

Office for  
Students



# Evaluation as a mobiliser of change

**NERUPI:** Making Spaces in Higher Education:  
Exploring Possible Selves

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# Evaluation as dialogue

“Nor yet can dialogue exist without hope. Hope is rooted in men’s incompleteness from which they move out in constant search – a search which can be carried out only in communion with others. Hopelessness is a form of silence, of denying the world and fleeing from it.... Hope, however, does not consist in crossing one’s arms and waiting”.

Freire, P. (1970: 2000: 91-92).

# Strategic vision

***Evidence and evaluation is used effectively by the Office for Students and higher education providers to drive improvements in access and participation.***

## What needs to change

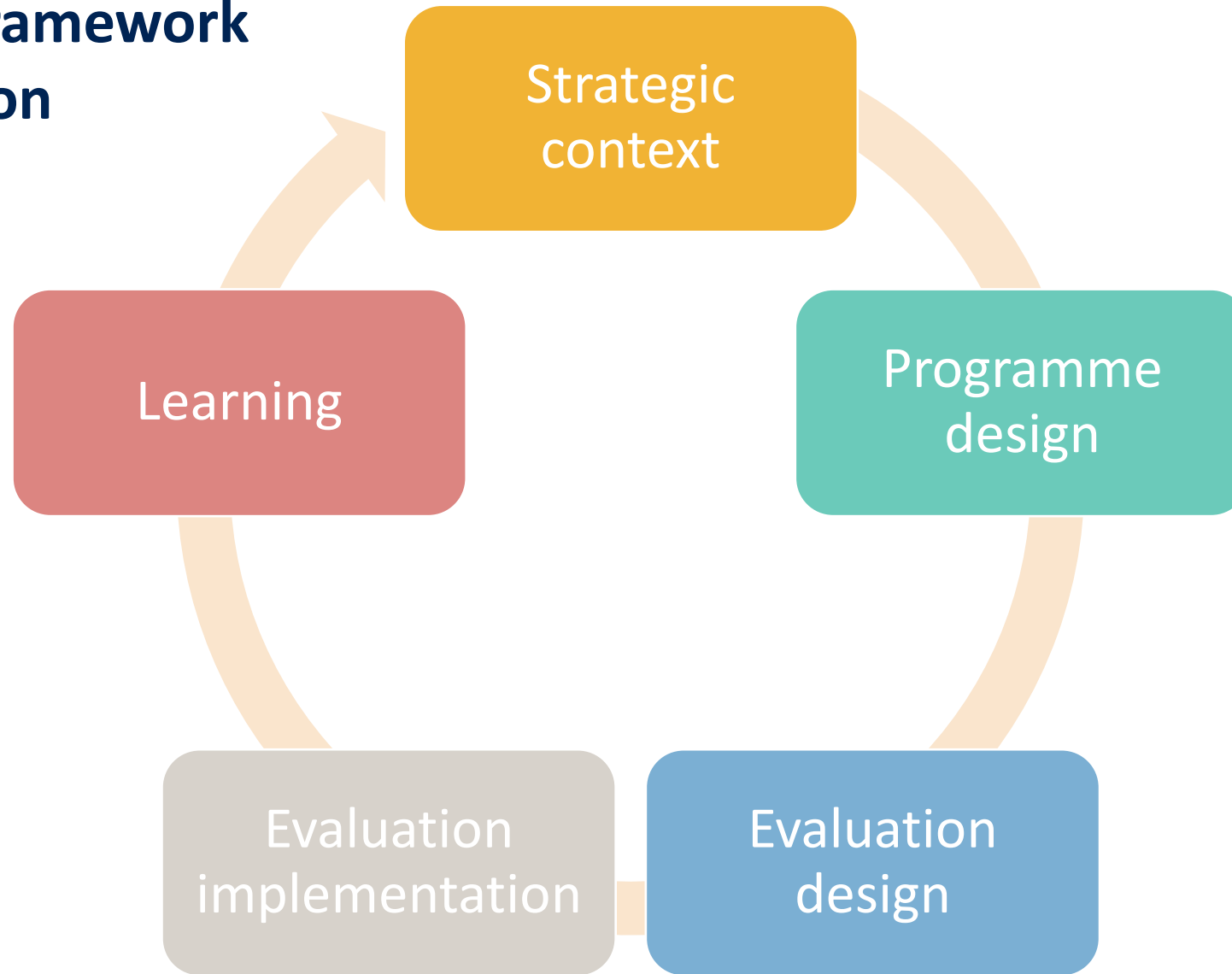
We have outlined three core outcomes for the OfS and higher education providers:



# Sector engagement and enhancement

- TASO - evidence-based practice in higher education
  - Call for evidence (30<sup>th</sup> June)
  - Academic and practitioner panels (14<sup>th</sup> July)
  - Partnership research (in development)
  - Evaluation
- NCOP capability building
- Strategic approach to effective practice
  - Mapping work, defining priorities
  - A-Z effective practice pages
  - Email [app@officeforstudents.org.uk](mailto:app@officeforstudents.org.uk) if you have examples of effective practice that has been evaluated and you want to share

## Five point framework for evaluation



# Strategic context

- **Support**

- Is evaluation regularly and routinely discussed in A&P meetings
- Do you have a strategic committee overseeing evaluation of A&P work?

- **Culture**

- Are your staff aware of importance of evaluation?
- Do you have an evaluation framework that covers all of your A&P work?
- Do you periodically review your practice and evaluation approach?

- **Skills**

- Do you have the right skills in place to undertake evaluation?
- Do you collaborate with your academic departments to undertake evaluation?
- Do you provide opportunities for your staff to develop their evaluation skills?

# Programme design

- **Rationale for programmes**

- Do your programmes have clear and specific objectives?
- Can these be measured directly or through proxies?
- Are your programmes underpinned by evidence?
- Can you refer to evidence of impact elsewhere or research literature?

- **Indicators and measures**

- Do your programmes have agreed deliverables?
- Are you clear how you will measure success?

- **Research strategy**

- Is evaluation agreed at programme/project specification stage?

# Evaluation design

*Evaluation must be built in as part of your delivery approach rather than as an afterthought or additional activity*

- How are you making sure that your evaluation method will answer the question you are asking?
- Do you embed evaluation at the start of designing projects/programmes? For example, agreeing the evaluation approach and action plan as part of the overall project specification.
- Have you embedded methods and processes for collecting data into your design?
- Do you prepare formal evaluation plans to ensure most effective delivery? This could include specifying what data will be required and when, and different people's roles and responsibilities.
- How do you identify where to look for the expertise that you need?



# Evaluation implementation – what does good look like?

- **Data collection**

- Practical planning - standard project management tools
- Understanding timing and dependencies for resources
- Ethics and data protection
- Validating data collection tools
- Identifying how you will access existing data sources
- Practicalities of data collection (*e.g. selecting tools, timing, logistics, data entry*)
- Longitudinal tracking systems
- Agreeing data sharing protocols with other stakeholders

- **Resources**

- Understanding required resource details
- Financial planning and budgeting

- **Identifying and managing risks**

# Learning

## How might we:

- **Interpret evaluation results**

- Be transparent and critically aware of the evaluation research design limitations?
- Be careful with causal impact claims when drawing conclusions?
- Triangulate findings from different sources?
- Compare findings with existing evidence?

- **Use evaluation**

- Clarify and plan how you will use findings?
- Mechanisms to translate findings in to practice to improve future impact?

- **Share evaluation results internally**

- Plan how you will share and engage others internally with findings?
- Return to activity/programme outcomes - do results show change as expected?

- **Share externally**

- Commit to sharing findings externally (*what works, how it works, what doesn't work*)

# Thank you for listening

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