

GBS Malta

Student Representative Handbook

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1. Introduction

Congratulations on being elected a Student Representative at GBS Malta. Being a student representative can be, alongside your studies, a demanding yet very rewarding role. Student Representatives tend to stand out amongst their peers as leaders and individuals and can be relied upon and to act as spokespeople.

GBS Malta depends on the relationships that it has with its student representatives to aid the communication flow between senior management, academic staff and the wider student body to enhance your overall student learning experience. This works both ways. Student Representatives are asked to inform GBS Malta of issues and concerns that the student community faces (as well as providing feedback on the positives things) and vice versa. Staff at GBS Malta will endeavour to feedback information back to the student population through Student Representatives and other communication routes, for example, Academic Board, Programme Committee, Student Representative Committee and in class teaching sessions. Constant development and enhancement of the communication channels between senior management, academic staff and students is critical to GBS Malta and the realisation of our desire to provide

all its students with the best possible learning experience. GBS Malta aims continually to enhance the student learning experience as a result of your input and full participation.

Lastly, we would like to welcome you to your role as a Student Representative at GBS Malta and wish you all the best with your new responsibilities and duties. We recognise that a handbook can never be definitive in the advice and guidance that it offers. If you have any questions or queries or simply need some advice, please don't hesitate to contact us.

2. Student Representative system and appointment

At the beginning of each academic year or semester your Programme Leader or Associate Dean will organise and run either online or classroom-based elections, as appropriate, for student representatives. GBS Malta seeks to appoint student representatives for each of the Maltese Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA) accredited programmes (this includes the MBA with pathways, Master of Public Health, MSc Information Technology Management, BSc (Hons) Computer Science and Information Technology, BSc (Hons) Health, Social care and Wellbeing, and the MQF Level 4 Awards in Business Management and Information Technology). We aim to have student representatives for each class group for each cohort of students.

Once Student Representatives have been appointed, we would like to have a photograph of each representative, email address for contact and short biography so that these can be posted at appropriate places in the GBS Malta campus and on Moodle (the GBS Malta's virtual learning environment – VLE). This will help ensure that all students in each cohort and class group will know who their Student Representatives are.

3. Benefits of being a Student Representative

There are many tangible benefits of being a Student Representative and looking after the interests of students on your programme of study. You may represent student views in formal venues such as at meetings of the Academic Board, Programme Committee and Student Representative Committee, each of which take place at least twice a year. First and foremost, Student Representatives will enhance their ability with key transferable skills as they undertake their role. Transferable skills are highly attractive to future employers. These skills include:

- Communication (written and verbal)
- Presentation and public speaking skills
- Time Management
- Teamwork
- Negotiation
- Networking
- Organisation and planning

All of this looks great on your CV and may realistically give you a head start over competition when applying for jobs in the future.

Ultimately, the role of Student Representative offers you a sense of achievement resulting from being central to representing the views of students to senior management, formal committees or

boards, and academic and administrative staff at GBS Malta. The role also promotes your own self-development and helps you understand more about how an educational organisation works.

4. Role and Responsibilities of Student Representatives

As mentioned previously, one of the paramount tasks of a Student Representative is to communicate any issues and concerns of your fellow students to staff at GBS Malta and to decision-making committees, such as the Academic Board, Programme Committee and student Representative Committee. Raising an issue or concern will result in discussion of the matter, an action plan formulated and agreed to address or resolve the concern. It is the responsibility of staff at GBS Malta to report back to you and the student body concerning actions taken to help resolve a matter that has been raised. It must be remembered that it is not always possible to resolve issues fully and to your satisfaction every time, for example, resource constraints may mean that not everything you would like to see can be achieved.

Your role and responsibilities typically span a broad range of matters from resource issues and the quality of teaching to social events.

Key tasks of the Student Representatives include:

1. Proactively aiding the continual improvement of the general learning environment at GBS Malta by attending and contributing to discussions at Academic Board, Programme Committee and Student Representative Committee meetings.
2. Gaining and providing feedback of the views of all the students that you represent.
3. Attending meetings of all Student Representatives that take place once each semester for the Student Representative Committee
4. Identifying good practice and issues that affect the student experience.
5. Ensuring that you are representing views of other students and not just your own view on matters to do with the learning and social experience at GBS Malta.

5. Some guidelines

As a Student Representatives you should consult with all the students that you represent concerning issues and problems that have arisen concerning academic and learning experience matters. These issues should first be taken your Programme Leader or appropriate Associate Dean where a solution should be sought. If a matter is more urgent and cannot wait until the next meeting of the Programme Committee or Academic Board you should meet with your Programme Leader or appropriate Associate Dean. Attempts will be made to sort the matter out as quickly as possible.

In the case of problems that are more profound and need the attention of senior management, the issues should be relayed to your Programme Leader or the Associate Dean.

In all cases, prior to being brought to a committee meeting, such as the Academic Board or Programme Committee, and where possible, an informal solution should be explored. This can be informally discussed with your lecturer or your Programme Leader or Associate Dean.

6. A Guide to Committees and Boards at GBS Malta

(a) Academic Board

The Academic Board is the most senior academic board at GBS Malta and deals with all aspects of academic and student learning experience matters. It is chaired by the GBS International Dean and normally meets twice a year. Academic Board deals with matters at the level of the GBS Malta, which include such items as academic standards, annual quality monitoring reports, teaching and learning matters, assessment matters, policies and procedures relating to academic matters and learning resources.

There are one Student Representative for each of the GBS Malta MFHEA accredited programmes who are members of Academic Board, representing different programmes of study and selected by all Student Representatives to represent them. Student Representatives are entitled to raise issues and concerns about any aspect of the general learning environment at GBS Malta. It is hoped that issues and concerns raised by students can be addressed informally and do not need to reach Academic Board. For a matter to be raised by a Student Representative at Academic Board may mean that it has not been resolved to the satisfaction of students by informal means or that it is a GBS Malta wide matter that students wish to raise at this high-level board.

A typical agenda for Academic Board should normally include a list of those attending, apologies, minutes and resulting actions from the previous meeting and any other agenda items suggested by members of the board.

In preparation for a formal meeting, such as Academic Board or Programme Committee, you should make sure that you:

- consult with the students that you represent, and have noted the issues and concerns, if there are any, that they wish to raise. Perhaps this is best done at the end of a teaching session with permission of the lecturer
- organise your thoughts regarding the matters that are important to your fellow students. Think about the conclusion that the committee should reach and how you are able to influence the decision-making process.
- are able to plan your time effectively in preparation of the meeting.
- know when the meeting is to take place, at what time and the room the meeting is to be held in

Before the meeting the minutes of the previous meeting of Academic Board can be accessed on GBS Malta's VLE. Double check the minutes against your notes and ensure that nothing has been overlooked. Providing you are happy with the content of the minutes you will be able to report the outcome of the meeting and any resulting actions to the students you represent. This may be best done at the end of a teaching session to the group of students you represent.

(b) Programme Committee

Programme Committee is a formal board that meets at least twice a year and reports to Academic Board. There is a Programme Committee for each academic discipline – Business and

Management, Computer Science and Information Technology, and Health. Programme Committee membership includes Student Representatives. Each Programme Committee has oversight of programme in that academic area and considers a number of summary reports, such as Annual Quality Monitoring reports, observation of teaching reports, and results of student feedback obtained through the student survey. Student Representatives have the opportunity to raise matters that they wish to bring to the attention of members of staff responsible for programme management.

7. Student Representative Committee

The Student Representative Committee meets each semester and consists of Student Representatives and members of staff of GBS Malta. There may be a Student Representative Committee for each of the academic areas (Business and Management, Health, and Computer Science and Information Technology). The role of Student Representatives on this Committee is to:

- seek views about the role of Student Representative and how you could be supported in your role
- feedback issues raised by students who wish matters to be brought to the attention of GBS Malta management staff
- up-date you on any matters related to GBS Malta as a whole
- have an open discussion about how the operation of GBS Malta could be further enhanced
- discuss social events and activities that you would like to see happen

These meetings do not have formal minutes taken, however, notes of views expressed, ideas for enhancement of the student experience and suggestions for social events will be recorded. The notes of these meetings will be considered at a subsequent meeting of a Programme Committee and Academic Board as well as being discussed by academic and professional services staff at GBS Malta.

8. A brief word of Warning

Student Representatives should not get involved with advising other students on personal matters or individual grievances, since, if the advice is later deemed to be unhelpful, wrong or seen to have exacerbated a situation, complaints could be raised against the Student Representative. In these circumstances or if in any doubt please make students aware that your Programme Leader and/or Associate Dean are here to help and provide guidance and advice. Where personal or sensitive issues are a cause for concern your Programme Leader and/or Associate Dean can advise or offer guidance on a one-to-one basis.

9. Enjoy the role of Student Representative

All of the staff at GBS Malta hope you enjoy the role of being a Student Representative. It is an important role and one that is crucial to ensuring that all students have a 'voice' at GBS Malta.

The role is challenging and demanding and requires that you give time to being an effective representative. Through you, students are listened to and wherever possible action taken to further enhance your learning experience whilst studying at GBS Malta.

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