



Data Futures independent review steering group: purpose, proceedings

Approved 13 June 2024

Purpose

Objective

1. The Data Futures independent review steering group's (steering group) objective is to support the successful contractor to deliver a quality independent review of the Data Futures programme, in line with the agreed remit, on time and within budget.

Responsibilities

2. The steering group will:
 - a. Monitor progress of the review and provide direction to the contractors.
 - b. Oversee the delivery of the review, including ensuring it is being delivered on time and within budget, escalating any issues to the funders.
 - c. Support engagement with relevant stakeholders.
 - d. Provide a forum for open discussion around the review and any lessons learned.

Proceedings

Membership and meeting attendance

3. Members of the steering group should, collectively, possess relevant expertise in relation to data collection, governance of projects and delivery of complex solutions.
4. The steering group will be chaired by Margaret Monkton, Chief Financial Officer at University of Nottingham. Membership of the steering group has been decided by the chair in consultation with the regulators and funders. The steering group membership consist of a representative from each of the following organisations:
 - a. Academic Registrars Council (ARC)
 - b. Department of the Economy Northern Ireland
 - c. Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW)/Commission for Tertiary Education and Research

- d. Higher Education Strategic Planners Association (HESPA)
 - e. Jisc
 - f. Office for Students (OfS)
 - g. Scottish Funding Council (SFC)
 - h. Student Records Officers (SROC)
 - i. Universities and Colleges Information Systems Association (UCISA).
5. If the chair is unable to attend a meeting, they can nominate another member to chair in their absence.
 6. Consistency of representation from each organisation is preferred to support the efficiency and effectiveness of the group, and to limit the reach of any draft reports from the contractor.
 7. Attendees are expected to represent the opinions of their organisation and be clear when raising points that are individual opinions instead.

Secretariat and administrative

8. Secretariat and administrative support will be provided by the OfS.
9. Support will include:
 - a. Scheduling meetings to maximise attendance.
 - b. Liaising with the successful contractor to ensure papers and presentations are ready for meetings as agreed with the chair.
 - c. Sharing draft agendas and meeting papers with the chair for approval.
 - d. Distribution of agendas and meeting papers to the steering group members.
 - e. Being a general point of contact for the steering group and co-ordinating support required.
 - f. Attending meetings to take a decisions and action note.

Meetings

10. The steering group are anticipated to meet with the contractors three to four times during the contract period. Additional time is likely to be required before or after the contractors join meetings for internal discussions within the steering group.
11. Meetings will be held via Teams.
12. The secretary will maintain the agenda and will be approved by the steering group chair.
13. Meetings will:
 - a. Review the progress to date by the contractor.

- b. Consider emerging findings.
 - c. Review and agree roles and responsibilities for any appropriate actions to keep the review on track.
14. A decisions and actions note will be taken at each meeting.
15. Meeting papers and relevant documents to the steering group will be circulated at least three working days before meetings via email unless a specific sensitivity need, or timing issue is identified.

Escalation routes

16. If the steering group has concerns about the contractors' ability to deliver the required output on time and to budget the chair should raise this with the OfS Director of Resources and Finance as the ultimate contract manager for the review.

Duration

17. The steering group will remain in place for the duration of the review contract and until the final report has been issued.

Information management

18. Steering group members:
- a. Must not disclose any information which is confidential in nature or which is provided in confidence. Papers or other information provided to members in their role on the group must not be shared with anyone outside of the steering group without the explicit permission of the OfS or group chair.
 - b. May need to communicate with each other outside of meetings about the review. This data may be subject to consideration as part of a request made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. To ensure effective data searches can be undertaken in response to any such requests, members are requested to copy in a relevant OfS employee in all such correspondence.
 - c. Ensure devices such as mobile phones or laptops used to receive or view information about the review, are installed with up to date vulnerability protection (for example, virus protection and anti-spyware) and require some kind of user authentication to access them.
 - d. May not use data sticks as a storage system for any information about the review.
 - e. Must promptly report any data loss or incident to the group secretariate.
19. Members are reminded that maintaining the confidentiality of review information continues to apply after they leave the group. At that point all records relating to the review should be promptly destroyed.