



Theme Plan
April 2015

Outline three year plan for the Student Transitions Theme, 2014-17

1. The Student Transitions Theme is planned to run for three academic years, from summer 2014, to summer 2017.
2. A major outcome will be a National Framework for Higher Education Transitions and all areas of the Theme's work will contribute to the development of this resource.
3. The work of each main group immediately involved in the Theme is set out below.
4. The plans have been updated following discussions at the first two meetings of the Theme Leaders' Group. The main change from the original plan is the removal of Theme Tracks from the work during the first year of the Theme, and resulting change to the Student Network activities. Tracks have been retained for consideration for the second and third years of the Theme.
5. The first year is the most detailed, though there are fixed and desirable milestones which are included in the plans for the Theme's second and third years.
6. The plan provides a guide for the Theme's work, but will also be reviewed regularly as the Theme develops, and in light of evaluation and feedback. The plan will remain sufficiently flexible to adapt to any external factors which may become important.

Year 1 2014-15

7. At the start of the Theme, much of the work is focusing on establishing the Theme and the structures that will support and deliver it. The key groups have been appointed and briefed, with the Theme Leaders' Group (TLG, similar to recent Themes' steering committees in composition) and the Theme Student Network each having met before the end of the calendar year. In addition, a consultation event was held in October for the sector to inform planning for the work of the Theme.
8. Substantively, the work for this year will involve obtaining a baseline of 'where we are now'. This will engage the sector in identifying and collecting evidence drawn from Institutional Teams' work and examples of existing practice, to allow a sector-wide picture to begin to emerge which, in turn, will begin to inform the National Framework for Higher Education Transitions. This will comprise a map or matrix of practice which should reveal areas of activity and expose gaps allowing the Theme Leaders' Group (TLG) to prioritise the focus of aspects of the Theme work. The Theme will also identify other groups and organisations involved in the different areas of transitions so they can be drawn upon to inform and contribute to the work of the Theme as appropriate. The TLG will work with the Student Network, which will report to TLG.
9. TLG decided at its first meeting that the plan to have Theme Tracks was premature. Instead, during the first year of the Theme, work will be undertaken and commissioned to support areas identified through consideration of institutional plans and initiatives and policies concerning the sector. The idea of having Theme Tracks will be revisited at the end of the first year of the Theme.
10. The Theme Student Network will have its own programme of work, complementing the wider work of the Theme. Funding will be made available to support the Network's identified projects.
11. Although it is a necessary and useful first step, the Theme will not dwell on simply describing and recording current successful practice; it will also seek to challenge and support change in terms of institutional strategy and practices, as well as at sectoral level and beyond. Through reflection on, feedback from and formative evaluation of the activities and work each year, TLG will adjust the areas of work and how these are addressed for the remainder of the Theme, through the mechanisms described above – Institutional Teams, TLG and the Student Network. A formal evaluation of the Theme will be carried out as part of the activities of its final year.

Relationships between groups

12. TLG will report progress at each SHEEC meeting, and TLG will meet with SHEEC at least once each year. TLG and the Student Network will each meet regularly. For the inaugural meetings of TLG and the Student Network in November 2014, TLG will meet before the first Student Network meeting so that the latter's discussions can benefit from the deliberations of the former.
13. Instead of two Tracks being set up during the first year of the Theme, work will be carried out and commissioned, to support areas of work identified in Institutional Team plans, and where there are areas which would be useful to carry out on behalf of institutions. Progress on this work and its outcomes will be reported to TLG.
14. QAA Scotland will support all this work and liaise closely with the chair of the Theme (and deputy), as well as supporting the Student Network, with the assistance of sparqs.

Activities relating to the Student Transitions Enhancement Theme

Year 1

Group	July – December 2014	January to June 2015
SHEEC	Select and support potential member of TLG and Institutional Team members, including students Joint meeting with TLG	Host International Enhancement Themes conference (June)
Provide support for TLG member		
Institutional Teams	Establish Team Develop three year institutional plan of work Start identifying key transition points and processes to support them in institution, identify challenges. Support TLG and Student Network members Consider proposals for International Enhancement Themes conference	Prepare examples of practice (Jan) Take part in Institutional Teams event (Feb) Take part in International Enhancement Themes conference (June) Report on institutional Theme work (June)
Carry out institutional plan of work for the year		
TLG	Become familiar with role Begin working with other TLG members from first meeting (Nov)	Further TLG meetings (Feb, Apr) Receive institutional reports and updates Receive reports from Student Network and commissioned work Begin considering National Framework for Higher Education Transitions Formative external evaluation of year 1 contributing to outline plans for year 2 Take part in International Enhancement Themes conference (June)
Student Network	Individually become familiar with institutional role First meeting of Student Network (Nov)	Develop and carry out work relating to Theme Contribute to plenary at International Enhancement Themes conference (June)
Additional work to support the Theme	Consider initial areas arising from Institutional Team plans (Dec)	Commission work and other activities Consider outcomes arising and report to TLG Outcomes to inform plenary session at Enhancement Themes conference (June)

Group	July – December 2014	January to June 2015
International critical friends	Existing connections informed about the Theme Inviting additional connections Feedback and reflection invited International conference highlighted	
QAA Scotland	Support and monitor all of the above Liaise with Theme Chair (and Deputy) to reflect on evaluation, progress and develop planning Meet with SHEEC and TLG members and institutional teams to support Plan and support all related events and conferences	

Year 2

Group	July 2015 – June 2016
SHEEC	Provide support for TLG member Joint meeting with TLG Host Enhancement Themes conference (June)
Institutional Teams	Within three year institutional plan of work, develop and carry out second year activities Support TLG and Student Network members Consider proposals for Enhancement Themes conference Take part in Institutional Teams meeting Take part in Enhancement Themes conference (June) Report on institutional Theme work
TLG	Hold 4 meetings of TLG, one as joint meeting with SHEEC, one to include Institutional Teams Further develop National Framework for Higher Education Transitions Contribute to ideas for areas of work for Student Network to consider, and receive progress reports Formative external assessment of year 2 and outline plans for year 3, including external evaluation of the Theme's work Take part in International Enhancement Themes conference (June)
Student Network	Hold regular meetings of Student Network (Nov) Develop and carry out further work relating to Tracks Take part in Enhancement Themes conference (June)
Additional work to support the Theme	Revisit the idea of Theme Tracks Commission work and other activities Consider outcomes arising and report to TLG Take part in Enhancement Themes conference (June)
International critical friends	Develop connections informed about the Theme Feedback and reflection invited relating to emerging National Framework for Higher Education Transitions
QAA Scotland	Support and monitor all of the above Liaise with Theme Chair (and Deputy) leads to reflect on evaluation, progress and develop planning Meet with SHEEC and TLG members and institutional teams to support Plan and support all related events and conferences

Year 3

Group	July 2016 – June 2017
SHEEC	Provide support for TLG member Joint meeting with TLG Host International Enhancement Themes conference (June) As appropriate, discuss with TLG potential areas for the next Theme
Institutional Teams	Within three year institutional plan of work, develop and carry out final year activities Support TLG and Student Network members Consider proposals for International Enhancement Themes conference Take part in Institutional Teams meeting Take part in International Enhancement Themes conference (June) Report on institutional Theme work Provide final outcomes of work
TLG	Hold 4 meetings of TLG, one as joint meeting with SHEEC, one to include Institutional Teams Finalise and test National Framework for Higher Education Transitions Direct areas of work for Tracks and Student Network to consider, and receive progress and final reports and outcomes Formative assessment of year 3 and commission external evaluation of the Theme's work Take part in International Enhancement Themes conference (June)
Student Network	Hold regular meetings of Student Network (Nov) Develop and carry out further work relating to Tracks Take part in International Enhancement Themes conference (June)
Additional work to support the Theme	Commission work and other activities Consider outcomes arising and report to TLG Take part in International Enhancement Themes conference (June)
International critical friends	Develop connections informed about the Theme Encourage proposals to and participation in International Enhancement Themes conference Feedback and reflection invited relating to final National Framework for Higher Education Transitions
QAA Scotland	Support and monitor all of the above Liaise with Theme Chair and Track leads to reflect on progress and develop planning Meet with SHEEC and TLG members and institutional teams to support Plan and support all related events and conferences Respond to evaluation of Student Transitions and use this to inform the next Theme