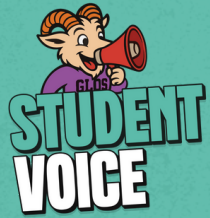


WELFARE REPS



Understanding Intersectionality

Intersectionality is the idea that people can experience multiple identities, backgrounds and circumstances at the same time, which can shape how they feel, what they face and what support they need. For example, a student may have a disability and be a parent, or LGBTQIA+ and from a minority ethnic background. These identities do not exist separately, and sometimes the combination creates pressures or barriers that are not visible when we look at issues through a single lens.

As a Welfare Rep, it is important to recognise that your community is diverse and that no identity group is ever one-dimensional. Even if you have lived experience that connects you to your role, your experience will not match everyone else's. Your goal is to listen widely, avoid assumptions and create space for voices and experiences that may be different from your own.

You can work with intersectionality by asking open questions, allowing students to define how they identify and giving them choice over how they share feedback. Try not to assume that every student in your group faces the same challenges or wants the same solutions. When an issue appears to affect only a small subgroup, it may still need attention, especially if it relates to fairness, belonging, safety or access.

Collaboration also supports intersectional work. You can link with other Welfare Reps, societies and SU Officers to understand overlap, share insight and work on joint actions where appropriate. When planning campaigns, consider who may be unintentionally left out and how you can make participation accessible, inclusive and safe.

If you are ever unsure how to approach a sensitive or complex situation, it is fine to pause, seek guidance and return when ready. The aim is not to represent everything perfectly but to ensure that students feel seen, valued and respected.