

Student Engagement Staff Network

Thursday 1st October 2026

Welcome!



sparqs is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation funded by the Scottish Funding Council. Registration number SC046172.



Your sparqs Team Today!



Amy
Monks
(she/her)
Development
Consultant



Shona
Agnew
(she/her)
Development
Consultant



Cerys
Davies
(she/her)
Development
Consultant



Sophie
Kennedy
(she/her)
Development
Consultant



Ok team...



- You can use your audio or the chat box to speak.
- Mute your microphone when not talking.
- To speak, click the “raise hand” icon.
- If you are having any tech issues, post a comment in the chat.
- We will be transcribing the meeting for note taking purposes.



Agenda

- 10.00am** – Welcome & Ice Breaker
- 10.25am** – What is SESN?
- 10.30am** – Student Partnership in practice
- 10.55am** – Break
- 11.05am** – Student Partnership Agreement (SPA) Activity
- 11.30am** – sparqs updates
- 11.40am** – Discussion/Q&A
- 12.00pm** - Close



Getting to know you



- Your name
- Your Institution
- Your role
- Complete this sentence –
"This year, I'd love this network to be the place
where I can _____."



Student Engagement Staff Network (SESN)



What is SESN?

A professional network supported by sparqs for staff who coordinate and support student engagement in quality across colleges, universities, and students' associations.

Why It Matters:

Student engagement is key to shaping learning. SESN supports the staff who make this happen - those managing rep systems, supporting officers, and ensuring student voices influence quality processes.

How SESN Helps:

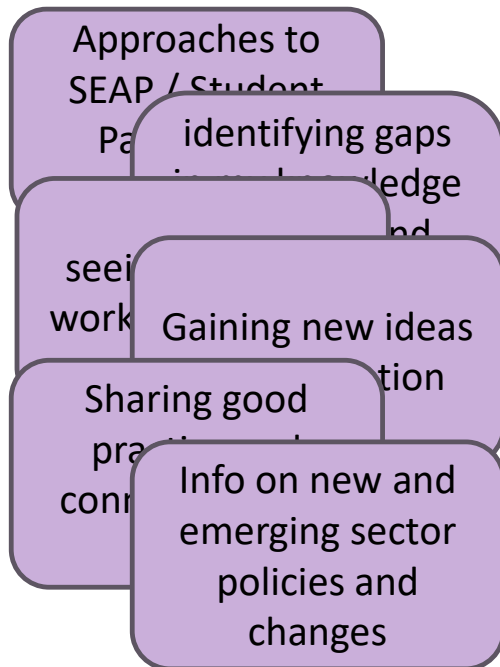
Through its "learn, share, develop" approach, SESN offers sector updates, peer learning, and practical resources like the Induction Guide for Academic Representation Co-ordinators



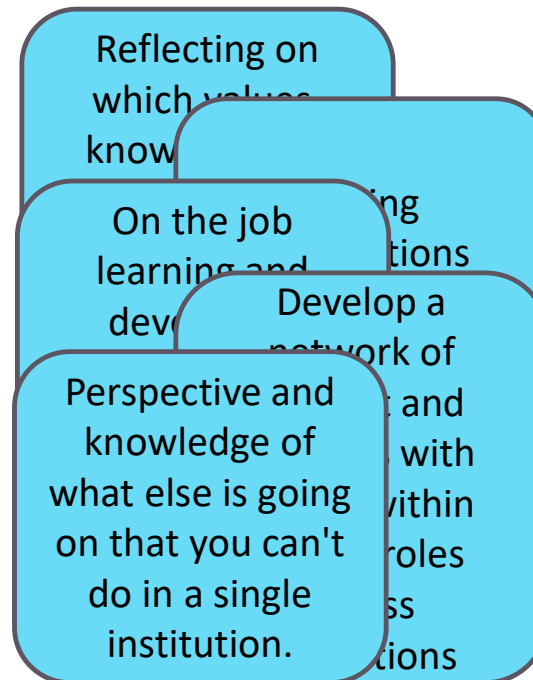
Learn, Develop & Share



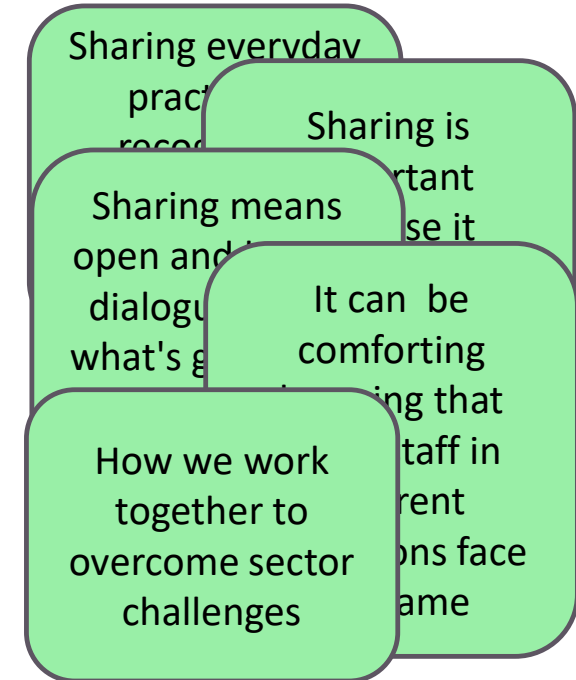
Learn



Develop



Share

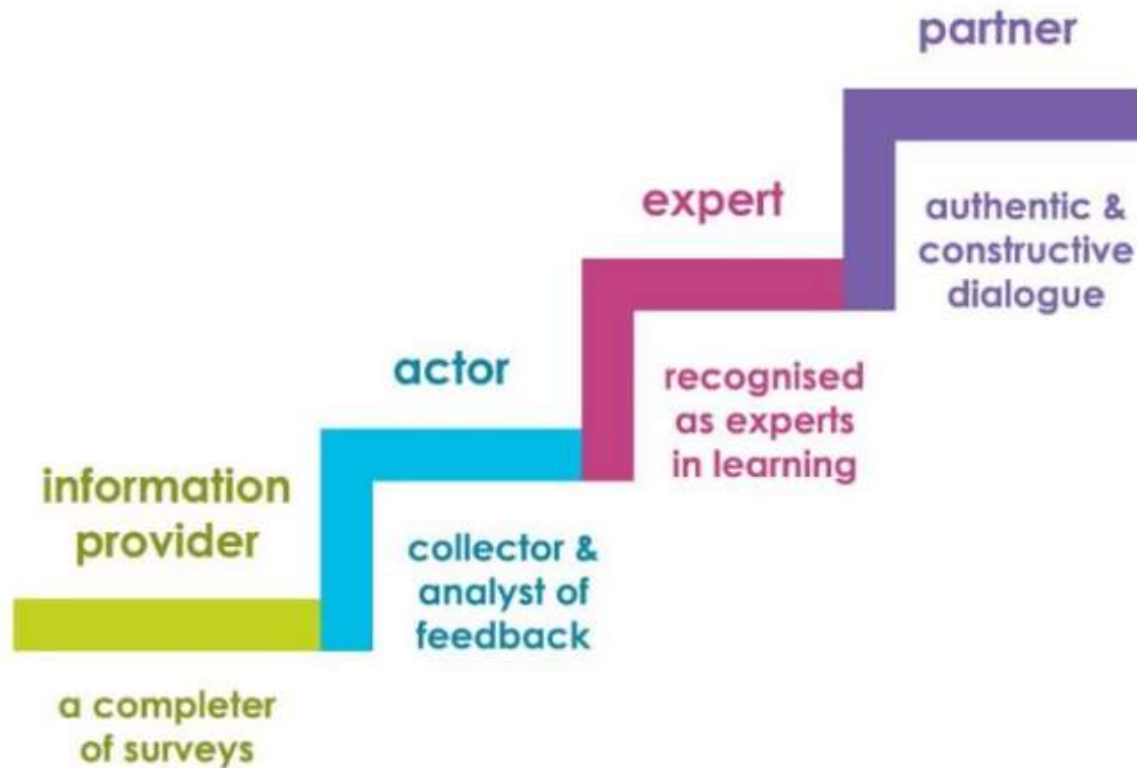




Student Partnership



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Student Partnership Staircase

Scotland's Ambition for Student Partnership



- A shared vision statement developed for the sector.
- 8 Features of Student Partnership to help institutions and students to reflect, improve and grow
- Supports continuous enhancement and ensures student voices are empowered.



Indicators of Practice



- Description of the feature
- Different methods to achieve
- Each feature has 6+ indicator examples, there could be more!

 **Training and professional development**

Partnership requires a range of knowledge and skills, which are acquired through induction, **training and professional development**, enabling students and staff to carry out a multitude of roles within their student and professional lives.

Evidence of this could include:

- Student representatives at all levels are trained and supported to successfully undertake their roles and to represent their student body effectively.
- ★ The students' association and the institution have an ongoing programme of training, support and development for senior student representatives, including induction and handover, attendance at external and national events, and support to contribute to formal decision-making spaces.
- Student engagement and partnership concepts and approaches are built into professional standards, training, and development programmes for all roles. Staff demonstrate that they actively acquire, share and apply knowledge about student engagement policy and practice.
- ★ Staff within the institution and students' association with responsibility for student engagement receive ongoing training and development and make use of institutional and national programmes of support.



How can I use the Partnership Ambition/Staircase?



- A tool to carry out an **evaluation** of your student partnership activities across the college alongside staff.
- An evaluation of partnership within a **particular subject area** or **level of study**.
- You might choose a step or **specific feature** and/or group of indicators you want to explore in more detail.



How can I use the Ambition and Staircase together?



- Use the Staircase to reflect and explore **where you are currently** in partnership, use the Ambition features and indicators of practise to get you to the **next step!**



For example,



You have identified that your institution's current approach to SEAP drafting is on the Information Provider step of the staircase and you want to enhance this to a higher step.



From exploring the Ambition as a SA/institution, you know the Diversity of Student Voices feature also needs enhancing to strengthen student partnership.



In partnership with students and staff you can use the indicators of practise to recognise areas of strength and areas that can be enhanced in that feature.



A collaborative action plan can be created to take steps to achieve stronger student partnership in SEAP by including more diverse student voices.



Another example



You have identified that your institution's Student Agreement is quite tokenistic and doesn't really reflect the way in which students and staff want to work together. This is sitting on the information provider step of the staircase, if that.



From exploring the Ambition as a SA/institution, you know that Strategically planned and Genuine Dialogue features need enhancing to strengthen student partnership.



In partnership with students and staff you can use the indicators of practise to explore areas of strength and areas that can be enhanced in that feature. What ways can you have more genuine dialogue with students and staff?



A collaborative action plan can be created to take steps to achieve stronger student partnership writing and using a new student partnership agreement that reflects the culture of student partnership everyone wants at the institution



Break - back in 10 minutes

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Student Partnership Agreements (SPAs)



Student partnership agreements: refresher



- In essence – these agreements are another way for students' associations and their institutions to work together to enhance the student learning experience.
- They often have 3-5 priority areas and are refreshed every few years.



Student partnership agreements: refresher continued



- The agreements generally have three parts:
 - Part A (the tools): an outline of the different ways in which students can engage with shaping their learning experience.
 - Part B (the projects): 3-5 priority projects for the SA and institution to collaborate on (which do not need to be completed in a year!).
 - Part C (the successes): report on progress and outcomes from previous projects (Part B).



Review of the sector CG1



- We want to learn from you!
- Are SPAs still a priority?
- Does your students' association have a SPA?
- If so, is it effective?
- Do you have an alternative system?
- With the introduction of the SEAP, does it feel like the work of partnership agreements is being duplicated?
- We will send out a quick survey after SESN.



Slide 20

CG1 I'd humbly also suggest asking of the SPA feels duplicative given the introduction of SEAPs (which have a whole section where the SA/institution need to evaluate "student engagement and partnership").

Chase Greenfield, 2026-09-23T08:54:16.560

AM1 0 [@Sophie Kennedy] are you happy to add this in?

Amy Monks, 2026-09-23T08:55:33.602

SK1 1 With the introduction of the SEAP, does it feel like the work of partnership agreements is being duplicated?
What do you think of this phrasing? Struggling to make it clear [@Chase Greenfield]

Sophie Kennedy, 2026-09-23T09:01:19.849

Scotland's Ambition for Student Partnership.



Connecting to Scotland's Ambition for Student Partnership



- Our current resources around partnership agreements were created before the launch of the Partnership Ambition.
- We also want to explore how this resource and Self-Evaluation & Action Plans can effectively interact with existing work on SPAs.
- Let's step into the universe of partnership...



Scotland's Ambition for Student Partnership Activity



1. SUPERNOVA

- Which partnership puzzle piece is shining brightest in your institution right now? Where is strong partnership already happening?



3. SHIFTING ORBIT

- If you were writing your Student Partnership Agreement tomorrow, what is one thing you would add, or change based on this discussion?

2. STELLAR NURSERY

- Which partnership puzzle piece shows the most potential for growth?
- Where could it be enhanced?



4. TELESCOPE

- How would you measure the progress and outcomes of any suggested changes or next steps?





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Buddy Scheme



"It was great to have somebody who can understand what kind of struggles we are facing and share some successes."

"I learned lots! My buddy was more experienced and senior than me, so I got a lot out of it."

"I liked the fresh perspective my buddy brought to problems that I thought I was stuck on. Talking to someone outside of my bubble brought so many lightbulb moments."

"I like that we both were on the same wavelength, also I felt understood."

"It was nice to be able to chat to someone who understood the role from a different perspective. We were able to exchange notes and be really quite frank with one another."



Mental Health and Wellbeing Lens Pilot



The resources included in the pilot are:

- An introductory presentation and activities on Mental Health and Wellbeing and the SLE Lens.
- A guide to using the SLE Lenses.
- A guide to using the Mental Health and Wellbeing Lens to gather data and evidence.
- Feedback by 30TH October 2026



SESN Teams Site



- Dedicated space for SESN members
- Collaborative and interactive
- Community space for communication
- Opt in



Course Rep Training



Holding 2 x online sessions to discuss the results of the course rep training survey from earlier this year.

- 1) Thursday 15th October – 10am – 12pm (Teams)
- 2) Tuesday 20th October – 2pm – 4pm (Teams)

You are welcome to join either session, even if not previously involved with the survey!

- Email shona.agnew@sparqs.ac.uk



Supporting Student Board Members



- We are working with NUS and CDN to develop and update the available resources for Supporting Student Board Members
- We would love to hear About The Following:
 1. Do You Support Student Board Members?
 2. How Do You Support Student Board Members?
 3. What Support Do You Think Student Board Members Need?
- If you want to contribute or learn more email – cerys.davies@sparqs.ac.uk



Evaluation



- Please complete this evaluation to help us make SESN as valuable to you as we can.



Next SESN



Thursday 26th November 2026

10am to 12pm

MS Team



Agenda items: Scottish Funding Council (SFC)
Annual Quality Engagement (AQE) meetings, RAISE
network and Class Rep Training.

Before you go...



- Remind your Officers to sign up for NEON!
Tuesday 1st December -10am to 12pm
- Sign up to the sparqs articles
- Sign up to the [sparqsESN Jiscmail list](#) (and do use the list to chat and share!)



Social media



 LinkedIn: [sparqsscotland](https://www.linkedin.com/company/sparqsscotland)

 Instagram: [sparqs Scotland](https://www.instagram.com/sparqs_Scotland)

 Bluesky: [@sparqs-scotland.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/@sparqs-scotland.bsky.social)

 X: [@sparqs_scotland](https://twitter.com/sparqs_scotland)



Some Possible Topics

- Class Rep Recruitment/Training
- Induction and Welcome Events
- Self Evaluation Action Plan (SEAP)
- Feedback emerging from student representation and survey mechanisms
- **YOUR current priorities, challenges, or ideas!**



Discussion/Q&A

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Thank you