National Forum for the Enhancement of
Teaching and Learning (NFET&L)

'Next Steps for Teaching and Learning: Moving Forward Together'

Work Package 7
Technological Higher Education Association (THEA)

Index

1.0
Executive Summary

This report presents the outcomes of a series of facilitated reflections with the Registrars and Chief Academic Officers of Higher Education Institutions that are members of the Technological Higher Education Association (THEA). This project, as part of the overall 'Next Steps for Teaching and Learning' project coordinated by the National Forum, sought to examine the learned experiences of the senior leaders charged with key responsibilities for their institution's overall academic provision, including academic quality and integrity. Documentation relating to deliberations of the Council of Registrars (which met very frequently throughout the public health emergency) and associated sectoral / national policies and papers were complemented by two workshops designed to prompt reflection on what lessons had been learned during this time, and which key changes might be successfully maintained into the future. The Maynooth University Innovation Lab (Mi:Lab) designed and facilitated each workshop, the first of which took place online in June 2021, with the second workshop held on-campus in a member institution in August 2021. This occasion represented the first face to face meeting of the Registrars' group since March 2020.

Two key facts must be acknowledged as informing the context for these reflections. The first is that discussions of Registrars, collaboratively and individually, were significantly underpinned by the existence of well-established principles, policies and procedures to maintain and enhance the quality of provision and to provide agreed structures for decision-making. While adaptations were required to operationalise these policies and procedures in an environment of a rapid and large-scale move to remote learning, the inherently strong foundations proved invaluable. Secondly, the additional pressures caused by COVID-19 largely highlighted known issues and challenges to teaching, learning and assessment to a greater extent than they identified entirely new issues. For THEA member institutions, the enormous transformation already underway with the move towards single, multi-campus technological universities represented, and continues to present, unique opportunities and challenges as the attendant impacts on teaching, learning and assessment experiences for students and staff are more fully explored and better understood.

Workshop one focussed on the forces enabling and inhibiting change within institutions; those aspects that were liked, should change, or which merited further exploration; as well as some prioritised emerging trends within Higher Education. Assessment featured strongly in participants' reflections with a widely shared view that the culture of traditional summative examinations felt "broken, ineffective or outdated". It was acknowledged that the emergency pivot to remote learning and assessment had taken place much quicker than might have previously been anticipated and that great flexibility had been demonstrated by staff and students to enable this change. However, in more usual circumstances when Higher Education (and society as a whole) learns to "manage with COVID-19" on a longer-term basis, concerns were expressed about maintaining or embedding sufficient systemic flexibility to accommodate a suitably diverse range and schedule of assessments and assessment approaches.

Issues relating to existing academic calendars and contractual arrangements may be perceived as restricting optimal flexibility unless these are addressed in a planned and sustained manner by all relevant stakeholders. Some concern was also expressed about maintaining the academic integrity of assessments and the need to take care to revisit changes made to teaching, learning and assessment in an emergency context. Indeed, similar issues were identified with providing a holistic student experience of Higher Education. In an environment where some voices are actively promoting the benefits of teaching and learning which is substantially online, the need to balance such aspirations with the desire of students for a meaningful on-campus experience highlighted some of the challenges yet to be resolved. From the perspective of senior leaders responsible for quality of provision, the importance of rigorous Quality Assurance of emerging / proposed teaching, learning and assessment practices was regarded as essential before any long-term changes are implemented.

Recent experiences also provided opportunities to mainstream training in assessment design and academic integrity as many more staff had availed of such services than might have been the case in other circumstances. This example also illustrates the increased appreciation of a Higher Education Institution as an ecosystem with academic, professional and managerial support service staff all playing their part to contribute to the overall provision of engaging experiences to students. To enable a diverse and inclusive student body to achieve success in Higher Education (with all of the interpretations of what success means for individual students), a fully supportive infrastructure of quality assurance and enhancement, student support services, physical and technology-related facilities, and institutional decision-making, is required to facilitate the core activities of teaching, learning and assessment. The interplay between these different and complementary components was deeply appreciated during the past eighteen months in a way which may have been perceived as somewhat theoretical prior to this. The contribution of different organisational units within institutions to shared decision-making made a persuasive difference to this deeper understanding.

Co-creation and collaboration across different staff teams, and with students, were viewed as a key positive experience during this time. Similar experiences were gained when Registrars discussed issues with peers, as one of a series of key networks facilitated by THEA. As one stated, "For the Registrars' group, collaboration and sharing was very important throughout the process. When this happened, the true value of the relationships came to the fore". When considering top emerging trends for Higher Education, redesign of assessments and prioritising diversity, equity and inclusion featured most strongly.

The second workshop was scheduled just before the start of the next academic year with the intent of focussing on what experiences and lessons learned may mean for the future of teaching, learning and assessment. An institutional Operating System canvas was used to provide an approximate structure for different organisational components, while recognising that some issues could feature under multiple headings.

> **"For the Registrars' group, collaboration and sharing was very important throughout the process. When this happened, the true value of the relationships came to the fore"**

Greater flexibility in uses of physical spaces were considered in order to effectively accommodate more flexible learning and varying group sizes, with increased use of hybrid teaching and learning models. Many institutions are physically set up for traditional modes of teaching and learning and multi-annual strategic funding is required to enable the development of multi-functional healthy spaces at a pace to match anticipated demand.

The blend of on-site and online meetings worked well for institutional meetings, for quality-assurance panels such as validation, external examiners and for PMSS staff. If the potential changes in demand for space - as currently configured in (predominantly) large teaching spaces, offices and meeting rooms - could be addressed in a sustained and planned manner, greater flexibility could be achieved to provide a range of flexible and diverse teaching and learning spaces.

In terms of authority and decision-making, many logistical changes were evident throughout the pandemic, with meetings scheduled exclusively online. These changes, and the topics being considered in these meetings, facilitated increased involvement of participants from a wider range of organisational units than would have been commonplace previously. In some instances, these mechanisms worked well but the reduced opportunities for informal discussions also increased the potential risk of a perception of less transparency. There was consensus that leaders and managers would benefit from training and support to manage staff in a remote working environment, and that it was insufficient to rely on individual leadership styles.

On a related authority and decisions / governance theme at sectoral and national level, participants reflected on the benefits of sectoral collaboration to inform decision-making at institution and sectoral level in the context of increased direction from the state during the emergency period, and the ongoing managerial challenges and workload relating to the rapid transition towards technological universities. It was strongly argued that care should be taken to reflect on the appropriate remits, role and responsibilities of state actors, representative bodies and individual institutions in a future with a smaller number of larger, autonomous TUs with significant regional footprints and broader strategic aspirations. Such considerations would identify key actors to lead on development of new / refreshed policies (to reflect the "new" hybrid working / learning realities), increased involvement with geographically-distant experts (for quality assurance, external examiners, etc), collaborative updating of contractual arrangements informed by an ongoing review by the OECD, as well as seeking to harness other opportunities to enhance teaching, learning and assessment practices by examining best practice elsewhere.

The technological sector, in general, has lower proportions of PMSS staff than other institution-types, which is largely due to historic funding arrangements. However, the importance of effective, scaled and agile infrastructure to support students' success was repeatedly identified during the period of public health restrictions.

As one example, making more effective uses of data featured repeatedly in discussions of these senior leaders, in order to inform communications and decision-making. It was regarded as extremely important to ensure that requests for information were minimised and that maximum intelligence was harnessed from data already maintained. There was acknowledgement, in parallel, of the need to develop a wider range of methods to communicate to students and to the wider staff body.

As referenced earlier, many of the issues and topics identified and reflected upon, are particularly pertinent in the context of establishment of new multi-campus institutions and of building a shared ethos and teaching, learning and assessment experience across these institutions. The need to examine flexible uses of spaces; to deliver clearly communicated blends of face to face and online discussion fora for students and for staff; to provide a diverse range of T, L & A experiences underpinned by inclusion, diversity and equity; to build upon the strong student-centred focus of existing institutions is self-evident. The importance of the support infrastructure of robust quality assurance / enhancement policies and procedures, and sufficient investment to provide student support services cannot be overstated if teaching, learning and assessment is to meet the needs of all stakeholders.

2.0
Introduction and Overview

'Next Steps for Teaching and Learning: Moving Forward Together' is a national project coordinated by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning (NFET&L) aimed at building an informed vision for the future of teaching and learning in Irish Higher Education post-2020.

Launched by Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, Simon Harris TD in May 2021, the project will inform strategic development of teaching, assessment and curriculum design at a national level.

Since 2018, THEA member institutions have been engaged in processes to merge and to create new multi-campus technological universities with attendant significant changes for teaching, learning and assessment experiences for students and staff. For THEA member institutions, COVID-19 "simply" emphasised the importance of issues related to that transformation and the development of single multi-campus institution approaches to teaching, learning and assessment.

As part of Work Package 7, Vice-Presidents for Academic Affairs and Registrars of THEA Member Institutions participated in two workshops coordinated by Mi:Lab (Maynooth University Innovation Lab) to contribute insights and construct a vision and action checklist to inform future planning for THEA members and other institutions..

This report outlines the results of Workshop 1 and Workshop 2.

The outlined findings capture the wisdom, expertise and experience of the group to reference and inform decision making and planning how THEA Member Institutions move forward together in Teaching and Learning.

Across these findings, as well as being able to read all of the views of the participants, readers will be able to see how these views were prioritised by the groups and used to construct insights and a vision and initiatives for the future of their institutions and HE more generally.

Work Package 7 activity

Workshop 1

Workshop 1 was designed to garner a high level understanding of the forces enabling and inhibiting change, the group's feelings toward the events of the previous 16 months and a reaction to emerging trends in HE.

Workshop 2

Workshop 2 was designed to provide a focus on 9 key 'in flux' components of the institution. The group agreed upon common insights relating to each component and suggested potential changes, actions or initiatives that might emerge as a result.

Emerging Trends in Higher Education
The group ranked emerging Higher Education trends that they feel will have an important impact on their institutions Post-COVID-19.

Forces of progress
The group identified forces enabling change and preventing change in their institutions. These must be prioritised and provide areas for deeper focus.

I like, I wish, I wonder
The group shared their feelings regarding what they liked, would change, want to explore further and want for their institutions.

The Post-COVID-19 Institutional

OS Canvas

COVID-19 has highlighted & amplified the cracks

There was a continuing and frequent realisation during our discussions that COVID-19 restrictions predominantly highlighted existing challenges and issues. In reality for the technological sector, the majority of issues occupying management considerations related to the enormous transformative changes impacting the sector with almost all member HEIs firmly within processes to merge and to create new multi-campus technological universities with attendant significant changes for teaching, learning and assessment experiences for students and staff.

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2.1
About Mi:Lab

The Maynooth University Innovation Lab (Mi:Lab) take a human-centred design approach to exploring and tackling Higher Education challenges. Through a process of applied design research and co-creation, Mi:Lab builds on the knowledge, expertise and creativity of students, staff and partners. We strive to ensure that the right problems are being tackled, unmet and unarticulated needs are defined, and continuous experimentation becomes the norm in Higher Education.

Through design-thinking projects, interactive workshops and journal publications, the Mi:Lab team of design researchers, anthropologists and innovators seek to demonstrate the value of, and embed a Human-Centred design mindset, skillset and confidence across the Higher Education system. Mi:Lab is funded by the Higher Education Authority's Innovation and Transformation Fund 2018.
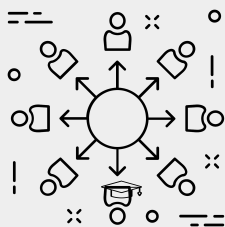
We embed & support innovation

Embedding a Human-Centered design capability across the HE system. **Supporting** education innovators & change initiatives

We co-design & explore opportunities

Human-Centered innovation & **Co-Design** projects to meet user, institutional & system needs. **Exploring** opportunities for change
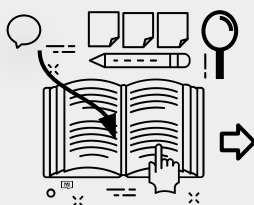
We research & publish findings

Exploratory **research** at the intersection of Design, Innovation & Higher Education. **Publishing** for impact and adoption

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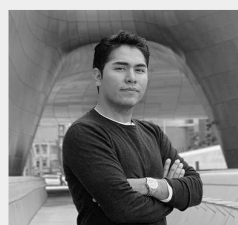
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"Transforming education is not easy but the price of failure is more than we can afford, while the benefits of success are more than we can imagine."

Sir Ken Robinson

3.0

Workshop 1

Forces of Progress
I like, I wish, I wonder
Emerging Trends in Higher Education

Online workshop

3.1
Workshop 1 Overview

In Workshop 1, participants contributed their vision and insights for the HE sector through taking part in three audit exercises.

1. The *Forces of Progress* exercise invited the group to identify forces enabling change and preventing change in their institutions. These informed what needed to be prioritised and provided areas for deeper focus.
2. The *I like, I wish, I wonder* exercise involved the group sharing their feelings regarding what they liked, would change, want to explore further and want for their institutions.
3. Finally, the group ranked *Emerging Trends in Higher Education* that they feel will have an important impact on their institutions Post-COVID-19.

All three exercises asked participants to reflect on what had come before, what currently exists and what they want to see in the future.

The results of the Forces of Progress and Emerging Trends exercises were added to our Dotstorming software and the group had an opportunity to read and vote on each of the answers. The top six ranked answers for the Forces of Progress and the top eight Emerging Trends can be found on the following pages as well as insights gathered from the I like, I wish, I wonder exercise.

Across these findings, as well as being able to read all of the views of the participants, readers will be able to see how these views were prioritised by the groups and used to construct insights and a vision for the future of their institutions and HE more generally.

Emerging Trends in Higher Education
The group ranked emerging Higher Education trends that they feel will have an important impact on their institutions Post-COVID-19.

VISION & INSIGHTS

I Liked

Forces of progress
The group identified forces enabling change and preventing change in their institutions. These must be prioritised and provide areas for deeper focus.

I like, I wish, I wonder
The group shared their feelings regarding what they liked, would change, want to explore further and want for their institutions.
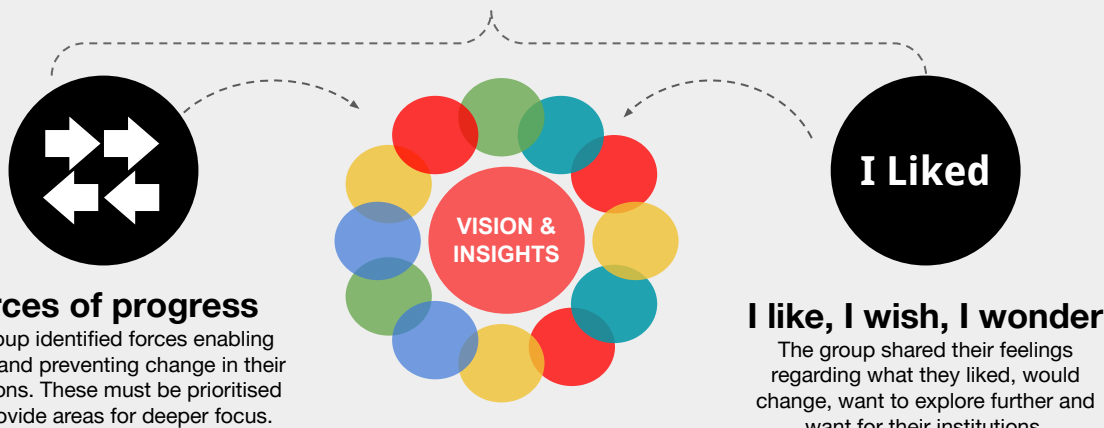
Forces of Progress Findings

3.2
Forces of progress

Through our initial survey and workshop activities we asked each participant to identify the forces promoting change or creating inertia. This exercise was designed to allow each participant to share their perspectives on each of these forces acting on their institutions. The survey asked:

Q1. **Having now experienced very different approaches to teaching, learning, assessment and managing, as a result of COVID-19, what 3 things about traditional approaches now feel broken, ineffective or outdated?**

Q2. **Having now experienced very different approaches to teaching, learning, assessment and managing as a result of COVID-19, what 3 things have you seen that you would like to retain, introduce or explore further?**

Q3. **What 3 things about how you used to do teaching, learning and assessment prior to COVID-19 should change, but would be difficult or would be met with resistance? (from staff, students, leadership etc)**

Q4. **What 3 things about the new ways of teaching, learning and assessment over the last 15 months have been mooted, but would make you anxious?**

The results of these four questions were added to our Dotstorming software and the group had an opportunity to read and vote on each of the answers. The top six ranked answers for each question can be found on the next pages.

These ranked answers will will provide key areas for deeper investigation in the research phase. Suggested approaches can be in the next section of this report.

"Nothing so undermines organizational change as the failure to think through the losses people face."

William Bridges

Some innovation initiatives in higher education focus on just two of the 'forces for change'. Focus may be placed on "what's best for the institution?" and 'how we can create demand (for this service / programme, etc,.)?'. These initiatives often overlook, or place less emphasis on the 'forces of inertia' - the forces that prevent change from happening.

The formula for change is quite simple; if Push + Pull is greater than Habit + Anxiety, change will happen. If not, then the benefits of the new thing are not worth the perceived pain of change.

Forces of change

Push from the current situation
What is pushing them away from the current solutions?

Pull of a new solution
What is attracting them to your new solution?

Existing

Preferred

Habit of the present
What habits of the current solution are preventing change?

Anxiety of the new solution
What would cause them to be uncertain or anxious about your solution?
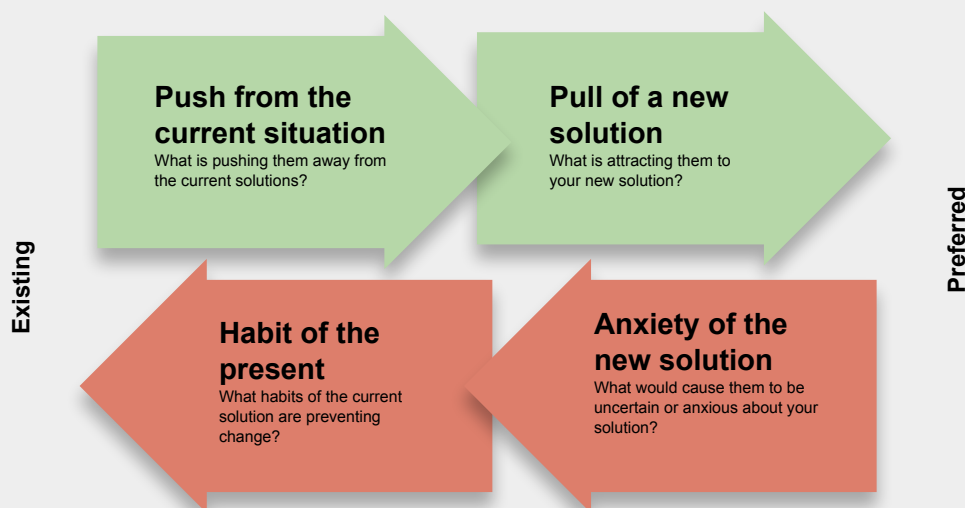
Forces of Inertia

3.2.1
Ranked *PUSH* forces

Q1. Having now experienced very different approaches to teaching, learning, assessment and managing, as a result of COVID-19, what 3 things about traditional approaches now feel broken, ineffective or outdated?

10 votes — *Approaches to and culture of traditional terminal exams*

8 votes — *Meetings do not require physical attendance at all times*

8 votes — *Learning is just in the classroom*

7 votes — *Must be face-to-face*

6 votes — *How to deliver programmes and services being predicated on face to face methods only*

6 votes — *Programme validations and external examiner interactions worked well remotely and in the future I cannot see us requiring travel, certainly in the case of some external examiners, on an annual basis as before.*

3.2.2
Ranked *PULL* forces

Having now experienced very different approaches to teaching, learning, assessment and managing as a result of COVID-19, what 3 things have you seen that you would like to retain, introduce or explore further?

8 votes — *Ensuring that the students remains active versus passive in the learning environment - including the online world of learning where they could be very active*

8 votes — *Mainstreaming training in assessment design and academic integrity.*

7 votes — *Ability to access interesting and relevant webinars, both national and international.*

6 votes — *The rigour of a range of assessment methods being employed*

5 votes — *Virtual Programme Validation Panels*

5 votes — *Virtual labs in Science & Engineering to complement physical labs*

5 votes — *The level of interaction between academics and students and student to student was efficient and even more effective in the lecture scenario when online*

5 votes — *Implementing stronger academic integrity practices*

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Ranked *HABIT* forces

What 3 things about how you used to do teaching, learning and assessment prior to COVID-19 should change, but would be difficult or would be met with resistance? (from staff, students, leadership etc)

9 votes

The academic calendar requires some adjustment to facilitate a mix of onsite and alternative assessments in August and early September. Flexibility will be required around this going forward.

8 votes

Staff were very flexible under Emergency teaching conditions but not sure same degree of flexibility will exist without additional resources post pandemic.

7 votes

Students (FT) want a meaningful campus experience and if the quantum of remote / online was too large they would resist same

7 votes

A more robust review of the purpose / suitability of the assessment methods being employed on stages / levels of programmes

7 votes

A move towards more alternative assessment would be appropriate but until solid permanent QA arrangements are in place around this area, there will be resistance

7 votes

Management of delivery models - wherein lies the responsibility?

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Ranked *ANXIETY* forces

What 3 things about the new ways of teaching, learning and assessment over the last 15 months have been mooted, but would make you anxious?

9 votes

Academic Integrity of assessments

8 votes

The QA rigour of T, L & A practices that occurred - what evidence is there actually?

8 votes

We don't have sufficient evidence, case history to know if online works for all types of learning, teaching and assessment - we need to be careful on making assumptions

8 votes

Academics perceiving that they will have the choice about delivery mode to facilitate their home life. Not thinking of the practicalities of such an approach for students

7 votes

We don't need to ever be on campus

6 votes

I worry about an imbalance in favour of online teaching ....the student experience is very important and the blend should be balanced especially in the humanities and business areas.

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"I wish some of my face to face meeting would not come back! Keep elements of it – meetings are important but we can waste time. We need to become more efficient."

Workshop participant

I Like, I Wish, I Wonder

3.3.1 LIKED

We asked: What key aspects of the last 15 months stood out as positives? Why?

Key themes to emerge

Breaking down silos towards a culture of co-creation, for the benefit of the student

The pandemic led to collaboration and co-creation across the teams within the HEIs. Students and the Students' Unions were recognised as important players in this collaboration, being commended for their "mature attitude." There was a strong desire for the co-creation across disciplines and the student cohort to continue.

Drawing on previous relationships for co-creation and leadership

The true value of the THEA Registrars' network came to the fore during the pandemic. The THEA Registrars' network provided co-leadership for those involved. The network also allowed for Registrars to forge alignment and commonality in their approaches to the challenges they faced.

Professional, managerial and support staff's (PMSS) role in academic delivery recognised

None of the remote teaching or learning could have happened without them. They contribute hugely to the academic space. We are a community and we depend on each other.

Accelerating progress

All academics had to give online delivery "a go," which was described as "a game changer." Additionally, administrative systems which were firmly recognised as being offline and paper-based found a way to provide their services online over the short space of a few weeks.

Pride in the treatment of students

There was a sense of pride in how the institutions treated their students, particularly with relation to the 'no academic disadvantage' policy adapted in some institutions, to provide a safety net for students sitting examinations during the height of the pandemic.

3.3.2 WISH

We asked: What key aspects of the last 15 months would change?

Key themes to emerge

More time for planning online delivery from the Teaching and Learning perspective

While faculty generally possessed the technology to provide lessons and assessment for their students, Registrars wished for additional time to plan for the pedagogical approach to Teaching and Learning during this period, and set up systems for ensuring academic integrity was understood and upheld by students.

In control of your own time

Less essential face-to-face meeting to remain online, where time slots could be shortened in line with the priority of the matter being discussed.

Continuation of collaboration

Cross silo collaboration and getting people "around the table" proved valuable in both decision making and alignment and lead to a 'culture of collaboration'. There is a strong desire for it to continue into the future.

Left to paddle our own canoe by the Government

Directions and guidance for the Third Level Education sector from the Government were either absent or provided at the "last minute." There was a wish that the third level sector had not been "abandoned" in this way, but had been supported as THEA supported its member institutions.

Accountability for staff and tools for managers

There was a desire for more management tools and direction in terms of the small number of HEI staff who had "abused online system to not return to work or not do their job effectively."

Retention of student-centred measures

There was a wish to retain measures that positively impacted the students, such as the mitigation process to support students should they experience unforeseen circumstances in their personal life. Others wished that they would have tried a bit harder in relation to academic integrity in terms of online assessment – mindful some students got stiff penalties that may have been avoided with increased awareness.

"I liked the cross functional thinking and decision making. Getting people around the table to think things through created a culture of collaboration rather than silos"

Workshop participant

3.3.3 WONDER
We asked: Did something come up over the last 15 months that piqued your interest enough to further explore?

Key themes to emerge

The real student experience

How did students "really" find the experience of learning online during the pandemic?

How prepared are graduates for their future, especially those who have completed the final two years of their Third Level Education online?

How prepared are graduates that are finishing now / next year? How have they been impacted in terms of learning / experiences?

Under the bonnet, how good was the Teaching and Learning?

There was much interest in the quality of the teaching, learning and assessment throughout the pandemic and how this could be examined. Is it possible to stop the involvement of Unions in the Quality Assurance process?

The future of Higher Education

Will future learners decide not to go down the traditional full time, on campus Third Level Education route?

How can this experience help Irish HEIs become more global and further internationalise their programmes?

Will there be long term consequences in the competitive environment, not only from other HEIs, but from the commercial world (e.g. Apple University)? Will what was already happening in online programme provision will be further accelerated?

3.3.4 WANT

We asked: What one key action do you want to take with the learnings of the last 15 months?

Key themes to emerge

Multi-Mode Delivery

To future-proof modules and courses, there is a call for the Multi-Mode Delivery of all content to be assessed through a standardised format, to deal with future crises and also to optimise the students' time spent on and off campus.

Encourage and empower staff through training, resources and QA measures

To make any changes to the system as a result of the pandemic, staff need to be provided with the resources and training to do this. There also needs to be a strong QA framework in place, for the benefit of students and staff.

Agility to become the norm

Remote teaching and learning displayed the commendable agility possessed by academic and PMSS staff. There was a desire to take the agility seen during the pandemic forward in the return to campus and beyond.

Student involvement in decision-making to continue

The value of the "student voice" has been recognised and should hold a place in the future of Teaching and Learning.

Primary research into advancements
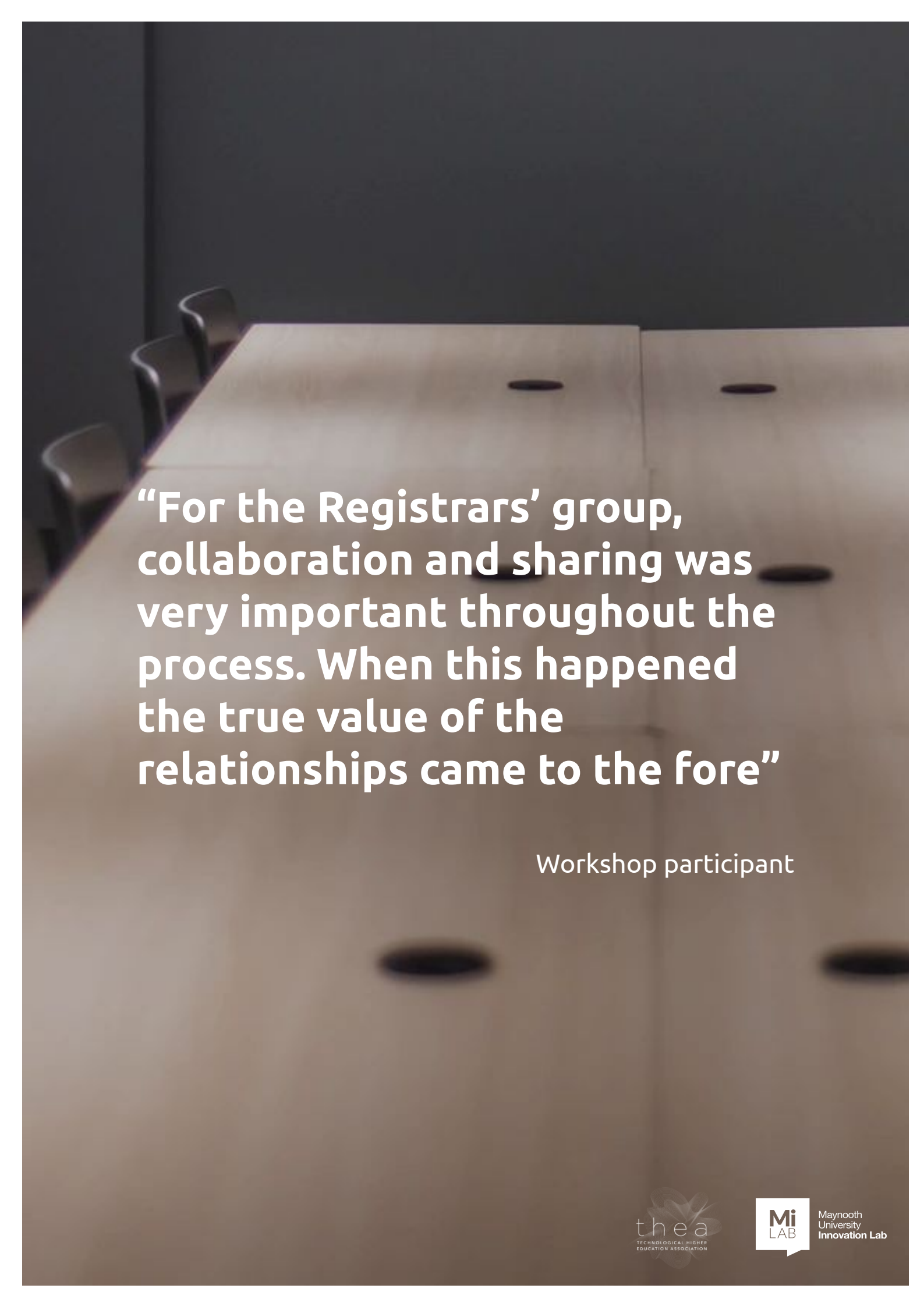
Much primary research was conducted over the pandemic to assess the student and staff experiences of new initiatives. There was a desire for this type of primary research to continue to help with better decision making. Advancements included the move away from the end of year exams, towards new forms of assessment.

Not all content should move online

While platforms like Microsoft Teams have allowed colleagues to stay connected, these were sometimes overused, where meetings that should have been a quick chat in the corridor turned into unnecessary, hour-long sessions. Also, well intentioned events, such as seminars to target wellness are better delivered in person that online.

Remote working to remain

There was a desire for structured remote working to remain for both academic and PMSS staff.

"For the Registrars' group, collaboration and sharing was very important throughout the process. When this happened the true value of the relationships came to the fore"

Workshop participant

Emerging Trends in Higher Education

We presented the participants with an extensive list of emerging trends in Higher Education and each had an opportunity to vote on which trends they felt would have an important impact on their institution Post-COVID-19.

3.4.1 Top Ranking emerging Trends in HE

Which emerging HE trends do you feel will have an important impact on your institution Post-COVID-19?

7 — **Prioritising Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**

5 — Student Support and Wellbeing

7 — **Redesigning Assessments of Learning**

5 — *Addressing Non Academic Barriers to Student Success*

6 — Employability Skills for the 21st Century

4 — *Transformation of Pedagogical Approaches*

6 — Digital Transformation

4 — Emergence of TUs and the impact for academic contractual model, etc.

6 — Hybrid Teaching and Learning

3 — New Funding models

Full list of choices

- Face-to-face Teaching & Learning
- Curriculum Re-Design
- Micro Credentialing
- Curation of Student Experience
- Redesigning Assessments of Learning
- Blended Learning
- Digital Transformation
- Staff support & Wellbeing
- Students as partners
- Challenging HE Orthodoxies

- Rethinking the 4 year degree
- Prioritising Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Inclusive Decision-Making
- Transformation of Pedagogical Approaches
- Engage Faculty in Finding Creative Solutions
- Building a Virtual Infrastructure
- Redesigning the Traditional Academic Calendar
- Student Support & Wellbeing

- Hybrid Teaching & Learning
- Employability Skills for the 21st Century
- Lifelong learning
- Competency-based education
- Life Skills and Social Emotional Learning
- Addressing Non Academic Barriers to Student Success
- New Funding models
- The Flipped classroom
- Engaging physical Learning & Collaboration Spaces

3.4.2 Supporting evidence for the ranked emerging trends

Prioritising Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

According to the ESRI, "the impact of the pandemic will be felt the most by young people from more disadvantaged backgrounds"(2020). In times of converging crises, it has prompted a call for more effective strategies that will result in more equitable and inclusive outcomes for underrepresented groups within the institution (Benson Clayton, 2021).

Digital Transformation

The digital transformation of higher education has paved the way for numerous opportunities surrounding teaching and learning as well as how we interact with one another online. As technological landscape continues to penetrate the Higher Education system, HEIs have been forced to accept these changes (Neborsky et. al, 2020).

Redesigning Assessments of Learning

The transition to a digital teaching and learning environment has required staff to re-envision and re-design learning outcomes as well as associated assessment (Neuwirth et al. 2020).

Hybrid Teaching and Learning

The transition towards a digital teaching and learning environment has prompted the exploration of blended or hybrid teaching and learning as well as mixing synchronous learning with asynchronous learning (Santos et. al, 2021).

Employability Skills for the 21st Century

Today, the complex challenges of the 21st century demands graduates with not only academic qualifications but those that too are equipped with employable skills and attributes (Made Suarta et al, 2017). According to the World Economic Forum, creativity is among the top three skills needed to succeed in any professional environment in 2020. These are the kind of 'soft' mindsets and skills that can never be replaced by automation (World Economic Forum, 2020).

Student Support and Wellbeing

Supporting student wellbeing is of growing focus in Higher Education, reflecting mental health conversations in wider society, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the Salesforce 2021 Connected Student Report, 76% of students surveyed globally say they have trouble maintaining their wellbeing (2021).

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Transformation of Pedagogical Approaches

COVID-19 has transformed the delivery of education and brought with it an appetite for new pedagogical approaches in Higher Education. Standing on the shoulders of John Biggs' (1999) seminal research into the quality of teaching, HE pedagogical research focuses include problem-based learning (Dickie and Jay, 2010), flipped classroom approaches (Abeysekera et al. 2015), blended learning (George-Walker and Keeffe, 2010) and since COVID-19 especially, an influx of research into effective and engaging remote teaching and use of learning technologies (Bolumole, 2020; Pham and Ho, 2020; O'Neill et al, 2021; Yang, 2020). Concurrently, we see the rise of Student co-creation and partnership trends around how students and staff work together to shape learning, teaching, and the work of the University. (Cook-Sather, Bovill, Felton, Healey, Millard, Moore-Cherry, Ryan and Tilbury). Likewise, as a result of changing and more diverse cohorts of students entering third level, there is a need to support all students and move beyond a 'one size fits all' mould of higher education. In particular, this has meant the rise of inclusive teaching practices and actions such as decolonising curriculums, Universal Design for Learning and more flexible and customisable course offerings and supports to attract and engage to non-traditional students.

New Funding models

In 2017, the HEA reported that "Ireland cannot continue to increase student numbers without increasing investment". According to the TURN Working Group Report (2019), a 'prioritised and targeted action and investment' is needed around realigning the policy framework and funding for TUs; building research capacity; and investing in digital infrastructure for TUs to achieve the government's expectations. THEA's 2020 Budget Submission reinforced the need for long-term investment and support for the immediate financial impact of COVID-19. Additionally, a significant proportion of higher education funding comes from private funding (House of Oireachtas, 2019). Salesforce predicts that Higher Education institutions globally will be looking to new funding models by attracting more lifelong learners looking to reskill and upskill through more flexible course offerings (2021).

Emergence of TUs and the impact for academic contractual model, etc.

The enactment of the Technological University legislation in March 2018, (Technological Universities Act, 2018) started the process of amalgamating IoTs in Ireland into technological universities. Two technological universities are already in existence with establishment of the third set for October 2021. It is expected that Ireland will have five TUs by 2022. The emergence of TUs raise yet unanswered questions around the impact of mergers between former IoTs including the implications for academic contracts (Houghton, 2020). Skodvin's (1999) *Lessons Learned from Mergers in Higher Education* highlights how "mergers within higher education are complex, time-consuming and difficult processes" in which "implementation of organizational goals often occurs at the cost of personal needs and job satisfaction" (1999).

Addressing Non academic Barriers to Student Success

Higher Education is increasingly looking to widen their supports and address non-academic barriers to student success.

THEA's analysis of 2020 data from StudentSurvey.ie pertaining to its member institutions states that the most frequent reasons for withdrawal from programmes were personal or family reasons (15%) and financial reasons (13%). 6% responded health, employment, institutional transfer respectively and 7% stated 'other'. 62% of all respondents in the technological sector did not seriously consider withdrawing from their studies.

According to 2018 / 2019 Enrolment Data compiled by the HEA, THEA Members' student populations closely resemble the national socio-economic profile, reflecting THEA member institutions' strong commitment to access and widening participation. Institutions must adopt a holistic approach to student success to help students navigate their entire third level experience and all factors that might lead to non-completion.

"A shock of this scale will create a discontinuous shift in the preferences and expectations of individuals as citizens, as employees, and as consumers. These shifts and their impact on how we live, how we work, and how we use technology will emerge more clearly over the coming weeks and months.

Institutions that reinvent themselves to make the most of better insight and foresight, as preferences evolve, will disproportionately succeed."

Beyond coronavirus: The path to the next normal.
McKinsey & Company

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Workshop 2

In-person workshop in a
THEA Member Institution

Like our technology, Higher Education Institutions run on code. But this code is made of principles and beliefs, practices and rules

THE POST-COVID INSTITUTION

OPERATING SYSTEM...
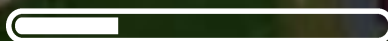
LOADING
PLEASE WAIT...

4.1
Workshop 2 overview

The overarching aim of the 'Next Steps' project is to address the question - ***"in the context of COVID-19, what have we learnt and what does it mean for the future of teaching and learning in Irish higher education?'*** Based on the scale of this question, we felt it important to break the institution into more manageable components in order to provide focus and to insure a more holistic analysis. To do this we adapted the 'OS Canvas framework' (Dignan, 2019) as it provided a two dimensional representation of the organisational components that are in a state of flux. Each component on the adapted canvas asks the group to consider certain aspects of their HEI more deeply than typically would be.

The post-covid OS canvas is a discussion tool adapted for HE teams, departments and institutions to reflect on their current practices and to consider how they might reimagin and redesign. In two groups of 4, the workshop participants were asked to discuss each of the 9 sections of the OS canvas outlined below. Together, participants were asked to agree on **3 key learnings or insights** for each component, before brainstorming together to identify potential **corresponding actions, changes or initiatives** based on these insights.

In Workshop 2, participants considered two questions:

1. **In the context of COVID-19, what are 3 insights the group have had about the future of T, L & A?**

2. **What 3 Changes, actions or initiatives might emerge as a result of these insights**?

The following sections outline the insights and action points gathered from Workshop 2.

The Post-COVID-19 Institutional
OS Canvas

Structure & Space How we gather, work & connect	**Authority & Decisions** How we share power & make decisions	**Information & Communication** How we share & use data
Policy & Governance How we steward the organization	**Purpose & Values** How we orient & steer	**Meetings & Coordination** How we convene and coordinate
Strategy & Innovation How we plan, prioritise, learn & evolve	**Resource Allocation, Targets & Forecasts** How we invest our time and money	**People, Development & Motivation** How we reward, support & encourage

Dignan, A. (2019). *Brave New Work: Are You Ready to Reinvent Your Organization?*. Penguin UK.

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4.1.1
The post-COVID-19 OS canvas

The post-COVID-19 OS canvas. Adapted from the Ready OS canvas 1.0.

Structure & Space — How we gather, work & connect
In the context of COVID-19, what are 3 insights the group have had about 'Structure & Space' that may impact the future of TL&A?
What 3 changes, actions or initiatives might emerge as a result of each of these insights?

Authority & Decisions — How we share power & make decisions
In the context of COVID-19, what are 3 insights the group have had about 'Authority & Decisions' that may impact the future of TL&A?
What 3 changes, actions or initiatives might emerge as a result of each of these insights?

Information & Communication — How we share & use data
In the context of COVID-19, what are 3 insights the group have had about 'Information & Communication' that may impact the future of TL&A?
What 3 changes, actions or initiatives might emerge as a result of each of these insights?

Policy & Governance — How we steward the organization
In the context of COVID-19, what are 3 insights the group have had about 'Policy & Governance' that may impact the future of TL&A?
What 3 changes, actions or initiatives might emerge as a result of each of these insights?

Purpose & Values — How we orient & steer
In the context of COVID-19, what are 3 insights the group have had about 'Purpose & Values' that may impact the future of TL&A?
What 3 changes, actions or initiatives might emerge as a result of each of these insights?

Meetings & Coordination — How we convene and coordinate
In the context of COVID-19, what are 3 insights the group have had about 'Meetings & Coordination' that may impact the future of TL&A?
What 3 changes, actions or initiatives might emerge as a result of each of these insights?

Strategy & Innovation — How we plan, prioritise, learn & evolve
In the context of COVID-19, what are 3 insights the group have had about 'Strategy & Innovation' that may impact the future of TL&A?
What 3 changes, actions or initiatives might emerge as a result of each of these insights?

Resource Allocation, Targets & Forecasts — How we invest our time and money
In the context of COVID-19, what are 3 insights the group have had about 'Resource Allocation, Targets & Forecasts' that may impact the future of TL&A?
What 3 changes, actions or initiatives might emerge as a result of each of these insights?

People & Motivation — How we reward, support & encourage
In the context of COVID-19, what are 3 insights the group have had about 'People & Motivation' that may impact the future of TL&A?
What 3 changes, actions or initiatives might emerge as a result of each of these insights?

Post-Covid institution OS Canvas

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4.1.2
Structure & Space
How we share power & make decisions

Insights & Findings:

In the context of COVID-19, what are key insights you have had about 'Structure & Space' that may impact the future of T, L & A?

Points of Action:

What changes, actions or initiatives might emerge as a result of these insights?

Insights & Findings	Points of Action
The group agreed that discipline areas that never contemplated delivering online managed successfully.	The group suggest that the Industrial Relations Framework needs to support innovation with respect to new programmes.
The group agreed that there is a need for versatile / multifunctional learning spaces.	The group suggest that funding needs to be strategic and support online and Technology Enhanced Learning separately.
The group agreed that healthy spaces will be needed in the future.	The group suggest that national discussion is required on Future Capital projects. These needs need to be captured.
The group agreed that validation panels worked quite well in online mode.	The group suggest that further reflections on merits of online vs on-campus to include availability of international / geographically distant members.
The group agreed that exam boards generally worked well in online mode.	The group suggest that further reflections on merits of online vs on-campus to include availability of geographically distant members but, ultimately, decision-making rests within each HEI.
The group agreed PMSS and support services proved effective when working remotely despite historic perceptions that on-campus presence was essential.	The group suggest that a review / development of appropriate "Working from home" policies include all staff.

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Structure & Space

> *How will departments and offices organise and lead? How will we reimagine the physical and functional campus as it current exists?*

Insights

Higher Education Institutions need versatile, multifunctional and healthy spaces for teaching, learning and assessment, and appropriate workspaces for staff in the context of hybrid working.

No longer tied to perceptions that on-campus presence is essential, there is an appetite to continue some activities remotely including exam boards, validation panels as well as some teaching and PMSS and support services.

Action Checklist

❏ Further reflection on merits of online versus on-campus to include international and geographically distant students and staff.

❏ Review and develop appropriate "Working from home" policies.

❏ IR Framework needs to support innovation in new programmes.

❏ Strategic Funding that supports online and Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) separately.

❏ National Discussion on Future Capital projects.

Case Example

Reimagining the Traditional Lecture

Professor David Kellermann, at the University of New South Wales (UNSW), reimagined the traditional lecture theatre by utilising personalised and interactive software on Microsoft Teams to present engaging, remote lectures during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Using platforms such as Azure Connect, Kellermann was able to create an augmented reality (AR) lab for his classes where students could conduct their experiment directly through Microsoft Teams. Students felt part of an online community and exam pass rates increased from 65 percent to 85 percent (Curtin, 2021).

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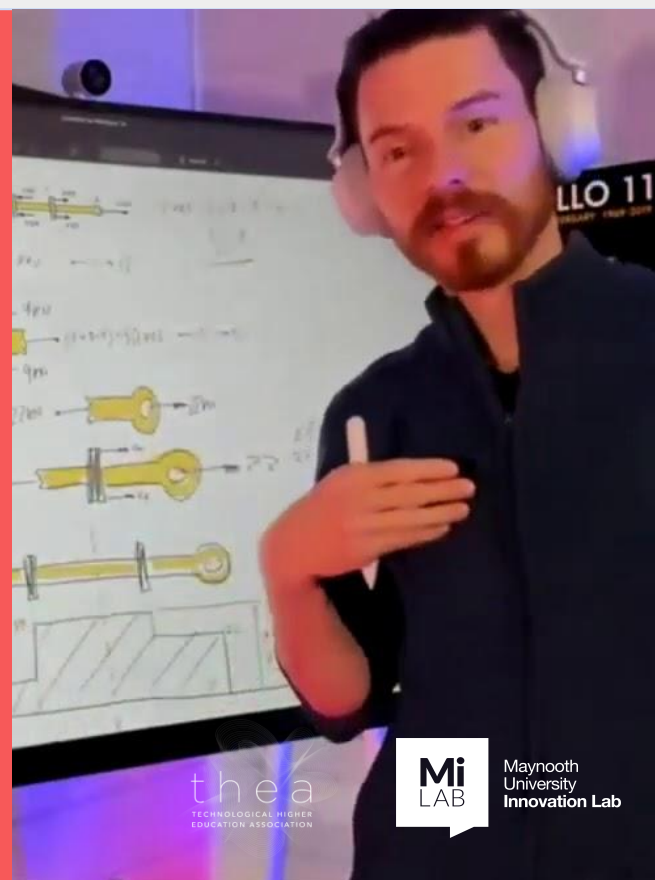
Authority & Decisions

How we gather, work & connect

Insights & Findings:

In the context of COVID-19, what are key insights you have had about 'Authority & Decision making' that may impact the future of T, L & A?

Points of Action:

What changes, actions or initiatives might emerge as a result of each of these insights?

Insights & Findings	Points of Action
The group agreed on the need for clear leadership / management development at services level.	The group suggest that the needs of senior leadership has changed - manage people onsite / remotely.
The group agreed on the need for collaboration during division making.	The group suggest the need to empower teams at local level to build change - prepare for the next challenges.
The value of the sector's representative body was highlighted as a forum to collaborate, discuss and coordinate decision making during the crisis. The establishment of new TUs and cessation of existing member institutions present challenges to this cohesiveness.	The group suggest that there is a need to re-establish the autonomy of the HE sector / individual institutions in the context of significantly increased direction from centralised COVID-related working groups and state interventions during the pandemic.
The group agreed that there were perceptions of less openness / transparency in decision-making / conducting executive board meetings.	The group suggest that leadership style is critical. Training may be required to enable optimal transparency in context of hybrid working modes.
The group agreed there were less opportunities for informal discussions - to address issues perceived as "not urgent", or to socialise ideas / proposals in advance of decision-making fora.	The group suggest that there is a desire to return to F2F for key decision making meetings, perhaps by identifying in advance the key objective(s) of specific meetings.
The group agreed remote working increased opportunities for wider group participation in decisions.	The group suggest the need to develop / reinforce distributed leadership through appropriate organisational structure, particularly in the context of new multi-campus institutions.

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Authority & Decisions

How will we distribute authority? How will we make key institutional decisions? How will we collaborate with key Higher Education partners to take action?

Insights

Participants identified a need for strong leadership and collaboration to manage transformations in the Technological Higher Education Sector.

There was a perception that there had been less openness and transparency in decision-making and less opportunity for informal discussions as a result of remote working but this was countered by increased opportunities for wider group participation in decisions.

Action Checklist

❏ Senior leadership must now manage people onsite and remotely.
❏ Develop and reinforce distributed leadership through appropriate organisational structures, empowering teams at a local level to make and build change, particularly in the context of new multi-campus institutions.
❏ Training to enable optimal transparency in context of hybrid working modes.
❏ Return to face to face for key decision making meetings by identifying in advance key objective of specific meetings.
❏ Re-establish the autonomy of the HE sector and individual institutions.

Case Example

Citizen Designers in the Scottish Government

The city of Glasgow has created a network of citizen designers as part of their transition to a citizen-led model of decision-making. Glasgow City Council invites citizens to participate in the co-design of public services, empowering them with methodologies and expertise to evaluate services in the community and actively solve challenges they face locally and across the city.

Glasgow City Council's ethos is centred around design with, rather than for its citizens.

4.1.4
Policy & Governance

How we share power & make decisions

Insights & Findings:

In the context of COVID-19, what are key insights you have had about 'Policy & Governance' that may impact the future of T, L & A?

Points of Action:

What changes, actions or initiatives might emerge as a result of each of these insights?

Insights & Findings	Points of Action
The group agreed that the challenge the HE sector is going through runs parallel to external changes.	Remember that HE is a microcosm of wider society with many of the associated variations in individual / group appreciation of issues; compliance with regulations; and competing demands.
Online meetings facilitated reaching wider and geographically dispersed participants	Institutions should extend the international reach for QA (International experts etc).
The group agreed that the collaborative approach to developing policies / responses through THEA was invaluable.	Care should be taken to reflect on appropriate remits, roles and responsibilities of state actors, representative bodies and individual institutions.
Many QA policies and procedures were based on the premise of face to face interaction.	QA governance needs to develop new supports around Technology Enhanced Learning and online.
The group agreed that the historic dominance of terminal exams was seriously in question.	Institutions and the HE community as a whole must consider an appropriate range of assessment approaches for all disciplines, including those with external regulators which have demonstrated differing degrees of flexibility during COVID-19.
The group agreed that new policies are required to manage emerging realities, both locally (within HEIs) and nationally e.g. online / hybrid.	The group suggest that existing policies should be reviewed, both in terms of content / relevance, and for suitable presentation to key audiences in accessible web-enabled formats.
The group highlighted the influence and impact of unions' positions and practices on change.	The group suggest that existing contracts reflecting historic contexts need to be revisited nationally (for example in the context of the OECD review) to reflect expectations and aspirations of TUs.

Policy & Governance

How will our policies be drafted and redrafted? How will institutional policies and governance reflect our purpose, values and strategic mission?

Insights

The registrars noted the competing needs of COVID-19 with long-term processes to merge and create new multi-campus technological universities.

The collaborative approach espoused by THEA was invaluable, highlighting the need for new policies around teaching, learning and assessment as well as a unified approach to managing external organisations and stakeholders.

Action Checklist

❏ View HEIs as microcosms of wider society.
❏ Extend international reach for Quality Assurance.
❏ Focus on the remits, roles and responsibilities of state actors, representative bodies and individual institutions when developing policies.
❏ Quality Assurance governance need to develop new supports around Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) and online.
❏ Institutions and the HE community as a whole must consider an appropriate range of assessment approaches for all disciplines, including those with external regulators - which have demonstrated differing degrees of flexibility during COVID-19.
❏ Existing policies should be reviewed, both in terms of content, relevance, and for suitable presentation to key audiences in accessible web-enabled formats.
❏ Existing contracts reflecting historic contexts need to be revisited nationally (for example in the context of the OECD review) to reflect expectations and aspirations of TUs.

Case Example

The world's first student-driven innovation house.

'Station' is a former police station which has been transformed for student innovation and engagement. Based in Denmark, Station functions to connect students from Higher Education Institutions through innovation opportunities within the civic, public, and private sectors.

Student & Innovation House

4.1.5

Information & Communications

How we share & use data

Insights & Findings:

In the context of COVID-19, what are key insights you have had about 'Information & Communications' that may impact the future of T, L & A?

Points of Action:

What changes, actions or initiatives might emerge as a result of each of these insights?

Insights & Findings	Points of Action
The group agreed that online works for softer, less strategic engagement. And there are travel cost savings.	The group suggest that we need to ensure optimum balance between F2F and online for operational activities (e.g., exams).
The group agreed there was a loss of deep engagement - online doesn't replace.	The group suggest the need to develop research / data offices to compile / drive data collection (Data informed decision making).
The group agreed expectations have been raised regarding frequency of and definitiviness of communication.	The group suggest that it is likely that demand for constant information will emerge into future.
The group agreed that new information & communication systems with mixed capabilities of infrastructure and user expertise was less than optimal.	The group suggest that explicit strategy / policy for document management and dissemination to key audiences be developed.
The group agreed on the importance of respecting people's personal time and boundaries in order to manage health and wellbeing.	The group identified that hybrid working blurs boundaries between work and personal. The group suggest development of explicit policies and modelling of behaviours should be put into place to limit these challenges.
The group agreed that existing instruments to collect feedback (from staff and students) and to communicate response were too limited for the remote environment.	The group suggest the development of an appropriate range of instruments / methods to collect data and to communicate responses. "Less surveys" - these are insufficient alone.

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Information & Communications

How will knowledge be shared within the institution and how should stakeholders communicate with one another? What tools, systems, or forums support storing and sharing?

Insights

The Registrars recognised that softer engagements suited online meetings whereas deeper and more strategic engagements were better conducted in person. Expectations for communication have been raised in the transition to online and there was a need to establish boundaries and give staff a right to disconnect.

There was also a need for more efficient and creative communication with students and staff to collect feedback and relay important communications.

Action Checklist

❏ Ensure optimum balance between face to face and online for operational activities.
❏ Develop a research data office to compile and drive data collection.
❏ Develop explicit policy for document management and dissemination to key audiences.
❏ Development of explicit policies and modelling of behaviours to help ensure work-life balance.
❏ Develop an appropriate range of instruments and methods to collect data and to communicate responses including less surveys.

Case Example

After Hours Emails Delayed until the Morning

Retail giant, Lidl will not deliver internal emails after 6pm until 7am the next day in their offices in Belgium and Luxembourg. This is part of their efforts to give their staff the 'right to disconnect' after hours.

Purpose & Values

How we orient & steer

Insights & Findings:

In the context of COVID-19, what are key insights you have had about 'Purpose & Values' that may impact the future of T, L & A?

Points of Action:

What changes, actions or initiatives might emerge as a result of each of these insights?

Insights & Findings	Points of Action
The group agreed that there is difficulty / absence of achieving consensus.	The group suggest explicit consideration of the merits of centralised versus distributed leadership into the future.
The group agreed there is a need to navigate towards a common good.	The group suggest building natural consensus around direction with respect to future campus and online activity.
The group agreed there is a lack of stability of structures which is disconcerting in times of crisis.	The group suggest that the nature of collective leadership needs to be addressed - balance between individual TUs and collective / sectoral perspective.
The group agreed that the origin of the technological sector, in particular, has been as teaching institutions - which bore fruit in the context of the pandemic.	The group suggest a new Vision and Mission should be developed for the technological HE sector, which reflects the central teaching mission, informed by active research.
The group agreed that there are examples of over-assessment with learning outcomes assessed in multiple modes.	The group suggest asserting the role of the Chief Academic Officer to inform and guide activities of individual departments / schools / faculties.
The group agreed that our institutions are student-centred organisations, with numerous examples of staff going 'over and beyond' to meet the needs of students in extraordinary circumstances.	The group suggest the need to acknowledge and reinforce what has been achieved, as foundation for reflections on meeting the future needs of students.

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Purpose & Values

What is our reason for being? What are our values? How will our purpose and values evolve?

Insights

Developing a clear purpose and values was seen to be essential for navigating times of crisis.

It was widely viewed that this should be agreed on at a sectoral level due to the shared ethos of TUs as student-centred teaching institutions. Nonetheless, there were anxieties about institutions' ability to reach a consensus.

Action Checklist

❏ A new, serious consideration of the merits of centralised versus distributed leadership approach.

❏ Build natural consensus around direction with regard to on campus and online future activity.

❏ Nature of collective leadership needs to be addressed including balance between individual TUs and the collective.

❏ A new Vision and Mission should be developed for the technological HE sector, which reflects the central teaching mission, informed by active research.

❏ Assert the role of the Chief Academic Officer to inform and guide activities of individual departments, schools and faculties.

❏ Acknowledge and reinforce what has been achieved, as foundation for reflections on meeting the future needs of students.

Case Example

Arizona State University's Charter

In 2014, as part of its blueprint for transformation into a 'New American University', Arizona State University adopted a new charter. Reflecting a long standing commitment to inclusion and the communities it serves, it measures itself "not by whom it excludes but by whom it includes and how they succeed."

The charter is displayed as a monument across its campuses.

ASU Charter

ASU is a comprehensive **public research university**, measured not by whom it excludes, but by **whom it includes** and how they **succeed**; advancing **research and discovery** of public value; and assuming **fundamental responsibility** for the economic, social, cultural and overall health of the **communities** it serves.

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4.1.7
Meetings & Coordination

How we convene and coordinate

Insights & Findings:

In the context of COVID-19, what are key insights you have had about 'Meetings & Coordination' that may impact the future of T, L & A?

Points of Action:

What changes, actions or initiatives might emerge as a result of each of these insights?

Insights & Findings	Points of Action
The group agreed that the nature of online engagement is not optimal.	The group suggest that operational matters meetings dealing primarily with operational matters are likely to be online, but caution should be exercised regarding examination boards, programme validations etc.
The group agreed that Policies / Strategies have 'gone through' more easily - not good.	The group suggest that it is Important to schedule / plan meeting 'types' on a yearly basis.
The group agreed using COVID-19 to change things may have led to some "exploitation."	The group suggest managing expectations regarding always being online - right to disconnect.
The group agreed that online communications proved effective for some meetings but can be overdone.	The group suggest that a a policy / agreed approach to the balance between online and face-to-face meetings which relates to purpose of the discussion should be determined.
The group agreed that online meetings can tend to become transactional and overly focussed on objectives and, therefore, less effective for informal discussions.	The group suggest that, as above, action to determine a policy / agreed approach to finding balance between online and face-to-face meetings which relates to purpose of the discussion.
The group agreed that online meetings facilitated participation of a wider range of staff than would be regularly possible in face to face.	The group suggest that It is particularly important in the context of new multi-campus institutions that scheduled meetings are designed to accommodate continued wider participation.

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Meetings & Coordination

How will we convene, coordinate and communicate as we move forward? How will we organise and manage workflows?

Insights

Participants acknowledged that the nature of online engagement is not optimal and meetings can often tend to become 'transactional.' Certain policies have been passed easily which is not always positive. However, meetings online facilitate participation of a wider range of staff than if they were face-to-face.

Action Checklist

- ❑ Operational matters meeting remain online.
- ❑ Important to schedule / plan meeting 'types' on a yearly basis.
- ❑ Manage expectations regarding always being online - right to disconnect.
- ❑ Determine a policy to balance between online and face-to-face meetings which relates to purpose of the discussion.
- ❑ Scheduled meetings are designed to accommodate continued wider participation.

Case Example

A blueprint for hosting hybrid meetings

MSU Denver now host a live page of resources for running Teams meetings for a hybrid on-campus / remote audience. Consisting of tips for best practice and numerous tutorials, this was launched as part of the University's Safe Return to Campus initiative.

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Strategy & Innovation

How we plan, prioritise, learn & evolve

Insights & Finding:

In the context of COVID-19, what are key insights you have had about 'Strategy & Innovation' that may impact the future of T, L & A?

Points of Action:

What changes, actions or initiatives might emerge as a result of each of these insights?

Insights & Finding	Points of Action
The group agreed they were "on a treadmill" during COVID-19 so there was little opportunity for strategic thinking.	The group suggest a move away from an overfilling CAO strategy to a different funding model.
The group agreed that is it difficult to disengage and carve out space for strategic thinking.	The group suggest that institutions should state and explicitly implement the right to disconnect, thus minimising the risk of decision-makers being bypassed.
The group agreed that Innovation initiatives that have taken place online will serve us well in the future.	The group suggest the need to ensure we continue serve the type of student we attract but they will have different needs.
The group agreed that more use of hot desking will present opportunities.	The group suggest re-evaluating the use of space to balance more flexible (smaller) spaces for teaching, learning and assessment, with quality appropriate workspaces for staff in the context of hybrid working.
The group agreed that existing assessment strategy needs review.	The group suggest Institutions and the HE community as a whole consider an appropriate range of assessment approaches for all disciplines, including those with external regulators - which have demonstrated differing degrees of flexibility during COVID-19.
The group agreed that there was limited availability of key timely data to inform their decision-making.	The group suggest establishing / growing capacity for institutional research in the technological HE sector. Additional funding is required to complement institution decisions - existing funding models treat different institution types differently. This leads to lower proportion of PMSS: academic staff than other institution-types.

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Strategy & Innovation

How will our institution manifest our strategic plan and what needs to happen for the institution to evolve? How will we promote and incentivise a culture of innovation day to day?

Insights

Participants acknowledged it has been difficult for institutional leaders to disengage and carve space for strategic thinking and there is also limited availability of key timely data to inform decision making. Participants stated that existing assessment strategies need to be reviewed and innovations that have emerged in this digital learning environment will serve the HE sector well in the long term.

Action Checklist

- ❏ Move away from overfilling CAO strategy to different funding model.
- ❏ State and implement right to disconnect - gatekeepers bypassed.
- ❏ Need to ensure we still serve the type of student we attract - different needs.
- ❏ Re-evaluate use of space to balance more flexible (smaller) spaces for teaching, learning and assessment, with quality appropriate workspaces for staff in the context of hybrid working.
- ❏ Institutions and the HE community as a whole to consider an appropriate range of assessment approaches for all disciplines.
- ❏ Establish and grow capacity for institutional research in the technological HE sector.

Case Study

Innovation Toolkits in Public Libraries

Chicago Public Library and Denmark's Aarhus Public Libraries partnered with the design agency, IDEO to create an Innovation toolkit. This toolkit is available for any frontline library staff to innovate and change the library to suit library user needs. New innovations include an expression lab with music- and art-making tools, a 'tech spa' for users looking for how-to information, and narrative storytelling workshops for kids. The toolkit has since been downloaded by over 11,000 librarians in over 100 countries.

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4.1.9
Resource Allocation, Targets & Forecasts
How we invest our time and money

Insights & Findings:	Points of Action:
In the context of COVID-19, what are key insights you have had about 'Resource Allocation, Targets & Forecasts' that may impact the future of T, L & A?	What changes, actions or initiatives might emerge as a result of each of these insights?
The group agreed that academic contracts are not fit for purpose in the context of TUs.	The group suggest that the OECD issue concrete recommendations for speedy implementation.
The group agreed that there are fewer senior PMSS personnel within our sector which led to notable constraints in the context of additional workload and initiatives related to COVID-19.	The group suggest that PMSS will require support and training within the new environment.
The group agreed that there is a lack of long term approach to funding.	The group suggest that the sector must make a stronger push for strategic and multi annual funding to allow for good planning.
The group agreed there is a need to ensure a mix of resources to effectively support online & offline teaching. Assessment has been strongly highlighted.	The group suggest that It is necessary for institutions to revisit resource allocation. However, the overall HE funding requires investment. It is imperative that the state supports the aspirations of technological universities as articulated in the TURN report which identified 3 pillars of priority investment i.e. realigning the policy & funding framework for TUs; investing in digital infrastructure; and building research capacity.
The group agreed there are limitations to current levels of PMSS staffing.	The group suggest it is essential that there is increasing capacity for PMSS student supports and engagement provision. Additional funding is required to complement institution decisions - existing funding models which are different lead to lower proportion of PMSS: academic staff than other institution-types.

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Resource Allocation, Targets & Forecasts

How will we ensure the allocation of the appropriate resources and supports within the institution to achieve our strategic plan?

Insights

Participants stressed current limitations of levels and profile of PMSS staffing as well as acknowledging that academic contracts are not fit for purpose. A mix of resources would be needed to effectively support teaching and assessment both online and offline, however, a lack of long-term funding currently exists across the board.

Action Checklist

- ❏ Need concrete recommendations on lecturing contract and speedy implementation.
- ❏ PMSS staff require support and training within the new environment.
- ❏ The sector must make a stronger push for strategic and multi annual funding - allows good planning.
- ❏ Revisit resource allocation. The overall HE funding requires investment. It is imperative that the state supports the aspirations of technological universities.
- ❏ Increase capacity for PMSS student supports and engagement provision.

Case Example

GOV.UK Design System

The GOV.UK Design System is a compiled pool of styles, components, resources and patterns that are accessible and readily available to support a variety of projects and applications. Created by the Design System working group, this group of individuals consists of a multidisciplinary panel of representatives from across government. With representatives from a mixture of disciplines and departments, the GOV.UK Design System ensures that it represents its users and that all components and patterns published in the Design System are of a high quality and meet user needs.

4.1.10
People & Motivation
How we reward, support & encourage

Insights & Findings:

In the context of COVID-19, what are key insights you have had about 'People & Motivation' that may impact the future of T, L & A?

Points of Action:

What changes, actions or initiatives might emerge as a result of these insights?

Insights & Findings	Points of Action
The group agreed that centralisation has led to disengagement nationally / locally.	The group suggest that leadership development / mentoring will be required into the future.
The group agreed disenfranchisement has occurred due to centralisation.	The group suggest the need to encourage people to re-engage. Emergency is over. HE has to bounce back responsibly.
The group agreed there is a need to use the good innovations that have emerged as motivation.	The group suggest that people including our students need support / motivation to innovate.
The group agreed that examples showcasing good practice, peer support and peer learning helped all staff to do their utmost to meet the needs of students. However, this relied unduly on goodwill and may not be sustainable into the medium to longer term.	The group suggest that we need to review and plan for coherent acknowledgement of peer support, peer learning and showcase good practices.
The group agreed that staff from across the institution will go 'above and beyond' to support students when their efforts are acknowledged.	The group suggest institutions and the HE community more widely offer credible recognition of staff / team achievements i.e. Robust criteria and perceived currency of such "awards" rather than allowing the space to be taken by commercial stakeholders or by distribution of awards so widely as to risk them becoming devalued.
The group agreed that the emergency response to the pandemic removed some perceived existing barriers / distinctions between the treatment by HEIs of academic and PMSS staff.	The group suggest that we need to ensure equal recognition and treatment of all staff cohorts.

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People & Motivation

How will we invest in people? How will we define and cultivate relationships and networks within the institution? How will we recognise and reward the contributions of stakeholders within the institution?

Insights

Participants recalled the disenfranchisement & disengagement both locally and nationally. It was acknowledged that many staff will go 'above and beyond' to support students when their efforts are recognised. Participants also noted that innovations that have emerged over the lockdown should be used as factors of motivation.

Action Checklist

- ❏ Review and plan for coherent acknowledgement of peer support, peer learning and good practice.
- ❏ Robust criteria and perceived currency for credible recognition of staff / team achievements.
- ❏ Equal recognition of treatment of all staff cohorts.
- ❏ Need to encourage people to re-engage.
- ❏ Provide appropriate support and motivations to students also.

Case Example

Teaching Portfolios for Promotion

Chalmers University of Technology in Sweden employ external 'pedagogical experts' to provide an independent evaluation of staff teaching portfolios. This is used for staff under consideration for promotion. A university leader highlighted that "the mere fact that we have this system of external review in place has had an impact" on the approach of candidates, by making them "sharpen their case", and on the promotion committee, by "increasing the threshold level for [acceptable] teaching". These external 'pedagogical experts' are trained by a national scheme, organised by the Swedish Network for Educational Development in Higher Education.

4.2
Key Action Checklist
from Workshop 2

Structure & Space
How we gather, work & connect

- Work from Home Policy
- Policy determining balance of face to face and online meetings for operational activities
- Reflect on merits of online versus on-campus for international and geographically distant students
- Re-evaluate use of space to balance more flexible (smaller) spaces for teaching, learning and assessment, with quality appropriate workspaces for staff in the context of hybrid working

Authority & Decisions
How we share power & make decisions

- Leadership development at every level to provide support in this new environment for senior leadership and managers, HODs etc
- Distributed leadership approaches through appropriate organisational structures to empower teams at local level in context of multi-campus institutions
- Re-establish the autonomy of the HE sector and individual institutions

Information & Communications
How we share & use data

- A new Communications Strategy
- The Right to Disengage Policy
- A new Data Management Strategy
- Establish and grow capacity for institutional research in the technological HE sector and create Institutional Research offices for data-driven decision-making including support for innovation in new programmes
- New student Engagement and Feedback Channels

Policy & Governance
How we share power & make decisions

- Extend international reach for Quality Assurance.
- Focus on the remits, roles and responsibilities of state actors, representative bodies and individual institutions when developing policies.
- Quality Assurance governance need to develop new supports around Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) and online.
- Institutions and the HE community as a whole must consider an appropriate range of assessment approaches for all disciplines, including those with external regulators - which have demonstrated differing degrees of flexibility during COVID-19.
- Existing contracts reflecting historic contexts need to be revisited nationally (for example in the context of the OECD review) to reflect expectations and aspirations of TUs.

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Key Action Checklist

Purpose & Values
How we orient & steer

- A New Vision and Mission for the technological HE sector which reflects the central teaching mission, informed by active research
- Acknowledge and reinforce what has been achieved, as foundation for reflections on meeting the future needs of students
- Build natural consensus around direction with regard to on campus and online future activity
- A new centralised versus distributed leadership approach addressing the balance of collective leadership for THEA Member Institutions
- Assert the role of the Chief Academic Officer to inform and guide activities of individual departments, schools and faculties

Meetings & Coordination
How we convene and coordinate

- Return to face to face for key decision making meetings by identifying in advance key objective of specific meetings with yearly 'types' of meetings to be scheduled in advance.
- Design meetings to accommodate continued wider participation

Strategy & Innovation
How we plan, prioritise, learn & evolve

- Move away from overfilling CAO strategy to different funding model
- Audit and review emergent needs of students to ensure we still serve the types of students we attract

Resource Allocation, Targets & Forecasts
How we invest our time and money

- Engagement in national discussions on Future Capital Projects
- Campaign for Strategic and multi-annual funding for sector for online and TEL separately
- Increase capacity for PMSS student supports and engagement provision
- Revisit resource allocation. The overall HE funding requires investment. It is imperative that the state supports the aspirations of technological universities.
- Push Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development for concrete recommendations and speedy implementation

People & Motivation
How we reward, support & encourage

- Review and plan for coherent acknowledgement of peer support, peer learning and good practice
- Empower staff to re-engage through empowering them make change at local level. Training to enable optimal transparency in context of hybrid working modes
- Provide appropriate support, empowerment and motivation to students
- Robust criteria and perceived currency for credible recognition of staff and team achievements with equal recognition of treatment of all staff cohorts

5.0
Appendix

5.1
Abbreviations

Abbreviations	
CAO	Central Applications Office
F2F	Face to face
IR	Institutional Research
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PMSS	Professional, Managerial and Support Staff
TEL	Technology Enhanced Learning
THEA	Technological Higher Education Association
TU	Technological University
QA	Quality Assurance

5.2
Workshop Data
5.2.1 Top Motivators

Top Motivators	Votes
Ensuring that the students remains active versus passive in the learning environment - including the online world of learning where they could be very active	8
Mainstreaming training in assessment design and academic integrity.	8
Ability to access interesting and relevant webinars, both national and international.	7
The rigour of a range of assessment methods being employed	6
The level of interaction between academics and students and student to student was efficient and even more effective in the lecture scenario when online	5
Virtual labs in Science & Engineering to compliment physical labs	5
Virtual Programme Validation Panels	5
Implementing stronger academic integrity practices	5
Assessment mix, appropriate to programme level, discipline, and graduate attributes.	4
Better engagement with Professional and Regulatory bodies on placement requirements to ensure greater flexibility in approaches	4
Flexibility	3
Regarding assessment, a cultural change had started prior to C-19 in many cases. NF funding and internal funding calls helped greatly in this regard. However, bringing the not so willing to the pitch was more difficult. All changed over the past 15 months. Post pandemic, the challenge is to mainstream this culture of assessment mix.	3
Flipping Learning	2
Online approaches to some types of examinations	2
As per the previous question, from a cost perspective the online approach to examination boards worked very well and was cost efficient. This could be retained into the future	2
Some elements of online ..for large lectures perhaps and perhaps a hybrid approach to some meetings	2
Virtual academic supports for students-e.g Maths supports Virtually any stigma attached removed	2
TEL and staff engagement with same	2
Remote / online tutorials to supplement face to face delivery	2
Support for all students	1
Range of delivery modes	1
Online approaches to some types of examinations	1
Supporting peer to peer and social learning by physical presence on campus	1
Flipped classroom	0
Hybrid / hyflex (whatchamacallit) learning	0
Better ways of QA management	0
Range of alternative assessments deployed	0

5.2.2

Reasons for Inertia	Votes
The academic calendar requires some adjustment to facilitate a mix of onsite and alternative assessments in August and early September. Flexibility will be required around this going forward.	9
Staff were very flexible under Emergency teaching conditions but not sure same degree of flexibility will exist without additional resources post pandemic.	8
Management of delivery models - wherein lies the responsibility?	7
A move towards more alternative assessment would be appropriate but until solid permanent QA arrangements are in place around this area, there will be resistance	7
A more robust review of the purpose / suitability of the assessment methods being employed on stages / levels of programmes	7
Students (FT) want a meaningful campus experience and if the quantum of remote / online was too large they would resist same	7
Calling out online learning as something more than emergency remote teaching	5
Allowing for the recording of lectures to allow for revision by students	5
More work-integrated learning	4
learning happening outside classroom	3
While staff are willing at one level to move towards a blended mode, there is resistance from a IR perspective currently.	2
Previous T&L model was very simple - lectures, labs and tutorials all on site and then it was up to the individual learner to put in the independent learning hours. Initial ERT framework was kept simple for IR reasons. By AY 2021-2022, we had developed a palette of options for the academic, who decided on the best pedagogical approach for that module. Would like to keep this going forward - move to credits based model. I think many staff would favour it, but fear it will be held back on the IR front.	2
Integrated assessment as an approach to reducing over-assessment	2
Asynchronous activity- more reading material, recorded lectures	2
IR resistance to blended approach without agreed resources	2
Ensuring that VLEs continue to be used to support Teaching and Learning	1
Student having difficulty with internet connection and a suitable place to engage with online lectures / tutorials	1
Better broadband in all regions	1
Support for all students	1
Terminal exams	0
The nature of assessment methods being employed	0

5.2.3

Anxieties of the New Solution	Votes
Academic Integrity of assessments	9
We don't have sufficient evidence, case history to know if online works for all types of learning, teaching and assessment - we need to be careful on making assumptions	8
The QA rigour of TLA practices that occurred - what evidence is there factually	8
Academics perceiving that they will have the choice about delivery mode to facilitate their home life. Not thinking of the practicalities of such an approach for students	8
I worry about an imbalance in favour of online teaching ....the student experience is very important and the blend should be balanced especially in the humanities and business areas.	8
We don't need to ever be on campus	7
I worry about an imbalance in favour of online teaching ....the student experience is very important and the blend should be balanced especially in the humanities and business areas.	6
Solely online delivery	5
Panicgogy being accepted as pedagogy	5
Technically competing with international institutions of repute in the online market? Competitive disadvantage?	4
Proctored examinations	3
The online world creates false expectations of ownership of learning - passiveness may be something we don't want for our graduates	3
Increasing direction on T&L / Academic matters from government due to COVID-19 - will that tendency be reversed after the pandemic	3
Changing the patterns of enabling full engagement by students in academic affairs	3
The recording of lectures needs to be carefully thought out in terms of setting student expectations - this is not a repository to be set aside for consideration towards semester end, while freeing up time for huge amounts of part-time work over the semester.	2
Just as I worry about the all closed book exams approach, I would also worry about a no closed book exams at all type approach. We need a mix. Hard questions have arisen in Maths, Accounting, etc.	2
The assumption that areas including programme promotion and student recruitment can remain to online is a worry ...there is no substitute for F2F in these areas. While some areas such as individual programme validations could remain online, more substantial activities around Institute and School reviews should revert to onsite.	2
Going fully online and disabling the social time	1
Students will opt to go Open University route if they have limited on campus experience	1
That there will be a reversal to pre COVID-19 if additional resources nor forthcoming- staff, additional pay etc	1

5.2.4

I Like	I Wish
I liked the collaboration and the way we all worked together. We couldn't have done it without it. It was a student and staff partnership approach	I wish I would have tried a bit harder in relation to academic integrity in terms of online assessment – I'm mindful students got stiff penalties.
I like the PMSS staff and how important they are to the running of the academic institute. None of the remote teaching / learning could have happened otherwise – they contribute hugely to the academic space. Like that because it came to the fore - academic staff don't see the value of PMS staff and that we are a community and we depend on each other. Liked the leadership shown by the students union in being proactive and students were very resilient. They had a mature attitude. Would like the co creation of the environment to carry on	I wish some of my ftf meeting would not come back! Keep elements of it – meetings are important but we can waste time. Need to become more efficient.
I liked the collaboration internally within the college. The collaboration across teams from academic to professional services. Trying to move forward within the context. The registrars group, collaboration and sharing very important throughout the process. When this happened the true value of the relationships came to the fore. Collaboration of THEA registrars came up with an academic framework flowed out – commonality in how they approached things.	I wish the collaboration would continue, - would have wished that there had been more direction nationally. That was lacking – left to our own devices at third level, directions were absent or last minute. We were abandoned as a sector.
Like the leadership in HE sector locally and collectively via THEA. All academics had to give online delivery a go "a game changer". The acceleration in the move away from manual system from admin POV	Wish: We had some more time in planning for pedagogy for the delivery of online delivery, not the tech, but time for the T&L side. Wish there was a mechanism in place for small number of staff who have abused online system to not return to work or not do job effectively – managing people (PMSS) - managers had no tools to manage their staff.
Like – how we treated our students in mitigation / no disadvantage.	Wish – retain principles in mitigation policy
Like – collaborative nature, all Institutes supported students	I wish – more government guidance 'feeling of left on their own to paddle own canoe' - THEAs support phenomenal
Like. - cross functional thinking & decision making. Getting pe0ple around the table to think things through created a culture of collaboration rather than in silos – loosing grade / role - most important student. Tech invested in.	Wish: Not getting things from ministers office at 4pm on friday. Wish: spending longer on some parts of academic delivery and assessment.

5.2.5

I Wonder	I Want
To further explore – assessment mix is the one for me	I want / need from the highest level is structures in place to empower us to do it locally for assessment design and training.
Wonder – would like to ask students really how they found it.	I want our ability to be agile and take that forward. Agility in context of remote teaching. If we are going to have this we need the resources to do this.
I wonder about the opportunities to be more global, using what we have learned and tech to internationalize our programmes more.	I want a QA framework around this new world – something more permanent. If there is to be change and new structure, there will be need for new QA framework and resources.
Wonder: will there be long term consequences in the competitive environment – not only HE, but commercial world (Apple Uni). Wonder will trad school leavers decide not to go down the full time edu route. Wonder what was already happening in online programme provision will be further accelerated?	want the benefits that did accrue (people revisiting assessment) want the terminal end of year exams to remain unnecessary. Want the incessant teams meetings to end. Want wellness seminars to disappear. An online wellness seminar to help people cope with the stress of online. (Teams texts)
Wonder: stop involvement of Unions in QA process	Want: we are facing programmatic review for 'Multi-Mode Delivery' so we can deal with future crises, instead of having to go through alternative academic framework.
Wonder – under the bonnet the quality of the delivery, how can that be unearthed.	Want: remote working arrangements for acad staff & professional staff innovative doing work from home and can accommodate remote working going forward
Wonder: How are grads are prepared, finishing now / next year. How have they been impacted in terms of learning / experiences.	Want: Student voice is continued to be listened to. More primary research and having as part of evidence base. Looking at new programme delivery – take multimode delivery perspective.

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