

**ESSENTIAL  
FRAMEWORKS  
FOR ENHANCING  
STUDENT  
SUCCESS**

**STUDENT ENGAGEMENT  
THROUGH PARTNERSHIP**

# What is Student engagement through partnership?

In the context of HE, Advance HE regards partnership as a relationship in which all involved are actively engaged in and stand to gain from the process of learning and working together. It is distinct from listening to, or consulting with, students. A partnership between students and staff, among students, or between Higher Education Provider (HEPs) and students' unions is student engagement, but not all student engagement is partnership; hence the approach here is engagement through partnership.

Partnership is a process for developing engaged student learning and effective learning and teaching enhancement. At its heart, partnership is about applying well-evidenced and effective approaches to learning, teaching and assessment with a commitment to open, constructive and continuous dialogue. Partnership involves treating all partners as intelligent and capable members of the academic community. Flexible learning requires a balance of power between institutions and students, and seeks to find ways in which choice can be provided that is economically viable and appropriately manageable for institutions and students alike.

## Who is the framework for?

The framework has been written for all partners (staff, students, institutions and students' unions) to reflect on, inspire and enhance practice and policy relating to partnerships in learning and teaching. It can be most effective if adopted at an institutional level, as well as embedded within programmes, technological infrastructures relating to learning and teaching, and employer engagement.

## Why is student engagement through partnership important?

Partnership approaches to student engagement are important for:

### STUDENT LEARNING:

- to enable and empower all students to engage deeply
- to enhance employability through developing high level knowledge, behaviours and skills
- to engender a sense of belonging; vital for retention and success.

### STAFF ENGAGEMENT:

- to renew engagement with learning and teaching enhancement
- to transform thinking about learning and teaching practices as collaborative processes
- to deepen understanding of academic community.

### TRANSFORMATION:

- as a powerful alternative to traditional relationships in higher education
- to prompt reflection on implicit assumptions about learning processes and the people within them
- to open up new spaces for learning, dialogue and inquiry.

### SUSTAINABILITY:

- to develop self-sustaining communities defined by shared goals and values.

# Areas of focus

The complete framework illustrates four overlapping areas of focus where partnerships may be fostered. The left hand side emphasises partnership in student experiences of learning, teaching and research.

## Learning, teaching and assessment

Engaging students through partnership casts students as active participants in their learning.

### PARTNERSHIP APPROACHES:

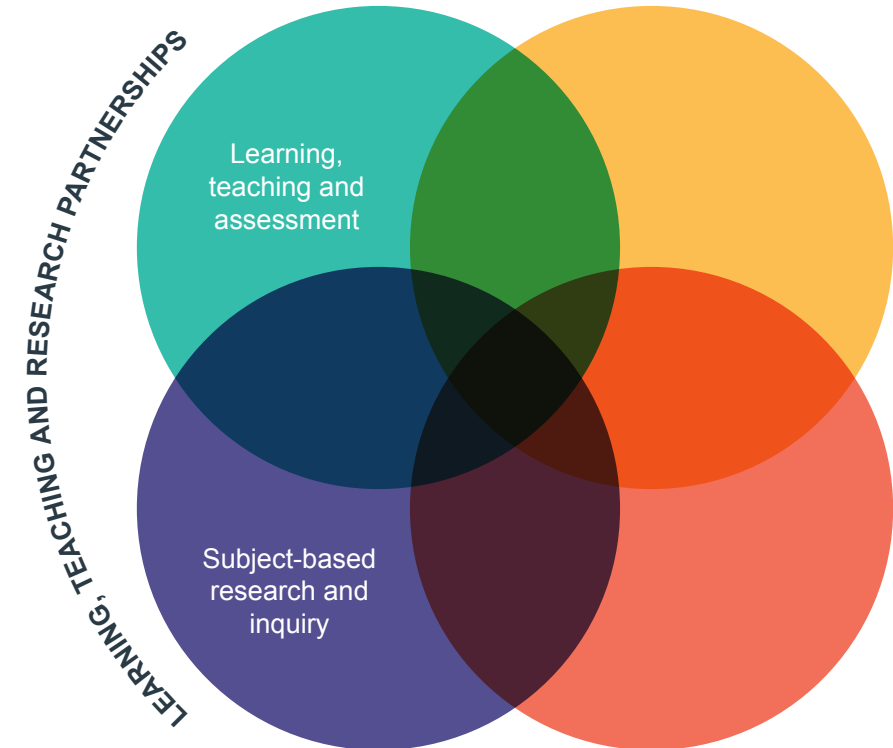
- focus on collaborative and active learning (eg flipping the classroom, experiential learning, community and work related learning)
- give students a level of choice and ownership
- place students in different roles (eg as tutors, mentors or assessors) and as co-designers of learning materials and resources.

## Subject-based research and enquiry

Engaging students as co-researchers and co-inquirers can involve all students on a programme learning through research, or selected students working with staff on extra-curricular research projects.

### PARTNERSHIP APPROACHES:

- involve students directly in knowledge production within their discipline community (eg through enquiry and problem-based learning, research based assessments, and 'live projects')
- provide opportunities for students to share their research publicly (eg through undergraduate research journals, blogs and conferences).



# Areas of focus (continued)

The right hand side emphasises partnership in the enhancement and scholarship of learning and teaching.

## Curriculum design and pedagogic consultancy

Students are commonly engaged through programme evaluations and staff-student committees. Partnership approaches involve students in the formal processes of course design, revalidation, and professional development for staff.

## Scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL)

Inquiring into learning, teaching and assessment in partnership with students is one of the five principles of good practice in SoTL.

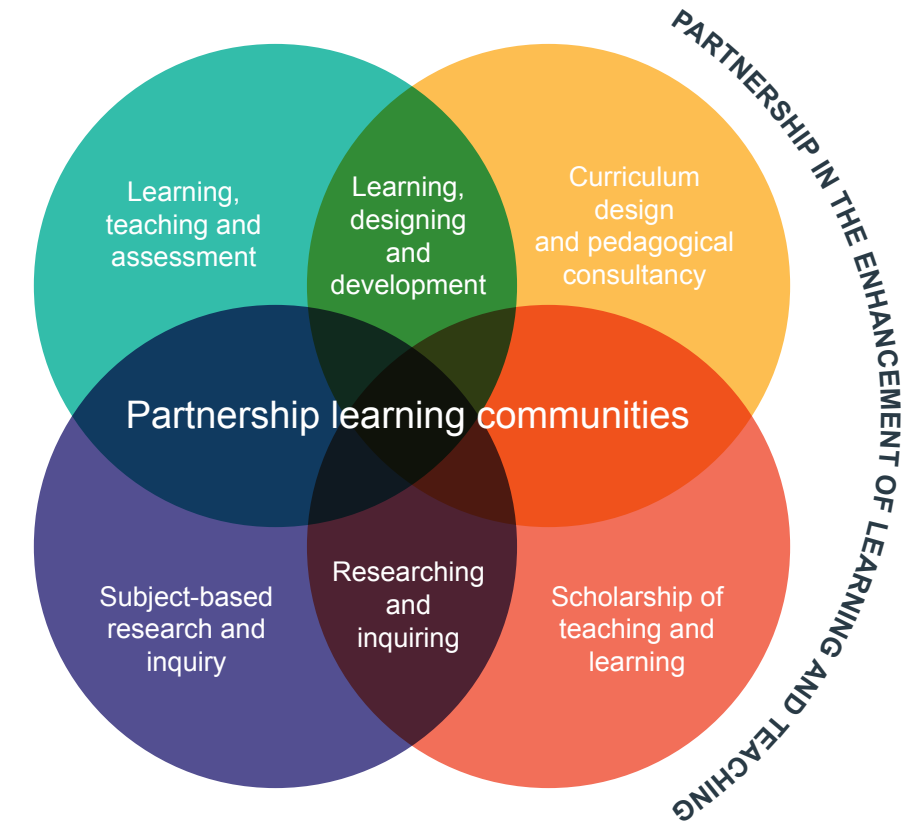
### PARTNERSHIP APPROACHES:

- involve students at all stages of the SoTL process; from co-designing research questions to acting on research findings
- cast students as co-researchers not just subjects of research

Embedding partnership as an ethos requires a holistic approach, with attention to all four areas of focus. Community is integral to developing a culture of partnership. Therefore partnership learning communities are at the heart of the framework.

## Partnership learning communities

As partnership acknowledges students and staff as learners, scholars and colleagues, it invites critical reflection on existing relationships, identity, processes and structures. For partnership to be embedded and sustained beyond documentation and initiatives, it needs to become part of the culture and ethos of the institution. Developing strong partnership-learning communities is a way of doing this. These communities facilitate deep connections between staff and students and bring partnership values to life. All members should co-create and contribute to the development and direction of the community.



# Partnership values

The values which underpin successful student engagement through partnership are:

**AUTHENTICITY:** the rationale for all parties to invest in partnerships is meaningful and credible.

**HONESTY:** all parties are honest about what they can contribute to partnership and about where the boundaries of partnership lie.

**INCLUSIVITY:** there is equality of opportunity and any barriers (structural or cultural) that prevent engagement are challenged.

**RECIPROCATING:** all parties have an interest in, and stand to benefit from, working and/or learning in partnership.

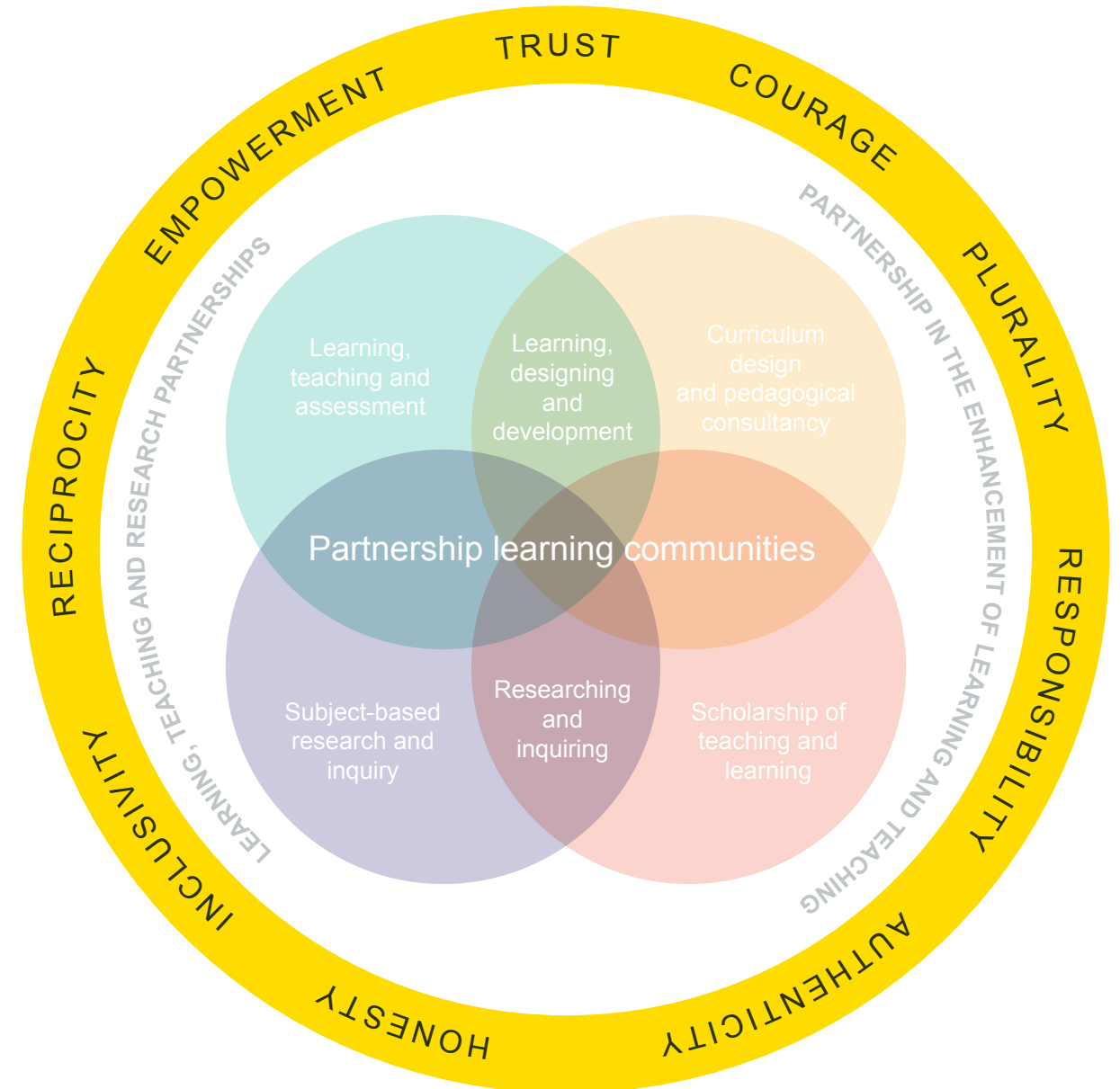
**EMPOWERMENT:** power is distributed appropriately and ways of working and learning promote healthy dynamics.

**TRUST:** all parties take time to get to know one-another and can be confident they will be treated with respect and fairness.

**COURAGE:** all parties are encouraged to critique and challenge practices, structures and approaches that undermine partnership, and are enabled to take risks to develop new ways of working and learning.

**PLURALITY:** all parties recognise and value the unique talents, perspectives and experiences that individuals contribute to partnership.

**RESPONSIBILITY:** all parties share collective responsibility for the aims of the partnership and individual responsibility for the contribution they make.



## How this framework can be used

This framework can be used flexibly, reflecting institutional context and priorities, to enhance practice and policy.

**RESEARCH:** framing research into partnership, mapping of current practice and benchmarking across and between institutions

**REVIEW:** assessing institutional readiness for partnership and exploring the relationship between an institution and its students' union, association or guild

**CURRICULUM DESIGN:** informing validation and course approval processes,

reviewing the curriculum and making pedagogic decisions

**ENGAGEMENT:** developing a sense of community among students and staff and developing ground rules for partnership meetings and initiatives

**PLANNING:** developing meaningful strategies and policies and planning or reflecting on specific initiatives

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:** informing professional development for staff, students' union staff and student partners.

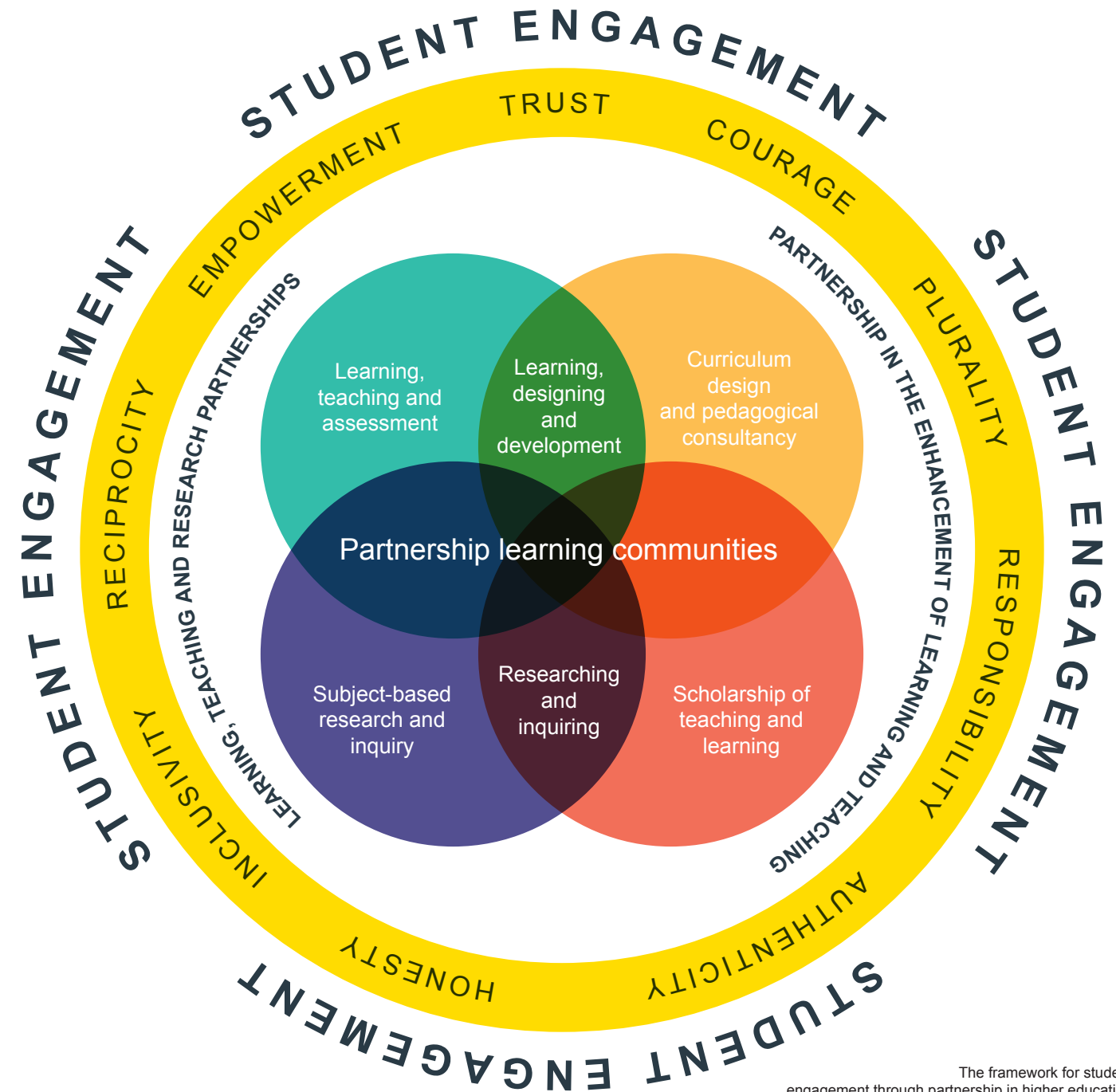
## How does this framework align with the Professional Standards Framework (PSF)?

Staff and students (who have roles in teaching and supporting learning) may want to consider how engagement through partnership can offer an effective approach to areas of activity, enable deeper understanding of core knowledge and demonstrate alignment with professional values. This framework is particularly relevant to:

<b>ACTIVITY:</b>	<b>A1, A2, A3, A4 AND A5</b>
<b>KNOWLEDGE:</b>	<b>K2, K3, K5 AND K6</b>
<b>VALUES:</b>	<b>V1, V2 AND V3</b>

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To find out more about Fellowship visit: [www.advance-he.ac.uk/fellowship](http://www.advance-he.ac.uk/fellowship)



## Acknowledgements

This framework is informed by a 2014 Advance HE publication, Engagement Through Partnership: Students as Partners in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education Advance HE development of the conceptual model adapted in this framework, and to colleagues across the sector who contributed to a summit and/or gave feedback on early drafts of the framework.

This framework focuses specifically on student engagement through partnership in learning and teaching. Advance HE acknowledges the complementary work on student engagement by other sector bodies and agencies.

The logo for Advance HE, featuring a stylized 'A' composed of three colored dots (blue, green, purple) to the left of the text 'AdvanceHE' in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

AdvanceHE

The logo for Student Success Frameworks, featuring a horizontal bar with segments of teal, blue, yellow, purple, and orange above the text 'Student Success Frameworks' in a white, bold, sans-serif font on a black background.

Student Success Frameworks

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