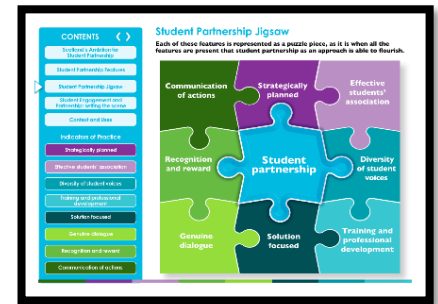


Strategic review of Student Partnership initiatives at institutional level (using Scotland's Ambition for Student Partnership) #11



Summary and Reflective Questions

This podcast captures the approaches used by Edinburgh Napier University (ENU) during 2025 to undertaking a strategic review of student partnership at institutional level using [Scotland's Ambition for Student Partnership](#) resource.

The podcast is divided into three parts, outlined below, each of which has accompanying key points and reflective questions within this document:

- Part 1: Introductions, drivers for change, and motivations for engaging with Scotland's Ambition for Student Partnership resource (5 mins 27 secs).
- [Listen here](#) and [view Part 1 transcript](#).
- Part 2: Getting started and approaches used. (4 mins 15 secs).
- [Listen here](#) and [view Part 2 transcript](#).
- Part 3: What worked, practical tips for colleagues, and links with Tertiary Quality enhancement Review (TQER) visits (5 mins 46 secs).
- [Listen here](#) and [view Part 3 transcript](#).

Full podcast: If you prefer to, you can also listen to the full podcast (15 mins 31 secs)
- [Listen here](#) and [view full podcast transcript](#).

Suggestions for using this resource:

- As one example of a strategic review of student partnership initiatives at institutional level.
- As a catalyst for discussion 'in advance of' or 'during' strategic review of student partnership initiatives. This may be useful for a variety of purposes, including:
 - Preparing for TQER visits.
 - Informing the development of Student Partnership Agreements.
 - Catalysing collaboration and partnership between institutions and students' associations.
- As a catalyst for group discussion during strategy development sessions.
- As a self-directed reflective tool for relevant colleagues to engage with on an individual basis.

Format

- Asynchronous resources:
 - 3 x audio files (each of which are 4-6 minutes in length) or one single audio file (~15 minutes in length).
 - Accompanying written summaries.
 - Reflective questions - prompts for group discussion or self-directed reflective activity.

Intended audiences

- Colleagues with student partnership remits.
- Students' association staff and sabbatical officers.
- Senior Quality professionals or other colleagues leading institutional preparation for TQER visits.
- Senior leaders.

Acronyms

- ENSA = Edinburgh Napier Students' Association
- ENU = Edinburgh Napier University
- SEAP = Self-Evaluation and Action Plan
- SPA = Student Partnership Agreement
- sparqs = student partnerships in quality Scotland
- TQER = Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review

Mapping to Professional Standards

[Professional Standards for Lecturers in Scotland's Colleges](#) (GTCS): 1.1.2; 1.2.1; 1.3.2/4; 2.1.3; 2.2.4/5/11/12; 2.5.2/4/6; 3.2.1./3/4/6; 3.3.3; 3.5.2/3/4.

[Professional Standards Framework 2023 \(PSF 2023\)](#) (Advance HE): V2, V5, K3, K5, A2

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Part 1: Introductions, drivers for change, and motivations for engaging with Scotland's Ambition for Student Partnership resource

[Listen here](#) (5 mins 26 secs)

Part 1 of this podcast introduces listeners to our guest speaker, Pamela Calabrese, Head of Student Engagement at Edinburgh Napier University (ENU).

Pamela then outlines the rationale for choosing to use [Scotland's Ambition for Student Partnership](#) as a foundation for undertaking a strategic mapping and review of ENU's existing student partnership activities in collaboration with Edinburgh Napier Students' Association (ENSA). This mapping then informed the review of ENU's Student Partnership Agreement, and this subsequently resulted in development of a new [Edinburgh Napier-ENSA Ambition for Student Partnership](#) (Aug 2025).

Key Points

- Drivers for change included the wish to review and refine the existing Student Partnership Agreement (SPA) in partnership with ENSA.
- Some initial reservations about Scotland's Ambition for Student Partnership were overcome by the fact that Indicators within it 'felt right', and the resource offered a useful tool to support strategic planning.
- An initial high-level mapping exercise offered ENU and ENSA the opportunity to identify key priorities for the enhancement of student partnership, and to identify evidence underpinning SPA activities.

Related Reflective Questions to consider:

1. What drivers for change would you identify for student partnership at your institution?
2. When was the last strategic review of student partnership initiatives undertaken at your institution? What were the outcomes of this review?
3. How and where is Scotland's Ambition for Student Partnership being discussed and embedded at your institution?
4. Can you summarise Scotland's Ambition for Student Partnership (on page 2 of the resource), and also identify your own personal role within this national ambition?

Part 2: Getting started, and strategic mapping approaches used

[Listen here](#) (4 mins 19 secs)

Part 2 discusses how the strategic review of student partnership was approached at ENU. This started with a desk-based mapping exercise by Pamela, followed by a number of inputs and activities that were developed and delivered in partnership with ENSA.

Key points

- The desk based mapping exercise started with the Features and Indicators within Scotland's Ambition for Student Partnership.
- An initial mapping document was developed with the headings shown below:

Suggested evidence (Indicators)	Activity at ENU and ENSA	Gaps/Areas for further development

- The initial mapping document was then further developed and refined in collaboration with ENSA and Student Consultants, gathering input from a number of sources at ENU, including the Strategic Partnership group, Departmental meetings, Student Rep Forums, and Student Council meetings.
- This resulted in co-creation of a RAG rated (colour coded with 'red, amber, green') mapping document which facilitated identification of priority areas and informed future planning.

Related Reflective Questions to consider:

1. Who are the key stakeholder groups and committees regarding student partnership at your institution?
2. What approaches do you currently use for undertaking institutional-level strategic reviews?
3. How and when does your institution work in partnership with your students' association and students to undertake strategic review of initiatives?
 - a. Who initiates this? (students' association or institution?)
 - b. Who leads this?
 - c. How and when does this occur?

Part 3: What worked, practical tips for colleagues, and links with Scotland's Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review (TQER) visits

[Listen here](#) (5 mins 46 secs)

In Part 3 Pamela shares reflections on 'what worked well' within ENU's strategic review of student partnership, some practical tips for engaging students with the review, and insights into how Scotland's Ambition for Student Partnership informed the preparation for their subsequent Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review (TQER) visit.

Key points

What worked well:

- Collaboration and shared ownership of the strategic review of student partnership (with ENSA).
- Starting the strategic review process with a desk-based mapping exercise, and breaking the review into manageable chunks that were tailored for each audience.
- Embedding pragmatism within the process, particularly in terms of identifying 'what was within the realms of possibility'; careful consideration of what students were being asked to contribute to the process; and ensuring that the review felt relevant and authentic to students, so they knew their input would inform actions.
- Embedding anonymous audience response tools (e.g. Mentimeter) during hybrid consultation events to encourage engagement by as many students as possible.

What worked less well:

- Some duplication within the strategic review process.

In terms of informing the future TQER visit at ENU, Scotland's Ambition for Student Partnership provided a tool for:

- Reflecting on institutional student partnership initiatives and exploring areas in more depth.
- Structuring and 'telling our story' about student partnership.

Related Reflective Questions to consider:

1. What role will Scotland's Ambition for Student Partnership play in your annual SEAP preparation and cyclical TQER visits?
2. What are your current priorities for enhancing student partnership at your institution? (see related [Diamond 9 activity](#) and [session plan](#)).
 - a) Have you asked your students' association and students the same question?
 - b) Do staff and student responses align or differ? What might this tell you?