

**Title: The Role of Higher Education: educator and student perspectives**

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### **Abstract:**

#### **Session Learning Outcomes**

- By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:
- Outline reasons as to why students come to university
- Discuss the changing nature of those reasons as the students experience university
- Highlight the importance of the first year experience on students' views on the purpose of higher education
- Compare and contrast educator and learner expectations of higher education

#### **Session Outline**

- Key issues to be addressed are:
- Educator expectations as to why students pursue higher education
- Student expectations of higher education
- The effect of experiencing higher education on student goals and expectations
- The role of educators in meeting student expectations

#### **Session Activities and Approximate Timings**

Please provide an indication of how the session will be structured and how activities and discussion will be facilitated. For discussion papers please include a few indicative questions which will focus the discussion element.

The discussion will begin with 2 questions:

1. What do we as educators think higher education should offer students?
2. What expectations do we think students have as they enter higher education?
3. If there are discrepancies between (2) and (3), why is that?

A short research paper will then be introduced based on the findings of a survey carried out on first year science students at the University of St Andrews. At 9am on their very first day a class of 120 students were asked why they had come to university (open question); then, on the last day of their first year the same question was asked of a related class (due to modularisation not all of the original class were present, but the majority were), as well as asking what they thought of their first year as a whole. The results of this survey will be reviewed, and the following questions posed in the light of these findings:

1. If these are the student expectations, how should we respond?
2. To what extent do we have a responsibility to help students achieve their goals?

In order to encourage discussion of these questions, selected mission statements from universities, here in the UK and abroad, will be distributed with the hope that we can draw upon these to

corporately reflect and bring together a clear vision of the roles and responsibilities between educator and learner in higher education.

## References

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