



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
SYDNEY

# Student Partnership Charter



Developed collaboratively by University of Sydney students and staff through the DVC-Education Portfolio's strategic partnership initiative.

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The resource is located:

<https://bit.ly/PartnershipCharterUSYD>



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We recognise and pay respect to the Elders and communities – past, present, and emerging – of the lands that the University of Sydney's campuses stand on. For thousands of years they have shared and exchanged knowledges across innumerable generations for the benefit of all.



Photo credit: Tom Cramond

## Aims of the Charter

The Sydney Student Partnership Charter is co-designed and authored by students and staff at the University of Sydney.

It has three aims:

1

Defines student-staff partnership as a reciprocal process for transforming teaching and support of learning at the university.

2

Commits to shared values that underpin student partnership across a variety of practice in diverse contexts related to teaching, learning and student life.

3

Fosters equity and inclusion through a shared purpose, language and commitment.

# Respect

Respect is the core value through which we define partnership at the University of Sydney. It means valuing the unique perspectives, contributions and experiences that students and staff bring, and upholding the dignity and agency of individuals and groups in the process of learning and working together.

## Seven principles of RESPECT in student partnership

### R - Recognition and reward

We recognise and reward the work of individuals and groups.

### E - Equity and empowerment

We acknowledge and address power dynamics and barriers to participation through all stages of partnership.

### S - Safety and support

We cultivate inclusive and culturally safe partnership spaces that are attentive to the wellbeing and development of all participants.

### P - Positive change in practice

The purpose of partnership is to enhance teaching, learning and our community.

### E - Evidence based

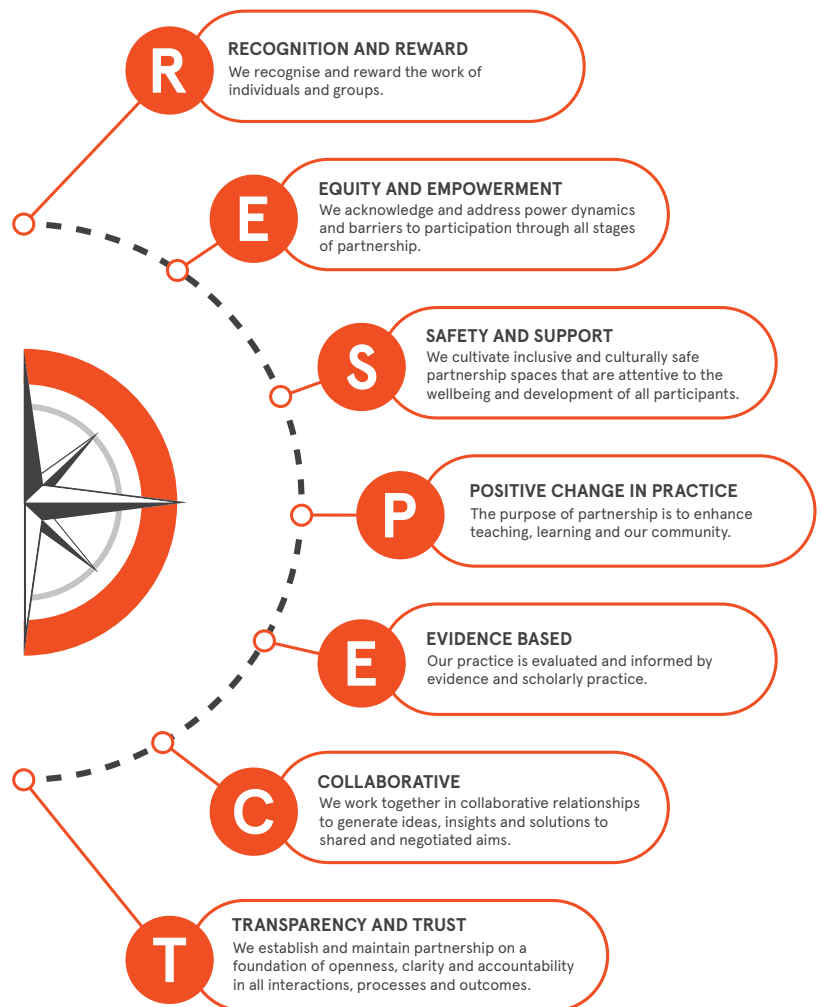
Our practice is evaluated and informed by evidence and scholarly practice.

### C - Collaborative

We work together in collaborative relationships to generate ideas, insights and solutions to shared and negotiated aims.

### T - Transparency and trust

We establish and maintain partnership on a foundation of openness, clarity and accountability in all interactions, processes and outcomes.



“Partnership means feeling heard and respected in reciprocal relationships. This means acknowledging the experiences that shape my beliefs, and understanding how that defines or limits my perspective.”

**Maeve Cairns**

Student Partner, Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Laws

“Students as Partners is about using meaningful and effective collaboration to create positive change in learning environments for both students and staff.”

**Jacob James**

Student Partner, Bachelor of Engineering Honours (Aeronautical Engineering) and Bachelor of Science

“Partnership is a mindset; it’s about going beyond student feedback ... not treating students as customers but as citizens in their own life-long learning. For me, it’s about co-creating transformative learning and teaching experiences with my students and recognising their agency. Together we inspire and support each other to move outside of our comfort zones to reinvigorate what learning and teaching looks like.”

**Dr Maria Ishkova**

Staff Partner, Lecturer in Work and Organisational Studies, University of Sydney Business School

# Partnership in action

RESPECT principles inform and guide the actions of individuals and groups and can be embedded in entities such as systems and processes.

All seven principles are actionable by all; however some specific actions may be specific to the role, position or project (e.g. a student partner, a staff partner, a manager, the institution).

| Principles  |   |
|---|---|
|    | <b>Recognition and reward</b><br>We recognise and reward the work of individuals and groups.  |
|    | <b>Equity and empowerment</b><br>We acknowledge and address power dynamics and barriers to participation through all stages of partnership.                                 |
|  | <b>Safety and support</b><br>We cultivate inclusive and culturally safe partnership spaces that are attentive to the wellbeing and development of all participants.         |
|  | <b>Positive change in practice</b><br>The purpose of partnership is to enhance teaching, learning and our community.  |
|  | <b>Evidence-based</b><br>Our practice is evaluated and informed by evidence and scholarly practice.   |
|  | <b>Collaboration</b><br>We work together in collaborative relationships to generate ideas, insights and solutions to shared and negotiated aims.                            |
|  | <b>Transparency and trust</b><br>We establish and maintain partnership on a foundation of openness, clarity and accountability in all interactions, processes and outcomes. |

## Actions in partnership initiatives should

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– provide staff and students opportunities for intrinsically and developmentally valuable work</li> <li>– recognise staff and students’ intellectual and creative contributions through appropriate authorship or acknowledgement on publications, presentations and other outputs</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– recognise student contributions appropriate to task and context; this could be non-funded (e.g. academic credit for in-curricula approaches, titles, award ceremonies, certificates, letters of recommendation) through to non-monetary awards (e.g. gift cards, catering) to paid contracts for substantive work</li> <li>– recognise staff work through existing reward and recognition mechanisms</li> </ul>                   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– develop understandings of diverse experiences and perspectives</li> <li>– advocate for equity and the inclusion of diverse opinions and backgrounds within practice</li> <li>– allocate sufficient time, funding and resources to support partnership work</li> <li>– use available resources and programs to address physical, cultural and financial barriers to participation</li> <li>– adopt protocols and processes that empower students and staff to participate equitably</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– acknowledge and address power dynamics (e.g. staff-student, equity status, etc.) and how they shape interaction</li> <li>– provide training, guidance and mentorship for student and staff partners at all levels of experience</li> <li>– distribute leadership roles to foster shared responsibility and diverse perspectives</li> <li>– establish representative partnership roles on committees and working groups</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– consider the needs and challenges others face</li> <li>– foster a culturally safe and trauma-informed partnership environment</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– provide clear avenues for support and feedback</li> <li>– show care for yourself, your peers and others</li> <li>– extend help to new or junior staff or student members</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– be change and practice orientated</li> <li>– be context and situation specific</li> <li>– practice active listening and proactively give feedback</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– be adaptive in project design to accommodate discovery and learning</li> <li>– recognise the affordances and constraints under which we work, teach and learn</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– use evidence to inform decision making</li> <li>– be accountable for the outcomes of those decisions</li> <li>– develop collaborative mechanisms to monitor and evaluate partnership work</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– collect and act on regular feedback from partners and participants</li> <li>– share good practices and lessons learned to inform future initiatives</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– encourage students to voice their thoughts and ideas</li> <li>– incorporate partnership early in initiatives (i.e. in identifying problems) and go beyond ‘students as evaluators’</li> <li>– support students and staff in taking part in the decision-making processes</li> <li>– engage in collaborative learning and teaching</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– co-design curricula, assessments, learning resources and learning environments</li> <li>– employ participatory and critical pedagogies to teaching and facilitation</li> <li>– engage in cooperative reflection and continuous enhancement</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– show respect for everyone</li> <li>– identify and state the goal and aims of partnership initiatives at the outset</li> <li>– be open and clear about processes, constraints, decision-making, roles and their responsibilities</li> <li>– engage in open dialogue and ask questions when unsure</li> <li>– report and share results during key points in an initiative</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– share our processes and outcomes to promote a culture of partnership across the institution</li> <li>– disseminate practice more widely with others outside the institution</li> <li>– establish representative partnership roles on committees, working groups and other governance bodies</li> </ul>  |





# Become a signatory to the Charter

This Charter represents our shared commitment to fostering authentic student-staff partnerships at the University of Sydney.

By becoming a signatory, you affirm your dedication to upholding the core value of RESPECT and the seven principles outlined in this document. By becoming a signatory, you commit to:

- Actively promoting and practicing the principles of the Charter in your partnership work
- Regularly reflecting on your partnership practices and seeking ways to improve
- Sharing your experiences and learnings to help build a culture of partnership across the University through a shared repository of names, initiatives and projects

## Who can sign?

- Individual staff members and students involved in partnership initiatives
- Teams or groups working on specific partnership projects
- Departments, faculties, or units engaging in partnership practices
- University-wide initiatives and programs

## How to sign

- Read the Charter carefully and reflect on how you, your team or your project can or could implement its principles in your work or studies.
- Endorse the Charter by completing the form by following the links available in the 'Sign here' box.
- After signing, you will receive a digital badge to display on your personal profile or project materials. You will be listed in the Sydney Student Partnership Database that will allow greater cross-institutional visibility and collaboration in student partnership work.

## Sign here

Follow the links below to sign the charter now

### Individuals

<https://bit.ly/Charter-Sig-1>



### Projects or initiatives

<https://bit.ly/Charter-Sig-2>



## Questions

For questions about the signatory process or to discuss how your initiative can align with the Charter, please contact [educational.learning@sydney.edu.au](mailto:educational.learning@sydney.edu.au)

# Acknowledgements

This Charter is the result of the collaborative and creative efforts of staff and students from across the University of Sydney community. We extend our gratitude to all who contributed their time, expertise, and insights throughout this development process.

## Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Portfolio

We would like to thank the leadership of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education) Portfolio specifically:

**Joanne Wright**

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education)

**Adam Bridgeman**

Pro Vice-Chancellor (Educational Innovation)

**Danny Liu**

Professor of Educational Technology

## Sydney Students as Partners Advisory Board

The Sydney Students as Partners Advisory Board was established in 2024 to guide the University of Sydney's student partnership initiatives. The members of the Advisory Board were instrumental to the design and development of this Charter.

### Co-chairs:

**Jessica Frawley**

DVC-E Portfolio, Educational Innovation

**Rebecca Denham**

DVC-E Portfolio, Educational Innovation

### Student Members 2024

**Maeve Cairns**

Bachelor of Science and  
Bachelor of Laws

**Jacob James**

Bachelor of Engineering Honours  
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**Heather Sengmany**

Bachelor of Arts and Advanced Studies

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**Michael McDonnell**

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

**Jesse Xu**

University Library

**Victor Zhou**

DVC-E Portfolio, Student Life

### External consultant

We would like to thank Dr Lucy Mercer-Mapstone of Collective Voices Consulting for her expert guidance in the development of this resource.

**Lucy Mercer-Mapstone**

Collective Voices Consulting

## 2023 Students as Partners Roundtable Delegates

This Charter is the result of the outcomes of the 2023 Students as Partners Roundtable, where over 40 students and 40 staff from across the University came together to co-design the Student Partnership Charter. Students and staff partners represented a diversity of disciplines, fields and services that comprise the university community.

### Schools and Faculties

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences  
Faculty of Engineering  
Faculty of Medicine and Health  
Faculty of Science  
Sydney Conservatorium of Music  
Sydney School of Architecture,  
Design and Planning  
The University of Sydney  
Business School  
The University of Sydney Law School

### Portfolio and Library

DVC-Education Portfolio  
Educational Innovation  
Student Life  
University Library

### List of delegates

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Steve Barry  
Trish Behan  
Amani Bell  
Leeah Betts  
Abigail Bobkowski  
Victoria Bonilla-Baez  
Francesca Branagan  
Adam Bridgeman  
Stephen Bursic  
Thomas Cafe  
Maeve Cairns  
Darcy Campbell

Beatriz Carillo Garcia  
Alison Casey  
Kathryn Cass  
Peter Cheng  
Yee Ler Chua  
Samantha Clarke  
Rebecca Denham  
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Vivy Feng  
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Rebecca Goldsworthy  
Matthew Gonzales  
Emma Heffernan  
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Chris Hui  
Minh Huynh  
Maria Ishkova  
Hannah James  
Jacob James  
Eszter Kalman  
Matthew Kiem  
Mary Koles  
Osu Lilje  
Teng Joon Lim  
Danny Liu  
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Annelise Ryan  
Mark Sanfilippo  
Thomas Schmaltz  
Heather Sengmany  
Amanda Shi  
Emily Simmons  
Emily Slapp  
Clair Sole  
Ricardo Sosa  
Sarah Sulaqa  
Blair Tholen  
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Sophia Werner  
Heidi Xing  
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Annie Yuan  
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Victor Zhou

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## Others

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The University of Sydney Student Partnership Charter is a tool for fostering an authentic culture of partnership across the University of Sydney's staff and student community. The Charter outlines the core value of RESPECT and its seven principles, each of which was developed through extensive student-staff collaboration and co-design. Each principle is actionable in practice, with suggestions provided. University of Sydney students, staff and their partnership project or initiative are invited to endorse and share their practice through this tool. By providing a values-led approach to partnership and a mechanism for commitment and knowledge sharing, the Charter marks a significant step towards more participatory and inclusive educational practices.

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