

GCU STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK
between the
University Executive and Students' Association Executive Committee

A framework for executive partnership, shared leadership, and student impact

Content

1. Executive Summary
2. Introduction
3. Purpose and Scope
4. How our Values Align
5. Governance
6. Partnership goals
7. Annual Strategic Priorities (Key themes and deliverables)
8. Sign Off

[Executive Summary](#)

The Glasgow Caledonian University Strategic Partnership Framework will ensure we deliver an exceptional and inclusive student experience by working collaboratively to shape priorities, align executive decision-making, and drive meaningful progress on shared institutional goals at the executive level of Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU) and Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU) Students' Association.

The Framework is designed to complement and reinforce the existing Student Partnership Agreement (SPA) and Guide to Student Representation at GCU. While the Student Partnership Agreement articulates GCU's wider approach to student engagement and co-creation across the University community, this Framework focuses specifically on structured collaboration at executive level, providing a dedicated space for strategic dialogue, alignment, and joint leadership.

In doing so, we will embed the student voice at the heart of strategic decisions while strengthening the Students' Association identity as an independent partner. By enhancing transparency, accountability, and continuity across leadership transitions, this Framework supports both the University and Students' Association in creating a visible and well-coordinated approach to student engagement; one that benefits the whole GCU community and ensures students see and feel the impact of executive collaboration throughout their time at University and beyond.

The Strategic Partnership Framework will be jointly signed by the Principal and Vice-Chancellor and the Student President annually.

Introduction

In recent years, the positive and proactive relationship between the University Executive and the Students' Association Executive Committee has played a central role in delivering meaningful improvements to the student experience. Through constructive partnership, joint initiatives have progressed across learning and teaching, student wellbeing, access, facilities, and institutional culture, reflecting a shared commitment to creating an inclusive, supportive and student-centred environment.

The strength of the partnership has previously relied on collaborative informal relationships; to ensure future success, we seek to formally recognise, define, and strengthen executive-to-executive working between the University and the Students' Association through the Strategic Partnership Framework. By setting out shared principles, aligning strategic plans, governance arrangements, and agreed ways of working, the Framework provides continuity, clarity, and accountability, ensuring that future leaders can build on shared progress rather than recreate partnership arrangements each year.

The Framework is designed to complement and reinforce the existing [Student Partnership Agreement](#) and [Guide to Student Representation at GCU](#). While the Student Partnership Agreement articulates GCU's wider approach to student engagement and co-creation across the University community, this Framework focuses specifically on structured collaboration at executive level, providing a dedicated space for strategic dialogue, alignment, and joint leadership.

Reviewed and jointly endorsed each academic year by the Principal and Vice-Chancellor, and the Student President, the Framework will support smoother leadership transitions, consistent communication, and alignment with institutional priorities. Ultimately, it reflects a shared commitment to transparent governance, meaningful student leadership, and lasting impact for the entire GCU community.

Purpose and Scope

Purpose

The purpose of this Framework is to provide a clear and consistent framework for how the University Executive and the Students' Association Executive Committee work together at a strategic level. It establishes shared expectations, structures, and principles for executive collaboration, ensuring that partnership working is intentional, visible, and sustainable.

Scope

This Framework:

- Applies specifically to executive-to-executive partnership between the University and Students' Association
- Supports strategic alignment, shared leadership, and joint accountability
- Provides continuity across leadership transitions
- Enhances transparency and communication around executive-level collaboration

This Framework does not replace existing representation and governance structures, democratic processes, or our Student Partnership Agreement. It operates alongside mechanisms such as the

Student Partnership Agreement, Guide to Student Representation at GCU, Student Experience Action Plan (SEAP) and Code of Practice relating to the operation of the Students' Association.

How our values align

GCU	GCU Students' Association
<p>Integrity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strive to make a positive difference in the world • Be open and honest in all our dealings • Treat everyone with dignity and respect • Be accountable for our actions 	<p>Inclusivity</p> <p>We champion diversity and support you to be proud of who you are.</p>
<p>Creativity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenge ourselves with new problems • Create space for curiosity, imagination and entrepreneurialism to flourish • Draw inspiration from working with others and across discipline boundaries • Continually seek improvement 	<p>Fun</p> <p>We are dedicated to providing a fun and friendly atmosphere where everyone is welcome.</p>
<p>Responsibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take responsibility for our work, study and our environment • Empower others to be independent contributors • Own, learn from and grow through our mistakes • Comply with all laws and regulations relating to our activities • Take a whole University approach to physical and mental wellbeing 	<p>Student-Led</p> <p>Our student-led activities empower students to become leaders and make their voices heard.</p>
<p>Confidence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be proud of our university and its contributions • Be bold and reach beyond that which is known • Believe that positive change is within our power to realise • Nurture self-belief, independence and ambition in others • Value and share our knowledge and expertise 	<p>Community</p> <p>We foster a culture of belonging, where you can make connections for life by creating a supportive community.</p>

The University and Students' Association are values-driven organisations with a strong alignment in purpose and intent. While each organisation expresses its values in different language, both are committed to integrity, inclusion, responsibility, community, and empowering individuals to contribute meaningfully to positive change.

This Framework is underpinned by the following shared partnership principles:

- Partnership rather than input
- Mutual respect, trust, and openness

- Transparency and accountability in decision-making
- Recognition of student voice as institutional intelligence
- An expectation of pace to ensure impact in the short-term
- Commitment to long-term impact beyond individual officeholders
- Respect for independence of the Students' Association alongside constructive collaboration and co-creation

These principles guide how the two Executives engage, communicate, and work together in pursuit of shared goals.

Governance

Ownership

This Framework is jointly owned by the University Executive and the Students' Association Executive Committee.

Executive Engagement

Progress against the Framework will be a standing item within regular executive-level joint meetings and Student President–Principal meetings, which normally each take place monthly.

Relevant updates and outcomes arising from this joint work will feed into existing governance and partnership structures, including (but not limited to):

- University Executive and Students' Association Executive Committee monthly meeting
- University Court, Senate and its standing committees
- Students' Association Trustee Board, Student Voice and its sub committees

This ensures coherence across institutional decision-making and partnership activity.

Annual Review and Renewal

The Framework will be reviewed annually following Full Time Officer elections. Joint strategic priorities will be co-developed with the Incoming Student President and formally agreed with the Principal at the start of each academic year, typically in September. The Framework and its annually agreed priorities will be published and updated on both the University and Students' Association websites and communicated to GCU students and staff. Joint working improvements, decisions, and outcomes arising from the partnership will be communicated and promoted to the University community and the wider sector in accessible and timely ways.

Partnership Goals

Through this Strategic Partnership Framework, the University and Students' Association seek to model sector-leading executive partnership, grounded in co-leadership and joint decision-making. By working collaboratively to shape priorities, align strategy, and deliver impact, we aim to enhance the student experience in ways that are inclusive, transparent, and distinctive to Glasgow Caledonian University.

This partnership recognises students as co-authors of their university experience. It seeks to ensure that executive decision-making reflects the diversity of the student community, responds to

emerging needs, and prepares students to contribute meaningfully to society during their time at Glasgow Caledonian University and beyond. This framework seeks to:

- Strengthen strategic alignment between University and Students' Association leadership
- Enhance visibility and transparency of executive-level collaboration
- Ensure continuity and stability across leadership transitions
- Accelerate progress on shared student experience priorities
- Empower student leadership as strategic partners rather than consultees
- Improve communication and feedback loops between decision-making and student impact
- Reinforce the identity of the Students' Association as an independent campaigning organisation representing students
- Model a culture of trust, accountability, and co-creation across the wider GCU community

Strategic Pillars of the Executive Partnership

1. Strategic Alignment & Co-Leadership

Working as equal strategic partners to shape priorities, influence decisions, and align executive-level work for maximum impact.

2. Visibility, Transparency & Accountability

Making executive collaboration and decision-making more visible to students, clearly communicating outcomes and closing the feedback loop.

3. Continuity & Leadership Transitions

Providing a consistent framework that survives changes in personnel, ensuring momentum is not lost when new officers or leaders take office.

4. Empowering the Student Voice & Students' Association Identity

Ensuring student leadership is respected as a co-author of change, while reinforcing the role of the Students' Association as an independent campaigning organisation representing students' interests.

Annual Strategic Priorities – Key Themes and deliverables

Each academic year, the University Executive and Students' Association Executive Committee will agree a focused set of strategic priorities aligned to:

- The University Strategy
- The Students' Association Strategic Plan
- Scotland's Tertiary Quality Enhancement Framework (TQEF) and Student Experience Action Plan (SEAP)

These priorities provide clarity and shared direction for the year ahead and are reviewed and refreshed annually upon the election of Full Time Officers. Indicative priority areas may include (but not limited to):

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Cost of Living, Wellbeing and Student Support

- Student Voice and Democratic Engagement
- Employability enhancement
- AI and assessment
- Sustainability and Civic Responsibility

For each priority, a short vision statement and a set of agreed deliverables will be identified.

A rolling action log will be jointly owned and published to provide visibility of progress on priorities and outcomes.

Establishment Year and Transition Arrangements (2025–26)

As this Strategic Partnership Framework is being established more than halfway through the 2025/26 academic year and Full Time Officer tenure, a full set of annual strategic priorities and deliverables will not be formally agreed for the remainder of this year. Instead, this period will be used to formally establish, endorse, and embed the framework itself, ensuring shared understanding of its purpose, principles, and governance arrangements. Indicative priority areas have been identified to reflect the direction of travel for the remainder of the current term and to support continuity through officer handover.

The first full set of annual strategic priorities and deliverables under this Framework will be co-developed by the Incoming Student President and the Principal during transition and handover periods, and formally agreed at the start of the 2026/27 academic year. These may be subject to review in year if required to meet the aims of the partnerships and ensure dynamic and effective engagement with student priorities.

Annual Agreement and Publication

Each year, the Strategic Partnership Framework will be jointly signed by the Principal and Vice-Chancellor and the Student President. The annual signing will be accompanied by clear and visible communication to the University community, including the publication of agreed priorities and deliverables, to shared ownership, and accountability.

Enablers of Success

These objectives will be enabled by:

- Adherence to commitments set out in the Student Partnership Agreement, Student Mental Health Agreement, and existing representation and governance structures
- Effective and purposeful resource-sharing between the University and Students' Association.
- Clear communication strategy around how we inform our students and staff about our shared work.
- Mutual respect for roles, responsibilities, and mandates.

Measuring Progress and Impact

Progress against the Framework will be assessed through qualitative and strategic indicators, including:

- Evidence of joint executive decisions reflected in SEAP actions
- Increased student awareness of the Students' Association role and independence
- Timely communication of joint initiatives and outcomes
- Clear handover of priorities between outgoing and incoming officers
- Demonstrable outcomes and progress against agreed annual deliverables

GCU Strategic Partnership Framework 2025 - 2026

This Strategic Partnership Framework represents a shared commitment to executive-level partnership, transparency, and meaningful student impact.

Signed:

Glasgow Caledonian University

Principal and Vice-Chancellor

Glasgow Caledonian University Students' Association

Student President

Date: