



NEON Establishing Evidence and Measuring Impact Working Group Meeting Minutes

Thursday 12th September 2019 – 12.30pm – 16.30pm

Miriam Styrnol, Evaluation Manager (Establishment Phase), The Centre for Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education (TASO): Discussing their plans and how we can feed into their future vision on what works

TASO So far

- Academic Advisory Panel (APP)
 - o Help ensure rigorous evaluation
 - o Develop evaluation frameworks and research protocols for use by the sector
- Evaluation Advisory Group (EAG)
 - o Decide if what is being suggested is relevant for the sector- ensuring it is accessible, comprehensible and applicable
- Theme Working Groups (TWGs)
 - o Scrutinise progress

Current research Themes

1. Cost Effectiveness of current outreach provision
 - a. Being undertaken by HEAT
2. Student experience gaps
 - a. EPI commissioned to under lit review of current evidence
 - i. Initial findings presented within slides
 - b. Report due in December / January

Currently working on

- Development of statistical analysis plan
- Produced a draft evaluation framework- inc theory of change, examples of evaluation methods, impact measures
- Online gap and evidence maps and toolkit to illustrate where evaluations have been found, relating to whom and what activities
- Knowledge mobilisation
 - o Upskill sector on techniques via panels, groups and workshops

Opportunities to get involved

- Next commissioning round- Jan 2010
 - o Partnership research projects
 - o Commissioned research projects
- Currently recruiting individuals to join the TASO Consultancy Network. Further details on this can be found [here](#).

TASO: Q&A

- When will the frameworks and toolkits be available to the sector?
 - o Draft going to evaluation group in October and should be made available in January
- Is there a risk that where there is poor / a lack of evidence to support the delivery of a particular activity that funding may be cut / reduced by OfS?
 - o It's not something that TASO would recommend. It's important that each set of findings are understood within the context they were delivered in, to whom and how the evaluation was carried out. It's very difficult at this stage to unpick activity from activity and as such would not recommend activities are removed from offer on the basis of one or two research projects.
- Is an objective of TASO to be owned by the sector?
 - o Want to be an independent charity- with representation from the sector

Lydia Redican, WP Project Officer, University of Liverpool: How to integrate evaluation into a practitioners world in the face of conflicting and competing priorities

- Firstly, created buy-in and raised awareness by
 - o Unlocking previous evaluation work
 - o Understanding who is a resource or source of support
- Followed by embed design using logic model- ensuring all outcomes are connected
 - o Expanding the evaluation framework to ensure data is at the heart of the plan but also ensuring that the practitioners voice is heard- as this is not necessarily something that can easily be measured.
 - o Using a core evaluation- structured and remains constant to enable year on year comparisons
 - o And enhanced evaluation to look at specific elements within each year
- To ensure success its important to have regular meetings with key stakeholders to continue to develop and discuss the focus of your strategy
- How to map out your evaluation framework:
 - o Identify stakeholders
 - o Set meetings
 - o Set milestones for the activity and link evaluation tools and techniques to this
 - o Decide where your evaluation will go when it's done

Topics for future meetings

- The group would like delegates to share examples of how they evaluate (or plan to evaluate) one-off discrete interventions so that we can help understand where comparable evaluations are taking place, help to improve existing evaluation plans as well as support each other in developing plans where they currently don't exist.
 - o For the next meeting we would like delegates to submit a one slide PowerPoint detailing:
 - **Activity Description**- including its overall type (Campus Visit, Masterclass, Summer School etc)
 - Overarching **aims and objectives** of the activity (what the intended outcomes you hope the activity will achieve, what its success looks like)

- **Evaluation tools** utilised (or proposed)- surveys, focus groups, interviews, monitoring data etc
 - Any **analysis techniques** you may have used or plan to use to unpick and interpret your findings
- The group are also keen to ensure where new evaluators come into post in the coming months that they are signposted to the group and forthcoming NEON Access Academy Evaluation Training sessions