

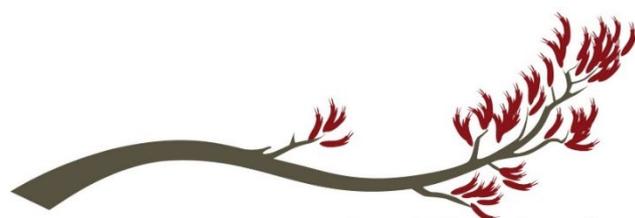
Students in Quality

*A working paper to guide AQA's response to its
2020 External Review recommendations*

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AQA

Academic
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For New Zealand Universities

*Te Pokapū Kōunga Mātauranga
mō ngā Whare Wānanga o Aotearoa*

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Abstract

In 2020, the Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities (AQA) was externally reviewed. Several of the External Review recommendations considered how AQA can better support and work with the student representatives it engages with, including a recommendation that AQA work with students' association to develop a national framework and good practice guidelines for working with students in academic quality activities.

These recommendations coincided with a broader trend that is occurring in pockets of the tertiary education sector in Aotearoa New Zealand, an embracing of student partnership.

The first section of the paper explores the terms student voice, student engagement and student partnership to identify the overlaps and distinctions of these concepts, before arriving at definitions for how they will be used in the context of academic quality.

The second section examines student partnership frameworks in Scotland, Wales, Ireland, England, Europe and Australia to understand what factors have contributed to the successful embedding of student partnership practices in those regions. This section also analyses the recent history of student voice and partnership in Aotearoa New Zealand and looks at the development of its own student partnerships principles in *Whiria Ngā Rau: Progressing from student voice the partnerships* (Ministry of Education in partnership with Te Mana Akonga, New Zealand Union of Students' Associations, Taura Pasifika, and the National Disabled Students' Association, 2021).

Using the international case studies, and the concepts in *Whiria Ngā Rau*, the third section provides guidance and advice to AQA on how it can respond to three of the recommendations made by the External Review. This is set out in four sections:

- Developing student partnership guidelines for academic quality assurance
- Student Partnership guidance for academic audit panels
- Student partnership guidance for the AQA Board
- Student partnership guidance for AQA

This guidance is designed to support AQA to work with student representatives, but it may also help universities respond to the Student Voice Guideline Statement in Cycle 6 Academic Audit.

Although this working paper is tailored to student partnership in the context of academic quality, many of the reflective questions and advice can be used to develop and strengthen student partnership practices throughout the tertiary education sector in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Introduction

Partnerships between students, their tertiary education institutions (TEIs) and tertiary education agencies, have become increasingly common internationally and these partnerships bring academic communities together to shape and enhance the experiences of both students and staff (Varnham, 2018). Different countries have embraced student partnership to varying degrees, with some adopting national frameworks for embedding student partnership practices, while others have relied on 'champions' within institutions to encourage partnership approaches. Where tertiary education systems have undergone cultural shifts to embed an ethos of student partnership, multiple actors in the sector have come together and coordinated the process for achieving their partnership aspirations.

Aotearoa New Zealand is also in the process of moving towards a 'students as partners' approach to tertiary education. Various organisations, including the New Zealand Union of Students' Associations (NZUSA), Te Mana Ākonga (TMĀ), Taura Pasifika, the New Zealand International Students' Association (NZISA), the National Disabled Students' Association (NDSA), the Ministry of Education, Universities New Zealand – Te Pōkai Tara, Te Pūkenga, the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA), Ako Aotearoa and the Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities (AQA), all have roles in strengthening student voices in tertiary education decision-making and leading the way towards supporting greater partnerships between students and institutions.

This working paper primarily focusses on AQA's role in strengthening student voices and partnerships in academic quality within sector by responding to the recommendations made in its 2020 External Review of AQA (Jones *et al.*, 2020):

Recommendation 3: The Panel recommends that, to improve consistency, AQA works with students' associations to develop a national framework for student voices and good practice guidelines for including student voices

Recommendation 5: The Panel recommends that all AQA auditors receive training on how to effectively work with and support student voices.

Recommendation 10: The Panel recommends that all AQA Board members receive training on how to effectively work with and support student voices.

To guide AQA's implementation of these recommendations, this paper will analyse student partnership frameworks and practices in Scotland, Wales, Ireland, England, Europe and Australia and explore the steps Aotearoa New Zealand has taken towards developing partnership practices in its tertiary education sector. Using these international and local student partnership frameworks, student partnership guidance has been developed for AQA in response to the recommendations listed above.

Guidance on recommendation 3 should also be beneficial to universities in their own internal quality assurance processes and provides reflective questions for institutions and students to identify how they might work together to enhance academic quality at their university. In particular, it offers further advice for universities in addressing guideline statement 2 (Student Voice) in the Cycle 6 Academic Audit Framework (Matear, 2020).

Although this paper looks at student partnership in academic quality, the ideas and concepts can be applied to a wide range of contexts across the tertiary education sector in Aotearoa New Zealand. It is also worth mentioning that this paper has been produced by a recent graduate who was involved in local and national student' associations, and it is from that perspective this paper is written. This guidance was also developed with national student representatives.

For the purposes of this working paper, it is important to consider on how the key terms of **student voice**, **student engagement** and **student partnership** will be used. Using international and local interpretations of these concepts, the following definitions are offered in the context of academic quality. At times, these concepts may overlap, but there are distinct differences, largely around the extent to which student voices are involved in decision-making.

Student Voice

The term student voice is commonly used in Aotearoa New Zealand when referring to the inclusion of students in tertiary education institution (TEI) decision-making.¹ Student voice focuses primarily on the student, or student representative, and whether they have the opportunity to provide their opinion or view in a decision-making process. Trowler et al. (2018) suggest that student voice:

"entails the engagement of students in shaping their studies ... through expressing their views, needs and concerns ... and challenges organisations to respond appropriately to the issues student voices raise"

The Higher Education Authority (2016) in Ireland believes the term 'student voice' may offer little guidance on what happens with that 'voice' after it has been engaged.

"Opportunities can be provided for student engagement to take the form of 'student voice', where students can offer an opinion, but they must rely on others to take on board their views".

The term student voice also has other shortcomings, including the assumption that student representatives have access to resources, training and support to deliver their views effectively, which is often not the case. The term, in its broadness, also creates situations where surveys are used to tick the 'student voice' box, when seats at decision-making tables would have been more effective.

Student voice can also imply that students are speaking as one, disembodied 'voice' rather acknowledging the diverse range of student communities. Consideration must be given to how representative the student voice is in decision-making processes, as one sole student member of a committee is unable to represent the rich diversity of the student body. Increasingly, the term student voice has morphed into student voices, recognising that there ought to be a range of students having input into decision-making. This is particularly relevant in Aotearoa New Zealand where Te Tiriti o Waitangi places obligations on universities to ensure Māori voices are heard and listened to.

The concept of student voice also raises questions about whether student members in decision-making processes are representing their own views, or views of their peers. Within the student voice concept sits representative student voice, where students gather information from other students to inform their views, and individual student voice, where students are asked for their own views by the institution (Heathrose, 2013). Guidelines from sparqs (2013) highlight that representative student voice is best delivered by representatives from independent students' associations who have the capability and capacity to engage with a range of student networks.

For the purposes of this paper, and in the context of academic quality, student voice will refer to **students, and their representatives contributing their views and perspectives to academic quality processes to improve their university experience.**

¹ The terms 'tertiary education' and 'tertiary education institutions' (TEIs) are in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. The terms 'higher education' and 'higher education institutions' (HEIs) are commonly used overseas.

Student Engagement

Student engagement in the context of TEI decision-making, is a term that features in several of the student partnership frameworks overseas. Definitions for student engagement, like student voice, also vary, with some placing emphasis on how students engage with their education, and some putting the onus on institutions and asking how they engage with students. The National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP) in Ireland defines student engagement as:

"The investment of time, effort and other relevant resources by both students and their institutions intended to optimise the student experience and enhance the learning outcomes and development of students, and the performance and reputation of the institution" (HEA, 2016).

Further, NStEP emphasises that student engagement is a two-way process.

"While students are ultimately responsible for their own learning and level of engagement, student engagement is also dependent on institutional conditions, policies, and culture that enable and encourage students to get further involved" (HEA, 2016).

Student engagement activities are broad, ranging from engagement in learning and teaching activities, to student interaction with the structures, processes and strategies of their institution. A common theme identified in student partnership frameworks is that the process in which students are engaged and the attitudes of students and staff towards this process, rather than the outcome of engagement, that is most important. This working paper advocates that a partnership approach to student engagement will yield the greatest benefit.

In the context of academic quality, and the purposes of this paper, student engagement refers to **universities seeking the views and perspectives of their students, and students interacting with academic quality systems and academic decision-making processes.**

Student Partnership

Partnership, in the context of tertiary education, sees student representatives and representatives of their tertiary education institution working together to enhance the experiences of students and staff. This involves institutions recognising students as experts in their own right, taking their voices seriously, and making decisions that affect students jointly with their representatives. This also involves student representatives considering the complex contexts of institutional decision-making and approaching partnerships in good faith.

Wise Wales provides a useful distinction between student voice, student engagement and student partnership:

"You can engage students [and listen to their voice] with a survey but working in partnership with students would mean giving them the opportunity to input what they think the survey should be asking in the first place, ensuring you feed the results back to them after the survey is finished, and involving students in any of the actions resulting from the feedback" (Healey et al., 2014).

A student partnership approach to education can be seen as opposite to a commercial transaction between students and their institutions. Rather than seeing students as consumers of education, students are considered as partners, where they take an active role in shaping their education experience, rather than passively receiving it.

sparqs (2013) suggests that partnership:

"goes far beyond the mere consultation, involvement, or representation of students in decision-making. Where partnership exists, students not only identify areas for enhancement, but they help to identify ways to carry out that enhancement, as well as helping to facilitate implementation where possible.

Wise Wales sees partnership as:

"a fundamental culture shift which embeds the idea that students are experts in their own right, and equally able to contribute to their student experience".²

Student Voice Australia defines student partnership as:

"a process of student engagement which has at its core staff and students working together in all aspects of an institution's operations, to foster enhancement of student learning and teaching, and the student experience" (Varnham, 2018).

Partnership is not a 'one-size-fits-all' concept, and partnerships will look different in different decision-making contexts, in different regions, for different student cohorts. What should be consistent, is that students and institutions agree on how their partnerships will operate. One key tool that has been used to build and develop student partnerships within TEIs overseas is student partnership agreements. These set out the expectations of both students and their institutions in governance and decision-making processes. Typically, they outline all of the levels where student voices will be present, how it will be supported, and often include a few key issues or projects that both parties want to address or work on together. The agreements are reviewed as the partnership grows and the number of TEIs with student partnership agreements around the world continues to increase.³

TEIs embarking on systemic shifts towards stronger students partnership is not about relinquishing all control but empowering those affected by decisions to actively participate in making them (SVA, 2019). Working in partnership is an ethos, not an activity, and successful partnerships rely on the intentions and attitudes of students and staff as much as the process itself.

For this paper, and in the context of academic quality, student partnerships refer to **students, students' associations and university staff working together, from problem identification to solution implementation, to enhance the teaching and learning experiences of students and staff, student outcomes and student support.**

Definitions Summary:

- **Student Voice:** students, and their representatives contributing their views and perspectives to academic quality processes to improve their university experience.
- **Student Engagement:** universities seeking the views and perspectives of their students, and students interacting with academic quality systems and academic decision-making processes.
- Student Partnership:** students, students' associations and university staff working together, from problem identification to solution implementation, to enhance the teaching and learning experiences of students and staff, student outcomes and student support.

² Wise Wales Website (<https://wisewales.org.uk/about/what-is-partnership/>). Accessed 2/03/21.

³ Student Partnership Agreement Example from The Australian National University. (<https://anusa.com.au/pageassets/advocacy/studentpartnerships/2019-Student-Partnership-Agreement.pdf>). Accessed 14/4/2021.

International Frameworks for Student Partnership

This section explores the history of student voice and student partnerships, national frameworks or guidance underpinning partnership practices, and the roles various actors in the tertiary education sector play in supporting student partnerships in Scotland, Wales, Ireland, England Europe, Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand.

For the purposes of this paper, the following are considered to be 'national frameworks' for student partnership:

- **Scotland:** A Student Engagement Framework for Scotland
- **Wales:** Pathways to Partnership Toolkit
- **Ireland:** Enhancing Student Engagement in Decision-Making
- **England:** Framework for Student Engagement Through Partnership
- **Europe:** Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area
- **Australia:** Creating a National Framework for Student Partnership in University Decision-making and Governance
- **Aotearoa New Zealand:** Whiria Ngā Rau: Progressing from Student Voice to Partnerships.

Where systemic shifts towards student partnership have been successful overseas, students, TEIs and agencies in the sector have developed student partnership frameworks and overseen their implementation together. It is the collaborative co-ordination of embedding a culture of student partnership that is as important as the guiding framework.

Scotland

Scotland is world-leading in its dedication and commitment to student partnership in higher education. In 2002, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education Scotland (QAA Scotland) developed a Quality Enhancement Framework (QEF) aimed at improving the quality of learning and teaching experiences in Scotland. The QEF emphasised the importance of listening to student voices and encouraging student participation in the review of academic quality, not as consumers, but as genuine partners (Land & Gordon, 2013). The Director of QAA Scotland at the time the QEF was created, noted that the academic quality process "had to be something in which everyone contributed to shaping" (sparqs, 2019).

In 2003, as the QEF was being implemented, organisations in the Scottish higher education sector came together to form a world-leading and world-first development agency for student engagement named student participation in quality Scotland (sparqs). The name was changed to student *partnership* in quality Scotland (sparqs) in 2015, but their vision maintained that:

"Students are partners in shaping the quality of learning, making positive change to their own and others' experience, however and wherever they learn".⁴

sparqs supports students to take active roles in shaping their education by providing training, resources, and guidance, as well as supporting higher education institutions (HEIs) to embed effective student partnership practices throughout their institutional decision-making processes.

⁴ sparqs Website (<https://www.sparqs.ac.uk/home.php?page=292>). Accessed 3/3/21

In 2011, the Scottish Government issued a report titled, *Putting Learners at the Centre*, which, among other things, outlined that a learner-centred approach is a fundamental principle of higher education. They also announced that a model for student partnership agreements would be developed in consultation with institutions and student representative bodies to strengthen and support effective relationships between institutions and students (The Scottish Government, 2011). This proposal was welcomed by Universities Scotland and the National Union of Students Scotland (NUS), who held a shared view that students should be partners, not consumers, in higher education (Universities Scotland, 2012).

In 2012, sparqs, along with QAA, NUS, Universities Scotland, the Higher Education Academy, Education Scotland, and the Scottish Funding Council, launched **A Student Engagement Framework for Scotland**. The Framework identified the five key elements of student engagement, being (SEF, 2012):

1. **Students feeling part of a supportive institution**: students feel supported to participate in their institution by creating a sense of community and positive all-round student experience
2. **Students engaging in their own learning**: students are encouraged to be active partners in the learning process.
3. **Students working with their institution in shaping the direction of learning**: students are not just identifying problems, but working with staff to develop solutions, implement actions and explore/identify future developments.
4. **Formal mechanisms for quality and governance**: independent student representatives are working in partnership with institutions to enhance the student experience at a strategic level.
5. **Influencing the student experience at a national level**: national support to create student 'experts' who can comment on their own experience and place it in the context of the wider educational experience.

Further, sparqs (2013) released their *Guidance on the development and implementation of a Student Partnership Agreement in universities*, and using this guidance and the engagement framework, student partnership agreements have become commonplace in Scotland. Broadly, student partnership is a "widely accepted concept" in Scotland, and as the sector has undergone its cultural shift, students have been afforded more meaningful opportunities to shape and contribute to their own learning experience (sparqs, 2012; sparqs, 2017).

Key Points:

- Scotland is **world-leading in student partnership practices** in higher education.
- **Student Partnership in Quality Scotland (sparqs)** was founded in 2003 to support student partnerships in higher education.
- **A Student Engagement Framework for Scotland** was launched in 2012.
- **Student Partnership Agreements** are commonplace in Scotland.

Wales

Wales followed Scotland's lead in student partnership and took key lessons and resources from sparqs and folded them into their own approach to bringing students and their institutions together to enhance the quality of higher education. The Wales Initiative for Student Engagement (WISE) was established in 2009 and was a cross-sector collaboration between the National Union of Students Wales (NUSW), Higher Education Funding Council Wales (HEFCW), Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), Universities Wales, Higher Education Academy (HEA), Colleges Wales, The Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and the Welsh Government. The project was originally aimed at enhancing and sharing

student engagement practices, but in 2014, the mission statement was re-evaluated, and WISE become Wise Wales, a project whose purpose was to:

'achieve meaningful partnerships between educators, students' unions, and students across Wales'.⁵

As the focus of Wise Wales' transitioned from engagement to partnership, Wales became the first UK nation to agree on a sector wide commitment to partnership, reflected in the Welsh Government Policy Statement on Higher Education in 2013:

"Partnership is about more than just listening to the student voice and enabling students to have input in decisions that affect them. True partnership relies upon an environment where the priorities, content and direction of the learning experience are all set by students and staff in partnership.

Strong students' unions have a key role to play in helping to deliver effective partnerships. For partnership to succeed the relationship between students, the student movement and the institution needs to develop in new ways.

HEIs in Wales should work in partnership with students' unions to support and facilitate the engagement of all students. (Welsh Government, 2013).

In 2015, the Welsh Government commissioned Wise Wales to develop a self-assessment partnership toolkit to help support higher education institutions working towards a culture of developing meaningful partnerships (Wise Wales, 2018). The **Pathways to Partnership Toolkit** (Wise Wales, 2018) has two parts: part one involves students' unions and staff separately self-assessing their institution's partnership practices against a set of indicators. Part two brings both parties together to identify areas of strength and areas that need improvement. Following this, an action plan is created with the support from Wise Wales, and this plan or agreement is reviewed annually.

For the self-assessment stage, there were five indicators of effective partnerships, each consisting of several criteria to meet each indicator (see Appendix 1), some are essential, some are desirable. For each criterion, a score between 1-10 is given. The five indicators of the Pathways to Partnership Toolkit are:

- **Indicator 1:** Partnership is being regularly debated and discussed between both institution and students' union representatives.
- **Indicator 2:** Both parties are able to identify examples of good practice, pertaining to student engagement and partnership, that might be implemented within their own context.
- **Indicator 3:** An ethos of partnership is being embedded throughout institution and the students' union; the message is being actively disseminated.
- **Indicator 4:** The practical opportunities for students to become partners in enhancing and shaping their experiences within education are ever increasing and evolving.
- **Indicator 5:** Greater engagement with a wider student audience.

Following the widespread use of the Toolkit in the Welsh higher education sector, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) and the Welsh Government commissioned research into the current status of student partnership in HEIs to inform further work in this area. *Research on*

⁵ Wise Wales Website (<https://wisewales.org.uk/about/>). Accessed 1/03/2021.

Student Partnership in Welsh HEIs and FEIs (Bebb, 2020) found that the work of Wise Wales “helped to embed an ethos of student partnership within the higher education sector” and made several recommendations for the short-term and long-term development of student partnership approaches in Wales going forward (Bebb, 2020). These included developing a national student partnership strategy, creating a monitoring and evaluation framework outlining baseline standards for student partnership, and government ring-fencing of funding to support student representation. Feedback from those in the sector highlighted the importance of enduring support for partnership progress, and that a short-term project-based approach to partnership may not achieve long-lasting change (Bebb, 2020).

In April 2020, the HEFCW updated the *Quality Assessment Framework for Wales*, placing greater focus on working in partnership with students. One principle of this framework is that the quality assessment system “has students integrated as partners in the design, implementation, monitoring and reviewing of processes to improve the quality of their learning”. As part of the annual quality assurance processes, the governing body of each HEI in Wales must confirm that an action plan has been put in place to implement recommendations made in external quality reviews, in partnership with their student body (HEFCW, 2020). The higher education sector on Wales is well underway in its systemic shift towards student partnership, both within institutions, and at a governmental level.

Key Points:

- **Wales Initiative for Student Engagement (WISE)** established in 2009 to enhance student engagement practices.
- **First sector wide commitment to student partnership in higher education** in the UK, reflected in the Welsh Government’s 2013 Policy Statement.
- **WISE renamed Wise Wales** in 2014, with a purpose of achieving meaningful partnerships between educators, students’ unions and students in Wales by providing support and guidance to the sector.
- Wise Wales was commissioned by the government to develop a **Pathways to Partnership Toolkit** that is released in 2018. It outlines five indicators of effective partnerships and is used by institutions and students’ union to develop action plans to strengthen partnerships.
- **The Quality Assessment Framework for Wales** was updated in 2020 to include a principle that the quality assessment system has ‘*students integrated as partners in the design, implementation, monitoring and review processes to improve the quality of learning*’.

Ireland

As sparqs was transitioning from a student *participation* focus to a student *partnership* focus, and WISE was becoming Wise Wales with a new purpose centred around enhancing partnerships, Ireland entered the student partnership domain. In 2014, the Higher Education Authority (HEA), the statutory body responsible for funding and regulating the strategic development and governance of Ireland’s higher education system, established a working group to develop a set of principles designed to support best practice in relation to student engagement within HEIs (NStEP, 2016, p. VII). The working group had members from the Irish Universities Association (IUA), the Technological Higher Education Association (THEA), Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) and the Union of Students Ireland (USI).

In April 2016, at the conclusion of a robust literature review and consultation period, the working group published their report, **Enhancing Student Engagement in Decision-Making** (HEA, 2016) which outlines a national framework for fostering meaningful student partnerships in higher education. The Report affirmed that student engagement in decision-making is not an ‘extra-curricular’ activity, but an integral element of higher education, and that a culture of student

engagement is driven by the extent that HEIs are a site of democratic citizenship, a learning community, and a critical institution (HEA, 2016).

The framework outlines 10 principles for enhancing student engagement:

1. **Democracy**: democratic principles are encouraged among staff and students.
2. **Student as partner**: students are active members of their institution.
3. **Inclusivity and diversity**: institutions actively seek insight from a range of staff and student voices in their governance and decision-making processes, both formally and informally.
4. **Transparency**: institutions and student unions are open about their governance and decision-making processes.
5. **Students as co-creators**: students take responsibility for their own learning, and institutions embrace innovative learning and teaching techniques which value the involvement of students.
6. **Collegiality and parity of esteem**: institutions and student union promote collegiality among students and staff.
7. **Professionalism and support**: both partners act professionally and recognise the different perspectives of everyone involved and institutions support student representatives to fulfil their roles.
8. **Feedback and feedback loop**: institutions encourage feedback from students, and students are aware how their feedback was used to influence outcomes.
9. **Self-criticism and enhancement**: both students and institutions will continue to be self-critical of their practices of student engagement.
10. **Consistency**: good practice is applied consistently across the institution.

These principles were designed to apply across teaching and learning, quality assurance and governance and management. The framework makes a clear distinction between student voice and student partnerships, noting that membership on committees alone does not equate to meaningful student input. Student representatives need to be actively engaged in decision-making, and non-students must be open to the student perspective (HEA, 2016). The importance of informal forms of student engagement was also stressed, suggesting that often discussions, or even decisions, have already been made before the formal decision-making discussions. Involving students throughout the process is essential to building engaging students as partners, whether it be at a course-, departmental-, faculty- institutional- or national-level (HEA, 2016).

The efforts of the working group, and the release of their framework, culminated in the launch of a national partnership initiative between HEA, QQI and USI in April 2016, called the *National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP)*. NStEP's vision is:

"To inform, guide and support an Irish higher education landscape that fosters student engagement and the building of meaningful staff-student partnerships within and beyond institutions".⁶

One aim of NStEP is to embed the 10 principles outlined in the HEA Report within Ireland's higher education system by providing training and support to students and institutions. To participate in NStEP, HEIs are required to have partnership agreements in place. In early 2021, all but seven of Ireland's 33 HEIs were participants of the programme.⁷ As outlined in the NStEP Strategy 2019-2021

⁶ <https://studentengagement.ie/about/>. Accessed 1/03/21.

⁷ <https://studentengagement.ie/about/hei-participants/>. Accessed 1/03/21

(2019), NStEP continues to build its influence in Irish higher education by growing the number of participants in the programme, training more students to be effective representatives, and continuing to develop key resources that staff, and students can use to strengthen student engagement and partnerships at their institution.

Key Points:

- A **cross-sector working group** was established in 2014 to develop best practice guidance for student engagement in HEIs.
- The **Enhancing Student Engagement in Decision-Making** report was published in 2016 by the working group, outlining a national framework for fostering student partnerships in higher education.
- A partnership initiative, the **National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP)** was launched in 2016 to inform, guide, and support the building of meaningful staff-student partnerships within the higher education sector in Ireland.
- In early 2021, **26 out of Ireland's 33 HEIs are participants of NStEP**. To participate, HEIs are required to have student partnership agreement in place.

England

In 2012, the Quality Assurance Agency released the *UK Quality Code for Higher Education* (The Quality Code) which outlined a set of mandatory expectations that HEIs are required to meet, including an expectation that HEIs engage students as partners in the assurance and enhancement of their educational experience (QAA, 2012).

In 2013, following the introduction of the Quality Code, The Student Engagement Partnership (TSEP) was established. TSEP is a collaboration between the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), Association of Colleges (AoC), QAA, GuildHE and the National Union of Students to support the sector to recognise students as active partners in their education. TSEP have produced several key resources on the principles of student engagement through partnership and turning partnership principles into reality.⁸

The development of a **Framework for Student Engagement Through Partnership** was developed by the Higher Education Academy (now AdvanceHE) (2015) in collaboration with the higher education sector. It outlines the values that underpin successful student engagement through partnership as:

Authenticity: the rationale for all parties to invest in partnership is meaningful and credible.

Honesty: all parties are honest about what they can contribute to partnership and about where the boundaries of partnership lie.

Inclusivity: there is equality of opportunity and any barriers (structural or cultural) that prevent engagement are challenged.

Reciprocity: all parties have an interest in and stand to benefit from working and/or learning in partnership.

Empowerment: power is distributed appropriately and ways of working and learning promote healthy power dynamics.

⁸ TSEP Website (<https://tsep.org.uk/what-we-do/>). Accessed 13/4/2021.

Trust: all parties take time to get to know one-another and can be confident they will be treated with respect and fairness.

Courage: all parties are encouraged to critique and challenge practices, structures and approaches that undermine partnership, and are enabled to take risks to develop new ways of working and learning.

Plurality: all parties recognise and value the unique talents, perspectives and experiences that individuals contribute to partnership.

Responsibility: all parties share collective responsibility for the aims of the partnership, and individual responsibility for the contribution they make.

In 2018, the Quality Code is revised, and it outlines the mandatory expectation that all HEIs:

'... actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience' (QAA, 2018a).

Subsequent advice and guidance produced by QAA to support the expectations in the quality code list, as the number one guiding principle of student engagement, that:

'Student engagement through partnership working is integral to the culture of higher education...' (QAA, 2018b).

Both AdvanceHE and TSEP continue to support the implementation of the Framework for Student Engagement through Partnership across the sector and support HEIs to meet their student engagement expectations as outlined in the Quality Code.

Key Points:

- **UK Quality Code for Higher Education** introduced in 2012, placing student engagement expectations on all institutions.
- In 2013 **The Student Engagement Partnership (TSEP)** is established to support student partnership in the sector.
- The **Framework for Student Engagement through Partnership** is developed by the Higher Education Sector and outlines the values underpinning successful partnerships.
- The **Quality Code is revised** in 2018, and guidance from the QAA says, 'student engagement through partnership working is integral to the culture of higher education...'

Europe

In 1999, European Ministers of Education gathered in Bologna Italy, to pave the way for a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by signing the Bologna Declaration. This sought to unify the standards and quality of higher education qualifications of European nations, known as the Bologna Process (EACEA, 2020). Following this, ministers and members of the European Students' Union (ESU) met in Prague in 2001, where they made new commitments under the Bologna Process, notably, to recognise students as 'full members of the higher education community' and affirm that '[students] should participate and influence the organisation and content of education at universities and other higher education institutions' (HEA, 2016).

As the Bologna Process progressed, ministers, institutions, and students' unions met in Oslo in 2003, where they agreed that, among other things, further involvement of students is needed at all levels of decision-making (HEA, 2016). In 2005, the European Network of Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), the European University Association (EUA), European Association of Institutions in

Higher Education (EURASHE) and the European Students' Union (ESU), known as the 'E4 Group', proposed that European education ministers adopt a framework they had developed called the **Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)**, which aimed to embed the importance of student involvement in quality review processes. The ESG were adopted by the European ministers in 2005.

In 2012, the E4 Group, along with Education International (EI), BUSINESSEUROPE and the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) partnered to revise the ESG. The ESG 2015 were adopted by European education ministers in May 2015 and required a more student-centred approach to learning and teaching across the continent. A specific standard and guideline statement focussing on student-centred learning, teaching and assessment was added (ESG, 2015):

Standard:

Institutions should ensure that the programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process, and that the assessment of students reflects this approach.

Guidelines:

The implementation of student-centred learning and teaching:

- respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths;
- considers and uses different modes of delivery, where appropriate;
- flexibly uses a variety of pedagogical methods;
- regularly evaluates and adjusts the modes of delivery and pedagogical methods;
- encourages a sense of autonomy in the learner, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teacher;
- promotes mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship;
- has appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints.

Although the nations who are part of the European Higher Education Area may deliver on these standards in differing ways, that fact that 49 countries have come together and agreed that a paradigm shift towards greater student engagement and partnership is integral to a world-class education system is a significant achievement.

Key Points:

- In 1999 European Education Minister began the **Bologna Process** that sought to unify the standards and quality of higher education across European nations.
- The European Students' Union met with European Education Ministers in 2001, where **commitments were made under the Bologna Process** to recognise students as full members of the higher education community and affirm that students should participate and influence the organisation and content of education at HEIs.
- The E4 Group (ENQA, EUA, EURASHE and ESU) proposed the **Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)** which were adopted by European Education Minister in 2005.
- The E4 Group revised the ESG in 2015, which included a **new standard on student-centred learning, teaching and assessment**.

Australia

Australia provides a more recent example of a national approach to supporting student partnerships in the tertiary education sector. Over 2015-2016, a research project funded by the Australian Office

for Learning and Teaching (subsumed into the Department of Education and Training in 2016), undertook a major review of international frameworks for enhancing student engagement and the experiences of student engagement in Australian institutions. The project found that students were having input into a range of decision-making bodies across their institutions, but that often this was tokenistic representation rather than emblematic of a meaningful partnership model (Varnham, 2018). Students often felt that staff saw their involvement in decision-making as compliance, and that students were treated as consumers, not partners.

Following the project, Dr Varnham, who led the original project, was offered a National Senior Teaching Fellowship where she undertook a sector-wide collaboration to develop a set of principles to facilitate and support student partnerships in TELs in Australia (Louth, Walsh, & Goodwin-Smith, 2019). Students, student leaders, university staff and agency representatives participated in a range of workshops, conferences and focus groups that produced a national framework for student partnership. The end product was seven principles for supporting student partnerships in tertiary institutions and the sector in Australia, named the **STEPUP Principles** (Students and tertiary education providers undertaking partnership for quality enhancement) (Varnham, 2019).

The STEPUP Principles are:

- **Building authentic partnerships:** institutions, staff and students should work together as partners at all levels of decision-making and governance.
- **Communication – honesty and transparency:** the relationship between the institutions and its students is one of trust and encouraging of working together.
- **Strong student leadership:** student leaders are critical to developing partnerships and representing students' interest. Knowledge handover between outgoing and incoming leaders must be managed.
- **Training and support – as a partnership:** training and support is essential for students to engage effectively in decision-making and governance and is the joint responsibility of staff and students.
- **Every student's voice – diversity and inclusivity:** every student should have the opportunity to present their views on decisions that affect them. Attention must be paid to how underrepresented students' voices are included.
- **Valuing student voice – recognition of formal and informal engagement:** the value students add to decision-making and governance must be valued and recognised by the institution.
- **A National presence – for facilitation and support:** a national presence supported by the sector to support in tertiary institutions, staff and students in sustaining and strengthening a culture of partnership.

In 2018, using the STEPUP principles developed by the sector, a pilot initiative was established by ten tertiary institutions called Student Voice Australia (SVA). The project brought the institutions together to investigate how cross-sector engagement could generate and support authentic student partnerships in decision-making and governance (Louth et al., 2019). The Pilot was funded jointly by the ten participating institutions and supported by the national students' unions and the Teaching Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA). Over a 14-month period, SVA supported the ten institutions to build and facilitate systemic student involvement in their decision-making and governance and embed partnership approaches to student engagement.

The activities of SVA included:

- **Institutional Strategic Analysis Workshops:** students and staff of participating institutions came together to discuss what partnership looks like in a range of institutional contexts and explore opportunities to develop their own practices.
- **Student Voice Summit:** students from 26 institutions gathered to share knowledge and experiences and discussed ideas to enhance student representation and partnerships.
- **Practitioner Network:** Staff from 17 institutions met to share good practice, discuss national issues, and provide support while they managed the student-staff partnership development at their respective institutions.
- **Student Voice Australia Symposium:** students, academics, professional staff, national agencies, and national student bodies met to showcase their achievements throughout the Pilot and explore further good practice in working in partnership.

The final activity of the SVA project was developing three sets of good practice guidelines in collaboration with students and staff from the SVA partner institutions. The three guideline sets looked at:

- **Student Partnership Agreements** (developing SPAs within institutions)
- **Student Representative Structures** (supporting student representation at all levels of an institution)
- **Training for Student Representatives** (supporting students to participate professionally and effectively in decision-making and governance)

Throughout 2018-2019, 34 tertiary institutions, five national student bodies, one national agency and over 350 staff and students engaged with the Student Voice Australia Pilot. The evaluation report of the Pilot shows that 80% of participants felt their institution benefitted from their involvement in the project, and 90% of participants thought their institution would benefit from further involvement with SVA (Louth et al., 2019).

Following the Pilot, SVA continues to provide national governance of developing and sustaining a culture of partnership within the tertiary education sector in Australia, working under the guidance of the STEPUP Principles. As of 2021, membership of SVA continues to grow beyond the Pilot members, and the activities SVA continue to adapt and expand.

Alongside the Student Voice Australia work, the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency in Australia (TEQSA) began developing their partnerships with national students' association, beginning with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Students' Union (NUS) in 2017. TEQSA also signed MOUs with the Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations, the Council of International Students in 2017, and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Postgraduate Association in 2018.⁹

As the number of student partnerships with TEQSA grew, a Student Expert Advisory Group (SEAG) was established, made up of national student leaders. The SEAG provides a framework for TEQSA to partner with students by co-designing strategies for addressing systemic issues in the higher education sector.¹⁰

Compared to the other international examples of student partnership frameworks and implementation, Australia has employed a bilateral approach to student partnership, mostly between

⁹ TEQSA Website (<https://www.teqsa.gov.au/engagement-professional-bodies>). Accessed 14/04/2021.

¹⁰ TEQSA Website (<https://www.teqsa.gov.au/student-engagement>). Accessed 1/04/2021.

students' unions and TEIs, with limited involvement from government agencies and other tertiary education-related organisations. However, the establishment and ongoing development of Student Voice Australia continues to bring more organisations on board its student partnership agenda.

Key Points:

- A **sector-wide collaboration project** was undertaken by Dr Sally Varnham to develop principles to facilitate and support student partnership in TEIs in Australia.
- The **STEPUP Principles** were published in 2017.
- The **Student Voice Australia Pilot** project was launched in 2018, bringing students and TEIs together help build and facilitate systematic student involvement in decision-making and governance by embedding partnership approaches to student engagement.
- **TEQSA partners with national student representative bodies** from 2017, leading to the establishment of a Student Expert Advisory Group to address issues in the sector in partnership.
- **Good practice guidelines** for Student Partnership Agreement, Student Representative Structures and Training for Student Representatives were produced by SVA in collaboration with students and TEIs.
- Following the successful pilot, Student Voice Australia **continues to provide national governance** of developing and sustaining partnerships in the tertiary education sector in Australia.

Aotearoa New Zealand

Student partnership in Aotearoa New Zealand is a concept that has recently been gaining traction in the tertiary education sector. In 2013, the New Zealand Union of Students' Associations (NZUSA) and Ako Aotearoa (National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence) commissioned research into student representative systems in TEIs and how they were contributing to the enhancement of academic quality (Heathrose, 2013). The report, *Student Voice in Tertiary Education Settings: Quality Systems in Practice*, explored the practices of nine TEIs and found that while there were many examples of good student voice practices, they were often reactive, rather than proactive, and used a 'students as consumers', rather than a 'students as partners' approach (Heathrose, 2013). Where they were examples of partnership in action, the research found that students made a significant contribution to quality enhancement at class, faculty, and committee levels.

The report also discussed how effective student voice can be achieved using a partnership model, and that adopting a partnership approach depends on whether institutions view their students as consumers or partners in education. At the time of publication, all participating TEIs noted they were looking to develop their partnership ethos. To support institutions from turning good intentions into action, the report introduced six key themes for using student voices to enhance the quality of learning and teaching experiences for staff and students.

Themes for Action (Heathrose, 2013):

- **Establishing the partnership in which the student voice is to be heard:** student voice is able to be stated, listened to, and acted on. This should be proactive, ongoing, and constructive.
- **Legitimising the student voice:** formalised training for student representatives and a recognition system and, most importantly, closing feedback loops.
- **Establishing clear roles for those delivering the student voice:** providing clear job descriptions or briefings to student representatives to help them understand what their role entails.

- **Providing training for those delivering the student voice:** training and support is provided to new student representatives, including ongoing leadership development.
- **Providing adequate resources for supporting the student voice:** student representatives are given time and space to collect information from students.
- **Hearing and heading the student voice:** there are multiple opportunities at all levels for students to be heard, and where their voice is used, they know how it has been used in decision-making.

To supplement these themes, the report includes several reflective questions to help students and staff to reflect on whether their student representative systems were effective, robust, and reflected a partnership approach (Appendix 2).

Between 2013 to 2016, all New Zealand Universities were audited as part of AQA's Cycle 5 Academic Audit. The Cycle 5 Audit Framework included a guideline statement (GS 1.3) that all universities had to address:

'Universities should facilitate student input to planning, policy development and monitoring of key academic activities.' (AQA, 2013).

No audit panels made any recommendations in relation to this guideline statement, suggesting that there was generally good practice in this area, although, it was not highlighted as an area of strength in any of the audit reports (Matear *et al.*, 2018).

To continue strengthening student voices and partnership, particularly in academic quality, AQA and NZUSA entered into a Memorandum of Understanding in 2017, with a shared objective of

"having an authentic, enduring, diverse and effective student voice that contributes to academic quality and quality assurance in New Zealand universities".¹¹

A specific objective of the MoU was for students or recent graduates to be included as auditors on the external panels that quality assure New Zealand Universities, and this objective has been adopted for the first time in the Cycle 6 Academic Audit process (Matear, 2020a). Since 2016, annual Student Voice Summits have been organised by national students' associations with AQA to support and train senior student leaders in academic quality systems and empowering them to becoming academic auditors.

Alongside this addition to the audit cycle process, a new guideline statement, focussed on Student Voice, is the second out of thirty guideline statement that all universities must address in their Cycle 6 Academic Audit (Matear, 2020b):

*"**Student voice:** Improved outcomes for students are enabled through engaging with the student voice in quality assurance processes as all levels, and this is communicated to students".*

Furthermore, the Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP) and AQA agreed to adopt 'Student Partnership' as a principle underpinning academic quality assurance in Aotearoa New Zealand in 2019.

¹¹ AQA Website (<https://www.aqa.ac.nz/memorandum>). Accessed 3/3/21.

Looking more broadly at developments in the wider sector, August 2019 saw the Government launch a nationwide survey on student voice in tertiary education. Participants were asked about the *status quo* of student voice, what structural changes were needed to enhance it, and whether a National Centre of Student Voice (similar to sparqs or Student Voice Australia), should be established.¹² The survey found there was inconsistency across the sector (universities, institutes of technologies and polytechnics, private training establishments and wānanga) when it came to robust student voice systems, a lack of resourcing for independent student voice locally and nationally, and that significant power imbalances existed between student representatives and institutional representatives.¹³

Survey respondents suggested that a partnership approach to supporting student voice would be valuable, and that this should be tailored to the unique contexts of different students and institutions. Support was also overwhelming for the creation of a 'National Centre for Student Voice' that could provide guidance, support and training to students and staff. While there has been a sector-wide interest in moving towards a 'students as partners' approach to decision-making over the past decade, the survey identified that those aspirations were often not translating into action, largely due to the lack of guidance on how student partnerships could be achieved.

In December 2019, the New Zealand Government amended the Education Act to allow the Education Minister to issue codes of practice for the pastoral care of students (Education (Pastoral Care) Amendment Act, 2019). The first code to be issued under this amendment, the Education (Pastoral Care of Domestic Tertiary Students) Interim Code of Practice 2019, includes specific requirements, that all TEIs must adhere to, in respect to student voice and partnership.¹⁴ Outcome 6 of the Interim Code states that:

"The mana of students is upheld in their learning environment and their voices are heard and integrated in decisions around the planning and provision of student support services."

One of the processes for achieving this outcome, as outlines in clause 17(a) of the code is that providers must have practices for:

*"assisting students to be **key partners** in developing practices that influence their study, their learning environment, and pastoral care"*

This requirement on TEIs is a significant step forward for student partnership in Aotearoa New Zealand, and seeing as this is the Interim Code, it will be interesting to see what student voice and partnership expectations are placed on institutions when the permanent code of practice is adopted in 2022.¹⁵

In 2020, student-institution relationships were tested as the country entered a COVID-19 Alert Level 4 lockdown in March due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite this, new possibilities were also opened, where partnership approaches could be taken to deal with the challenges the pandemic brought. To support institutions developing their pathways to partnership, national student representatives from NZUSA, TMĀ, Taura Pasifika, the institutes of technology and polytechnic sector, the rainbow

¹² Ministry of Education Website (<https://conversation.education.govt.nz/assets/TEs/Tertiary-Student-Voice-Discussion-Paper2.pdf>). Accessed. 4/3/21.

¹³ MOE Survey Results <https://conversation.education.govt.nz/assets/VOICES/tertiary-student-voice-paper-2.pdf>

¹⁴ Education (Pastoral Care of Domestic Tertiary Education) Interim Code of Practice 2019 (<https://www.education.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Further-education/Interim-Code-of-Practice-with-minor-and-technical-amendments-as-at-29-March-2021.pdf>). Accessed 8/4/2021/

¹⁵ Ministry of Education Website (<https://www.education.govt.nz/further-education/information-for-tertiary-students/code-of-practice-pastoral-care-domestic-tertiary/>). Accessed 8/4/2021.

community, and the disabled community, came together with support of the Ministry of Education to begin the creation of a national framework for student partnership in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Whiria Ngā Rau: Progressing from student voice to partnerships ((Ministry of Education in partnership with Te Mana Akonga, New Zealand Union of Students' Associations, Taura Pasifika, and the National Disabled Students' Association, 2021) challenges the notion that student representation, membership, or 'voice' alone is sufficient for students to take active roles in their education and offers ideas about how students and their institutions can work together to shape learning and teaching experiences. *Whiria Ngā Rau* sets out four key components that enable partnerships to flourish in tertiary education. These are all underpinned by the obligations on students' associations and TEIs under Te Tiriti o Waitangi. A more comprehensive breakdown of what these concepts look like in practice has been taken from *Whiria Ngā Rau* and can be found in Appendix 3.

The concepts for progressing from student voice to partnerships are (NZUSA et al., 2021):

- **Whakapakari | Strengthening student voices:** building capability and confidence to express student voices.
- **Whakawhanaungatanga | Building connections with each other:** Diverse taura (students) are involved and heard in decision-making.
- **Akoranga | Learning with and from each other:** Taura and providers work openly and transparently.
- **Mahi tahi | Working together:** Taura and providers develop ideas and solutions together.

Now that Aotearoa New Zealand has a resource to help guide partnership thinking in tertiary education, attention must turn to action. *Whiria Ngā Rau* provides a purposefully broad look at how partnerships can operate, so that students, students' associations, TEIs, and tertiary education agencies can use the concepts offered in *Whiria Ngā Rau* to develop partnership agreements, good practice guidelines and advice that is tailored to their local contexts.¹⁶

¹⁶ It should be noted that at the time the 2020 AQA External Review Report was released, and the recommendation was made for AQA to work with students' associations to develop a national framework for including student voices (Recommendation 3), *Whiria ngā rau* was still being developed.

Key Points:

- Research commissioned by NZUSA and Ako Aotearoa in 2013 found that student voice practices in TEIs were often reactive, not proactive, and where partnerships practices existed, academic quality was enhanced. The Report identified the pre-conditions for effective student representative systems and outlined six themes for using student voice to improve academic quality.
- NZUSA and AQA entered into a memorandum of understanding in 2017 with a shared objective of having *'authentic, enduring, diverse and effective students voice that contributes to academic quality and quality assurance in New Zealand universities'*.
- One student or recent graduate will be on every academic audit panel for Cycle 6 Academic Audit of New Zealand universities.
- Student Partnership was adopted as a principle of quality assurance in New Zealand universities by CUAP and AQA in 2019.
- A student voice guideline statement is included in the Cycle 6 Academic Audit Framework.
- The Government launched a nationwide survey into student voice in 2019. The results highlighted inconsistent student voice systems, under-resourcing of student voice, and significant power imbalances between students and their TEIs.
- In 2020, national students' associations, with the Ministry of Education begin developing *Whiria Ngā Rau*, providing concepts, ideas and actions for progressing the sector from student voice thinking, to a student partnership-based system.

Summary of International and Local Student Partnership Frameworks

There is clearly a global trend towards developing and strengthening partnerships between students and their tertiary education institutions, and the benefits of this transition, including quality enhancement, enriched experiences of students and staff, enhanced student development, better student services, greater learning engagement and achievement of shared goals are significant (Heathrose, 2016; HEA, 2016; sparqs, 2012; Louth et al., 2019).

Although the regions discussed in this section are at different stages of their student partnership journey and offer different pathways to embedding a culture of partnership within their sector, there are several key themes that run across these regions.

The multi-lateral approach to initiating student partnership discussions and working together to embed partnerships practices is a common feature of successful student partnership frameworks. Most of the case studies saw local and national students' associations, universities, agencies and government come together to develop and implement partnership frameworks.

An indicator of successful transitions to student partnership cultures internationally, is how tertiary education systems view their students. When students are treated as consumers of education, student engagement is typically surface level, tokenistic and feedback loops are rarely closed. As international tertiary education systems began to move away from this mindset, opportunities for student engagement using a partnership approach became more frequent, and institutions were more willing to relinquish some control over decision-making processes to involve students as key partnership in their education.

A final key the feature of student partnership internationally is the presence of a national organisation or project that is tasked with supporting student representatives and TEIs in the development and implementation of student partnership training, practices and agreements. The role that sparqs, Wise Wales, NStEP and Student Voice Australia have played in helping tertiary education sectors to embed

student partnership has been critical to ensuring a level of consistency, and instrumental in developing resources and training programmes for student and staff.

As Aotearoa New Zealand begins adopting of a culture of student partnership, these three features in particular must be considered. For AQA, it should learn from the international and local experiences and use the expectations of student partnership in *Whiria Ngā Rau* to respond to recommendations made in its External Review.

AQA's 2020 External Review Recommendations

This report has examined international and local student partnership frameworks and extracted the key principles that underpin strong student voice and effective student engagement using a partnership approach. It has also highlighted the importance of a cross-sector approach to changing the way students are engaged in tertiary education decision-making. With the introduction of *Whiria Ngā Rau*, Aotearoa New Zealand has been given a new way of thinking about student partnership, and how it might look in local contexts.

This section will focus on AQA's External Review recommendations that focus on working with students and provide guidance to AQA on how it can deliver on these recommendations. The following guidance is tailored to student partnership in the context of academic quality in universities, but many of the suggestions can be applied to governance, learning and teaching, pastoral care and student support.

Developing Student Partnership Guidelines for Academic Quality Assurance

***Recommendation 3:** The Panel recommends that, to improve consistency, AQA works with students' associations to develop a national framework for student voices and good practice guidelines for including student voices*

AQA has a role in supporting good partnership practices in academic quality assurance processes nationally and within universities. The following guidance offers questions and thoughts, based on the concepts in *Whiria Ngā Rau*, international frameworks and evidence to help support the development of good practice guidelines for student partnership in academic quality, as recommended in the External Review. As indicated from the outset, responding to Recommendation 3 should also support universities as they address Guideline Statement 2 (Student Voice) in the Cycle 6 Academic Audit Framework.

For the purposes of this report, academic quality has been split into three sets of activities:

Quality assurance processes

Quality assurance processes refer to the internal mechanisms universities use to ensure their academic services are of a sufficient quality. This typically includes new programme approvals, programme reviews, class representative systems, professional accreditation and preparing self-review reports and portfolios for external academic audit.

Academic committees and decision making

There are many decision-making forums related to academic quality within university. Academic committees at a faculty or subject-related level are where the bulk of decision-making takes place.

Quality enhancement activities

Quality assurance processes are generally enhancement-orientated, and universities may undertake specific activities or projects to enhance a particular area of academic quality.

In this section 'student representatives' mostly refers to class representatives, student members on academic committees and academic officers in students' associations.

Quality Assurance Processes

Whakapakari – strengthening student voices

Building capability and confidence to express student voice

- How should the students' association and university work together to provide training and support to student representatives?
- How can Māori student voices be supported to have input into quality assurance?
- How can a diverse range of student voices have input into quality assurance?
- What are the diverse perspectives that should be heard and included in quality assurance processes?
- How can student involvement in quality assurance reflect the principles on Te Tiriti o Waitangi?
- What role should students have in the programme and course review process?
- What role should students have in the creation of new programmes?
- What role and responsibilities should students have when the university is putting its self-review portfolio together for the academic audit?
- How can good practices of supporting, resourcing and structuring class representative systems be consistent across the university?
- Who should be responsible for coordinating the class representative system?
- How many class representatives should there be per course?
- How can class representatives be clear about what their role is?
- What opportunities should there be for class representatives to influence their course?

Whakawhanaungatanga – building connections with each other

Diverse taura are involved and heard in decision-making

- How can quality assurance processes honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi?
- How will students and their representatives know their feedback has been listened to and incorporated in final decisions?
- How will the university discuss the academic audit cycle with student representatives and plan how students will be part of the self-review portfolio together?
- How will the university make students and student representatives aware of their internal quality assurance processes?
- How can students be encouraged to take up representative roles?
- How can the university encourage engagement with class representatives among staff?
- How often should class representatives meet with their lecturers?
- How will staff be supported to work with student representatives?

Akoranga – learning with and from each other

Taura and providers work openly and transparently

- What should the expectations of student representatives and staff be when working together in quality assurance processes?
- How should relevant information be shared between student representatives and the university (e.g., proposed changes to a course)?
- How should universities inform wider student body about their quality assurance processes?

Mahi tahi – working together

Taura and providers develop ideas and solutions together

- How can universities and students' associations work together overtime to create an ethos of student partnership in their quality assurance processes?
- How can student representatives and university representatives work together to review their university's quality assurance processes from time to time?
- How can changes to quality assurance processes be implemented in partnership with student representatives?
- How can students and staff work together to review, re-design or co-design student voice systems in quality assurance?
- How can student representatives and academic managers work together to produce their self-review portfolio?

Academic Committees and Decision-Making

Whakapakari – strengthening student voices

Building capability and confidence to express student voice

- How many student members should be on academic committees?
- How can student membership on academic committees reflect the diversity of the student community?
- What induction and training should new student members receive?
- What role should both students' associations and universities have in training new student members on academic committees? University staff may provide the technical, or formal knowledge required for the role (e.g., standing orders, academic systems), and the students' association can provide the informal knowledge (e.g., who are key support people, how to raise points in meetings).
- When should meeting agendas be sent out to provide student members with sufficient time to read it?
- Should student members have a mentor/support person that sits on their academic committee or is a third party?
- How can committee Chairs ensure that student members have the opportunity to share their views on academic committees?
- What resources should student members be able to access to fulfil their roles (e.g., past meeting minutes, contact lists etc.)
- How can student members be familiar with their role descriptions and terms of references for academic committees?
- How should student members be appointed to academic committees (i.e., by the university, or by the independent students' association)?
- When should the wider student body be consulted on academic quality matters and what might this process look like?

Whakawhanaungatanga – building connections with each other

Diverse taura are involved and heard in decision-making

- What role should the committee Chair have in supporting student members on committees?

- Does can student membership on academic committees reflect the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi?
- How can student members be supported before each committee meeting (e.g., pre-meetings with their mentor/support person)?
- How can members of academic committees create an environment where student voices are respected and valued?
- How should student members and other committee members keep in touch in between meetings?
- How will the contributions of student members be rewarded or recognised (often they are the only ones in committee meetings not being paid to be there)?
- How can the wider student body be made aware of the student voice systems in academic decision-making at their university?
- How will staff be supported to work with student members of committees?

Akoranga – learning with and from each other

Taura and providers work openly and transparently

- How can student members know their ideas and views have been listened to and reflected in final decisions?
- How can student members be included in discussions that take place before academic committee meetings?
- What role should other networks play in academic decision-making (i.e., academic-related students' associations and clubs)?
- How can student representatives and universities be open about how their partnership can be improved?
- How can feedback from the wider student body through consultation be used to inform decision-making?
- How should the wider student body be kept aware of academic decision-making outcomes?

Mahi tahi – working together

Taura and providers develop ideas and solutions together

- When academic issues or proposals arise, how should universities and student representatives work together to address them?
- How should students and staff work together to review, re-design or co-design student voice systems in academic-decision-making?
- How should student representatives and universities work together to ensure academic decision-making honours te Tiriti o Waitangi?
- How should students' associations and their university jointly manage the handover process between outgoing and incoming student members on academic committees and other academic decision-making forums?
- How should consultation processes with the wider student body be developed and how should these be improved and reviewed?

Quality Enhancement Activities

Whakapakari – strengthening student voices

Building capability and confidence to express student voice

- How can students be involved in enhancement activities?
- Which students should be involved in enhancement activities and how should they be selected?
- How can universities engage with a range of student networks via students' associations, to ensure diverse student voices are heard?
- How can students involved in enhancement activities be supported by students' associations and universities?
- What resources should student representatives have access to when they are involved in enhancement activities (e.g., previous discussion documents, any consultation feedback on the matter etc.)?

Whakawhanaungatanga – building connections with each other

Diverse taura are involved and heard in decision-making

- How can academic managers and student representatives build relationships of trust, where ideas for enhancement can be discussed?
- When steering groups or ad-hoc committees are created to oversee enhancement activities, who should be responsible for supporting student representatives on these groups/committees?
- How can people involved in enhancement activities create an environment where student voices are respected and valued?

Akoranga – learning with and from each other

Taura and providers work openly and transparently

- What information should be shared between student representatives and staff to ensure both parties are working openly and transparently in enhancement activities?
- How can the progress of enhancement activities be reported to students' associations?

Mahi tahi – working together

Taura and providers develop ideas and solutions together

- How can terms of references or policies relating to enhancement activities be co-designed by students and staff?
- How can student representatives and universities work together to identify areas of potential enhancement?
- How can student representatives and universities work together to implement enhancement activities?
- How can student representatives and universities work together to ensure enhancement activities are te Tiriti-led?

Student Partnership Guidance for Academic Audit Panels

***Recommendation 5:** The Panel recommends that all AQA auditors receive training on how to effectively work with and support student voices.*

As part of Cycle 6 Academic Audit, external panels consisting of five members will be appointed to each university to investigate and verify how the university is meeting the guideline statements outlined in the Cycle 6 Academic Audit Framework.¹⁷ For the first time, a student or recent graduate will be appointed to each audit panel.

The following guidance is designed to help audit panels support their student or recent graduate members, and work with and support students meeting with audit panels during their site visit to the university.

Working with and supporting student auditors

Whakapakari – strengthening student voices

Building capability and confidence to express student voice

- Student networks should be engaged to disseminate information to student representatives about becoming potential auditors.
- Accessible and concise information about the audit process should be sent to student auditors as soon as possible, followed up by a scheduled meeting time with the AQA Executive Director to ask questions about the process.
- The Panel Chair should ask student auditors if there is any specific support they might need throughout the audit process.
- Where possible, AQA should be mindful of student auditor commitments (such as exams, and assignments) when planning meetings with a flexible meeting date.

Whakawhanaungatanga – building connections with each other

Diverse taura are involved and heard in decision-making

- The Panel Chair should check-in informally with student auditors from time to time to see how they are finding the audit process, and to see if they need any support.
- When preparing for site visits, the Panel Chair should be mindful of whether student auditors are able to share their views and thoughts, or if other members are dominating discussions. This includes considering inter-cultural and gender dynamics of audit panels.
- Where a member of an audit panel has been on a panel in a previous audit cycle, they should meet with the student auditor to discuss their experience.
- When issues arise during the audit process, discuss them with student auditors at the same time other auditors are being told.

Akoranga – learning with and from each other

Taura and providers work openly and transparently

¹⁷ Cycle 6 Academic Audit Framework (<https://www.aqa.ac.nz/sites/all/files/Cycle%206%20Introductory%20Guide%202nd%20Edition.pdf>). Accessed 9/4/2021.

- At the first meeting, audit panels should dedicate time to hearing about everyone's experiences with academic quality processes, to learn about the perspective everyone will be bringing to the audit process.
- When planning questions for site visits, ensure that student auditors have sufficient opportunity to put forward their ideas for possible questions.
- Take time to ask student auditors about their thoughts on evidence provided by the university, or answers to site visit questions.

Mahi tahi – working together

Taira and providers develop ideas and solutions together

- Members of audit panels should be working in partnership with each other, this includes student auditors. Ensure that the views of student auditors are not an afterthought, but integral to each stage of the audit process.
- Student members must be fully informed of all decisions made by audit panels. Where possible, other audit members should not meet outside of scheduled meeting without keeping student auditors in the loop.
- Development of the training programme for all auditors during each audit cycle should be done with national students' associations, to see where opportunities lie for greater insight into supporting student members of audit panels.

Working with and supporting students meeting with audit panels

Whakapakari – strengthening student voices

Building capability and confidence to express student voice

- Provide students who will be coming before audit panel with clear information about what the audit process is, and what questions they might be asked.
- Before the Panel commence questioning, run through the process again verbally and outline the kinds of questions students may be asked.
- Keep questions clear and concise – avoid university jargon and questions with several sub-questions.
- Aim to keep questions open, and where appropriate, be transparent about the intention of the question.
- Pitch questions at a student's experience with academic quality, not an academic or university staff member's experience.
- Where a student is struggling to answer a question, offer the question in a different way.
- Try to ensure questions are given specific contexts, rather than being too broad and open.

Whakawhanaungatanga – building connections with each other

Diverse taira are involved and heard in decision-making

- Quick introductions at the start will help to ease possible tension, including greetings in other languages where appropriate.
- Ask several 'warm up' questions before diving into substantive questioning (e.g., 'what do you study?')
- Inform the students that their comments may be recorded or written down and if they are comfortable with that.

- Consider whether the setup of the interview room is conducive to a comfortable environment. Rather than set up like a job interview, consider sitting around a larger table together.
- Consider the cultural and social dynamics that might prevent students from giving open answers to audit panel questions.
- Where appropriate, provide some kai to make the environment more welcoming. There could even be a brief 'mix and mingle' before the questions begin if time allows.

Akoranga – learning with and from each other

Taura and providers work openly and transparently

- When a student says something that differs from what a previous interviewee has said, consider whose answer is best informed. For example, if an academic says "students feel X", and the students say, "we feel Y", then don't ignore the students' comments.
- Leave time at the start and end of the interview for students to ask any questions.
- Remind the students why they are talking to the Panel – because they are the only ones who know what it is like to study at their university at this point in time.

Mahi tahi – working together

Taura and providers develop ideas and solutions together

- This may be difficult in this context, as the Panel is primarily seeking the student voice as a process of consultation, but aim to adopt the mentality that auditors, and student interviewees are working together to find out more about academic quality at the university.
- Try to be more conversational, rather than using a rigid questioning format.
- Ensure that the final audit report accurately reflects what students have said, even if it differs from the experiences of university staff. Ask, can those students see themselves and what they have shared in this report.

Student Partnership Guidance for the AQA Board

***Recommendation 10:** The Panel recommends that all AQA Board members receive training on how to effectively work with and support student voices.*

The AQA Board currently has a student member who is put forward by NZUSA. The AQA 2020 External Review also recommended that an additional student member put forward by TMĀ be added to the Board structure. This change is awaiting approval from the New Zealand Vice-Chancellor's Committee.

Induction for Student Board Members

Whakapakari – strengthening student voices

Building capability and confidence to express student voice

- AQA should work with NZUSA and TMĀ to facilitate handover between the outgoing and incoming board members. AQA may provide the technical, or formal knowledge required for the role (e.g., standing orders, academic systems), and NZUSA and TMĀ can provide the informal knowledge (e.g., who are key support people, how to raise points in meetings).
- Plan an induction timeline that works around the student member's study load and other commitments.
- Provide clear, concise resources (handbook, terms of reference, policies) along with a glossary to help navigate tertiary education jargon. Ideally, jargon is reduced where possible in induction resources.
- Online modules and short videos may be useful to work around the student members' schedule.
- Before the first meeting, go through the previous agenda to highlight the agenda format, the types of discussions that are had, and terms that may be unfamiliar.

Whakawhanaungatanga – building connections with each other

Diverse taura are involved and heard in decision-making

- Engage in values-based discussion to establish common ground and shared views in relation to academic quality.
- The Board Chair should ask student members as they commence their term if there are any skills they want to develop that would help them fulfil their role and seek out opportunities for professional development where possible.
- Agree on the best forms of communication during their term (email, text, phone calls).
- Be open and transparent about issues on the horizon that student members might have to address or deal with.
- Remind student members of the value they will be bringing to the Board.

Akoranga – learning with and from each other

Taura and providers work openly and transparently

- Take time to understand the student member's experiences of academic quality and the ideas and thoughts that they are bringing to the role.
- Take time to understand what support student members might need during their time on the Board.

- Provide an opportunity for post-induction feedback from the student member.
- Seek feedback from outgoing student members on how the induction could be enhanced, and work with NZUSA and TMĀ to make changes accordingly.
- Make incoming student members made aware of how induction processes have been improved from year to year when discussing the induction process.

Mahi tahi – working together

Tauira and providers develop ideas and solutions together

- Develop the induction programme in partnership with NZUSA and TMĀ to ensure that information is tailored to students who may not have had significant experience dealing with academic systems and quality.
- During the induction phase, discuss the expectations of both AQA and the student members during their term, and how they will work together in partnership to be effective members of the Board.

Working with and Supporting Student Board Members

Whakapakari – strengthening student voices

Building capability and confidence to express student voice

- When deciding on meeting dates and times, consideration should be given to the student members' timetables, and meetings should not be planned during exam periods.
- Flexibility should be given regarding virtual/physical presence at meetings.
- Ensuring that Board papers are delivered on time, so that student members (and other members), have flexibility around when they read it.
- Provide an opportunity for student members to raise questions about the meeting agenda and flag questions they might ask at the meeting to identify whether the Board is best places to raise those questions.
- During Board meetings, when substantial or significant matters are discussed, the Chair should circle around the Board members asking for their thoughts and comments (if any). This can reduce the pressure on student members to speak up at tense or challenging times.

Whakawhanaungatanga – building connections with each other

Diverse tauira are involved and heard in decision-making

- The Chair should check-in informally with student members from time to time to see how they are finding the board, and to see if they need any support.
- Board members should be aware that student members may be studying full-time and working part time, alongside other commitments.
- At the first meeting of new Board members, time should be taken at the start to do a round of meaningful introduction. This will help all members to understand what each person is bringing to the table, and their lived experiences with academic quality.
- Each student member could be paired with another Board member who can act as a mentor for their duration of the student member's term. This could look like checking in before meetings, being available for questions in between meetings, following up after meetings. A regular meeting time (e.g., every 6 weeks) should be established, so the student member does not feel bad about asking for their mentor's time.

Akoranga – learning with and from each other

Tauira and providers work openly and transparently

- When issues arise, discuss them with student members at the same time other members are being told.
- Relevant information should be shared openly and often to student members, not just on a need-to-know basis. This can help to build the relationship and ensure the student representative feels included and prepared.
- Where appropriate, Board members should meet formally and informally with student members, to discuss Board matters and share thoughts, insights and lived experiences.

Mahi tahi – working together

Tauira and providers develop ideas and solutions together

- Board meetings should adopt a partnership approach to working with its student members, where their voice is not just sought for consultation purposes but influences decision-making. Student members should be able to see how their views have impacted final outcomes.
- Board members should not be making in principle decisions prior to Board meetings without students. If issues arise in between meetings that need to be discussed, they must include student members. Leaving students out makes them feel like a tokenistic member of Board, not a valued member or partner.
- Consideration should be given to how student representatives and student networks could be engaged to implement decisions made by the Board.

Student Partnership Guidance for AQA

Although recommendations 5 and 10 of the AQA 2020 External Review focus on training for auditors and Board members, the staff of AQA, in particular the Executive Director, play a critical role in developing AQA's student partnership culture and working with a range of student representatives (student Board members, student auditors, national student representatives) to improve their experience.

Working with and Supporting Student Representatives

Whakapakari – strengthening student voices

Building capability and confidence to express student voice

- Make student representatives aware of any opportunities for professional development that arise during their term.
- Let the student representatives know that they should not hesitate to contact AQA for any questions or support.
- Keep student representatives up to date with relevant AQA activities.

Whakawhanaungatanga – building connections with each other

Diverse taura are involved and heard in decision-making

- When meeting with student representatives, balance meeting places between student spaces and AQA spaces.
- Share information with student representatives openly and often, not just on a need-to-know basis. This can help to build the relationship and ensure the student representative feels included and prepared.
- When issues arise, discuss them with student representatives at the same time others (Board members, audit panels) are being told.
- When meeting with student representatives, agree on the meeting talking points ahead of time so students can be prepared to discuss matters that might require some background knowledge.

Akoranga – learning with and from each other

Taura and providers work openly and transparently

- Recognise and respect that student representatives are experts at being a student's today.
- Share resources or research with student representatives (and vice-versa) that may help them in their roles.
- Both AQA and national students' associations could invite their respective members to conferences, seminars and meetings that are of mutual benefit.

Mahi tahi – working together

Taura and providers develop ideas and solutions together

- If student representative wants to bring a substantial matter or proposal to the AQA Board, AQA should support that student representative to do this, where appropriate.
- AQA should work together with national students' associations to support the range of student representatives that it engages with.
- AQA should work with student representatives when designing its academic audit cycles.
- Promote student partnership in the wider tertiary education sector where possible.

Conclusion

This working paper is a further contribution to the rich tapestry of resources for developing and strengthening meaningful student voice, engagement and partnership practices in Aotearoa New Zealand. International student partnership frameworks have helped to transition tertiary education sectors around the world into systems that embrace student partnership, and the benefits have been profound. The three key features of successful international models, being a multi-lateral approach to student partnership, treating students as partners, and a national presence for supporting the sector embed partnership practices, should be reflected on as student partnership is embraced in Aotearoa New Zealand.

With the development of *Whiria Ngā Rau*, Aotearoa New Zealand now has a starting point and a roadmap for embedding partnership practices into the various facets of its own tertiary education system. Using the ideas from overseas and the concepts in *Whiria Ngā Rau*, this working paper has provided AQA with tangible advice on how it can respond to recommendations made in its 2020 External Review and contribute to the development of student partnership practices in the field of academic quality. Using this guidance, academic audits panels, the AQA Board, AQA and universities will be better placed to work with and support the student leaders they engage with, to enhance and improve academic quality.

The concepts in *Whiria Ngā Rau* are purposefully broad to allow flexibility in how they can be applied to different contexts. This working paper serves as a case study for how *Whiria Ngā Rau*, as a national framework for student partnership, can be used by other organisations in the sector to develop good practice guidelines, or to strengthen organisational functions that engage with students and their representatives.

The most important consideration when institutions, organisations or agencies are seeking to develop partnership practices with their students, as is the case with AQA, is that students must be involved as partners from the outset. If the tertiary education sector in Aotearoa New Zealand embraces *Whiria Ngā Rau*, as uses it to guide the development of strong partnership practices with students, then, as has occurred internationally, the experiences of all members of the tertiary education community will be enriched.

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Appendix 1: Wise Wales Progressing to Partnership Toolkit

Indicator 1: Partnership is being regularly debated and discussed between both institution and students' union representatives

Essential Criteria

- a) Institutional and students' union representatives dedicate time to meet and discuss how culture of partnership should look
- b) New opportunities to enhance student engagement and partnership practice feature on the agendas of a wide range of appropriate committee meetings, and are regularly reviewed
- c) Annual statements are being completed by the student body and institutions are responding proactively to the recommendations, commendations and concerns raised

Desirable Criteria

- d) Partnership forums are set up in conjunction with the student body to formally debate the issues

Indicator 2: Both parties are able to identify examples of good practice, pertaining to student engagement and partnership, that might be implemented within their own context

Essential Criteria

- a) Both institutional and students' union representatives engage with standalone Wise Wales events such as the 'Partnership for Wales' conference, as well as longer-term ventures such as the staff network, in order to gain insight into partnership practice, and share ideas and challenges across the nation
- b) Both parties liaise with Wise Wales consultants to discuss the ways in which these ideas can be put into practice

Desirable Criteria

- c) Good partnership practice is included as a key component of the student charter and its promotion to the student body
- d) Institutions and students' unions work in partnership with Wise Wales to explore funding opportunities to pilot new ideas and schemes

Indicator 3: An ethos of partnership is being embedded throughout institution and the students' union; the message is being actively disseminated

Essential Criteria

- a) Meetings on matters pertaining to the student experience are made as flexible as possible to ensure maximum student participation
- b) Institution and students' union-wide emails are circulated to ensure that staff members have a basic understanding of the importance of partnership
- c) A broader spectrum of staff working directly with students begin to engage with Wise Wales events and activities, as opposed to only persons in positions of senior management
- d) Ways of disseminating good partnership practice are introduced within the institution and the students' union, whether that takes the form of meetings or digital communication methods

Desirable Criteria

- e) New staffing positions are being created, dedicated to furthering the partnership agenda and creating effective communications between the institution and the students' union
- f) Formal support is put in place for those who find the concept challenging, whether that is in-house or in conjunction with the Wise Wales consultants
- g) Institutions and students' unions are making joint efforts to ensure that student places are filled on joint committees, rather than being left empty

- h) Relevant student facing staff understand student engagement structures and are able to signpost students accordingly

Indicator 4: The practical opportunities for students to become partners in enhancing and shaping their experiences within education are ever increasing and evolving

Essential Criteria

- a) Ensure the presence of an effective, democratic, tiered course representative system, owned by the student body, supported by the institution
- b) Demonstrate that students know how and where to raise relevant issues
- c) The institution and students' union collaborate on piloting at least one project or scheme which facilitates students becoming involved in the enhancement of the wider student experience, with a view to propagating the work should the pilot prove to be a success
- d) The ways in which the institution uses student feedback are actively and widely promoted in order to close the feedback loop and encourage regular, genuine student participation in feedback pathways
- e) Students are involved in all decision-making processes that affect them across the whole institution
- f) Student representatives sit on every appropriate decision-making body that holds the potential to affect the wider student experience

Desirable Criteria

- g) Students become increasingly involved in the development of institutional and departmental policies and procedures
- h) Standalone projects and schemes develop into long-term, annual partnership promotion programmes
- i) Support is put in place to facilitate students in driving the changes they want to see, e.g., creating pop up drop-in centres where students can submit ideas and discuss the opportunities available to make them become a reality
- j) Institutions and students' unions hold student-experience conferences, workshops, and forums to discuss and challenge partnership ideas, as well as disseminating current practice within the institution and across the higher education sector
- k) Student involvement in shaping processes begins to extend beyond learning and teaching

Indicator 5: Greater engagement with a wider student audience

Essential Criteria

- a) Annual student reports are informed by as many student communities as possible to provide a more detailed picture of the wider student body's vision for change
- b) Institutions work with students' unions to distribute data collection methods to ascertain which student communities are least and most likely to engage
- c) Efforts are made to recruit course representatives from as many student communities as possible

Desirable Criteria

- d) Course representatives receive training and support in how to improve communications with less engaged students (either in-house or through Wise Wales)
- e) Institutions and students' unions work together to raise awareness of the benefits of working in partnership and taking ownership of one's education by organising events and developing incentives for students to participate

Appendix 2: Student Voice in Tertiary Education Settings Quality Systems in Practice

Establishing the partnership in which the student voice is to be heard

- How do governance arrangements show that the student voice is important to and valued by your organisation?
- How are student representatives involved as partners within committees and other mid-level organisational structures?
- What consultation mechanisms exist, so that students are invited to contribute to organisational decision making and their perspectives treated with respect?
- What mechanisms exist for students to influence the quality of individual courses for their own and future cohorts?
- How are student representatives given feedback about what has happened as a result of their input?
- How can the above systems and processes be improved, to ensure the student voice visibly enhances quality at the organisation?

Legitimising the student voice

- How is an active and independent student voice encouraged at your organisation?
- Are the mechanisms used by student representatives for gathering the student voice fit for purpose?
- How does your organisation demonstrate that it is listening to the student voice?
To what extent are there demonstrable lines of accountability from those who speak for students back to the student body?

Establishing clear roles for those delivering the student voice

- Are student representatives well prepared, and how do they work with other students to ensure that the views they put forward are genuinely representative?
- Who is responsible for orienting student representatives to their role(s), and how is this orientation provided?
- Are student representatives on committees given job descriptions, terms of reference etc.
- Within committees, how are the different pressures on students' time compared to that of other committee members acknowledged and managed?
- How can these systems and processes be improved to ensure that student representatives at all levels speak effectively for students?

Providing training for those delivering the student voice

- Is there training available for student representatives, who provides it, and what percentage of representatives are being trained?
- How is such training monitored and reviewed to ensure it is fit for purpose?
- How does training account for the specific needs of different representative positions?

Providing adequate resources for supporting the student voice

- What resources can student representatives' access to speak effectively for students (rather than only on the basis of their personal experience)?

- What organisational information exists that would assist student representatives, and how is this shared by the organisation?
- If applicable, what data does any student association collect, and how is this shared with representatives, the student body, and the organisation?
- How do processes for collecting student data encourage participation and avoid 'survey fatigue'?

Hearing and heeding the student voice

- To what extent is the student voice embedded in the organisation's processes and structures?
- What evidence shows that the student voice has made a difference to organisations' decisions and the quality of provision?
- How is evidence of the student voice's effectiveness publicised to students?

Appendix 3: Whiria Ngā Rau

Whakapakari – strengthening student voices

Building capability and confidence to express student voice

- Developing ways of working that fit their learning environments
- Receiving and passing on what was learned from previous cohorts
- Building capability and confidence to express student voice
- Planning, making offers and requests for how student voice kaupapa will work during their learning
- Tapping into a range of networks across communities to inform decisions.

Whakawhanaungatanga – building connections with each other

Diverse taura are involved and heard in decision-making

- Taura and providers are engaging in ways that honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi
- Any and all taura are informed and taking an active role in shaping decisions around learning experiences
- Taura are respected and valued as experts at being students now.
- Connections are mutually beneficial to students and providers.

Akoranga – learning with and from each other

Taura and providers work openly and transparently

- Taura and providers know what is expected of each other in the partnership and are motivated to keep working together
- Taura and providers are learning to shape the partnerships, measure progress and reflect on what improvements can be made
- Maintaining feedback loops to share information and updates and reporting regularly on the relationship.

Mahi tahi – working together

Taura and providers develop ideas and solutions together

- Taura and providers are giving practical effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi
- Taura and providers are shaping engagements together and building routines to embed student voice in the culture of the learning environment
- Taura and providers are collaborating in partnerships that are mutually beneficial
- There is a tuakana-teina relationship, where the one who is ahead or more experienced is looking back and helping the other move forward; these roles can be reversed at any time.