



Accreditation and Reward of Student Representatives

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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?

?





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



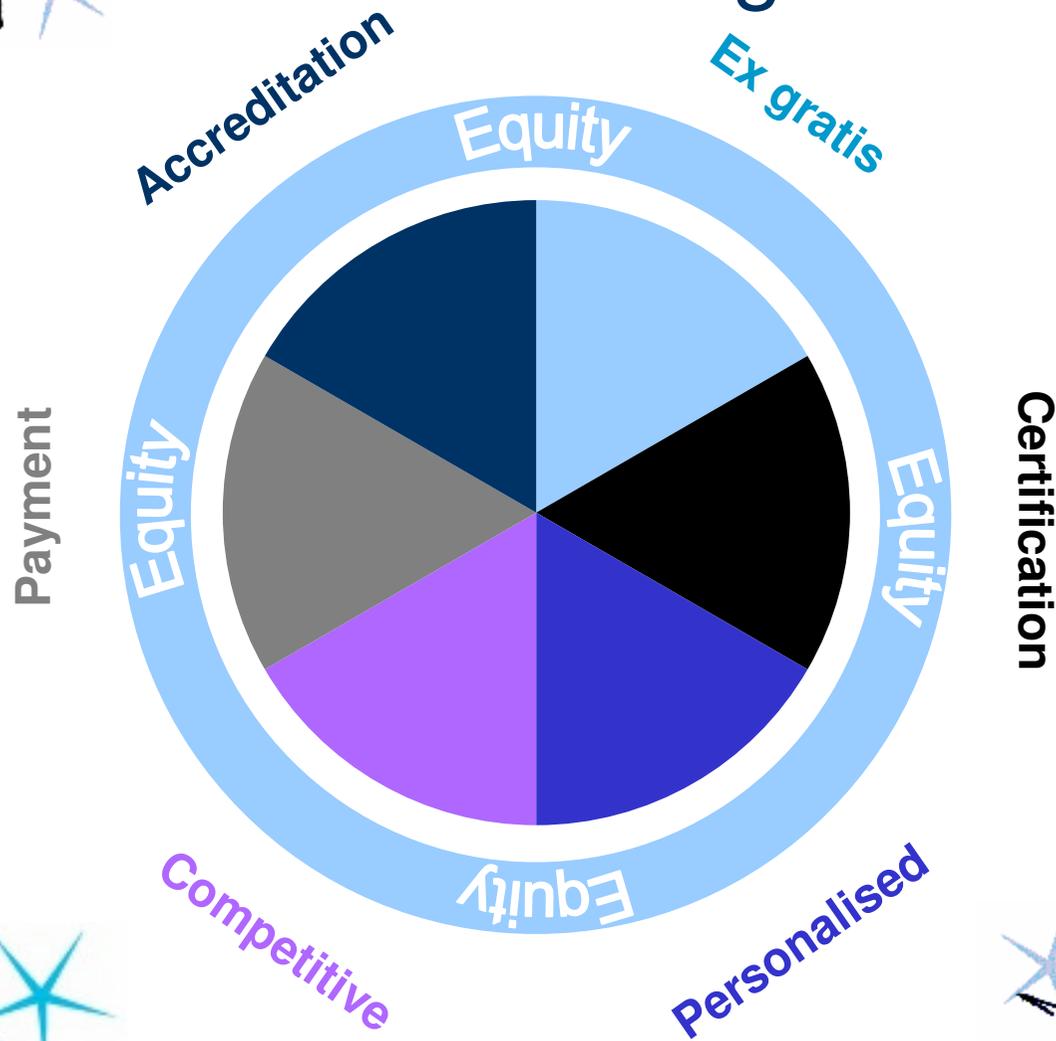


what needs fixed (or are we just being nice)?

- 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.

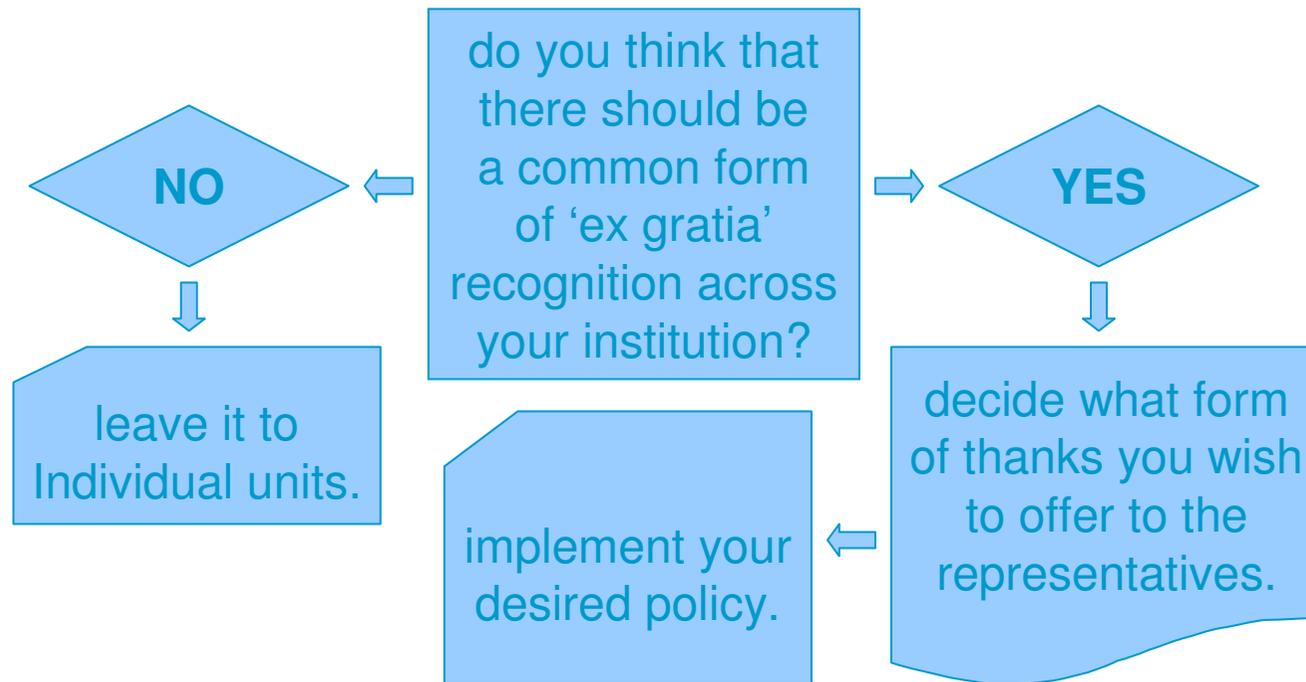
- **disadvantages:**

- 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:**

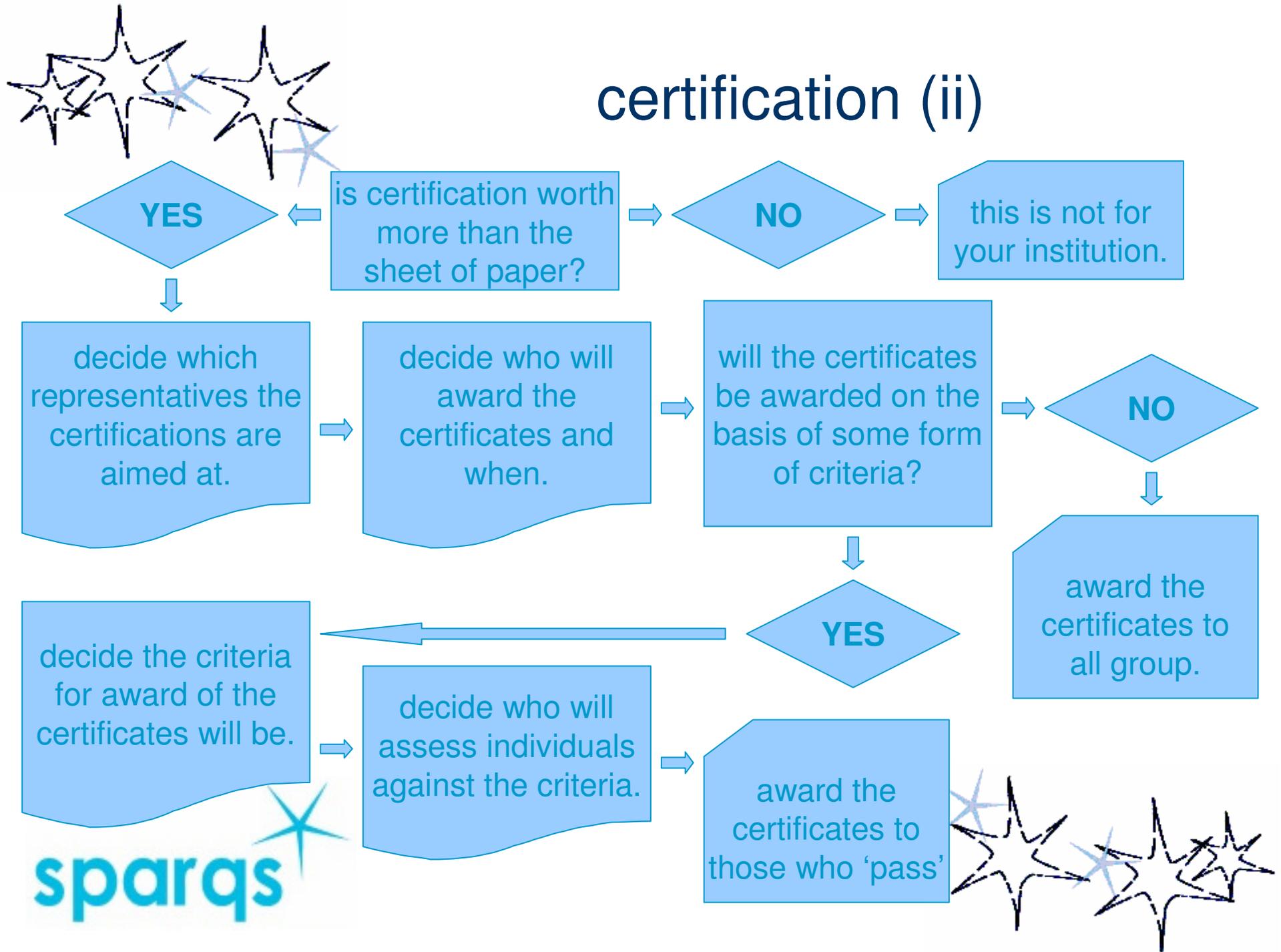
- a simple and relatively cheap way of the institution formally acknowledging the role and value of representation.

- **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:**

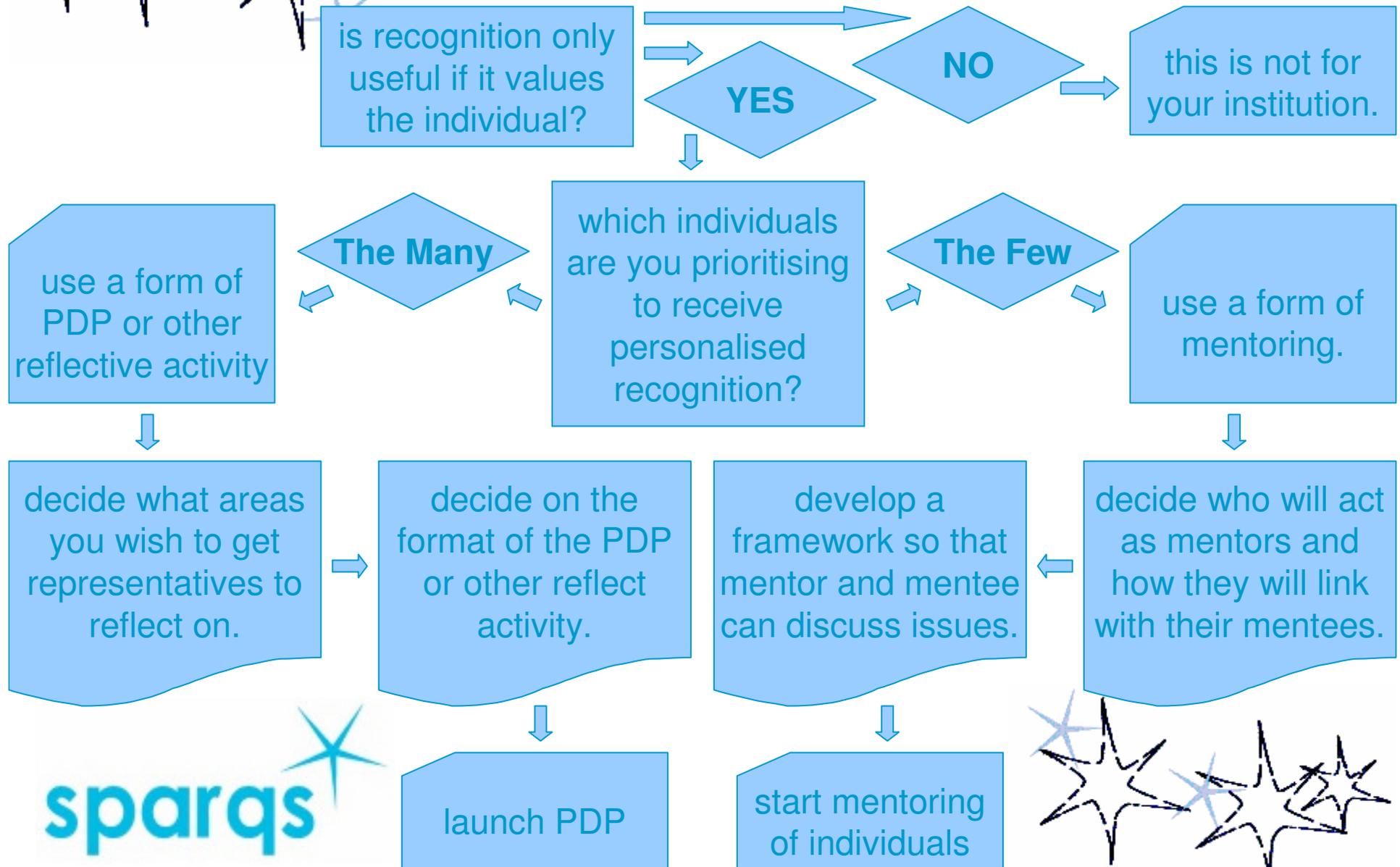
- potentially highly resource intensive.

- 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:**

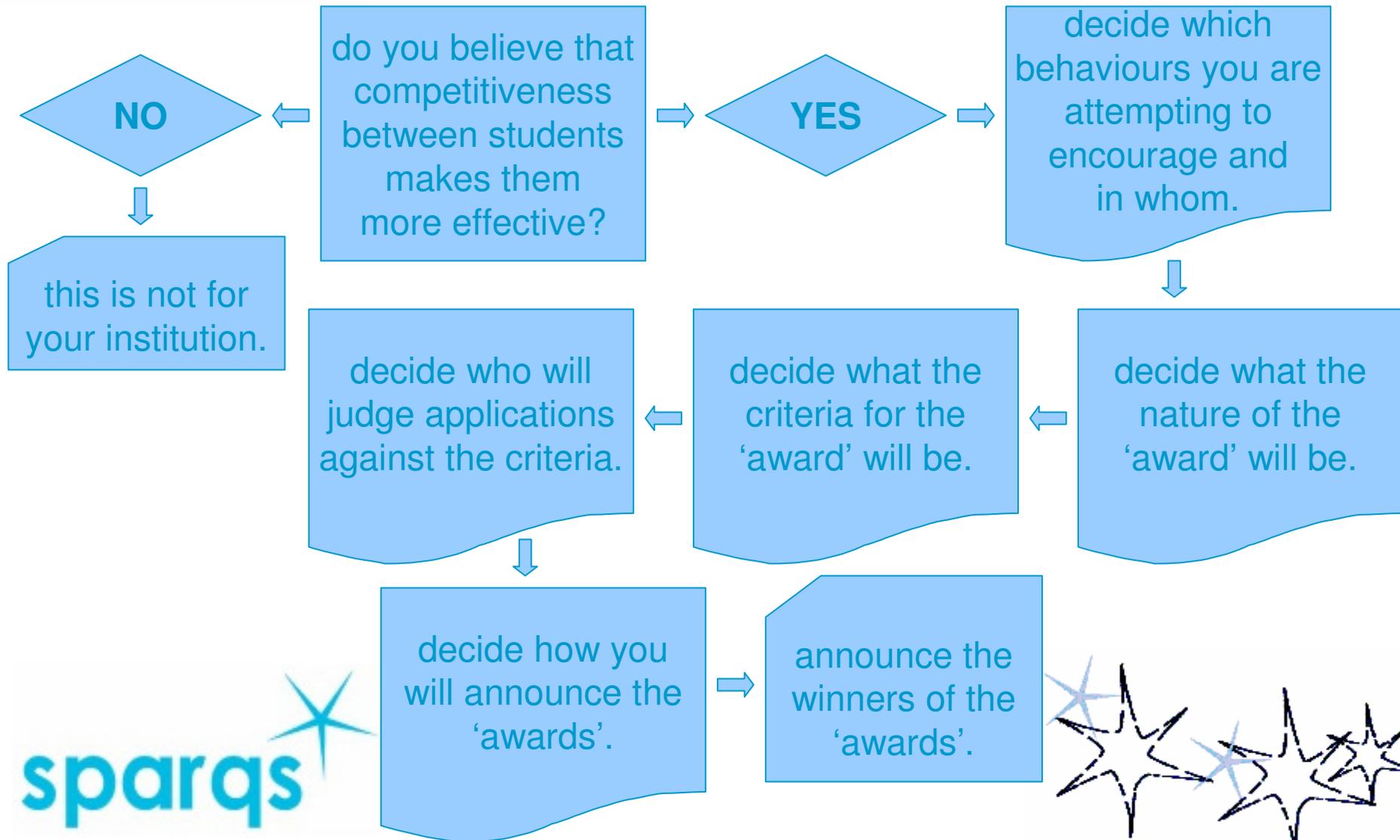
- only recognises the efforts of the 'best' of representatives.

- 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.

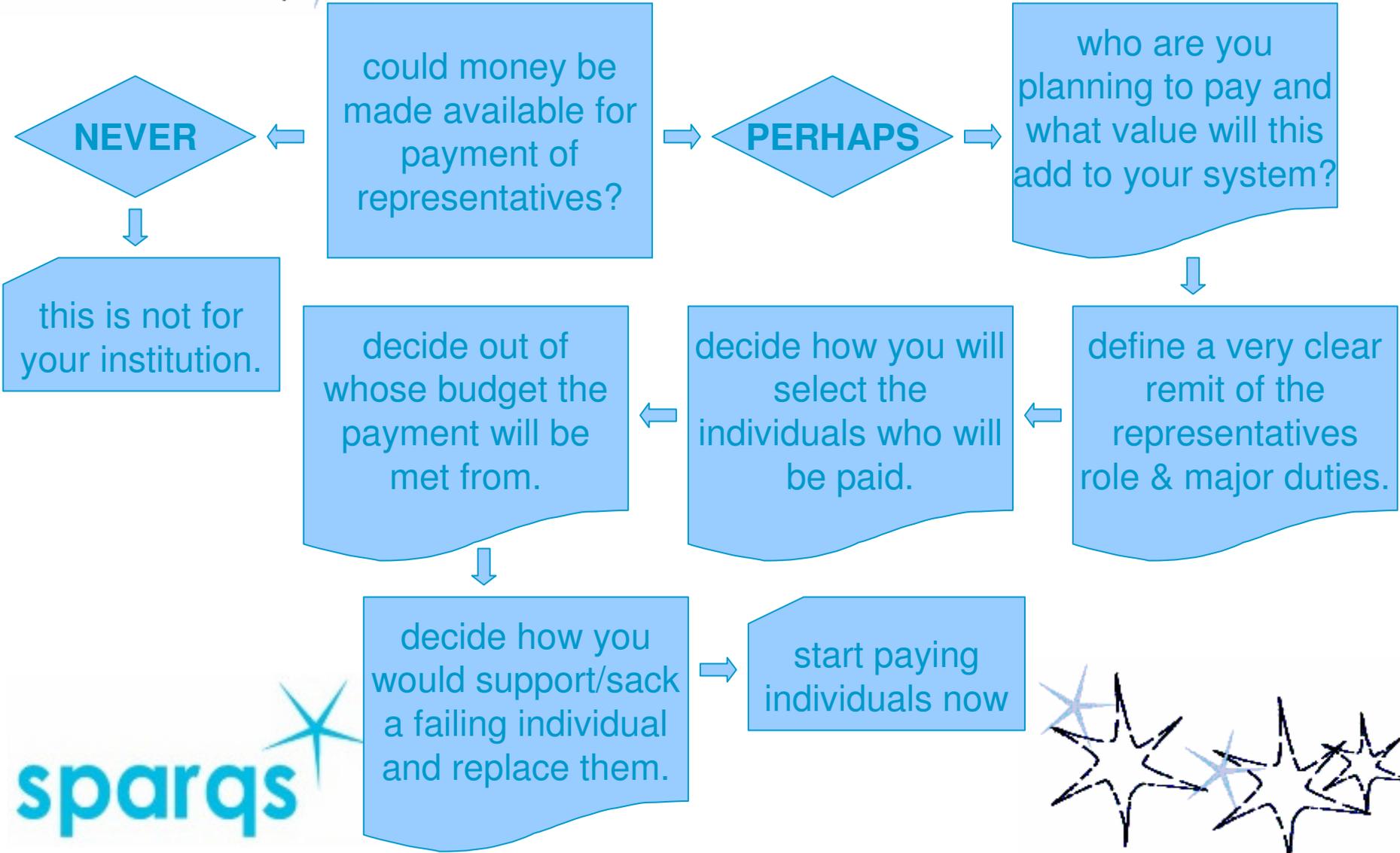
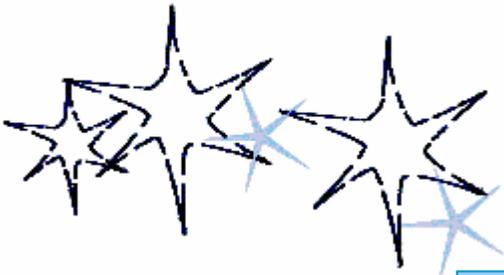
- **disadvantages:**

- 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.

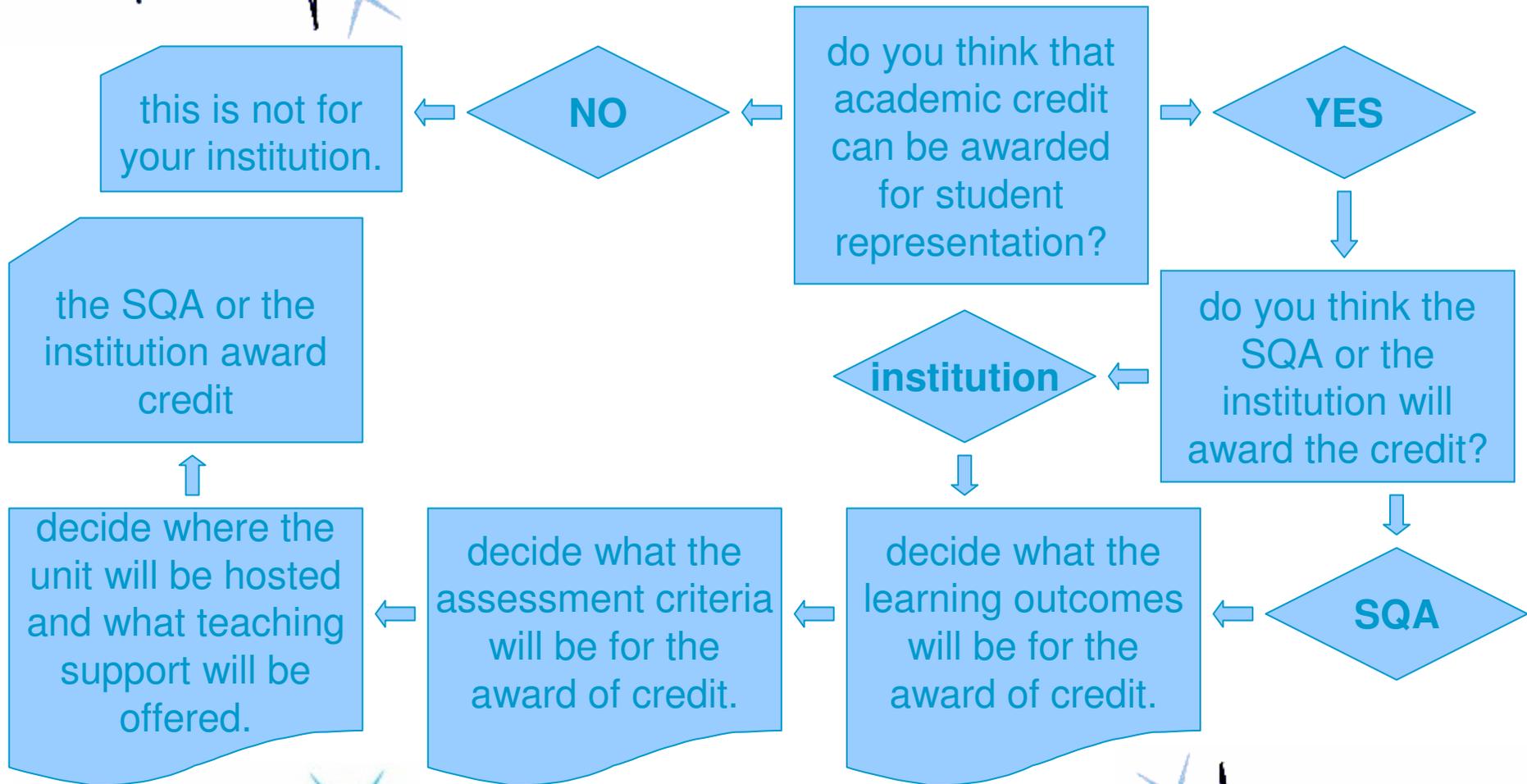
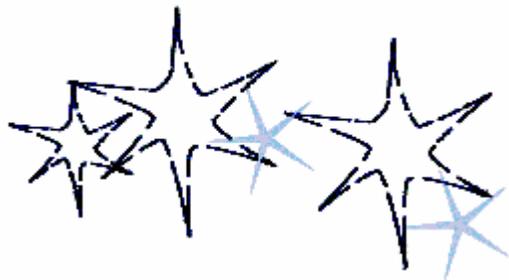
- **disadvantages:**

- 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**

