vygo

Higher Education
Support Ecosystem Platform Evaluation Guide

Universities spend millions on student support services, as they recognise their support ecosystem is critical to student outcomes. But these services are **disorganised** and **underperforming**. Use this guide to ensure your support ecosystem is being digitally enabled to deliver an **exceptional experience** for students and staff.

✓ From your tutors, mentors, advisors, coaches and alumni, organise & digitally enable your support ecosystem to ensure your students are tapping into the support they need, when they need it, wherever they are in the world.

✓ Empower your staff to create & manage industry leading student support services that are efficient, scaleable and driven by real–time data and insights.

✓ Integrate your student support services to ensure a simple, safe and compliant student experience, while reducing tech platform bloat.

This guide delivers a comprehensive framework to evaluate Support Ecosystem Platforms. As institution's combat student retention, experience and outcome challenges, use this guide as a resource to connect students to the support they need and ensure you're giving every student an equal opportunity to succeed.

The average university with ~30k students is administering 60+ unique student support services within their ecosystem. Traditionally these services have been disaggregated, competitive, highly administrative, high cost, low data, inconsistent and low performance.

Library

Careers Team

Faculties

Other Teams

= Unique Support Services (Tutoring, Mentoring, Industry, Alumni, Advisors, Workshops, Officers, LGBTIQ+, At–risk etc.)

= Unknown Support Services (Services unknown to senior staff and unmonitored)

89% of digital university leaders say their university is now prioritising **digital transformation** in their areas of student success and data to drive more retention and outcomes.

89%
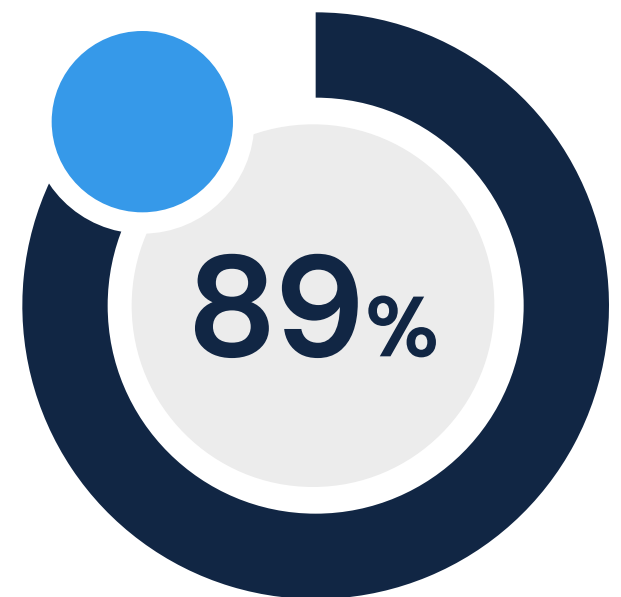
Not all support ecosystem strategies are created equal. Read on to learn the differences between the three common strategies in higher education.

With the rising importance of digital transformation in student support ecosystems there are various approaches universities can take.

| Approach	Benefits	Potential Drawbacks
Decentralised Point-Solutions Siloed problem solving without central coordination, strategy or oversight (Spreadsheets, Chronus, Facebook)	• Each school, team and program manager is able to purchase their own software and systems as they feel is appropriate for their student cohort.	• The support offering is a complex maze for students, staff & leaders. • Students more likely to fall through cracks • Inconsistent quality, accessibility and standards • High individual software and administrative costs • Low student engagement & ROI • High security & safety risk exposure (multitude of platforms) • Low centralised data to drive purposeful actions
Central Only Solution Removing support ability from de-central teams and offering only limited central support (Custom built software)	• All services reduced into one platform for a single platform experience for students and staff. • In theory, a mass reduction in services with an increased quality for remaining services. • Significant improvement in security of services and consistency of delivery	• Extremely long, difficult & expensive change management process • Unlikely to ever achieve full university wide staff buy-in • Low student personalisation and likely for students to fall through cracks • Low engagement & ROI • Limited data to drive purposeful actions • Low flexibility to respond to student needs quickly
Support Ecosystem Platform (SEP) One platform to aggregate, organise and enable all central and decentral support services (Vygo)	**Best Choice** • Organises the entire university's support ecosystem into one space for a simple student and staff journey. • Offers all support teams the choice running their program through the SEP via pro features or just being indexed & linked through the SEP. • Create personalised micro-ecosystem recommendations for every student • Significant improvement in security of services and consistency of delivery	

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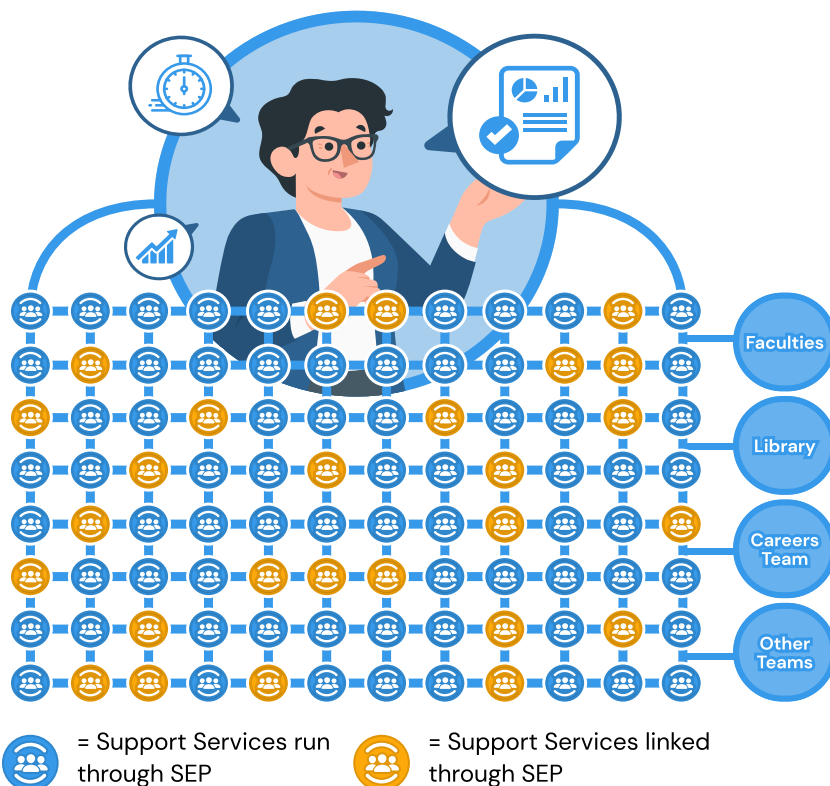
✅ **Services are unified & complementary**

✅ **Great experience for students & staff**

✅ **Highest engagement**

✅ **Holistic view of every student**

✅ **Easy to measure & drive insights**

✅ **Scaleable with lower admin burden**

✅ **Cost effective**

= Support Services run through SEP

= Support Services linked through SEP

✓ An easy-to-use, Support Ecosystem Platform that will unify the entire university support ecosystem.

✓ The ability to personalise each student's support journey at an individual support program and ecosystem level for their entire lifecycle.

✓ The ability to track all key engagement data across the ecosystem. Options for live insights surfaced to program managers & senior executives within the platform, through integrations with other university platforms & dashboards.
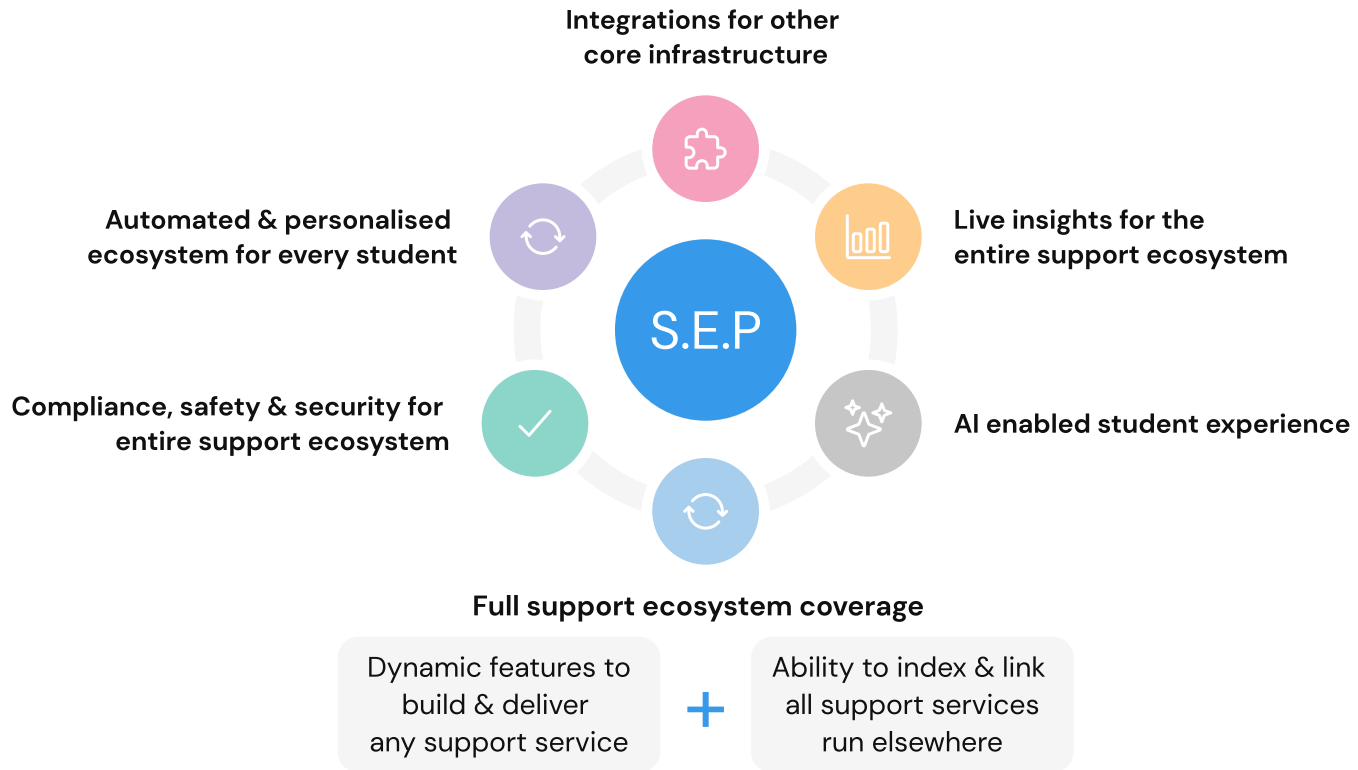
Support Ecosystem Platforms should simplify & personalise every students unique journey
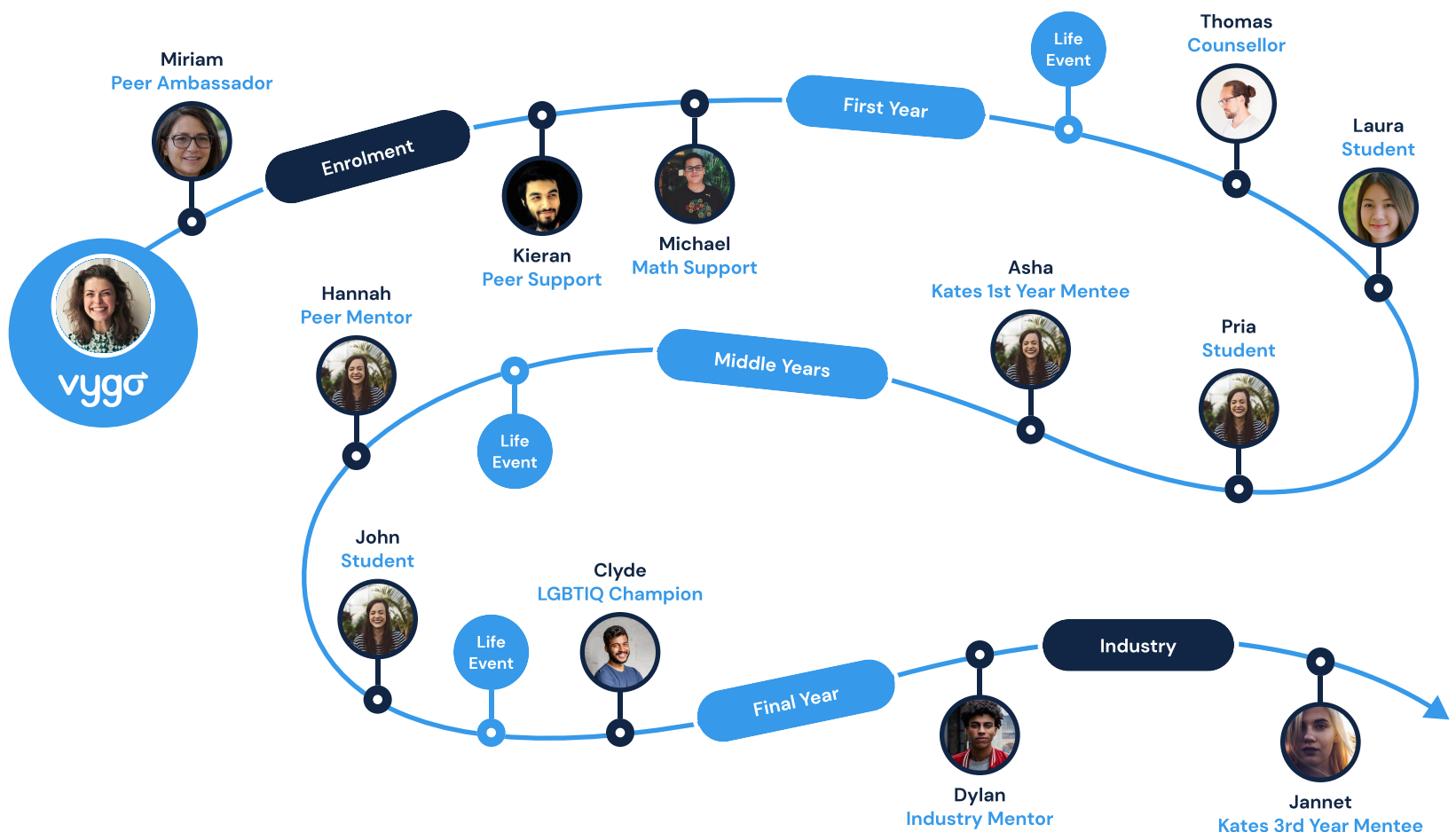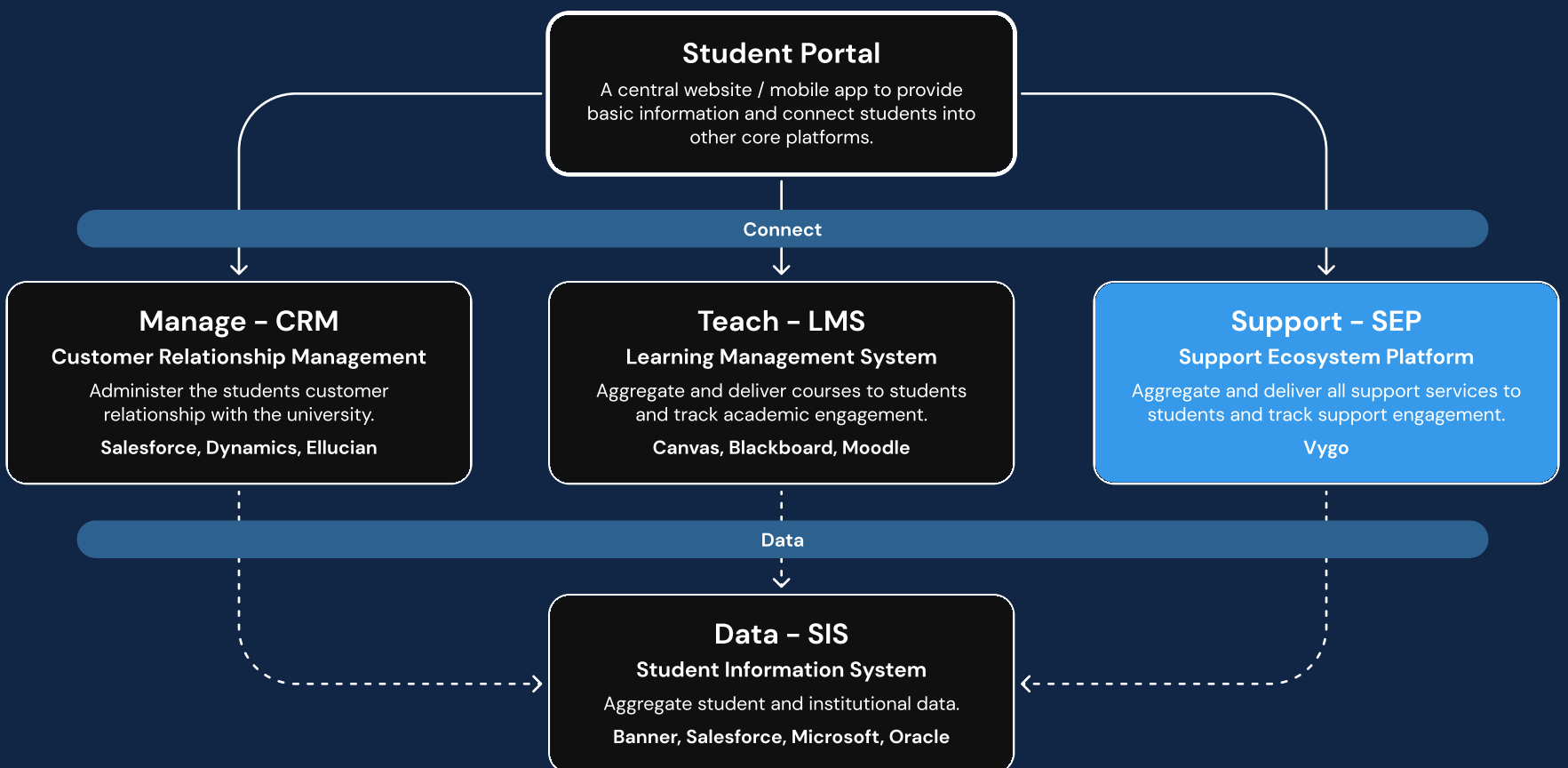
Driving a purposeful, scaleable & high impact Support Ecosystem requires a purpose built Support Ecosystem Platform that seamlessly integrates into your other core infrastructure.

Integrations for other core infrastructure

Automated & personalised ecosystem for every student

Live insights for the entire support ecosystem

S.E.P

Compliance, safety & security for entire support ecosystem

AI enabled student experience

Full support ecosystem coverage

| Dynamic features to build & deliver any support service | + | Ability to index & link all support services run elsewhere |

How the SEP fits into other core infrastructure

Student Portal
A central website / mobile app to provide basic information and connect students into other core platforms.

Connect

Manage – CRM
Customer Relationship Management
Administer the students customer relationship with the university.
Salesforce, Dynamics, Ellucian

Teach – LMS
Learning Management System
Aggregate and deliver courses to students and track academic engagement.
Canvas, Blackboard, Moodle

Support – SEP
Support Ecosystem Platform
Aggregate and deliver all support services to students and track support engagement.
Vygo

Data

Data – SIS
Student Information System
Aggregate student and institutional data.
Banner, Salesforce, Microsoft, Oracle

5 The SEP Evaluation Checklist

Use this checklist for the evaluation of your upcoming student experience digital transformation solution. Template EXCEL and DOC file available here.

Criteria	Provider 1	Provider 2	Provider 3
Ecosystem Capabilities			
SUPPORT APPROACH: Point-solution, Central-only solution, Support Ecosystem Platform			
Ability to map & index the entire support ecosystem for students and staff			
Automatic personalisation of ecosystem for every student (micro-ecosystems)			
Ecosystem wide engagement tracking & reporting			
Data available via API, CSV & in-platform dashboards			
Web application & dedicated Mobile App with push notifications for IOS & Android			
High quality User Interface comparable to other modern social experiences			
Coordinated and guided approach to bring consistency to user recruitment, onboarding, training, engagement and re-engagement			
Support ecosystem performance benchmarking against broader industry			
Support Program Capabilities			
Ability for program managers to quickly build and customise support programs via program creation wizard			
Options for matching via matching algorithm or via discovery and self select			
Captures all user connection direct in platform, in-built chat, video in 1:1 and group based formats			
Support program performance benchmarking and statistics at an institutional and industry level			
AI driven recommendations for personalised student experience when engaging with support services			

Security & Integrations

Integrates with the institution's SSO			
Regionalised local data storage (Data Sovereignty)			
Secure API available for integrations			
SOC2 Security Certification			

Other Key Considerations

Alignment to institutions mission, values and overarching strategy for student experience			
Maintains accessibility compliance (WCAG 2.1 AA)			
Ability to easily scale offering up or down as institution evolves			

Notes