

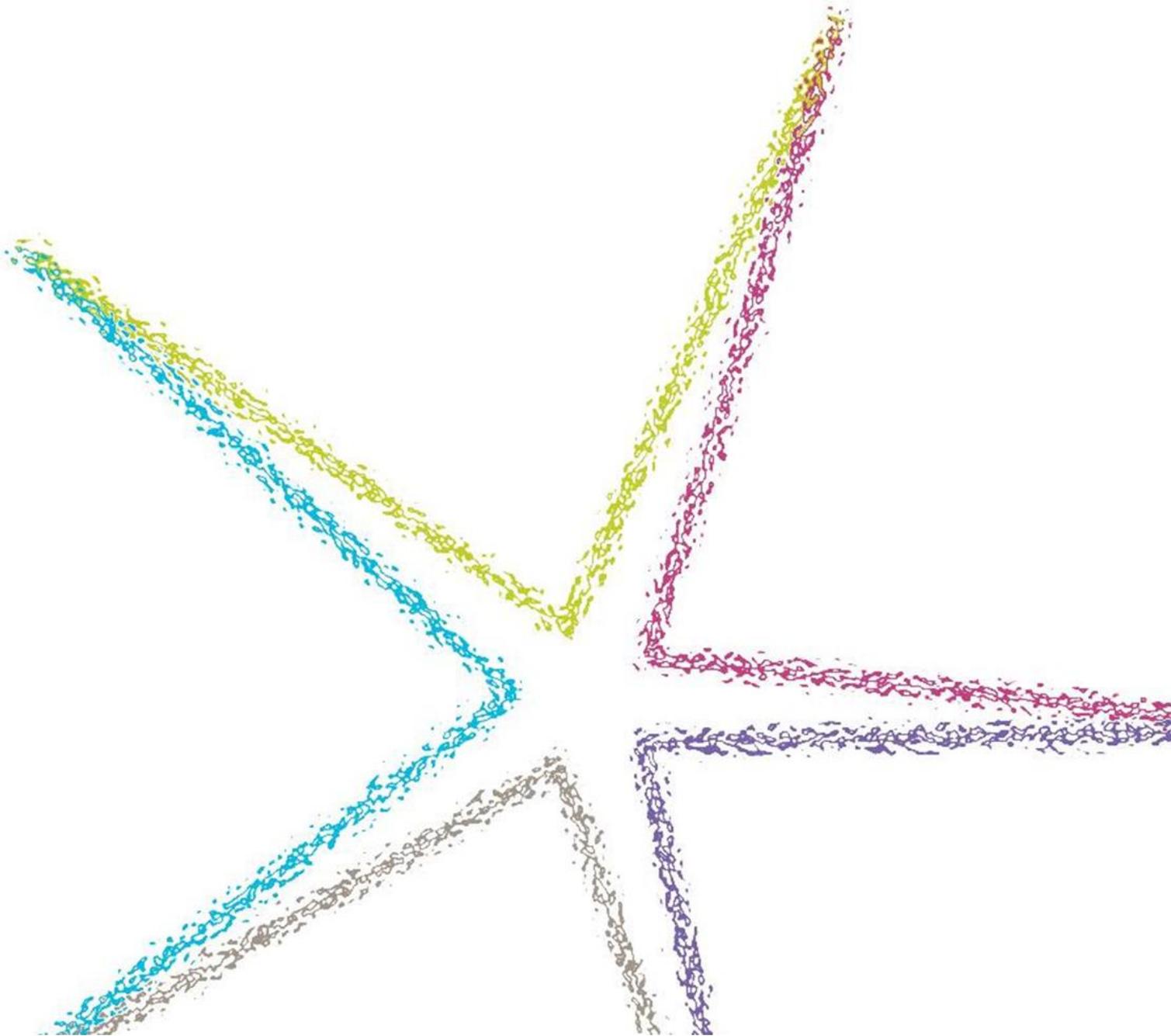
Guidance on the development and implementation of a Student Partnership Agreement in colleges

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Foreword by Angela Constance MSP Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning

In Scotland we have long recognised that effective student engagement is crucial to effective learning. Students learn at their best when they are actively engaged in their own learning and the wider college experience. And colleges perform at their best when students are engaged at all levels in college life, shaping what they do and how they do it.

Colleges play a key role in delivering educational opportunities that support people into the workplace and on to higher learning. We first committed as a Government to student partnership agreements in **Putting Learners at the Centre**, published in September 2011. By working together students' associations and colleges can make a profound difference to the quality of our colleges and improve outcomes for students.

This **guidance on the development and implementation of a Student Partnership Agreement in colleges** supports both the **2012 Student Engagement Framework for Scotland** and the new **Framework for the Development of Strong and Effective Students' Associations**. Both frameworks rightly identify partnership as crucial to the success of students, students' associations and colleges.

I endorse the approach this guidance takes in supporting students' associations and colleges to identify and agree (a) how students can effect meaningful change and (b) where they can work together to enhance students' learning and wider experience of college.

It gives very practical expression to the central purpose of our reforms of the college sector: to put students at the centre.

I am grateful to sparqs for developing this guidance. The organisation is a really great example of how Scotland leads the way by supporting students to realise their full potential in contributing to the success of their institutions. The work of sparqs in providing dedicated support and expertise to encourage greater engagement of students in college (and university) quality assurance and enhancement is simply outstanding. That is why this Government has, through the Scottish Funding Council, continued to support it.

I have every confidence it will be embraced by students' associations and colleges alike.



By working together students' associations and colleges can make a profound difference to the quality of our colleges.



Introduction from Eve Lewis, Head of sparqs

sparqs is pleased to launch this guidance on how to implement a Student Partnership Agreement between colleges and their students' associations. It sits alongside several other useful tools, including the *Student Engagement Framework for Scotland* and the newly published *Framework for the Development of Strong and Effective College Students' Associations in Scotland*. This guidance can be used alongside these documents and can complement existing activities. Whilst the guidance is in a format that can be easily used within a college, sparqs is pleased to offer tailored support to colleges wanting to take this work forward.

Our newly-developed students' associations have the potential to contribute significantly as partners to the success of our colleges and the enhancement of the student learning experience. Student Partnership Agreements offer a simple, effective tool to harness this potential. Our experience to date shows that where colleges have been developing their own Student Partnership Agreements this has led to new opportunities for collaboration and innovation.

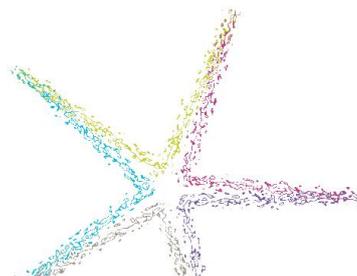
Students' associations have the potential to contribute significantly as partners to the success of our colleges.

The process of developing a Student Partnership Agreement – from initial discussions, through the mapping of existing processes and the consideration of engagement as it exists today, to the development of goals and expectations – is an exciting one for colleges and students' associations to undertake. At all stages there are opportunities for the work done and the thinking around it to be as expansive as the parties would like.

Students' associations across Scotland have, like colleges, experienced significant changes in recent years. Both colleges and students' associations can benefit from the open dialogue of a Student Partnership Agreement process regardless of their stage of development.

This guidance comes in two parts: the guidance itself and a practical toolkit to help to develop thinking about Student Partnership Agreements and the role they can play in student engagement. With the increased national focus on student engagement, we believe this will provide both a practical and a theoretical backdrop to your work in this area. We remain on hand to provide specific support, whether by facilitating discussions or answering questions as they arise.

Eve Lewis



The Scottish Context

Scotland has historically led the way in student engagement, with students being seen primarily as active participants in the learning process. In 2007, the student engagement role was enshrined as one of the three key principles underlying the quality arrangements, alongside High Quality Learning and Quality Culture. The resulting quality arrangements, developed by Education Scotland, emphasised the role of students through the confidence statement 'How well are learners engaged in enhancing their own learning and the work and life of the college?'

The resulting work throughout the sector included the introduction of student team members and a sustained effort by colleges to develop more effective mechanisms and support for students to play an active role in shaping not only their own learning, but the experience of others, and contribute positively to the success of the college.

With its remit to work with institutions and students to develop student engagement, sparqs has worked with colleges to support the many advances made across the sector over the past decade. In 2012 sparqs led the work that resulted in the sector-owned *Student Engagement Framework for Scotland*.¹ The framework helped provide context to discussions around this topic and helped clarify the role of the students' association in terms of quality mechanisms and governance. Student Partnership Agreements are an important development in strengthening this role, helping to capture not only the nature of the positive relationship between students and their institution, but also provide a practical way in which to develop that relationship even further.

Decisions are taken jointly, far beyond the mere consultation, involvement, or representation of students in decision-making.

What is Partnership?

Partnership implies an equal relationship between two or more bodies working together towards a common purpose and respecting the different skills, knowledge, experience and capability that each party brings to the table. Decisions are taken jointly between those parties, and they co-operate to varying degrees in implementing the consequences of those decisions. In this case it is an effective working relationship between an institution and its students, as individuals and through its collective representative body, working towards an educational institution of the highest quality possible.

This goes far beyond the mere consultation, involvement, or representation of students in decision-making. Where partnership exists, students not only identify areas for enhancement, but they help to identify ways to carry out that enhancement, as well as helping to facilitate implementation where possible.

Above all, a true partnership means neither party acts unilaterally. Rather there is active collaboration between the two. For a partnership to work, each party must recognise that the other bring to the table something which cannot be done without, and must value that contribution.

In this way, a partnership can be seen to be opposed to a transactional or consumerist relationship. Students actively participate in shaping and co-producing their education, rather than merely receiving it passively. This includes the effort that students put into their learning in the classroom, but also the work that students are increasingly doing to shape their experience at the course, departmental, institutional and national levels.

Partnership and the role of the students' association

Whilst partnership exists at many levels, an effective students' association is an essential element in developing the level of partnership identified above. In 2012 *the Report of the Review of Further Education Governance in Scotland* (commonly known as the Griggs report) found learner/student representation to be "patchy across the sector with non-autonomous and underfunded associations a key problem".² Since that time there has been sustained effort and significant investment in college students' associations.

Students' associations are now on the brink of playing their role as a partner.

With the 'Transformation Fund' received from the Scottish Funding Council and additional money allocated to non-merging colleges, came finances for colleges to develop their student engagement work, often including paid sabbatical officers and staff to help the students' association to enhance their activities. Students' associations are now on the brink of playing their role as a partner in the enhancement of the student learning experience and this guidance will help colleges realise the potential of associations as they develop.

'Partnered' is one of the five principles identified in the *Framework for the Development of Strong and Effective College Students' Associations in Scotland*. The others are: Autonomous, Representative, Accountable and Sustainable. The framework describes 'partnered', saying "a college and students' association in partnership have an equal relationship based on mutual value, trust, and respect. They have clearly agreed roles and responsibilities and work together to deliver positive change for students."³

This guidance offers a valuable and effective tool for colleges and students' associations to work together to develop effective partnerships at this level. Student Partnership Agreements are referred to in the framework's accompanying self-evaluation tool as an indicator of good practice which colleges can use to develop a Students' Association Development Plan.

What is a Student Partnership Agreement?

Student Partnership Agreements were mentioned first in the Scottish Government's 2011 paper *Putting Learners at the Centre*⁴ as a means of developing student engagement practices between institutions and students. sparqs, with its remit to work with institutions and students to develop student engagement, led the development of this concept and its piloting across Scotland.

Conversations can be more honest and open, without the pressure of having to meet external standards or aim for a particular target.

The Student Partnership Agreement is the document, agreed by the college and the students' association, which sets out how student engagement works right now, what they want it to look like, and how they will work to achieve that over the lifetime of the document. Usually no longer than three pages of A4, they are concise summaries to be read by everyone connected with the college, and function both as an honest summary of the current situation and a statement of intent for the future. While the written agreement is important, often the process of coming to it is more so. People find that by having something like a Student Partnership Agreement document to focus on, their conversations can be more honest and open, without the pressure of having to meet external standards or aim for a particular target. This process should be a collaborative and reflective one, supported by sparqs as required.

The challenges in coming to a Student Partnership Agreement are the same ones inherent in all aspects of student engagement. All sides need to be honest with themselves, be aware of how their past dealings could impact on the future, and be open to the possibility that things can improve in the future. This combination means that Student Partnership Agreements can be useful at any stage in the development of student engagement.

During the development of this guidance five key principles emerged as being important when developing a Student Partnership Agreement:

- 1. Ensure that the model helps to facilitate the effective working relationship between an institution and its students**
The first aim of the Agreement should be to help students and the college work together.
- 2. Ensure that the model is primarily a tool for Quality Enhancement, not just for Quality Assurance**
The Agreement should be about making things better tomorrow, not just making sure they work today.
- 3. Allow all parties to monitor and review the effectiveness of student engagement**
All parties connected with the Agreement need to know their work can be reviewed, and that the process of coming to an agreement offers them a reflective space to consider how they can work better for student engagement.
- 4. Avoid a transactional model**
The Agreement should avoid setting out responsibilities the parties have to fulfil contractually, instead it should point out how the work to be done can be divided between parties where possible.
- 5. Enable parties to define and promote the range of opportunities for students to engage in quality processes**
Mapping existing ways students can engage with their college can provide an excellent document for both the college and the students' association to develop other projects.

Recommended structure for Student Partnership Agreements

Student Partnership Agreements have two sections: A and B, with A allowing for description of how students can work with staff at the time of writing, and B being more practical and focused on the future.

Section A could include descriptions of institutional quality assurance and enhancement processes, students' association structures and processes, and the various ways that the students' association and institution work together to bring about change. This information promotes quality processes to students, and defines and enshrines the way in which students and staff work together in partnership. This section of the document could also signpost further information, such as the institution's student engagement strategy, outline aspirations on how the institution operates as a community, and highlight important information which students should know about the institution. It is unlikely that this first section would change radically from year to year.

Section B is more practical than descriptive, and has a focus on future partnership work. It outlines the areas in which the institution and students will work together over a given period of time – possibly on a rolling basis or over several years. These areas of work would be agreed jointly between the students' association and the institution, with suggestions sourced from student feedback mechanisms. These may include surveys, institutional feedback processes and students' association policy. Institutional information, such as strategic plans for learning and teaching, comments of external verifiers, and recommendations from external quality arrangements, such as Education Scotland reviews, could also be included.

It could be easy to imagine Section B as being contractual or dividing tasks between the students' association and the institution. This should not happen – Student Partnership Agreements are to identify joint themes and areas of improvement, not to set out specific tasks for parties according to expectations of their work as they've existed until now. It might be that areas for improvement demand different roles, different relationships from the parties involved and this cannot be undermined by a prescriptive second section.

The nature of the document will mean that these areas of work are likely to be at an institutional level, but it may also be appropriate or convenient in some institutions to identify planned enhancement activity at a faculty or department level. Institutions and students' associations are encouraged to outline how identified activity can be discussed and carried out at all levels of the institution.

Given that this section describes work to be done over a period of time, the document has a short 'shelf-life' and will need to be reviewed once that period of time is over. In this way, the Student Partnership Agreement becomes a flexible, working document.

Student Partnership Agreements are to identify joint themes and areas of improvement.

The development and publication of a Student Partnership Agreement

It is important that a Student Partnership Agreement is the result of negotiation between staff at the institution and students (via the students' association, as the collective voice of the students). Ideally, the agreement would be informed by evidence, and there would be a consultation process to engage a wide range of students and staff in its development.

In order to make the development of the Student Partnership Agreement as streamlined as possible, participants might consider how to integrate the consultation process into the ordinary workings of the institution. Consultation with staff might happen through departmental meetings and the institutional committee cycle. Participants should also consider in advance the most appropriate opportunities to carry out consultation with students, which might include:

- Induction events
- Course rep training
- Students' association meetings
- Course rep meetings
- Staff-student liaison meetings
- Academic society events
- Surveys
- Focus groups

Once such opportunities have been identified, it may then also be appropriate to schedule additional focus groups or other consultation activity.

The institutions that have developed their Student Partnership Agreements have generally chosen to set up a working group to guide the process. These working groups have typically consisted of members of staff from relevant areas of the institution, as well as student representatives. Your sparqs contact will also be able to support you through this process. If you don't know who your contact is, they can be reached through the sparqs office. It may take some time for each party to decide what it would like to take to the table as something that could be included in the Student Partnership Agreement. The final version of the agreement could be passed through the institution's committee structures in order to create buy-in, and students' associations might also consider passing it through their democratic structures. The Student Partnership Agreement might be signed off jointly by the Principal of the institution and the President of the students' association.

One way to formally launch the Student Partnership Agreement might be in pre-arrival information once an applicant's entry to the institution is confirmed. The advantage of this approach is that at this stage entrants are often keen to read any information they can find, and that during the induction week students are often given a large amount of information which is difficult to take in. Alternatively, launching the

agreement during the induction week may give staff an opportunity to engage with the document, particularly those with a student-facing role, such as teaching staff, who may be charged with introducing the agreement to students they interact with. This would also allow continuing students to engage with the agreement at the same time as new students. In any case, institutions will want to discuss and consider the most appropriate time to launch the Student Partnership Agreement.

Once a suitable time has been identified, institutions can work backwards to identify an appropriate time to begin development of the Student Partnership Agreement. Time might be allowed for any physical documents to be designed, printed and distributed, for any web pages to be designed and publicised, for the document to be passed through the various structures of the institution and students' association, and for several stages of consultation.

It may be helpful to carry out a mapping exercise of engagement opportunities.

Section A of the Student Partnership Agreement should include a description of the various opportunities students have to engage with their institution to improve the quality of their education. In order to ensure that this information is as accurate and inclusive as possible, it may be helpful to carry out a mapping exercise of engagement opportunities. Whilst it would be impractical to include a full picture of student engagement in a paper version of a Student Partnership Agreement, it may be useful to include it on the agreement's web page, and perhaps use a paper version to direct students towards it. We anticipate that the results of such a mapping exercise would also have uses beyond their inclusion in the Student Partnership Agreement. There is a resource in the attached toolkit which may be used to help facilitate such an exercise (Resource 5: Using the Student Learning Experience to map student engagement in learning and teaching for inclusion in Section A).

This mapping exercise may become a substantial piece of work, particularly at institutions that have not undertaken such an exercise in the recent past. For such institutions, it may be appropriate to carry out this exercise, publish Section A of the Student Partnership Agreement, and then move on to negotiate the issues to be included in Section B, perhaps over the next academic year.

In planning the areas for enhancement to be included in Section B, it may be appropriate to include the new senior student officers for the following year, once they are elected, given that they will be contributing to that enhancement. At some institutions this may require their involvement prior to taking office. The initial stages of development, such as evidence gathering, might begin in February for an agreement launched in September. An example timeline is included in the attached toolkit for reference (Resource 3: An example timeline of the development of the Student Partnership Agreement), as well as a resource to help identify appropriate topics for inclusion in Section B (Resource 6: Identifying areas for enhancement for inclusion in Section B).

The Student Partnership Agreement formalises a conversation which in many cases already takes place between the senior management of an institution and the senior officers of the students' association at the beginning of the latter's term in office. The Student Partnership Agreement formalises this conversation because it is recorded, agreed to and displayed publicly, because it includes a section on how students and their institution interact, and also because this conversation is informed by evidence. Types of evidence which could be used to help inform development of the document are:

- Student responses to feedback surveys
- Outcome Agreements and strategic plans
- Recommendations from Education Scotland Reviews
- Officers' manifestos
- Comments from SQA external verifiers
- Institutional research and policy
- *A Student Engagement Framework for Scotland*
- Students' association policies
- Annual Performance Indicator data
- Institution-led curriculum or service reviews
- Issues identified through officer case work/college advice services
- Priorities identified by institutional committees
- Activity in the wider sector
- Findings from consultation with students

During the development of the Student Partnership Agreement, both parties might consider how to ensure that the agreement is relevant to all different types of student within the institution. This includes those students with protected characteristics, but also students with different modes of study, students planning to articulate into university, international students, part-time students, and distance learners.

If a group of students interacts with the institution in a particular way, this should be included in Section A of the agreement, and issues facing different groups of students should be given due consideration for inclusion in Section B. Institutions should be mindful of their obligations towards staff and students with protected characteristics during the development and implementation of a Student Partnership Agreement. The institution may be required to undertake an equality impact assessment on areas of policy and work agreed upon in the Student Partnership Agreement.



Interactions between Student Partnership Agreements and other college processes

Exactly how a Student Partnership Agreement interacts with other infrastructure will depend heavily on the operating practices of the institution. In some ways Section B of a Student Partnership Agreement might be seen as an accessible student-facing version of an annual operational plan, on matters pertinent to students. Infrastructure such as strategic plans and thematic priorities may feed into the creation of the agreement at the initial stages.

Section B could be seen as an accessible student-facing version of an annual operational plan.

A more difficult issue to resolve may be how work agreed upon in Section B interacts with the institution's annual planning cycle. Work might simply be allocated to a particular committee or department in either the institution or the students' association, fitting into that area's plan of work for the year. How work is taken forward should be discussed during the development of the Student Partnership Agreement.

One question which might arise when developing a Student Partnership Agreement is how it should relate to Outcome Agreements. While there are no absolute rules around this we would usually advise that if there is a relationship between the Student Partnership Agreement and the Outcome Agreement this should be discussed openly during the process, and the Student Partnership Agreement discussion should not be shaped by the content of the Outcome Agreement. Student Partnership Agreements serve a very different purpose, as a tool to facilitate the relationship between students and their institution, as opposed to Outcome Agreements which are measures colleges agree to meet the needs of students and stakeholders in their region.

The presentation of a Student Partnership Agreement

Thought should be given to the format and presentation of the Student Partnership Agreement. Physical written documents are very easily distributed, but should be kept short and clear, ideally no more than two or three pages of information. Clear, measurable aims for the identified areas for enhancement could be included either in the Student Partnership Agreement itself or elsewhere, and this may make it easier to evaluate the progress made on those areas when it comes to monitoring and evaluation. Given the difficulty of including all necessary information in printed format which remains accessible and readable for students, it may be necessary to distribute summaries which signpost a more comprehensive set of information available elsewhere, perhaps online.

Additionally, presenting the document online would allow for the use of interactive media such as videos, and would also allow the page to be modified to include updates on any progress on the work outlined in Section B. This ensures that people are aware of the work the Student Partnership Agreement is helping to achieve and the relevance it has to their experience, whether from a staff or a student perspective.

Always make sure that the Student Partnership Agreement is relevant and accessible to all students.

This more flexible approach may also make it easier to use the Student Partnership Agreement during the training or recruitment of course reps, and may mean that staff and students are able to input into the consultation online during the development of the next Student Partnership Agreement. It may also be appropriate to promote the Student Partnership Agreement on the college website, the students' association website, the student intranet and social media.

Institutions and students' associations should always make sure that their Student Partnership Agreement is relevant and accessible to all students. If jargon is used there could be a glossary to explain the meaning of technical terms.

Carrying out enhancement activity identified in Section B

The precise way in which work identified in the agreement is implemented will depend on how the college functions. In some colleges work might be allocated to a particular committee or department, and in others the Student Partnership Agreement might feed into the annual planning cycle. However the work is carried out, it is important that decisions relating to it are taken in a manner which is conducive to partnership work.

It is important that work relating to the Student Partnership Agreement does not merely happen at an institutional level, but also filters down into the various curriculum and service departments. One way in which this could happen is that department heads could hold departmental meetings with staff and students to discuss the Student Partnership Agreement, how it relates to their activity, and what enhancement work they themselves might carry out in partnership as part of the agreement. Communication to this effect could be put together by those formulating the Student Partnership Agreement. In this way, the enhancement work is led from the top, but owned by everybody.

Reviewing a Student Partnership Agreement

Student Partnership Agreements should be reviewed after a period set out at the publication of each new version. This might vary, but a good indication would be every twelve months until the parties feel more comfortable planning into the longer term, once more established processes are in place.

Before the Student Partnership Agreement is renewed, institutions could consider evaluating the progress made on the priorities identified in Section B. Carrying out such an evaluation may prove useful in deciding how many areas of enhancement to prioritise for the next agreement, how best to go about working on those enhancement areas, and how to further improve partnership work between the institution and the students' association. An exercise is included in the attached toolkit to help with this evaluation (Resource 8: Evaluating the Student Partnership Agreement).

Before renewal, institutions could consider evaluating the progress made.

There should be a negotiation between the students' association officers and senior management.

It may be productive to discuss the first section of the agreement in order to help facilitate partnership work. Carrying out the exercise in the attached toolkit (Resource 1: What is Partnership?) may be useful during this stage of the review to establish a joint interpretation of what is meant by the term 'partnership'. If the interpretation of partnership is very different to current models, it may be appropriate to carry out a review of student engagement as part of the work identified in Section B.

Updating the second part of the agreement could happen in a similar manner to its initial development. There should be a negotiation between the students' association officers and senior management at the institution, informed by the evidence sources listed above, with final signoff by the President of the students' association and the Principal. Ideally before this time there would be a period of consultation with students and staff. Section B of the agreement could consist of three to five priority areas for enhancement on which the institution and the students' association will work together in partnership.

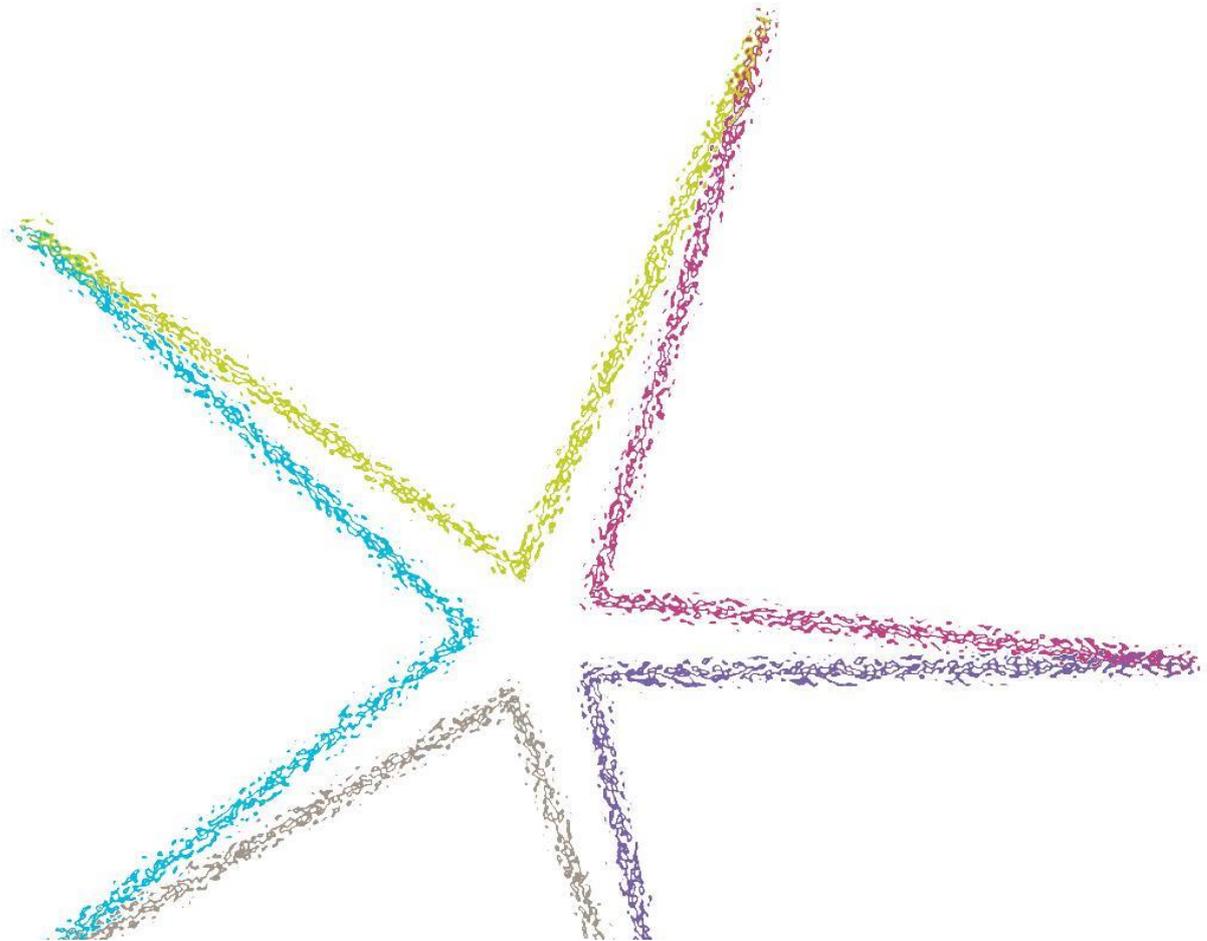
It is important to recognise progress made so far on any areas for enhancement, and to include references to the evidence sources used, particularly any evidence given by students, such as focus groups or survey responses. This helps to show the effectiveness of taking part in quality processes, giving additional value to them.

Recommendations

We recommend that:

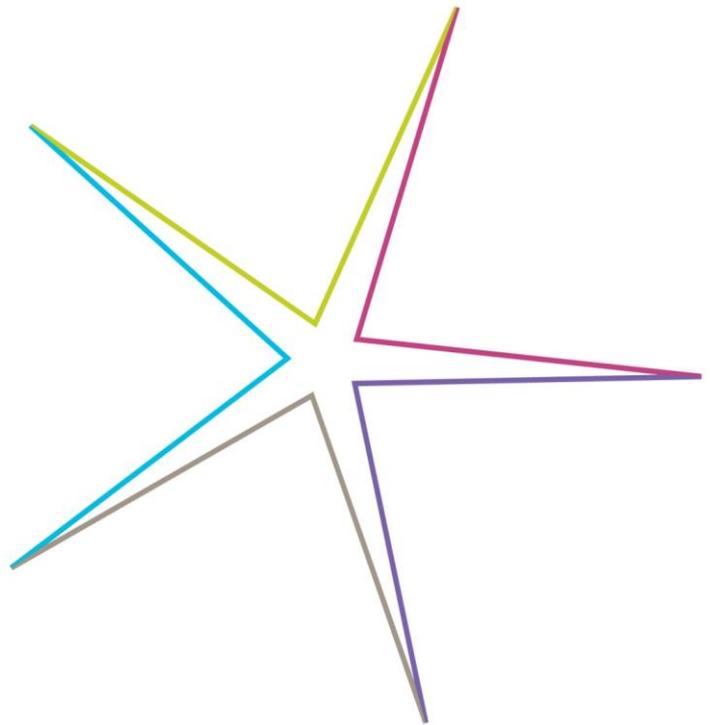
1. The Student Partnership Agreement is developed in accordance with the following principles:
 - The Student Partnership Agreement should primarily be a tool for quality enhancement, not just quality assurance.
 - The agreement should promote the opportunities for students to engage in quality processes.
 - The agreement should not be a consumer rights document, or a memorandum of understanding between the institution and the students' association.
 - The agreement should provide a tool around which institutions and students' associations can discuss the way institutions and students interact.
2. The Student Partnership Agreement has a two-part structure:
 - Section A describing and promoting the various ways in which students can work together with their institution, both collectively and as individuals, and signposting further information relevant to a student's role within the institution.
 - Section B outlining areas of work on which the institution and students' association will work together over a defined period of time.

3. The Student Partnership Agreement is developed in consultation with staff and students, and on the basis of a range of evidence.
4. The Student Partnership Agreement is signed off jointly by the Principal and the President of the students' association.
5. There is a single Student Partnership Agreement for all students, and that the needs of different groups of students are taken into account during the development of the agreement. Institutions should be mindful of their obligations under equality and diversity legislation.
6. The agreement's writing is accessible, and in an accessible format. Physical documents should ideally be no longer than two or three pages, and web pages should be interactive and relevant.
7. There is a clear communication and dissemination strategy to ensure that all staff and students are aware of the Student Partnership Agreement.
8. The Student Partnership Agreement is reviewed on a regular basis, to monitor and review the interactions between students and their institution, and to agree upon joint work for the next agreement.



Guidance on the development and implementation of a Student Partnership Agreement in colleges

A Toolkit



sparqs
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Resource 1:

What is partnership? An exercise to explore the concept of partnership at your college

Purpose of the session: 'Partnership' is fast becoming a standard term among those who work in student engagement and quality, but it means different things to different people. The purpose of this exercise is to help ascertain what is meant by 'partnership', to help you to think about what type of partnership is currently in place at your institution, and to consider the ways in which your institution's definition of partnership might change in the future. We recommend that the representatives of the institution and the students' association taking a lead on the Student Partnership Agreement carry out this exercise before starting to put together an agreement, and before starting the annual renewal process.

The session is aimed at: Staff and students involved in learning and teaching, particularly in quality and student engagement or student representation. The exercise can be carried out alone, or in groups.

You will need: Pen and paper. Participants in groups might prefer to use flipchart paper and markers.

This exercise consists of a series of analogies and reflections describing the various ways in which it is possible for students to interact with their institution. Some of these are widely considered partnership models, and others are not. It's possible for several models to be in practice at the same time, and some models are not in practice at any institutions. After each analogy are a number of questions which participants are invited to reflect upon and discuss, if appropriate. Participants should write down their thoughts in order to articulate them as clearly as possible.

Students as customers

The way students interact with their institution is similar to how customers interact with a supermarket or a car dealership. Even if they do not pay for their education, they are in effect given vouchers by the government to spend on their course. Institutions do what is best for students in order to increase their intake and their income, and in that way they are run in the interests of students. The more students pay for their education, the higher standards they will demand.

- 1) Does this reflect what happens at your institution?
- 2) What power do consumers have over supermarkets?
- 3) What consequences might there be of thinking about students in this way?

Students as members of a gym

Students interact with their institution like members of a gym. It is not possible to buy fitness, and in the same way it is not possible to buy an education. Instead, just as a gym member only gets out as much as they put in, so a student must put in hard work in order to achieve. Students are not 'empty vessels' into which teachers pour knowledge, they are active participants in their learning. In this way, students are partners with their institutions.

- 1) To what extent does this model accurately describe students' interactions with your institution?
- 2) How do students' associations, quality processes and decision-making beyond the classroom fit into this model?

Students as lobbyists

Decision-making power in institutions is concentrated in senior managers. Students, and in particular students' associations, can only make changes to their institution by convincing those with power to make those changes. Even if all students agree on a change, it does not happen unless their representatives are able to convince senior managers that it's the right decision.

- 1) Is a lobbying relationship the same thing as a partnership? If not, in which ways are they different?
- 2) If students at your institution wanted to change something, how would they do it? Are they lobbyists?

Students as stakeholders

Students are consulted on decisions that the institution is about to make. Since those decisions affect students, their views should be taken into account. Institutions make sure that students' views are listened to and taken seriously.

- 1) In this model, who decides what students should be consulted on?
- 2) Who shapes the agenda of the institution?
- 3) What happens if students and senior managers disagree?

Students as members of a golf club

Members of golf clubs have access to the facilities, and agree to abide by a code of conduct. Often they are also able to vote to decide how many new members to admit each year, the opening hours of the bar, and a few other very practical decisions. Students could be said to act in a similar way. They agree to be part of a learning community, abiding by certain rules, and they are given power to represent themselves to their institution about things which are in their interests.

- 1) Does this reflect what currently happens in your institution?
- 2) What role do staff play in this model?

Students as shareholders

Shareholders in companies, through virtue of having bought shares, are able to go to an AGM once a year, where the actions of the company are scrutinised, and where they can elect the board for the coming year. In this way, they 'control' the company at arm's length. Students could interact with their institution in the same way, choosing who runs the institution, and setting broad principles by which it is run.

- 1) What are the advantages and disadvantages of running an institution in this way?

Students as workers in a co-operative enterprise

Students are sometimes referred to as 'co-producers' of their education. In a co-operative enterprise, the company is run in a democratic way by the workers. Practical decisions about what the company does are taken in a democratic manner, and the workers share the profits made by the company. Decisions taken within tertiary education institutions could also be taken in a democratic and decentralised manner by the staff and students working as 'co-producers' within it, rather than through a line management system.

- 1) How would you avoid institutional indecision in this system?
- 2) Should institutions be democratic? Why?

Students as pathfinders and entrepreneurs

When students and students' associations identify a need at their institution, they set out to meet that need themselves. Examples of this might include setting up academic student societies or sports clubs, starting a student letting agency, or Student-Led Teaching Awards. In this way, they are able to address their own needs independently, without the institution.

- 1) Can you think of any examples of this model in operation at your institution?
- 2) Is this partnership? Why/why not?
- 3) To what extent can this model empower students?

Final questions

- 1) Think of a quality process in your institution such as staff-student liaison committees or student surveys. Which of these models most closely reflects the relationship between the staff and students involved in that process?
- 2) Which of these models reflects most closely what currently happens overall in your institution?
- 3) Which of these models, or which combination of models, is preferable to you? Why?
- 4) If these last two answers are different, what could change at the institution to move towards your preferred model of partnership?
- 5) When others in your institution use the term 'partnership', which of these models do you think is closest to what they mean? How can you convince them that your model is better?

Resource 2:

Example Student Partnership Agreement

The following Student Partnership Agreement is included to provide an illustration of the two sections of the model, and to help those putting together an agreement to visualise what they are aiming towards. We recommend that institutions develop their own Student Partnership Agreement rather than using this one as an initial basis, and in particular the presentation of this document is not necessarily a good example to be followed.

Mary Barbour College Student Partnership Agreement

The agreement

The purpose of this agreement is to show students what work is being done to improve the student experience in partnership between Mary Barbour College and Mary Barbour College Students' Association (MBCSA), and to show students how they can get involved in that work. It does not replace other strategic documents, and students are not limited by this document – you are actively encouraged to tell us how we can make your education better in any way!

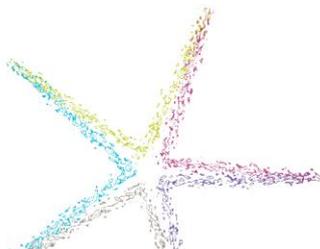
Our community

Mary Barbour College and MBCSA are proud of the contribution the college makes to our local community. Our mission is to develop skills and personal attributes in our students for the benefit of the whole community in the local area and beyond.

Our student body is central to that mission. Both Mary Barbour College and MBCSA value the diversity of the student population here and work to make sure everyone feels welcome and supported. All staff and students should interact in a way which helps create an inclusive, pleasant and welcoming environment for everyone.

Students at Mary Barbour College are represented collectively by MBCSA. MBCSA represents the views and interests of all students to the College and other decision-makers, and works in partnership with the College to secure the best possible student experience.

Find out more at <http://www.marybarbourcollege.ac.uk/ourcommunity>



Partnership working is based on the values of: openness; trust and honesty; agreed shared goals and values; and regular communication between the partners.

What is Partnership?

The terms 'partner' and 'partnership' are used in a broad sense to indicate joint working between students and staff. Partnership working is based on the values of: openness; trust and honesty; agreed shared goals and values; and regular communication between the partners. It is not based on the legal concept of equal responsibility and liability; rather partnership working recognises that all members in the partnership have legitimate, but different, perceptions and experiences. By working together to a common agreed purpose, steps can be taken that lead to enhancements for all concerned. The terms reflect a mature relationship based on mutual respect between students and staff.

Find out more at <http://www.marybarbourcollege.ac.uk/partnership>

Student representation

Mary Barbour College recognises the importance of students being involved in decisions at the college and making sure all students have the best experience possible. The college and students' association work together to ensure:

- That students are represented by a students' association representative on all committees relevant to the student experience.
- That student representatives are supported in their work on these committees and able to represent students' views and interests effectively.

We also make sure that every course has a course representative to make sure that students' views on their courses or any other part of the college experience are listened to and acted upon by staff where necessary. Course organisers and department heads should meet regularly with course representatives to discuss any relevant issues.

Find out more at <http://www.marybarbourcollege.ac.uk/studentvoice>

Students shaping life at the college

Student involvement in decision-making is key to creating the best possible student experience. At Mary Barbour College there are lots of ways that students can help shape college life. These include:

- Giving honest, constructive feedback by taking part in feedback surveys, focus groups, and other feedback processes which are available.
- Using these same mechanisms to suggest solutions to any problems they may have experienced.
- Speaking to their course organiser or personal tutor directly.
- Sharing their opinion with their course representative.
- Standing to be a course representative, or a member of the Student Representative Council.
- Taking a motion to the Student Representative Council.

The students' association and its role in the College

Mary Barbour College also supports the work of MBCSA in making sure that students are listened to by the college and that student views have an impact on how the college works.

MBCSA consists of:

- The Student Representative Council, with representatives for each department.
- The President and Vice President.
- Four Liberation Committees for Women, LGBT, Black and Ethnic Minority, and Disabled students, respectively.
- Open forums on Learning and Teaching, Welfare and Community Campaigning.

Last year's Partnership Agreement

Last year, Mary Barbour College and MBCSA agreed to work together on the following areas:

- Variety of assessment methods – we made a lot of progress in making sure all programmes have a variety of assessment methods, reducing the number of 'high risk assessments' by 35%.
- Feedback on assessment – we made some progress on this issue, but we recognise that this is an ongoing problem, and have agreed to continue work in this area over the next year.
- Library resources – we made changes to our library lending and subscription policies to increase the number of electronic resources and improve access to more popular resources.

Using student feedback and existing strategies, Mary Barbour College and MBCSA have agreed to work together on the following issues over the coming year. We will undertake equality impact assessments on any policies which arise from this work.

Feedback on Assessment

The college has been making progress in this area, but it is clearly still an ongoing issue. In last year's survey, 42% of students said they were not satisfied with the feedback they receive on their work, and 46% said that feedback on their work was not prompt. Some subject areas scored exceptionally in this area, and we will use the experience in these areas to inform our work.

Mary Barbour College and MBCSA have agreed that the college's policy on feedback on assessment – that written individual feedback on assessments will be provided within four weeks and that a feedback session with the relevant tutor will be provided [reference to relevant institutional policy] – may need further action to apply across the college. We will aim to improve scores in this area by 10% over the next two years.

MBCSA and the college will work together to:

- Uncover the reasons for the current problems.
- Remove the obstacles to the full implementation of the feedback policy, working with staff across the college.
- The college will support MBCSA to do research into what students consider good feedback to be.

This work will be led by the Learning and Teaching Committee, and progress will be monitored by seeking student feedback on this issue. Keep track of our progress at:

<http://www.marybarbourcollege.ac.uk/feedback>

Employability

A recent external review of Mary Barbour College recommended that we strengthen our links with industry. The MBCSA officers agree that this is an important issue, and 76% of students say they chose their course in order to gain qualifications relevant to their career. We will aim to increase the number of our students in a positive destination by 5% over the next four years.

MBCSA and the college will work together to ensure all courses:

- Enable students to articulate the employability skills developed through the course.
- Are relevant to the needs of industry.
- Provide industrial placements where appropriate.

This work will be led by the Curriculum Committee. Keep track of our progress at: <http://www.marybarbourcollege.ac.uk/employability>

Procrastination

Social media has become a more prominent feature of many people's lives over the past few years. Anecdotally, many students tell us that they find it difficult to work because they're so frequently distracted by Facebook, Twitter and similar sites. MBCSA and the college will work together to:

- Carry out a research project to find out how students use social media and how it affects their work, and identify ways in which students can avoid procrastination.
- Launch a campaign to help students use social media without procrastinating from their work.

This work will be led by MBCSA. Keep track of our progress at: <http://www.marybarbourcollege.ac.uk/procrastination>

Overall

Mary Barbour College and MBCSA also agree to work together to investigate and address any issues arising from student feedback as required throughout the year. Mary Barbour College agrees to ensure that MBCSA has the support required to fulfil their role, and MBCSA agrees to fulfil this role, making the student voice heard.

Signed College Principal
LOGO

Signed MBCSA President
LOGO

Resource 3: An example timeline of the development of the Student Partnership Agreement

Initial discussion on the concept of the Student Partnership Agreement and planning for its development. Identifying opportunities within the college calendar to carry out consultation activity with students.

Resource 1: 'What is partnership?'

Period for consultation with staff and students. Discussion at appropriate committees within the institution and the students' association. Using existing events and processes to consult with students where possible.

Resource 4: Focus group

New student officers elected. Involved in discussions about the priorities for Section B. Negotiation period begins.

Resources 6 & 7: Areas for inclusion in Section B

Student Partnership Agreement approved at appropriate committees within the institution and students' association.

Final signoff by Principal and students' association President.

Design/printing time. Student Partnership Agreement included in pre-arrival information.

Student Partnership Agreement launched in Week 1. Identified work begins.

Reviewing the Student Partnership Agreement

Month 1

Months 2-4

Months 5-6

Month 6

Month 7

Month 8

Month 10

Month 12

Resource 4: A focus group workshop to help students' associations engage the student body in the initial stages of the development of a Student Partnership Agreement

Session name:	Student Partnership Agreements Focus Group	Session timings:	70 to 90 minutes, depending on group size
Session objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To gather the views of a group of students beyond the sabbatical officers about the development of the Student Partnership Agreement. • To foster a sense of ownership for the Student Partnership Agreement amongst this group of students. 		
Resources:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flipchart paper • Markers • Sticky notes (two different colours) • A prepared visual presentation (optional) 		
Preparatory work:	Set up the room into clusters of tables, with about four or five people in each group. It would help the session move along if there were an experienced rep in each group.		

Introduction	
Timings	Tutor activity
<i>2 mins</i>	<p>Introduce the session. Be sure to cover the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who you are • How long you're planning for the workshop to take • Housekeeping • Session objectives
<i>10 mins</i>	<p>Using your prepared visual presentation if you chose to use one, briefly introduce the concept of Student Partnership Agreements. You should be sure to cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The advantages you expect from developing the Student Partnership Agreement. • The two sections of the Student Partnership Agreement (Section A describing the various structures and processes by which students can effect change at their institution, and Section B describing the work which the institution and students' association agree to work on together over the next academic year). • How the Student Partnership Agreement will be developed at your institution.

Exercise 1

10 mins

Put a piece of flipchart paper and some sticky notes of one colour (say, green) on each group's table, and ask each of them to write on a sticky note the one thing that they would like to change about their institution, or one problem that they've had with their institution. Make it clear that these issues won't be reported back to their teachers, and encourage them to be as frank as possible. As prompts, this could be something to do with:

- the content of their course
- the books in the library or the number of computers
- whether they feel prepared for employment
- what skills they're developing
- any issues you know of, raised through institutional feedback methods

Once everyone has something, have each of them feed back briefly to the rest of the group, and stick the sticky notes in a column on the left hand side of the paper. If someone finishes quickly, ask them to come up with another.

Exercise 2

40-60
mins
depending
on group
size

Now put the sticky notes of the other colour (say, blue) on each table. Ask the groups to work through each problem identified in Exercise 1, and to think of all the different ways in which they as a student could go about solving that problem. Ask them to write these solutions on the blue sticky notes and put them alongside the corresponding green note.

Remember:

- They are not identifying the solution to this problem, rather how *they as a student* would work with the institution to solve it. For example they might raise it through the course rep system, feed into a particular committee, or put it in a survey response.
- This is the most important part of the workshop. Make sure you allow enough time for them to discuss each problem in full. They should write down as many different ways as possible.

This will be a difficult exercise for most students, and they will need a lot of prompting. Wander around the groups and ask them lots of questions:

- Who makes decisions about this issue? How could this person be influenced?
- Why does this problem exist? What might be the reason for doing things in this way? What resource might be needed to solve this problem?
- How might a student influence this decision? Is there a committee which oversees it? Are students represented on that committee?
- Can this issue be solved directly with institution staff or will the students' association's structures be needed?
- How else could this problem be solved?

Again, have them feed back to the rest of the group, and ask the other participants if they can think of other ways in which students might get the problem solved.

5 mins	<p>Ask each table to rank the problems on their sheet in order of importance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many students does it affect? In how many departments? • How serious a problem is it for those students it does affect? <p>They should write the order of importance next to the green sticky notes.</p>
5 mins	<p>Before you finish, it's important to thank the participants and tell them how their contribution is going to be used to feed into the development of the Student Partnership Agreement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer back to the two sections that you introduced at the beginning of the session. The solutions that they've written on the blue sticky notes will help, amongst other things, to inform Section A on how students interact with their institution. • The issues written on the green sticky notes and the priority given to them will help, amongst other things, to inform the issues which the students' association might argue should be included in Section B on what the institution and students' association agree to work on over the next academic year. • Give them your contact details, and if there will be other opportunities for them to be involved in the development of the Student Partnership Agreement, let them know about those. <p>Ensure that you take all the materials from the session and write them up into a useable form as soon as possible after the event.</p>

Resource 5: Using the Student Learning Experience to map student engagement in learning and teaching for inclusion in Section A

Section A of the Student Partnership Agreement includes a description of the various formal and informal ways in which students are able to engage with their institution to enhance the quality of their education. In order to create as accurate a picture as possible, it may be useful to carry out a mapping exercise of those opportunities, although the results of the exercise may be too lengthy to include in a paper copy of the Student Partnership Agreement. This resource is designed to help facilitate such an exercise, which it is anticipated will be useful far beyond its inclusion in the Student Partnership Agreement.

The Student Learning Experience is an exercise which forms a part of sparqs' Course Rep Training. It helps course reps to understand that learning and teaching is a multi-faceted concept, and to differentiate learning and teaching from the wider student experience. It identifies seven elements of learning and teaching: curriculum, learning resources, learning and teaching processes, assessment and feedback, progression and achievement, guidance and support, and quality assurance and enhancement. Some of these elements overlap, but taken together they help to clarify the various aspects of learning and teaching.

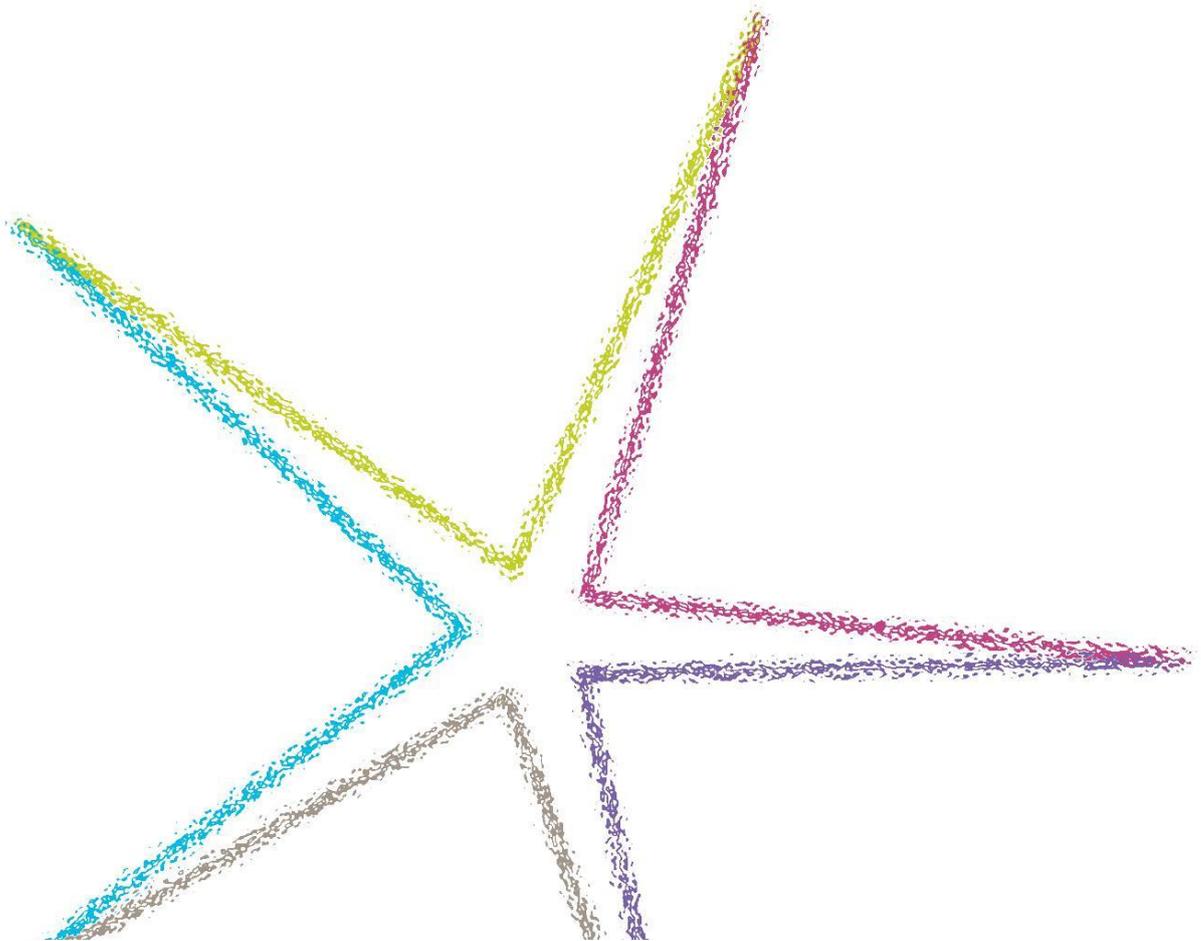
Practically, mapping student engagement means identifying how decisions are made about the various aspects of the Student Learning Experience, and describing how students are engaged in that decision. In carrying out this exercise it is important to remember the following:

- Decisions are often taken at course, departmental and strategic levels. For instance, whilst decisions about which books to buy may be taken within the library, the overall budget for the library is likely to be set at a more strategic level. It is important to remember how students are engaged in decision-making at all levels.
- Decisions may be taken differently in different parts of the institution. Whereas one department may make a particular decision through a discussion at a committee, in another the decision might be made by an individual.
- Sometimes practice is not the result of a conscious decision, but instead is a result of tradition or individual preference. How can students engage with this practice?
- Student engagement may also happen in different ways and to a greater or lesser extent in different parts of the institution. It is important to map not only how students should be engaged, but also whether that engagement happens everywhere, and whether it happens in the same way in all parts of the institution.

Sometimes practice is not the result of a conscious decision, but instead is a result of tradition or individual preference. How can students engage with this practice?

- Whilst the Student Learning Experience categorises various aspects of learning and teaching, it may be necessary to extend this exercise to other aspects of the student experience if the Student Partnership Agreement is to have a wider scope than learning and teaching issues. These aspects might include accommodation, bursaries, catering and social provision.
- This exercise identifies the opportunities available for students to engage with their institution to improve the quality of learning and teaching. It does not evaluate the quality or effectiveness of those interactions. This evaluation may be a useful piece of work to undertake as part of Section B of the Student Partnership Agreement.

It is anticipated that this exercise may well generate questions as well as answering them, and that the first time the exercise is undertaken, there may be several gaps in the chart. It may be fruitful to use this as an opportunity to gather information on this topic.



	Where are decisions taken? By whom?	Formal student engagement mechanisms	Informal student engagement mechanisms	Is more information needed? Who from?
Curriculum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Course content - Handbooks - Study abroad opportunities - Placements - Optional and compulsory modules 				
Learning Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Library - IT - VLE - Estates - Classroom resources 				
Learning and teaching processes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contact time - Independent and group work - Class sizes - Teaching styles - Staff development 				
Assessment and feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marking criteria - Consistency of marking - Number and type of assessments - Choice of assessment - Quality and promptness of feedback 				

	Where are decisions taken? By whom?	Formal student engagement mechanisms	Informal student engagement mechanisms	Is more information needed? Who from?
Progression and achievement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The learner journey - PDP - Links between courses 				
Guidance and support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Careers advice - Personal support - Counselling - Academic support 				
Quality Enhancement and Assurance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Institution-wide conversations about enhancement - External review - Internal review - Staff observation - Survey development - Interpretation of student feedback 				

Resource 6: Identifying areas for enhancement for inclusion in Section B

Areas should be things which can be worked on in partnership between the institution and the students' association.

Section B of the Student Partnership Agreement should be used to identify areas upon which the students' association and the institution will work together in partnership, over the coming year. The areas included in this section should be negotiated between the students' association and management at the institution, which might happen over a series of meetings. Participants in this process should bear in mind the following points:

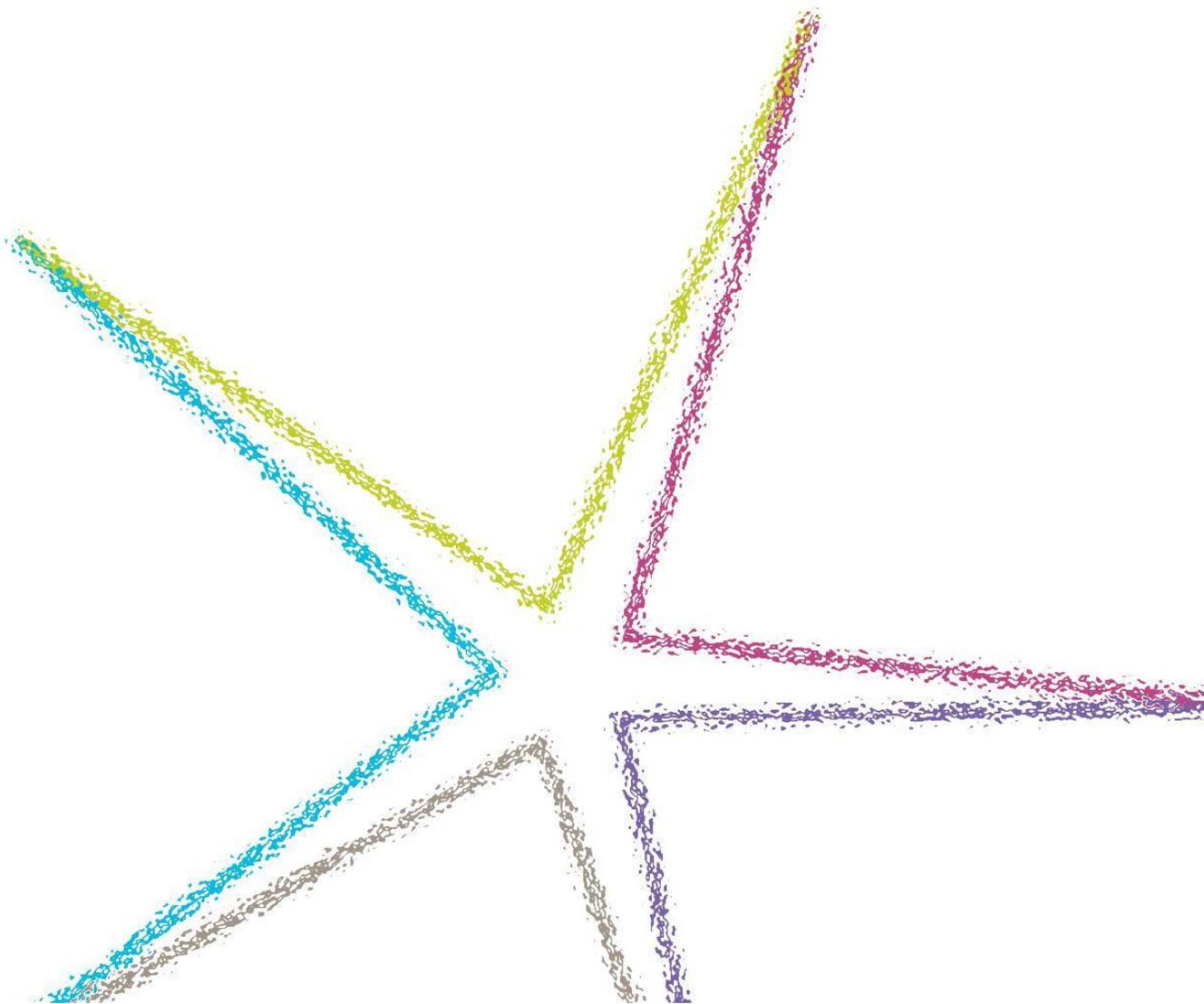
- The areas should be things which can be worked on in partnership between the institution and the students' association – staffing issues are unlikely to be appropriate!
- The identified areas should be issues that students recognise as priorities, not necessarily issues that students aren't aware of.
- The areas should be relevant to a large number of students across the institution – an issue which affects just one department may not seem relevant to other students.
- No area of work is 'too big' to be included – ongoing areas for enhancement, such as assessment and feedback, can be carried over into subsequent agreements.
- The areas identified in this section are just the priorities that are communicated to students – you don't have to include everything, and there's nothing stopping you working together on other things, too!
- Your choice of priorities should be informed by evidence.

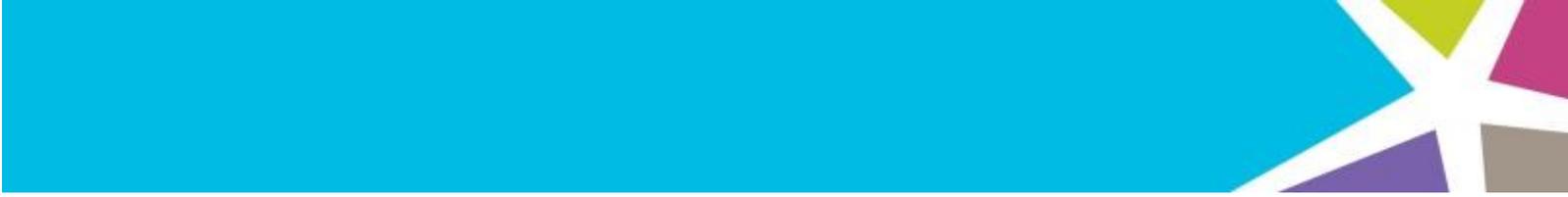
No area of work is 'too big' to be included – ongoing areas for enhancement, such as assessment and feedback, can be carried over into subsequent agreements

Those taking part in putting together the Student Partnership Agreement, from the institution and from the students' association, should meet together to discuss what they'd like to see in Section B. They should come to this meeting prepared with various sources of evidence, which may include the following:

- Student responses to feedback surveys
- Recommendations from external review
- Officers' manifestos
- Comments from SQA verifiers
- Institutional research
- Students' association policy
- Annual evaluation data
- Internal subject or departmental reviews
- Issues identified through officer case work/institutional advice services
- Outcome Agreements
- Strategic plans (institutional, thematic and departmental)
- Priorities identified by institutional committees
- Activity in the wider sector
- Findings from consultation with students

These sources of evidence will indicate areas which may be enhanced within the institution. Discussing this evidence, the two parties may negotiate about which areas they think should be prioritised, bearing in mind the points above about relevance to students. One way in which this could be done is if each party brought a list of between five to ten areas. Comparing these two lists should reveal some common ground, which could be the basis upon which the areas for enhancement are agreed. Once this draft list is drawn up, it may be appropriate to consult with a wider group of students, and with appropriate committees at the institution, before final agreement, and signoff by the Principal and the students' association President.





Resource 7: Topics which might be covered by Section B of a Student Partnership Agreement

This list is not exhaustive, but looking over and discussing it may be useful for institutions and students' associations in the early stages of developing a Student Partnership Agreement, in order to help clarify what each would consider appropriate for inclusion, particularly in the second part of the Student Partnership Agreement.

Teaching and Learning

- Curriculum
- Assessment
- Feedback
- Teaching practices within the classroom
- Student progression and achievement
- Additional course costs
- Quality processes, and student engagement in those processes
- Student support, including personal tutors and supervisors
- Information, Advice and Guidance
- Professional accreditation
- Course creation and approval

Estate and facilities

- Quality of estate
- Learning resources
- Study space
- Access to computer hardware and software
- Virtual Learning Environment
- Student services

Community, equality, diversity and respect

- Extracurricular social activity
- Volunteering
- Creating a sense of community
- Health and welfare support services
- Accommodation
- Students and work
- Accessible campuses
- Accessible learning
- Mutual respect and professionalism in treating all members of the institutional community

Resource 8: Evaluating the Student Partnership Agreement

It is recommended that in order to ensure that the Student Partnership Agreement is a living, working document, it is revisited and reviewed regularly. Work identified in Section B may take longer than one year to complete, and so it may be appropriate to carry out this review on a rolling basis.

It may be useful to reflect upon the suggested questions during the review process.

The specifics of the review process will vary by institution, depending on the Student Partnership Agreement that has been developed and implemented. However, it may be useful to reflect upon the following questions during the review process, perhaps with a group of those who have participated in developing and implementing the Student Partnership Agreement.

It is important to remember when reviewing the Student Partnership Agreement that it is not merely the finished document which is significant and which is under review. Rather, the process of developing and implementing the agreement should be conducive to a better working relationship between staff and students, and therefore holds significance of its own, and is worthy of review. Similarly, the progress made on the areas for enhancement in Section B should be measured against any expectations that the group might have had in those areas.

1. The partners

- Who were the main participants in developing the Student Partnership Agreement? Was a working group created? If so, how did that group operate?
- Was the membership of the group that took the agreement forward appropriate? Was there an appropriate balance of staff and students? Did the group have the necessary authority to drive the work forward and promote it to other areas of the institution?

2. Consultation

- How did the participants ensure that other staff and students were able to input into the Student Partnership Agreement? How much of this consultation happened face to face? Were all types of students able to take part in the consultation?
- Were students partners in this process? Were they able to generate ideas spontaneously, or did they mostly respond to questions set by the organisers of the consultation?
- Did the consultation take advantage of existing processes within the institution, or was it composed of new activity? Was the process overly work-intensive?

3. Evidence

- What other types of evidence were used to inform the development of the Student Partnership Agreement? Was this an appropriate range of sources?

4. Progression of the project

- Did the participants, in developing the Student Partnership Agreement, set out a timeline for the progression of the project? Did this timeline take into account other activities happening within the institution?
- Did the project stick to this timeline? When the next Student Partnership Agreement is developed, might another approach be used?

5. Ethos

- Is the Student Partnership Agreement an enhancement-focused document?
- Did the group carry out the 'What is Partnership?' exercise? Does the document reflect a partnership approach, or does it resemble a contract?
- Does the Student Partnership Agreement cover all students within the institution?

6. Communication

- Does the Student Partnership Agreement signpost further information?
- Is the agreement online, or is it in hard copy? Does the Student Partnership Agreement use a format and language style which is accessible to students?
- If the agreement is online, does it enable staff and students to input into the development of the next Student Partnership Agreement, or take part in work identified in Section B?
- Is the dissemination and promotion strategy for the Student Partnership Agreement effective?

7. Section A

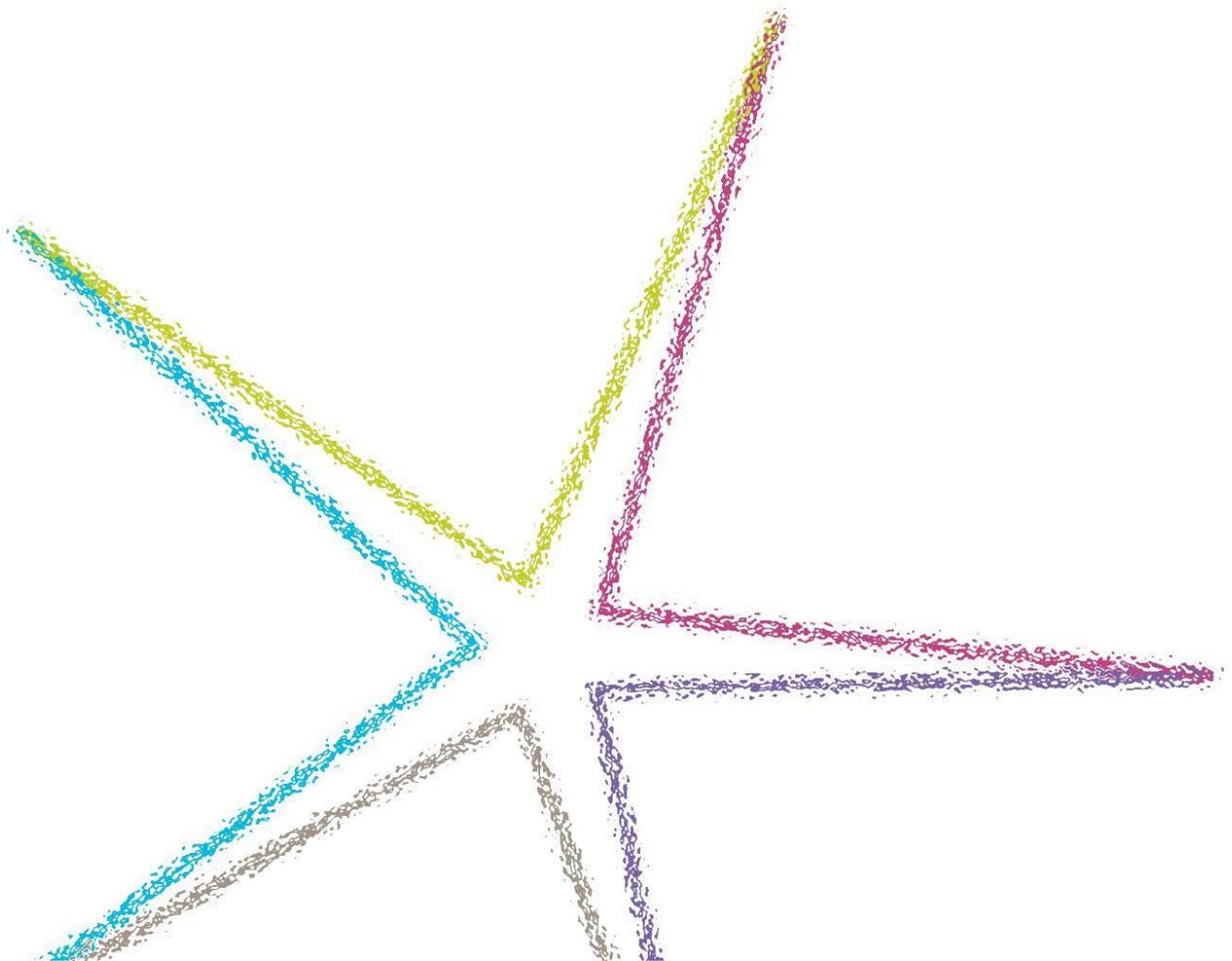
- Did the participants in developing the Student Partnership Agreement carry out a mapping exercise to ensure that the information about opportunities for students to engage in quality processes is complete and accurate?
- Now that the various formal and informal mechanisms for student engagement have been identified, has there been any effort to assess the quality of those interactions? If not, might this be a piece of work to undertake as part of Section B in the next Student Partnership Agreement? How might this work be carried out?

8. Section B

- How was each piece of work identified in Section B taken forward? Was there a partnership approach to this work?
- Was as much progress made as expected in each of these areas? How do you know?
- Did the activity on these areas take place only at a strategic level, or was it discussed and taken forwards within other parts of the institution too?
- How were students kept informed of the progress made on each of the areas for enhancement?

9. Using the Student Partnership Agreement for other purposes

- Has the Student Partnership Agreement, or any of the activity used to develop it, been used to help inform other activity within the institution? What other purposes might the Student Partnership Agreement serve?
- Were there any unexpected outcomes to developing the Student Partnership Agreement, positive or negative?



Acknowledgements

Thanks to all those who contributed to the development of this guidance. Discussions involving both students and staff have filtered back to sparqs, with the experiences and ideas of all those concerned with student engagement forming a part of this document. We remain grateful to everyone across the country who has given their time and enthusiasm to the conversations around this guidance, and the future of SPAs in the college sector. In the coming months and years there will be a well-evolved network of people to draw on for this work.

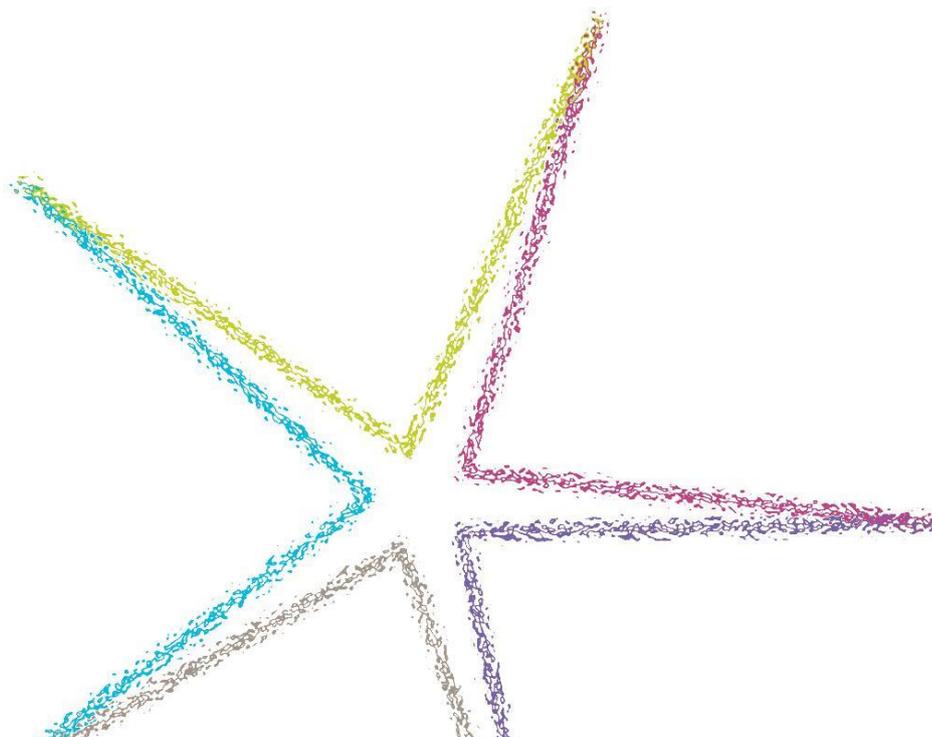
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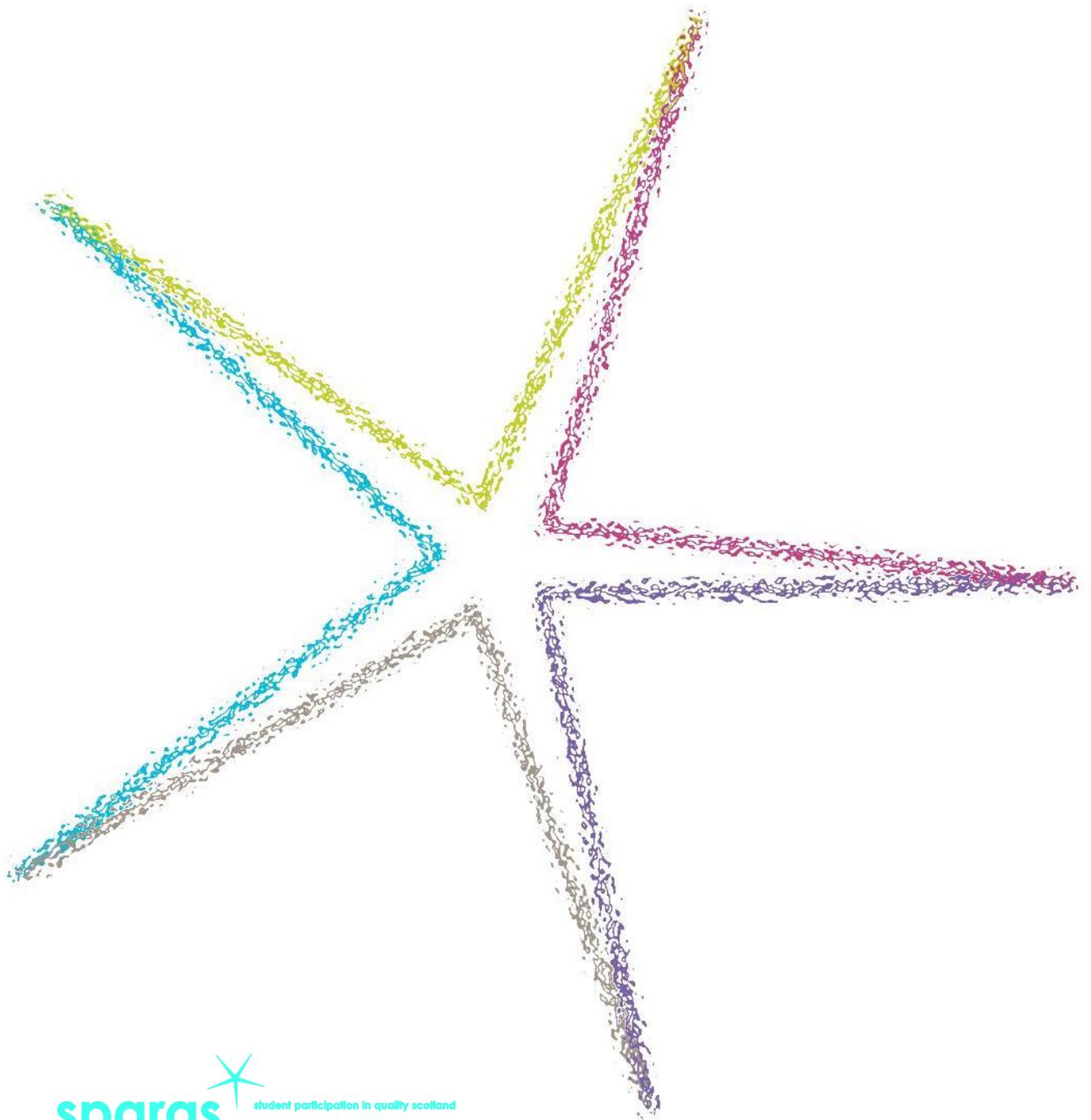
¹ *A Student Engagement Framework for Scotland* (sparqs, Education Scotland, The Higher Education Academy Scotland, NUS Scotland, Quality Assurance Agency Scotland, Scotland's Colleges, Scottish Funding Council, Universities Scotland, December 2012) www.sparqs.ac.uk/SEFScotland

² R. Griggs, *Report of the Review of Further Education Governance in Scotland* (January 2012). <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0038/00386490.pdf> - Last accessed 18.5.15

³ *Framework for the Development of Strong and Effective College Students' Association in Scotland* (NUS Scotland, Scottish Funding Council, The Scottish Government, May 2015) – www.saframework.co.uk

⁴ *Putting Learners at the Centre – Delivering our Ambitions for Post-16 Education* (The Scottish Government, September 2011) <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2011/09/15103949/0> - Last accessed 18.5.15





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