



Curriculum reform: a whole community approach

A QAA-funded Collaborative Enhancement Project



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About the project



Curriculum reform is not just redesign—it's institutional transformation under pressure



HE as a contested space: financial pressure, regulation, employability, AI, student expectations



Curriculum reform is a very common response – what's different about the current moment is the scale (institutional and strategic, rather than ad hoc and programme-level)



Our project: 7 institutions + a shared challenge → shared learning

The Project Partners



Chris Hill, School of
African and Oriental
Studies



Roscoe Hastings, and Beverley
Hawkins, University of Exeter



Rachel Dearlove and Sarah Marsham,
University of Newcastle



Mark Allinson, University
of Bristol



Vish Maheshwari and Jess Power,
University of Salford



Kenneth McDowall and Claire Gibbs,
Leeds University



Elizabeth McCrum,
Reading University



Stages of Delivery

Discovery:

Salford, SOAS

Implementation:

Newcastle, Exeter

Evaluation and Review:

Reading, Bristol, Leeds

Project Aim: What if we treat curriculum reform as shared sector challenge, not isolated institutional work?

Project Outputs

1. Develop a Community of Practice

- Senior Leader Insights
- Student Perspectives
- Cross Institutional Practice-Sharing (the good, the bad, and the ugly!).

2. Sector-Facing Tools to Support Community Engagement in Curriculum Reform

Project report with sector insights

Engagement toolkit, workshop templates, case studies..

3. Student Engagement and Co-creation

Working alongside student interns, as well as sabbatical officers.





We hired two undergraduate Collaborative Enhancement Project Assistants, to co-create resources aimed at supporting the sector to lead meaningful change.

They created:

- A guide to what works in ‘whole community’ consultation
- A shareable ‘your transformation project on a side’ template
- A guide to sustainable curriculum including field trips
- Case studies, quotes and insights included in the project report drawn from interviews with project partners
- Insights from a survey of staff and student leaders, that inform a conversation on ‘what I wish I’d known before leading curriculum change’ at the QAA Conference on 9th July, 2026.
- A workshop template and facilitator guide to help departments/institutions sustain momentum in curriculum transformation.



What's driving Curriculum Reform?

1. Regulatory and Political Change

2. The Coronavirus Pandemic

3. Skills and Employability

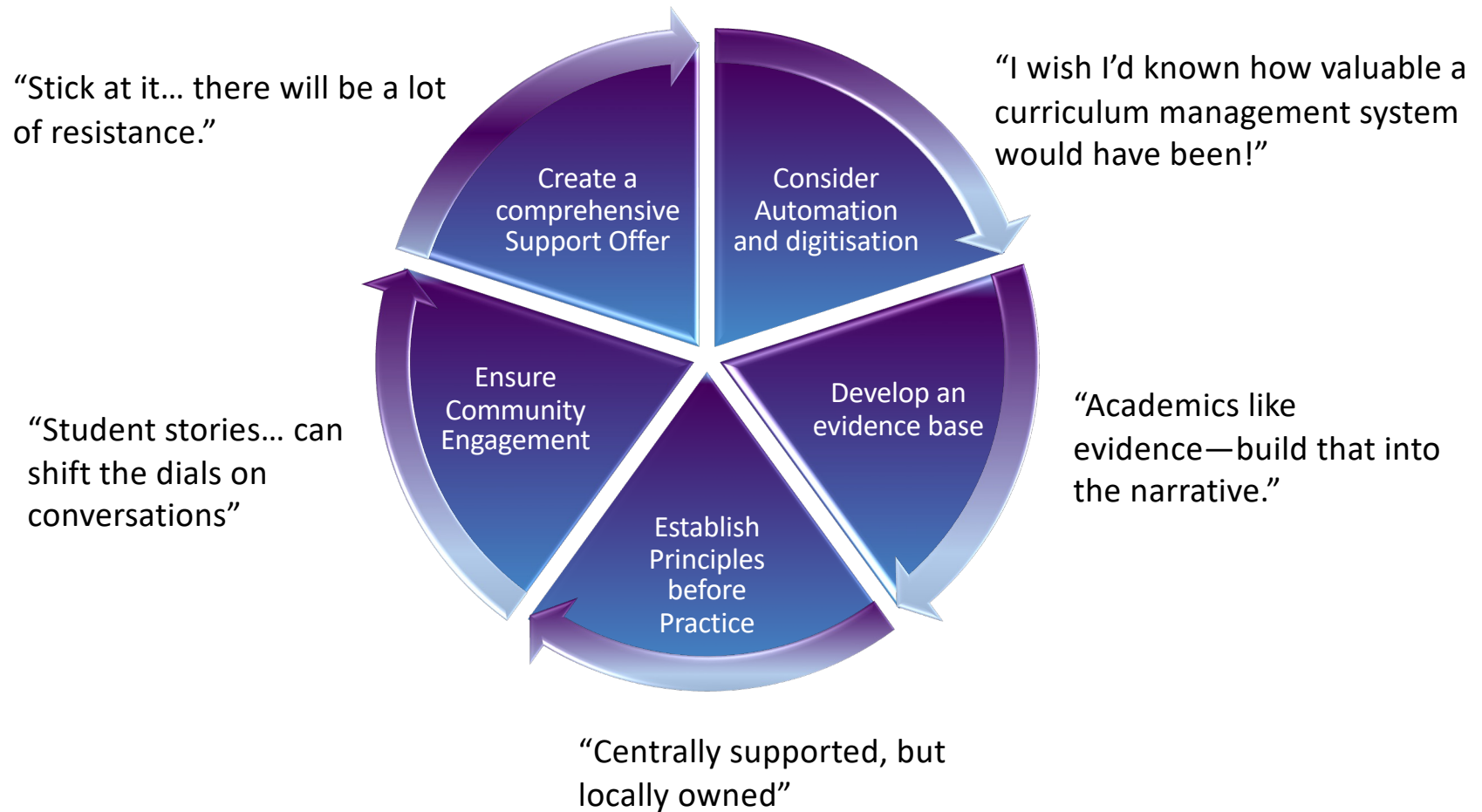
4. Financial Pressure

5. Public and Media Scrutiny

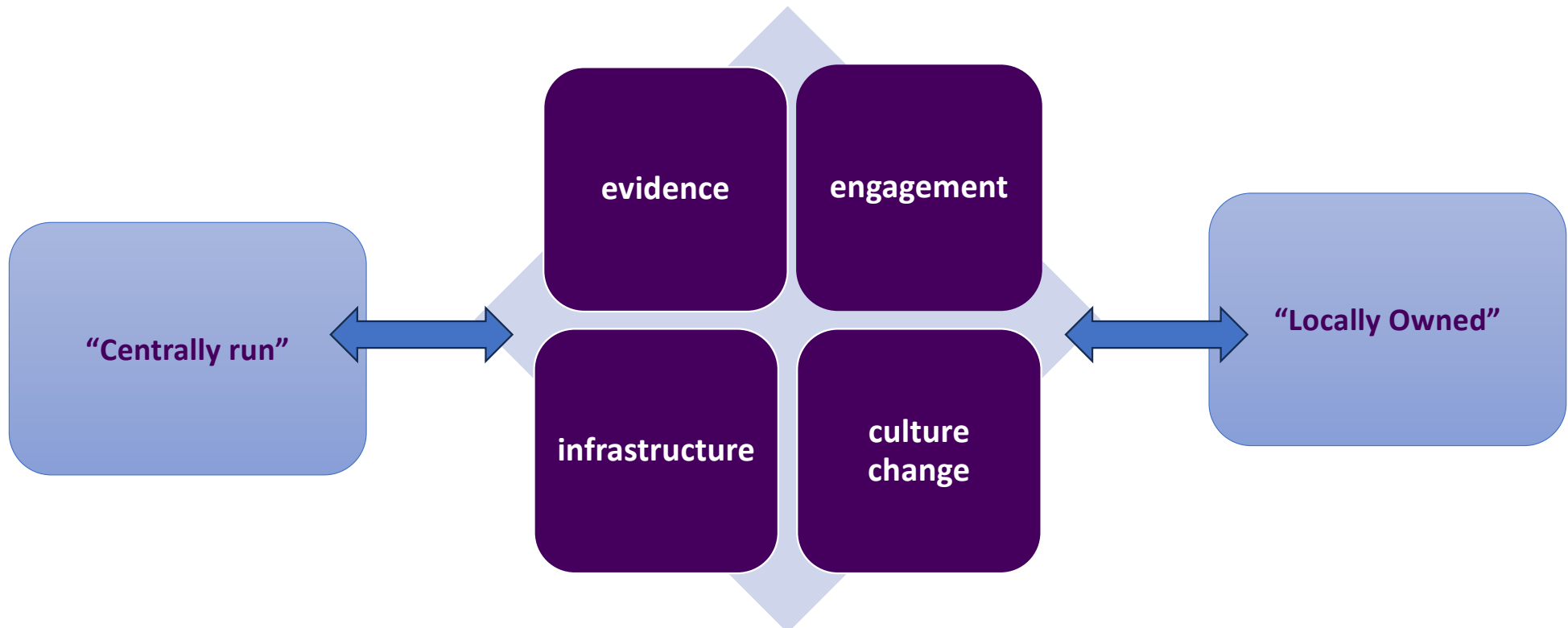
6. Technological Disruption

7. The Changing Student Demographic

Five enabling factors



Generating momentum in transformation



- What practice exists in each quadrant can identify synergies and spot gaps in your institution?
- Creating links between each of the four quadrants can help develop a 'virtuous circle'.

100% of event participants confirmed they would be interested in taking part in more sector-wide engagement and collaboration on curriculum reform.

- Co-creation is not optional—it's messy, but enabling.
- Consultation is continuous: Expand stakeholders from 'staff and students' to employers, parents, applicants, PSRBs, international student recruiters, and heads of FE/6th Form.
- **How can the sector develop a 'coopetitive' approach to transformation?**



Thank you

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