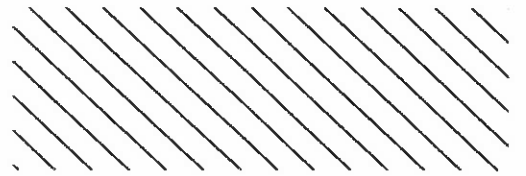






PARTNERSHIP Agreement



This document outlines the Partnership Agreement between
Technological University of Dublin and Technological University of Dublin Students' Union

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Introduction

This Agreement represents a Partnership Agreement between the Technological University of Dublin (The University) and the Technological University of Dublin Students' Union (The Union).

The Agreement is based on the Principles of Student Engagement as set out by the National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP) in Steps to Partnership A Framework for Authentic Student Engagement in Decision-Making published in May 2021 (<https://studentengagement.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/NStEP-Steps-to-Partnership-Doc.pdf>). The foundations of the framework were laid in the 2015 HEA report Enhancing Student Engagement in Decision-Making (<https://www.thea.ie/contentfiles/HEA-IRC-Student-Engagement-Report-Apr2016-min.pdf>).

The University recognises the autonomy of the Union and its role 'to act as the recognised voice of students and to be a means of communication between members of the Union and the University'. ([https://www.tudublinsu.ie/pageassets/yourunion/constitution/TU-Dublin-SU-Constitution-1st-July-2023\(1\).pdf](https://www.tudublinsu.ie/pageassets/yourunion/constitution/TU-Dublin-SU-Constitution-1st-July-2023(1).pdf)).

Representation is delivered by the Union by membership of and engagement with Governing Body, Academic Council and its Committees, faculty boards and Quality Assurance processes.

Other areas of Partnership between the Students' Union and the University include (but are not limited to) Active Consent Training, Speak-Out Tool, the National Student Survey, CINNTE Review, Orientations, Freshers' Week, SLWC (Students Learning with Communities) programme, ACCESS programme, Body Acceptance Workshops (Counselling Service), Climate Action (Green Week) and Student Volunteering.

Further information on these may be found at:
<https://www.tudublin.ie/explore/about-the-university/governance/>
<https://www.tudublin.ie/intranet/academic-council/>
<https://www.tudublin.ie/explore/about-the-university/academic-affairs/enhancing-student-engagement-in-quality-enhancement/> <https://studentsurvey.ie/>.

This Partnership Agreement signals a further positive step in the ongoing collaborative relationship between the University and the Students' Union and demonstrates the commitment of both parties to working together to enhance the experiences of all students.

Principles of Partnership

Dialogue

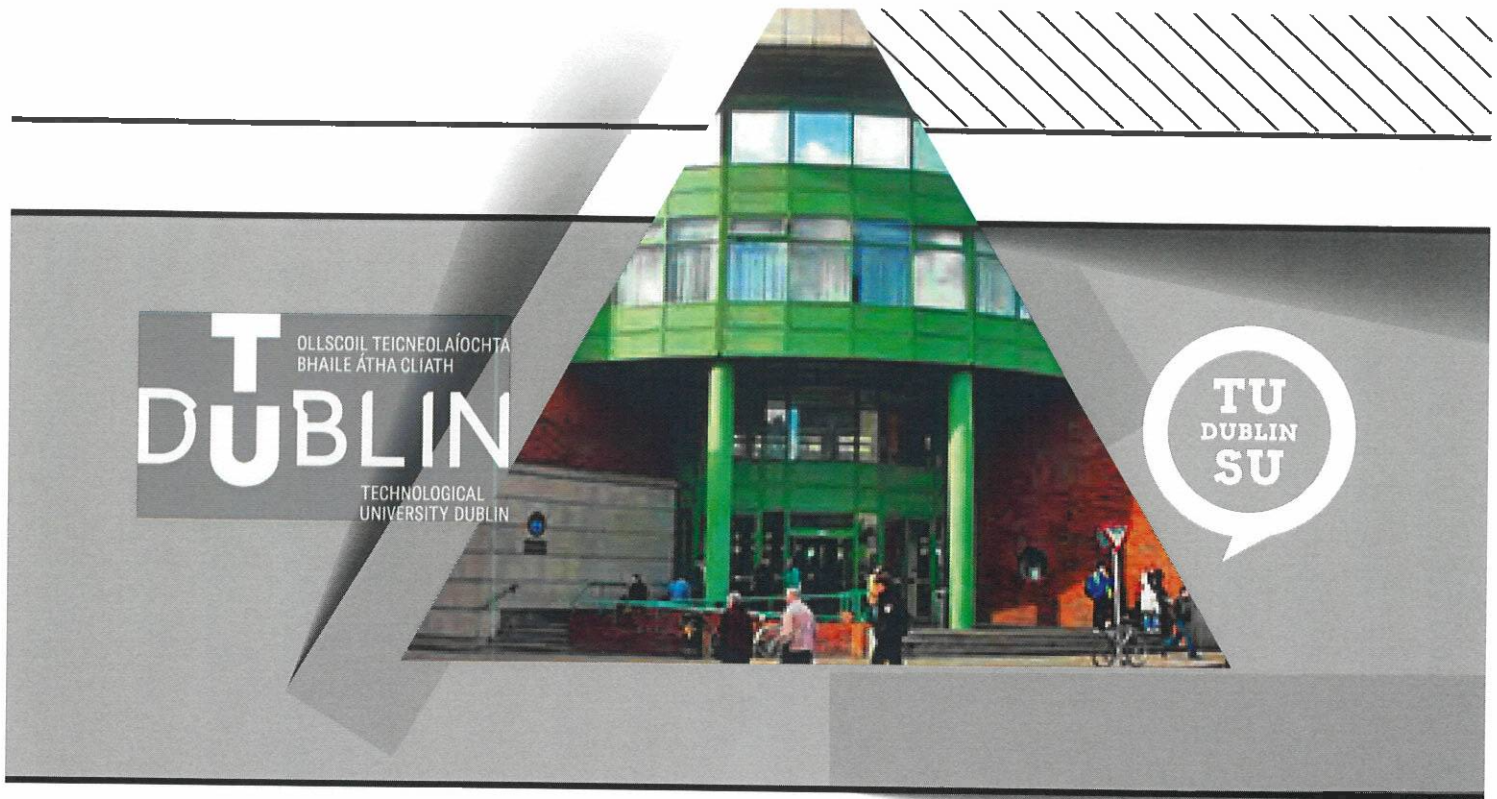
Engagement that can meaningfully lead to partnership between students and staff requires a dialogic approach, open and transparent relationships, the nurturing of connections, and the development of a sense of belonging. Dialogue denotes communication that is multi-directional and responsive to concerns and ideas, underpinned by recognised processes of providing feedback and taking actions that close the feedback loop. Authentic debate and discourse thrive in an environment where the outcomes of that discourse are valued and actionable, where opinions and experiences are treated with legitimacy, and expectations are discussed openly. Reciprocity and cultural values are defined in tandem to avoid the imposition of traditions.

Delivery Mechanisms

Regular meetings, informal and formal arrangements and governance of the student partnership agreement are all in place to strengthen the opportunities for open dialogue between both partners.

Deliverables:

- Continued engagement with existing bodies e.g. Academic Council, programme/school review panels.
- Agreed schedule of meetings of Academic Council and its committees.
- Agreed schedule of meetings of Student Finance Committee.
- Agreed schedule of meetings of Student Facilities Working Group.
- Establishment and agreed meeting schedule of the Student Partnership Oversight Group with an annual student-centred action plan including:
 - Development and updating Terms of Reference for the group. Terms of Reference to include reference to annual reporting to relevant University bodies.
 - Governance of Partnership Activities.
 - Development of communications processes.
 - Collaborate with the Students' Union in the facilitation of Students' Union democracy.
 - Maintenance of data-sharing agreement.
 - Develop and deliver mentoring and training.
 - Development of an agreed mechanism for resolving conflict.
- Agreed approach to governance of the partnership agreement.



Building Trust

For students and staff to develop engagement and partnership with one-another, the existence of relationships of trust is crucial. Transparency in processes, a willingness to share information, communication that is multi-directional, and honest dialogue are core to building practices that can support sustainable partnerships. Nurturing constructive and collegial relationships requires space to generate a deeper understanding of both shared and competing goals. Providing clarity and clear rationale is crucial to creating an environment where solutions are not always easily identifiable and allows partners to address issues of power imbalance. Navigating challenges, seeking compromises, and building consensus necessitates mutual respect, accountability, empathy, and ethics. A sense of trust shapes spaces for cooperation, as well as shared roles and responsibilities.

Delivery Mechanism

This agreement is underpinned by a mutual trust in both organisations; this agreement will encourage the culture of reciprocity and shared responsibility to improve the student experience.

Deliverables:

- Development of the Student Charter.
- Develop and agree formal dispute resolution mechanisms.
- Develop opportunities for students to engage meaningfully with the University throughout the academic year at all levels of university activities.
- The Union will maintain offices on TU Dublin campuses for the purpose of furthering students' educational, welfare and student experience.
- The University will ensure that the Union has sufficient access to relevant University information systems.
- Development of a mutually beneficial reciprocal communications protocol between the University and the Union.



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Equality & Inclusivity

An increasingly diverse student and staff body requires diverse approaches to student engagement, underpinned by universality, inclusivity, and representation. Partnership recognises that the learning experience is shaped by the lived experiences of each individual engaged in higher education. Equitable processes can ensure that tokenistic approaches to diversity are avoided, underpinning a culture where engagement is accessible and attainable for all students and staff, and ultimately begin to address issues of exclusion or non-engagement. Building structures and processes that value understanding and visibility for lived experiences, strengthened by practices that create equity of access to opportunities for engagement, can ensure that institutional cultures are truly inclusive, supportive of equality of outcomes, and able to realise the development of all students and staff.

Delivery Mechanism

Both partners acknowledge that meaningful efforts to create inclusive and equitable processes are needed and recognise that student and staff are not homogenous groups but have diverse needs and voices.

Deliverables:

- Agreed schedule of meetings of Student Experience Committee.
- Student Experience Committee to identify best practice to include all in student engagement.
- Annual Action Plan to include processes for review and development which ensure equity and engagement.

The image features a large, modern glass building with a blue and green tint, set against a grey background. The building is partially obscured by a large, stylized 'A' shape. On the left, the TU Dublin logo is displayed, consisting of a large 'T' above 'DUBLIN' and the text 'OILSCOIL TEICNEOLAÍOCHTA BHAILE ÁTHA CLIATH' and 'TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY DUBLIN'. On the right, there is a white speech bubble containing the text 'TU DUBLIN SU'.

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Empowerment

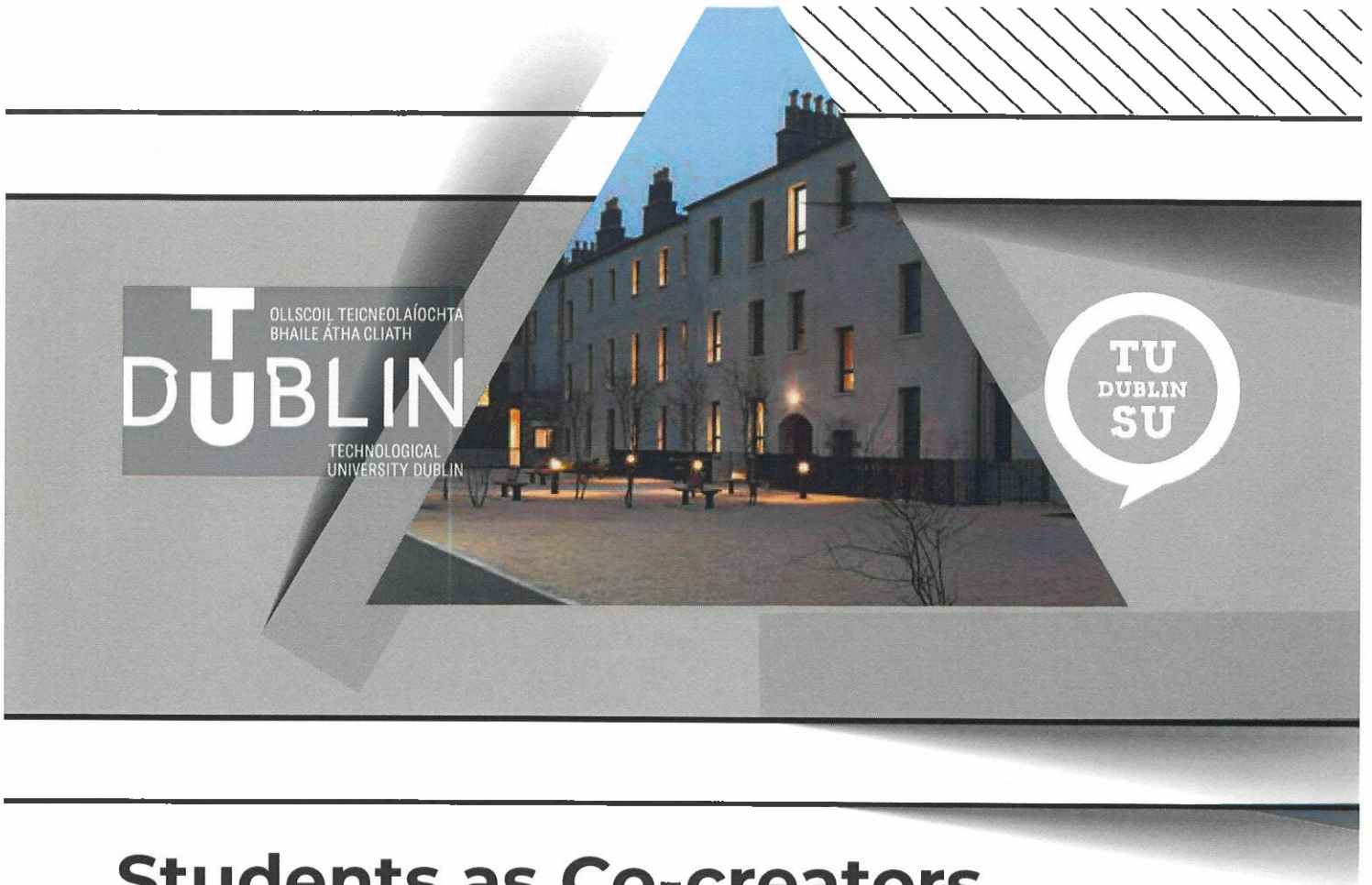
Empowerment in decision-making, both individually and collectively, is required for both students and staff to realise the full potential of engagement and partnership with one another. The recognition of inherent power imbalance and the impact of power dynamics is required to recognise meaningful pathways to build the capabilities of students and staff to work together to influence and inform change. Developing agency and self-efficacy through dialogue can allow for more inclusive spaces for both disagreement and consensus to exist more harmoniously. Parity of esteem, supported by empathetic mentoring and leadership development, generates the opportunity to overcome tokenistic approaches and afford all students and staff the chance to participate in a process that provides meaning and value to their input.

Delivery Mechanism

Students must be encouraged and offered opportunities to engage in partnership activities within the University, to increase their capacity as change agents.

Deliverables:

- Identify areas where students can engage in partnership activities within the university community.
- Identify and implement appropriate mechanisms for the delivery of such partnership activities.
- Develop and deliver mentoring and leadership training.
- Continued engagement between the University and the Union in training and development of the class representation system.



Students as Co-creators

Partnership cannot exist without the co-creation and co-design of knowledge, actions, and outcomes, where engagement culture shifts from passivity to collaboration. Developing this culture elevates partnership from conceptual to tangible, where the role of students can be focused on both the process and the product of engagement. Co-creation develops a sense among both students and staff that their dialogue can lead to the co-development of solutions, underpinned by listening, understanding of the expertise of each individual, shared goals, and agency. Co-creation emerges from the ability of staff and students to be able to jointly navigate existing norms, practices, and assumptions, while allowing space to anticipate challenges and competing pressures. Developing this active agency, for both staff and students, can grow roots from small-scale initiatives at all levels of education, and is embedded by the gradual realisation of both confidence and potential.

Delivery Mechanism

Students must be encouraged and offered opportunities to engage in partnership activities within the University to increase their capacity as change agents within both organisations.

Deliverables:

- Review student engagement with the School and Programme Review Processes to identify areas for improvement.
- Identify opportunities within the UEM for students to act as change agents.



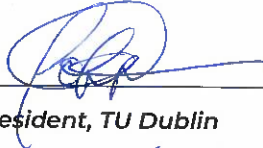
Agreement Ownership

Ownership of this Partnership Agreement lies with the University and the Students' Union.

Signatories:

President, TU Dublin Students' Union

Date: Brian Jordan
28/6/24



President, TU Dublin

Date: 28.06.24

