Supporting Professionalism in Admissions

Professional Admissions in a changing environment: 2011 Entry and beyond

NSA Admissions to HE Conference - *19 October 2010*

Janet Graham, Director of SPA

What is SPA?

- SPA - the Supporting Professionalism in Admissions Programme

- Established in 2006 following the Schwartz Report *Fair Admissions to Higher Education 2004*

- Small team, with over 70 years management and practical experience between us in the HE admissions sector

- UK's independent and objective voice on HE admissions, reporting to the SPA Steering Group

What have we been doing?

- A central shared source of expertise and advice for institutions on strategy and policy on a wide range of admissions issues
- Published good practice statements and check lists – see www.spa.ac.uk
- Evidence base from: visits to over 130 institutions; events and activities round the UK. 207 different institutions have attended SPA events
- HEI survey (SPA External Evaluation report, June 2010) highlighted:
  - 66% thought SPA 'responsive' or 'very responsive' to their needs
  - SPA was strategically well-placed and proactively anticipated change
  - 88% engaged with SPA resources (events, website etc)

What does professionalism mean in an admissions context?

- Expertise of staff in HEIs working in admissions, recruitment and planning areas.

'Knowledge is of two kinds. We know a subject ourselves, or we know where we can find information upon it.'

Samuel Johnson (Boswell's The Life of Samuel Johnson 1791)

- Perceptions and realties of the admissions to HE process, fair and transparent?:
  - Views of senior managers in HEIs
  - Views of schools, colleges, parents, public and media
  - Government views

Context for professional admissions 2011 and beyond

David Willetts, Minister of State for Universities and Science, UUK speech, - 9 September 2010.

- Three main options, ‘an iron triangle’, being considered:
  1. cut the unit of resource per student, or
  2. reduce the number of students going to university, or
  3. expect graduates to pay a greater contribution to their education once they are earning.
- Efficiency savings *- doing more for less* - will be imperative
- Admissions to higher education has irrevocably changed - we are entering a new era.

Context for professional admissions 2011 and beyond

- Impact of the Browne Review -12 October – higher tuition fees will mean a new competitive market / differentiated system.

- The outcomes of the Comprehensive Spending Review - 20 October; cuts to the public HE funding 25% to 40% or more?

- HE White Paper to be published December 2010/ January 2011, aim to have a HE Bill in autumn 2011. Aim to implement from **2012/13**.

- Media interest in admissions **will** continue.

Context for professional admissions 2011 and beyond

- More qualifications and curriculum change throughout the UK
- More routes in to HE - vocational and apprenticeships, Wolf Review
- More flexible HE provision - part-time, HE in FE, blended and WB learning
- More public information about HE for potential students

Context for professional admissions 2011 and beyond

- New ways of widening participation, fair access and identifying disadvantage - use of contextual data via UCAS from 2012 entry
- Possible developments of the UCAS systems and services and major review and development of UCAS Tariff
- IT developments, data analysis, automated processes, CRM, social networking.

New pressures, new solutions: admissions 2011 & beyond

Planning now for this year and beyond:

- working with internal colleagues and learning from external colleagues
- can help manage the policy and processes more effectively
- needs to be underpinned by robust systems in terms of IT, good quality data and analysis
- requires the ability to use data for management, policy and process development
- training and professional development enable staff to keep up to date in a fast changing environment.

Professional admissions planning for 2011 and beyond

SPA Action Plan: Planning and Managing 2011 Admissions

- **Planning admissions**
  1. Overview
  2. Review
  3. Predict
  4. Enact

- **Collaboration** with internal and external colleagues

- **Mitigation** of risks in admissions planning and management
  1. Keep up to date
  2. Be ready

Professional admissions planning for 2011 and beyond

- Data, including ‘contextual data’ underpins successful planning and admissions decision making
- UCAS plan to deliver an initial basket of data to HEIs, free of cost, for 2012 entry
- Research by universities - operational and academic, peer review and discussion – academic research conference in pipeline for 2011
- SPA research - Are HEI research findings transferable across the HE sector? What more needs to be done?

Common basket of data HEIs would like to see

Educational Background "Hard Data"	Socio-Economic Background "Soft Data"
▪ Progression rates to higher education (% determined by cohort size) from school/college ▪ School performance – Average (mean) school GCSE performance for 5 A*-C GCSE (including English/Welsh Maths) ▪ Average (mean) school "best eight" GCSE performance ▪ Progression from Year 11 to further education ▪ Average (mean) of QCA points per qualification	▪ In receipt of (or entitled to) free school meal (school rates and individual) ▪ In receipt of (or entitled to) an Educational Maintenance Allowance (including levels) ▪ Lives in a low progression to higher education neighbourhood ▪ Socio-economic class IIIM-VII ▪ Have been in care for greater than six months

New pressures, new solutions: professional admissions

- Strategic leadership in admissions is an integral part of an institutions learning and teaching strategy and planning.
- An applicant experience strategy underpins leadership in admissions, it supports the management and processes of both academic and professional staff
- The benefits for the institution:
  - more integrated ways of working, with possible efficiency gains
  - enhanced staff professionalism and understanding of strategy
  - improved quality practices and procedures which may give competitive advantage and enhance reputation
  - ability to take advantage of external changes quickly

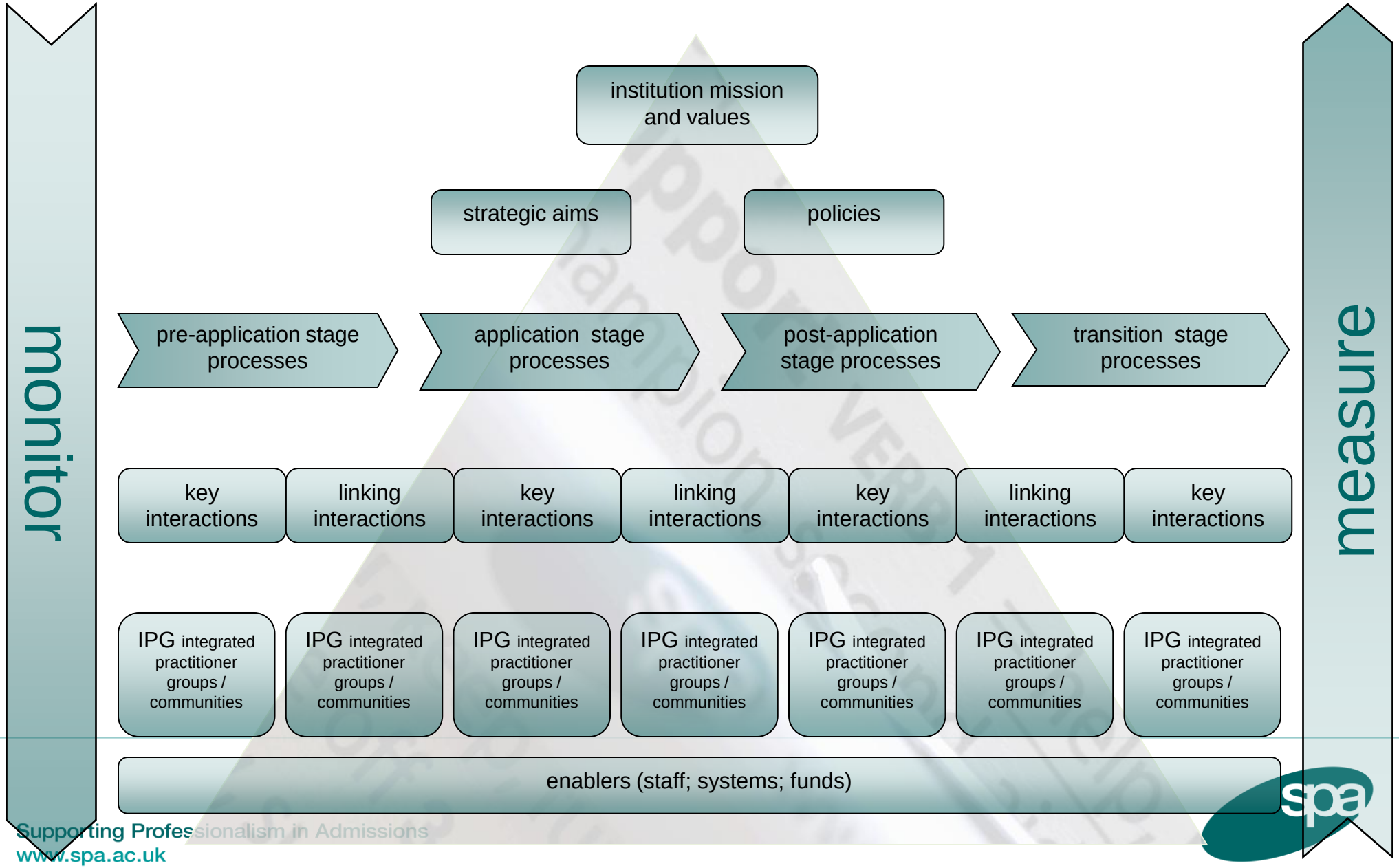
The applicant experience definition

- A behavioural view of ‘experience’

  Interactive participation and engagement, not a passive journey

- *Reviewed under four broad stages:*

The Applicant Experience Strategy Map



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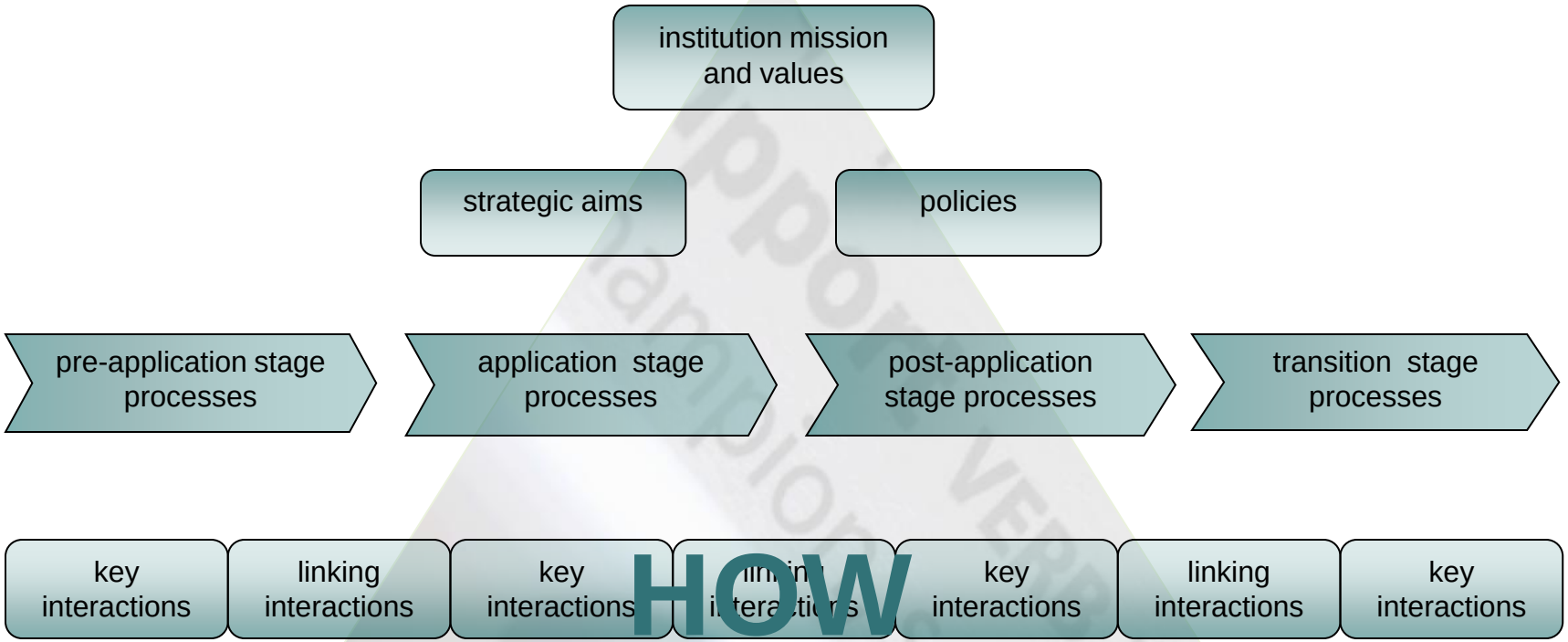

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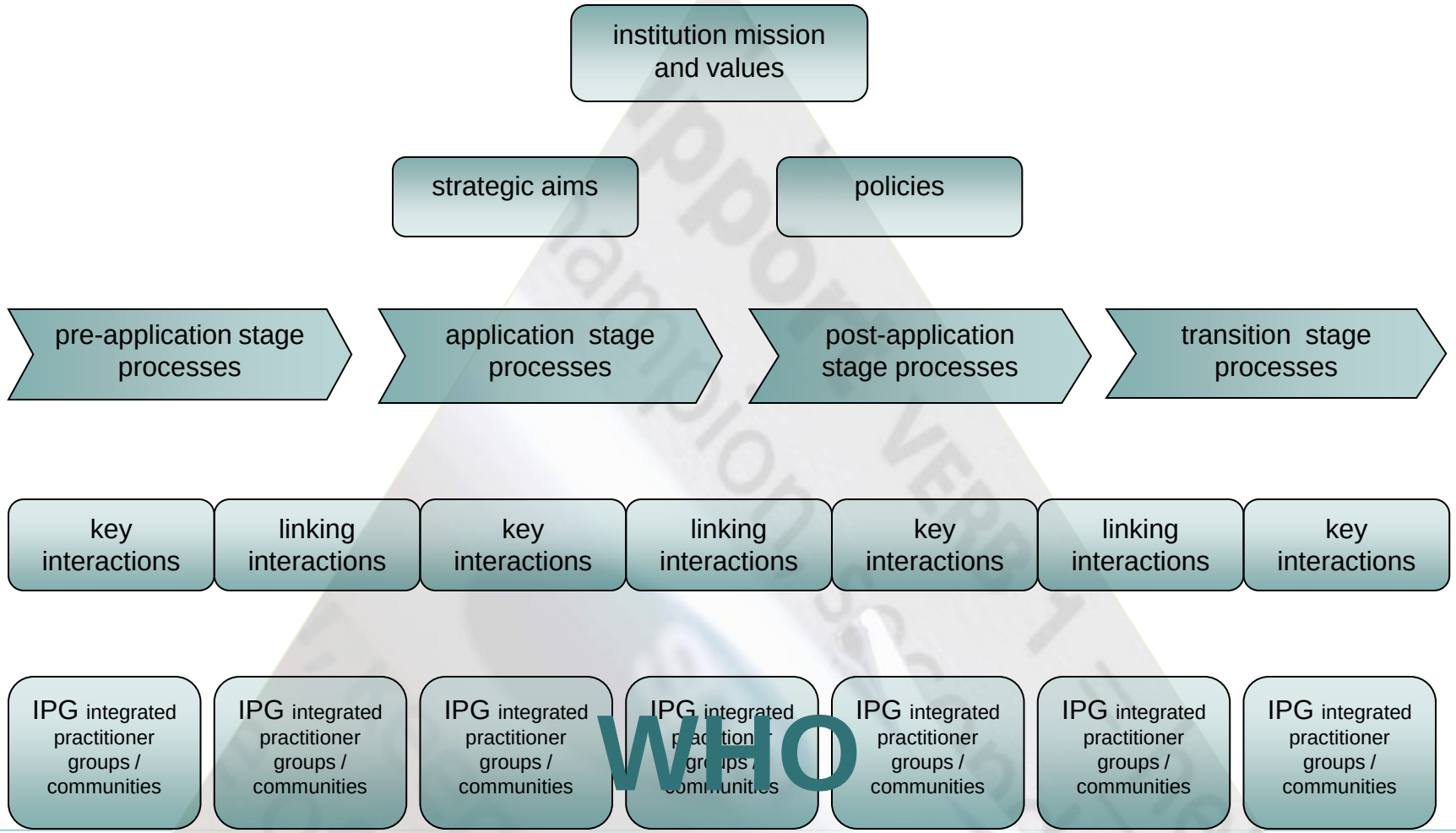

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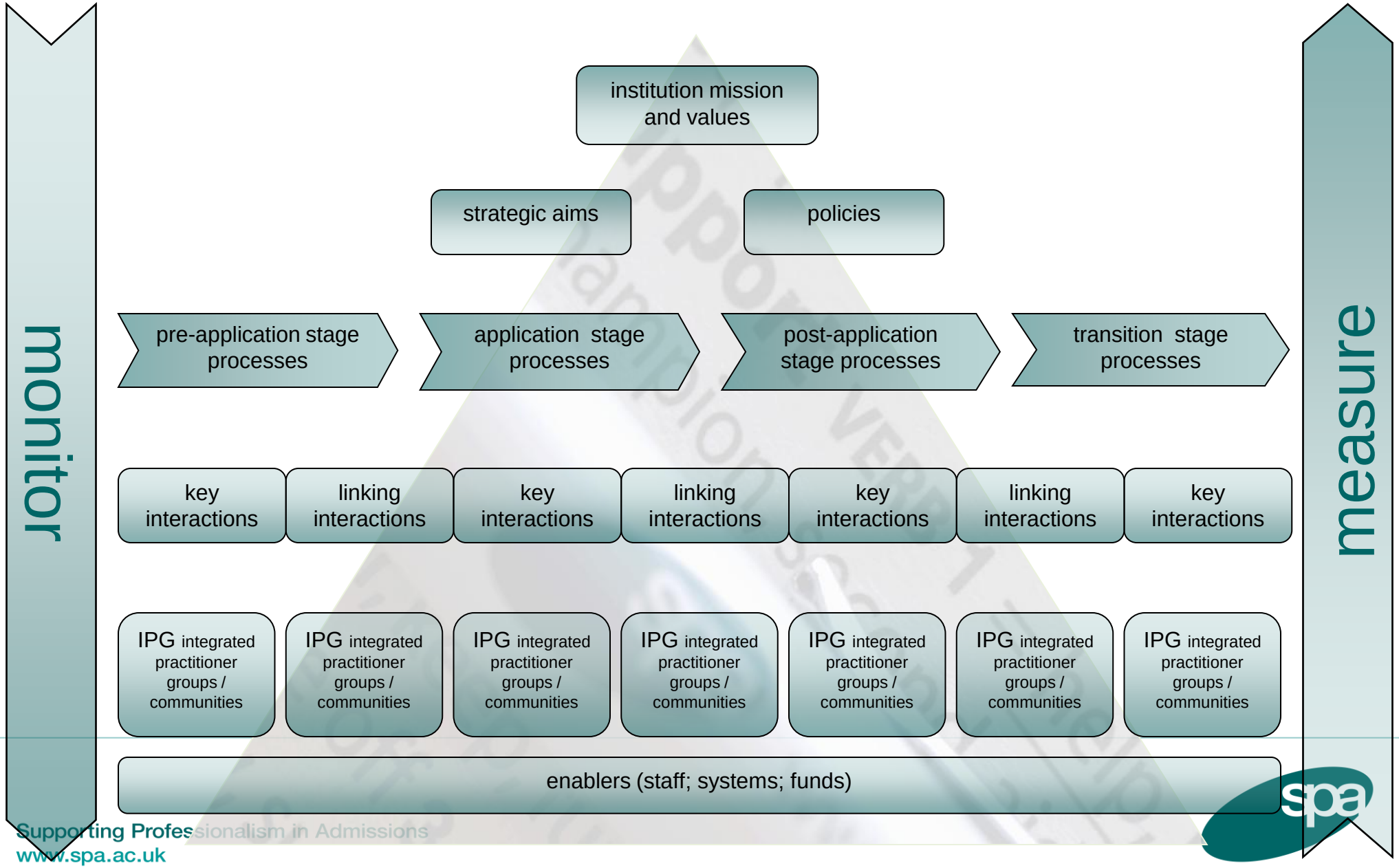

Thank you

SPA staff welcome the opportunity to discuss professionalism and planning with colleagues in HE

More information from: enquiries@spa.ac.uk or 01242 544891
www.spa.ac.uk