Students as Partners

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Background

• Postgraduate Roundtable debate – October 2018

[Annual debate, attended by colleagues from other HEIs, professional bodies, UK CGE, VITAE, HEFCE, Advance HE, colleagues from industry and students]

• 2018 - “Co-creation and innovation in professional development”

• Plenary delivered by Professor Tony Boviard (University of Birmingham)
  • Outlined thoughts /research on user engagement in terms of co-commissioning, co-design, co-delivery and co-assessment
Background

- **Co-Commissioning** – advising on the strategic direction, ideas generation, setting priorities

- **Co-Design** – developing and designing content

- **Co-Delivery** – contribution towards delivery, teaching

- **Co-Assess** – evaluation of provision
Background

• Inspired by Professor Boviard’s talk, the Graduate School developed a new “Students as Partners Programme”
  • Aiming to embed student input into every aspect of our programme provision
  • Giving students ownership of professional development opportunities at Imperial College London

• Students as Partners also aligns with the College’s Student Shapers programme which provides financial support for students taking part in educational development and education research projects.
Students as Partners – The Proposal

• Two aspects to the proposal;
  1. to embed student input at a School level and
  2. to embed student input at a programme level

Graduate School level:
• **Co-Commissioning**
  • Graduate Students’ Union President (or nominee) to attend the Graduate School’s management group meeting where key strategic decisions are made
Students as Partners – The Proposal

Programme Level:

• 10 programmes within the Graduate School professional development provision, each led by a member of the Graduate School’s teaching staff

• Annually recruit and appoint a Student Programme Leader (SPL) to work with the Graduate School Programme Leader (GSPL), for each of the 10 programmes.

• SPL must have completed the core training for Graduate Teaching Assistants.

• £1000 bursary for SPL as recompense for their time and contribution, paid in instalments throughout the year.

• Key part of the role of SPL is consult with a broad range of students to gather thoughts and suggestions for development.
Students as Partners – The Proposal

10 Programmes are:

1. MasterClass programme (for Master’s level students)
2. Research Communication
3. Research Impact and Societal Engagement
4. Research Computing Skills and Data Science
5. Professional Effectiveness
6. Professional Progression
7. Professional Business Skills
8. Industry and Enterprise
9. Graduate Teaching Assistant Programme (GTAP)
10. Research Integrity

[Each programme contains several different courses]
Students as Partners – The Proposal

SPLs will work with GSPL in the following ways:

- **Co-Commissioning** of the programme
  - Identifying gaps in provision
  - Looking at development priorities
  - Developing business cases for new courses to be included within the programme
  - Removal of existing courses
Students as Partners – The Proposal

SPLs will work with GSPL in the following ways:

• **Co-Design** of the programme
  - Designing course material, workshops and other teaching activities which are part of the overall programme

  [the level of engagement here will depend on the expertise of the SPL and the time they have available].
SPLs will work with GSPL in the following ways:

- **Co-Delivery** of the programme
  - Contribution towards the delivery of at least 4 workshops which are part of the programme (again, depending on the level of expertise)
  - Recommending other students who could also help to co-deliver some or part of programme workshops.

[paid for their teaching in accordance with the rates of pay of GTAs and in addition to the honorarium]
Students as Partners – The Proposal

SPLs will work with GSPL in the following ways:

• **Co-Assessing** the programme
  - Contribution towards the annual review of the programme
  - Making recommendations for new courses and removal of some existing courses
  - Providing handover to successor SPL

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Evaluating the Programme

The proposed framework involves the following steps:

1. **Self-Assessment:**
   - Learners assess their understanding of the programme objectives.
   - Identify areas for improvement.

2. **Peer Assessment:**
   - Learners evaluate each other’s work.
   - Feedback is given on performance and areas needing improvement.

3. **External Review:**
   - An external expert reviews the programme.
   - Provides insights and recommendations for enhancement.

4. **Feedback Gathering:**
   - Collect feedback from learners, staff, and external stakeholders.
   - Analyze and incorporate improvements.

5. **Implementation:**
   - Develop an implementation plan based on feedback.
   - Set timelines and allocate resources.

6. **Monitoring and Evaluation:**
   - Regularly monitor the programme’s progress.
   - Evaluate outcomes against set goals.

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Impact of the Programme

The programme aims to achieve the following outcomes:

- **Enhanced Learning Experience:**
  - Learners benefit from peer and self-assessment.
  - Improved understanding of programme objectives.

- **Improved Teaching Practices:**
  - Staff receive feedback and areas for improvement.
  - Enhanced teaching strategies.

- **Sustainable Development:**
  - Employers value the skills and qualifications.
  - Improved employability and career prospects.

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Conclusion

The proposed framework aligns with the needs of learners, staff, and stakeholders. It fosters a culture of continuous improvement and enhances the overall quality of the programme.
Students as Partners – Implementation

Developed SPL roles and responsibilities document:

Graduate School Student Programme Leaders will be PhD students who have completed the Graduate School’s core courses as part of the Graduate Teaching Assistant Programme. In partnership with the Graduate School’s Programme Leaders, Student Programme Leaders will be expected to:

- Help with identifying gaps in programme provision, look at priorities, review existing provision
- Help to develop business cases for new provision and advise on the removal of existing courses, where appropriate
- Help with designing workshops, including course material and other associated workshop and teaching activities
- Where appropriate, contribute towards the co-delivery of at least 4 workshops for the programme that they have been appointed to (this may be full workshops or part of the workshops)
- Help to develop marketing material advertising the opportunity for other students to co-deliver on the programme
- Contribute to the annual programme review by reviewing student feedback and making recommendations for changes to the programme.
Students as Partners – Implementation

Developed GSPL roles and responsibilities document to provide clarity on working with SPL:

Each GSPL will be expected to work with a SPL in the following ways:

- identify gaps in programme provision, looking at priorities, reviewing existing provision
- developing business cases for new provision and advising on the removal of existing courses, where appropriate.
- designing workshops, including course material and other associated workshop and teaching activities
- co-deliver workshops if students wish to
- reviewing the programme annually (noting that individual tutor ratings should not be shared with Student Programme Leaders)
- dealing with cases of poor performance and termination of appointment of Student Programme Leaders (note guidance on this process will be provided)
Students as Partners – Implementation

Recruitment Process

- **February/March 2019**
  Programme Leaders to write set of expectations/specifications relating directly to their programme area (BR, JDW & Programme Leaders)

- **March 2019**
  Adverts, application forms and webpages to be developed (BR)

- **1st of April 2019**
  Advert to be circulated to all PGR students (BR)

- **30th of April 2019**
  Application closing date (BR)

- **May 2019**
  Shortlisting to take place (Programme Leaders & JDW)

- **Early June 2019**
  Interviews to take place (Programme Leaders)

- **June 2019**
  Appointments to be made (Programme Leaders)

- **June 2019**
  Administrative processes relating to appointments to be completed (BR)

- **1st of July 2019**
  Appointments to begin. Initial meetings between programme leaders and student partners to take place
Students as Partners – Implementation

Honorarium:

- Paid for their development contributions via a bursary in instalments, (10 payments of £100)

- Additional teaching carried out as part of Co-Delivery, paid as work via casual payroll
Students as Partners – Implementation

• Placed an advert, applicants asked to complete an online form, providing a 250 word statement

• GSPL reviewed applications, some informal interviews/coffee and chat

• Offer of partnership made

• Developed guidance for GSPL to support their first meetings with SPL, planning work across the year and how to manage poor performing SPL
The scheme has evolved since its inception – some GSPLs now have small teams to manage

Increased workload for staff

Ensuring that the students have the time to dedicate on a monthly basis

Keeping track of work discussed/agreed etc.
Students as Partners – Moving Forward

- Pilot year

- Evaluating the Student as Partners Programme in 2020

- Looking at the impact on our professional development provision

Further information:

www.imperial.ac.uk/study/pg/graduate-school/students-as-partners/
Thank you

Questions?