



# P9 S6 C8 Learner Representation Policy



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<b>Reviewed by:</b>	Quality Assurance and Academic Governance Council (QAAGC)	
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## POLICY STATEMENT

Forus Training is committed to including the 'voice of the learner' into all levels of operational activity. Class Representatives raise issues that may impact on the learning and learner experience of their class. Learner representation on the Programme Delivery and Assessment Committee ensures that the learners experience is heard in all matters of Programme Delivery as facilitated by Forus Training. In addition, learner representatives may be invited to participate in other governing, decision-making and advisory bodies of Forus Training. This policy extends to Blended Learning courses. Our online learners will not be disadvantaged.

## ROLES AND FUNCTIONS OF LEARNER REPRESENTATIVES

Learner representation is instrumental in keeping a smooth flow in the day to day functioning of Forus Training. Learner representatives help to ensure that the learner voice is heard in decision-making bodies of Forus Training, and help to keep the Forus Training community alive. The most important requirements are:

- Enthusiasm,
- Diplomacy,
- Having a good rapport with others,
- Being able to represent the views of class colleagues,
- Having a strong desire to maintain the social cohesion of the class and Forus Training,
- Having an ability to see the bigger picture,
- Having collaborative leadership skills.



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## LEARNER REPRESENTATION AT COMMITTEE LEVEL

The learner is an important representative at senior committees.

- Learner Representation is required in accordance with Quality Assurance guidelines on a high level unit of governance as depicted below (QAAGC), through which learners can participate and contribute to policy and decision making.
- It is important that we support learners to become advocates by enabling them to develop the confidence and skills necessary for representational work.

			Development and Review Committees		
	Quality Assurance and Academic Governance Council	Programme Delivery & Assessment Committee	Type 1. Organisation Review Committee	Type 2. Programme Development Committee	Type 3. Programme Review and Evaluation Committee
Learner Representative	Member	Member	Member	Member	Member
Meetings per year	4 times per year	3 times per year	As required	As required	As required

It is important that the learner representative:

1. Has an understanding of the role of legal and governance issues.
2. Has strong support from Forus Training to enable advocacy for other learners.
3. Has confidence to participate in discussing agenda items.
4. Has the courage to ask ‘the hard question’ or, what sometimes feels like ‘the stupid question’, realising that other learners might need the same information but are reluctant to ask.
5. Has support as an equal member of the committee and not be intimidated by others they may think of as being ‘more qualified’.
6. Has time to commit to a certain number of Board meetings per year.
7. Has adequate time as preparation requires a vast amount of reading including minutes of meetings, agendas, background reports and so on.

## CLASS REPRESENTATIVES



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Learner Representatives are democratically selected by the learner group and in agreement, generally in the first few weeks of the programme.

Where two class reps are elected it is of vital importance that they consult closely with each other on all issues on a regular and ongoing basis and not pre-empt or assume for the other.

The term of office for class representatives is for the duration of the programme.

Practical aspects of the class representative role involve taking responsibility for ensuring that their group have a rota for housekeeping duties which includes organising a rota for obtaining canteen provisions and ensuring that the canteen is clean and tidy after all breaks. Each group has the responsibility to tidy up after themselves and to “clean as they go.”

Learner Representatives also act as a point of contact and hub for communications between Forus Training and learners and are expected to take a coordination role in this regard.

Learner Representatives are elected to represent the learners’ views to Forus Training and to communicate these views in a manner that best reflects the ethos and philosophy of Forus Training.

Learner Representatives support the development of the social aspects within the group which might include arranging social events for special occasions as deemed appropriate.

### ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF LEARNER REPRESENTATIVES

- To be an ambassador for Forus Training,
- To represent your class at academic and social events,
- To moderate the my.forustraining.ie forum following training,
- To liaise with staff to resolve relevant group concerns and to maximise the positive aspects of Forus Training. On an individual basis, learners will be able to avail of pastoral care time at the end of each training day or can meet their tutor or relevant member of faculty by arranging an appointment.



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In order for Learner Representatives to be able to express the views of the class, it is important that, at first there is an appreciation of what their opinions are. Learners' views or opinions should never be assumed or guessed.

Consultation with learners can be a simple process. Forus Training adopt the following modes of consultation when wishing to seek out opinions:

- Ask each individually,
- Ask them as a group; it might be good to arrange with your class that they take a few minutes during lunch time or during a break when they are all together,
- Arrange some other time outside of class time when the group can meet.

### P1 S5 PROGRAMME DELIVERY AND ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE LEARNER REPRESENTATIVE

All registered learners of each core programme are eligible to be elected by the learner body to the P1 S5 Programme Delivery and Assessment Committee. The term of office of learner representatives elected to P1 S5 Programme Delivery and Assessment Committee is one calendar year. Learners appointed to the P1 S5 Programme Delivery and Assessment Committee cease to be members of the P1 S5 Programme Delivery and Assessment Committee if they cease to be registered learners or for reasons of disqualification or resignation.

In order to ensure continuity of learner representation, where elected members are not available then the P1 S5 Programme Delivery and Assessment Committee may nominate a representative.

It should be noted that Learner members do not attend confidential parts of P1 S5 Programme Delivery and Assessment Committee meetings.

### BENEFITS OF BECOMING A LEARNER REPRESENTATIVE

- Opportunity to work in a leadership role,
- Helps to develop communication, diplomacy and negotiation skills,
- Gives an opportunity to be part of positive change and development within Forus Training,



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- Excellent profile for Curriculum Vitae,
- Greater appreciation for all aspects of further education and training.

### TRAINING FOR CLASS REPRESENTATIVES /APPOINTEES

Forus Training intends to introduce training for Learner Representatives in the 2020/21 Academic year. This will help in the development of understanding of what it means to be a class representative at Forus Training, and introduce the skills needed to be effective in the role.

#### **A note on WhatsApp use amongst learners.**

WhatsApp in education is a reality. Learner's often set up their own WhatsApp groups or Facebook groups, and agree to "join" on the basis of their phone number / profile picture being shared. Forus Training sees the benefits of the WhatsApp application in the educational process. Many interesting tasks can be done with messaging applications.

It is up to trainers to be part of this communication medium for the benefit of the educational process, this can avoid inappropriate dialogue amongst learners. It is advised that a WhatsApp group is created to facilitate communication and that the learner representative is an administrator on the account and moderates the conversation in line with this policy.

The use of WhatsApp in courses has greatly benefited trainers and learners. This tool can allow for more effective communication amongst learners. It can allow for more agile, less costly, and more effective communication.

Whats App or similar forums stimulates collaborative work and achieves the exchange of content both between the trainer and the learner. For example, sharing audio lessons, sending PPT materials or documents such as Word, books, etc. It is also possible to share video content or topical relevant links.

It can be used for announcements, notices, and information amongst learners.

A technology tool cannot be expected to be educational in itself, but is a means to an educational end.



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- Notification of job announcements relative to the sectoral area,
- Peer learning,
- Motivating learners by means of a tool they know and like,
- Quick responses for specific queries - “What size font”.



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Amendment History			
Amendment summary sheet			
Revision	Date	Amendment summary	Training Requirements
	26/1/2021	This policy extends to Blended Learning courses. Our online learners will not be disadvantaged.	