

**CLASS REPRESENTATIVE
POLICY**

**FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND
MANAGEMENT SCIENCES**



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1 Introduction: Broad description of a Class Representative's role

Class representatives are students who have been elected by their peers on a module level, to represent the class (a cohort of students). Such a representative acts as the first point of contact for students and must provide/ facilitate a channel for students to obtain additional information and communication from the EBSK and/ or other relevant student committees regarding general matters. Additionally, the class representative acts as a channel of communication between their class colleagues and the lecturer through, among others, asking for additional information from the lecturer, raising issues and/or make any comments or suggestions on any area of the course that they are studying.

The main aim is to ensure continuous and effective communication between the students, the EBSK/AAC and the Faculty academic staff. Class representatives play an essential role in the development of a positive learning environment inside and outside the classroom. This environment is supported through open lines of communication between the class representative, the lecturer, and students; as well as following the current channels when issues or grievances arise. Students are encouraged to contact staff members directly before making use of alternative channels.

2 Definitions

1. Class Colleague: A fellow student who is registered for a particular undergraduate Economic and Management Sciences module.
2. University: Stellenbosch University
3. EBSK: Economic and Management Sciences Student Committee.
4. AAC: Academic Affairs Council.
5. Relevant student committees: Industrial Psychology Society (IPS) and the Society of International Business (SIB)
6. Academic staff: The academic staff from the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences

7. Grievance: A real or perceived cause of complaint regarding mistreatment or unfair treatment of a serious nature, where it is certain that actions contravene expected norms and/or university policy.
8. Query: a question, usually one requesting further information or expressing doubt. Perceived wrongdoings for which there is not significant proof or where the situation is not severe are also dealt with as a query and not a grievance.

3 Duties and Responsibilities of a Class Representative

1. A class representative must comply with the Ethics and Reasonableness provision contained in this Policy.
2. Class representatives are expected to:
 - a. Communicate the academic interests of their class colleagues to the relevant structures to the best of their abilities.
 - b. Serve in the best interest of all their class colleagues, subject to the Ethics and Reasonableness Policy.
 - c. Attend bi-annual training sessions hosted by the EBSK and/ or AAC, subject to section 5.
 - d. Fulfil the role as a liaison between the EBSK, AAC, other relevant student committees, academic staff, and their class colleagues.
 - e. Ensure the maintenance of respect, decorum, and professionalism in communications and/or conversations in their capacity as Class Representative.
 - f. Ensure that the student perspective is considered when a matter arises. This is achieved by obtaining feedback from class colleagues; afterwards, relaying the information to the respective lecturer, as a point of departure. If the matter is not resolved they must refer the matter to the relevant EBSK Departmental Representative.
 - g. Refer certain matters to the relevant structure, within a reasonable time, subject to section 6. These matters include, but is not limited to;
 - i. Issues that have arisen, or that they reasonably expect to arise, as it concerns class colleagues.

- ii. Requirements, and/or needs that have not been met, or that they reasonably suspect will not be met, as it concerns class colleagues.
 - iii. Major disputes, grievances, and issues.
 - iv. Individual disputes, grievances, and issues which in their reasonable opinion, unless otherwise stated, merits escalation.
 - v. Subject to section 4, if it is found that the Class representative unreasonably refused, and/ or failed, to refer a matter within a reasonable time, as indicated in ss 3(2)(g)(i) – (iv), to the relevant structure, such a representative may be subject to disciplinary action, as the case may be.
3. Class representatives are further expected to:
- a. Facilitate the creation of a conducive learning environment, taking into account such an environments' notable characteristics, whether inside or outside of the classroom.
 - i. This includes, but is not limited to, the creation of a positive learning environment, and;
 - 1. Regular and consistent class attendance by the representative themselves, and their class colleagues.
 - b. Attend meetings relating module specific matters upon the request of the EBSK.
 - i. Meetings will not be held regularly, but notification of any meeting held by the EBSK will be given at least 5 working days prior to the meeting.
 - c. Relay any important and/or necessary information from either the EBSK, AAC, relevant student committees, or the University that may be of interest to their class colleagues, with specific attention to be drawn to information of academic and/ or administrative importance.
 - d. Follow the Grievance Procedure Policy, as updated from time to time, and the query process as set out by the EBSK.
 - e. Be knowledgeable about class matters and are encouraged to avail themselves to their class and other colleagues to acquire such knowledge, supplementary to their class attendance.

- i. They are also expected to ensure they are aware of information that is reasonably available such as in the module framework and;
 - ii. To be up to date with such information.
4. If a class representative fails to duly fulfil their roles (as indicated by the lecturer or student cohort), the dissatisfied parties shall approach the EBSK Student Relations Head in this regard.
 - a. If necessary, a new class representative will be elected according to the Selection process, subject to section 5.

4 Ethics and Reasonableness

1. A Class representative must apply the provisions contained within this section whenever they are acting in their official capacity, which includes communication between themselves students, academic staff, and/or any other relevant party.
2. Transgression of this section is particularly serious. As such, Class representatives must understand and internalise all provisions contained herein. Transgression may result in disciplinary action, as the case may be.
3. Class Representatives must:
 - a. Represent all class colleagues in a manner that is reasonable, fair, honest, and impartial;
 - b. Ensure transparency in all their official activities, and duties;
 - c. Obtain the necessary assistance, information, as may be necessary, within a reasonable time;
 - i. Such information is to be distributed, if required, within a reasonable time;
 - d. Do as much as possible to avoid, and limit, conflicts of interest;
 - i. In such an instance, it is important to inform the proper structure, whether that is the EBSK or otherwise, of such a conflict of interest and then follow the advice as provided by them;
 - e. Act with the required professionalism, knowledge, and foresight;
 - f. Treat all individuals and structures, whether it may be class colleagues, academic staff, representative bodies, etc., in a manner consistent with the

Class Representative's role. This includes, but is not limited to, treating such individuals and/ or structures;

- i. With the required respect, dignity, decorum, and professionalism;
 - ii. Equally, without preference or discrimination;
 - iii. In a manner that respects their privacy, and anonymity (as the case may be).
- g. Act in an ethical manner, in all their dealings.

5 Selection Process

1. The election process must take place in the spirit of democracy and must focus on justness and the equitable treatment of all relevant parties.
2. The election process must take place:
 - a. Biannually in the case of semester modules; or
 - b. Annually in the case of year modules.
3. One class representative must be elected per module.
4. In the case where there are multiple class groups per module, a class representative must be elected per class group.
5. Class representatives must be elected by the end of the third academic week of the first term and the third term (for second-semester modules).
6. In the first lecture of the first semester, the EBSK video explaining the duties of a class representative and the election process is to be displayed and/or referred to for access by the lecturer or an EBSK representative.
 - a. Alternatively, or in addition, the video is to be displayed on the EBSK SharePoint site and referred to for access by way of an e-mail sent to all students by the EMS Dean's office.
7. A minimum of two students in each class group must be nominated (either by themselves or by another member of the class).
 - a. Each candidate can choose to either accept or decline the nomination. In the case where a candidate declines, another candidate must be nominated until there are a total of two nominees.
 - b. In the case where there is only one nomination, the nominee should be given a vote of confidence.

8. Once the candidates are established, a list of their details should be given to the EBSK to allow the Student Relations branch to create an online form/clicker for the students to vote.
9. Each nominee must then give a short motivation in the form of a speech to the class expressing why they believe that they should be elected as the class representative.
10. In the case of online lectures, this motivation can be given in the form of a video to upload, or a written motivation. The nominee must give permission for the recording and upload of any form of motivation.
11. The class representative will be chosen based on having the most support from the members of the class:
 - a. In the case of both contact and online lectures, the nominee with the most support will be determined based on the online form.
 - b. The nominee with the most votes will then be elected as a class representative.
12. The lecturer will be sent the contact information of the newly selected class representative and will share their email address with the entire class by placing this information on SUNLearn; with the permission of the class representative.
13. A record of all class representatives will be kept by the EBSK to ensure these students fulfil their mandate in respect of their class colleagues.

6 Grievance and query procedures

1. The differences between a grievance and a query are:
 - a. A grievance is significantly more formal than a query and requires intervention from the EBSK and/or faculty management to be resolved. Grievances relate to matters of intentional action/inaction where there is certainty/clarity regarding the matter to be considered, with need for additional parties for resolution of the matter due to disagreement or an impasse reached. A grievance can only be raised if the student (1) contacted the lecturer him/herself or via the class representative and the issue could not be resolved.
 - b. A query can be raised at any time and is usually resolved with little to no effort, not requiring a formal process beyond outline in section 6(5) below. A query relates to situations of uncertainty where clarity is being sought by students

where they are unsure of procedures/outcomes relating to administrative matters and/or module expectations/outcomes.

2. Queries usually arise because of miscommunication of information or from the need for more information, while grievances are usually raised because of a dispute or dissatisfaction.
3. Records of grievances must be kept for at least 2 (two) years by the EBSK, while queries are not formally recorded.
4. Refer to the Academic Grievance Procedure Guideline as a primary source of information regarding the grievance procedure.
5. The query process is as follows:
 - a. First consult the module framework to see whether it resolves the query.
 - b. Thereafter consult the class representative for an answer.
 - c. If the matter is administrative in nature the class representative should consult the EBSK for clarification where needed. If the matter is module specific, the class representative should, after consulting the module framework, email the lecturer on behalf of students for clarification.
 - d. If the query is sensitive in nature and cannot directly be addressed to the lecturer, the class representative may consult the EBSK to seek clarity on their behalf. Importantly, the EBSK will only seek clarity and not mediate or become directly involved at this point of the query process.
 - e. The Dean of the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences is only to be approached as a last resort, after exhausting other mechanisms through the EBSK and the class representative.

Signature of Class Representative

Date