National Student Engagement Programme
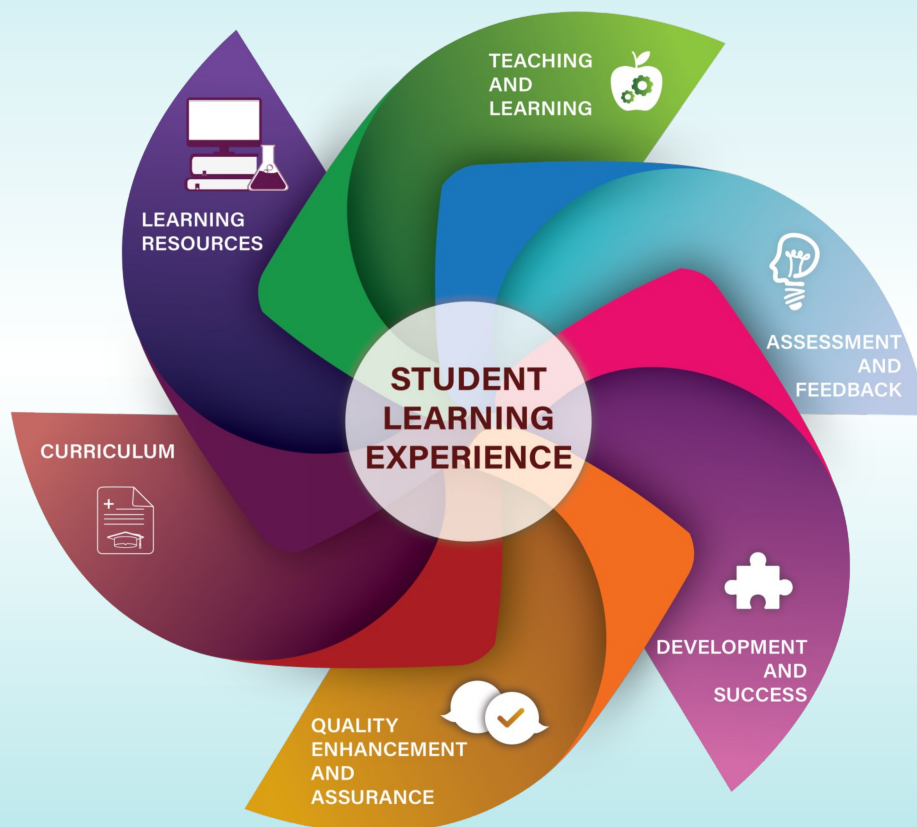
Clár Rannpháirtíochta Náisiúnta na Mac Léinn

The Student Learning Experience

STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCE

TEACHING AND LEARNING

ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK

DEVELOPMENT AND SUCCESS

QUALITY ENHANCEMENT AND ASSURANCE

CURRICULUM

LEARNING RESOURCES

A tool for collecting, evaluating, and communicating student feedback on undergraduate courses and programmes

The Student Learning Experience

Collecting, responding to, and acting upon student feedback is an important part of student engagement. But with so many factors that contribute to a student's whole learning experience, it can be difficult to gather wide-ranging or detailed information. The Student Learning Experience, or SLE, is a tool that breaks down the broad concept of learning into a set of meaningful, bitesize categories.
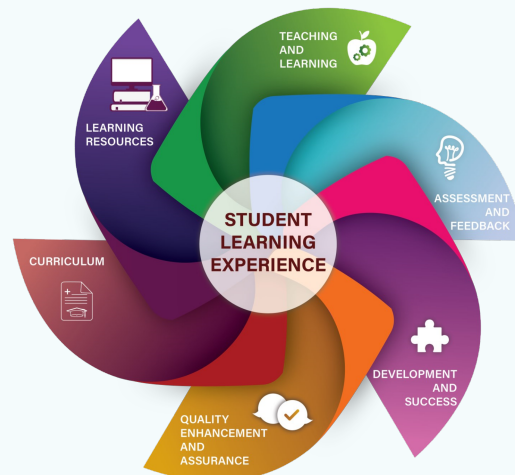
The SLE will help you to collect relevant ideas and suggestions based on students' views, and enable you to:

Ask specific questions about students' learning

While generalised or open ended questions such as 'how are you finding the course?' can elicit insightful responses, a more systematic and detailed approach to collecting student feedback is critical to making improvements and ensuring the quality of the learning experience. The questions under each section of the SLE can be used as a starting point for conversations, survey questions, or developing partnerships. By targeting these specific areas the SLE can help to establish clearly defined and actionable areas to improve the learning experience on a course or programme.

Collect broad-ranging feedback

The SLE helps staff and students to reflect on six core areas relating to their learning experience. This ensures that the student voice is heard across the different areas that impact learning, building student and staff capacity to engage with one another across areas of policy and practice.

Assess where additional feedback may be required

The SLE can be used to monitor the feedback received from students. Does feedback mostly lie within one or two areas of the SLE? Are there areas of the SLE where student views have not been collected? By using the SLE to assess feedback trends, additional steps can be taken to prioritise underrepresented areas as a part of ongoing efforts to gather student feedback.

Provide a common vocabulary and structure

The SLE is a valuable tool for preparing and supporting students to engage in the feedback process. In addition to providing six lenses through which to consider and decipher their learning experience, it also introduces students to vocabulary that can be used to articulate opinions and communicate feedback with staff. The SLE can also serve as a foundation for staff and students to work together as partners in evaluating and enhancing the learning experience, and can be used to structure meetings, projects or reviews.

Curriculum
The way content and learning is organised on your course and modules

- Is the course well-structured and does it match the description from the prospectus/handbook?
- How well are students supported in their transition to learning at third-level, and as they progress from year to year?
- Are you satisfied with the timetable and module choices?
- Are learning objectives clearly stated, and are they being followed?
- Is it clear what is required to progress from year to year, and ultimately complete the course?
- Is your course challenging enough, and does it incorporate all the subjects and content areas needed to prepare you for future study or employment?

Learning Resources
Everything needed to be successful on your course and modules

- Are adequate learning resources available (e.g. textbooks, up-to-date materials in the library, access to digital repositories and eLearning materials)?
- Is there sufficient access to necessary materials (e.g. lab equipment, art materials, computer software, health and safety equipment)?
- Are learning materials available on your college's virtual learning environment, or VLE (e.g. Moodle or Blackboard)?
- Is the VLE used consistently across modules?
- Are facilities such as study spaces, labs, and classrooms well-equipped and open at convenient times?
- Are there adequate IT resources and reliable WiFi?
- Do students know what resources are available and how to use them?
- Are adequate supports and services available for students struggling with a particular subject or skill?
- Are resources, facilities, and learning materials easily accessible for *all* students?

Teaching and Learning
The way content and skills are taught, and how students learn

- Are students guided in the development of technical, digital, academic, and transferable skills as a part of the teaching process?
- Does teaching foster academic curiosity and introduce students to research principles, methods, and skills?
- Are lecturers, tutors, or demonstrators available to provide support on course content, assignments, and assessment outside of the classroom?
- Is there sufficient time spent in class preparing students for assessments?
- Are students able to learn in a way that suits their needs?
- Are there forms of teaching other than lectures and tutorials/seminars that would help student learning?
- Are the size of tutorials/seminars conducive to participation and further learning?
- Is teaching material up-to-date?
- How would you rate the quality of teaching?

Assessment and Feedback
How learning is measured, and results are communicated back to students

- Does assessment accurately reflect the content and learning objectives of the module/course?

- Are students given a choice of appropriate assessments?

- Are assessments marked fairly and consistently, and is the marking criteria communicated to students?

- Are assignments staggered across different modules to prevent overload?

- Are assessment types varied, or is there too much reliance on one type of assessment (e.g. essay)?

- Do students receive adequate and constructive feedback on their work?

- Is feedback provided promptly, with enough time for students to identify areas for improvement on future assessments?

- Is feedback given in a variety of ways (e.g. one-to-ones, peer review, written comments)?

- Are procedures for submission of assignments and exam re-sits clearly communicated and fair?

Development and Success
A learning experience that embraces diversity and wellness, and encourages students to develop new perspectives and future goals

- Does this course improve student employability and work-readiness, and are there adequate careers advice and services available?

- Are students aware further study options are available after completing the course?

- Does student success underpin the work of all staff, including administrative and support staff?

- Does this course provide an educational experience with opportunities to meet new people, discover new talents, and expand student's understanding of the world? (e.g. social activities, the opportunity to take modules in another discipline, student conferences, or study abroad experiences)

- Does the college actively work to remove obstacles to student achievement and participation? (e.g. adequate parking/transport links, childcare facilities, assessment policies and procedures)

- Is student diversity recognised through curriculum and learning supports, and are students encouraged to engage in discussions whereby diverse perspectives can be accommodated?

- Do assessment and exam policies/procedures take student wellness and wellbeing into consideration?

Quality Enhancement and Assurance
Institutional processes to improve the quality of student's learning experience

- How do you feel your programme, course, or institution compares with others?

- Are student opinions listened to and taken seriously?

- Are improvements made to your course as a result of student feedback?

- Are students told what changes have been made to their course?

- Are class reps involved in assessing and improving the quality of courses?

- Are students actively involved throughout the decision-making process, or merely consulted?

- Are students invited to co-create surveys and feedback forms?

- Is student feedback communicated to all stakeholders, including teaching assistants and tutors?

Enhancing the Student Learning Experience (SLE)

The National Student Engagement Programme seeks to strengthen a culture of partnership between students and staff, underpinned by meaningful student engagement practices. Core to this work is to build the capacity of both students and staff to engage and partner with one another. Ultimately, the SLE is a tool that improves student capacity to navigate their institutions and the way in which education is typically structured. This can also have a benefit for the way in which staff perceive the experiences and views of their students, contributing toward a level-playing field for dialogue and discussion that creates actionable, informed and collaborative solutions.

The SLE can be used by staff and student representatives to support engagement and partnership with whole class cohorts:

- Utilise the SLE to inform how feedback is sought from the whole cohort

- Work with class representatives to identify aspects of the SLE that require particular focus

- Structure dialogue, surveys, and class content around the elements of the SLE

- Build students' confidence and literacy on issues of their own learning experience using the SLE

- Inform the structure of peer activities, improving understanding of peer experiences through the SLE

- Support staff to have more effective conversations on expectations, using more universally understood language

- Use the SLE as a framework around which to structure conversations on students' choices

The SLE can be used to support partnership activities and projects for enhancement:

- Inform the nature and structure of focus groups, using the SLE to provide greater agency to students

- Develop questionnaires and workshops for both staff and students to consider key issues, providing an opportunity to compare and contrast expectations and challenges

- Inform more structured induction to institutional committees for both students and staff

- Use the SLE to develop shared language and common understandings

- Develop student capacity to understand and engage in the development of new projects, using the SLE to map how particular projects can have a positive impact on the SLE itself

National Student Engagement Programme

Clár Rannpháirtíochta Náisiúnta na Mac Léinn

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The National Student Engagement Programme is a partnership of

USI
Union of Students in Ireland
Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn

QQI
Quality and Qualifications Ireland
Dearbhú Cáilíochta agus Cáilíochtaí Éireann

HEA | HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY
AN tÚDARÁS um ARD-OIDEACHAS

The Student Learning Experience was developed in partnership with

sparqs
student partnerships in quality scotland