

# Findings Forum

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Queensland University of Technology

## GoSoapBox feedback

### 1. What do you think of the SESR model itself (categories, process, practices)?

#### Useful

- Useful and sophisticated
- A useful tool. Easily understood and visually analysed.
- I think it's useful... we had some questions about how you can have no evidence of a practice and yet be doing very well in that practice and/or be monitoring it... or indeed optimizing it...
- Well researched in a consultative and collaborative manner, useful, self-explanatory

#### Good discussion tool

- Good discussion and engagement tool for decision makers.
- Great work - its best outcome is as a very good conversation starter around topics that are sometimes not discussed on the ground.
- This provides the ability for directed and focused discussion
- Extremely valuable tool particularly for planning and staff discussions

#### Model structure helpful

- Categories and processes are useful indicators
- The categories provide a good coverage of options in an understandable manner.
- Really interesting and comprehensive. How agile is the model in being able to alter categories or incorporate new practices?

#### Meets a sector need

- There is at this point an absence of a national framework to measure university student experiences (and therefore likely engagement, success etc.) While this is likely to be changed by international drivers in the next few/several years, the SESR is an interesting (and challenging) way of helping us become more student-focussed.

#### Questions/extensions

- Some concern that lack of evidence LOOKS like lack of actions.

- Visually clear but some clarification needed around we can be good at certain things but appear to have no evidence when we know in fact have that data. Need to make evidence more explicit to wider university context
- It would be useful to look at intersections between them...
- It would be helpful to have some explanations of how the categories, processes and practices were defined and measured.
- The density of information is stimulating but also quite intimidating.
- The challenge with the model is that it is highly sophisticated and a significant amount of time needs to be spent teaching how the model is used. Otherwise people will want to grab at results and jump straight to the conclusions.
- Replies across the room look overwhelmingly positive. this might be due to the nature of the people here today - it would be useful to see how a wider audience might response (and therefore potentially indicate the existing culture among our three institutions)

## 2. What sort of actions could arise from the SESR-MM carpet?

### Strategic use

- Input to strategic plan, funding allocation and resourcing. Better understanding of student retention as a holistic activity, not just a technical or short term deliverable.
- Senior executives focusing too narrowly on their area of interest or only on the negatives. Quick reference to identify areas that meet or need improvement in meeting strategic goals and objectives. A smart design that all university staff can quickly understand the macro snapshot of an institution
- It was especially striking in depicting the emphasis in practice. This feed nicely into strategic direction.
- Model facilitates institutional review and cascading reviews by faculties and central support areas to identify the extent to which institutional activities are mirrored or enacted in an integrated way. The gaps between intended and enacted can be identified and monitored for action.
- Facilities prioritises different areas of support. Strategies to identify and record data.

### Helps visualise the situation

- The visual representation is quite striking and really makes the areas of interest stand out in a manner that I have never seen before. All of a sudden I feel so much more connected with the issues and have a grasp of the larger picture in an institutional context.
- UQ is at the right place, appetite-wise, for adopting a more systematic approach to enhancing its student engagement/experience. Inevitably this

appetite may be tempered by 'competing' agendas, but the power of the magic carpet is that it has an academic/research grounding and is likely to be accepted as an underpinning mechanism for making sense of what can be a nebulous concept.

- It works to create opportunities for better practice as well as better evidence gathering of such practices, by seeing where more effort is needed.

#### Identify areas for change

- Opportunities to develop in maturity to hopefully lead to improved student outcomes
- This might be a useful tool to use within an institution - faculty by faculty.
- Identify gaps, areas for improvement

#### Improvement

- I think some guidelines with the iterative evidence collection process would be invaluable if a uni was to commence using it.

### **3. How do you think you could use the SESR-MM to enhance your area of responsibility?**

#### Motivate action

- Provide information needed to justify support for eLearning services.
- Peer support is provided by my unit and I know that we provide it well, but it has never been as clear to me as now that we need to pay more attention to optimizing and monitoring. This will be two points that I will be able to arrange action on immediately.
- Use as a visual snapshot of areas of strength and development-needed, and will be a tool to engage staff in working towards continuous improvement.
- I'd like to review my course to compare it to the university average prior to investigating ways of lifting our performance.

#### Guide action

- Provide context and measurements for student retention interventions.
- In addition to continuous improvements principles, opportunities for gap analysis, some quick wins and of course leverage with decision makers.
- Strengthen monitoring, evaluation, action research approach

#### Gap analysis

- Gap analysis
- Provides an indicative view of where the gaps may be either in delivery or measurement.

- Useful visual tool for gap analysis and planning for future focus of service and staff priorities
- Gap analysis and tool to assist with strategising and planning peer programs within faculties and across university. Promote discussion and raise awareness.

#### Situate practices in wider context

- The carpet allows particular aspects of the student engagement/experience to be located in a broader map, and help explain their importance/priority for the institution.

#### Stimulate discussion

- Useful for stimulating discussion at the course and unit level.
- To begin conversations
- It looks very useful for stimulating discussion of our performance at the coal face as well as our relationship with institutional framing.

#### Focus on evidence

- A well as identifying areas to focus, I will endeavour to ensure there is evidence.
- Amazing

#### **4. Which particular aspects of the model do you think provide the most useful information?**

##### Model elements

- The categories provide a headline of how student-focused an institution might be. The relationship among these can also often indicate how reactive or proactive an institution might be in engaging with its students
- The categorisation coupled with the dimensions is neat.
- Description of practice, with evidence of examples, are particularly helpful as they are clear concise and allow staff from all areas to understand the areas of discussion/interrogation. The carpet when used over a time period.
- Practice descriptors are very useful however it would be important to ensure it is comprehensive and doesn't leave any practices out....otherwise there's a risk of what doesn't get measured doesn't get done
- The examples of the types of evidence

##### Coloured tiles

- The colour tiles are an excellent visual that allow me to see the depths of an issue.

## 5. How do you think you would go about using the SESR-MM in your institution?

### Presentation to managers

- I would like the model to be distributed to the various Unit managers for consideration, and then the process and ideas should be discussed regularly at management meetings.
- Slowly at first. Might be worth considering asking the project team to explain the concept to the institution's senior management to secure buy-in.

### Presentation to staff

- Initially, its power is as an educator that identifies the practices that impact on SESR to those staff not across this space
- To drive better collaborative practice in areas that need development and also to celebrate successes. Whilst the focus of the question is institution wide I think in reality there will be changes and movement at the ground level as action occurs at senior exec level. Hopefully the ground level movement will help drive upwards the senior exec "buy-in" institution wide.

### Apply to sub-units

- It would be interesting to see this done at a faculty level to help identify specific areas for improvement that contribute to a uni wide assessment.
- There is definite potential for the model across all levels of the institution.

### Further modelling

- It would be interesting to see how eLearning maturity maps to the student engagement model so direct links can be made between the two.

### **Q&A – (moderated to remove 2 irrelevant comments)**

- 4 x Is Stephen available to present the model to our VC Executive please?
- 1 x Should we be engaging in a reality check with students as to whether they are aware of/receiving various levels of practice e.g. Peer Support Provided, is actually occurring across the student body and are they aware that this support is available?
- 1 x Could we obtain soft copy of our institution findings with the descriptions of practice to help with dissemination and discussion with colleagues?
- 1 x Could you please circulate the participant kit electronically - Ta!