



TLG Bulletin, January 2021

Welcome to the TLG Bulletin - your quick guide to the activity of the Theme Leaders' Group. Please feel free to share this with any colleagues who might find it valuable.

At the end of January 2021, we welcomed higher education institution (HEI) student and staff representatives, and colleagues from our partner sector bodies, to our first TLG event for the 2020-23 [Resilient Learning Communities](#) Enhancement Theme. Our online event featured a [presentation](#) from our [Theme Leadership Team](#) (TLT), providing an inspiring and informative introduction to our work. The presentation highlighted the Theme's [organisational structure](#) and four priority areas: Equality and diversity; Community and belonging; Supporting student and staff success; and Flexible accessible learning. Theme Leader, Professor Clare Peddie, emphasised that while the Theme speaks to the pandemic, it also focuses the sector on future resilient learning communities.



In autumn 2020, we used an online collaborative space, *Mural*, to bring colleagues together virtually, sharing learning from the last Theme and ideas and topics for the new Theme. That activity helped us establish the four priority areas and generated several ideas for [collaborative cluster projects](#).

There are eight exciting [sector-wide project](#) projects:

- ✓ The Anti-Racist Curriculum Project (delivered in partnership with [Advance HE](#))
- ✓ Online and blended learning
- ✓ QAA back catalogue review and web redevelopment
- ✓ Addressing the digital divide
- ✓ Research in advance of updating the Recognition of Prior Learning: National Framework for Higher Education
- ✓ Stories of Resilience

- ✓ Scottish sector learning from the pandemic
- ✓ Higher Education: More than a Degree (jointly led by *sparqs*).

Seven [collaborative clusters](#) will run in session 2019-20:

- ✓ Decolonising the Curriculum in the Time of Pandemic: what does this look like in practice?
- ✓ Student mental wellbeing within our BAME and LGBTQ+ learner communities
- ✓ Personalised Approaches to Resilience and Community
- ✓ Re-imagining Resilience for PGT: A community focused approach
- ✓ Exploring the Potential of Micro-Credentials and Digital Badging
- ✓ Programme Leadership: Strengthening Resilience, Supporting Learning Communities
- ✓ Resilient Academic Leadership: an exploration within the Principal Fellows Network Scotland.

Collaborative clusters provide an opportunity for institutions to work together on topics of mutual interest for the benefit of all. If you are interested in any of the projects, please do visit the Theme web pages and hear our cluster leaders introduce their activities in a series of short video presentations. We will be launching a call for expressions of interest in the spring for collaborative clusters to run in year 2 of the Theme so please check our web pages for details.

Within [institutions](#), teams are being established and work plans are being developed. A [summary analysis](#) of HEIs' year 1 plans shows the exciting range of activity that institutions are taking forward. Among the topics being explored are: tackling loneliness and isolation; widening participation; whole-person education;



choice and flexibility; and the staff body as a resilient learning community. While there is an emphasis on laying the groundwork for later years of the Theme, some institutions anticipate hosting Theme-related events, developing frameworks and models and developing practical toolkits and resource packs in this first year. Keep checking the website for further updates.

As well as highlighting the importance of communicating, disseminating and promoting work widely within institutions, Alex Hedlund (Student Theme Lead) spoke about the centrality of students and the benefits of working co-creatively with them and engaging students in a range of ways in Theme work.

There was much interesting and useful discussion at TLG, and the QAA Scotland team is taking forward the suggestion about scheduling focused, themed drop-in sessions between the formal TLG events/meetings.

As a previous institutional Theme Lead, Professor Ruth Taylor (Deputy Theme Lead) spoke about the transformative nature of the Enhancement Theme approach, empowering staff and students to take forward innovative and creative work collaboratively.

We were delighted to welcome Professor Stella Jones-Devitt (Staffordshire University) and Dr Liz Austen (Sheffield Hallam University) as evaluation consultants. They will be working with colleagues on the evaluation of the Resilient Learning Communities Theme. Additionally, they will be leading the sector in a far-reaching and wide-ranging evaluation of 20 years of the Enhancement Themes. This significant programme of work will help us to identify the impact of the Themes in Scotland and beyond and explore how we can continue to develop the Themes' reach and effectiveness.

We are so excited to be starting this work with you and hopeful for the possibilities this Theme will bring to the sector over the next three years!

TLG is a group central to delivering the Resilient Learning Communities Theme. The group leads, supports and evaluates the work undertaken for the Theme. Please get in touch with your TLG [institutional staff and student representatives](#), [Scottish Higher Education Enhancement Committee](#) representative or [QAA Scotland](#) if you want to know more and get involved in Enhancement Theme activity.