

# EVALUATION FOR IMPROVEMENT: A NEW APPROACH TO COURSE COMMITTEE MEETING (CCM)

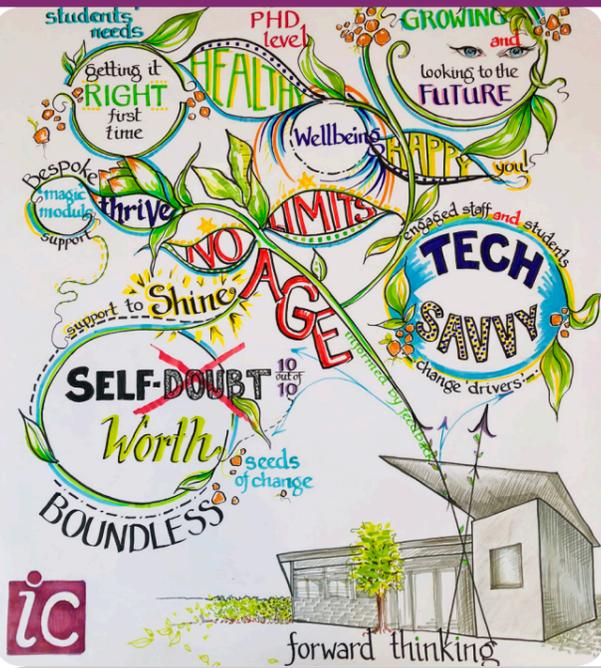
## Background

Following a review of the college's quality arrangements, a revised approach to self-evaluation has been introduced in 2018-19. The approach is informed by the college's involvement in the College Improvement Project and ongoing work with sparqs examining student engagement in the How Good is Our College? (HGIQC) framework.

The college has made year-on-year improvements to the student experience and student outcomes for the last five years through fostering and embedding a culture of continuous improvement. However, the approach to self-evaluation implicitly and inadvertently valued the outcome of evaluation over the impact of actions. The revised approach maintains a focus on robust evaluation using all available evidence while better promoting the active engagement of all stakeholders and, crucially, places the emphasis on the identification and monitoring of tests for change to ensure improvement.

## Aim

To ensure that key issues that impact on the student experience are identified and that actions are tested and monitored rigorously to ensure improvement occurs.



## Results and Data

- Student and stakeholders more involved in programme evaluation
- More staff have a greater involvement in the process
- Richer discussions based on a collated evidence base, personal experience of students and stakeholders and professional expertise of staff
- Focus on 'tests of change' rather than report writing ensures real-time change
- Withdrawal rates across the college showing a further improvement in 2018-19
- Further test for change planned for implementation in the next academic year at a much earlier point than previous years

Fulltime FE early withdrawal rates and success rates over time:

AC YEAR	EARLY WD%	SUCCESS %
2016/17	8.6%	67.27%
2017/18	8.5%	71.12%
2018/19	6.7%	70.17%
2019/20 (YTD)	1.96%	N/A

## Method

The ethos of the approach is to ensure robust self-evaluation activity, with pro-active, ongoing analysis and monitoring focused on the improvement activities that result from the evaluative process. The evaluative activity takes place at quarterly Course Committee Meetings (CCMs) which include students, employers (or other stakeholders) and support teams. The process used for the CCMs was designed through the sparqs project, using prompts from HGIQC. Areas for development identified through the evaluative activity are translated to 'aims', and Driver Diagrams (or other QI tools) are used to unpack the factors that impact on the aims.

The outputs of Driver Diagrams are change ideas, some of which are then translated into tests for change. Unlike the traditional SMART actions, tests for change require a more focussed structure, including a prediction of impact, identification of data (qualitative and quantitative) that will evidence impact and a data collection plan covering the duration of the test. The impact of the test is then monitored regularly (e.g. weekly or monthly) and the test amended if required. The Driver Diagram may even be re-visited depending on the evidence of impact that emerges. This approach ensures that teams monitor closely the impact of their 'actions' throughout the year (a research-in-action approach) and amend them if there is no sign of improvement.

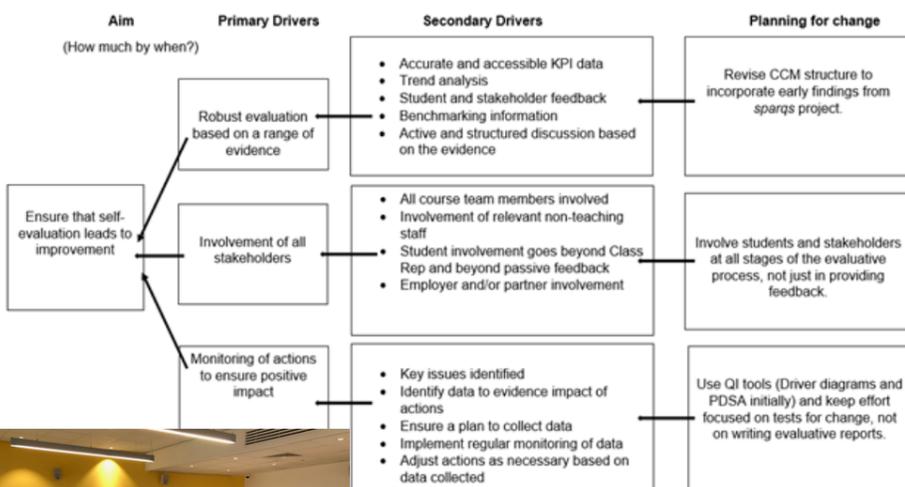
The approach makes good use of the college's existing, comprehensive management information arrangements, including the weekly monitoring of individual student progress.

## Project activity

'Evaluation for Improvement' workshops held in 2017-18 to review existing practice and identify strengths and areas for development, using the 'what works well / even better if (WWW/EBI) methodology.

- Pilot programme teams identified and engaged during 2017-18
- Further workshops with a range of staff to explain and engage them with the methodology
- Roll-out to all programme teams in 2018-19, along with a revised process of engagement between each curriculum area and senior management throughout the year
- Process summarised below:
- 1 pre-Course Committee Meeting (CCM), and 3 CCMs held throughout the year with pre-determined themes based on Quality Indicators (QI) from HGIQC
- Attendance: course teams, students, employers, relevant support teams.
- Output from CCMs captured through a range of QI methodology tools, including but not limited to driver diagrams, Plan Do Study Act (PDSA); immediate implementation of tests for change or other actions.
- Programme teams use data collection plan and INSIGHT to monitor outcomes from tests of change and share progress at monthly team meetings.
- Cross college sharing of themes through monthly Programme Coordinator meetings.

## Process Change



## What the students told us

Students enjoyed being much more involved in the process of self-evaluation and planning for improvement

'Recently, I was invited to a course committee meeting where students, lecturers and employers were proactive in finding better ways to move forward regarding learning and teaching. These events are highly enjoyable and also motivational. **(Student Quote)**

Having employers at the table helped students get a better perspective on what employers are looking for and the relevance of the course content

In curriculum areas where all FE courses came together in a shared space for CCMs, students enjoyed the cross-discipline discussions and sharing experiences

## QI Learning

- Involving all stakeholders in active, structured discussion leads to more informed evaluation
- Students felt much more involved in the process and active participants in the planning for change
- Driver diagrams and PDSA useful, and also challenging to get to grips with initially
- Test for change and full PDSA should be used sparingly, when key issues are identified that need significant change to address
- Revised monitoring model, including 'stop and review' meetings, better supports continuous monitoring and sharing of practice.



## Next Steps

- Review approach at end of 2018-19 and implement adjustments for 2019-20
- Roll-out for non-teaching teams (piloted in 2018 - 19)

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