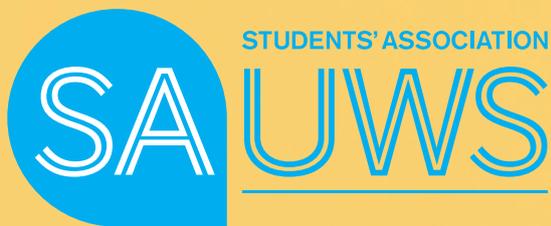


UNIVERSITY OF THE  
WEST of SCOTLAND

**UWS**



# **UWS & SAUWS**

## **LEARNING IN PARTNERSHIP**

### **Student Partnership Agreement 2015-16**



**DREAMING,  
BELIEVING,  
ACHIEVING**

A 21ST CENTURY UNIVERSITY

[WWW.UWS.AC.UK](http://WWW.UWS.AC.UK)

# UWS & SAUWS - Learning in Partnership, Student Partnership Agreement 2015-16

The purpose of this Student Partnership Agreement (SPA) is to present how the University of the West of Scotland (UWS) and the Student's Association UWS (SAUWS) are working together in partnership to improve the student learning experience. The agreement sets out our approach to partnership as well as detailing agreed priorities for the academic year 2015-16. It also describes how all students can get involved in all this activity. It is intended to make students aware of agreed areas for improvement and to promote the engagement of students during their time at UWS.

UWS and SAUWS are proud of their commitment to student engagement and representation, and of their work in supporting a positive and enhanced learning experience for all. To extend this commitment, SAUWS and UWS have agreed to enter into a formal Student Partnership Agreement. Developed by students and staff, the agreement outlined below, articulates our understanding of partnership. It reinforces our commitment to work together to create a contemporary and inspirational learning environment where everyone is valued and able to influence the learning experience.

Section A identifies our principles and values underpinning our understanding of partnership. Section B identifies our agreed priorities and actions that will focus our shared activity across the academic session 2015-16, allowing us to assess and evaluate the impact of our partnership work.

The University and SAUWS are committed to the continual development of this Partnership Agreement which will be reviewed jointly on an annual basis.

## Section A

### **The principles and values of partnership:**

We believe partnership should be embedded as the ethos of the 21st Century University, reflecting a culture of inclusion and enablement. Partnership should be authentic and empower students and staff to work together to create transformative and sustainable learning communities. It should be based on mutual respect and trust, and instil and enhance feelings of belonging. Partnership should be a powerful driver of positive change, promoting critical reflection and enhancement activity across the work of the University. Partnership does not imply that all participants are the same, but recognises and seeks to harness the diversity of perspectives, experience and expertise available across the University. Our partnership agreement should enhance student engagement and strengthen the role students already perform at all levels of decision-making at UWS.

### **Partnership in learning & teaching:**

Engaging students and staff effectively as partners in learning and teaching is arguably one of the most important issues facing higher education in the 21st century. Students as partners is a concept which interweaves through many other debates, including assessment and feedback, employability, flexible pedagogies, internationalisation, linking teaching and research, and retention and success.

Across the higher education sector in the UK, a number of initiatives have been introduced to harness the potential of partnership in learning and teaching. Students have been empowered as 'producers', 'collaborators' 'co-creators' and 'change agents' in the shaping of learning environments and the university experience. Within Scotland, the commitment to working and learning in partnership is explicitly stated in the Government's strategic vision for post-16 education. We recognise engagement in this type of partnership activity as essential to the future development of our University.

### **Partnership at UWS**

The commitment to partnership is already clearly articulated in the University's Corporate Strategy and Education Enabling Plan. There is an explicit emphasis on maximising student engagement in the work of the University and on building learning communities where students are empowered as active partners: "We shall celebrate staff and students as co-creators of learning, co-solvers of learning challenges and co-beneficiaries of the positive outcomes that ensue". This Student Partnership Agreement formalises and extends that commitment. It is written for all partners, students, academics, professional service staff and senior managers, supporting a breadth and depth of reflection on our current relationships and practices. It will explicitly locate students at the centre of the enhancement work of our University.

## Section B

### Partnership in practice

Using student feedback from a range of sources and initiatives, the university and SAUWS have agreed to work together on the following themes listed below over the coming year.

#### Student Representation, Involvement and Participation

| ACTION   | Responsibility                    | Desired Outcomes  | Measurement of Success/<br>Timeline (SMART)   |
|--|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| Implement the SPA  | SAUWS/UWS                         | Improved Student Engagement<br>Student representatives to have appropriate training to undertake role   | Effective practice report – June 2016   |
| Improve opportunities for student representation and participation in all appropriate committees across the university.  | SAUWS                             | Opportunity for recognition for all representation work within the HEAR   | All appropriate forums and committees to include trained reps as members – March 2016   |
| Create a recognition system whereby we can record representation, partnership activity and engagement in support of employability.                               | SAUWS/Student Engagement          |   | Produce metrics of engagement in representation for 2015/16 based on SPARQS matrix.   |
| Each School will have at least one student led academic society by end 2015/16, with appropriate support being provided.   | SAUWS/Assistant Deans (Education) |   | Annual increases in numbers of students and staff involved in collaborative and co-created work. Appropriate activities recorded on the HEAR (June 2016)<br>Production of the HEAR - July 2016  |
| <b>Establish institutional working groups to:</b><br>Review engagement with Global Reach and international activity within the institution.                      | SAUWS/UWS                         | Demonstrate improved integration between home and international students through the production of shared work.   | Benchmark established for International students through introduction of International Student Barometer.<br>Improvements in outward mobility and greater uptake of languages provision.  |
| Co-create an Award in Global Citizenship, with students working in partnership with staff to create an Award that features on the student HEAR and in staff PDR. |                                   | Develop a culture where students and staff are supported to be collaborative & co-creative.<br>Provision of an international curriculum and development of an international culture across UWS. | Student satisfaction increased (NSS & EVASYS, PTES and UKES).<br>Evidence of collaboration available from module descriptors, with examples of best practice in collaboration showcased in presentations of student work.<br>Produce an award in 2015-16 and then in 2016-17 to engage 100 students and 10 staff, increasing to 500 students and 20 staff by 2017-18. |

## Assessment & Feedback:

To improve engagement with assessment and feedback

| ACTION  | Responsibility                      | Desired Outcomes  | Measurement of Success/<br>Timeline (SMART)   |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| Ensure that 3 week turnaround for effective and timely feedback is met.<br>Where, for a valid reason it is not possible to provide feedback within 3 weeks an explanation will be provided with details of when and how feedback will be provided to you. | Assistant Deans (Education) /SAUWS. | Monitoring of feedback and turnaround times in place.<br>Increased NSS scores (2016/17).<br>Production of an activity and intervention report by each group (January 2016). | Setting up of assessment, feedback and research awareness group in each School (November 2015).<br>AAPC to monitor provision of timely and useful feedback. |
| Set up Action Research Groups to explore assessment and feedback organised around the SPA for each School.  |                                     |   | Production of an activity and intervention report by each group (January 2016).   |
| Produce a report on assessment practices across all programmes of study.  |                                     | Exploration of new approaches to assessment and feedback such as an assessment partnership model, co-creation, peer and self-evaluation.                                    | Benchmark levels of student engagement with assessment/ reassessment.   |

## Wellbeing

| ACTION   | Responsibility                   | Desired Outcomes   | Measurement of Success/<br>Timeline (SMART)   |
|--|----------------------------------|--|---|
| Deliver financial awareness campaign involving Student Services, SAUWS and external partners during 2015/16. | Director of Student Life /SAUWS. | Increased capacity to better manage finances, increased confidence and resilience. | A collaborative approach taken to delivering Student Money Week 2016.<br>Development of a collaborative approach to a series of financial capability activities to be used in classroom settings. |
| Deliver a campaign focusing on mental health awareness during 2015/16.                                       |                                  |  | With SAUWS mental health ambassadors, take a partnership approach to promoting wider student engagement.<br>Increased confidence and resilience.  |

# Achieving the Student Partnership Agreement

In keeping with the values of this Partnership Agreement, equality and diversity will be considered at all times. The utilisation of expertise and perspectives from the whole learning and professional community will determine the success of this agreement and outcomes derived from it.

In addition, this partnership agreement supports innovation and creativity, the use of technology, intentions to expand our global reach and will assist our partnership in delivering a 21st century experience.

# Reviewing the Student Partnership Agreement

A SPA review group will be set up during Trimester 2 of each year, this group will include members from SAUWS, UWS and the student body, to ensure that an annual review takes place at an appropriate time which all members of the community can contribute to and benefit from. This will include mandates from the Student Voice, Manifesto pledges from elected officers and results derived from Quality Assurance and Enhancement Processes. The review and mandates will provide a basis for each successive update to the SPA.

# Conclusion

This partnership agreement contributes to/reflects the reality of UWS being a 'different university' and sets out to achieve our commitment to "maximise student engagement in the life of the university" (UWS Corporate Strategy, 2014-20, p.11) through the provision of transformative, learner-centred learning where students are empowered as critical partners.

Partnership, at UWS, is continuously evolving and will develop and change as the community, simultaneously, develops and changes. Ultimately, students and staff are only truly partners when we engage with each other; neither can do it alone.

Signed on behalf of UWS ..... [Principal & Vice-Chancellor]  
Professor Craig Mahoney

Signed on behalf of SAUWS ..... [Student President]  
Jack Douglas

## References

- Healy, M, Flint, A. and Harrington, K. (2014) Engagement through partnership: students as partners in learning and teaching in higher education. Cited in Higher Education Academy (2014) Framework for partnership in learning and teaching in higher education. [Online] Available: [www.heacademy.ac.uk/students-partners-framework-action](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/students-partners-framework-action) [Accessed: 17 June 2015].
- Heggie, G. and McPherson, N. (2015) Transitioning to Students as Partners, Producers, Collaborators and Co-creators. Are We Serious?. Paper presented at Enhancement and Innovation in Higher Education, 9-11th June 2015, Glasgow UK. Available at: [www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/pages/docdetail/docs/paper/transitioning-to-students-as-partners-producers-collaborators-and-co-creators-are-we-serious](http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/pages/docdetail/docs/paper/transitioning-to-students-as-partners-producers-collaborators-and-co-creators-are-we-serious) [Assessed 2nd August 2015]
- Higher Education Academy (2014) Framework for partnership in learning and teaching in higher education. [Online] Available: [www.heacademy.ac.uk/students-partners-framework-action](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/students-partners-framework-action) [Accessed: 17 June 2015].
- National Union of Students (2012) A manifesto for partnership. London: National Union of Students.
- National Union of Students (2014). Creating and developing excellent academic societies. [Online] Available: [www.nusconnect.org.uk/pageassets/charity/student-opportunities/training/lunchandlearn/Lunch-and-Learn-Academic-Societies-Briefing.pdf](http://www.nusconnect.org.uk/pageassets/charity/student-opportunities/training/lunchandlearn/Lunch-and-Learn-Academic-Societies-Briefing.pdf) [Accessed 17th June 2015]
- National Union of Students. (2013). Success in the Student Market 2013. London: NUS.
- Quality Assurance Agency (2012) UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Part B: Assuring and Enhancing Academic Quality, Chapter B5: Student Engagement. [Online] Available: [www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Pages/Quality-Code-Chapter-B5.aspx](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Pages/Quality-Code-Chapter-B5.aspx) [Accessed: 16 June 2015].
- University of the West of Scotland. (2014) UWS Corporate Strategy 2014-20. UWS.
- University of the West of Scotland (2010). UWS Learning Manifesto. UWS.

**Ayr Campus**

University Avenue  
Ayr  
KA8 0SX  
Scotland  
Tel +44 (0)1292 886 000

**Hamilton Campus**

Almada Street  
Hamilton  
ML3 0JB  
Scotland  
Tel +44 (0)1698 283 100

**London Campus**

235 Southwark  
Bridge Road  
London  
SE1 6NP  
Tel +44 (0)207 015 9470

**Dumfries Campus**

Dudgeon House  
Dumfries  
DG1 4ZN  
Scotland  
Tel +44 (0)1387 345 800

**Paisley Campus**

Paisley  
PA1 2BE  
Scotland  
Tel +44 (0)141 848 3000

**WWW.UWS.AC.UK**

0800 027 1000  
(+44 (0)141 849  
4101 outwith UK)  
ask@uws.ac.uk