



AMLÉ Postgraduate Representation Report & Framework 2026

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Definitions

Class Representative Council: Democratic body operated within most SUs, consists of elected class/researcher representatives

Class Representative: Elected representative of a PGT course, may be multiple reps depending on course size.

MO: Member Organisation of AMLÉ, i.e. a student's union.

Researcher Representative: Elected representative of a cohort of doctoral candidates, number is variable depending on size of research unit.

PGT: Postgraduate Taught student, inclusive of all Level 9 postgraduate courses

PGR: Postgraduate Researcher, inclusive of level 10 Masters by Research and PhD programmes.

PTO: Part-Time Officer of an SU, typically works in an unpaid volunteer capacity.

Sabbatical Officer: Full-time Officer of an SU, works in a paid full-time capacity, typically taking a sabbatical from their studies/research in which to do so.

SU: Student's Union, representative body of all students (inclusive of doctoral candidates) in a given HEI

PWO: Postgraduate Worker's Organisation, representative body for PGRs, operates a branch structure within some HEIs.

Introduction

This document aims to create a best-practice framework for representing postgraduate taught students (PGTs) and postgraduate researchers (PGRs) within student's unions, and their respective higher education institutions (HEIs). This document was developed by the '25/26 AMLÉ Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs, Madeline Jane Quill, in consultation with SU officers and members of the AMLÉ/NStEP National Postgraduate Engagement Network.

This document is not intended to dictate the best way for representing postgraduates, but rather provides information on current representative structures, based on knowledge developed by student's unions over the past number of years. Note, that where an SU does not list a designated postgraduate officer, it can be assumed that the Education Officer of the Student's Union has primary responsibility for these students/researchers. Likewise, where an SU does not have a specific delineation between PGT class representatives and undergraduate representatives, it can be assumed that they are both equal members of the class representative/union council.

Note on university/HEI representation

Under current Irish legislation, a postgraduate representative is required to sit on the Governing Body of a Technological University, as defined by the Technological Universities Act 2018.¹ Under the Higher Education Act 2022 meanwhile, the Governing Authorities of universities must simply have “three student union representatives appointed by the governing authority”.² While, in practice, one of these representatives is often a postgraduate representative as is the case with UCC Student's Union, it is not a legal requirement to have it be so.

It is uncommon for students' unions to constitutionally define what other committees or boards a postgraduate representative, or indeed student's union officer generally sits on, with the exception of Trinity College Dublin Students' Union; there, the postgraduate officers are expected to sit on The Board of Trinity College Dublin, The Council of the University of Dublin, The Graduate Studies Committee of the University of Dublin, The Student Life Committee of Trinity College Dublin and any other relevant committees. These are typical of the types of committees a postgraduate representative may be expected to

¹ [Technological Universities Act 2018](#)

² [Higher Education Authority Act 2022](#)

sit on, but committee membership can fluctuate year by year and so it is not a guarantee as to if a postgraduate representative has a permanent spot on any given committee.

Overview of current representative structures within Irish SUs (as of 2026)

Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn (AMLÉ)

PGT Class Representatives? Not applicable to the national students' union.

Researcher Representatives? Not applicable to the national students' union.

Part-Time Postgraduate Officer? AMLÉ formally had a part-time paid Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs, this position was made full-time paid in 2024.

Sabbatical Postgraduate Officer? Yes, the Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs is the full-time national representative for PGTs and PGRs.

Other Representative Structures? Yes, AMLÉ operates a Postgraduate Affairs Working Group, chaired by the Vice President for Postgraduate Affairs, alongside the National Postgraduate Engagement Network (NPEN), operated in conjunction with NStEP. Additionally, AMLÉ is an active member of the European Council of Doctoral Candidates & Junior Researchers (Eurodoc) and the European Students' Union (ESU), both of whom advocate for PGTs and PGRs on a European level.

PWO Branch? Not applicable, however AMLÉ has an active Memorandum of Understanding with the Postgraduate Worker's Organisation (PWO) which outlines areas of collaboration between the two organisations.

Atlantic Technological University Student's Union (ATUSU) (PROVISIONAL)

PGT Class Representatives? Yes, not meaningfully distinguished from undergraduate class representatives.

Researcher Representatives? Presumably, will be treated as "class representatives" e.g. PhD Biology Year 1,2,3,4 etc.

Part-Time Postgraduate Officer? Yes, there shall be a Postgraduate Officer for the union as a whole who has responsibility for representing postgraduates, attending councils and committee meetings and recruiting “postgraduate activists.”

Sabbatical Postgraduate Officer? Yes, each campus shall have a Deputy President, one of whom shall assume responsibility for one of five policy areas, one of which being Life-long Learning with responsibility for postgraduates, online students, apprentices and part-time students.

Other Representative Structures? It is assumed that the Deputy President with responsibility for Life-long Learning shall chair a working group/committee for this remit.

PWO Branch? No.

Burren College of Art Student’s Union (BCASU)

PGT Representatives? Presumably on the basis that a large proportion of students at BCA are PGT students, but not meaningfully differentiated from undergraduate class representatives.

PGR Representatives? No, BCA does not have doctoral candidates.

Part-Time Postgraduate Officer? No.

Sabbatical Postgraduate Officer? No.

Other Representative Structures? No.

PWO Branch? No.

Carlow College Student’s Union (CCSU)

PGT Class Representatives? Presumably, not meaningfully differentiated from undergraduate class representatives.

Researcher Representatives? No, Carlow College does not have doctoral candidates.

Part-Time Postgraduate Officer? Yes, Postgraduate & Mature Students Officer.

Sabbatical Postgraduate Officer? No, Carlow College only has a single sabbatical President who is responsible for representing all students

Other Representative Structures? No.

PWO Branch? No.

Comhaltas na Mac Léinn Ollscoil na Gaillimh (CMLONG)

PGT Class Representatives? Yes, but not constitutionally differentiated.

Researcher Representatives? Yes, elected proportionally to the respective schools within the four main colleges.

Part-Time Postgraduate Officer? Yes, there are two part-time voluntary officers, a Postgraduate Research Officer for PGRs and a Postgraduate Taught Officer for PGTs.

Sabbatical Postgraduate Officer? No, although attempts have been made to run a referendum around this.

Other Representative Structures? Yes, a Postgraduates Council exists and is comprised of all Postgraduate class and research representatives in the university, Postgraduate class and researcher representatives are also entitled to sit on their respective College Council. A Postgraduate Society also exists, outside of the SUs structures but nonetheless frequently collaborates with the SU on events for PGTs and PGRs.

PWO Branch? Yes.

Dublin City University Student's Union (DCUSU)

PGT Representatives? Presumably, not meaningfully differentiated from undergraduate class representatives.

PGR Representatives? No.

Part-Time Postgraduate Officer? Yes, Postgraduate Student Officer, represents both PGT and PGR cohorts on relevant committees and ensure postgraduate inclusion in Union campaigns and events.

Sabbatical Postgraduate Officer? No.

Other Representative Structures? No, however there is an active Postgraduate Society that collaborates with the SU to organise social events for PGTs and PGRs.

PWO Branch? Yes.

Dundalk Institute of Technology Student's Union (DkITSU)

PGT Class Representatives? Presumably, not meaningfully differentiated from undergraduate class representatives.

Researcher Representatives? No, DkIT also has very few doctoral candidates.

Part-Time Postgraduate Officer? Yes, works with sabbatical officers to ensure postgraduate inclusion and represents postgraduates on relevant institute bodies.

Sabbatical Postgraduate Officer? No. Also of note, Education responsibilities are typically the responsibility of the President.

Other Representative Structures? No.

PWO Branch? No.

Institute of Art, Design and Technology Student's Union (IADTSU)

PGT Representatives? Presumably, not meaningfully differentiated from undergraduate class representatives.

PGR Representatives? No, also IADT does not have doctoral candidates, only MRes students.

Part-Time Postgraduate Officer? No, however a Special Interest Representative could in theory be established to represent postgraduate students.

Sabbatical Postgraduate Officer? No.

Other Representative Structures? No.

PWO Branch? No.

Maynooth Student's Union (MSU)

PGT Class Representatives? No, MSU does not have "class representatives", instead student senators are elected to serve on panels (see below).

Researcher Representatives? No, see above.

Part-Time Postgraduate Officer? Yes, has a Taught Postgraduate Officer and a Doctoral Postgraduate Officer who represent PGT and PGR cohorts respectively.

Sabbatical Postgraduate Officer? No.

Other Representative Structures? Student Senate (equivalent of class representative council in other SUs) has a Postgraduate Panel, which two Taught Postgraduate Senators and two Research Postgraduate Senators are elected to, however senate panels are not a structure in and of themselves, rather they just provide the composition for the Senate.

PWO Branch? Yes.

Munster Technological University Student's Union (MTUSU) (PROVISIONAL)

PGT Class Representatives? Presumably, not meaningfully differentiated from undergraduate class representatives.

Researcher Representatives? No.

Part-Time Postgraduate Officer? Under the currently-proposed MTUSU constitution, there will be two Life-Long Learning Officers, one for the Kerry campus and one for the Cork campus, who shall be “elected to represent and promote the views and interests of mature students, postgraduate students and student parents.”

Sabbatical Postgraduate Officer? No.

Other Representative Structures? No.

PWO Branch? No.

National College of Art and Design Student's Union (NCADSU)

PGT Representatives? Presumably, not meaningfully differentiated from undergraduate class representatives.

PGR Representatives? Unknown but presumably not.

Part-Time Postgraduate Officer? Yes.

Sabbatical Postgraduate Officer? No.

Other Representative Structures? No.

PWO Branch? No.

National College of Ireland Student's Union (NCISU)

PGT Representatives? Presumably, not meaningfully differentiated from undergraduate class representatives.

PGR Representatives? No.

Part-Time Postgraduate Officer? No.

Sabbatical Postgraduate Officer? No, however the Vice President for Education has a direct, constitutional mandate to “ensure that the needs of Postgraduate and Part-time students are fully catered for.”

Other Representative Structures? No.

PWO Branch? No.

Queens’ University Belfast Student’s Union (QSU)

PGT Class Representatives? Yes, but not representatives at the class level, instead School and Faculty Representatives are elected by the Postgraduate School and Faculty Constituencies, those representatives then form the Postgraduate Taught Academic Representative Committee of the SU Council.

Researcher Representatives? Yes, similar to above, the Postgraduate Research School and Faculty Constituencies elect Postgraduate Research School and Faculty Representatives who form the Postgraduate Research Academic Representative Committee of the SU Council.

Part-Time Postgraduate Officer? No.

Sabbatical Postgraduate Officer? Yes, Postgraduate Education Officer who works in tandem with the Undergraduate Education Officer. Only SU in Ireland operating this joint structure, however it is more common in United Kingdom SUs.

Other Representative Structures? Yes, SU Council has two standing committees, the Postgraduate Taught and Postgraduate Research Academic Representative Committees, comprised of the respective faculty and school representatives. It is proposed also that PG School Reps would sit on the School Postgraduate Research Committee and School Research Committee, and to chair a PGR Student Voice Committee, although it is unclear as of 2026 as to whether this change has been implemented.

PWO Branch? No.

South East Technological University Student’s Union (SETUSU)

PGT Class Representatives? Presumably, not meaningfully differentiated from undergraduate class representatives.

Researcher Representatives? No.

Part-Time Postgraduate Officer? Yes, however part-time officers are initially elected as Campus Officers representing a campus of 2,500 or greater students, and then assigned a representative remit, one of which being the Mature student and Postgraduate Officer.

Sabbatical Postgraduate Officer? No, however the Vice Presidents for Education (Waterford and Carlow campuses) are responsible for the remit of Postgraduate Affairs.

Other Representative Structures? No.

PWO Branch? No.

Technological University Dublin Student's Union (TUDSU)

PGT Representatives? Presumably, not meaningfully differentiated from undergraduate class representatives.

PGR Representatives? No.

Part-Time Postgraduate Officer? Yes, part-time paid Postgraduate Officer, represents both PGT and PGR cohorts.

Sabbatical Postgraduate Officer? No.

Other Representative Structures? No.

PWO Branch? No.

Technological University of the Shannon Student's Union (TUSSU)

PGT Class Representatives? Presumably, not meaningfully differentiated from undergraduate class representatives.

Researcher Representatives? No, however there have been attempts to establish this type of representative structure.

Part-Time Postgraduate Officer? No.

Sabbatical Postgraduate Officer? Yes, there has been a Deputy President for Postgraduate Affairs in existence longer than TUSSU, as the role existed in the LIT Student's Union. The Deputy President represents all Level 9 and 10 students/researchers, sits on the Governing Body, chairs the Postgraduate Student Working Group and recruits postgraduate Student Representatives, among other responsibilities.

Other Representative Structures? Yes, the Student Council has a permanent standing committee in the Postgraduate Student Working Group.

PWO Branch? No.

Trinity College Dublin Student's Union (TCDSU)

PGT Representatives? Yes, also has a Postgraduate Faculty Convenor and Postgraduate School Convenor for every Faculty and School in the College. The Postgraduate Faculty Convenor co-ordinates their sub-ordinate Postgraduate School Convenors who then co-ordinate their sub-ordinate Postgraduate Class Reps.

PGR Representatives? Unclear, PGR Representatives are not specifically defined in the TCDSU Constitution, but it is implied that a "class" for the purposes of electing Class Reps may refer to a year of PhD in a specific research group, but this is unclear and undefined.

Part-Time Postgraduate Officer? Yes, has a Postgraduate Taught Officer and a Postgraduate Research Officer who sit on the Council of the University of Dublin and the Graduate Studies Committee respectively

Sabbatical Postgraduate Officer? Yes, has a Graduate Officer who represents all PGT and PGR members of TCDSU, works with the other sabbatical officers to support these cohorts and organise campaigns and initiatives related to them, and represent those cohorts on relevant university committees

Other Representative Structures? Yes, has a Postgraduate Forum consisting of the Graduate Officer, PGR and PGR Officers, Sabbatical Officers and representatives of postgraduate constituencies (presumably the Faculty and School Convenors). This forum exists to advise the Graduate Officer, develop union strategy, services and campaigns for postgraduates, establish sub committees and propose motions to Union Council.

PWO Branch? Yes.

Note: Trinity College Dublin formally had a Graduate Student's Union, NStEP have published a separate case study covering this in detail.

Ulster University Student's Union (UUSU)

PGT Class Representatives? Course/School/Department representatives exist, these presumably apply to postgraduate courses too.

Researcher Representatives? Unclear, but presumably not, unless they are a School/Department representative.

Part-Time Postgraduate Officer? Yes, 1x Postgraduate Taught and 1x Postgraduate Research Councilor who sit on Student Council.

Sabbatical Postgraduate Officer? No.

Other Representative Structures? No.

PWO Branch? No.

University College Cork Student's Union (UCCSU)

PGT Class Representatives? Yes, treated the same as undergraduate class representatives.

Researcher Representatives? Has been established as a practice since 2024 whereby there shall be one researcher representative per ~40 researchers, however this is not currently a constitutional provision.

Part-Time Postgraduate Officer? Yes, the Postgraduate Representative is elected to represent all PGTs and PGRs in the university, including on Governing Authority, Academic Council Research & Innovation Committee, and other relevant committees and boards.

Sabbatical Postgraduate Officer? No, there have been multiple attempts to run a referendum on this but all have failed.

Other Representative Structures? The Postgraduate Representative from time to time runs Postgraduate Taught/Research Town Halls and may establish ad-hoc committees involving elected PGT/PGR representatives, but these are not constitutionally defined.

PWO Branch? Yes.

University College Dublin Student's Union (UCDSU)

PGT Representatives? Yes, but only referred to as "postgraduate class reps" once in the current constitution, this position is not defined further.

PGR Representatives? Not defined in the current constitution.

Part-Time Postgraduate Officer? Yes, there is a Postgraduate Research Officer who has significant responsibilities to represent PGRs, convene forums and attend relevant committee meetings. Many of these functions were transferred from the sabbatical officer to this role.

Sabbatical Postgraduate Officer? Yes, there is a Postgraduate Officer whose role involves casework and representation around postgraduates, which refers to all students enrolled in a postgraduate degree, higher diploma or graduate diploma, and is only elected by those same students.

Other Representative Structures? Yes, in theory the Postgraduate Research Officer has the power to “Convene forums or other appropriate mechanisms for consultation with Postgraduate Researchers no fewer than twice per semester, with provision for engagement during the summer period.”

PWO Branch? Yes.

Postgraduate Students’ Unions

Two postgraduate students’ unions currently exist in Ireland, while they will not be counted for the data analysis part of this report, they are included for interest.

Royal College of Surgeons Postgraduate Student’s Union (RCSIPGSU) – Non-AMLÉ MO

PGT Class Representatives? Presumably, however the RCSIPGSU constitution is not easily accessible online.

Researcher Representatives? Presumably, however the RCSIPGSU constitution is not easily accessible online.

Part-Time Postgraduate Officer? Yes, the PGSU has a President, Vice president, Treasurer, Public relations officer, Events officer, Welfare officer and Beaumont Hospital representative.

Sabbatical Postgraduate Officer? No.

Other Representative Structures? No.

PWO Branch? No.

University of Limerick Postgraduate Student’s Union (ULPSU) - Non- AMLÉ MO

PGT Class Representatives? Yes.

Researcher Representatives? Unclear as to whether this responsibility solely lies with the PhD Officers.

Part-Time Postgraduate Officer? Yes, the PSU have two “PhD Officers”; An AHSS/EHS PhD and Research Officer and a KBS/S&E PhD and Research Officer to represent researchers in arts/science fields, along with a Publicity Officer, and Equality Officer, a Faculty Officer and the Chair of Council. In addition to this, there are external members: A Representative from UL Student Life (the primary students’ union of UL), a representative from Mary Immaculate College Students’ Union (MISU) and a Clubs & Societies official.

Sabbatical Postgraduate Officer? Yes, the PSU have three sabbatical officers: a President, a Vice President Academic and a Vice President Engagement.

Other Representative Structures? Yes, the PSU have a Postgraduate Council/Class Rep Forum, which also has a Publicity Team (Technical Rep, Campaigns Rep, Marketing and Promotions Rep, Events Rep, a Faculty Representative Team (AHSS, EHS, KBS, S&E), an Equality Team (Enablement Rep, LGBTQ+ Rep, Environment Rep and International Rep), a PhD and Research Team (reps for AHSS, EHS, KBS, S&E) and a Council Advisory Team.

PWO Branch? No.

Summary of Representative Structures (not including AMLÉ, RCSIPGSU or ULPSU)

Taught Representation

As seen below, the vast majority of SUs do not differentiate between undergraduate and postgraduate class representatives. It is generally uncommon for SUs to have a specific constitutionally provision for postgraduate class representatives, and where it does exist, e.g. in QSU, this is typically for the purpose of electing representatives at the school/faculty level, rather than individual classes etc.

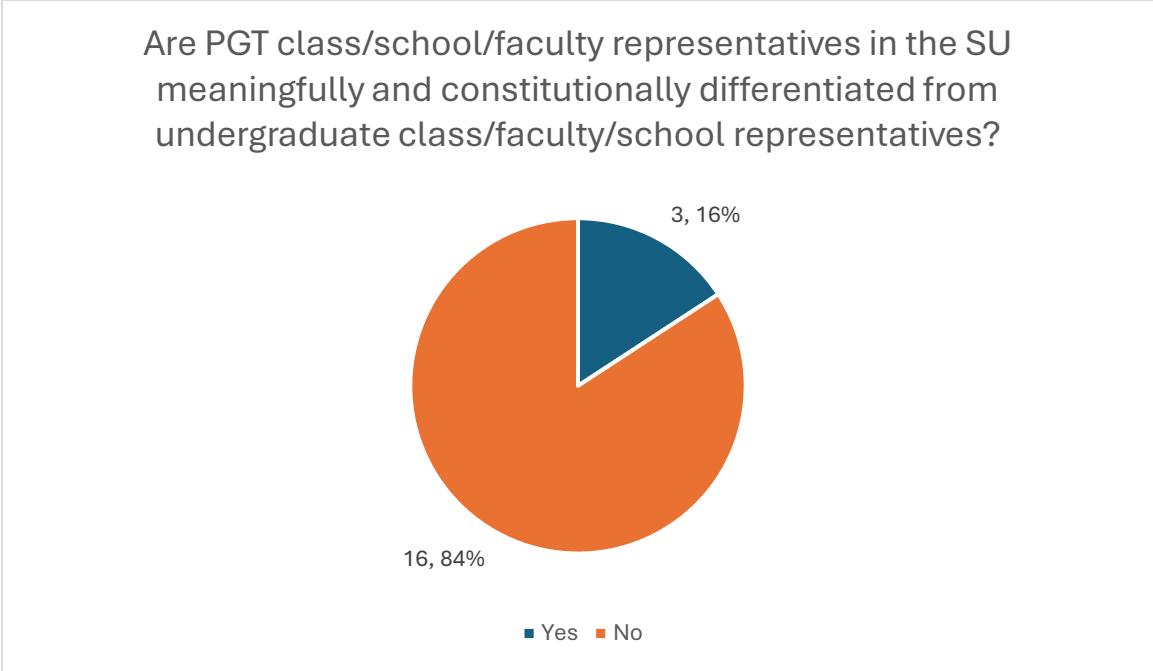


Figure 1: Percentage breakdown of Postgraduate Taught Representation within SUs

Researcher Representation

As seen below, the vast majority of SUs do not currently have a “PGR representative” system. In the SUs where this system does exist, such as UCCSU, PGRs are typically split into groups of ~40 per department/school/faculty or research centre, with one rep per 20-~40 doctoral candidates.

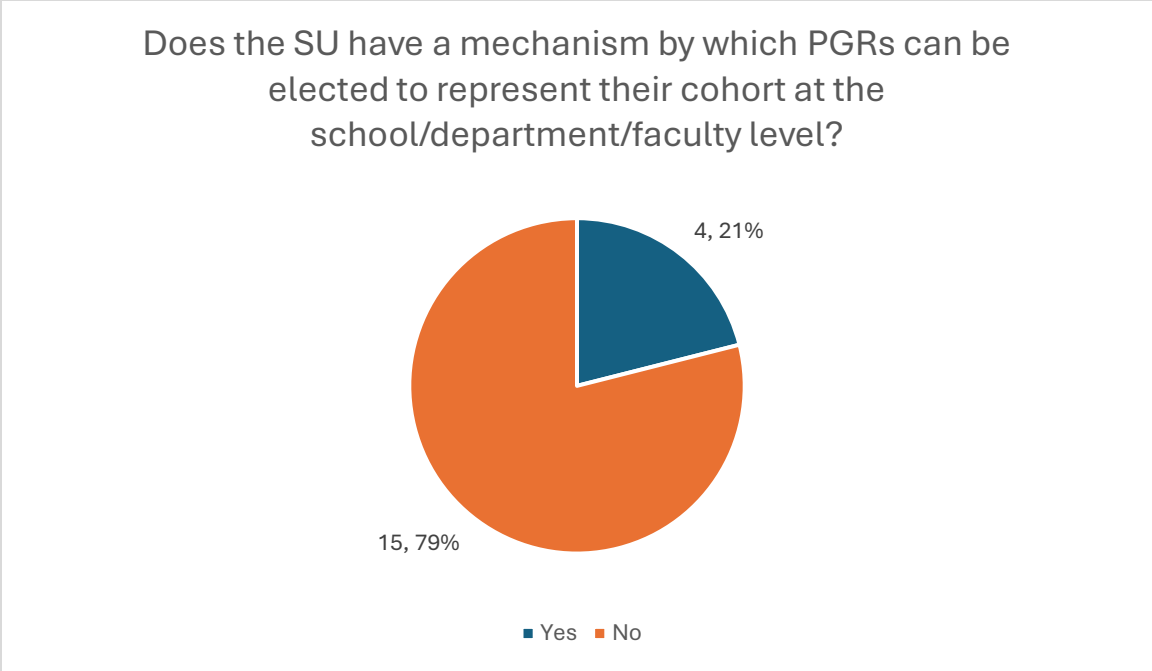


Figure 2: Percentage breakdown of Postgraduate Researcher Representation within SUs

Part-Time Postgraduate Officers

As shown below, a majority of SUs have some form of postgraduate representation in the form of an officer on the SU executive, however it varies union to union as to whether this is a single role responsible for representing all postgraduates (sometimes in tandem with mature students and other life-long learners), or if there is a distinct PGT and PGR role. Interestingly, UCDSU is the only SU to have a single PTO who is responsible for

representing only one cohort (in this case, PGRs). This is likely due to their rare quality of possessing a sabbatical postgraduate officer.

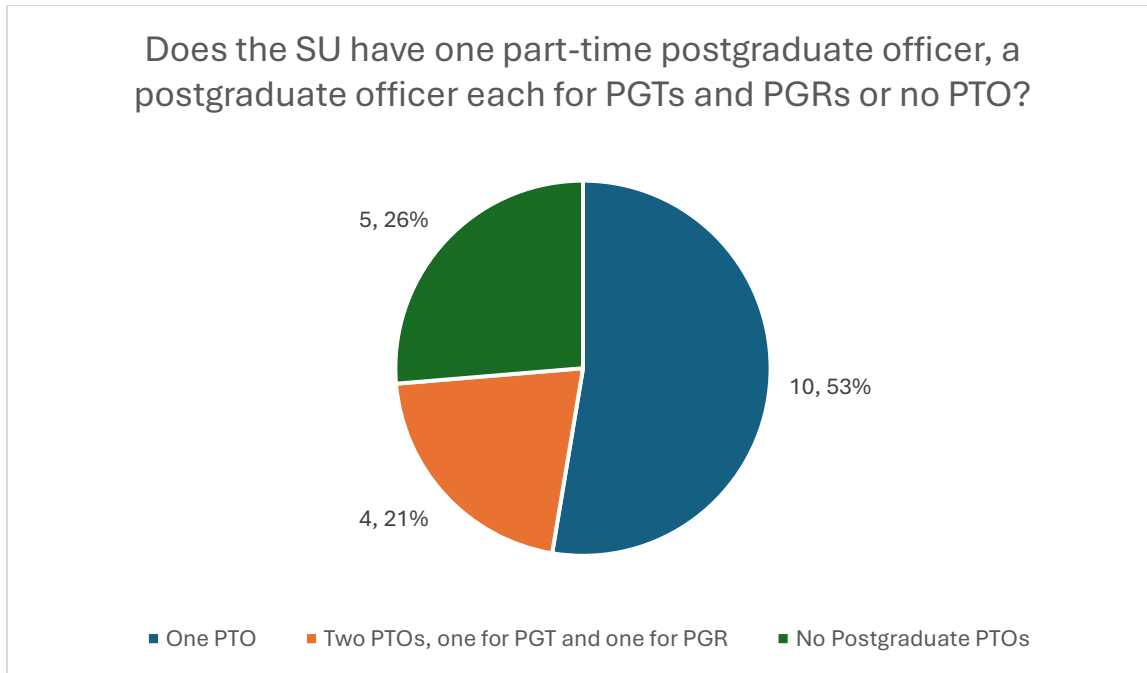


Figure 3: Percentage breakdown of Part-Time Postgraduate Officer prevalence within SUs

Sabbatical Postgraduate Officers

As shown below, a majority of SUs do not have a sabbatical postgraduate officer, however before 2025, only UCD, QSU and TUSSU had a sabbatical postgraduate officer. As of 2026, TCDSU have introduced a Graduate Officer, and the merged ATUSU will also have a Deputy President with responsibility for life-long learning, showing there is an increased interest

from SUs in “sabbaticalising” these positions. Sabbatical postgraduate officers are more common in the United Kingdom, whose SUs may have a separate Undergraduate and Postgraduate Education/Welfare Officer, as is the case with QSU.

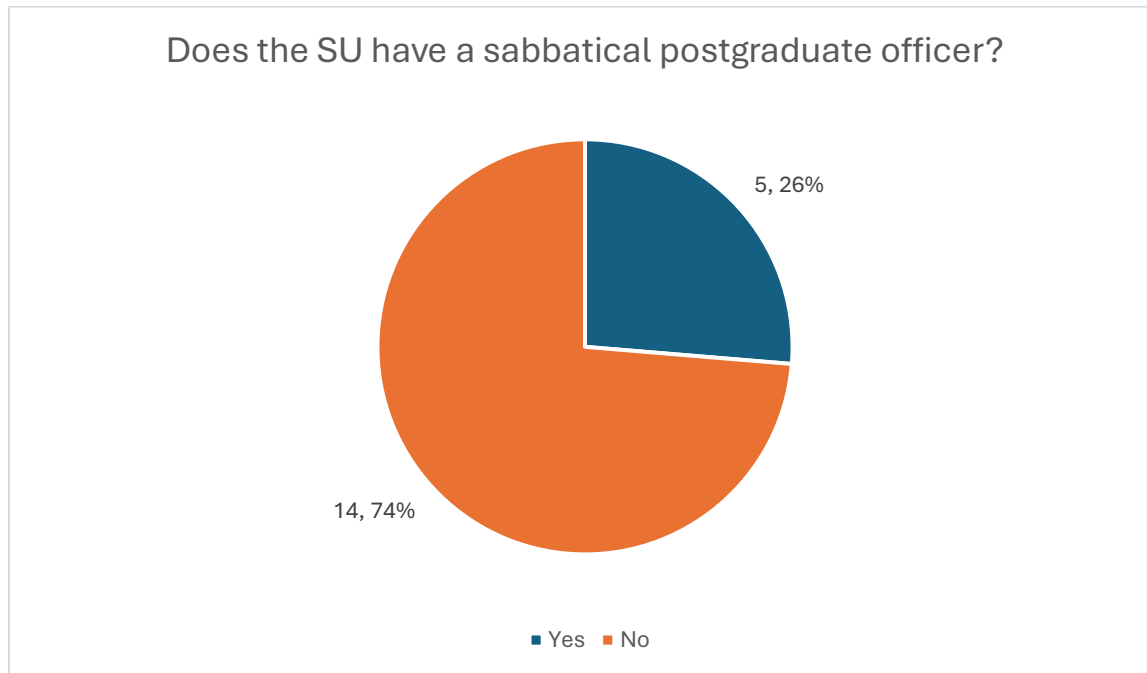


Figure 4: Percentage breakdown of Postgraduate Sabbatical Officer prevalence within SUs

Other Representative Structures

As shown below, 7 SUs currently operate some form of postgraduate representative structure, outside of the Student Council, however the format and permanence of these structures can vary wildly, with some, for instance in UCDSU being ad-hoc forums, and some like TUSSU having standing committees of the Student Council for postgraduate representation.

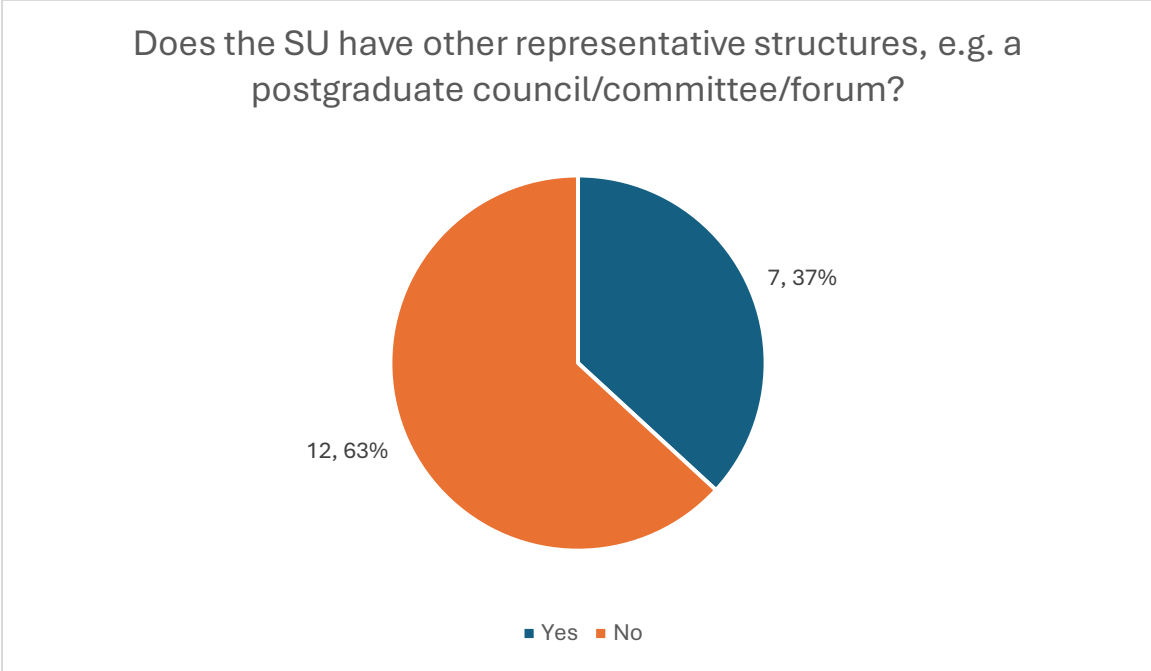


Figure 5: Percentage breakdown of postgraduate representative structure prevalence within SUs

Postgraduate Workers' Organisation Branches

Five HEIs with an AMLÉ-affiliated SU currently have a PWO branch, those being Dublin City University, Maynooth University, University College Cork, University College Dublin and the University of Galway. Notably, all of these HEIs, with the exception of DCU are members of the National University of Ireland federal university, indicating a greater baseline level of doctoral organization in these HEIs that allowed for union formation to occur.

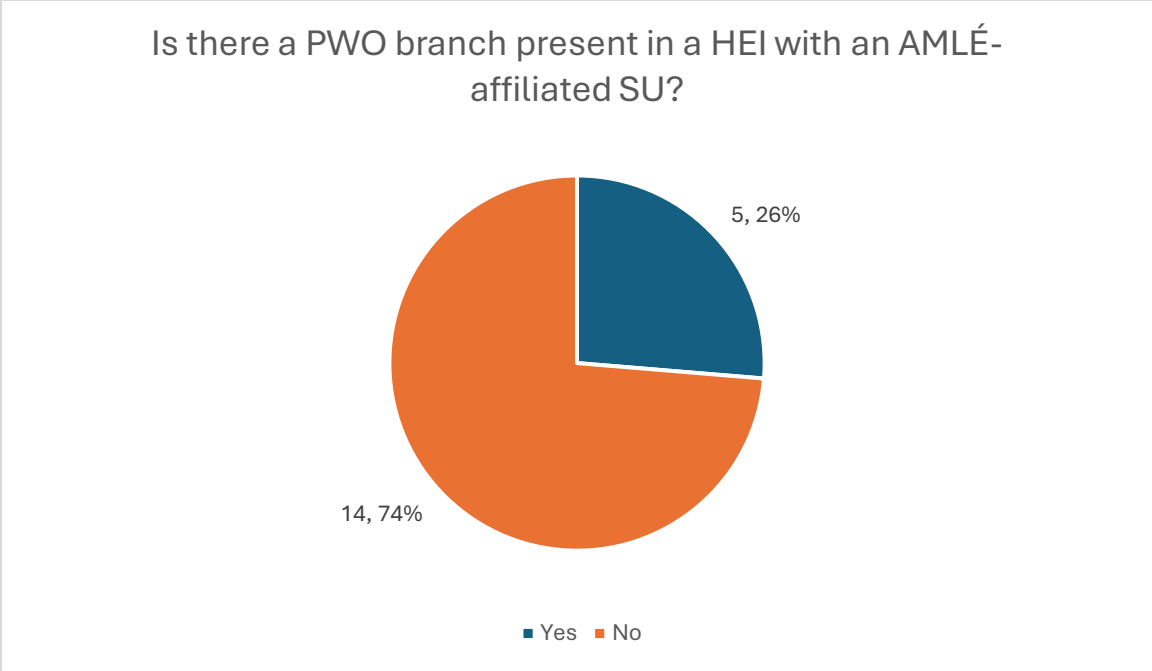


Figure 6: Percentage breakdown of PWO branch prevalence within HEIs with AMLÉ-affiliated SUs

Discussion and Recommendations

Based on the above information, AMLÉ has produced some generalized recommendations on best practices with regards representing postgraduate students and researchers. These recommendations are not binding, and should be considered by students' unions as to whether they are appropriate to implement for their representative structures. Likewise, staff members in HEIs should work with the SU to ensure the democratic election of representatives, for postgraduates generally to be involved in wider student democracy, and to encourage postgraduates to self-organise into local-level committees etc.

Taught Representation

Generally, it is appropriate for PGT representatives to be elected in a similar manner to undergraduate class representatives, due to their class structure, assignment requirements and pedagogical methods being broadly similar to those employed in undergraduate education.

1. Critically however, these representatives should be elected in accordance with SU procedures, ideally in an election co-ordinated by the Education/Postgraduate officer or relevant faculty PTOs, otherwise this introduces the risk of representatives being undemocratically nominated by course coordinators, isolating the representative from the SU.
2. PGT representatives should receive a similar level of training to their undergraduate counterparts, in collaboration with NStEP.
3. To ensure that PGT representatives are recognized by the SU, there should be a constitutionally reference to the need for electing PGT representatives.

Researcher Representation

The question of best-practice for researcher representation is a difficult one, and these structures have been developed in some HEIs (primarily larger universities) over a number of years to ensure that PGRs are integrated properly into the SU. Similarly to PGT classes, PGR reps can often be nominated by staff members in an undemocratic fashion, and remain in these positions for years with no accountability or oversight.

1. PGR representatives should have a democratic system of election, overseen by the SU, ideally a Postgraduate Officer, whereby there is one representative elected per e.g. 40 doctoral candidates in a given department/school (adjust as necessary depending on the size of the research group. These representative structures should be developed in collaboration with doctoral candidates, not forced upon them.
2. PGR representatives should be supported by the SU and their department/research group to form self-organised committees for the purpose of representing their cohort, organising events, creating feedback loops with supervisors etc.
3. PGR representatives should receive specialised training from NStEP, recognising their unique position as early-career researchers, making them closer to working professionals than traditional students.

Part-Time Postgraduate Officers

Part-Time Officers often make up the backbone of good SU representation, as they are current students/researchers who possess current lived experience, as opposed to sabbatical officers who may be a year or more detached from being in higher education. Many SUs have established a PTO role for postgraduates, however persistent issues prevail e.g. in finding suitable candidates to run for election and having PGT students dominate these positions due to higher student numbers. The work of PTOs can often go undershadowed or unrecognized by the SU, due to their voluntary, unpaid nature and varying capacity depending on the amount of time they have to devote to representation.

1. Where a PTO position does not exist in an SU, one should be established for the purpose of having a current postgraduate student/researcher sit on the SU Executive, which is often mostly comprised of undergraduate students.
2. Where a postgraduate PTO position does exist in an SU, the SU could consider splitting the position into two positions, one for PGTs and one for PGRs, particularly if the SU has noticed a frequent PGT bias in the candidates being elected to the position.
3. Where a postgraduate PTO position exists, they should be an integral part of coordinating the election process for PGT and PGR representatives, setting up other structures e.g. committees, and generally ensuring postgraduate integration within the SUs activities.

Sabbatical Postgraduate Officers

The “sabbaticalisation” of positions within SUs has been a generally increasing trend since the inception of the first SUs in the 1960s and 1970s, due to greater commercial revenue and funding from HEIs, larger student cohorts requiring more complex representation and the general expansion of the political and societal activities of SUs requiring professionalised representation. Sabbaticalising is usually a multi-year process, whereby a PTO is first established, its functions developed, a case is made to make it full-time, funding sources are identified, and this then goes to referendum. Sabbatical postgraduate

officers, formally rare, are becoming more common, however their implementation must be done with careful consideration to its functions and the representative needs of postgraduates.

1. Where a postgraduate PTO position exists in an SU, the SU may consider sabbaticalising that position if it feels the workload is too much for a PTO and the SU would benefit, however alternative methods of increasing capacity e.g. paying the PTO a part-time wage (e.g. as is the case in TUDSU), or splitting the PTO role into PGT and PGR positions should be considered first.
2. When developing a sabbatical postgraduate officer, this should be done with an intense period of consultation with PGTs and PGRs as to their needs and as to whether they feel a sabbatical officer would be of benefit to them.
3. Ideally, a sabbatical postgraduate officer should be at the top of a “representational hierarchy”, as shown below, with PTOs below them, and below the PTOs should be PGR/PGR representatives, to prevent the sabbatical officer being a tokenistic representative with no structural responsibilities to the SU.

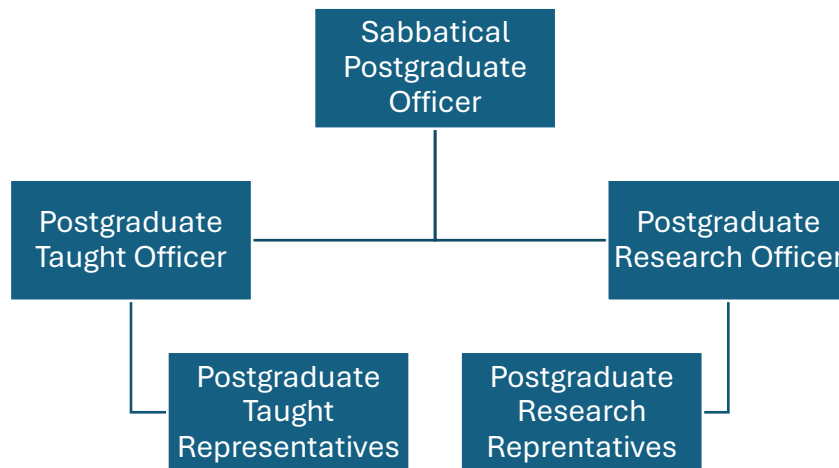


Figure 7: Proposed representational hierarchy for postgraduates within SUs

Other Representative Structures

It is important for SUs to have other representative organs within their structures, for the purpose of ensuring that postgraduates feel they have an avenue for their issues to be raised more directly, in a space that responds to their needs, due to most Student Council structures being primarily dominated by undergraduate students.

1. Where a representative organ for postgraduates does not exist in an SU, one should be established – starting small with e.g. a committee of representatives from

particular faculties/cohorts, and scaling up into e.g. sub-committees of the Student Council.

2. If postgraduates are included in the overall Student Council, they should be able to propose motions that only they can vote on, to avoid undergraduate students from influencing debates around issues that do not affect them.
3. The respective PTO/sabbatical officer of the SU with responsibility for postgraduates should be supported by, and regularly collect feedback and information from such a representative organ to inform their work.

Postgraduate Workers' Organisation

The existence of the PWO undoubtedly complicates the question of postgraduate representative democracy, however AMLÉ believes a balance can be struck between SU and PWO representation, as exemplified in the Memorandum of Understanding that exists between AMLÉ and the PWO.

1. Where a PWO branch does not exist in a HEI, the SU should work with the PWO national committee towards establishing a branch, however ideally such a development should emerge organically, perhaps with the SU facilitating discussions between the PWO and PGRs.
2. Where a PWO branch does exist in a HEI, the SU should work co-operatively with them to strengthen PGR representation, with a delineation existing between the academic representative work of the SU and the more labour-focused representation of the PWO, similar to existing relationships between SUs and the INMO for nursing students.
3. Ideally, elected representatives of the SU, be they PGR reps or PTOs should sit on the local PWO branch committee in an ex-officio committee, to facilitate bidirectional communication between the SU and the PWO.