

**Partnership Agreement**  
between  
**New Zealand Union of Students' Associations (NZUSA)**  
and  
**Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities (AQA)**

---

## 1. Purpose

The purpose of this Partnership Agreement is to agree and achieve shared objectives between the New Zealand Union of Students' Associations (NZUSA) and the Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities (AQA).

NZUSA is the national voice of students in tertiary education. It represents the interests of students through research, campaigns and lobbying; and provides support to institution-based students' associations.

AQA conducts audit processes in New Zealand Universities which encompass both academic quality assurance and academic quality enhancement, including dissemination of good practice.

NZUSA and AQA share an objective of having authentic, enduring, diverse and effective student partnerships in academic quality and quality assurance in New Zealand universities.

A specific objective in this Partnership Agreement is to include students, or recent graduates, as auditors in the sixth cycle of academic audit.

To achieve these objectives, NZUSA and AQA agree to the responsibilities set out in this Partnership Agreement.

This Partnership Agreement is a living document that will be reviewed regularly by NZUSA and AQA to ensure the objectives and aims continue to be relevant to both organisations.

## 2. Definitions

- *Academic Quality* refers to the quality of teaching and learning experiences of students and staff, student outcomes and student support.
- *Student Voice* refers to students, and their representatives, contributing their views and perspectives to academic quality processes, to improve the university experience.
- *Student Partnership* refers to students, students' associations and agency staff working together, from problem identification to solution implementation, to enhance the learning and teaching experiences of students and staff, graduate outcomes and student support.

### **3. Aims**

*This Partnership Agreement aims to:*

- Recognise students' associations, including NZUSA, and their role as primary representative bodies for students.
- Empower the role that student partnerships have in quality assurance and enhancement, and the specific students' associations who work towards enhancing student partnerships.
- Support student representatives who engage with their university's academic processes.
- Enhance student voice and partnerships in the academic audit process.

### **4. Organisations**

This Partnership Agreement is between NZUSA and AQA.

NZUSA agrees to collaborate with university students' associations who are not members of NZUSA to achieve the objectives in this Partnership Agreement.

### **5. Responsibilities**

*AQA will:*

- Recognise NZUSA as the national voice of students and its role in enhancing student voice and partnerships within the tertiary sector.
- Continue to support student membership on the AQA Board.
- Contribute to NZUSA professional development programmes for senior student representatives. This includes briefing these representatives on system overview, key players, the role of AQA and committee dynamics.
- Share timelines for academic audit cycles.
- Meet with students' associations when visiting universities.
- Respect and support the relationships that exist between universities and students' associations.
- Provide information to students' associations about academic audits and provide guidance on engaging with academic audits.
- Include students' associations in academic audit de-brief processes and provide feedback to students' associations on outcomes of academic audit.

*NZUSA will:*

- Develop and run professional development programmes for senior student representatives and students' association staff with responsibilities for education.
- Encourage appropriately qualified students, or recent graduates, to apply to join the register of auditors and reviewers.
- Ensure that academic quality is included in national conferences and other appropriate events.
- Contribute a student voice column to the AQA quarterly newsletter.

*AQA and NZUSA will jointly:*

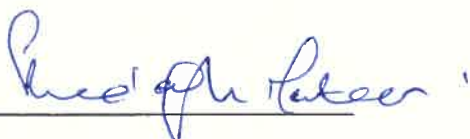
- Together with other national students' associations, run an annual Student Voice Summit to strengthen student voices in academic quality in universities, share good student partnership practices, and facilitate the handover between outgoing and incoming student representatives. The Summit should involve outgoing and incoming education-related executive officers, student presidents, and university academic quality managers.
- Undertake joint activities from time to time, such as conference presentations, that support the objectives and aims of this Partnership Agreement.
- Share relevant resources (such as those in Appendix 1) and information about initiatives, including engagement with overseas entities such as sparqs and Student Voice Australia.

## 6. Schedule of Activities

An annual schedule of activities will be agreed between AQA and NZUSA. This will normally include the activities set out in the Schedule of Activities (Appendix 2).

---

Signed on 11 day of August in the year 2021 by



**Sheelagh Matear**  
Executive Director  
AQA



**Andrew Lessells**  
National President  
NZUSA

## Appendix 1: References and Resources

- A Student Engagement Framework for Scotland (<https://www.sparqs.ac.uk/upfiles/SEFScotland.pdf>)
- Enhancing Student Engagement in Decision-Making (<http://www.thea.ie/contentfiles/HEA-IRC-Student-Engagement-Report-Apr2016-min.pdf>)
- Pathways to Partnership Toolkit (<http://wisewales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Pathways-to-Partnership-toolkit.pdf>)
- Creating a National Framework for Student Partnership in University Decision-Making and Governance (<http://studentvoiceaustralia.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Creating-a-National-Framework-for-Student-Partnership-in-University-Decision171017.pdf>)
- Whiria Ngā Rau: Progressing from Student Voice to Partnerships
- AQA External Review Report 2020, recommendations 3, 5, 8, 9 and 10 (<https://www.aqa.ac.nz/sites/all/files/AQA%20External%20Review%20Report%202020%20NZVCC.pdf>)
- Cycle 6 Academic Audit (<https://www.aqa.ac.nz/sites/all/files/Cycle%206%20Introductory%20Guide%202nd%20Edition.pdf>)

## Appendix 2: Schedule of Activities

Timeframe	Activity
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 monthly regular meeting with NZUSA and AQA</li> <li>• NZUSA National Conference</li> </ul>
February	
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AQA Newsletter student column</li> </ul>
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 monthly regular meeting with NZUSA and AQA</li> </ul>
May	
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AQA Newsletter student column</li> </ul>
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 monthly regular meeting with NZUSA and AQA</li> </ul>
August	
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AQA Newsletter student column</li> </ul>
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 monthly regular meeting with NZUSA and AQA</li> <li>• AQA Support for Quality Conference</li> </ul>
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student Voice Summit</li> </ul>
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AQA Newsletter student column</li> <li>• Annual planning meeting with NZUSA and AQA</li> </ul>