

University of Queensland Medical Society Inc.

Position Description

Disability Representatives

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Medical Society Inc.

About the UQMS

Established in 1936, the UQMS is a not-for-profit, incorporated association which strives to support and enrich the UQ medical school experience. Through a significant range of academic, social, wellbeing, philanthropic, cultural, advocacy, and leadership opportunities, the UQMS aims to inspire and develop well-rounded medical students. Comprising over 100 volunteers, it is one of the largest and most successful student organisations in Australia. The UQMS works closely with the UQ Faculty of Medicine as well as local, state, and national bodies to ensure that all UQ medical students benefit from a student built community like no other. Above all, the UQMS values inclusivity, diversity, integrity, connectivity, fulfilment, and excellence throughout their actions, events, and activities.

About Representatives of the UQMS

Representatives serve to voice the collective opinion of their student body within the UQMS. Across different phases, years, and clinical sites, representatives consistently gather feedback to convey them to the Management Committee and/or to the Faculty of Medicine in their respective committees. Representatives belong to UQMS subcommittees corresponding to a Management Committee portfolio and can be elected or appointed for one-year terms.

As a UQMS Representative, the office bearer is expected to:

- Actively gather feedback day-to-day through open and transparent discourse with the wider student body;
- Maintain respectful communication with all external stakeholders;
- Dedicate themselves and remain committed to effective teamwork and the success of their advocacy for the duration of their term, including handover;
- Adhere to all UQMS Rules, Bylaws and Policies, and comply with all plans enacted at a portfolio level; and
- Provide regular reports and updates to their corresponding Management Committee member (Advocacy Chair), and be advised by them where appropriate to effectively coordinate UQMS advocacy.

About the Role

Disabled medical students often have unique requirements when completing their medical degree. These students require proper provisions and adjustments to support their learning

as they have a broad range of circumstances that can present challenges when completing their medical studies. Whilst there are a broad spectrum of disabilities and not all of them are visible, the role truly and fundamentally believes that all students deserve equal opportunity and access to the program, and where adjustments are reasonable and proper, they should be implemented to its fullest extent in a manner that is as appropriate as possible.

The UQ medical program, as a graduate program presents an educational challenge like no other. The full-time commitment of the degree, as well as the necessity for students to stay on top of their health may often be in direct conflict with each other if a supportive environment is not created. Disabled students should not be precluded from participating and excelling in the unique challenges of medical training. Hence, the role will focus itself on advocacy surrounding accessible adjustments and ensuring the availability of support services for these students. Advocating for these to the faculty is imperative, with support from the rest of the Advocacy team. Educating medical students about disability is important in reducing stigma and misconception towards disabled students and disabled people within the population, and as such is a responsibility of this role. Many challenges arounds students with disability are difficult to openly discuss, and thus this role will seek to develop and maintain opportunities and a safe platform for connection and socialisation of these students. The challenges faced by disabled students can be difficult to discuss openly. Thus this role will seek to develop and maintain opportunities, as well as a safe platform where disabled students can connect and socialise with other students with similar experiences.

Roles and Responsibilities

1. **Manage Communications with Disabled Students:** In conjunction with the Advocacy Chair and UQ Mind Chair, create a safe space/anonymous platform for students to talk about their struggles or challenges, seek advice on issues and connect with others with similar needs.
2. **Advocacy and Support for Disabled Students:** In conjunction with the Advocacy Chair, the representative should make enquiries and work on issues that affect these students as well as relay important information, where appropriate, to staff and students. Ensure to escalate any widespread issues to the Advocacy Chair in order for such issues to be raised at higher-level governance bodies. Representatives should aim to educate the general student cohort to widen knowledge on disability.
3. **Regular Meetings with the Advocacy Chair:** The representative should communicate with the Advocacy Chair, Year Level representatives and other UQMS representatives frequently to discuss relevant academic matters or other issues pertinent to disabled students.
4. **Create a sense of community amongst those who may feel a lack of support and facilitate a social network for these students:** Ideally organise one unique social event over the year.

Desirable Candidate Qualities

The prospective candidate should consider the following desirable candidate attributes:

- **Identify as disabled and have lived experience of being disabled:** this is greatly preferable in order to accurately and appropriately represent these groups, and to be able to guide and assist students if they turn to the representative for some friendly advice. This role aims to give disabled students a voice within UQMS and the medical program.
- **Interest, Knowledge and Vision:** The successful candidates will be the key UQMS people that identify and solve academic and other problems relevant to disabled students' needs. The representative should seek to learn as much as possible about the issues facing these groups. A strong desire to improve the academic experience for these students is important.
- **Time:** In this role, you should expect to work a **few hours per fortnight**. Some weeks may require additional hours.
- **Professionalism:** At the core of every success of the UQMS is the professionalism of representatives. Our credibility within the Faculty of Medicine depends on the thoughtful, timely, insightful, diplomatic and professional approach we take to solving problems. Communication skills, including prompt and appropriate responses to staff and student emails and calls, are essential.
- **Previous Leadership experience:** Experience is always helpful, but not essential. In fact, many successful representatives have not previously been involved in high-level leadership or UQMS positions. Of course, previous experience is still highly valuable. Passion and vision for the role is also equally valued.

Process for Nomination for Appointment

If you wish to apply, please complete the following:

1. **Ensure you are a Full Ordinary member of the UQMS** before applying. If you are unsure, email secretary@uqms.org to check your membership.
2. Potential candidates are **strongly advised to contact** the **Disability Representative** at disabilityrep@uqms.org to discuss the role. You may also wish to contact the **Advocacy Chair** at advocacy@uqms.org.
3. This role can be held by two candidates. Each candidate must fill out the Google Form for applying for appointed roles, as linked on the Elections Page, and write a **300-word candidate statement** addressing the following criteria
    a) Vision for the role and suitability to advocate for disabled students;
    b) Previous experience relevant to the role, including **leadership and advocacy roles and/or passion for increasing accessibility within the MD program**
    c) Communication skills and other relevant skills; and
    d) Ability to work independently as well as part of a team.

    Please note, candidate names will be removed before applications are marked. Please see UQMS By-Law Section 16.4 and 23.7 for more information.
4. You may submit an (optional) **1-page CV** to accompany your candidate statement.
5. Submit your completed form and statement to the **Secretary** at secretary@uqms.org. The Secretary will reply to confirm that they have received your

nomination. If you do not receive this confirmation within 3 days, please contact the Secretary again.

6. Please see our Elections Page for more information including the **appointment timeline**. No late submissions will be accepted.

The Elections Page also contains links to relevant UQMS Governing Documents, FAQs and Nomination Forms. Please familiarise yourself with these, particularly the UQMS By-Laws (Part 1 and 3) to ensure you comply with the rules of the Association.

General Enquiries

For more information, please contact UQMS Secretary at secretary@uqms.org.

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For office hours see: http://uqms.org/contact/

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