



Evaluating & Researching University  
Participation Interventions

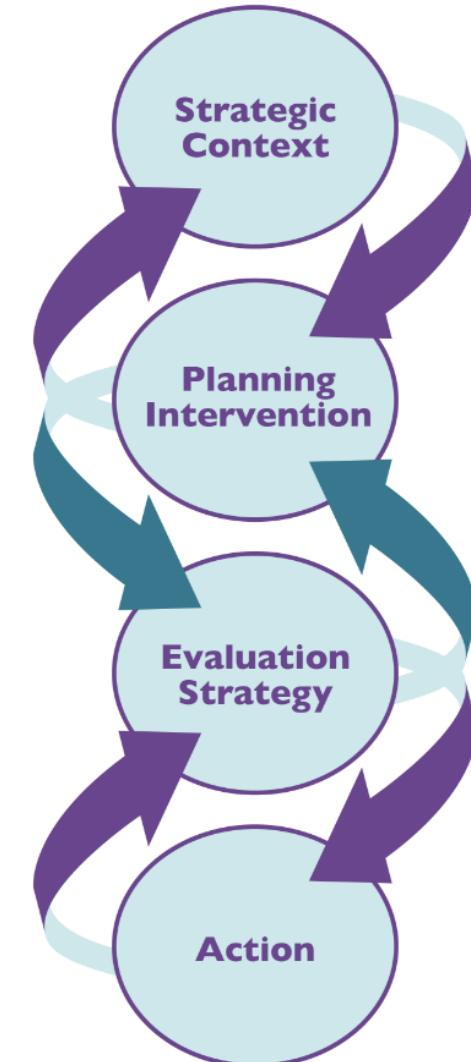
# NERUPI and your Access and Participation Plan Submission

Monday 11 March 2024



## Main focus of the day on Intervention strategies

- Presentations to guide group discussion
- Scenarios or work own projects
- Action Planner to use during the day
- Range of updated resources to support APP planning & evaluation



<b>9.30</b>	<b>COFFEE &amp; REGISTRATION</b>
<b>10.00</b>	<b>OfS Requirements and Reflections on Wave I</b> Heather Bowyer, Senior Officer OfS Presentation
<b>10.45</b>	<b>BREAK</b>
<b>11.15</b>	<b>Developing Intervention Strategies</b>
<b>12.30</b>	<b>LUNCH</b>
<b>1.15</b>	<b>Making plans measurable and reportable</b>
<b>2.30</b>	<b>TEA &amp; CAKE</b>
<b>2.45</b>	<b>What goes in the plan?</b>
<b>15.30</b>	<b>The overall Strategy</b>
<b>16.00</b>	<b>CLOSE</b>

# NERUPI and your APP Submission

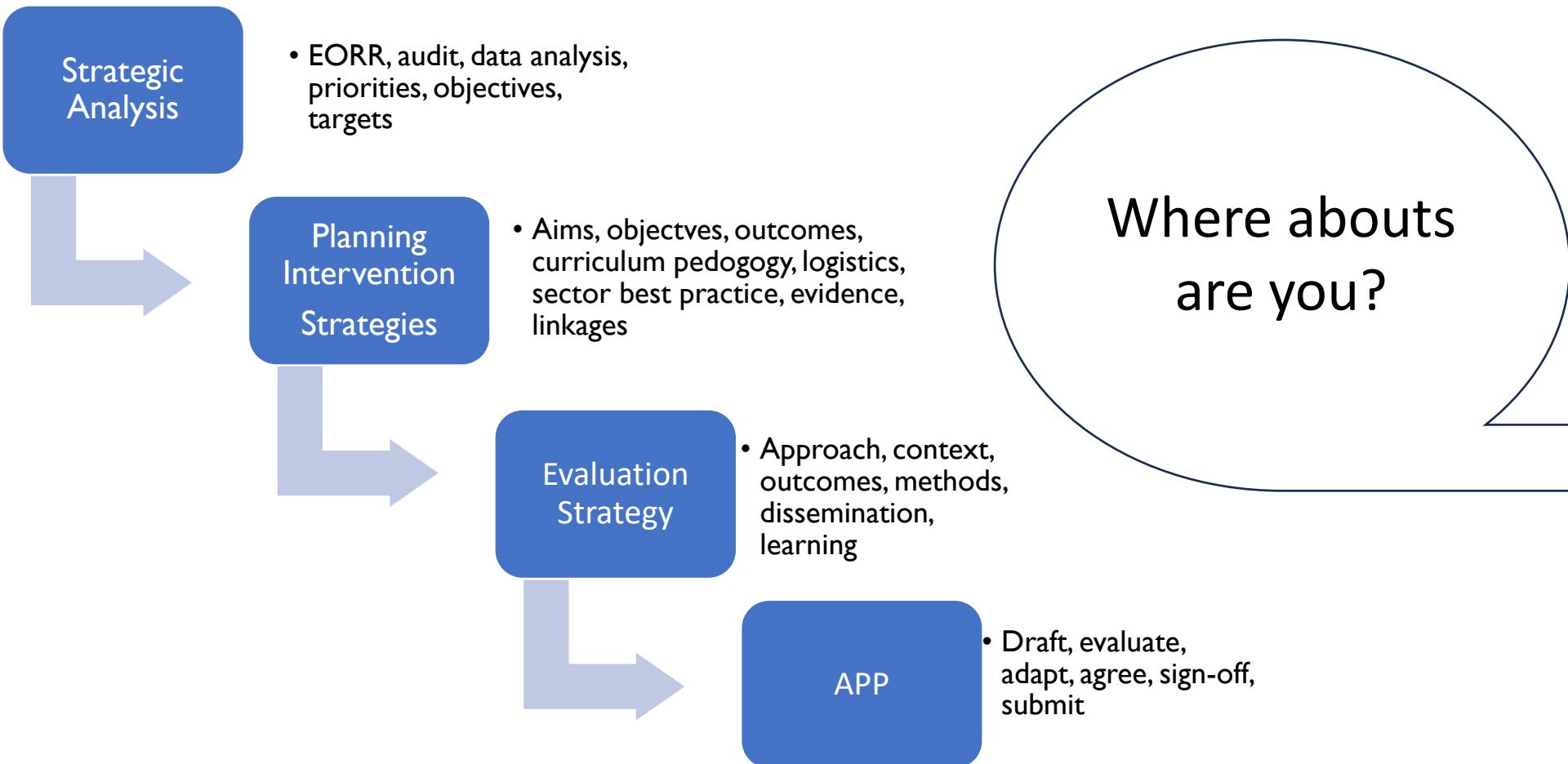
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**Session I**  
**11.15 – 12.30**

## **Developing Intervention Strategies**

# APP Process



# Discussion Groups

PopU

aka Poppleville

- converted from polytechnic to a university in 1992
- appears in the middle of university league tables
  - Inclusive entry requirements
- diverse student body with strong local recruitment
- unexplained awarding and progression gaps



Popplebridge  
University

- Old university with strong research base.
- appears near the top of league tables.
  - Highly selective
- Subjects largely academic; traditional curriculum & pedagogy
- Majority white middle class student body.
- unexplained awarding and progression gaps

Popple Arts

- small specialist provider for the creative industries.
- offers FHE in arts and design, performance, & media
- Students from Quintile 1-2 postcode and (IMD) are underrepresented

# Intervention Strategy



pl46  
pp 41/42

## Intervention strategy example

146. An example of an intervention strategy is set out below. This example is for an unspecified number of students, and as such the financial inputs for similar interventions are likely to vary depending on the number of students and the specific context of the provider.

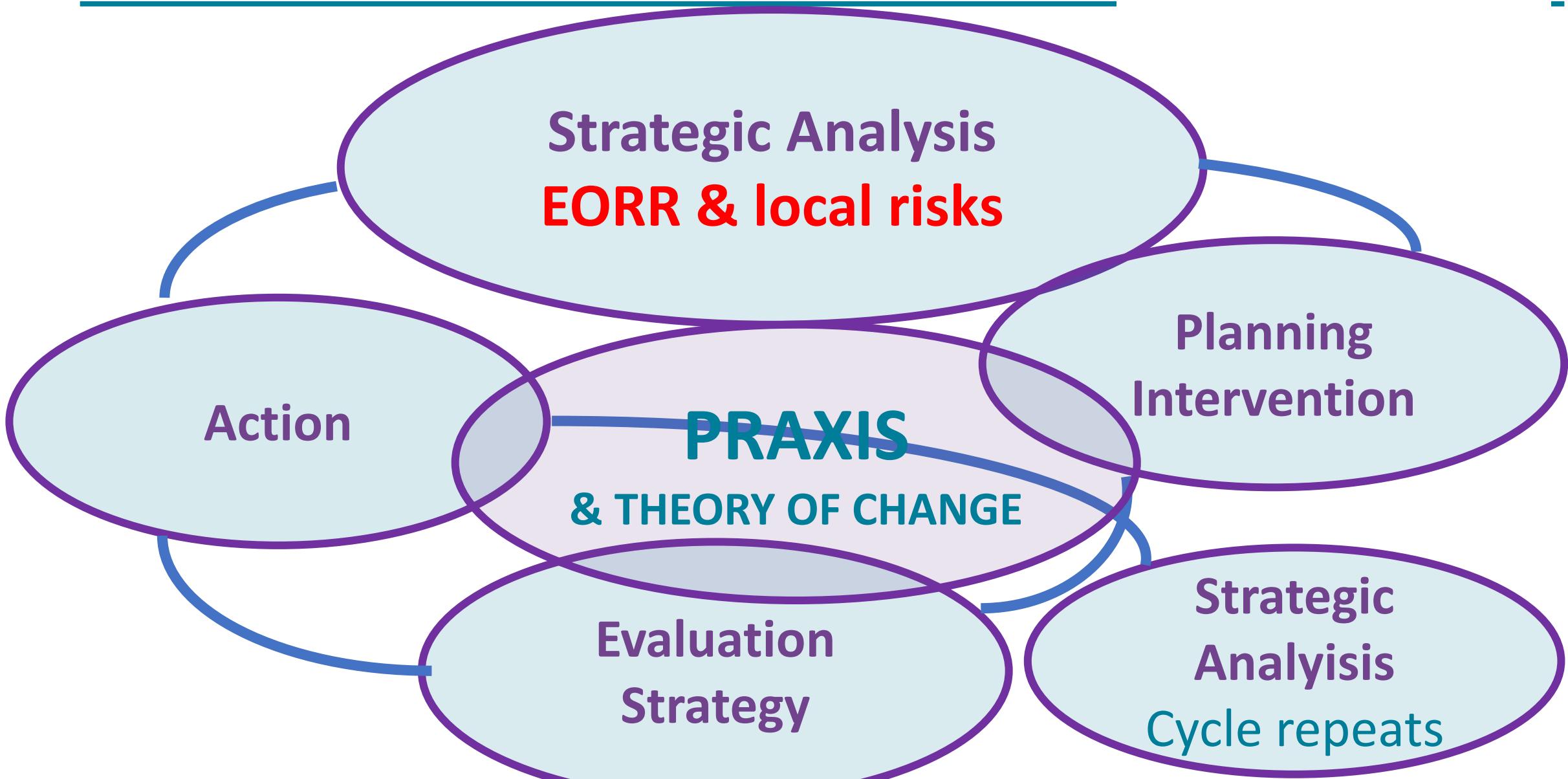
### Intervention strategy 4

**Objectives and targets:** To ensure there is no difference in continuation rates between care experienced students and non-care experienced students by 2027-28 (Target – PTS\_3). Secondary objective(s): PTP\_1 (IS4); PTA\_1 (IS1); PTP\_2(IS5)

Risks to equality of opportunity: **Information and guidance; insufficient academic support; insufficient personal support; mental health; cost pressures.**

Activity	Inputs	Outcomes	Cross intervention?
Accommodation promise: 365-day accommodation guarantee for care experienced students, plus accommodation bursary to cover vacation residence. Guarantee of accommodation if student suspends status for one year. Accommodation guarantor scheme for Y2,3 and graduating students. New activity.	Accommodation budget per eligible student. Administrative costs and deposit loss fund.	Decreased financial concerns for students; increased sense of security; increased sense of belonging	IS1, IS4

# REFLEXIVE CYCLE



## Access

**Knowledge & skills**

**Information & Guidance**

**Perception of Higher Education**

**Application Success Rates**

**Limited choice of course type & style of delivery**

## On Course

**Insufficient academic support**

**Insufficient personal support**

**Mental Health**

**Ongoing impact of Coronavirus**

**Cost pressures**

**Capacity issues**

**Progression from Higher Education**



INDIVIDUAL FACTORS	ACTIONS	NERUPI AIM	ACTIONS	INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS
<b>Imagined Futures</b>	?	Develop students' knowledge and awareness of the benefits of higher education & graduate employment	?	<b>Culture</b> <b>Structures &amp; Policies</b>
	?	Develop students' capacity to navigate Higher Education sector and make informed choices	?	
	?	Develop students' confidence and resilience to negotiate the challenges of university life	?	
	?	Develop students' study skills and capacity for academic attainment	?	
	?	Develop students' understanding by contextualising subject knowledge	?	
	?			

EORR Risk	EORR descriptor	NERUPI L3 OBJECTIVE	NERUPI LEARNING OUTCOMES
<b>4. Knowledge &amp; skills</b>	<p>Students may not have equal opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills required to be accepted onto higher education courses that match their expectations and ambitions</p>	<p>Enhance academic skills that develop capacity for critical thinking, independent research and self-directed learning</p> <p>Situate existing knowledge within wider fields of knowledge and apply to other contexts</p> <p>Situate existing knowledge within the context of university degree programmes and academic disciplines</p> <p>Access and experience appropriate attainment-raising interventions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance capacity for independent learning, self-directed study and enterprise</li> <li>Enhance capacity for creative problem solving and decision making</li> <li>Enhance communication and presentation skills using different mediums</li> <li>Enhance critical thinking skills through experimentation, reflection, analysis, synthesis and evaluation</li> <li>Enhance research skills and gain experience of independent research</li> <li>Enhance project planning skills and expertise in designing, implementing and evaluating a small-scale project</li> <li>Enhance interpersonal and group work skills and capacity to work collaboratively with others</li> <li>Enhance revision skills and expertise in a range of revision techniques</li> <li>Extend awareness of the wider applications of knowledge</li> <li>Locate existing knowledge within wider fields of knowledge and other contexts</li> <li>Enhance understanding through collaborative projects which extend knowledge and challenge assumptions</li> <li>Relate existing knowledge and interests to university subject areas and degree programmes</li> <li>Extend their capacity for critical thinking, perspective taking and creative engagement with their subject area</li> <li>Understand how knowledge can be developed within university subject areas and academic disciplines</li> </ul>

EORR Risk	EORR descriptor	NERUPI objective	NERUPI learning outcome	NERUPI NEW AIM?	ACTION
<b>10. Cost pressures</b>	Increases in cost pressures may affect a student's ability to complete their course or obtain a good grade	Receive comprehensive information about personal development and progression opportunities for graduates in their subject area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Access student finance and budgeting support appropriate to personal circumstances</i></b></li> </ul>	<b>Economic Capital</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that student financial support services are accessible and relevant</li> <li>• <b>Review bursary offer</b></li> </ul>
<b>11. Capacity issues</b>	Students may not have equal opportunity to access limited resources related to higher education, such as suitable accommodation	Access and utilise appropriate opportunities and provision in order to orientate themselves towards and realise personal goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><i>Access student finance and budgeting support appropriate to personal circumstances</i></b></li> </ul>	<b>Economic Capital</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ensure that student accommodation is available</b></li> </ul>

# Organisation risks, EORR & NERUPI

**EORR**  
Match NR  
to the HEI

**RISKS FOR  
ORGANISATION**  
Analyse data &  
identify IR &  
intersectionality

NERUPI  
Link to NERUPI  
to define aims,  
& objectives  
for action

**Which comes first?**  
**Strategic Analysis of your**  
**organisational data**

# Scenario Discussion

Popple Arts \

**2: OUTREACH L3**  
Improving participation  
through arts outreach:

**PopU** (aka Poppleville)

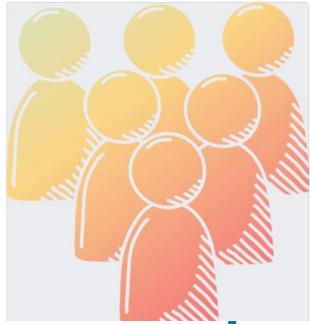
**4: TRANSITION & ON COURSE**  
Mature Undergraduate Students

**6: Improving outcomes for CARE**  
**EXPERIENCE STUDENTS:**



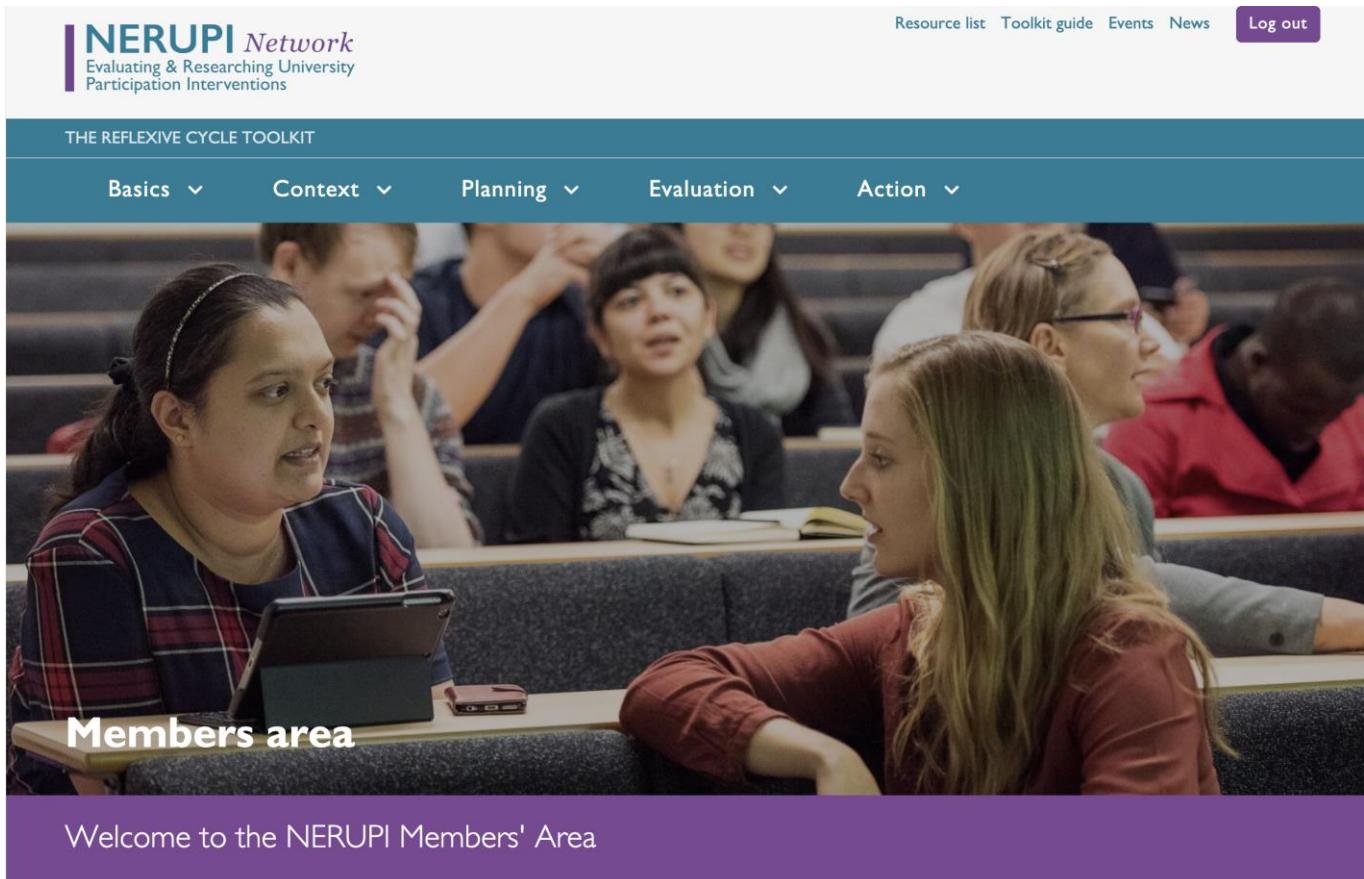
- 1. OUTREACH ON ROUTE**  
Level 3 Post-16
- 3. PROGRESSION Employability**  
through non-course related  
activity
- 5: PARTICIPATION Reducing**  
Awarding Gaps

# Scenario Discussion



- Are the objectives & targets realistic? stretching?
  - Do the targets & objectives relate to the activities? Could they be improved
    - Are the inputs appropriate?
  - Who would need to be involved internally? externally?

# Updated Resources



The screenshot shows the NERUPI Network website. At the top, there is a purple header with the text "Members area". Below this, a large image shows a classroom with students sitting in rows, looking towards the front. In the foreground, a student is looking towards the right. The website has a dark blue header with the text "THE REFLEXIVE CYCLE TOOLKIT" and a navigation menu with dropdowns for "Basics", "Context", "Planning", "Evaluation", and "Action". At the top right, there are links for "Resource list", "Toolkit guide", "Events", "News", and "Log out". A purple banner at the bottom of the page says "Welcome to the NERUPI Members' Area".



NEW RESOURCE: How  
NERUPI Resources can  
support Wave 2 APP Planning

**APP RESOURCES**

# Action Plan



- Is there a clear strategy for prioritising risks?
- Is there information to develop the targets & objectives?
- How will the interventions be developed and agreed?
- What would be in your Praxis Team? Who would be your stakeholders? How would students be involved?
- What would be the inputs to, your activities?
- What tools & resources could support you?

# NERUPI and your APP Submission

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12.30 – 1.15

**LUNCH**

**Session 2**  
**1.15 – 2.30**

**Making plans measurable and  
reportable**

# Section on evaluation

- Frameworks, approaches, capacity for evaluation
- Practice has been strengthened by using developmental tools provided by the OfS (e.g. self-assessment)
- Mapping historical activity to identify best practices and gaps in knowledge
- An outcomes-led approach
- Appropriately aligned for the type of activity and stage of development
- Adherence to rigorous processes
- Mechanisms for learning from evaluation

# Frameworks for evaluation planning

- Data analysis utilising internal management data, the OfS APP Data Dashboard and any other relevant data sets
- A literature review and review best practice across the sector (internal and external evidence banks, NERUPI, local networks, TASO toolkits and OfS Effective practice examples)
- A Theory of Change Workshop with staff and student stakeholders
- Student Advisory Panel to seek input, guidance, and support
- Meeting with the Evaluation Coordinator to discuss the evaluation plan, resources required and to discuss considerations such as GDPR compliance, small sample sizes and any ethics requirements
- An evaluation planning document detailing all the above steps

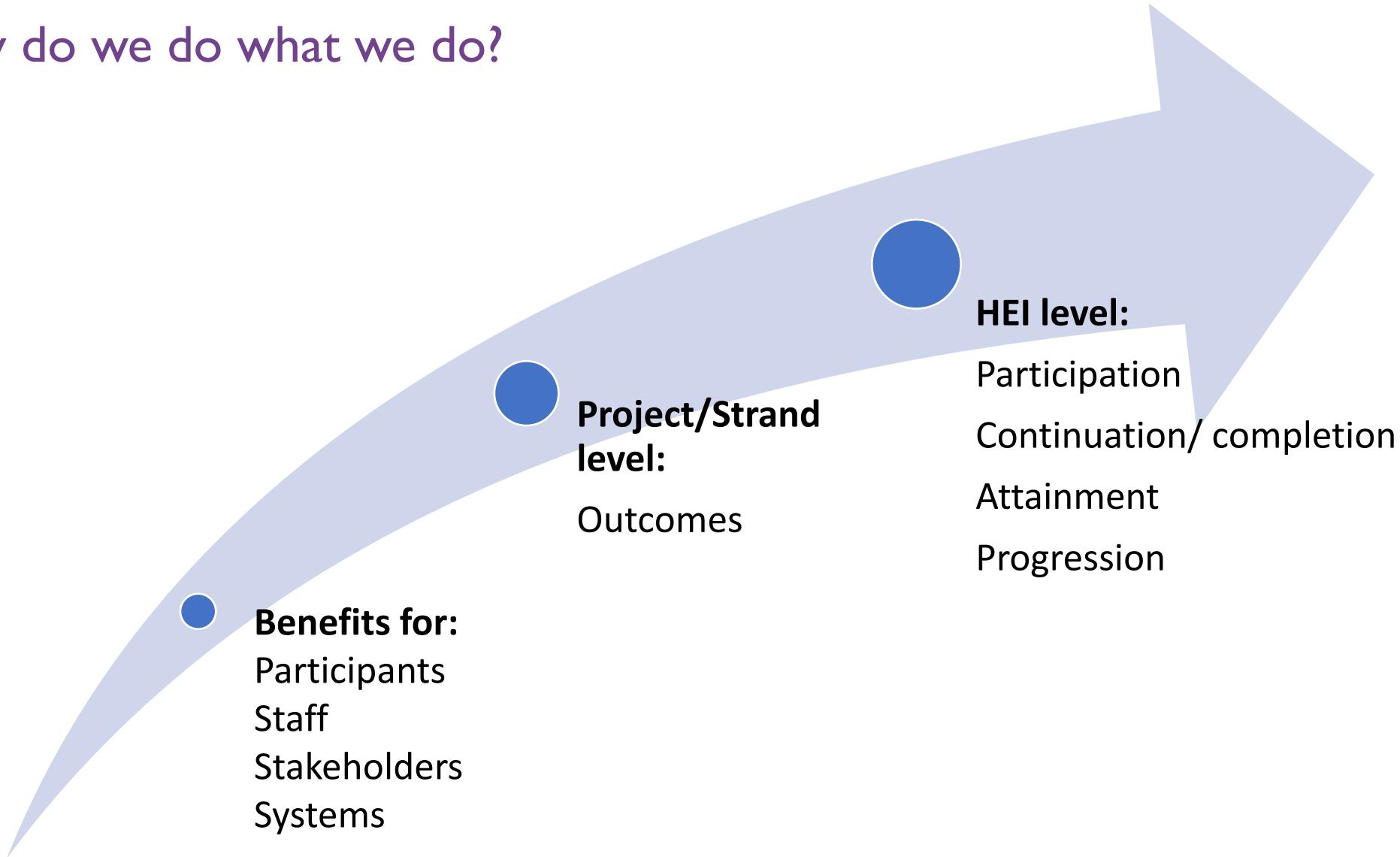
# Intervention strategies: focus on the outcomes

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- Sets out the purpose and can help get shared clarity about what it is trying to achieve
- Contextualised to the intervention (activities, resources etc)
- Provides a structure and focus to aim for
- Encouraging for both staff and participants, through providing evidence of progress
- Central to Impact Evaluation, moving towards understanding of causality and finding out what works in APP

# Exploring outcomes

- Why do we do what we do?



# Levels of measurement

- **Individual level**
  - might include detailed aspects describing psychological processes which underpin the pathways (such as changes in individuals' identity and attitudes)
  - changes in behaviours
  - individual perceptions as well as objective measures
- **Community level**
  - aspects describing group or community level changes (such as increased participation rates)
  - better understanding or deepened understandings
- **Organisation level**
  - alignment with APP Targets
  - might align with institutional KPIs
  - change in resources and expertise, or stakeholder involvement.

➤ May be multiple causal pathways, different interventions linking together  
➤ Some interventions may only impact on outcomes at one point in time

## Different types of data

### Objective data

(e.g. test results)

### Behavioural outcomes

(e.g. applications to HE)

### Non-behavioural outcomes

(e.g. confidence)

### Validated scales

(e.g. well-being)

# Key Impact Evaluation Challenges

1. How to measure the changes that result from an intervention
  - Measures
  - Proxy-measures
  - Indicators
  
2. How to attribute any changes to your intervention
  - Approaches
  - Methods

Glossary	
Measure	How you know an outcome you are hoping to make has occurred
Proxy	An indirect measure of an outcome which is correlated to that outcome when direct measures aren't available.
Indicators	Defines how you'll actually measure the change that has taken place
Approach	The distinct ways to think about, design, and conduct the evaluation
Method	A systematic way of collecting and using data and evidence

# Characteristics of 'good' indicators

- Fully defined so it is clear what it is that is being measured, when, how, with what frequency etc;
- Actually measures what it intends to measure or is reasonably indicative of it ('validity')
- Can be collected consistently by different people and at different times ('reliability')
- Affordable and feasible to collect the data regularly and with high quality.

<b>SMART &amp; SPICED</b>	
<b>SMART INDICATORS</b>	<b>SPICED INDICATORS</b>
Specific (to the change being measured)	Subjective
Measurable (& unambiguous)	Participatory
Attainable (and sensitive)	Interpreted (& communicable)
Relevant (and easy to collect)	Cross-checked
Time bound (with dates)	Empowering
	Diverse and disaggregated

# Consider the options

Aim	Method	Participants	Variables
Describe, test, generalise	Survey	Large	Large
Explain, test, predict	Experiment	Relatively large	Small
Explore, describe, explain	Interviews	Small	Relatively Small
Explore, describe, explain	Case studies	Small	Large
Explore, explain	Focus groups	Medium	Small
Describe, test , generalise	Tracking/follow-up	Large	Small

# Type 2 and Type 3 evaluations

- Explore the use of comparator groups where appropriate
- Explore the use of benchmarks for assessing effectiveness (e.g. 'golden' questions')
- Explore completing a risk analysis of the evaluation plan
- Tracking of participants (including tracking services)
- Embedding data collection processes (creative methods)

## Things to consider

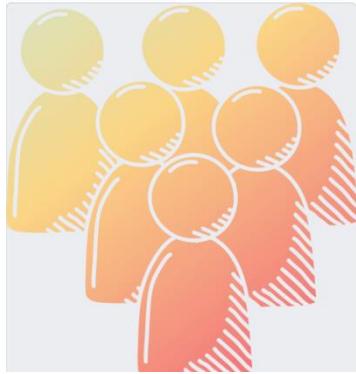
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- Evaluation of the whole APP versus separate strategies and individual strands and extent to which each contributes to the overall objectives
- Process evaluation
  - Influence of context (e.g. Realist approaches)
  - Inputs/activity/delivery
  - The causal pathways
  - Assumptions
  - Role of monitoring in this
- Evaluation of the work with partners

# Resources for evaluation

- Dedicated centralised resources
- Embedding evaluation responsibilities in practitioner roles
- Partnerships with academic and other staff
- New roles, studentships, PhDs
- External evaluation

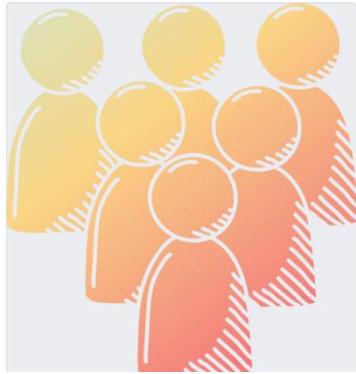
# Small Group Discussion



## **Linking outcomes and measures....**

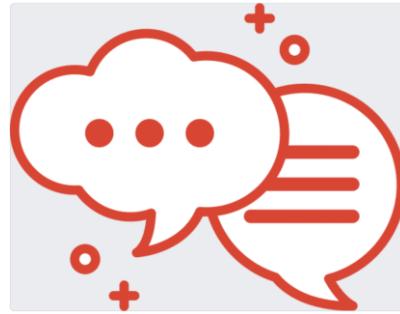
- How easy was it to decide on the Short term, intermediate and long term outcomes
- Are you happy you can measure these using the methods you've picked?
- Are you clear about what will need to happen to collect, analyse and report on the information?

# Small Group Discussion



Activity	Outcomes	Method(s) of evaluation	Summary of publication plan

# Action Plan: Evaluation



- Is there a clear process for agreeing the ToC?
  - What existing insights can inform the ToC?
  - What new information do we need?
- Do our objective & targets link to outcome and impact measures?

What evidence do we need to show progress?

What types of evaluation should we be aiming for?

  - What resources do we need for evaluation?
  - Who will be responsible?

## Session 3 2.45 – 3.00

**What goes in the plan and supporting documentation**

# Writing your APP

**Regulatory advice 6: How to prepare your access and participation plan - effective practice advice**

**Annex C: Access and participation plan template**

**Annex H: Guidance for completing a summary of an approved access and participation plan**

**Annex I: Plan summary template**

## **Annex C: Access and participation plan template**

- Overarching strategic aim relating to equality of opportunity
- Summary of the key risks to equality of opportunity that your plan will address
- Objectives – each risk to equality of opportunity should have at least one corresponding measurable objective
- Intervention strategies and expected outcomes – each objective should have an intervention strategy
- How you are taking a whole provider approach
- Student consultation and Provision of information to students
- Evaluation of the plan – strategy for strengthening your evaluation activity overall

## Annex C: Access and participation plan template

### Your access and participation plan may also include:

- **Annex A:** Further information and analysis relating to the identification and prioritisation of key risks to equality of opportunity
  - Explain how you identified your key risks and describe any identified risks that your plan does not address (including any mitigating actions for the latter if appropriate)
  - May use charts and graphs
- **Annex B:** Further information that sets out the rationale, assumptions and evidence base for each intervention strategy that is included in the access and participation plan
  - Can set out:
    - Further information about underpinning evidence for each intervention strategy
    - Rationales and assumptions relating to your TOC for each intervention strategy

## Risks to Equality of Opportunity and Objectives

- Summarise the key risks that you plan to address, how you identified them and why they are occurring\*
- Each risk should have at least one measurable objective
- Can use information from your completed NERUPI TOC (Intervention Strategy) template

\*More detail about your risks can be provided in the APP Annex A

## Intervention Strategies and Outcomes

- OfS template that they suggest you use for each intervention strategy – it can provide a high-level summary of your underpinning theory of change.\* Worked example pp 41-42 of OfS Regulatory guidance 6
- Some intervention strategies may need multiple pages
- Also need to include:
  - total cost of your activities and evaluation
  - High-level overview of the evidence base used for the strategy\*
- The NERUPI TOC (Intervention Strategy) template matches the sections in the OfS intervention strategy template

\*More detail can be provided in your APP Annex B

## Intervention Strategies and Evaluation

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- The OfS provides an example table to show how you might want to set out detailed evaluation activity that relates to the activities in each of your intervention strategies\* Worked example p42 of OfS [Regulatory guidance 6](#)
- The [NERUPI TOC \(Intervention Strategy\) template](#) also matches the sections in the OfS example table
- You might also wish to refer to the evaluation information that you have developed in your [NERUPI Framework Planning Template with EORR](#)

\*More detail can be provided in your APP Annex B

## Evaluation of the Plan

- This section is where you describe your strategy for strengthening your evaluation activity overall including:
- Your approach to developing your strategy
- How your evaluation strategy will be strengthened overall – including through self-assessment
- An explanation of the methodologies that you will be using
- How you will put the plan into practice
- How and when you intend to share your evaluation evidence
- ( Wave I examples 2 to 4 pages for this section)

## University of Derby Example

### Stage 1

NERUPI TOC (Intervention Strategy) template

### Stage 2

Completed NERUPI TOC (Intervention Strategy) template

### Stage 3

Access and participation plan entry (p5 to p14) 9 pages\*

**\* Note the inspired fusion of the OfS intervention strategy template and intervention strategy evaluation table into one table**

# Action Plan: What goes in the plan?



- What information will we include in the plan?
- What will we include in supporting documentation?
- Which information will not be included in the plan or supporting information?
- Is there any information it's not clear whether to include?

# NERUPI and your APP Submission

11<sup>th</sup> March 2024

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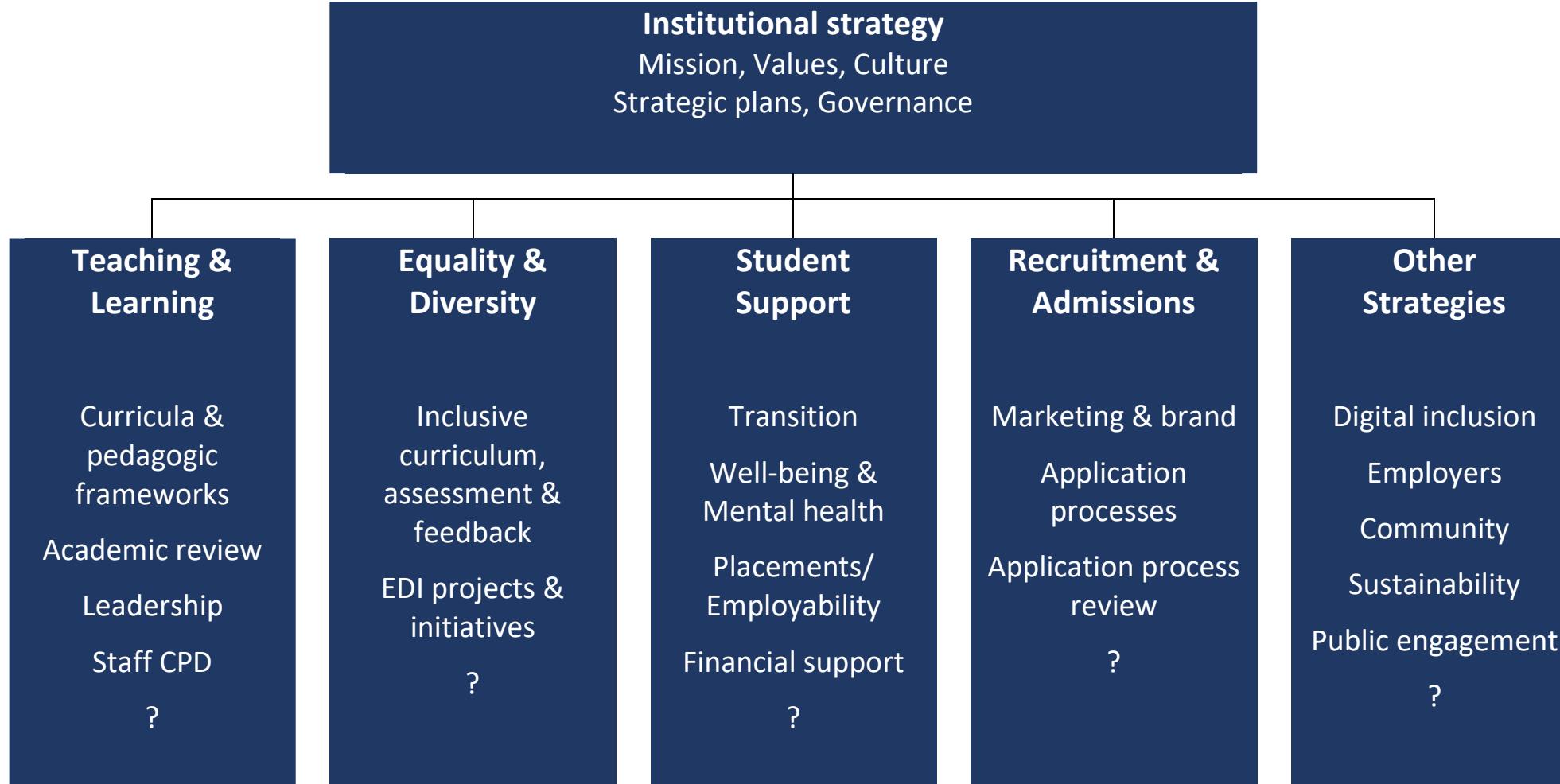


**Session 4**  
**3.30 – 4.00**

## The Overall Strategy

**Jo Astley. Evaluation & Evidence Manager,  
University of Derby**

# Whole provider approach



# The Overall Strategy

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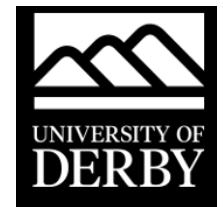
What is required through the guidance?

Does your strategy align and deliver?

Play to your strengths

Ambition and commitment

Draw on existing guidance and networks



## Intervention strategies

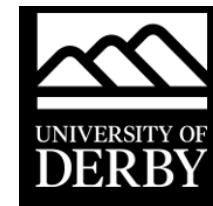
Theory of Change

Does activity evaluation align with your  
strategy?

Who is conducting the evaluation?

Resources can follow later

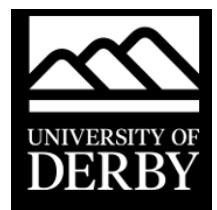
**Don't over promise but demonstrate  
ambition!**



# The Overall Strategy

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- **What are your key principles? Be clear about what you intend to do and achieve?**
- This is a whole university decision so how do we reach agreement? How do we keep those involved in planning, delivery & evaluation on track with this?
- **Monitoring, governance, and accountability**
- This is linked to the above— are the lines of accountability clear? How and when are plans agreed? Have systems been put in place to monitor progress?
- **Dissemination Strategy**
- OfS Requirements so how do we manage this? Internally? Externally?



# Action Plan: Overall Strategy



How well do our intervention strategies link up and fit with the strategic background?  
Are we clear about the governance arrangements and accountability lines?

What do we need to do to demonstrate a whole institutional approach?

What do we need from our institution and colleagues in order to write the plan?  
Who can help us get what we need to complete this work?