# Harper Adams Students' Union



# Course Rep and Department Rep Handbook

HASU VOICE

# Hello and welcome to the team!

A big thank you from the HASU team! We appreciate your commitment to represent fellow students and we will support you every step of the way.

If you have any questions during your time as a Course Rep or Department Rep, the SU is here to help. Contact Zena, the Student Voice Coordinator, or your Student Officers *anytime*.

Luke Smith



HASU President
SUpresident@harpersu.com

Bri Edwards-Periera



HASU Vice President
SUVicePresident@harpersu.com

Zena Rittenhouse



HASU Student Voice Coordinator
zrittenhouse@harper-adams.ac.uk

HASU VOICE

# Your Department Reps

These are your student Course Rep leaders. They can help you with any questions or concerns regarding student feedback - whether academic or non-academic.

They will bring all non-academic feedback to the relevant university department at the Student Experience Group Committee Meeting.

## Jess Walker



LPM, Harper Food Innovation and Harper Adams Business School

22152100@live.harper.ac.uk

## Ollie Glover



Agriculture and Countryside (Ag)

23103900@live.harper.ac.uk

## Mel Lawrence



Agriculture and Countryside (Zoology and Environment)

25148000@live.harper.ac.uk

## Joshua Tapner



Engineering

22165100@live.harper.ac.uk

## Esmé Penton



Animal Health, Behaviour and Welfare (Vet Nursing and Animal Science)

23112300@live.harper.ac.uk

## Beatrice Bonsey



Animal Health, Behaviour and Welfare (Vet Physio and Animal Science)

23216900@live.harper.ac.uk

HASU VOICE

# What does it mean to be a Course Rep?

Course Reps are integral to promoting student voice and representation on campus. Through Reps, we ensure that students have a platform to be heard and create change. It's also a fantastic opportunity to develop your professional skills and build your network.

If you are a Course Rep you will collect feedback from peers and communicate course specific feedback to Module Tutors and Leaders.

You will bring unresolved, course specific feedback to committee meetings. The SU exists to support your feedback gathering and will help you advocate for yourself and your peers.

Course Reps are also responsible for taking unresolved feedback and non-course related feedback to Department Reps.

The last step is to bring information back to your course mates. Explain what's been done so that they know their feedback is heard and actions are being taken.

HASU VOICE

# What does it mean to be a Department Rep?

In short, Department Reps are organisers and communicators of student feedback. They are student leads and support Course Reps in their work.

As a Department Rep, you will have specific tasks to complete each term. You will listen carefully to the Course Reps and encourage them as they gather feedback. Remind Reps to keep careful notes of students' opinions (positive and constructive) and encourage them to pass along the feedback to the appropriate person.

If a Course Rep brings you non-course specific feedback - for example something about catering or accommodation - you will bring that to the Student Experience Group. These committee meetings allow for Department Reps to bring feedback to the appropriate department and have a record of the actions being taken on behalf of students.

If any course specific feedback is not resolved at Course Committee meeting, it will be communicated to you, the Department Rep. Should this occur, you will schedule a meeting with the head of your department to communicate the feedback.

If course specific feedback remains unresolved following a meeting with the Head of Department, you will bring the feedback to the HASU President and/or Student Voice Coordinator.

To close the feedback loop you will write a termly report to ensure that communication flows between HASU and your department.

The Department Rep checklist in this document should help you make sense of how to ensure that feedback goes to the right person. You can use it to stay on track.

You will collect your termly bursary upon completion of your termly report.

HASU VOICE

# Help Us Improve

An important part of the Course Rep and Dep Rep process is sharing your thoughts and criticisms. You, the student representatives, are the best people to inform the SU on what worked, what didn't work, and how the rep system can function better.

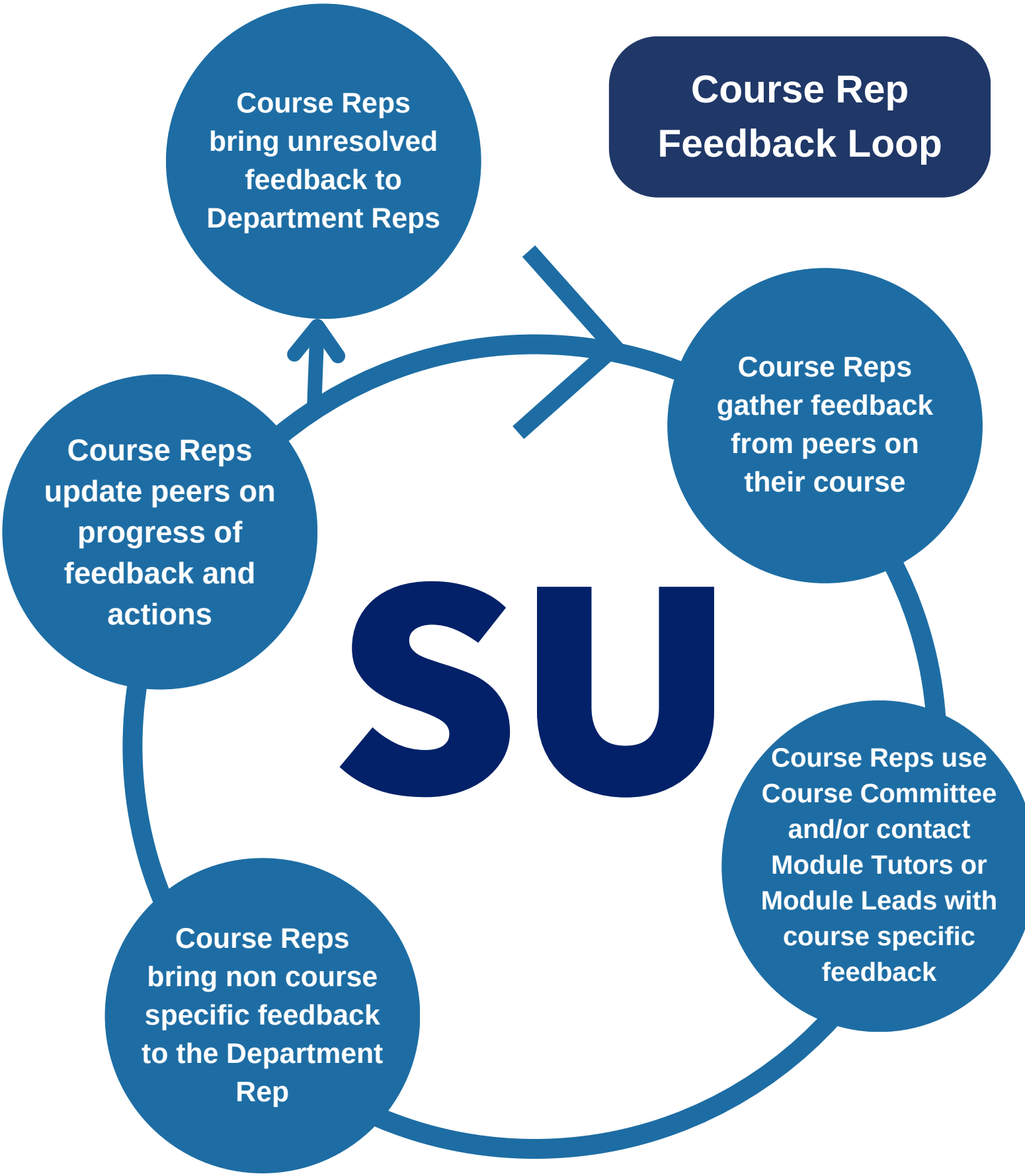
At the end of the year you will be given a short, anonymous questionnaire from the Student Voice Coordinator and SU President that asks you to share your thoughts on how the system went this year. Please be honest! We will ask a few specific questions and also give you space to write whatever is on your mind regarding the experience of being a Course Rep or Dep Rep.

Department Reps will also meet at the end of the year to discuss improvements specific to the Dep Rep role.

Thank you for helping us improve! We truly value your input.

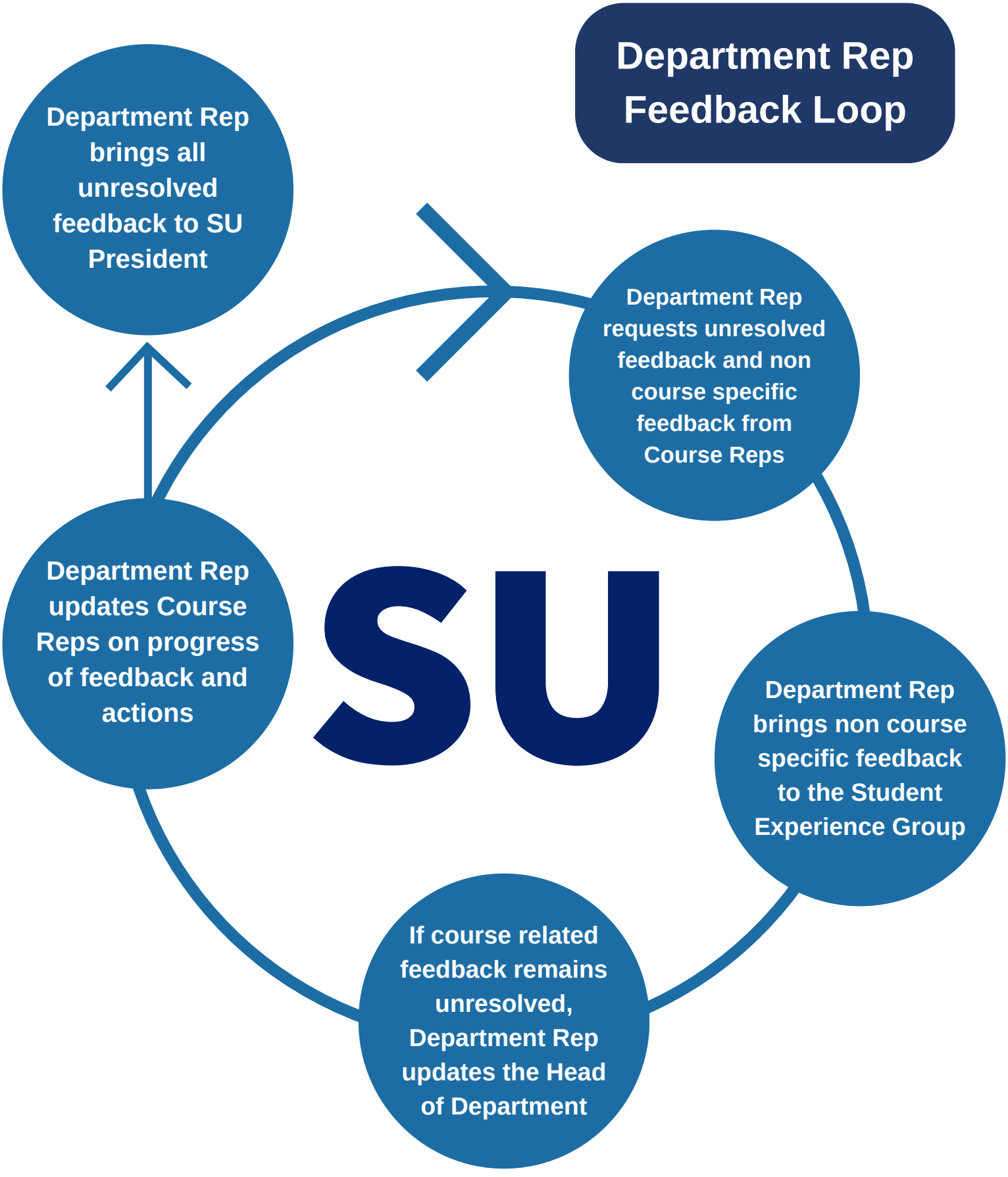
HASU VOICE

# What happens to student voice?



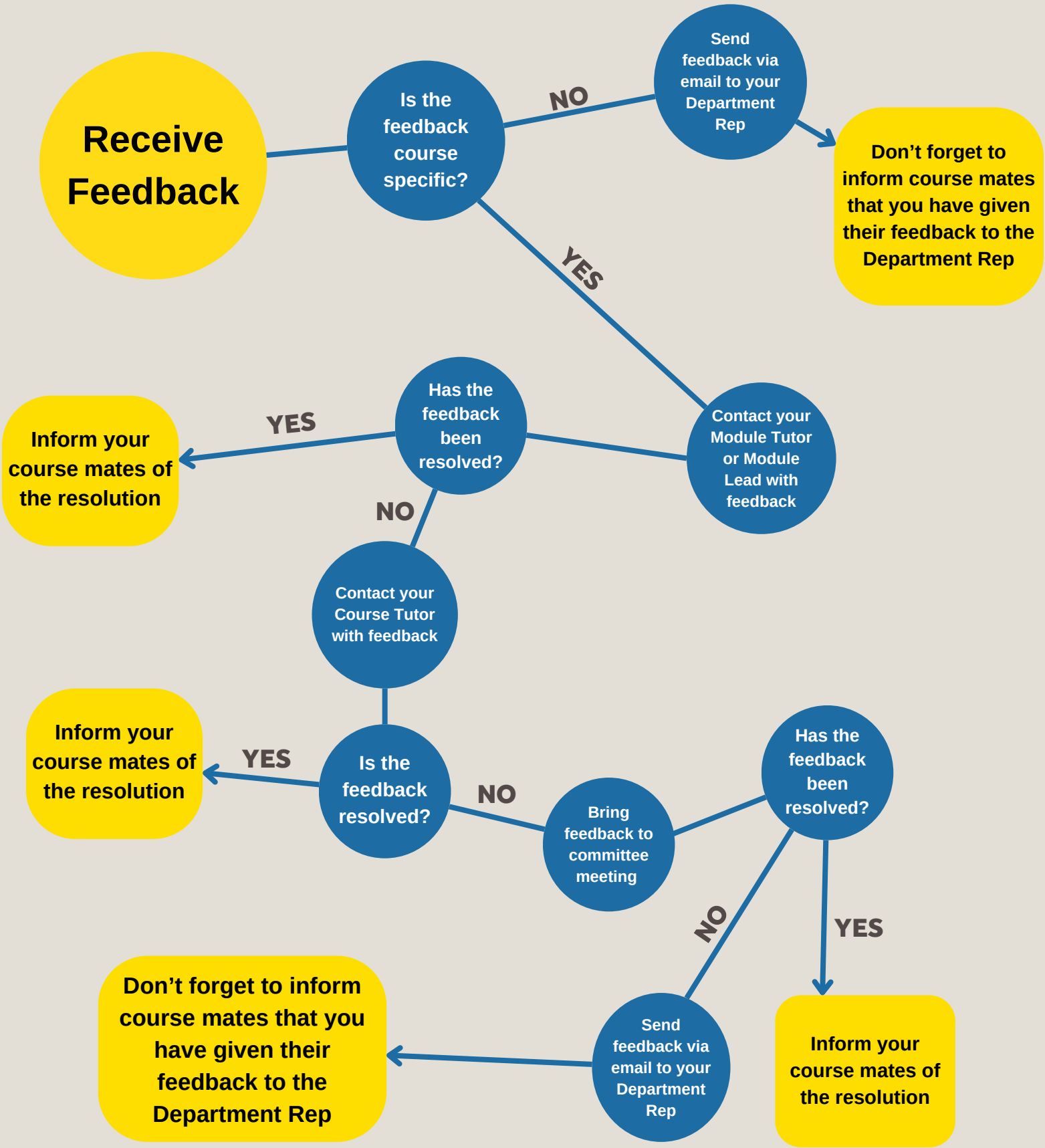
HASU VOICE

# What happens to student voice?



HASU VOICE

# I'm a Course Rep.
# What do I do with feedback?



# DEPARTMENT REP CHECKLIST

## TERM 1

- [ ] Introduce yourself to the Course Reps in your department. Make sure they know who you are and how to contact you.
- [ ] Schedule a term 1 meeting with Course Reps to follow their course committee meeting.
- [ ] Keep a document with all feedback received from Course Reps.
- [ ] Send any urgent feedback to the President or Student Voice Coordinator straight away - email, Teams, or in person.
- [ ] Attend course committee meetings within your department, if necessary.
- [ ] Communicate with Course Reps following the committee meeting. Gather any unresolved feedback.
- [ ] If necessary, meet with your Head of Department to communicate unresolved, course specific feedback.
- [ ] Attend SEG - the Student Experience Group - with non course specific feedback brought to you by Course Reps.
  Term 1: October 22nd
- [ ] Write your End of Term Report and send to the Student Voice Coordinator to receive your bursary payment.

# DEPARTMENT REP CHECKLIST

## TERM 2

- [ ] Schedule a term 2 meeting with Course Reps to follow their course committee meeting.
- [ ] Keep a document with all feedback received from Course Reps.
- [ ] Send any urgent feedback to the President or Student Voice Coordinator straight away - email, Teams, or in person.
- [ ] Attend course committee meetings within your department, if necessary.
- [ ] Communicate with Course Reps following the committee meeting. Gather any unresolved feedback.
- [ ] If necessary, meet with your Head of Department to communicate unresolved, course specific feedback.
- [ ] Attend SEG - the Student Experience Group - with non course specific feedback brought to you by Course Reps.
  Term 2: February 25th
- [ ] Write your End of Term Report and send to the Student Voice Coordinator to receive your bursary payment.

# DEPARTMENT REP CHECKLIST

## TERM 3

- [ ] Schedule a term 3 meeting with Course Reps to follow their course committee meeting.
- [ ] Keep a document with all feedback received from Course Reps.
- [ ] Send any urgent feedback to the President or Student Voice Coordinator straight away - email, Teams, or in person.
- [ ] Attend course committee meetings within your department, if necessary.
- [ ] Communicate with Course Reps following the committee meeting. Gather any unresolved feedback.
- [ ] If necessary, meet with your Head of Department to communicate unresolved, course specific feedback.
- [ ] Attend SEG - the Student Experience Group - with non course specific feedback brought to you by Course Reps.
  Term 3: June 3rd
- [ ] Write your End of Term Report and send to the Student Voice Coordinator to receive your bursary payment.

# JARGON - TERMS TO KNOW

**Actions** - used in meetings to describe a task that must be accomplished - usually by a single individual. Action items have a limited scope that can typically be accomplished within one to two weeks.

**Agenda** - a list of items to be covered in a Course Committee or other meeting in the order they will be discussed.

**Apologies** - at the start of a meeting, apologies from those who couldn't attend are read out. If you are unable to attend a meeting, you should *send your apologies* by informing the relevant person in advance that you will not be present.

**Course Committee** - meetings in which staff members from a course team get together with Course Reps and other key members of staff. These meetings are held in every course area and occur once a term.

**Course Rep** - a student who represents their peers by listening to views and concerns and sharing the feedback with staff at Course Committee meetings. They communicate unresolved feedback with their Department Rep.

**Department Rep** - Student Representatives who follow up on unresolved feedback collected by Course Reps. Department Reps take unresolved student feedback to termly meetings with their Head of Department. They also write End of Term Reports for the Students' Union.

# JARGON - TERMS TO KNOW

**End of Term Report** - documentation of what has occurred throughout the term and what remains to be done. It is written by the Department Reps and given to the SU.

**Feedback** - information about the university experience - written or verbal.

**Feedback Loop** - the cycle in which feedback is received, acted upon, and results communicated.

**Head of Department** - sometimes referred to as an HoD, their primary role is to provide leadership to their department. At HASU the Heads of Department are Andy Wilcox (Agriculture and Environment), Jane Thomas (Animal Health, Behaviour and Welfare), Ian Moorcroft (Engineering), Rebecca Payne (Harper Adams Business School), and Lynn McIntyre (Interim Director of Harper Food Innovation).

**Matters Arising** - updates of actions from previous meetings.

**Minutes** - a record of what was discussed in a meeting.

**Papers** - committee papers are the documents that are used to conduct a committee meeting. They include the agenda, minutes, reports, and supporting papers.

# HOW TO BE EFFECTIVE IN YOUR ROLE

The most important part of being a Student Representative is listening and communicating. This may seem a little daunting so read on for guidance on how to make the most of your role.

## COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR COHORTS

It's important that students know who their Course Reps are. It's also important that Course Reps know who their Department Rep is. Sometimes it can be difficult to get your name out there, so here are some suggestions for communicating with the wider student body.

### TALK!

- Don't be afraid to start up conversations with students and hold sessions where you make yourself available. You can speak to course tutors about spending a few minutes in tutorials in which you explain your role and how students can contact you.

### SOCIAL MEDIA

- WhatsApp (or other social media) chat groups can be a valuable platform for gathering feedback. Try to make these groups as inclusive as possible, and remember that not everyone uses social media.

## SURVEYS

- Be careful not to overload students with surveys but if there's a specific issue that you'd like feedback on, a survey can be a good idea. Surveys are a brilliant way of gathering evidence to support your suggestions - you could even bring in statistics eg: "60% of students said...".

- The SU puts out an annual student voice survey, so come and speak with us about adding specific questions.

## EMAILS

- Speak to the Students' Union team about sending out emails to students. The President sends out a bi-weekly email and can help get the word out if you are hosting an event or campaign.

## BE CREATIVE

- If you have a fun idea to engage the students you represent, go for it! If you'd like to run your ideas past someone, you can always ask the SU for advice.

## COMPILING FEEDBACK

Keep track of any feedback that you receive. Ideally, Course Reps will be continuously gaining feedback and sending their Department Rep any issues that are not course related, or have not been resolved using the regular channels.

For more detail on exactly what to do with feedback, see the diagram ‘I’m a Course Rep. What do I do with feedback?’.

Department Reps should keep track of all feedback given to them.

For both Course and Department Reps, keep a dedicated place for feedback as you receive it. Always bring your notes to meetings to ensure accuracy and detail. Provide as much detail on the issue as possible. It usually isn't necessary to provide student names, but have an idea of the amount of students who are involved in a particular issue.

## FEEDBACK LOOPS

Course Reps play a crucial role in closing the 'feedback loop'. This means that students are informed of what is being done about their concerns and needs.

It is useful to provide students with a summary of what was discussed, whether this is in person or by other means.

Similarly, whenever student feedback is acted on throughout the year, students should be made aware.

# TOP TIPS

- Communicate and don't be afraid to speak up.
- Don't forget to relate positive feedback! It's useful to hear what's going well so that more of the good stuff can be done.
- Let the SU know of an issue promptly to allow more time and quicker responses.
- Make sure the students you represent know how their feedback has been acted on.
- Never think a suggestion is silly - it's better to suggest it than to not bother at all.
- The Course Reps and Department Reps should support each other so please do.
- If you need some support, just ask. The Students' Union is here for you!
- Have fun - this is a great opportunity to meet others and get involved with the structures of the university.