



**InclusiPHE**

Inclusive Engagement of Non-Traditional  
Students in Professional Higher Education

**Stronger Together**

**Towards inclusive student  
engagement of non-traditional  
students in Professional Higher  
Education**

**Strategies and guidelines for Inclusive  
Students' engagement in PHE institutions**

## Authors

Mónica Gago, Agurtzane Martinez, Ane Urizar, Jon Altuna, Idoia Peñacoba.

## Contributors

Jon Altuna, Vanda Bajs, Jodie Bonnici, Antonella Brincat, Marina Brunner, Anthony Camilleri, Martina Darmanin, Tara Drev, John Edwards, Ulf-Daniel Ehlers, Laura Eigbrecht, Justin Fenech, Monica Gago, Yasmine Goossens, Nik Heerens, Silke Huber, Michal Karpíšek, Agurtzane Martinez, Manushan Nesari, Meral Nur, Krisztina Oláh, Idoia Peñacoba, Maciej Rewucki, Marta Rodrigues, Ninoslav Šćukanec Schmidt, Beatriz Soler, Ivana Stanojev, Ana Uglesic, Ane Urizar, Tess Van Den Brink.

## Editors

Mónica Gago, Agurtzane Martinez, Ane Urizar, Jon Altuna, Idoia Peñacoba.

## Layout

Ane Urizar

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## The InclusiPHE Consortium

Mondragon University	MU	ES
European Students' Union	ESU	BE
European Association of Institutions in Higher Education	EURASHE	BE
Malta College of Arts, Science & Technology	MCAST	MT
Duale Hochschule Baden-Wurtemberg	DHBW	DE
Knowledge Innovation Centre	KIC	MT
University College Leuven Limburg	UCLL	BE
Institute for the Development of Education	IDE	HR

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# 1 Abbreviations

NTS	Non-traditional student
HEI	Higher Education Institution
PHE	Professional Higher Education
PHEI	Professional Higher Education Institution
SU	Student Union

## 2 Summary

This report presents a framework for self-assessment, benchmarking and action planning of inclusive engagement of non-traditional students, on both at the level of the Professional Higher Education (PHE) institution and the level of students' organisations. The self-assessment frameworks will take the form of sets of indicators for inclusive engagement and participatory governance, to be used to conduct a baseline survey, a mechanism to monitor progress at PHEIs and students' organisations, and develop benchmarking exercises. In addition, this guideline will serve to map ways for turning the self-assessment into concrete action plans, advancing a commitment to inclusive engagement both at campus/PHEI and within student-led organisations. This will result in PHEI's and students-led organizations' better understanding of the impact of more inclusive students' engagement in the governance, internal quality assurance and curriculum development of PHEIs and in the advancement of equality and inclusion.

## 3 Introduction

The InclusiPHE consortium has developed a framework for self-assessment of inclusive engagement of non-traditional students to conduct baseline surveys of PHEIs and student led-organizations, develop benchmarking exercises and monitor their progress. Experts from within the consortium have drawn up the criteria on the basis of best-practice in literature, their own experience and the supplementary evidence provided by other research conducted during this project.

Based on this framework, a PHEI inclusive-engagement score-card tool and a Student Union (SU) score-card tool have been designed and developed. The PHEI score-card assesses to what extent PHEIs are following inclusive strategies and practices for students' engagement and how these are aligned with their overall institutional strategies. Assessment based on this score-card will also allow HEIs to monitor their progress and compare themselves with other institutions. Similarly, the SU score-card tool has been developed with a set of indicators for

inclusive engagement which can be used to conduct a baseline survey, a mechanism to monitor progress at students' organisations, and to develop benchmarking exercises.

The benchmarking data generated with both tools will enable PHEIs and student-led organizations to assess whether they have policies in place for students with particular characteristics, who may be disproportionately represented or underrepresented in key areas of the higher education life cycle. The main focus of benchmarking will be in using the data to drive the institution's aspirations and challenge PHEIs and student organizations to make significant improvements.

Furthermore, the Consortium has produced guidelines that will map ways for turning the self-assessment into concrete action plans, advancing a commitment to inclusive engagement both at campus/PHEI and within student-led organization. Both PHEIs and student organizations will use the guidelines for development of inclusive engagement action plan at student-led organisations, to assist them in creating new policies, as well as to measure progress and celebrate successes. The guidelines will use the following questions to formulate the inclusive engagement practices:

1. What gaps do we need to address?
2. What challenges do we face?
3. What does change look like?
4. What are the goals and measurable outcomes?
5. How will we know if we are successful? What benchmarks will we use, and how will we document our progress and success?
6. What actions will we need to implement to reach our goals and vision?
7. How will we operate and learn as an organization?

# 4 Description of the score-card tool

## 4.1 Objective

The purpose of this tool is to provide an instrument to analyze documented information on the institutional strategy for inclusive participation of non-traditional students in PHEIs and to provide educational institutions with a tool to validate and improve the quality of the institutional response in order to strengthen collaboration between stakeholders: students, non-traditional students and educational institutions.

## 4.2 Tool design process

The instrument presented in this report is the result of a co-creation process involving 16 participants from 8 countries. The tool prototype and method were developed by 6 experts from the consortium, based on a literature review of internationally validated instruments.



Figure 1 tool and guideline design process

Based on the literature review of internationally-validated tools and surveys of student engagement, a set of variables that have been shown to have an impact on student-engagement were identified.

TOOL	AUTHOR	YEAR	MEASURED VARIABLES
National survey of student engagement	NSSE	2013	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Academic Challenge.</li> <li>2. Learning with Peers.</li> <li>3. Experience with Faculty.</li> <li>4. Campus Environment.</li> </ol>
Evaluation of inclusion in higher education through indicators	Márquez, C., Sandoval, M., Sánchez, S., Simón, C., Moraña, A., Morgado, B., Moreno-Medina, I., García, J. A., Díaz-Gandasegui, V. & Elizalde San Miguel, B.	2021	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Institutional culture.</li> <li>2. Equitable access.</li> <li>3. Student-centred learning.</li> <li>4. Well-being and engagement.</li> <li>5. Mobility and employability.</li> <li>6. Academic learning.</li> <li>7. Well-being and arpticipation.</li> <li>8. Mobility and employability.</li> <li>9. Academic achievements.</li> </ol>
Participation and exclusion: a comparative analysis of non-traditional students and lifelong learners in higher education	Hans G. Schetzer & Maria Slowey	2002	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Institutional differentiation of the higher education system.</li> <li>2. Institutional governance and control.</li> <li>3. Flexible (open) access.</li> <li>4. Mode of study.</li> <li>5. Financial assistance and other support.</li> <li>6. Continuing education opportunities.</li> </ol>
National student engagement programme (2020)	Quality & qualifications Ireland, the higher education authority and the union of students in Ireland.	2020	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Governance and management.</li> <li>2. Teaching and learning.</li> <li>3. Quality assurance and enhancement.</li> <li>4. Student representation and organization.</li> </ol>
European working condition survey (in the field about employee involvement)	Eurofound	2021	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Task discretion &amp; organizational participation.</li> <li>2. Task characteristics.</li> <li>3. Flexibility (task, rotation, contract duration, working time status).</li> <li>4. Human resources capacity ( supervisory style, career chances, team</li> </ol>

			work,...). 5. Representative voice (consultation procedure, employee representation). 6. Ownership characteristics (public vs private, size). 7. Employment regulation (bargaining, trade unions, union density).
European participation index (in the field of employee participation)	ETUI & ETUC	2010	1. Board level participation. 2. Establishment level participation. 3. Collective bargaining participation.
European company survey (in the field of employee participation)	Eurofound	2021	1. Participation in organizations (Suggestions, possibilities to change, influence in management decisions in several aspects).

The initial design of the tool integrated some of the variables from the different validated instruments as categories, dimensions or sub-dimensions for the analysis. In this phase, as many items associated with the analyzed variables as possible were selected, trying to collect as many precisions as possible. These items were associated to dimensions and sub-dimensions of the initial tool design and an initial consultation with experts in the field of assessment measurement was carried out. Each category is complemented with a best practice example to illustrate it.

In order to obtain further information on the initial framework developed, experts from student-led organisations, quality assurance agencies, university leaders and program leaders were consulted. The inputs received from this consultation were integrated in the tool and validated later by the project consortium members. The consultants were particularly requested to contextualise the items to non-traditional students, since most of the surveys and instruments considered student engagement in general.

### 4.3 Description of the tool

The tool consists of 5 categories, each of them divided into several dimensions. Each dimension has a series of indicators that attempt to respond to the objective of each of the dimensions.

The tool is adapted according to the target group at which they are aimed. The questionnaires targeting institutional leaders, program leaders, student services and support staff and students differ in the items to be responded.

The categories, dimensions and items included in the tool are as follows:



## CATEGORY 1: GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Rationale: Student engagement in governance and management of PHEIs can be enhanced through their involvement in committees, however, a broader understanding is needed. Recognition of non-formal forums, pre-existing hierarchies, decision-making cultures, and knowledge or information asymmetry is crucial. It is from the governance domain that student engagement can be embedded throughout all institutional decision-making, projects, and policy developments.

### DIMENSION 1.1. INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE

Description: The set of beliefs, values, general structures and meanings that the institution uses to deal with day-to-day life. In this dimension we should refer to support and incentives for inclusive engagement of non-traditional students (Inclusive Normative Framework, Equity and Inclusion Training, Inclusion support services, non-formal forums, etc ...).

For PHEI institutional leaders, program leaders or student service and support staff the items include:

Item
P1. How would you rate the current scenario (plans, policy, regulations, strategy, etc) in relation to the principles of equity and inclusion that exist in your institution?
P2. To what extent do all the curricula and training activities of your institution include content on equal opportunity, accessibility or universal design?
P3. Is there a specific service to support inclusion in your institution?
P4. I'm satisfied with training possibilities in my institution on equal opportunities, accessibility and universal design offered to students, research/teaching staff and administrative and service personnel.

For students the items include:

Item
S1. Non-traditional students participate in defining rules and regulations consistent with principles of equity and inclusion and in the assessing of their enforcement.
S2. I'm satisfied with the curricula and training activities that include content on equal opportunity, accessibility or universal design.
S3. I'm satisfied with the care received by the specific inclusion support services, if there is one. If there isn't, I'm satisfied with care received by the institution and its staff.
S4. Accessibility of the support systems or of the student support staff is adequate.
S5. Quality and frequency of communication regarding the support systems or of the institution are adequate.
S6. I'm satisfied with the training in equal opportunities, universal accessibility and universal design offered to students, research teaching staff and administrative and service personnel.

## DIMENSION 1.2. FUNCTIONING OF THE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Description: This dimension refers to how committees or other formal or informal structures are integrating non-traditional students, how non-traditional students take part in the definition of management plans, how students' experience and success is discussed in governance bodies, how national and regional policies regarding non-traditional students are debated, how strengths and weaknesses are identified and how a culture for democratic participation of non-traditional students is recognised at the institution.

For PHEI institutional leaders, program leaders or student service and support staff the items include:

Item
P5. All major committees, formal or informal structures in the institution discuss staff-student partnership, have non-traditional student members, and discuss issues of importance to non-traditional students.
P6. The culture of democratic participation across my institution is high.
P7. Are there mechanisms to ensure that all students (including non-traditional students) are informed about decisions, regulations, rules, etc. even if they are not part of the governance structure?
P8. If in your opinion student participation is high in your institution is high, could you mention an example of good practise?

For students the items include:

Item
S7. All major committees, formal or informal structures in the institution discuss staff-student partnership, have non-traditional student members, and discuss issues of importance to non-traditional students.
S8. I'm satisfied with the culture of democratic participation across the institution.
S9. I'm satisfied with every level of participation: from the class room until the board level.
S10. I'm satisfied with the mechanisms my institution uses to ensure that all students (including non-traditional students) are informed about decisions, regulations, rules, etc. even if they are not part of the governance structure.
S11. In case the assessment in your institution about democratic participation is high, could you mention an example?

**DIMENSION 1.3. MATERIAL AND IMMATERIAL SUPPORT FOR ACCESS, PARTICIPATION AND CONCILIATION**

Description: Finance remains an important obstacle in the decision of adults and other non-traditional groups whether or not to study. The absence of financial support and grants is, besides the lack of time and lack of child care facilities, one of the most cited reasons for non-participation. Two particular sub-dimensions emerge here- firstly, the constraints on many financial support schemes based on age and the impact of loan schemes which do not make repayment conditional on higher income after completions of studies.; secondly, gaps in many support systems for part-time or distance students.

For PHEI institutional leaders or program leaders the items include:

Item
P9. Are there any income-dependent forms of financial aid for students?
P10. Are there different and flexible modalities of equitable financial support?
P11. How do you rate the availability family related facilities for the need of all students (e.g. childcare facilities/facilities for conciliation of student and personal life)?
P12. How do you rate the availability within your institution of universally applicable financial support systems for all students, based on their needs and contributing primarily to cover both direct study costs (fees) and indirect costs (living expenses, accommodation, transportation, etc.)?
P13. Could you give some examples of financial support systems in you institution?

For students the items include:

Item
S12. I'm satisfied with the fact that the student financial support is based on the needs of the student.
S13. I'm satisfied with the fact that student financial support is adjusted to the students' needs.
S14. There are sufficient family related facilities for the need of all students (e.g. childcare facilities/facilities for conciliation of student and personal life)
S15. The institution has universally applicable financial support systems for all non-traditional students, based on their needs and contributing primarily to cover both direct study costs (fees) and indirect costs (living expenses, accommodation, transportation, etc.)

EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE IN THE CATEGORY OF GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT	
Organization	MONDRAGON UNIBERTSITATEA
Description	Mondragon Unibertsitatea is at the centre of one of the largest groups of co-operatives in the world and in 1997 set up what is probably the only co-operative university in existence. This highly successful university has a solidary economy, effective methods of knowledge generation and transfer, and is expanding. Among its unique features are flat hierarchies and forms of self-management, community engagement and student participation built on an overall concept of the solidarity of the stakeholders.

Links	<a href="https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/co-operative-leadership-higher-education">https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/co-operative-leadership-higher-education</a> <a href="#">Report on a field visit to Mondragón University: a cooperative experience/experiment</a>
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## CATEGORY 2: QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT

Rationale: Student engagement in both quality assurance and quality enhancement should not only be rooted in student participation throughout all processes, but the process itself needs to be able to effectively capture and understand the ways in which student engagement and participation are meaningfully supported and realised through practice. Quality assurance that has student participation and engagement principles systematically embedded can ensure greater responsibility to the needs and aspirations of all students, as well as scaffolding that staff require to turn partnership into lived reality.

3 ideas can be included: 2.1. External QA evaluations (refers to relevant national QA agencies) contain standards and criteria for inclusive engagement of non-traditional students; 2.2. Internal QA procedures and evaluations contain standards and criteria for inclusive engagement of non-traditional students; 2.3. Existence of awards and other incentives for inclusive engagement of non-traditional students.

For PHEI institutional leaders, program leaders or student service and support staff the items include:

Item
P14. Feedback mechanisms are co-created and agreed by all students (including non-traditional ones) and staff. All students (including non-traditional ones) are encouraged to use such mechanisms, and feedback provided is valued.
P15. Students and staff collaborate to review and analyze data collected from non-traditional students such as survey responses and will agree and implement changes together
P16. Non-traditional students are actively involved in the programme design, reviews and approval process.
P17. Non-traditional students and staff are involved in internal quality assurance processes.
P18. Non-traditional students are involved in external quality assurance processes.
P19. How do you rate the availability within your institution of rewards and other incentives for participation of non-traditional students?

For students the items include:

Item
S16. Feedback mechanisms are co-created and agreed by all students (including non-traditional ones) and staff. All students (including non-traditional ones) are encouraged to use such mechanisms, and feedback provided is valued.
S17. Students and staff collaborate to analyse data collected from students (including non-traditional students) such as survey responses and will agree and implement changes together.
S18. Non-traditional students are actively involved in the programme design, reviews and approval process.

S19. Non-traditional students are involved in internal quality assurance processes
S20. Non-traditional students are involved in external quality assurance processes.
S21. How do you rate the availability within your institution of rewards and other incentives for participation of non-traditional students?

**CATEGORY 3: WELL-BEING AND PARTICIPATION**

Rationale: Participation is a multidimensional concept composed of three interdependent subdimensions. Firstly, it alludes to feeling part of or the perception of emotional well-being resulting from a settled social and academic self-esteem. It also symbolizes being part of a peer group, where students are valued and recognized and where identities are constructed in positive and not deficient or of lesser value over any student. And, finally, it involves taking part in the formal and informal bodies and structures of educational participation.

**DIMENSION 3.1. CAMPUS ENVIRONMENT**

Description: College environments characterized by positive interpersonal relations promote student learning and success. Students who enjoy supportive relationships with peers, advisors, faculty, and staff are better able to find assistance when needed, and to learn from and with those around them.

For PHEI institutional leaders, program leaders or student service and support staff the items include:

Item
P20. The institution provides support to help students succeed in their personal and academic development.
P21. The institution offers opportunities for social participation (cultural and social events promoted by the institution that non-traditional students can access to interact with others)
P22. The institution provides general wellness support (recreation, sporting events, medical care, counseling, mental health, etc.)
P23. The institution helps students manage their non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)

For students the items include:

Item
S22. Satisfaction with the quality of inter-personal interactions (relationships with peers, advisors, faculty, and staff) in the institution.
S23. Satisfaction with the support provided by the institution to help students succeed in their personal and academic development.
S24. I feel safe and I feel that possible cases of discrimination are handled well.
S25. Satisfaction with the opportunities provided by institution to be involved socially in student life.
S26. Satisfaction with the overall well-being support provided (recreation, sporting events, health care, counselling, etc.)

S27. Satisfaction with the support provided by the institution to help students manage their non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.).

### DIMENSION 3.2. STUDENT REPRESENTATION AND ORGANIZATION

Description: Student-to-student engagement is an important element of an inclusive and collaborative system of partnership. The ability of all students to participate in democratic processes and elect their own representatives, coupled with the ability of students to self-organise, debate and discuss, to develop student-led opportunities, and to support one another throughout their learning journey, is core to enhancing capabilities to become change agents.

The existence of effective systems of student organisation allows space for disagreement and dissent, while nurturing spaces that build consensus and the discovery of mutual goals.

For PHEI institutional leaders, program leaders or student service and support staff the items include:

Item
P24. Are there formal participation bodies specifically aimed at non-traditional or diverse students?
P25. Are there psychological support services available within your institution?
P26. There is an effective and diverse representation of non-traditional students at all levels of institutional governance.
P27. Training is provided to student representatives to help them carry out varied and meaningful work in all areas of the institution, in accordance with their role, responsibilities and interests
P28. Institutional leadership and non-traditional students' representatives meet regularly with defined and pre-communicated agendas and the possibility of alternatives to face-to-face participation and dialogue at meetings.

For students the items include:

Item
S28. Satisfaction with the diverse representation of students in the institution.
S29. Satisfaction with formal participation bodies specifically aimed at non-traditional or diverse students.
S30. Satisfaction with the measures to adapt physical and sports activities to the needs of all students.
S31. Satisfaction with the adequacy of religious spaces to the profile of students in the institution.
S32. Satisfaction with the psychological care and support services.
S33. There is an effective and diverse representation of non-traditional students at all levels of institutional governance.
S34. Training is provided to student representatives to help them carry out varied and meaningful work in all areas of the institution, in accordance with their role, responsibilities and interests.
S35. Non-traditional student representatives are included on all committees where they are well briefed, are able to take up an active role in forming agendas, and can influence outcomes, while staff is proactive in seeking to reduce the power imbalance with students and find flexible ways of engagement.

S36. Institutional leadership and student representatives (including non-traditional students) meet regularly with defined and pre-communicated agendas and the possibility of alternatives to face-to-face participation and dialogue at meetings.

EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE IN THE CATEGORY OF WELL-BEING AND PARTICIPATION

Organization	MCAST – The Malta College of Arts Science and Technology
Description	Support Services within MCAST including Counselling and Career Guidance services
Links	<a href="https://www.mcast.edu.mt/mcast-wellbeing-hub/">https://www.mcast.edu.mt/mcast-wellbeing-hub/</a>

## CATEGORY 4: TEACHING AND LEARNING

Rationale: The environment of teaching, learning and assessment is where students and staff will most often engage. Approaches to student engagement should seek to find balance between student engagement in their own learning and student engagement in the process of enhancing that learning. Partnership in this space can be pedagogical, curricular, and extra-curricular, founded on strong dialogic relationships, where staff and students recognise that their engagement can have wider influence in institutional change, emerging good practice, and quality assurance.

### DIMENSION 4.1. LEARNER CENTERED LEARNING

Description: Design of learning experiences that respond to the diversity of students using methodologies, activities, materials, support, resources and evaluation that allow responding to all students.

For PHEI institutional leaders, program leaders or student service and support staff the items include:

Item
P29. Teaching materials meet the learning needs of all students, including non-traditional students
P30. To what extent does the teaching materials meet the learning needs of all students, including non-traditional students?
P31. To what extent do the used methodologies facilitate the learning and participation of all students and are they reflected in the didactic guides of the study programme?
P32. To what extent do students have the option to demonstrate their acquired learning through different assessment methods (e.g. hybrid/auto and heter evaluation)?
P33. To what extent can all students (including non-traditional students) receive more individualised support from lecturers if they wish?
P33b. To what extent do professors/teachers facilitate the participation of all students by taking specific measures according to the diverse needs of non-traditional students (schedule, time, space, alternative communication, technological resources, etc.)?

For students the items include:

Item
S37. Teaching materials meet my learning needs
S38. To what extent do the used methodologies facilitate the learning and participation of all students?
S39. To what extent do students have the option to demonstrate their acquired learning through different examination methods?
S40. To what extent can all students (including non-traditional students) receive more individualised support from lecturers if they wish?
S41. To what extent do professors/teachers facilitate the participation of all students by taking specific measures according to the diverse needs of non-traditional students (schedule, time, space, alternative communication, technological resources, etc.)?



## DIMENSION 4.2. LEARNING WITH PEERS

Description: Students learn more when they are intensely involved in their education and are asked to think about and apply what they are learning in different settings. Collaborating with others in solving problems or mastering difficult material prepares students to deal with the messy, unscripted problems they will encounter daily, both during and after college.

For PHEI institutional leaders, program leaders or student service and support staff the items include:

Item
P34. How do you rate the extent to which teachers in your institution facilitate peer support (student to student) in the classroom?
P35. How do you rate the extent to which teachers encourage positive and open discussions with people with different religious beliefs than their own, with people with different political opinions than their own, with people from a different economic background than their own, with people belonging to different ethnic groups, with functional diversity, with different gender identity and, in general, with other groups different from their own inside and outside the classroom?
P36. Does your institution have systems of mentoring between students?

For students the items include:

Item
S42. How do you rate the extent to which teachers in your institution facilitate peer support (student to student) in the classroom?
S43. How do you rate the extent to which teachers encourage positive and open discussions between non-traditional and traditional learners inside and outside the classroom?

## DIMENSION 4.3. EXPERIENCES WITH FACULTY

Description: Students learn firsthand how experts think about and solve problems by interacting with faculty members inside and outside the classroom. As a result, their teachers become role models, mentors, and guides for continuous, lifelong learning.

Non-traditional students have equal opportunities to participate in these programmes/opportunities.

For PHEI institutional leaders, program leaders or student service and support staff the items include:

Item
P37. Is there positive and open interaction with professors/teachers such as conversations about career plans, collaboration with professors/teachers on activities other than course activities, discussion of course topics, ideas, or concepts between staff and students outside of class?

For students the items include:

Item
S44. Is there positive and open interaction with professors/teachers such as conversations about career plans, collaboration with professors/teachers on activities other than course activities, discussion of course topics, ideas, or concepts between staff and students outside of class?

#### DIMENSION 4.4. SERVICE LEARNING

Description: Complementary learning opportunities inside and outside the classroom augments the academic program. Experiencing diversity teaches students valuable things about themselves and other cultures and persons. Service-learning is a teaching and learning methodology which fosters civic responsibility and applies classroom learning through meaningful service to the community.

Non-traditional students have equal opportunities to participate in these programmes/opportunities

For PHEI institutional leaders, program leaders or student service and support staff the items include:

Item
P38. Are there any activities at this institution that have included a community-based project (service-learning)?

For students the items include:

Item
S45. Are there any activities at this institution that have included a community-based project (service-learning)?

#### DIMENSION 4.5. LEARNING COMMUNITY

Description: Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together.

Non-traditional students have equal opportunities to participate in these programmes/opportunities

For PHEI institutional leaders, program leaders or student service and support staff the items include:

Item
P39. How do you rate the extent to which your institution offers activities/opportunities that include a learning community or some other formal programme in which groups of students take two or more classes together?

For students the items include:

Item
S46. How do you rate the extent to which your institution offers activities/opportunities that include a learning community or some other formal programme in which groups of students take two or more classes together?

#### DIMENSION 4.6. INTERNSHIP OR FIELD EXPERIENCE

Description: Participate in an internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement.

Non-traditional students have equal opportunities to participate in these programmes/opportunities

For PHEI institutional leaders, program leaders or student service and support staff the items include:

Item
P40. How do you rate the extent to which your institution's study programmes have internship activities, field experience with tutorial follow-up and financial support if needed?

For students the items include:

Item
S47. Satisfaction with the internship activities, field experience with tutorial follow-up and financial support if needed.

#### DIMENSION 4.7. INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES THROUGH LEARNING MOBILITY OR INTERNATIONALISATION AT HOME

Description: Participate in an international experience.

Non-traditional students have equal opportunities to participate in these programmes/opportunities

For PHEI institutional leaders, program leaders or student service and support staff the items include:

Item
P41. Does your institution offer study abroad programmes that are accessible for all students?

For students the items include:

Item
S48. Satisfaction with the study abroad programme available in your study programme and getting sufficient information and financial support for this, if needed.

EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE IN THE CATEGORY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING	
Organization	NSSE
Description	Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice (different reports)
Links	<a href="https://nsse.indiana.edu/nsse/working-with-nsse-data/nsse-data-users-guide-with-worksheets/index.html">https://nsse.indiana.edu/nsse/working-with-nsse-data/nsse-data-users-guide-with-worksheets/index.html</a>

## CATEGORY 5: ACCESS

Rationale: Broadening access is a distinctive element of university democratization and a prerequisite for building more inclusive universities. The possibility of access to the institution of higher education for all people including non-traditional students and the preparation of environments to make their participation possible is necessary.

### DIMENSION 5.1. EQUITABLE ACCESS

Description: Opportunity for individuals to participate in an educational institution regardless of their physical, psychological, socioeconomic and cultural characteristics, articulating differentiated responses based on needs in order to be able to participate under equal conditions.

For PHEI institutional leaders, program leaders or student service and support staff the items include:

Item
P42. What is the percentage of non-traditional students out of the total number of students?
P43. To what extent do the facilities comply with universal accessibility criteria/regulations?
P44. The information provided by the university or PHEI about its organization, services or curricula meets Universal Design criteria and respond to all participants.
P45. Do e-learning platforms and environments comply with the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) guidelines?
P46. How do you rate the availability and quality of preparatory training for incoming students?
P47. Is there an institutional welcome plan for incoming students?

For students the items include:

Item
S49. I'm satisfied with the degree of compliance of facilities with universal access criteria/regulations.
S50. I'm satisfied with the degree of compliance of the information provided by the university about its organisation, services or curricula with Universal Design criteria.
S51. I'm satisfied with the degree of compliance with the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) guidelines for virtual learning platforms and environments.
S52. Is there preparatory training for incoming students?
S52b. If so, I'm satisfied with the preparatory training received by incoming students.

### DIMENSION 5.2. FLEXIBLE (OPEN) ACCESS

Description: 'Flexible' or 'open' admission for those without traditional entry qualifications – usually the leaving certificate of the academic stream in upper secondary schools. Access is more "flexible" to the extent that admission for all applicants is open or where special entry routes for non-traditional students exist which grant admission either on the basis of specific personal characteristics (age, work experience or other qualifications and achievements) or of specific entrance examinations. In this context, mechanisms for the assessment and

recognition of prior learning can be instrumental in breaking the monopoly of formal education institutions for the certification of acquired knowledge and learning progress.

For PHEI institutional leaders, program leaders or student service and support staff the items include:

Item
P48. Are there special access routes for non-traditional students that grant admission based on specific personal characteristics (age, work experience or other qualifications and achievements) or specific entrance tests?
P49. The institution has mechanisms, platforms and/or digital content that allow students to learn autonomously and collaboratively in a network
P50. The institution has mechanisms for evaluation and recognition of prior learning (work experience and previous studies)

For students the items include:

Item
S53. There are special access routes for non-traditional students that grant admission based on specific personal characteristics (age, work experience or other qualifications and achievements) or specific entrance tests
S54. Satisfaction with the mechanisms, platforms and/or digital content that allow students to learn autonomously and collaboratively in a (digital) network offered by the institution.
S55. Satisfaction with the mechanisms for evaluation and recognition of prior learning (work experience and previous studies), offered by the institution.

EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE IN THE CATEGORY OF ACCESS	
Organization	KU LEUVEN
Description	Students with a “non-traditional story” (first generation students, students with a multicultural background, LGBTQIA + students, etc.) are engaged as student ambassadors and role models, known as the A-crew. They talk with (soon-to-be) students and/or their parents about their own experience, e.g. at secondary schools, information events at community centres, mosques, etc.
Links	<a href="https://www.kuleuven.be/toekomstigestudenten/tijdomdecijfersongelijktgegeven/acrew.html">https://www.kuleuven.be/toekomstigestudenten/tijdomdecijfersongelijktgegeven/acrew.html</a>

## ENGAGEMENT

In order to assess the **engagement** of the students, three additional questions are added in the students' questionnaire:

Item
S56. I am proud to study in this organisation
S57. I feel that the problems of this organisation are my own.
S58. I would recommend a friend to come and study in this organisation.

## 5 From planning to implementation

If an organisation is interested in advancing in the commitment to inclusive engagement, there are different ways of approaching such a process. The simplest option may just involve one person in the organisation who would fill in the tool and make a self-diagnosis of needs and challenges in this area. Another approach would activate a team within the organisation, including senior management, program leaders and/or people from student support services to implement the diagnosis. However, a more ambitious option would be to activate a team including both traditional and non-traditional students, to hear their voices and involve them in the development of the diagnosis. Some ideas of dynamics that can be carried out to establish objectives and an action plan adapted to the peculiarities, sizes and capacities of each organisation appear in the following pages. However, these are only ideas and each organization can develop the project in different ways.

In this proposal of dynamics to develop a project to promote participation in order to improve the involvement of non-traditional students, 3 teams within the organization are visualized as being needed in order to move forward in the best possible way: (1) the **organization's management team**, as they are the ultimate stakeholders in carrying out this project and the ones who can make the decisions at the organizational level; (2) the **project design team**, which will be in charge of designing the action plan with the concrete objectives and aimed at the specific collective identified in the project and (3) the **feedback team**, which will provide feedback on the proposed measures and the expected progress.

Depending on the size of the organisation and the number of people to be included in the development of such a project, these teams may vary. Thus, if the organisation is small or if it is believed that few people can have the global vision, the design team and the feedback team could be made up of the same people. On the other hand, if the organization is large, and you want to have feedback from different groups, it is better to have two working groups and the feedback team should be made up of people already involved in other projects or representatives of specific groups previously organized in stable groups within the organization.

If you choose to have both design and feedback teams, these are some things to consider:

- Design team:
  - select 5-6 people to drive the project □ 2-3 manager/training courses leaders/student support staff + 2-3 students' representatives (including nontraditional students' voices).
  - A good practice is to make an open call to all students, but you can also go directly to the students' representatives (from a student union/council/association in the organisation).
  - Define well and make clear what the functions of this team are: they will normally make recommendations and proposals to the management team, design the action

plan, check with the feedback team and work closely with the students to achieve the desired objectives.

These are some ideas to work with these groups.

## 5.1 Step 1: Pre-KICK-OFF

Objective: To introduce the need to assess the engagement of non-traditional students and the need to adapt policies to these students to the management team.

The idea of this first step is to convince of the need to assess the situation of non-traditional student participation.

Participants: organization's management team.

Output generated:

- Selection of design team's participants. Example: 1 management representative + 2 program leaders + 1 person from student support services + 3 students (two of them non-traditional). This selection can be adapted to the profile of the organization.
- Definition of the functions of the design team.
- Design of the work dynamic.
- Planning

## 5.2 Step 2: KICK-OFF

Objective: Presentation of the project to the design team and its subsequent validation. Selection of the people that should assess the organization and the categories.

Participants: design team.

Output generated:

- List of persons to whom the tool should be addressed for them to fill it in. Examples: (1) design team participants; (2) design team participants + 2-3 leaders of the organization + 3-4 students.
- Categories that are going to be assessed. Select from the list of 5 categories in the tool which ones are going to be assessed. Also, you can select which people are going to assess which category. For example, the category Training and Learning is suitable to be assessed by students and teachers, but not by student support staff.

## 5.3 Step 3: Action plan proposal

Objective: After the assessment, analyse and make an action plan proposal.

Participants: design team.

Output generated:

- Analysis of the main results of the assessment.
- Main conclusions (A SWOT-type tool can be used to carry out such a conclusion analysis). Some questions which can be used to promote debate and analysis are:



- Which discrepancies appear between management and students?.
- Reflect on whether the situation would be different if something different would be done.
- How do we feel about this situation now, what could we (as leaders) do and what do I ask the students to do to change this emotion?
- How do we feel about this situation now, what could we (as students) do and what do I ask the management to do to change this emotion?
- Action Plan proposal. You can use the example in table 1. Establish the objective, the target and some possible actions.

## **5.4 Step 4: First review of objectives, targets and proposals for action.**

Objective: Check with the management team that the proposals are appropriate and collect feedback. Prepare the checking in the organization.

Participants: design team + management team.

Output generated:

- Action Plan proposal 2. revision.
- Proposal of participants in the feedback team
- Preparation of an open communication so that whoever wishes to participate in the feedback team can do so.

## **5.5 Step 5: Check**

Objective: Check with the feedback team that the proposals are appropriate and collect feedback

Participants: design team + feedback team.

Output generated:

- Action Plan proposal 3. Revision. Prioritise the activities in each of the areas of work.

## **5.6 Step 6: Final proposal of actions**

Objective: Define the final action plan to present to the management team.

Participants: design team.

Output generated:

- Action Plan Final proposal.
- Detailed proposal. You can use the example in table 2.

## **5.7 Step 7: Final proposal of actions, communication and monitoring**

Objective: Approval of the proposal.

Participants: design team + management team.

Output generated:

- Detailed action plan.
- Design of the next steps:
  - Planning
  - Plan to activate the teams that will develop the actions.
  - Communication strategy of the project
  - Design the monitoring of the project: how and how often the design team is going to meet to monitor the development of the project and the progress of the action plan.

<b>ANALYSIS</b>	<i>Take the results of the institution's staff and students, compare them and underline the headlines. Use a SWOT-type tool to help in this analysis</i>
<b>CHOOSE THE CATEGORY</b>	<p><i>Choose a category to focus on</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Governance &amp; Management</li> <li>● Quality assurance and enhancement</li> <li>● Well-being and participation</li> <li>● Teaching and learning</li> <li>● Access</li> </ul>
<b>TARGET</b>	<i>Set the target considering SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, timely) objectives</i>
<b>SUPPORT</b>	<p><i>Who is to be involved?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Teaching staff</li> <li>● Program leaders</li> <li>● Administrative and service staff</li> <li>● Students in general</li> <li>● Students association</li> <li>● Non-traditional students</li> <li>● External stakeholders (organizations, firms, agencies, politicians, non-traditional students' associations...)</li> </ul>
<b>ACTIONS</b>	<p><i>List the actions to be taken to achieve the objectives</i></p> <p>·</p> <p>·</p> <p>·</p> <p>·</p> <p>·</p> <p>·</p> <p>·</p> <p><i>Prioritise them and choose the top four/five.</i></p>

**Table 1** From planning ...

	Action 1	Action 2	Action 3	Action 4	Action 5
<b>WHAT</b>					
<b>WHERE</b>					
<b>BY WHEN</b>					
<b>HOW</b>					
<b>WHO</b>					
<b>LIST OF RESOURCES</b>					
<b>INDICATORS OF SUCCESS</b>					
<b>What will prevent you from carrying out the improvement? What difficulties?</b>					

**Table 2** ... to implementation

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## 7 Appendix – Good practices

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT		
PROJECT	TARGET	DESCRIPTION
<a href="#">TEFCE Toolbox for Community Engagement in HE</a>	Higher Education Institutions and staff Students involved in community engagement	The objective of the TEFCE project is to develop innovative and feasible policy tools at the university and European level for supporting, monitoring and assessing the community engagement of higher education institutions.
<a href="#">Platform for Student Ideas and opinions</a>	Students	In Flanders you can find some examples of (internal) digital / online platforms for students (often inspired by local governments) that try to make it as easy as possible for all students to bring up new ideas and give their opinion on new projects. A known downside is that these platforms are expensive (production and maintenance) and mostly reach already highly involved students. Most platforms connected to a PHE institution have been taken offline, but local governments often use these platforms.
<a href="#">Principles and Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Dimensions of Higher Education in the EHEA</a>	Institutions Public authorities Policy makers	The first paneuropean document that should help countries and HEIs to work effectively on strengthening the social dimension in HE, providing a holistic perspective on how to strengthen student engagement and inclusion through main higher education missions: learning and teaching, research, 3rd mission.
<a href="#">Social inclusion and engagement in mobility</a>	Students in mobility	Internal and external maps in order to find units and external organisations that could help to define target groups. PARTNERSHIPS WITH RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS
<a href="#">Social inclusion and engagement in mobility</a>	Students in mobility	reflection exercise to find what needs to be done at the institution to help identify diversity and inclusion measures which can be used in the promotion and recruitment to student mobility. INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE
<a href="#">Social inclusion and engagement in mobility</a>	Students in mobility	Templates of topics to include in the promotion of outgoing student mobility, based on the major concerns of the students choosing not to be mobile. INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT		
PROJECT	TARGET	DESCRIPTION
<a href="#">NSSE National Survey of Student Engagement-</a>	Institutions Public authorities Policy makers, institutions, non traditoinal students	Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice (different reports)
<a href="#">Laboratory for Polices and Practices of Social Development in Higher Education</a>	key stakeholders within higher education institutions (HEIs); under-represented groups in higher education institutions	Toolkit. The A4A 'Pyramid Inclusion Model' has been constructed to help key stakeholders within higher education institutions (HEIs) develop strategies and plans for widening access to higher education for students from under-represented groups, increasing inclusive practices and ensuring success for all students. It is an interactive and dynamic model that allows institutional stakeholders to consider their current context and circumstances in relation to inclusion and provides helpful prompts for reflection on key development goals and positive action that can be taken. The 'Pyramid Inclusion Model' is linked to the Bank of Good Practices (IO2), where a myriad of examples from institutions across all the countries are explained in detail. It is also linked to the A4A Self-Assessment Tool (IO3), which enables institutions to complete an audit of the institutional culture and current practices.
<a href="#">Co-operative leadership for higher education</a>	higher education institutions (HEIs+PHEI)	The aim of this research was to assess the possibility of establishing co-operative leadership as a viable organisational form of governance and management for higher education.iINSTITUTIONAL CULTURE
<a href="#">Report on a field visit to Mondragón University: a cooperative experience/experiment</a>	higher education institutions (HEIs+PHEI)	Mondragón is at the centre of one of the largest groups of co-operatives in the world and in 1997 set up what is probably the only co-operative university in existence. This highly successful university has a solidary economy, effective methods of knowledge generation and transfer, and is expanding. Among its unique features are flat hierarchies and forms of self-management, community engagement and student participation built on an overall concept of the solidarity of the stakeholders. INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE

WELL-BEING AND PARTICIPATION

PROJECT	TARGET	DESCRIPTION
<a href="#">Initiative: Center for First Generation Student Success</a>	First generation students.	examples of services offered for this group
<a href="#">Summer Start</a>	First generation Students	First generation students often struggle with low self-esteem and insecurities while starting higher education. By organising a (optional) Summer Start, UCLL gives them a head start by introducing them to teachers, fellow students, student services, etc. After this Summer Start, they can engage in a longer participatory project to keep in touch with each other and provide UCLL with 'inside-information' about barriers they experience throughout their learning experience. fellow students, teachers and student counsellors and will work with them in various workshops.
<a href="#">Spectrum</a>	Members of the LGBTQIA+ community.r.	Student-driven organisation that brings LGBTQIA+ students (and their allies) together
<a href="#">Wellbeing Hub</a>	All Students.	Support Services within MCAST including Counselling and Career Guidance services
<a href="#">APZ</a>	All Students.	The service will be preventive. Regarding primary prevention, the service will offer different programs aimed at achieving healthy development in safe contexts in order to guarantee the well-being of our students through an accompaniment process.
<a href="#">I belong</a>	Refugees, Students with Migration Background.	I Belong Programme supports third country nationals and refugees in improving their language skills and knowledge of the Maltese history and culture, to ultimately complete the minimum requirement for a long-term residence status.
<a href="#">Laboratory for Policies and Practices of Social Development in Higher Education</a>	key stakeholders within higher education institutions (HEIs); under-represented groups in higher education institutions	Toolkit. The A4A 'Pyramid Inclusion Model' has been constructed to help key stakeholders within higher education institutions (HEIs) develop strategies and plans for widening access to higher education for students from under-represented groups, increasing inclusive practices and ensuring success for all students. It is an interactive and dynamic model that allows institutional stakeholders to consider their current context and circumstances in relation to inclusion and



WELL-BEING AND PARTICIPATION

PROJECT	TARGET	DESCRIPTION
		provides helpful prompts for reflection on key development goals and positive action that can be taken. The 'Pyramid Inclusion Model' is linked to the Bank of Good Practices (IO2), where a myriad of examples from institutions across all the countries are explained in detail. It is also linked to the A4A Self-Assessment Tool (IO3), which enables institutions to complete an audit of the institutional culture and current practices.
<a href="https://firstgen.naspa.org/files/dmfile/NASPA_First-generation_Community_Colleges_ES_Final_Nov4R_educated.pdf">https://firstgen.naspa.org/files/dmfile/NASPA_First-generation_Community_Colleges_ES_Final_Nov4R_educated.pdf</a>	First generation students.	examples of services offered for this group

TEACHING AND LEARNING

PROJECT	TARGET	DESCRIPTION
<a href="#">Corporate Social Responsibility</a>	All Students.	CSR – Community Social Responsibility - an initiative throughout MCAST that awards 2 credits for participating in inter-intra skills workshop and doing 20 hours of voluntary work to give something back to the community. This program should help to develop and cultivate skills, attitudes and values for the real world and empower young and adult learners to become active citizens and be employable in a dynamic democratic society and economy.
<a href="#">NSSE National Survey of Student Engagement-</a>	Institutions Public authorities Policy makers, institutions, non traditoinal students	Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice (different reports)
<a href="#">Apprenticeships or Work Placement</a>	Most Higher Education students	Exposure to the world of work and an opportunity for work-based learning. Employment is not necessarily offered after the apprenticeship or work placement but in reality many students find it easier to start employment afterwards throught the experience acquired and contacts made.

**TEACHING AND LEARNING**

PROJECT	TARGET	DESCRIPTION
<a href="#">European Observatory of Service-Learning in Higher Education</a> ...	Most Higher Education students. Metodology and experiences	<p>European Observatory of Service-Learning in Higher Education (EOSLHE) was created in January 2019 as a permanent space for cooperation and exchange among the members of the European network Europe Engage for mapping the use of, collecting data and evidences and promoting the use of this learning methodology as well as its institutionalising processes.</p> <p>The aim of the European Observatory is to enhance and disseminate the knowledge of service-learning in higher education in Europe, as an educational approach that enhances students' civic engagement, brings them closer to different social realities while allowing them to work in a real environment. Most of the time they will also be able to perceive at first hand the successes or consequences of their work.</p>
<a href="#">MOOC</a>	Most Higher Education students. Metodology and experiences	<p>The main objective of this course is to provide teachers with strategies that allow them to offer favorable contexts to develop all these dimensions in their students. To this end, we will work on the conceptualization of each of the dimensions of talent (cooperative, creative, entrepreneurial, persevering, flexible, critical-analytical and the dimension of emotional regulation) and the strategies to promote them in students: to work on each dimension, above all, we will provide basic material on certain strategies, as well as complementary material for further study. There will also be webinars that can be followed live or on demand.</p>

**ACCESS**

PROJECT	TARGET	DESCRIPTION
<a href="#">I belong</a>	Refugees, Students with Migration Background.	<p>I Belong Programme supports third country nationals and refugees in improving their language skills and knowledge of the Maltese history and culture, to ultimately complete the</p>

		minimum requirement for a long-term residence status.
<a href="#">A-Crew</a>	Non traditional students	Students with a “non-traditional story” (first generation students, students with a multicultural background, LGBTQIA + students, etc.) are engaged as student ambassadors and role models, known as the A-crew. They talk with (soon-to-be) students and/or their parents about their own experience, e.g. at secondary schools, information events at community centres, mosques, etcS.
<a href="#">The Board of Inspiration</a>	Students with multicultural backgrounds.	Inspiration Council as support

## **About the InclusiPHE Project**

For a Professional Higher Education Institution (PHEI) to be truly inclusive, it needs to reflect its diverse range of students. To achieve this, a PHEI should not just consider its study programmes and teaching & learning processes, but also aim for fully inclusive student engagement. Student engagement not only relates to student activism and student involvement in decision-making bodies, but also to the structures and practices of students' organisations themselves.

All of these elements of student engagement do not fully reflect the diverse student community in a PHEI and can be difficult to access for non-traditional students and underrepresented student groups.

The InclusiPHE project intends to contribute to a more inclusive student environment by raising awareness for full student inclusion and providing PHEIs and their students' organisations with concrete ideas, tools and guidance on how to make student engagement fully inclusive.



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