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Guidelines on how to conduct training activities to create ambassadors of student engagement recognition

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Student Engagement Project

STEP

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I. Executive Summary

The project “European Student Engagement Project” (European STEP) contributes to the recognition and improvement of students’ active participation in Europe, particularly as a factor in the development of key and cross-curricular skills complementary to the academic path, with the following objectives:

- To acquire in-depth knowledge of the modalities of recognition of students’ active participation in the different European countries;
- To equip and support committed students and higher education institutions in Europe with the intellectual productions of the project to better recognise student engagement;
- To promote, value and bring a better recognition of student commitment.

This document aims at offering practical guidelines in the context of the above-mentioned objectives and develop training activities for engaged Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) staff, who will be the European STEP local ambassadors and will ensure the sustainable continuation of the project’s mission. These guidelines describe the different components of the European STEP project training toolkit containing the following:

- Online training format outline;
- Presentations by the presenters linked in the outline;
- Video recording of the virtual training;
- Other documents: supporting documents and exercise instructions.

The training toolkit is tailored for the following target groups:

- Students who are currently engaged and students who are not yet engaged in extra-curricular activities;
- Student life offices and educators at Higher Education Institutions;
- Public authorities that can act on the legislation and outline measures to be implemented within the higher education area.

All of the three target groups are invited to collaborate and support each other during the training and, thereafter, create a real proactive policy in favour of the recognition of student engagement.

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II. Learning objectives and key messages

Apart from the overarching goals, learning objectives (LOs) shall be defined to best ensure that each training session activity will answer precise and need-specific: SMART¹ objectives.

Below, the indicative list of learning objectives corresponds to each one of the training sessions belonging to the European STEP training. The learning goals are associated to the learning objectives and the according messages have been developed to guide the ambassadors in the way the message could be conveyed and highlight the key benefit.

Goal 1- Gain Skills Through Student Engagement

LO1 – Helping students to identify the skills acquired during their volunteering

Key message:

How to help students to cross-reference the skills (knowledge, soft skills and expertise) they acquired during their volunteering with the ones they acquired through their academic education?

The importance of identifying those skills for their professional integration as well as for their social life. The European STEP platform will automatically cross-reference the experiences students lived with the skills they have used. In the end, the students will have their experiences associated with skills.

LO2 – Learning how to build a professional profile and presenting the skills gained during extra-curricular activities

Key message:

How to help students to build a professional profile?

Learning how to build a professional profile not only on a CV, but on modern virtual platforms, such as LinkedIn, is crucial for landing a job nowadays. The objective is to teach students how

¹ SMART objectives are goals that are designed to be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound.

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to use the right wording when they present the competences acquired during engagement and methods on how to prepare a tailor-made CV and a LinkedIn profile.

Goal 2 - Advocating for the recognition of student engagement

LO 3 – Finding adequacy between student engagement and curricula

Key message:

What is the institutional perspective on the recognition of student engagement and what is the role of HEIs in this process?

The most important and common motivations of engaged students. Types of motivations according to different paths of students' life.

LO 4 - Attracting important stakeholders to student engagement

Key message:

What is multi-stakeholder governance and why do we need it?

Bringing stakeholders together to participate in a dialogue, decision-making and implementation of solutions is crucial to achieve any goal. The learning objective is to understand how to identify the challenges and prepare an efficient plan to attract important stakeholders.

LO 5 - Advocating for student engagement recognition

Key message:

What are the arguments in favour of advocating for student engagement recognition?

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Elaborate an action plan and create an advocating pitch, to be prepared to advocate efficiently.

Goal 3 - Become an Ambassador of Student Engagement

LO 6: Creating a communication strategy

Key message:

How to attract students to engage in extracurricular activities? What tools and tips to use?

This learning objective is all about eliciting strategic thinking about communication.

LO 7: Increasing accessibility of extracurricular activities for students on the autism spectrum using Universal Design principles

Key message:

How to engage more students on the autism spectrum in extracurricular activities?

Discuss and present the benefits of volunteering for students on the autism spectrum and how to prepare a volunteering opportunity for these students.

LO 8: Learning to use the European tools

Key message:

Where to document your learning outcomes from formal and non-formal education in order to make them visible to education institutions and recruiters?

The Europass platform offers a lot of options to create a complete and effective professional profile.

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III. Training session outlines and resources

This section reveals the potential online training session activities and the format in which they could be presented, as well as tips, resources and a programme that can be used for further replication.

The examples below are based on the experience and feedback collected during the pilot online training organised from the 15th to the 17th of February 2021 for 40 participants from partner universities² from the following target groups - students, engaged students, administrative staff.

In addition, a version of a physical training of the same session activities is presented. This physical training was not tested due to the pandemic in 2020.

The indicative resources listed below are part of the European STEP training toolkit which can be found [here](#) with additional materials, such as the recordings from the online training.

Session 1: Introduction and warm welcome

Time	Learning goals and activities	Resources
30 min	<p>Learning goal: To announce the project, the agenda of the training, the speakers and the objectives of the sessions.</p> <p>Workshop methods used: presentation</p> <p>Expected outcome of the session: To set the scene and provide practical information for the training.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Video ◇ Presentation

Session 2: What are my competences, and do they matter?

² University of Vienna, University of Warsaw, University of Valladolid, University of Cergy-Pontoise, Dublin City University

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Time	Learning goals and activities	Resources
150 min	<p>Learning goal: To equip participants with the ability to understand the impact their student engagement activities has had on their competency development.</p> <p>Workshop methods used: Presentation and interactive exercises</p> <p>Expected outcome of the session: By the end of this session, participants will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand a competency and the components which make up a competency (KSAO - knowledge, skills, abilities, other characteristics) • Identify the individual competencies that they have developed • Apply the principles of reflective thinking to their own experiences to date and how this contributes to their competency development • Create an action plan to develop their competency <p>Session description:</p> <p>This engaging and interactive session will help participants to understand the development of their competencies through participation in their extra-curricular activities. By introducing them to a self-assessment tool and the importance of reflective thinking, this session demonstrates the value of student engagement activities and assists the participants in being able to articulate the benefits of their experiences in a wide variety of situations.</p> <p>Agenda:</p> <p>Welcome & Icebreaker (15m)</p> <p>Part One (55m)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Competencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Interactive session to explore competencies ○ Overview of competencies, including definitions and differences • The Value of Identifying Competencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Evidence-based demonstration on value of understanding competencies • How to Identify Competencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Overview of how to begin analysing participation in student engagement activities ○ The meaning and value of developing competencies in student engagement activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Video ◇ Presentation ◇ Supporting material ◇ Other sources

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<p>Break (15m) Part Two (55m)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills Platform <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introduction, demonstration, and use of the Engagement and Skills Platform • The Importance of Reflective Practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Overview of reflective thinking and value ○ Reflective Exercise • Looking to the Future <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Action Planning for Skills Development <p>Closing and Q&A (10m)</p>	
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Session 3: Tips for building a professional profile

Time	Learning goals and activities	Resources
75 min	<p>Learning goal: To learn/teach how to prepare a professional profile for professional purposes</p> <p>Workshop methods used: group activities</p> <p>Expected outcome of the session: knowing how to build a professional profile and teach others how to do it. Learning/teaching how to value one’s skills and competencies acquired during student engagement on a LinkedIn profile.</p> <p>Session description: This session gives a method and some advice on how to elaborate a LinkedIn profile and a standard CV, meaning how to put in words one’s experience of engagement on one’s professional profile.</p> <p>Agenda:</p> <p>General context and issues on valuing one’s engagement (10 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students do not always know how to value their engagement - the following advice can vary depending on the social, cultural context or professional field. • It is important be able to sum up and analyse one’s engagement path => it can help in identifying skills and competencies . 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Video ◇ Presentation

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Tips for building a LinkedIn profile (presentation 60 min)

- Why it is important to have a LinkedIn profile?
 - It is increasingly more important to have a LinkedIn profile for professional purposes because more and more recruiters are active on LinkedIn and have a LinkedIn page.
 - If you are applying for a mission or a job, the recruiter might look at your LinkedIn profile
- Elaborating a profile in groups
- Feedback

Session 4: Adequacy between the motivations for students’ engagement and the curricula

Time	Learning goals and activities	Resources
90 min	<p>Learning goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The institutional perspective on the recognition of student engagement. • Identifying the most important and common motivations of engaged students as well as unique motivations for certain types of engagement. • Identifying the types of motivation according to different paths of students’ life. • Preparing the ground for further discussions on the role HEIs play in the process of students’ engagement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Participants can exchange different viewpoints. ○ Participants can explore in detail the questions that they need. <p>Workshop methods used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brainstorming • Presentation • Cooperation and discussion in smaller groups • Mentimeter.com • Google Jamboard.com <p>Expected outcome of the session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the profile of an engaged students and how this definition defers between countries. • Answer to the question: how many types of engaged students’ motivations are connected with academic life? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Video ◇ Introduction to the session ◇ Presentation ◇ Task 1 ◇ Task 2

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Session description:

The facilitator presents the characteristics of engaged students and the results of IO2 - preliminary report. The facilitator reveals which kinds and forms of student engagement were identified by the survey participants as being supported and recognised by HEIs. Then, participants are asked to connect the motivations with academic and professional paths with the help of the Jamboard.com tool.

Agenda:

Introduction (20 mins):

- Presentation of the agenda & goals of the session.
- Presentation of the participants
 - On **mentimeter.com** Participants are answering questions: where are you from? Are you a student/staff member?

Characteristics of engaged students (30 mins):

- Group work (blind division into breakout rooms):
- In the breakout rooms participants are meant to discuss the following topics:
 - How do participants perceive engaged students from their countries?
 - What are their study goals?
 - What are the typical characteristics of engaged students?
 - Do the answers to the questions above differ depending on the country or not?
- Each group writes down their opinion in a **shared google doc**.
- Each group presents the results of the subgroup work to the other participants.

Presentation of the preliminary report of the European STEP project (15 mins):

- Bullet Point **presentation** of the preliminary report (in the context of the session).
- **Mentimeter** question: What motivates students who are engaged?

Connecting the motivations with academic and professional paths (20 mins):

- On a pre-set virtual board on **Jamboard.com**, participants are asked to organise all of defined motivations into groups depending on the aspect of life that is connected with this motivation. The question is “How can we arrange these motivations in groups that are connected with different aspects of students’ life?”:
 - Professional
 - Academic
 - Private
 - Social

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- Civic
- etc.

Closing remarks and questions on this session (5 min)

Session 5: The role of the stakeholders in the student engagement and how to attract them

Time	Learning goals and activities	Resources
30 min	<p>Learning goal: To equip participants with a plan on effective engagement of stakeholders</p> <p>Workshop methods used: presentation</p> <p>Expected outcome of the session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understand the definition of the term “multi-stakeholder governance” ● Identify the challenges of engaging stakeholders ● Identify who are the stakeholders and what we want to achieve by attracting them ● Learn how to execute an action plan <p>Session description: The facilitator introduces the definition of multistakeholder governance, which helps the student to identify the different stakeholders, as well as the challenges, the goals and the actions that need to be taken to attract stakeholders.</p> <p>Agenda: Presentation on the implementation of a multi-stakeholder approach (25 min) Closing and Q&A (5 min)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Video ◇ Presentation

Session 6: Advocating for the student engagement recognition

Time	Learning goals and activities	Resources
90 min	<p>Learning goal: Acquire practical skills, build arguments on how to advocate for the recognition of student engagement and develop effective collaboration between students and staff members.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Video ◇ Presentation ◇ Task 1

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Workshop methods used:

- Presentation
- Brainstorming
- Short debate

Expected outcome of the session: To provide participants with a method to advocate for the recognition of student engagement

Session description: This session will provide knowledge on the topic of advocacy for the recognition of student engagement in order to change or improve student engagement recognition in HEIs.

Agenda:

What is student engagement and why should we advocate for its recognition? (20 min)

Different types of engagement exist: it is necessary to define student engagement in order to be able to recognise it.

- In groups (**breakout rooms**), brainstorm on what can student engagement be.
- A small debate: is student engagement recognition necessary?
- Why should we advocate for the recognition of student engagement?

General overview of existing practices (30 min)

- Presentation of the European STEP project's Good practices guide
- Quick overview of existing practices in different HEIs

Presentation of a method to advocate for the recognition of student engagement (20 min)

- Composing teams of staff members and students interested in the subject
- Elaborating an action plan
- Building an advocacy pitch
- Conducting a debate on student engagement recognition

Questions and Feedback (10 min)

Session 7: Let's think strategically! Creating a draft of communication strategy

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Time	Learning goals and activities	Resources
90 min	<p>Learning goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn how to attract students to engage in extracurricular activities • Exchange experiences and ideas and to try to define the direction of further work <p>Methods used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation • Brainstorming • Teamwork • Discussion • Voting (menimeter.com) • Project card • Google Jamboard <p>Session description:</p> <p>We have to work with a very diverse team. Everyone will have a different experience with communication, students and students’ social engagement. The specificity of each cultural background brings diversity to students' behaviours and their habits. The facilitator explains that the purpose of the task should be to present a methodology of creating a communication strategy that could be developed and implemented for different activities at the university. They will not be provided with ready-made solutions but with tools and tips that they will later use and adapt to the realities of their university. Creating sketches can develop strategic thinking about communication. It is also worth taking advantage of a situation where participants include both university employees and students. This could result in creative communication ideas as well as new conclusions that wouldn’t have been reached if we were only using typical communication channels (typical for our group). Thanks to this, ambassadors for student engagement can emerge among various audiences.</p> <p>Agenda:</p> <p>Introduction of the trainer (5 min)</p> <p>Explanation of the task (10 min):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation. What we will do and why? <p>Communication strategy - what is it? (15 min):</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Video ◇ Presentation ◇ Task 1 ◇ T.1 Case 1 ◇ T.1 Case 2 ◇ Task 2

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- **Presentation.** A few words about communication strategy

We create a communication strategy (30 min):

- The participants will be divided into groups (depending on the number of participants). **(use a platform that allows dividing participants into smaller groups in working rooms)**
- **Jamboard.** Each group will receive a template - filling it out will create a sketch of the communication strategy.
- The card will contain the main questions that are the basis for creating the strategy: Why? For whom? What? How? Who?
- In a shorter version, focus on the questions: For whom? What? How? Who?
- **Important:** We can't assume specific solutions, but directions, possibilities, paths, types of tools. If there are specific solutions - great.

We share our ideas (30 min):

- It's time to present the effects of teamwork.
- Each team will present a communication strategy template. It will be time to ask questions and discuss them.
- **Dot voting on Jamboard** - what we like
- **Presentation:** It's time to think about which ideas and solutions we prefer. Each participant is given a certain number of dots (points) to mark the elements that seem best. Thanks to this, we will see which elements of the strategy are the most universal/interesting and would be worth implementing in HEIs.

Session 8: Increasing accessibility of extracurricular activities for students on the autism spectrum using Universal Design principles

Time	Learning goals and activities	Resources
90 min	<p>Learning goal: Learn how to engage more students on the autism spectrum in the extracurricular activities</p> <p>Workshop methods used: Presentation</p> <p>Expected outcome of the session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe and recognise the basic features of the autism spectrum among students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Video ◇ Presentation

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- Name several benefits of volunteering for the students on the autism spectrum and the community
- Be able to prepare a volunteering opportunity that is accessible for students on the autism spectrum
- Understand that the aim should be to increase accessibility of the extracurricular activities rather than creating new activities dedicated to the students with autism

Session description: The facilitator will teach the participants how to be more inclusive towards students on the autism spectrum and how to prepare volunteering offers specifically designed for them.

Agenda:

A student on the autism spectrum – an overview (10 min)

Benefits of volunteering for the students and the community (20)

How to prepare a good volunteering offer for students on the spectrum? (20 min)

Inclusion of students on the spectrum in decision-making via self-advocacy (30 min)

Discussion: what did you find useful? What would you change in your current practice? What new ideas came up? (10 min)

Session 9: European Tools

Time	Learning goals and activities	Resources
60 min	<p>Learning goal:</p> <p>Raise awareness on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills and competences acquired in formal and non-formal education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Video ◇ Presentation Europass ◇ Presentation Youthpass

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- European tools to document learning (Europass, Youthpass) and their functions
- The importance to reflect on learning and document learning outcomes

Workshop methods used:

- Presentation
- Live demonstration
- Q&A

Expected outcome of the session:

- Knowledge of the European tools to document learning
- Awareness of skills

Session description:

1. Presentation of the (new) Europass platform
 - Introduction, objectives and reasons for launching a new platform
 - Official launch [video](#) with Nikolas Schmit and Margaritis Schinas
 - Presentation of the functionalities of the Europass platform
 - Live demonstration of the Europass platform
 - Benefits for users and guidance for professionals
 - Survey
 - Future developments of the platform announced by the European Commission

Agenda:

- Presentation of the Europass platform (50 min)
- Presentation of the Youthpass platform (10 min)

IV. Organisation of the online training

A. Indicative training programme

The programme of the training event is an important element that should be developed and shared well in advance. The programme should be detailed enough to allow participants and training

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prospects to get a comprehensive overview of the training’s schedule and content. The programme should allow for a logical unrolling of the training activities and ensure that the participants’ expectations are coherent with the content. Thus, the programme should contain the following information:

- Title of the sessions;
- Duration of the sessions;
- Name of the speakers and the organisations they represent.

Moreover, the training programme is a key document to ensure that the learning objectives will be met within the allocated time. The following indicative programme has been developed for the pilot online training.

We recommend a three-day long training event; however, you can adjust the allocation of time for each session according to your needs and resources.

Day 1	
Skills Gained Through Student Engagement	
10:00 30'	Session 1: Introduction and Warm Welcome <i>Name of the speaker, Name of the organisation</i>
10:30 150'	Session 2: Identify skills acquired during engagement <i>Name of the speaker, Name of the organisation</i>
13:00 60'	Lunch break
14:00 75'	Session 3: Tips for building a professional profile <i>Name of the speaker, Name of the organisation</i>

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15:15 30'	Questions and Answers <i>Name of the speaker, Name of the organisation</i>
Day 2	
Advocating for recognition of student engagement	
10:00 90'	Session 4: Adequacy between student engagement and curricula <i>Name of the speaker, Name of the organisation</i>
11:30 30'	Session 5: How to implement a multi-stakeholder approach <i>Name of the speaker, Name of the organisation</i>
12:00 60'	Lunch break
13:00 90'	Session 6: Advocating for student engagement recognition <i>Name of the speaker, Name of the organisation</i>
15:00 30'	Questions and Answers <i>Name of the speaker, Name of the organisation</i>
Day 3	
Become an Ambassador of Student Engagement	

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10:00 90'	Session 7: Implementation of a communication campaign to attract students <i>Name of the speaker, Name of the organisation</i>
11:30 90'	Session 8: Inclusion of students in the spectrum of autism in student engagement <i>Name of the speaker, Name of the organisation</i>
13:00 60'	Lunch break
14:00 60'	Session 9: European tools – Europass and Youthpass <i>Name of the speaker, Name of the organisation</i>
15:00 60'	Closing Session and Evaluation: Introducing the idea of a network of ambassadors for student engagement <i>Name of the speaker, Name of the organisation</i>

B. Organisational tips

1	Plan for 35-40 participants per training including the presenters - this is an ideal group size that ensures both an effective individual learning experience as well as lively group discussions.
2	Announce the event/open a call for participation at least 3 months in advance.
3	Prepare a webpage for the event and share the agenda and useful information.
4	Upload training materials in a folder shared with all the presenters (PPT presentations, documents, Jamboard virtual boards, quizzes and polls prepared ahead).
5	Send an email prior to the event with practical information on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ The exact date/s and time of the training

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ The information on how to access the online event (connection link, link to the platform, passwords, etc.) ◇ Material to read before the training (optional) ◇ Rules during the training (see tip 6)
6	<p>Prepare and share the training rules with both the presenters and participants:</p> <p><i>During the online training, please:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ <i>Mute your microphone when not speaking, but turn on your camera if your equipment allows for it;</i> ◇ <i>Use the chat to ask questions, but not for side conversations;</i> ◇ <i>Feel free to use body signals to show you are engaging: thumbs up, smiles, nods;</i> ◇ <i>Write in the chat or via email to xxx.yyy@zzz.zz if you are experiencing any technical issues</i>
7	Send a reminder about tip 6 at the beginning of the training.
8	Conduct an IT check prior to the online event (sound, video, recording options, working rooms).
9	Allow time to reflect on teamwork - debriefing (reflection on learning outcomes) can be connected to the goals and expectations of participants.
10	Review and collect all the final information from the training event - follow-up is as important if not more important than preparation. Don't forget to send an email to all participants after the event to thank them for their participation.

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