High Impact Modules (HIMs) project 2023

BACKGROUND

The main objective of the HIMs project is to improve the success rate of modules that are experiencing lower pass rates by pinpointing the critical areas requiring support and concentrating available resources on those modules. The Department for Education Innovation offers assistance with module reviews through its data analytics team, instructional designers, educational consultants, and tutoring support. In the past, the interventions implemented on high-touch modules have led to significant improvements in their pass rates. As a result, the HIMs project received the 2022 Catalyst Award for Student Success from Anthology, an international accolade.

The module review process takes a team- and data-based approach. For each module review, an analysis is conducted to determine the specific issues affecting the module's performance regarding curriculum, assessment, policies and practices, support services, communication, students, and lecturers.

The review process is based on a combination of quantitative and qualitative data, as well as stakeholder insights. Some potential causes of poor student performance in these modules include:

- Curriculum: the structure of the programme, alignment, content of the module, prior knowledge/ skills, admission requirements, and credits (notional hours)

- Assessment (formative and summative): anticipated outcomes, quality, marking, moderation, level, nature, weights, quality assurance, and cognitive demand

- Teaching and learning: student involvement, prerequisites, prior knowledge, essential concepts, clickUP content, learning materials, study guides, communication, and cognitive demand

- Student data: readiness, engagement, class attendance, dropout rates, deregistration rates, early alerts, and formative assessment

- Policies and practices: timetable, facilities, prerequisites, student support (including lecturer availability, tutors, and FSAs)

- clickUP (LMS): design, activities, assessment, communication

The interventions are categorised into two levels based on the size and performance of the module:

1. High-touch modules (pass rate < 75% & enrolment > 500): They receive dedicated team support from EI, access to data in clickUP dashboards and HEDA, formative evaluations through surveys, further data analysis, and a structured module review. In addition, the deputy deans pay special attention to these high-touch modules and report on their progress at Tshebi.

2. Medium-touch modules (pass rate < 70% & enrolment < 500): which receive data as well as negotiated support from EI.

HIGH IMPACT MODULES (HIMS) PROJECT PROCESS

To support the improvement of low-performing modules, the following six-step process is employed:

Step 1: Deputy Deans identify the HIMs in their faculties. They could use the HIMs dashboard using their own or the suggested selection criteria.

Suggested criteria for selection of modules:
- High-touch modules (pass rate < 75% & enrolment > 500)
- Medium-touch modules (pass rate < 70% & enrolment < 500)

Step 2: Deputy Deans for Teaching and Learning collaborate with the Heads of Departments and lecturers. They can activate the process by sending an email to *tshebi@up.ac.za.* The HERI EI team will upload the lecturers to a Microsoft Teams channel and provide training on how to complete the self-evaluation report.

Step 3: Lecturers complete the module self-evaluation report and notify Deputy Deans for Teaching and Learning, Head of Department, or module coordinator when finished.

Step 4: Based on actionable data from the module self-evaluation report, Deputy Deans for Teaching and Learning, Heads of Departments, or module coordinators can request support from the relevant sections of the Department for Education Innovation, including:
- Education Consultants to help with teaching and learning quality, assessments, and curriculum issues.
- Instructional Designers to assist with clickUP content, student and lecturer engagement, and course/learning design and setting up the Retention Center in clickUP as an early warning system.
- SFTS EI team to support with formative mid-semester surveys to identify possible student issues.
- Tutorial funding for these modules throughout the course.
- The Head of Department collaborate with the Instructional Designer and Educational Consultant to identify suitable training courses for the lecturer.

Step 5: Evaluation of module interventions and outcomes: The lecturing team evaluates the module interventions and outcomes in the Notebook section facilitated by the module coordinator and provides a report or self-reflection survey to the Head of Department and Deputy Deans at the end of the semester.

Step 6: Reporting on the interventions at a Tshebi meeting: Heads of Departments or Deputy Deans give feedback on the impact of the interventions at a Tshebi meeting, which presents and discusses data of high-impact service modules across the phases of progression and arrives at actionable recommendations for follow-up by Deputy Deans.

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