

The background features a large, semi-transparent watermark of the Aston University crest. The crest is a shield-shaped emblem with a blue and gold color scheme. At the top, a hand holds a torch. The shield contains an open book and two crossed hammers. Below the shield is a banner with the word 'FORWARD'.

# **COURSE REPRESENTATIVE TRAINING 2011/12**

Aggy Jacobs - Senate Officer

Ben Smith - Vice President of Education and Welfare



# TRAINING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session you will :

Understand the importance of and be able to explain the role of a Class Rep

Understand the structure of the Rep system and how you fit in

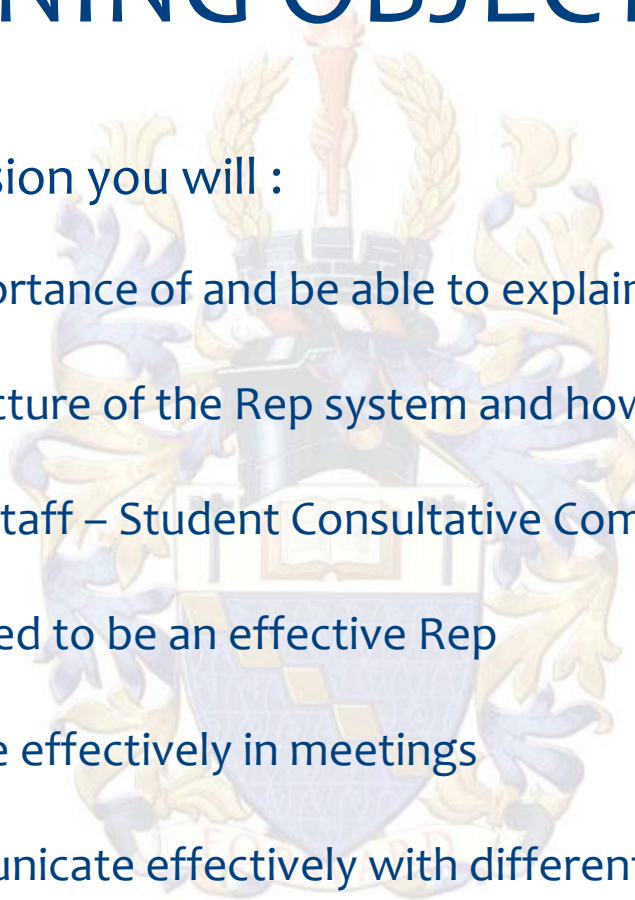
Understand what a Staff – Student Consultative Committee is

Know the skills needed to be an effective Rep

Know how to engage effectively in meetings

Know how to communicate effectively with different groups

Be able to deal with student issues



The image features the official crest of Aston University, which is a shield-shaped emblem. At the top of the shield is a castle tower with a torch emerging from it. The shield is flanked by two golden lions holding a banner. The shield itself is blue with a white book in the center. Below the shield is a banner with the word 'FORWARD' written on it. The crest is set against a light blue background.

# Professor Helen Higson

Senior Pro Vice Chancellor  
(External Relations)

The image features a large, semi-transparent watermark of the Aston University crest in the background. The crest is a heraldic shield with a blue and gold checkered pattern, topped with a crown and a torch. It is flanked by two figures holding a banner that reads 'FORWARD'.

“The direct feedback from students who get involved in roles such as COURSE REPS is more immediate and has high impact”

Professor Julia King, Vice Chancellor



# BILATERAL COMMITMENT

- The University has made a commitment to listen and respond to our opinions.
  - You must make the commitment to speak out and represent the views of your cohort .
- 



# **Section 1: The role of course reps**

Section 2: Structure & support

Section 3: Putting it into action

Section 4: Important information





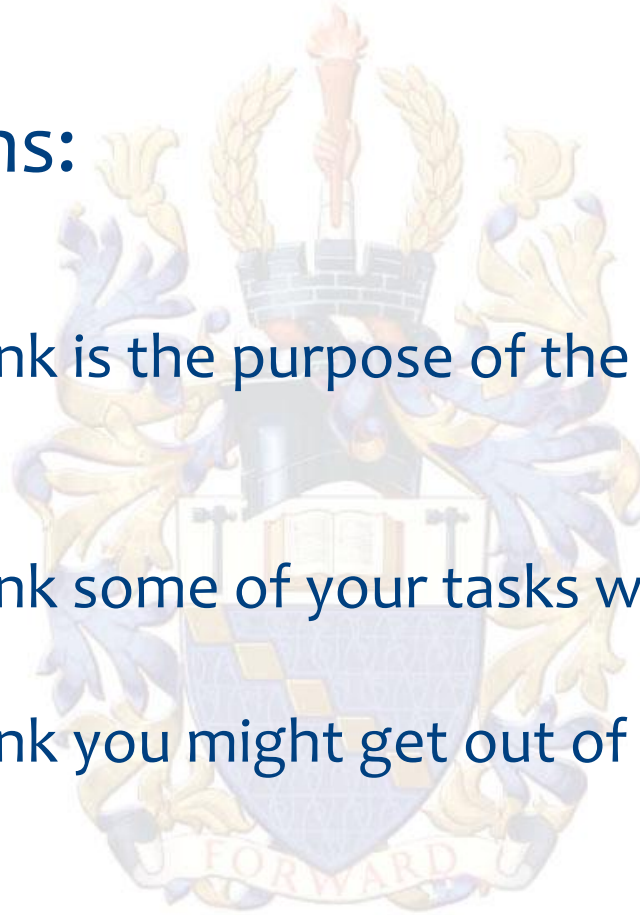
# YOUR ROLE AS A REP

A few questions:

What do you think is the purpose of the course representative?

What do you think some of your tasks will be?

What do you think you might get out of the role?





# PURPOSE

Find out what  
STUDENTS THINK



REPRESENT these opinions to  
the University & Guild



FEEDBACK to students





# COURSE REPS KEY TASKS

Raising awareness of student engagement and mechanisms for representation

Gathering , collating and recording information on current issues

Internal liaison

Planning, organising and attending meetings

Presenting and communicating information

Identifying and agreeing action points

Taking action

Feeding back both positives and negatives

Representing your fellow students

Giving constructive criticism and feedback

# WHAT DO YOU GET OUT OF IT?

CV

Good experience

Increased confidence

New skills development / transferable skills

Training

Personal satisfaction

Practical experience

Increased knowledge

Networks

Enhanced student learning experience

Career development





# ...AND THERE'S MORE

Guild Senate Dinner

CV development

Skill enhancement

... more details to come





Section 1: The role of course rep

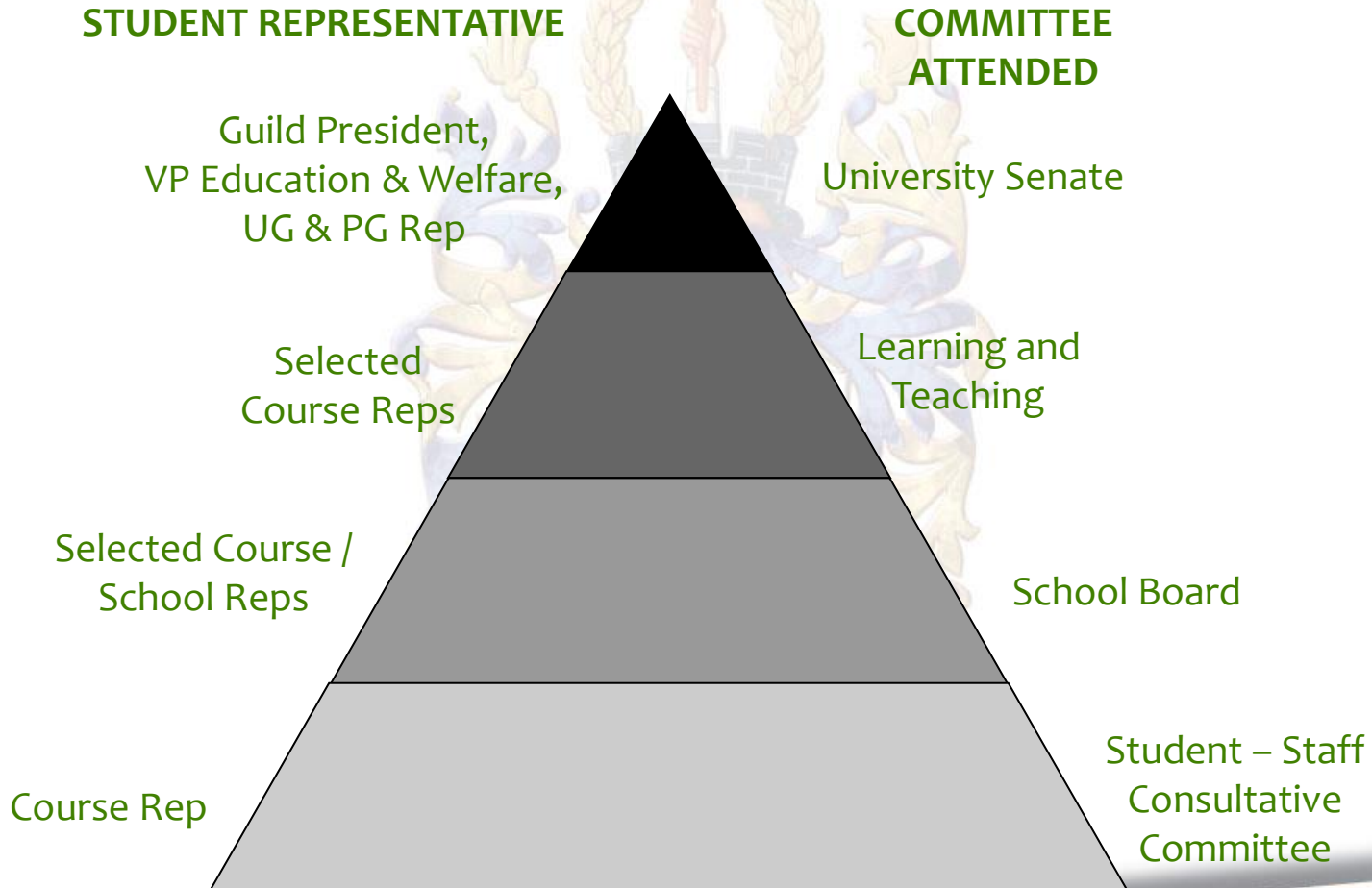
**Section 2: Structure & support**

Section 3: Putting it into action

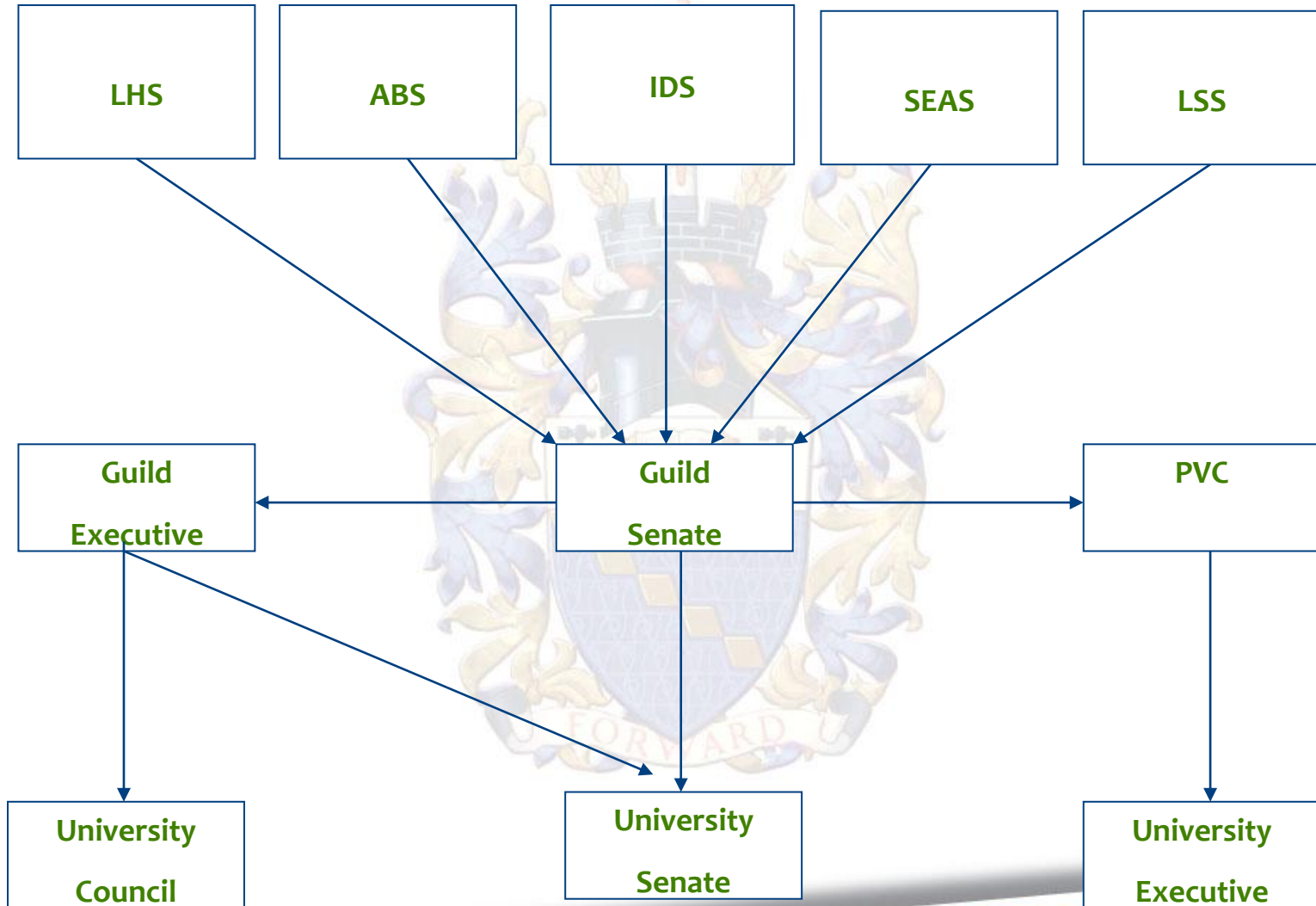
Section 4: Important information



# WHERE DO YOU FIT IN?




# GUILD SENATE





# ISSUES REPS CAN DEAL WITH

- **Teaching Resources**
  - **Teaching Methods Study Resources**
  - **Course content & structure**
  - **Access to facilities after hours**
  - **Issues concerning placements**
  - **Comparisons between Schools and/or departments**
- 



# ISSUES REPS CANNOT DEAL WITH

- 
- Individual Student Performance
  - Allegations of harassment or bullying
  - Complaints

If you aren't sure... just ask!



# SCHOOLS/SUPPORT

## Who/Where?

Other Reps/ Committees/ VPEW/ Guild Senate

## When?

Raise the issue with the lecturer concerned first

If you've brought up an issue at Course Consultative Committee but it has not been resolved to your satisfaction

If an issue affects more than just the students on your course (i.e. students across the department or School/Faculty)



# SCHOOLS/SUPPORT

## Who/Where?

Advice and Representation Centre (ARC)

[arc@aston.ac.uk](mailto:arc@aston.ac.uk) 0121 204 4848

## When?

Housing

Consumer Law

Complaints

Internal disciplinary proceedings





# SCHOOLS/SUPPORT

## Who/Where?

THE HUB

[thehub@aston.ac.uk](mailto:thehub@aston.ac.uk) 0121 204 4007

## When?

Specialist information & support required:

Disability & Additional Needs Unit

Financial Assistance Unit

International Student Support Unit Counselling

Credit Control

Registry



Section 1: The role of course rep

Section 2: Structure & support

**Section 3: Putting it into action**

Section 4: Important information





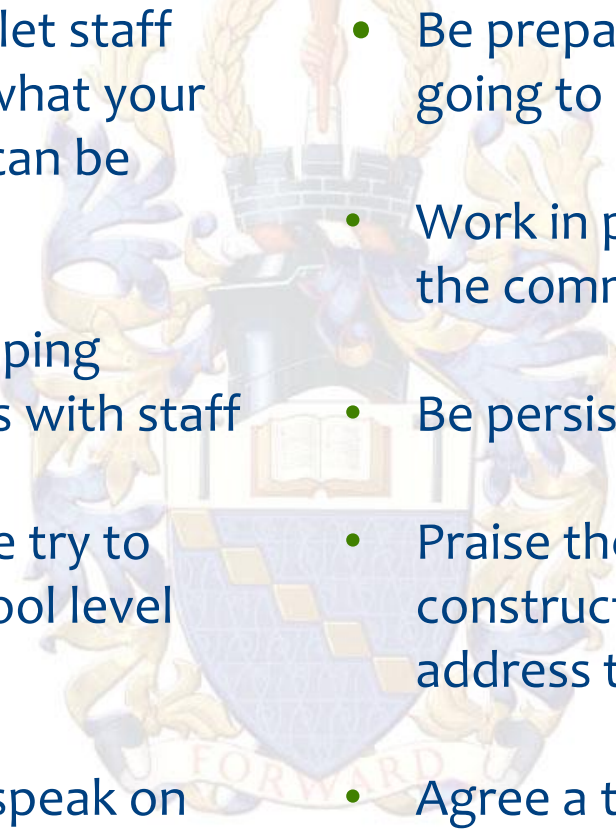
# COMMUNICATION WITH STUDENTS

How to get known as a Student Rep: **INITIATIVE & ENTHUSIASM**

- Speak at lectures and seminars
  - Introduce yourself to the administrative staff in your school and department
  - Talk to your fellow students
  - Publicise your email address
  - Speak to the Vice President of Education and Welfare/ Senate Officer
  - Make use of Web-pages/ Blackboard/Notice-boards
  - Write a questionnaire <http://freeonlinesurveys.com/>
- 

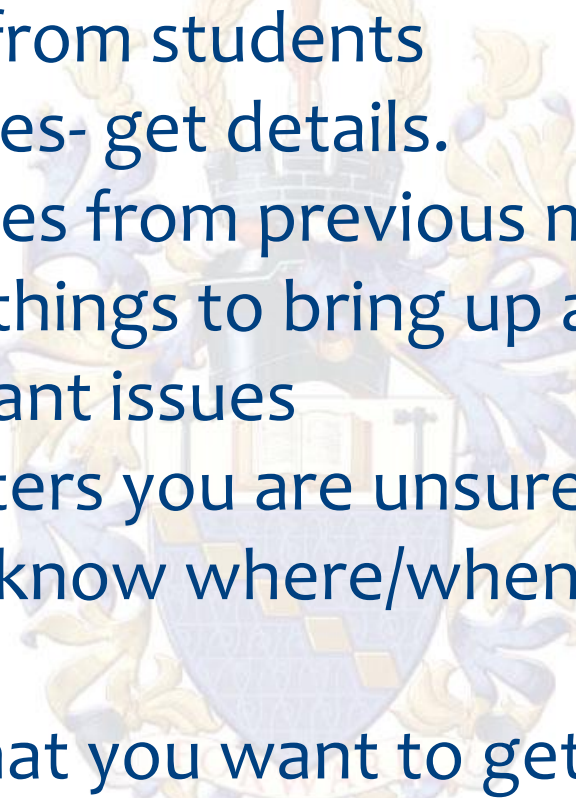


# COMMUNICATION WITH STAFF

- 
- Introduce yourself - let staff know who you are, what your role is and how you can be contacted
  - Invest time in developing positive relationships with staff
  - Where issues emerge try to address them at school level first
  - Be representative – speak on behalf of class reps / students
  - Be prepared - plan what you are going to say
  - Work in partnership - focus on the common ground
  - Be persistent and assertive!
  - Praise the positive and develop constructive solutions to address the negatives
  - Agree a time scale for a response and action plan




# MEETINGS: BEFORE

- Gain feedback from students
  - For any big issues- get details.
  - Read the minutes from previous meetings
  - Make notes of things to bring up and any questions
  - Identify important issues
  - Clarify any matters you are unsure of
  - Make sure you know where/when the meeting is
  - Be on time
  - Be aware of what you want to get out of the meeting
- 

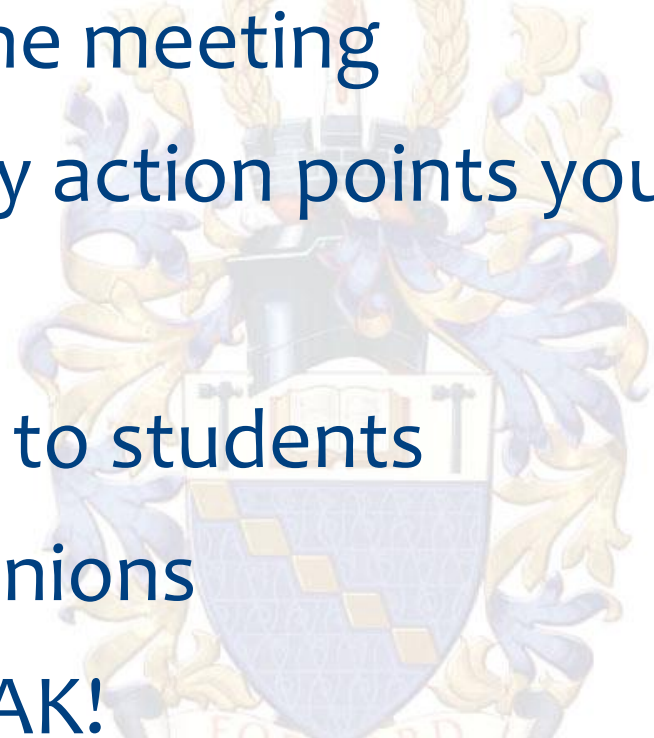


# MEETINGS: DURING

- Be concise when making points
  - Listen to others views
  - Contribute your own views
  - Be fair and professional
  - Vote
  - Support that which you are in favour of
  - Don't be afraid to say NO
  - Sit where you can see the chairperson and where they can see you
  - Make notes
  - Look alive!
- 



# MEETINGS: AFTER

- Reflect on the meeting
  - Carry out any action points you have been allocated
  - Report back to students
  - Get their opinions
  - TAKE A BREAK!
- 



# PROBLEM SOLVING

## Scenario 1

A student tells you they are having trouble taking in information when a particular lecturer teaches. The lecturer's style of delivery is quite dry and there is no student interaction; the lecturer only reads out power point slides which are available off Blackboard anyway.

**What could you do?**

## Scenario 2

One of your modules is covering a notoriously complicated concept as part of the coursework and you for one are having difficulty getting your head around it. You get the impression you are not the only one in your group in this position. **What could you do?**

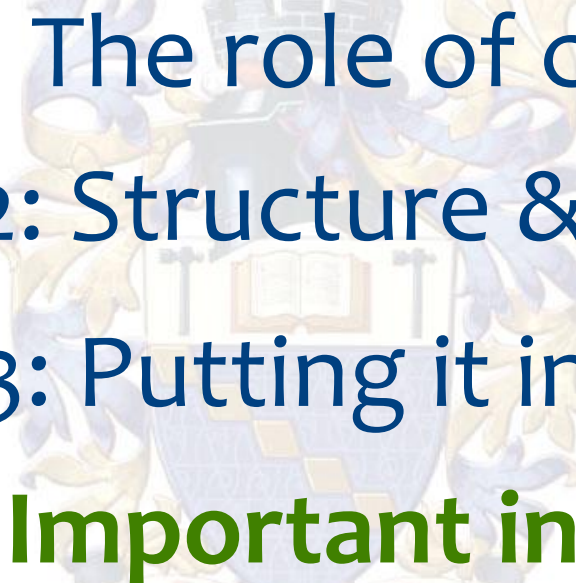
## Scenario 3

A student approaches you regarding access to their lecture room. The student uses a wheelchair but the lecture theatre is on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of a building which is notorious for its lifts breaking down. The lifts have been out of order 3 out of 5 times this student's lecture has taken place. **What could you do?**

## Scenario 4

A student emails you. They tell you they think one of their lecturers does not like them and is victimising them in lectures. The lecturer always looks at them during the lectures and always asks them to answer questions. **What could you do?**



- 
- Section 1: The role of course rep
  - Section 2: Structure & support
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# SOURCES OF SUPPORT FOR YOU

- 
- Aston Guild Website [www.astonguild.org.uk](http://www.astonguild.org.uk) has useful information regarding course reps.
  - Senate Officer – Aggy Jacobs- [senate@astonguild.org.uk](mailto:senate@astonguild.org.uk)
  - Sabbatical Officer- VPEW Ben Smith - [guild.welfare@aston.ac.uk](mailto:guild.welfare@aston.ac.uk)
  - Your school/programme administrators.
  - The Advice and Representation Centre - 1st Floor of The Guild  
[arc@aston.ac.uk](mailto:arc@aston.ac.uk) 0121 204 4848.



# GUILD SENATE DATES

1. 16th November 2011 1pm
2. 29th February 2011 1pm
3. 25th April 2011 1pm

- Please submit agenda items in advance.
- What if I cannot attend Guild Senate?



Any questions???



[senate@astonguild.org.uk](mailto:senate@astonguild.org.uk)  
[guild.welfare@aston.ac.uk](mailto:guild.welfare@aston.ac.uk)