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# STUDENT KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE IMPACT TOOLKIT

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## Summary Guide

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# 1.0 PURPOSE OF THE KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE IMPACT TOOLKIT

## Consider intended impacts and outcomes

E.g., breaking down barriers for widening participation students, opportunity providers gain new knowledge and practices, greater impact of the university in the local area.

## What are the contextual and policy conditions?

E.g., providing virtual and flexible approach to knowledge exchange activities, linking in with Knowledge Exchange Framework, and Access and Participation Plan.

## What are the inputs needed?

E.g., bursary for students, staff resources, point of contact for opportunity provider engagement, commitment to supporting local community, economy, and society.

## Which activities and outputs will there be?

E.g., virtual micro internships, enterprise challenges, student start-up seed funding, events, publicity, and marketing.

## FIGURE 1. THE LEARNING CYCLE

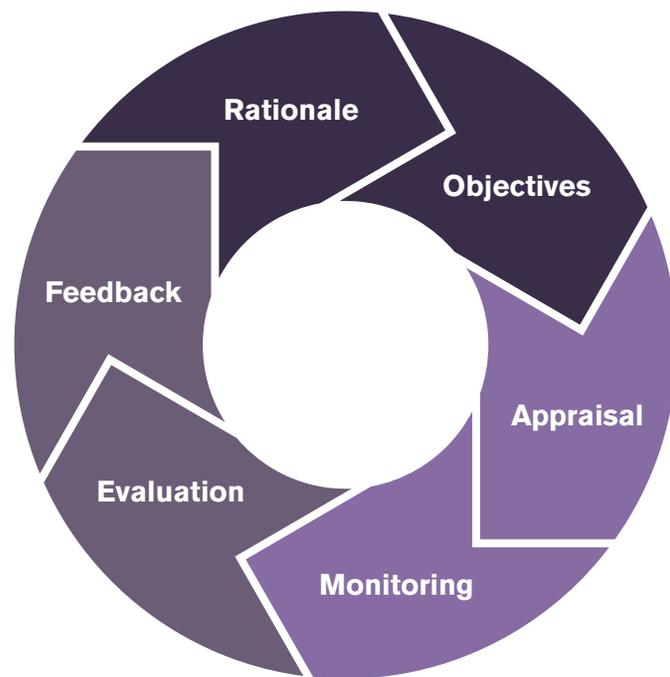


Figure 1. The Learning Cycle shows how the evaluation process continues throughout the project. From understanding the **Rationale and Objectives** of a project, the continued **Appraisal and Monitoring** throughout, and the **Evaluation and Feedback** which then informs future projects and policies.

## WHAT IS THE KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE IMPACT TOOLKIT?

The Student Knowledge Exchange Impact Toolkit is for academics and practitioners who want to know the impact that their knowledge exchange project makes. The Toolkit is a collection of evaluation methods used and developed by Keele University and the University of Birmingham through the project Student Knowledge Exchange Re-imagined – Removing the Barriers, Engaging Communities, funded by the Office for Students and Research England.

The toolkit shares the **best practice and top tips** from the Keele University and the University of Birmingham when **capturing and evaluating** the interconnected impacts that student knowledge exchange activities have.

## POLICY AND PRACTICE LEARNING CYCLE

Evaluating the impacts that knowledge exchange activities have is vitally important. Evaluating projects is a key part of the policy cycle which has three main parts: the **Rationale and Objectives** of an intervention; **Appraisal and Monitoring** of the programme; and **Evaluation and Feedback** into the impacts and future iterations. It is important that evaluations feedback to inform the **Rationale and Objectives** of future policy and practice.

Putting the policy cycle down on paper is a really good way to visualise the evaluation process and to outline how to go from policy to practice. This approach is called a **Logic Model** or a **Theory of Change**. Clearly outlining how the programme goes from idea into practice is a valuable step in evaluation.

## THE STEPPING STONES OF EVALUATION

Follow each of the **Stepping Stones of Evaluation in turn** when starting the evaluative process, **without jumping ahead**. First consider **who is taking part in the scheme** (Step A), and the **participant's opinions of the impact** (Steps B and C) before progressing. Please bear in mind that it is **not always necessary to progress all the way to the final step**. As such, it is important to consider **practicality, staff resource, and ethics** when conducting evaluations.

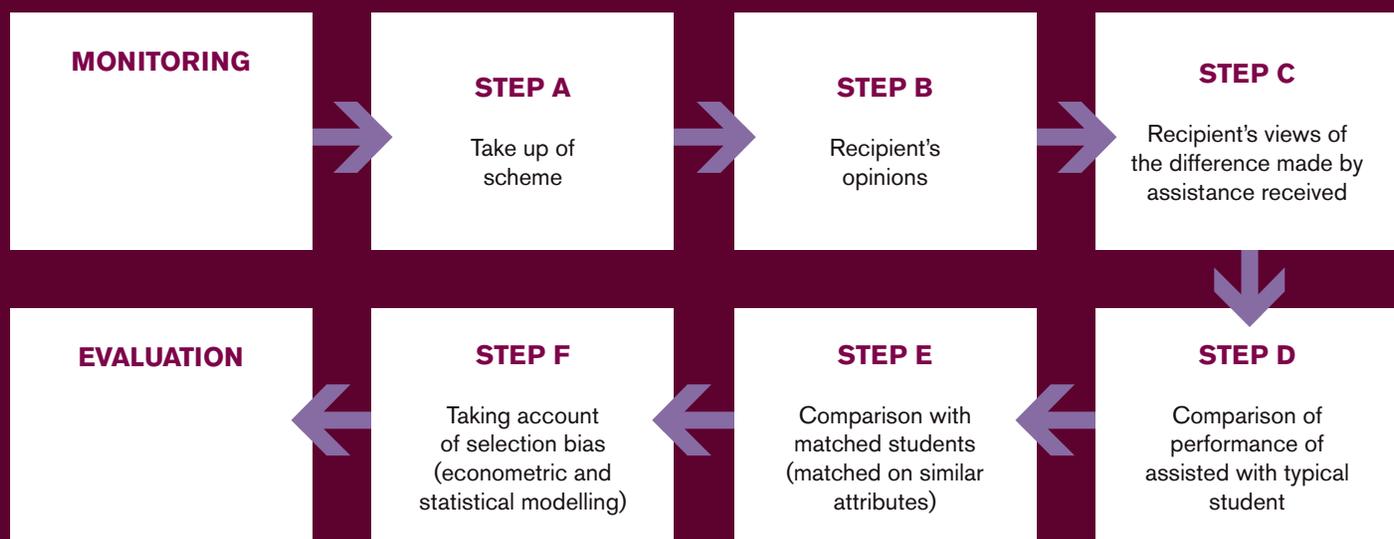


Figure 2. There are different steps of evaluation, ranging from monitoring the take up of the scheme through to using sophisticated statistical modelling of impacts. Evaluations can be useful and insightful without progressing all the way to the final step.

### BEST PRACTICE

- Showing that there is strong rationale and objectives for interventions is important to ensure the project is targeted and purposeful.
- Planning evaluations from the start is crucial. Having a benchmark and starting point is vital for making comparisons to evidence the impact that the project has had.
- Having clear objectives allows project managers to keep on track, and keep in mind the impacts that the programme set out to achieve.
- Feedback findings of evaluations into future programmes and policies is vital for ensuring the continuation of the good practice, as well as providing a legacy for the project.

### TOP TIPS

- It is important to choose the most suitable method for the task at hand. You do not want to use a sledgehammer to crack a nut, for example.
- Start from the end and work backwards when identifying the intended impacts and outcomes. What are the intended outcomes and impacts? Which activities are required to achieve these? What resources are needed? What is the rationale for the resources? How does the rationale meet the programme objectives?
- Consider at least one evaluation method for each thread of the Quadruple Helix to show a rounded evaluation impact.

## THE QUADRUPLE HELIX MODEL

The **Quadruple Helix model** emphasises the importance of evaluating the interconnections between **students; universities; opportunity providers; and place, regional economy, and society** as stakeholder groups. Evaluations should consider the impacts for each of the four stakeholder groups. Evaluating the impact for students, and in particular students from widening participation backgrounds, is the **golden thread** that runs throughout the Quadruple Helix. The Impact Toolkit sets out **methods, good practice, and top tips** for evaluating each of the four stakeholder groups.

- **Students:** Evaluate how the project impacts students, in particular those from widening participation backgrounds.
- **Higher Education Institutions:** There is importance in evidencing the impact role Higher Education Institutions are having on supporting knowledge exchange activities.
- **Opportunity providers:** Participating external organisations also gain from the knowledge exchange process. In particular, evidencing impacts and benefits for businesses, public bodies, charities, and social enterprises can be insightful.
- **Place, economy, and society:** The university acts as an anchor institution in a place. Evidencing and capturing how the university, students, and employers make a difference in wider economy, society, and community is an important part of the impact of knowledge exchange.

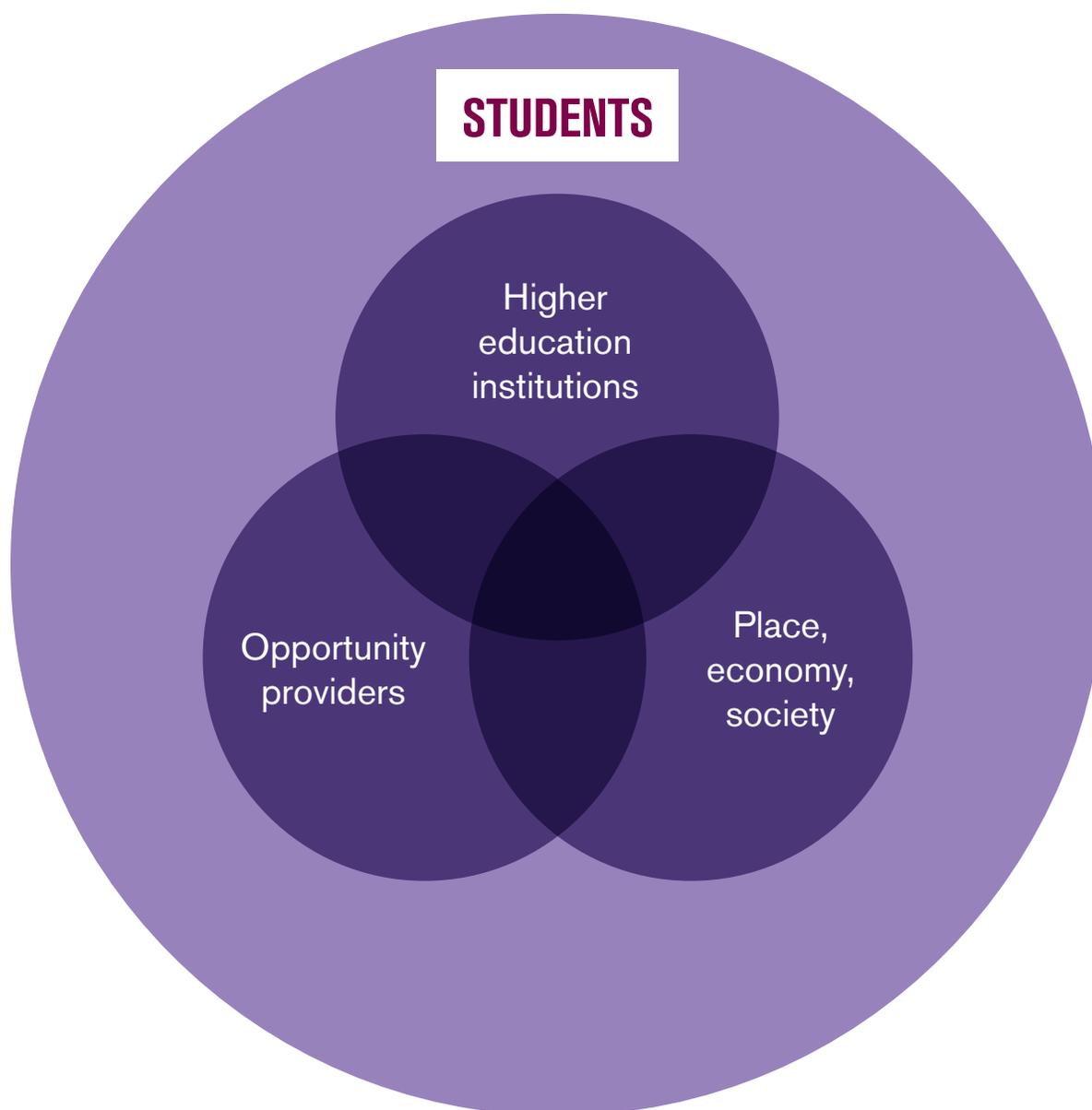


Figure 3. The Quadruple Helix Model for evaluating the impacts of student knowledge exchange. Students are the overarching circle that has interconnected impacts for: opportunity providers; higher education institutions; and place, economy and society.

## 2.0 EVALUATING IMPACT FOR STUDENTS

This Student Knowledge Exchange Impact Toolkit is for academics and practitioners who want to know the impact that their knowledge exchange project makes. The Toolkit is a collection of evaluation methods used and developed by Keele University and the University of Birmingham through the project Student Knowledge Exchange Re-imagined – Removing the Barriers, Engaging Communities, funded by the Office for Students and Research England.

Suitable Evaluation Approaches	Top Tips
<p>Use <b>pre-event surveys</b> to set a benchmark for student skills, confidence, or knowledge. Evaluation used for more in-depth comparisons.</p>	<p><b>Reflect</b> on previous programmes and identify the added value that this programme can bring.</p> <p>Use unique identifiers such as or <b>Project IDs</b> to be able to link data and anonymise student data.</p> <p>Use <b>Likert scale questions</b> to quickly identify trends in the data using Excel or similar.</p> <p>Consult legal teams for advice on <b>GDPR</b>.</p>
<p>Consult <b>Access and Participation Plans</b> to ensure the project supports diversity, equality, and inclusion objectives.</p>	<p>Consider 'how can this project support the Access and Participation Plan?' and '<b>what skills or knowledge do we want to evaluate?</b>'</p>
<p>Host regular <b>Student Shape-It Workshops</b> so students can provide feedback to and make improvements to their experience. Evaluates the difference the programme has made for students.</p>	<p>Provide officers with time and resources to host regular workshops and read over logs from students to <b>gather feedback</b>.</p> <p>Reflective logs should be completed weekly and use the <b>STAR</b> (Situation, Task, Action, Result) <b>format</b> so students can use their experience ready for future interviews, CVs, and covering letters.</p>
<p>Submit <b>reflective logs</b> to track the student journey over the course of the programme. Evaluates the difference the programme has made for students.</p>	<p>Students can use their experience ready for future interviews, CVs, and covering letters.</p> <p>Consider how barriers to accessing knowledge exchange opportunities can be <b>broken down</b>, such as the impact of bursaries, accessible language, altering the format to provide virtual online opportunities, or offering part-time opportunities with roles spread over several weeks.</p>
<p>Use <b>post-event surveys</b> to compare with the student position pre-event and identify change. Evaluation used for more in-depth comparisons, whether with similar students on the same project, students on a different project, or students who have not taken part at all.</p>	<p>Include relevant questions in both pre- and post-event surveys to allow <b>comparisons</b> to be made.</p> <p>Breakdown analysis by <b>student characteristic</b> to identify impact for different groups of people. Comparing with students from similar 'career readiness' stages could be a good option for analysis.</p> <p>Provide space for both <b>qualitative and quantitative</b> responses in surveys. Analyse quantitative responses to give a high-level overview before <b>digging deeper</b> by analysing qualitative responses.</p> <p><b>Incorporate the same questions</b> in the evaluations of future programmes to compare the impact one programme makes compared to another.</p>

## 3.0 EVALUATING IMPACT FOR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Universities are increasingly focused on capturing knowledge exchange through the Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF) and Knowledge Exchange Concordat (KEC). This Knowledge Exchange Evaluation Impact Tool supports collection of the KEF and KEC metrics and also provides additional tools to capture impacts that are not collected in KEF and KEC reporting.

The staff at universities play a key role in the support of knowledge exchange and it is important to capture, recognise, and celebrate the impact that staff make in supporting knowledge exchange activities. Keele University and the University of Birmingham have developed a toolkit on Embedding Enterprise in the Curriculum which provides step by step guides for academic staff to embed knowledge exchange activities in their modules.

Suitable Evaluation Approaches	Top Tips
Align with the objectives and metrics linked to the <b>KEF and KEC</b> .	<b>Coordinate with relevant officers</b> involved with the KEF and KEC so evaluations capture relevant impacts and outcomes.
Staff to record and share their <b>good practice</b> to evidence the impact they make too.	Keep a record of good practice that is regularly updated, and examples of where and how <b>staff have supported</b> students and opportunity providers in their roles.
Record and share <b>good news stories</b> and case studies of where staff have supported the smooth running of the project.	<b>Embed</b> the impact that project staff have made to the project within reporting mechanisms.
Include <b>proxy questions</b> from other reporting mechanisms in the evaluation forms.	<b>Align evaluations</b> with the National Student Survey or Graduate Outcomes Survey by using proxy questions. This can indicate whether the programme is working to support broader institutional metrics.
Develop a <b>repository of relevant policies and toolkits</b> , and feedback into these projects for future impact. This can monitor the take-up of the programmes compared to other similar opportunities.	Consider the impact of the project for future iterations of projects, supporting the <b>strategic aims and objectives</b> of the institution or department, to evaluate the legacy impact of the programme.  Feedback evaluations to <b>inform policy and practice</b> for other similar programmes.

# 4.0 EVALUATING IMPACT FOR OPPORTUNITY PROVIDERS

Opportunity providers can gain knowledge and improve business processes from engaging with knowledge exchange activities to improve their day-to-day operations. Keele University and the University of Birmingham have broken down barriers by completing 250 internships over the two-year project. Over 70% of opportunity providers are charities, social enterprises, and not-for-profit organisations. These opportunity providers have been supported by the virtual and flexible delivery of knowledge exchange activities.

Suitable Evaluation Approaches	Top Tips
<p>Complete Opportunity Provider <b>Application Forms</b> when initial contact or expression of interest is made. This can monitor the take-up of the opportunities provided.</p>	<p><b>Embed</b> the application form within the initial engagement process to ease the administrative burden for opportunity providers and the institutions.</p> <p>Collect data on: sector; postcode; SME status; charity or social enterprise status (if applicable) to evaluate the impact for small businesses, charities, local businesses, and important sectors in the regional economy.</p>
<p>Record and share <b>good news stories</b> and case studies of opportunity providers. This can share the view of opportunity providers of the difference that the opportunities have made.</p>	<p>Capture how opportunity providers have gained knowledge, changed business practices, supported their own aims and objectives by taking part in knowledge exchange activities.</p> <p>Staff to record and share examples of <b>good practice</b> to keep a record of what works well to ensure the smooth running of the project.</p>
<p>Provide <b>post-internship evaluations</b>, whether that is through a form or an end-of-internship interview. This can inform the difference that the activities have made for the opportunity providers.</p>	<p>Capture how opportunity providers have gained knowledge, changed <b>business practices</b>, supported their own aims and objectives by taking part in knowledge exchange activities.</p> <p>Consider how barriers to accessing knowledge exchange opportunities be broken down, such as the impact of bursaries, altering the format to provide virtual online opportunities, or offering part-time opportunities with roles spread over a number of weeks.</p>

# 5.0 EVALUATING IMPACT FOR PLACE, ECONOMY, AND SOCIETY

Universities are anchor institutions that play an active economic and societal role in the local area. Placing the student knowledge exchange work in the local economic and societal context is the key to evaluating the broader impact of student knowledge exchange. Evaluating the broader impacts of knowledge exchange for place, economy, and society.

Suitable Evaluation Approaches	Top Tips
<p>Consult Access and Participation Plans Civic University Agreements to ensure the project supports <b>diversity, equality, and inclusion</b> objectives. Evaluation is a quick and easy monitoring of student numbers.</p> <p>Consider the social value policies of the institution, and where the knowledge exchange opportunities support <b>creating social value</b>. This can evaluate the additional benefits and difference that the opportunity has made.</p>	<p>Record the <b>wage rates</b> that students are paid. Are opportunities paid or unpaid, above Government National Living Wage (£9.50 per hour for 23-year-olds and over from April 2022), or above the Real Living Wage (independently calculated based on the cost of living at £9.90 per hour in the UK or £11.05 per hour in London from May 2022)?</p> <p>Record the number of opportunity providers in each industry sector by using Broad Industry Groups from the Office for National Statistics</p> <p>Record and evaluate the impact for students from <b>widening participation backgrounds</b>, social enterprises, charities, not for profit, small businesses, and local businesses.</p>
<p>Utilise dashboards and indices such as the <a href="#">WMREDI Civic Index</a> to evaluate whether the programme supports the contribution of the university to their local area.</p>	<p><b>Check the 'metrics' tab</b> to identify suitable metrics for your institution. These can be metrics that the institution wants to improve upon, or has a particular strength in, and wants to build from.</p>
<p>Use case studies and good news stories to exemplify the <b>impact for community</b> organisations and individual cases.</p>	<p>Small scale activities still have their value for individuals. Capturing the <b>impact for individuals</b> through case studies is valuable.</p>
<p><b>Link with strategic economic plans</b> from local authorities to evaluate whether the organisations that are part of the project are part of the local economy, and work towards the strategic aims of the locality or region.</p>	<p>Consider if there are <b>economic strengths that can be built upon</b> in your area. Or, conversely, whether there are any economic weaknesses to address.</p> <p>Using case studies can be powerful in capturing <b>impact for individuals</b>.</p> <p>Consider 'do the case studies fit in with the <b>direction of travel</b> for knowledge exchange policies?' to ensure individual impacts align with broader policies.</p>

