



University
of Glasgow



Staff-Student Partnership Guide

For Staff Partners

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What is a Student-Staff Partnership Scheme?

A student-staff partnership, or SSP, can be defined by Cook-Sather et al. (2014) as:

“[a] collaborative, reciprocal [process] through which all participants have the opportunity to contribute equally, although not necessarily in the same ways, to curricular or pedagogical conceptualization, decision making, implementation, investigation, or analysis.”

For the University, these partnerships can focus on co-creation between staff and students along the themes of the Learning and Teaching strategy. Co-creation follows when staff and student partners work collaboratively together in their projects to fulfil their overarching vision, and goal (Bovill et al., 2016).

Our schemes focus on three main subject areas:

- Assessment and Feedback

- Co-Creating the Curriculum

- Decolonising the Curriculum

Each SSP, even if dissimilar in subject matter, will follow a similar timeline.

The funding schemes pay for student partners to undertake the project (a maximum of 110 hours per student partner, with no more than 20 hours worked in any week). There could be more than one student partner per project, normally a maximum of three, though a case could be made for more where this is required by the nature and aims of the project.

Why take part in a partnership?

Participating in a student-staff partnership can provide a range of professional, pedagogical and personal benefits for staff members. Alongside contributing to improvements in learning, teaching and the wider student experience, SSPs also create opportunities for staff to develop new perspectives and collaborative practices within their work.

Through partnership working, staff are often able to gain deeper insight into the student experience and the barriers, challenges and perspectives that may not always emerge through traditional feedback mechanisms. Working collaboratively in co-creation with students can help inform areas such as teaching practice, curriculum design and assessment structures, allowing for better, more inclusive and responsive approaches to learning and teaching.

In addition, SSPs can support professional development for both students and staff through the strengthening of skills such as facilitation, communication and

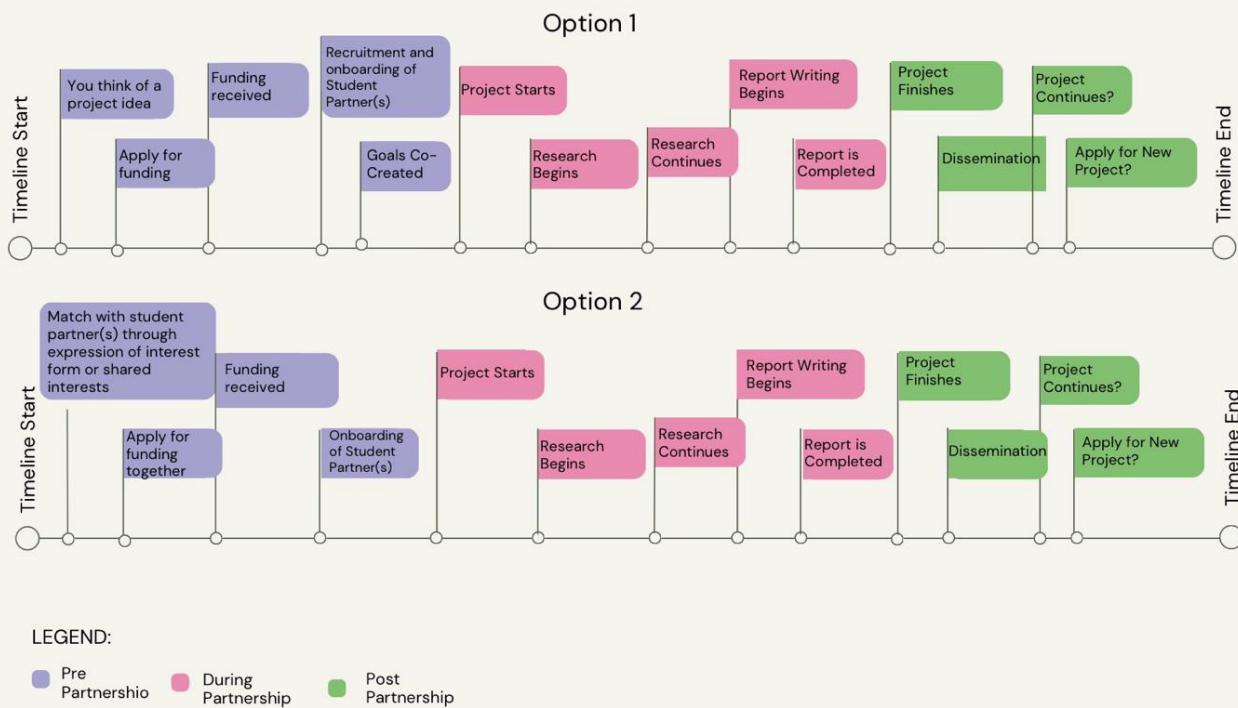
collaborative leadership. Many projects also create opportunities for dissemination - whether that be through conferences, showcases or publications. Participation in SSP projects can therefore lead to wider professional growth and recognition within learning and teaching scholarship.

Importantly, SSPs should not be viewed solely as opportunities for students to gain experience or develop skills. Effective partnerships create mutual learning opportunities where both staff and students benefit from collaboration and the co-creation of ideas, approaches and project outcomes.

Timeline

Your role in the SSP can begin in differing points upon this timeline, as some staff may conceptualise their project early; while others may join much later. However, this timeline planning, structure and understanding off the SSP, and your role within it.

STAFF PARTNER TIMELINE



How to Use This Guide

Your Staff SSPS guide is formulated to help you throughout your role as a staff partner. It is based on a wider literature review into good practice, as well as interviews with previous staff and student partners about what has worked well, and the barriers encountered previously in projects. By using this guide throughout your experience, you should feel more equipped to start your role, contribute to your project, and know how to apply for more funding, or even, continue your project.

This guide is split into three sections: pre, during and post partnership - this is to aid in your understanding of what is expected of you for your role, as well as giving you structure, understanding, and support throughout the partnership.

It is recommended that you use this guide during these three specific timeframes, however, it has been split for quick access to specific sections. Reflection prompts have been added to each section to encourage evaluation at each stage of the process. Additionally, a timeline has been produced to follow along as you complete your position in your project.

Reflection Throughout this Guide

Reflection is an important part of meaningful student-staff partnership work. SSPs are collaborative, and as such evolving projects. This means that challenges, expectations, relationships and project goals may change throughout the partnership process. Regular reflection helps staff and students recognise what is working well, identify barriers early and consider what makes 'good practice' in partnerships.

Within SSPs, reflection should not only take place at the end of the project. Instead, reflective practice is most valuable when embedded throughout all stages of the partnership. Allowing for regular reflection can help ensure that partnerships remain collaborative rather than becoming staff-led or overly task-focused.

For this reason, reflection prompts have been included throughout this guide. These prompts are designed to encourage ongoing discussion and critical thinking around:

- How decisions are being made
- Whether students feel able to contribute meaningfully
- How power dynamics are being managed
- Whether expectations and workloads remain realistic
- How inclusive and accessible partnership practices are
- How projects may continue to have impact beyond the funded period

Additional Resources

If you are interested in SSP and wish to read more about these projects, please follow the links below:

<https://gla.sharepoint.com/sites/learning-teaching-project-funding>

<https://gla.sharepoint.com/sites/learning-teaching-project-funding/Lists/projects/AllItems.aspx>

Before Your SSPS

Preparing Your Partnership Project

In drafting your application for a potential partnership project, you will be prompted to think about the following points below. These will help you establish clear aims, timelines and expectations early, creating a more structured and collaborative approach to your project. When preparing your SSPS application, consider:

- What is the overall purpose and intended impact of the project?
- How does the project align with wider learning and teaching priorities and themes of decolonising the curriculum, assessment and feedback or co-creation of the curriculum?
- In what ways will students contribute meaningfully to the project beyond consultation?
- Are the project scope, timelines, and expected outcomes realistic considering funding and time constraints?
- How will responsibilities and decision-making be shared across the partnership?
- What training, guidance, or support may students require during the project?
- How will inclusivity and accessibility be considered throughout recruitment and project delivery?
- How might the outcomes or impact of the project continue beyond the funded period?
- What are your indicators of success?

Reflection prompt:

- 1) **Does this project create genuine opportunities for partnership and co-creation, or are students primarily contributing to pre-defined staff-led work?**

Recruitment and Onboarding

Selecting Your Student Partner

When looking for student partners, it is important to consider what an effective student partner would ideally bring to your project. Selecting your partner can either happen before submitting an application – with you and your student partner(s) jointly applying for a project – or a formal recruitment process after an application

has been submitted. Depending on the nature of the project, you may wish to think about when recruiting:

- Interest in the project topic and motivation to contribute
- Ability to work collaboratively with staff and other students
- Communication and interpersonal skills
- Reliability and ability to manage competing time constraints
- Willingness to share ideas, ask questions and engage in unfamiliar situations
- Relevant experience – where appropriate – such as volunteering or previous work experience that may be helpful for working in a partnership

Recruitment processes should seek to widen participation and encourage applications from students who are from traditionally underrepresented groups. Student-staff partnerships benefit from a range of perspectives, so an effort should be made to reduce barriers to participation. For example, you could send an open call to all students in the cohort that you are looking to work with, highlighting the benefits that the project will bring to them as a cohort and as individual student partners.

Getting Started

HR Requirements

Before your project can start, your student partner(s) will need to complete the University's onboarding process. As the staff partner, you may be asked to help coordinate some of the required information.

You should take into consideration time for information to be collected in setting a start date for your project.

Information Required

- ✓ **A current CV**
- ✓ **Two references (one may be the staff partner involved in the project)**
- ✓ **A UK term time address**
- ✓ **An email address**
- ✓ **A contact number**

Depending on arrangements, you may be asked to collect this information (if not already given) or ensure students submit it directly to Student and Academic Services

Once all required documentation has been received:

1. HR will prepare and issue contracts to student partners
2. Students should sign and return their contracts as soon as possible
3. Students will then have to undertake a right-to-work check
4. Following this, students will receive their staff ID number and email and will be given access to the University's HR system. Students will be able to input bank details to be paid

Managing Student Partner Payments

Student partners are paid monthly for the hours they input into timesheets on the CoreHR system. As the student's line manager, you will be acting as the main approver for timesheets submitted.

Before the project starts

Please ensure that you are registered as a manager. To register, either contact your College HR or directly request manager status through the University's Helpdesk. To do this:

- Click on the portal which logs you into University systems (MyGlasgow Staff), including the Helpdesk
- Scroll down to IT Services where you will find "New Helpdesk request"
- Click on staff
- Click on "Request or Report something" - choose HR Helpdesk.
- You will be prompted to state "What is your enquiry about." Click on this and a dropdown menu appears.
- Click on "HR systems." You will then be asked to select an area which best relates to your enquiry, and a further dropdown menu appears
- Click on "Approver/Line Manager Access." Within this form, you can state that you have been awarded a Student Staff Partnership fund and as such will be the main budget holder and manager of the student partner(s) employed
- Submit

During the project

Encourage student partners to:

- Record their hours regularly
- Submit timesheets monthly
- Notify you when a timesheet has been submitted

As the approver, you should:

- Ensure hours are coded correctly (most commonly used pay code for timesheets is 2143 for fractional and casual hours)
- Make students aware of payroll deadlines and approve timesheets before these deadlines. Deadlines can be found at <https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/finance/payandpensions/payrolldeadlines>

Managing Your Project Budget

After being awarded your funds:

- You will be named as the budget holder
- You will receive a unique sub project code for student salary costs
- Your School Professional Services Team should be informed of details of the award (project is SSPS funded, amount awarded and the sub project code)
This helps ensure that expenditure is monitored appropriately throughout the project.

The financial year runs from 1st August to 31st July. Therefore:

- **Projects that run across two financial years will have to have funding allocated for each year. An estimation of student hours and costs across each financial year should be given**
- **All work should be completed by the end of July, with all outstanding hours to be claimed at least 7 days prior to the July payroll deadline**

Support Avenues

Student–staff partnership projects are often different from traditional project work, meaning that challenges faced are different to what many staff members may have previously encountered. The University has support in place to aid you at all times throughout your project.

Institutional Support

Student and Academic Services can provide help with:

- Student partner recruitment and onboarding
- Project administration and funding processes
- Budget and payroll queries
- Signposting to relevant University services and resources

- Advice on project planning and delivery
- Guidance on sharing and disseminating project outcomes

Responsibilities of Student Ambassadors vs Staff Partner would be outlined here (could use a graphic) – University of Nottingham example below for reference

Responsibilities	
Student Engagement Officer	Staff Partner
• Supporting of student recruitment where appropriate • providing relevant documentation; e.g., ethical approval forms • Approving students' timesheets • Sorting out the admin for recruitment e.g., communicating with UniTemp; contacting the students on the outcome of application etc.. • Provide support for both staff and student partners with queries on regarding the partnership project • Dissemination of good news stories • conducting project progress assessments	• Carry out project with students • Ensuring there is regular communications/meetings as appropriate for the delivery of the project • Monitoring of timesheets • Distributing of tasks for project • Being available to answer questions and provide support • Ensuring the evaluation for the project • Ensuring there is a safe and supportive environment for the project • Providing advice on effective strategies for project completion • Supporting the dissemination of results (co-authoring reports, papers, presentations)

Learning from Others

Many challenges encountered within student-staff partnerships are shared across projects. Staff may benefit from:

- Speaking with colleagues who have previously participated in partnership projects
- Reviewing examples of previous Student-Staff Partnership Scheme projects
- Attending relevant workshops, networking opportunities or showcase events, such as the University's Learning and Teaching Conference

Learning from existing practice can help staff identify approaches that support effective collaboration and avoid common challenges.

Key Contacts

Learning and Teaching Strategy Support: LT-Strategy-Support@glasgow.ac.uk

Pay & Pensions: finance-payroll-pensions@glasgow.ac.uk

Co-Creation of Expectations and Project Goals

Co-creating expectations and goals at the beginning of a partnership project can help establish a more collaborative working environment built on trust. Students are more likely to engage with confidence when they understand the purpose of the project, how decisions will be made, and that the role they have in the partnership is just as important as staff members. Team building at the start of a partnership – whether that be informally or through an induction – can aid in creating an environment of trust and mutual respect.

For effective co-creation of expectations and goals, staff should:

- Discuss project goals collaboratively at the beginning of the partnership and create opportunities for students to shape or refine these where possible
- Ensure expectations around workload, timelines, communication and participation are discussed and agreed upon before the project commences
- Recognise that project goals and expectations may grow as the project develops, and that the students understand that they can influence this too
- Support a shared understanding of what successful collaboration and meaningful partnership will look like throughout the project
- Begin to create an environment where students feel as though they can contribute ideas, ask questions or express uncertainty without judgement or dismissal

Reflection prompts:

- 1) Have expectations been discussed collaboratively, or been mainly communicated by staff?**
- 2) Would all members of the partnership describe the project goals in the same way?**
- 3) Are students clear from the start about where they can influence the direction of the project?**

Before Starting Your SSP Checklist

- ✓ Project goals discussed collaboratively
- ✓ Communication methods agreed
- ✓ Roles and responsibilities clarified
- ✓ Accessibility needs considered and addressed
- ✓ Meeting schedule, and mode, established
- ✓ Students and staff know what support is available
- ✓ Shared expectations documented

During Your SSPS

Active Collaboration, Communication and Co-Creation

Students-staff partnership projects are most effective when collaboration is active and co-creation-centred. Rather than viewing students as consultees, partnership work should create opportunities for students to actively shape discussions, contribute ideas and influence project development. Effective collaboration is supported by open communication, trust and shared ownership.

To support active collaboration and co-creation, staff should:

- Promote collaborative working practices such as shared reflection, collaborative problem solving, and co-development of outputs such as reports.
- Create space for student creativity and experimentation, rather than following set, rigid tasks.
- Revisit project goals regularly to ensure that all participants remain aligned and engaged and that goals remain relevant.
- Encourage shared ownership of the project by involving students in reviewing progress, adapting approaches, and identifying next steps.
- Build an environment of open communication based on trust to ensure that students feel they are equally valued and that their perspectives matter.

Reflection prompts:

- 1) As the project progresses, are students still actively shaping the project, or are they primarily being led by staff direction?**
- 2) Have opportunities been created and taken by students to take ownership of aspects of the project?**
- 3) Are the previously set expectations of roles, responsibilities and project goals being met, and if not, how could this be achieved?**
- 4) Have all members been able to contribute ideas, and have these been addressed/actioned?**

Managing Power Dynamics

The inherent nature of student-staff partnerships and institutional structure implies that staff members are in a natural position of power. Being aware of this structural dynamic, and that student-staff partnerships work best where these traditional hierarchies are reduced, can help create a more balanced, open and collaborative environment.

To help manage power dynamics within partnership work:

- Be aware that students may feel uncertain about how much authority they have within the project, particularly when working with staff who have taught or supervised them previously
- Invite students to take visible responsibility within the project, such as leading parts of meetings, developing resources, shaping research tools, or contributing to outputs
- Encourage guided autonomy by giving students enough structure to feel supported, whilst allowing them freedom to develop their own ideas and take ownership over tasks
- Be reflective about how language, meeting structures, or project processes may unintentionally reinforce hierarchy
- Be explicit about where students face decision-making influence, and where institutional, ethical, or practical constraints may limit this
- Continually reflect throughout the project on who is making decisions, and whether the partnership is becoming genuinely collaborative or staff-led

Reflection prompts:

- 1) Who currently has the greatest influence over decisions within the project?**
- 2) Are there opportunities for students to lead aspects of the project more visibly?**
- 3) Has there been a conscious effort to share decision-making responsibilities (where appropriate) to support more genuine partnership working?**
- 4) Does the working environment feel as though students are treated more as colleagues and partners rather than traditional students or supervisees?**

How to Sustain Engagement

Sustaining engagement in student-staff partnerships requires students to feel that their involvement is meaningful, manageable, and connected to visible outcomes. Students are more likely to remain engaged when they understand their role, can see progress being made and feel that their contributions are valued throughout the project.

In order to help sustain engagement, staff should:

- Keep the project active through regular meetings, check-ins or short updates so that students remain connected and understand the progression of the project
- Be mindful of students' changing availability due to coursework, assessments or other personal responsibilities, and adapt expectations where possible. Importantly, staff should do the same and let students know when there are competing workload priorities
- Support continuity by keeping shared records of decisions, actions and materials, especially in the case where students may join, leave or have shorter contracts
- Give students ownership of particular tasks such as designing surveys, organising and hosting focus groups, analysing data, developing resources or contributing to reports. Appropriate training should be put in place if there are gaps in knowledge to ensure that students feel supported in delivering these tasks
- Provide regular feedback on how student work is shaping the project as the partnership progresses

Reflection prompts:

- 1) **Do students currently feel connected to the progress and direction of the project? How?**
- 2) **Are workloads and expectations still manageable for all members of the partnership, and has this been discussed within the team?**
- 3) **Have there been visible smaller goals and objectives achieved over the course of the project, and have these been recognised?**

Inclusivity, Accessibility, and How You Can Help

Inclusive and accessible partnership practices help ensure that a wider range of students feel able to participate meaningfully in SSP projects. Without careful consideration of barriers to participation, there is a risk of partnerships being unintentionally dominated by those who are already highly engaged with university work. Creating inclusive partnership environments requires ongoing reflection on how these barriers can be reduced to allow for meaningful participation across underrepresented groups.

This can be supported by:

- Recognising these barriers and that they may be different to each student. Examples of barriers include workload pressures, caring responsibilities, employment elsewhere or accessibility needs
- Respecting students' lived experiences and recognising that these are valuable forms of expertise within partnership work
- Considering whether recruitment, communication or project structures may unintentionally limit participation
- Being flexible with meeting formats, communication methods and deadlines to accommodate different schedules, accessibility needs and working preferences
- Using accessible and straightforward language in communication to avoid unnecessary institutional or academic jargon
- Recognising the associated emotional labour that comes along with projects where students are expected to represent wider student perspectives or engage with issues of inclusivity and diversity
- Promotion of visibility by encouraging students involved in projects who are from traditionally underrepresented groups to share their experiences with other students

Reflection prompts:

- 1) **Has there been discussion of barriers with partners, acknowledgement of challenges that may come with these, and an appropriate 'action plan' of some sort to manage this?**
- 2) **Has adequate support been signposted or given for participants partaking in a project focused on sensitive issues, where emotional labour and difficult discussions may be prevalent?**

Post SSPS Role

Beyond your Project: reflection, evaluation and dissemination

Many SSP projects continue to have value and impact beyond the funding period. Reflecting on how project outputs, relationships and good practice may continue after the formal partnership ends can help strengthen the long-term impact of SSP across the University and contribute to institutional change.

Furthermore, the projects that you and your students have undertaken should be celebrated and recognised. This is a great way to share your work to a wider audience, and to connect with other projects. Particularly for students, this may be their first time having worked on a project with opportunity for real impact. Therefore, acknowledging and maintaining contact with students on their impact is crucial to ensuring feelings of belonging and valued contribution. Showcasing successful projects is also a great way to encourage other applications for partnership across the University.

To support this, staff could:

- Consider how the outcomes of the project may contribute to longer term-change within the School or College
- Reflect on how learning from the project may shape future approaches to student partnership and collaboration
- Present your work at conferences such as the University of Glasgow's Learning and Teaching Conference, and giving the opportunity for students to join you
- Publish your work – key journals dedicated to student-staff partnerships include the International Journal for Students as Partners, Student Engagement in HE Journal, and the Journal of Educational Innovation, Partnership and Change
- Share your experiences and examples of good practice with colleagues, and encourage others to apply
- Keep students informed on the legacy of their work, even after their formal involvement in the project has ended
- Encourage students to reflect on how the skills gained in partnership can help them in the future
- Publicly recognise achievements of both students and staff through involvement in the [UofG Student-Staff Partnership Showcase event](#) or the Learning and Teaching Conference, for example.

Reflection prompts:

- 1) How will students remain informed about longer-term outcomes or developments linked to the project?**
- 2) What lessons from this project could inform future SSP work?**
- 3) Are there aspects of the project that could continue or be developed further?**

Options for Continuation and Other Routes of Funding

You are more than welcome to apply for another round of funding if you wish to develop your project further or apply for a new project, in line with the themes in the learning and teaching strategy. In addition, the University offers other funding schemes which may be closely linked to your project aims. Examples include the following:

1. The Learning and Teaching Development Fund (LTDF)

LTDF supports developments in the practice of learning and teaching that will contribute to the enhancement of learning and teaching across the University and to the delivery of the objectives of the Learning and Teaching Strategy. All University of Glasgow staff are eligible to bid for funds, and LTDF funding may be used to match other funding. The LTDF is best used for:

- Supporting teaching practice at the University of Glasgow
- Testing innovative, novel, practical learning and teaching ideas
- Sharing and expanding best practice
- Projects that are small and large, with £3000 bids available for small projects and £3000-£20000 for large projects

2. The Scholarship of Teaching & Learning Fund (SOTL)

This fund supports the scholarship of teaching and learning, that is, the evaluation of learning, teaching and assessment in higher education, and has been created to support work that will provide insight into the enhancement of learning and teaching and create an evidence base for change. SOTL supports:

- Sharing scholarship with UofG and the wider HE community
- Creating an evidence base for change in learning, teaching and assessment
- Projects that are reflective, literature based, or based in novel practice
- Up to £10000 of funding per project

3. The Chancellor's Fund

The Chancellor's Fund supports innovative, exciting projects that have an impact across the University and wider community. The Chancellor's Fund aims to:

- Support our students by helping to provide a rich and rewarding university experience.
- Enhance the learning environment by providing access to new technologies and enhanced facilities.
- Develop excellence by providing financial support for research, teaching and promoting academic developments.
- Preserve the University's heritage, enhancing the physical and cultural heritage of the University.
- Advance projects aimed at tackling environmental sustainability in line with the University's response to the climate change emergency.

Examples of funded projects, and further information, can be found at:

<https://gla.sharepoint.com/sites/learning-teaching-project-funding/Lists/projects/AllItems.aspx>

<https://www.gla.ac.uk/connect/supportus/supportinspires/chancellorsfund/fundedprojects/>