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Internationalising Higher Education Framework

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Internationalising the Higher Education Framework

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In partnership with:

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THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Contents

1. Context

This study was conducted as part of the Strategic Enhancement Programme's work on the theme 'Internationalising the Curriculum.' The study explored how staff and students understood, and envisaged the deployment of, the HEA Internationalising Higher Education Framework document.

Specifically, we were interested to find out:

> how individuals understood the concepts and interpreted the language of the framework;
> how participants viewed the framework as relating to their day-to-day learning, teaching and general social interactions within higher education.

2. Methodology

2.1 Sample

The study was conducted in three universities, in different locations across the UK, which varied in size and in their institutional missions. Five discipline areas were represented: Business, Education, Health Sciences, Mathematics, and Social Work. In total, 70 participants took part in individual interviews or focus groups. A total of 36 were staff (predominantly academic with a small group of professional support staff) and 34 students covering undergraduate and postgraduate levels. In all institutions, individual interviews were held with Directors of Learning and Teaching or equivalent, Heads of Schools and in one University, the Pro-Dean for Learning and Teaching. Focus groups were held with staff and students. There was an attempt to ensure the study involved home and international staff and students and to include not only academic staff but also participants from professional support services.

Table 1 presents a breakdown of the number of interviews and of participants by university and disciplinary area. As will be seen from Table 1, participants were predominantly drawn from Social Science disciplines, with a focus on Education for a profession. As the following presentation of findings from participants in Mathematics suggests, perceptions of the framework by students and staff in STEM subjects may differ from those we report here from participants in professionally-oriented Social Science subjects. More generally, there would appear to be a need in future research and development work on internationalisation to examine more closely the affordances for, and constraints on, internationalisation in different disciplines.

Table 1: Number of interviews (individual and focus groups) and number of participants by university and disciplinary area

University	School/Department	Number of interviews (individual + focus group)	Number of staff interviewed	Number of students interviewed
University A	Education	9	16	9
	Health Sciences	5	5	5
	Mathematics	5	5	5
University B	Social Work	4	4	6
University C	Business + participants drawn more widely from across the university	3	6	9

2.2 Nature and content of the interviews

The interviews conducted in this study were interactive in nature. Participants were encouraged to take time to articulate their understanding of internationalisation and to talk through in some detail how they perceived specific aspects of the document. In conducting the individual and group interviews it was necessary to maintain a balance between questions that allowed for an open exploration of participants' understanding of internationalisation and of their reactions to the framework and those which focused attention on specific features and sections of the document. The interviews with individuals and the focus groups began with fairly wide questions on internationalisation, in order to determine what thoughts, feelings and images the term brought to participants' minds. This often fostered a general discussion around internationalisation as a concept, and prompted participants to think about it in terms of their own experience in academia. We encouraged staff and students to consider to what extent they saw internationalisation as applying to their own experiences.

Thereafter the interview turned to the document itself, with questions focusing on any initial reactions to the framework, asking participants to pick out any specific sections or language that stood out for them. We followed up this discussion on first impressions by inquiring whether participants felt that the framework was applicable to them and their current roles or experience. We also sought views on the language of the document, and specifically if it was easy to comprehend and recognisable as the kind of language they would use themselves.

After gathering general reactions to the document, we moved to focus more specifically on the separate sections of the framework, beginning with the columns headed 'Activity', 'Knowledge' and 'Values'. Questions addressed the content and the language used. If not mentioned by participants, we asked for thoughts on some of the terminology, such as 'a global learning experience' and 'effective intercultural relations'.

Next we turned to the sections in 'operational implications' on 'individuals' and 'curriculum'; (and for members of management also the section on 'organisation'). We asked staff if they felt the questions in these sections applied to them, and if so, how. For student interviews and groups we asked whether they felt these were sensible questions for staff to be considering. This often served to prompt consideration of the framework as a guide to action versus an awareness-raising document. We also explored with participants whether or not it would be desirable to have a set of questions within the document that were specifically addressed to students. Furthermore, we inquired whether participants felt that there were any obvious gaps in these sections or additional questions that the framework might include. In concluding the interviews, participants were asked to reflect and comment on the process of the preceding discussion, particularly whether it had helped them to gain a clearer understanding of what internationalising the curriculum involves.

2.3   Analysis and presentation of findings

All of the interviews were transcribed in full and the initial stage of the analysis consisted of a close reading of all of the transcripts by the three members of the research team, carried out independently of each other. The researchers then met together to share and interrogate their understanding of the key issues and themes that were emerging from this fine-grained reading. This close engagement with the interview texts provided the foundation for a more focused coding of the data to be taken ahead. This coding was guided both by our central research aims and by insights and issues that emerged from the interviews themselves. This second stage of analysis included an examination of points of comparison and contrast between universities; staff and students; different disciplines, etc. During this stage two members of the research team met on a regular basis to cross-check interpretations of the data.

The following section of the report presents a summary picture of central findings that emerged from this process of analysis. To respond to our brief in this project, this summary has centred on matters that we judged would be of most value to the HEA in bringing the draft framework to its final form. It points up aspects of the document that participants perceived positively and aspects that they felt might benefit from revision. At the stage of analysis, and in the writing up of findings, we have been concerned to bring out clearly points on which there was a large degree of consensus and points where there was a distinct division of opinion. We have tried to ensure as far as possible that participants and their universities have been anonymised.

3. Concepts and language of the framework

3.1   Unpacking the term 'internationalisation'

All interviews and focus groups began with a general exploration of what the term internationalisation in relation to higher education meant for participants.

Not surprisingly, there was a diverse range of views. Many participants conceptualised the term widely, discussing how the term should mean a change in *campus ecology* (McGill Peterson,

2002). This included the need to ensure a mixing of the local and the international and an examination of how universities are accommodating the interests, abilities, knowledge and expertise of international students. Internationalisation was about society as well as a learning experience and participants indicated that exposure to diversities was positive as meaningful encounters could enable individuals to adapt more easily to different contexts. For many participants, there was a recognition of the need to broaden our understanding and approach to internationalisation.

> "So rather than saying that an international student actually has to somehow, I suppose, conform to the British curriculum that we broaden out the curriculum and the discussion so that their perspective is actually very valuable from wherever they might come from in the world."

Academic staff individual interview

It was also recognised that there was a need to consider different pedagogies to assist the broadening out of such discussions.

> "And also then, of course, looking at different pedagogies because very often the pedagogies that will encourage that kind of debate, discussion, interaction can be [an] element of a course."

Academic staff individual interview

Participants recognised the importance, possibilities and benefits of working and studying within an international campus. However, they noted that the positive aspects of internationalisation were rarely accentuated within the internationalisation narrative. Too often internationalisation has been a shorthand to mean the recruitment of overseas students. Participants indicated that such 'historic' ideas of internationalisation had to be extended so that there was a more comprehensive and more developed understanding of what internationalisation means. In that sense, many saw the framework document as being helpful in widening such perceptions.

Some international student participants interpreted the term as: coming to the UK to study; learning to be tolerant of other cultures; and understanding better those who are different. For postgraduate home students, internationalisation offered opportunities to 'have their eyes opened' and to learn about other concepts and approaches such as to understand the meaning of Confucian culture. As one home student said, internationalisation enabled students to learn to become comfortable with the uncomfortable. Student participants also associated the term internationalisation or international with creating an inclusive culture, having spaces to share cultural experiences and different perspectives and not being judgmental about other cultures.

There was a minority of staff participants who viewed internationalisation as a series of complex issues, with international students being discussed largely in terms of having problems or being a problem. Any problems tended to be connected with the lack of fluency in English as well as acculturation issues. It is useful to note that staff brought up these issues as they wanted to assist the students but nevertheless in the mix there was an echo of deficit perceptions.

Some participants understood the phrase 'internationalising the curriculum' to mean designing a curriculum that was outward looking and drawing from theories, perspectives and approaches from across the world. Yet for others, that phrase meant diverse students from across the world studying a UK-focused course. There was a view that for internationalisation to be meaningful, there was a need for UK staff and institutions to be self-reflective concerning normative paradigms which may need to be disrupted.

> "Maybe it starts with introspection because the fact of the matter is that we're all walking around with national, cultural and social paradigms and part of making ourselves ready to actually be effective in a global economy and in a global world is to make sure that we understand what are the paradigms which we're locked into and beginning to loosen up those paradigms so that we're much more receptive to operate a sort of global system."

> Academic staff focus group

Participants raised a critical issue which internationalisation narratives have paid less attention to; that is that it is harder to promote the need to consider internationalisation to cohorts of home students. Staff recognised that there was a need to enhance the 'international capital' of home students but shared the view that this was difficult particularly for courses and programmes which largely catered for the home market, for example, producing teachers to teach in the home education system or training social workers to work in the local communities. These programmes also have to meet the registration standards of professional bodies, limiting spaces within the academic timetable for inclusion of critical international and global comparative practices. It is also a challenge to recruit from the international market to courses that largely educate for home market professions and therefore students from these courses often end up in 'home student only' cohorts.

Participants indicated that it was important for programmes that do not provide opportunities for students to study abroad to harness the presence of the 'international' within home campuses.

The study did cover some professional and support staff, and the view from this group was that the contributions of administration and frontline staff were often overlooked in any discussions about internationalisation.

> "I think for us in our role as programme secretaries, certainly in the graduate school where we have so many international students, our role with them starts very early, right from induction and before induction. They come into the office, they don't know where they're going in the city. We've got to, and we do (I know that all the programme secretaries do) sort of look after them and try and nurture them. They even e-mail us about maybe medical problems that they're having and then we have to then explain that, you know, well… we could put them onto their personal tutor. International students that come over here, it's not just about study. It's about everything else that…"

<div align="right">Administration staff focus group</div>

Some participants reflected that it would have been helpful for the document to have defined the term 'internationalisation' within the framework either from the outset or in the glossary. The need to have the term defined clearly was borne out of a concern that terms like 'internationalisation' or 'global learning experience' if not approached in a critical way, could lead to a narrow economic interpretation of internationalisation, reducing it to the commercial imperative of recruiting more international students into the UK market. There was also a concern that internationalising the curriculum could be approached in a simplistic way where the approach is to compare what is done well in the UK to other parts of the world with the potential that we simply export what works here to somewhere else.

For some, the absence of a diversity of overseas students made internationalisation more difficult. Students voicing this were concerned that programmes that marketed themselves as international were really quite monocultural, where the majority of the international cohort was from China.

> "I think internationalisation is difficult if you don't have a spectrum of people, I think that to say, 'Oh, we're going to be global and we've got international students it's a very international-heavy programme' is not the same thing as saying, 'Actually we've got quite a mono-cultural programme …' So where there was someone from Italy and there was someone from Mexico we discussed those two countries but when they weren't in the class, you know, we never remotely considered what people in Mexico or people in Italy might be thinking."

<div align="right">Masters International PG student focus group</div>

3.2 Language and Terminology

We were also interested in participants' views about whether the language and terminology employed in the document were accessible, easily understood and clear. Participants supported the aspirations of the document and understood that the framework had to appeal to a diverse higher education sector.

Some participants, particularly members of staff, found that the language used was familiar and clear. These participants stated that the document was largely jargon-free and appreciated having a glossary which assisted them to understand different terms within the context of internationalisation and higher education.

However, there was a not insignificant number of participants who indicated that the language used did not assist them to engage with the framework. These participants found it difficult to pick up swiftly an understanding of what the document was trying to communicate beyond aspirational jargon. These participants found they had to read the document several times before connecting with the key messages. General words like 'enhance' and 'inspire' were found to be positive and signalled a need to be pro-active and positive about matters international. However, these words were also somewhat vague leaving participants unclear as to what actions these words were meant to deliver.

> "I had to read it two or three times. I think the first time I was trying to learn the language…And then the second time you started to get a feel of the direction the document was going in, and then third probably okay… I can now start thinking about what relates to me…"

> Academic staff individual interview

Others indicated that the document were likely to be read by those who were "the converted". While it was useful to be told by the document of the benefits of internationalisation, it would be more effective to be given practical ideas of "how to do it".

> "You know I'm already sold, we're all sold on the benefits of internationalisation but I don't really know how I'm going to put that into my curriculum."

> Academic staff individual interview

Practical examples would be accompanied by more detail of how to put something into practice, for example, the idea of a cultural and languages café is interesting. However, it would be

more useful to bring such an example alive by capturing how such a café was organised, to learn more about the benefits as well as lessons learnt from the initiative.

Participants also reported that while generic examples gave some initial ideas, more specific examples pertaining to their subject or discipline areas would be helpful. In trying to appeal to a broad readership, participants did wonder if the vagueness of some terms opened the document up to different interpretations and whether it mattered if conceptual ambiguity resulted in ambiguous practice.

> **Participant**: I feel as though pretty much every sentence I could have complained about the vague, the… unclarity of the wording… for instance, in organisations it said…a flexible and embedded approach across services and functions.

> **Interviewer**: Do you know what that means?

> **Participant**: No I don't know…I mean, you know, embedded in something but what, what does it mean in practice? I just feel like if you're reading this, and the language seems unclear, it kind of puts you off, in a way.

The point was also made that given the contested nature of discourses around globalisation and internationalisation and of terms such as 'global society', the HEA could recognise more explicitly that the meaning of a term such as 'global learning experience' was contentious.

> "I don't know what a global learning experience is … I think it's particularly contentious for me in education though, global learning and global citizenship. And they, they're so broad as to be possibly meaningless … if that means different things for different people, it's up for analysis … certainly those individuals who are involved in this and will know in their minds what they mean by 'global learning' but if you're new to it, I would imagine lots of people would have very different ideas about what that concept is."

Participants suggested that one way of exemplifying would be to create links between concepts and examples more explicitly in the document.

There were some grammatical errors which were identified by participants which could be amended in an update. These are listed in Appendix 1. The key messages from participants in relation to language and terminology are:

> define concepts more clearly to remove conceptual ambiguity, e.g. terms such as internationalisation, global learning;
> where possible, link concepts to practical examples so that the reader is able to see the connection;
> provide examples which are more discipline specific.

4. Raising awareness and guiding action

We now turn from considering how participants understood the concepts and interpreted the language of the framework to the other key question that guided our investigation, i.e: How do participants see the framework as relating to their day-to-day learning, teaching and general social interactions within higher education? In addressing this question we were able to gain a detailed sense of the degree to which, and the ways in which, the document was viewed as acting to raise awareness of issues concerning internationalisation, and as serving to guide action on internationalisation. In this section we look first at observations on how the document acted to raise awareness and then move on to the question of the extent to which it was seen to guide action.

4.1 Recognition of the challenges in creating a document of this type

In evaluating the document on both these fronts, a number of participants recognised the challenges involved in creating a document to serve a very wide university constituency. In the words of one student: "I think the action points would be difficult to come up though because they would be different for everywhere."

In addition to this recognition of a need to produce a document that would have relevance to universities of varying size and institutional mission and to a wide range of disciplines, there was an alertness to the different 'audiences' within an individual university: 'decision makers', 'curriculum leaders', support staff, lecturers and students. Some participants observed that there had been a clear effort made within the document to address 'key stakeholders' and appreciated that this was a daunting task:

> "... what they've done is try to isolate the key players, key stakeholders, which is appropriate; but each of these stakeholders is so enormous – students, staff, you know, it's almost as if you need to take a different kind of approach than try to be all things to all men".

In one of the student groups there was debate over the question of whether or not individual sections were required for different groups of staff, with one party to this debate arguing that the document in its current form might be rather challenging for novice lecturers: "If you were starting out it might be a bit daunting." The other party to the debate made the case that: "You need[ed] to appeal to all staff in a single production, rather than having separate documents."

A rather different challenge in creating a general framework of this type was acknowledged to a degree by a few participants, such as the member of a staff focus group who after expressing a wish to have a more detailed account of the examples presented in the document, went on to note that: "I mean this is a small document and you can't put that level of detail in it." We will return to this question of the tension between providing a clear, succinct overall vision and a sufficiently detailed guide to action; and present one way in which it might be addressed.

4.2   The framework as a political ally

Prior (2011) reminds us that documents do not simply enter into human projects as containers of instructions and wishes but also "as agents in their own right" (p.94). On this theme a number of the senior management participants observed that the framework could be used "to make a case", with one remarking that "as a political tool it's probably quite good". In the words of another of these participants:

"I think the value, the value of a document like this is that it reinforces. It allows me to, and it allows others to reinforce and to say: 'Look everybody's saying the same thing here,'... so it's very important at that kind of ideological level, I think."

One participant described how the framework had in fact played such a 'reinforcing' role in the processes of taking ahead an internationalisation initiative in his own institution:

Participant: ... it has definitely been useful for us. Apart from anything else it has allowed us to say: "This is part of a much wider process that's happening in higher education," and this is very useful. And the Higher Education Academy, I think, has a very good reputation so it's helpful to use their reputation too in those discussions with the wider staff group and student groups about why we're doing this and how useful it is and why other people are doing it.

Interviewer: So having that credibility but also tying individual universities into a wider collective effort, is that?

Participant: Yes.

In addition to identifying this important 'political' role of the document as an agent of change, one member of senior management was firmly of the view that this role would be greatly strengthened by continuing communication and follow-through on this front by the HEA, including efforts to "connect where it can with what's going on at the institutional level".

4.3   The framework's role in moving from rhetoric to action

In a similar vein to this body of comments on how the framework could give an internationalisation initiative legitimacy, a number of participants welcomed the document as a vehicle for highlighting an area that was possibly not receiving sufficient attention: "I welcome it. I think it's a recognition that perhaps universities don't do it as well as they could."

As the following sub-section will reveal, a considerable number of our participants had reservations about how well the framework functioned as a guide to action. However, in general there was an endorsement of the framework as a means of alerting individuals within higher education to the importance of internationalisation and to issues concerning internationalisation. Some appreciated the document on the grounds that it was raising awareness of internationalisation in terms of an "inclusive approach" that opened up "minds to diversity", thereby acting as a counter-narrative to 'market-driven' discourses of internationalisation. In the words of one staff participant: "It's a good idea to do something that introduces and develops people's thinking in, in that [inclusive] way, yeah."

On this theme, quite a number of participants very much welcomed the prominent position given to 'Values' within the framework. An undergraduate student, for example, talked of how: "It's all the quite respectful values, like at the end you have 'openness' and 'reciprocity' which sometimes you won't always see that in a document. I think it's quite good to have it there."

As another illustration of the appreciation expressed for the emphasis on values, a senior member of staff welcomed the fact that 'embedding social responsibility' featured in the framework:

> "I appreciate having 'embedding social responsibility' explicitly listed there 'cause I think so much of this conversation has internationalisation as an incomer, you've to be competitive in the business world; and it's also the larger questions about how we focus on the planet with all of the attendant problems at issue and how those are global conversations to be had. So, yes, I really appreciated that being one of the points."

Indeed, some participants, such as the individual quoted beneath argued for a different ordering of 'Activity, Knowledge, Values' with values appearing first:

> "Activities and knowledge is sometimes hard to actually operationalise and they take time and they take a lot more working through and customising. But values are much more universal and they're at the heart of it. And I would actually have values first and knowledge second because we operate on our values."

A few suggestions were made concerning possible additions to the 'Values' column, additions which perhaps would not sit under a strict definition of 'values' but can be seen to concern the development of particular dispositions. One of the suggestions was that 'self-awareness' should feature in the framework: "If they've got openness, so I don't see why not self-awareness." Another participant made an extended, quite nuanced, case for attention being given to a spirit of criticality:

> "In some ways I like the word critical and I don't like the word critical. It's too readily labelled as a kind of leftie term. On the other hand, it's absolutely vital that people, that part of emancipation is thinking for yourself and sometimes if that involves risk-taking and being awkward and sometimes that means being very creative and taking people forward in a different kind of way. So I do like the term emancipation, I do like terms like creativity; so I'm a bit ambiguous about the term critical and whether we should be using that, but, you know, maybe we should. And it's not about questioning for the sake of questioning this, it's questioning to do better."

However, some participants suggested that there should be clearer definition of some of the values that were foregrounded in the document:

> "I was interested in the Equity definition, which was 'ensuring parity and fairness'…Do they mean within the context that you're working or do they mean real parity or a parity that takes into consideration the cultural backgrounds of the students?"
>
> Masters International Student focus group

With regard to the 'Knowledge' column, the argument was made that awareness needed to be raised not only to these relevant areas of knowledge but also to the need to develop a particular *orientation* to knowledge. This involved gaining the metacognitive capacity to look with analytical distance on the knowledge that one was developing rather than being simply confined within a set of cultural understandings or disciplinary tradition: "understanding how to situate it [a body of knowledge]. Or how you are situated in it".

While welcoming the values enshrined in the document and the areas of knowledge that it covered, a number of participants did point up potential hazards if these values were only taken on board in a superficial fashion. Here, for example, is a member of senior management who identified the danger of "cultural tourism".

"The reciprocity one is an interesting issue, I think in terms of, and this was perhaps particularly with India [where his department had had an academic exchange], although we experience it a little here, just in terms of a concern about internationalising activities, especially exchange type activities. The potential for the – obviously the intended benefit is in terms of education and sort of broadening people's horizons and so on – but the possibility of that, I think, this is only a minor sort of consideration in terms of sort of like cultural tourism. It's shades of reinforcing imperialist stuff which we're obviously keen not to do. But there is a risk in there."

He went on to note that it was important that the values which appear in the framework were not treated in a "surface" fashion but that they needed a "deeper reading". Continuing this theme of a deeper reading of the values of, and issues in, internationalisation, he observed that: "We can't uncritically say everything to do with internationalising the curriculum is brilliant, there are complexities in there."

Quite a number of participants indicated that they would have liked to have seen rather greater recognition within the framework of the "complexities" of internationalisation and of the challenges that it posed for staff and students alike. For example, while very much wishing to see an inclusive ethos fostered in universities, one management participant drew attention to the practical and moral challenges in facilitating an inclusive ethos: "Some of these are difficult". A wish for a more "upfront" statement that internationalisation is a quite challenging, as well as a rewarding, enterprise came through strongly in the following extracts from a staff group interview:

"I think maybe what that page needs is just a statement about potential, the potential problem, problems, but also the potential richness. And the challenge that's involved in it, you know, for everyone."

….

"I think it is about teaching with courage but also probably behaving with courage as well."

The challenges that a truly international curriculum and experience could pose for students themselves were brought out clearly by a number of participants, with one member of a staff group claiming that: "Inter-cultural engagement requires challenging your very essence right to some degree. True inter-cultural engagement it's not just a surface-level engagement."

In another staff group the necessity for all those involved in higher education to "challenge your [their] stereotypes" was highlighted, along with the role of "unlearning", of divesting oneself of past assumptions and ways of acting: "One of the other things about 'global learning experience' is that … you have to unlearn things as well as part of this process, unlearning is as important as learning." Discussion in this group went on to consider the need for a careful balancing of support and challenge in guiding students to develop as international citizens and to engage in 'inter-cultural' learning:

> "It is aspirational and I'm glad it's that. I think it's a challenge that we'll probably face as a university as we look at putting into action a globalisation agenda with students is: How are we doing really this inter-cultural learning? It's complicated to facilitate spaces where people are pushed out of their comfort zone but safe enough to not feel alienated from it and particularly when you're talking about, you know, things like global inequality or race or immigration, or issues where people can get touchy and sensitive very, very quickly."

Summarising the main thrust of the preceding paragraphs, the participants felt that the document was raising awareness of internationalisation in appropriate ways, underpinned by values to which they subscribed. However, there was a fairly widespread sense that greater recognition could be given to inherent, albeit rewarding, challenges involved in this enterprise.

One staff group identified the diametrically opposite dangers of creating a document that made the work of internationalisation seem too challenging, or of producing a document which skated over difficulties and made everything appear too easy:

> "There is a danger … with [a] policy or a document like this which is addressing something very, very challenging but you could present it in such a way that it presents impossibilities for people."

> ….

> "The counter position which I think this might have just slipped into in some areas is that it is possible for a reader or readers to come to this and say, 'Hang on, I thought this was going to be difficult' … And we end up with the 'We're doing this already' approach without perhaps taking the shift and the steps."

Along with the member of this staff group, we recognise that a balance has to be struck, but the steer from participants appeared to be that the framework could move a bit more strongly towards a recognition of challenges.

Turning from the question of possible changes in the content of the framework in its role as an awareness-raising document to suggestions on how the communication of its messages could be strengthened, a number of possible changes have already been set out in the preceding section examining reactions to the language and structure of the document. Additional points to make here concern how the framework might raise awareness by drawing in an audience. These relate to its tone and its implied image of a reader. Here one participant appreciated that the document was inspirational while not preaching at the reader and that "it recognises that the individual reading it's probably half-way there". Some other participants, however, felt that the document was somewhat 'neutral', 'bland' in tone and could do more to make an immediate connection with an individual academic.

The following quotation from a staff group argued for the framework to be cast in a livelier tone:

> "So that would be great if the kind of things that have been said just now: challenge, excitement, opportunity, be great if that was communicated a bit more strongly in the document. So I think they missed a trick there. Everything we've talked about, the excitement and the challenge we've talked about I'm not quite sure it comes over. Even usage of these words can instill that."

One suggestion as to how a more immediate connection with individual readers could be achieved was to have it brought alive by including 'people's voices'. In one staff group this was seen as a possibility in a web-based version of the document:

Participant 1: Yeah, I would have voices, the vignettes, if you can hear people's voices.

Participant 2: And see people.

Participant 1: And see people, yeah. And people being international people and so you could have videos of discussions perhaps, you could bring it to life with, you could capture some of the discussions we've been having and produce it as a video. Or even an interactive video, people could stop it and engage in, you know. That might be a way of doing it.

4.4   Raising awareness as an end in itself

For staff participants there appeared to be a definite expectation that the framework needed to guide action, in addition to its role in raising awareness of issues concerning internationalisation. Not all members of the student focus groups, however, were of this view. Some student focus groups saw raising awareness as a sufficient end in itself, and given the challenges of providing

a sector-wide scheme of action the only feasible purpose for the document. We have already quoted the student who remarked that "the action points would be difficult to come up though because they would be different for everywhere". One group presented the case for the document focusing on an awareness-raising function in the following terms:

> **Student 1:** I think it should be awareness-raising and then, you know, you have your toolkit later. I think if you added all that in someone would get their pdf and see that it was 100 pages –

> **Student 2:** And they're not going to touch it, yeah.

> **Student 1:** Aha, it's just too much. Whereas actually this way you could get someone really interested in it.

Another group approached this question in relation to what was appropriate for the *current* state of awareness and practice in the sector as opposed to what might be required in the future once the basic ideas behind internationalisation had been more widely disseminated.

> **Student 1:** Do you think it seems like it's a very beginning document like that's why all that information's there because not everyone's sure what internationalisation is and we're trying to make sure that you've awareness and grasped the concept, so that this does make sense. … I think you're looking at the document like five years down the line like when this sort has spread, you know. …

> **Student 2:** If it's in its infancy then keep it simple so that actually people can buy into it and actually recognise what it's trying to achieve and then, you know, build on that.

Another group took yet another perspective on the document's role, making an argument for it concentrating on raising awareness on the grounds of respecting universities' autonomy and the agency and creativity of individual lecturers.

> **Student 1:** I think when you're trying to put a toolkit or almost like if we're taking this going to be like standardisation, I think that very much goes back to like school and to that sort of level of education … whereas universities … they have like autonomy on what they teach just about. So I think having it like inspiring people and giving them ideas to then go back and have a discussion, I personally think that's the only way that you keep like the autonomy and the sort of the ethos of university education in itself.

Student 2: Yeah, I like how it's inspiring the creativity of the individual instead of, like as you've said the whole way through, instead of giving them tick-boxes, giving individuals the chance to work themselves and decide what's best for their students and their department. So I think it's really good at inspiring ideas rather than giving them [action points].

4.5   The framework as a guide to action

Other student groups and, as we have noted, the staff participants did, however, lay stress on the role that the document could play as a guide to action. In this section we consider first the particular case of *Mathematics as an international curriculum*. We then look at general reactions to the framework as a guide to action before moving to examine views on how effective the examples given of internationalisation activities were in inspiring action.

This leads into a consideration of the participants' evaluations of the extent to which the questions provided in the 'Operational Implications' section of the document could act as prompts to push ahead practice in internationalisation. Here we also consider opinion on the matter of what collective discussion of these questions might be required to move action ahead. The final sub-section presents participants' deliberations on the matter of whether or not the framework might incorporate a list of questions for students and their thoughts on the role that students themselves could play in the creation of more international curricula.

*Maths **as** an international curriculum*

A key initial point to make concerning staff and student participants' general reactions to the framework as a guide to action is that these reactions can be seen to have been coloured by their sense of the affordances for, and constraints on, internationalisation within their disciplines. Those in the areas of Business, Clinical Psychology, Education, Nursing and Social Work could more readily see how the framework related to curricula for the 21st century in their disciplines. In Maths, however, responding to the curricular thrust of the framework at least was seen as a more challenging enterprise. For example, one group of Maths students drew the following comparison between Maths and their understanding of what might be achieved in other disciplines:

Student 1: But what I'm trying to say is that this is the type of courses that, that they have space for, for discussion like this because you can't have the discussion about cultural differences now in algebra, for example.

Student 2: Yeah, I mean, yeah, the discussion like that doesn't happen organically.

In this circumstance, 'intercultural engagement' was seen as "engaging [socially] with your fellow students who are from different cultures".

It is important here to note that these perceptions of curricular constraints were not accompanied by a general resistance to an 'inclusive' agenda, as the following point of trenchant critique made in the same Maths group revealed:

> "But I think part of the issue with that is that by making people think that in order to get a diverse experience you have to leave the UK, it makes them not respect diversity in the UK as much as they need. And it's kind of like…like idealising the idea of culture outside the UK when people are culturally diverse within the UK."

In a similar vein, a senior member of Maths staff noted how the Maths curriculum offered less in the way of opportunities for experiential engagement with issues surrounding internationalisation:

> "You're trying to strive towards understanding that answer or understanding some theorem. And it's less about interpretation through experience or something like that, I think."

He went on in the interview to note the 'metanational' nature of the formal curriculum in Mathematics and the fact that "already being a language in its own right is a very fundamental thing". At the same time he recognised that "there's a cultural part to however you learn Mathematics and however that gets taught in your school and so on". He viewed a challenge in Maths teaching as lying in opening students' eyes to the international character of Maths: "I think it's very easy for, let's say, students who come from the UK not to recognise the international aspect of Mathematics." He saw the task of leading students to appreciate this commonality, and diversity within the commonality, in the following terms:

> "So part of the internationalisation that would happen say in our lecture theatres or in our workshops would be that the coming to the understanding that even though you've come up in completely different systems, you both have this common language, you can both understand each other. And then that engenders some respect. And you can see then from that commonality the diversity that could come from it and that there can be differences. And so I think that internationalisation is something which is – it's an easier starting point than in some other disciplines, I'm perfectly sure. But then it leads you to different things about what you want to get out of it. It's not in the nature of the subject necessarily that you're wanting to get something out of it, and you expect to get some new insights into the subject; but I think you get new insights into the people taking the subject."

This exposition of what internationalisation may involve within the Maths curriculum serves as a reminder of the need to look closely in future framework type publications at how internationalisation is conceived of in different disciplines. More immediately, it introduces a cautionary note on the generalisability of the findings that we are presenting in this current report. Outside of Maths, participants were all drawn from Social Science backgrounds; and different views on the relevance of the framework as a guide to action might have emerged if we had had a greater representation of individuals from STEM subjects.

4.6   General reactions to the framework as a guide to action

Moving on to present general reactions to the framework as a guide to action, we have already pointed up the way in which it was seen as an actual, or potential, political ally *in* action. Other positive commentary on the document as an 'agent', included a senior member of staff in one site seeing it as a possible tool to be deployed in embedding a university-wide policy on internationalisation:

"[Because] it's the action that's really needed I think there's probably, yes, there's a role for a document or a framework that can continue to raise awareness; but if like we have, or we are developing now an internationalisation strategy and so that will have certain key targets and certain desired outcomes, but how deep does that actually go down into the university. And I think perhaps this framework could be one of the tools that could help to embed some of that into the university."

In a senior management staff focus group, appreciation was expressed for the section on 'operational implications':

"… you had this list of operational implications, what we have to do as individuals, as an organisation, which are basically like key indicators – that, I think, are measurable and helpful in terms of framing this to people who aren't really singing from the same internationalisation hymn-sheet".

By contrast quite a number of participants, while often recognising that there were "some pointers and thoughts", felt that more could have been achieved in terms of giving pointers to action. For example, one senior manager commented that: "You're telling me what to do but you're not really giving me the tools and the structure on how to change it, you know."

Someone in a comparable role in another site recognised strengths in the framework and had made use of it in an internationalisation initiative but similarly wished to see a stronger stress on "exactly what you should do":

"I think it's very good exactly in that, in considering here are the different components of the sort of process of internationalising the curriculum and what you need to think about and here are the benefits; and the bit in-between is the bit I'm sort of wanting more on which is, you know, 'This is exactly what you should do'."

At the same time this respondent did recognise that the document was pursuing different purposes and that there might be tension between these purposes. We have also earlier presented observations from students who appeared to be arguing for respecting the agency of individual lecturers, as opposed to providing clear prescriptions for action.

Turning to the focus of the document as a guide to action, two participants, who both had responsibilities for the direction of learning and teaching in their respective universities argued for a focus on curriculum. This thrust to have a closer concentration on curriculum can be seen in the following extracts from the interview with one of these participants.

"… it says 'the framework as a whole can be used as', all of these elements there – it's quite aspirational isn't it to be a 'self-reflective audit tool, communication tool, professional development tool'? It's trying to be a lot of things and I wonder if it hits its point more clearly if it actually is quite clearly predominantly for informing curriculum development…I think the key target would be perhaps as a curriculum review tool…if you're then using this to inform curriculum review you're actually perhaps getting most deeply into the university…it's actually within the curriculum that we can then perhaps develop the most in the way of real change".

Some groups made the point that in bringing internationalisation into action, the document could provide more pointers to the policy structures and to the organisational arrangements that would be required for effective implementation. One staff group, for example, talked of how one needed "operational advice" in addition to the clear steer on strategy that the document was seen to provide:

"You want to put something like that in place then … there has to be a strategic view which, I think, is probably encapsulated in some of this. But there's got to be a kind of operational advice on operational levels of how that happens in institutions that are so big and clumsy and unwieldy often that you could be doing lots of things in different areas but it's not a really coherent picture. … Maybe that's a link to how other universities have structured this kind of approach, or are structuring this approach or experimenting with it."

4.7   Examples of internationalisation as pointers to action

Focusing in now on the examples of internationalisation provided in the document, a few participants critiqued them on the grounds that they gave an insufficient sense of the challenges

involved in taking ahead an internationalisation agenda. For example, one staff participant described how "there's some slight vignettes in here. They're very bland as well, they could be more challenging". In the main, however, the responses to the examples from both staff and students were positive, and they were seen as helpful prompts to action. Here is a student on the theme of how the examples rooted the framework in 'practical suggestions':

Student: I really like the sort of practical suggestions.

Interviewer: The activities round the hexagons?

Student   : Yeah, sort of hexagons and the hexagon design thing is really nice. But just the actual, you know, giving these practical tips is so often you get these types of things and it's got no actual real. So I like that, so I'd maybe extend that …

The following extract illustrates how one of the staff groups expressed their distinct appreciation for the examples:

Participant 1: I like these bits. The hexagons have got some quite clear ideas.

Participant 2: Yeah, me too.

Participant 3: They're not really directives exactly; but they're examples of how you might 'foster an inclusive ethos' and it can give you ideas around that. And that's really helpful, isn't it?

Participant 4: Yeah.

…

Participant 4: … the hexagons are good because they start to get to things that are done in other institutions and that's what, often in these kind of documents these are, I found the most powerful things are examples of practice.

A number of participants, such as the individual quoted beneath, found that the examples help to elucidate the main messages conveyed in the document:

"I liked the fact that there are lots of examples. So sometimes when I'm reading these kind of core points about 'fostering intercultural engagement', for example, I think 'What do they actually mean by that?' but this, the few examples worked well."

These positive evaluations of the examples were echoed in another staff group by a participant who observed that: "I liked the vignettes. I particularly responded to them. I thought they made the points more than some of the other aspects – the examples."

Similar expressions of appreciation and of a wish for a more detailed account of the exemplar projects were made in another staff group, with the suggestion being made that in a web-based version of the document there could be links out to case studies:

"Well, the bits that have got little examples, I wish they were longer and perhaps a bit more detailed. And I wondered if they could be like case studies, or you could, you know, put a link in or something … so you could find out more about it because I think reading about what other people do sometimes sparks your engagement with it."

The point was also made by a member of senior management that the case for internationalisation would be strengthened if there were links back to the evidential support for the effectiveness of the 'case studies' presented in the document.

Summarising the main thrusts of discussion in the student and staff interviews:

> the examples were seen to clarify the meaning of statements made in the 'main text' of the document;
> there was a wish for rather more exemplification;
> some participants wanted to see a rather more detailed treatment of the examples.

Quite a number of participants expressed the view that the examples could be connected more tightly with the 'main text' of the document, "with examples and Operational Implications needing to be more closely tied up". Suggestions were also made concerning areas that could benefit from the inclusion of examples, such as in relation to the curriculum and changing assessment systems to be more equitable for international students. Students in one focus group perceived from their reading of the framework that:

Student 1: You have examples of activities with students, you don't have examples of activities with staff, for example, and that is central too.

Student 2: It is, yeah.

One member of staff argued for the value of having more examples of internationalisation from outside the UK in the following terms:

"I think it would be interesting to have the examples of practice from other countries. And it might not, you know, it's that thing where sometimes you read something and it's not maybe very comfortable for you; but maybe that's part of the process. Understanding that discomfort of negotiating it because you might not necessarily think it's the right thing to do, or whatever. But I think it would matter that it was there."

4.8   Operational implications: questions as guides to action

Across the interviews there was a positive view of the questions concerning 'organisation', 'individuals' and 'curriculum' that appeared in the section on 'Operational Implications', with often distinct appreciation being expressed for this part of the document. One function that the questions were seen to achieve was that of clarifying the main messages of the document: "I quite liked the questioning pages, it made you realise what they were wanting to achieve from it a bit more, I think" (undergraduate student). The questions were seen to stimulate thought and thereby might lead to action:

"[the questions] directly stimulated your thinking, you know, to 'Is this actually happening? Am I actually participating? Have I actually seen these things happen or would I want to, and how I feel about them?'." Student focus group

"I thought the questions were provocative. I thought they were something that resonated with me and connected … I would see the final pages about operational implications and individual questions and curriculum. I would see maybe a choice of the most pertinent aspects becoming foci [for action]."

Staff focus group

In one site a member of university management described how the set of questions for individuals had been used as a focus for discussion and drawing all staff into seeing the relevance of an internationalisation agenda:

"[The questions for individuals were] useful, I think, for us as a staff group again thinking of it. I mean there's an issue about why some people engage with the stuff and some don't or the degree in between. So this was useful to use this as a way

of getting everybody involved in that discussion. So even to ask those questions was helpful. …But also in terms of encouraging people who are maybe less interested or less in a position to directly engage with the international activities … to pull them in and pull them in to thinking this is, regardless if you never leave the building, this is relevant to you and in your teaching; this needs to be got out of it."

While the general reaction to the Operational Implications section of the document, and to the sets of questions within it, was affirmative, participants also presented quite a number of suggestions for improvement. One point made in one staff group and in three of the student interviews was that the particular *form* in which the questions were currently cast made it too easy for staff to agree that they were already achieving the actions highlighted in the questions. A simple but significant change to the wording of the questions was put forward by one student group:

Student: I wonder whether just adding 'How' at the beginning would be better; so not just 'Are you critically?' 'cause it's very easy to answer that question 'Yes'. 'Are you doing this?' 'Yes'.

Interviewer: So it's letting lecturers off too easily?

Student: Whereas if you just put the word 'How' at the beginning: 'How are you critically?' then you've got to think of an example for every one and then you're automatically including the context.

In another student group an almost identical suggestion concerning the wording of the questions was made, along with a comparable rationale for the change:

"I think these four questions here it would be very easy just to say 'Yes' to all four of them. A bit like, for example, if there's a kind of leading question, say, 'How would you?' that means you might have to articulate your ideas a bit more."

Attention was also brought in some of the student groups to the matter of whether there needed to be questions that not only prompted staff to action but also to consider the effects of their actions. These groups also considered what evidence staff might need to be aware of, and to assess, these effects. Here are extracts from three different student groups which pursue these matters.

"I feel like it concentrates a lot on whether they have, for example, whether they do this or that; but what about the effects? I don't know, I guess that's something they should reflect on too."

Student group 1

"Like run down one side [of the check list]: 'How do you know you're achieving it?'."

Student group 2

"So maybe you might change the questions in terms of, you know, 'What is it that you are doing?', or 'How do you?', or 'How do you show that you've done it?'."

Student group 3

Students also pointed up the value of prompts to staff to: consider closely how students might perceive internationalisation; get suggestions concerning internationalisation from students; gain a sense of the potential variety of student views on internationalisation in a particular subject area. The wish for staff to be prompted to reflect on students' experiences of internationalisation comes through clearly, for example, in the following excerpt from a student focus group:

"…if the lecturer puts themselves in the student's shoes so you'd do it kind of as a self-reflection exercise; or even if they wanted to ask the students themselves: 'Have they achieved what I wanted them to achieve?' … 'Have you achieved it?' – you could try and match up".

Another student group highlighted the desirability of a question that encouraged lecturers to engage in discussion and negotiation with their students about matters concerning internationalisation:

"[for the lecturers] if there was even just a section saying, even one question, just like, well 'How are your students feeling about this?' and then it might just prompt them to go back to their students and say 'Are we doing enough to raise your awareness of this? Are there areas that you don't feel you're aware enough about, or is there?'."

In a similar vein a staff participant commented on how:

> "Yeah, I think it's definitely asking people to be reflexive. … But what perhaps could be added to this is not only the reflexive part for staff but then also responses from students in the way of 'well, you may be thinking about this, but this is perhaps the reality'."

We will return in a following sub-section of the report to the question of how students and their voices could appear more strongly in the document.

4.9   Talking the framework into action

A staff group identified one of the strengths of the questions in the Operational Implications section of the document as being their capacity to spark discussion: "I think as an individual you could use those questions to think about your own practice. You could use it as, to programme your meeting. You know, it's quite a nice way to generate a discussion."

Throughout quite a number of the interviews the framework was seen as having distinct value as the basis for a productive discussion of internationalisation; and indeed in some groups there was a clear view that discussion was *necessary* if its ideas were to be moved into practice. In one group, for example, discussion was seen as necessary to achieve sufficient common understanding:

> "I understand much more now that I've had a closer look at it. But to achieve what's here we need to work with colleagues, everybody needs, it's that deeper understanding still. … as I'm going through I'm thinking, 'Yes, but actually we don't know enough yet', or 'We don't understand'. There's not enough common understanding."

In another staff group the process and effects of their group discussion were seen as exemplifying the benefits of collective deliberation around the document:

> "But clearly what's happened in the last ten minutes is … we've gone from sort of discussion about blandness to actually engaging with discussions about how you can actually start to bring about the change. Now if the document was to do that with everybody it's successful."

Continuing on this theme, another participant in this group pointed up how discussion of the document could also introduce a more analytical and critical edge than might be achieved by individuals reflecting by themselves on what they had achieved in terms of internationalisation:

> "It seems to me based on our discussion that the dialogue is what is going to make it work because, you know, just an administrator going, 'Oh, yeah, I do all this perfectly,' and an individual going, 'Yeah, I do this.' It's very difficult to really analyse your own practice alone."

The framework was seen by some of the staff participants as not only a common object around which university staff could brainstorm. They thought that it could also serve this function for students themselves. For example, the participant quoted beneath felt that the questions within the Operational Implications section could be used to engage students in dialogues around internationalisation that could widen their understanding of what it entails:

> "I like, almost the way that it's put together … had this [been given] to our Staff Student Liaison Committee I think we might have had a more interesting discussion about what internationalising the curriculum might mean. You know, when I made that comment they just sort of went, 'Are you talking about the opportunity to go to Tokyo?'."

In addition to exploring participants' reactions to the current sets of questions in the Operational Implications section of the document, the interviews asked whether it was seen as desirable or not to have a set of questions designed specifically for students. Three of the student groups did not see this as a necessary addition, with one of these groups rejecting student questions on the grounds of the need to keep a clear focus on staff: "I think if you focus on one thing what you want the book to do and then kind of just stick to that, and you're obviously keeping it simple as well," In another group it was considered that questions for students would remain purely rhetorical given the limited power of students to determine the curriculum: "I think it wouldn't be helpful because the students don't have any agency to then influence the course."

The other student groups did see the value of including questions for students and in contrast to the second quotation presented in the preceding paragraph, one group was clearly of the view that such questions could indeed be a means of enhancing their agency:

> "I think also if these questions are to like inspire the lecturers and enhance the curriculum, I think if there was a student page as well it would inspire a student not to just be handed it on a plate and maybe go and find it themselves and find different things to improve their education on their own without a lecturer standing and going: 'This is what it is'."

Another student group that was strongly in favour of such questions pointed up the value of putting students centre stage: "It's a part of like your professional and your career development

and at every stage you reflect on it and expand on it. And I think by putting onus on students from the very beginning that's how you develop it."

Staff participants were almost wholly positive or very positive about the inclusion of a set of questions for students, with one member of staff observing that: "I would think it probably would be essential." A senior management group, reacting very favourably to the idea of questions for students, saw this as desirable not only in itself but also as a means to move forward on "the change journey":

> "Yeah, in terms of [questions for] students because in a way that also helps the change journey because you're not just giving a message to the academic staff to say, 'Well you need to do this now with yourself, and you need to do this with your students' and they go off to do that in territory which is not particularly fertile. The fact that you make this available to students and some students will read it will mean that there will be some students who will actually have started the journey themselves. Maybe not very many; but if you get more than one well you should do it then or try to. Also I think it tests the logic of the document and it tests the logic of the approach…"

A colleague of this participant went on to observe that if students read the document they would be able to make informed judgements on the extent to which an internationalisation agenda was permeating all courses:

> "Also you get another perspective if students read this document … A student could look at this document and ask themselves about all of their lecturers and all of their units, you know, "is it accessible, is it inclusive?" And they might say, 'Well, yes, Bob's is, but this one really isn't' and have a broader audit of your institution than just an individual looking at their own practice."

In another institution a senior management participant saw the value of questions for students in terms of positioning them more actively in the document as agents in their own right, rather than as 'objects' of internationalisation:

> "[arguing against the perception that] 'Oh, it's nothing to do with me, it's all to do with the senior management team'. Actually what it needs to do, it's, it's the responsibility of all; and, I guess, includes students as well. So, yes in the design and delivery of the curriculum, you look at how the changes are happening within **X university** now in terms of that and individuals as well. Yes, so, yes the students are not seen as something that this gets done to."

The words of this participant resonate with the position put forward in a student group that staff and students could work together to create a more international curriculum: "I think that internationalisation should come, you know, both ways. It's exchange of information. It's a dialogue, it's not a monologue."

5. Presentation, design and structure

While the original focus of the study did not explicitly seek comments about presentation, design and structure, conversations in the interviews and focus groups offered an opportunity to touch on these areas. Participants offered views ranging from issues such as colour and use of diagrams to comments about the document's layout and the way that information was structured.

Overall participants were positive about the design. Several participants found it visually appealing and engaging, and praised its ability to draw the reader in. The information was set out in an accessible format that did not make the framework seem daunting:

"…some of the diagrams and the little flip-out make it easy to get an overview very quickly…it's colourful and it looks, you know, 'Oh that's not going to be too difficult to read'."

Academic staff individual interview

"You can whizz through it quite quickly and pick out some of the key headings and we like how all the information's been broken up quite nicely in sections and it's quite digestible as opposed to being a dull thick report."

Academic staff individual interview

The use of hexagons as opposed to using plain square text boxes was seen as novel and assisted important points to stand out. Others however found the document 'over-designed' though these comments were in the minority.

Reactions to the colour of the document were mixed with some participants liking the 'colourful' feel of the document while others found the use of orange and turquoise might be problematic particularly for those with a range of disabilities.

"The turquoise page that's entitled 'People, benefits for students and benefits for staff'…I find it almost impossible to read because I'm dyslexic because of the colour…the colour combination is hard for me I had to really concentrate and even then I didn't take in what it said."

Student PG Home

"I was trying to work out whether they were colour coded or whether they were just pretty, if you know what I mean."

Student PG International

"Get away from the light orange headings…'cause it's really difficult. I printed it out just in black and white and you lose the light orange. The colour looks fine … but it's just too light in colour, the headings."

Academic staff

Commenting on the structure of the document, participants suggested that a small paragraph at the beginning to orientate the reader and to lead the reader into the framework would be helpful.

"Frontloaded … for me … I like it nice and clear … Does what it says on the tin and I had to work about what it said on the tin."

Academic staff individual interview

It would also have been useful to know who was the author of the introduction. This would have given readers an understanding of who was driving the initiative and provided a context as to why the Framework was produced. In the same vein, a conclusion or a 'round-up' of the document was also suggested. There were also practical suggestions such as numbering the pages and providing a contents page.

Participants proposed that consideration be given to how the information could be laid out differently in a format that was easier for the reader to navigate. For instance, some

participants found it difficult to make links between the information on separate pages and suggested changes to the document structure to remedy this.

"With the examples for these ones, so for example, 'enabling a global learning experience' … actually there's a given practical example of that but it's over the next page again … which is again not obvious until you get there and you think, 'Oh those are those examples for that page' but you don't then connect the two up."

Student PG Home

"Yeah, I didn't know that these blocks here were still going back to actually the activity section. It jumps. So I just lost that bit, but on my second or third time I worked that out."

Academic staff individual interview

Participants in one focus group stressed the importance of approaching work related to internationalisation with an inclusive value base. They suggested that values should be at the front of the agenda and underpin any activities or knowledge acquired.

There were also comments about the images used in the document. In the main, the pictures were seen as portraying a 'British' version of academia rather than illustrating the types of interaction discussed in the document. These comments were made by both staff and student participants. Some remarked that the pictures, (if not of buildings), were of fairly solitary individuals yet a key message of the framework is that of internationalisation and community. Participants felt the lack of diverse, vibrant and multicultural images was a missed opportunity to bring alive some of the examples mentioned in the document such as about student volunteers or the Language Café.

There was support for redesigning the framework to be an interactive online document. Several participants suggested an online component could overcome perceived problems with the document, such as the need for further examples. There was also a recognition that having an online resource could help to facilitate the discussions about internationalisation that the framework is seeking to promote. Having a search element would also assist engagement with the resource.

> "I mean of course documents have limited space but it feels like there should be a follow-up, you know, and 'What does that mean?'… you know, a list of points that you'd click if it was online…"

<p align="center">Academic staff individual interview</p>

An online resource would also offer opportunities to have audio accompanied with vignettes of practice.

> "… so you could have videos of discussions perhaps, you could bring it to life with, you could capture some of the discussions we've been having and produce it as a video. Or even an interactive video, people could stop it and engage in, you know. That might be a way of doing it".

<p align="center">Academic staff individual interview</p>

6. Conclusion

This study set out to explore how staff and students understood and envisaged the deployment of the Internationalising Higher Education Framework. The study engaged with 70 participants covering three universities across the UK through a series of individual interviews and focus groups.

Participants recognised the challenges of creating a document to serve a wide university constituency. Participants were positive about the framework and indicated the framework could be used as a strategic tool to 'make a case' for deeper engagement with the concept of internationalisation within higher education institutions. Participants welcomed the emphasis on values and indicated that the Values section should be a precursor to the sections on Activities and Knowledge.

There was a diverse range of views as to what internationalisation meant but in general participants wanted internationalisation to be a comprehensive concept which involved a change in campus ecology. There was a view that the positive benefits of internationalisation needed to be more fully articulated so that both staff and students had a better understanding of the possibilities and benefits of working and studying within an international campus. Participants indicated that it was harder to promote the need to consider internationalisation to home students and many stressed that it was important to develop the international capital of home students.

While participants welcomed some of the examples for action within the document, they wanted more examples covering a wider range of disciplines. There was also a call for the document to be more 'organic' by being online. This would allow clickable links with more information about how each initiative or example was taken forward. There was also a call for terms which were potentially conceptually ambiguous such as 'internationalisation' or 'global learning' to be more clearly defined. While participants acknowledged that the document had to encourage colleagues to take action, the steer from the participants was that the framework could move a little more strongly towards a recognition and discussion of the challenges.

Participants found the series of questions aimed at individuals, organisations and the curricular area to be particularly helpful. They found these questions to be useful foci for discussion for staff at various levels. This led to some participants suggesting that it might be useful to have a set of questions for students to reflect on as part of their academic journey. In addition, such questions would assist students to reflect on the extent to which an internationalisation agenda was permeating their courses.

Participants also provided comments about presentation, design and structure and the general consensus was that the design was appealing and engaging. However, helpful suggestions for revising these aspects of the framework were also provided.

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