

2019

EDULOG

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EVIDENCE, POLICY AND PRACTICE

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From access to success
Developing a national approach to improve the
outcomes of students from under-represented
groups in HE and beyond

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From access to success

Developing a national approach to improve the outcomes of students from under-represented groups in HE and beyond

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Overview

- Improving social justice: Access and success for students from under-represented groups
- A multi-dimensional approach to understanding student success: students, institutions and the national context.
- England as an example of a national approach to improving the outcomes of students from under-represented groups
- Conclusions



Addressing social inequality in higher education in Europe

- Europe target: At least 40% of 30-34-year-olds to complete HE qualification by 2020.
- Portugal is one of the countries furthest from achieving its target.
- Achieving the target involves increasing the number of students who enter HE, and increasing the proportion of those students who successfully complete their studies.
- Improving social justice in and through HE requires national systems and individual universities to increase the diversity of who enters and completes HE – and progression beyond HE.
- “*Access without support is NOT opportunity*” (Tinto 2008).

Higher Education Area commitments

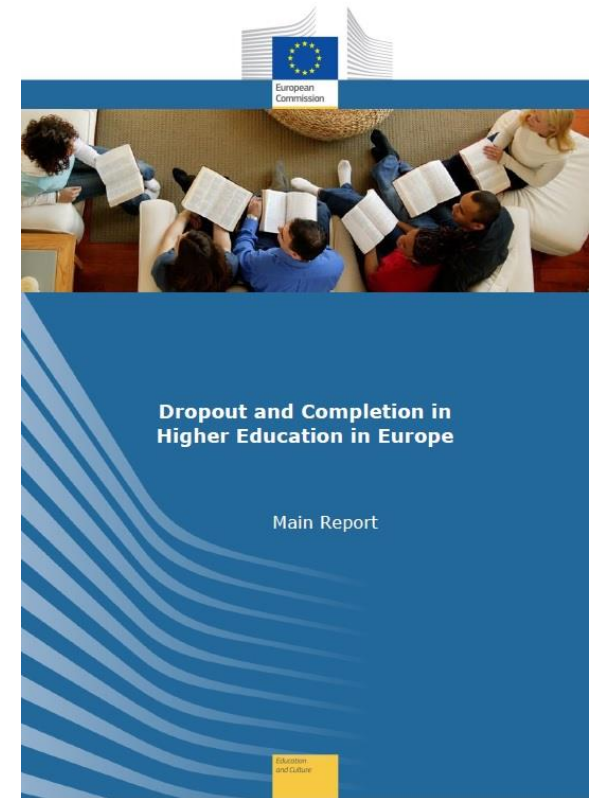
- London Communiqué, 2007 “...*the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education at all levels should reflect the diversity of our populations*”.
- Students should be “... *able to complete their studies without obstacles related to their social and economic background*”.
- Yerevan Communiqué 2015 identifies the importance of learning and teaching, graduate employability and inclusive higher education.
- Paris Communiqué 2018 re-iterates the commitments to these goals.

Higher Education Area commitments

- *We recognize that further effort is required to strengthen the social dimension of higher education. In order to meet our commitment that the student body entering and graduating from European higher education institutions should reflect the diversity of Europe's populations, we will improve access and completion by under-represented and vulnerable groups. (Paris Communique, 2018, p4)*

European research about student success

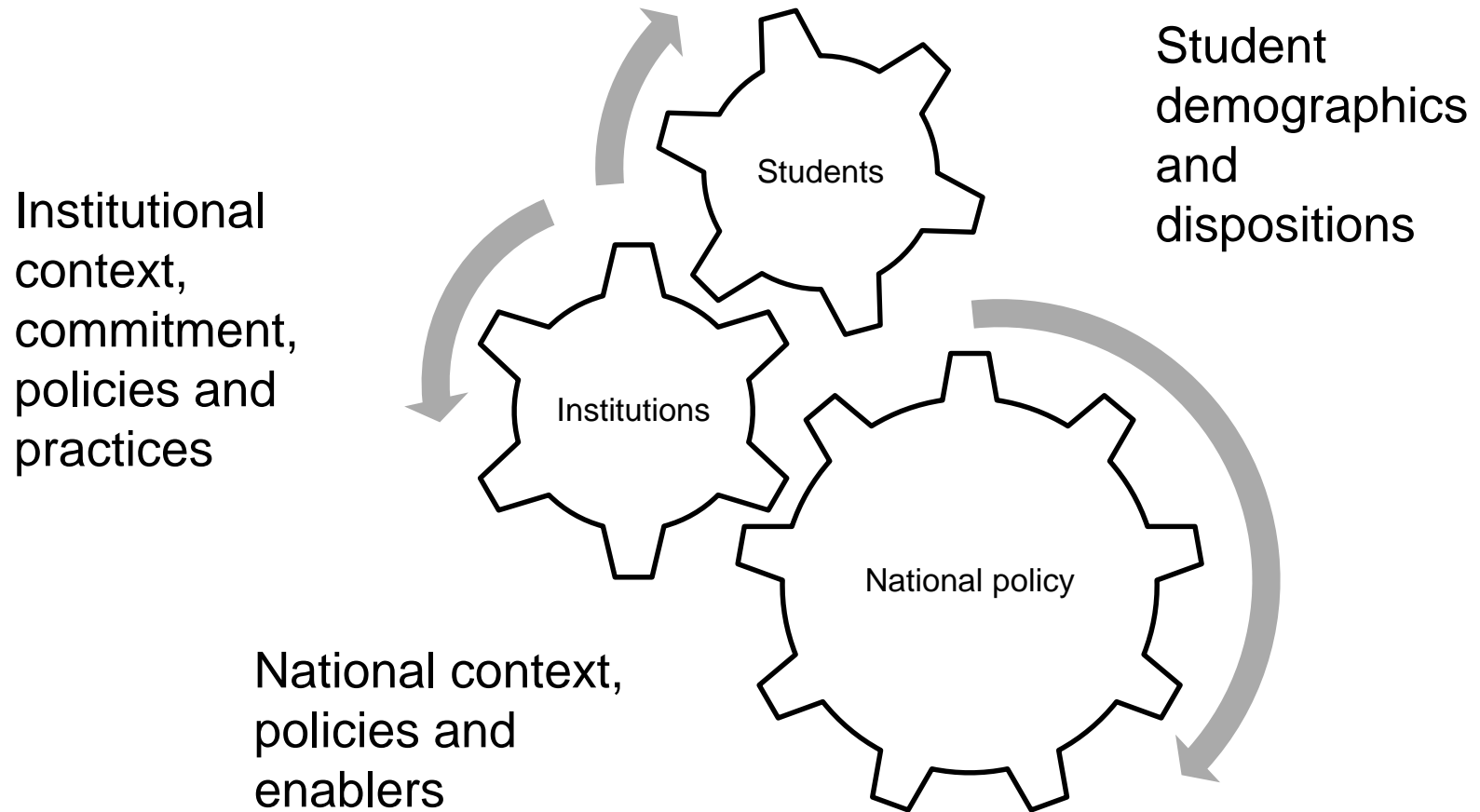
- Comparatively little is research about student success in HE (Quinn 2013).
- Drop-out and completion in Higher Education in Europe (Vossensteyn et al 2015). Survey of HE experts in 35 countries to explore national approaches, and how these influence institutional actions.



Defining success in European HE

- **Completion:** to have students successfully complete their study programme with a degree.
- **Time-to-degree:** to have students complete their study programme within a reasonable time period.
- **Retention or dropout:** the aim to have students re-enrol in a study programme until they complete their degree and to reduce the likelihood they drop out before completing their programme.
- Employment outcomes
- **Lack of shared definition of study success across Europe and within most national states.**

Multi-dimensional approach to student success



Individual level

Demographics and dispositions

- Low socio-economic status
- Male students, minority gender in subject dominated by one gender
- Ethnic minorities
- Older students
- Weaker past academic achievements and alternative entry pathways (to some extent)
- Motivation linked to interest and expected benefits

Institutional level

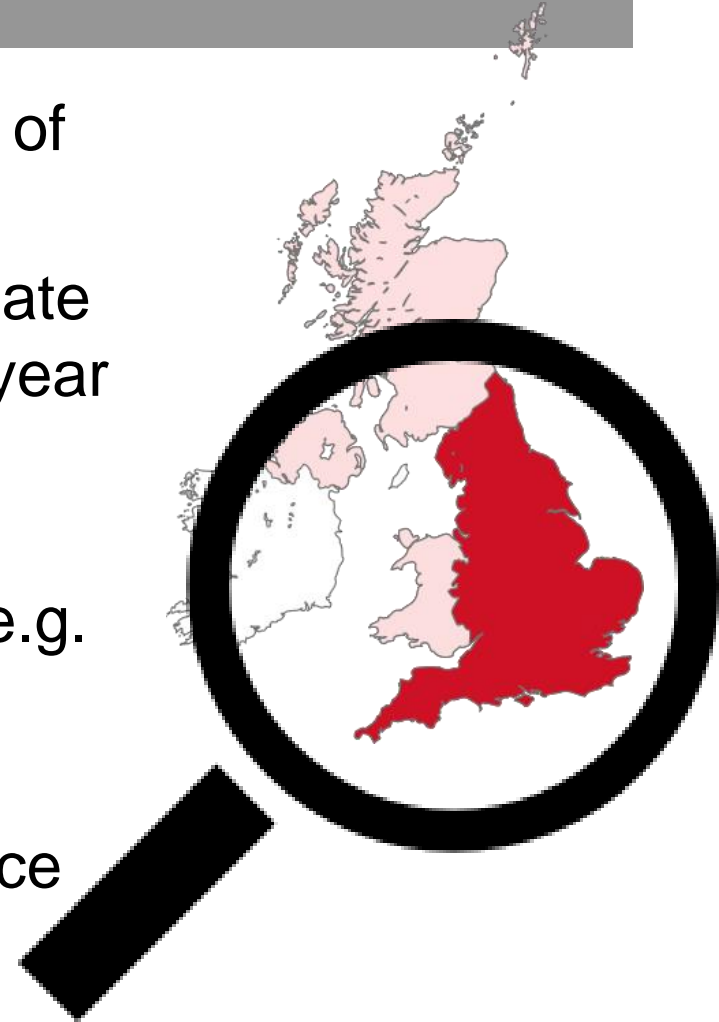
- Institutional mission and commitment
- Information and matching to improve decision making
- Selection versus open access
- Inclusive learning and teaching
- Facilitating social integration and sense of belonging
- Monitoring students' attendance and progression
- Whole institution approach

National level

- Context: current participation and success levels; access and selectivity; alternative options; student tuition fees and financial support.
- Policies: Financing (student and institution), organisation of teaching and learning; and information and support for students.
- Enablers: Commitment; shared definition of study success, policy alignment; measuring progress and holding institutions accountable.

Using England as a case study: Context

- 1.9 m students in England 2017/18, of which 1.4m are undergraduates.
- 6.3% of young, full-time undergraduate students did not continue following year of entry, and 7.6% of all FT UGs
- Most institutions select applicants; there are few alternative pathways e.g. vocational learning.
- High tuition fees; all students have access to tuition fee and maintenance loans.



Strengths of the national approach

1. Clear and widely accepted definition of student success, and target groups.
2. Several policies are aligned to incentivise, require and support institutions to improve success, these relate to institutional funding, teaching quality and provision of information and support to students.
3. Institutional performance is measured, and this information is in the public domain.
4. The policy mix encourages institutional responsibility for student success, and is under-pinned by a developing evidence base.

Definitions of retention

- Completion rate: “*proportion of starters in a year who continue their studies until they obtain their qualification, with no more than one consecutive year out of higher education*”.
- Continuation rate: “*proportion of a higher education providers intake which is enrolled in the year following entry*”.
- These definitions have been extended, but are not not really contested.

Extended definitions of success

Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE 2013) identified four outcomes of HE:

- Achieving a degree (retention and completion).
- Achieving a good degree (attainment).
- Achieving a degree and continuing to employment/further study (employability).
- Achieving a degree and continuing to graduate employment or study (graduate progression).

Widening participation target groups in England

National participation groups:

- Students from deprived areas (IMD Q1&2)
- Students from low participation areas (POLAR 4 Q1&2)
- Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups
- Mature students
- Disabled students
- Care leavers

Policy alignment: Funding, organisation and information and support

- Funding follows students, previously through an allocation and currently through fee income. This provides a strong incentive.
- An emphasis on improving the quality of teaching, learning, e.g. Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF).
- All institutions must produce an Access and Participation Plan (APP) which assesses performance, allocates funding, commits to interventions and provides targets.
- Publication information: Performance indicators, APP, TEF, Key Information Sets
- Research evidence: E.g. Evidence and Impact Exchange.

Access and participation plans

APPs set out how providers will improve equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups to access, succeed in and progress from HE. They include:

- Assessment of performance and priorities;
- Plans for change;
- Challenging targets;
- Investment to deliver the plan;
- Evaluation approach.

There is greater emphasis success and progression, including differential attainment, more challenging targets and appropriate evaluation.

Sanction: Registration as an HE provider.

Target Group	Student Lifecycle Stage			
	Access	Continuation	Attainment	Progression
Students from IMD Quintiles 1-2	✓	✓	✓	✓
Students from POLAR4 Quintiles 1-2	KPM1	KPM3	✓	✓
Black, Asian and minority ethnic students	✓	✓	KPM4	✓
Mature students	✓	✓	✓	
Disabled students		✓	KPM5	✓
Care Leavers	✓	✓	✓	

Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF)

- New scheme to assess the quality of learning and teaching and provide information to students.
- Positive outcomes for **all** students
 - Student satisfaction (NSS)
 - Student voice
 - Continuation
 - Employment outcomes
- Split metrics provide data in relation to WP and equality groups: e.g. age, POLAR, IMD, ethnicity, disability and gender.
- Provider (and subject) level award: Gold, silver, bronze

The framework



The Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) aims to recognise and reward excellence in teaching, learning and student outcomes

Aspects of quality:

Teaching Quality	Learning Environment	Student Outcomes and Learning Gain
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Evidence:

- Core metrics

Teaching; Assessment and feedback (NSS)	Academic support (NSS); Continuation (HESA/ILR data)	Employment / Highly skilled employment or further study (DLHE)
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- Split metrics

Core metrics split into sub groups reflecting widening participation priorities

- Submission & Supplementary metrics

Provider submission (additional evidence written by the provider), and Supplementary metrics: Grade inflation (provider declaration) and Sustained employment / Above median earnings or further study (LEO)

Outcome:

TEF award & Statement of findings

Four award icons are shown in a row: TEF Gold (yellow), TEF Silver (grey), TEF Bronze (orange), and TEF Provisional (green). Each icon consists of the letters 'TEF' in a white box followed by the award name in a colored box.

Measurement of student success and outcomes in public domain

- Shared and widely accepted definitions of success facilitated measurement.
- Each institution must report data to the Higher Education Statistics Agency.
- This is compared against benchmarked data to provide an adjusted target for each institution.
- The benchmark and annual target is published.
- This and other information is used (e.g. by the press) to create league tables.

Low participation neighbourhood marker

All (T3a) ▾

Academic year of entry

2016/17

	Total full-time entrants ↓	Number no longer in HE ↓	Percentage no longer in HE (%) ↓	Benchmark (%) ↓	Standard deviation (%) ↓	+/- ↓
Anglia Ruskin University	2,510	250	9.9	9.0	0.53	
Aston University	2,700	75	2.8	6.2	0.39	+
Bath Spa University	1,840	115	6.1	6.7	0.55	
The University of Bath	2,575	45	1.7	3.0	0.37	
University of Bedfordshire	1,470	225	15.2	10.4	0.78	-
Birkbeck College	290	35	11.7	8.0	1.58	
Birmingham City University	4,250	415	9.8	8.7	0.41	
The University of Birmingham	5,010	125	2.5	3.2	0.28	
University College Birmingham	480	50	10.2	10.0	1.21	
Bishop Grosseteste University	360	15	4.2	7.1	1.14	
The University of Bolton	815	125	15.4	10.8	1.04	-
The Arts University Bournemouth	825	35	4.4	6.4	0.77	

Low participation neighbourhood marker

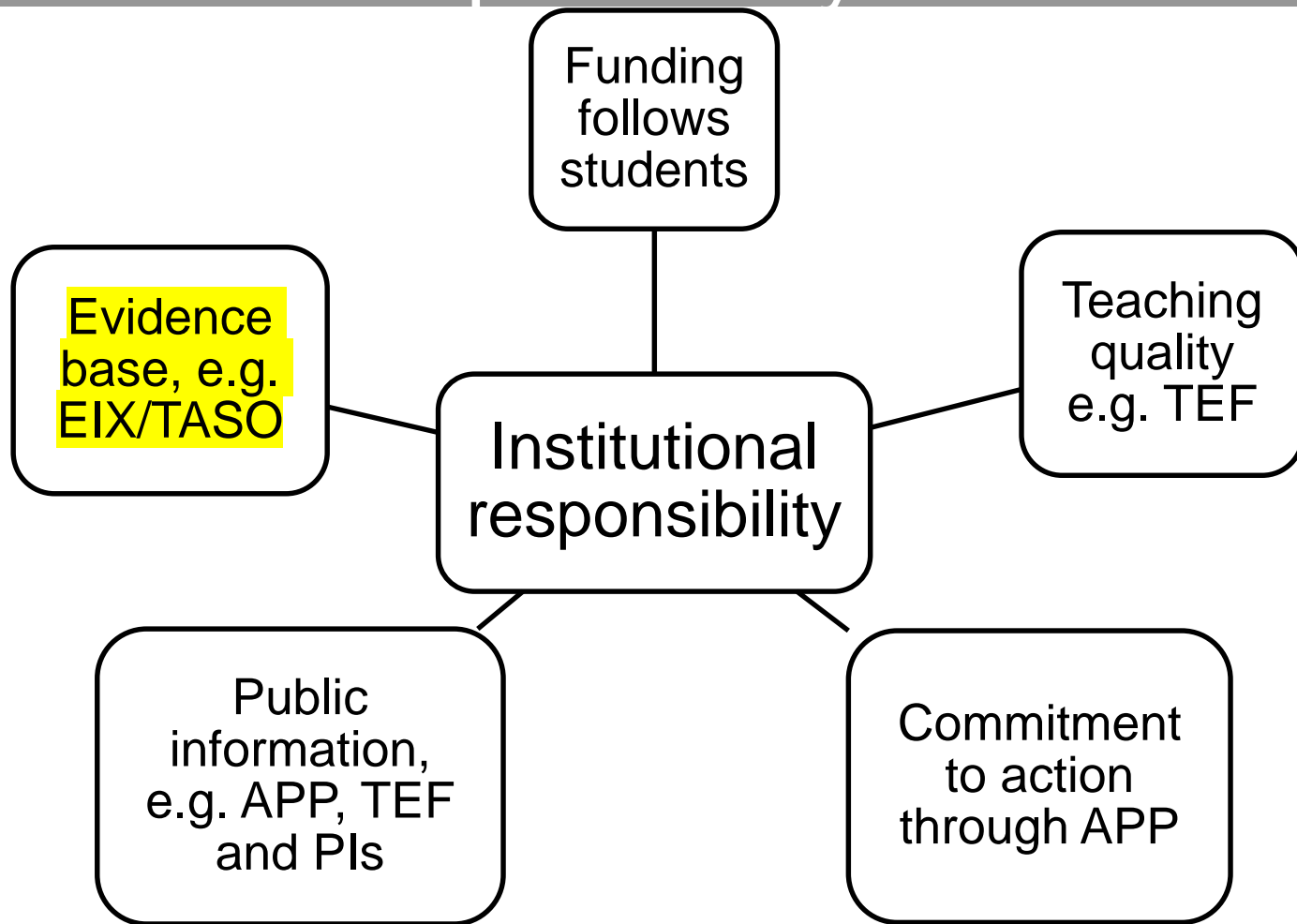
Low (T3b) ▾

Academic year of entry

2016/17

	Total full-time entrants ↑	Number no longer in HE ↓	Percentage no longer in HE (%) ↓	Benchmark (%) ↓	Standard deviation (%) ↓	+/- ↓
Anglia Ruskin University	410	40	9.8	10.5	1.37	
Aston University	260	5	2.7	7.0	1.40	+
Bath Spa University	190	15	6.8	8.4	1.88	
The University of Bath	140	5	3.5	4.6	1.90	
University of Bedfordshire	170	20	12.5	11.8	2.23	
Birkbeck College	15	0				
Birmingham City University	555	60	11.0	10.2	1.20	
The University of Birmingham	335	10	3.3	4.4	1.23	
University College Birmingham	75	5	9.2	12.6	3.05	
Bishop Grosseteste University	75	0	2.6	8.5	2.54	
The University of Bolton	200	45	21.3	13.3	2.33	-
The Arts University Bournemouth	75	5	6.8	8.7	2.91	

National policy mix promotes institutional responsibility for success



Institutional responsibility

- Financial incentives, policies and the availability of information in the public domain encourage institutional responsibility.
- This has been informed by development of the evidence base, e.g. What works? Various literature reviews and the EIX/TASO.
- Access and Participation Plans hold institutions accountable and require evaluation of impact and achieving challenging targets.
- *What are institutions doing?*

Development of understanding about retention and success

First generation: Retention

Fixing up students through bolt-on interventions



Second generation: Success

Engagement and belonging in academic learning



Third generation: Whole institution approach

Cross-institutional commitment, engagement and inclusive practice.

WHAT WORKS? STUDENT RETENTION AND SUCCESS

Phase 1



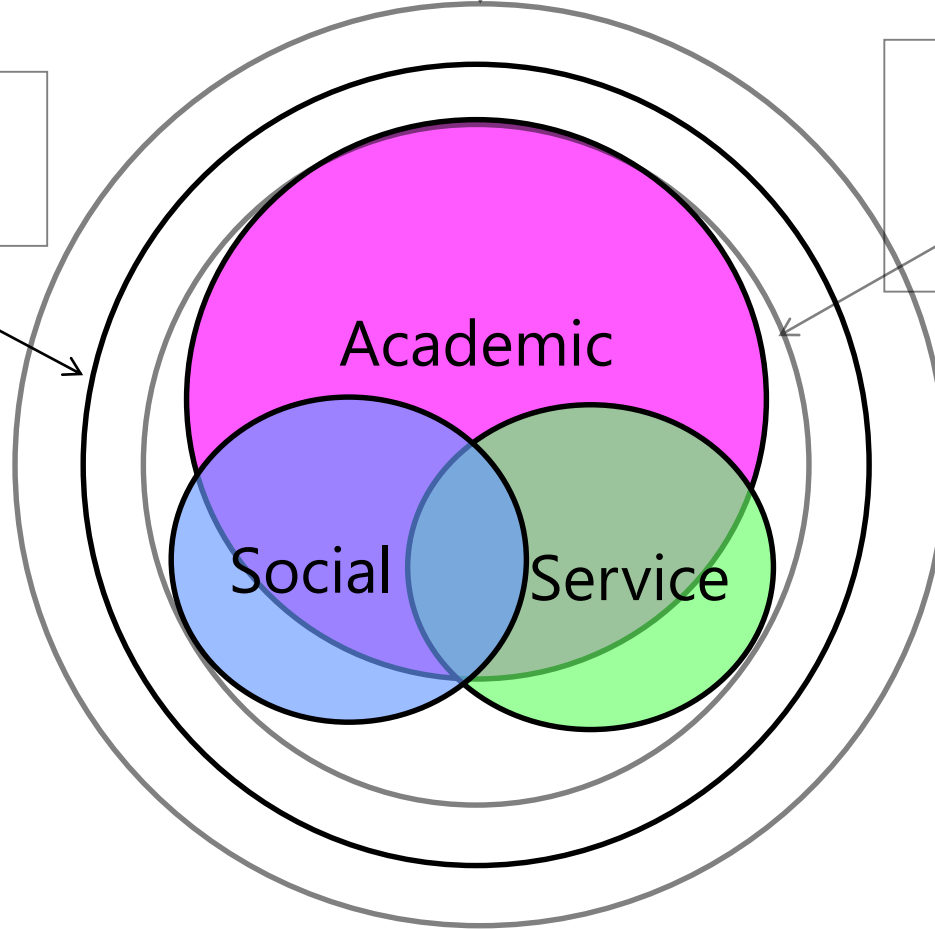
Phase 2



Institutional management
and co-ordination

Staff capacity
building

Student
capacity
building



Early engagement extends into HE and beyond

Breaking down the silos

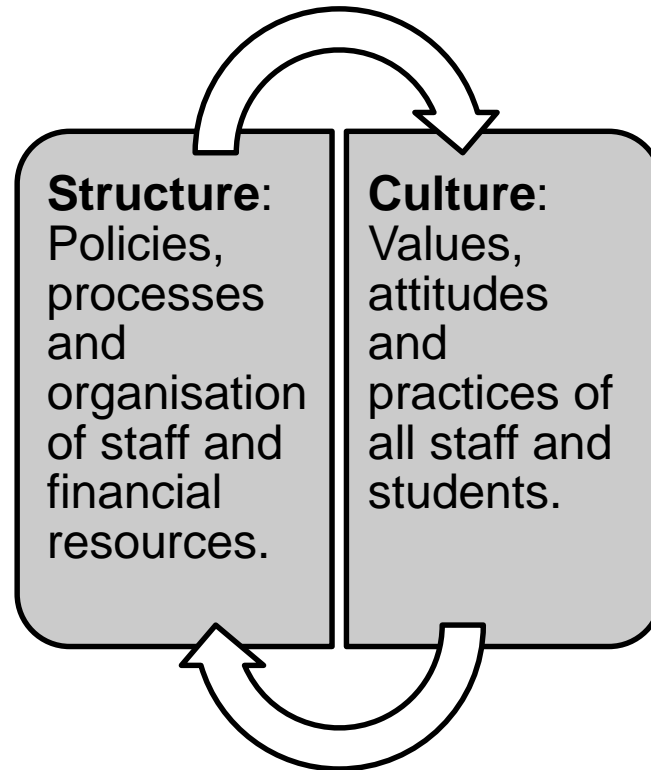
Vertical alignment: The student lifecycle



Horizontal alignment: Students' HE experience

Whole institution approach

Institutional commitment to student retention and success



Underpinned by data, evidence and research

Co-ordinated and consistent approach to retention and success

Examples of institutional practice

- A strong focus on transition and the first year student experience, promoting engagement and belonging.
- Embedded academic skills.
- Inclusive learning environments, student-centred teaching and improving assessment.
- More feedback from students/more student voice.
- Teacher education; greater reward and recognition for teaching.
- Monitoring student attendance and engagement.
- Personal tutoring, student service and financial support.
- Co-curricular activities.
- Funding to support engagement.
- Well-being within the curriculum.

Conclusions

Achieving student success is more likely when:

- National commitment results in a shared definition, policy alignment and measurement of institutional performance.
- Institutions take responsibility for student success and demonstrate commitment to this issue.
- The institutional approach is informed by research and evaluation, and seeks to engage students through mainstream activities, especially an inclusive curriculum.
- The institution takes account of the whole of the student experience, and aligns financial support, personal and social well-being and professional development with the academic experience.



**Thank you for listening.
Any questions?**

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