



National  
College of  
Ireland



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

# National Student Engagement Network Event

Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> November 2024  
National College of Ireland

**“Engage, Empower, Elevate:  
Transforming the Student Experience”**



[nstep@usi.ie](mailto:nstep@usi.ie)



[studentengagement.ie](http://studentengagement.ie)



[@NStEPie](https://twitter.com/NStEPie)



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# Welcome, welcome, welcome!

Thank **you** for taking the time out of your busy schedules to join us today!

A huge thank you to NCI, NCI Students Union and Tre, SU President, for hosting today's event

# Niamh Kennedy

## Programme Manager

### Qualifications & Experience

- LLB Law and Psychology
- LLM, Human Rights in Criminal Justice
- PhD in Experiential Legal Education (current)
- Undergraduate and postgrad student rep
- Student Associate (National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning)
- NStEP Student Trainer
- Quality Assurance Student Reviewer
- Postgraduate Student Associate Intern (NStEP, 2021 - 2022)
- Teacher of Criminology



# Rachael Sarsfield Ryan

## Development Co-Ordinator



### Qualifications & Experience

- BSc. in Applied Psychology
- Deputy President & Education Officer in IADT Students' Union (IADTSU) 2020/21 and 2021/22
- Advisory Board Member for Irish Open Access Publishers (IOAP)

[nstepdevelopment@usi.ie](mailto:nstepdevelopment@usi.ie)

# Train our student trainers

Arrange networking events and conferences

## Organise training sessions

Liaise with students and staff in Higher Education



### Organise QA Student Reviewer Pool

## Develop resources for staff and students

Drivers of student engagement at a national level

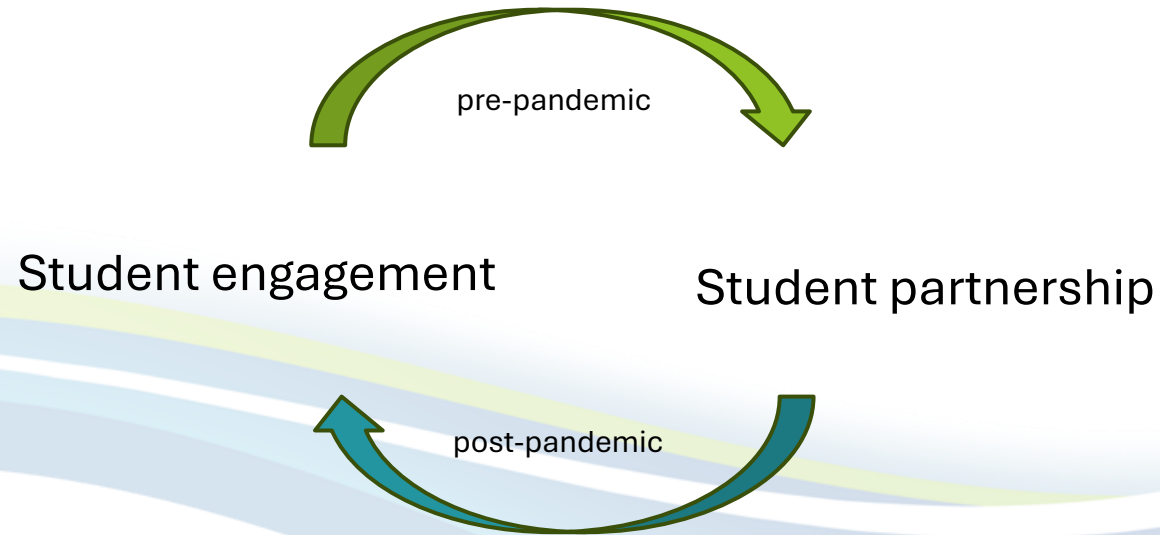
Facilitate institutional development workshops

### Develop NStEP strategies

# And more....



# “Engage, Empower, Elevate: Transforming the Student Experience”



- the importance of student-led change in Higher Education,
- student leadership initiatives,
- the need for diverse perspectives in decision making,
- how student engagement has changed post-pandemic and the need to adapt accordingly,
- the importance of student wellbeing and mental health



# National Student Engagement Programme

Clár Rannpháirtíochta Náisiúnta na Mac Léinn



National College of Ireland

## National Student Engagement Network

28<sup>th</sup> November 2024

National College of Ireland

Time	Session
10.00 am – 10.30 am	Registration, Refreshments and Networking
10.30 am – 11.00 am	Welcome and NStEP Update
11.00 am – 11.20 am	Linda O’Sullivan, SUCCEED, Munster Technological University, Cork
11.20 am – 11.35 pm	Fiona Mullins, Student Engagement Associates, Munster Technological University, Kerry
11.35 pm – 11.45 am	Refreshments and Networking
11.45 am – 12.30 pm	Keynote Speaker: Rebecca Roper, Student Success Project, Higher Education Authority
12.30 pm – 1.30pm	Lunch
1.30 pm – 2.15 pm	Project Updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Caroline Mahon, Student Wellbeing Project, Higher Education Authority</li> <li>• Sarah Hughes, Mental Health, Union of Students of Ireland</li> <li>• Sinead Lynch, Student Voices: Peer Support in Module Selection for Online Education Students, Dublin City University</li> </ul>
2.15 pm – 2.45 pm	Dr Lorraine Tansey, StudentVolunteer.ie
2.50 pm – 3.00 pm	Closing Remarks and Photographs



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# National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP)

- ▶ Founded in 2016 – a partnership of QQI, the HEA, and USI.
- ▶ Promotes and strengthens student engagement at a national level by:
  - ▶ Working with students, students' unions, higher education institutions (HEIs), staff, and organisations/government bodies.
  - ▶ Providing training and professional development
  - ▶ Creating resources
  - ▶ Running workshops, seminars, network events, and conferences

**NStEP is here to support you!**



## Our Vision

To inform, guide and support an Irish higher education landscape that **fosters student-staff partnership**, at both the national and institutional level, by **enhancing student engagement**.

## Our Mission

To ensure **value is placed on student engagement** in Irish higher education through the **development of the leadership capabilities** of students and by supporting institutions and their staff **to create and sustain meaningful partnership with students**.

## Strategic Priorities

- A) Strengthening the value of student engagement at the national level**
- B) Developing the leadership capabilities of students in Irish higher education**
- C) Supporting staff to create and sustain meaningful partnership with students**

# A Menti Minute

<https://www.menti.com/alatqowuor9k>

4396 4148





# What comes to mind when you hear "Student Partnership"?

53 responses



# Has student engagement and student partnership changed since the pandemic? If so, how?

36 responses



# What is Student Engagement, Student Partnership, Student Voice?

1

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

2

**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.

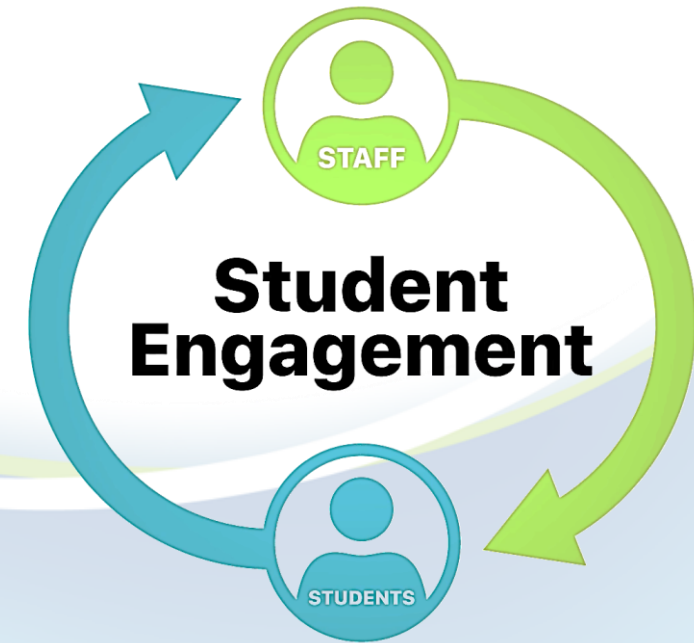
3

**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.

\*NStEP Strategy 2022-2025

# Student Engagement

- ▶ Student engagement is more than just hearing the student voice and acting on it:
  - Students are able to participate in decision making...
  - Students are able to take up roles and responsibilities in shaping change and new ideas that improve education for all....
  - And students are a valued and diverse part of the higher education community.
- ▶ Successful student engagement can lead to **student partnership** – which might be described as a culture of partnership and regular collaboration or co-creation.



# A Shared Understanding

## STUDENT VOICE

is the **act of students sharing** their individual and collective lived experiences, 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.



4

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

4

DOMAINS OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT



5

PRINCIPLES OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

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

5

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

- A new call being issued for National Advisory Group Student Engagement
- Consultations for our next NStEP Strategy, due in 2026





# **National Student Engagement Programme**

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# **Student Training Programme**

Rachael Sarsfield Ryan  
Development Coordinator

# Student Training Programme (STP)

- ▶ **25** participating higher education institutions
- ▶ **7000+** students trained across Ireland since 2016
- ▶ **15** Student Trainers
- ▶ **79** Student Quality Assurance Reviewers



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# Student Training Programme (STP)

▶ **4 student trainer-led modules (90 mins):**

- Introductory Class Rep Training (ICRT)
- Advanced Class Rep Training (ACRT)
- Representing Diversity Training (RDT)
- Institutional Review Student Briefing sessions

▶ **Total trained this semester: 426**

- ▶ ICRT – 394 students
- ▶ ACRT – 32 students
- ▶ RDT – available in the spring semester
- ▶ Student Briefing Session in October preparing students in South East Technological University ahead of their participation in SETU's CINNTE Institutional Review earlier this month

# Class Rep Census Project

- ▶ A snapshot of the diversity of student representation in Irish higher education.
- ▶ Included at the start of the ICRT survey:
  - Their responses will be anonymous
  - Their responses will not be shared with your higher education institution
  - Not all questions may apply to you, and you may not know the answer to every question
  - You don't have to answer these questions if you don't want to
- ▶ In 2023/24, the survey had 279 respondents across 21 higher education institutions partnered with NStEP.
- ▶ **Q.** Please describe your gender identity.
- ▶ **Q.** Is your gender identity the same as the gender you were assigned at birth?
- ▶ **Q.** What is your ethnicity?
- ▶ **Q.** Are you a member of the LGBTQ+ community?
- ▶ **Q.** Do you have a disability or condition that impacts on your learning, working, or learning activities?
- ▶ **Q.** Do any of these other conditions which may impact your learning, working or learning activities apply to you?
- ▶ **Q.** If you commute to college, please specify here (e.g., bike, bus, car, etc).
- ▶ **Q.** How has the cost of living/housing crisis affected you, if at all?

(with 2 further questions expanding on commuting)

# Of those surveyed...

- ▶ **59%** of student representatives surveyed **commute to college** by various means.
- ▶ **63%** of students **must work to support themselves** (either full or part-time),
- ▶ **21%** are **financially dependent on a grant** (e.g., SUSI), in line with what we're seeing nationally with the student accommodation crisis and increasing cost of living.
- ▶ **18%** were the **first in their family** to go to Higher Education.
- ▶ **13** student reps indicated that **they do not have a permanent residence**. As none of the students surveyed indicated they are part of the Irish Traveller community, we can assume that these students are unfortunately homeless.



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## Census Project Report 2023 – 2024

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## Join our Mailing List

Training updates

Paid opportunities to work with NStEP

News on NStEP's work across higher education



## Student Engagement Recognition Awards

Work towards a national Student Engagement Recognition Award for Academic Representation.



## Check out NStEP's Student Portal

Resources

Book a space on one of NStEP's other training modules

Online self-study modules

# Keep Connected!

The student portal can be accessed at [studentengagement.ie/student-training](http://studentengagement.ie/student-training)





# Thank you so much for listening and engaging!

## Questions?

▶ Contact Niamh:

- [nstep@usi.ie](mailto:nstep@usi.ie)
- 086 063 4843

▶ Contact Rachael:

- [nstepdevelopment@usi.ie](mailto:nstepdevelopment@usi.ie)
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