COMMIT

Committing to the social dimension in universities

EMBEDDING THE LLL CONTRIBUTION FOR SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT INTO UNIVERSITY STRUCTURES AND PRACTICES

BENCHMARKING TOOL

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HEI = Higher Education Institutions

LLL = Lifelong Learning

ULLL = University Lifelong Learning

LLLU = Lifelong Learning University

SD = Social Dimension

EUA = European University Association

APL = Accreditation of Prior Learning

RPL = Recognition of Prior Learning

ECTS = European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System

CPD = Continuing Professional Development

OPL = Open and Distance Learning

Welcome to COMMIT's Tool 3: Benchmarking Tool against the EU's Charter on LLL!

This tool is very comprehensive and can be used in different environments and in different ways, depending on what you are trying to find out or achieve. You can find a general view of the tool reading the Introduction (page 5) and the LLL and the Social Dimension of universities section (page 6).

Go to the **Illustration of the EUA's Charter for the Social Dimension section** (page 7) if you want to see **samples of situations where the different EUA Charter points are well addressed in a HE environment**. You will see ideal situations in which the different EUA Charter points have been integrated in a HE institution. These samples or illustrations are not referring to any specific institution.

Once you have done the preparatory work reading the introductory sections and the illustrative samples, you are ready to plan your own self-assessment. Please see below in the table of contents the sections and the objective(s) envisaged in each section and activity that you will need to do in order to achieve it and take the most out of its use.

Contents found in Tool 3 and their use

Section	Page	Objective of the section	Type of activity
Introduction	6	To give you the background material to understand the topic	Reading
The LLL Benefits to Society – ALLUME Project	35	To give you the background material to understand the topic	Reading
LLL and the Social Dimension of Universities	35	To give you the background material to understand the topic	Reading
Integration of LLL and Social Dimension (LLL-SD) of Universities - The EUA's LLL Charter	35	To give you the background material to understand the topic	Reading
Illustration of the EUA's Charter for the Social Dimension (SD)	36	To give you samples of cases that have addressed the Charter well in HE environments	Reading
Benchmarking Tool - Where is your university on each of the 10 commitments for the LLL-SD?			
A. Ranking purposes	7	▪ Individual level – different people rank the institution as they see it <u>individually</u>. Try to receive answers from staff at different levels ▪ Faculty/HE level – <u>combine the collected answers</u>, make meetings with the staff involved, discuss the situation ▪ HE by students – <u>involve students</u> and potential students to tell you their perception	Involve different actors at different levels to fill in the questions. Talk to the people answering. Depending what you look for, discuss their answers in group
B. In depth analysis	7	To <u>compare</u> and discuss the answers given by different groups in the institution and to analyse why they see it different and maybe how to change it so the "reality" is perceived at all levels	Group the answers collected by type of staff to see if groups in each category think the same. Make a transversal analysis and compare the answers from the different groups
Questionnaire – to be used as Set I (ranking) or Set II (in depth analysis)	8	To collect answers by different groups (see Set I or Set II)	Convincing different people in different positions to fill in the questionnaire

Section	Page	Objective of the section	Type of activity
C. Status quo & future scenario	12	Introduction to the use of the Spider Diagram (Annex) to put into an image the result of the collected answers. Alternatively, application of the use of the Matrix	Reading
D. Importance of the ten Commitments to the Social Dimension	13	To rank which commitments your institution are giving more or less importance	Thinking and ranking
E. Your LLLU strategy Framework for the Social Dimension	13	To see how you would like the spider diagram to be, taking into account the commitments you give more and less importance (see point above)	Plotting in a new diagram the ideal situation for your institution
F. Problems in implementation your LLL-SD strategy framework	14	To plan how to improve the current situation taking into account what you would like to achieve	Thinking and strategizing: plan your future!
Set II: Deep analysis	15	To gather together all the answers from all the actors and to collect them in one form	Fill in extensive tool, bringing together all the feedback collected
Spider Diagram (see in a separated Excel file)	n/a	To visualise the results of the data collected	Plotting and visual understanding of the results

4

Decoding Tool 3

When we arrive to the Benchmarking Tool, the idea is that each university uses the tool for whichever purpose it finds useful/interesting (from A to F), or to all of them:

Purpose	Description
Ranking purpose	if you ask different actors to rank the university on their own perceptions against LLLU/SD and the 10C, that is a state of the art perspective
Promote in-depth discussion on…	the strategy, policy, reality of the university against LLLU/SD and the 10 Commitments
Status quo & future scenario	Diagram 1 and grid
Importance of...	Rank the priorities
Your LLLU strategy…	Diagram 2
Problems in implementing…	Compare the diagrams

To do that, we propose the use of **Set I** or **Set II** to collect answers, depending only on the approach chosen:

■ if you go individually (ranking) you use Set I: collecting individual answers of three sets of relevant people for ranking (individual/faculty/students)

■ if you go by group (in depth) you use Set II: a result/summary of opinions of a discussion, in focus-group, for instance, that you will afterwards analyze transversely and process to produce one comprehensive document alone, in the form of Set I, from in-depth discussion

Only when the HE person working with the Tool has **a** Set I of answers (a lot of information will be then already gathered), the ranking is made and /or an in depth discussion happened, it is possible to move to any / all of points C to F.

Set I appears right after points A and B because it is in face of the answers collected with Set I (or Set II) that it is possible to move on to points C to F.

5

Introduction

This Tool intends to provide HEIs with an insight into their performance in Lifelong Learning and the third mission – Social Dimension. It was designed with the intention of fostering awareness of the LLL-SD commitments, to allow ranking purposes and in-depth analysis. In the remit of the COMMIT project it also aims to promote the success of the partners' visits.

HEIs are invited to reflect on their activities and to match them against the 10 Commitments of the European Charter on LLL. The Charter is presented next in this tool, as well as a definition of LLL, and every commitment is interpreted with illustrations of how it has been put into practice in HEIs. The direct interaction of LLL with the Social Dimension of the commitments is also emphasised, and can be further accessed via an exemplary matrix.

The overall picture, in every HEI, will be produced by the responses to a questionnaire (SetB or Annex) directed to each of the 10 commitments, where every respondent will express his/her perceptions towards the commitments. The participants will be the key players of your HEI.

Because the Tool requires considerable amount of time to get ownership, and all the key players/actors involved are very busy people, it may be difficult to collect completed individual questionnaires. Since you will need to contact several different actors, you may prefer to work with all of them together, in a focus-group/workshop (or other) type session, and collect the answers in one single questionnaire, from the different perspectives, at the same time. If this is not the case, you need to collect the individual answers and summarize them in one form.

It is highly advisable that before filling in the Tool, you take your time to go through the whole document and accompanying notes on order to enhance the results.

When analyzing the commitments, you may find that your HEI does not embed an ULLL strategy. Even in this scenario, please proceed with the process. We ask you to please identify 3 or 4 commitments, when prioritizing them (section F), to work in depth.

For details about the **LLL Benefit to Society (the ALLUME project)**, please read **Annex 1**.

Benchmarking Tool

Where is your university on each of the 10 commitments for the LLL-SD?

This tool invites HEIs to benchmark their performance against the 10 institutional commitments of the European Universities' Charter on LLL, from a Social Dimension perspective, at an institutional level. The 10 commitments can also be used in different ways to identify the position of your university with regard to Lifelong Learning-Social Dimension.

A. For ranking purpose

1. **At individual level**

   Ask different actors (including yourself) to rank the faculty/university according to their perception. You may want to collect the opinion of decision makers (either elected or delegated), managers (or performing equivalent task), researchers and /or teachers

2. **At faculty / university level**

   Combine the rankings and the explanations given by various staff members to describe the present position in LLL-SD and use ranking for strategy development. Depending on the structure of your HEI you may want to approach the rector, provost, president, dean or director of the HEI, vice-rectors for social and/or educational affairs, head of departments, faculties or schools etc.

3. **At university level by students**

   Ask present (potential) students to rank the university from their perception of LLL-SD at their university and let them explain why they perceive it like that and what they think is missing.

B. For in depth analysis

Use the individual rankings collected by the above-mentioned stakeholders in the faculty/university for an in-depth discussion. Divide the answers in different actors (e.g. decision makers, managers, researchers, teachers) and explain the differences (if any) between the groups.

Please rank your university to the following scale, but bear in mind that while a perfect 0 is possible, a perfect 4 is probably impossible!

Scale	No	Small	Fair	Good	Excellent
	(not started)				(fully implemented)
	0	1	2	3	4

Please, also include a short statement of evidence explaining why you ranked your university the way you did (you can use the 10 commitments' illustrations above to help you illustrate your own University's reality).

You can choose one of two approaches: collect the answers to all commitments individually from each actor (Set I), or the answers to each commitment from all the responding actors (Set II).

Set I. Mark the Participant profile and apply to all profiles individually (use multiple forms when needed). The answers to every statement are to be circled between 0. and 4.

Manager   Decision-Maker   Researcher   Teacher   Institutional   Student   Yourself

1. Your university is embedding concepts of widening access and lifelong learning in its institutional strategies

No	Small	Fair	Good	Excellent
(not started)				(fully implemented)
0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**

2. Your university is providing education and learning to a diversified student population

No	Small	Fair	Good	Excellent
(not started)				(fully implemented)
0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**

3. Your university is adapting study programmes to ensure that they are designed to widen participation and attract returning adult learners

No	Small	Fair	Good	Excellent
(not started)				(fully implemented)
0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**

4. Your university is providing appropriate guidance and counselling services				
No	Small	Fair	Good	Excellent
(not started)				(fully implemented)
0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**

5. Your university recognises prior learning				
No	Small	Fair	Good	Excellent
(not started)				(fully implemented)
0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**

6. Your university is embracing lifelong learning in quality culture				
No	Small	Fair	Good	Excellent
(not started)				(fully implemented)
0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**

7. Your university is strengthening the relationship between research, teaching and innovation within a perspective of lifelong learning

No	Small	Fair	Good	Excellent
(not started)				(fully implemented)
0	1	2	3	4

8. Your university is consolidating reforms to promote a flexible and creative learning environment for all students

No	Small	Fair	Good	Excellent
(not started)				(fully implemented)
0	1	2	3	4

9. Your university is developing partnerships at local, regional, national and international level in order to provide attractive and relevant programmes

No	Small	Fair	Good	Excellent
(not started)				(fully implemented)
0	1	2	3	4

10. Your University is acting as a role model of a lifelong learning institution				
No	Small	Fair	Good	Excellent
(not started)				(fully implemented)
0	1	2	3	4

| Yourself only: please add 2 to 5 examples of good practices identified in your University |
|---|
| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |
| 4. |
| 5. |

Yourself only: Please comment on differences of ranking order between respondents

11

C. Status quo & future scenario

For a visualisation of your university's performance in relation to the 10 Commitments, you are invited to create a spider diagram, which will show you your strong points and possible areas of improvement. To create such a diagram, please enter your scores in the table included in the provided excel spreadsheet[1]. As you collected the opinion of several actors, you may use the mean value of all the answers as the score for each Commitment. The following graph serves as an example of a possible diagram.
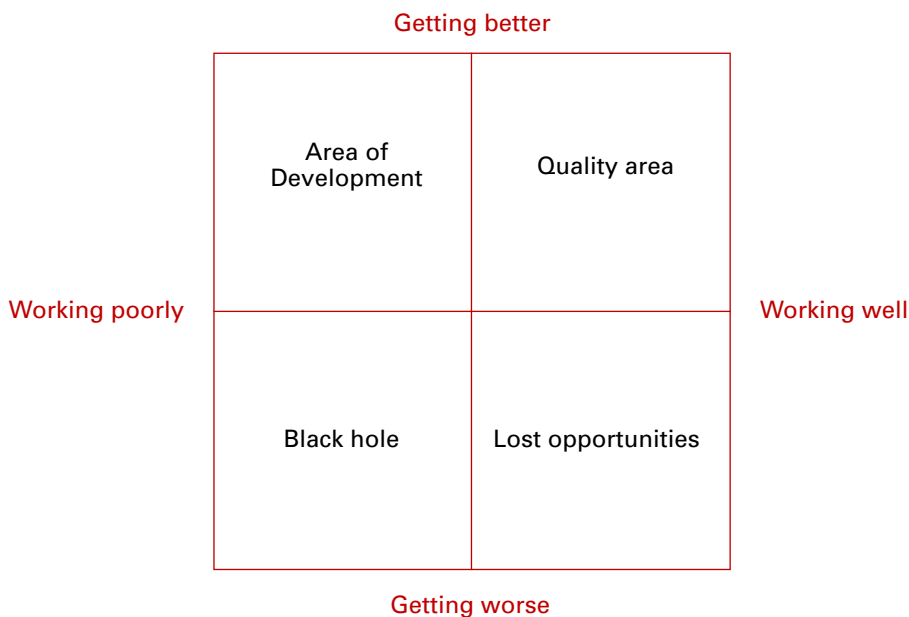
Your university scores for the 10 Commitments

■ Series1
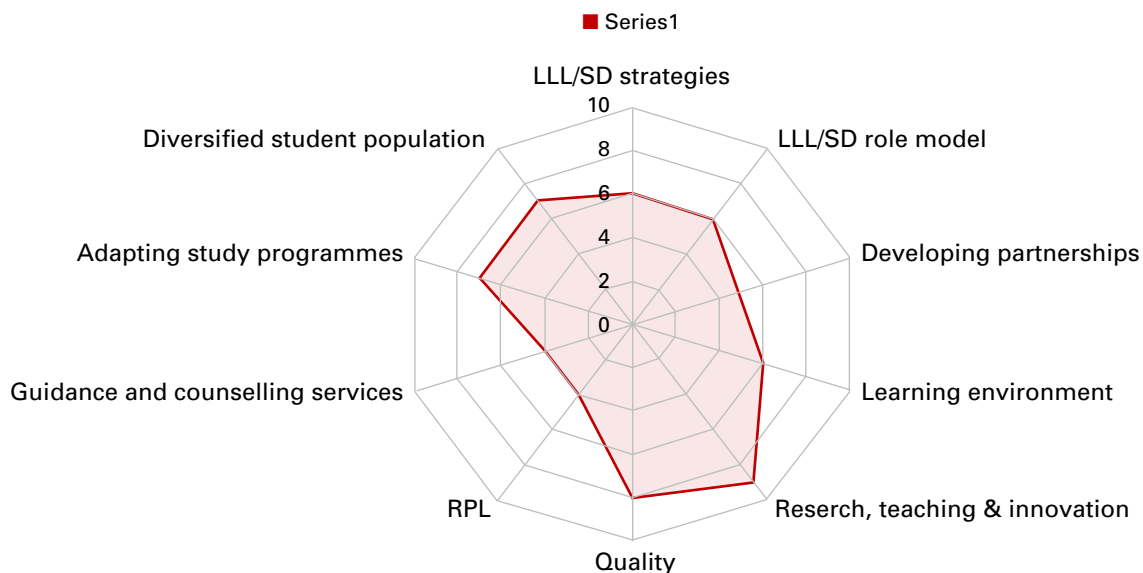
Diagram 1. *Current Status Quo of your university concerning the Social Dimension in the 10 Commitments.*

If you plot the 10 commitments in the following matrix[2], it will show you graphically the real position of the different commitments, at present, in your institution.

_____

1 You can access and download the spreadsheet on the Moodle Platform, under section WP2 > COMMIT Tools > Individual Tools in Word. You may notice that the grading proposed along the Tool 3 does not correspond to the one suggested for the spider diagram. The sharper scale provided for the spider diagram is intended to allow for a more accurate position on the diagnosis and on the prognosis. Please consult the "conversion table" tag in the same excel for a possible conversion of the grading.

2 Graph idea taken from Esko Paakkola and Jyri Manninen model, University of Eastern Finland, FI.

D. Importance of the ten Commitments to the Social Dimension

Could you please rank the 10 commitments in order of priority for your institution, in a Social Dimension Perspective?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

E. Your LLLU strategy Framework for the Social Dimension

Based on the subsections above ("Status quo & future scenario" and "Importance of the ten Commitments in the Social Dimension"), please create a second diagram where you draw the vision of your proposed framework, i.e. a visualisation of where you would like to see your University within a couple of years.

Here you will find an example for a possible diagram:

Your university scores for the 10 Commitments

■ Series1
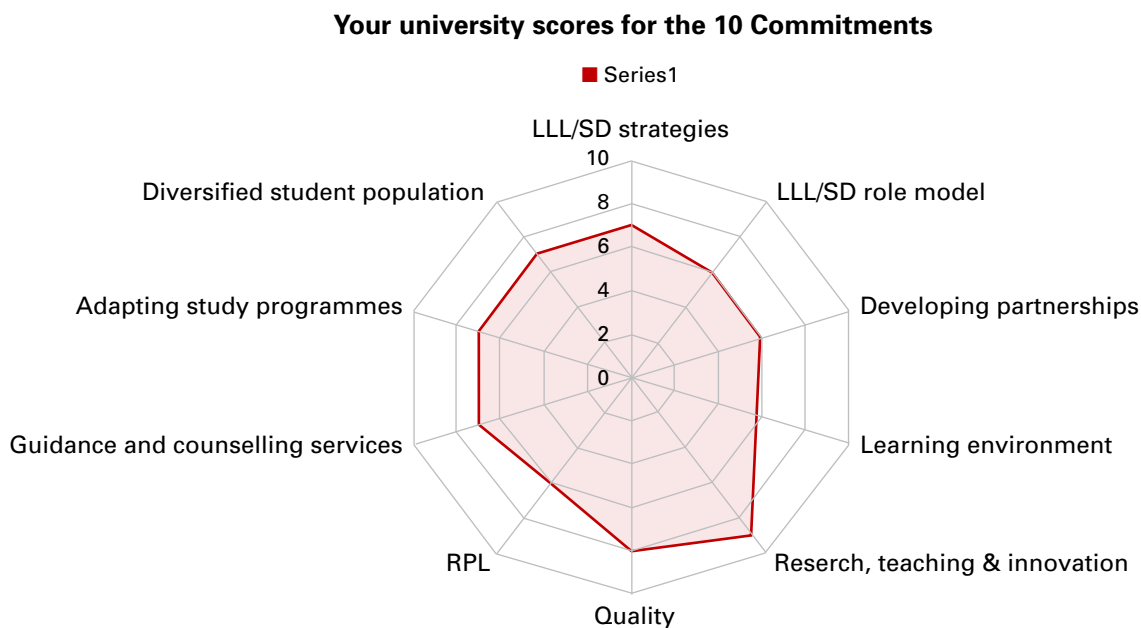
Diagram 2. Future Scenario & vision of your university concerning the 10 Commitments in the Social Dimension perspective

F. Problems in implementation moving towards number 4 on your LLL-SD strategy framework

If you compare now the two diagrams, what stops you from moving up on the scales?

Things you might consider could include	
Strategy (vision not clear or goals not yet defined)	
University Priorities	
Organisational barriers	
Staff Attitudes / Internal communication processes	
Finance	
Other factors	

14

Set II. This part of the questionnaire is optional. Institutions interested in carrying out a deeper analysis can avail themselves of this annex to collect the answers from all the actors on each one of the Commitments.

1. Your university is embedding concepts of widening access and lifelong learning in its institutional strategies					
Please circle your choice using this scale and provide a brief statement of evidence	No	Small	Fair	Good	Excellent
	(not started)				(fully implemented)
	0	1	2	3	4

Individual level					
Decision Makers	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					
Management	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					
Research	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					
Teachers	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					
Other:	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					

Faculty/College/Department level					
Ex.: Dean, Head,…	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					

Students level					
Ex.: Union, Representative,…	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					

Yourself
Please add between 2 to 5 examples of good practices identified in your University
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
Please comment on differences/agreement of ranking order between above groups

16

2. Your university is providing education and learning to a diversified student population					
Please circle your choice using this scale and provide a brief statement of evidence	No	Small	Fair	Good	Excellent
	(not started)				(fully implemented)
	0	1	2	3	4

Individual level					
Decision Makers	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					
Management	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					
Research	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					
Teachers	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					
Other:	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					

Faculty/College/Department level					
Ex.: Dean, Head,…	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
Position:					

Students level					
Ex.: Union, Representative,…	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
Position:					

Yourself	
Please add between 2 to 5 examples of good practices identified in your University	
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
Please comment on differences/agreement of ranking order between above groups	

18

3. Your university is adapting study programmes to ensure that they are designed to widen participation and attract returning adult learners.					
Please circle your choice using this scale and provide a brief statement of evidence	No	Small	Fair	Good	Excellent
	(not started)				(fully implemented)
	0	1	2	3	4

Individual level					
Decision Makers	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					
Management	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					
Research	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					
Teachers	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					
Other:	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					

Faculty/College/Department level					
Ex.: Dean, Head,…	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					

Students level					
Ex.: Union, Representative,…	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					

20

Yourself	
Please add between 2 to 5 examples of good practices identified in your University	
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
Please comment on differences/agreement of ranking order between above groups	

4. Your university is providing appropriate guidance and counselling services					
Please circle your choice using this scale and provide a brief statement of evidence	No	Small	Fair	Good	Excellent
	(not started)				(fully implemented)
	0	1	2	3	4

Individual level					
Decision Makers	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					
Management	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					
Research	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					
Teachers	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					
Other:	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					

21

Faculty/College/Department level					
Ex.: Dean, Head,…	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
Position:					

Students level					
Ex.: Union, Representative,…	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
Position:					

Yourself
Please add between 2 to 5 examples of good practices identified in your University
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
Please comment on differences/agreement of ranking order between above groups

22

5. Your university recognises prior learning					
Please circle your choice using this scale and provide a brief statement of evidence	No	Small	Fair	Good	Excellent
	(not started)				(fully implemented)
	0	1	2	3	4

Individual level					
Decision Makers	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					
Management	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					
Research	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					
Teachers	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					
Other:	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					

Faculty/College/Department level					
Ex.: Dean, Head,…	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					

Students level					
Ex.: Union, Representative,…	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					

24

Yourself	
Please add between 2 to 5 examples of good practices identified in your University	
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
Please comment on differences/agreement of ranking order between above groups	

6. Your university is embracing lifelong learning in quality culture					
Please circle your choice using this scale and provide a brief statement of evidence	No	Small	Fair	Good	Excellent
	(not started)				(fully implemented)
	0	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**

Individual level					
Decision Makers	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
Position:					
Management	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
Position:					
Research	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
Position:					
Teachers	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
Position:					
Other:	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
Position:					

Faculty/College/Department level					
Ex.: Dean, Head,…	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					

Students level					
Ex.: Union, Representative,…	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					

26

Yourself	
Please add between 2 to 5 examples of good practices identified in your University	
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
Please comment on differences/agreement of ranking order between above groups	

7. Your university is strengthening the relationship between research, teaching and innovation within a perspective of lifelong learning					
Please circle your choice using this scale and provide a brief statement of evidence	No	Small	Fair	Good	Excellent
	(not started)				(fully implemented)
	0	1	2	3	4

Individual level					
Decision Makers	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					
Management	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					
Research	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					
Teachers	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					
Other:	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					

Faculty/College/Department level					
Ex.: Dean, Head,…	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
Position:					

Students level					
Ex.: Union, Representative,…	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
Position:					

Yourself	
Please add between 2 to 5 examples of good practices identified in your University	
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
Please comment on differences/agreement of ranking order between above groups	

8. Your university is consolidating reforms to promote a flexible and creative learning environment for all students.					
Please circle your choice using this scale and provide a brief statement of evidence	No	Small	Fair	Good	Excellent
	(not started)				(fully implemented)
	0	1	2	3	4

Individual level					
Decision Makers	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					
Management	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					
Research	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					
Teachers	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					
Other:	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					

Faculty/College/Department level					
Ex.: Dean, Head,…	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					

Students level					
Ex.: Union, Representative,…	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					

30

Yourself
Please add between 2 to 5 examples of good practices identified in your University
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
Please comment on differences/agreement of ranking order between above groups

9. Your university is developing partnerships at local, regional, national and international level in order to provide attractive and relevant programmes.

Please circle your choice using this scale and provide a brief statement of evidence	No	Small	Fair	Good	Excellent
	(not started)				(fully implemented)
	0	1	2	3	4

Individual level					
Decision Makers	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					
Management	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					
Research	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					
Teachers	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					
Other:	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					

31

Faculty/College/Department level					
Ex.: Dean, Head,…	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					

Students level					
Ex.: Union, Representative,…	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					

32

Yourself
Please add between 2 to 5 examples of good practices identified in your University
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
Please comment on differences/agreement of ranking order between above groups

10. Your University is acting as a role model of a lifelong learning institution					
Please circle your choice using this scale and provide a brief statement of evidence	No	Small	Fair	Good	Excellent
	(not started)				(fully implemented)
	0	1	2	3	4

Individual level					
Decision Makers	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					
Management	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					
Research	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					
Teachers	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					
Other:	0	1	2	3	4
Position:					

33

Faculty/College/Department level					
Ex.: Dean, Head,…	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
Position:					

Students level					
Ex.: Union, Representative,…	**0**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
Position:					

34

Yourself
Please add between 2 to 5 examples of good practices identified in your University
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
Please comment on differences/agreement of ranking order between above groups

ANNEX 1

The LLL Benefits to Society – ALLUME Project

"*It may be felt that if there is an exclusive concentration on Lifelong Learning as the constant upgrading of skills for employment or of a narrow stream of knowledge, there is the danger that those who are not in at the start of the journey will remain excluded. There is the danger that a knowledge society will not be an understanding society. Because of this, it is felt that Lifelong Learning promotes also active citizenship, where people can participate in all spheres of social and economic life, and thus feel that they belong to their society and that their society belongs to them. Societies should place value on a vigorous intellectual and cultural life, and any Lifelong Learning strategy should make this perfectly clear.*"

LLL and the Social Dimension of Universities

In the light of the Lisbon Agenda[2] and Europe2020[3] strategy, Universities have been asked to transform themselves into effective players in a knowledge based economy. Although it is not required that Universities are excellent in their three missions - each University should design its own path toward the best accomplishment of interaction with society (third mission activities) – those related to the University-Society interaction have been receiving more attention in the present European context.

The development of this interaction can be made from a set of underlying institutional principles (rationales): Social Justice, Economic Development and Social Development[4], in a political and structural line of reasoning, or from a set of field-activity identified dimensions such as: Technology Transfer and Innovation, Continuing Education and Social Engagement[5]. This last perspective relies on the Universities field core of action that integrates and overlaps universities' first and second mission – teaching and research. Whether the option is made on one or the other approach it is inevitable to conclude that the dimension of the third mission is closely related to education and training, therefore with Continuous Education/Lifelong Learning (LLL), as according to the European Commission interpretation of LLL:

" '*Lifelong Learning' means all general education, vocational education and training, non-formal education and informal learning undertaken throughout life, resulting in an improvement in knowledge, skills and competences within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective. It includes the provision of counselling and guidance services.*"[6]

Integration of LLL and Social Dimension (LLL-SD) of Universities

The EUA's Lifelong Learning Charter

In 2008 EUA published the European Universities' Charter on Lifelong Learning[7], which is a set of 10 institutional commitments designed to guide Universities evolution in their trajectory towards LLL.

Universities which signed the Charter for Lifelong Learning are committed to:

1. Embedding concepts of widening access and lifelong learning in their institutional strategies.

2. Providing education and learning to a diversified student population.

3. Adapting study programmes to ensure that they are designed to widen participation and attract returning adult learners.

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2 http://www.eahep.org/europeanhigher-education/background/lisbon-process.html
3 European Commission (2011): EUROPE 2020. A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. (COM 2010) 2020 final. Brussels
4 PL4SD Project - Peer learning for the Social Dimension, http://www.pl4sd.eu/
5 E3M Project - European Indicators and Ranking Methodology for University Third Mission, www.**e3mproject**.eu/
6 Decision No 1720/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 November 2006: *establishing an action programme in the field of Lifelong Learning*

4. Providing appropriate guidance and counselling services.

5. Recognising prior learning.

6. Embracing lifelong learning in quality culture.

7. Strengthening the relationship between research, teaching and innovation in a perspective of lifelong learning.

8. Consolidating reforms to promote a flexible and creative learning environment for all students.

9. Developing partnerships at local, regional, national and international level to provide attractive and relevant programmes.

10. Acting as role models of lifelong learning institutions.

No doubt these 10 Commitments include Universities' three Missions. The ALLUME project aimed to use the 10 commitments as a mean to help every University in identifying obstacles and facilitators in the pathway to become a Lifelong Learning University (LLLU), in its own particular reality and context.

COMMIT Project intends to apply the same tool, with a different goal - Social Dimension. In order to do it will be enhanced, in each of the Commitments, its contribution to Universities' third mission.

Illustration of the EUA's Charter for the Social Dimension (SD)

Although the 10 commitments have been developed for the institutional level, each of the commitment can be read for use at the faculty, the department and even at the individual level. In this document the focus is at institutional level. In this sense, and to help the users' understanding, some non-exhausting examples of indicators/good practices for each commitment are produced, in order to help the user understanding of each commitment.

1. Embedding concepts of widening access and lifelong learning in their institutional strategies

This means that universities will grasp the opportunity to address lifelong learning centrally in their mission and strategy as part of a wider definition of excellence. The complexity of Lifelong Learning concepts has to be acknowledged and explored as a key aspect of developing the contribution by universities to a culture of Lifelong Learning.

Illustration: Inclusion of SD as a priority in the University's mission or vision.

Presence of SD in the policy and /or strategy of the University.

Existence of an institutional plan for SD.

2. Providing education and learning to a diversified student population.

This means that European universities will respond positively to the increasingly diverse demand from a broad spectrum of students – including post-secondary students, adult learners, professionals who seek to up-grade skills for the workplace, senior citizens taking advantage of their increasing longevity to pursue cultural interests, and others – for high quality and relevant higher education throughout their lifetime. European universities recognise the important contribution that a diversified student body will make to the development of a culture of success and innovation in the institution and wider society, and the need to think to which extent different types of learners can interact in a supportive mutual learning environment.

Illustration: Existence of data basis on under-represented groups in your University (gender, ethnic origin, immigration, socio-economic *status* and background, disability, geography, etc).

Existence of a dedicated office to non-traditional students (senior citizens, adult learners, post-secondary students, working professionals, etc), either by faculty or at institutional level.

Existence of mechanisms for monitoring education and learning societal demands and of specific organisations (enterprises, public administration, associations, etc) needs.

3. **Adapting study programmes to ensure that they are designed to widen participation and attract returning adult learners**

   This means that flexible and transparent learning paths need to be in place for all learners enabling them to access and succeed in higher education in all its different forms. It is an essential responsibility of universities to ensure that this educational offer is always of high quality. European universities acknowledge the diversity of individual learner needs and it is therefore their responsibility to adapt programmes and to ensure the development of appropriate learning outcomes in a learner-centred perspective. They also pledge to play their part in promoting widening participation and continuing education.

   Illustration: Existence of "costume-made" programmes for enterprises and other non-academic organisations.

   Existence of academic staff and student's involvement in educational outreach activities.

   Existence of programs, degrees or activities targeting disadvantaged students/community groups.

   Existence of degree programmes adapted at the pedagogical, organisational and at the content level in order to facilitate the access of working candidates.

4. **Providing appropriate guidance and counselling services.**

   This means that relevant academic and professional guidance, as well as other psychological counselling, should be available for all qualified potential students when needed. This support should be relevant to learners of all ages, and from all social and cultural backgrounds.

   Illustration: Existence of specific academic support for students including mentoring (senior students guiding freshmen).

   Existence of specific first-generation student counselling (including study method, study planning, etc.) and/or supplementary courses to bridge the gap within secondary education.

   Existence of orientation events for last year students in secondary education.

   Existence of professional guidance office, open to the both university's internal and external community.

5. **Recognising prior learning**

   This means that universities should ensure that everybody with the potential to benefit from higher education provision is enabled to do so. It is therefore essential for universities to develop systems to assess and recognise all forms of prior learning. This is particularly important in the context of Lifelong Learning in a global era where knowledge is acquired in many different forms and places.

   Illustration: Existence of systems dedicated to recognising the APL/RPL way to access a partial/full diploma, for all study cycles, in your University.

   Existence of procedures and tools to assess and recognise prior, formal, informal, non-formal learning.

   Existence of procedures for validation of work experience and/or professional qualifications.

6. **Embracing Lifelong Learning in quality culture**

   Europe's universities have taken important steps in developing internal quality culture and assuming prime responsibility for the quality of their provision. This work will adapt to an evolving framework for Lifelong Learning in order to ensure that an appropriate range of targeted learner support services are provided for increasing numbers of more diverse learners.

   Illustration: Existence of a good balance between strategic aims and evidence of practical outcomes.

   Existence of Quality Board/Office structures at students/faculty/institutional level. Existence of monitoring mechanisms for quality diagnosis.

   Existence of Institutional indicators for under-represented groups in your University (gender, ethnic origin, immigration, socio-economic *status* and background, disability, geography, etc).

7. Strengthening the relationship between research, teaching and innovation from a Lifelong Learning perspective

This means that universities' research and innovation missions can be strengthened through Lifelong Learning strategies, and that universities' specific contributions to Lifelong Learning should be underpinned by research. Researchers should also be recognised as a fine example of lifelong learners, whose own educational needs are continually evolving, taking into account the changing skills required by the labour market. Lifelong Learning can also be a source of new research methodologies and topics.

Illustration: Existence of research initiatives with direct impact on society, projects related to educational outreach and fostering of opportunities of dialogue between practitioners and researchers.

Existence of postgraduate theses or projects with non-Academic Supervisors, and of joint publications with non-Academic authors.

Existence of teacher training initiatives on inclusive teaching and assessment, and curricula adapted to include content reflecting cultural and societal diversity.

Existence of research data on your University actual student population, and active integration of research findings in curriculum development.

8. Consolidating reforms to promote a flexible and creative learning environment for all students

In creating European higher education research areas, Europe's universities are engaged in the development of major reforms which aim at placing all learners at the centre. Universities now need to exploit the potential of these reform processes and their tools (ECTS, Diploma Supplement, European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance, Qualifications Frameworks, etc.) to enhance the development of a creative Lifelong Learning environment that is open to a more diverse population of learners, and thus responds to societal needs for the modernisation of higher education. Fully integrating Lifelong Learning into the mission of universities is essential to enhance the creativity and innovation profiles of institutions.

38

Illustration: Existence of no-fee single courses, non-university people using the Campus facilities, and events open to the society/public.

Existence of post-secondary programs/degree, single degree modules (credits transfer) attendance or non-degree programmes.

Existence of CPD or ODL initiatives, interface Offices to diversify and intensify the CPD programmes.

9. Developing partnerships at the local, regional, national and international level to provide attractive and relevant programmes

Providing relevant educational provision in a Lifelong Learning context cannot be done by institutions on their own. The need for structured partnerships – with a range of other educational institutions, employers, employees' organisations (trade unions) as well as with other stakeholders – is essential if provision is to be responsive, flexible and innovative.

Illustration: Existence of curricula based on learning outputs designed in cooperation and partnership with professionals, organisations and public stakeholders to meet professional needs.

Existence of an office for work based learning management supporting the creation of professional bachelor programmes.

Cooperation with employers to provide internship opportunities to students from special under-represented groups during studies.

Existence of partnership with public and private business in SD programs.

10. Acting as role models of lifelong learning institutions

This means that universities are not only providers of higher education and research, but also major employers in their own right. They therefore have the potential to act as role models in society by offering lifelong learning opportunities for their own employees – whether academic, administrative or technical and auxiliary staff. They should also be key actors in lobbying for coherent policy development in national systems.

Illustration: Existence of internal professional development opportunities for staff.

Participation of Academic staff in professional bodies, networks, organizations and boards.

Existence of opportunities for Academic staff to develop knowledge based activities for retired staff and/or former students.

Existence of credited education activities in partnership with regional stakeholders in order to increase the educational attainment of under-represented or disadvantaged groups.

The Benchmarking Tool invites universities to benchmark their performance and engagement in LLL and social dimension against the 10 institutional commitments contained in the European Universities' Charter on LLL and against other social dimension indicators. It also assists universities in establishing their own objectives with regards to LLL strategy and social dimension.

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