



# **Accreditation and Reward of Student Representatives**

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UHI Millennium Institute Executive Office

**sparqs**





## overview

1. sparqs and the background to today
2. Why accredit?
3. Examples of good practice
4. Comparing various tools
  - Lunch (12.30pm to 1.15pm)  
Comparing various tools (continued)
5. Reflecting upon reward and accreditation
6. Conclusions and finish at 3.30pm

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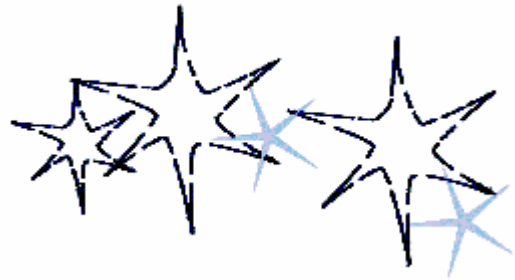




# Who are you?

- Your name
- Your institution
- Your role





# Session 1

## The background to today





# sparqs: a quick introduction

- **Student Participation in Quality Scotland**
- **Funded by the Funding Council to work with:**
  - institutions
  - students' associations
  - students
  - other sector agencies
  - Works in universities and colleges to develop ways to help students shape their learning experience
- **Created in 2003, in its fifth year**
- **6.5 staff, most based in Edinburgh but 1 in Inverness**
- **14 Associate Trainers – students who deliver training**





# sparqs' work 2007-08

## ■ **work strand 1: embedding support for representatives**

- core and end of year course representative training
- other training for student representatives
- support materials and resources
- staff workshops in both colleges and universities

## ■ **work strand 2: facilitating sector-level collaboration**

- briefings to student officers (HE officers & college student governors)
- support to staff on effective representative systems
- national conference on student involvement (autumn 2008)
- clearing house of information on student involvement

## ■ **work strand 3: supporting individual institutional agendas**

- pilot approach to support 20 institutions in the North of Scotland





## The process of the pilot approach in the North

- “supporting individual institutional agendas” involves giving five free days consultancy to 20 institutions in the north of Scotland: northern Fife to Shetland
- Each institution has told us the issues they would like us to help them with
- 5 day workplans will be delivered through research, training and workshops





## Examples of workplans

- The experience of class representatives
- The “middle level” of representation
- The experience of student governors
- Tools of mass feedback
- Learner involvement strategies
- School/department-based projects
- And of course, accreditation and reward



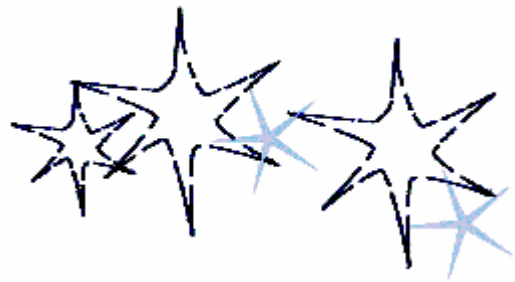




## Joint events

- College student-staff liaison officer network day, Perth, 7 February
- Accreditation and reward of student reps, Inverness, 28 February
- Learner involvement strategies, Abertay, 10 June

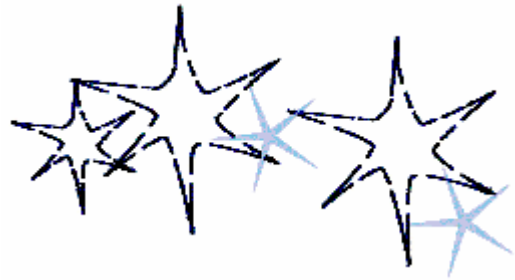




Any questions?

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## Session 2

# Why accredit?

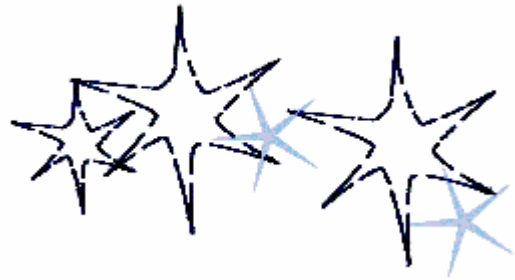




## Why accredit?

- As a “thank you”
- To compensate for expenses
- To enhance the sense of partnership
- To recognise roles’ academic merit
- Evidence for prospective employers
- As payment





## Session 3

# Examples of good practice





## “Class reps in the community”

- Angus College
- Some class reps use their role as the community element of their Duke of Edinburgh Award
- Raises profile of college locally
- Provides a qualification without needing to create a specific one





## Certification at the start

- Anniesland College, Glasgow
- Presentation of certificate by Principal at a class rep lunch
- Immediately after class rep training (delivered by sparqs, naturally)
- Thank you at beginning, not end – an incentive to treat role seriously?





## Modular accreditation

- Napier University, Edinburgh
- Accredited module available to class representatives
- Optional rather than compulsory







## Gifts

- Forth Valley College (Falkirk, Stirling and Clackmannan)
- Gifts have included discounted gym membership, stationary vouchers etc





## Payment

- Dundee College
- Payment of representatives for their attendance at meetings and preparation time
- Part of a wider reform of representative structures





## Expenses/payment

- UHI Millennium Institute
- Attendance allowance paid to representatives on UHI committees
- Recognition of time, incidental expenses, contribution to institution





## Mention on transcript

- University of Glasgow
- Class rep role included on transcript (which outlines completed modules)
- Dependent on attendance at training and two out of three course committee meetings over the year
- Detailed information about reps is collated as a result

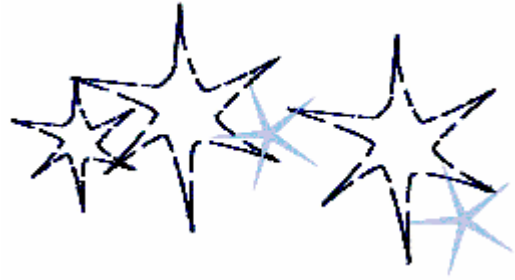




## Payment

- Heriot-Watt University
- School representatives are appointed, not elected
- £500 honorarium is paid to reps, who are supported and managed by a member of students' association staff





## Session 4

# Workshop on various methods





## Methods to explore

- Certification – before and after
- Mention on transcript
- Payment
- Expenses
- Modular accreditation
- External agency's volunteer award
- ...?





## Methods to explore

- Do a “SWOT” analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats
- What message does this tool give out? (eg to the representative, other students, staff, wider community, sector...)
- What are the resource implications?
- What sort of institution might this work in?
- Take notes, and feed back after lunch







Lunch



See you at 1.15pm





## Methods to explore

- Feedback on your group discussions





## Session 5

# Recognising & Rewarding Student Involvement



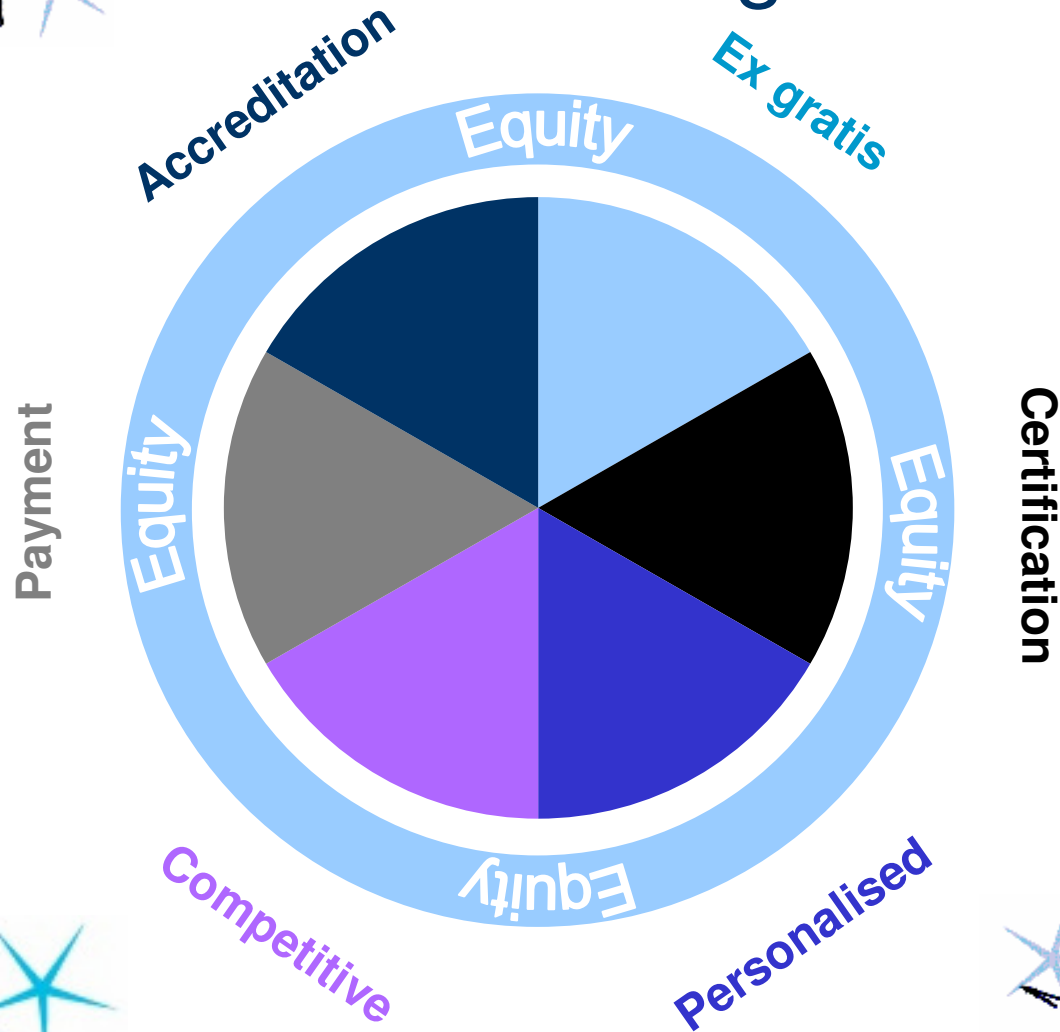


## what needs fixed (or are we just being nice)?

- recognition could lead to:
  - increased up take of students fulfilling a representative role
  - increasing numbers of students acting effectively in their role
- alternatively its nice to be nice, because:
  - it is a way of saying thanks
  - it is a way of recognising the input of the student voice
- question of 'value for money':
  - does the time and resource spent developing such systems of recognition produce greater returns in terms of student involvement that effects change within our institutions?



# towards a typology of recognition





## ex gratis (i)

- **definition:**

- the provision of free lunches or drinks at meetings or the availability of expenses to incur reasonable expenses.

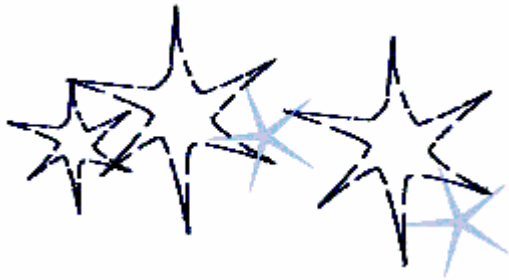
- **advantages:**

- one of the most old-fashioned and simplest ways of saying 'thank you' to those who assist you.

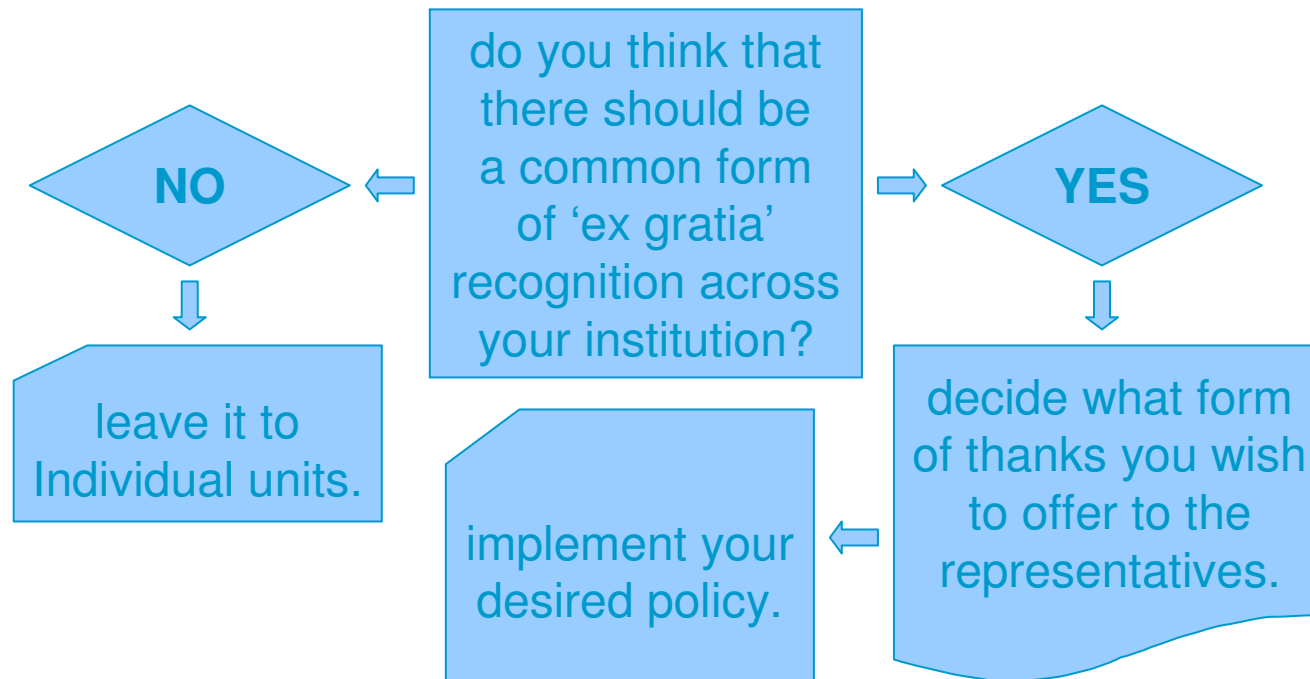
- **disadvantages:**

- across an institution this could raise issues of parity.
- whose budget does this come out of?





## ex gratis (ii)





## certification (i)

- **definition:**

- the provision of a certificate for undertaking the role and duties of a student representative.

- **advantages:**

- a simple and relatively cheap way of the institution formally acknowledging the role and value of representation.

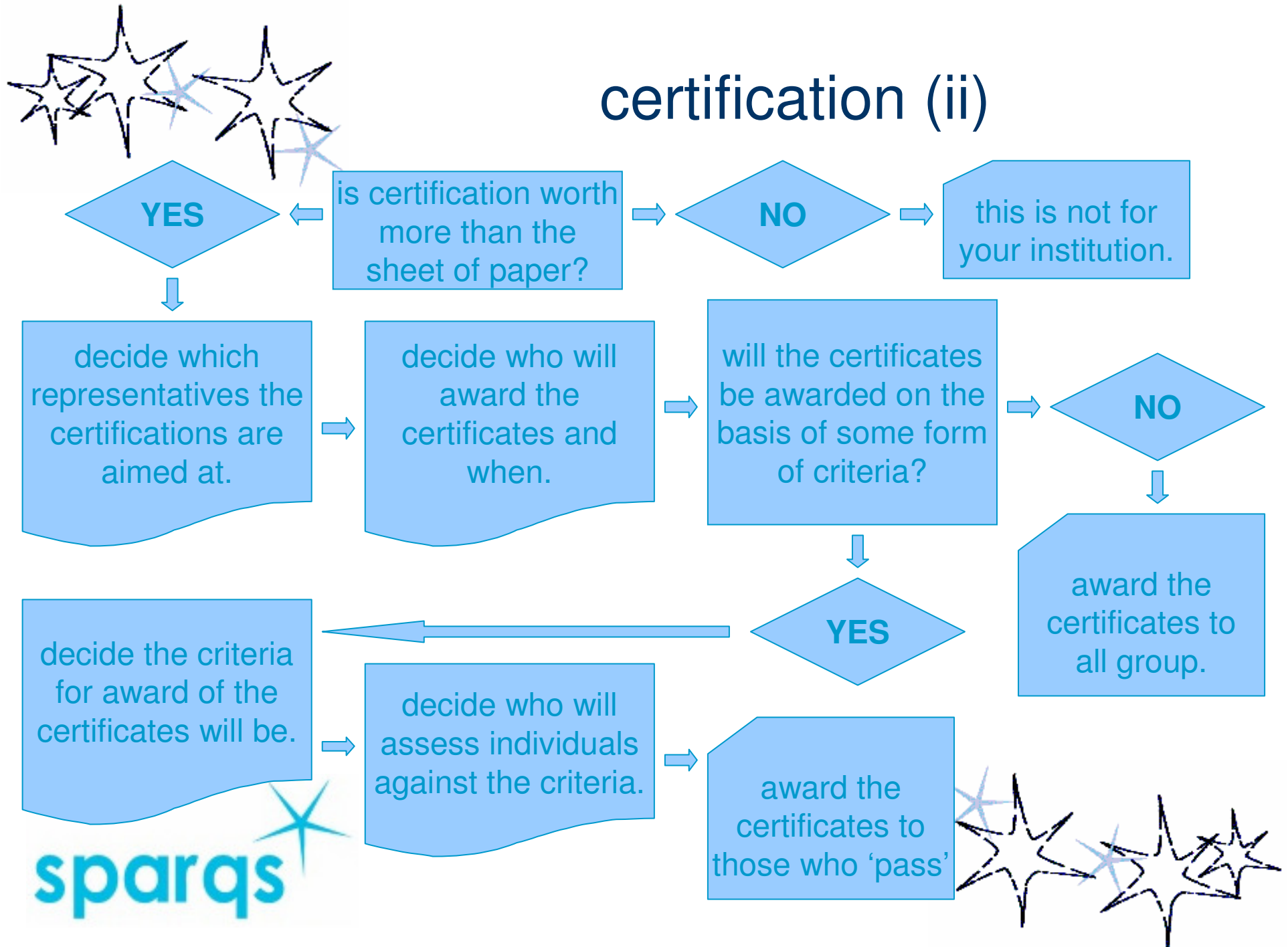
- **disadvantages:**

- do all student representatives get a certificate, even if they have done very little in their role?
  - can such certificates be meaningfully used by students after they have left their institution?





# certification (ii)





## personalised (i)

- **definition:**

- recognition that is based upon the assumption that the experience of each individual representative will be different.

- **advantages:**

- could be one mechanism of allowing representatives to reflect on the skills and understandings they are developing.

- **disadvantages:**

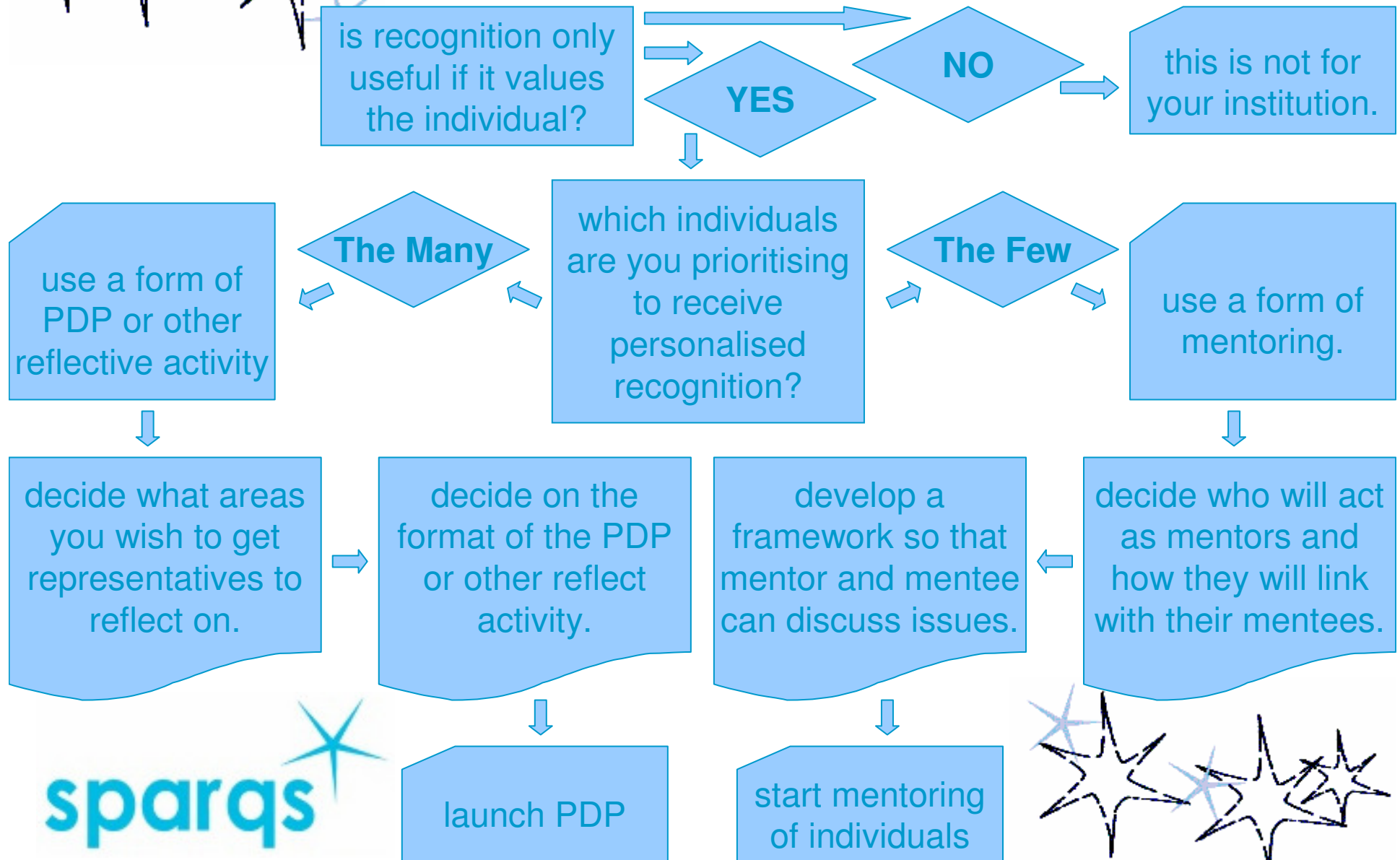
- potentially highly resource intensive.

- representatives may not wish to spend time on such reflective activity.





## personalised (ii)



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## competitive (i)

- **definition:**

- the organisation of some form of competition to recognise the efforts of the 'best' student representatives.

- **advantages:**

- can be used to promote certain behaviours amongst student representatives.

- could be used as a mechanism for evaluating what student representatives are doing within the institution.

- **disadvantages:**

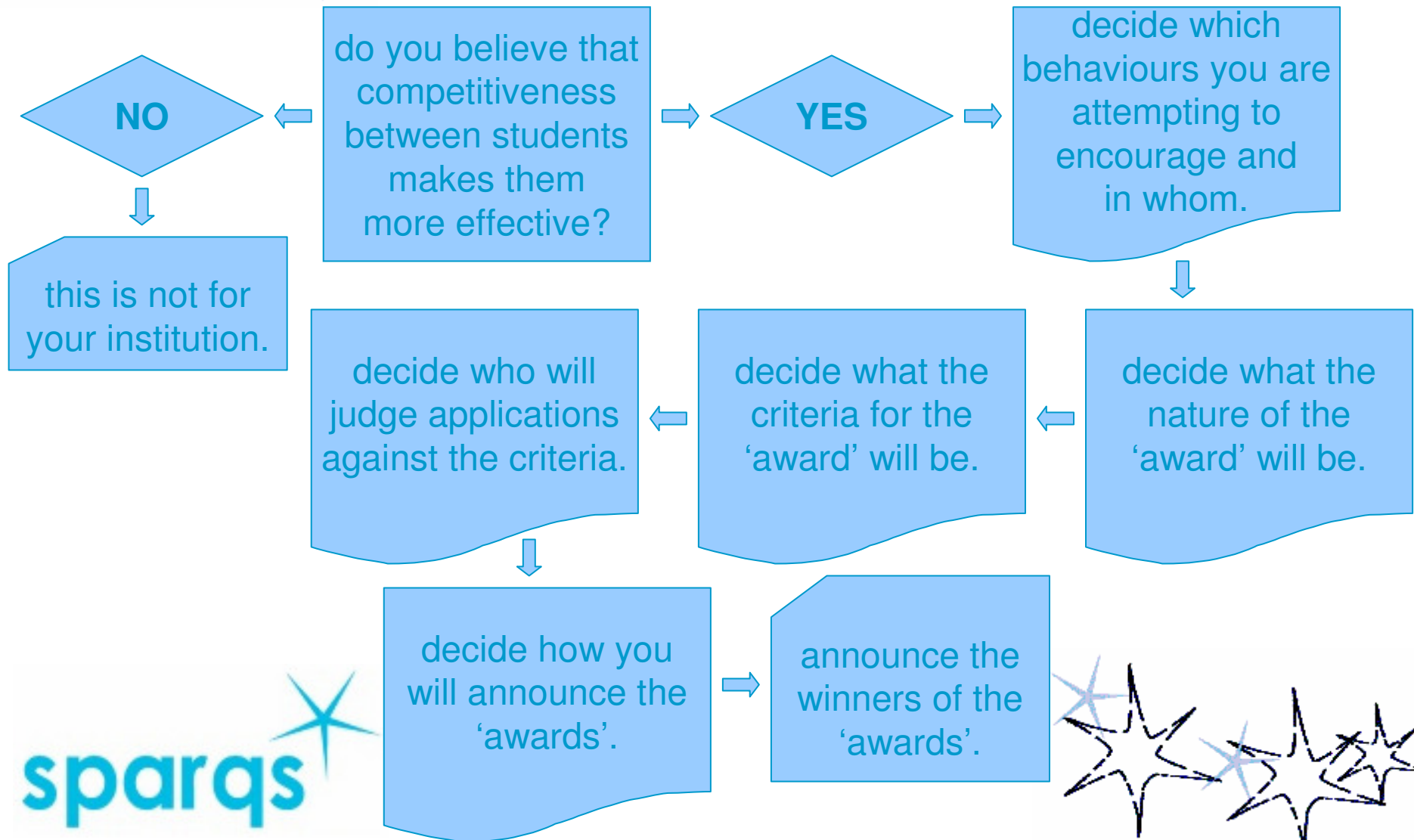
- only recognises the efforts of the 'best' of representatives.

- only self-selecting individuals who enter such competitions.





## competitive (ii)





## payment (i)

- **definition:**

- the payment of a sum of money to students once they have undertaken representative duties.

- **advantages:**

- adds an additional element of accountability for student representatives.

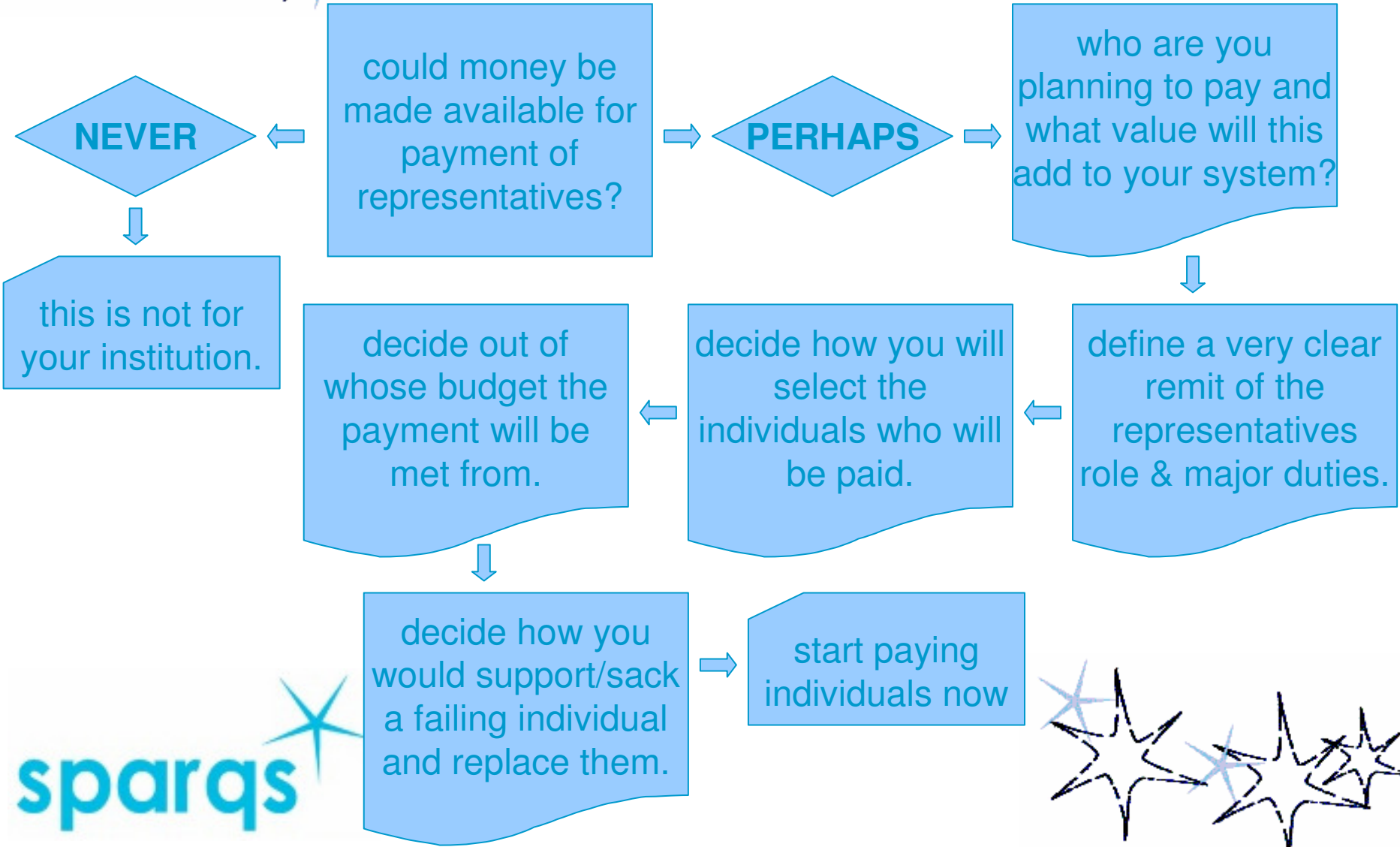
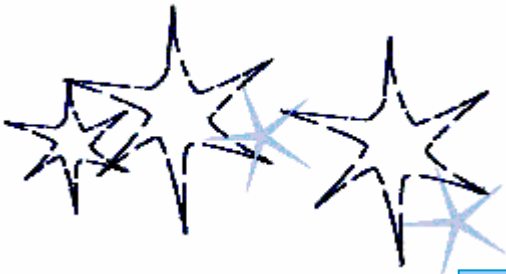
- **disadvantages:**

- people only undertake representative activities for the sake of the monetary payment potentially affecting their honesty.

- there are tax implications for institutions and students.



# payment (ii)





## accreditation (i)

- **definition:**

- the provision of a course (through the SQA or a university) bearing academic credit.

- **advantages:**

- recognises the role that representatives play in the same way that institutions recognise the achievements of students.

- **disadvantages:**

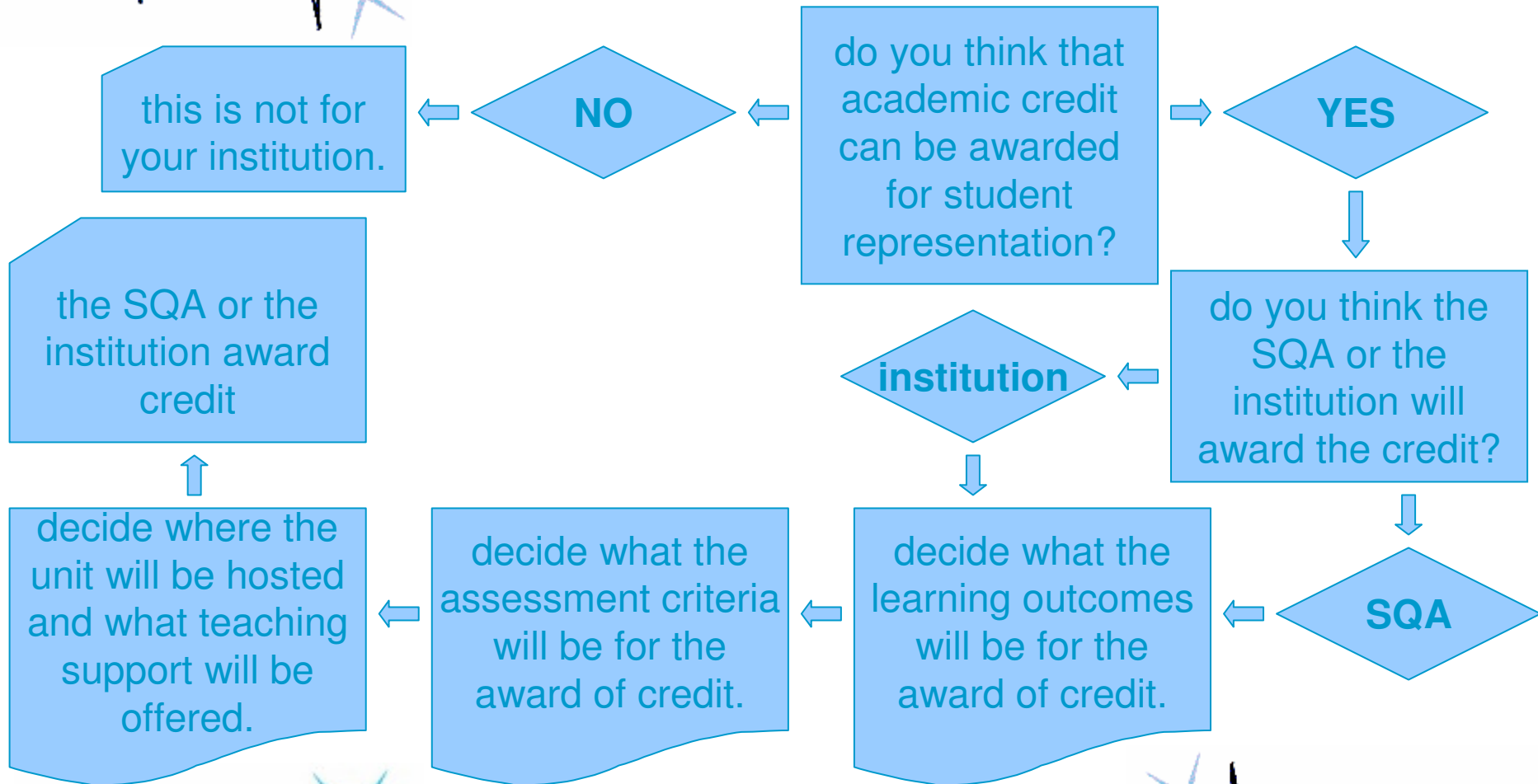
- the limitations of curricula flexibility could limit the up take of such courses by representative.

- many question the academic value of what representatives do.





# accreditation





## issues of equity

- in a system that is based on the idea of staff and students working in partnership to create a enhancing learning experience do students need to rewarded for their activity?
  - in this partnership model is student involvement central to the essence of being a student and therefore no reward is needed, beyond the fact that enhancements are made to the learning experience?
  - alternatively staff are remunerated for their work in enhancing the learning experience (i.e. they are paid) therefore should students receive similar recompense?





## revisiting 'VFM'

- question of 'value for money':
  - does the time and resource spent developing such systems of recognition produce greater returns in terms of student involvement that effects change within our institutions?
- question of take-up:
  - frequently (and perhaps ironically) the greater the effort in developing the system of recognition the fewer students who take the opportunity up.
- recognition vs. equity?
  - is the principle of equity more important than the reasons for recognising the role representatives play?





The end!

- **Thank you** for your time and ideas

Contact us:

- **sparqs – student participation in quality scotland**
- **[www.sparqs.ac.uk](http://www.sparqs.ac.uk)**

