Higher Education Student Engagement Code of Practice

Review

Formal Review Cycle	Every three years (or earlier as required by legislation or regulation)		
Latest Formal Review (date)	June 2025	Next Formal Review Due (date)	May 2028
Policy Owner	Vice Principal with responsibility for HE		
Policy Author	Vice Principal Student Life and Stronger Communities		

Approvals

Board of Corp Y/N	N	Committee	-	Date Board approved	
ELT Y/N	Y	ELT date approved	18/09/2025	Additional committee	HE Board

Publication

Website Y/N	Y	Unify Y/N	Y	Student VLE Y/N	N	Other	

Change History

Version	Date Reviewed/ Revised	Description of Change	Reviewed by	Approved by
v1.0	May 2025	New Code replacing Student Engagement Framework (HE)	HE Board	
v1.1	June 2025	HE Board amends	VPSL&SC	ELT

Higher Education Student Engagement Code of Practice

1. **Statement**

   1.1. This Code of Practice is a code of the City of Sunderland College, trading as Education Partnership North East (which includes Sunderland College, Hartlepool Sixth Form College and Northumberland College). These colleges will be referred to as "the College" throughout this document.

   1.2. It sets out expectations for staff and students on student engagement practices across Higher Education programmes.

   1.3. The Code aligns with OfS Condition B2, the UK Quality Code, and is informed by participatory evaluation principles, ensuring students are not only consulted, but actively involved in the review, development, and enhancement of their academic experience and their higher education course, in a way that maintains the academic standards of their course.

2. **Scope**

   2.1. Applies to all staff and students involved in Higher Education provision within the College.

   2.2. Covers both formal and informal engagement processes, academic and co-curricular.

   2.3. Supports co-created evaluation, with students contributing to the design, implementation and analysis of engagement processes.

   2.4. This Code does not cover or define Published Information to include information contained in letters, verbal communications, teaching and learning materials, scholarly activity, creative work or staff recruitment advertisements.

3. **Aims and Underpinning Principles**

   3.1. The Code of Practice aims to ensure that student engagement is embedded and valued at all levels and aspects across the College.

   3.2. The Code of Practice ensures the requirements of the Office for Students regulatory framework for higher education in England and in particular in relation to condition B2: Resources, support and student engagement are met.

   3.3. It supports the development of empowered, reflective and collaborative students who actively shape their learning experience.

   3.4. It enables continuous enhancement of learning, teaching and student support through structured, inclusive, and iterative engagement processes.

3.5.   The Code is built on a foundation of participatory evaluation, where students and staff co-create, review and refine the academic experience, course and learning environment together.

3.6.   Engagement is viewed as a shared responsibility requiring mutual trust, communication, and respect.

3.7.   The following principles underpin student engagement at the College:

I.   **Collaboration** – Shaped through collectively identifying, researching, producing, reframing and shared decision-making.

II.   **Co-creation** – Active contributors to academic and college development.

III.   **Equity** – Ensuring all voices are heard and valued.

IV.   **Transparency** – With clear outcomes from feedback and engagement processes.

V.   **Empowerment** – Building student confidence, agency, and leadership.

VI.   **Iteration** – Using participatory evaluation to foster continuous improvement.

VII.   **Reflectiveness** – Emphasising shared learning through feedback and review cycles

VIII.   **Evidence-based** – Using student voice to inform decisions at all levels.

4.   Definitions

4.1.   **Participatory Evaluation:** An inclusive, democratic approach to assessing practices, where students and staff jointly shape evaluation questions, methods, data interpretation and actions.

4.2.   **Student Voice:** Collective and individual perspectives on learning and experience.

4.3.   **Engagement:** Active, empowered participation in shaping academic and college life.

4.4.   **Feedback Loop:** A process through which feedback is gathered, analysed with students, and used collaboratively to make change.

5.   Responsibilities

5.1.   **Executive Leadership Team** is responsible for:
   o   Ensuring the College complies with the Office for Students conditions of regulation as set out in Securing student success: Regulatory framework for higher education in England.
   o   Has a robust practice of student engagement that ensures students are shaping their academic experience

5.2.   **The Campus Principal with responsibility for Higher Education** is responsible for:
   o   Oversight of all HE and that there are routine opportunities for students to contribute to the development of their academic experience and their higher education course, in a way that maintains the academic rigour of that course.

5.3. **The Vice Principal Student Life and Stronger Communities** has responsibility for:
  o Oversight of the implementation of the Code of Practice Student Engagement process and evaluative reporting to Board of Corporation.
  o Work with the Quality Office to build in and embed participatory evaluation within the College's quality assurance cycle.

5.4. **Campus Principals** have responsibility for:
  o Effective implementation of the Code of Practice Student Engagement (HE) across their campus and acting upon findings..
  o Championing the purpose and underlying principles of this Code of Practice.

5.5. **The Quality Office** have responsibility for:
  o Oversight, evaluation and operating the quality assurance aspects of student voice such as AMRs, MEQ and student surveys including reporting to HE Board and ELT, sub committees of the Board of Corporation.
  o Lead the process for College's Self Evaluation Document (SED) and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP).
  o Work with the Vice Principal Student Life and Stronger Communities to build in and embed participatory evaluation within the College's quality assurance cycle.

5.6. **Directors and Associate Principals** have the responsibility for:
  o The implementation of the Student Engagement Code of Practice and enhancements across their faculty.
  o Lead on ensuring students across their whole faculty are actively involved in the review, development, and enhancement of their academic experience and their higher education course.

5.7. **Curriculum Managers/Heads of Department** are responsible for:
  o The implementation of the Student Engagement Code of Practice across their team.
  o Ensure every HE programme has a minimum of 1 student rep.
  o Lead on ensuring students across their team are actively involved in the review, development, and enhancement of their academic experience and their higher education course.

5.8. **Programme and Module Leaders** are responsible for
  o To ensure their programme has a minimum of 1 student rep in place by October.
  o Maintaining active student dialogue and for reporting student-led actions including informal student voice to inform teaching and learning.
  o Supporting Course Representatives to co-facilitate focus groups, surveys and learning conversations.
  o Ensuring students are actively involved in the review, development, and enhancement of their academic experience and their higher education course, in a way that maintains the academic rigour of their course.
  o Ensure students meet with external examiners to feedback on their course.

5.9. **All staff** have responsibility for:
  o Listening to and acting on student voice and collaborating with them on to make improvements.

5.10. **HE Students** have responsibility for:
- o Participating constructively in engagement opportunities including student rep training, committee and reporting activities.
- o Students will be offered optional training in peer research, data analysis, and evaluative communication.

6. Implementation

6.1. Before Programme Delivery Commences

I. Students' perspectives must inform the design and validation of programmes through representation at planning and approval stages.

II. Programme Handbooks must clearly state the role of students in shaping learning and evaluation practices.

III. Induction must introduce students to opportunities for feedback, co-creation, and collaborative evaluation.

6.2. During Programme Delivery

I. **Academic Engagement:** Students should be involved in the creation and periodic review of module content and delivery strategies.

II. **Dialogue and Feedback**: Structured feedback opportunities—MEQs, surveys, QR-code surveys and HE Board of Studies—must be accompanied by feedback summaries and action plans co-created with students.

III. **Developmental Partnerships:** Students will engage in reflective exercises (e.g. PDPs) and review mechanisms that involve peer and staff dialogue to shape the learning environment.

IV. **Representation:** Course reps must be active participants in curriculum review and institutional decision-making; training will include facilitation and evaluative skills.

V. **Shared Evaluation:** Students and staff will jointly analyse qualitative and quantitative feedback data, with findings reported via module handbooks, VLE, and HE Board reports.

7. Institutional Oversight and Participatory Evaluation

7.1. Participatory evaluation will be built into the College's quality assurance cycle.

7.2. Students must be included in:
- Programme validations and modifications
- Programme and module reviews
- Periodic reviews
- Thematic analysis of NSS/internal survey results
- HE Reporting and committee structures of the College

7.3. Student-led audits or focus groups will be piloted and embedded, where effective.

7.4. Action plans resulting from engagement will include timelines and named responsibilities, shared with students via course channels.

8. **Associated Documents**
    8.1. **External:**
    - Office For Students, Conditions of Registration (Condition B2)
    - UK Quality Code

    8.2. **Internal:**
    - University Partnership agreements
    - Periodic review terms of reference
    - Annual Monitoring and Review Code of Practice
    - HE Assessment Code of Practice
    - HE Quality Assurance Handbook
    - Teaching, Learning & Assessment Policy
    - Student Rep Handbook

9. **Code Monitoring and Review**

This Code will be reviewed every three years unless changes to legislation, regulation or regulatory guidance requires earlier review. The effectiveness of this Code is reviewed through:

- Programme and Annual Review
- Student Rep reports
- Thematic feedback analysis
- Peer-led evaluation initiatives
- Findings will inform strategic planning and resource allocation.
- The HE Board will oversee an annual participatory review of the engagement strategy involving student and staff co-analysis.

10. **Equality Impact Assessment**

Have you sought consultation on this policy? Details:	Yes , across ELT and HE Board Focus group of HE students.			
Could a particular group be affected (negatively or positively)?	**Impact Y/N**	**Description of Impact**	**Evidence**	**Mitigation/ Justification**
Protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010				
Age	N			
Disability	N			
Gender Reassignment	N			
Marriage and Civil Partnership	N			
Pregnancy and maternity	N			
Race	N			

Religion or belief	N			
Sex	N			
Sexual Orientation	N			
Additional characteristics to consider				
Young Persons in Care & Care Leavers	N			
Young Carers & Care Givers	N			
Young Parents	N			
Youth Offenders	N			
Those Receiving Free School Meals	N			
If there is no impact, please explain:				

Appendix 1: Visual representation of student engagement across EPNE

Boards and Committees

Partner Body Committee (e.g. Hull Joint Board of Studies)	HE Student Representation x 1	HE Rep providers verbal report to partner
Curriculum Quality and Student Experience	HE Student Governor x 1	HE Rep provides overarching presentation from ELT Plans
Campus Principal Meeting	Rep (1-2) from each programme	"You said we listened" Plan to ELT
Higher Education Board	HE Student Representative	HE Rep contributes to Board meeting (excl confidential items)
EPNE Board of Studies	HE Student Representative	HE Rep provides verbal report.
Joint Student – Staff Committee	• All students on a programme • Led by students	HE Reps contribute to Course Forum

Appendix 2: Visual representation of student engagement across EPNE

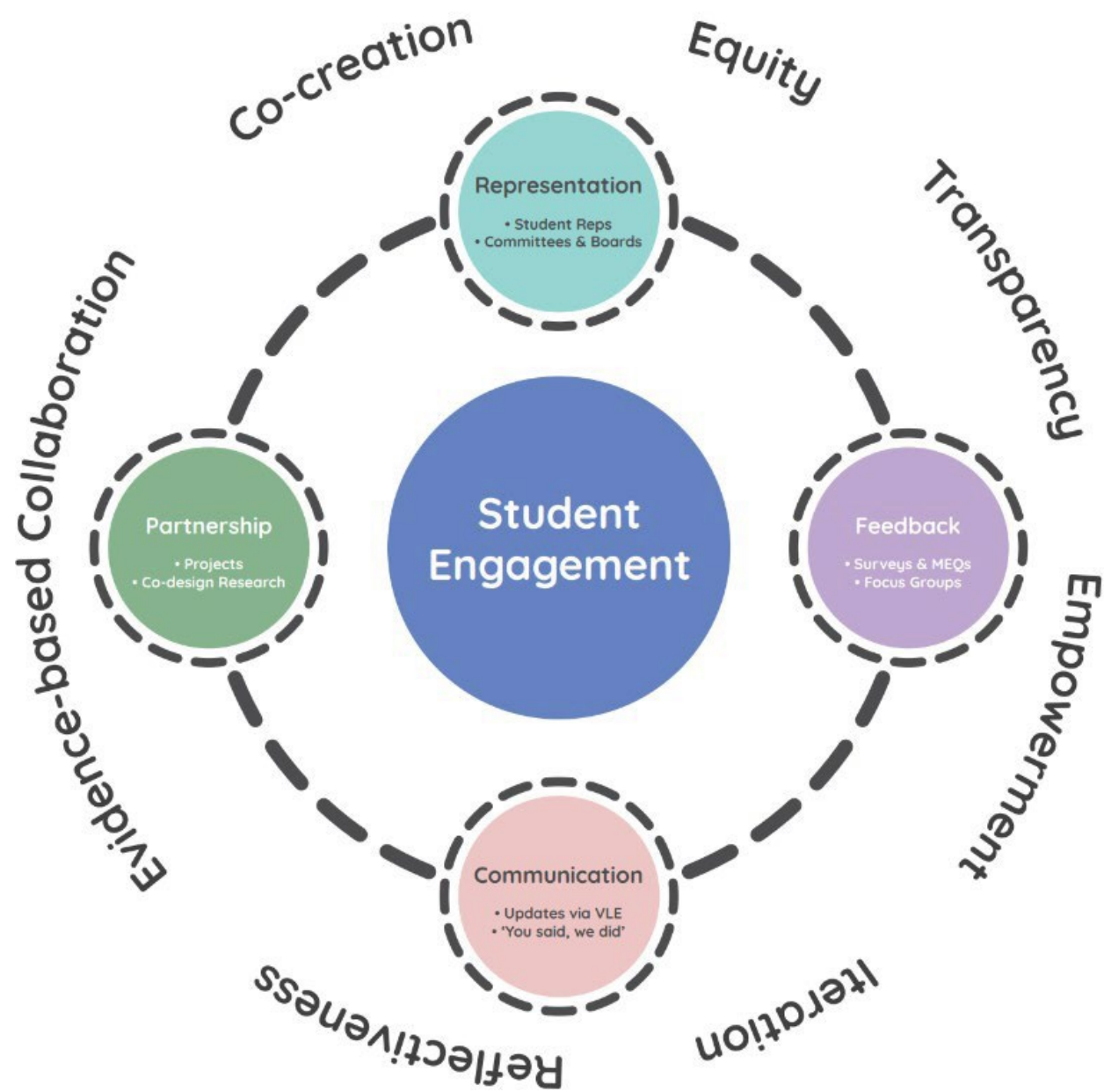## Quality Assurance and Enhancement

SED Validation	Student and Governor Representation at SED validation event, which includes examples of how student feedback is used to make enhancements
Self Evaluation Document (SED)	SED analyses Student Complaiints, AMR Themes, Trends, Actions and other information pertinent to students A student evaluation report forms part of the SED
Periodic Reviews	Panel Member
Annual Programme Report (AMR)	Completed by Programme Leader; MEQs analysed Quality assured by Quality Lead HE Examples of how student feedback is used to make enhancements is an integral part of the AMR.
Module Evaluation Questionnaires (MEQ)	Completed by students Issued by Programme Leaders

Student evaluation is integrated into the above and informs enhancement.

Student Engagement Through Externality

National Student Survey (NSS)	The NSS is run by Ipsos MORI and commissioned by the Office for Students (OfS).
External Examiner Student Meetings	External Examiners and External Qualiy Assurance Leads to meet with students as required.
QDP Survey	Issued to all students by QDP Services. Optional as the NSS is the priority

Appendix 3: Visual representation of student engagement across EPNE

Appendix 4: Annual Engagement Plan

	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
STUDENT REPS	STUDENT REP PROMOTION **08 - 12 Sept** COURSE REP ELECTIONS (2 per course/group) **15 – 19 Sept** Names to Student Services by **24 Sept**	COURSE REP TRAINING **06 – 17 Oct**	COURSE REP TRAINING (mop up) **03 – 07 Nov** CAMPUS STUDENT COLLECTIVE ELECTIONS **10 –14 Nov**				STUDENT CONFERENCE *Empowerment & Inclusion* **06 Mar** **9.30-3.30**			
CURRICULUM FORUMS WITH CMSs AND PLs			MEETINGS TAKE PLACE* **03 – 07 Nov** Minutes to Student Services by * **14 Nov**		MEETINGS TAKE PLACE * **12 – 16 Jan** Minutes to Student Services by * **23 Jan**			MEETINGS TAKE PLACE * **20 – 24 Apr** Minutes to Student Services by * **01 May**		
MEET COLLEGE LEADERS			Autumn Term MEETINGS TAKING PLACE **City – 26 Nov** **Bede – 24 Nov** **Hartlepool – 28 Nov** **HICSA – 25 Nov** **Kirkley Hall – 25 Nov** **Ashington – 27 Nov**	**Publication of College wide** "YOU SAID … WE LISTENED" **05 Dec**		Spring Term MEETINGS TAKING PLACE **City – 09 Feb** **Bede – 12 Feb** **Hartlepool – 10 Feb** **HICSA – 11 Feb** **Kirkley Hall – 10 Feb** **Ashington – 13 Feb** **Publication of College wide** "YOU SAID… WE LISTENED" **20 Feb**				Summer Term MEETINGS TAKING PLACE **City – 04 Jun** **Bede – 03 Jun** **Hartlepool – 02 Jun** **HICSA – 05 Jun** **Kirkley Hall – 01 Jun** **Ashington – 02 Jun** **Publication of College wide** "YOU SAID… WE LISTENED" **12 Jun**
QDP SURVEY			**2nd Year Survey**				**1st Year Survey**			
NSS					**NATIONAL STUDENT SURVEY WINDOW January- April**					