



JOB DESCRIPTION

Representation & Insights Manager

Reporting to: Membership Services Manager

Grade D: Departmental Manager

About Us

Our vision

A place for everyone, we inspire and empower students to change the world.

Our mission

At Reading Students' Union, we strive to help students be their most authentic selves. We celebrate the diverse backgrounds, identities, and lived experiences that make up our student body, and pride ourselves on creating spaces and opportunities where everyone feels they belong and are empowered to grow, thrive and achieve their goals.

Our strategic focus

We will:

- ✓ make data-informed decisions that reflect and respond to our students' realities and their evolving needs.
- ✓ deliver consistent, safe, and supportive services for students.
- ✓ provide opportunities for students to achieve balance and build meaningful connections.
- ✓ champion student futures and skills development.

Our 4 pillars of performance

1. ENTERPRISE & DEVELOPMENT
2. CLEARLY SIGNPOSTED STUDENT JOURNEYS
3. OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE
4. DATA DRIVEN INSIGHTS

Our Values

- ★ **AMBITIOUS**
we are trailblazers
- ★ **DELIBERATE**
we focus on the right things
- ★ **DISRUPTIVE**
rebellious spirit; pragmatic mind
- ★ **RESPONSIBLE**
a force for good
- ★ **OPTIMISTIC**
obstacles are the path

The role of a Grade D Departmental Manager

Leads a department, aligning delivery to priorities and turning strategy into action.

This job description is not an exhaustive list and may be subject to change. The post holder is expected to demonstrate flexibility, undertaking additional reasonable duties to support our mission and enhance the student experience.

Job Title: Representation & Insights Manager



Role purpose: *why the role exists*

To provide professional and operational leadership for the Students' Union's approach to student voice, academic representation, democracy and insight, ensuring students can influence the decisions that affect them and that evidence is translated into meaningful action and change.

The role holds departmental accountability for Representation & Insights, including people leadership, performance, democratic and representation systems, research and insight, campaigns, projects and officer priority delivery. It will ensure the Students' Union has effective mechanisms for capturing and combining student voice and organisational data, identifying trends, inequalities and emerging issues, and translating evidence into organisational action, institutional influence and measurable outcomes.

Role Responsibilities:

what the role 'does' within our strategy (the golden thread)

1. Enterprise & Development

(Brand, strategy, sector leadership, income generation, partnerships, innovation)

Strategy Delivery

- Own the effective operation and continuous development of the Students' Union's democratic processes and representative structures.
- Ensure elections and other democratic processes are accessible, well governed and enable meaningful student participation.
- Act as Deputy Returning Officer for Autumn Elections and Assistant Returning Officer for Leadership Elections, ensuring responsibilities are discharged effectively and in accordance with relevant rules and procedures.
- Lead the implementation of agreed improvements to the Union's democratic and representation systems.

Institutional Relationships & Influence

- Build and maintain strategic relationships with Schools, academic departments and senior University stakeholders to strengthen student representation and the Union's institutional influence.
- Provide professional leadership on the Students' Union's contribution to University student voice and quality assurance structures, ensuring representation evidence is effectively used to influence institutional decision-making.

	• Represent the Students' Union on relevant University committees, working groups and external forums. • Present student insight, evidence and recommendations to senior stakeholders, influencing decisions through professional expertise and a deep understanding of the student experience. • Identify opportunities for collaboration and partnership that strengthen the Union's understanding of and response to student needs. Organisational Development • Contribute as a member of the Membership Services management team, supporting wider organisational priorities and initiatives. • Lead significant departmental development projects and contribute to major cross-organisational initiatives. • Lead and support organisational change, service development and continuous improvement.
2. Student Journeys <i>(Advocacy, campaigns, democracy, belonging, events)</i>	Representation & Engagement • Oversee the Students' Union's academic representation system, ensuring students are effectively represented and empowered to influence their academic experience. • Lead the continuous development of academic representation, ensuring structures remain effective, accessible and responsive to changes within the University. • Oversee systems for capturing, escalating and tracking issues raised through academic representation. • Drive improvements in student perceptions of the Students' Union's academic representation and influence, including relevant National Student Survey measures. • Ensure students can see the outcomes and impact of academic representation through effective feedback loops. • Identify whose voices are missing from the Union's representation, research and decision-making and develop appropriate approaches to reach and engage them. • Work with Officers, societies, representatives and other student leaders to create opportunities for different student communities to organise, connect and influence change. • Support Officers to engage directly with the membership through targeted outreach, listening and relationship-building.

	• Ensure insight from underrepresented communities informs organisational decision-making, campaigns and institutional advocacy. • Act as the organisational lead for representation practice, ensuring effective standards, frameworks and approaches are embedded across academic representation and wider student voice activity. Democracy & Participation • Oversee the effective operation and continuous development of the Union's democratic processes and participation mechanisms. • Ensure elections and democratic opportunities are accessible, engaging and enable meaningful student participation. • Identify and address barriers to participation in elections, representation and democratic activity. • Ensure students can understand how to participate in and influence their Students' Union.
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3. Operational Excellence

(Governance, leadership, people management, delivery, compliance, systems, efficiencies)

Departmental Leadership & Accountability

- Hold overall accountability for the performance, quality and effective management of the Representation & Insights department.
- Make accountable departmental decisions on priorities, resource allocation, service standards and operational responses, escalating matters where organisational or strategic authority is required.
- Lead delivery through the Representation & Insights team, setting clear accountabilities and empowering staff to own specialist functions, projects and delivery.
- Contribute to operational leadership across Membership Services, working with other managers to resolve cross-departmental issues and deliver Directorate priorities.

People, Resources & Performance

- Recruit, induct, develop and support staff and student staff, including responsibility for performance, wellbeing and development.
- Foster a positive, creative and high-performing team culture with clear accountability and effective collaboration.
- Plan team capacity around major organisational priorities, campaigns and periods of high demand.
- Set departmental priorities and allocate staff, budgets and other resources according to organisational objectives, student need, evidence, risk and service demand.
- Own departmental workforce planning and budgets, monitoring financial performance and ensuring resources are used effectively and provide value for money.
- Establish clear service standards, performance expectations and quality assurance arrangements across the department.

Elections & Democracy

- Lead the planning and delivery of the Leadership Elections, acting as Assistant Returning Officer.
- Oversee the planning and delivery of Autumn Elections and other democratic processes.
- Ensure elections and democratic processes are delivered effectively and in accordance with the Union's governing documents, byelaws and election rules.

	• Act as the senior operational escalation point for complex election and democratic matters, working with the Returning Officer and senior leaders as appropriate. • Lead the implementation of agreed improvements to the Union's democratic systems and processes. Campaigns, Initiatives & Officer Priorities • Oversee the Union's approach to campaigns and student-focused initiatives, ensuring activity responds to Officer priorities, student insight and emerging issues. • Ensure elected Officers receive effective support to develop and deliver campaigns, manifesto priorities and projects. • Ensure significant issues identified through research, representation, service data and student engagement are translated into appropriate organisational responses. • Oversee proactive, insight-led initiatives addressing recurring student issues, including areas such as housing, money and academic experience. • Maintain oversight of the departmental portfolio of campaigns and initiatives, ensuring priorities, ownership, resources, dependencies and intended outcomes are clear. • Ensure campaigns and initiatives are proportionate to the available evidence, recognising when existing insight is sufficient and when further research is genuinely required. • Ensure campaigns and initiatives are evaluated and learning informs future activity.
4.Data Driven Insights (Strategic planning, research, innovation, impact evaluation, engagement, communication)	Research & Student Insight • Oversee the Students' Union's programme of student research and insight, ensuring activity responds to organisational priorities and genuine evidence gaps. • Set priorities for research projects and oversee their design, delivery and application. • Ensure research is proportionate, robust and translated into clear findings, recommendations and action. • Ensure insight from Advice, Student Communities, Officers, representatives and other services is systematically captured and brought together.

	Understanding Our Students • Analyse trends across research, service data, representation activity, engagement data and student feedback to build a coherent and current understanding of what matters to students. • Ensure the organisation develops a coherent and current understanding of student needs, experiences and emerging issues, providing clear insight and recommendations to Officers, senior leaders and teams. • Develop organisational understanding of how different students engage with the Students' Union, identifying who participates, who does not and where engagement gaps exist. • Lead the development and application of student segmentation to improve understanding of different student experiences and inform targeted action. Student Insight Dashboard • Lead the development and embedding of the Student Insight Dashboard as an organisational tool for understanding students, identifying trends and informing priorities. • Ensure the Dashboard brings together relevant evidence from across the organisation and is actively used by staff and Officers. • Continually develop the Dashboard in response to organisational needs and available data. Insight Into Action & Impact • Ensure significant trends, emerging risks and inequalities in student experience are identified and escalated to the appropriate organisational forums. • Ensure student insight is translated into clear organisational action, with ownership, progress and outcomes effectively tracked. • Establish and monitor departmental KPIs covering representation, democratic participation, campaigns, initiatives, insight use and student outcomes. • Produce regular performance, impact and insight reports for senior leaders and relevant organisational governance bodies. • Support the organisation to evaluate and demonstrate the impact of its work for students.
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Role KPIs	1. Delivery of the annual Representation & Insights plan, with effective departmental performance against agreed objectives, service standards, KPIs and budget parameters. 2. Evidence that student insight consistently informs organisational priorities, decisions and service development. 3. Effective development and use of the Student Insight Dashboard, with evidence of engagement from staff and Officers. 4. Effective academic representation systems, with increased student engagement and improved perceptions of the Students' Union's academic representation and influence. 5. Accessible and effective democratic processes, with strong participation and successful delivery of Leadership and Autumn Elections. 6. Successful delivery of Officer-led campaigns and insight-led initiatives against agreed outcomes. 7. Evidence that student voice, research and insight lead to measurable organisational or institutional action and change. 8. Effective leadership, performance and development of the Representation & Insights team.
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Competency Matrix: what good performance looks like (by grade)

Guide: this Core Competency Matrix below defines *how success is demonstrated –across our pillars of performance- for all Grade D Departmental Managers - regardless of role specifics.*

CORE COMPETENCY MATRIX (Grade D Manager)				
LEVEL	Leader			
WHAT THIS LEVEL DOES	LEADS			
HOW THEY OPERATE	"Leads work and makes clear, accountable decisions"			
Reporting line	E-FF			
HOW THE ROLE CREATES VALUE	Leads a department, aligning delivery to priorities and turning strategy into action			
CULTURE	All activities must demonstrate our values and Culture Code in how we act and deliver			
Pillar 1: ENTERPRISE & DEVELOPMENT	Pillar 2 CLEARLY SIGNPOSTED STUDENT JOURNEYS	Pillar 3 OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE	Pillar 4 DATA DRIVEN INSIGHTS	
Turns strategy into action	Leads teams to deliver seamless experience and create student opportunities	Leads delivery and owns team performance and standards	Uses insight to drive team performance and service improvement	
Turns strategy into clear departmental plans and delivery	Puts student impact first. Always.	Leads day to day team delivery - owns solutions not problems	Uses insight to drive performance and improve services	
Drives growth, innovation and meaningful partnerships	Delivers in real partnership with elected student leaders- making change happen	Manages a high-performing, accountable team. No passengers	Focuses on meaningful outcomes, not just activity	
Aligns people, resources and priorities to maximize impact	Champions student voice through democratic structures and action	Communicates with clarity and confidence-no silos, no gatekeeping, no gossip	Tracks performance, challenges issues and takes action quickly	
Contributes as an active and visible member of the management team to support change and share information	Leads team to deliver high impact student experiences	Operates within governance, managing risk without slowing progress	Communicates insight clearly and drives visible improvement	
		Drives efficiency, quality, and continuous improvement with strong SOPs	Builds a team culture of accountability and evidence-based decision-making	
KPIs to measure success				
1. Strong compliance with governance, policies, and procedures				
2. Delivery of departmental objectives in line with organisational strategy				
3. Demonstrable service impact and continuous improvement				
4. Effective team performance and engagement with good professional boundaries				
5. Strong stakeholder feedback				



Person Specification: what to hire for

Representation & Insights Manager

	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
QUALIFICATIONS	• Educated to degree level or equivalent relevant professional experience.	• Management or leadership qualification • Relevant professional qualification in research, data, democracy, representation or project management
EXPERIENCE	• Managing and developing teams. • Experience working within a Students' Union environment. • Significant experience leading or developing representation, democratic participation and student voice. • Experience holding accountability for the performance and development of a service or department, including people and outcomes • Experience overseeing research or analyzing evidence from multiple sources to identify trends and inform action • Experience leading large-scale, multi-stakeholder projects involving multiple stakeholders. • Experience managing budgets and resources	
KNOWLEDGE	• Strong knowledge of governance and democracy in an SU setting • Understanding of student trends and issues across the sector.	• Understanding of Higher Education structures

	• Effective representation and engagement approaches. • Knowledge of election governance. • Strong understanding of what makes a 'good campaign' • Health and safety, and risk management within activities, events or community settings. • Inclusion, data protection and sustainability practices.	
SKILLS	• Departmental planning and operational management • People leadership/management • Organisation, planning and prioritisation • Problem-solving and decisions • Communication and stakeholder working • Basic data and systems (M365) and digital tools • Risk management • Strong numeracy and literacy (spoken and written) • Budget and resource management • Data and trend analysis and reporting • Ability to interpret and apply complex governance frameworks, policies and procedures.	• Process improvement/SOP development • Networking and partnership development
APPROACH	• Strong and confident leader • Student focused • A champion of our brand and values driven Culture Code • High standards • Proactive, collaborative and solutions-focused	• Passionate about the SU sector and our charitable purpose

	• Resilient • Flexible (including occasional evenings and weekends to support events) • Confident managing challenging and difficult situations. • Ability to have difficult conversations.	
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