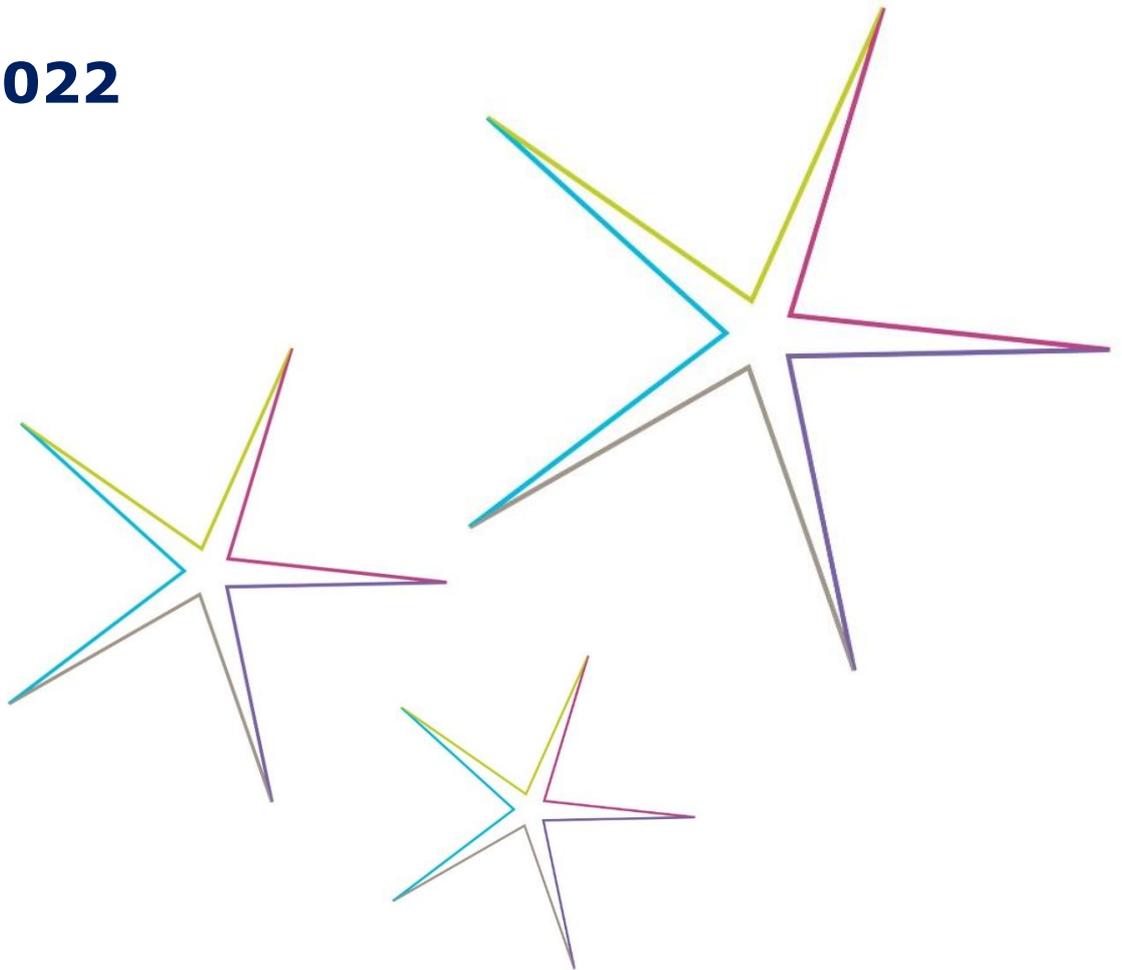


Professional standards framework for student engagement

June 2022



Introduction

Student engagement roles have a unique position within further and higher education and are central to building partnership between staff and students and between institutions and students' associations. Such posts can be students' association appointments, or work within various institutional functions, such as quality enhancement, student support and experience, or educational development. Student engagement is also an important facet in teaching, management and governance positions.

These practitioners of student engagement, in all their manifestations, regularly connect operational support for student representation and feedback, with strategies for learning, teaching and wider institutional functions. They can also be a professionalised resource for what is, quite correctly, an often voluntary and organic student voice.

Sector context

The roles, in turn, are framed by policy and practice in student engagement, partnership and the enhancement of learning. In Scotland, this includes the resources below, as well as a vast and growing body of academic literature. Partnership between staff and students also underpins the work of Scotland's sector agencies, including of course, [sparqs](#), Scotland's nationally funded agency for student engagement.

- [Quality arrangements for Scotland's colleges and universities](#)
- [UK Quality Code for Higher Education's chapter on student engagement](#)
- [Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area](#)
- [A Student Engagement Framework for Scotland](#)
- [Professional Standards for Lecturers in Scotland's Colleges](#)
- [Framework for the Development of Strong and Effective College Students' Associations](#)

Despite, or perhaps due to, the critical importance of student engagement to our sector, roles that drive engagement and partnership can often be hard to define and understand. At the same time, they are exciting, rewarding positions that, with appropriate support, have immeasurable impact on learning and the wider student experience.

Scope of the framework

Recognising student engagement's multiple definitions and the wide range of activities supported by student engagement roles, this professional standards framework aligns with the work of sparqs and is shaped by elements **3**, **4** and **5** of **Scotland's Student Engagement Framework**:

- 3. Students working with their institution in shaping the direction of learning.**
- 4. Formal mechanisms for quality and governance.**
- 5. Influencing the student experience at national level.**

Therefore, this professional standards framework for student engagement exists to inform and enhance roles that contribute to the engagement of students in shaping the quality of learning and teaching, in Scotland and beyond. The indicators of values, knowledge and activities have been developed by sparqs with the support of student engagement practitioners and others across our sector, to enable those who hold, manage, or work with such positions, to better understand and enhance their impact on the learning experience.

Values



- V1** A belief in education as a positive, inquisitive and liberating force for wider societal change.
- V2** Placing the student voice at the heart of continuous enhancement and co-creation of the student learning experience.
- V3** Recognition of the centrality of equality, diversity, liberation and inclusion to student engagement.
- V4** A belief in students' associations as vital collective, democratic contributors to institutional life and students' experiences.
- V5** A commitment to transformative partnership as an underpinning aspect of work with staff and students.

Knowledge



- K1** The implications of the diversity and intersectionality of the student population in its demography, pedagogy and geography.
- K2** How institutions manage and develop learning and teaching.
- K3** The role of evidence and data in effective student engagement in quality enhancement and assurance.
- K4** The purpose, role and dynamic structures of students' associations.
- K5** How the national and international policy and agency landscape affects, and is shaped by, students.
- K6** Policies, theories and strategies relating to student engagement, feedback and partnership in quality.

Activities



- A1** Empowering all students to own and shape their learning.
- A2** Supporting and enabling academic representative systems.
- A3** Facilitating and promoting the recognition of student engagement activities.
- A4** Working with, supporting and developing student officers as they engage in strategic decisions about learning and teaching.
- A5** Informing and advising decision-makers on students' views and priorities.
- A6** Enabling the generation and use of data about the learning experience.
- A7** Championing partnership-based collaborations between staff and students.
- A8** Acquiring, sharing and applying knowledge about student engagement policy and practice.

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- **Ross Brand**, Learner Engagement Officer, New College Lanarkshire.
- **Gemma Brash**, Quality Officer (Assurance and Enhancement), Glasgow Caledonian University.
- **Fiona Brunton**, Student Engagement Co-ordinator, Abertay University Students' Association.
- **Robin Chandler**, Stakeholder Experience Co-ordinator, West College Scotland.
- **Aimee Cuthbert**, Students' Association Co-ordinator (Perth), Highlands and Islands Students' Association.
- **Chase Greenfield**, Academic Representation Co-ordinator, University of St Andrews Students' Association.
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- **Professor Catriona Bell**, Director of Academic Development & Learning Enhancement, Queen Margaret University.
- **Jonny Rees**, Head of Professional Development, College Development Network.

Finally, developing this framework was aided by consulting comparable documents:

- [UK Professional Standards Framework for higher education.](#)
- [The National Union of Students' national competency framework for students' unions.](#)
- [Scottish Widening Access and Participation Professional Standards Framework.](#)
- [The Professional Standards for Lecturers in Scotland's Colleges.](#)



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