

BeyondScale



Guidelines on Peer-Learning

FH Campus Wien

GUIDELINE ON PEER-LEARNING INBOUND ACTIVITY

FH CAMPUS WIEN

BeyondScale - Developing the Organisational Capacity of Higher Education Institutions using the HEInnovate platform to facilitate peer-learning and a pan-European community of practice

Take-aways from peer-learning experiences

Peer-learning is a way for partners to learn from each other effectively. At a time when the university resources are limited and demands upon the staff are increasing, it can be beneficial internal as well as external stakeholders of an HEI to learn from each other.

For peer-learning to take place it is important to know who the “peers or buddies” are. For peer-learning to be achieved within the BeyondScale project a buddy system was created. The buddy system included internal HEI partners for the inbound projects, external for the outbound projects, and a system that involved project partners, associate partners as well as mentors. The internal partners were university management, heads of departments, heads of degree programs, experts in service units, and selected lecturers. On the other side external partners were public sector/policy-oriented organisations along with enterprise support organizations/incubators/start-ups, micro firms and relevant actors in the industry.

The internal HEI partners in the activities – the project team, administrative, academic, and other staff as well as students - benefited from the documentation of the activities of BeyondScale, the capacity building seminars and webinars organized at the higher education institutions. External stakeholders also benefited from the augmented capacity at the higher education institutions they collaborate with.

While COVID-19 made things more complicated, the design of the system allowed all partners to interact on multiple levels and with a variety of partners from the inside and the outside of their network. The result was the co-design and the implementation of inbound and outbound activities.

The following roadmap provides an overview of the peer-learning activities developed during the BeyondScale project. Further information is available at www.beyondscale.eu or you can contact us at: office@wpz-research.com

The BeyondScale roadmap on peer-learning included the following steps:

1. Think about what contribution you expect or what you want to learn
2. Think about your own contribution and whether your partner can use this contribution
3. Define together the goals of the exchange
4. Agree on the way of communication
5. Define future meetings or possibilities of exchange
6. Reflect on the value of the exchange
7. Think about further joint activities

An example of a peer-learning activity

HEInnovate dimension: Digital Transformation and Capability

Description of the activity: The overall objective of this activity was to re-design curricula, in order to transform the digital competencies of students of the FH Campus Wien. Activities were conducted on university and program level and focused on content in curricula and in learning outcomes and digital teaching and learning methods.

Our participants represented:

- University management
- Heads of departments
- Heads of degree programs
- Experts from other service units
- Selected lecturers
- BeyondScale buddies
- Expert from a partner university

Involvement, contributions and future benefits of the partners

| Internal Buddies | Involved in | Contribution | Future (mutual) benefit |
|---|---|--|---|
| Lecturer, expert on digital transformation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value based proposition workshops • Workshops on maturity model for digitalization of curricula • Workshops on digital competencies of students • Public webinar | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical expertise on digital transformation • Know-how of the structure of a maturity model • Presenting at the webinar | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Backing for the introduction of the maturity model |
| Head of degree program | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value based proposition workshops • Workshops on maturity model for digitalization of curricula • Workshops on digital competencies of students • Public webinar | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know-how on existing competence frameworks for digital competences • Examples of potential obstacles and problems in degree programs • Presenting at the webinar | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optimization of current curricula • Support for enhancing digital competences among students and lecturers • Exchange with other programs |
| Head of department | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops on maturity model for digitalization in curricula | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know-how of the structure of a maturity model • Highlighting potential obstacles for implementation in a department • Expertise about digital technology | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge about digitalization status in curricula of the whole department • Enhanced acceptance of maturity model |

| External Buddies | Involved in | Contribution | Future (mutual) benefit |
|--|--|--|---|
| Head of Start-up Center, university (BeyondScale buddy) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Value based proposition workshops Follow-up activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know-how of the value based proposition method Feedback after the workshops | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible link between a university and UAS regarding entrepreneurship Possible contribution to teacher network of FH Campus Wien |
| Expert from a partner university | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussions about the maturity model for digitalization in curricula Public webinar | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expertise on digital transformation in an HEI Presenting at the webinar | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possibility to adapt maturity model in partner university Collaboration in future projects |

Why was peer-learning important for your activity?

- Knowledge that already exists within an HEI can be used and instrumentalized for new activities and initiatives. We could truly benefit from the expert advice of some partners for developing our actions.
- Bringing internal stake holders on board for feedback and contribution in the developing process of new initiatives from the beginning was important to enhance the acceptance of those initiatives within FH Campus Wien.
- Involving different internal and external stake holders brought different perspectives and shone light on issues that we wouldn't have discovered alone.
- Involving different stake holders within the institution helps creating a community feeling, which can be beneficial for future collaboration on other topics as well. In our workshops we connected people within the institution who usually do not collaborate very often.

What have you learnt during the peer-learning process of your inbound activity?

- We realized how much expert knowledge about the topic of digitalization is already available in our institution. We are more aware of the potential within our university now.
- It was challenging to bring people on board for activities and convince them of our ideas as the relevance for them was not tangible for them yet.
The peers in our activities reported about problems and potential obstacles, which we were not aware of.

Would you recommend the peer-learning buddy system to another HEI and why? What could other HEIs learn from it?

- We recommend including different internal stake holders in a process from the beginning, because it is important to listen to the critical voices early on.
- We recommend peer-learning to increase interdisciplinary thinking and to broaden the perspective.

What were the common objectives?

- Re-design curricula in order to transform the digital competences of students.
- University level: generate a blueprint of activities and measures for the strategic field “digital transformation and social change” of the FH Campus Wien strategy 2020-25.
- Programme level: The focus of the activity was on the strategic objective “All degree programs deal with the developments and effects of the digital, social and global transformation in the respective occupational field and implement central contents in the curricula.” The activity will foster the transformation of curricula and teaching and learning regarding digitalization.

What were the outcomes?

- A blueprint with activities and measures for the strategic field “digital transformation and social change” of the FH Campus Wien strategy 2020-25 was identified.
- The HEInnovate tool and the website for quality development of degree programs to foster digitalization with focus on extended possibilities of use were reflected.
- Several degree programs integrated learning outcomes and content related to digitalization in their curricula.
- An internal framework for learning outcomes for digital competences, which refers to the “Digital Competence Framework for Austria – DigComp 2.2 AT” was drafted.
- Many degree programs integrated a vast number of virtual courses of high quality in their curricula.
- Most curricula were transferred into the database “eCurriculum” of FH Campus Wien.
- A concept for a maturity model for digitalization in curricula was designed.
- A webinar about different topics related to digitalization at FH Campus Wien was hosted.

What were the possible opportunities?

- The activities can strengthen strategic partnerships.
- Improved alignment of curricula to the requirements of the professional field.
- FH Campus Wien demonstrates leadership as the largest UAS in Austria.
- The results of the activities can be used in the upcoming institutional audit.

What were the possible barriers and challenges?

- Increased workload for lecturers and therefore reduced motivation to participate in the planned activities.
- A lack of digital competences among lecturers and students.
- Tight resources of the FH Campus Wien including a lack of time.
- Restrictions caused by COVID-19.
- Limited political focus on UAS on a national level.
- Unpredictable future and difficulty to decide which competencies will be essential in the future.

Disclaimer:

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.