Title: **Developing the work of programme teams . . . by 'giving licence' to Programme Leads**

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Session Learning Outcomes

- Consider personal programme leadership experiences and those reported in the research
- Explore factors that enable programme leads to develop their teams and curricula
- Discuss ways in which programme leads can be better supported
- Propose ways of raising programme leadership up the agenda

Session Outline

The role of Programme Leadership underpins the development of engaging curricula and facilitation of innovative learning (Hunt, 2015) and is reliant on positive models of working with the programme team. Likert (in Vilkinas and Ladyshewsky, 2011) identified Programme Leaders (PLs) as the strategic linchpin between the students and the department. Milburn (2010) reinforced the pivotal nature of this role, stating that PLs translate policy into practice, promote inspirational teaching and learning, and determine the future direction of programmes. It is concerning therefore that Knight and Trowler (2001) find that Programme Leadership is often undervalued, and the potentially creative elements of the role can be undermined by a 'struggle for identity and authority' (2001:vii).

This paper shares findings from a recent research project (Magne & Muneer, publication currently under review) indicating that programme leads identify three core features of their work. These may be viewed as a cone with a wide base of administrative tasks, a mid-region of functional activities and an apex which includes strategic planning. The paper suggests the way in which programme leads conducted their role was influenced by: appointment process and motivations; responsibilities and workload; preferred leadership approaches; and perceived opportunities and challenges. The paper highlights a lack in clarity about the role, further compounded by a sector-wide deficit in institutional training and support for PLs (Johnston &Westwood 2007; McLeod, 2010; Blackmore et al., 2007).

This discussion paper will invite participants to discuss key themes arising from the research, reflect on their own and institutional perspectives of Programme Leadership, and consider how these may influence the ways in which programme teams work.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

The session will comprise:

@ 10 mins   outline rationale and findings of the programme leads research project

@ 10 mins   small group discussion Q: to what extent do the research findings chime with your own institutional experiences of programme leadership?

@ 10 mins   small group activity: develop annotated diagram indicating how specific factors impact on the way in which programme leads develop the work of their team

@ 10 mins   summary presentations of annotated diagrams

@ 5 mins   plenary discussion exploring how to raise the profile of the programme lead agenda

References

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