

Academic & Welfare Officers “AWO’s”

Role and Responsibilities

This document outlines typical duties expected of the role and may be subject to change.

Summary of role

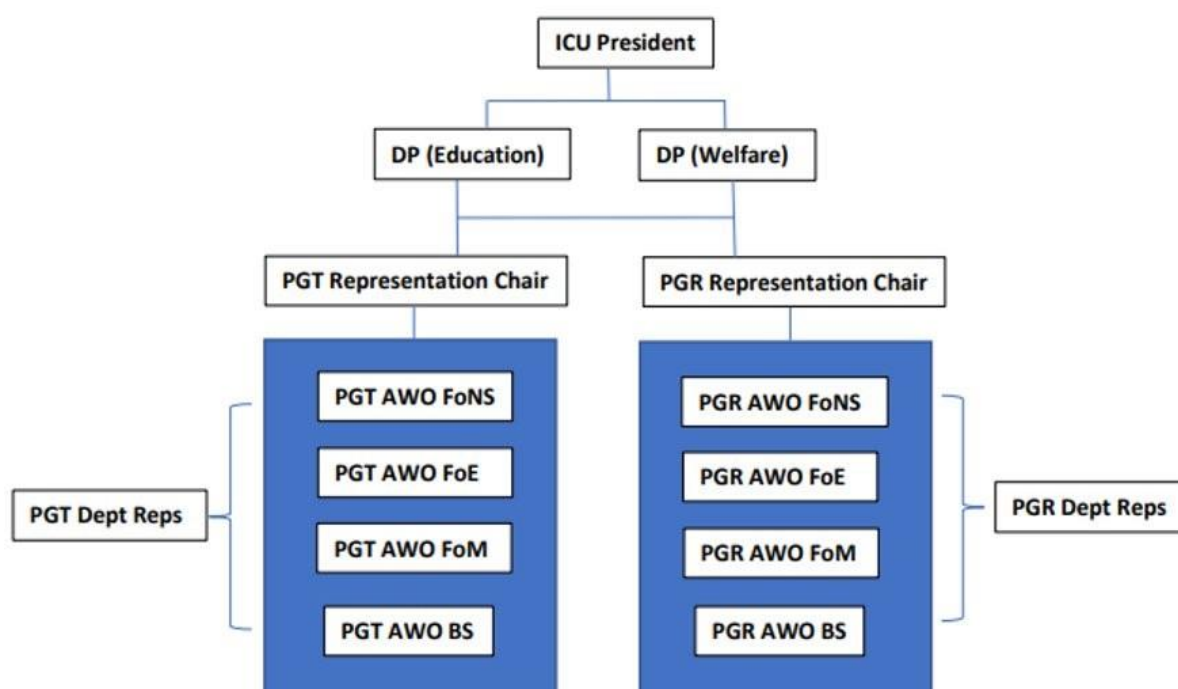
AWO’s are elected members who are responsible for seeking out, receiving and collating student feedback from student representatives in their Faculty and raising it to Faculty and College level staff and/or Imperial College Union as appropriate. They are expected to proactively pursue improvements to their Faculties on their students’ behalf and to provide updates on their progress to their representatives.

Relationships with: PG Department and Year Reps, other AWOs, Faculty Staff, ICU Deputy President (Education), ICU Deputy President (Welfare), ICU Representation Team, Early Career Researcher Institute

Responsible for: Postgraduate Department and Year Reps

Responsible to: PG Representation Chair

PG Representation Structure



Key responsibilities and duties

It is expected that all Academic and Welfare Officers attend the Representation Essentials Training and Effective Meetings and Chairing Training to provide them with the knowledge and awareness required to fulfil their role.

- Represent the academic and wellbeing views of PG students in their Faculty to the College and Imperial College Union.
- Coordinate the activities of, and hold regular meetings with, Department-level representatives in their Faculty.
- Work with Department-level representatives, the Faculty, and Imperial College Union to develop solutions to student feedback.
- Work with the Department-level representatives to ensure Year-level representatives feel supported, are collecting feedback and voicing it fairly.
- Ensure they are known to the student reps and students in their Faculty and provide mechanisms for students to voice their feedback.



- Ensure feedback they are collecting and presenting is representative and has been gathered from a pool of students. Communicate with other AWO's and PG Department Reps to share best practice.
- Ensure that students' views are fairly and inclusively represented.
- Chair Student-Staff Committees/ Student-Staff Liaison Group (or equivalent) in their Faculty.
- Attend Union meetings such as Union Council, Academic Representation Forum (taught/research where applicable), and Community & Welfare Forum.
- Share outcomes, decisions, developments, or progress to students in their Faculty regarding their feedback.
- Be in regular communication with the PG Representation Chair, ICU Deputy President (Education and Welfare) and with the Representation Coordinator at the Union.
- Refer urgent issues directly to a relevant member of College or Union staff, especially if you are concerned about a student's safety.
- Ensure student confidentiality is maintained at all times unless agreed otherwise or you believe the student to be a danger to themselves or others.
- Make it clear to students that you cannot provide counselling, support, or advice, however you can signpost to relevant services.

Skills and knowledge required

Whilst it is beneficial to have prior knowledge as outlined below, all student representatives receive sufficient training and support to be able to carry out their roles.

- Knowledge of the ICU Representation Network structure and Imperial College Union.
- Good understanding of College's workings as a whole and knowledge of available support services both internally and externally.
- Know who to contact in emergencies and if you have concerns regarding a student's safety.
- Being aware of and adhering to personal limitations and limitations of the role, seeking support for oneself regarding pressures of the role from Imperial College Union staff.

Training and support

- PG Rep Chair and AWO Representation Essentials, delivered by Imperial College Union.
- PG Effective Meetings & Chairing training, co-delivered by the Union and the Early Careers Researcher institute.
- Ongoing support from, and regular meetings with, the ICU Representation Coordinator.
- Representative Handbook and Newsletters.
- Rep social activities.

Time commitment and availability

- AWO's should expect to attend in the region of fifteen meetings per academic year. These are usually held at the campus where the bulk of their course is administered so should require no more travel than would be expected on a day-to-day basis. Meetings typically last 1-2 hours.
- AWO's are expected to catch-up with their Department Reps in advance of Staff-Student Committees and Union Council to establish what discussion points are being raised by students. This can be informal and last about an hour.
- Representatives should be available by email and expect to be approached to meet for a brief time with students when requested. Email correspondence should be answered within a reasonable period and Reps should use their role accounts as the primary source of contact between themselves and students.
- Work relating to the position should take on average no more than a 5 hours per week. The work volume will vary during the academic year and term by term.

It is recognised that students are primarily at Imperial to study or research and that this must be prioritised. Students who feel their studies are being compromised, are struggling or feel they are spending too much time filling the role should speak to the Representation Coordinator (icu.representation@imperial.ac.uk)

