

SEDA Blog template

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Blog title:
Student Partnership Impact Awards: get your students involved!
Text for Twitter (if you would like):
Blog authors and affiliations (please list)
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Blog Text
We have an idea! Student partnership has been a developing concept originally observed in teaching and learning in higher education (HE), but in more recent years has extended to a wide range of areas across institutions. The literature exploring Students as Partners in HE evidently values the importance of incentivising, recognising and rewarding the efforts of their students (Lowe and Moxey, 2024). However, professional recognition of our students is not widely extended to the HE community, therefore, providing students with the opportunity to showcase their graduate skills, developed through student partnership, to an accrediting external organisation required further exploration.
How it all began... In 2022 a core team of HE colleagues and a postgraduate student affiliated with SEDA began the development of the Student Partnership Impact Award (SPIA) in partnership with Jisc. SPIA provides students and recent alumni (graduated in the last 12 months) with an opportunity to be professionally accredited for their leadership abilities through partnership. The SPIA award requires students to reflect on their co-leadership role within a partnership and evidence the impact their leadership skills have had on staff, students, and educational development. Successful applicants are certified and included in SEDA's online wall of excellence, recognising student roles and efforts in supporting and leading educational change. In 2025 successful applicants will be encouraged to publish their good practice with SEDA, aiding professional development and their scholarly networks.
There are two types of written application routes available in conjunction with different formations of student partnership. This includes a team-based application where students who were part of a larger project consisting of up to 12 student partners submit a collaborative response. Otherwise, there is the individual application if students wish to submit separately or were part of a smaller partnership.

Where are we now?

There have been two submission rounds since SPIA was developed with applicant numbers improving each year. There is one application deadline per year, which is updated on the SEDA website and circulated through mailing lists to SEDA members. We welcome international applicants. The first application deadline in August 2023 received 45 student applications, mainly from the UK. There were also a small number of applications received from the US (2) and Asia (1). In May 2024 SPIA nearly doubled the number of applications from the previous year, receiving 89 applications. Like the previous year, applications were predominately from the UK, however, the international reach was wider on the second round, receiving applications from Australia, as well as the US, and Asia.

The SPIA scheme has been a positive and well received endeavour for students and staff. This is evident from national institutions who have honoured and publicised their students receiving the SPIA award:

[Imperial College London](#)

[University of Chester](#)

[University of Sussex](#)

[University of Aberdeen](#)

[Bangor University](#)

What next?

The development team would like to continue expanding its applicant numbers, its international reach, and establish interest in other continents where we have not yet received submissions. We would also be interested in exploring with our institutional members accrediting institutional award schemes through SEDA.

Colleagues who would like to explore or discuss the SPIA scheme or potential ventures with the SPIA team please do not hesitate to get in contact with Gemma Mansi, SPIA lead on: g.j.mansi@gre.ac.uk

Author biographies: provide a brief professional biography

Gemma Mansi is an Associate Professor in the Vice Chancellors office at the University of Greenwich. Her area of expertise is in student partnership, assessment, and pedagogy. In addition, she is a SEDA executive committee member who is chair for SPIA and co-chair for SEDA fellowships.

Daisy Bao is a PhD researcher in Higher Education at the University of Edinburgh. She has been working on supporting student HE experiences for over 6 years with strong interests and research achievements in student-staff partnerships, student engagement and social justice in HE, in her roles of a researcher and policy maker.

Roz Grimmitt is the SEDA Administration Manager who leads the admin team. She has worked with the rest of the team to design and implement the SPIA application and review processes.

Jo Peat is Head of Educational Development at the University of Roehampton. Jo's research interests include innovative pedagogies, inclusive practice and academic professional development, underpinned by a commitment to social justice in higher education. In addition to her work at Roehampton University, Jo has been fortunate to be involved in nationally and internationally funded projects, focussing on inclusion, internationalisation and professional accreditation and recognition. Jo is a Fellow of SEDA and Principal Fellow of the HEA.

Peter Hartley is freelance Higher Education Consultant, and Visiting Professor at Edge Hill University, following previous roles as Professor of Education Development at Bradford and Professor of Communication at Sheffield Hallam. As National Teaching Fellow since 2000, he has promoted new technology across higher and further education, and his current projects include programme assessment, group communication, visual thinking, and the educational applications and implications of Generative AI. His most recent publication is co-editor of and contributor to the new SEDA/Routledge text on [Using Generative AI effectively in Higher Education](#) (2024).

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