TEFCE

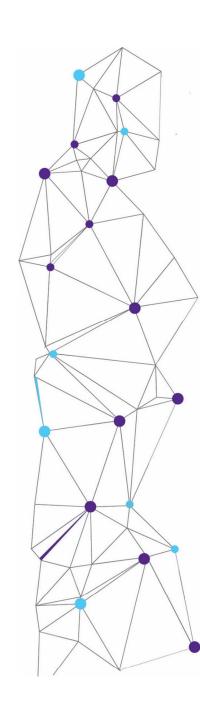**Towards a European Framework for Community Engagement in Higher Education**

LINKING THE SDGs TO UNIVERSITY-COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Thomas Farnell, Higher Education Policy Expert,
Institute for the Development of Education, Croatia

ACUP Conference 'Institutional commitment to teaching activities: how to introduce and reinforce the perspective of SDGs in university teaching?'
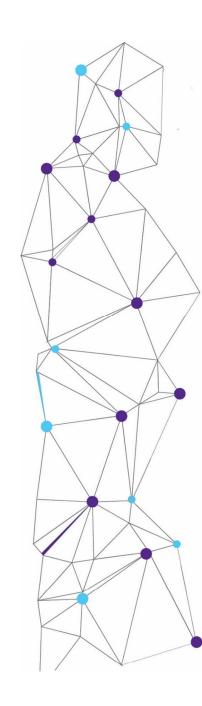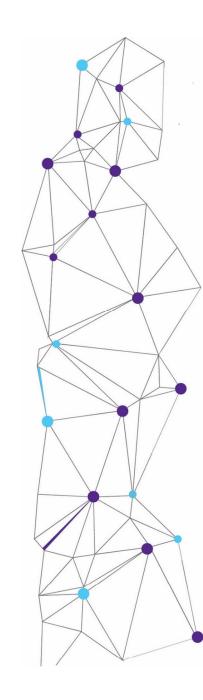
Barcelona, 01.03.2019

TEFCE
Towards a European Framework for
Community Engagement in Higher Education

OVERVIEW OF PRESENTATION

1. About the TEFCE project

2. Linking community engagement and the SDGs

3. Approaches to 'measuring' the societal engagement and impact of HE

4. The TEFCE approach: The Toolbox for community engagement in HE
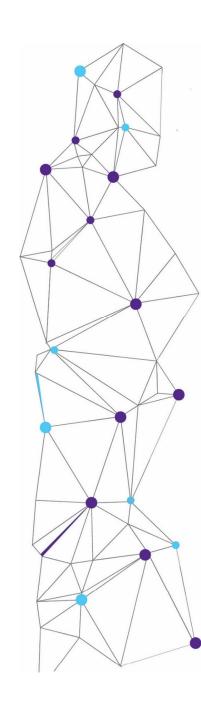
1. ABOUT THE TEFCE PROJECT

BASIC PROJECT DATA

˝ Project funded by Erasmus+, Key Action 3, Forward Looking Cooperation projects (FLCPs):

˝ *'FLCPs are trans-national co-operation projects aiming to identify, test, develop or assess innovative policy approaches that have the potential of becoming mainstreamed and giving input for improving education and training systems.'*

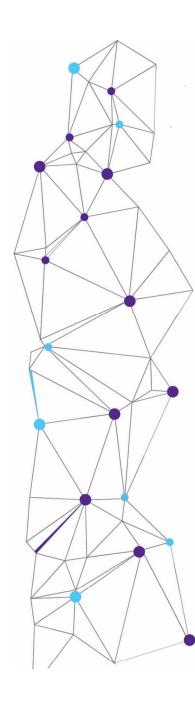˝ Duration: 1 January 2018 – 31 December 2020

TEFCE PROJECT: OBJECTIVE

˝ Develop innovative and feasible policy tools at the university and European level for supporting, monitoring and assessing the community engagement of universities.

Sub-objectives:

˝ Develop and pilot an innovative toolbox (including measures for guidance, assessment and peer-learning) on the community engagement of universities

˝ Assess the feasibility of launching innovative tools for policymakers and stakeholders to monitor, measure and incentivise community engagement at the European level
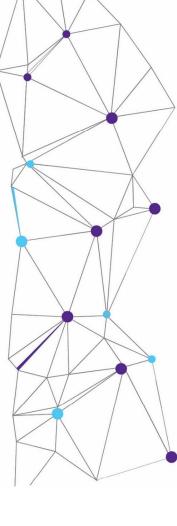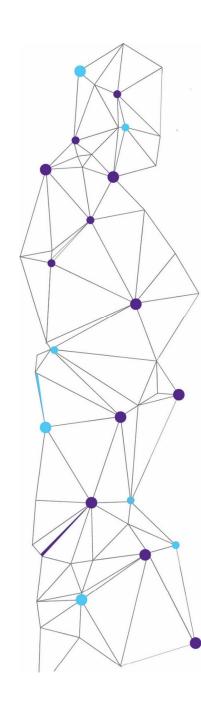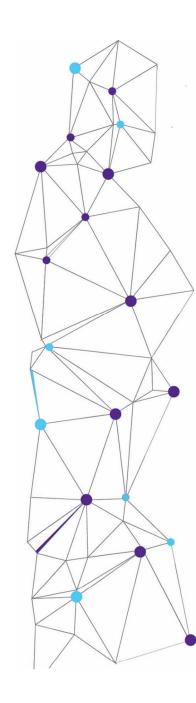
DEFINING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION (HE)

″ The development of relationships universities with their wider communities in order to address societal needs, in a way that is mutually beneficial…

″ … and with an emphasis on communities with fewer resources.
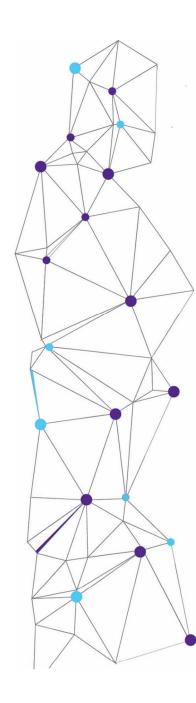
CLARIFYING THE TERM 'COMMUNITY'

˝ External groups or organisations that do not have the resources to engage easily with universities, e.g.
- ˝ NGOs
- ˝ social enterprises
- ˝ cultural organisations
- ˝ schools
- ˝ local governments
- ˝ citizens.

˝ The community does not necessarily need to be local - community engagement can also have regional, national and international dimensions.
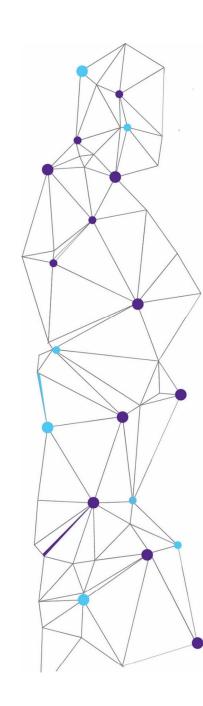
ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN HE

Teaching	Research	Service/knowledge exchange	University-level
Community-based learning / service-learning (placements in community-based organisations)	Collaborative/ participative research Citizen science	'Science shops' Capacity-building for community groups	Open access to university resources and facilities Community represented in university boards

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2.
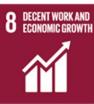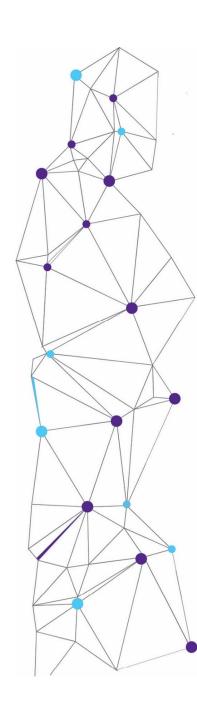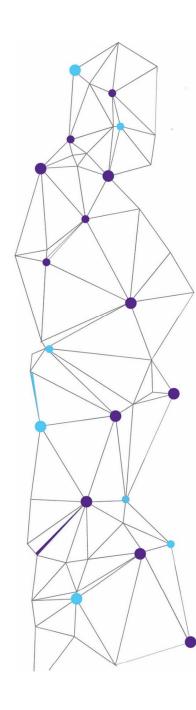# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND THE SDGs

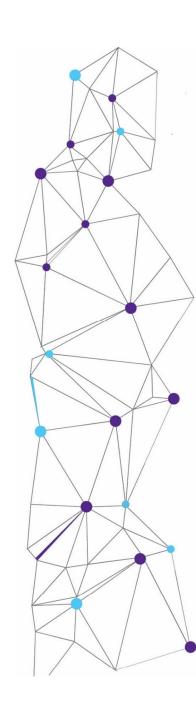# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND THE SDGs IN HIGHER EDUCATION

″ Link 1: Third mission of higher education - the societal relevance and impact of universities

″ Link 2: The gradual move away from an exclusive focus on the economic significance and impact of universities

″ Link 3: Broad scope of these agendas – can address social, economic, cultural and environmental challenges

″ Link 4: The relevance of societal impact at both the local and international level

″ Link 5: The crucial element of partnership, rather than top-down solutions
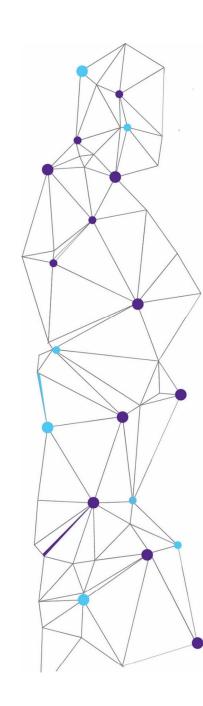
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND THE SDGs IN HIGHER EDUCATION

˝ Difference 1: Community engagement is a process, not a goal.

˝ Difference 2: Community engagement (in the TEFCE definition) is not linked to a specific societal goal or value.

˝ Difference 3: Achieiving some SDG targets might not always require community engagement

˝ Bottom line: A university's focus on community engagement and/or the SDGs is about how to achieve positive social impact in partnership with external communities.

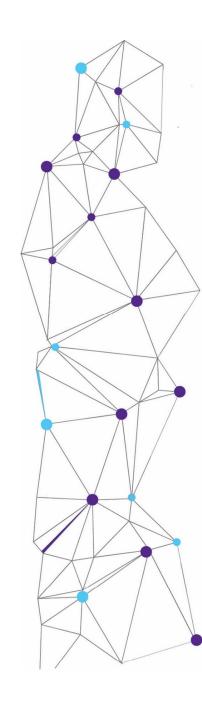# 3. 'MEASURING' THE COMMUNITY-ENGAGED INSTITUTION

MEASUREMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Typical measurement and assessment tools

| Guidelines
Standards
Indicators
Targets | Accrediting
Auditing
Benchmarking
Evaluating
Ranking |

MEASUREMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Typical measurement and assessment tools

Guidelines Standards Indicators Targets	Accrediting Auditing Benchmarking Evaluating Ranking

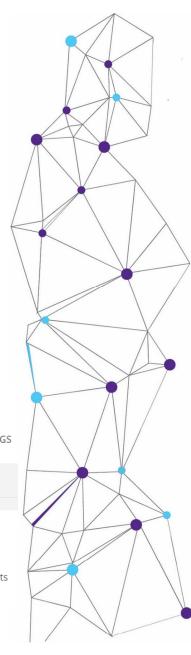**THE** WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS

PROFESSIONAL   JOBS   SUMMITS   RANKINGS

THE developing ranking based on Sustainable Development Goals

New league table will be first to measure global universities' success in delivering on UN targets
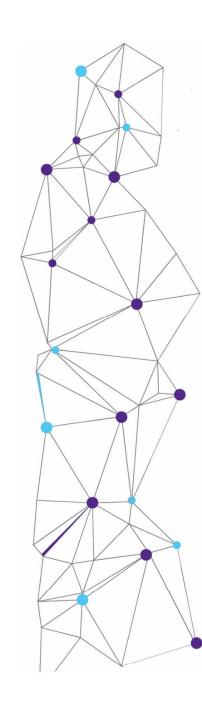
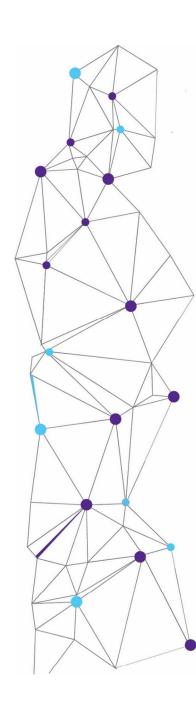September 6, 2018

THE TEFCE APPROACH?

Not scoring and ranking!

Not self-assessment, either!

FOUNDATIONS OF THE TEFCE APPROACH (1)

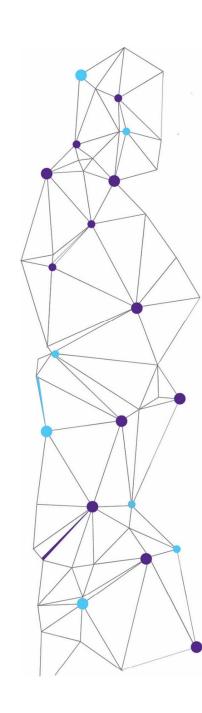″ There is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach to community engagement – it is always context-specific.

″ Community engagement is resistant to being measured. Most attempts to externally assess community engagement have had limited success and uptake.

″ The university is not a homogenous, ideal-type institution whose performance is easily steered centrally by university management and whose performance can be reduced to a score.

FOUNDATIONS OF THE TEFCE APPROACH (2)
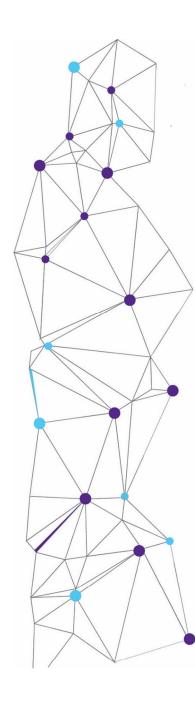
˝ New Public Management (NPM) tools focusing on comparisons of competitive performance and top-down steering have reached their limits.

˝ There is increasing acceptance by the European Commission of multidimensional assessment approaches that avoid simplistic indicators
  - ˝ *U-Multirank*
  - ˝ *University Regional Innovation Impact Assessment*
  - ˝ *RRI indicators*
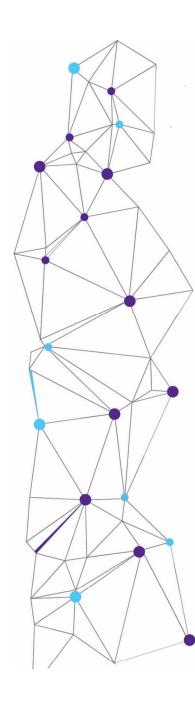
THE TEFCE APPROACH:
4 PRINCIPLES

1. Authenticity of engagement	2. Empowerment of individuals
The Toolbox's interpretative framework differentiates authentic community engagement (that provides the community with a meaningful role and tangible benefits) from instrumental and 'pseudo-' engagement.	The Toolbox aims to recognise and award value for different kinds of individual efforts and results, thus encouraging universities to develop empowering environments for individuals at the university
3. Bottom-up rather top-down steering	4. Learning journey rather than benchmarking
The Toolbox is based on mapping stories of practitioners (rather than on best practices selected by senior management) and providing both university staff and the community with a say in the process.	The Toolbox results in a qualitative discovery of good practices, a critical reflection on strengths and areas to improve, achieved through a collaborative learning process.

THE TEFCE 'TOOLBOX': 5 STAGES

Steps	Description
1. Quick scan	Initial discussion by university/community team on the type and extent of community engagement at the university.
2. Evidence collection	Collecting stories of community-engaged practitioners throughout the university
3. Mapping	Using the TEFCE Toolbox matrix to map the level of community-engagement of the university and to identify good practices.
4. Self-reflection	Open discussions among university management, staff, students and the community on strengths and areas of improvement
5. Institutional report	Promoting good practices and impact, and critical self-reflection for planning improvements to university-community engagement

TEFCE TOOLBOX DIMENSIONS

DIMENSION I. TEACHING AND LEARNING

The university has study programmes that include content about societal needs that are specific to the university's external communities and that include a community-based learning component for students.

DIMENSION II. RESEARCH

The university has research projects about societal needs of external communities and collaborative/participatory research projects which are implemented in cooperation with community groups

DIMENSION III. SERVICE/ KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

University staff use their knowledge to contribute to matters of interest to the community, to support community organisations, to build their capacity, and have a positive impact on the community

DIMENSION IV. STUDENTS

Students deliver their own community engagement activities through student organisations or initiatives, and the university supports them.

DIMENSION V. MANAGEMENT (communication and partnerships)

The university has partnerships with community groups, and makes its both its facilities/services and the results of its research, teaching and other activities open and accessible to the public
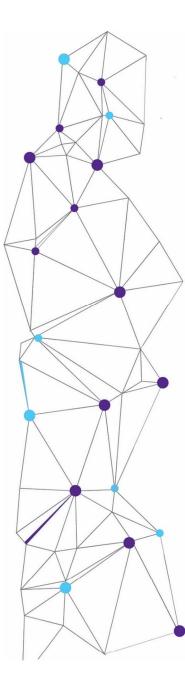
DIMENSION VI. MANAGEMENT (policies and support structures)

University policies recognise and acknowledge achievements in community engagement through staff development processes (e.g recruitment, tenure, promotion), awards

The university commits itself to community engagement through its mission/strategy, through support structures and funding
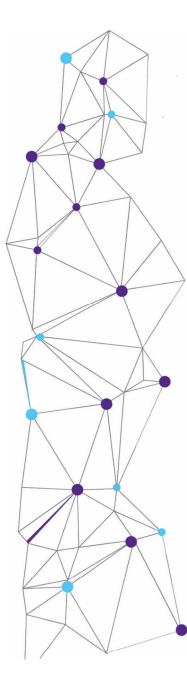
DIMENSION VII. SUPPORTIVE PEERS

Academic staff supportive of their university undertaking community-engaged learning, and there are prominent academic influencers / mavens advancing community engagement.

TOOLBOX INTERPRETATIVE FRAMEWORK

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	References
	Superficial	Ad hoc	Building block	Systematic	Hallmark	
1. Ethos	**Pseudo**	Tentative	Stable	Authentic	**Sustainable**	Hoyt (2011)
2. Relationships	**Transactional**	Bilateral	Network	Systemic	**Structural/ transformational**	Bowen et al. (2010), Enos and Morton (2003), Clayton et al. (2010)
3. Mutuality	**Exploitative**	Donating	Assisting	Accommo-dating	**Including**	Benneworth (2013)
4. Directionality	**Dissemination**	Hearing voices	Listening to the voices seriously	Creating structures to hear voices	**Co-creation**	Hall et al. (2011)
5. Endowment	**Betterment**	Co-planning	Shared community	Co-determining	**Empowerment**	Himmelman (2001)
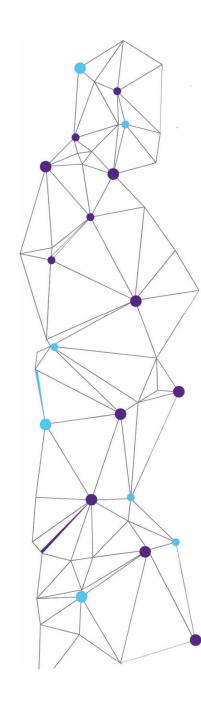
Example: Dimension I – Teaching and learning

SUB-DIMENSIONS	CRITERIA FOR MAPPING PRACTICES				
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Sub-dimension I.1.	**There are study programmes at the university that**				
The university has study programmes that include content about societal needs that are specific to the university's context and its external communities	...make general references to their relevance to the societal needs of university's external communities.		... include specific content or make specific links with the societal needs of the university's external communities.		... are developed in cooperation with the university's external communities to address a societal need.
Sub-dimension I.2.	**Community-based learning is included in relevant study programmes at the university and** ...				
The university has study programmes that include a community-based learning component for students	.. benefits students to develop their knowledge and skills, although there is little evidence yet of their impact on the community.		... has demonstrated benefits for students and help community partners address a short-term problem or need.		... builds capacities of community partners and bring equal benefits to the students, teaching staff and university as a whole.

BENEFITS OF THE TOOLBOX

˝ Demonstrating the value that the university brings to communities, as well as the value that community engagement brings to university.

˝ Supporting intrinsic motivation of community-engaged staff, students and external partners by recognising and showcasing good practices.

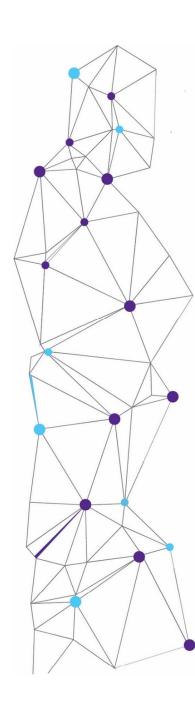˝ Basis for planning improvements to the universities' mutually beneficial community engagement activities.

CHANCES OF PROJECT SUCCESS IN IMPACTING EU POLICY?

Renewed Agenda for the Modernisation of HE (2017)

Priority: "Building inclusive and connected HE systems"

˝ *'HEIs should be engaged in the development of their cities and regions, whether through contributing to development strategies, cooperation with businesses, the public and voluntary sectors or supporting public dialogue about societal issues."*

˝ *„Some institutions are developing their profile as 'civic universities' by integrating local, regional and societal issues into curricula, involving the local community in teaching and research projects, providing adult learning and communicating and building links with local communities"*
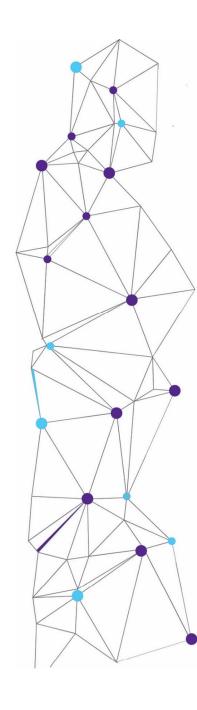
CONCLUSIONS

˝ Community engagement in higher education and the role of higher education in achieving the SDGs share the fundemental feature of ensuring that the university makes a positive social impact

˝ While they are not the same, community engagement is an approach and process that will be essential to achieving many of the SDGs, and can bring added value to achieving others

˝ The TEFCE Toolbox for community engagement can provide universities with a reflective tool on how to further improve their societal impact.

TEFCE
Towards a European Framework for
Community Engagement in Higher Education

See our first publication and policy brief on:
www.tefce.eu

![TEFCE - Towards a European Framework for Community Engagement in Higher Education](logo)

THE COMMUNITY-ENGAGED UNIVERSITY

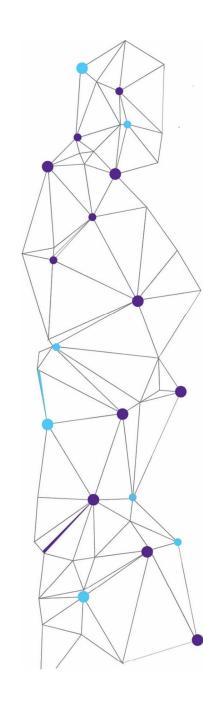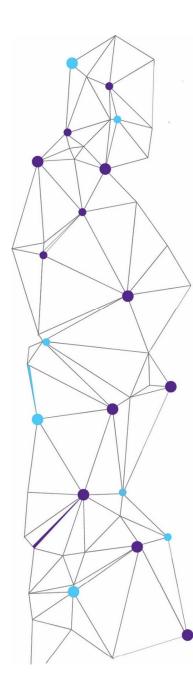| Being a community-engaged university ...	
1 ... does not imply that community engagement is necessarily the primary goal or mission of the university	... implies that community engagement is considered as one of the university's key goals or missions
2 ... is not necessarily dependent on having a "top-down" university management strategy for community engagement	... implies having a range of "bottom-up" community engagement activities in place. Supportive leadership is important to consolidate these efforts.
3 ... does not imply conforming to "one-size-fits-all" guidelines that prescribe a specific community-engagement activities.	... implies carrying out community engagement activities that depend entirely on *context*.

Being a community-engaged university ...	
4	... does not imply that community engagement can (or should) be carried out equally in different disciplines.	... implies that community engagement activities are carried out in a variety of ways in different disciplines. Academics ultimately retain the autonomy to determine how to organise their community engagement activities.
5	... does not imply that university activities that are not community-engaged are of less value.	... implies that the community-engaged activities bring additional value to the university and its communities.
6	... cannot be measured quantitatively, and hence is not institutionally comparable.	... can be determined individually and qualitatively based on the collection of evidence and based on a structured reflection