



**Guidelines for “Exchanges between practitioners and researchers
for research-informed practice” sessions – developed by WG5**

The present guidelines were developed by members of the ENIS WG5, with valuable input from the leadership of WG3 (during a workshop in Porto), and meant to serve the chairs and other members of the thematic WGs of the ENIS network, who might wish to organise an interactive exchange between researchers and practitioners, on a practice-based topic.

The format of such exchanges was piloted during the ENIS 2024 conference in Tbilisi, in an onsite (face-to-face) setting only, with 2 practitioners and 2 researchers, and 1 moderator. Nonetheless, the format could equally be applied in an online setting, and could also be delivered, in a shorter session, through an exchange between only 1 practitioner and 1 researcher.

Purpose of the session

The core idea of this session format is that, in an interactive, **interview-style format**, **practitioners** would have an in-depth **dialogue with researchers** on an ISM-related question or topic proposed by the practitioners, and that would help them advance their own practice (or that of the HEIs in their country) as follows:

- A. **1-2 practitioners** from the ENIS network outline, based on prior preparation, some **key questions/challenges encountered in their ISM practice** on a specific topic (e.g. anticipating upcoming student mobility flows; integrating international students on campus; etc.),
- B. **1-2 researchers** with related expertise are identified from the ENIS network. The researchers try to **summarise the existing research** (from their own work, as well as that of other scholars, if possible) that would provide some (partial) answers to the practitioners' questions above. When presenting, the researchers would try to 'translate' this academic evidence into a 'language' that is more easily accessible to practice-based professionals and policymakers.
- C. the **1-2 practitioners** would **then reflect on the applicability of these research findings** for their own work (or, for practitioners working at national level, for HEIs in their country), pointing to **remaining gaps** that could be explored through **further research** (and that might be helpful for researchers).
- D. The discussion would then be **opened to the wider public** to learn from other practices, discuss the applicability of research recommendations and bridge remaining gaps.

This could be delivered via the proposed **session outline** below.

Choice of common topic

The key element for the success of such sessions is the prior identification of a **common topic** by the participating practitioner(s) and researcher(s) in the session. Essentially, the area of interest of the practitioner(s) needs to match with the area of research/expertise of the participating researcher(s).

Ideally, the process would **start on the practitioner side**, with the identification of 1-2 burning questions spanning from the day-to-day work of the respective practitioner(s). **Alternatively**, if the first approach is not possible, the process could start with the identification of the researcher, and

based on his/her area of expertise, the practitioners could raise some real-life questions/challenges encountered in their practice.

Irrespective of which approach is followed, it is essential that the practitioner(s) and researcher(s) that will take part in the session have an **in-depth exchange prior to the session**, to agree on the **topic and question(s) to be addressed**. This can be organised either through online meeting(s) or in writing.

Nota bene

For the **researchers**:

- The **form** in which the **questions will be raised** by practitioners will very likely not resemble a typical research question. It's up to the researchers to clarify the scope of the question(s) with the practitioner(s) and to adapt them to a format that allows them to answer the question(s) based on own research or based on other scholarly articles.
- Practitioners often have many burning questions that they would like answers to. It is nonetheless advisable to stay with a **limited number of questions** (preferably 1 per practitioner), to be able to go in-depth in the topic, rather than too broadly, and risk staying only on the surface.
- When answering the questions try to be **as specific as possible and very clear** on which parts of the question can be answered, based on existing research, and which not. It is rather likely that the practitioners' questions cannot be answered in full, due to their complexity or specificity.

For the **practitioners**:

- The evidence summarised by the researchers might come in terms/scientific language that you might not fully grasp, despite their attempts to 'translate' the findings to a practitioner audience. If that is the case, do not hesitate to ask for a **clarification of terms and further adaptation**.

Proposed session outline

Total duration: **75 min.**

5 min.	Introduction by the moderator of the session, format and speakers
15 min.	Practitioners' needs – Question 1 5 min. for the Practitioner 1 to phrase the question and present the issue from a practice and/or policy point of view. 10 min. for the Researcher 1 to answer, based on existing research.

15 min.	Practitioners' needs – Question 2 5 min. for the Practitioner 2 to phrase the question and present the issue from a practice and/or policy point of view. 10 min. for the Researcher 2 to answer, based on existing research.
20 min.	Applicability of the research findings in practice Moderated discussion between the practitioners and researchers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practitioners reflect on which of the research findings that the researchers presented can be directly applied in practice, in their contexts, and how. • Researchers and practitioners suggest which other aspects need to be further researched, to provide practitioners with fully-fledged solutions to the challenges they had earlier identified (imagining the previous research does not answer all related questions).
15 min.	Q&A with the audience
5 min.	Wrap-up of the exchange by the moderator