

Steps to Partnership is a framework for supporting and enhancing an authentic culture of student engagement and decision-making in Irish higher education. This framework is for all students and staff. It recognises that higher education is a learning community, where students are partners, not consumers.

Steps to Partnership sets out three key concepts as follows:

Student voice

is the act of students sharing their individual and collective lived experiences within the learning community, expressed through views and perspectives, demonstrated by formal and informal conversation, debate, feedback, and ultimately, active listening and being heard.

Student engagement

is a process by which students and staff seek to work together to shape decision-making in higher education, building individual and collective capacity and knowledge to navigate institutional structures and cultures.

Student partnership






is the practice that both drives forward and emerges from meaningful student engagement, which recognises the need to re-balance power dynamics in higher education and seeks to enable a culture of change through collaboration, reciprocity and shared responsibility between staff and students.

The framework has four key elements: the **four drivers of student engagement**, the **four domains of student engagement**, the **five principles of student engagement**, and the **five enablers of student engagement**. These elements can be remembered as **4-4-5-5**.



To view the full Steps to Partnership framework, including an interactive version with supporting resources, please visit
studentengagement.ie/framework

You can contact NStEP for further information and support to utilise and embed *Steps to Partnership* in your higher education institution.

-  NStEP@USI.ie
-  www.studentengagement.ie
-  NStEPie
-  National Student Engagement Programme
-  National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP)



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STEPS TO PARTNERSHIP

A Framework for Authentic
Student Engagement in
Decision-Making



**National Student
Engagement Programme**
Clár Rannpháirtíochta Náisiúnta
na Mac Léinn



Steps to Partnership

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in Decision-Making

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DRIVERS OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

A CULTURE OF STUDENTS
AS PARTNERS

THE INSTITUTION AS A
SITE OF DEMOCRATIC
CITIZENSHIP

THE INSTITUTION AS AN
INCLUSIVE LEARNING
COMMUNITY

A CULTURE OF
INSTITUTIONAL REFLECTION
AND ENHANCEMENT

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DOMAINS OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT



5

PRINCIPLES OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

- Dialogue
- Building Trust
- Equity and Inclusivity
- Empowerment
- Students as co-creators

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ENABLERS OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

- Capacity Building
- Institutional Approaches
- Supportive Policies and Practices
- Communities of Practice
- Sustainability

DEVELOPING A SHARED UNDERSTANDING AND APPROACH TO STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN DECISION-MAKING

STUDENT VOICE

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

STUDENT PARTNERSHIP