

Questions for evaluating a student voice or partnership project

These questions have been designed to consciously reflect on your practice with student partnership and voice projects. Use these questions to examine an existing project or when developing a new initiative, and, on reflection, consider the authenticity and agency of student engagement and participation.

1. Did a student initiate the project?
2. Are risk factors clearly considered and documented in collaboration with student-participants/leaders? Are potential consequences of failure/risk noted?
3. Are different student stakeholders and equity and diversity groups involved in various steps of the project, including its governance, design, teaching and/or administration?
4. Do students lead or co-construct the project with staff?
5. Are students playing a key role in making decisions about the project?
6. If the institution initiated the project, are the true objectives clear to student-participants?
7. Are rewards for the success of the project equally apportioned between student-participants and staff? And, are the non-tangible benefits of the project's success fairly distributed to students as well as staff? (inc. e.g., communicating success in partnership projects in a resume)
8. Where student contributions are included, are they appropriately referenced and valued?
9. Are there clear steps for succession of students and staff and the longevity of the project?
10. If products are generated, are there clear modes of sharing these amongst/between stakeholders?
11. Are training/scaffolding opportunities considered in the development/delivery of this program/project?
12. If curriculum/learning objectives are developed as part of the project, are equitable future opportunities provided to subsequent generations of participants? (inc. addressing academic integrity concerns)?

References and further reading:

Some questions adapted from Cornelius-Bell's (2021) thesis:

Cornelius-Bell, A. (2021). Student Activism in Higher Education: The politics of students' role in hegemonic university change [Ph.D., Flinders University].
<https://dx.doi.org/10.31237/osf.io/veq5a>

Some questions adapted from Varnham's (2017) StepUp principles:

Varnham, S. (2017). Creating a national framework for student partnership in university decision-making and governance (pp. 1–14) [Australian Learning and Teaching Fellowship Report]. Australian Government Department of Education and Training.

For robust discussion of difference between student voice and partnership see:

Matthews, K. E., & Dollinger, M. (2022). Student voice in higher education: The importance of distinguishing student representation and student partnership. Higher Education. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-022-00851-7>

Further resources available via the Student Voice Australia website:

<https://studentvoiceaustralia.com/reports-publications>