Supporting student engagement practitioners: resilience, professionalism and sustainability in representation and student voice

International Enhancement Conference, Wednesday 14th June 2023

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sparqs

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Who are we?

- **Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland.**
- Full-time staff in Edinburgh and Inverness.
- Works with all institutions and students’ associations in the university and college sector.
- Scottish Charity - members all sector agencies.
- Main funding from the Scottish Funding Council.
- Various international consultancy work.
- [www.sparqs.ac.uk](http://www.sparqs.ac.uk)
Student engagement in our sector

Focus on enhancement and change

Appropriate resources and support

Responding to diversity

Valuing the student contribution

A culture of engagement

Students as partners

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Developing student engagement

• Student engagement strategies.
• Student Partnership Agreements.
• Content in strategic plans.
• Quality enhancement activity.

• Students’ association staff and officers.
• Institutional quality, student experience or student engagement teams.
• …and maybe all staff?

• Student engagement working groups.
• Institution-students’ association forums.
• Shared partnership committees.
Student Engagement Staff Network

- Meets online and in-person.
- “Learn, share, develop”.
- Jiscmail group for conversation.
- Buddy scheme piloted in 2023.
Buddying scheme development

• Created through practitioner feedback.
• 12 pilot participants, paired to ensure complementary experiences and roles.
• Encouraged to meet two or three times over six months, in-person and online.
• Mutually beneficial conversations, and even shadowing of work.
• All participants want continuation, but with more structure for conversations.
Buddying scheme feedback

“It was a lovely idea to set up a buddying scheme because the world of student engagement can feel awfully lonely. It sometimes feels like you and your colleagues against the world, and I think expanding our networks to other associations is always for the better.”

“I have found all of these meetings to be incredibly useful, as I am still quite new into role and new to Students’ Associations it’s been invaluable to see how other institutions work and how they are working with their student community.”

“I found these talks to be so beneficial, especially as during a lot of this time I was without a manager, so I really enjoyed talking through ideas.”

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# Professional Standards Framework for Student Engagement

## Values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>V1</td>
<td>A belief in education as a positive, inquisitive and liberating force for wider societal change.</td>
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<tr>
<td>V2</td>
<td>Placing the student voice at the heart of continuous enhancement and co-creation of the student learning experience.</td>
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<td>V3</td>
<td>Recognition of the centrality of equality, diversity, liberation and inclusion to student engagement.</td>
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<td>V4</td>
<td>A belief in students’ associations as vital collective, democratic contributors to institutional life and students’ experiences.</td>
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<td>V5</td>
<td>A commitment to transformative partnership as an underpinning aspect of work with staff and students.</td>
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## Knowledge

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K1</td>
<td>The implications of the diversity and intersectionality of the student population in its demography, pedagogy and geography.</td>
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<tr>
<td>K2</td>
<td>How institutions manage and develop learning and teaching.</td>
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<td>K3</td>
<td>The role of evidence and data in effective student engagement in quality enhancement and assurance.</td>
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<td>K4</td>
<td>The purpose, role and dynamic structures of students’ associations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>K5</td>
<td>How the national and international policy and agency landscape affects, and is shaped by, students.</td>
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<td>K6</td>
<td>Policies, theories and strategies relating to student engagement, feedback and partnership in quality.</td>
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## Activities

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>Empowering all students to own and shape their learning.</td>
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<td>A2</td>
<td>Supporting and enabling academic representative systems.</td>
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<td>A3</td>
<td>Facilitating and promoting the recognition of student engagement activities.</td>
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<td>A4</td>
<td>Working with, supporting and developing student officers as they engage in strategic decisions about learning and teaching.</td>
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<td>A5</td>
<td>Informing and advising decision-makers on students’ views and priorities.</td>
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<td>A6</td>
<td>Enabling the generation and use of data about the learning experience.</td>
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<td>A7</td>
<td>Championing partnership-based collaborations between staff and students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A8</td>
<td>Acquiring, sharing and applying knowledge about student engagement policy and practice.</td>
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“What do you do for a living?”

“Student engagement roles have a unique position... and are central to building partnership between staff and students and between institutions and students’ associations... regularly connect operational support for student representation and feedback, with strategies for learning, teaching and wider institutional functions.”

“...roles that drive engagement and partnership can often be hard to define and understand. At the same time, they are exciting, rewarding positions that, with appropriate support, have immeasurable impact on learning and the wider student experience.”

(PSFSE)
Discussion

1. Who are the SE practitioners in your institution?
2. Where and how do you work with them?
3. How much of the PSFSE do you recognise in your own role?
4. How much does student engagement shape your own practice, and your institution’s strategy?
5. Could sparqs help you in these reflections?
References, links and contacts

- Student Partnership Agreements.
- Student Engagement Framework for Scotland.
- Student Engagement Staff Network.
- Professional Standards Framework for Student Engagement.
- More on sparqs’ website: [www.sparqs.ac.uk](http://www.sparqs.ac.uk).
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