Evidence for Enhancement: Review of evaluation plans workshop, Glasgow, 28th February 2019

Aims and objectives

Aim: To provide feedback on plans to evaluate Evidence for Enhancement projects to develop evaluation capacity and consistency.

Objectives are for institutional teams to:

○ Have an overview of project themes and level of evaluation across the sector.

○ Identify strengths in their evaluation plans and areas for development.

○ Develop further capacity to apply the E4E evaluation model and improve the quality of their impact evaluation.

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Overview of the workshop

- Overview of evaluation plans
- Review of the evaluation model
- Feedback and examples of narrative summaries, indicators, evidence sources and baselines
- Consideration of the role of students and student leads in the evaluation process
- Break
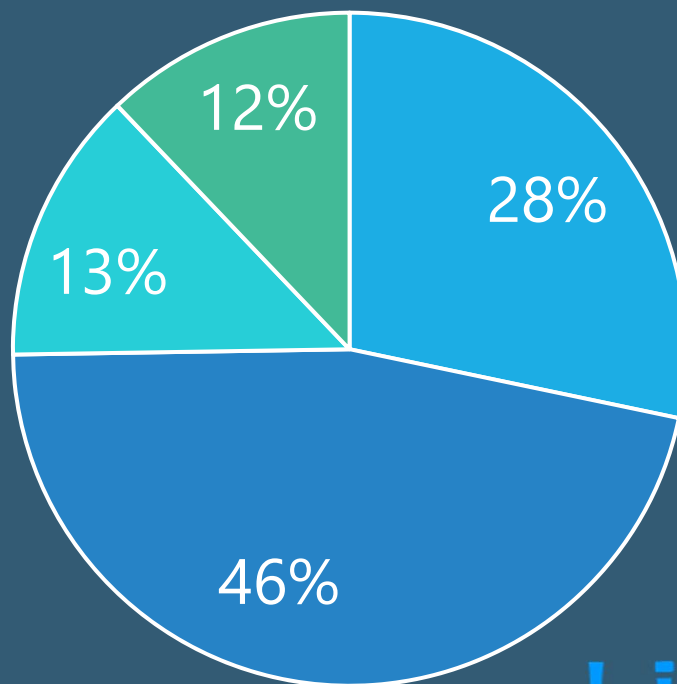- Activity: Reviewing evaluation plans

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Over view of evaluation plans

○ Full or partial information received from 16 institutions.

○ 82 projects planned for this year. The number per institution varies, ranging from 3-10 projects (the mean is 5 and the mode is 3).

○ 74% of projects will be evaluated in some way.

○ 46% light-touch.

○ 28% in-depth.

○ 9 institutions are evaluating all projects. Lowest evaluation proportion is 25%.
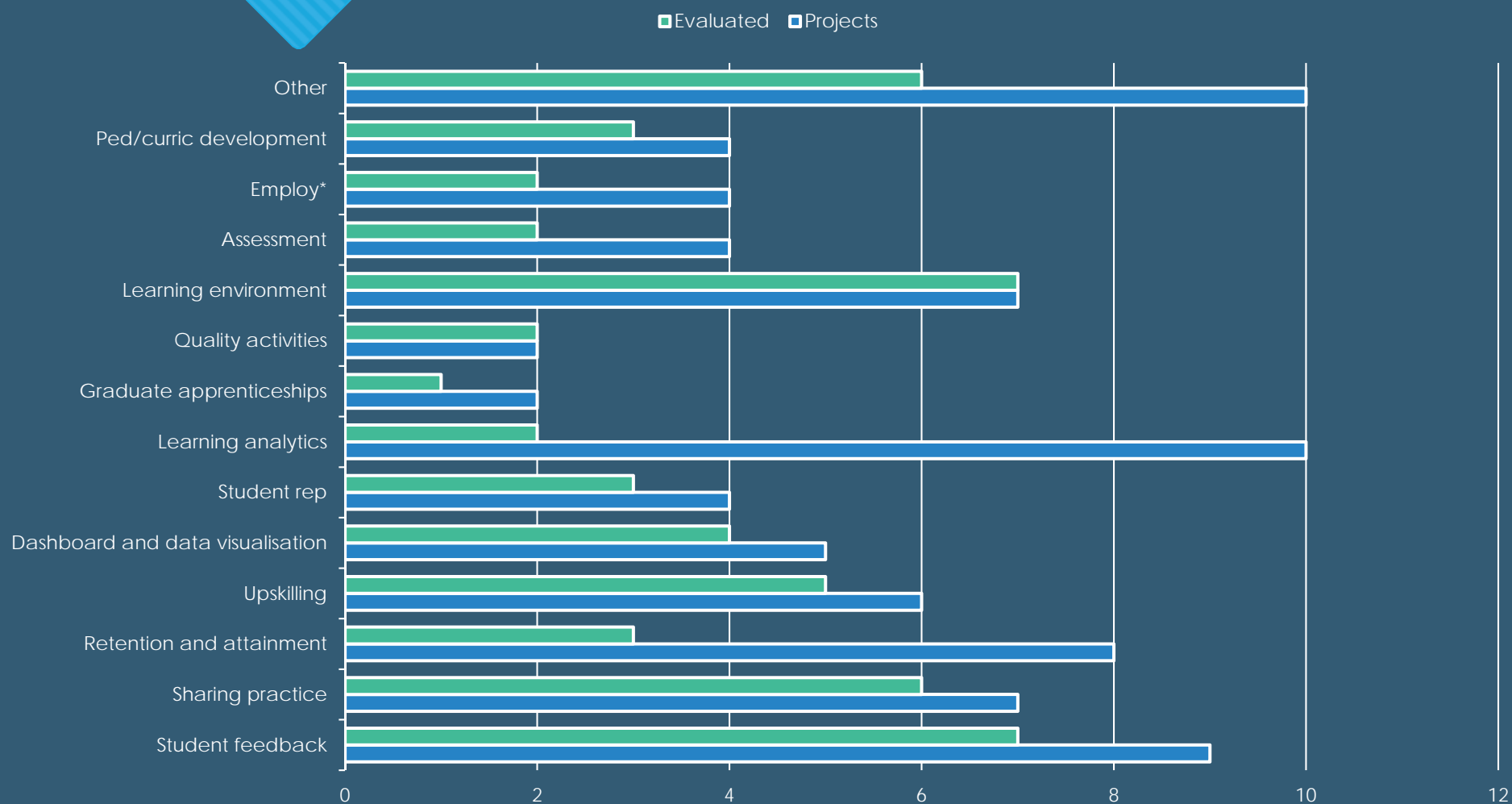
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Proportion of projects being evaluated

■ In-depth   ■ Light-touch   ■ Unknown   ■ None

12%

28%

13%

46%

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Summary of projects

Legend: Evaluated, Projects

Category	Evaluated	Projects
Other	6	10
Ped/curric development	3	4
Employ*	2	4
Assessment	2	4
Learning environment	7	7
Quality activities	2	2
Graduate apprenticeships	1	2
Learning analytics	2	10
Student rep	3	4
Dashboard and data visualisation	4	5
Upskilling	5	6
Retention and attainment	3	8
Sharing practice	6	7
Student feedback	7	9

Summary of the evaluation approach

| Project activities: new evidence, better use | Short-term benefits: generate new evidence, present evidence, develop skills... | Medium-term outcomes – change in attitudes or behaviour | Longer-term impact on student experience, institutional culture |

- Focus on impact
- Different evaluation levels and priorities
- Smaller project evaluation template
- Theory of change and logic chain informing evaluation priorities
- Narrative summary

- Short-term benefits, medium-term outcomes and longer-term impact indicators
- Range of sources of evidence to verify indicators
- Pragmatic use of baselines

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Narrative summary

○ The aim is to describe the links between your project activities and longer-term goals, spelling out intermediate outcomes.

○ All include the activities, but these are not always related to outcomes and impact over time; the causal links need to be explicit to test the logic and support the development of intermediate indicators (which are not more activities by the project team). Sometimes the focus is on the activities and not the evidence, out our goal is to evaluate the Evidence for Enhancement theme.

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Narrative summary example

Retention and progression forum

This project brings together key staff from different parts of the University. Presenters use examples and case studies to help participants to understand what evidence exists and how it can be used to improve our retention and progression rates further. This will help more staff to know how to use data to understand trends and factors that impact retention and progression. Knowledge and understanding of key evidence will inform the design and implementation of interventions and projects aimed at enhancing retention and progression.

Narrative summary example

Data visualisation models

- This project will create data visualisation tools to make existing data sets more accessible to a wide range of staff.
- Staff will be able to identify patterns and areas of concern easily and, from that, can develop detailed understanding of the student population and the range of student journeys.
- Better understanding will enable interventions in terms of programme design, delivery and support to be more effectively targeted whether aimed at particular groups or more generally.
- If our efforts and actions to enhance our provision are more effective our students will have better and more satisfying experiences throughout their time at University.

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Short-term benefit indicators

- These are intended to demonstrate immediately, or soon after your intervention, that you have had some sort of positive impact.
- They need to be more than output indicators as they are intended to be an early indicator that your project is likely to have the desired effect.
- They can include the number of people participating in an activity, but you should also attempt to evidence how they benefitted from participating.
- Evidence, including a baseline, can often be developed as part of the intervention. Alternatively a baseline can be generated by an initial review.

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Example: Short-term indicators, evidence and baseline

Data Literacy for Programme Leaders

Indicators

1) The project team acquire a clear understanding of data usage, including any specific discipline dimensions to the use of data.

2) The project team knows and understands the variability of use of data and responsibility of programme leaders across the university.

Evidence

1) This evidence will be generated by audit output.

2) This evidence will come from analysis of the audit output and analysis

Example: Short-term indicators, evidence and baseline

Data Literacy for Programme Leaders

<u>Baseline.</u> A baseline survey has been developed to enquire how Programme Leaders are using existing sources of evidence. The survey covered their awareness and use of data sources, reasons for not using certain sources, areas of their role where data is being used, and the perceived usefulness of data. Data queried was internal and external surveys, formal reporting and destinations data sets, and institutional systems. This was distributed by the Deans of each faculty to all Programme Leaders on 07/09/2018 and staff were given 3 weeks to complete, with reminders sent to participants to encourage engagement. 57 responses were received representing 24 out of 28 departments.

Medium-term outcome indicators

○ These are intermediate indicators that your project is likely to achieve as it moves towards to longer-term impact.

○ They often refer to changes in behaviour or new ways of doing things by people outside of the project team.

○ They can use evidence generated by the project itself, or collected specifically, or utilising internal data and documentations.

○ A mixed methods approach can be useful.

Example: Medium-term outcome indicators, evidence and baseline

Retention and progression forum

Indicators

○ Use of relevant evidence in annual School Enhancement Reports and in Periodic Programme Reviews.

○ Data champions using evidence to create interventions/appropriate action plans.

Evidence

○ Existing evidence: reports and reviews held centrally

Baseline

○ Yes, created by review of reports and reviews from previous years.

Longer-term impact indicators

○ These are indicators of the longer-term impact, often beyond the life of the project.

○ Most projects are contributing to enhancing the student experience and an institutional culture that utilises evidence, plus other outcomes.

○ These are best evidenced using institutional data and surveys, which readily provide a baseline. However other factors may contribute to this, so qualitative evidence can be useful too.

Examples of longer-term impact indicators

Data visualisation models

- Improved retention, progression and performance as evidenced by student records/institutional data (historical baseline).
- Increased student satisfaction reflected in improved results in course evaluations and wider surveys (historical baseline).

This would be usefully supplemented by qualitative evidence. E.g. about how staff are continuing to use the data to enhance the student experience, and the link between the interventions and improved retention and success.

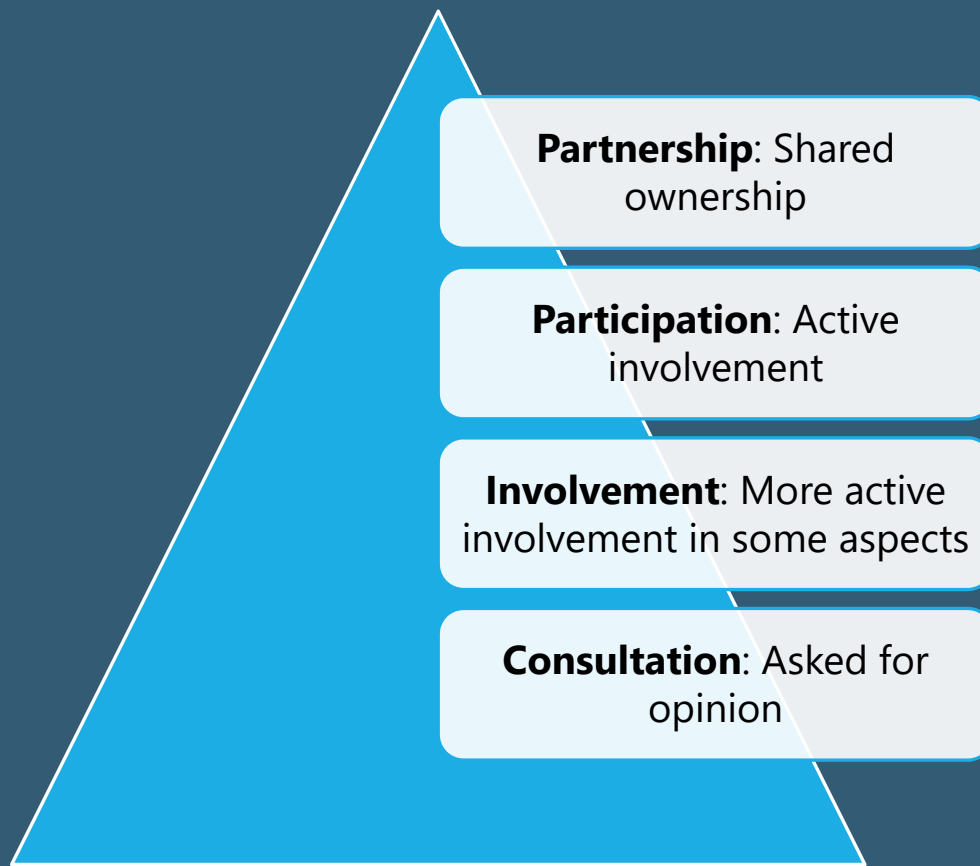# The role of students in the evaluation of your project

Context:
- The potential contribution of qualitative research in verifying the impact of the programme.
- Feedback from conversations with student leads.

Discussion:
- How are your students and student-leaders involved in the evaluation of your projects?
- How could you involve students more, beyond consultation to co-production?

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Levels of student engagement

Partnership: Shared ownership

Participation: Active involvement

Involvement: More active involvement in some aspects

Consultation: Asked for opinion

Thank you

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