

# Harper Adams Students' Union



## Course Rep and Department Rep Handbook

## Hello and welcome to the team!

A big thank you from the HASU team! We appreciate your commitment to represent fellow students and we will support you every step of the way.

If you have any questions during your time as a Course Rep or Department Rep, the SU is here to help. Contact Zena, the Student Voice Coordinator, or your Student Officers *anytime*.

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## **What does it mean to be a Course Rep?**

Course Reps are integral to promoting student voice and representation on campus. Through Reps we ensure that students have a platform to be heard and create change. It's also a fantastic opportunity to develop your professional skills and build your network.

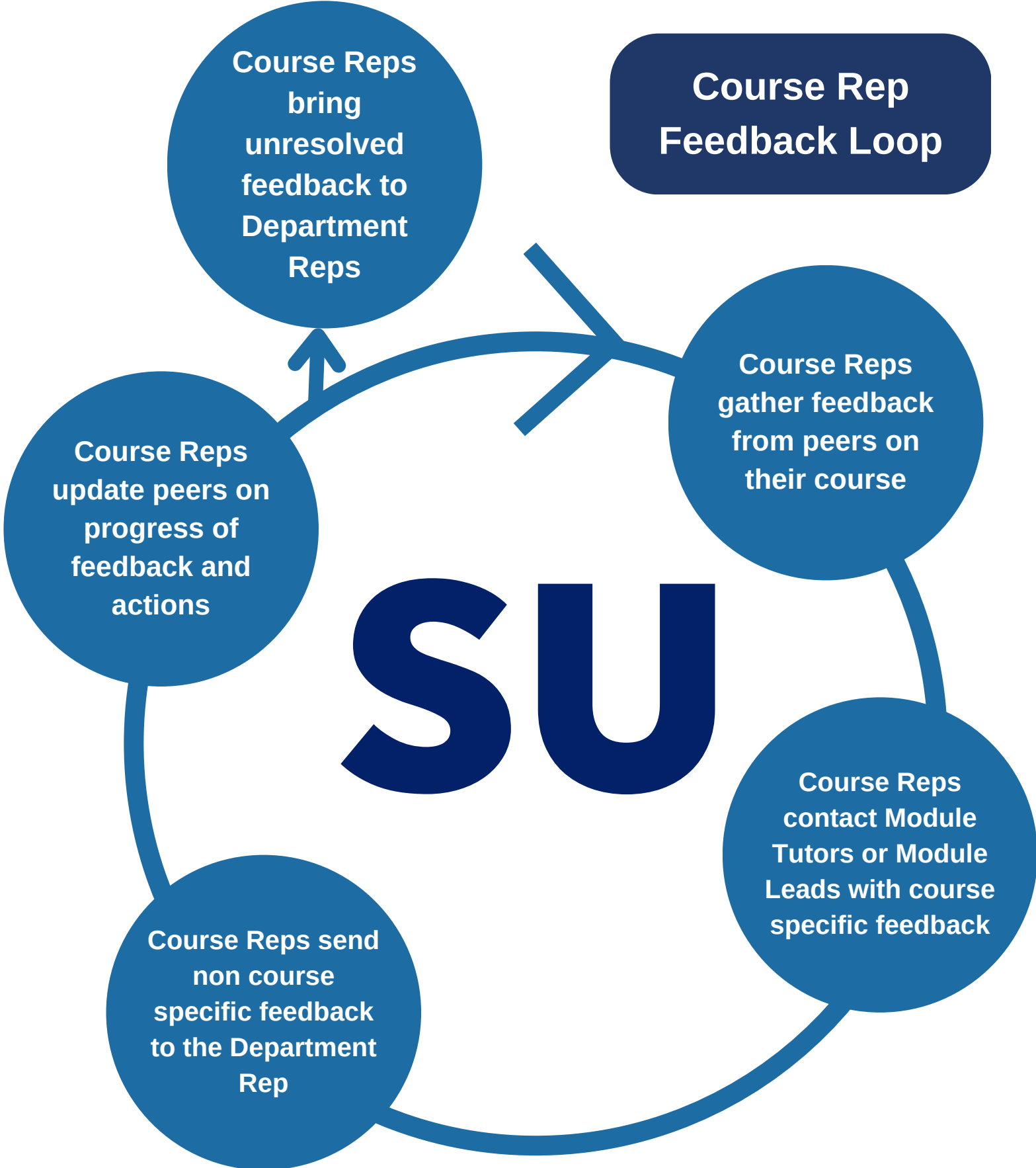
If you are a Course Rep you will collect feedback from peers and communicate course specific feedback to Module Tutors and Leaders.

You will bring unresolved, course specific feedback to committee meetings. The SU exists to support your feedback gathering and will help you advocate for yourself and your peers.

Course Reps are also responsible for taking unresolved feedback and non-course related feedback to Department Reps.

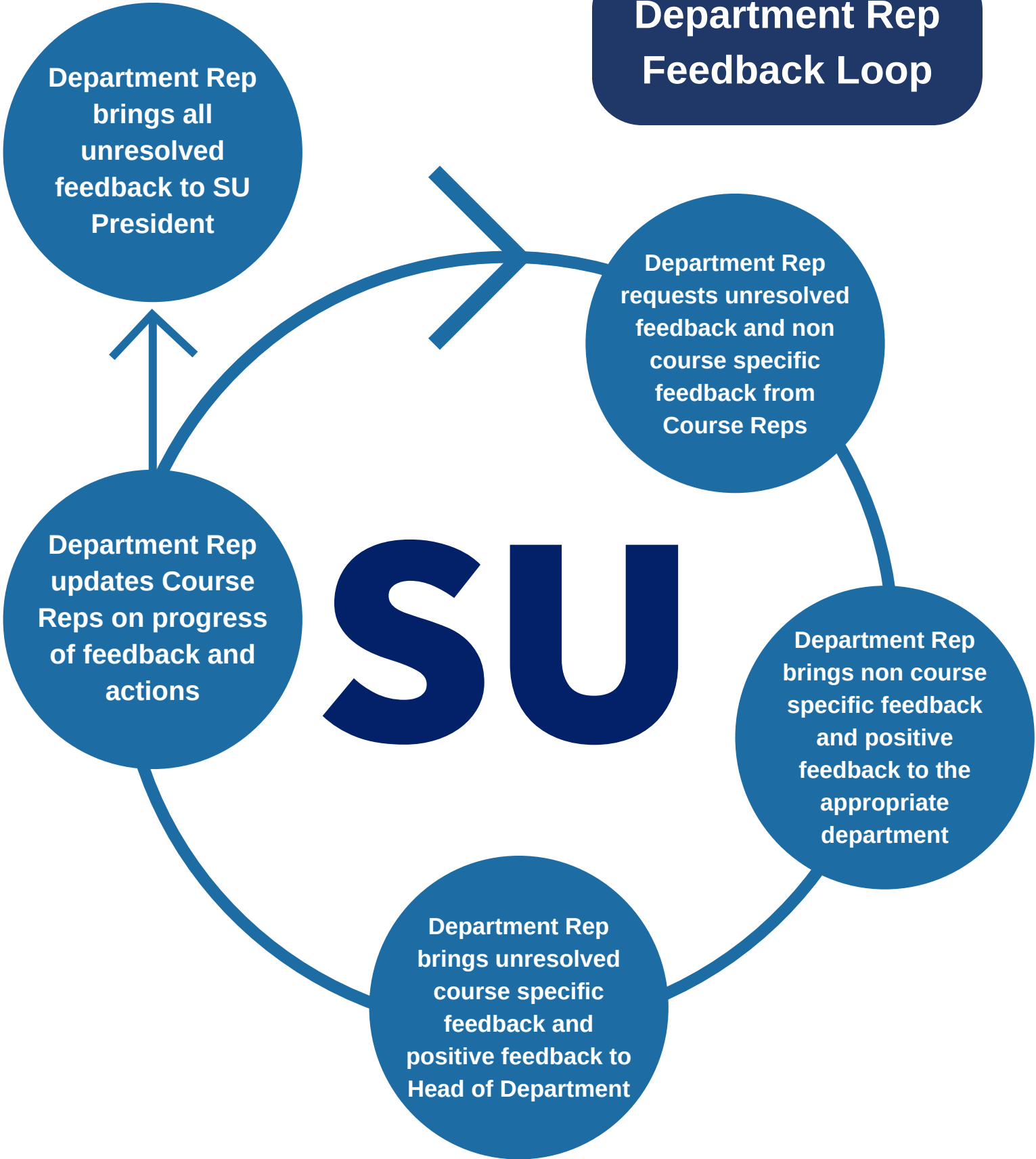
The last step is to bring information back to your course mates and explain what's been done - thereby closing the feedback loop.

# What happens to student voice?

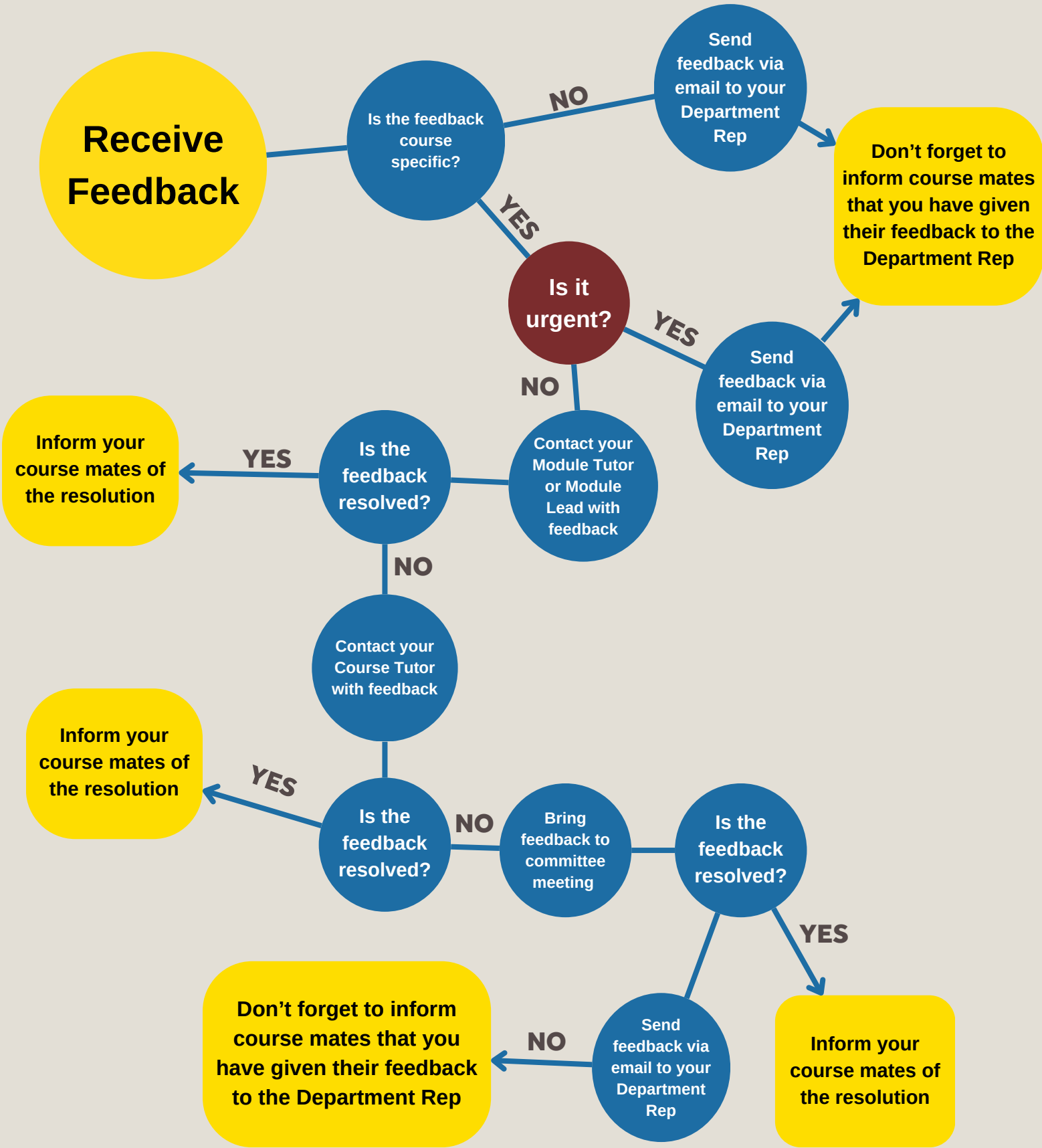


# What happens to student voice?

## Department Rep Feedback Loop



## I'm a Course Rep. What do I do with feedback?



# JARGON - TERMS TO KNOW

**Actions** - used in meetings to describe a task that must be accomplished - usually by a single individual. Action items have a limited scope that can typically be accomplished in one to two weeks.

**Agenda** - a list of items to be covered in a Course Committee or other meeting in the order they will be discussed.

**Apologies** - at the start of a meeting, apologies from those who couldn't attend are read out. If you are unable to attend a meeting, you should let the relevant person know in advance.

**Course Committee** - meetings in which staff members from a course team get together with Course Reps and other key members of staff. These meetings are held in every course area and occur once a term.

**Course Rep** - a student who represents their peers by listening to views and concerns and sharing the feedback with staff at Course Committee meetings. They communicate unresolved feedback with their Department Rep.

**End of Term Report** - documentation of what has occurred throughout the term and what remains to be done. It is written by the Department Reps and given to the SU.

**Feedback** - information about the university experience - written or verbal.

# JARGON - TERMS TO KNOW

**Feedback Loop** - the cycle in which feedback is received, acted upon, and results communicated.

**Head of Department** - sometimes referred to as an HoD, their primary role is to provide leadership to their department. At HASU the four Heads of Department are Andy Wilcox (Agriculture and Environment), Jane Thomas (Animal Health, Behaviour and Welfare), Ian Moorcroft (Engineering), and Rebecca Payne (Food Land and Agribusiness Management Department).

**Matters Arising** - updates of actions from previous meetings.

**Minutes** - a record of what was discussed in a meeting.

**Papers** - committee papers are the documents that are used to conduct a committee meeting. They include the agenda, minutes, reports, and supporting papers.

**Department Rep** - Student Representatives who follow up on unresolved feedback collected by Course Reps. Department Reps take unresolved student feedback to termly meetings with their Head of Department. They also write End of Term Reports for the Students' Union.



# HOW TO BE EFFECTIVE IN YOUR ROLE

The most important part of being a Student Representative is listening and communicating. This may seem a little daunting so read on for guidance on how to make the most of your role.

## COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR COHORTS

It's important that students know who their Course Reps are. It's also important that Course Reps know who their Department Rep is. Sometimes it can be difficult to get your name out there, so here are some suggestions for communicating with the wider student body.

### TALK!

- Don't be afraid to start up conversations with students and hold sessions where you make yourself available. You can speak to course tutors about spending a few minutes in tutorials in which you explain your role and how students can contact you.

### SOCIAL MEDIA

- WhatsApp (or other social media) chat groups can be a valuable platform for gathering feedback. Try to make these groups as inclusive as possible, and remember that not everyone has social media.

## **SURVEYS**

- Be careful not to overload students with surveys but if there's a specific issue that you'd like feedback on, a survey can be a good idea. Surveys are a brilliant way of gathering evidence to support your suggestions – you could even bring in statistics eg: "60% of students said...".
- The SU puts out two student voice surveys annually, so come and speak with us about adding specific questions.

## **EMAILS**

- Speak to the Students' Union team about sending out emails to students. The President sends out a bi-weekly email and can help get the word out if you are hosting an event or campaign.

## **BE CREATIVE**

- If you have a fun idea to engage the students you represent, go for it! If you'd like to run your ideas past someone, you can always ask the SU for advice.

# COMPILING FEEDBACK

Keep track of any feedback that you receive. Ideally, Course Level Reps should be continually gaining feedback throughout the term and encouraging students to approach you with any feedback. This shouldn't be a large burden - just keep in touch with students to have an idea of how they're feeling and how their experience at Harper is going.

For more detail on exactly what to do with feedback, see the diagram 'I'm a Course Rep. What do I do with feedback?'.

Department Reps should keep track of all feedback given to them from Course Reps.

For both Course and Department Reps, keep a dedicated place (physical or electronic) for feedback as you receive it. Don't forget to bring your notes to meetings. Provide as much detail on the issue as possible. It usually isn't necessary to provide student names, but have an idea of the amount of students who are involved in a particular issue.

## FEEDBACK LOOPS

SU Execs play a crucial role in closing the 'feedback loop'. This means that students are informed of what is being done about their concerns and needs.

It is usually useful to provide students with a summary of what was discussed, whether this is in person or by other means.

Similarly, whenever student feedback is acted on throughout the year, students should be made aware.

# TOP TIPS

- Communicate and don't be afraid to speak up.
- Don't forget to relate positive feedback! It's useful to hear what's going well so that more of the good stuff can be done.
- Let the SU know of an issue promptly to allow more time and quicker responses.
- Make sure the students you represent know how their feedback has been acted on.
- Never think a suggestion is silly - it's better to suggest it than to not bother at all.
- The Course Reps and Department Reps should support each other so please do.
- If you need some support, just ask. The Students' Union is here for you!
- Have fun - this is a great opportunity to meet others and get involved with the structures of the university.