



PARSA

ANU *postgraduate &
research* students'
association

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES (CASS) CLASS REPRESENTATIVE HANDBOOK

**EFFECTIVE SUPPORT FOR
POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS
2023**

The ANU Postgraduate and Research Students' Association (PARSA) respects the stories, traditions and living cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

PARSA primarily operates on Ngunnawal and Ngambri land. Although equity is at the heart of our Association's work, we acknowledge that we have not achieved reconciliation. Sovereignty was never ceded, and we live on stolen land.

In restoring the rights of First Nations Peoples across Australia, we implore all readers to research the historic lands they call 'home'.



FOREWORD FROM THE EDUCATION PORTFOLIO

Thanks for your interest in becoming a class representative! Whether you're formally appointed as a representative, providing advice to a convener, or completing a SELT survey, your voice as a student helps to shape and improve the university experience for all postgraduates. Student representation is your chance to provide feedback on what works and what doesn't, and to work with university faculty members in a constructive, mutually beneficial way. This Handbook is designed to provide you with guidance for representing your cohort and to direct you to the appropriate channels to provide feedback within your College. You can also access advice on our website, parsa.anu.edu.au. If you have further questions or concerns, you can also reach out to your PARSA College Representative (listed under 'Relevant Contacts') or PARSA's Coursework and HDR Officers for advice or to arrange a quick chat.

Kind regards,



HDR OFFICER – IRINA SAMSONOVA



COURSEWORK OFFICER – AKRTI TYAGI

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WHAT IS A CLASS REPRESENTATIVE?

Each course at the Australian National University (‘the University’) is meant to have a Class Representative. These representatives are the first point of contact for students wishing to raise their concerns in a confidential or unbiased manner. The appointment of Class Representatives may not be possible in smaller classes or where no student volunteers.

Class Representative duties include:

- collecting feedback for Course Conveners;
- acting as a communication channel between staff and students;
- escalating issues to the appropriate stakeholders; and
- ensuring students can access relevant support services.

In late 2021, the University updated its Class Representative Policy and Procedure. This policy aims to standardise the appointment process for Class Representatives across all Colleges and Schools as a way of ensuring Course Conveners engage with student feedback. However, our research indicates that many Colleges across the University have implemented their own tailored policies for handling class representation. This guide seeks to clarify and explain the policy specific to the College of Engineering and Computer Science.

QUALITIES OF AN EFFECTIVE CLASS REPRESENTATIVE:

Anyone who is engaged with their studies and cares about student representation can be a Class Representative. However, there will be times when Class Representatives are required to have challenging conversations. Prospective candidates should be willing to engage with these discussions.

To succeed in this role, you must:

- **Be visible:** make sure students know who you are and how to contact you. Throughout the duration of the course, reach out to your peers and remind them you are there to help.
- **Have strong communication skills:** keep in touch with your Course Convener. Instead of waiting until you hear negative feedback from students, let them know when they are doing a good job. Ensure that a written record exists for all your interactions.
- **Collaborate with others:** attend student/staff meetings and use the resources provided to you by PARSA. Promote your classmates’ participation in University-wide surveys. Have the confidence to ask for additional support when required.
- **Know your limits:** at the end of the day, Class Representatives are all students. You are not expected to handle sensitive cases that require specialist training. If a student comes to you with an issue, be open to referring them to another service provider (eg. PARSA’s Student Support Team, the Dean of Students, the University’s Counselling Centre or the relevant College Services Team).



HOW THE CLASS REPRESENTATIVE PROCEDURE (2023) WORKS:

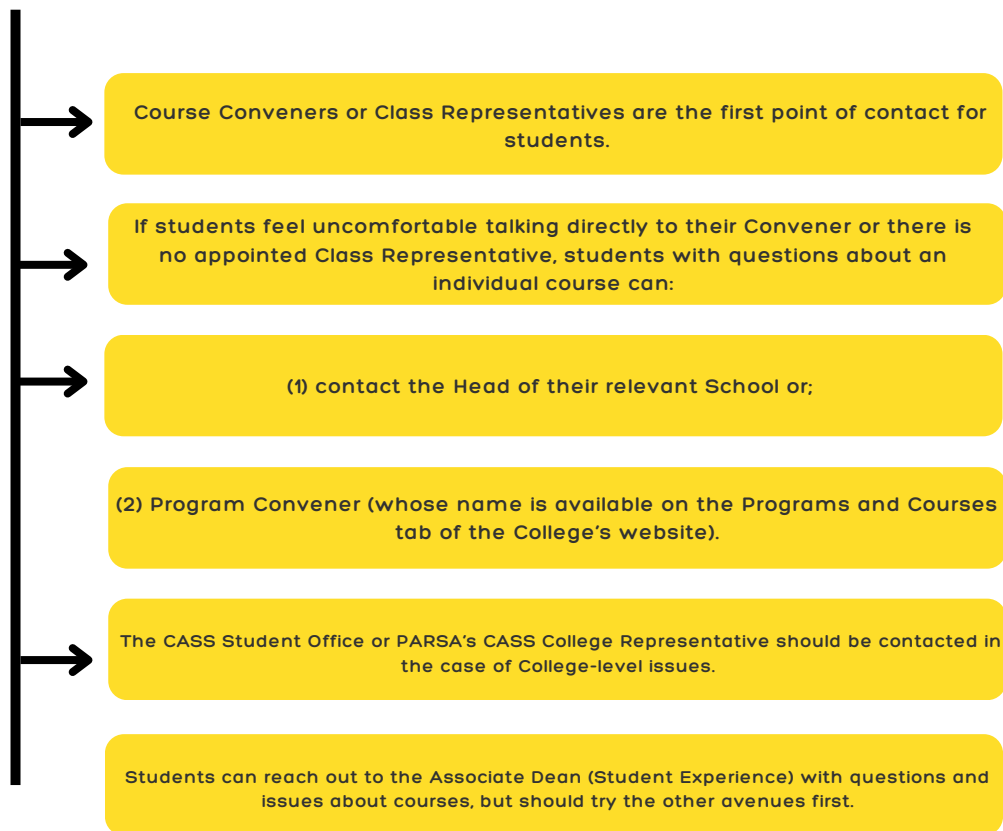
1. The Course Convener should promote the Class Representative role on Wattle. They should also note the role's availability during the course's first lecture.
2. Applicants should be made aware of the Class Representative's responsibilities before applying. Applicants must agree to have their contact details be made available to the cohort via the 'Course Assistance' section on the course's Wattle page.
3. Class Representatives are appointed by the Course Convener by the end of the first 25% of teaching (week 3 of a 12-week term), through either:
 4. an expression of interest; or
 5. a vote of the Class student cohort,
6. 4. Where two or more Class Representatives are appointed, Course Conveners should consider the diversity of a cohort (eg. gender, sexual orientation, or country of origin) when appointing Class Representatives through an expression of interest process.
7. 5. Ideally, Course Conveners will organise a meeting with appointed Class Representatives at least two (2) weeks after their appointment, during which the Course Convener and Class Representatives discuss if and how feedback is collected and communicated, and their expectations for the semester. Information about Class Representative training may also be provided, which Class Representatives are encouraged to attend. If you have not heard from your Course Convener within two (2) weeks, please reach out to them.
8. 16. Course Conveners should notify the relevant College faculty staff, PARSA, or ANUSA about all appointed Class Representatives for their course.
9. 17. Class Representatives cease to function in their roles if they withdraw from a course.
10. 18. Class representatives are not required to perform duties outside of the teaching period.
11. 19. If the relationship between the Course Convener and a Class Representative is not constructive, then the Associate Dean (Education) or their nominee/s and/or ANUSA/PARSA President may be contacted to mediate. In cases where the relationship is not improved after mediation, the Course Convener in consultation with the Associate Dean (Education), or their nominee, may replace a Class Representative at the Course Convener's discretion and with express communication to ANUSA and/or PARSA

To see the full procedure follow this link:

policies.anu.edu.au/ppl/document/ANUP_6495493



CASS ISSUE MANAGEMENT PROCESS



Meetings with representatives are held at a school level during weeks 5 - 7. The Associate Dean (Student Experience) meets with students at a College level during week 8

The College would like to emphasise that CASS Class Representatives are there primarily to collect feedback to assist and inform the College's approach to learning, rather than solely acting as a point for escalating concerns.

The method of selection for Class Representatives is at the discretion of Course Conveners. However, in practice, voting is rarely used, and appointment is preferred.

RELEVANT CONTACTS

PARSA's CASS Representative: parsa.cass@anu.edu.au

Society of Arts and Social Sciences: sass@anu.edu.au

CASS Coursework Administration: students.cass@anu.edu.au

CASS HDR Student Administration: research.students.cass@anu.edu.au

Office of the Dean of Students: dean.students@anu.edu.au

TRAINING

PARSA and Associate Deans or their delegate will ensure class representatives are aware of training and resources offered by PARSA. PARSA's Coursework and HDR Officers, or their delegated representatives, are also available for consultation and contact regarding this Handbook and training.

Training occurs before the end of the fourth teaching week of each semester. Training is open to all Class Representatives. It includes an overview of a Class Representative's role and responsibilities as well as the contact information of relevant referral pathways.

Each College's Associate Dean (Education) or their nominee/s are responsible for communicating these training opportunities to Course Conveners and Class Representatives. ADE's liaise with PARSA (parsa@anu.edu.au) to resolve issues or questions.

Free training is provided to help you fulfil your potential as a Class Representative. In particular, training is designed to equip Class Representatives with the tools to collect feedback and effectively communicate this feedback back to the College. It also emphasises the importance of establishing a productive, constructive and mutually beneficial relationship with your Course Convener and other members of the College faculty.

Training sessions are recorded for Class Representatives who are unable to attend. For in-person attendees, complimentary food is provided.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

If you would like additional support from PARSA, please reach out to us at parsa.hdr@anu.edu.au or parsa.coursework@anu.edu.au. Your HDR and Coursework Officers are here to help.

Be sure to stay in contact with them and enquire whether there are any further ways to utilise PARSA's support systems. Please also visit our website for further support resources: parsa.anu.edu.au

The Office of the Dean of Students provides another avenue for students to seek academic support and raise concerns. The role of the Dean and Deputy Dean of Students is to listen, offer options, encourage, and facilitate informal grievance resolution, provide guidance in the case of formal grievance pathways, and facilitate access to support services within the University. The Office operates as an independent entity within the University providing impartial, neutral advice and consideration of the matters that are brought to it, predominantly by ANU students. For more information, please visit: anu.edu.au/students/contacts/dean-of-students

