

HESA Data Futures: A Senior Manager's perspective on the work of the planning team



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5 July 2017



Common Characteristics for Senior Teams

- Under pressure to produce good news/results – want ‘good’ data
- Under time pressure
- Broad range of responsibilities
- Normally the majority have a strong academic background
- Responsible for or work with large teams
- Not sure of the detail
- Interested in results not process
- Make decisions on relatively weak evidence base
- Will need support!



Common Characteristics for Senior Teams – when it comes to data

- We just want things to work
- Work done so-far to prepare for Data Futures... will not be noticed by Senior Managers
- Both managers and those immersed in data issues have a natural instinct to want more – even if we hope to think for a use for it later

Readiness at Newcastle University

Thus far, the Planning team has:

- Participated in consultation exercises
- Attended briefings
- Engaged with our IT supplier
- Volunteered to be part of the Alpha Pilot
- Reviewed the outputs of the collection design phase

and...

- Raised some concerns about the clarity of the benefits case, the timescales and the knock-on impact on other activities



Perspective of senior managers

A contact group with the Association of Heads of University Administration

- Group of Chief Operating Officers/Registrars from across the sector
- Include AHUA members already involved with HESA Data Landscape
- To act as a senior provider group
- Meet twice in the next twelve months to consider issues raised by planning teams and other groups
- Broaden the stakeholder engagement by HESA
- Review the benefits case from a senior perspective
- Provide steer on prioritisation, approach and solution development



Future work of strategic planning teams

Expectations from a Registrar's perspective

- Continued engagement with HESA on the development of a detailed specification
- Constructive feedback that identifies the benefits and risks of any new data collection
- Project management of changes, and implementation of new systems and processes
- Integration any changes as part of a University's own 'data journey' – using data futures to make more strategic use of data ... and...
- Highlight issues – both practical and strategic – where Data Futures may not achieve the intended benefits to the University and sector



The horizon for 2019/20 and beyond...

Changing policy context

- Establishment of the Office for Students
- Subject level TEF and REF 2020
- The 'B' word...

For strategic planning teams

- Making more effective use of our data
- Supporting University priorities (not just the needs of the regulator)
- Streamlining systems and processes
- Engaging effectively with colleagues from other professional services



Action

So following this conference I will go back to my Planning team and instruct them to do the right thing – and leave before they have time to seek clarification.