

# **Evaluating and Enhancing Student Partnership and its role in institutional resilience:**

practical steps to establishing an effective approach to  
student engagement and partnership within the  
quality assurance and enhancement arena

Eve Lewis, Director, sparqs  
Megan Brown, Senior Development Consultant, sparqs



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



 [@sparqs-scotland.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/@sparqs-scotland.bsky.social)  [@sparqsscotland](https://www.linkedin.com/company/@sparqsscotland)   [@sparqs\\_scotland](https://www.instagram.com/@sparqs_scotland)

# Who is sparqs?



- **student partnerships in quality Scotland.**
- We work with all institutions and students' associations in the university and college sector in Scotland.
- Main funding from the Scottish Funding Council.
- 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.



# Learning Outcomes



- Introduce participants to the **Partnership Ambition** and provide an opportunity to use the features and indicators of student partnership in practice.
- Begin to **evaluate and enhance** student partnership within your own institution, students' union or national agency.
- Explore with attendees the importance of developing effective student partnership in the context of **contemporary challenges** within higher education.

# Why is student partnership important?



**What does student partnership mean to you?**

**What are the elements that make up successful partnerships between students and staff?**



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



 [@sparqs-scotland.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/sparqs-scotland.bsky.social)  [@sparqsscotland](https://www.linkedin.com/company/sparqsscotland)   [@sparqs\\_scotland](https://www.instagram.com/sparqs_scotland)

# Scotland's Ambition for Student Partnership



 @sparqs-scotland.bsky.social

 @sparqsscotland

  @sparqs\_scotland

# Background and context



- The Scottish Funding Council commissioned sparqs to create a tool to support institutions to explore student partnership, for inclusion in the new **tertiary approach to quality**.
- Scotland's Ambition for Student Partnership is designed to support you to **evaluate** student engagement and partnership and make improvements.

# Scotland's Ambition for Student Partnership



- An **ambition** for Scotland's tertiary sector.
- Underpinned by 8 **features** of student partnership.
- Each feature of student partnership can be explored further through **indicators of practice**.



# Scotland's Ambition for Student Partnership



Our ambition is to **develop and mature** student 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.

# Features of Student Partnership



# Indicators of Practice

## INDICATORS OF PRACTICE



### Recognition and reward

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.

Evidence of this could include:

- There are a variety of ways of recognising and rewarding students for their roles, proportionate to the time and effort they have been expected to contribute.
- Students are supported to reflect on and develop skills during partnership activities and there are a variety of ways that students can record and have their efforts certificated and accredited.
- There are events and activities which celebrate and reward the efforts and achievements of students, such as through institutional and national awards and social activities.
- There are processes and procedures to identify when it is appropriate for students to be paid for their contribution and these reflect good employment practice in areas such as recruitment, level of remuneration, and management and support.
- The institution and the students' association take steps to spotlight the impact and value of the student contribution through a range of formal and informal publicity and communications.
- There is an embedded system within the institution and students' association that can record and measure the effectiveness and impact of students' participation in partnership roles.

- Examples of the ways in which the features can be illustrated in practice.
- Not an exhaustive list or designed to be a checklist!
- **Example:** "There are a variety of ways of recognising and rewarding students for their roles, proportionate to the time and effort they have been expected to contribute."

# How can institutions use the Partnership Ambition?



- A tool to carry out a **high-level evaluation** of your partnership activities across the college.
- An evaluation of partnership within a **particular department** or **subject level**.
- You might choose a **specific feature** and/or group of indicators you want to explore in more detail.
- Acts as a **sector benchmark** when writing your Self Evaluation and Action Plan and your Strategic Impact Analysis.

# Activity: Self-Evaluation

- In small groups, choose one feature of Partnership to explore in further detail.
- What existing practice do you have which works well in this area?
- Where are there areas for improvement?

# Activity: Action Planning



- Consider 3 key areas:
  - what support would you require to enhance your practice and who could offer this support?
  - what barriers are there to improving student partnership and how can you overcome these barriers?
  - what first steps can you identify to enhance this feature in your own context

# Feedback

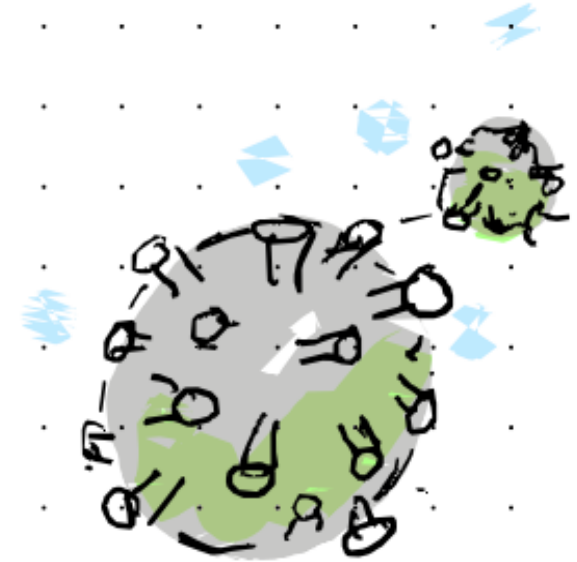
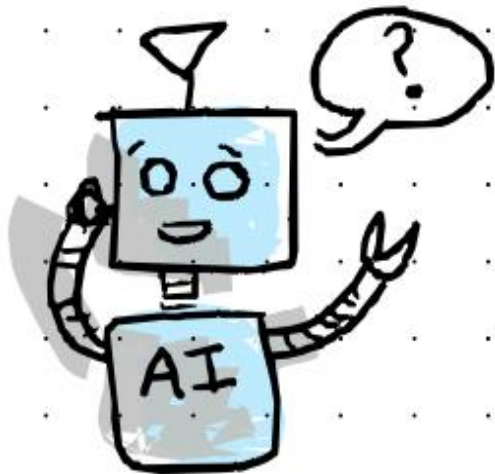


sparqs is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation funded by the Scottish Funding Council. Registration number SC046172.



 [@sparqs-scotland.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/sparqs-scotland)  [@sparqsscotland](https://www.linkedin.com/company/sparqsscotland)   [@sparqs\\_scotland](https://www.instagram.com/sparqs_scotland)

# Partnership and Contemporary Challenges



**Thank you, stay in touch**

Eve.Lewis@sparqs.ac.uk



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



 [@sparqs-scotland.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/sparqs-scotland.bsky.social)  [@sparqsscotland](https://www.linkedin.com/company/sparqsscotland)   [@sparqs\\_scotland](https://www.instagram.com/sparqs_scotland)