



STEP

Scotland's Tertiary
Enhancement Programme

Scotland's Tertiary Enhancement Programme (STEP) - Recruitment of Student Topic Leads

Session 2026-27



Scotland's Tertiary Enhancement Programme (STEP) is the national enhancement programme for Scotland's colleges and universities.

STEP is a sector-owned programme of activity that supports enhancement across the tertiary sector in Scotland. The programme is jointly managed by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and College Development Network (CDN).

STEP runs on a four-year cycle, with each cycle bringing institutions together around a particular topic that has been chosen by the sector. In 2026-27, we will be entering the third year of this cycle, for which the topic is **Supporting Diverse Learner Journeys**.

STEP Topic Leads: an overview

A core team of four individuals - two Staff and two Student Topic Leads, with both colleges and universities represented in these roles - act as key sector-level leads for STEP. They champion the STEP topic across Scotland and beyond, driving the ambitions of the sector. Their insights on the sector and topic support the operational delivery of the STEP topic, working closely with QAA and CDN, and through the STEP governance groups.



The four Topic Leads co-chair the STEP Topic Leadership Group, which provides operational leadership for STEP as well as guidance and expertise for project teams around development and evaluation.

Our two Student Topic Leads vacated their roles in June 2026, therefore both places - one for a college student, and one for a university student - are now open for nominations.

Why should you be interested in this role?

One of our outgoing Student Topic Leads, Adelayo Adebayo from the University of Stirling Students' Union, shares what inspired her to take on the role:

'Being a Student Topic Lead has been incredibly rewarding. The role has allowed me to contribute strategically to sector-wide enhancement work, collaborate meaningfully with staff and students across institutions, and ensure that the student voice shapes key priorities. It's also been a valuable opportunity for personal development, building confidence, leadership skills, and a deeper understanding of quality assurance and enhancement across the tertiary sector.'



Student Topic Leads: expectations

- Attend meetings of the STEP Steering Group, the group that determines the overall direction of STEP and identifies key priorities. Meetings take place four times per year and are typically online.
- Co-chair the STEP Topic Leadership Group, the group that helps to lead, support and evaluate the work undertaken for the current STEP topic. Meetings take place at least four times per year and are typically online.
- Attend meetings of the STEP Network. This comprises staff and student representatives from each institution in Scotland, as well as representatives from some sector agencies. It meets four times per year and meetings are typically in-person, including networking and workshop activities. As members of the Topic Leadership Group, the STEP Topic Student Leads have a key role in setting the agenda and planning activities for the STEP Network meetings.
- Engage with STEP evaluation activity.

- Engage with major STEP-related events, including conferences, at which they may have the opportunity to present on student-led work.

Nomination and appointment of Student Topic Leads

- Student Topic Leads are appointed for a one-year term, which may be extended to a second term with agreement from the STEP Steering Group.
- Student STEP Topic Leads receive an honorarium of £3000 per annum.
- It is not necessary for Student Topic Leads to be sabbatical officers. However, they will be expected to demonstrate experience and involvement beyond their immediate programme and department/school. Ideally, nominees will have experience of student engagement or representation matters (or otherwise working towards enhancement of the student experience) from beyond their institution.
- Nominations for Student Topic Leads should be made through self-nomination and supported by a member of senior management.
- It is expected that all nominees for Student Topic Leads will inform their Students' Association/Union prior to submitting their nomination.
- Nominations must include the following information:
 - a. Nominee's name and email address
 - b. A statement of no more than 200 words indicating why they are suitable and what their skills and experience will allow them to bring to the role
 - c. Support for the nomination from a senior manager (or appropriate alternative) within their institution.

Nominations timeline

- All nominations should be received by **1200 noon on Friday 14 August 2026**
- The STEP Steering Group will consider all nominations by either email correspondence or an extraordinary meeting.
- In the event of there being more nominations than roles, there will be a ballot of Steering Group members.
- All nominees will be informed of the outcome by **Friday 28 August 2026**.

11 June 2026