Institutional Research in UK and Ireland, organisation, action and beyond.
Based on work by

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UK and Ireland we are similar but different
An outline

Some definitions and positions

How we are organised

The things that we do and contextual pressures

Going forward
Institutional Research UK and Ireland?

I do institutional research

What’s that
A range of definitions

“Research that is undertaken within an institution or higher education system to provide information to support an evidence-informed approach to policy and practice” (Jackson 2003)

“The application of social and enterprise research methods to improve institutional effectiveness by transforming institutional and other data into valid, reliable and useable information’, (IUQB, 2008, p.13).
HEIR definition

“The use of research and enquiry to provide evidence to inform policy, practice and management at all levels within higher education. This includes management information to inform policy and strategy, evaluation and pedagogic research to inform learning and teaching, and using data gathered for different purposes to better understand and manage activities within institutions, including the student experience” [HEIR website].
What we are not
More like this
Plus
How is IR organised in UK and Ireland

Organised and Defined

National Initiative
Enhancement Projects
Statutory Reporting
Pedagogy research

A bit messy

Pedagogy research
and Development
Enhancement Projects
Statutory reporting
But similar activities

- Quadrant (II): Accountability Work on a Routine Basis
- Quadrant (III): Accountability Work on an Ad-Hoc Basis
- Quadrant (I): Improvement Work on a Routine Basis
- Quadrant (IV): Improvement Work on an Ad-Hoc Basis
**Org Context**
- Public Master’s Institution
- Report to Provost
- New President

**Personnel**
- IE Director
- IR Associate Director
- Assessment Coordinator

**Accountability**
- 50%
- Grant Reporting
- Financial Aid Reporting
- College Ranking

**Routine Basis**
- 20%
- IPEDS Reporting
- Accreditation Reporting
- State Reporting
- HEOA Reporting

**Improvement**
- 10%
- Strategic Planning
- Learning Outcomes Assessment
- Departmental self-study
- NSSE

**Ad-hoc Basis**
- 20%
- Student Retention Analysis
- Student Graduation Analysis
- Peer Comparisons
- Key Performance Indicators
UK- typical?

Senior management teams and committees

Planning Office / Strategy

Faculties

HE Education Development Unit or and project teams

Quality Office / Enhancement unit

Marketing Dept.
GPA - example

Academic Board

Implementation

Project Team undertake evaluation

Proposal

Project Team (GPA) – who undertake a review of GPA practice

Planning Office to model/analyse

Publish

EDU
Why include first year marks?
Ireland

Senior Management team

IR office (often with quality office)

Faculties
Marketing and Recruitment example

SMT desire to know more about geography of recruitment at a fine scale.

IR Office

Faculties and Marketing
| Evaluation of an enhancement at Institutional level | Enhancing student learning through the interactive learning space initiative |
| Evaluation of an enhancement at local level | A discussion of the efficacy of Student led seminars for encouraging critical thinking |
| Descriptive | Is there a relationship between staffing profile and students’ ratings of their programme |
| Methods and or methodological | What is wrong with certainty based marking |
| Policy/ Position papers | IR, Planning and Quality Assurance in the World Around Us |
The Numbers

Category of IR
Still the Numbers

Category of IR

- Inst Evaluation
- Description
- Methodological
- Local Intervention
- Policy/Position
- National Project
- Impact of IR

Colors:
- Blue (2010)
- Red (2012)
- Green (2014)
- Purple (2016)
Who are we?

• Broadly 70% have pedagogic research focus 30% planning office.
• 20% of work presented is Qualitative.
• 15% - 20% of delegates from beyond UK and Ireland.
Scale

Subject 25%

Institution 52%

National 23%
Interviews

IR data is often messy and incomplete, not collected according to normal research rules.

IRs adopted the cultural language and practices of academic research, in order to gain ‘power’ for their findings amongst the academic community.

IR projects are “hands on” and “functional
Interviews

Handling lots of data from different sources (silos) can be a barrier

Low level of understanding of the of social survey techniques

Messages can be lost through the power of the ‘anecdote’ and staff ‘experience’

Staff may need to consider that an issue deserves addressing before they lend credence to the data
Interviews

Effectiveness would be improved through better presentation and communication of the findings, Communicate a message.

Senior Management buy-in to the findings

Matching client expectations

Respecting Academic Values
Trends

Data for enhancement not compliance

The curse of the KPI

Data Automation

Learner/ Learning Analytics

Bigger more centralised IR teams
Three questions

How is it that we dedicate relatively proportion of our effort to Evaluations?

What can we do to develop our propensity to research ourselves?

How can we ‘market the products of our work better?

Any Questions?