

Musings on the KEC

Amanda.Selvaratnam@york.ac.uk

Views from the PrA Conference

- 90 min session – 80 delegates – 4 principles each – share frustrations and best practice



Principle 1 - Mission

Key Findings

- Having a senior champion makes a massive difference
- Needs to be embedded in university strategy
- Link university KPIs to KEC action plans
- KEC useful to raise awareness of KE

Issues

- Often institutional KPIs don't reflect KE
- Overemphasis on quantitative metrics
- How do we track the real impact
- Should KE have its own strategy
- Language of KE not universally accepted



Principle 2 – Policies and Processes

Key Findings

- Lots of enthusiasm for sharing policies
- Everyone is (re)writing and communicating policies
- Get people early – promote policies & processes
- Overall a useful exercise

Issues

- Everyone struggling with consultancy policies
- How do we track use of policies - risk
- State Aid, National Security and Investment Act – lack of awareness
- Overlap of policies and communications across university



Principle 3- Engagement

Key Findings

- Need for training both from academics and professional services staff
- How do we identify strategic/key partners
- Building into key activities for ECRs
- Lot of interest/use of CRMs
- Not just the role of PS
- Show the value of engagement in building research career



Issues

- Ensuring the institution talks with one voice to external partners
- How do we encourage sharing of contacts and cross selling
- Effective training – what should be covered

Principle 4 - working transparently and ethically



UNIVERSITY
of York

Key Findings

- Very useful for raising awareness of EDI
- Helpful to have standardised contracts
- Adding equity policy sharing policies on website
- Express licences on website – highlighting our terms
- Need to find a balance between welcoming vs regulations

Issues

- Who and how are ethical decisions made
- Can we develop ethical frameworks who we will and wont work with
- Transparency can be a challenge – what does it mean in different contexts



Principle 5 – Capacity Building

Key Findings

- Important for motivation
- Some good examples of promotion via KE route
- High churn of KE staff – move for promotion
- Lack of a KE job family
- Few examples of KE in academic promotion criteria
- KE becoming mainstream

Issues

- Limited promotion criteria for PS staff
- A competency model might help
- Perceived lack of training capacity in the sector
- Difficult to get academics engaged in KE training
- Overlaps and lack of alignment with other concordats



CAPACITY BUILDING

Principle 6 – Reward and Recognition



Key Findings

- Some good examples of reward and celebration activities
- KE is a team sport so hard to reward individuals
- Cultivate academics to be good champions of KE staff
- Recruiting staff with KE skills can be hard
- IP policy in one gave share for PS
- Different kinds of KE values different things

Issues

- Market rate salaries
- What does high quality KE support look like
- Academics are the ones who get the credit
- How do we raise awareness of our expertise – what goes on under the bonnet

**REWARD &
RECOGNITION**

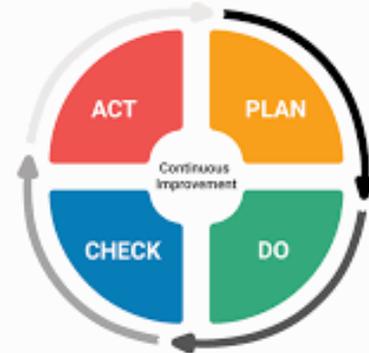
Principle 7 – Continuous Improvement

Key Findings

- Often hard to find time to improve
- KEC has helped us focus on improvements
- Develop a post project review team to provide feedback
- KE committees to help identify ways to improve
- Structured feedback after each engagement
- Is this about processes or culture
- Build in feedback as standard

Issues

- What is good KE
- Best approaches for gathering feedback
- Reluctance in case feedback is bad



Principle 8 – Evaluating Success

Key Findings

- KEC action plans are developed but with limited engagement
- Narratives are useful but senior management often want numbers
- Challenge capturing softer impacts
- Often a 3-5 year journey
- Write evaluation into project from the start
- Need marketing onside to share and celebrate

Issues

- What KPIs should we use
- How can you capture audience engagement
- Marketing often focussed on students no time for KE
- What are we measuring? the KE teams or the contribution of KE to the organisation



General Positive Feedback

KEC has helped
to raise the
profile of KE

Can we share
policies – we
are all writing
them

Opportunity
to share best
practice

Used KEC
to drive
change

Achieving
societal
impact should
be driver not
finance

Use of language
– KE not always
the words used

Opportunities
to develop a
career/training
pathway

Highlighted
contribution of
KE to REF
impact

KEC allows
institutions
autonomy to
focus on their
priorities

Helped
identify areas
for
development

Raised
awareness
of EDI

Common Challenges



Should we have a separate KE strategy

Risk of KE practitioners being policing arm of the KE culture

Speaking as one voice/cross selling

KE career pathway

Can we discuss KE governance – where does it sit

Research KE continuum – risk KE being seen as an add on

How do others monitor adherence to policy

CRM best practice – academic ownership of contacts

What does good look like

Aligning KEC with institutional strategy

Engaging Academics

Lack of PS promotion opportunities/criteria

Consultancy – has anyone got it right

Metrics for non financial impact

Transparency when negotiating