



Tempus



**UCB**  
University College Birmingham

# STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Sharing leadership and  
co-creating change within  
Higher Education Institutions in  
transition

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### **About the Toolkit**

This toolkit is designed to support shared leadership and the co-creation of change - and the management of the consequent change processes – for higher education institutions (HEIs) in transition. The toolkit is based upon existing research literature, reports and theoretical standpoints at the cutting-edge of the 'student engagement' agenda.

This highlights a key opportunity for La Manche Partner HEIs to engage with their students. It affords an opportunity to identify the current state of student engagement in your institutions, and to work upon the potential for sharing the leadership and management of change in the future.

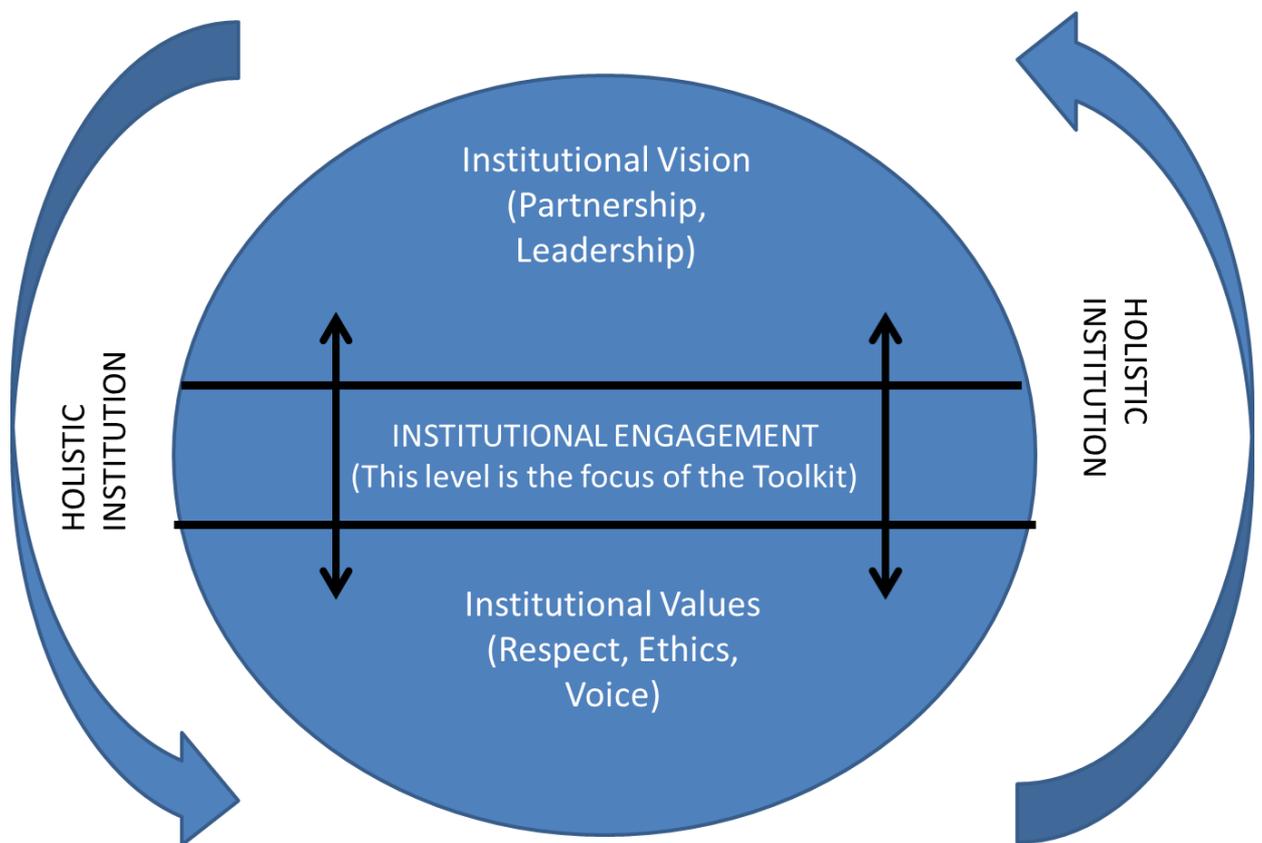
The European landscape for higher education is changing: with moves towards greater marketisation and financialisation, increased competition and a more palpable pressure to recognise and engage with wider sets of stakeholders. Such dynamism in higher education can be embraced in order to drive quality, curriculum, learning and teaching developments and knowledge production. These currents can lead to enhanced performance, outcomes and outputs within institutions.

This toolkit is designed as a stage-by-stage process to support HEI's in identifying the present state of student engagement in your institution. It supports the unlocking of opportunities for greater engagement to enhance the student – their experience and contribution - and the institution's effectiveness and wider contribution.

A series of tools are included in the pack which focuses upon the key quadrants of engagement, seeking to identify opportunities for engagement more holistically. It is suggested that the elements of the toolkit are approached sequentially in a process driven by change agents - staff and students - but increasingly owned by all stakeholders: with a view to opening up conversations and enhancing participation across the institution.

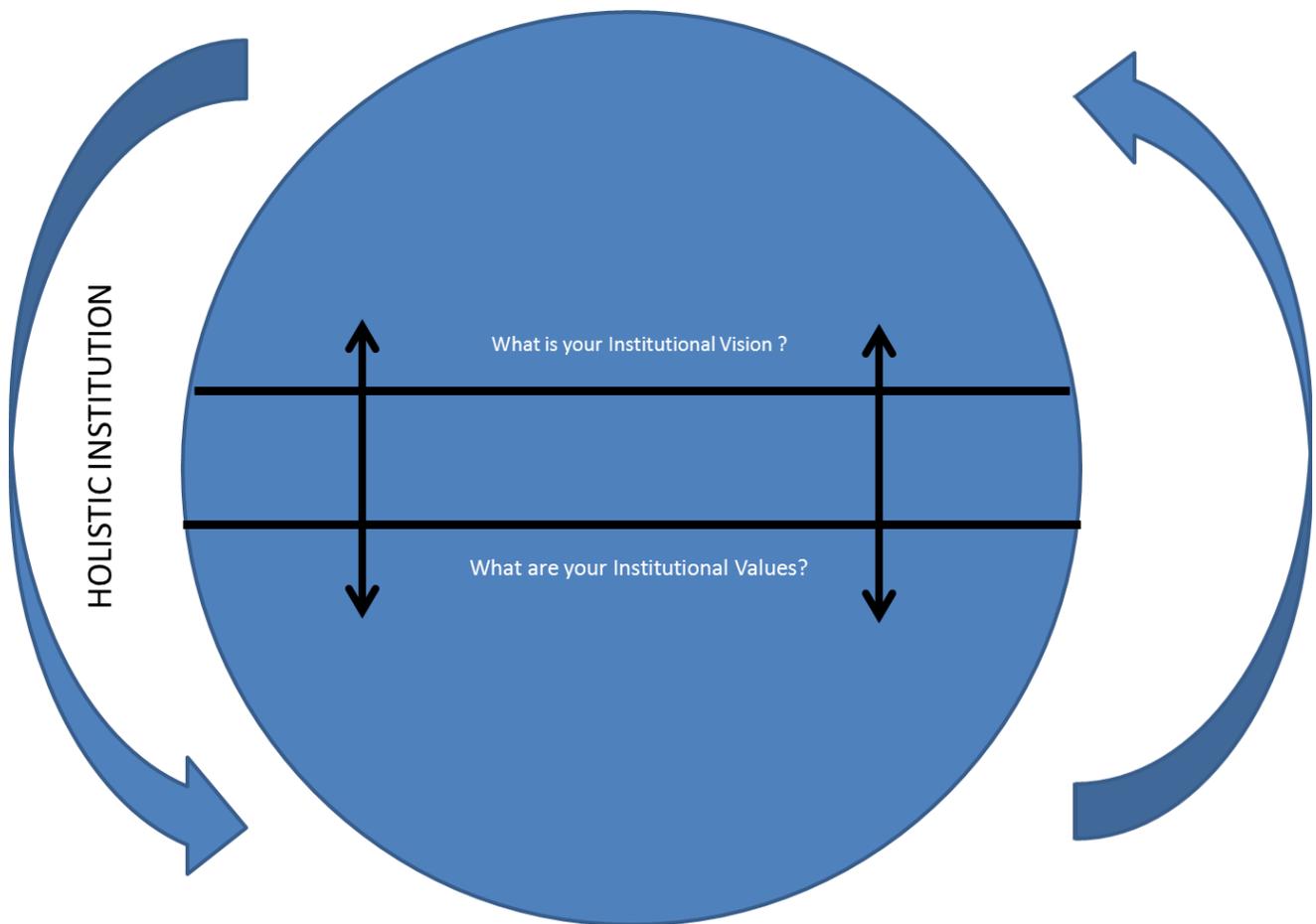
## TOOLKIT PLACEMENT

The diagnostic tool is a critical starting point. It helps you to identify the current state of the institution in relation to student engagement, and the opportunities that will open up during the change process. However the placement of the tool within the organisation is an important consideration. It cuts across the centre or the heart of the institution, and is underpinned by the values of the organisation and overarched by the aspirations. We suggest a visual to support this process as follows:



**PRELIMINARY EXERCISE**

Identify the values that underpin your own institution (this may be on a departmental, School or Polytechnic/University/Whole HEI level)  
Please, also consider your institution's vision. Write your responses in the diagram below:



**DIAGNOSTIC TOOL - GUIDANCE**

Please read the generic descriptors below. They relate to the student engagement roles and the contexts for work which shape the diagnostic tool (See: p9).

**STUDENT ENGAGEMENT APPROACHES – THE FOUR QUADRANTS**

(Adapted from QAA/University of Exeter 2009 and HEA 2011)

<b>Students as Change Agents</b>	<b>Students as Producers</b>	<b>Students as Co-creators</b>	<b>Students as Evaluators</b>
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Curriculum</b>	<b>Quality</b>
Students are actively involved in the processes of change, often taking a strategic leadership role. Deeply engaged with the student body, their institution and their discipline or subject area. Meaningful roles in relation to higher education governance may be adopted.	Student move from being passive consumers of knowledge, to the recognition of their knowledge contribution and their active role in knowledge production. New or different forms of knowledge derive value. Students may initiate, devise, plan and deliver research projects. This may feed into disciplines or pedagogy, as well as current and emerging agendas and drivers such as learning and teaching, and employability.	Students are actively engaged in the creation of processes and activities which determine the planning, implementation and evaluation of the curriculum. Students collaborate upon learning and teaching developments, influencing professional development in order to enhance the learning and teaching experience.	Students contribute evidence of the student experience through questionnaires, surveys and focus groups, voting through student councils and guilds, as well as informal evaluation tools, such as module reviews. This feeds into and shapes institutional or sectoral audits (through external bodies or national-level processes) and supports the drivers for change.

## STUDENT ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT

Please also read the following engagement level descriptors (Futurelab, 2006). These will also support your use of the diagnostic.

<b>INFORM</b>	<b>CONSULT</b>	<b>INVOLVE</b>	<b>PARTNER</b>	<b>SHARED LEAD</b>
Students are informed regularly about matters which affect them and made aware of their rights and ways they can participate within the institution.	Staff within the institution seeks views from students and students are given voice. Students receive feedback on institutional decisions that are taken.	Staff within the institution work with students through the decision making process to ensure that views are understood and taken into account when institutional decisions are made.	All aspects of decision making are taken in partnership with students.	Students set agenda for change, self-organisation and responsibility over management is given to students.

These are examples of widely accepted descriptors and therefore you may wish to work with these. However, the flexibility of the Toolkit means that you may wish to adapt them to suit your own institutional context.

Take a few moments to consider this and if you need to adapt, please re-write the descriptors using the blank table below.

It is important that you feel comfortable with the descriptors so that the diagnostic is both respectful of and relevant to your own institutional needs.

<b>ENGAGEMENT LEVELS</b>	<b>INFORM</b>	<b>CONSULT</b>	<b>INVOLVE</b>	<b>PARTNER</b>	<b>SHARED LEAD</b>
CONSIDER WHAT THE ENGAGEMENT LEVELS MEAN TO YOUR UNIVERSITY					

### TRAINING EXERCISE - USING THE DIAGNOSTIC TOOL

The training toolkit will now focus upon ONE of the four quadrants (defined on page 5) for the remainder of the training session.

Using the diagnostic tool provided on the next page, work through the following activities:

- Place an arch at the present level of student engagement that your institution has reached.
- Then, based upon your institutional aspirations, consider the level of student engagement you envision your institution could achieve in the future (this is an aspirational outer boundary, given resource, cultural and other institutional changes). Place a second arch along this (outer) student engagement level.
- Finally, consider an intermediate/transition goal. This indicates an achievable objective (given current resources, culture and other institutional realities) and will shape your immediate priorities. Place a third arch at this student engagement level.

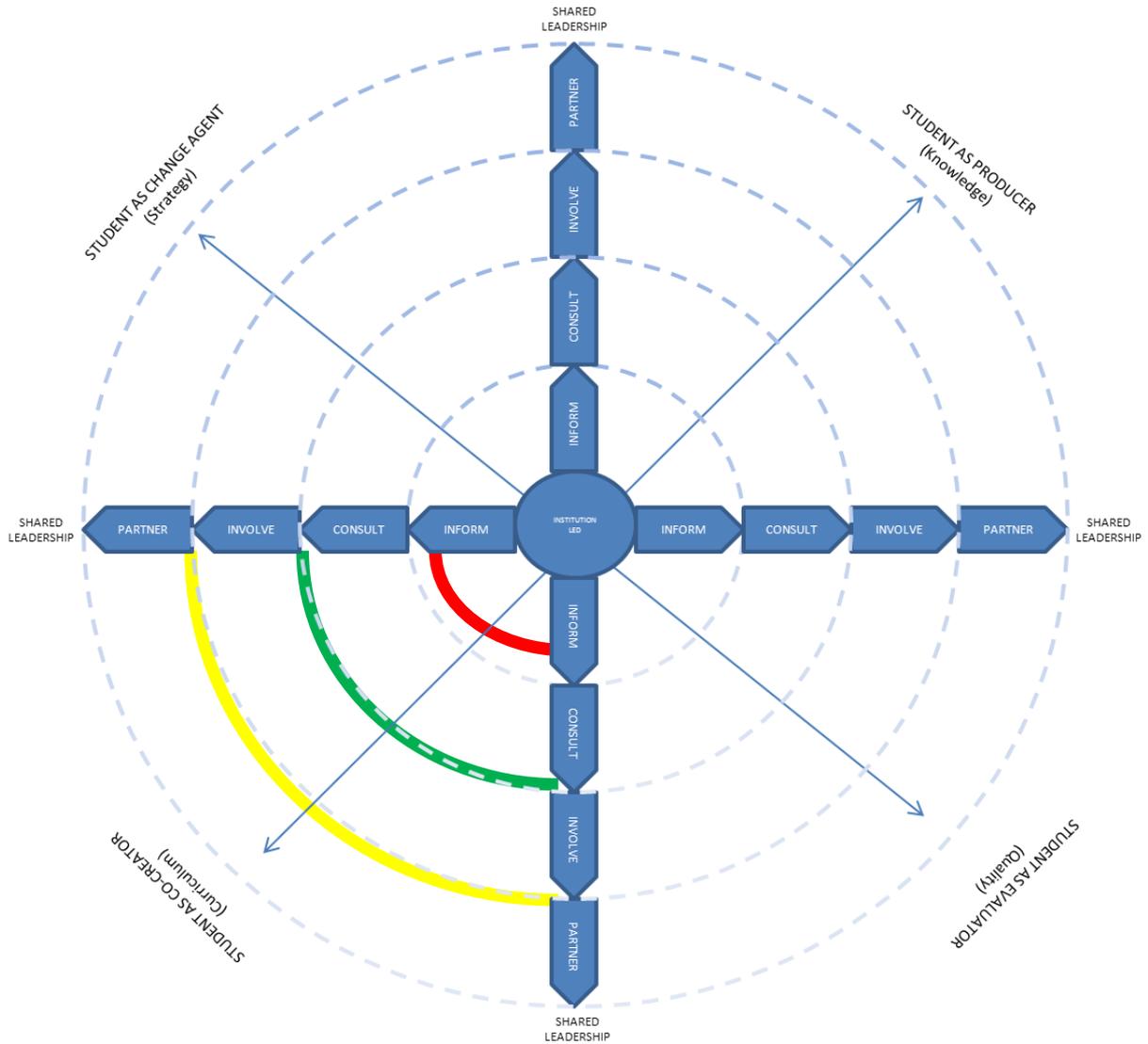
#### **NOTE:**

It is anticipated that stakeholders will undertake activities based upon ALL four quadrants when working with and within their own institutions.

The full Student engagement Toolkit is therefore available for download by Partners, through the La Manche website.

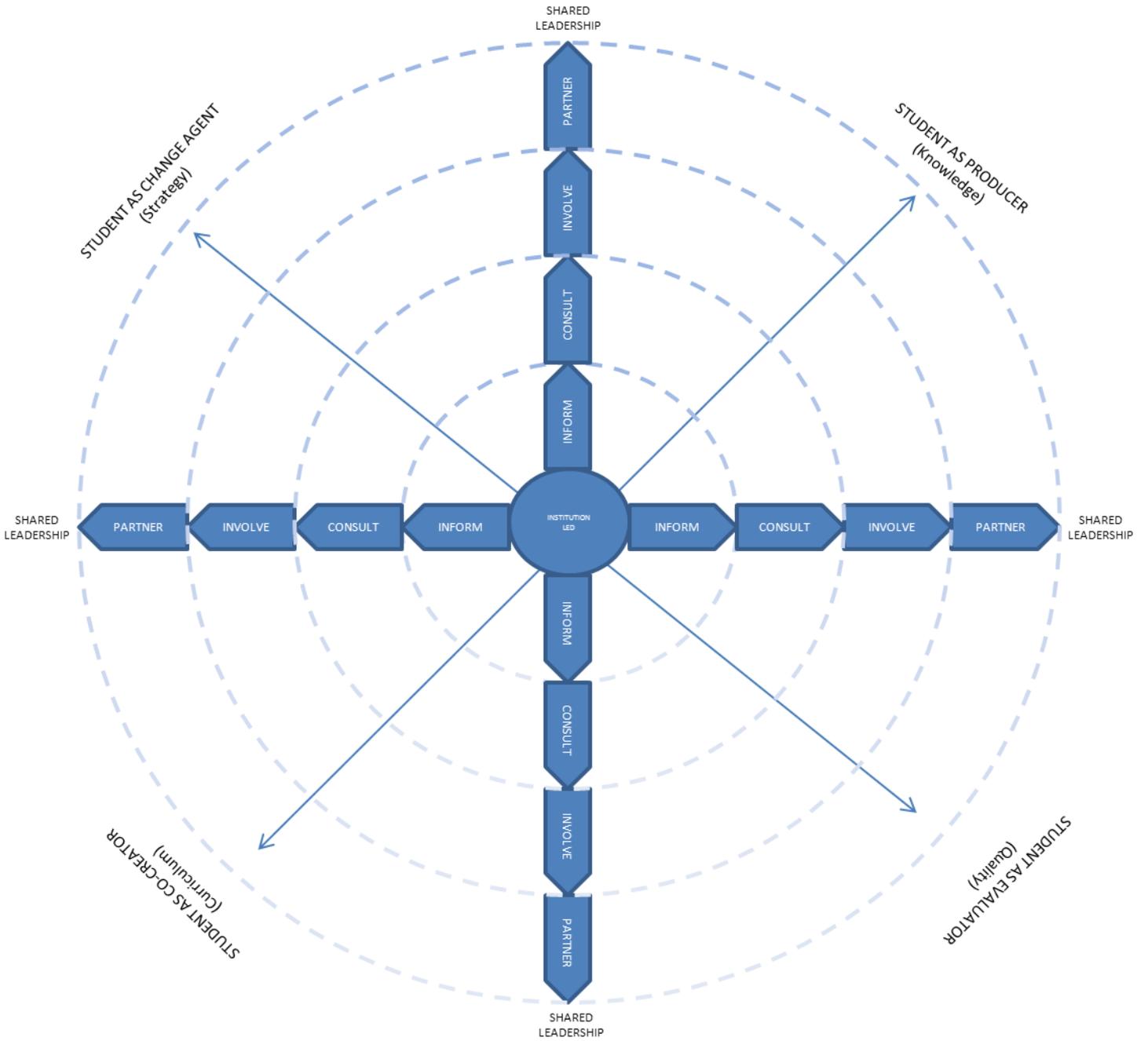
DIAGNOSTIC TOOL (Example)

ORGANISATIONAL LEADERSHIP QUADRANTS



ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT QUADRANTS

# ORGANISATIONAL LEADERSHIP QUADRANTS



# ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT QUADRANTS

### **ACTION TEMPLATE – EXERCISE 2**

Using the templates on the following pages, consider the actions and associated tools you may already use to support student engagement. Your responses will be influenced by your findings whilst completing the diagnostic exercise.

You will complete this exercise in relation to the ONE quadrant focused upon for the diagnostic.

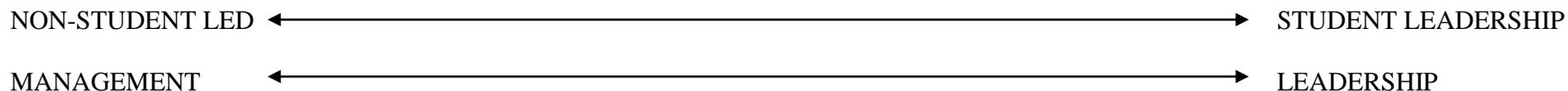
Finally, consider and explore other actions and activities that your higher education institution could undertake to reach the student engagement levels you've identified – both intermediate/transition and in the future.

What could your institution do, what are the possibilities, visions and opportunities for sharing leadership and co-creating change?

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT

**STUDENT AS CO-CREATOR – ACTION SHEET**

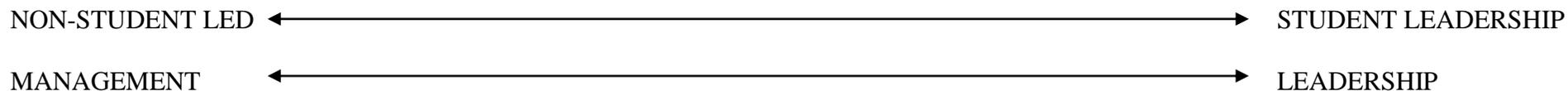
**Using the table below, identify activities which you currently undertake regarding students as Co-Creators (based on your diagnostic) and also consider actions that could be implemented to reach your transition and future goal of engagement in that quadrant**



ENGAGEMENT TOOLS AND ACTIVITIES	ENGAGEMENT LEVELS	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	PARTNER	SHARED LEADER
	IDENTIFY ACTUAL AND POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES THAT COULD BE IMPLEMENTED IN YOUR INSITUATION AT EACH LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT TO ENGAGE STUDENTS AS CO-CREATORS					

**STUDENT AS PRODUCER – ACTION SHEET**

Using the table below, identify activities which you currently undertake regarding students as Co-Creators (based on your diagnostic) and also consider actions that could be implemented to reach your transition and future goal of engagement in that quadrant

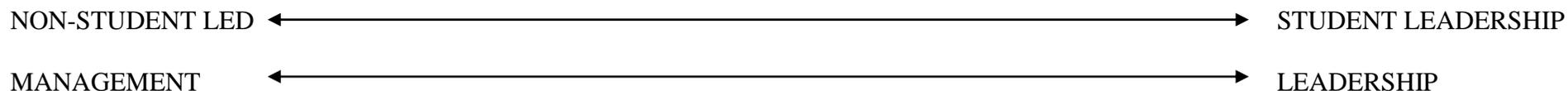


ENGAGEMENT TOOLS AND ACTIVITIES	ENGAGEMENT LEVELS	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	PARTNER	SHARED LEADER
	IDENTIFY ACTUAL AND POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES THAT COULD BE IMPLEMENTED IN YOUR INSITUATION AT EACH LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT TO ENGAGE STUDENTS AS PRODUCERS					

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT

STUDENT AS EVALUATOR – ACTION SHEET

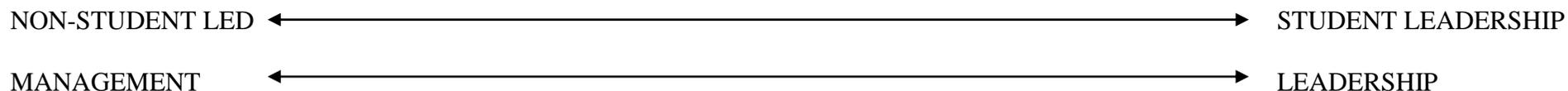
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ENGAGEMENT TOOLS AND ACTIVITIES	ENGAGEMENT LEVELS	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	PARTNER	SHARED LEADER
	IDENTIFY ACTUAL AND POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES THAT COULD BE IMPLEMENTED IN YOUR INSITUATION AT EACH LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT TO ENGAGE STUDENTS AS EVALUATORS					

**STUDENT AS CHANGE AGENT- ACTION SHEET**

Using the table below, identify activities which you currently undertake regarding students as Co-Creators (based on your diagnostic) and also consider actions that could be implemented to reach your transition and future goal of engagement in that quadrant



ENGAGEMENT TOOLS AND ACTIVITIES	ENGAGEMENT LEVELS	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	PARTNER	SHARED LEADER
	IDENTIFY ACTUAL AND POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES THAT COULD BE IMPLEMENTED IN YOUR INSITUATION AT EACH LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT TO ENGAGE STUDENTS AS CHANGE AGENTS					

### ASSIGNING PRIORITIES

Many aspects of your higher education context will require you to consider how to prioritise student actions and tools. For example, some actions may require organisational culture change and a realignment of strategies. You may also be required to evidence successes, feeding into indicators or other measures/metrics. Acknowledgement of such realities may lead you to reappraise their prioritization.

Trowler and Trowler (2010) suggest consideration of the purpose for student engagement within your institution, for example are you most interested in:

- Engagement for enhancing individual student learning
- Engagement for democratizing institutional governance
- Engagement for social justice/redress, identity enhancement and social integration

As a support to your prioritisation of student engagement actions and tools, you may wish to consider what is desirable, practicable and most likely to succeed. Or consider the salience (importance), congruence (the fit) and profitability (benefits) of the actions you have identified to your institution.

What is suggested is that to make best use of the toolkit, you consider working with key stakeholders in your staff teams and from the student body. This will allow for a wide range of experiences and perspectives to be drawn together. Furthermore, meeting and working together will afford you with opportunities to co-create and prioritise the actions which you wish to implement.

### SUPPORTING YOUR STUDENT ENGAGEMENT JOURNEY

This toolkit identifies the beginning of a process of change towards greater student engagement which may be both exciting, lengthy and, at times, quite difficult. Through the La Manche website, a virtual space dedicated to this specific work will support your work. The Toolkit developers will be available through this platform in order to consult on processes and actions. We wish to track and celebrate the changes that occur in your institution. A tool will be available in the coming months identifying methods to evaluate and monitor to support you through transition.

Thanks for participating in this training session. As a Partner in the La Manche programme, we very much look forward to working with you and hearing about your successes in co-creating changes in your institution through shared leadership.