NERUPI *network*
Evaluating & Researching University
Participation Interventions

QAA

QAA Collaborative Enhancement Fund Project

Developing a Pilot Peer Evaluation System

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Peer Evaluation Context

Evaluation for widening access and participation

- Organisational learning & continuous improvement
- Accountability for equity focused investment (APPs)
- Learning from practices that work to ensure equal opportunities and address the risks
- External and internal transparency
- Effective, efficient and rigorous evaluations

Internal systems of Quality Assurance → Peer Review → External systems of Quality Assurance

Peer Evaluation Context

Aims of the Pilot

- Sustainable tools and resources, to increase evaluation expertise & underpin institutional improvement in the sector through:
  - Guidelines for institutions commissioning & offering Peer Reviews
  - Templates for guiding Peer Reviews
  - Peer Reviews of participating HEI's programmes & evaluation strategies
  - A CPD course for peer evaluators
  - A report to the sector & events for QAA & NERUPI members

Funding through the QAA Collaborative Enhancement Fund

A pilot Peer Evaluation system to support widening participation evaluation strengthening

Pilot Lead Partner

- The project leader was **NERUPI** *(Network for Researching and Evaluating University Participation Interventions)*

- Based at the University of Bath

- Over 80 member organisations and growing

- A well-established organisation

- Extensive experience of evaluation.

www.nerupi.co.uk

Pilot Organisations

Pilot Group

- Fourteen participants

- Diverse range of experience and types of HEI

- Small group learning environment

- Co-creation required a well-balanced group in terms of:
  - gender, ethnicity, and class
  - range of roles and professional experience
  - differing expertise including quantitative data analysis, qualitative research, understanding of regulation & management of equity initiatives

Advisory Group

- Charles Wiffen, Head of Academic Portfolio Development, Bath Spa University,

- Jessica Bond, Head of Widening Participation, London School of Economics,

- Mark Walmsley, Associate Professor, University of East Anglia,

- Dan West, Policy Lead, University of Derby,

- Wendy Fowle, APP Lead, Oxford Brookes University,

- Julian Crockford, Senior Lecturer, Sheffield Hallam University,

- Anna Anthony, Senior Analyst, HEAT,

- John Rainford, NERUPI Researcher, Visiting Fellow University of Bath

- Becky Bull, QAA

Benefits of Peer Review

Organisations

- External feedback and objectivity
- Recommendations for evaluation strengthening internally
- Benchmarking evaluation practice against others in the sector
- Collaborative learning from colleagues with similar challenges and expertise
- Building evaluation capability through staff continuing professional development (CPD)

Individuals

- Understand evaluation theories
- Improve practice in all aspects of evaluation
- Experience collaborative working
- Capacity to demonstrate impact & disseminate findings
- Understand equity issues
- Reflexivity & criticality in own practice

Commissioning a Peer Review

A successful Peer Review would need:

- Support within your organisation

- Identification of an Institutional Contact to liaise with the Peer Reviewer

- Provision of time to prepare for and participate in the process

- Preparation of appropriate information for the Peer Reviewer

- Clarification of your requirements e.g. key areas you would like explored

- Information about the ways you envisage using the Peer Review

- An experienced Evaluator to undertake the Review

- Agreement on the terms i.e payment or reciprocal Peer Review

Key elements of Peer Review

An effective Peer Review should:

- Demonstrate understanding of your context

- Provide an assessment of your overall approach to evaluation

- Undertake an in-depth analysis of at least one evaluation

- Incorporate a reflexive discussion exploring areas for development

- Identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats along with clear recommendations for change

- Be presented in a format to support organisational learning and development

Qualities of Reviewer

Honesty and candour	Experienced (2 years+)		Institutional buy-in
Solid contextual knowledge	Reflective	Willing to learn	Position to influence
Open to learn/share	Committed to the process		Criticality

SWOT Analysis

- **Strengths -** describe what the institution is good at: coherent planning processes; embedded evaluations; use of variety of methods and data; areas of expertise etc

- **Weaknesses** – what stops the evaluations from being optimum: poorly planned measures/indicators, data difficulties, inappropriate analytical strategy etc

- **Opportunities** – internal and external factors that could give a boost: new data sources, chances to embed evaluation, additional expertise, unused resources etc

- **Threats -** factors that have potential for harm if not mitigated: competing priorities, difficulties engaging others, lack of resources/expertise etc

PLUS

- Any other comments

- Recommendations

Wider Perspectives

Michelle Hawthorne
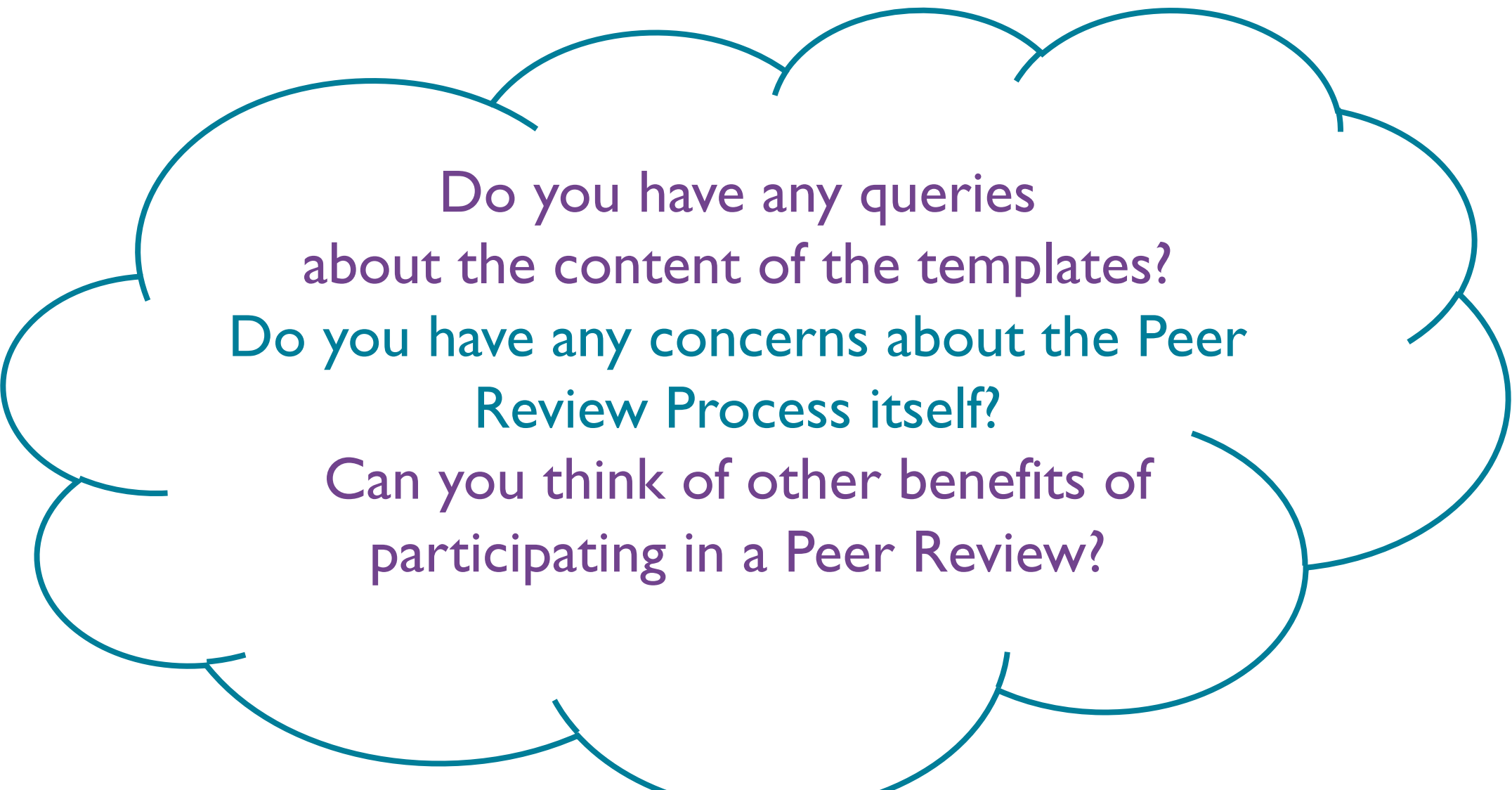WP Evidence and Evaluation Manager
University of East Anglia

Jonathan Schulte
Evaluation Manager

Jared Patel
Access and Participation Policy
and Impact Manager

Group Discussion

Do you have any queries
about the content of the templates?
Do you have any concerns about the Peer
Review Process itself?
Can you think of other benefits of
participating in a Peer Review?

Peer Review Templates

Developed as part of the pilot:

- **Template 1** Contextual information
- **Template 2** Evaluation context
- **Template 3** Evaluator's checklist
- **Template 4** Peer Evaluation Report

- Should be regarded as a minimum
- Can include additions to reflect your needs
- Would not recommend any short cuts
- Experience of Peer Review

Combines collaborative learning in small groups with colleagues with a process of Peer Review

Hybrid Course 2024

- Initial, full day, in-person workshop (London, 18 April)

- Four expert sessions (online: 9 May; 6 June; 25 June; plus one tba)

- Two-day residential experience in (Bath, 17-18 July)

- Conducting and receiving a Peer Review (July-September)

- In-person workshop (London, November 7)

enabled me to become aware of a range of different perspectives, which was helpful for my learning

...provided many opportunities for knowledge exchange and mutual learning which have and will continue to influence my practices

Practicalities

Criteria:

- At least two years of relevant experience of evaluation in higher education.

Cost:

- Others - £1,500 pp*

- QAA and NERUPI members. - £975 pp*

* Includes two nights accommodation in superior student halls of residence in central Bath during the residential, meals and refreshments at in person sessions.

Enrolment: open now, go to:

https://www.nerupi.co.uk/events/peer-evaluation-course

Peer Evaluation Principles

- **Active engagement**
- **Collaborative learning**
- **Willingness to share**
- **Supportive rather than judgemental**
- **Openness to different perspectives & ideas**
- **Improvement focused**