

Title: **A ‘One-Stop Shop’ to enhance the Student Experience through active communication of extra-curricular and co-curricular opportunities**

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Session Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

- Take home new practices and strategies to view student engagement at their Universities to enhance the student experience.
- Critically reflect on their own institution’s view of which student opportunities provide employability benefit and contribute to the student experience.
- View student engagement activities holistically in a new light inspired by outputs of the Centre for Student Engagement.
- New perspectives on what contributes to the student experience beyond and alongside the curriculum.

Session Outline

This discussion will give a report on the ‘Signposting Service for Student Opportunities’ (Get Involved Button) which aims to offer an accessible platform for all student opportunities beyond the curriculum at the University of Winchester together in a ‘one-stop shop’ to raise awareness of opportunities and overall student involvement, by providing information and signposting to appropriate colleagues and offices. This aligns with sector policy and research aligning student involvement/engagement to enhancing the student experience, sense of belonging, integration to Higher Education and raising employability (REACT, 2017; Humphrey & Lowe, 2017; Thomas, 2012; Tchibozo, 2008; Astin, 1984). Also there has been significant demand from students for greater clarity, wealth of information and signposting to help students find out about opportunities to get involved at Winchester (Shaw, 2016) and demand for additional opportunities by prospective students (UUK, 2017). The signposting service will offer activity coordinators a platform to communicate with students directly, intending to increase awareness and numbers of participation at the University of Winchester, mutually beneficial for staff and students.

The paper will be delivered by the newly formed team at the Centre for Student Engagement which aims to develop the University of Winchester’s priority to be sector leading in Student Engagement through internationally recognised activities, by building on the HEFCE Catalyst funded project REACT. The Centre for Student Engagement

houses the central ‘Signposting Service’ Initiative as well as provide service on demand for colleagues wishing to engage students in new ways. The Centre is also in the process of validating a new PG Cert in Student Engagement in Higher Education and seeking opportunities to bid for external funding to further research sector practices in Student Engagement. The team welcomes the opportunity to receive feedback from SEDA colleagues on our projects.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

The outline of the workshop is as follows;

Questions:

- 1) When reviewing the complete student experience, what extra-curricular / co-curricular activities do you include / exclude as valuable?
- 2) Do you see extra-curricular activities as enhancements to the student experience or distractions?
- 3) How do communicate opportunities for students beyond / alongside the curriculum?
- 4) How do you advertise this to ensure the opportunities are accessible?
- 5) How can your University better signpost, collaborate and align strategies to enhance the student experience?

Session Outline:

0 – 10 minutes – Introduction to Student Engagement, Winchester and the REACT project as the basis for the ‘signposting service’. (Tom Lowe)

11 – 20 minutes – Activity 1: Questions 1 and 2 asked through a short mapping activity in groups and pairs.

21 – 35 minutes – Overview of the journey of the ‘signposting service’ for student opportunities from planning to operation. (Maisha Islam and Tim Mellor)

36 – 45 minutes – Activity 2: Questions 3 – 4 on screen for small group discussion followed by open discussion before close.

References

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- Humphrey, O., Lowe, T. (2017) Exploring how a ‘Sense of Belonging’ is facilitated at different stages of the student journey in Higher Education. *Journal of Educational Innovation, Partnership and Change*. Vol 3 (1). ISSN: 2055-4990.
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- Shaw, C. (2016). Student Perceptions of “Student Engagement” at the University of Winchester, The Winchester Student Fellows Conference 2016. 18th May 2016, Winchester, The University of Winchester.
- Thomas, L. (2012) Building student engagement and belonging in Higher Education at a time of change: a summary of findings and recommendations from the What Works? Student Retention and Success programme. London: Paul Hamlyn Foundation. http://lizthomasassociates.co.uk/commuter_students.html

Tchibozo, Guy (2008) Extra-Curricular Activity and the Transition from Higher Education to Work: A Survey of Graduates in the United Kingdom Article. In: *Higher Education Quarterly*. Vol 61(1), pp 33-56. DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-2273.2006.00337.

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