

Research Briefing No. 17

14-19 Centre Research Study (CReST): The institutions' perspectives

Key findings



The research

Best interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •What do our students need? •What do our stakeholders and community need?
Longevity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •How long is this policy likely to last? •Will this policy have continued political support?
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Is there an attractive funding stream associated? •Can we continue to fund this? •How will this affect the shape and capacity of the organisation?
Coherence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Can this be done locally? •Do other policies complement or conflict with this? (locally or nationally)
Doppelgänger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Is this similar to previous policies? •Is it better than previous policies?
Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Are we required to do this by law? •Are we obliged to do this by regulators? •Is a powerful stakeholder (eg LEA) pressing for this?

Policy tests: How an educational institution decides the extent to incorporate policies into their strategies

Research design

52 schools and colleges in England took part in the project. The research team visited 18 institutions in 2009/10, when the reforms had begun to be implemented. Visits to the other 34 institutions were scheduled for 2010/11, and 2011/12, with further visits to all 52 in 2012/13. Three-day visits comprised:

- interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders (head teachers, partnership coordinators, curriculum managers, governors, teachers, students, parents)
- collection of documentary evidence (prospectuses, Strategic plans, Curriculum staffing structure, enrichment activities, information advice and guidance practice)

Additionally, surveys of Y11 and Y13 students, and all teachers, were carried out in participating institutions. Making claims for the representatives of our sample of participating institutions is problematic, because schools and colleges vary across so many dimensions. Our sample was sufficiently diverse to provide the perspectives of a wide array of UK contexts.

Further information

Key messages for institutions and policy makers include:

- Educational stakeholders, as well as governments, make and shape policy
- National policies are only part of the policy environment considered by educational institutions
- Educational institutions need a longer term view than policies might support: leaders use key 'policy tests' to consider engagement with reforms
- Involvement of stakeholders (leaders, students, teachers, parents) in creating and formulating policy would offer a better understanding of the likely uptake, giving objectives a greater chance of success
- Stakeholders are knowledgeable about local, national and international arrangements that affect policy implementation, including policy clashes
- Educational policies need to be developed with a consideration of their impacts upon and integration with existing educational structures

Website

<http://oucea.education.ox.ac.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/CRest-Annual-Report-Final-whole.pdf>

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