Transforming Access and Student Outcomes in Higher Education

TASO Implementation and process evaluation (IPE) framework

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Acknowledgements

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This document guides you through the IPE framework, providing a structured approach to considering the IPE dimensions that can be used to build your IPE work. This framework provides an overview of the TASO IPE guidance document and serves as a reminder for planning your IPE work. If you have not already read the TASO IPE guidance, it is recommended you read this first. Once you feel comfortable with your understanding of IPE, you can then use this document for reference when completing the IPE protocol template.

TASO IPE framework

This section of the document acts as a summary of the 11 IPE dimensions detailed in the IPE guidance document. Table 1 below summarises the IPE dimensions. If you are unsure of which dimensions to use in your IPE evaluation work, please refer to the guidance document where more detail on each dimension can be found.

Table 1: IPE dimensions

IPE Dimension	Definition	Example research question(s)	Example data collection approach
Adherence	Adherence is defined as whether the intervention was delivered as it was designed to be. It is strongly linked to the training and support received to deliver the material, for example, formal training or support within the organisation to deliver the material i.e., buy-in.	Was the intervention or programme delivered as intended? Was the intervention or programme protocol followed when implementing the programme or intervention?	Quantitative ratings such as structured observations to look at what was delivered (adherence) and interviews to explore if there were any difficulties in the delivery of the intervention or programme.
Exposure	Exposure is defined as the amount of the intervention or programme received by participants and/or delivered to the participants.	How much of the intervention or programme was delivered? What was the total amount of time spent delivering the intervention or programme?	Attendance data can be collected to know the number of sessions pupils/ students attended. Logs can be completed each week to detail how many sessions were completed or not completed and include the reasons why.

Quality	Quality considers how well the components of an intervention or programme are delivered. It is impacted by the skill and techniques needed so is strongly linked to training and support associated with intervention or programme.	Did the training ensure facilitators could implement the programme or intervention?	Training evaluation forms can be completed and then in an interview or focus group include specific questions on training. Alternatively, quantitative ratings such as structured observations to look at how the programme or intervention was delivered.
Stakeholder perspective	Stakeholder perspective captures the experiences and perceptions of those involved in the intervention or programme, this includes the recipients and the facilitators.	How did individuals feel about the intervention or programme? What did the recipients and facilitators think about the content? How involved in the activities and content were the recipients? What perceived impact do facilitators or participants think the programme or intervention had?	Focus groups or interviews are potential methods to gather information on experiences and perceptions. Alternatively, a survey could be shared if an interview or focus group is difficult to arrange.
Reach	Reach focuses on whether the intervention or programme reached its intended audience.	Compared to the target sample for the programme or intervention what was the number of participants from the target audience that were part of the final sample who participated in the intervention or programme itself?	Attendance data to understand who did attend the programme or intervention and whether these participants were the target group.
Recruitment	Recruitment outlines the strategies used to recruit to an intervention or programme, both enrolment and retention.	How were participants enrolled on to a programme or intervention? What strategies were used to retain	Interviews or focus groups to explore how successful recruitment strategies were.

		students to a programme or intervention?	
Context	Context captures the environmental factors outside of the programme or intervention that impact on delivery this could be individual characteristics, organisation structure or resources available.	Did all settings have access to the same resources for example budget and time? Did the organisation value the programme or intervention being delivered? Did the programme or intervention align with the organisation's goals?	Field notes, interviews, and focus groups.
Adaptation	This dimension focuses on the changes made during the delivery of an intervention or programme.	Were any changes made to the programme or intervention and what were the reasons for the change?	Data collected during delivery such as a log and then explored in detail via an interview or focus group.
Appropriateness	At the early stage of a programme or intervention, this element is important to determine the perceived fit of the intervention or programme in a setting towards addressing an identified problem.	Are components of the intervention responsively reaching the intended audience?	Focus groups or interviews can explore in detail whether the programme or intervention is fit for purpose.
Programme differentiation	This element focuses on the uniqueness of the programme or intervention and from this identifying any features of the programme or intervention which are essential for its success.	Do all elements of the programme or intervention need to be implemented for it to be effective? How does this intervention or programme differ from other similar schemes?	Data collected during delivery such as a log and then explored in detail via an interview or focus group.
Sustainability	The extent to which an intervention or programme is sustained in a setting after initial delivery.	What elements of the programme or intervention have you maintained following the initial delivery?	Survey to be completed a period after the intervention or programme to capture use of the material.

		How has the intervention or programme led to changes in practices?	

Step One: Diagnose

The first step is to establish an enhanced theory of change to map the components of your intervention or programme and describe how you will achieve the desired outcome. Guidance on preparing a theory of change can be found here. A necessary step to develop your theory of change is to detail your programme or intervention in enough detail that it can be replicated. Table 2 below outlines what information is needed. We recommend that your impact evaluation and IPE are developed in conjunction with an enhanced theory of change to help you plan which research questions will be answered by the impact evaluation and the IPE.

Table 2: Intervention description

Section name	Information to include
Name	Name or phrase that describes the intervention
Why is the intervention being run?	Rationale, theory, and/or goal of the elements essential to the intervention
Who is the intervention for?	Participants or beneficiaries of the intervention
What is the intervention?	Materials: Physical or informational materials used in the intervention Procedures: Procedures, activities, and/or processes used in the intervention
Who is delivering the intervention?	Expertise, background and any specific training
How is the intervention delivered?	Modes of delivery of intervention (e.g. face-to-face, internet) and whether it is provided individually or in a group
Where is the intervention delivered?	Type(s) of location(s) where the intervention occurs
How many times will the intervention be delivered? Over how long?	Number of times the intervention will be delivered and over what timeframe
Will the intervention be optimised?	If the intervention will be personalised or adapted, describe what, why, when and how
How will implementation be optimised?	Strategies to maximise effective implementation

Step Two: Plan

In this step, you will identify your research questions and outcome measures, select a research method, develop an analysis strategy, and create a research protocol. The IPE research protocol can be found here.

For each IPE you conduct, not all dimensions of the TASO IPE framework will be applicable, therefore you need to ask yourself the following questions while preparing your protocol.

1. What are the research questions that were informed by the enhanced theory of change model?
2. What data do you currently have access to that could be used (i.e., monitoring data on the reach of participants to report to Office for Students)?
3. What stage is the programme or intervention at in terms of development and evaluation lifecycle for example pilot stage or a randomised controlled design?

To plan your IPE, you need to identify your outcome measures. We suggest five categories of data collection tools to select from, you can find more information on each tool in the IPE guidance report.

1. Checklists or logbooks
2. Questionnaires (open and closed questionnaires)
3. Interviews and focus groups
4. Behavioural observations (structured or unstructured observations)
5. Administrative data such as attendance data.

For IPE a mixed-method approach is recommended. The IPE guidance document summarises four approaches to integrate the IPE data gathered, these approaches are convergent parallel design, explanatory sequential design, embedded design, and multiphase design. You need to select the approach your work will use, and this decision needs to be made before analysing your data as stated in the IPE protocol document.

Step Three: Measure

In this step, you will collect and analyse your IPE evaluation data. In undertaking your IPE, stick closely to the IPE protocol document completed in step two. Whilst collecting the data for your IPE work remember to keep a personal reflection of the evaluation process to help guide future IPE work. This will enable you to monitor the IPE data being collected to identify if there are any missing data points such as the completion of logbooks. At this point, if it does occur you can then revisit your IPE protocol to explore whether any other data collected can help explore the IPE dimension that has experienced data loss.

Step Four: Reflect

The final step is reporting your findings and putting your evidence to work. In this step, the impact evaluation and IPE should be integrated to comprehensively understand whether the intervention worked or not and the reasons for the outcomes reported. You can find the IPE reporting template here.