



GOOD PRACTICE IN DEVELOPING AN INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGY FOR POST-ENTRY STUDENT ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

LEADERSHIP - It is essential that the strategy should be driven by a senior positional leader. Leadership involves engaging appropriate stakeholders, chairing meetings, smoothing processes, promoting consultation, and driving policy changes.

This study found... in one institution it was the VC, in most other successful institutions it was the DVC Academic. No organisation that lacked leadership of this type was able to implement major, sustainable changes.

EXPERTISE – A strategy will only be successfully implemented if an expert person or team is appointed to ensure that it is operationalised. There are many points at which the process will stall, unless there is an individual or group maintaining momentum and implementing change.

This study found... in all cases the appointees were experts in the field of academic language and learning, applied linguistics or TESOL, and had considerable leadership experience. Both their academic knowledge and managerial expertise were critical elements in the success of the strategy.

CONSULTATION – This needs to include all stakeholders, and should include initial wide consultation to scope the strategy, followed by ongoing consultation with key stakeholders.

This study found... the most successful institutions had a permanent steering group or advisory committee with representation from across areas, and which includes students.

TIME – Sufficient time should be allocated to the conception, development, implementation and evaluation of a new strategy.

This study found... the most effective and sustainable strategies were devised and developed over a period of at least two years. Evaluation of the success of the given strategy took considerably longer than that.

UNITY – Different providers of language-related services should have a clear and coordinated understanding of their role and its limitations within the institution, and communicate this to end users.

This study found... the most successful universities had a post-entry academic language and learning (ALL) organisation that took overall responsibility for the provision of services. The leading universities employed ALL staff to engage in both teaching and research.

RESOURCING – The development of a sustainable institutional strategy involves the investment of considerable resources.

This study found... successful universities had allocated sufficient resources to the development and implementation of the strategy to cover the full costs of staff time and all other outgoings associated with the strategy.

EDUCATIONAL INTEGRITY – The approach must be based on an understanding of language that is theoretically defensible, guided by evidence and scholarly in approach if it is to be respected by both staff and students in the long term.

This study found... the most effective universities were guided by an overall philosophy, conducted ongoing research into their practices and made decisions based on the available evidence.

SUSTAINABILITY – To be sustainable, it is necessary to integrate the strategy and its outcomes into the normal operations of the university.

This study found... successful institutions had written language proficiency into graduate attributes, policy documents, course descriptions, unit outlines, and assessment rubrics. Responsibility for language development was located within a permanent area of the university, and overall governance was the responsibility of a standing committee or body.