



# EC Students' Association

## Class Rep Meeting 3 Report

### May 2023

In our final round of Class Rep meetings this April, both our online and in-person meetings saw a marked decrease in engagement. This report examines possible reasons for this, and suggests some new priorities to take forward for the next academic year.

#### Meeting objectives

- To present updates and information from the EC Students' Association Officers and relevant partners, including the forthcoming lecturer strike and the Big Student Thank You initiative
- To find out what matters are currently impacting the Class Reps' overall student experience
- To encourage current Class Reps to reflect on how to improve the Class Rep experience

#### 1. Lecturer Strikes

We shared information with Class Reps on the local and national issues that are affecting Edinburgh College and the wider sector, resulting in Action Short of a Strike and Lecturer Strikes. There was some concern about this among participating Class Reps. It is part of our EC Students' Association mission to be a helpful channel information between the College, staff and students, and the Class Rep system is a key part of this. We now have a [dedicated page](#) on our website with a contact form so that students can submit questions they have about the forthcoming strike action.

#### 2. Have your say

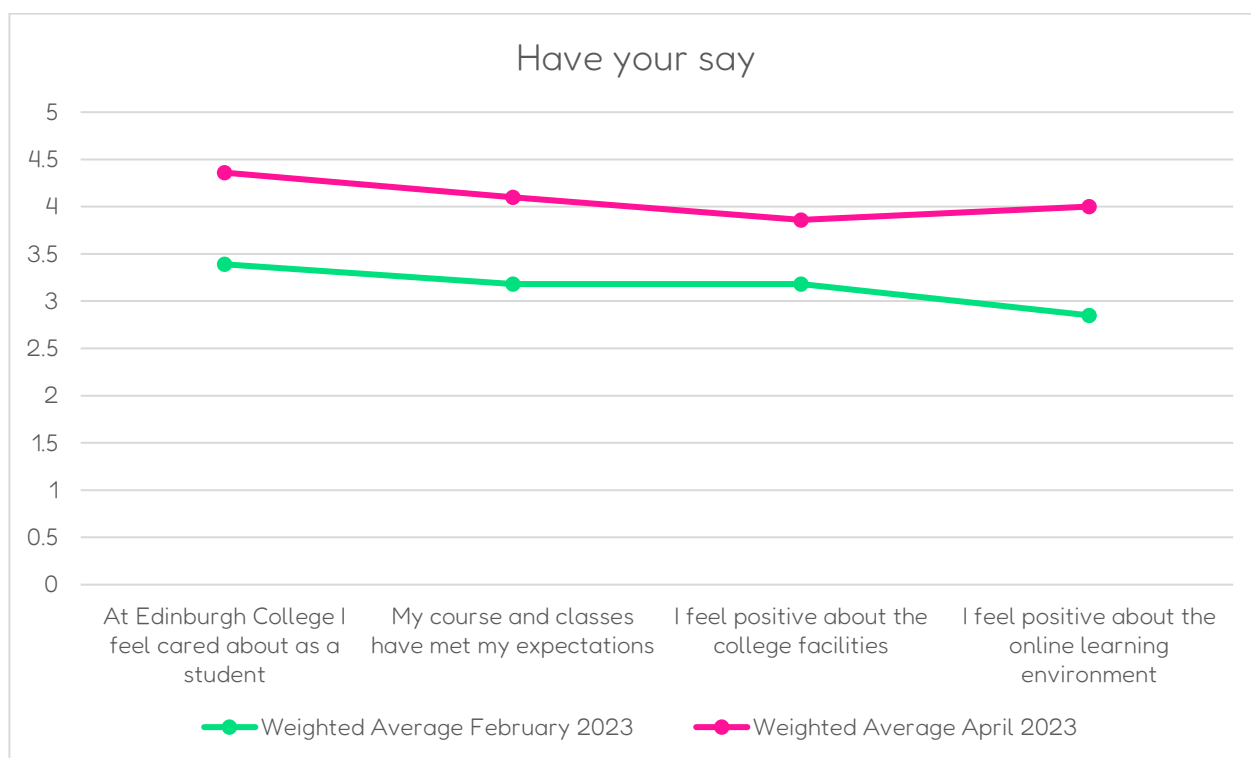
For the following section, we asked our Class Reps to answer a series of questions using the online presentation and data collection tool, Mentimeter. This allows students to respond anonymously and share feedback in a variety of ways.

As with our February Class Rep meetings, we asked attendees to respond to a series of statements reflecting on their overall experience at Edinburgh College. Respondents rated these statements on a scale of 1– 5, where 1 = “strongly disagree” and 5 = “strongly agree”.

As shown in the chart below, the responses tended to be quite positive:

- *“At Edinburgh College I feel cared about as a student”* received an average response of 4.36
- *“My course and classes have met my expectations”* received an average response of 4.10
- *“I feel positive about the College facilities”* received an average response of 3.86
- *“I feel positive about the online learning environment”* received an average response of 4

When comparing the February and April results, on every point, respondents were now more likely to respond more positively. While it is important to note that this was a different group of Class Reps, it is still a useful indicator of student experience.



Comparing data across Class Rep meetings throughout the year has the potential to be extremely effective, so we will incorporate this approach into planning for next year's Class Rep meetings.

In the second part of the Have Your Say section, Class Reps were invited to raise other matters affecting them and the students they represent. There were some trends in Learning & Teaching.

Tech issues	Some Class Reps raised concerns about issues with Turnitin, Moodle and Teams, and the use of all three sometimes being confusing. There are also issues with PowerPoint and Moodle being incompatible.
Teaching	Concerns were raised about some lecturers not providing resources, not marking work on time and not responding to MS Teams messages.
Cuts	Students are concerned about the cuts to teaching staff as part of the curriculum reshaping, and how their impacts their lecturers on a personal level as well as what this means for their courses. For example, the removal of 1-1 time with tutors.
Student withdrawal	There were concerns from a student about whether a course would be cancelled as a result of other students withdrawing from that course.
Finances	Students have been forced to drop out through not being able to afford ongoing fees. There were also concerns that the College doesn't always inform students when their funding doesn't go through, which leaves the student in financial difficulty.
Library	Concerns were raised about the perceived early closure of the library at 4.30pm. There was also a suggestion that library software is not compatible with certain IT students, and a common room for IT students which has fully compatible PCs would be appreciated. <a href="#">[06]</a>

It is worth noting that at the February 2023 meeting, issues with catering and facilities were a high priority among Class Reps, but there were no issues raised on these matters at either April meeting.

### 3. Student Mental Health Survey

We used part of our meetings to allow Class Reps who had not yet completed the Student Mental Health Survey to do so. This survey focuses on mental health, exploring what students do to support their own mental health, what they think of the current services provided at Edinburgh College, and how those services could be improved. The results of the survey are included in a separate report.

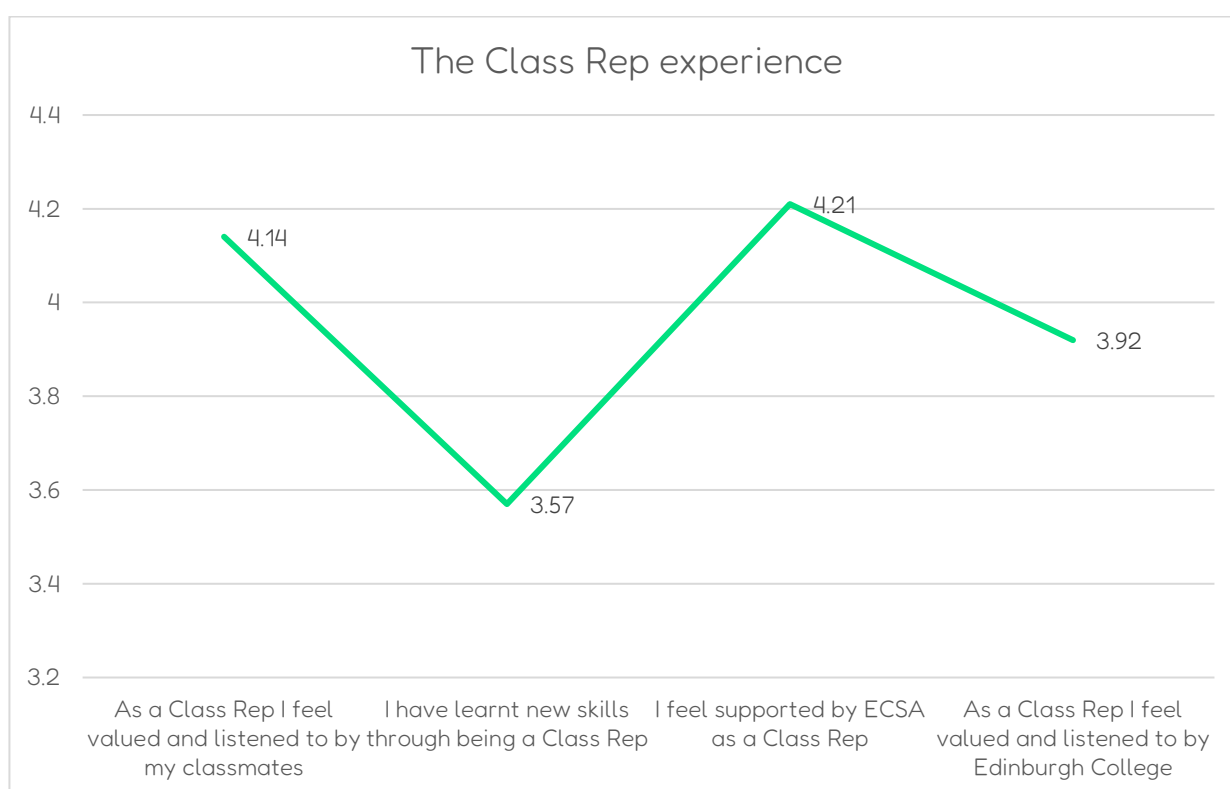
### 4. The Class Rep Experience

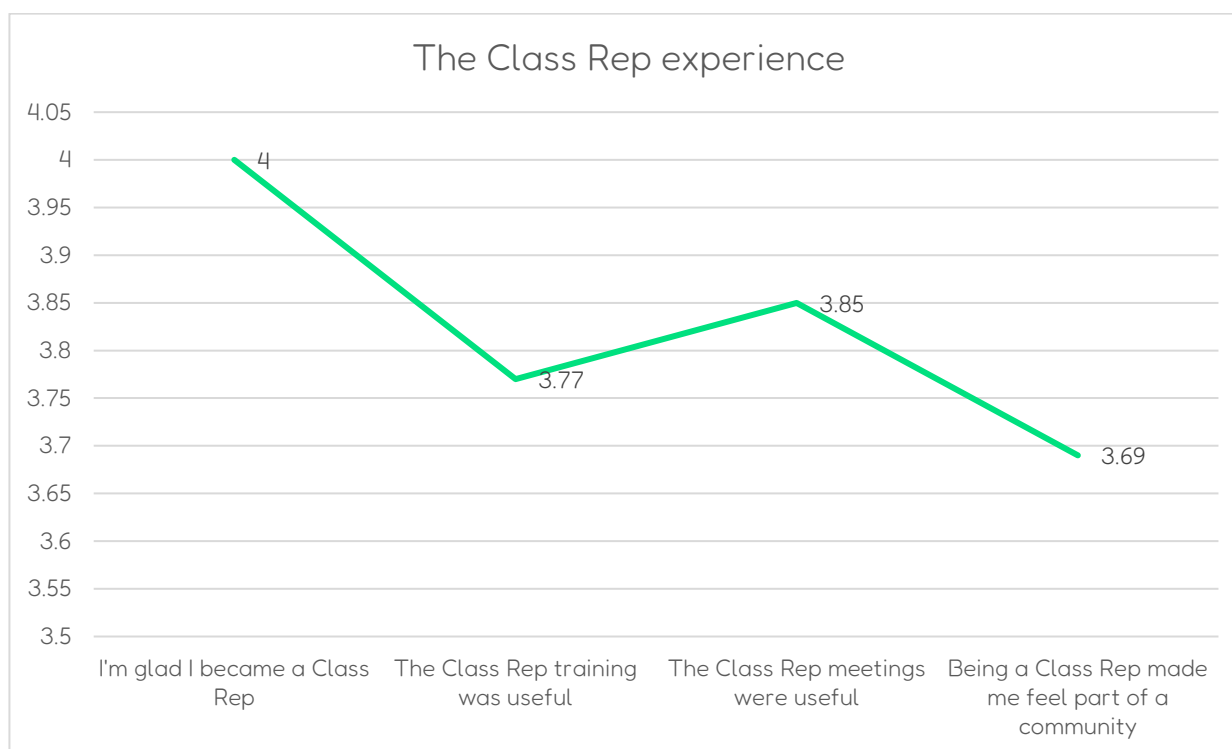
Over the course of this 2022-23 academic year, 607 students registered as Class Reps, with 245 attending a Class Rep training session either online, via a Moodle course, or in-person. These were our first in-person Class Rep training sessions since 2019, and a focus on in-person engagement was a key part of our approach this year.

As these April 2023 meetings are the final formal chance for us to meet with and engage with Class Reps before the end of the academic year, we were keen to get their feedback. While we expect some level of declining engagement as the academic year progresses, the low numbers of meeting attendees in both February and April indicates that the experience is perhaps not quite meeting expectations. It could also be an indication that students have other priorities and don't see the Class Rep experience as particularly valuable.

We want the Class Rep experience to be a positive one, for Reps to feel that they are part of a valued community, and to feel they are learning new skills.

Using a similar approach to the 'Have Your Say' section, we asked meeting attendants to respond to a series of statements on Mentimeter, reflecting on their overall Class Rep experience. Respondents rated a series of statements on a scale of 1 – 5, where 1 = "strongly disagree" and 5 = "strongly agree". It is important to note that the Class Reps who responded to these questions were the ones who attended the final meeting, so represent the most engaged cohort.





Overall the feeling was broadly positive, with the highest scores relating to Class Reps feeling supported by EC Students' Association (4.21) and the respondents reflecting they were glad to have become Class Reps (4.0).

However, there are clearly areas we can improve on. The lowest scoring areas were around Class Reps feeling they had learned new skills, which scored an average of 3.57, and Class Reps feeling like they were part of a community (3.69). These will be priority areas for us to work on in the next academic year.

#### Further observations

- Of the Class Reps who attended the April meetings, 78.57% said they preferred in-person meetings, while 21.43% preferred meeting online
- Most of the Class Reps who attended our April meetings said that they were useful (57% very useful; 35% somewhat useful; 7% not useful).
- Most Class Reps preferred us to communicate with them via MS Teams, followed by email and then the EC Students' Association website
- 86% respondents would be a Class Rep again, or recommend it to their peers

#### Feedback we received suggested it would be helpful to:

- Hold more face-to-face meetings, to facilitate communication and allow the Reps to be aware of other students' experiences
- Embed more opportunities to share information with classmates
- Schedule meetings at varied times, to capture more Class Reps throughout the year

#### Further comments, thoughts and suggestions for us to take forward:

- "Our class weren't aware we could have Class Reps till recently when there have been issues with cuts. It would be good to email all new students about it"
- "Some of the survey questions can be quite personal so not everyone in the class wants to answer - so sending surveys to be completed on an individual basis would help."
- "A form to submit ideas to Class Reps"
- "Having the class complete the surveys you send. And having them listen to what we (the class reps) are telling them."

## 5. The Big Student Thank You

We dedicated a section of our meeting to promoting The Big Student Thank You Awards. This EC Students' Association initiative is all about recognising tutors and support staff who have helped students through the last year at Edinburgh College. This year has been tough for everyone, but we know that there have been incredible people across the College who have made a real difference to the students and to the overall College experience.

There are five separate categories, with a 'Best Lecturer' award for each of the College's faculties, as well as a 'Guiding Hand' award for Support Staff. From the nominations we receive, we will also be selecting the overall Outstanding Lecturer of the year.

Nominations opened on Tuesday 18th April and close on Friday 19th May. The judging panel is made up of EC Students Association staff, the Student President and the Chair of the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee. Winners will be announced on the week beginning Monday 5th June, and we hope to surprise winners with their award while they are teaching on campus.

As of Tuesday 9th May, we have received 139 nominations.

## 6. Conclusion

The Class Rep system is an important part of the College's ecosystem, helping us to amplify student voice, closing the feedback loop on student experience, and acting as conduit of useful information between the College Management, the Students' Association and the student body. However, declining engagement rates with Class Reps over the course of this year has highlighted some areas that can be improved, to keeping the system functioning in a way that is fruitful for both the College and the student body.

Alongside focusing on improvements to enhance Class Rep engagement in the coming academic year, this report has highlighted certain issues, worries and concerns around the Learning & Teaching experience at the College. We will take this student feedback further and will circulate these notes to Class Reps and to the College Board of Management's Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee, along with the Student Mental Health Survey report.