

PACES Work Package 1: Needs Analysis and Transfer of Knowledge

Research Design and Methodological Framework

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Aim of the Project

The overall aim of the PACES project is to set up a programme of initiatives in universities in Egypt and Morocco in order to support the modernisation of higher education by developing Accessibility Centres (static, mobile, and virtual) that will enable students with disabilities to access assistive technology and support services such as counselling and peer support. The project additionally seeks to establish a network of employers and HE institutions in the partner countries with the aim of assisting employers to understand the needs and skills of people with disabilities. Through these centres and the employer/HEI networks, students with disabilities will be able to gain employability and transition skills in order to move forward into employment.

Brief Description of WP1

The first work package (WP1) focuses on providing a picture of the situation in the partner institutions with regard to students with disabilities. This data will inform the subsequent work packages of the project. There are four elements to the work package, resulting in three deliverables.

Timeline for WP1 activities

04/12/2017	Needs analysis survey distributed to NA partners.
13/12/2017	Deadline for return of survey to Coventry research team.
15/12/2017	Information about focus group management to research team in partner institutions. Researchers to conduct focus groups before 10 January 2018.
17/01/2018	Deadline for return of focus group transcriptions (translated into English) to Coventry research team.
28/02/2018	Completion of needs analysis report by Coventry research team.
31/03/2018	Deadline for submission of good practice examples to Coventry team.
30/06/2018	Dissemination of Good Practice Guide among partners.
30/07/2018	Delivery of compendium of HEI/employer networks.

Tasks and Outcomes

1.1 Needs Analysis

This involves in-depth research to assess the situation and practices within each NA institution, focusing on accessibility and employability. Online surveys will capture institutional practice, followed by focus groups with students with disabilities which will be conducted by staff within the NA partner institutions.

Deliverable:

- Analysis report, focusing on each of the eight NA partners, based on the survey and focus groups.

Outcome

- Increased awareness of disabled students' access to university premises and education provision. An indication of the current situation with regard to relationships between HEIs and employers within the region.

1.2 High Profile Visits in EU

Within first 6 months, there will be two visits to EU partners (in Greece and UK) for study visits and the transfer of knowledge. This will result in the identification of common best practices between the EU, EG and MA.

Outcome:

- Improved insight for top level staff into the integration of students with disabilities.

1.3 Good Practice Guide

During the first six months of the project, all partners will contribute to a Good Practice Guide, showcasing institutional practices and providing a cross-cultural comparison of related practices, involving all NA partner HEIs.

Deliverable:

- Good Practice Guide, based on the activities and projects identified as part of WP1.1 and following on from WP1.2. This document will be reviewed and updated throughout the period of the project. The interim Guide will be published and uploaded to the consortium webpage by PM7, and 160 copies will be printed to be disseminated among partners.

Outcome:

- A published interim document which can be used for dissemination, which gives a picture of the good practices in use within the partner institutions at the start of the PACES project. At the end of the project, a final version of the Guide will be made available, showcasing the good practice that has been developed and established throughout the lifetime of the project.

1.4 Compendium of HEI/Employer Networks

An analysis of the data provided as part of WP1.1 will assist in mapping the situation with regard to HEI/employer networks in Egypt and Morocco. This analysis will identify where those links are already established, where they need strengthening, and where none exist.

Deliverable:

- A compendium of the networks which exist between HEIs and employers in Egypt and Morocco.

Outcome:

- Awareness of where NA HEIs have good links with employers, where they need to be strengthened, and where there are none. This will lead on to WP4 and the creation of regional HEI/employer networks.

Methodological Framework

We will use an **appreciative inquiry** methodological framework.

Appreciative Inquiry

In appreciative inquiry, attention is paid to “what works”, and exploring positive potential. Five principles of appreciative inquiry have been identified by Bushe (2013). These are:

1. **Constructionist principle** argues that people co-construct the organizations they inhabit
2. **Simultaneity principle** argues that discussing systems and change are essential processes in achieving change; systems move in the direction of the questions that are most actively discussed
3. **Poetic principle** argues that words chosen for inquiry invoke sentiments and understandings, and in doing so can provoke change
4. **Anticipatory principle** argues that what is done today is guided by visions of the future
5. **Positive principle** argues that sustainable change requires positive affect.

As a methodology, then, appreciative inquiry focuses upon the positive practices which need to be nurtured, and the attitudes and language of those who seek change. More importantly for this work package, it argues that the contributions of individuals as well as organizations must be acknowledged. Clouder and King (2015) identify three key factors which are essential to successful appreciative inquiry studies:

- 1) The first factor is to involve the right people. The real world view of people who fully understand and live the experience is crucial. The right research team is vital to the success of the research; a positive attitude, unconditional positive regard, empathy and reflective capability are all necessary. Together, participants and researchers need a commitment to the principle of co-created change; this includes people of influence, such as managers in HE, policy makers or funders.
- 2) Secondly, the appreciative inquiry process requires rigorous attention to detail; it involves keeping a good focus, careful framing of questions and delicate management of data collection methods in order to maintain the focus on ‘what works’.
- 3) Thirdly, well developed analytical capability is crucial. Adept analysis of all viewpoints and a high degree of reflexivity – even scepticism – on the part of the research team are needed to promote the trustworthiness of findings.

Appreciative inquiry in the PACES project

An appreciative inquiry methodology means that we believe that, while we have expertise in supporting students with disabilities, project partners are experts in practices in their own institutions. We are keen to work with partners to identify best practices and improvements to those practices and to recognize the important contributions of students as well as staff.

Data Collection Methods and Analysis

Throughout Work Package 1, there will be three separate phases of data collection which will contribute to the required deliverables. Although Coventry University is responsible for the overall implementation of this work package, all partners will contribute to the provision of knowledge and practices, and the student focus groups will be conducted by research staff within the NA partner institutions.

Data Collection Methods

- 1) Online survey collecting information about current services and structures in place for supporting students with disabilities. The survey will also capture information about current links between HEIs and employers.
- 2) Partner institutions in Morocco and Egypt will conduct focus groups with students with disabilities (minimum five students per HEI), in order to evaluate the students' levels of satisfaction and whether their expectations have been met.
- 3) Partner institutions will provide examples of good practice to be considered for inclusion within the Good Practice Guide, using a template provided by the Coventry University research team.

Data Analysis

- 1) The survey includes a combination of quantitative and qualitative questions which ask NA partners for demographic and institutional information and for examples of relationships with local or national employers. The results will be analysed and collated 'by hand', using widely available software such as Microsoft Office.
- 2) Focus groups with students with disabilities will be conducted by researchers within each NA partner institution, and transcripts will be translated and sent to the Coventry University partners for analysis and synthesis and for inclusion within the report. Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) will be conducted using NVivo qualitative analysis software, and will focus on any needs or challenges identified by students which were not included within the survey responses.
- 3) Good practice examples provided by NA partners will be evaluated by the work package lead in order to select the examples to be included in the Good Practice Guide.

Ethical Approval

Ethical approval will be sought from Coventry University Research Ethics Committee for both the survey and the focus group schedule, and partners will also be asked to seek approval from their institutional ethics board. Ethical considerations are of significant importance throughout the data collection process, particularly with regard to conducting the focus group interviews with students who have disabilities.

Appendix 1

Needs analysis survey

Erasmus+ project: PACES Initial survey questions

This questionnaire is part of Work Package 1 of the PACES project. The overall objective of PACES is to set up a programme of initiatives in universities in Egypt and Morocco in order to enable higher education students with disabilities to access assistive technology and support services, and to build networks of employers and HE institutions within the partner countries in order to assist employers to understand the needs and skills of people with disabilities.

This questionnaire asks about the current situation and practices in your university. Please make sure you have read the Work Package 1 Research Design and Methodological Framework document, which has been emailed to all of you.

If you have any questions, please contact Jacqueline Cawston at j.cawston@coventry.ac.uk or Sarah Kate Merry at sarah.merry@coventry.ac.uk.

Your Institution

1. What is the name of your university?
2. How many students attend your university?
3. How many campuses does your university have? [1 / 2 / 3 / 4 or more]
4. Does your university have physical accessibility for students or staff with disabilities? (for example lifts, wheelchair ramps, widened doors) [Yes / No / Don't know]
 - a. Please add any additional information below.
5. Does your university have any connection with projects or organisations which support staff or students with disabilities? (for example regional or national societies for people with disabilities) [Yes / No / Don't know]
 - a. If Yes, please give details.

Students with Disabilities

6. How many students attending your university have disclosed a disability? (If you do not know, please type 'dk' in the box.)
 - a. Of the students who have disclosed a disability, how many are:
 - men
 - women
 - unknown

Any additional comments:

7. Please indicate the different types of disabilities that have been disclosed across the student population, with numbers if available.

Hearing impairment

Visual impairment

Mobility impairment

Autism

Learning disability (dyslexia, dysgraphia, ADHD, etc)

Other

If Other, please provide details.

Any additional information:

8. If your university has any support clubs or societies specifically for students with disabilities, please list them below.

Support for Students with Disabilities

9. Please list any departments or offices within the university with responsibility for supporting students with disabilities (for example Student Services).
10. Please list any staff members who have specific responsibility for supporting students with disabilities or who are actively involved with them.

Technology and Assistive Technology

11. How many computers in your university are accessible to students with disabilities? (for example have large keyboards, screen readers, joysticks or trackballs)

12. Please use the list below to show the accessibility tools which are available to your students:

Large keyboard

Joystick

Screen reader

Screen magnifier

Speech-to-text input software

Braille keyboard

Braille terminal

Braille printer

Digital audio recorder

Video recorder

Other

- a. If you selected Other, please give details

13. Do you provide assistive hardware to students with disabilities? (for example joysticks, laptops, tablets/iPads, mobile phones)

Any additional information:

14. Who provides support and maintenance for the assistive technology at your university?

15. Does your university use a LMS (Learning Management System) or VLE (Virtual Learning Environment) such as Moodle or Blackboard?

- a. Is your LMS/VLE accessible for students with disabilities? (for example can a student change the font size or colours on screen, can it be used with a screen reader)

Employability Support

16. What sort of employability support and employability skills training do you provide to your students as a whole? Please give details.
17. Is employability support and training available specifically for students with disabilities? If so please provide details.

Relationships with Employers

18. Does your university partner with employers in order to provide work experience or internships for students during or immediately after their studies? If so, please provide details.
 - a. If you work with companies to provide employment for students, does this also include students with disabilities? [Yes / No / Don't know]
19. Who is the person responsible for dealing with these relationships? Please provide a contact email.
20. Please provide the names of the employers/companies you work with most often (maximum of ten).

Thank You!

Thank you very much for completing the survey.

If you have any questions or concerns, or if you would like to discuss your answers to the survey, please contact Jacqueline Cawston at j.cawston@coventry.ac.uk or Sarah Kate Merry at sarah.merry@coventry.ac.uk.

Appendix 2

Focus group researcher guide and interview schedule

Approach to focus groups

We will be using a semi-structured approach to the focus groups. This means that you should ask all of the questions included in this document, but if you think that anything should be added or if you would like to explore the students' answers in more detail, please ask additional questions.

Before the focus group

- Recruit at least five students for the focus group. If any of them would prefer to meet in smaller groups, or to be interviewed alone, please do your best to accommodate this.
- Adapt the participant information form for your own university.
- Provide the participant information form to the students 2-3 days in advance of the focus group, and read through it with participants if necessary.
- Decide whether it is better to use video-recording or audio-recording for your focus group. It is always best to have a back-up if possible. If you are audio-recording, please try to use two different devices such as a digital recorder and a phone. If you are video-recording, we recommend that you also take an audio-recording as a back-up.
- Read through the questions contained in this document and decide if anything needs to be added, or if it is not relevant to your institution. If you amend the focus group questions, please send the updated version to Sarah at sarah.merry@coventry.ac.uk.
- Read through the information that was submitted to Coventry University about the assistive technology available at your institution, and the support for students with disabilities, so that you are familiar with the details. If you do not have access to this information, please contact Sarah.
- You should have two researchers present in the focus group. The first person should ask the questions, and the second should take notes and identify key issues as they emerge. You can then discuss these issues with the students at the end of the focus group, if appropriate.

Beginning the focus group

- Tell the participants if and how the focus group is going to be recorded.
- Let participants know that the focus group could take up to an hour, and tell them that they can request breaks at any time, or can ask to be interviewed alone instead.
- Make sure that all participants have read and understood the participant information form and that they agree to participate.
- Make sure that all participants have read, understood and signed the focus group consent form. Students can provide verbal consent instead if this is recorded, or someone else can sign the consent form on their behalf, as long as there is some evidence of the student's consent.
- Make sure that you have all of the information requested in the Student Focus Group Participants document.

Asking the questions

- Questions in **bold** are the essential questions that you must ask the students.
- Questions in *italics* are additional questions – please think about these before the focus group. Depending on your institutional context and the student answers to the bolded questions, it may not be necessary to ask all of these questions.

If you wish to follow up on students' answers by asking additional questions which are not listed here, please do so. As mentioned above, if you think some of the questions are not appropriate for your university and you want to change them, please let Sarah know as soon as possible.

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

- **What kinds of technology do you use to help you when you are studying at the university? (for example mobile phone, iPad, laptop, audio recorder, digital texts)**
- **What do you use this technology for? (for example recording lectures, making notes, writing assignments)**
 - *Is this technology provided by the university, or do you bring it yourself?*
 - *How and where do you use it? For example, in a lecture or when studying in the library?*
 - *Do you use the same technology when you are at home?*
 - *Is there any technology which the university provides but that you definitely do not use?*
- **What kind of support, if any, do you get as a student with a disability?**
 - *Do you feel supported by your lecturers? Is there any difference between the support from different lecturers?*
- **If you use assistive technology, does the university provide technical support? Where do you go to if there is a problem or something breaks?**
- **Has anyone ever done a needs assessment with you? This means that they look at your particular needs and work with you to understand how the university can support you.**
- **How involved in university life do you feel, as a student with a disability?**
- **Do you live in halls of residence with other students, or do you live at home? Or somewhere else?**
- **Are you a member of any student groups?**
- **Are there any groups specifically for students with disabilities that you know of? If so, do you attend them?**

- *If there are groups for students with disabilities, are these formal (created and supported by the university) or informal, student-organised groups?*
- **Is there anything that is particularly good about your experience as a student with a disability at this university?**

If they do not know how to respond to this, you can ask them to consider any support they get from lecturers, physical accessibility, the assistive technology available, support from technicians, administrative staff, or other students. However, try not to direct them too much!

- **What would make your university experience ideal?**

If they do not know how to respond to this, you can ask them to consider physical accessibility, institutional support, their interactions with lecturers, other staff, and other students. However, try not to direct them too much!

- **Are you interested in going on to further study?**

- **Do you know what you would like to do as a job after you graduate?**

- *What sort of employment do you think that your course prepares you for?*
- *Do you think that the technology that you currently use will enable you to confidently go into employment in this field?*
- *What other types of support do you think would help you to make the transition from university to employment? (for example training in CV construction and interview technique, or work experience opportunities)*

- **Is there anything that we haven't discussed that you would like to mention?**

The person who was taking notes should summarise the most important points that they identified throughout the focus group. Ask the participants if they agree that these are the most important points, and see if they agree on the most important issues.

Ending the focus group

- Thank the participants for taking part in the focus group.
- Remind the students of the details of participant consent and let them know that they can withdraw their permission for their data to be used, if they wish.
- Both researchers should then take some time to write about their experience of running the focus group and the most important points from the discussion. These should be **written in English (or translated)** and then sent to Sarah at sarah.merry@coventry.ac.uk **within 2 days of the focus group.**

Appendix 3

Focus group information for participants

PACES Project: Participant Information

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important to understand why the research is taking place and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully, and ask **[name of researcher at university]** if you have any questions. The PACES project is a collaborative project between universities in Egypt, Morocco, the UK, Spain, Greece, and Slovenia. This project is designed to increase accessibility to higher education and employment for students with disabilities at **[name of university]** and others in Egypt and Morocco. It will do so by working with universities to identify current practices, which is why you are being invited to participate in this project.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been approached because you are a student with a disability at **[name of university]**. We would like to find out what you think is working well and what you think can be improved.

Do I have to take part?

No, it is voluntary.

What do I have to do?

We would like to run a focus group, which is an interview with you and some of your fellow students. We will be talking about your experiences of the support available to students with disabilities at your university, about the assistive technology that you use, and about your plans after you finish your current course. With your permission, it will be audio-recorded and written up for our records. You have a right to review the recording and the written record, and you can withdraw your permission for your data to be used if you wish. If you would prefer to participate in an individual interview with the researcher, then we can arrange that instead.

Data protection and confidentiality

Any private information, such as your contact details, will be kept confidential, meaning that no-one other than **[name of researcher at institution]** will have access to it, and it will be deleted at the end of the project in October 2020. It is up to you whether your name is used with any quotes from the focus group. We can either acknowledge you by using your name, or use a pseudonym, which means that we will use a fake name. The results of the focus group, when they have been written up, will be shared in a variety of places, including (but not restricted to): the project website, project reports available on the project website, Facebook, and Twitter.

What are the risks involved in this project?

It is important to know that if you choose to allow us to use your data from the focus groups this will be available online to anyone and cannot be deleted after it has been made public.

We are able to use a different name for your focus group data, which means that you cannot be identified, but deciding whether or not you are going to allow this is an important decision.

What are the benefits of taking part?

The main benefits of taking part are that you will be playing an important role in improving support for students with disabilities at **[name of university]**. It is likely that these improvements will then lead to progress across the region and possibly internationally. Your contribution to this project is essential in ensuring the success of the PACES project.

What if I decide I don't want to participate, or want to withdraw my data?

If you decide you want to withdraw your permission for the focus group data to be used, then you may do so for up to two days after the data has been collected. You can do this by contacting **[name and contact details of researcher at institution]**.

What will happen with the results of the study?

The findings from this study will be published in the final project report and further publications in order to distribute what we have learned more widely. These will be shared online, so anyone with an internet connection will be able to view them, and may also be published in a printed form.

Who is organising and funding the research?

The PACES project has been funded by the European Commission funding agency Erasmus+. The coordinators of the project are Coventry University, UK, who are also responsible for the research aspect of this project.

Who has reviewed this study?

This study has been reviewed and approved by Coventry University Ethics Committee, UK. It has also been approved by **[insert partner university ethics details]**.

Contact and complaint details

We hope that you will enjoy taking part in this project. However, if you have any concerns and you want to complain, please contact **[name and contact details of researcher and PACES project coordinator at university]**.

Appendix 4
Focus group consent form

**Participant Consent Form
PACES Project**

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. I have read the participant information sheet about the PACES project.
2. I understand what the project is about.
3. I am happy to take part in a focus group interview as part of the data collection for this project.
4. I understand that the interview will be recorded and I know that this will only be listened to by the researchers.
5. I understand that I can change my mind about taking part at any point during the project.

I give permission for my personal information to be used to identify me in any write-ups of the focus group.

OR

I wish to remain anonymous in any write-ups of the focus group.

Participant Signature Date

Name of Researcher Date

Researcher Signature

Appendix 5

Focus Group Participant Information form

Student Focus Group Participants

This information will only be available to the project researchers who are running this evaluation. But if you don't want to share this information then you **do not have to**. You can share as little or as much information as you want.

Please let the researcher know if you would like to have this document in another format, such as larger font, on a different colour of paper, or if you would prefer to tell them this information for them to write down instead.

About the student

Name: _____

Age: _____

Gender: _____

What is the nature of your disability? Please provide as much information as you want to.

About your course

Course of study: _____

Year of study: _____

Did you have any difficulties enrolling on this course? Please explain if possible.

Appendix 6

Template for submission of good practice example

Please complete details of **one good practice** within your university (in English, please) and return to sarah.merry@coventry.ac.uk by **Friday 6 April 2018**.

Please also be prepared to **present your good practice at the project meeting in Coventry** on 18 April. Thank you!

Good Practice		
[title of project/activity]		
University	Country	Target Groups
Objectives of the project/activity (maximum 4)		
1.		
Fast Facts about the Project/Activity: (maximum 5)		
[brief information about the project/activity]		
Focus of the Project/Activity: (maximum 300 words)		
Challenges for Students with Disabilities: (maximum 150 words)		
[barriers for students which this project helps to overcome]		
Challenges for the University: (maximum 150 words)		
[difficulties in supporting students with disabilities, which this project can help to overcome]		
Particular relevance of the Good Practice for Students with Disabilities: (max. 300 words)		
Quote: (please include a quote from staff or students about the good practice)		
Photograph: (please include a photograph which illustrates the good practice)		