

What does a learner representative do?

The video in the Learner voice section on the Developing the expert learner website gives an overview of what it is like to be a learner representative.

Collects learner views and feeds back

You should gather information and opinions from other learners in your group. You can do this in a number of ways. You can use a slot in tutorial sessions to speak to the rest of the group, or use feedback slips, email and web forums. (For more on this, see 'Gathering learners' views' in Theme 2: How to be an effective learner representative.)

Represents learners

The opinions you voice should not be your own but should represent the views of all the learners in your group. Find out more about this in Theme 2: How to be an effective learner representative – Representing the whole group.

Acts on learners' views

It is very important to think about how you as learner representative collect the views of other learners. Once you know a range of views, you need to think about how you will tell other people in your organisation to make sure they can be used to improve the learner experience. There are a number of ways you could pass them on and these are explored in Theme 2: How to be an effective learner representative – Acting on learners' views

Attends meetings on behalf of the learners they represent

These include the programme or course review where staff and learners re-examine the materials, teaching and timetable for the programme. There may be learner representative meetings, an opportunity for you to get together with other learner representatives, or committee meetings held by learner or student liaison officers or managers in the organisation. You may be able to attend meetings outside your organisation, such as those held by a Youth Opportunities Panel. Find out more about these in Theme 2: How to be an effective learner representative – Acting on learners' views

Acts as a source of information

Although an education or training provider will make great efforts to tell learners at the beginning of their programme all about how the organisation works, sometimes learners can forget about some of the opportunities they have to influence what happens.

Every education or training provider has procedures that all learners can access (including procedures for learner involvement, teaching and learning development, bullying, harassment and complaints). You can be a source of information about these procedures in your organisation, and point learners to where they can find out more. You will also be in contact with other learner representatives and any learner or student liaison officers or managers, who will have copies of any relevant policies and procedures.

Gives support

You can help learners in your group to feed their views into wider systems. You may also be able to support an individual through the start of a particular procedure. This could be by simply sitting down with the learner and writing down their views or concerns. This can be used to provide a written statement of feedback or the basis of a complaint.

Remember that your role is to make sure that learners' views about their learning experience are heard. It is not your role to support learners who are having a difficult time personally. If learners need help with their course work or with something that is happening at home, you should encourage them to talk to their tutor, appropriate personnel such as a student services team or another member of staff whom they feel comfortable with.