



## Student Transitions: Example of transitions practice

**Title:** Student-Led Individually Created Courses (SLICCs), University of Edinburgh

**Transition(s) the practice supports:** Through and out

**Student(s) the practice supports:** Undergraduates (currently years one and two only)

**Abstract:** Student-Led Individually Created Courses (SLICCs) offer students a framework to reflect on the development of their personal, professional and academic skills during an appropriate co- or extra-curricular experience that they arrange for themselves during their summer vacation. This may be an internship, expedition, work experience or summer project. Through this framework students receive academic credit for their self-designed learning experience. Proof-of-concept piloting in summer 2015 has now allowed larger-scale piloting and expansion.

**Description:** The University's experience has consistently confirmed that not only are students very capable of leading, managing and assessing aspects of their own learning, but that the levels of active engagement, independence, self-direction and acquisition of new skills and attributes are precisely what employers are seeking over and above an academic degree.

A new innovation was introduced in 2015 to further develop career readiness and to introduce self-reflection and assessment for learning approaches. It is a credit-bearing online undergraduate 'self-defined learning experience' course called SLICCs (Student-Led Individually Created Courses), underpinned by using e-portfolios to evidence the learning. The course is one where students create their own learning experience, critically self-reflect and formatively self-assess their own learning as part of the experience; all supervised by tutors. There are no formal lectures, the learning outcomes are predefined and are the same for all students, who are required to design and write a proposal for their own learning experience. This can be based on a range of activities e.g. a volunteering experience, a community or personal development project, a research project, a placement, work experience or an internship.

The student proposals for a SLICC are required to detail the learning activities, together with how they will evidence the set learning outcomes (which include learning outcomes that relate to graduate attribute development). Tutors are required to sign-off the academic viability of the proposal and whether it is practically achievable. Students also have to re-interpret the learning outcomes in their own words within their proposal and this aids student

understanding of what is required of them, what evidence they need to produce and how they will be assessed.

Before commencing the SLICC journey, students are required to attend preparatory workshops. The first workshop explains the SLICCs process (i.e. how to design an individual learning experience and what is required in the student proposal) and focuses on self-assessment, introducing the rubrics that tutors will use for assessment and how to write a critically reflective report at the end of their project. The final preparatory workshop focuses on how to create a web portfolio complete with the various types of digital artefacts required to evidence the learning acquired. Following these workshops and by the time the student has submitted their project proposal, they will be working on their own (under supervision) but will not have any further tuition. Students also have access to a range of resource links such as open source web-materials e.g. for audio and video editing (to create their digital artefacts) as well as self-assessment diagnostics tools such as Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and Belbin, and resources on organising and managing their time. While undertaking their SLICC, students regularly log their reflections in a blog along with capturing evidence as part of their webfolio.

For the summative assessment submission, students critically select various parts of all their formative reflections, documentation and digital artefacts, and bring these together as a formal submission in their webfolio along with a critically self-reflective and evaluative report. This report comments on their successes, and as importantly where they have learnt from mistakes or challenges, while referring back to the original learning outcomes they re-interpreted for themselves at the proposal stage. Students are also required to formatively self-grade the final submission. The summative assessment is then conducted by their tutors. Students receive academic feedback at three key time-points: on their initial proposal prior to approval, half-way through, and with the summative assessment of their final report.

SLICCs underwent a 'proof of concept' pilot over the summer of 2015 for 'Additional Credit' at SCQF Level 8. Students who participated in SLICCs were warmly appreciative of the learning experience and outcome, and the overall evaluation was strongly positive. This has enabled Phase 2 pilot of SLICCs to be taken forward with an increased number of students during summer 2016, again at SCQF Level 8. Student reflective activity for 'In-programme Credit', derived and adapted from the 'Additional Credit' reflective framework, will also be piloted in 2016/17. Three generic online e-portfolio based course study guides and course templates will be created containing student and staff guidance, reflective learning frameworks, cross-disciplinary Learning Outcomes, and assessment rubrics, at SCQF Levels 8, 10 and 11. These will be piloted in several academic disciplines as new trial courses within existing programmes, including team-based frameworks and settings. Courses adopting the SLICC framework will use the generic template at the appropriate credit level, which will have some defined flexible space to enable adaptation to their own discipline, but facilitating students working across disciplines. These will be assessed through their local Board of Examiners. Evaluation of both the 'Additional Credit' and 'In-programme Credit' models will be conducted to inform future plans.

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**All examples provided will be posted to the Enhancement Themes website with the intention of including them in the National Transitions map.**