

2.1 Good practice in partnership implementation should:

Establish, implement and monitor a project plan (based on agile methodology)

- » To what extent is your project working in an uncertain environment?
- » What issues and challenges are your projects likely to encounter?
- » To what extent do the project team members work well together?



Establish, implement and monitor a project plan (based on agile methodology)

- » Develop a project plan and ensure that project participants buy-in to their roles and responsibilities
- » In early stages of student partnerships adopt light-touch management approaches - though this might need to change as such partnerships evolve
- » Adopt an agile and flexible approach that allows for responding to changing issues, contexts and policies
- » Where appropriate, work with other institutional departments/support services/initiatives to identify areas of mutual benefit e.g. helping them to meet their own goals
- » Engage the student union as a key partner
- » Ensure there is sufficient initiative funding particularly seed-funding
- » Encourage cross-faculty/department working to minimise “silos”
- » Adopt and encourage business-like and entrepreneurial approaches
- » Always be aware of the need to build capacity in both the student body and with staff
- » Encourage best-practice team-working through e.g. developing team skills and appropriate team-building exercises
- » Review the partnership on a regular basis
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2.2 Good practice in partnership implementation should:

Develop a set of principles of good practice to follow for student partnerships

- » To what extent will a set of good practice principles help guide your project?
- » How could such principles be communicated to stakeholders?
- » Could such principles be used to inform institutional policies and curriculum design?



Develop a set of principles of good practice to follow for student partnerships

- » Develop your own set of principles of good practice to follow for instituting student partnerships and aim for about seven key principles
- » Ensure principles are short, focus on headline argument, action oriented e.g. using action verbs, point to aspirations and use accessible language
- » For each principle, identify why it is important and any evidence to justify it
- » Use the principles as a core component of your stakeholder communications and engagement plan
- » Develop specific resources to help communicate the principles e.g. printed cards
- » Use every opportunity to re-enforce the principles in communications and in documents, resources and publications that are created
- » Collaboratively develop a set of “practice points” for each principle that can help give students and staff ideas of how to put the principles into practice
- » As student partnerships mature, consider embedding principles in strategies, policies and processes
- » Use principles to inform and guide curriculum design
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2.3 Good practice in partnership implementation should:

Allocate significant time and resource for stakeholder engagement and communications

- » To what extent will there likely be resistance to student partnership initiatives?
- » To what extent has the project evaluated different stakeholder's interests and motivations with student partnerships?
- » To what extent has the project evaluated how best to engage different stakeholders?



Allocate significant time and resource for stakeholder engagement and communications

- » Develop and implement a stakeholder communications and engagement plan using sector toolkits
- » In developing such a plan, take time to better understand how students as partners can help different stakeholders to meet their goals and interests
- » Celebrate successes and ensure external recognition is a key element of such a plan
- » Continually re-enforce the notion of students as equal partners (not assistants) and partnership working as the norm
- » Set high, but achievable expectations and continually ensure these are fully understood by all stakeholders
- » Seek support and drive from senior management and ensure they understand how students as partners can help them fulfil their strategic and personal goals
- » Ensure communications and engagement with the wider student and staff bodies (i.e. not just those involved directly with partnership initiatives or the “educational elite”)
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2.4 Good practice in partnership implementation should:

Develop/acquire guides, toolkits and resources

- » To what extent has “best practice” in student partnerships been established?
- » To what extent have the needs of different stakeholders for guides, toolkits and resources been established?
- » To what extent has the project researched the availability of third-party guides, toolkits and resources e.g. from other institutions and educational agencies?



Develop/acquire guides, toolkits and resources

- » Engage with different stakeholders to identify their needs for guides, toolkits and resources
- » Adopt the “Top Tips” and, if appropriate, customise these to institutional needs and contexts
- » Use the “Viewpoints for student engagement” toolkit as part of initiative planning and team-building exercises
- » Recognise that best practice is continually evolving and join the Change Agent Network to keep up-to-date with new approaches, toolkits and resources
- » Capture detailed case studies and share via the community of practice
- » Develop resources and toolkits that clearly and simply describe partnership models, role cards for staff and students (defining e.g. activities, responsibilities and logistical info), contract templates, briefing/induction resources etc.
- » Regularly revisit the web-sites of the key educational agencies/bodies which have major initiatives in the field of students as partners and change agents e.g. Higher Education Academy HEA), Jisc, Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW), Scottish Funding Council (SFC), National Union of Students (NUS), Student Participation in Quality Scotland (sparqs) & The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)
- » Arrange access by students and staff to appropriate technology resources to support engagement, efficient partnership working, knowledge sharing and reflective practice
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2.5 Good practice in partnership implementation should:

Clarify detailed student and staff roles, responsibilities and activities

- » To what extent has the project evaluated options for different student roles?
- » To what extent has the project specified what these roles entail in terms of activities, time commitments, skills required etc.
- » To what extent has the project defined commercial, contractual and compliance requirements?



Clarify detailed student and staff roles, responsibilities and activities

- » Define options for student roles together with associated key activities, how the roles will develop students, what students will bring to the roles and logistical information such as time commitments, training and support
 - » Student change projects/activities should involve students in planning, developing and delivering change in conjunction with staff support
 - » Consider two key staff roles: partnership lead and development lead role
 - » Consider employing student intern(s) to support and facilitate projects
 - » Partnership lead should logistically support students with e.g. workplace induction, review progress against role descriptions
 - » Provide sufficient and a broad range of student opportunities to work on innovation/change projects
 - » Develop a three-way contract between students, development lead and partnership lead, incorporating role descriptions, responsibilities, activities and compliance with institutional procedures and requirements
 - » Ensure the contracts incorporate engagement with induction, dissemination, support, record keeping, team-building and progress review and evaluation
 - » Development lead should provide students with learning and support opportunities, reflective activities and feedback as well as exploring options for accreditation
 - » The development lead role focuses more on student learning and development and the partnership lead focuses on making the partnership succeed
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2.6 Good practice in partnership implementation should:

Identify risks and how to manage them

- » To what extent has the projects identified and evaluated potential risk?
- » In particular, to what extent could some stakeholders react adversely to students as change agents?
- » To what extent has the projects identified creative ways to address and manage such risks?



Identify risks and how to manage them

- » Develop a risk management plan and review and update this regularly
- » Continually be aware of other institutional initiatives and how these impact on stakeholder workloads and priorities with a view to e.g. piggy-backing on and working with such projects to mutual benefit
- » Be continually aware of “mission creep” – high expectations need to be balanced with realistic goals
- » Be aware of the dangers of a funding culture which can restrict sustainability
- » Identify likely points of resistance by different stakeholders – drawing on the experiences of previous sector innovation and change programmes – and develop appropriate approaches to counteract such resistance
- » Be aware that student change agents could possibly undermine institutional professional support staff – and develop win-win approaches to counteract this
- » Be aware of changing institutional policies and goals and adapt appropriately
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2.7 Good practice in partnership implementation should:

Establish/join external and internal communities of practice

- » To what extent could the project influence students to drive and facilitate a community of practice?
- » To what extent could the project learn from and influence external communities of practice?



Establish/join external and internal communities of practice

- » Encourage students to develop a strategy and plan for an internal community of practice
- » Encourage students to lead the community of practice in support of partnership working between students and staff
- » Recognise the need for active facilitation by students and ensure that this is recognised as a key part of change agent activities (and possibly incorporated into an accreditation scheme)
- » Encourage students to join relevant professional body communities of practice
- » Monitor the emergence of new external communities of practice in the area of student partnerships and encourage links with these
- » Specifically, encourage students and staff to join and engage with the Change Agent Network
- » Develop processes to encourage students and staff to draw out key lessons learnt from their activities and make these available to other institutional staff and students
- » Encourage students and staff to read and contribute to the Journal of Educational Innovation, Partnership and Change
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