



# Class Rep Report

## November 2024

### Class Rep Recruitment

In the first part of the 2024-25 academic year, EC Students' Association worked with Learning Development Tutors (LDTs), and Course Tutors to get as many Class Reps registered as possible. The registration system is hosted within our [website](#) and includes a [video](#) from our President, Adam Lowe, explaining the importance of student representation and how the Class Rep system at Edinburgh College works.

#### Class Reps: Key stats

- 627 Class Reps recruited (last year 548)
- 251 Class Reps trained
- 135 Class Reps attended the first round of meetings, with the campus breakdown as follows:
  - 34 Sighthill
  - 28 Granton
  - 23 Milton Road
  - 50 Online, from all campuses

In total, 627 Class Reps have been registered so far this year, which is significantly higher than the total number of Reps registered for the whole of the last academic year (548), and in 2022/23 (502). One of the reasons for this substantial increase is that we have been working closely with the ESOL team to ensure their reps are included in the College system. We are pleased that a high proportion of Class Reps undertook training this year, which was made available both in-person and online.

#### Lead Reps – a new engagement programme for 24/25

In an exciting development for this year, we launched a new engagement programme called Lead Reps, where we invited Class Reps to volunteer to become part of a group drawn from different courses and campuses, that meets more regularly with EC Students' Association and key college staff in focussed discussion groups. We are also hoping to get these Lead Reps connecting regularly with their relevant Head of School and Curriculum teams.

Our aim for this project was to recruit two Lead Reps per school (approximately 30 in total). We were delighted with the uptake, (31 Reps) which was spread fairly evenly across the different academic disciplines and covers all four campuses at the college. We have now begun the task of planning Lead Rep meetings agendas and schedules, and look forward to having an engaged group of students to bounce ideas off and explore different ways to enhance the overall student learning experience.

The Class Rep system is an invaluable way of gathering student feedback on all aspects of their Learning & Teaching. For the first meetings of the year, which took place on the week of 4<sup>th</sup> November, we asked students about their experience of induction. The following key themes emerged.

### Reflecting on induction

As induction is no longer being delivered centrally, but is delivered by different curriculum areas in their own ways, the student experience of induction varied significantly between different courses and departments. Mostly Reps felt positive or neutral towards induction. Generally, it was felt that icebreakers were helpful for allowing the class to bond as a group. Rep suggestions included:

- Provide physical maps which are clearly marked with room numbers and water fountains
- Include signage or maps on corridor walls
- Provide campus tours to enable new students to get their bearings
- Adjust timetables so that they specify subjects for lessons, rather than a course code
- Issue classes with an assessment/assignment schedule at the start of the year, so that students have an academic 'road map' for the year ahead. Reps would prefer deadlines written as dates, rather than defined as 'week 16' as this language can be confusing.

### Online learning environment

We decided to ask our Reps their thoughts on the online learning environment, to see how they rated the different platforms, including Moodle, Teams, Outlook, MyEC and Wi-Fi. The general consensus was that the usage of different platforms can be inconsistent. Many of our students access the online learning platforms using their phones, rather than through a desktop PC or laptop. That means that apps geared to phones, such as Teams and Outlook, are usually fine to use, whereas Moodle was described as 'clunky' and not easy to use. Reps agreed that the College Wi-Fi is patchy across all campuses. Rep suggestions included:

- Early agreement on which platform staff will be using to communicate, as students can be overwhelmed with different messages on different platforms
- Make the MyEC App available on android devices
- Documents should be uploaded to Moodle in PDF format (rather than Word) to ensure they are easier to read on mobile devices
- Add in digital skills tutorials on how to use the online platforms
- Highlight the college's Digital Map resource to all students
- Boost/upgrade on-campus Wi-Fi, particularly in study areas

### College teaching staff and the learning environment

Generally, Class Reps felt positive about the approaches of teaching staff, with second year students especially grateful this year had not been disrupted by industrial action. Many Reps highlighted their best learning experience was when students feel they are welcome to ask questions in an open dialogue with staff. As one student said: "Our lecturers are knowledgeable and positive about the subject, they understand our needs and they're just friendly and fun and always there if we have any questions and they're always willing to answer." Other rep suggestions included:

- If lecturers are absent for sickness or other reasons, it would be great to have an agreed system in place to alert students as early as possible
- Keep students in the loop with contingency plans if a lecturer leaves college or is on long-term sickness absence

- If class details, e.g. locations/timings change, communicate this with students in a timely way and explain why
- Reps also suggested that a joined-up approach between lecturers on the same course would be ideal, so that assessments and graded units are not all happening around the same time

## Have your say

We asked students several questions using the anonymous online tool Mentimeter to gather feedback. The wordcloud below shows the range of responses when asked how being at College made them feel.



We gathered some direct feedback on student experience by asking students what the best and most challenging things about college were. Here are some examples from students in their own words.

Best thing about college so far?	Most challenging thing about college so far?
"Meeting classmates, and having really enthusiastic and knowledgeable lectures, and a great LDT"	"Sometimes being overwhelmed with the workload given at once. I sometimes feel as though the lecturers don't communicate when they each set assignments."
"Having something to do and look forward to and the lunches are nice too, good prices."	"Living far away and getting in on time and getting a space, fitting in all the work on an 18-week course."
"The classmates, lecturers, collaboration and room to express your creativity"	"Time management due to intensity of the course. Juggling workload, massage hours, research studies, real life stuff outside of college etc. It's pretty tight timewise."

In every Class Rep meeting, we ask Reps to respond to a series of statements reflecting on their overall experience at Edinburgh College to track their experience over the year. Respondents rated a series of statements on a scale of 1 – 5, where 1 = “strongly disagree” and 5 = “strongly agree”.

Statement	Average Score (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)			
	Sighthill	Granton	Milton Road	Online
My induction went really smoothly	3.83	3.42	3.36	3.29
I feel I've settled in well at College	4.63	4.50	4.09	4.13
I feel safe at Edinburgh College	4.57	4.13	4.23	3.95
I feel I've been able to connect with other students	4.20	4.13	4.14	3.89
At Edinburgh College I feel cared about as a student	4.00	3.56	3.00	3.49
My course and classes have met my expectations	4.03	3.5	3.18	3.39
I feel positive about the College facilities	4.10	3.48	2.95	3.51

As the above results show, mostly Class Reps feel broadly positive about each of these different aspects of the student experience, with many areas scoring at least a four or above across all campuses and online. Sighthill Reps consistently rated their experience most highly across all seven questions. The most concerning results came from the Milton Road meeting, where students responded neutrally to the statement “At Edinburgh College I feel cared about as a student”, as well as rating the college facilities more negatively than at any other campus.

## Summary

This report has explored the feedback gathered from our Class Reps so far, reflecting on their first few months of getting settled into college. The Class Rep system is a valuable way for students to reflect on their Learning & Teaching experience, and we are grateful for the Reps who attended meetings and maintained a solution-focused attitude throughout. Our key learnings were:

- Inductions are generally seen as quite good, with almost every student having a timetable before starting, but students especially cited the lack of campus tours and maps available.
- Many Reps reported that students struggle to access vital information due to systems not being as easy to use on mobile phones (particularly Moodle).
- Students are broadly positive about their learning experience so far. Those with negative experiences cite staff absences and the lack of communication being key contributing factors.

Along with the data shown above, we have also collected individualised feedback from each meeting, which we are taking forward with staff and individual students. We aim to try and resolve any issues promptly, by working in partnership with College staff.

We hope that our Reps feel empowered to know that their feedback is being heard across the College and will help to shape student experience in the coming months and years. We also look forward to working with our Lead Reps as an active community linking college staff, students and the Students' Association more closely.

This report will be circulated to the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience committee in advance of their meeting on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> November. This report will be circulated to all Class Reps and to the College's Senior Management Team, and made available on the [Class Reps webpage](#).