The SMG is a unique platform for School Presidents to raise student experience issues to the higher management of the school - particularly to the Dean. Information raised within SMG is often fed up to University-level management. SMG also includes the Associate Deans of the School (each of whom lead their own subcommittees on learning and teaching, quality and academic standards, research and internationalisation). School Presidents are allowed to attend any or all of these sub-committees, should they feel it relevant to do so.

School (Staff) Board

School Board is an open forum that sees all members of faculty across the school come together to discuss key issues. Board acts as a mini staff council and will follow a set agenda. Board meet two to three times a semester.

School Presidents are uniquely placed to lead a 'student voice agenda item' that allows you to communicate any particular issue or initiative to all members of staff in the School. Board is chaired by the Dean, and key board matters will often feed up to University-level management.



SSLC



SMG



Board



UoD

SYSTEMS & STRUCTURES

Student Board

Student Boards are a relatively new forum that allows the School President to chair a wider committee made up of all their Vice Presidents, course representatives, faculty staff and, most notably, representatives of academic societies whose activities are relevant to the school. This board provides you with a broader insight into student issues, experiences and suggestions.

It is the responsibility of each School President to make these boards effective. You may only wish to hold one or two per semester. You may also wish to meet with your Vice Presidents on a more frequent basis around your scheduled board meetings. Make the most from all of the attendees and use this board to better inform the University-related committees.

School President Forum (SPF)

The SPF is a regularly held forum comprising of all eight School Presidents, DUSA representatives and the University Vice Principal of Education. The SPF discuss wider student learning and teaching matters, as well as the national student survey (NSS), campus affairs and wider DUSA initiatives.

It is the responsibility of each School President to make these boards effective. You may only wish to hold one or two per semester. You may also wish to meet with your Vice Presidents on a more frequent basis around your scheduled board meetings. Make the most from all of the attendees and use this board to better inform the University-related committees.

Student Representative Council (SRC)

The SRC is one of the oldest student representative bodies on campus, made up of a collection of general representatives, the DUSA Executive Officers, councilors with portfolio (such as first year rep or mature student rep) and School Presidents. Whilst the SRC operate independently to DUSA, they strive to work collaboratively to meet common objectives that enhance the overall student experience.

Each School President is an automatic member of the SRC. Use this platform to convey your cohorts' experiences and lobby for actions or reform at a DUSA and University level. Feed SRC information back to your student and school committees.

Dundee University Students' Association (DUSA)

DUSA provide training, resources and support to the entire representation across campus. DUSA offer a wide range of services to representative leaders, offering guidance whenever you need it. The DUSA Executive are the most senior representatives, who are also at your disposal if needs be.



Student
Board



SPF

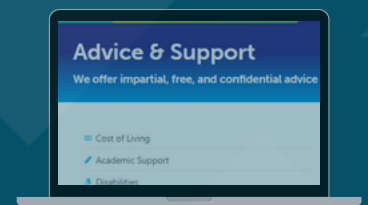


SRC



DUSA

SAMPLES & RESOURCES



As a School President, you have a wide range of resources readily accessible to you, allowing you to fully maximise your potential and increase your impact on student life. Below are useful resources and people that will make your time as School President more efficient and powerful.

DUSA Resources

Representation Team | Chris Gourley | Head of Operations | cgourley@dusa.co.uk

The representation team are here to assist you in any matter around your role, engagements, activities and related issues. They also facilitate the SRC and training for representatives. We also offer counsel, planning support and event guidance. Make the very most of these resources.

Advice & Support Team | Candy Preater | Advice Co-ordinator | cpreater@dusa.co.uk

Advice & Support interact with hundreds of students a semester. They are a crucial stakeholder that can provide general insight and direction to representatives as to what issues are facing your student cohorts. They are a useful signposting service that can guide you to the right people across DUSA and the University.

DUSA Executive | Dumindu Nukulasooriya | Executive PA | dnukulasooriya@dusa.co.uk

The DUSA Executive are not only the most senior representatives on campus, but they are also internal trustees of DUSA. They have a unique platform and access to key University officials that make the most profound decisions as an institution. It is crucial for all representatives to build strong relations with the Executive. The better the collaboration, the better the outcomes for all.

Events and Activities | Anna Broggi | Operational Support Manager | abroggi@dusa.co.uk

For any DUSA assistance on planning events, booking venues, marketing your event, supporting your ticket sale drive or providing you with staff and services, our events team are diverse and flexible to make your dreams a reality. The best approach is to reach out to them as early as possible.

University Resources

Student Services | <https://www.dundee.ac.uk/student-services/people>

Student services have a wide range of people and services that can offer your insight and guidance on student issues, particularly if you are leading an initiative or campaign.

University Marketing and Comms | <https://www.dundee.ac.uk/marketing-communications>

Academic Governance | <https://www.dundee.ac.uk/governance>

Equality and Diversity | <https://www.dundee.ac.uk/equality-diversity/support/staff>

Public Engagement Team | <https://www.dundee.ac.uk/engage/people>

Useful Research Resource:

<https://wonkhe.com> | Leading the Higher Education Conversations

GOING BEYOND REPRESENTATION

The following two pages are a selection of exemplar projects, campaigns and initiatives that any School President or Executive Officer are free to undertake during their term in office. The examples below are non exhaustive, and your projects need not be similar to these. Your role is not restricted to representing students in meetings. You have the power and platform to think big and make a lasting difference on campus.

Academic Experience Reporting

A comprehensive example of reporting on a serious matter pertaining to students' academic experiences. This form of work goes beyond the usual activity of a representative.

During the academic restructuring project involving three schools, a team of School Presidents led a multi-school consultation that seen over 300 class representatives and focus groups provide course-level feedback and recommendations. The data and feedback was subsequently reviewed and responded to by the New Combined School Leadership Board. This project ensured the student voice was upheld and transmitted during a controversial period of uncertainty and opposition.

Learn More at <https://www.dusa.co.uk/new-combined-school>

Student Welfare Initiatives

A prime example of a quick-paced response to student hardship through lobbying efforts and developing comprehensive recommendations to mitigate the challenges.

Amidst the challenging periods of the cost-of-living crisis, students worked in partnership with the University Executive to develop multiple support measures to assist students suffering economic hardship. After negotiations between students and the University, it was agreed that DUSA would introduce a free campus foodbank and a free breakfast club that would be funded by the University. Additionally, it was agreed that a further £100,000 would be allocated to the student hardship fund. This methodology demonstrates lobbying with solutions, instead of merely raising an issue to stakeholders.

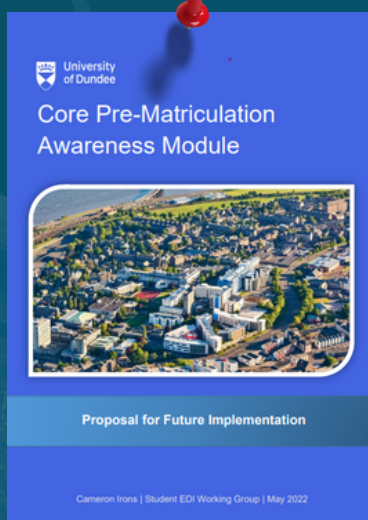
Learn more at <https://www.dusa.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/DUSA-Cost-of-Living-Paper.pdf>

University-Wide Projects

A strong example of an extra-curricular proposal that calls for University-level action to educate students on critical topics.

Students developed a university-wide proposal for enhanced pre-matriculation training for all students. The proposed training covers areas including Gender Based Violence and Consent, EDI, Climate Action and Academic Integrity. Widespread consultations were held before the final report, involving over 1000 students and various staff. The University accepted the proposals, with the training now being developed in with students and DUSA. This was launched with an online campaign to raise awareness on the issues, with involvement from societies, clubs and representatives. This gave the project much needed profile and momentum.

Learn more at <https://www.dusa.co.uk/pre-matriculation-survey>



Academic Initiatives

A strong example of an extra-curricular proposal that calls for University-level action to educate students on critical topics.

In 2021, a group of law students campaigned and lobbied for the revival of a pro-bono free legal advice centre within the Dundee Law School. This project was led by the School President of Social Sciences, who used their communications platform and position within the School Management Group to influence its revival. A corresponding report was drafted that outlined rationale, student support, external clinic testimonials and strategic alignment information. This was also made into an SRC motion to garner wider campus support. The law school are now developing the clinic to be in full operation in the 2023/24 session. Any representative can design or lobby for initiatives or resources that enhance learning.



Student Experience Events

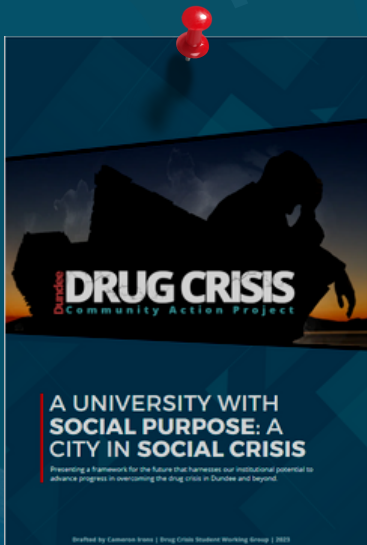
Aside from academic and extracurricular initiatives, social activities are equally sought after by students. As School President, you are well placed to run your own social events, be that networking dinners, galas or celebratory award nights. In 2022, the school representatives of social sciences organised a ball for staff and students, which was a fun way to conclude the session. It is also a chance to build a stronger community spirit and sense of belonging. It is advised that an experienced committee be established to assist in any social event coordination.



Community Action Projects

A strong example of an extra-curricular proposal that calls for University-level action to educate students on critical topics.

In 2023, a group of students designed and launched a campus-wide campaign on the local and national drug crisis. They utilised hundreds of society and sport club platforms. The group designed a large proposal framework that consisted of a five year plan of actions. Through intense lobbying and building strong student support, this project reached national media and is now being reviewed by University management and DUSA Executives. Any project you do can be this large with this level of reach. There should be no limit in your ambitions, and community action projects are just as important as student-related initiatives.



Learn more at <https://www.dusa.co.uk/drug-crisis-community-action-project>



Lobbying



Reporting



Community



Proposing



Campaigning



Designing

"Becoming School President introduces you to so many amazing people and gives you the chance to see your ideas come to reality"

find another quote

"It is a once in a lifetime experience that allowed me to make changes for a wider cause"

"This is a role that allows you to be the lead ambassador of your school, to stand up for those in your school who may feel voiceless. It is such a privilege, and a necessary role"

find another quote

find another quote

"There is no doubt I am leaving with more pride and fulfilment about my work in leadership roles than any degree could give me. It was honestly that worthwhile"