Student Participation Framework

1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose

The purpose of the Student Participation Framework (SPF) is to set out APAC's systematic approach to encouraging and facilitating the genuine and active participation of its students in their learning and in their career development; in shaping, and benefitting from, the culture, reputation and direction of the institution; and in institutional governance and decision-making. APAC appreciates that its students are not only the key stakeholders in its activities and operations as a higher education institution but are also partners in those activities and operations. The concept of students as partners is unpacked through the following principles, which govern APAC's approach to student participation, and which underpin the policies, procedures, processes, standards and norms impacting students.

1.2. Principles

APAC is committed to:

- ensuring inclusive and equitable access to academic opportunities, to student support services, and to positive student experiences, for all groupings within its student cohort;

- being transparent and honest in its communications and interactions with its students, and encouraging its students to be similarly transparent and honest in their communications and interactions with the institution, its staff, and members of governance, decision-making and advisory bodies;

- creating channels for, including in internal and external review processes, and actively encouraging, student and alumni feedback on all aspects of APAC's operations, including its courses, its teaching, its facilities, its policies and procedures, its processes, and its decisions; respectfully and seriously taking account of that feedback; and clearly communicating to students the decisions and changes made as a result of that feedback;

- making provision for student voices to the Board of Directors, and student representation on the Academic Board; and providing mentoring for students in these roles; and

- encouraging the involvement of alumni in APAC activities and operations, including on advisory bodies, in student internship and mentoring programs, in building professional and industry networks, and as guest lecturers or guest speakers.

1.3. Activating the Principles

There are six broad channels through which the principles set out in 1.2, above, may effectively be activated. These channels are related and so intersect at various points. Their impact increases over time as a culture of students as partners develops and is embedded, and as that culture becomes increasingly nuanced and sophisticated.

1.3.1. Policies and Procedures

There are a number of policies and procedures that govern the interactions of APAC, its governance, decision-making, and advisory bodies, and its staff, with its students; student interactions with the institution and its staff and members of the bodies just referred to; and the interactions of students with one another. The scope of these policies and procedures ranges from admission to graduation and they are applicable to the various matters which reflect all stages of the student journey and the issues and concerns arising within it. These policies and procedures are calibrated to take account of students both as stakeholders and partners. They evolve over time as the institution grows, develops and becomes more complex. Their evolution is driven by, among other things, student feedback on existing policies and procedures and appropriate student participation in the development of improved iterations.

1.3.2. Terms of Reference of Governance, Decision-Making and Advisory Bodies

The terms of reference, which include membership, of key corporate and academic governance bodies, and decision-making and advisory bodies, contributes to defining the way in which students are partners as well as stakeholders. They do this by empowering, in different ways and to different extents, student voices.

In the case of the Board of Directors it may not be appropriate to have students as members, but it is appropriate to have mechanisms for bringing student voices into its deliberations, through, for example, the scheduled attendance of student representatives to bring student issues to the Board's attention, through the scheduled consideration of student feedback with student representatives present to provide perspectives on that feedback, or through scheduled events where Directors may meet with and talk with students.

In other cases, such as with the Academic Board, it is appropriate to include students as members to represent student voices in discussion, decision-making and the provision of advice.

1.3.3. Capability Development

Having, for example, terms of reference enabling student contributions and representation is necessary for student participation and partnership but it is not sufficient. Students also need the leadership, communication and personal capabilities to participate professionally and to function as effective partners. Consequently, APAC offers mentoring for students who are involved with, or wish

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to be involved with, governance. The contribution of such activities to the achievement of graduate attributes and to providing a foundation for career development is recognised.

1.3.4. Planning and Review

The involvement of students in governance, and decision-making provides opportunities for student voices to be heard on matters concerning planning and review. Such opportunities should be available to all students. Consequently, planning impacting students, such as the development of the Strategic Plan or planning the development of new facilities, makes space for student voices to be heard through broad consultation at key stages of the planning process.

Similarly, where possible, space is made for students to participate in internal and external reviews, including where appropriate as members of review panels. Broader participation is through opportunities to provide written submissions to reviews and to be interviewed by review panels. Where students have participated in reviews, their feedback is sought on actions and changes proposed in response to review findings and recommendations.

1.3.5. Curriculum Design and Delivery

A core guiding principle of curriculum design and delivery is the commitment to maintaining academic and professional standards. This does not, however, preclude the participation and partnership of students in curriculum design and delivery, broadly understood. APAC takes seriously the views of its students about, in particular, the quality and relevance of the curriculum, about the effectiveness of teaching, about the fairness of assessment processes and the adequacy of facilities. Opportunities are provided for students to offer feedback on such matters without fear of subsequent recriminations or victimisation. Feedback is through surveys, in workshops and in discussion fora where feasible, and through student voices on relevant governance, decision-making and advisory bodies. Relatedly, opportunities are provided for students to offer input into curriculum development initiatives, such as the development of new course and units.

Where feedback or input is provided, APAC will respond to it honestly, openly and transparently, making clear its impact on subsequent changes made and decisions taken, and providing the rationale for not making changes significantly supported by students. This closing of the loop is documented, and the documentation is made available to students through the Learning Management System to build a culture of openness, trust and transparency and encourage future participation of students in such opportunities.

1.3.6. Culture and Communication

APAC takes all reasonable steps to build and maintain an institutional culture where student participation is actively encouraged, where student voices are welcomed and seriously and respectfully considered, and where there is trust and

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open communication. Members of governance bodies and senior management model the behaviours and attitudes that form the basis of such an institutional culture and seek appropriate occasions on which they might engage with students and make clear their commitment to active student participation and their appreciation of students as partners, including of the time and energy students invest. APAC staff, more generally, model these behaviours and attitudes in their interactions with students and with each other, so as to reinforce an organisational culture of student participation and partnership.

APAC works collaboratively with students to develop and utilise effective means of communicating with all student cohorts, and to provide access to the information and data required to enable robust and effective student participation in the relevant range of governance, decision-making and advisory activities. Conversely, APAC works collaboratively with students to enable all student cohorts to make their voices heard in the context of governance, decision-making and advisory activities.

APAC staff and members of governance, decision-making and advisory bodies encourage and support an environment characterised by free expression and civility, in which staff and students are empowered to speak their minds and to advocate for decisions and outcomes aligning with their values and reflecting their perspectives on situations. While these decisions and outcomes may not eventuate, they are given serious and respectful consideration and are openly, transparently and honestly discussed.

2. Responsibilities

2.1. The Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is responsible for:

- assuring itself that effective steps have been taken to enable robust student participation across APAC and to embed the students as partners model in APAC's structures, operations and culture;

- modelling the behaviours and attitudes conducive to robust student participation and to operationalising the ideal of students as partners.

2.2. Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- modelling the behaviours and attitudes conducive to robust student participation and to operationalising the ideal of students as partners.

2.3. Students

Students are responsible for:

- participating in good faith in APAC activities, operations, and decision-making, with an attitude of partnership, and with the intention of benefiting the APAC community; and

- engaging with fellow students, APAC staff, and members of APAC governance, decision-making and advisory bodies, openly, honestly, transparently and positively.

3. Relevant Documents

- Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021

- Sally Varnham, Creating a National Framework for Student Partnership in University Decision-Making and Governance 2017

Version Control and Document Owner

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1.0	DVE Business Solutions Pty Ltd	New document.	10 January 2023	

Appendix A: Policies and Procedures Relevant to Student Participation

- Academic Honesty and Misconduct Policy and Procedure

- Admissions Policy and Procedure

- Advanced Standing Policy and Procedure

- Assessment Policy and Procedure

- Benchmarking Policy and Procedure

- Course Development and Review Policy and Procedure

- Course Discontinuation Policy and Procedure

- Graduation and Awards Policy and Procedure

- Learning Facilities and Resources Policy and Procedure

- Moderation Policy and Procedure

- Privacy Policy and Procedure

- Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure

- Student Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy and Procedure

- Student Orientation Policy and Procedure

- Student Support Policy and Procedure

- Students with a Disability Policy and Procedure