

Introduction

SEDA is the independent professional association for all staff engaged in educational development in higher education (HE), working with both staff and students to promote innovative and effective practices. SEDA is driven by its members and exists to advance education, particularly through improvement of educational and professional development in university and college-based higher education across the UK and, increasingly, internationally.

This paper outlines SEDA's Strategic Objectives for the next five years.

About SEDA – Our Mission and Values

SEDA's mission is to enhance HE, through educational and professional development, for the benefit of students, staff and the wider public. SEDA does this by offering scholarly and accessible developmental resources and opportunities to everyone involved in positive educational change and innovation in HE.

SEDA is a **values-driven** organisation, committed to educational development, and underpinned by the following values:

1. Developing understanding of how people learn
2. Practising in ways that are scholarly, professional and ethical
3. Working with and developing learning communities
4. Valuing diversity and promoting inclusivity
5. Continually reflecting on practice to develop ourselves, others and processes.

Strategic Context

SEDA was formed over 25 years ago and, since that time, the higher education sector has experienced a period of significant change and increasing complexity. Currently, some of the contextual factors driving change are contradictory, including the need to respond to less funding being available for educational development at a time of greatest need. For example:

1. Quality measures – There is a need for institutions to be more accountable to students, parents and the wider public in relation to the fees charged and potential return on investment. At undergraduate level, this is in part due to the implementation of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), managed by the newly created Office for Students (OfS), which is due to be expanded to scrutiny at subject-level. This has given renewed focus on the enhancement of teaching and the quality of the student learning experience in relation to student outcomes. Educational development has a large role to play in improving outcomes for students and in turn for the institutions themselves.
2. Funding - Several factors are likely to impact significantly on admissions to higher education and therefore fee income – for example, demographic data indicates that there are fewer young people available to enter HE. In addition, the withdrawal of the UK from the European Union (Brexit) has the potential to impact negatively on recruitment of international students from both EU and non-EU countries.

3. Student diversity and breadth of provision - The broadening of access to HE continues to occur, not only through widening participation activities but through types of programme e.g. degree apprenticeships, online Masters programmes, credit accumulation models and other non-traditional study patterns. The complexity of the sector presents challenges for educational development as HE can no longer be thought of in terms of 'traditional' programme structures and on-campus learning.
4. Staff diversity and breadth of provider – In turn, the number and type of HE providers has increased, with growth in college-based higher education plus smaller and independent universities. Competition in the marketplace, fluctuations in student numbers and overall reduction in funding have created the need for a more flexible workforce with many more associate lecturers effectively employed on zero hours contracts, making access to continuing professional development more difficult for them. It is also becoming less likely that educational development is provided by a large central development unit.
5. Professionalisation – Accountability of HE providers has resulted in the need for staff to gain qualifications and/or recognition in teaching and supporting learning. There is now a greater diversity of professional bodies, networks, regulatory frameworks etc, and the existence of alternative providers for Fellowship-type recognition.
6. Internationalisation – Educational development has always drawn on international best practice and research, but it is increasingly a global sector. There are growing expectations that academic programmes of study reflect international cultural and curricular perspectives, and SEDA must likewise actively engage colleagues and perspectives from around the world. Many other professional bodies are seeking to expand their influence and footprint beyond the UK. Whilst SEDA remains a UK-based organisation, it has to have an internationally recognised standing.

As a consequence of the above contextual factors, there is a congested and potentially competitive market for SEDA to operate and thrive in. SEDA has to have a distinctive offering with a clearly identified and valued niche in this environment.

SEDA's Five Year Strategic Objectives

Set against this context, SEDA's objectives for the next 5 years are:

1. **To provide sector-leading outputs, activities and events that attract and support a varied range of people.** This includes those involved in educational innovation and change directly and in particular those who might not have previously thought of themselves as educational developers. Whilst SEDA has continued to grow its outputs, we must continue to expand our footprint so that we become the "go to" organisation for all staff engaged in educational development in higher education. Further, SEDA as a charity is well-placed to provide resources that can be used by educational developers who are more isolated or under resourced in their institutions, and for use with those teaching staff who may have limited access to professional development.
2. **To modernise SEDA's offer and to provide alternative ways for people to engage with our development provision.** For example through use of web-based technologies, social media and different ways of achieving fellowship recognition. This is imperative, not only to respond to the reduction in finances available in the sector to fund participation in online courses or attendance at events and conferences, but to exemplify practices and for SEDA to be more cost-effective in order to remain competitive.

- 3. To inform the sector of the value and benefits of educational development through SEDA's research activity and scholarly outputs.** A key element of SEDA's role is to stimulate scholarship and research-capability in educational development and to enhance the quality of research in this area. In view of the precariousness of some units and positions in the profession, part of this ongoing role will be to develop an evidence base that is able to influence HE managers and decision makers.
- 4. To develop strategic partnerships with other organisations and institutions, both nationally and internationally, to our mutual benefit.** This is not only for SEDA to thrive, but to ensure that SEDA has a clearly recognised and valued niche in the sector and to extend our support for educational developers both at home and globally. There is significant potential for SEDA to grow its international profile, through membership of ICED and in providing opportunities to share and disseminate practice through our various activities.
- 5. To ensure the appropriateness and sustainability of SEDA's governance.** As an organisation that exists to serve its constituency and one that is largely run by volunteers, SEDA needs to ensure that the committee structure is fit for purpose and that committee members are well-supported for their role, equipped to contribute fully from the outset and that the value of their contribution is recognised both within and outside SEDA. There is a need for SEDA to develop a suite of processes to achieve this.

Benefits to SEDA

This strategic plan will enable SEDA, over the next five years, to:

- raise our profile across the UK and internationally,
- enhance our membership proposition and value for money;
- increase our membership and assure our financial security.

A five-year timescale has been selected to straddle the terms of office of SEDA's leadership, and to provide incoming Co-Chairs with a degree of stability before having to revisit SEDA's direction.

Putting the plan into practice

Once approved, this strategic plan will be used to inform the development of SEDA's activities and outputs through guiding the work of the Executive and its sub-committees. It is expected that relevant objectives will be on the agenda of every committee meeting and committee chairs will be asked to report on progress against their objectives and associated targets at each Exec meeting

Approval and Review Process

These strategic objectives were planned through a facilitated discussion at the SEDA Executive Committee residential in June 2019. The document was subsequently written by Co-Chairs and circulated to committee chairs for comment before being further reviewed during the Autumn cycle of committee meetings. Committees were asked to propose their own quantitative and qualitative measures through which they can monitor and evidence progress towards their objectives. These include general measures that can be used to show how well we are doing in relation to objectives and/or specific targets e.g. 10% increase in membership or numbers of people participating in activities such as events and conferences. Progress against the overall strategic objectives will be reviewed every six months and will inform the risk register.

Theme	SEDA Values	Strategic Aim	Objective(s)	Committee with responsibility	How will we know how well we are doing? (quantitative and qualitative)	Delivery and reporting dates.
Activities & Outputs	Values 2, 3, 4, 5	O.1. To provide sector-leading outputs, activities and events that attract and support a wide range of people involved in educational innovation and change	a. To review and position SEDA's provision to be inclusive in meeting the initial and continuing development needs of all those who may be considered to have a role in educational development b. To ensure SEDA's membership proposition for institutions and individuals is clear, attractive and offers value for money c. To offer a range of ways for people to access and engage with SEDA's provision e.g. virtual, face-to-face, streaming, Skype, webinars d. To create resources in teaching and supporting learning that can be used for, or by, those teaching staff who may have limited access to professional development in their own institutions	All committees		Annually
			e. To increase institutions and courses accredited against PDF and through collaboration with other organisations f. To promote SEDA-PDF accreditation as complementary to	PDF Committee	•	

			Advance HE accreditation in the UK HE sector and beyond			
			g. To continue to review the rationale and format for SEDA conferences h. To increase the number of one-day events and to streamline organisation so that SEDA can be more agile and responsive	Conferences & Events Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nos. of events Attendance @ SEDA conferences & events 	
			i. To raise awareness of the benefits of SEDA Fellowships j. To create alternative routes to gaining SEDA recognition (e.g. direct application) k. To increase opportunities for offering SEDA membership to those engaging with SEDA's activities	Services and Enterprise Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institutional and Individual Memberships Nos. participating in courses, fellowships Success rate 	

Enabling Technologies	Value 5	O.2. To modernise SEDA's offer and to provide alternative ways for people to engage with our development provision	a. To grow SEDA's digital presence and impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. To promote all SEDA events and outputs through a co-ordinated and coherent campaign of marketing / activity ii. To review and update SEDA's website and its functionality to ensure that it is modern and fit-for-purpose iii. To use social media effectively to promote SEDA events, outputs and activities iv. To explore opportunities to make digital resources available to members 	Services and Enterprise Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tweets and blog posts • Website hits 	
			b. To model good practice in online and blended learning	Services and Enterprise Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of SEDA's online courses 	
Research	Values 1, 2	O.3. To inform the sector of the value and benefits of educational development through SEDA's research activity and scholarly outputs	a. To contribute to the scholarship that underpins and informs educational development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. To encourage and support SEDA members to undertake scholarly activity c. To promote SEDA's opportunities for showcasing scholarly outputs plus benefits for individuals d. To challenge and change the discourse of educational development 	Papers, Educational Developments Committee & Scholarship Committees plus IETI Editorial Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nos. SEDA Specials • Conf. abstracts submitted • Conf. abstracts accepted • IETI Impact factor • SEDA small grant bids 	Annual

			e. To develop an evaluation framework that can be used by institutions (including SEDA) to demonstrate the impact and benefits of educational development and to support TEF narratives			
(Inter)National Engagement	Value 3, 4	O.4. To develop strategic partnerships with other organisations and institutions, both nationally and internationally	a. To seek out opportunities to collaborate with other agencies whose remit relates to staff and educational development, for example through running jointly badged events, aligning other professional recognition with PDF awards b. To publicise opportunities to engage with SEDA's work through attending other conferences	Exec Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint events • Mapping of awards / frameworks 	
			c. To pursue opportunities and funding sources for international collaboration in relation to educational development d. To support international colleagues to develop capability in their own educational development contexts and to provide opportunities to share and disseminate good practice e. To develop a set of guidelines for SEDA when undertaking project work of this nature and to ensure that projects are appropriately costed to include administrative support	SEDA Project oversight sub group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nos. Projects • Bid success rate • Funding (£) • Outputs 	

			f. To ensure outcomes of projects are disseminated			
Governance	Value 5	O.5. To ensure the appropriateness and sustainability of SEDA's governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. To review the structure, membership and operation of all committees b. To develop processes for the operation of all committees plus committee members and consultants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i clear and specific terms of reference ii clear role description for committee members iii code of conduct set expectations of committee members and consultants iv statements on copyright and licensing v induction for new committee members vi a process for succession planning on all committees vii opportunities for prospective committee chairs to shadow and/or be mentored 	Exec Committee		Annually