

A CO-CREATED TOOLKIT TO ENHANCE SEKE ACTIVITY

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Background & Rationale

In 2019 the Office for Students (OfS) and UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) launched a call for projects within Higher Education that would: provide evidence of the ways in which Knowledge exchange (KE) activities involve or benefit students or graduates; demonstrate effective practice in KE that benefits students, make such knowledge available to the wider Higher Education sector; address evidenced issues of equality of opportunity and diversity and inclusion within existing KE activities.

The University of Portsmouth submitted a successful bid for a project, **Creative Students Creating Business (CSCB)**, to further explore these priorities.

The CSCB project's aim is to research, develop and test models of Student Engagement in Knowledge Exchange (SEKE), resulting in a practical toolkit for the UK Higher Education sector, that improves SEKE outcomes for students, academics and external organisations.

SEKEtoolkit.com

A number of requirements, around functionality and accessibility, were identified for the toolkit, including:

- open-access with no requirement for user log-on
- a simple and easy to navigate user interface
- a filtering system that facilitates quick searches, enabling all stakeholders to find relevant tools quickly
- the ability to scale up over time as the website matures

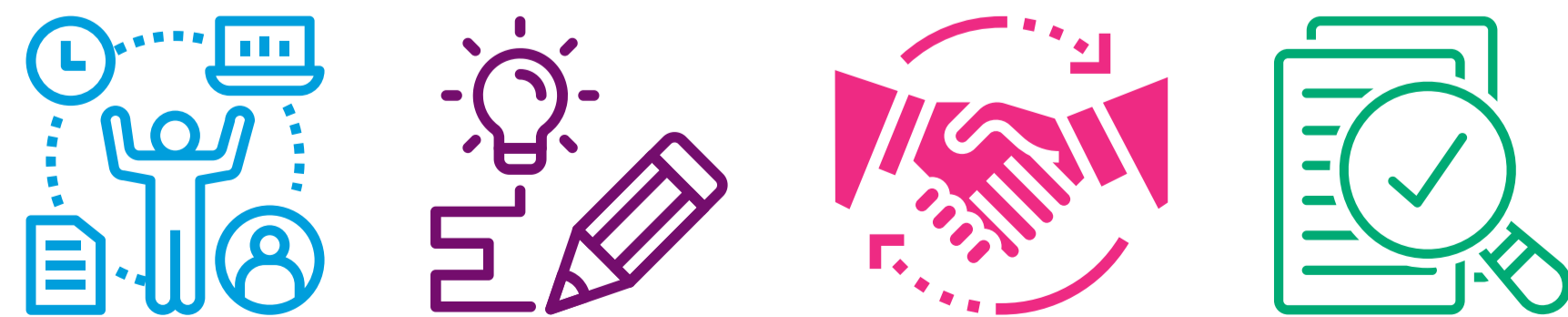
Based on these criteria, a number of platforms were evaluated and WebFlow was chosen as the platform to host the toolkit.

A template for drafting tools was created. This template was modified during the early stages of the co-creation process, based on feedback from the stakeholder groups. One of the modifications was the inclusion of a 'learning benefits' section for each tool, based on Anderson's revision of Bloom's taxonomy.

Academic engagement in the tool creation process supported the discovery of overarching themes for the tools. These themes are being incorporated into the digital filtering system.

Toolkit Key themes:

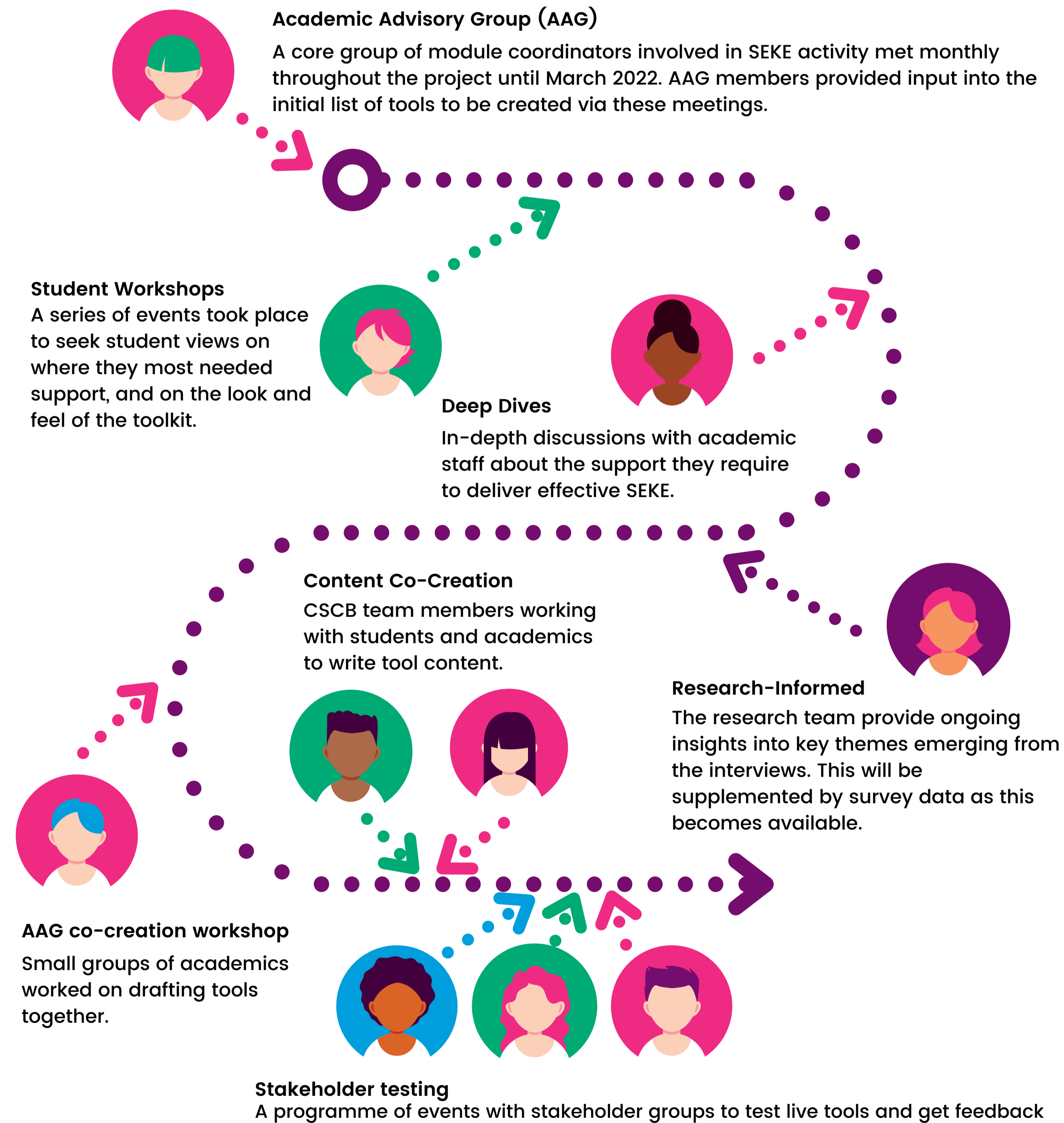
- Student knowledge and skills development
- Relationship Management Skills
- Module Design
- Assessment
- Recruitment to SEKE



The Co-Creation & Stakeholder Engagement Process

Our key stakeholders fall into 3 main groups: students, academics, and external collaborators. The student stakeholder group is further broken down into current students and recent graduates. Each group of stakeholders is included in the co-creation process.

The CSCB Project aims to engage 600 SEKE students and 200 KE actors, and investigate 100 SEKE projects at the University of Portsmouth.



Research-Informed Creation

Our students report that SEKE projects improve their ability to present themselves professionally, relate learning to future careers, and work in a team co-creating value with their clients. Good communication and collaboration are perceived as key success factors. Students fed back that they wanted opportunities for more client-based projects, more face-to-face activities, more frequent and effective feedback, and deeper relationships with organisations.

These and other findings have informed tool-creation around supporting students with discussing their SEKE experience in job applications and at interviews, working effectively in teams, and communicating with clients. There are also tools for staff who create SEKE modules giving guidance on what to include.



Evaluation

Some of the key challenges we have encountered on this project are:

- **Top-down v bottom-up approaches to theming of tools:** This relates to the challenges posed by creating tools that are research-informed rather than research-led due to parallel research and toolkit streams.
- **Challenge of engagement:** This incorporates the challenges of accessing details and adapting language to engage and incentivise different stakeholder groups.
- **Institutional data paucity:** There was a need to start from scratch in obtaining data on participation and engagement in SEKE learning.
- **SEKE Language:** There was an overall challenge of explaining SEKE to stakeholders where they had their own conceptions of what entailed knowledge exchange with students.

Next Steps

In the final stages of the project, feedback from the three stakeholder groups will help us with the copy and content of specific tools, the priorities for the 3 different groups, and how all the tools fit together as a suite or menu. A series of testing events will be taking place over the next 2 months.

Our Academic Advisory Group has paved the way for the foundation of a new Community of Practice, open to all stakeholders with an interest in improving SEKE activity. This launched in April 2022.

A number of Student Ambassador roles were created on the project team to improve engagement with student stakeholders. These Ambassadors act as a student voice for the project, both in a promotional capacity and participating in the co-creation of tools.