This agreement is set out in two sections. The first describes the priorities and themes for the academic year (AY). The second provides the context and the overarching concepts and principles of the agreement.

Section 1: Partnership theme and associated projects for 2016-17

Annual priorities

Using feedback from student surveys, feedback from the Student Representative Council (SRC), the goals outlined in the DUSA Executive Manifesto and in considering progress with ongoing initiatives, the University and DUSA have agreed to work together on the principal theme described below during AY 2016-17. Oversight and monitoring of the Student Partnership Agreement will be undertaken by the SRC and the University Learning and Teaching Committee. These groups will request progress reports as standing agenda items.

The single overarching theme identified for AY 2016-17 is Embedding a Culture of Student Engagement. In the context of this Partnership Agreement the culture of student engagement encompasses:

- engagement with representation;
- engagement with learning; and
- engagement with the University community.

Whilst we start from a position of strength in this area there are certain specific areas that fall under these key headings where we believe that further progress is required.

1. Engagement with representation.

We will continue to work together to enhance our approach to student representation. We will take a proactive approach to encourage more of our students to engage with representation and strengthen representation for students who are not based on the city campus. We will continue to improve training and support for student representatives and consider how representative roles can be recognised and rewarded. We will develop a framework to promote a ‘One Dundee’ approach to representation in the Schools. We will also work together to improve the effectiveness, relevance and reach of the SRC.

Performance indicators:

- The co-development of a guidance and good practice document to replace the current joint agreement on student representation.
- Increased student engagement (nominations and votes) with DUSA elections.
- Positive feedback from School Presidents, Associate Presidents and Class Representatives on the effectiveness of School Student-Staff Liaison Committees.
- A consistent approach to School presidential elections to ensure appropriate representation on the SRC and opportunities for all students to engage.
- Strong performance in the new NSS section on the student voice.
2. Engagement with learning

In recognising that the scope of ‘engagement with learning’ is very broad we have decided to focus on assessment and feedback for AY 2016-17. This theme has been a mainstay of previous partnership agreements and the NSS results suggest that we are making considerable progress in this area in terms of student satisfaction. That said, feedback from the SRC suggests that students would like to be more engaged in shaping programme/module assessment strategies.

As part of an increasing momentum in enhancement of assessment and feedback it has been proposed that an Assessment and Feedback Hub is developed. DUSA will work in partnership with CASTLE so that this development is co-led by students, ensuring that the mission of the Hub meets the requirements of students and staff.

We will also evaluate the effectiveness of our Academic Advisers system and consider the further development of the role to include supporting the engagement of students with feedback on assessment.

**Performance indicators:**

- The development of the vision and strategy for an Assessment and Feedback Hub and the instigation of a tangible presence (whether on-line or physical) for the Hub.
- Production of a report and recommendations as an outcome of evaluation of the Academic Advisers system.
- Improvement in NSS scores for questions relating to assessment and feedback and the Institutional question that relates to Academic Advisers.

3. Engagement with the University community

Evidence suggests that student engagement with their Schools/Disciplines and the wider University community (including societies and volunteering initiatives) enhances the student experience, helps with retention and progression and improves employability. As part of embedding a culture of engagement we will work together to further encourage community engagement. This will be though a combined effort across the University – with DUSA leading on the promotion of engagement with societies and the annual student Referendum; Student Services and DUSA leading on promoting engagement with support services; and Schools/Disciplines leading on the development of local societies, ‘academic families’ and student events.

The Vice-Principal (Learning and Teaching) working with DUSA will continue to take forward plans on how student extracurricular achievements such as involvement in societies, student media, sports clubs and volunteering are recorded and recognised by the University.

**Performance indicators:**

- Increased engagement with Dundee Plus awards.
- Student participation in the annual student referendum.
- Development of Open Badges or other certification methods to recognise extracurricular achievement.
- Improvements in retention and progression.
- Improved graduate employment statistics.
- Strong performance in the new NSS section on the learning community.
Section 2: Context of the agreement and overarching concepts and principles that define student engagement and representation

Introduction

The University of Dundee (‘the University’) and Dundee University Students’ Association (‘DUSA’) wish to build on our existing strengths in working together to further enhance the student experience at the University of Dundee. This agreement sets out our approach to partnership, as well as detailing agreed priorities for the academic year (AY) 2016-17. It also describes how all students can get involved in this activity.

This agreement does not replace other strategic documents such as the Joint Agreement on Student Representation or the Memorandum of Understanding between DUSA and the University. Rather, it has been developed to promote an understanding between students and staff about agreed enhancement-focused goals that are important to all individuals who are part of the University.

We believe that this Partnership Agreement is an important statement of our commitment to the fostering of a university community within which we all have a role and a function to perform and where we all have rights and responsibilities.

This Partnership Agreement is designed to promote the engagement of students during their period of study at the University, and they are encouraged to provide feedback on their experience whenever possible.

The University community

The University and DUSA are proud of the contribution we make to the City of Dundee, the rest of Scotland and beyond. The University of Dundee has a central vision which is to transform lives locally and globally through the creation, sharing and application of knowledge. We wish to build on our reputation as an institution which is welcoming and accessible to all.

Our student body and its relationship with academic and support staff is central to this purpose and vision. The University and DUSA value the diversity of our student population and work to make sure everyone feels supported and a part of the community. All staff and students should interact in a way which helps create an inclusive, pleasant and welcoming environment for everyone.

What is partnership?

The terms ‘partner’ and ‘partnership’ are used in a broad sense to indicate joint working between students and staff. Partnership working is based on the values of:

- openness;
- trust and honesty;
- agreed shared goals and values; and
- robust communication and understanding between the partners.

It is not based on the legal conception of equal responsibility and liability. Rather, partnership working recognises that all members in the partnership have legitimate, though sometimes different, perceptions and experiences. By working together to a common agreed purpose, steps can be taken that lead to enhancement in a way that works for all concerned. The use of the term ‘partnership’ reflects a mature relationship based on mutual respect between students and staff.
Formal student representation

The University is committed to involving students in decision-making processes and ensuring that students have the best possible experience during their period of study at the University of Dundee. All students are automatically members of the Students' Association and are members of the University. DUSA primarily exists to be an advocate for students across the University by representing their rights, needs and opinions. The University and DUSA work closely together to ensure that students are represented on all relevant University committees and are supported and trained to fulfil their roles.

Opportunities to become involved in student representation include the following:

- Standing for election as a member of the DUSA Executive (paid full-time or voluntary roles within the Association). The DUSA Executive comprises the most senior student representatives and as such attend bodies such as Court and Senate to articulate the views of the student body.

- Standing for election as the Independent Student Member of Court. The Independent Court member attends meetings of University Court, the governing body of the University, to ensure that students' opinions are heard and to hold the DUSA President to account. The Independent Court member is also a full member of the Students' Representative Council (SRC), which ensures that there is an additional link between the views of the student body and Court.

- Standing for election as a Student Councillor. The SRC includes student representatives with responsibility for specific groups of students, including first year, international and postgraduate students. They deal with any and all issues affecting students on campus, and hold both the University and DUSA to account.

- Standing for election as a School President. In addition to the cross-cutting councillor positions that represent specific constituencies, the SRC membership includes School President representatives from each of the nine University Schools. School Presidents contribute to the decision-making processes of School committees and other meetings with staff through being appropriately informed about the views of their School's student body. School Presidents liaise with Associate Presidents and Class Representatives in order to create a culture of feedback and information exchange and also share good practice with other School Presidents. The School Presidents have a key role in ensuring that there is an appropriate flow of information between the SRC and Schools.

- Standing for election (or being nominated) as a Class Representative and standing for election as an Associate President. Within each School, there are a number of students nominated or elected on an annual basis to represent the relevant class/module and subject/programme. Class Representatives are representatives for the class or module. Associate Presidents are representatives for a subject, programme or theme and are elected from the group of class representatives. The Class Representatives and Associate Presidents have meetings with staff and other representatives within the School to provide feedback and highlight any issues, and receive training from DUSA to fulfil their roles.

- Participating in Representation Online. Representation Online is an informal and supported platform for students to bring forward their ideas and feedback on how to enhance the student experience across the community. Facilitated by DUSA, Representation Online allows
students to feed forward their opinions and views and be connected to student representatives who will assist and work with them to rectify any concerns and action enhancements. The system is currently under development.

- Standing for election as a Student Halls Representative. Each University Hall of Residence elects individuals to be part of a Residents' Committee charged with representing the interests of the residents to the University, Dundee Student Villages and DUSA.

Further information on student representation is provided on the Quality Framework website:
http://www.dundee.ac.uk/qf/studentengagement/studentrepresentation/

Other forms of student involvement

Student involvement is not restricted to formal representative structures. All students are encouraged to become partners in shaping their learning experiences and life at the University. Opportunities include:

- giving honest, constructive feedback by taking part in surveys, focus groups and other feedback opportunities;
- participating in internal Periodic Programme Review events and the external Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (ELIR);
- sharing opinions with School Presidents, Associate Presidents, Class Representatives, members of the Students’ Forum, SRC representatives or members of the DUSA Executive; and
- speaking directly with lecturing staff, administrative staff or Advisers of Studies.

Enhancement of working in partnership

A key component of this Partnership Agreement between students and staff of the University is a commitment between the University and DUSA to work together to address student feedback as required throughout the year. The University agrees to ensure that DUSA has the support required to fulfil its role, and DUSA agrees to ensure that it fulfils this role responsibly in making the student voice heard.

The University and DUSA are committed to the continual development of this Partnership Agreement which will be reviewed jointly on an annual basis.

Signed on behalf of the University

[Signature]

Professor Sir Pete Downes
University Principal and Vice-Chancellor

Signed on behalf of DUSA

[Signature]

Indre Urbanavicute
DUSA President

Date: 21/10/2016