

# That's Quality! Colleges 2023

Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> July  
10am – 1pm



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# Welcome! Your sparqs team

**Simon Varwell –**  
Senior Development  
Consultant

**Justin Walker –**  
Development  
Consultant

**Gloria Laurini –**  
Development  
Consultant

**Megan Brown –**  
Development  
Consultant

**Eve Lewis –**  
Director

**Nicola Cameron,  
Sarah Davidson and  
Ali McDade – Central  
Support Team**



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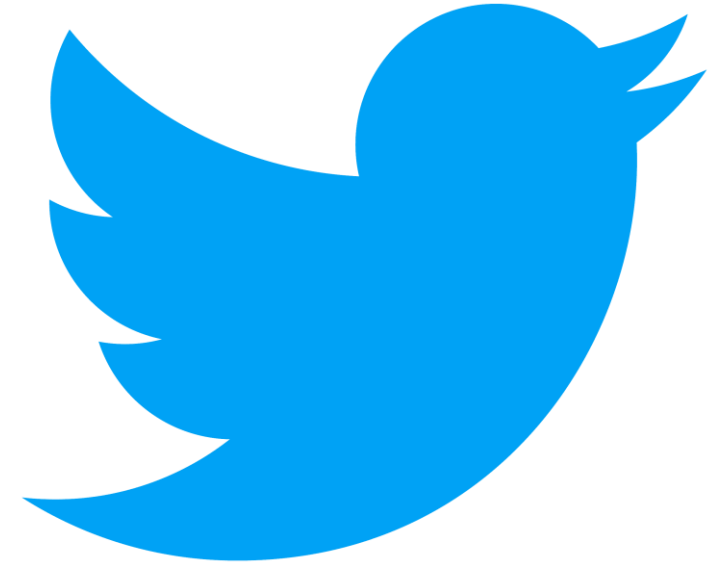
# Who is sparqs?

- student **partnerships** in **quality Scotland**.
- Scotland's national agency for student engagement in colleges and universities.
- Publicly funded agency.
- Our vision: Students are **partners** in shaping the **quality** of learning, making positive change to their own and others' **experience, however** and **wherever** they learn.



# Twitter

- Twitter – tweet throughout the days @sparqs\_scotland and individual accounts (@sparqs\_name)
- Individual accounts:
  - sparqs\_Simon
  - sparqs\_Justin
  - sparqs\_Megan
  - sparqs\_Gloria
- Twitter hashtag **#sparqsTQ**



# Using Zoom

- We have **captioning** enabled: instructions on how to turn this off are in the chat box.
- If you are having any **tech issues**, post a comment in the chat.
- Please change your **display name** to your own name.
- When you go on breaks, please **don't disconnect** from the session.



# Using Zoom

- You can use your audio or the chat box to speak.
- **Mute** your microphone when not talking.
- **Raise your hand or type \*** in the chat window if you would like to speak.
- We understand there may be other **distractions** – let us know if there's anything we can do to support you during the event.



# Objectives for That's Quality

To give officers and SA staff the opportunity to make connections from across the sector.

To think about the diversity of the students body and how to aim for a good quality experience for all.

To explore the quality landscape in Scotland and the quality arrangements in place for 2023 and beyond.

To introduce key sector projects and developments in learning, teaching and quality.



# Format of That's Quality

Half day, sector-specific, online day

Online self-study module

That's Quality Residential

NEON/SESN



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# Agenda

**10.00 – 10.15:** Introduction and welcome

**10.15 – 11.15:** Getting to know you/what does a student officer do?

**11.15 – 11.30:** Break

**11.30 – 12.00:** What makes a quality student experience?

**12.00 – 12.10:** Break

**12.10 – 12.55:** Diverse student voices

**12.55 – 13.00:** Conclusion & end of event



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# NEON and SESN jiscmail



- Officer mailing list: sign up [here!](#)
- Student engagement staff mailing list: sign up [here.](#)
- Both members and sparqs can email around all those on the list to ask questions, share experiences or seek support
- Useful to have one easy, accessible space to speak to all education officers/student engagement staff.
- The mailing is not over-used, so semi-regular contact but not overwhelming.



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# Tutor Groups



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# Getting to Know You & Role of a Student Officer



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## Introduce yourself to the group with:

- Name
- Institution
- Newly elected or returning officer/staff member?



# What are your aims for the year?



Officers: What is on your manifesto?

Staff: What are your key areas of focus for projects and initiatives?



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**What do you hope to gain from attending TQC?**



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# PRE-TRAINING SURVEY



Please complete the evaluation form assessing your pre-course knowledge and experience:

[www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/TQOLC23pre](http://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/TQOLC23pre)



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# Tutor group ground rules

**This is our shared understanding of how we will work together as a tutor group:**

We will **listen** to each other.

We have **different perspectives** and may not always agree – that is ok.

We will **respect** each other and **seek to learn** from each other's views.

We will **work together** and support each other's learning.

This is a **safe space** to share our hopes and fears.

We will treat information carefully and will **not share private or sensitive information** outside of this group.



# Discussion

**What do you think are some of the key responsibilities of a student officer?**

**Imagine you have to describe what you do to someone who doesn't work in the sector, what would you say?**

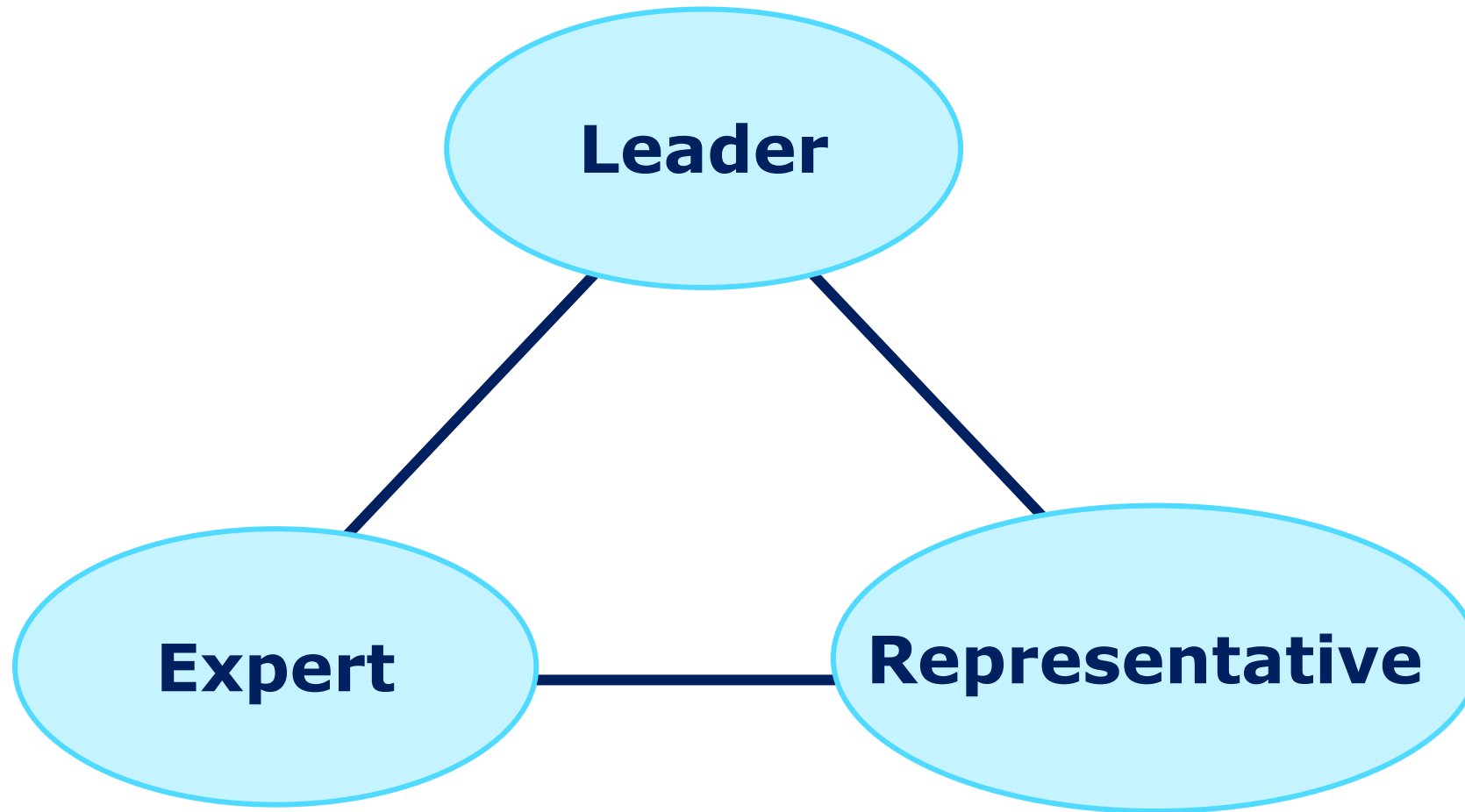


# Consider the following statements

- 'Students are experts in their own learning'
- 'Students only know what they want, not what they need'



# The role of a student officer



# Delegate or Trustee?

- **Delegate representation:** elected reps follow the express views of the people they represent. They make decisions based on the desires and preferences of their constituents.
- **Trustee representation:** elected reps follow their own judgement of the best action to take. They make autonomous decisions on behalf of the people.



# Break

Please be back by 11:30



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# What makes a quality student experience?

Gloria Laurini  
Development Consultant



# What will this session cover?



- What 'quality' means.
- Scotland's quality system for colleges– why is it the way it is?
- The recent changes of quality arrangements and what to expect for the coming academic year



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# What *is* Quality?



- 'Quality assurance' is the process of ensuring that universities and colleges are meeting a certain set of standards and delivering qualifications to students which are of value.
- Quality enhancement is ultimately about *improving* things and making the institution better.

**What you do every day as officers is part of the quality process.**



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# Assurance vs Enhancement



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# Quality systems



- Quality systems are **changing**, as a result of recommendations from the Scottish Funding Council Review
- This year, your role will not just be to look at what is currently going wrong and right, but to consider what the **future of the student experience and quality systems** could look like.
- There is a **formal process** for this which you will be asked to contribute to as officers.
- To be prepared for this, you need to understand the **fundamental principles** that underpin Scotland's quality system



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# What are the **fundamental principles** that underpin Scotland's quality system?



The sector agreed on three key principles that would **underpin quality arrangements across the sector**:

- High quality learning
- Student engagement
- Quality culture

This is a distinctive Scottish approach to quality, which has been recognised and replicated internationally.



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Our frameworks are committed to **student engagement**, but we also know that four other key aspects are fundamental to the success of our system

an  
enhancement  
approach

self-  
evaluation

external peer  
review

openness  
and honesty



# Quality timeline

1

Building evidence and mapping arrangements – November 2021 to June 2022

2

Policy review and reflections – July 2022 to October 2022

3

Co – creation – October 2022 to present



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# Arrangements 2022-24



Either **Progress Visits (PV)** or **Annual Engagement Visit (AEV)** for every college



Visit carried out by a team including a **Student Team Member (STM)**, one **Education Scotland** representative (HMI) and at least one associate assessor from other institutions.



You can prepare for the visits with your college quality department.



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# Key information about AEV

- AEVs take place in colleges where there is clear progress against priorities;
- They are short, light touch visits lasting typically one day on-site;
- Visit team consists of the college link HM Inspector, supported by HM Inspector colleagues, Associate Assessors (AA), and Student Team Member (STM);
- Dates are planned collaboratively between the college and the link HM Inspector;
- On conclusion of the AEV, colleges receive an initial verbal report. A subsequent written report is produced and shared with the college and SFC;
- AEV outcomes inform future engagement approaches with individual colleges.





# Key information about PV

- PVs are undertaken in colleges where more work needs to be done in certain areas for improvement and enhancement.
- Identify what is working well and where further improvement may still be required, considering key indicators of performance, and their impact on the learning experience.
- Managed by a lead HM Inspector accompanied by the college link Inspector, Associate Assessors and Student Team Member.
- Usually carried out across two to three days and a visit schedule is agreed with colleges in advance.
- Planned collaboratively.
- Prior to the visit, colleges have the opportunity to provide relevant PV updates, identified through self-evaluation, to reflect the progress made and highlight any changes in circumstances.



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# What happens during the visits?

- Before either AEV or PV, **Students' Association staff and officers** should be invited to a pre-meeting with the college to prepare for the visit.
- **Students' Association** will be asked to recruit group of students from different courses and level of study who can attend meetings with visit team.
- STM to **meet with Students' Association** and ask questions focusing on learner engagement and quality of learning & teaching.
- STM to **meet groups of students** recruited by SA, and also engage with students on site, outside meeting times.
- SA to be involved in meetings with progress visit team and college management.



# What does this mean for you?

Consider whether your SA have any written reports or evidence that could be added to the submitted documentation for the progress visit, such as class reps feedback and reports.

Attend meetings before the visit and work with college quality team to discuss topics that will come up during the visit.

Make time to recruit students to attend the AEV/PV and prepare them for the meeting.

Make sure you are in touch with sparqs to find out any updates on the arrangements and any specific topics (such as quality of L&T and level of learner engagement).

The visit is NOT an assessment of the SA work. Being involved in quality arrangements means being a partner with the institution in its self-evaluation.



# Next steps

More details in the online module, link will be sent before the residential. Please read the first two lessons in Unit 1 before attending the residential event.

More content delivered during the residential event

Engaged in developing new tertiary arrangements through consultation



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# Break

Please be back by 12.10pm



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# Diverse Student Voices: a good quality experience for all



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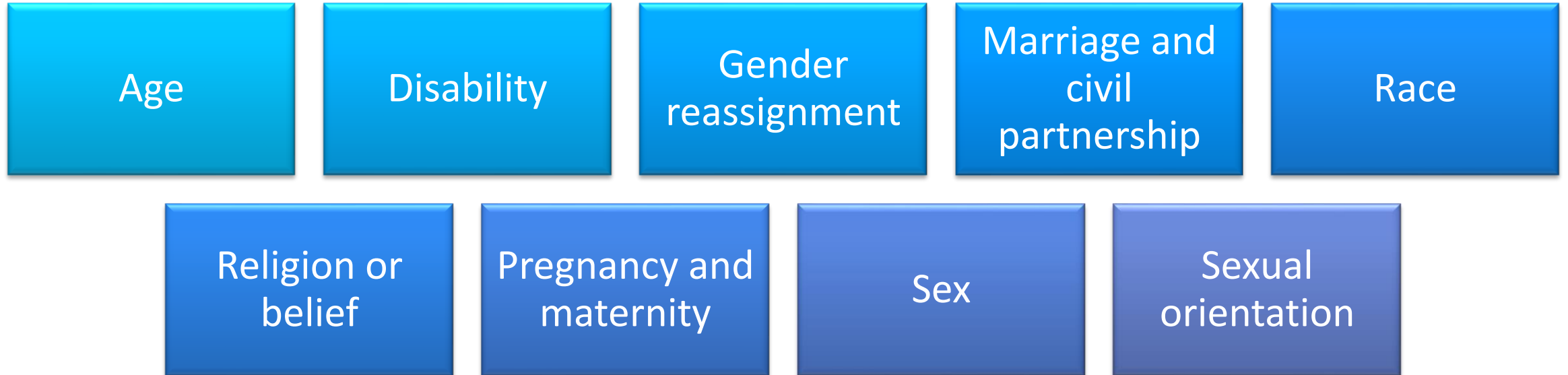


**Who are you  
representing?**





# What are the protected characteristics?



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# Who else?

- Student parents
- Student carers
- Care-experienced students
- Estranged students
- Part-time students
- Students working alongside studying
- Postgraduate students
- Mature students
- Students whose first language is not English
- Widening participation students
- International students
- Commuter students
- Students studying in a rural location



There is no such thing as *the*  
student experience.



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# The wider context: access



In 2016/17, male students made up 83.8% of all students on HE STEM courses compared with 16.2% of female students.

Advance HE, Colleges in Scotland  
Statistical Report (2018)

In AY 2019-20, 16.4% of Scottish-domiciled full-time, first-degree entrants to universities were students from the 20% most deprived areas, equating to around 1000 more students from these disadvantaged areas than four years ago.

Scottish Funding Council, Coherent  
Provision and Sustainability Report  
(2021)



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# The wider context: completion



In 2016/17, at HE level students who disclosed as disabled had lower rates of completion (81.2%) than non-disabled students (86.4%), a difference of 5.2 percentage points.

Advance HE, Colleges in Scotland Statistical Report (2018)

The highest successful completion rates were among female students in SIMD Q2-5 (77.3%) and lowest among male students in SIMD Q1 (67.3%).

Advance HE, Colleges in Scotland Statistical Report (2018)



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# The wider context: educational environment



**Around a quarter of students from an ethnic minority background (24%) said they had experienced racial harassment since starting their course.**

Equality and Human Rights Commission,  
Tackling Racial Harassment Report  
(2019)

**Three in five trans students (60%) and more than one in five lesbian, gay and bi students who aren't trans (22%) have been the target of negative comments or conduct from other students.**

Stonewall, LGBT in Britain University  
Report (2018)



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# Benefits of a diverse institution



- It's not all about addressing inequalities and disadvantage.
- Students' experiences give them unique perspectives which improve the learning experience for all.
- Diversity in the classroom leads to a whole host of benefits for students and staff.



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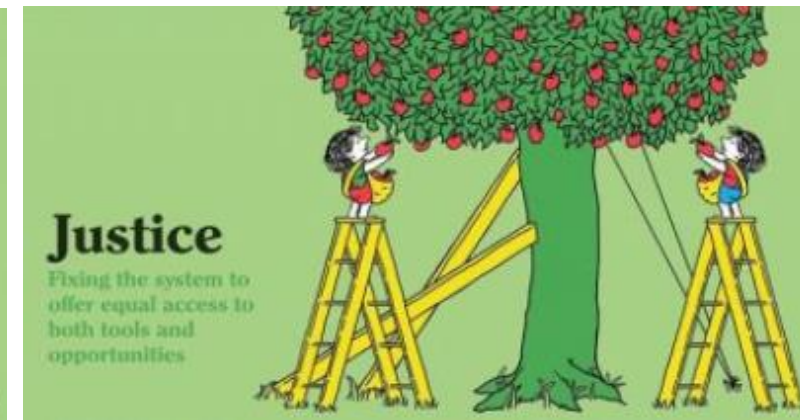
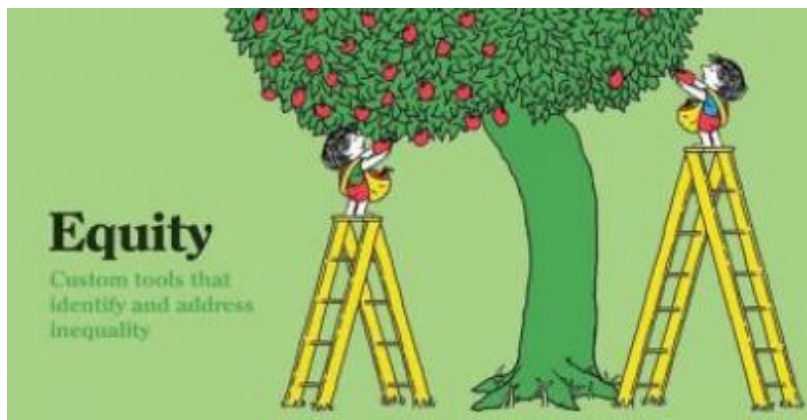
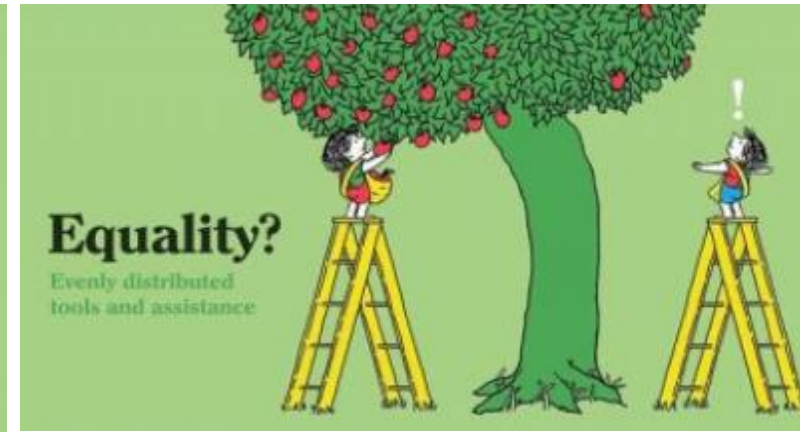
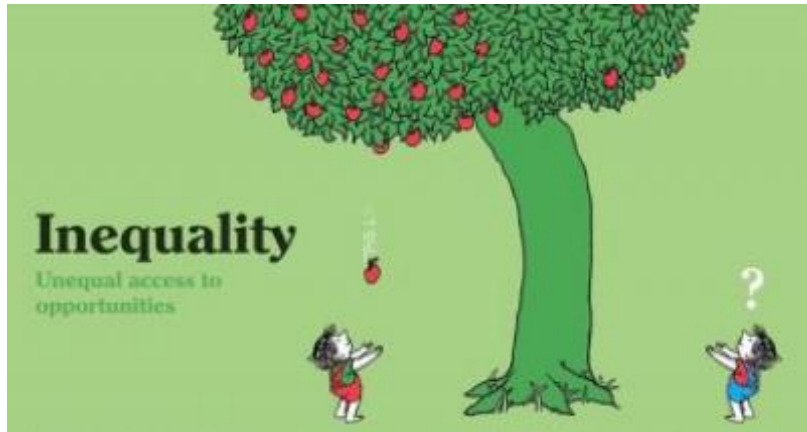
## Key concepts



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# Equality or Equity?



(Source [Tony Ruth's Giving Tree art of justice/equality/equity](#))

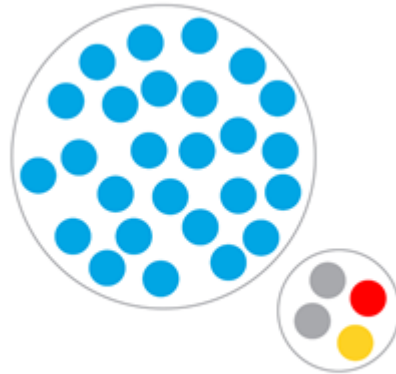


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# Exclusion → Inclusion



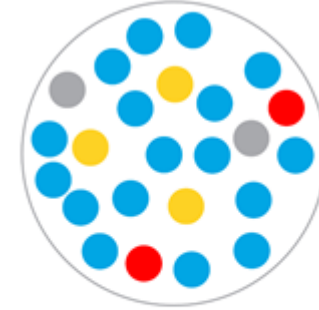
Exclusion



Segregation



Integration



Inclusion

Source: United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities General Comment No. 4  
 (<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/CRPD/GC/RighttoEducation/CRPD-C-GC-4.doc>)

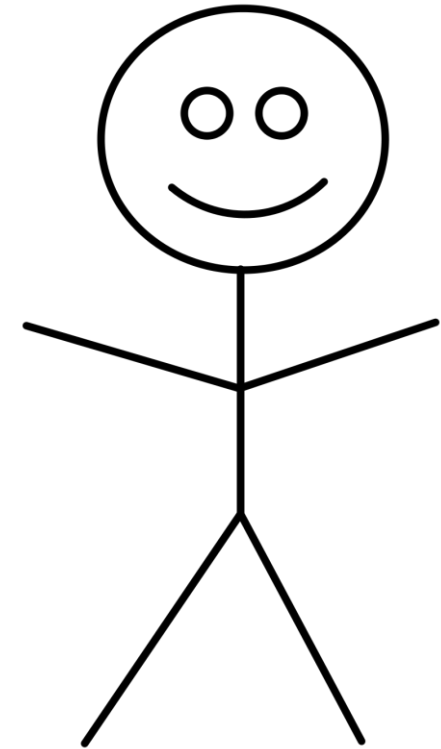


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# The Imagined Student

- When planning teaching, the teacher often **imagines a student** and how they might respond to the activities they are designing.
- Lars Ulriksen called this the **implied student**.

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# The Imagined Student

- People who don't fit in this box may be **disadvantaged** because the teaching hasn't been designed for them and their needs or preferences.
- Dr Elliot Spaeth explains that 'inclusive teaching practice is a process involving **“reconceptualisation”** of the imagined student'.





## Discussion prompt



- Consider your students' association context. Who do you think is 'the imagined student' when you develop projects, events and initiatives?



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How can you ensure you are being inclusive in your own practice as an officer?



# Scenario 1



Your institution has identified that they need to extend the teaching week, in order to have enough time to deliver in-person, socially-distanced teaching to everyone. Potential proposals are:

- **Extending the teaching day to run from 8am-8pm.**
- **Running classes on Saturdays.**

You are asked to feedback on which of these options would work best.

- **Which groups of students could be impacted by these changes, and in what ways?**
- **What sources of evidence could you use to support your position?**
- **Are there alternatives/solutions that you could propose?**



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# Who is affected – some suggestions



- Student parents – particularly those that need to take their children to school/nursery in the morning.
- Student carers.
- Students who work on evenings and at weekends.
- Jewish students (Saturday is the Jewish Sabbath when work should not be done).



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# What alternatives can be proposed?



- Offering multiple sessions covering the same content, and giving students a choice as to when they attend.
- Asking your institution if they have considered offering more asynchronous content that students can access any time.



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# Scenario 2



The institution approaches you as they want to make a decision about how to approach the delivery of learning from September. Should they deliver more content online or in person? How much should be pre-recorded and how much should be 'live'? They ask you what the students want their learning and teaching to look like going forward.

**How would you approach this situation?**

**How will you provide evidence to the institution in order to answer their question?**



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# How would you approach this situation?



- Different students experience online/blended/on-campus learning and teaching in different ways.
- In some cases, the increase in digital delivery has made elements of the student experience **more inclusive** e.g. greater flexibility for students with children, money saved on travelling to campus, students with a disability may benefit from studying in a space set up for their own needs.
- In other cases, this move may have made the learning experience **less equitable** for certain groups and demographics of students e.g. digital exclusion, lack of access to a suitable study space or stable WiFi, potential lack of interaction with other students leading to loneliness.



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# How can you gather evidence?



- **Existing survey results** e.g. many institutions and students' associations will have run COVID-related surveys over the past year.
- Gathering qualitative feedback from **diverse student groups**, through focus groups or surveys.



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# How can you make your case?



- **'Casework to campaign'** approach. Tell a story. Qualitative data can be as persuasive as quantitative data.
- Remember that evidence on online learning and teaching is **evolving** and we're all learning together – you may not have all the answers. You don't need to have a 'position', but you do need to clearly present the views of *all* students, even where there is disagreement.



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# Scenario 3



You run a survey with students to find out where they would most like student rep meetings to be hosted for the next year. There are 10 options and students put a tick in the box next to their preferred venue option. Your plan is to collate the feedback and choose the venue that the majority of the respondents prefer.

- **Are there any issues with this approach?**
- **Are there alternatives you would suggest?**



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# Challenges



- By only expressing the views of the majority, you run the risk of '**tyranny of the majority**', where only those objectives important to the largest group are heard, and the very real issues experienced by minority groups are ignored or go unnoticed.



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# Challenges



- Your survey only gathers quantitative feedback. You don't know *why* a student may prefer a particular viewpoint e.g. access reasons.
- Although it is important to understand the most popular viewpoint, often *depth* of feeling is as important as *breadth* of feeling.
- Something that is *deeply* felt by just one or two people is as important to consider as something that is *widely* felt (but perhaps not strongly) by most.



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# Alternatives



- Where possible, consider offering only accessible options in the first place when designing your survey. Or consider whether this needs to be a survey at all?
- You should be actively seeking out the views of students from diverse demographics and groups – this may involve asking specific questions that ensure these views are captured.
- Communicate *why* you make the choices that you do – students will tend to understand as long as you share with them the rationale.



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# Top Tips



- Sometimes the evidence you need is already out there. Don't run a survey for the sake of it.
- Make friends with your quality team. They can give you a great deal of the data you may need!
- Data is only as good as the questions you ask.
- Decisions will affect different students in different ways. Be mindful of the diversity of your student body when you make decisions on learning and teaching.



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Evaluation Form:



[www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/TQOLC23post](https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/TQOLC23post)



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# Thank you!

**Keep in touch and look out for future sparqs events throughout the year.**

**[www.sparqs.ac.uk](http://www.sparqs.ac.uk)**

**We'll see you on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> August at QMU!**



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