

That's Quality! Universities 2024

Monday 15th July
2pm – 5pm



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Welcome! Your sparqs team



**Justin Walker –
Development
Consultant**

**Gloria Laurini –
Development
Consultant**

**Megan Brown –
Senior Development
Consultant**

**Eve Lewis –
Director**

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



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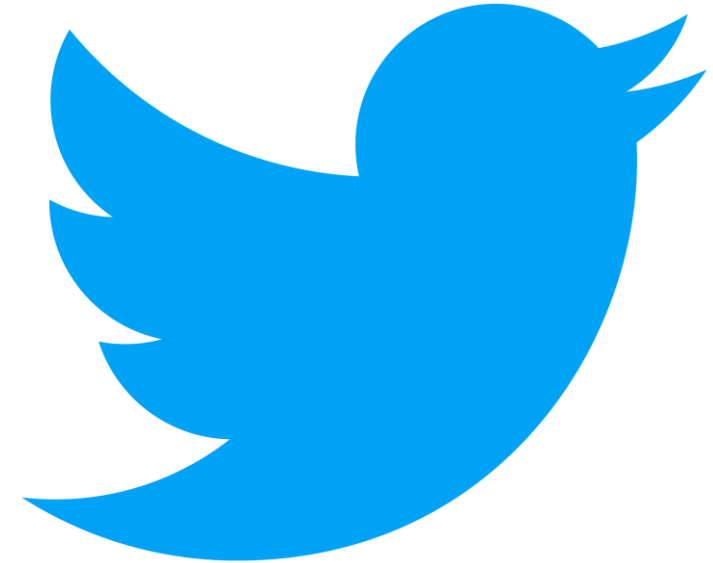
Who is sparqs?

- student **partnerships** in **quality Scotland**.
- Scotland's national agency for student engagement in colleges and universities.
- 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_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 2024 and beyond.

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



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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

14.00 – 14.15: Introduction and welcome

14.15 – 15.15: Getting to know you

15.15 – 15.30: Break

15.30 – 16.00: What makes a quality student experience?

16.00 – 16.10: Break

16.10 – 16.55: Diverse student voices: a good quality experience for all

16.55 – 17.00: Conclusion & end of event



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NEON and SESN

- NEON = National Education Officers Network
- SESN = Student Engagement Staff Network
- Our networks for student officers and student engagement staff members.
- Spaces for ongoing training and development.
- Officer mailing list: sign up [here](#).
- Student engagement staff mailing list: sign up [here](#).



Tutor Groups



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Getting to Know You and Exploring the 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 TQU?



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PRE-TRAINING SURVEY



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



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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.



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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?

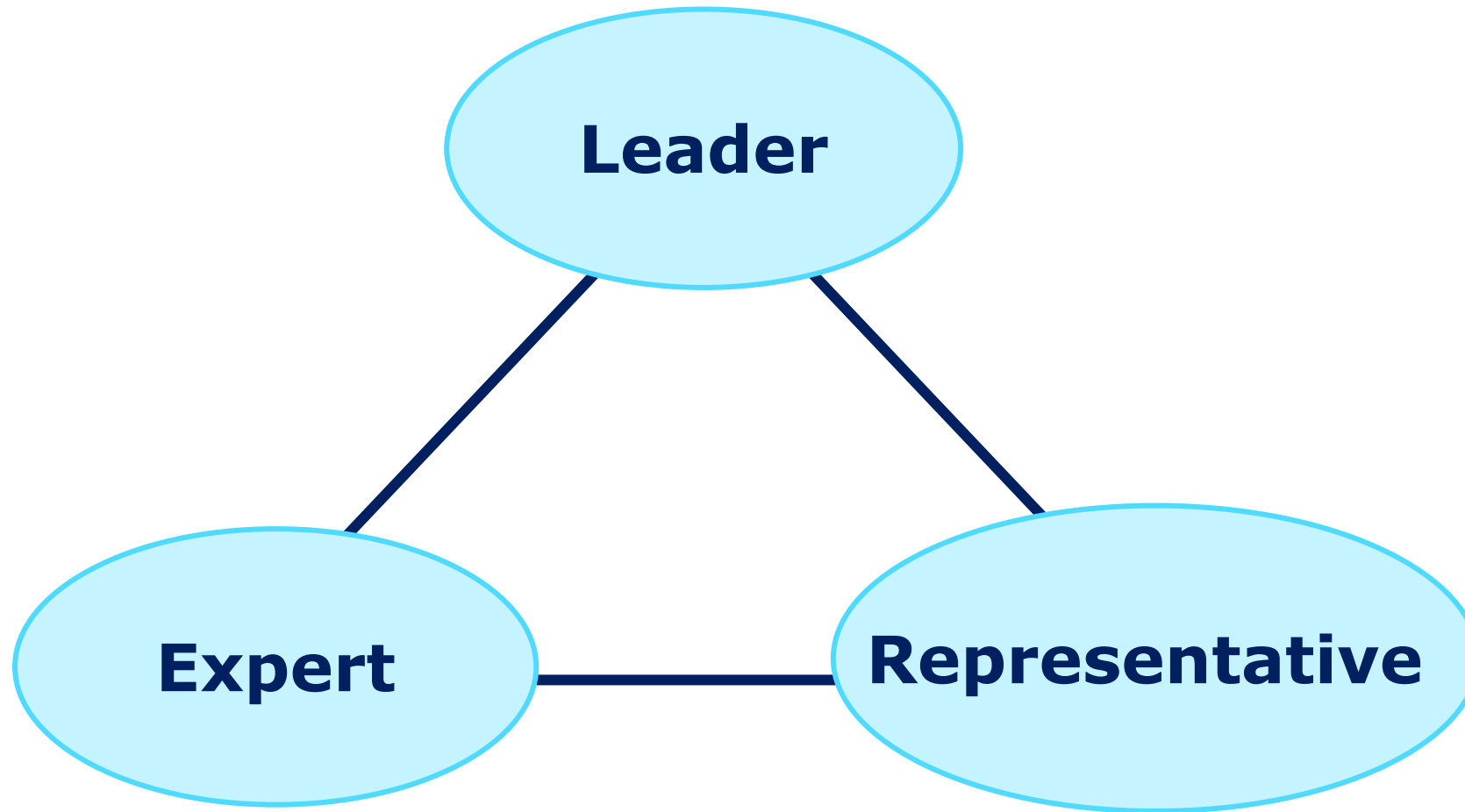


Consider the following statements

- '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 15:30



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What makes a quality student experience?

Megan Brown

Senior Development Consultant



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What will this session cover?



- What 'quality' means in Scotland
- An introduction to Scotland's new Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF)
- Sparqs' sector reference points:
 - Student Learning Experience model
 - Student Partnership ambition statement and features



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Quality Assurance vs Quality Enhancement



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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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Scotland's Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF)



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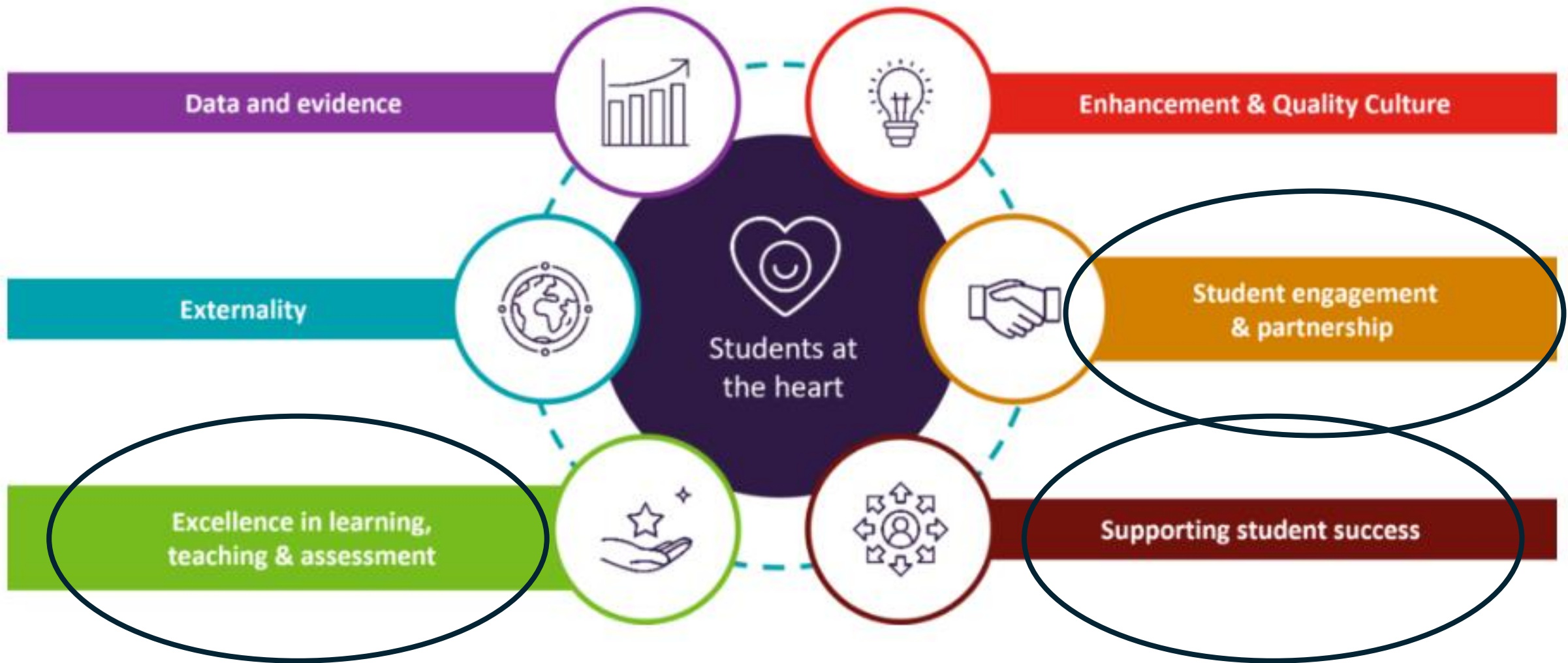
What is the Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF)?



- The TQEF is the new quality assurance and enhancement framework for colleges and universities.
- It seeks to answer the question, *'Is the provision delivered by Scotland's colleges and universities of high quality and is it improving?'*



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The TQEF is underpinned by 6 principles

Principles of Scotland's Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework



Data and evidence

- Student outcomes
- Common dataset for reporting
- Institutional PIs/QIs
- Institution-led self-evaluation and action planning
- Use of student and staff feedback
- Outcomes of review activity



Externality

- External institutional peer review
- Sector reference points/requirements
- External specialists/experts
- Public information and assurance



Excellence in learning, teaching & assessment

- Academic standards and awarding
- Strategic leadership of learning and teaching
- Curriculum planning, design and delivery
- Learning environment, resources and technologies
- Professional development
- Currency of learning and teaching
- Peer review and evaluation of learning, teaching and assessment
- Innovation in learning, teaching & assessment



Enhancement & Quality Culture

- Institution wide culture of assurance, improvement and enhancement
- Institution-led review/activity and action planning
- External institutional peer review
- Sector enhancement activity
- Impact of collaboration
- External outlook – globally responsive



Student engagement & partnership

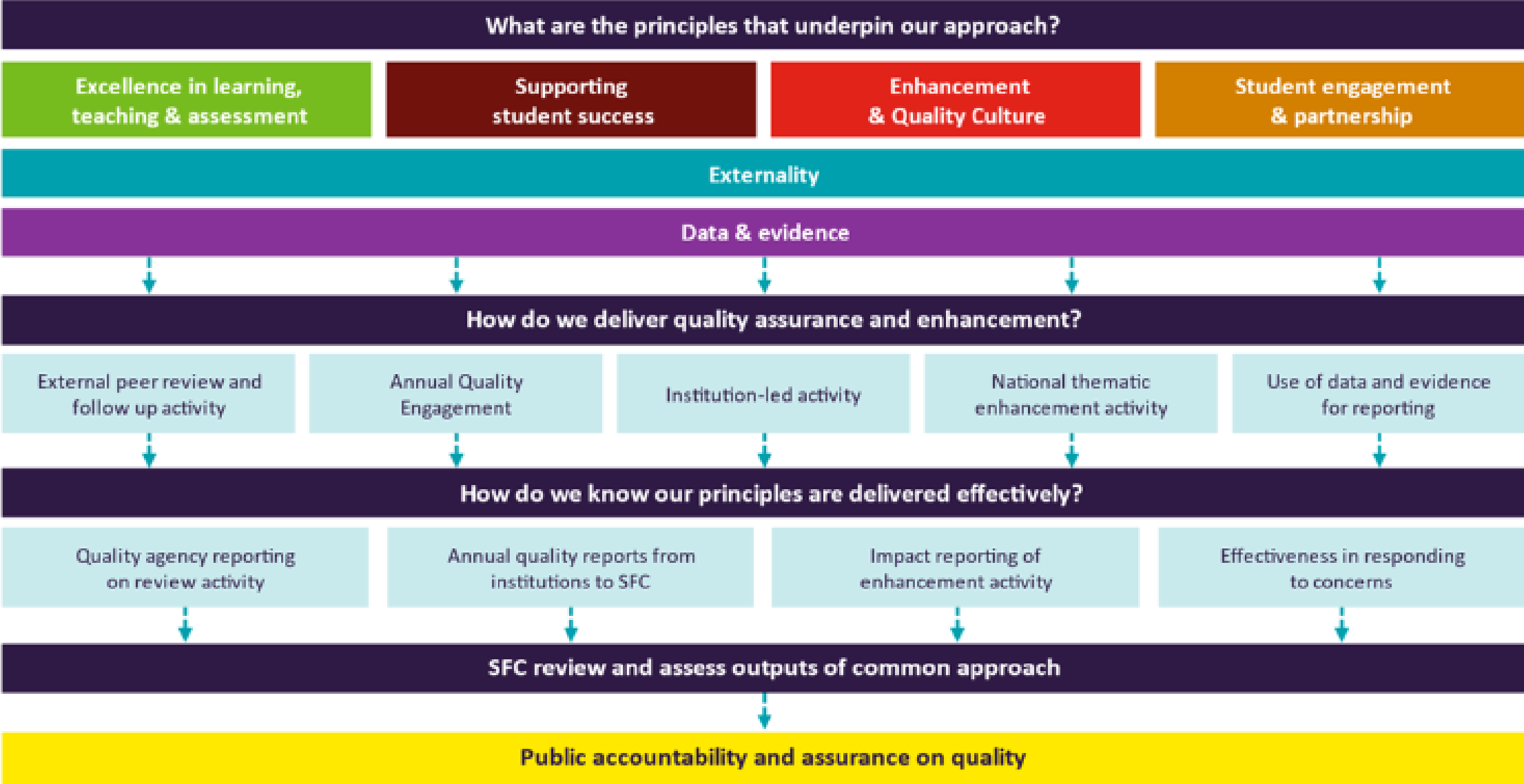
- Engaging students as partners in their learning experience
- Students at core of review and enhancement activity
- Student voice – every place, every level
- Effective support for student representation
- Responsiveness to student feedback



Supporting student success

- Enabling student success – wellbeing, inclusion, equality, student support
- Context and community - meeting the needs of students
- Effective and successful transitions
- Support for employability, skills development and lifelong learning
- Achieving positive outcomes for every learner
- Responsiveness to concerns

Scotland's Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF)



Key mechanisms of TQEF and the role of students



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Self Evaluation and Action Plan (SEAP)



- Once a year, all institutions will complete a document called a SEAP.
- Institutions will be expected to evaluate what they do well and what could be improved (a process called self-evaluation).
- Based on the 6 principles of the TQEF.



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The role of students in SEAP



- Students' associations may be asked by the institution to help write the SEAP, particularly any parts related to student engagement.
- Students' associations should see a final draft version of the SEAP before it is submitted and be given an opportunity to comment on it.



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External peer review - TQER



- Called Tertiary Quality Enhancement Review – TQER
- This process is currently out for consultation, these are some of the suggestions for the process.
- All institutions will be reviewed every **6 years**.
- This will be done by a process called **peer review**.
- The review is based on the 6 principles of the TQEF.
- In 2024/25, only 2 institutions will be reviewed.



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The proposed role of students in TQER



- Student engagement in the review should help the review team to **understand what it is like** to be a student at the institution.
- Student meetings form the basis of the **initial review visit** and with the review team.
- Students are sources of evidence and co-authors in the **SEAP** and in the institution's **Strategic Impact Analysis**.
- Student **reviewers** are full members of the team.
- The institution will have a **Lead Student Rep** (LSR).



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Scotland's Tertiary Enhancement Programme (STEP)



- Scotland's new programme for **enhancement activity** for colleges and universities.
- A new topic is expected to be selected every **4 years** – this year's will be chosen by September.
- First year of the programme (2024/25) will have a focus on **project development** and **exploring the topic**.
- **Student partnership** is at the heart of each phase of STEP, from designing the topic through the delivery of projects



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The importance of self-evaluation

- Underpinning all quality arrangements is self-evaluation.
- Students' associations have a key role in supporting the institution in self-evaluation.

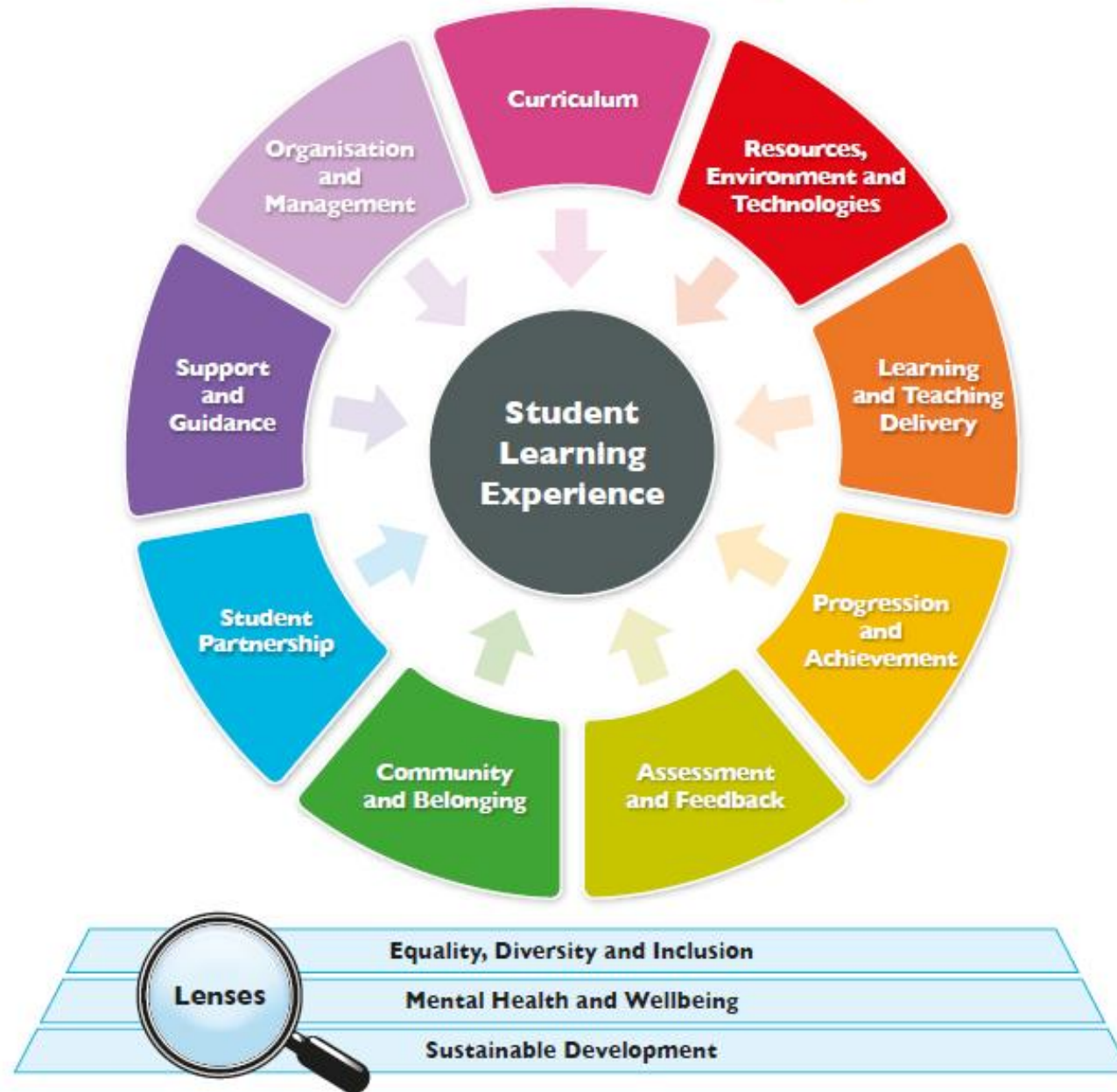


Sector reference points developed by sparqs



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Student Learning Experience (SLE) model



Uses of the SLE model



- As a basis for **recruitment, training, and support activities** for student reps. sparqs uses the SLE model as a core element of its training for course representatives and student officers.
- As a basis for **discussions between students and staff**, e.g. at student-staff liaison meetings, to prompt conversations on what is working well and what could be improved within the student experience.
- To support **student reps** to gather **meaningful feedback** from the students they represent, at both course level and at institutional level. sparqs can explore ways to **support students' associations to bring together evidence** from across the institution and nationally.
- To collate **evidence** on the SLE at a course, institutional and national level, to support institutions in **self-evaluative activity** and **enhancement planning**.
- As a reference point for review teams in **internal and external review**, to provide a shared understanding of the student learning experience.



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Student Partnership ambition statement and features



- In 2023, the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) commissioned sparqs to develop a resource that *'explores the way in which students play a role as partners in the quality assurance and enhancement arrangements and strengthens student partnership in quality'*.
- This resource is designed to enable understanding of the extent to which students are **key partners** in Scotland's **quality processes** and are playing a full role in institutional **self-evaluative activity** and **enhancement planning**.



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What we've created:



- Student Partnership ambition statement for Scotland
- A set of 8 features of partnership.



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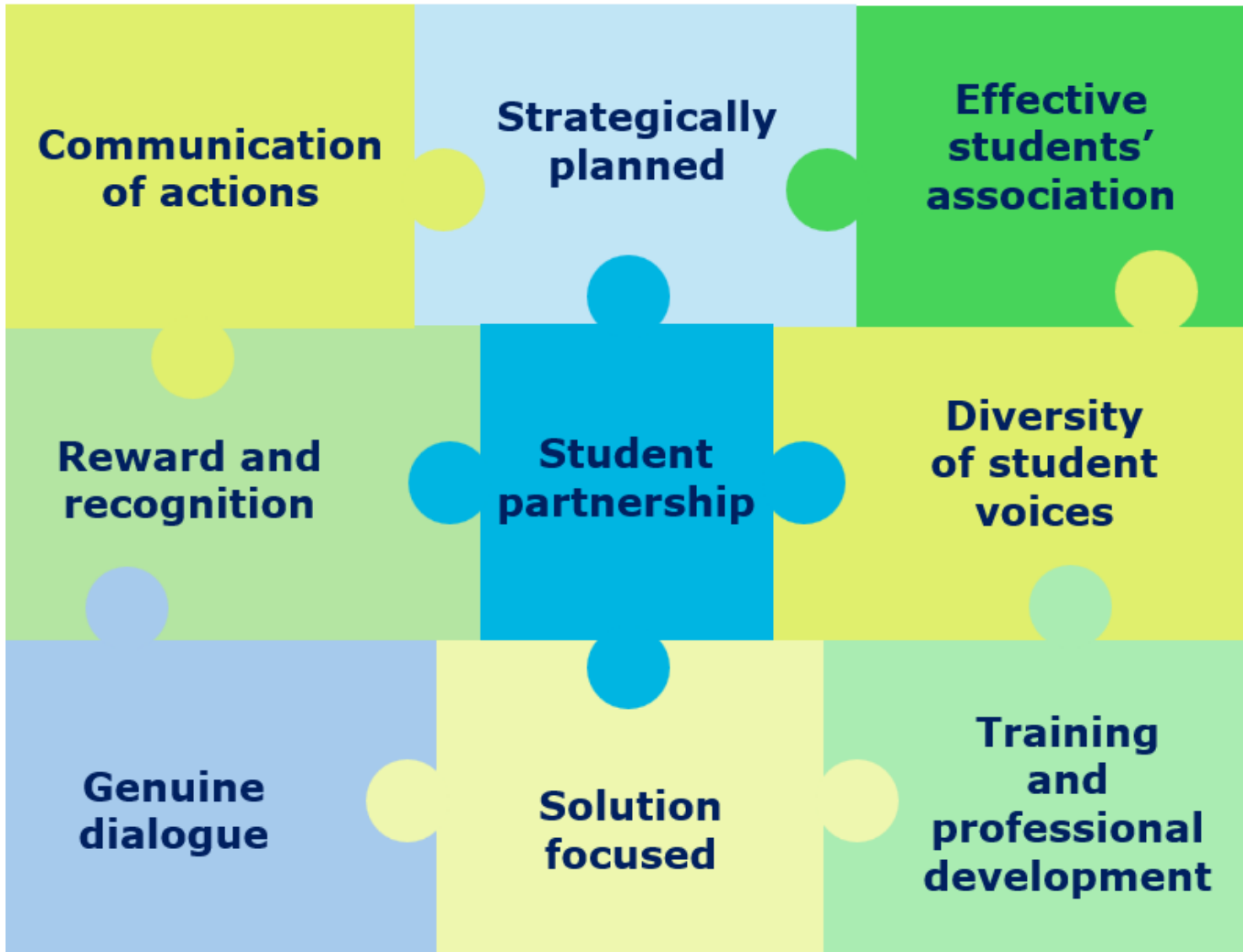
Ambition statement:



Student partnership is embedded in Scotland's Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework. Our ambition is to **develop and mature this partnership**, ensuring that students are central to shaping the quality of learning and **making a positive impact on their own and others' experience, however and wherever they learn**. Student partnership is achieved when there is **trust and mutual respect** for both student and staff expertise, a **robust representative system** which is accountable to the **diverse student body**, and **student and staff capacity** to co-create and implement solutions. Central to this is an **equal partnership** where students are essential to **all levels** of decision making, self-evaluative activity, enhancement planning and quality processes.



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8 Features of Partnership visual (draft)



Features of Student Partnership:



- Partnership is **strategically planned**, resourced, evaluated and enhanced at all levels of the institution. It is led by student officers and senior institutional managers and widely owned and developed across the institution.
- Partnership is **solution focused**. Together, students and staff collect, review, and interpret evidence; identify priorities and design solutions that address diverse student needs; and meet institutional challenges.
- Partnership creates opportunities for **genuine dialogue** and requires a relationship between the institution, the students' association and students, which values equally the contribution each brings.
- Partnership is underpinned by an **effective students' association** with a robust, accountable and joined-up representative system, that is able to understand the complexity of the student experience and effectively influence decision making.



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Features of Student Partnership:



- Partnership values the **diversity of student voices**, their backgrounds and their lived experiences. All students who wish to should have the opportunity to participate fully and take on a partnership level role, and opportunities exists for students to be involved at a level that suits them.
- 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.
- Partnership results in **tangible actions** that are communicated with students in a way which allows them to feel confident that their views are taken seriously and result in change at a local and strategic level.
- Partnership **recognises and rewards students** for the role that they play in student partnership and for the impact they have made on current and future students.



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Tertiary Quality Student Expert Group



- For the last year, sparqs has run a group to support the development of TQEF.
- Comprised of officers and other students.
- This year, the group will have **a key role in the continued development of the TQEF** and will be a key sector group to facilitate decision makers to work in partnership with students.
- If you're interested in influencing national level policy and guidance, put yourself forward for this group!



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What does all this mean for you?



Arrange a meeting with your quality team to discuss how you'll work together this year.

Everyone will complete a SEAP this year and you may be asked to help complete this document.

Consider if you would like to join sparqs' Student Expert Group and put yourself forward if you do!

If you are from one of the institutions getting an external review (TQER) this year, we'll be in touch.



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Break

Please be back by 16.10pm

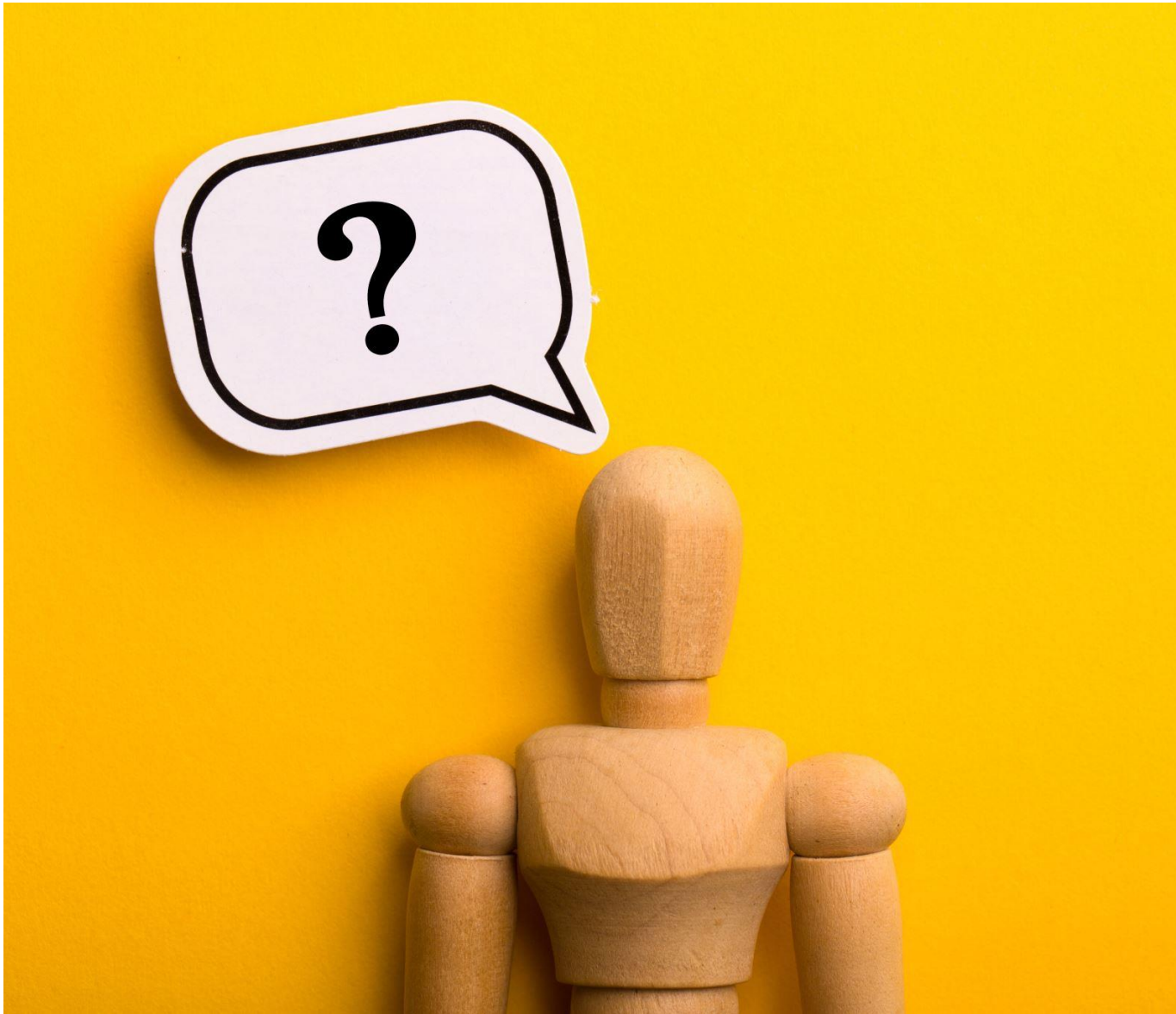


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Diverse Student Voices: a good quality experience for all



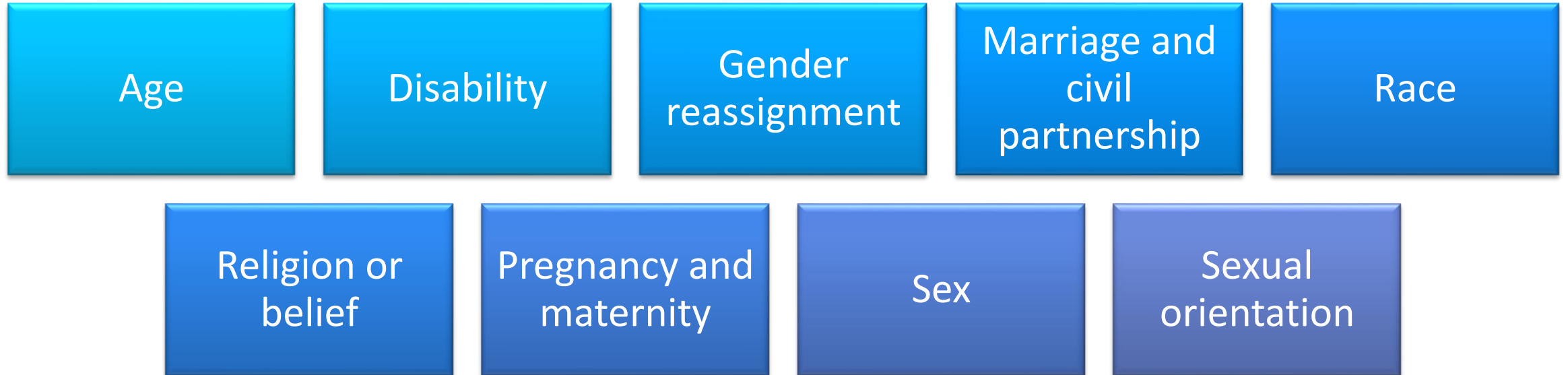
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**Who are you
representing?**



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: 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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The wider context: attainment



In 2020, 81.4% of white students received a first/2:1 compared with 68.0% of BAME students, representing a BAME degree awarding gap of 13.3 percentage points.

Advance HE, Students Statistical Report (2020)

Students with a disability who receive Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) are more likely to receive a 1st or a 2:1 than students with a disability who do not receive DSA.

Advance HE, Students Statistical Report (2020)



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The wider context: access



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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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.

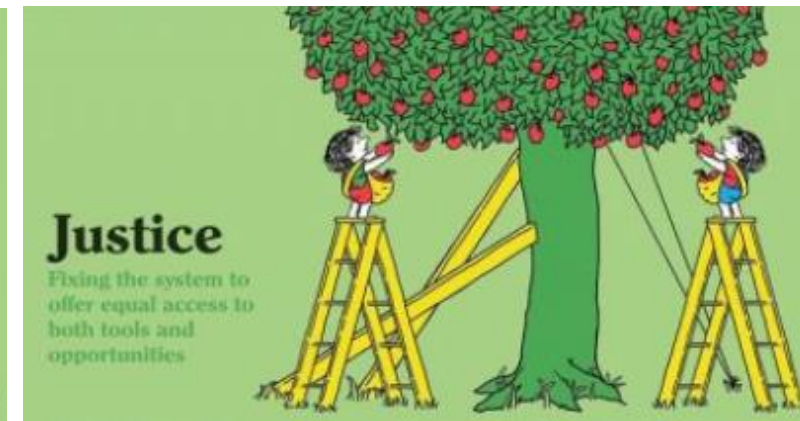
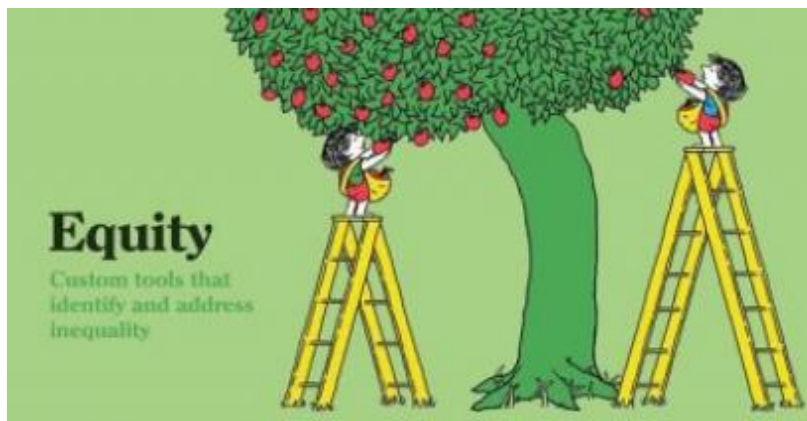
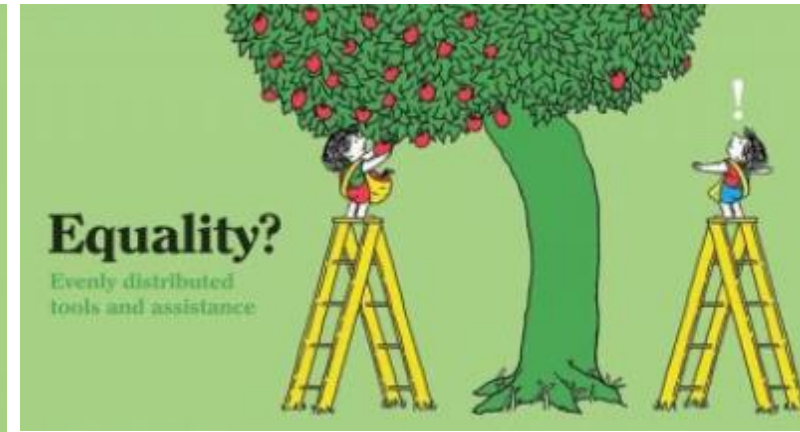
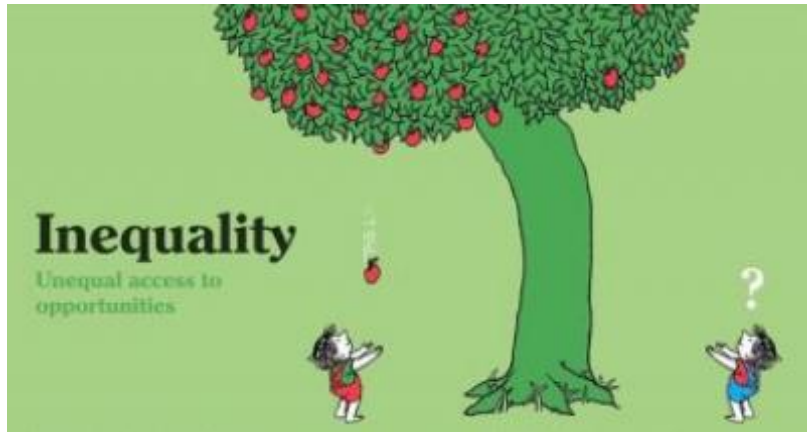


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Key concepts

Equality or Equity?



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

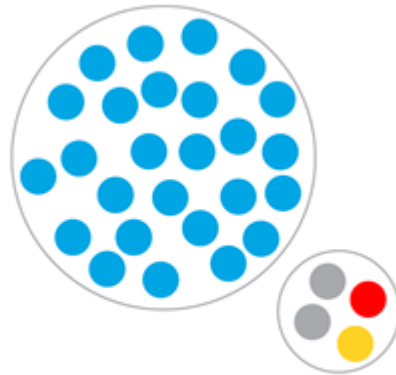


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Exclusion → Inclusion



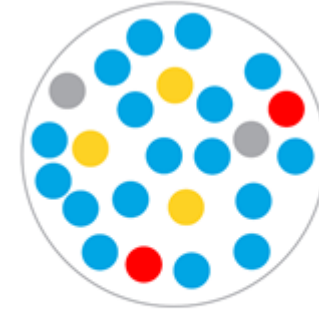
Exclusion



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>)

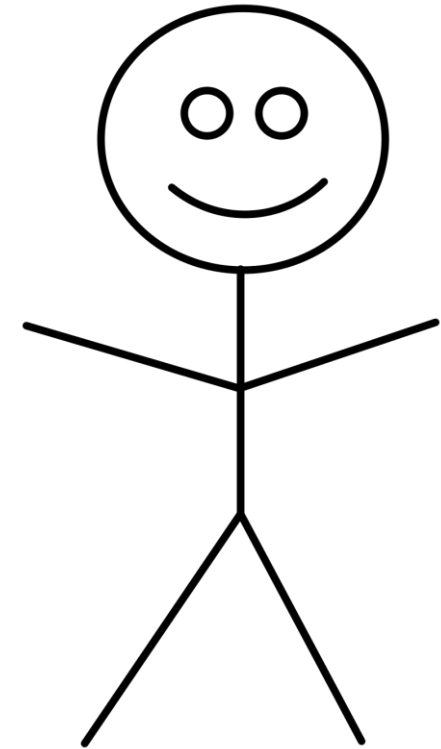


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The Imagined Student

- When planning teaching, the teacher often **imagines a student** and how they might learn.
- 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?



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Scenario 1



Student numbers at your institution have increased. Your institution has identified that they need to extend the teaching week, in order to have enough time to deliver in-person 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:



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Thank you!

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

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We'll see you on Monday 5th August at QMU!



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