



EC Students' Association

Lead Rep Report

January 2025

Introduction

Our Lead Rep scheme was launched in November 2024 and aims to facilitate the communication between the Rep system and the curriculum staff. It was designed so that the Students' Association could work regularly with an engaged group of students from different campuses and academic areas, to discuss specific issues with them.

We aimed to recruit two Lead Reps per School, and there are now 33 Lead Reps appointed across different subjects. All schools currently represented, except for Construction. Meetings are going to be held roughly every six weeks on different themes.

Meeting 1: Edinburgh College's student spaces

Over the week beginning 14th January 2025, EC Students' Association held the first Lead Rep meetings across the Milton Road, Granton and Sighthill campuses. In total, 11 Lead Reps attended. Our theme for this first round of meetings was to gather feedback on the different spaces at college, including:

- Spaces for learning (classrooms, labs, studios)
- Spaces for studying (libraries, open access PCs)
- Social spaces (hub/atrium/other spaces such as the music box)
- Eating spaces (cafes, canteens, food halls)

We asked our Lead Reps to think in advance about the different spaces on their campuses, and how well they are serving the students. The following main points emerged from the discussions.

Milton Road campus

At Milton Road, Lead Reps from Music, Media & Sound Production and Social Sciences attended.

- Overall, the Lead Reps seemed generally happy with the learning spaces, especially the studios in CR8 which students said were industry standard. There was some concern raised over classroom chairs being uncomfortable and some classroom chairs being broken. The recently-upgraded whiteboards have been good.
- Students suggested introducing a common room for their curriculum area, or one per floor. We discussed the general shortage of space at Milton Road.
- Lack of space to eat in the main campus building was a concern, as was general lack of social spaces available. One Lead Rep said "I would rather eat in my car." This could also be due to concerns around lack of healthy options provided at lunch.

- Concerns were raised about there not being many healthy food options available, students also requested hot water for free e.g. for noodles, etc.
- A visit to the Club building identified the 3rd floor as an area of potential to develop into a social space, by reducing the number of tables and chairs, and adding comfier furniture. A pool table or ping-pong table would be great for transforming the space, and a kettle and microwave for student use was requested.
- Outside space was discussed, and the Lead Reps suggested more picnic tables could be added for students to enjoy the outdoor space in the summer, as well as additional shelter provided in the smoking areas.
- Students also expressed a bit of disappointment at the lack of physical activities at Milton Road, and the cost of membership at The Club gym. Could there be a possibility for a student discount, so that the membership be closer to the rates offered by PureGym and Edinburgh Leisure?

Granton campus

Schools represented at the Granton meeting included Art & Design, and Professional Cookery, Hospitality, Travel & Tourism.

- Generally learning spaces were rated highly, except for when class sizes were very large and this resulted in two spaces being used. Students in the space away from teaching staff felt left out (Foundation).
- There were some requests/concerns specifically relating to Art & Design:
 - Concerns were raised about one of the textile presses not working (not hot enough) so everyone queueing in lessons to use 1 machine
 - The Art & Design reps highlighted their request for access to lockers, if possible
 - The materials pack which is given to under 18s and bursary students for free should be included for everyone
 - These Reps enquired after whether it was possible to use art studios in non-class time
 - The computer next to the printer on the 3rd floor doesn't sync up with printer. ECSA to investigate whether this is an issue with Mac computers specifically. (Same with computer in room 306)
- In terms of social and eating spaces, the Granton Lead Reps felt fairly negative towards the hub, particularly in terms of the seating layout, people leaving litter on the tables, and the noise of the space. The noise in particular was highlighted as very off-putting for neurodivergent students. Some people eat sitting in the corridors and in landing spaces where people walk. Some suggestions included:
 - Benches along the upper-level walkways
 - More picnic tables outside
 - Adding booths/pods or comfy seating, students cited Boroughmuir High School as a good example of different uses of space for students
 - A roof garden?
 - Replacing the spinning entrance doors
 - Hosting a lunch club where people can go as an alternative to the Hub
- There was feedback that the toilets on 3rd Floor never seem to have sanitary products in them – ECSA to follow up
- Students also raised concerns about student funding more generally, that the bursary and student loan are not enough to cover the cost of living in Edinburgh.

Sighthill campus

At Sighthill campus, Lead Reps from Enterprise & Commerce and Music, Media & Sound Production attended.

- For learning spaces, a few concerns were raised, including:
 - Double booking of library study spaces. The library is also incredibly busy at lunchtime, students are eating in the library/areas immediately outside the library, leading to hygiene concerns. Students are being loud in the library. This leads to students preferring to study at home.
 - Currently students are trying to read/study in stairwells as these are quieter spaces. Students were keen to explore options of an overspill study space, or use of the classrooms during lunchtimes. Alternatively, could they use the 4th Floor Lecture theatre at lunchtime as this space isn't frequently used? Suggestions that this could be operated using a sign-in book.
 - Pillars obstructing the view of the board in room S118
 - Differing temperatures in the learning spaces – either very hot or very cold
 - Heating systems being loud in the Music Box
 - Wifi issues within the classrooms
- Music Box
 - Printing not being possible in the music box because of lack of connection
 - A new rule in the Music Box foyer that students are not allowed to play their instruments. Could this be relaxed between 12-2pm?
 - Music Box students still feel as if they are 'cut off' from the rest of the campus and find it difficult to find their way around. Need for maps and/or tours at the start of the year highlighted.
- Social spaces
 - Students requested more benches outside
 - ECSA to check what the rules are with students accessing the quad area
 - Lack of healthy (but hearty) options at Sighthill means that people prefer to go to Napier for lunch
 - More signage for where water fountains are located
- Other ideas: introduce Lead Reps at next Class Rep meeting, send Lead Reps the details of Class Reps in their area, create a news article announcing who the Lead Reps are with their email address available. Mondays were also highlighted as a good day for Sighthill Lead Reps.

Midlothian campus

As there is only currently one Lead Rep situated at Midlothian campus, there wasn't a formal meeting held, but we are in regular contact with the student and making improvements to the social spaces, including a new table tennis table introduced to the Food Court, and chair ferules added to lessen the noise in the space.

Discussions with individual Lead Reps

The President met with a number of Lead Reps separately who were unable to attend their campus groups. Many of the points raised were echoed in the group discussions, and he will be following up with the points they raised individually where needed.

Action points

Along with the points raised above, the following actions will be taken.

- EC Students' Association will take forward this feedback about spaces at college to discussions with the Vice Principal and Assistant Principals Quality & Student Experience
- EC Students' Association to define some 'quick wins' that could be resolved in-house e.g. the purchase of a table tennis table for Milton Road club 3rd floor
- EC Students' Association will send each Lead Rep a list of the Class Reps in their Department to facilitate communication with them
- EC Students' Association will publicise who has been appointed as a Lead Rep via their website, so that Class Reps can reach out to them directly if needed

We are grateful to all the Lead Reps who have taken part so far. Our next meeting will be in the week beginning 24th February and will be themed around Decolonising the Curriculum.