End of Year 1 Report for Abertay University

Italicised text can be removed as it is advisory.

The key purposes of this report are to:-
- provide a framework for HEIs to report on their Theme activity that has taken place over the year
- help share information across the sector on the benefits and challenges around Theme engagement.

Please report under the headings below. The report should be about 6 to 8 sides of A4 in length.

### Institutional team

Identify any changes in Theme leadership, TLG and institutional team membership since details were reported in the institutional plan developed at the start of the academic year.

We put out an open call for new academic staff members of the institutional team in early 2018 and from this recruited a further 6 staff members. These are:
- Mr Eddie Simpson (Lecturer, Division of Natural and Built Environment)
- Dr Euan Dempster (Lecturer, Division of Computing and Maths)
- Dr Greg Bremner (Lecturer, Division of Accounting, Finance and Economics)
- Mr Laurie O’Donnell (Development Director, School of Design and Informatics)
- Mr Robin Ion (Senior Lecturer, Division of Mental Health Nursing and Counselling)
- Dr Bill Graham (Academic Curriculum Manager, School of Social and Health Sciences)

### Outcomes/activity

Outline what was achieved in relation to your year 1 planned outcomes and activities, at the time of submitting this report.

Have there been any unintended outcomes/unexpected findings?

Please report on any aspect of work that you are particularly proud of and want to promote.

If there is work, which is not yet completed but will be by the 31 July, please comment below.

### Activities:

Review of annual monitoring processes and uses of data with a view to linking process with the proposed portfolio review in year 2 of the theme.

A Short Life Working Group (SLWG) was formed which reviewed the annual monitoring processes. In addition, new method of Institution-Led Review (ILR) was trialled in 17/18 which took annual monitoring as a central source of evidence for Divisional Self-Evaluation Documents. This fed into the work of the SLWG as it was felt that the current presentation and uses of data and template format were not as helpful as they could have been for the ILR process. As a result of this work a new Divisional level of reporting was added to the existing programme and school level reports. The flow of information and data for each level of report has been clarified and new templates for programme and Divisional reporting were developed. In the next academic year, consideration
will be given to introducing KPI data to the templates. This will enable these processes to be linked to strategic priorities and to our portfolio review processes.

**Evaluation of new learning spaces (implemented in October 2016)**

It was decided that the JISC student digital tracker was the best vehicle to start this evaluation as the majority of the new learning spaces had a digital element. The JISC student tracker survey was live for responses in February and March 2018 and questions in this were relevant to the new learning spaces. A series of follow-up focus groups were held at the end of April 2018. These are currently being transcribed and a student researcher will be paid to analyse the data and work with the Teaching and Learning Enhancement Team to come up with some good practice and recommendations for the University. This will feed into our current institutional discussions about the future of teaching and learning at Abertay which includes thinking about our estate and how it can best serve the needs of students and staff in the future.

**Evaluation of curriculum reform (implemented in September 2016)**

The whole of institution ILR which is on-going through 17/18 included an evaluation of curriculum reform. Specific sections of the template for the Self-Evaluation Document asked for evaluation of curriculum reform at both operational and strategic levels. The final Divisional ILR event occurred on the 25th May with the Divisional report being due at the end of June 2018. An institutional report will be produced which evaluates curriculum reform at an institutional level and will include recommendations to the institution in terms of changes which can be implemented to address any immediate issues and also any lessons learned from the change management process to inform any future such initiatives.

**Evaluation of our new student-voice initiatives (implemented in September 2017)**

Heads of Division have been asked for feedback in both Term 1 and Term 2 and students have been asked about their experiences of these initiatives in the student voice ILR meetings. Term 1 findings were reported to Teaching and Learning Committee and once the Divisional ILR reports have been completed, a fully report will go to Teaching and Learning Committee at the start of the 2018/19 Academic Year. Recommendations will also be informed by the Student Voice Think Tank event which was held in April 2018.

**Student-led strand to be developed and supported by the Abertay Students’ Association**

The student-led strand for 17/18 will concentrate on analysing the nominations of the Abertay Students’ Association’s Student-Led Teaching Awards. Over the summer, a research assistant will analyse the nominations since the start of the awards looking for evidence of what students feel makes a good learning experience and an award-winning member of staff. This will feed into the work of the Teaching and Learning Enhancement unit to be used in identifying good practice and how this can be used in supporting staff to enhance what they do.

**Re-approval of the Post-graduate Certificate in Higher Education Teaching as the Post-graduate Certificate in Academic Practice (PGCAP)**

The PGCert HET was re-approved as the PGCAP in February 2018 and has been submitted to Advance HE for re-accreditation. The work to support the redevelopment of the programme was led by a SLWG within Abertay comprising past and current students, members of Teaching and Learning Enhancement and the institutional Intellectual Lead for Teaching and Learning, discussions with our External Examiner and other academics delivering similar programmes and a day visit to Edinburgh Napier University to share practice which was extremely useful.

**Abertay Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund projects**
A new round of funding was announced in February 2018 with an emphasis on “Evaluating Practice”. The funding for this call is a combination of internal Abertay funds and Enhancement Themes monies. A condition of funding was that all projects had to have an element of student engagement which not only includes students as subjects of the research but also as active participants in the research. Students employed as researchers in the ATLEF initiative are HEAR-recognisable. The following projects were successful in obtaining funding:

- ‘Who’s holding the baby? An exploration of advice and support for students (and their partners) in pregnancy and maternity/paternity
- The use of Sketchnotes as an intermediary resource or revision tool to improve students experience, learning and attainment.
- Learning theory, theorizing learning: a qualitative investigation into second year undergraduate student engagement with a classical social theory module.
- Improving the student experience of laboratory practicals through digital video guides
- Toward a better understanding of the conditions of students’ engagement: unpacking the dynamics of teacher and students technology mediated partnering practice
- Team and Group Work: A Student Perspective of Assessment and Management

All the project leads, except one, are holding their first ATLEF project grant and all the proposal submitted for consideration of funding (except 2) were from staff who have not held an ATLEF project grant before. We feel shows the attractiveness of this kind of funding to staff and a desire from staff to be involved in evaluative practice.

The projects are due to complete between August and December 2018.

Digital tracking project on students’ use of learning technologies with JISC
See section on “Evaluation of new learning spaces”

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At the present time, we do not have many outcomes and resources to disseminate. The programme documentation for the new PGCAP went to the relevant Teaching and Learning Committee for discussion and approval which ensured that all Heads of Division were aware of the requirements of the programme. The new Annual Monitoring forms have also been discussed at Teaching and Learning Committee. The rest of the outcomes are not yet completed.

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Our main collaborative working has been with Napier to develop our new PGCAP. This involved email discussions, sharing of documentation as well as a visit to Napier to meet with the team. The Napier team were able to share their experiences which allowed us to take those into account when re-developing our own work. Staff have been visiting learning spaces at a number of
Scottish institutions e.g. RGU, Glasgow College and UWS to help inform our own evaluation and future plans for the estate at Abertay.

We are also liaising with UWS re their use of data and dashboards in annual monitoring and have a team going to visit in July.

Staff have also visited and presented at a number of other institutions about our experiences regarding student surveys and learning spaces. This has enabled us to share our evidence about the implementation of these pieces of work and how they are being evaluated.

The main benefits are:
- Gaining insights from those who have already implemented things we are interested in.
- Being able to share our own practice and make connections which we can take up in future.

Challenges are:
- Time. People are increasingly under pressure in terms of their own workloads which makes finding time to engage with others difficult unless it is very specifically related to work they are already having to do.

**Sector-wide work**

Identify the ways in which your institution has contributed to collaborative sector-wide work project strands (work funded beyond institutional contract finance).

We have been playing an active role in the Learning Analytics collaborative cluster. Members of staff from Abertay have been attending the workshops and contributing to discussions. We are committed to continue to support this work through Years 2 and 3 of the theme as our own learning analytics work in partnership with Jisc develops.

**Supporting staff and student engagement**

How have staff and students been supported to engage in Theme activities? Please provide examples.

Please report on any work (current or planned) around upskilling staff and students in the use of evidence to improve the student experience. Would you be willing to share any of your materials with the sector?

We have been supporting staff and students in a number of ways. We have involved colleagues in the open call to join the institutional team and so we now have representation from all academic schools as well as a number of professional services areas. We have supported staff and students by paying for travel and subsistence to attend any theme related activities, this includes inter-institutional collaborative activity and collaborative cluster activity as well as TLG meetings and the Student Voice Think Tank event. We will also support colleagues and students attending the Enhancement Themes Conference in June. We supported colleagues who wished to submit abstracts to the conference by supporting the writing of those abstracts and recruited staff to review the abstracts for QAA. Information around theme activities have been disseminated around the institutional team and wider, where appropriate, including regular updates to the institutional Teaching and Learning Committee. Finally, we have been supporting staff who wish to engage in relevant research projects through ATLEF funding and personal support from the staff Institutional Lead.
We are intending on looking at the upskilling of staff and students in the use of evidence to improve the student experience in Year 2 of the theme but have no definite plans as of yet.

**Evaluation**

*Reflecting on the monitoring and evaluation of your Theme work, what is changing with respect to *strategy*, *policy* and *practice*?*

In this first year of the theme, the main change has been on the more strategic use of data, particularly with tying it more firmly into monitoring practices. The ILRs which have taken place in 2017/18 have highlighted different ways in which data is being used in annual monitoring and the new process is intended to have an impact on the consistency in which data is reported which will make processes such as ILR much easier in future. The joined up use of data is also a key priority in all areas of strategy, policy and practice and the theme is supporting this. At the moment, it is early days but the use of evidence for enhancement is gaining greater prominence throughout the institution and we envisage seeing greater change over the course of the theme.

**Processes**

*What are you learning from the processes, approaches and structures you are using to support this Theme? How will this report be used/distributed within your institution?*

One major thing we have learned as an institution is how much institutional interest there is in this topic and that a number of staff and students feel that they could be better supported in how to work with evidence for enhancement purposes. The draft report was discussed by our institutional team and also Teaching and Learning Committee with the view to gaining input and examples into the report. The report will be used to inform our planning for next year and the final version will be available on our Enhancement Themes intranet site alongside internal publicity.

**Report Author:** Julie Blackwell Young

**Date:** 22 June 2018
End of Year 1 Report for Edinburgh Napier University

The key purpose of this report is to provide a framework for HEIs to report on their Theme activity that has taken place over the year.

Institutional team

The Institutional Team has changed slightly through the course of the year to reflect staff changes and to secure broad engagement across the Schools. We have also invited a staff member from ENSA to join the group in order to support continuity of engagement by the student association.

The institutional Team is supported by an advisory group comprising senior Planning, Learning and Teaching, and Quality colleagues and reporting to the University Dean of Learning and Teaching.

The Institutional Team now comprises:

| Institutional lead & TLG Rep | Dr Martha Caddell, Associate Professor (Dept of Learning and Teaching Enhancement) |
| TLG staff representative alternate | Dr Katrina Swanton, Head of Quality & Enhancement |
| TLG student representative | Hannah Markley, ENSA (until July 2018) |
| Team Member | Hannah Macleod, ENSA (until July 2018) |
| Team Member | Jenni Behan, ENSA Staff Member |
| Team member | Dr Colin Smith, (School of Computing) |
| Team member | Dr Jackie Brodie (Business School) |
| Team member | Dr Christine Haddow (School of Applied Science) |
| Team member | Avril Gray (School of Creative Industries) |
| Team member | Liz Scott (Head of Widening Participation) |
| Team member | Dr Nicola Kivlichan (Planning) |
| Team member | Dr Liz Adamson (School of Health and Social Care) |
| Team member | Brent Hurley (Strategy Unit) |
| Team member | Dr Sandra Cairncross ((Assistant Principal) |
| Team member | Prof Kay Sambell (Dept of Learning and Teaching Enhancement) |
| Transitions Theme Legacy Lead | Julia Fotheringham (Dept of Learning and Teaching Enhancement) |
Outcomes/activity

Outline what was achieved in relation to your year 1 planned outcomes and activities, at the time of submitting this report.

Over the course of this first year of the Theme we have made good progress in refining and advancing our planned activities and outcomes.

The Theme has provided a catalyst for conversations across a number of core strategic institutional workstreams, ensuring pan-university collaboration and enhanced engagement across our priority work areas. Specific activity has included:

- Scoping and introducing the Theme via a bespoke workshop and tailored sessions at the ENU Learning and Teaching Conference;
- Activity within and across core workstreams linked to the Theme:
  - **Key workstream (1): Optimising use of existing data:**
    - Amplify awareness of existing data tools and staff engagement with training and support. (Ongoing)
  - **Key workstream (2): Embedding Evidence in Quality Processes:**
    - Initiated mapping of annual review processes to identify key points where data / evidence is used and how to enhance support to staff wishing to engage with evidence and make appropriate enhancements to practice. (Ongoing)
  - **Key workstream (3): Programme Leader Support:**
    - Workshops explored the support and development needs of this key group of staff.
  - **Key workstream (4): Engaging with Student Voices:**
    - Initiated and funded a number of mini-projects focused on understanding ‘student belonging’ and enhancing communities of learning. These provide the basis for learning about ways of capturing ‘student voices’ and exploring if and how we can work to strengthen appropriate and meaningful belonging / community for diverse students. (See below and attached Briefing Note.)
  - **Key workstream (5): Feedback Focus:**
    - School based workshops and activity to enhance focus on assessment as learning, supporting student engagement with feedback for learning.

This collaboration will deepen in Year 2 of the theme as we move to consider the specific support needs of programme teams as they navigate the breadth of evidence available to them as part of review and enhancement activities.

Our focus on ‘**Exploring Student Belonging: Engaging with Diversity, Data and Hidden Voices**’ has tapped into a rich vein of current interest and activity across the institution. In response to the introduction of a suite of questions on belonging and community in the 2017 NSS, we are exploring what this means from the perspective of different student groups and how to enhance the student experience in this area. Through the Enhancement Themes funding we have supported a suite of projects to spark institutional conversations about what ‘belonging’ means, how we can work to enhance this, and how we might evidence change in this area. This has resulted in a wide-ranging set of discussions exploring and problematizing the terms and using this as the basis for more nuanced exploration. The diversity of ways of belonging to university communities has also led to the exploration of a range of types of evidence to underpin enhancement efforts. This is feeding directly into discussions around how to navigate different ‘ways of
knowing’ about the student experience, bringing together survey data sets with more qualitative evidence.

The specific projects highlighted in this strand include:

• Feedback narratives: beyond the usual suspects.
• What Makes a ‘Community of Staff and Students’? Perspectives from Criminology and Social Sciences.
• Belonging at a Distance.
• Belonging to Team Napier: What difference do sports clubs and societies make to students’ experience of university?
• The Edinburgh Napier ‘Big Read’: Developing a university-wide community.
• Graduate Apprenticeships: Belonging at University, Belonging at Work

[See attached Briefing Note for further details.]

In our Institutional Plan we indicated that we would be initiating scoping work around institutional engagement with learning analytics. This was launched as an ‘Institutional Conversation on Learning Analytics’ in April with a workshop involving colleagues from across the university. A formal project working group has now been convened and this work will continue through Year 2 of the Theme. The Enhancement Theme umbrella has proved useful in bringing together the diverse array of interests in this area and helped to focus discussion of the purpose and potential of learning analytics on the priority area of student retention and success.

Dissemination of work

Which mechanisms have been most effective in disseminating outcomes and resources internally, and to the sector – please provide examples?

If there are materials and resources you can share with the sector, please provide details below.

We continue to experiment with ways of engaging staff and students with the Theme activities. Our underpinning approach, however, is for the Enhancement Themes to be a catalyst for interaction and collaboration, not a ‘project’ in and of itself. Therefore the visibility of the Theme per se is not a key priority. Engagement with the institutional enhancement practice, ideas and initiatives that flow from the Theme is more important than awareness of the Themes ‘brand’.

The ‘mini-project’ approach, involving staff from across a range of Schools, ENSA and professional services in discussions around the theme of belonging has proved particularly effective and resulted in a rich set of conversations and emerging collaborations. We will be taking this forward early in Year 2 with an event on ‘Belonging’ being developed as a focal point for student reps and staff discussion at an early point in Trimester 1.

We have introduced monthly Tweetchats (#DLTEchat) on issues related to Learning and Teaching Enhancement as a way of sparking conversation across the institution and with external participants. We will continue to explore this approach and consider how to grow our audience in Year 2.

ENSA have produced a video resource on student belonging and community which will be used to spark further discussion and action around the role of sports and societies in enhancing student communities and wider engagement.
More traditional dissemination and engagement routes – institutional and sector conferences, workshops and seminar presentations – have continued to form a core to our dissemination activity.

**Inter-institutional collaboration**

*What was achieved with respect to collaborative working with other Higher Education institutions and what do you perceive as the benefits and challenges – please provide examples. Note that this relates to work funded through institutional contract finance rather than the collaborative cluster activity.*

This first year has provided a foundation for further collaboration with other HEIs as the Theme progresses. We have benefitted from a range of conversations with colleagues across the sector, sharing approach and substantive expertise. These conversations have led to specific support including:

- The Open University offering expert input and ‘critical friend’ support for our institutional conversation on Learning Analytics.
- Discussions and sharing of practice re feedback, belonging and building learning communities with Heriot Watt University.
- Emerging collaboration with colleagues from a range of universities around support for programme leaders (QMU, UHI and others).

We anticipate these inter-institutional collaborations deepening through Year 2 of the Theme. Conversations through year 1 were largely to help shape priorities and approach. As we move into the second phase of the work these will be more targeted and focused in orientation.

**Sector-wide work**

*Identify the ways in which your institution has contributed to collaborative sector-wide work project strands (work funded beyond institutional contract finance).*

The sector-wide work has been of particular importance and impact during the first year of the Theme. ENU has benefitted enormously from our engagement in the three Cluster workstreams:

**Learning Analytics Strand:** Provided a timely boost to our own institutional conversation and a ready-made network of peers for Information Services and Learning Technology colleagues who were new to the Enhancement Themes approach. The opportunity to learn from the approach taken by other institutions has been invaluable.

**Creative Industries Cluster:** ENU has been a member of this cluster. We have valued the opportunity to collaborate and share concerns and to help shape the debate in this crucial area. We anticipate taking learning from this work forward into our discussions and resource development at institutional level – and hope the sector conversation will also continue to develop.

**Supporting Distance Learners:** ENU attended the start-up discussion hosted by the OU in Scotland. There seems to be potential in developing this work further. There are clear synergies with the emerging work ENU is developing around the diversity of belonging and building communities of learning. We would welcome the development of this work – with a focus on distance and online – either as a cluster or as a Focus On workstream.

**Student-Led Workstream:** The *Think Tank* event and wider work around this has been a particular highlight, with student and staff from ENU feeling engaged and energised by this
work. The enthusiasm generated will hopefully provide a useful catalyst for new student rep engagement with the Theme from the outset of their term of office.

The TLG meetings and launch event have provided useful forums for discussing practical issues around the management and development of the Themes within institutions as well as support in shaping the scope and ambition of institutional activity. It has been refreshing to see the diversity of staff and student members involved in the Theme from across the sector. This has helped shape a rich and diverse set of sector conversations.

Sector-wide resource development: We are looking forward to seeing the resources on ‘Navigating the Data Landscape’ being developed by the Scottish Planners. We anticipate this will be a key resource for us to adapt and develop for institutional use (specifically with Programme Leaders) in Year 2.

Supporting staff and student engagement

How have staff and students been supported to engage in Theme activities? Please provide examples.

Please report on any work (current or planned) around upskilling staff and students in the use of evidence to improve the student experience. Would you be willing to share any of your materials with the sector?

Year 1 of activity has primarily focused on scoping staff and student interest and support needs across a range of work areas – engaging with programme and module data, exploring learning analytics and capturing the diverse voices of students. This has been supported by a range of workshops and by the development of the mini-projects focused on belonging and student voices.

Year 2 will focus on developing support and resources for supporting staff and students to engage with a range of evidence for enhancement. This will include resources to support the navigation of existing data sets as well as guidance on ‘how to’ listen and respond to diverse student voices and interests. We anticipate developing this as a resource specific for ENU, but with significant overlap with other institutions’ interests. [This is likely to be an area for collaborative development / cluster activity and sector-wide sharing in Year 2.]

The ENSA staff member responsible for Democracy and Participation has been working closely with sabbatical officers involved in this Theme. This provides a useful focus for continuity of ENSA engagement between the years of the Theme and a key source of support for incoming reps.

Evaluation

Reflecting on the monitoring and evaluation of your Theme work, what is changing with respect to strategy, policy and practice?

Much of our work in Year 1 has focused on scoping priorities and shaping the conversation. The key shift has been recognition of the breadth of groups across the university who have an interest and valuable contribution to make to the E4E area.

Our evaluation of activity and impact of Theme conversations and collaborations will be taken forward in a more formal way in Year 2 through a series of facilitated workshops focusing on an outcome / logic modelling approach to capturing medium and longer term impact of initiatives.
To lay the ground for this, we have been working with an external consultant from outwith the HE sector to think creatively about how we could measure and evaluate the impact of enhancement efforts across the university, as well as the direct impact of the specific activities linked to this Theme.

Our evaluation approach seeks to incorporate both the specific ‘additional’ activity supported by Theme funding and captures the wider institutional activities in train that are linked to this area of Enhancement.

**Processes**

*What are you learning from the processes, approaches and structures you are using to support this Theme?*

*How will this report be used/distributed within your institution?*

An annual report on Enhancement Theme progress was presented to ENU’s Joint Learning and Teaching / Student Experience Committee in May 2018.

Key learning from this year has been around the importance of making strategic level connections. The potential of this Theme stems from its high level strategic engagement and opportunity to reshape core institutional approaches to evidence, planning and learning and teaching enhancement. This requires the strengthening of collaborations within and between groups that have not previously been actively involved in Theme-related work. We have seen this specifically in relation to Learning Analytics work and in efforts to support Programme and Module Leaders to effectively engage with evidence for enhancement. Ensuring the right groups and individuals are involved in conversations and action will be key to Theme success in Year 2 and beyond.

**Report Author:** Dr Martha Caddell

**Date:** 31st May 2018
End of Year 1 Report for Glasgow Caledonian University

Institutional team

The Institutional Team remains constant and we are awaiting confirmation of the new Student Representative for academic session 2018/19.

Year 1 Outcomes/activity

Outcome 1
Establish a cross University Strategic Team ensuring representation from student representatives, academic and professional staff to plan, direct and oversee QET activity.

Outcome 1 Achievement
The GCU QET team is now well established (as per the year 1 QET institutional plan) with representation from the University Executive, students and academic and professional services staff. The plan is as indicated, wholly integrated with the GCU Student Experience Action Plan (SEAP) and is overseen by the Enhancing the Student Experience (EtSE) Steering Group (Chaired by the DVC Academic) and which includes the members of the QET Institutional Team. The QET plan is wholly coherent with the aims and priorities of the University including GCU Strategy 2020¹ and the Strategy for Learning² (SfL). Outputs from QET are raised and discussed at University Committees, Executive Board and Senate as appropriate.

Outcome 2
Take account of Professional Services contribution to student success and achievement linked to WP strategy³.

Outcome 2 Achievement
Professional Service representation on the EtSE Group and in addition the linked Operational Group (EtSE OPS Group) ensures that a wide range of voices, including the GCU Students Association (SA), Student Services and Strategy & Planning are heard in relation to this Scottish Funding Council Priority (SFC Priority 4⁴). Professional service colleagues are leading a number of strands of work aligned with enhancing the student experience, aligning and integrating professional services and academic schools to support enhanced delivery of key priority activities such as Widening Participation.

¹ https://www2.gcu.ac.uk/strategy2020/media/2020-Strategy-Brochure-OP.pdf
³ https://www.gcu.ac.uk/strategy2020/transforminglivethrougheducation/wideningaccess/m
Outcome 3
School based staff in collaboration with Students’ Association lead the major strands of work supported by the QET Strategic Team e.g. Student Experience Scholarships, Student Summit and Student Partnership Agreement.

Outcome 4
Focus on the student journey of stratified and differentiated student groups to inform policy and practice.

Outcomes 3/4 Achievement

Student Experience (SE) Scholarships
The SE Scholarships are supported and their achievement monitored by members of our QET Institutional Team. All Scholarships are cross university and all must evidence how students are involved and how the partnership will deliver the project aims. Current scholarships will report to the EtSE Group at the end of June 2018.

In session 2017/18 we funded the following Student Experience Scholarships

1. Contemporary Academic Advising and Mentoring
2. Enhancing the GCU Online Student Experience
3. Enhancing and promoting support for international students
4. Improving Assessment Rubrics and Marking Guidelines
5. Good2CU: pre induction student transition online mini MOOC (QET Student Transitions link)

A further five Scholarship projects (exploring student attendance; partnership working; interdisciplinary learning; the learning experiences of students with disabilities; and comparing online and face to face learning) have been selected for funding in the next Academic Year, reflecting institutional priorities (from the Student Experience Action Plan) as well as the current QAA Enhancement Theme: Evidence for Enhancement: Improving the Student Experience.

Student Summit
First introduced in 2013 as an annual event, the University’s Student Experience Summit brings students and staff together to discuss topics which are important to the enhancement of the GCU student experience. The focus of this year’s Student Summit was to inform the development of an action plan to enhance student mental health and well-being at GCU. The event was opened by Professor Valerie Webster (DVC) and facilitated by the Students’ Association. The event took place on Monday 26th of February 2018 (videos). The first video discusses how students take care of their mental health whilst studying and the second video reveals the thoughts of staff and students who attended the summit. The summit aligns with our QET work focussed on meeting the needs of a diverse student population.

GCU Community: Working in Partnership
GCU views staff and students working as partners as central to the delivery of excellence in learning and an outstanding student experience. The GCU community – students, staff

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5 https://www.gcu.ac.uk/academicqualityanddevelopment/educationalresearchandevaluation/2020scholarships/
7 http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/enhancement-themes/current-enhancement-theme
8 https://www.gcu.ac.uk/student/studentlife/getinvolved/studentsummit/
9 https://www.gcu.ac.uk/student/studentlife/getinvolved/gcucommunityworkingtogetherinpartnership/
and the Students' Association – are all responsible for partnership working in practice. Our Partnership Agreement was developed jointly by students and staff and was the focus of the 2016 Student Summit. It is structured around a set of four Principles which are based on the GCU Values (Responsibility; Creativity; Integrity; Confidence) and Students' Association strategic priority areas (Partnership; Belonging; Empowerment; Innovation). The University and Students’ Association are committed to the continuous enhancement of the student experience and our Partnership Agreement outlines how we will work together to achieve this; it describes our culture of partnership working, rather than a list of actions to be taken. Students and staff work together in a range of settings at School Level (formally in committees and School and Programme Boards, and in specially convened focus groups and working groups) to consider student experience data and use insights gained to inform other work to enhance the student experience. Student representation on the EtSE Group ensures oversight of the whole process. The Student Action Group for Engagement¹⁰ (SAGE) provides a mechanism for students to become involved in the policy development process, with the recent agreement that all GCU student facing policies with significant impact across the institution will be considered by SAGE at an early stage of development and prior to being approved at Senate. Our partnership working approach will be scrutinised as part of one of the 2020 Student Experience Scholarships funded for AY 2018-2019.

Outcome 5
Link to existing data to measure, triangulate and evaluate existing demographics that will inform the institutional approach to student retention, achievement and success.

Outcome 5 Achievement

GCU DASH
The introduction of GCU DASH, GCU’s interactive suite of data dashboards, provides staff with access to a range of metrics to monitor student performance and the student experience. Further development work has taken place over the past year to provide enhanced key datasets to improve GCU’s reporting capabilities and to allow staff to access and interrogate data to support continual improvement of the student experience. This includes monitoring of module pass rates, progression and completion and student experience surveys. Information is monitored and reported at programme, department, School and institution levels and contains demographic information to support in depth analysis of the data.

GCU Experience Survey and Module Evaluation Survey
GCU has piloted two internal surveys, the GCU Experience Survey, an annual student experience survey, and Module Evaluation Surveys to support staff to monitor the student experience. The surveys are based on similar themes to the National Student Survey (NSS) which allows for benchmarking activity and will help the university understand student responses by considering results, questions etc. with students to inform future tools as well as student experience activities. Analysis of survey results also provides valuable insight into the student experience, giving the opportunity to identify good practice and address issues raised by students and feed into the quality enhancement process. This data, appropriately caveated is being used by departmental learning teaching and quality (LTQ) leads and programme leaders to inform Annual Programme Analysis (APA), feeding into Departmental and programme level action planning.

¹⁰ https://www.gcustudents.co.uk/sage
Outcome 6

*Benchmark to external data sources to measure student performance to inform wider SEAP activity.*

**Outcome 6 Achievement**

GCU monitors a number of external benchmarks related to student performance and student experience, including the National Student Survey and HESA Performance Indicators for non-continuation and projected outcomes and the employment of leavers. Programme-level and institutional analysis of quantitative, and qualitative NSS data is fed back to individual programme teams.

GCU benchmarks performance against the sector, and gives focus to institutions with similar attributes dependent on context. These external data sources are reported via the GCU Committee structure with datasets made available for staff via GCU DASH to inform the wider enhancement activity.

**Outcome 7**

*Implement and establish an approach to institutional level monitoring, reporting and evaluation through the GCU Committee structure.*

**Outcome 7 Achievement**

Institutional level monitoring is undertaken at a number of levels. We have refreshed the remit of the GCU Learning and Teaching Committee (LTSC a sub-committee of APPC) to fully consider the School Annual Monitoring Reports that integrate all sources of monitoring data. These reports are tabled for consideration each March at a dedicated LTSC meeting. Actions, challenges or issues are fed forward to APPC for consideration and onto Senate.

**Unintended outcomes/unexpected findings/aspects of work that we want to promote**

The engagement with and participation in the work of the QET has taken place in an established cross-University environment (EtSE Group) which means that we have been able to reach a wide audience in a relatively short space of time. The group benefits from being chaired by the DVC Academic and has wide representation from Schools and Departments, Professional Services, Strategy and Planning, and the Students Association which makes it an ideal conduit for institutional communication. We could not have predicted how well this communication channel would work at the beginning of Year 1. The Student-Staff Partnership is a particular source of pride as it represents a true collaboration between staff (academic and professional services) and students.

In terms of the work we want to promote, this has taken into account the wider needs of students and staff.

**Student Summit**

The 17/18 student led summit, focussed on enhancing student mental health and well-being at GCU¹¹. It was an outstanding success with staff and student representatives from UG and PG attending. This has led to the university and the student's association jointly developing a Mental Health Action Plan and signing a joint Mental Health Partnership Agreement.

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¹¹ [https://www.gcu.ac.uk/student/studentlife/getinvolved/studentsummit/](https://www.gcu.ac.uk/student/studentlife/getinvolved/studentsummit/)
Gender Based Violence Policy

The University has developed a policy around Gender Based Violence. We believe that all members of the University community have the right to study and work without experiencing any form of gender based violence, abuse or harassment. All members of the University community are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that does not infringe upon the rights of others. In line with our University values, preventing and responding to gender based violence as a community will help us to align for the Common Good and through gender based violence training programmes, will transform lives through education. Our collaborative approach has been commended by students, staff and external partners.

Supporting Student Success

As part of the GCU approach to Supporting Student Success, the University partnered with ‘grit’ to deliver an innovative personal development programme that supports student and staff partnership working. Programme Leaders and students participated in a three-day course to support the development of resilience, belonging and confidence. Evidence of the power of this course as a trigger for change is reflected in the evaluation. Both staff and students described the course as ‘life changing’ and students reported that the course had empowered them to manage themselves, their studies and their future in a positive way. Promoting a ‘can do’ attitude to personal success. Students who attended the course reported being more focused on their goals, less stressed and increased confidence levels. This is an example of a GCU SEAP activity that wholly integrates with the ethos and philosophy of the QET.

Dissemination of work

The work of the SE Scholarships has been actively promoted through external dissemination at national and international conferences, including presentations at the 15th Enhancement Theme Conference to be held on the 7th of June 2017.

Internally work is disseminated through activities organised by the Education, Research and Evaluation Team including Workshops and Seminars, and a twice yearly newsletter. The Annual Learning & Student Experience Event, held on 24 January 2018 provided an opportunity to present the work of the SE Scholarships alongside complementary work from elsewhere in the University facilitating cross-fertilisation. For example, the event brought together staff leading four related induction activities who have subsequently co-operated to coordinate their efforts. An interim update on the University's involvement in the current enhancement theme was also provided at this event.

The 17/18 annual institutional visit from sparqs to the GCUSA and the QAA annual visit to GCU provided good opportunities to disseminate key areas of this work at a Sector level. The work of the QET will also support the development of the GCU ELIR4 SED and feed into the GCU Annual Statement on Enhancement Led Internal Subject Review and Quality Assurance Arrangements for the Academic Session 2017/18.

12 https://www.gcu.ac.uk/media/gcalwebv2/student/wellbeing/Gender%20Based%20Violence%20Policy%20FINAL%20APPROVED.pdf
13 https://grit.org.uk/about
14 https://www.gcu.ac.uk/academicqualityanddevelopment/educationalresearchandevaluation/erecommunity/seminars/
15 https://www.gcu.ac.uk/academicqualityanddevelopment/educationalresearchandevaluation/erecommunity/seminars/
16 https://www.gcu.ac.uk/academicqualityanddevelopment/educationalresearchandevaluation/erecommunity/newsletters/
17 https://www.gcu.ac.uk/academicqualityanddevelopment/archive/
Inter-institutional collaboration

We are not currently at this stage of development, but will reflect on this aspect of our work in the forthcoming year.

Sector-wide work

We have engaged with the Learning Analytics Collaborative Cluster activity led by the University of Strathclyde and passed on details of other collaborative cluster activities to relevant staff within Glasgow Caledonian University. We will consider other cluster proposals as and when they emerge.

Supporting staff and student engagement

Staff and Students have been supported to engage in theme activities, through the work of the EtSE Steering Group and the linked Operational Group, and informed by institutional data sets presented via GCU DASH. Specifically, partnership and collaboration has been achieved through the Student Experience Scholarships, which are due to report in June 2018. All projects are supported by the GCU Educational Research and Evaluation Team.

There are two projects that link to the new QET.

The CAAM (Contemporary Academic Advising & Mentoring) project
This project is cross university and staff are partnered by members of the Students Association. The key outcome of this project will be enhanced Academic Advising Practice Guidance facilitating transmission of good practice across the University. The project links to the current QET through the promotion of an enhanced sense of belonging and sense of community.

Assessing use of Rubrics at GCU
The key outputs of the project will be a database of assessment practices across the University, a report on the efficacy of these practices, and recommendations for addenda to existing policy to encourage and facilitate the use of rubrics in a robust manner. Students will benefit from more robust assessment and feedback processes that personalise the learning experience and lead to more positive perception of feedback. This project links with the assessment and feedback element of the QET.

Evaluation

The work of the theme feeds directly into the University 2020 Enhancing the Student Experience (EtSE) Operational Group. This group provides a mechanism whereby theme related student enhancement activities can be monitored and evaluated. In this way, outcomes and recommendations can directly input into the strategic development of learning & teaching policy and practice, and can be used to inform further enhancement.

Processes

The EtSE Steering Group and linked Operational Group have provided an established and solid infrastructure to support the work of the theme. The Operational Group brings together the theme team on a regular basis and ensures a consistent flow of communication. This ensures the work of the theme links directly to the SEAP and GCU Strategy 2020 priorities and help us to be discerning in our activity and focus on those areas that have meaning to

18 https://www.gcu.ac.uk/academicqualityanddevelopment/educationalresearchandevaluation/
The University and directly link to the QET. In this way activity is seen as joined and integrated not regarded as separate work streams. For example, This Year 1 Report has been circulated in draft to the EtSE Operations Group in the first instance, then tabled at the EtSE Steering Group and finally will be tabled at the University Learning and Teaching Sub-Committee (LTSC).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Report Authors:</th>
<th>Professor Nicky Andrew (QET Institutional Lead)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dr Colin Milligan (Education Research and Evaluation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lesley McAleavy (Policy and Development)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td>1/6/2018</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
End of Year 1 Report for Glasgow School of Art

Italicised text can be removed as it is advisory.

The key purposes of this report are to:-
- provide a framework for HEIs to report on their Theme activity that has taken place over the year
- help share information across the sector on the benefits and challenges around Theme engagement.

Please report under the headings below. The report should be about 6 to 8 sides of A4 in length.

**Institutional team**

Identify any changes in Theme leadership, TLG and institutional team membership since details were reported in the institutional plan developed at the start of the academic year.

The team remains as originally composed. Vicky Gunn oversees the project work both in her capacity on SHEEC and with the support of Mark Charters as the ‘vice’ theme leader.

**Outcomes/activity**

Outline what was achieved in relation to your year 1 planned outcomes and activities, at the time of submitting this report.

Have there been any unintended outcomes/unexpected findings?

Please report on any aspect of work that you are particularly proud of and want to promote.

If there is work, which is not yet completed but will be by the 31 July, please comment below.

In the first year of this project, GSA committed to three defined work-packages:

1. **Using a newly implemented student experience survey to build a more comprehensive understanding of the student experience as cohorts’ progress through their degrees at GSA.**

   This specific element of work is part of a broader, coherent evolution of using evidence to both understand and evaluate the student experience at GSA. It is accompanied by a recognition that engagement with metrics-based evidence, as well as our more traditional use of qualitative material, is now a requirement for GSA within the Glasgow campus, but also via Forres’ engagement with Highlands and Islands Enterprise and within Singapore through the government focused Graduate Outcomes data.

   **Update:**

   Stage 1 of the survey was implemented and the results used to initiate discussion across GSA about (a) professional practice development in the curriculum; (b) shifts in sentiment within a cohort over time. We also ran the second semester version of the survey, but response rates were low and we are now considering that any part 2 of an annual cycle of
student experience monitoring and feedback needs to be done in a different format to a cross-GSA survey instrument.

As a direct outcome of GSA’s more systematic engagement with metrics-based evidence, we are beginning to consider the following questions:

- How can we better engage all levels of teaching staff in the use of evidence (metrics, qualitative data)
- What support is needed to make engagement with and use data more possible?
- As an institution are there better ways for us to present the data to staff/students?
- How can data be curated and mined in order to identify potential impact of targeted enhancements?
- How can we engage students with evidence and data to inform enhancement at the same time as growing their awareness of the increasing role metrics data plays in their education but also in their post-graduation arenas?

In the original work-package we aimed to employ an intern that would be involved in the feedback of this work-package to students. However, we opted to implement two slightly different approaches. Firstly, we used the new student voice structure to disseminate the results and ensure discussion at a local level between staff and students was facilitated. Secondly, we employed a project assistant to develop a form of student experience evaluation predicated on a participatory arts method. The project assistant is working with Vicky Gunn on a pilot process to enable students to consider the assets of the GSA community of which they are part. He is basing the design of his work on a month-long installation at Cooper Union under the direction of Caroline Woolard and Stamatina Gregory:

The aim is to enrich the focus on instruments like the NSS with a model of student reflection that is more akin to participatory asset mapping as an artwork. If the pilot is successful, we hope to repeat it on a larger scale in year two of the theme. Key to this enhancement theme is exploring the possibilities of Arts methods as a way of enhancing how we evidence the impact of our Art School education. The project assistant is a current PGT student in the School of Fine Art.

2. **An audit of assessment and feedback practice with the specific aim of revisiting GSA’s Code of assessment.**

**Update:** This is underway, and the initial discussion about next steps occurred at GSA’s Learning and Teaching Committee in May 2018. Given clear feedback from students in the NSS regarding satisfaction levels as well as recognised variances in assessment practices across the institution, a revision of the code of assessment is now embedded as an explicit objective of the next Learning & Teaching Enhancement Strategy (2018-2021).

3. **Beginning to explore and use outcomes metrics as part of GSA’s evidence base for evaluating and understanding the impact of the learning and teaching on students’ post-graduation experiences and careers and specifically build confidence amongst PLs in using Graduate Outcomes (DLHE) within their annual monitoring discussions.**

**Update:** This current work-package has been delayed whilst we await the latest DLHE figures. It will be picked up in year two of the theme and incorporated into broader work raising the profile of graduate outcomes amongst teaching staff. Part of this work will be linked to the establishment of Graduate Outcomes related KPIs within GSA’s new strategic plan.
Dissemination of work

Which mechanisms have been most effective in disseminating outcomes and resources internally, and to the sector – please provide examples?

If there are materials and resources you can share with the sector, please provide details below.

We are still very much in the scoping stage of this theme. We anticipate being able to share specifics regarding evaluation via a participatory arts project in the second year of the project.

Inter-institutional collaboration

What was achieved with respect to collaborative working with other Higher Education institutions and what do you perceive as the benefits and challenges – please provide examples. Note that this relates to work funded through institutional contract finance rather than the collaborative cluster activity.

As we are leading one of the collaborative clusters, this work is rolled into one with the other.

Sector-wide work

Identify the ways in which your institution has contributed to collaborative sector-wide work project strands (work funded beyond institutional contract finance).

The Creative Cluster has met twice to discuss the initial scoping stage of their work. Around these conversations, the group has been collaborating on the production of a text (this interim scoping document) that will be converted into the provocation statement to be used in a round table event on 29\textsuperscript{th} June. The group was also informed by the Creative Scotland funded event on Scotland’s Creative Economy at GSA on 3\textsuperscript{rd} May.

Plans are underway for the round table on 29\textsuperscript{th} June and are being taken forward with project assistance from a current Masters’ student at GSA. The round table will focus on a provocation summed up as:

“The creative arts disciplines need to disrupt current HE models for identifying student satisfaction and outcomes. In doing this, we should reconfigure how we think about evidencing improvements to the student experience using the framework of the Ecology of Culture.

Participants from Scotland’s creative context will come together to discuss this provocation under the following questions:

- What does success look like for Creative Arts education?
- How do current methods of measuring student experience and outcomes respond to this question?
- What could we develop using our own creative methods that would enrich the data sets that have become normalised through HE governance processes?

The initial scoping document will be amended in the light of this event as well as having fuller sections relating to how quality outcomes are required and operate for creative disciplines across social, economic, health, and educational boundaries. This in turn will become the final report for year one, with clear recommendations regarding activity in year 2.

Within the activities of the Enhancement Theme it sits underneath the sector strand: optimizing the use of existing evidence.
Supporting staff and student engagement

How have staff and students been supported to engage in Theme activities? Please provide examples.

Please report on any work (current or planned) around upskilling staff and students in the use of evidence to improve the student experience. Would you be willing to share any of your materials with the sector?

In the first phase of this theme, GSA has been concentrating on two areas:

(1) Raising confidence around using evidence through continued reiteration of how to engage with it when discussing strategic matters in Boards of Studies, annual reviews, and with students through Student Voice mechanisms (e.g., using NSS assessment and feedback scores as well as their benchmarked scores as released by the Office of Students within TEF metrics to map longitudinal attitudes to our practices at the same time as using it to check whether enhancement interventions have any impact long term). Most recently this resulted in the suggestion of the following reflection rubric at GSA’s May 2018 Academic Council with regards to enhancements to learning and teaching:

(2) Scoping a participatory art process to encourage students to see themselves as agents in the co-creation of value within a community of practitioners rather than just recipients within a value-chain (customer type focus of NSS type instruments).

In these two areas, ‘upskilling’ around evidence is part of a long-term project of engagement of staff and students with both metric data and enriching data sets.

Evaluation

Reflecting on the monitoring and evaluation of your Theme work, what is changing with respect to strategy, policy and practice?

The most significant areas of change relate to how GSA strategically views metrics and qualitative evidence in order to:

1. Make decisions about teaching enhancements (moving away from annualised reactions to more reflective approaches);
2. Map the impact of teaching enhancements within subject review.

To ensure systematic approaches to evidence are embedded, the following objective has been added to the next iteration of the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy (LTES) (2018-2021): “Implement a coordinated, evidence-based approach to GSA’s enhancement of learning, teaching, and assessment which draws on GSA’s engagement with the Enhancement Theme and consolidates GSA’s use of a range of evidence regarding the student experience on its programmes.” This objective is then responded to by each of GSA’s academic schools through the process of operationalizing the LTES.

Processes

What are you learning from the processes, approaches and structures you are using to support this Theme?

How will this report be used/distributed within your institution?

The key lesson so far is that upskilling as a general principle in terms of the sheer scale of the increase of metrics data available is an imperative for GSA. How best to do this will be the focus of years two and three of our institutional work.
Given the academic cycle, this report will go to the August Learning and Teaching Committee (2018) and the first Undergraduate and Postgraduate Committee of the next academic session with updates and further work for year two outlined (September 2018).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Report Author:</th>
<th>Vicky Gunn</th>
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<td>Date:</td>
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End of Year 1 Report for Heriot-Watt University

Italicised text can be removed as it is advisory.

The key purposes of this report are to:-

- provide a framework for HEIs to report on their Theme activity that has taken place over the year
- help share information across the sector on the benefits and challenges around Theme engagement.

Please report under the headings below. The report should be about 6 to 8 sides of A4 in length.

<table>
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Two members have been added to the Institutional Team to ensure that all international campuses are represented. These are:

- Dr Alyce Mason (Academic Development Coordinator - Dubai Campus)
- Stella Marie C. Galimpin (Effective Learning Manager - Malaysia Campus)

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<tr>
<th>Outcomes/activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>Outline what was achieved in relation to your year 1 planned outcomes and activities, at the time of submitting this report.</td>
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Have there been any unintended outcomes/unexpected findings?

Please report on any aspect of work that you are particularly proud of and want to promote.

If there is work, which is not yet completed but will be by the 31 July, please comment below.

Overall, the Enhancement Theme work at Heriot-Watt is progressing well. Like many institutions, the industrial action in early spring has had an impact and some elements are behind where we might have expected them to be.

An institutional wide team, with representatives from our two international campuses has been set-up. This team has met twice to date. An institutional Enhancement Theme web site has been created to provide information for HWU staff on Enhancement Theme activities and to provide information on calls for projects etc. This can be viewed at https://www.hw.ac.uk/services/is/learning-teaching/qaa-enhancement-theme.htm and links within.
**Funded Projects**
As with previous Enhancement Themes, much of the HWU funding will be used to fund individual projects across the University. In contrast with previous Themes, the call for these are focussed on specific aspects of our Enhancement Theme work and staff and students across the University are invited to submit project proposals to meet the call.

To date we have funded two projects.

**Project 1: Revitalising the Student Survey Process at HWU: Closing the feedback loop & How do we know we have made a difference?**
This project will involve a systematic review of the current survey processes at HWU and assess the effectiveness of the actions taken by the University in response to student survey results over the last two academic years. The project will provide a series of scalable recommendations to the University on how the student survey framework could be enhanced to close the feedback loop. This work will include desk research around existing survey data and actions plans etc., but will also include interviews and/or focus groups with student representatives and key staff to help fully understand present approaches and how they might be enhanced. This project will be based in the Registry and is expected to report in Oct/Nov 2018.

**Project 2: Exploring Student Views of Good Practice: An evaluation of Student Lead Teaching Awards (SLTAs)**
This project will undertake research of student nominations for the Student-Led Teaching Awards (e.g. Oscars) at the HWU Dubai and Scottish campuses. This research will be student-led and have a clear aim in order to assess how we have made a difference to the learning & teaching environment across Heriot-Watt University. The project will employ a student intern to undertake content analysis of the student nominations for SLTAs and identify the main themes. They will conduct a literature review of how SLTAs have been analysed or used in other institutions. The will also carry out semi-structured interviews with students and award winners. The output of this work will be a report to the University on the findings and recommendations. This will be shared with various stakeholders across the University. It is expected that relevant outcomes and learning from this project will be shared with the wider sector through conference presentations and other means.

**Present Project Call**
A call for further project proposals is presently open and we expect to fund another 3 to 5 projects this academic year. (see [https://www.hw.ac.uk/services/is/learning-teaching/innovation/enhancement-theme-funded-projects.htm](https://www.hw.ac.uk/services/is/learning-teaching/innovation/enhancement-theme-funded-projects.htm) for details). Further project funding will be made available in future years of the Theme.

**Other work in relation to our Year one Plan**
Work is underway to identify appropriate approaches to evaluating the success of action plans created in response to student surveys. This work is being informed by the approaches taken to evaluating the successful implementation of the
recommendations of the PGR Life-Cycle working group, (part of our Student Transitions work) which reported in November 2016. The approaches taken in this work will be shared with the sector at the 15th Enhancement Conference on June 7th. The present Heriot-Watt approaches to Athena Swan and the HR Excellence in Research Award evaluation are also influencing this work. It is expected that this work will not be finalised until after the results of the “Revitalising the Student Survey Process...” project are reported. (see above)

Dissemination of work

Which mechanisms have been most effective in disseminating outcomes and resources internally, and to the sector – please provide examples?

If there are materials and resources you can share with the sector, please provide details below.

As most of the HWU activity is in an early stage, there are few, if any, tangible outputs at this point.

Regular updates on activity and approaches have been provided at TLG meetings, reports to the University Committee for Learning & Teaching (UCLT) and in other fora. We also have created a dedicated website for HWU Enhancement Theme activities to raise staff and student awareness and to both advertise calls for funded projects and to present the outcomes from these projects. (see https://www.hw.ac.uk/services/is/learning-teaching/qaa-enhancement-theme.htm)

HWU will be presenting in both a workshop and a paper session at the forthcoming ET Conference. The paper presentation will be sharing the approaches and lessons learnt from a recent review of our PGR life-cycle. The workshop will be an update on a collaborative project with the University of Glasgow which is trying to better understand the data available on the experiences of International PGR students in the UK. The workshop will both share present knowledge as well as engaging participants in identifying potential ways forward for this project. A similar workshop will be run at the UKCGE Annual Conference in Bristol in July.

We expect that once our internally funded ET projects are complete, the reports and other outputs will be shared through the HWU ET web site and through other means.

Inter-institutional collaboration

What was achieved with respect to collaborative working with other Higher Education institutions and what do you perceive as the benefits and challenges – please provide examples. Note that this relates to work funded through institutional contract finance rather than the collaborative cluster activity.

None of the monies that HWU receive from the QAA have been invested in collaborative working. However, that has not prevented inter-institutional collaborative activity that falls under the wider remit of the Theme.
HWU staff are involved in a collaborative project with staff and research students at the University of Glasgow, to try and identify gaps in the existing data pertaining to the experiences of International PGR students in the UK. This work is ongoing and workshops will be presented at the QAA Enhancement Themes conference and the UKCGE Annual Conference to raise awareness and to get input to the project from the wider sector. It is expected that the learning and outcomes from this project will be shared in future ET reporting and at future ET events.

The other main inter-institutional collaboration we are involved in is with Edinburgh Napier University. The focus of this project is on “supporting staff in interpreting and synthesising evidence and in evaluating the impact of changes introduced”. It is expected that much of the work of this project will be achieved in the next academic year.

**Sector-wide work**

*Identify the ways in which your institution has contributed to collaborative sector-wide work project strands (work funded beyond institutional contract finance).*

**TLG:** HWU has been actively represented at all bar one of the TLG meetings to date.

**Collaborative Clusters:** HWU was represented at the second meeting of the Learning Analytics Cluster, and expects to continue to contribute to this work going forward.

**Student Led Project:** Three HWU staff and one student representative attended the April Think-Tank event. A number of staff also completed the online survey related to this event.

**ET Conference:** HWU staff will be involved in two of the workshops and presentations at the conference. A number of HWU staff are registered to attend.

**E4E Scottish Planners Group:** Our Planning Manager is a member of this group and attended the meeting in March, with further offline contribution as part of this work stream. HWU will continue to contribute to the future activities of this group.

**Supporting staff and student engagement**

*How have staff and students been supported to engage in Theme activities? Please provide examples.*

*Please report on any work (current or planned) around upskilling staff and students in the use of evidence to improve the student experience. Would you be willing to share any of your materials with the sector?*

**Staff Engagement**

Enhancement Theme activities at HWU are aligned with institutional strategic priorities and are heavily influenced by guidance from the University Committee for Learning and Teaching (UCLT).
Our main mechanisms for raising awareness of the Enhancement Theme activities amongst staff across the university is through UCLT, and the Schools Directors of Learning and Teaching, and through the HWU Enhancement Theme webpages (see https://www.hw.ac.uk/services/is/learning-teaching/qaa-enhancement-theme.htm and links within).

Our main mechanism for engaging staff directly in Enhancement Theme activities is through our Enhancement Theme funded projects (see above).

**Student Engagement**

As part of our awareness raising activities the TLG Staff Representative and the TLG Student Representative held a meeting with the Student Union School officers in March. This was an opportunity to explain to the School Officers how the Theme activity was being approached within HWU and to answer any questions they might have on this.

One of the funded projects to date is being led by HWU Student Union and will involve input from the Student representatives at our Dubai and Edinburgh campuses. This project will involve the recruitment of a student intern to carry out a content analysis of past nominations for Student Led Teaching Awards (SLTAs), carry out a literature survey of how SLTAs in other institutions have been used and carry out semi-structured interviews with students and award winners. The learning from this project will enhance HWUSUs expertise in the use of evidence to support improvements in the student experience, and feed into future student led work in this area. This learning will also be shared with staff across HWU.

**Evaluation**

*Reflecting on the monitoring and evaluation of your Theme work, what is changing with respect to strategy, policy and practice?*

The progress of our Theme work is assessed and considered at a number of regular points during the academic year. These include:

- Annual reporting to QAA through the end of year report and the annual plan of work,
- The meetings of our Institutional Team,
- The reporting to the HWU University Committee for Teaching and Learning,

At each of these points, our progress against our plan is evaluated and appropriate changes to planned work and input of time etc. considered. At each of these points an account of our progress is shared with the Deputy Principal (Learning and Teaching) and with the School Directors of Teaching and Learning.

This ensures that our Theme work is closely linked to other enhancement work across the University and that all major stakeholders are aware of progress and next steps.
Stakeholders are also provided with an opportunity to input into the evaluation of progress and may influence the next steps at each juncture.

This regular communication between the Institutional lead for teaching enhancement, the School leads and the Theme Institutional Team ensures that our Theme activity is aligned with other institutional enhancement strategy, is in line with present policy and can feed into new policy changes and developments. This process also provides early opportunities for the learning from our Theme activities to influence practice within our Schools.

The present Theme activity has been designed to directly address elements within our present Teaching and Learning Strategy (2013-2018), while our learning from this activity feeds into the development of the new 2018-2023 Teaching and Learning Strategy which is presently being developed.

An example of how this works in practice is that the recent call for projects was designed to focus on two areas that the University Committee for Teaching and Learning identified as key to institutional progress in these areas. These were “closing the feedback loop” in regard to student surveys and identifying “How do we know we have made a difference” regarding actions taken in response to student feedback provided in surveys.

It is too early to identify specific significant policy or practice changes, but we expect that the learning from the project elements of our work will lead to significant changes in policy and practice at both School and Institutional level. The learning from some of these projects, along with the work of the Institutional team will influence our teaching and Learning strategy for the next five years as well as impacting on other strategy elements.

Processes

What are you learning from the processes, approaches and structures you are using to support this Theme?

How will this report be used/distributed within your institution?

Learning from the process

To date the Theme activities and discussions have included staff from across our campuses, from all of our academic schools and many of our professional service directorates. This has resulted in many discussions and collaborations between staff whose work would not normally overlap. This closer working is helping us to identify gaps in our knowledge and identify elements of our process where enhancement is desired. Once our funded projects start to report, we expect the learning from these to help us to enhance our understanding of student survey usage across the university and to identify new ways of enhancing our student engagement and our student learning experiences. We also expect that some of the learning from these projects will provide questions for future projects to tackle.

Report Distribution
This report will be shared with the members of the Institutional team, HWUSU, UCLT and with the University Student Survey Management Group. It will also be made available to staff and students across the University through the HWU Enhancement Themes website.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Report Author:</th>
<th>Dr Rob Daley</th>
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<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td>June 1st 2018</td>
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End of Year 1 Report for Queen Margaret University

Institutional team

The team comprises members at a variety of levels from both professional services (planning, student retention, registry, information and learning services, quality enhancement, and academic practice) and academic staff (business, creative industries, nursing, sociology, physiotherapy) as well as two student representatives (psychology, physical activity, health and wellbeing). The team is, therefore, representative of the university as a whole. The team has had four formal meetings.

Two part-time project officers were appointed to the team in February 2018 to take forward the Theme work at QMU.

Outcomes/activity
The objectives for 2017 – 2018 as laid out in the original plan for Queen Margaret University with comments appear below:

**Establish an effective institutional team** – the team has been established and, as noted above, has also appointed two part-time project officers.

**Develop a logic model for the three years of the theme** – this has been completed, and forms the foundation for the team's work over the three years.

**Scope current use of evidence and assess what evidence our staff and students need** – this is work in progress, but, so far, a survey of institutional team members has been carried out to assess their familiarity with and usage of the various forms of data collected at Queen Margaret University. To support this information, interviews were carried out with additional members of staff and the Students' Union. This information was combined with that obtained more broadly from staff via a BOS survey. The findings of this information-gathering exercise were presented to the institutional team in April, and formed the basis for team decisions on projects for the Theme. One important finding is that there is information gathered within the institution on an enormously wide range of areas. The issues appear to be around finding the information and making use of it effectively, rather than collecting any missing evidence. Another important finding is widespread support for more systematic and effective use across the institution of module evaluation data.

**Work on a QMU approach to the use of evidence** – In response to the above scoping activity, the following projects have been agreed as the Theme goes forward:

1. **Using internally gathered evidence:**
   - *The Five Things Project (working title).* This project is aimed at helping staff identify the five most important pieces of evidence about their area of work – where to find them, what they tell us and how they can be used to help make a difference to the student experience. This project will build on some of the current institutional initiatives noted in the QMU original plan, such as the student and staff dashboards. It is envisioned that this project will link more broadly to data sources across the institution and be a route into guidelines for staff on how to use this data.
   - *Making best use of module evaluations:* This project is still being designed, but it is hoped that it will increase awareness across the institution of best practice with regards to using the evidence from module evaluation to improve the student experience, both at the micro level and at the more aggregated level within programmes and divisions. This project will build on the work of the Module Evaluation Working Group which completed its brief in the institution early in 2018, and also take forward the Transitions Framework which was developed during the previous Enhancement Theme.

2. **Using externally gathered evidence:** It was strongly felt that education research more generally provides evidence which can help us to enhance the student learning experience, and this project aims to update and develop student and staff guidelines developed during the “Developing and Supporting the Curriculum” Enhancement Theme. These guidelines focused on successful institutional practice, and will now aim to incorporate, in addition, findings from institutional data on successful student practice, as well as the work of the Learning Analytics collaborative cluster.

In addition to the scoping and project development work noted above:
- An institutional newsletter on the focus of the Theme and the work of the institutional team was developed and distributed across the institution in April. Further newsletters are planned.
- A number of paper proposals were submitted and accepted for the Enhancement Theme Conference in June 2018.
- Focus groups are being planned to help identify staff views on the Theme work and also to identify the most commonly sought and most useful evidence as a basis for the Five Things project.
- Work has begun on preparing outline requirements and bid documents for Projects for Learning and Teaching – an Enhancement Theme-focused opportunity for seed funding which will take forward the idea of evidence-based enhancement of student learning. These PETL projects will form a key part of the institution’s Theme work in 2018/19, and culminate in a showcase day as part of our dissemination strategy.

The project plan and work progress is presented graphically in the images which follow.
### Table 1: Task Completion Table

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<th>1st Quarter</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Gantt Chart 1

- Key Dates: 01/06, 07/06, 27/02, 27/05, 15/05, 08/03, 18/05, 15/05.
Dissemination of work

- As noted above, a regular newsletter informs staff of work on the Theme. This is made available both electronically and in paper form. In addition, a website is maintained with relevant information, such as institutional team minutes, materials developed, collaborative cluster updates, etc.
- Brief presentations by institutional team members at programme and division meetings are planned for the new academic year. Team members will be provided with a pack of materials to support them in making these presentations.
- Focus groups will aid not only in providing information for project developments, but also in disseminating information about the Theme.
- PETL projects and their final showcase have in the past proved to be powerful mechanisms for raising awareness of the Theme within the institution.

Inter-institutional collaboration

QMU is in discussion with Edinburgh Napier University and UHI, to explore joint working around supporting programme leaders / teams vis a vis their use of evidence. It is hoped that by keeping this collaboration small scale and tightly focused we will be able to pool resources and jointly produce guidance for programme level use.

Sector-wide work

QMU has been contributed to a number of sectoral projects so far:

- We have participated in workshops for the learning analytics cluster, led by the University of Strathclyde
- We have participated in workshops on the Employability and OLL strands, led by the OUiS
- We have participated in meetings for the creative arts cluster, led by GSA.

These projects are all in the early stages and we hope to be actively involved with each of them next year.

Supporting staff and student engagement

See above –

- Our newsletter and discussion of the Theme at meetings has raised awareness of the focus of the Theme across the institution.
- The Five Things project is the starting point for a suite of linked sources of information (some already existing, some yet to be created) which will form guidelines and provide ideas on the use of evidence. The delivery format of these resources has yet to be decided.
- Students are represented on the institutional team, and have also been consulted via the Students' Union with regard to their use of and requirements for evidence.
This process is ongoing. It is hoped that further links can be made with various student initiatives, and discussions are under way for an Evidence-based Enhancement category in the 2018/2019 STAR awards for staff, which is led and voted for by students.

- In 2018/19, as noted above, PETL projects will allow staff to bid directly for seed funding to undertake projects related to the work of the Theme.

**Evaluation**

It feels rather early in the theme to be able to make statements about strategy, policy and practice changes. Some discussions have been undertaken around Module Evaluation, and these may lead to policy change, but there is a long way to go yet. Previous experience indicates that a slow and steady shift in the discourse around Theme issues takes place over the whole timeframe of the Theme, and it is this that leads to lasting change. In order to achieve this, a variety of approaches, levels and strategies are required, and the projects noted above are designed to meet this need.

**Processes**

The processes, approaches and structures being used to support this Theme represent a combination of mechanisms found to be effective in previous Themes. In particular, it was recognised that the appointment of project officers with ring-fenced time is an effective way of accelerating the work of the team. Similarly, an active and wide-ranging institutional team is needed to support the Theme.

A combination of activities decided at grassroots level and facilitated by the use of seed funding AND centrally led projects chosen and supported by the institutional team has in the past been found to create momentum around the Theme, and therefore this approach has been continued.

This report will be made available on the institutional Theme website. It is also available for all institutional team members, and will be included in the briefing pack for presentation at meetings.

**Report Author:** Dr Sally Anderson, ET Project Officer  
Professor Roni Bamber, Chair of institutional team  
Karl Johnson, ET Project Officer  
Jo Rowley, Deputy Chair of institutional team

**Date:** 25 May 2018
End of Year 1 Report: Robert Gordon University

Institutional team

The RGU institutional team has remained as originally specified:
- Staff lead - Kirsty Campbell, Learning Analytics and Partnership Lead, DELTA
- Student lead - Kerry Harrison, President Education and Welfare, RGU:Union

In addition an internal Enhancement Theme Leadership Group (RGU:ETLG) was established. This group brought together stakeholders of the Year One project strands and comprised academic and support colleagues from across the university, alongside members of the student union and school representatives.

The RGU:ETLG reports to directly to our Teaching Learning and Assessment Sub-Committee (TLASC), which is convened by the university's Scottish Higher Education Enhancement Committee (SHEEC) member.

Outcomes/activity

The university has a long-standing commitment to the strategic use of evidence to support quality assurance processes, and to drive enhancement activity. In recent years this has been formally recognised by the positive outcomes of our Enhancement-Led Institutional Review (2016), and Gold Award achieved via the Teaching Excellence Framework (2017).

Engagement with the first year of the new Enhancement Theme has helped us reinforce and strengthen this firm institutional commitment to the ethos of evidence-based enhancement.

Key activity over the period has included:

- Establishment of a cross-institution Leadership Group to shape the development of the university's approach to the Theme and to ensure that through various levels of engagement the Theme was promoted and driven forward (e.g. institutional, service and discipline).
- The identification of three primary project strands, aligned to institutional priorities, and which capitalised on our desire to extend and embed our analytical capability. In addition two distinct project initiatives were agreed at a discipline and service level.
- Active engagement of staff and students in the initial shaping of project strands, and the subsequent delivery against objectives.
- Full participation in the in the QAA Theme Leaders Group and relevant collaborative clusters.

Project activity has further progressed RGU's capacity to deliver high quality analytical insights which inform effective, timely and sustainable enhancement activity within teaching and learning pedagogy and service delivery.
INSTITUTIONAL PROJECTS

Key outcomes in relation to institution-wide project-strands are provided below:

**OPTIMISING EVIDENCE: Further development of our analytical capacity through the phased roll-out of a new business intelligence reporting tool**

Building on our existing strengths in the use of evidence to support both strategic and operational decision-making, and a desire to develop increasingly agile analytical capacity the university has invested significant resource in the institution-wide roll-out of a new Business Intelligence tool; entitled RGU:Insight [Using Tableau and Alteryx software].

Primarily this has involved the development of a suite of new business intelligence reports/dashboards to better support core quality assurance and enhancement processes. The project, led by our Strategy, Planning and Policy Development department, has engaged with key stakeholders across the institution on strategic priorities and progress.

In the first instance considerable activity took place on defining the technical specifications, data definitions and data governance in support of the implementation. Subsequent tangible outputs include the development of reporting functionality to underpin key business functions, such as our Annual Course Appraisal Process, which incorporates indicators of performance across the breadth of the learner journey:

- **Intake** (Enrolments and continuing students)
- **Satisfaction** (National Student Survey, internal Student Experience Questionnaire)
- **Success** (Student Achievement Rates as a proxy for continuation, Module Achievement)
- **Destination** (Withdrawals, Honours Classifications, DHLE)

Each dashboard contains a separate interactive workbook for each indicator; providing visualisations of different aspects and including a breakdown of data by population characteristic within the same ‘view’ (e.g. SIMD, articulating, age, ethnicity, gender, disability) – this is brand new functionality to the university and is a step-change from previous methods of providing data sources to colleagues to support this process.

Whilst the above indicators were, of course, previously available to staff considerable efficiencies will be achieved in terms of time spent by academics accessing information from different sources, allowing this time to be better spent gleaning quantitative and qualitative insights and facilitating informed discussion in order to prioritise appropriate interventions.

**Example: Empowering colleagues to define evidence-driven interventions**

Alongside the step-change in presentation and dissemination of metrics outlined above, the Annual Course Appraisal process itself has been augmented for Session 2017/18. Amendments aim to further embed critical analysis of metrics pertaining to the learner experience; allowing trends, strengths and required developments in performance to be identified. In addition the capture of planned enhancement actions has been further formalised to facilitate more effective progress monitoring.

The roll-out of the revised Annual Course Appraisal process and RGU:Insight dashboard will be supported by a series of staff workshops designed to explore the value of meaningful metrics as a sound basis for assuring quality as well as driving enhancement activity, showcase the new RGU:Insight product, introduce new concepts for interrogation - and most importantly empower all staff as change agents within their own contexts.
In addition to the advancement of our understanding of core performance indicators the RGU:Insight project has driven forward the collation of new types of metrics, namely:

- **League Table Analysis**, to enable greater understanding of performance at subject-level, and contributions to our overarching institutional ranking(s); and
- **Market Insight Analysis**, through the creation of a self-service data set encompassing five years of commissioned HESA data.

These new data sets have enabled innovative external benchmarking capability which is deemed imperative to supporting the university to achieve its strategic aims.

Subsequent project phases will involve the linking of other internal data sources - including those pertaining to the learning infrastructure, such as the VLE and Library service - to further extend cross-institutional analytical capability.

Furthermore specific consideration will be given to how the effective dissemination of evidence via RGU:Insight can best support practitioners in reflection of their academic practice, and underpin tangible enhancement activity.

### STUDENT ENGAGEMENT: Extension of the reach and impact of the suite of internal student evaluation questionnaires

As part of its central role in supporting the analysis of key metrics pertaining to the student experience the Department for the Enhancement of Learning, Teaching and Access (DELTA) undertook detailed analysis of the 2017 National Student Survey (NSS), and specifically the new Student Voice category. Subsequently it was agreed that the topic be an objective of our Student Partnership Agreement (SPA) for Session 2017/18, as well as progressed under the auspices of the Theme.

Recognising the value of student partnership the department appointed a Student Intern to gain additional insight into existing practice of ‘closing the feedback’ loop to students, and how this differs across subject areas. An Appreciative Enquiry was commissioned and the process enabled self-reflection within Schools and allowed collation of perceptions on what is currently working well and/or could be further developed at university and school/course levels.

Staff and students engaged in the process were unanimously in agreement of the value of the ‘student voice’, and of the ‘partnership ethos’ as a means to engage with students in meaningful dialogue. Examples of good quality partnerships were evident and enthusiastically shared amongst colleagues; from examples of student involvement with major enhancement projects to in the day-to-day planning and delivery of practitioner activity. It was evident that staff would welcome additional guidance on suggested approaches for effectively communicating school/course enhancement activity to the student body. Furthermore it was agreed that there would be benefit in extending use of our institutional ‘Achieved in Partnership’ branding concept at school and service levels.

Over the summer period planned enhancements will be progressed, and will also be informed by the outputs of the student-led Enhancement Theme project; ‘Responding to the Student Voice: Communicating the Impact’.

In conjunction DELTA also led substantive review of university-wide student evaluation mechanisms; aiming to increase the reach and strengthen the collective ‘Student Voice’. By way of example:
• A new Semester 1 Student Experience Questionnaire (SEQ) was piloted in November 2017; providing an in-year mechanism for feedback and allowed earlier interventions to be considered by course teams.
• A new internal mechanism to seek feedback from the Postgraduate Research community was developed.
• Bespoke questionnaire content was created for Graduate Level Apprenticeship cohorts, to ensure appropriate feedback from these new delivery methods.
• Approval was gained for additional questions within both the NSS and SEQ in support of emergent priorities (Eg: NSS - Employability and Skills bank question category, SEQ - Student Voice and career pathways)

Significantly, the role of the School Survey Coordinator was augmented to encompass both internal and external student evaluation mechanisms. These colleagues are responsible for ensuring local-level engagement and facilitated briefing workshops encouraged renewed consideration of effective practice and the benefits of student-feedback forming the basis of informed enhancements to teaching and learning, and the wider student experience.

Notably, in support, revised branding was commissioned for internal questionnaires to raise the profile of, and distinguish the SEQ from the range of other module/service surveys. Importantly this includes templates which can be easily adapted by academic colleagues to communicate local and contextualised messages. Given the timing in the cycle this content is deemed a precursor to development of resources to ‘close the loop’ on 2017/18 results and action in response.

Example: Engaging learners to create a culture of co-ownership

The development of a suite of promotional materials was initiated by DELTA with input from a range of staff and students. Materials were aimed at providing high-level insights into the previous cycle, whilst encouraging the provision of constructive feedback, and have been championed by Student Ambassadors and Survey Coordinators.

The initial collective impact of this activity is demonstrated in RGU achieving its highest response rate to date for the 2018 NSS; 82% [NB: Pending final cleansing].

In addition, although fieldwork is still ongoing, levels of engagement with the internal SEQ appear to be on a positive trajectory. In 2016/17 the final response rate was 52%, and within the 2017/18 cycle to date 50% of those eligible have responded.
The university’s employability rankings and the work-related experiences and placements offered are deemed one of our unique selling points. In recognition of the imperative to continue to provide a renowned offer to our students, during Session 2017/18, a physical Hub for ‘Employability and Professional Enrichment’ has been established on campus. Complemented by an online presence, the Hub combines the related activity of placement, careers education and study abroad within one organisational entity.

The purpose of this project was to explore the underpinning qualitative and quantitative metrics which could best support the work of the new student-facing service, and ultimately the successful transition of students into graduate level employment – a key performance indicator of the university.

An early priority for the Hub was the conception of a clear suite of metrics in support of meeting our aspirational targets for graduate level employment, as well as concerted efforts to raise their profile across the institution. Joined-up analysis of results of the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education survey (DLHE), feedback from the NSS, service engagement statistics, and other complimentary metrics, has informed dialogue with Heads of School to focus and agree employability activities for the next academic session.

Insights from the analysis has also supported a number of targeted interventions, including: the fostering of closer industry links in certain subject areas below sector benchmarks, delivery of bespoke events for key groups and work to articulate a set of graduate outcomes.

**Example: Effective use of evidence to support service design and delivery**

A specific illustration of the use of evidence to inform new student-facing support offers is the development of our What’s Next Conference. The event was targeted towards subject areas, and categories of students, which were identified as being below graduate level employability benchmarks.

The one-day career development event brought together students and alumni to help develop understanding of different career pathways. Attended by over 100 students, the event featured inspiring industry speakers, career support as well as a range of practical, step-by-step workshops to help develop employability and prepare students for the world of work.

In recognition of the phasing out of the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education survey (DLHE), and phasing in of the Graduate Outcomes survey [which will include linked data from HMRC Longitudinal Educations Outcome (LEO)] steps have been taken to maintain our level of insight into the progression routes of our leavers.

Approval was gained for the inclusion of new employability questions within both our internal SEQ and within our ‘bank’ category selections for the external NSS; specifically to gain insight into how the learning experience has helped students plan for future career pathways. In addition a new internal survey mechanism has been designed; the Leavers Survey will provide a direct comparison with both the DLHE and NSS and quantitative and qualitative insights will enable proactive support to be targeted in the period following graduation and in advance of the GO Survey.
DISCIPLINE AND SERVICE PROJECTS

The university also chose to commence specific project activity led by both a discipline area and student-facing service. It has been agreed these projects will continue until December 2018, however progress to date is outlined below:

STUDENT-FACING SERVICE PROJECT: Library Service

Initial activity explored currently collected Library Service data sources and identified those which had the most potential to provide relevant insights into user experience; in support of the ambition to ensure students can readily access the materials required to best support their learning.

Moreover, colleagues have investigated both operational and strategic level analytics functionality which will be afforded by the implementation of a new Library Management System (LMS) with a view to informing the design, delivery and appraisal of the services which the Library offer.

The LMS is due to be implemented in early June, and to date activity has encompassed:

- Engagement of students as partners in the development through inclusion on the Project Board, and focus group activity.
- Consideration of methodology to harmonise separate systems - and data sets - from previously distinct functions (e.g. reading lists, inter-library loans and links to Student Records.)
- Review of opportunities to signpost core, and additional, services.
- Development of a customised and intuitive interface in support of workflows and improving ‘back office’ efficiency.
- Review of communication functionality to personalise and streamline the systems notifications which will be issued to end-users.
- Investigation into how patterns of library patron behaviour might inform resource purchasing at course and module level (e.g circulation activity, usage of discovery tools, results lists and documents retrieved).

Following initial implementation, over the summer period, the Library will seek to identify and exploit opportunities to pro-actively act upon new intelligences, and decrease reactive practice and process.

DISCIPLINE PROJECT: School of Nursing and Midwifery

The discipline project supported the implementation of a new online platform within the School of Nursing and Midwifery for the evaluation of students’ practice learning environments; Quality Management in Practice Learning Evaluation (QMPLE).

Sponsored by the Scottish Government, QMPLE which will provide a real time transparent dashboard on the quality of student's practice placement learning experiences. Accessible to placement providers and academics, QMPLE will enhance the level and quality of student feedback regarding practice placements and enable the School to focus targeted enhancements using an evidence-based approach.

This is of particular significance to RGU given NSS results for the subject area are relatively low. Analysis of comments indicates complexities of placement organisation and management impact these results and it is anticipated that feedback from the new platform will provide first-hand insights allowing a more pro-active offer of support as required.
Key outcomes to date include:

- Collaboration with the NHS Project Lead to confirm baseline source data on placement locations and environments across partners, ensuring uniformity.
- Engagement with Student School Officers (SSO) to gain understanding of students perceptions of being ‘data generators’ in the placement context.
- Collaboration with other Scottish institutions on their approach to implementation, and key learning points.

An event to showcase the dashboard to student representatives is planned and will inform the roll-out to the wider student body during Semester 1. It will be vital that students fully understand QMPE and also feel motivated and encouraged to use the student evaluation function.

Student engagement with the QMPE implementation will also help establish effective mechanisms for partnership dialogue in response to new Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) standards. Major curriculum revisions are anticipated to include; the development of an electronic practice assessment tool, implementation of enhanced attendance monitoring systems, development of the School clinical skills and simulated practice centre.

Supporting staff and student engagement

Staff and students have been supported to engage in the theme via a range of mechanisms:

- The Enhancement Theme itself was introduced internally in the university’s teaching and learning communication; ‘DELTA Digest’ as well as alongside dissemination of the Semester 2 programme of CPD opportunities received by all academic staff.
- The Theme remains a standing item on relevant standing committees with members receiving updates for consideration [Learning Infrastructure Sub-Committee (LISC), Teaching Learning and Assessment Sub-Committee (TLASC) and Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC)]
- Each project strand has engaged relevant staff and students directly in their development process as appropriate. Examples include:
  - Project Board [Optimising evidence]
  - Meetings with individual Heads of Schools to outline the intended benefits to their students and courses [Student Attainment]
  - Workshop events with Student School Officers and Survey Coordinators [Student Engagement]
- Project activity has been showcased via relevant teaching and learning events for example: our annual conference, informal Network for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning (NETL), Focus On series and CPD offer.

Notably input from student leaders has been instrumental in informing the institutional project activity. The Student Lead, RGU:Union President (Education and Welfare), has facilitated dialogue amongst key representative roles and within relevant standing forums (eg DELTA Interns, Student School Officers/Student Rep Connect, Partnership in Action forums). In addition a recent blog post aimed to raise awareness amongst the wider student body ‘How do we use evidence to improve your experience?’

Dissemination of work

Progress and dissemination of outcomes has primarily been supported internally by a range of facilitated dialogue opportunities [Refer Staff and Student Engagement section above].
In addition examples of external activity to showcase project outcomes include:

- **Optimising Evidence** - The Business Intelligence team will present on the development of the DLHE dashboards, providing both institutional context and technical detail to the Tableau HE User Group on 27th June
- **Student Engagement** - Show-casing of RGU’s ‘Achieved in Partnership’ approach to closing the feedback loop as well as planned augmentations to this, at the Student Voice Think-Tank event.

### Inter-institutional collaboration

Collaboration with other institutions has predominantly been via the TLG and initial input to collaborative clusters [Refer Sector-wide work section below].

Within a regional context, and in celebration of national digital learning week, a joint Network for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning (NETL) session was held between RGU and North East Scotland College (NESCol) looking at ‘developing digital capabilities’. The session explored the importance of digital skills for today’s learners and how the development of digital capabilities can best be supported through our learning and teaching.

The university has also engaged in dialogue with Abertay University and anticipates this productive relationship evolving in subsequent years of the Theme.

### Sector-wide work

The university has actively engaged in collaborative cluster events for the following:

- Employability
- Distance and belonging
- Learning Analytics

These sector-level opportunities to explore our current thinking and positioning on key topics has been extremely valuable and we look forward to progressing further on this basis. It has highlighted effective practice elsewhere in the sector, which we are excited to learn more from.

Given the cross-over in objectives with our own internal Student Engagement project, membership of the Steering Group of the student-led project ‘Responding to the Student Voice: Communicating the Impact’ has, to date, proved most fruitful. Participation has allowed us to reflect on the progress of our internal partnership objective and to share this with colleagues across the sector. Specifically the Think-Tank event created opportunities for colleagues from different backgrounds to share and promote aspects of effective practice. In turn we anticipate benefitting from the alignment of our planned enhancements to that of the sector; particularly with regard to the concept of identifying principles of good practice in engaging students as partners in closing the feedback loop.

### Evaluation

The institutional-wide projects agreed in Year One stemmed from the university’s commitment to monitoring and evaluation. Bourne out of our established focus on the analysis of key metrics to inform impact-driven enhancement, the Theme has provided an opportunity to draw together strands of activity under one umbrella and to consider the alignment of institutional priorities,
identification of cross-cutting aspects of commonality, aspects of effective practice and challenge. In turn this has initiated new activity, and new forms of staff and student engagement. Moving forward we will seek to maximise the impact of this holistic approach and of our staff and students as enablers of change.

Whilst a range of changes in practice and process and have been initiated, to date this has not necessitated specific changes to policy.

**Processes**

As reported above, the process of establishing the RGU:ETLG - bringing together expertise from different parts of the institution in support of developing a core understanding of evidence for enhancement - and the Year One approach to progressing institutional projects has had value in of itself. Notably, interest in the Theme across and within subject areas and professional support services has grown over the period. It is apparent that in the context of a range of external factors evidence-based enhancement generates genuine interest amongst a wide range of staff (For example; TEF, growth of open and distance learning, student mobility, shortening and focusing the learner journey etc).

In response the RGU:ETLG will consider opportunities to support a wider network of practitioners to engage and to support ‘local’ activity aligned to institutional priorities. The planned approach for Year Two will be explored and refined with key academic and professional service roles over the summer period.

There is full recognition of the significant opportunity the Theme presents to share and shape evidence-based enhancement activity pertaining to learning and teaching, and/or to aspects of university life which contribute to the wider student experience.

**Report Author:** Kirsty Campbell, Learning Analytics and Partnership Lead, DELTA  
Kerry Harrison, President (Education and Welfare), RGU:Union

**Date:** 1 June 2018
End of Year 1 Report for: Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

**Institutional Team**
*Identify any changes in Theme leadership, TLG and institutional team membership since details were reported in the institutional plan developed at the start of the academic year.*

Due to staff illness and a change of Institutional Lead, the Institutional Team was only established in November 2017. Since then we have had one alteration and one expected progression. Hugh provided important guidance on the development of the Institutional Plan, however it became clear that Christoph would be in a position to play a more active role, aligning the work of this theme with his own PhD study and lecturing role.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>On Original Plan</th>
<th>Replaced by</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other Team Member</td>
<td>Hugh Hodgart</td>
<td>Christoph Wagner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Director of Drama, Dance, Production and Film</td>
<td>Lecturer in Lighting Design and PhD student</td>
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Our Student Union President steps down this Summer and will be replaced by our new Student Union President. Jasmine attended our most recent Institutional Team meeting along with our outgoing President Will.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>For year 1</th>
<th>For year 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TLG student representative</td>
<td>William Stringer Student Union President</td>
<td>Jasmine Munns Student Union President</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Outcomes/activity**
*Outline what was achieved in relation to your year 1 planned outcomes and activities, at the time of submitting this report. Have there been any unintended outcomes/unexpected findings? Please report on any aspect of work that you are particularly proud of and want to promote. If there is work, which is not yet completed but will be by the 31 July, please comment below.*

Our plan for year 1 was specifically designed to help us establish the foundations upon which the following year would be built. As a result we did not anticipate significant visible output from year one, but feel confident that we have made good progress across the projects and will be ready to capitalise on this preparatory work in year two.

By project, the following progress has been made against the original plan:
**Project 1: Good Teacher/Good Learner**

**Key outcome:**
This will be an online resource, available to all staff and students. We expect responses to be submitted in a number of modes including video, audio, image and text files. A key outcome for year 1 would be to have developed the best platform for this resource, and to have established a set of clear instructions for the task and for the process of uploading content. To engage as many staff and students as possible we would provide these instructions on a variety of formats.

**How we’d measure a positive outcome in year 1:**
By the end of year 1, we would be in a position to launch the online space for all new and returning students as they begin academic year 2018-19

We have employed a Learning Technologist that is already doing some excellent and creative work within our Fair Access department here at RCS, and she has begun constructing the online space. To ensure the platform was secure and sufficiently protected, we made the decision to build our new platform within the existing Portal space (WordPress engine) and there has been a little time lost with a change of staffing in the permanent learning technologist role. Work has now started on this space and we are very confident the resource will be ready to launch as planned for our 2018 intake. At our institutional meeting our SU president expressed a concern that students may not engage with a standalone online resource, and would be likely to engage more with a facilitated event. As such, we have designed some facilitated events designed to encourage students and staff to respond to the key questions on postcards and through a specially constructed videobooth. We will be aiming for the following roll-out:

- Sept 2018 – Introduce the key question 'What Makes A Good Teacher?' to staff at our Learning and Teaching Conference
- Early Oct 2018 - include a slide in the RCS information screens that simply says 'What Makes A Good Teacher?'
- Late Oct 2018 - add a twitter address to the question, allowing staff and students to contribute responses to the online space.
- Nov 2018 – organise first live event in the café to engage students in the question
- Nov/Dec 2018 - begin to stream responses to the question on our TV screens alongside existing messages. Also have this running on our Facebook page, perhaps with a distinct page for this theme work
- Jan/March 2019 - effect a similar launch but this time flipping the question to 'What Makes a Good Learner?'
- April-June 2019 - gather and disseminate responses

**Project 2: Definitions of Success**

**Key outcome:**
As with the previous project, this will be an online resource, available to all staff and students. Again we expect responses to be submitted in a number of modes including video, audio, image and text files. A key outcome for year 1 would be to have developed the best platform for this resource to build, and to have established a set of clear instructions for the task and for the process of uploading content. To engage as many students as possible we would provide these instructions on a variety of formats.

**How we’d measure a positive outcome in year 1:**
By the end of year 1, we would be in a position to launch the online space for all new and returning students as they begin academic year 2018-19

This project has progressed ahead of schedule and has produced some really interesting data. The original plan for this piece of work was that it would follow the model of project 1, however it became clear that this would be a more useful and distinct project if it were approached differently. Our Statistical Analyst Stephanie lead on the design, distribution, collation, analysis and synthesis of data
gathered from over 67% of our entire Undergraduate 1st year cohort. The questions posed have really helped us gather an understanding of the aspirations of our student cohort on entry to the programme and how they feel our institution can help them get there. Stage 2 of this project is already about to begin, with Stephanie now about to canvas our staff to ask for their predictions of the student responses. She will also launch the same questions to PG students beginning in Sept 2018. Stage 3 will commence in February 2019 where Stephanie intends to present the findings to the original first year cohort at a point of reflection and an opportunity to capture responses to provide data on the anecdotally reported second year ‘slump’.

**Project 3: Evidencing Enhancement Project Fund (Aim 3)**

**Key outcome:**

*We do not expect to allocate the finance for this project until year 2, therefore in year 1 the activity will be modest, seeking to establish the timeline of applications, criteria for selection and the appropriate panel membership.*

*How we’d measure a positive outcome in year 1:*

*We would be in a position to launch the fund for all staff and students as they begin academic year 2018-19*

This project has had significant discussion within the Insititutional Team meetings. There was concern from our SU President that students may not engage with a project fund that was too specifically focused on QAA Enhancement Theme outcomes. We considered a shift to a fund to support students and staff in developing the evidence of learning and impact for existing projects that they were already working on. Again, the offer was a little too abstract. Our Institutional Team member Deborah Keogh is our Research and Knowledge Exchange Manager with a particular remit for entrepreneurship. We now intend to integrate the work of this project with a newly developed extracurricular enterprise strand for students and recent graduates. *Make It Happen Month* is an annual series of talks, workshops, panels and seminars on how students can get their projects and ideas off the ground. For new graduates we are launching the *Make It Happen Fund* in July 2018, a micro funding initiative to support graduates to take their next steps. Small bursaries of between £250 and £750 will be available through a competitive application process. Project 3 will contribute to a specific event in this year’s *Make It Happen Month* which will focus on how emerging graduates can secure their first project investments and the myriad of ways that this can happen. We intend to hear from Creative Scotland, Crowdfunding Specialists, Sponsors and RCS Alumni about how to generate those all-important first funds. In line with the sector strand of optimising the existing evidence, we intend to use this integrated project to help students gain a deeper understanding of the evidence that will genuinely make a difference to the progression of their careers as professional artists.

**Project 4: Collaborative Cluster work on Creating Rich Evidence**

(see section on inter-institutional collaboration)

**Project 5: Evaluation of Mental Health support mechanisms (Aim 4)**

**Key outcome:**

*The bulk of this work will take place in years 2 and 3 of the Theme and the focus for year 1 is on developing a research strategy to begin in year 2.*

*How we’d measure a positive outcome in year 1:*

*Having successfully been cleared by our ethics committee, we would be in a position to begin to undertake the research work in academic year 2018-19*

The project is on track to begin as planned for academic year 2018/19. The focus of this project will be focused specifically on the impact of the introduction of the Big White Wall online support, but we hope that this project will connect with other work our institution is engaged in around the topics of mental health, suicide prevention, safe space and gender-based violence. The research proposal is being prepared ahead of the next meeting of our internal Ethics Committee.
There has been some speculation that mental health may become a sector theme for year 2. We are keen to get involved in this work if possible, as the performing and creative arts can present some unique stresses and challenges (such as we are finding from initial research into performer identity).

**Dissemination of work**

*Which mechanisms have been most effective in disseminating outcomes and resources internally, and to the sector – please provide examples?*

Given the preparatory nature of our year 1 plan, we have had a modest dissemination of the work of the theme. Institutional Team meetings have been instrumental in helping us clarify how we will achieve our aims for the work of the theme, and to find natural collaborative opportunities across the institution. We are fortunate that the appointment of our Statistical Analyst Stephanie preceded the announcement of this theme, and as such she was able to move quickly on project 2. Stephanie has disseminated her findings for stage 1 of this project to the Institutional Team, to our PG Learning and Teaching Team and as a lightning talk entitled ‘Student data landscape of a small specialist institution’ at the recent QAA Conference at GCU. Stephanie has been leading in the use of Power BI software that provides significantly more opportunities to visualise data for dissemination and communication. We are looking at rolling this software out across the institution as part of our existing package of programmes. Stephanie has already used this software to share data visually with staff, particularly in the areas of mapping recruitment activity to specific SIMD and low attainment schools.

The work of the theme is likely to feature in our RCS Learning and Teaching Conference in September, which will help us engage staff in the plans for year 2.

**Inter-institutional collaboration**

*What was achieved with respect to collaborative working with other Higher Education institutions and what do you perceive as the benefits and challenges – please provide examples. Note that this relates to work funded through institutional contract finance rather than the collaborative cluster activity.*

We have focused our inter-institutional collaboration on the work we have been engaged with as part of our Creative Arts Cluster group. Whilst we are being asked not to comment on that work here, it is significantly connected to our institutional project work and has provided a wealth of opportunity to explore our shared concerns and aspirations, feeding back into our institutional project work. The early work we have done here especially around definitions of success and narratives of transformation are contributing to the dialogue of the cluster group and helping shape the content of the provocation and round-table discussion event planned for late June.

**Sector-wide work**

*Identify the ways in which your institution has contributed to collaborative sector-wide work project strands (work funded beyond institutional contract finance).*

Beyond Stephanie’s lighting talk delivered at the QAA Enhancement Theme Conference in June 2018 and attendance at TLG meetings we have no direct input into collaborative sector-wide work. Our work on the Creative Arts Cluster group has allowed us significant opportunities to engage with a number of institutions who share the challenges faced in the arts education sector.
### Supporting staff and student engagement

**How have staff and students been supported to engage in Theme activities? Please provide examples.**

As mentioned at the start of the report, the work of year 1 has been focused on laying the foundations for engaging staff and students with the work of the theme. We are expecting that project 1 will have the biggest impact on engagement. We plan to engage students through a series of simple but interesting questions and facilitated events. We hope to build a critical mass of curiosity around the question of ‘What makes a good teacher/learner?’ helping us gather the rich qualitative data that we have never really had across the institution. Central to engagement with the theme is the manner in which we communicate the findings from the data gathering for members of a creative arts institution. We hope to utilise data visualisation tools to find innovative ways to engage our staff and students with the evidence of their shared learning journey. It is our intention that year three will focus on institutional dissemination of meaningful data around success and good learning experiences.

### Evaluation

**Reflecting on the monitoring and evaluation of your Theme work, what is changing with respect to strategy, policy and practice?**

Beyond the Institutional Team, it is unlikely that the work of the theme has had enough exposure to gain much traction. As such it is too early to make any meaningful evaluation of the work of the theme as yet. The work of the team will gain a wider audience with our Learning and Teaching Conference in September, and with stage two of the Success project and staff survey (mentioned above). It is worth stating that there is an increasing institutional awareness of the role, challenges and opportunities associated with the gathering, management and utilisation of data. Our Learning and Teaching Conference has a focus on the development of our next institutional strategic plan and the timing of the QAA ET work is well-placed to feed into this process. We are also revising our Quality Assurance Handbook and academic committee structure, and it is likely that the work of the theme will influence and enhance the range of metrics we currently use to evaluate our ability to enhance the student experience.

### Processes

**What are you learning from the processes, approaches and structures you are using to support this Theme?**

**How will this report be used/distributed within your institution?**

The work of the theme and this progress report will be received by our Quality and Standards Committee. We intend to include the work of the theme (and this report) as a standing item for Programme Committee meetings, which are attended by key staff and student reps.

| Report Author: | Jamie Mackay |
| Report:        | 14/6/18       |
End of Year 1 Report for SRUC (Scotland’s Rural College)

Institutional team

During year one of the Theme there has been two minor changes in membership and responsibilities within the SRUC institutional team. Student representation transferred from the SRUC Students’ Association (SRUCSA) President, Gemma Jones, to the Vice President, Martina Bradacova. SRUCSA has two sabbatical posts and the SRUCSA Executive decided that one of them should focus on quality assurance and enhancement activities within their remit, and this was allocated to the Vice President. Martina has therefore attended Theme Leaders’ Group meetings and other QAA meetings and workshops related to sector activities. Within SRUC she also represented the students as a member of the Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement Group (QA/QE Group) which has a remit to communicate Theme activities and encourage engagement, both with staff and students.

The second change was that the TLG staff representative alternate transferred to Ann Wood who is Senior Tutor (Elmwood campus) and Core Skills Coordinator.

Outcomes/activity

A key priority was to ensure that activities within the Theme continued to build on the integration of further and higher education across SRUC - this was identified as an output, albeit unintended, from the previous Theme of Student Transitions. There should be no artificial or perceived barriers between these levels of delivery, and progressing this has been a very positive outcome during year one of the Theme as the projects undertaken (see below for further detail) have engaged and encompassed all SRUC education provision.

The overall outcome that SRUC identified for the Theme was to foster an ethos that demonstrates the importance of considering evidence for enhancement across the whole student learning experience. Again the work within the projects is making a positive impact on staff and student engagement and ownership of data, although this is an area that we will continue to develop and address throughout the lifetime of this Theme. There are many aspects that impact on increased engagement, use and ownership of data e.g. upskilling and training of both staff and students, increased data transparency, and actions that will engage with and provide evidence from the wider student body.

A summary of the three projects undertaken during year one is as follows.

*Strengthen the Annual Monitoring and Institution-led Review processes through improved use of Learning/Learner Analytics*

This was the main project identified for year one of the Theme. The focus is to work with staff and students to strengthen the evidence base that informs annual monitoring at
programme and department level and hence leads to a more robust process, and ultimately to enhanced and more effective institution-led reviews. As indicated in the institutional plan of work, compiling and using information to inform decision-making, planning and management processes is part of SRUC’s strategic development. A Business Intelligence (BI) Steering Committee has been established with the responsibility of aligning BI functionality with SRUC’s strategic needs. Note that the SRUC Strategic Plan 2018-2013 was published in February 2018 and Theme work, and in particular this project, will complement this plan.

This project will most likely span the full three years of the Theme and the main achievements during year one are:

- Activities aimed to embed the revised SRUC procedures for annual monitoring and institution-led review across all campuses and levels of delivery. There are constant prompts e.g. through the Quality Calendar, via Department Quality Enhancement Coordinators and from members of SRUC’s Academic Development Team (Quality Team) about the importance of annual monitoring and these have been supported and strengthened through this project. Annual monitoring should be a continuous process with evidence collected throughout the year which is then discussed and actioned on an ongoing basis through the appropriate forum.

- The Academic Development Team will be visiting all campuses in early June to facilitate a quality roadshow. This will provide an opportunity to engage with the majority of teaching staff and discuss the need to ‘own’ and use the evidence available to them in partnership with the students. There will be a focus on evidence for enhancement, and in particular the work that has been undertaken to strengthen the annual monitoring process. This roadshow will be complemented by SRUC’s Education Business Support team also doing a roadshow covering topics such as attendance monitoring and the importance of timely student resulting for units/modules.

- Demonstration of the suite of SFC Performance Indicator tools by a representative from the funding council. These tools are used to analyse FE data and the workshop was attended by relevant staff. There is also the HESA Community Dashboard and Heidi Plus, which although used by the Education Business Support team could also be used by programme teams to analyse HE data. A member of the institutional team, a business intelligence analyst, will demonstrate this to the team and other interested colleagues during June.

- With quality assurance/enhancement falling within the remit of the SRUCSA Vice President, and with increased engagement with the two Learner Engagement Officers on quality assurance/enhancement activities during this academic year, there has definitely been stronger links developed with the SRUCSA Executive. This has included joint working on projects within the Student Partnership Agreement on increased engagement with student surveys and enhancing the class representative system - both of which are very important activities in ensuring that we hear authentic student voices. SRUCSA also ran a ‘speak week’ during early February to gather student views on all aspects of their experience at SRUC. Although this provided criticism of some elements of the student experience there was also much positive feedback received. It is important to appreciate that student feedback is not always about raising issues and challenges.

- Engagement with the work of the SRUC BI project. One work stream within this project is considering all aspects of applying rights to data sets e.g. data protection, copyright, licensing etc. thus insuring there is initial consideration of ‘rights’ when developing data sets.

- Support from Education Scotland (ES) in strengthening our evidence base. SRUC has benefitted from the input of an ES Student Team Member - an external student who facilitated focus groups at two campuses during May 2018 to explore the topics of student voice and career guidance. A similar exercise will take place in October where the topics will be induction/enrolment and support for progression. As well as
supplementing the evidence base for annual programme reporting this exercise will be extremely beneficial as SRUC prepares for Enhancement-led Institutional Review in spring 2019 and, of course, in assisting with annual reporting to ES.

**Assessing digital technologies in curriculum delivery**
This project focussed on SRUC’s current use of digital technologies and their future use in the development and delivery of the curriculum. This initially focussed on video conferencing for campus based students which is used for blended delivery of modules across campuses, and GoToMeeting and Skype which is used to support distance learners. Inconsistent views from student groups regarding the quality of their learning experience with video conferencing has been a constant challenge, and there is ongoing training on both the technical and pedagogic aspects of this mode of delivery. Distance learning students are positive about their experiences of GoToMeeting and Skype although the departmental institution-led review held during 2018-19, which included four distance learning programmes, identified that these students would wish to develop social media such as Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp as a discussion forum and as a means to support each other.

During the year it was agreed to pilot a digital classroom at the Barony campus and work is well underway to have this in place for 2018-19. Some members of the development team visited UWS in early May to view their facilities. There will also be a couple of workshops at the SRUC Learning and Teaching Conference (held annually in late August) on digital technologies in the classroom.

**Investigate current delivery of Modern Apprenticeships to inform development of Technical/Graduate Apprenticeships**
This was the smallest of our identified projects with the aim to evaluate existing data on the learning experience of work based learners at SRUC, including those on Modern Apprenticeships. Various internal activities are ongoing with the intention of ensuring parity of experience across the range of delivery e.g. training of external assessors, a common approach to student induction and consistency in the learning support available to students. The number of Modern Apprenticeships being delivered by SRUC has increased substantially during this academic year which is positive, although it does however highlight the need for there to be parity with on campus students in many areas of the student experience. This internal work will continue. The intention was also to engage with the sector around collaborative work on Technical/Graduate Apprenticeships. Although the collaborative cluster led by the University of Strathclyde indicated the inclusion of apprenticeships in its original remit, the outputs from the scoping workshops identified a willingness for institutions to collaborate on more generic aspects of learning analytics at this point in the Theme.

**Dissemination of work**
Given the topic of this Theme, SRUC constituted a bespoke institutional team as opposed to allocating the role to an existing committee as was the case with previous Themes. This provided wider representation than the education departments, bringing in increased representation from support services, a stronger link to SRUCSA and the student body, and a BI analyst strengthening the link to the BI project. This has widened reporting of Theme activities across SRUC and also, within Education, the team reports strategically to the Learning & Teaching Committee and the Divisional Management Team and operationally to the departments and practitioners via the QA/QE Group. The Department Quality Enhancement Coordinators are members of this Group and disseminate information through the department committee structure. SRUCSA and the Learner Engagement team are also represented on the QA/QE Group providing an additional dissemination route to students.
Beyond this formal committee structure improved dissemination has resulted from the reintroduction (in 2017-18) of monthly Education Staff Information Notes (E-SINs) coordinated by the Academic Development Team (both the Institutional Lead and the TLG Staff Representative are members of this team). E-SINs also include contributions from the Research Division, related to postgraduate research delivery, and therefore reach a wider audience than just education staff. As noted in the institutional plan of work in November 2017, integration of research and education activity at SRUC to form an Academic Division is underway as part of SRUC’s strategic development. Once this is formed, it is anticipated that Staff Information Notes will encompass a wider range of topics and should be distributed across the whole institution. All of this has definitely improved dissemination of activities and ultimately led to increased staff and student engagement.

As indicated in the section below, it was intended to use the digital screens at each campus to promote the Theme to staff and students and this will now be a dissemination method for years 2 and 3. We also intend to produce roll up banner stands for each of the six campuses - these could also be displayed at other SRUC sites such as research farms, veterinary laboratories and farm advisory offices.

Dissemination information to the sector is basically through engagement in sector committees and sector wide work e.g. Theme Leaders’ Group, Collaborative Cluster activity, Focus On projects, the Student-Led project etc.

Inter-institutional collaboration

Collaborative working with other HEIs has been through attendance at Theme Leaders’ Group and at Scottish Higher Education Enhancement Committee plus contribution to the sector level programme of work. Discussions at these events are always beneficial as it is an opportunity to learn from colleagues in the sector and to share the challenges. For example, a round-table discussion at the recent joint TLG/SHEEC meeting focussed on staff and student engagement with the Theme and the potential use of digital screens for promotion. This is something that our institutional team discussed but it was challenging to know what information to present - the discussion with sector colleagues indicated a general consensus that it would be best to do this in years 2 and 3 of the Theme where there should be something more substantial to report that would promote wider interest and engagement.

A summary of SRUC contributions to the sector level programme of work is as follows:

- Student-led project - Responding to the Student Voice: Communicating the Impact. The ‘think tank’ event on 26th April was attended by four members of the institutional team, including the SRUCSA Vice President, and this had been very useful and should help inform future procedures and activities. SRUC also submitted two responses to the survey - one from the institutional lead and the TLG staff representative, the other from SRUCSA assisted by a Learner Engagement Officer.
- Focus On: Feedback from Assessment. Four representatives from SRUC, including the SRUCSA Vice President, attended the sharing practice event on 22nd March. This was very interesting and various points arising from the event have been considered by SRUC’s Academic Development Team to assist the annual monitoring process. This will be part of the content of the quality roadshow, noted earlier in the report. Martina Bradacova, the SRUCSA Vice President co-facilitated a workshop at this event with Simon Varwell from sparqs.
- Ali Hastie, an E-Learning Developer based at the Barony campus, will be presenting a webinar on Thursday 28th June as part of the Focus On: Feedback from Assessment
QAA Scotland is also producing three short films to support this Focus On project - one is on student and staff views on assessment feedback and Martina Bradacova has been involved.

**Sector-wide work**

SRUC has participated in three collaborative clusters that are being funded in the current year. These are as follows:

- **Learning Analytics**, led by University of Strathclyde. Four SRUC staff attended the first scoping meeting on 27th February but unfortunately no-one was available to attend the follow up workshop on 15th May. A summary report from the workshop was requested and this has been shared with the institutional team. As this cluster progresses, SRUC will contribute to the theme of engagement (covering both staff and students).

- **Employability: how do we know, and how do we measure, the difference we make?** - led by the Open University in Scotland (OuIs). A staff representative from SRUC attended the workshop on 3rd May. The report from the event is still awaited and we will then consider further involvement in this collaboration. The majority of attendees were career guidance staff whereas we anticipated that the focus would be more from the practitioners’ perspective with consideration of how to successfully embed employability skills in the curriculum.

- **Distance and Belonging: how do we know that our distance and rural students are achieving their potential and feel part of a learning community?** - led by the OuIs. Lesley Howie, the TLG staff representative, had discussed the potential content of this collaborative cluster submission with Heather Gibson from OuIs as it is relevant to previous discussions within the Student Transitions Theme on undertaking a collaborative project on sharing good practice and the challenges associated with engaging and supporting distance learning students. Three representatives from SRUC, including the SRUCSA Vice President, attended the workshop on 10th May and felt it was extremely interesting and beneficial. The resulting report was circulated to the team and it was agreed that SRUC would continue to engage with this collaborative project.

**Supporting staff and student engagement**

Staff have been supported through a range of activities, many linked to the main project around strengthening the monitoring and review processes (as reported above). Upskilling staff and students in the use of evidence will be part of the quality and business support roadshows in June. A workshop to demonstrate the use of Heidi Plus is planned, and a workshop to demonstrate the SFC PI tools has taken place.

As with previous Themes, SRUC provided funding to support a small number of pedagogic research projects linked to Theme activity. In 2017-18 two projects were supported:

- **An investigation of student and staff perceptions on the effectiveness of Moodle (the Virtual Learning Environment) as a teaching tool at SRUC.** This project is led by the SRUCSA Vice President and also involves a member of the Academic Development Team.

- **An investigation on the impact of e-assessment on learning and teaching.** Although led by two members of the management team of a degree programme, the aim of the project is to evaluate the views and experiences of students and staff to SRUC e-assessment processes across all education provision - again inclusive of both FE and HE delivery.
Both projects are due to report by the end of July and will disseminate their findings internally via the annual Learning and Teaching Conference in August. Unfortunately the projects had not progressed sufficiently for project leads to submit proposals for the QAAS Annual Enhancement Conference on 7th June.

Staff and students are also supported via the Theme funding to attend sector meetings and other activities. Engagement in workshops to date has been reported in the above sections, and it is anticipated that at least 12 staff and students will attend the Conference on 7th June.

Student engagement in this current year has been particularly effective, as already reported. It is important that this momentum continues as this has generally proved a challenge with one year SRUCSA sabbatical posts - compounded over the last year or two by staff changes in Learner Engagement Officer (LEO) posts. New LEOs have been appointed, with engagement with quality enhancement more formalised, and the TLG staff representative will input to the SRUCSA hand over during July. Both the incoming President and Vice President will attend the quality roadshow at their home campus, and the incoming Vice President will also attend the QAAS Enhancement Conference.

Overall, SRUC is proud of the level of engagement of staff and students with this Theme. There has definitely been a marked increase, partly due to the Theme being particularly pertinent to SRUC at this time, but also due to the project activities and the dissemination and support mechanisms as outlined in various sections of this report. For a Small Specialist Institution there has been a high level of engagement in sector activities including the collaborative clusters.

### Evaluation

Revising and embedding policy and practice across SRUC links very strongly to the main project within the Theme (i.e. to strengthen monitoring and review processes) and to the SRUC wide Business Intelligence project. Added to this and related to the BI project, SRUC is currently working on a digital strategy. The strategy is in its early stages although it is likely that there will be four data projects highlighted across the institution. One of these will have an education focus and be designed to correlate data from various sources and thus identify at an early stage students that are potentially ‘at risk’ e.g. linking Moodle and library usage, student support and assessment outcomes. Through these changes to strategy, policy and practice it is expected that we will see greater engagement with, and evaluation of, data in monitoring reports and through the annual quality dialogues held with departments as part of SRUC’s monitoring procedure. This should ultimately strengthen a department’s approach to institution-led review.

As previously mentioned SRUC has published its Strategic Plan 2018-23 indicating its aim towards University status and Degree Awarding Powers. Work within the Theme will contribute to this strategic direction. It is essential to have accurate and meaningful data and, most importantly, to increase staff and student engagement with this data. There should be ownership of all forms of evidence for enhancement by programme teams. Relevant actions should be taken with a shared responsibility for enhancement between staff and students. These are all outputs we would wish to see by the end of the Theme.

### Processes

As already indicated there have been changes in some of the internal approaches to support this Theme e.g. in the institutional team, yet many approaches are similar to those
used in previous Themes e.g. supporting pedagogic research projects and using Theme funding to encourage sector engagement. There has, however, been a definite increase in staff and student engagement partly due to the focus of the Theme being very pertinent to SRUC at this point in time. No major changes in the processes, approaches and structures to support the Theme are anticipated for year 2 - as indicated above actions are already in place to hopefully build on the improved level of student engagement.

This report should be widely distributed throughout SRUC as indicated in the section above on ‘dissemination of work’. It should be available to all staff (through the E-SIN) and to students (via SRUCSA) and therefore discussed in a variety of forums. The report should provide relevant information for students and staff across both FE and HE provision. It should be used to illustrate the level of activity during this academic year and to engage staff and students in ongoing work, particularly the project around strengthening monitoring and review processes which is a major focus for SRUC going forward.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Report Author:</th>
<th>Lesley Howie, Learning and Teaching Enhancement Manager, HE</th>
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<td>Date:</td>
<td>4th June 2018</td>
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End of Year 1 Report for The Open University in Scotland

**Institutional team**

*Identify any changes in Theme leadership, TLG and institutional team membership since details were reported in the institutional plan developed at the start of the academic year.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional lead</th>
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<td>Shona Littlejohn, Depute Director, Student Experience and Widening Access</td>
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<th>TLG staff representative</th>
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<tr>
<td>Heather Gibson, Widening Participation and Enhancement Manager (until Feb 2019)</td>
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| TLG staff representative alternate, |
| TBC, Widening Participation and Enhancement Officer |

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<th>TLG Student Representative</th>
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<tr>
<td>TBC</td>
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**Other members**

Avi Boroowa (staff) Senior Product Development Management
Ebony Carberry (staff) Projects and Events Team Co-ordinator and Associate Lecturer
Sara Ebbett (staff), Senior Manager, Careers and Employability Services
Susan Fish (staff), Student Numbers and Funding Manager
Janet Hughes, (staff), Staff Tutor
To be confirmed, OU Students Association Area Representative
Hannah Jones (staff) Information Analyst
To be confirmed, OU Students Association President
Kenny Stewart (staff), Head of Communications, Open University in Scotland
Aisha Shahid (Staff), Associate Lecturer
Sylvia Warnecke (staff), Staff Tutor and Associate Lecturer
Outcomes/activity

Outline what was achieved in relation to your year 1 planned outcomes and activities, at the time of submitting this report.

Have there been any unintended outcomes/unexpected findings?

Please report on any aspect of work that you are particularly proud of and want to promote.

If there is work, which is not yet completed but will be by the 31 July, please comment below.

The current Enhancement Theme ‘Evidence for Enhancement: Improving the Student Experience’ is very timely as it is helping us to develop the concept of evidence-based practice for our work to support student success. Exploring what we mean and understand by ‘data’ and ‘evidence’ and how we use both, should enable us to develop a more sophisticated engagement between our staff, students and enhancement activity.

In OUiS (Open University in Scotland), enhancing student success is seen as ‘everyone’s business’ and is strategically aligned with our widening participation agenda with its current focus on reducing attainment gaps. A central team (the More Students Qualifying (MSQ) team) drives and facilitates this work across the University in Scotland. The team has developed an approach to enhancement that could be described as ‘an OUiS focus through a four nations lens’ as we seek to link into wider University processes and communities to help us enhance the student experience in Scotland. This approach reflects the University’s organisational model and recognises that key points of influence and leverage for change may lie beyond OUiS in the wider University. This approach differs somewhat from the original model proposed in the plan submitted in October 2017 but has evolved as we have scoped the work of the Theme within the University.

We planned to deliver four key outcomes and activities in year one:

Scoping the use of data and evidence in the University

This year we have started to scope, and map work being carried out in the University on how data is being used to monitor and enhance the student experience. This work aims to establish the work that the University is doing in this area, so we could identify our strengths, locate gaps in our knowledge and determine focus of work for year 2. The final report from this scoping activity is being finalised and includes:

- The different types of evidence and data that OUiS and the University collects and uses for enhancement
- The key systems and processes in OUiS and the wider University that use this data and evidence and how they use it
• What the University is doing at present to improve how data and evidence is used in enhancement

• How the University supports its staff to use data and evidence to enhance the student experience

**Literature review on current trends in learning analytics research**

This work was subsumed into a commissioned piece of work for QAA Scotland to produce a short literature review mapping the latest trends and findings from the Learning Analytics research community. We had intended that the work would produce a resource to help us understand some of the current trends in the use of learning analytics to improve the student learning experience. However, after some interest in the work was expressed by others in the sector QAA Scotland kindly offered to support the work. Therefore, the aim of the work was amended slightly to complement and inform QAA Scotland’s sector wide work to support the Enhancement Theme particularly in the areas of optimising the use of evidence and using data to support student success. The literature review will be completed by 31 July 2018.

**A shared logic model and evaluation framework;**

We are developing a model that articulates an evidence-based theory of change for the Theme while reflecting the natural Theme lifecycle of scoping, implementation and evaluation. This is a work in progress.

**A staff development programme and a staff development forum for the Open University in Scotland**

Our scoping work identified several existing University-wide activities that support staff in how to use data and evidence for enhancement. These include the Data Handbook (detailed below), a Data-Competency Framework and a University-wide Applications of Analytics Community of Practice. We are considering the best way to support OUiS staff in the use of evidence and data taking into account the support offered by the wider University and we will revisit to this in our year 2 work.

Four areas of work we wish to draw particular attention to:

**Addressing the attainment gap for students from deprived communities**

We have initiated an OUiS wide project that seeks to address the attainment gap for students from deprived communities. This project will run throughout the lifetime of the Theme and will utilise data and evidence from a variety of sources within the University, including the different data systems. There are a number of issues that we can explore about how data and evidence is used to inform enhancement activity through this project and we will be reflecting on this as we proceed.

**Data Handbook and Data Competency Framework**
Developed by the Data Governance Team in the University’s Strategy and Information Office, the handbook aims to support the development of data capability across the University. The first sections of the handbook have been constructed on the University’s intranet and include information to help staff consider how to work with data along with links to data tools and examples of best practice. The handbook is complemented by the Data Competency Framework, which allows staff to position themselves in terms of data expertise and directs them to further resources to allow them to upskill. Future sections of the handbook will include help on how and where to find data in the University’s systems and further guidance on how to extract information from datasets.

Links between research and practice

The Open University has considerable research strengths in the areas of technology-enhanced learning and this includes learning analytics and learning design. For example, our researchers have found that course design impacts on how students engage, succeed and experience their learning. This gives us a robust foundation on which to build our enhancement activity.

An example of this synergy is the Early Alert Indicators Project, which centres on the use of the OU Analyse dashboard by teaching staff. The OU Analyse (OUA) dashboard, uses machine learning methods developed by researchers to improve student retention; providing an early alert dashboard of students ‘at risk’ of not submitting their next assignment. A predictive model drawing on two data sets to identify ‘at risk’ students informs OUA: demographic data and usage data from the virtual learning environment. It provides weekly early warning indicators of students who may be at risk of not submitting their next assignment, which can be used by teaching staff to quickly identify students who may be in need of additional support. It has been piloted with more than 20 online modules at the OU with positive findings in terms of retention. Interviews with teaching staff revealed the usefulness of the tool for complementing their teaching practice and being ‘on top’ of what students are doing in distance learning settings.

Predictive learning analytics to support retention for Scottish students

This retention intervention was first run in 2016-2017 and drew on predictive modelling and student probabilities to identify and predict students at risk of failing their studies. Predictive modelling was used to complement existing OU in Scotland approaches to identify students to receive a retention intervention at the start of their studies. Data from as early as the second milestone (day 14 of the module) suggested that the intervention had a positive effect. During the current Enhancement Theme the project has been extended with a repeat of the same approach, but with a change to the timing of the retention intervention. The results from this second pilot are being analysed.

Dissemination of work

Which mechanisms have been most effective in disseminating outcomes and resources internally, and to the sector – please provide examples?

If there are materials and resources you can share with the sector, please provide details below.
We have sought to use existing OUiS and University structures and networks to disseminate outcomes from Theme work for several reasons. Existing networks are well established, colleagues are used to obtaining information from them and their use emphasizes the message that enhancement activity focuses on our strategic priorities and work, i.e. student success. Therefore, updates on Theme activity are shared with these established networks inside the University through scheduled meetings including our Extended Senior Management Team, our Senior Staff Group and Staff Tutor Group. We have also sought to involve our colleagues in the wider University through providing opportunities to attend events in Scotland and by also holding face-to-face meetings with colleagues.

We are also working with our Communications team to create and maintain a webpage supporting the work of the Theme within the University. This will provide a location/space for others in the University to find out what work is being carried out with regard to the Theme and should help disseminate Theme work to the wider University audience and encourage engagement/contact.

Inter-institutional collaboration

What was achieved with respect to collaborative working with other Higher Education institutions and what do you perceive as the benefits and challenges – please provide examples. Note that this relates to work funded through institutional contract finance rather than the collaborative cluster activity.

OUiS and OU staff have presented at the Enhancement Theme conference. This included a plenary session given by Dr Rebecca Ferguson entitled ‘Future possibilities: analytics and enhancement’. Rebecca also participated in a question and answer session after her plenary. Other sessions offered by OU staff were:

- ‘Can predictive analytics be used to support students in HE?’ which was a workshop given by Alison Gilmour and Kevin Mayles.
- Using predictive analytics to support students: Case study 1 a paper given by Alison Gilmour, and ‘Using predictive analytics to support students: Case study 2’ which was also a paper given by Avinash Boroowa.

We have also sought to collaborate with the wider sector by producing a one-page handout describing our Data Handbook that we shared at the joint SHEEC/TLG meeting in May 2018. OUiS are also organising a workshop with the Scottish Planners Forum, QAA Scotland and Data and Governance staff to discuss potential collaboration next session.

Sector-wide work

Identify the ways in which your institution has contributed to collaborative sector-wide work project strands (work funded beyond institutional contract finance).

To support the collaborative cluster work, the Open University in Scotland designed and facilitated two workshops that aimed to explore the potential for collaboration in the broad
topic areas of employability and online and distance learning. Both topic areas are aligned to our institutional strategy and priorities.

**Employability: how do we know, and how do we measure, the difference we make?**
This workshop was held on 3rd May 2018 at the University of Edinburgh. Colleagues from 9 HEIs explored the potential for collaboration around the use of metrics and data to enhance employability support for students covering several areas including the use of Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO)

**Distance and belonging: how do we know that our distance and rural students are achieving their potential and feel part of a learning community?**
This workshop was held on 10th May 2018, colleagues from 7 HEIs in Scotland discussed a range of questions including how online and distance learners (ODL) are supported and how we can make them feel they belong to their institution and a learning community.

A report was produced and circulated to participants summarising the discussions from both workshops. It is hoped that participants will collaborate and submit bids for cluster work for session 2018-19.

OUiS staff also attended two workshops hosted by the University of Strathclyde, which focused on learning analytics. This is a particular area of strength for the University and we are considering how best to engage with this work.

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**Supporting staff and student engagement**

*How have staff and students been supported to engage in Theme activities? Please provide examples.*

*Please report on any work (current or planned) around upskilling staff and students in the use of evidence to improve the student experience. Would you be willing to share any of your materials with the sector?*

Students are an integral part of our institutional team. As a distance learning University, engaging our students is challenging. The University has been addressing this strategically and we are exploring ways in which we can use this strategic work to help facilitate student engagement with the Theme. This will include developing a student-led project and using the University consultative structure to spread awareness of, and engagement with, the Theme. We would be very willing to share practice of engaging distance learning students as well as learning from the experiences from other institutions.
We have supported the engagement of key staff from OUiS, the student consultative office, widening access team and the quality enhancement and learning analytics team in the work of the Theme. We have facilitated attendance at some key sector events including the Enhancement Theme conference on 7th June 2018 and the Think tank event - Responding to the student voice: communicating the impact held on 26th April 2018. Attendance at these events served to introduce staff to the work of the Enhancement Theme and the Scottish higher education policy context. Feedback from staff suggested that their experiences of the Scottish enhancement approach had caused them to reflect on how collaboration and communication between different teams in the University could be improved. This could help the University upscale and embed interesting and innovative practice into mainstream activity, create opportunities for collaboration and avoid replication of effort. OUiS will work with key staff within the University to explore how work with this Enhancement Theme can help build a University-wide enhancement network.

Several members of staff also presented sessions at the Enhancement Theme conference sharing practice in the areas of predictive learning analytics.

The work the University is undertaking with regard to the Data Handbook and Data competency framework aims to upskill the data capability of our staff. The team responsible for this work are happy to share their experiences of this a meeting is being arranged between the team, OUiS, the Scottish Planners Forum and QAA Scotland.

**Evaluation**

*Reflecting on the monitoring and evaluation of your Theme work, what is changing with respect to strategy, policy and practice?*

At a practical level, the Theme has helped change our practice with regard to how we manage our project work. It has helped us reflect on how we use evidence to inform our project work at all stages from inception to completion. We have developed a tool illustrating the lifecycle of a project with questions to prompt reflection about how evidence and data informs the project at key project stages. We are trialling the tool to help us manage our enhancement work on student attainment.

At a strategic level within OUiS, we have identified a need to link our strategic widening participation and enhancement agenda within OUiS. We have decided to investigate the formation of a new cross-OUiS group (the Student Success Action Group). The group should both facilitate the link between widening participation and enhancement and also help encourage collaboration and sharing of practice between teams.

As mentioned elsewhere in the report, we have also identified the need to engage key staff from Milton Keynes, other Nations and Units to leverage change and access networks. This work may start to influence enhancement policy across the institution as more people work with us and learn about the Scottish enhancement approach.

**Processes**
**What are you learning from the processes, approaches and structures you are using to support this Theme?**

**How will this report be used/distributed within your institution?**

The most significant learning has been around the benefit of undertaking a robust analysis of key people across the OU who are engaged in related activity or have access to relevant networks and resources. This approach avoids duplication and can act as an accelerator and facilitator to the changes we seek to make.

As part of this engagement activity, this report will be shared with our Extended Senior Management Team (which includes the OUIS Senior Management Team), the OUIS Senior Staff Group, the institutional Theme Group and the OU’s Quality Enhancement and Learning Analytics Unit.

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<tr>
<th>Report Author:</th>
<th>Heather Gibson and Shona Littlejohn</th>
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<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td>10th July 2018</td>
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End of Year 1 University of Aberdeen

Institutional team

Identify any changes in Theme leadership, TLG and institutional team membership since details were reported in the institutional plan developed at the start of the academic year.

AY 2017/18: The representative from the Directorate of Planning left and was replaced by the Head of Planning. A representative for Postgraduate Research students was added to the group.

AY 2018/19: All team members have been asked if they are willing to continue. The Postgraduate (Taught) student will be replaced. The demitting Dean of Postgraduate Research will be replaced by the new post holder.

Outcomes/activity

Outline what was achieved in relation to your year 1 planned outcomes and activities, at the time of submitting this report.

Have there been any unintended outcomes/unexpected findings?

Please report on any aspect of work that you are particularly proud of and want to promote.

If there is work, which is not yet completed but will be by the 31 July, please comment below.

1. Institutional evidence project

   a. An institutional project to establish what different disciplines regard as evidence, and what use is made of that evidence at institutional and discipline level is ongoing. In parallel, an online ‘Good Practice Hub’ is being created to provide a central and accessible repository for evidence-based practice case studies which have been identified and can then be shared across the institution. This dynamic resource is currently being developed and will be populated over the summer.

   b. A second project focusing on the postgraduate (taught) student (PGT) experience has been formulated to identify factors which contribute to a good PGT experience. The project aims to enable the PGT experience to be improved and to measure the impact of any changes in practice which have been made. The approach taken by the project group was to look at measures / metrics that are routinely used at undergraduate (UG) level and to ask how appropriate these are for PGT students. The project is the focus of a TiPZone article (see
https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/teaching/enhancement-themes-3473.php#panel7283) which has been submitted to QAA Scotland and has led to the launch of an internal PGT survey with questions more akin to those found in the National Student Survey and supplemented by additional engagement survey questions.

2. **Using technology to improve the student experience**

   a. Recognising that a well-designed course provided within the virtual learning environment (VLE) has the potential to improve the student learning experience, the Institution is using the forthcoming changes to the Institutional VLE as a driver for enhancement. A staff survey is underway to establish the current level and breadth of VLE usage. In addition, learning analytics data will be extracted from the VLE’s database tables which will provide a quantitative measure of the use of a range of functionality. Student experience data has also been collected through student focus groups conducted by a student intern. These data will provide a baseline which will inform consultations with each School with a view to planning and supporting further good practice in the use of the VLE in a measurable way.

   b. Recording of educational activities is commonplace in some areas of the Institution and not in others. We are in the process of expanding the digital recording of educational activities (including lecture capture) to more areas of the Institution, measuring to what extent this improves student satisfaction and learning attainment. There is now an institutional policy on lecture capture which gives the default expectation that lectures will be recorded unless there is a reason why this should not be the case; in the latter instance, the reason will be recorded.

3. **Measuring impact**

   A working group was established to explore how we can improve the amount and quality of student feedback at course level with a view to using the evidence from this student feedback to improve the student learning experience. Annual student course evaluations (SCEFs) used to be paper-based and a 75% minimum response rate was expected; when we moved to electronic SCEFs the response rate was expected to fall with the expected trade-off being the richness of free-text responses. Whilst this has, in the main, been the case, some disciplines’ response rates are too low to be of value. The working group, which includes three student members, has investigated the student viewpoint; survey fatigue and ‘not seeing anything change as a result’ were cited as the primary reasons for non-completion. As such we now showcase good practice in closing the feedback loop to students (including “you said, we did/didn’t” reports, in-class real time feedback using personal response-based systems and whole class feedback response sessions) via our new good practice website. A student intern will work over the summer months to analyse the extensive database of past SCEFs, exploring response rates and the utility of mandatory and optional questions. The intern will also evaluate student perceptions of course review in order to inform strategy that will improve confidence, from both students and staff, in the course evaluation process. Two of the group's student members are also part of the Enhancement Theme student-led project on ‘Closing the
Feedback Loop’ and as such are helping us learn from effective practice elsewhere.

**Unintended outcome of Theme activity**

There are two unintended outcomes resulting from activity undertaken in support of the Theme:

a. The review of the University’s ‘Identification and Dissemination of Good Practice in Learning & Teaching Strategy’ which is now being refreshed to place greater emphasis on evaluation and impact.

b. The creation of an institutional online ‘Good Practice Hub’ which was inspired by the Enhancement Themes ‘Student Transitions Map’.

**Dissemination of work**

*Which mechanisms have been most effective in disseminating outcomes and resources internally, and to the sector – please provide examples?*

*If there are materials and resources you can share with the sector, please provide details below.*

**Effective internal dissemination**

- Collecting examples of current use of evidence through committee structures and institutional task forces has provided the opportunity to raise awareness about the Theme.
- The ongoing development of a central online ‘Good Practice’ resource will provide an opportunity to disseminate these examples and other outcomes of Theme-related activity.
- Theme related events such as the Annual Academic Development Symposium (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/teaching/annual-academic-development-symposium-2018-7103.php), Annual Learning & Teaching Network event and monthly Learning & Teaching Network meetings have been particularly successful vehicles to disseminate examples.
- As mentioned above, an article about the PGT student experience has been provided for TiPZone.
- Dissemination to the student body is led the Education Officer from the Aberdeen University Students’ Association. Planning is underway for a workshop or other interactive event to showcase Enhancement Themes in general and the current theme in particular to School Convenors/Class Representatives during their mandatory training in September 2018.

**Effective external dissemination and sharing of practice**

- Several members of staff and students will present at the June Enhancement Themes Conference and others have attended Enhancement Theme events this year.
- Staff from other HEIs attended the institution’s successful Annual Symposium (see above), which was aligned with the Theme.
- Engagement with Collaborative Clusters has also enabled sharing of practice between institutions.
Students who are members of the ‘Closing the Feedback Loop’ Steering Group have brought back examples of practice from other HEIs to share with the University's SCEF Working Group.
Inter-institutional collaboration

What was achieved with respect to collaborative working with other Higher Education institutions and what do you perceive as the benefits and challenges – please provide examples. Note that this relates to work funded through institutional contract finance rather than the collaborative cluster activity.

At this stage it has not yet been possible to engage in any inter-institutional collaboration.

Sector-wide work

Identify the ways in which your institution has contributed to collaborative sector-wide work project strands (work funded beyond institutional contract finance).

Staff from the Institution have contributed to meetings of the both the Online Learning and Learning Analytics groups and intend to take part in the Employability cluster in the future.

Supporting staff and student engagement

How have staff and students been supported to engage in Theme activities? Please provide examples.

Please report on any work (current or planned) around upskilling staff and students in the use of evidence to improve the student experience. Would you be willing to share any of your materials with the sector?

Staff engagement with the Theme

- Staff have been encouraged to engage with Theme activities by (i) attending internal events, such as the Annual Academic Symposium and the Annual Learning & Teaching event, and (ii) being provided with funding to attend external Enhancement Theme events such as Collaborative Cluster meetings and the Enhancement Themes conference, and to be involved with other strands such as ‘Closing the Feedback Loop’.
- Staff who belong to the Learning & Teaching Network (aimed at academic staff on a scholarship track) attend monthly meetings, several of which have encouraged them to think about evaluating their practice.
- Staff have also been provided with funding to produce posters (https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/teaching/2018-poster-submissions-7325.php) for the Symposium, and have contributed case studies which will feature in the new Good Practice Hub.

Student engagement with the Theme

- Students contributed to the Annual Academic Development Symposium and have also been funded to attend sector-wide Enhancement Theme events such as the ‘Closing the Feedback Loop’ Steering Group, and the Enhancement Themes Conference.
- Students at all levels are represented on the Institutional Theme Steering Group.

Plans to upskill staff

- A new Good Practice Strategy focussing on evaluation and impact is in development
- Engagement with the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme is helping to encourage staff to consider the Scheme as a path for their own development, well in advance of an application being made.
- An institutional Pedagogical Research Network is in its early stages.
An outcome from the working group looking at student course evaluation forms was that staff felt unable to change the standard University forms to ones more specific to the questions they wanted to get student feedback on. As a result once the working group has completed their work, with a possible redesign of the forms, training will be provided for staff to enable them to use the evaluation process in a manner more suitable to them.

**Plans to upskills students**

- In September 2018 a workshop or other interactive event to showcase Enhancement Themes in general and the current theme in particular will be delivered to School Convenors/Class Representatives by the Aberdeen University Students’ Association during their mandatory training.

**Evaluation**

*Reflecting on the monitoring and evaluation of your Theme work, what is changing with respect to strategy, policy and practice?*

- We noted in our plan for engagement with the Theme that we would monitor progress by working under the guidance of, and reporting to, the Enhancement Theme Institutional Team. This will continue in Year 2.
- Updates will also be provided through Institutional committee structures, primarily the University Committee on Teaching and Learning
- As a general observation, we feel that it is too soon at this stage to evaluate our Theme work. As others have observed, this first year has been spent trying to pin down the Theme, with momentum at least for the University of Aberdeen, building over recent months. Evaluation will take place over the course of the remaining years.

**Processes**

*What are you learning from the processes, approaches and structures you are using to support this Theme?*

*How will this report be used/distributed within your institution?*

The Institutional Theme Steering Group is a useful vehicle to oversee and support the Theme, particularly as it includes four student representatives covering undergraduate, taught postgraduate and research postgraduate levels.

Although using existing committee structures to raise awareness and collect examples of practice has been useful, this could be extended, particularly at discipline level. This is just one example of where sharing responsibility across the Steering Group could be improved to widen the reach of Theme activity.

This report will be distributed to the Institutional Theme Steering Group and to other relevant committees.

**Report Author:** Professor Kath Shennan
End of Year 1 Report for University of Dundee

Institutional team

Identify any changes in Theme leadership, TLG and institutional team membership since details were reported in the institutional plan developed at the start of the academic year.

Dr Stella Howden, School of Medicine, joined the TLG as an additional member with experience in PG education.

Outcomes/activity

Outline what was achieved in relation to your year 1 planned outcomes and activities, at the time of submitting this report.

Have there been any unintended outcomes/unexpected findings?

Please report on any aspect of work that you are particularly proud of and want to promote.

If there is work, which is not yet completed but will be by the 31 July, please comment below.

Activities

- Our Student Partnership Agreement is already operational at institutional level, but during Year 1 we will extend this approach to the level of individual Schools. Academic Schools and their student representatives, supported by DUSA (Dundee University Student Association), will develop School Partnership Action Plans suited to the needs of the learners in each School and the particular challenges they face.

  This was a successful initiative that will also be supported in future years. Academic Schools have developed tailored agreements, but the action plans have not been finalised in all Schools yet. Areas identified for enhancement include employability and advising, with the latter being seen as instrumental in aiding retention and progression. Events relating to employability have taken place, and the advising system was reviewed during our annual L&T forum in May.

- We will develop a structured outreach approach to Schools and Directorates on core data sources (e.g., student numbers, league tables, retention, outcomes), using OPD training and making presentations to School boards so we can reach as many staff as possible.

  Registry have produced detailed and user-friendly data dashboards. All Schools have had dashboard presentations to enable staff to use data to enhance teaching, learning and the student experience. OPD training is still in development stage.
• We will look in more detail at retention and progression data for WA using existing structures within the institution, such as L&T committees and sub-committees or working groups.

Retention & Progression Committee reviewed the relevant data in December. The resulting Action Plan has been reviewed and absorbed into university strategy action plan.

• We will begin to look at data on the impact of the Student Transitions Theme initiatives, such as the STEP UP module.

Initial feedback indicates that the STEP UP (Student Transitions Enhancement Programme for University Progression) Module, aimed at Associate Students transitioning from College to Level 2 undergraduate studies at the University of Dundee, has had a positive effect. Students entering the Humanities have increased their average grades by 1 across the board, e.g. C3 - C2, compared to previous student cohorts who did not have this input. The students themselves reported the following positive effects:

• Being on main campus and moving around different buildings was really helpful to get used to where everything was.
• Bringing in role models from previous years really made a difference.
• Improved awareness of Student Support Services.

We will continue to track the students’ progress and provide updates throughout their degree studies.

• We will work with DUSA to make sure that students are aware of academic, pastoral, financial and other kinds of support available at institutional level. We will help and support DUSA to disseminate that information.

DUSA are putting together an international student booklet (paper & digital), using evidence from current international students in order to aid and support their successful integration into our community. Current advice available here: https://www.dusa.co.uk/advice/

Student handbook and Advisor of Studies handbook also under development. Our Academic Standards Committee is leading on this, using evidence from dashboards, School committees and focus groups.

DUSA and Student Services have produced, in response to student demand for a one-stop-shop approach, a short video to highlight relevant resources. The video is in post-production at the time of writing this report.

• We will use NSS evidence to identify areas of strength and areas for improvement in relation to closing feedback loops to students.

These processes are in place. Our VP L&T and DUSA are leading this ongoing activity.

• We will explore ways we can see the student journey from the student’s perspective
We have not been able to progress this during Year 1, but we will follow it up in Year 2. We will concentrate on finding out what a typical student inbox looks like, with a view to improving communication and ensuring that important communications are not overlooked.

- We will evaluate the effectiveness of our new approach to attendance monitoring, whose main aim is to offer advice and support as needed so as to improve retention.

  This has been actioned through the University’s Retention & Progression Committee. We have also organised student focus groups with DUSA. Our work on enhancing the advising system, mentioned earlier in this report, has been informed by this initiative. Details below:

  It is acknowledged that the manual process of collecting and entering student data in the Student Management System is an onerous for Schools and this is acknowledged by the University. The Digital Strategy Committee have recently agreed that an attendance data capture solution is a strategic priority. The target date for the solution is September 2019.

The Working Group in partnership with Directorates have made good progress this year with Schools reporting that:

(i) they have been able to ‘reach out’ to more students who are not attending sooner (providing they can process attendance data quickly enough);

(ii) the majority of students are pleased to learn that their absence is noticed and this gives students a sense that their School cares about them and is building a sense of School identity for students – particularly as they have more supportive interactions with staff;

(iii) some students who may have previously ‘slipped through the net’ have been helped back into their studies;

(iv) there is still work to do, however, in persuading some academic staff about the merits of attendance monitoring, and this hampers the amount and accuracy of data that is returned to School Offices.

The Working Group are currently reviewing attendance monitoring processes to ascertain if efficiencies can be made next year whilst the tender process for an attendance data capture system is undertaken.

- We will create a work-based learning community of practice to share best practice in delivering work-based learning. We can learn from similar activities employed by our distance learning communities.

  The Academic Skills Centre ran a Sharing Good Practice: ‘Making the most of Masters’ workshop in February. Further activities of this type will be run with the ASC in year 2.

**Findings**
The use and analysis of data and other forms of evidence such as student focus groups has not revealed any unexpected areas of strength or weakness. It has helped to clarify and refine the picture, especially in relation to retention and progression, which will be key areas of focus in Year 2 of the theme and beyond. Our continued commitment to WA and
the support of MD20/40 students is enhanced through the use of evidence available through dashboards and focus groups.

**Dissemination of work**

_Which mechanisms have been most effective in disseminating outcomes and resources internally, and to the sector – please provide examples?_

_If there are materials and resources you can share with the sector, please provide details below._


Highlighter was also used to put out a call for submissions for funded projects. We have received 16 applications, which suggests that Highlighter is reaching large numbers of colleagues across different academic schools.

The University of Dundee has unique strengths in the area of comics and graphic design. Our plan to commission students to produce a comic depicting the benefits of using evidence for pastoral support is ongoing, and we will report further progress in Year 2.

The University’s L&T Committee has a standing agenda item relating to ET work, so that Associate Deans and Professional Services can be kept up to date and encouraged to disseminate further.

**Inter-institutional collaboration**

_What was achieved with respect to collaborative working with other Higher Education institutions and what do you perceive as the benefits and challenges – please provide examples. Note that this relates to work funded through institutional contract finance rather than the collaborative cluster activity._

Colleagues in Strategic Planning attended the Scottish Planners forum on 23 November and 26 April.

We are also members of HESPA (Higher Education Strategic Planners Association). Staff attended the annual conference on 8 / 9 February.

Benefits and achievements resulting from this type of activity are ongoing and cumulative.

They feed into our strategic planning and have informed our strategy action pan.

**Sector-wide work**

_Identify the ways in which your institution has contributed to collaborative sector-wide work project strands (work funded beyond institutional contract finance)._
measures of graduate employment success; ‘supporting our graduates’ consortium work with Edinburgh and Stirling.

Supporting staff and student engagement

How have staff and students been supported to engage in Theme activities? Please provide examples.

Please report on any work (current or planned) around upskilling staff and students in the use of evidence to improve the student experience. Would you be willing to share any of your materials with the sector?

Current work includes Dashboard presentation in School Boards to maximise awareness of available data and its applications. A DUSA representative is always invited to attend TLG and other ET-related meetings to ensure inclusion of the student voice. Inclusion of the student voice is also one of the requirements for projects seeking ET funding, so any work arising from these projects will enhance student engagement. OPD courses are planned to upskill key staff who can act as ambassadors throughout the University.

Evaluation

Reflecting on the monitoring and evaluation of your Theme work, what is changing with respect to strategy, policy and practice?

The University has begun to investigate the potential that learning analytics may offer in terms of helping to inform improving learning and teaching practice, the learning experience and to maximise student potential. Our initial activity relates to a pilot project with Turnitin and Jisc to explore the insights that our assessment data might provide. A kick-off workshop has already served to highlight a range of different aspects relating to this data from both staff and student perspectives which could helpfully be considered.

A learning analytics governance working group is also being convened to help shape the University’s policies and approaches to learning analytics and ensure that they are developed ethically and responsibly.

Our L&T action plan includes the following objectives:

Systematise collection of feedback from students to enhance teaching performance.
Develop student achievement module dashboards and improve modules with low student achievement to maximise student achievement.
Develop a data-led individualised and cohort approach to the student journey to maximise student retention, progression and achievement.

These will be actioned through the L&T committee as well as short-life working groups, Registry, and collaboration with the Quality and Academic Standards Committee.

Processes

What are you learning from the processes, approaches and structures you are using to support this Theme?

How will this report be used/distributed within your institution?

What I have learnt during Year 1 of the new theme is that the University of Dundee has structures in place that can support and enhance the work of the theme. However, further thought and planning needs to go into how we maximise engagement from staff and students.

At the time of compiling this report, our student representatives at DUSA are handing over to their successors, so managing this transition will be key to our success in Year 2.
The sector-wide events have been very useful in re-focusing our energies, sharing good practice, and comparing working methods. In particular, we have learnt a lot about how other institutions are using technology to support the student journey, and also how Theme leaders in other institutions are using existing structures to promote engagement and disseminate the work of the theme.

This report will be shared through the TLG and the University’s L&T Committee.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Report Author:</th>
<th>Aliki Varvogli</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td>6/6/18</td>
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</table>
### Institutional team

Institutional Team membership can be found at: [https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/enhancement-themes-overview/evidence-based-enhancement](https://www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/quality/enhancement-themes-overview/evidence-based-enhancement)

There have been no changes in leadership or membership since the details were reported in the institutional plan in November 2017.

### Outcomes/activity

The institutional plan submitted in November 2017 was written before the Institutional Team had met. Since then, three productive team meetings have been held and a number of new activities, which align with the sector strands, have been identified.

**Institutional Team**

**Remit:** To have oversight of key institutional activities relating to the Enhancement Theme, with the aim of sharing information and identifying links and synergies. To support engagement with and work on the Enhancement Theme within the University and the sector, including the requirements set by Quality Assurance Agency Scotland. To facilitate communication on the Enhancement Theme across the University. To promote the use of data for enhancing the student experience.

The Team receive updates on the following projects: strategic performance measurement dashboards (Governance and Strategic Planning); analysing peer learning and support and Teaching Awards data (Students’ Association); student representative diversity work (Students’ Association); minimum standards for Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) (Learning, Teaching and Web (LTW)); analysing student survey data (Student Systems); and evaluation of lecture recording implementation (LTW).

**Staff Survey**

A staff survey on sources of information that are important to Schools to help improve the student experience highlighted a consistent theme of staff seeking more clarity on widening participation data, including definitions. The Institutional Team supported the development of a consistent set of definitions and identifying appropriate benchmark measures. In response to this, a member of staff from Student Systems attended the May meeting of the Institutional Team to provide an update of work undertaken in this area. Members were reassured that this work provided more clarity on widening participation data.

**Student Workshop**

The strongest themes to emerge from a workshop on sharing data with student representatives were requests for a handover from the previous year and information on key contacts. In response to this, the Students’ Association will explore using the impact questionnaire, which is completed by student representatives at the end of their tenure, to gather handover information. Additionally, from September 2018, there are plans to pilot with a few Schools the provision of a standard high-level analysis of student feedback to school student representatives.

**Staff Workshop**

A staff workshop to inform the establishment of meaningful and useful data sets for impact metrics for lecture recording and minimum standards for VLEs was held. Through this workshop, which had excellent staff engagement, some very useful information was gathered which will be considered by the relevant project boards.

**Student Data Dashboard**

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End of Year 1 Report for University of Edinburgh
It is planned to develop case studies of how the student data dashboard has been used, with a focus on what has been achieved as a result of clearer data.

**Work to Investigate Specific Non-Continuation Challenges**

Following a discussion at January Learning and Teaching Committee, two PhD student interns have been appointed to undertake analysis on non-continuation data and to explore patterns for different student groups. Additionally, Schools have been provided with non-continuation data and have been asked to provide insights into the patterns.

**Closing the Student Feedback Loop**

Academic Services have identified good practice examples of how staff can close the feedback loop with students. Examples are being drawn from School annual quality reports, teaching/postgraduate programme review reports, the Teaching Awards, and a staff survey to evaluate mid-course feedback. Some examples will be shared at a Directors of Teaching Network event in June 2018. It is hoped that other examples will be captured in various formats (videos, Teaching Matters blogs, etc.) and shared more widely via the University’s website alongside the outputs of the sector work.

The Students’ Association’s Vice President Education has led a project to transform the student representative structure, with a move from class (course) to programme representatives. There are early plans to develop a graphically designed visual representation of the new representative structure, which details how it supports the process of gathering student feedback and closing the feedback loop. It is hoped that this visual representation can be shared electronically. The visual representation would be complemented by planned communications about the student voice over summer 2018.

**Project Funding**

Staff and students were invited to submit applications for project funding. Unfortunately, none of the applications for project funding met the criteria. This result was unexpected and the criteria for any future calls for applications will be revisited. On reflection, the criteria may have been too broad.

**Dissemination of work**

Dissemination of work will commence as outcomes of activities, such as the closing the student feedback loop case studies, are finalised. Many of the Theme-related activities will continue into next academic year and beyond.

An update on activities was provided to the April 2018 Quality Assurance Committee meeting. Theme information is also disseminated through Institutional Team members, an internal wiki and a webpage.

The closing the student feedback loop case studies will be available on a webpage and so could be shared with the sector.

**Inter-institutional collaboration**

There has been no formal collaboration with other institutions outwith the collaborative cluster activity and sector work with which the University has been involved. Informal conversations at Theme Leaders’ Group meetings have been useful to discuss common areas of work and share ideas. The benefits of collaborating with other institutions is gaining a different perspective and the potential for synergies. The challenge for additional collaborative activities over and above the clusters and sector work is the time required.

**Sector-wide work**

**Student-led Project**

The Theme Leader coordinated an extensive survey response, involving many colleagues at the University and the Students’ Association. The Vice President Education was a member of the Steering Group and presented at the think tank event which was also attended by three members of staff from the University. There are plans to share the outcomes of this project within the University.

**Collaborative Cluster Engagement**

- A member of staff from Edinburgh College of Art is involved in the creative disciplines collaborative cluster.
- A member of staff from the Careers Service attended the employability collaborative cluster workshop and two members of staff attended the distance learning collaborative cluster workshops.
• A member of staff attended the second learning analytics collaborative cluster workshop.

Enhancement Themes Conference
The University and the Students’ Association are contributing three paper sessions and a lightning talk.

Supporting staff and student engagement

The Institutional Team has membership drawn from the University and Students’ Association, including the Vice President Education.

The staff and student workshops were an effective mechanism to explore and gather feedback on particular topics. It is evident from the wide breadth of the Theme that staff and student engagement with activities needs to be targeted in order to be meaningful and ensure positive engagement.

Next academic year there are plans to pilot with a few Schools the provision of a standard high-level analysis of student feedback to School Representatives. A School Director of Quality will also be invited to talk about how they made use of data to write their School annual quality report at the semester one network meeting. Work to present standard data sets to Schools prior to their teaching/postgraduate programme reviews to guide the development of remit items will be piloted next academic year and this will engage a new group of staff with Theme-related activity.

In terms of the approach to supporting staff and student engagement next academic year, this has been discussed with other institutions and creative approaches are being considered. For example, supporting local (e.g. School-level) activities or events and considering different ways to support dialogue between staff and students on student feedback (which would align with the Student Partnership Agreement). In general, there will be a growing focus on supporting staff to make evidence-informed decisions, which may include training.

These concepts will be discussed with the Institutional Team in year two of the Theme.

Evaluation

Due to its breadth, the Theme is supporting and strengthening aspects of existing strategy, policy and practice. For example, the Student Voice Policy was launched earlier this academic year and one of the principles covers closing the student feedback loop. The Theme has enabled us to focus attention on this aspect, to engage in sector-wide discussions, and to develop a staff-facing resource to support closing the student feedback loop.

Processes

There is great value in the breadth of the current Theme as there are numerous existing sector-wide and University activities that align with it. Also due to the breadth of the Theme, activities undertaken within the University require more targeted communications to ensure effective staff and student engagement. The Institutional Team consists of members who represent areas across the University and the Students’ Association who are involved in key Theme-related activity. The Team is smaller than for the previous Theme and, whilst this is working effectively, there are plans (outlined above) to consider more creative ways to increase staff and student engagement.

This report will be presented to the Institutional Team and the Quality Assurance Committee early next academic year.

Report Author: Nichola Kett, Academic Policy Manager, Academic Services

Date: 1 June 2018
End of Year 1 Report for University of Glasgow

Italicised text can be removed as it is advisory.

The key purposes of this report are to:-
- provide a framework for HEIs to report on their Theme activity that has taken place over the year
- help share information across the sector on the benefits and challenges around Theme engagement.

Please report under the headings below. The report should be about 6 to 8 sides of A4 in length.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional team</th>
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<tr>
<td>Identify any changes in Theme leadership, TLG and institutional team membership since details were reported in the institutional plan developed at the start of the academic year.</td>
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Ms Jane McAllister, Assistant Director of the Senate Office, has replaced Jack Aitken from May 2018 as TLG staff representative.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes/activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outline what was achieved in relation to your year 1 planned outcomes and activities, at the time of submitting this report.</td>
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</table>

Have there been any unintended outcomes/unexpected findings?

Please report on any aspect of work that you are particularly proud of and want to promote.

If there is work, which is not yet completed but will be by the 31 July, please comment below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Optimising the use and reporting of existing evidence on student performance, progression, attainment and outcomes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Glasgow has made progress on a number of fronts in relation to the use of evidence within reporting to enhance our performance, progression, attainment and outcomes. We have produced Business Intelligence Interactive Models that let us –</td>
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- Monitor performance and the success of students from our International Pathway College. This data enables us to work with the College to ensure an optimal learning experience prior to entry to Glasgow. This helps us to direct our support for students through the critical transition from College to University.
- Provide information to Colleges and Schools to help calibrate their approach to and management of assessment processes and procedures - using historical information.
- Monitor the utilisation of our teaching spaces to help us pro-actively manage our campus and mitigate any risks to the student experience.
- Deliver a range of models around key surveys to provide data on the student experience and outcomes to enable appropriate interventions. These surveys include the University’s Welcome Survey, the NSS, PTES and PRES. This information also supports Periodic Subject Reviews and other reviews across the University.
- Monitor student numbers – early warning of any areas that are full or where there may be pressure on class sizes – giving recruitment colleagues and staff locally the chance to act.

Although much of the work is based on large datasets and surveys, they all involve open questions which are periodically assessed on a thematic basis. An area for us to explore further is how central teams could support local areas with the analysis of the qualitative data on a more routine basis so that qualitative and quantitative data sources are combined into richer and more nuanced analyses.

**Strengthening and diversifying the ways in which the student voice is captured within our course, programme and subject review processes**

In collaboration with the Student’s Representative Council - Glasgow is creating a student representation toolkit. Thus far, a workshop has been held with student representatives to identify key themes that the toolkit will contain. Work on drafting content for the toolkit has been started, led by the VP Education at the SRC.

**Enhancing the evidence used in, and influence of our annual monitoring reporting process and Periodic Subject Review**

We have made progress on defining the scope of the annual monitoring related projects. Job descriptions have been produced for the Interns to carry out this work. Interns will be appointed shortly and will conduct research over the summer months. This will include a review of internal practice involving staff and students and the refinement of initial horizon scanning work undertaken by the Senate Office.

**Dissemination of work**

*Which mechanisms have been most effective in disseminating outcomes and resources internally, and to the sector – please provide examples?*

*If there are materials and resources you can share with the sector, please provide details below.*

The work on the data side of the Theme has all been internal so far and distributed mainly through our interactive QlikView offering available to all staff. Other means of internal distribution has included one-to-one sessions with Heads of School to review student performance, and discussions at College and School level about various datasets and how we might make use of them to improve the student experience. We are finding that providing Schools with evidence that relates to their programmes, gives them the opportunity to have insightful, evidence-based discussions with colleagues and that the evidence is proving effective in helping to make the case for changes in practice.

**Inter-institutional collaboration**
What was achieved with respect to collaborative working with other Higher Education institutions and what do you perceive as the benefits and challenges – please provide examples. Note that this relates to work funded through institutional contract finance rather than the collaborative cluster activity.

The focus has been on internal aspects of the work thus far and the data are often sensitive and not appropriate for external discussion. As such, our collaborative working on this aspect of our theme work has been unavoidably constrained. That said, we have, through the theme leader meetings, been able to share our approach to the work if not the specifics of the work itself and at the May SHEEC/TLG meeting, had useful discussions with the other Institutions represented at the meeting about what we were each doing, and how we were making use of evidence and engaging students and staff in our discussions about evidence. Our future work on annual monitoring will not be subject to the same sensitivities and so will be much more readily shared with other institutions.

Sector-wide work
Identify the ways in which your institution has contributed to collaborative sector-wide work project strands (work funded beyond institutional contract finance).

Our sector-wide involvement has thus far been constrained due to the nature of this particular phase of our work. As such, there is nothing further to report here.

Supporting staff and student engagement
How have staff and students been supported to engage in Theme activities? Please provide examples.
Please report on any work (current or planned) around upskilling staff and students in the use of evidence to improve the student experience. Would you be willing to share any of your materials with the sector?

All of the data projects have been developed in tandem with staff working in an agile fashion to develop our BI Models.

Evaluation
Reflecting on the monitoring and evaluation of your Theme work, what is changing with respect to strategy, policy and practice?

Our work on data analytics delivers across a number of key strategic aims. Our work with our International Pathway College aids our internationalisation objectives, promotes our Learning & Teaching Strategy aims of ensuring a geographically diverse student population and, crucially, in supporting transition into the University. The provision of enhanced information on assessment is an important strand within our Assessment & Feedback initiatives and will contribute to the A&F Transformation Project – a very substantial institutional venture. An important theme of our L&T Strategy is the provision of improved teaching and information support systems, and the empowerment of staff within Schools and Research Institutes through the provision of timely local and comparative data contributes to improved practice and more effective management of the student experience.

Processes
| What are you learning from the processes, approaches and structures you are using to support this Theme? |
| How will this report be used/distributed within your institution? |

| Learning from Theme activity is limited at this relatively early stage of work on the theme. However, the outcomes of development of analytics initiatives have already become embedded in local practice as well as School, College and University reflection on support for the student experience. |
| Circulation of this report will be limited in its own right, but it will inform reflective processes as indicated above. |

| Report Author: | Dr J Aitken |
| Date:          | 29 May 2018 |
## 1. Institutional team

*Identify any changes in Theme leadership, TLG and institutional team membership since details were reported in the institutional plan developed at the start of the academic year.*

The Theme lead and institutional team membership remains the same with the exception of an additional member of academic staff joining the team.

## 2. Outcomes/activity

*Outline what was achieved in relation to your year 1 planned outcomes and activities, at the time of submitting this report.*

*Have there been any unintended outcomes/unexpected findings?*

*Please report on any aspect of work that you are particularly proud of and want to promote.*

*If there is work, which is not yet completed but will be by the 31 July, please comment below.*

Consultations with staff and students, and referrals to University policies, enabled St Andrews to identify the following institutional priorities for the theme:

1. Reflect on the nature and use of evidence to improve the student experience
2. Engender a culture of pedagogical scholarship
3. Analyse student-led teaching awards nomination data
4. Explore the diversification of our student demographic
5. Optimise the use of evidence to enhance the postgraduate experience
6. Optimise the use of evidence to improve the design of learning and teaching space
7. Create a toolkit for University-wide projects in educational research.

A short update on each strand is provided below.

### 1. Reflect on the nature and use of evidence to improve the student experience:

This strand aims to help the institution: a) understand the nature of evidence in relation to the student experience; b) gather the right data and use this effectively to enhance the student experience; and c) contextualise and present data in an accessible and meaningful way. Activity beyond regular discussion at institutional team meetings has involved presentations and discussion at a learning and teaching away afternoon, ongoing efforts to recruit interested individuals in each School, and two lunchtime workshops, focusing respectively on "what we currently do" and "what would we like to do and how could we do it". A summary paper distilling conclusions and recommendations from the workshops is currently being drafted for consideration by the team in September. In year two, we aim to continue discussion in more depth, and work to identify opportunities for cross-School collaboration on the gathering and exploitation of evidence.
2. **Engender a culture of pedagogical scholarship**: The creation of a learning and teaching pedagogical initiative is underway. It is anticipated that this initiative will provide the framework within which staff will be able to network and collaborate to share ideas and resources. It will also support capacity building around pedagogical scholarship and research. A one-day conference in July 2018 will provide a platform for active researchers to share their research and scholarship within the community. The initiative will be formally launched in November 2018 with a keynote address by Prof Dilly Fung from the London School of Economics. A follow-up teaching practice forum will be dedicated to encouraging new and existing staff to include pedagogical scholarship as part of their normal teaching practice.

3. **Analyse student-led teaching awards nomination data**: The student-led teaching awards (SLTAs) provide a rich source of evidence in relation to students’ perspectives on what constitutes a high quality learning and teaching experience. An analysis of the nominations was undertaken for the first time this year. A report drafted by the Student Association’s Director of Education (DoEd) will be shared with the University’s Learning & Teaching Committee in October. The report contains a number of recommendations to inform our work in year two of the theme. This includes employing a student intern to carry out a longitudinal analysis of nomination data, engaging more of the student population in the awards, and embedding an annual analysis report into the role of the DoEd. This year’s process was further enhanced by the production of brief reflective pieces by award winners, which outlined the good practice identified in their nomination statements.

4. **Explore the diversification of our student demographic**: A plan for this strand of work has been developed this year alongside the work of the Admissions Review Group. Proposed activities were influenced by discussions with some members from this group, wider Admissions staff, and a PhD student from the School of Management whose research explores ethnicity and higher education in the UK. The plan will be considered by the institutional team in September.

5. **Optimise the use of evidence to enhance the postgraduate experience**: This strand will commence in AY 2018-19 so that it can be informed by the activities of the new taught postgraduates and research postgraduate working groups, which were established this academic year. The two working groups will commission the institutional team with pieces of work and strategically direct its activities.

6. **Optimise the use of evidence to improve the design of learning and teaching space**: Following the publication of the University wide review of Teaching and Learning Space by Architects HLM, it has been proposed that some of the recommendations should be implemented and tested with a refurbishment pilot project during the summer of 2018. Teaching rooms and associated learning spaces have been identified as well as a technology-enhanced learning sandpit space. These will be operational in time for the new teaching semester in September. It is anticipated that the team will be commissioned with pieces of work in the coming months.

7. **Create a toolkit for University-wide projects in educational research**: Evidence-based enhancement requires that we not only collect evidence but that we also evaluate it. In light of this, we are developing a suite of tools to enable the collection of appropriate evidence with guidance as to how it might be evaluated. The toolkit will be sufficiently generic to support multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches recognising the very different starting points, and kinds of evidence, that are represented. It will also be a starting point resource for
those new to the field of educational research and will address generic themes e.g. cognitive strategies for teaching and learning, pedagogical theory and practice, etc. It will also address, through the collection of exemplars, subject-specific and cross-discipline approaches to educational research.

Colleagues from across disciplines have expressed their wish to conduct educational research, as they understand that outcomes have the potential to enhance the student experience. Colleagues have also noted, in many cases, that they lack the applied research background to enable them to conduct this type of educational research. An overall framework for the toolkit will be developed in the first instance, which will be supplemented by focus groups and interviews with appropriate staff and the compilation of appropriate exemplars. We anticipate the project team (which comprises staff and postgraduate students) will complete most of this work over the forthcoming summer months.

3. Dissemination of work

Which mechanisms have been most effective in disseminating outcomes and resources internally, and to the sector – please provide examples?

If there are materials and resources you can share with the sector, please provide details below.

Internally, outcomes and resources are effectively disseminated via the institutional team, a range of small and large-scale events, and a number of formal and well-represented committees. These include the University's Learning & Teaching Committee, Academic Monitoring Group, the Student Association's Education Committee, the School Presidents' Forum (attended by the DoEd and senior class rep in each School), and Student Experience Committee. In addition, the institutional team is the process of introducing Enhancement Theme Champions in Schools, having drafted a remit and identified potential interested colleagues. An Enhancement Theme Communication and Engagement strategy is under development, and the University’s theme web pages will be updated over the summer months to provide a snapshot of progress in year one.

Externally, we share and discuss our work via the Scottish Higher Education Enhancement Committee (SHEEC), the Theme Leaders' Group (TLG), the Enhancement Theme conference (both as delegates and presenters); and our University web pages.

4. Inter-institutional collaboration

What was achieved with respect to collaborative working with other Higher Education institutions and what do you perceive as the benefits and challenges – please provide examples. Note that this relates to work funded through institutional contract finance rather than the collaborative cluster activity.

St Andrews worked collaboratively with other institutions by way of SHEEC and TLG meetings, and engagement in events such as:

- Responding to the student voice: Communicating the impact (26 April 2018)
- Using evidence: personalising the student experience (8 June 2018)

A review of the institutional plans indicated the following areas of commonality, which we will explore at the start of year 2:
• Make better use of evidence (specific interest in PGT experience) **Aberdeen**
• Enhance evidence used in annual monitoring and subject review **Glasgow**
• Gain better understanding of evidence **Queen Margaret**
• Develop data collection/collation methods in support of an ‘outstanding student experience’ **Strathclyde**

Inter-institutional collaboration is a useful way to bring together different perspectives and expertise, encourage creativity, and facilitate the development of closer and stronger working relationships. In terms of challenges, we are mindful that each institution is unique, and this may lead to different ideas on the preferred direction/nature of joint-initiatives. There is also potential for collaborative activity to divert energy and resources away from our core aims/deliverables. However, these challenges can potentially be overcome where there are good personal relationships, careful planning, a focus on the big picture, and clear and agreed mutual benefits.

5. **Sector-wide work**

*Identify the ways in which your institution has contributed to collaborative sector-wide work project strands (work funded beyond institutional contract finance).*

St Andrews has engaged with, and contributed to, two of the three collaborative clusters: ‘Learning Analytics’ led by the University of Strathclyde, and ‘Employability and distance learning’ led by the Open University.

Colleagues from St Andrews attended the learning analytics workshops held on 27 February and 15 May, and assisted with the development of three key themes for further exploration, i.e. learning analytics framework; engagement; and applications of learning analytics. Whilst it was agreed that three interns working over the summer will be hosted by Edinburgh, Stirling, and Strathclyde, St Andrews agreed to support the interns by offering consultation time and hot-desking opportunities.

The Open University hosted two workshops in May 2018 to scope the potential for collaborative work on employability and distance learning in years 2 and/or 3 of the Enhancement Theme. A colleague from St Andrews attended the employability workshop. Five potential project ideas emerged from the discussion, and these will be followed up by those in attendance in consultation with institutional teams. As an aside, it was noted that the understanding and dissemination of data was an area of challenge. Colleagues were advised that the QAA will develop a learner analytics manual as a guide to help all staff, including Careers Service staff, to understand learner analytic developments, which have moved quickly.

6. **Supporting staff and student engagement**

*How have staff and students been supported to engage in Theme activities? Please provide examples.*

Staff and students are supported to engage with the theme in a range of ways. Examples include representation on the institutional team, participation in focus groups during the planning phase of the project, attendance at an LTC away afternoon, and contributions to workshops on the nature and use of evidence. We also offer funding for staff and students who have ideas on how evidence might be used to improve the student experience.
As noted in section 3, the institutional team is the process of introducing Theme Champions in Schools to help raise awareness of, and encourage wider engagement with, the activity taking place around this theme. This will entail: reading emails from the institutional team and circulating to colleagues where appropriate (e.g. funding calls); discussing the theme activities in relevant School forums; and identifying colleagues who might be able to contribute to the various strands of work coordinated by the institutional team. Optional responsibilities include attending one institutional team meeting per academic year to share practice, and organising a theme-related event within their School (e.g. a lunchtime discussion about sources of evidence for enhancement in their discipline).

The University's periodic review process has also highlighted ways in which colleagues are engaging in the theme, and theme-related recommendations made by review teams. For example, the University Library was recommended to consider the need to develop a focussed strategy for digital approaches. They plan to analyse borrowing data and e-resource use trends to build the evidence-base of actual user behaviour to combine with expressed format preferences. They will update the institutional team later this year.

Staff and student engagement in QAA’s annual conference has grown in recent years. Eleven members of staff, the Student Association’s Director of Education, and Masters student Rayna Rogowsky attended the Enhancement Theme conference in June 2018. Rayna received a conference award (‘Most Inspiring Student-Led Contribution’) for her presentation on ‘Perceptions of health care needs and services at university’. In addition, one of our institutional team members - Dr Elizabeth Shively - shared her use of ‘Journal-keeping to enhance student engagement in learning’.

7. Evaluation

Reflecting on the monitoring and evaluation of your Theme work, what is changing with respect to strategy, policy and practice?

Since the Theme’s launch eight months ago, work is well underway and the team is taking steps to maximise staff and student engagement. We anticipate changes to strategies, policies and practices in years 2 and 3 of the theme.

8. Processes

What are you learning from the processes, approaches and structures you are using to support this Theme?

How will this report be used/distributed within your institution?

We are learning that as the level of ambition grows within the institution, sector and QAA, so too must the supporting structures. Institutions undertake work internally, collaborate with others, and lead or participate in funded clusters. Some clarity as to the weight or balance of these three areas would be helpful and inform future planning. The institutional lead is meeting with the Head of the University’s Business Transformation Portfolio Office in July to explore approaches to project managing the growing portfolio of Theme activity.

St Andrews identified seven strategic priorities for the course of the theme, some of which are relatively defined and focused (e.g. SLTAs), whilst others (e.g. our reflection on the nature and use of evidence to improve the student experience) are more complex and organic. In terms of activity at grass roots level, we have learned that
more comprehensive funding criteria is required for this theme. This includes clarification of what we mean by ‘evidence’. The team plan to review existing funding criteria in advance of the next funding round later this year.

We have also learned that colleagues have different understandings of what ‘evidence’ is. Arts & Humanities subjects tend to have a much broader interpretation of ‘evidence’ than Sciences and Social Sciences. If ‘evidence’ is defined as synonymous with ‘data’, there is a risk that colleagues outside quantitative subjects will not engage with the Theme.

We saw examples at the learning and teaching away afternoon of different approaches to evidence. For example, a subject like History would consider almost anything to be ‘evidence’ of something – a useful approach for gathering evidence about what people say about their experience, but harder to analyse or present in an unequivocal way. At the other end of the spectrum, professional statisticians can argue that the small variations seen from one year to another in, say, MEQ or NSS data are not statistically significant. This presents a different problem, namely that of engendering cynicism about the data that we collect about aspects of the student experience.

We have also learned that there are different understandings of what evidence we should use to enhance the student experience. We currently have a vast amount of evidence about students’ behaviour and outcomes (e.g. pre-university achievement; module and course choices; attainment; engagement; use of support services; student feedback on teaching and learning; graduate destinations; co-curricular activities). This is a valuable asset, but it also gives rise to questions: is this evidence gathered and contextualised in a way that lets us use it as we would like to; do we have the resources and the time to make the connections between different types of evidence collected for different purposes; is it ethically appropriate to use evidence collected for specific purposes (e.g. entry qualifications or module grades) for a different purpose?

This end of year report will be distributed to Schools and Professional Services via the University’s Learning and Teaching Committee. It will also be published on our website. As of AY 2018-19, the Enhancement Theme will be a standing item on the University’s Academic Monitoring Group, whose membership includes the Deans of Faculty and Associate Deans (Education).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Report Author:</th>
<th>Ros Campbell</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td>June 2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
End of Year 1 Report University of Stirling

**Institutional team**
Identify any changes in Theme leadership, TLG and institutional team membership since details were reported in the institutional plan developed at the start of the academic year.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There have been no changes to the Institutional Team during the first year however, Matt Adie as VP Education, will be demitting office in June. He will be replaced by Daniel Wright as VP Education in our Students’ Union.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Outcomes/activity**
Outline what was achieved in relation to your year 1 planned outcomes and activities, at the time of submitting this report.

Have there been any unintended outcomes/unexpected findings?

Please report on any aspect of work that you are particularly proud of and want to promote.

If there is work, which is not yet completed but will be by the 31 July, please comment below.

**Outcome 1**
We wish to improve student retention figures institutionally to reduce non-continuation to <5% by 2021.

Year 1 planned outcomes/activities:
- complete scoping project and assess current data
- review data available
- work with faculties, students and programme teams to determine the type of information they require and the way it should be presented to meet our key aims

Actual outcomes/activities:
The group is investigating student non-continuation and solutions to minimise students who leave the university before the completion of their studies.

A retention Steering Group has been formed with representation from across the institution, bringing together academics and professional services. The group are overseeing the review of, and planning for retention data.
A review of our current data and systems is now underway, early analysis has involved using the most recent information available from HESA regarding Scottish universities overall student satisfaction (2014/15-2016/17) and non-continuation rates (2013/14-2015/16) to indicate if there is a trend between student non-continuation rates and overall student satisfaction.

Initial analysis of reviewing VLE data and comparing it to autumn 2017 module grades will be undertaken to determinate whether there is some correlation between the two and student outcomes.

Staff consultation will commence once the data has been analysed with a series of focus groups planned for September 2018.

**Outcome 2**

**We wish to continue to improve student engagement across our programmes**

Year 1 planned outcomes/activities: complete scoping project and assess current data

- A review of the capabilities of our current systems to offer learning analytics

**Actual outcomes/activities:**

A Learning Analytics Steering Group has been formed with representation from across the institution, bringing together students, academics and professional services. The group are overseeing our review of, and planning for learning analytics.

A review of our current capabilities and systems is now underway, delayed slightly by the industrial action earlier this year. Parallel to this, staff and student consultation exercises have now commenced, with a further series of events planned for September 2018.

Activities to pilot learning analytics tools have been brought forward, with the implementation of a reporting tool linked to VLE data; and an agreement for the University of Stirling and Jisc to co-create a connector between our VLE (Canvas, by Instructure) and the Jisc Learning Analytics product.

**Outcome 3**

**We wish to enhance graduate outcomes of our students to the level of 85% obtaining graduate level jobs by 2021.**

Year 1 planned outcomes/activities: complete scoping of approach to PDP and acquisition of platform to support PDP

- Wide consultation with relevant stakeholders on new approach to PDP
- Create proposal and seek institutional approval
- Scope appropriate platform for e-portfolio to support PDP
- Acquire platform
- Begin to develop content

**Actual outcomes/activities:**

Over the course of the first year wide consultation has taken place with relevant stakeholders (students, staff and employers) to scope the requirements of PDP at Stirling. This has involved 1:1 meetings with a range of academic staff, professional services staff, students (a mix of years, disciplines and both under and post graduates). In addition, two student focus groups were held and staff were invited to complete an online survey to register their thoughts and views on the subject.

In addition, a review of best practice across higher education and of relevant publications and research was also completed.
This work has resulted in a paper that outlines a framework designed to support students to make sense of their university experience, to get the most out of it and to plan for the future. It aims to bring together a set of cohesive activities and interventions embedded throughout the student experience and is a suggested way for the university to make explicit to students the process by which learners are supported and the resources and opportunities provided for them. The paper will be consulted on and a working group formed to review and prioritise activity and begin implementation.

Initial discussions on the requirements for an eportfolio system have taken place and university approval for the purchase of a system is ongoing.

**In addition to the planned activities outlined in the Institutional Plan we have undertaken the following activities:**

An Institutional Student Surveys Working Group has been formed to have oversight of survey and other student engagement activity. This group has:
- Gathered evidence of surveys used by the University to develop a co-ordinated approach to this activity.
- Centralised the approach to survey reporting
- Developed a stakeholder Engagement Toolkit to provide a range of techniques to gain feedback
- Co-ordinated promotion of key surveys
- Reviewed responses to surveys and actions taken

Our Student Faculty Officers have each undertaken a project designed to enhance the student experience within their academic divisions or faculties. In early September 2017, our Students’ Union undertook a planning exercise with the officers to begin scoping out potential project ideas, this involved consideration of a wide range of evidence sources, including: Annual Programme Monitoring Reports, the most recent Student Surveys (NSS, SES, PTES, and PRES) data, and DLHE & LEO data. Projects undertaken in 2017/18 include:
- Gathering evidence of student reactions to feedback on assessment, to better inform staff feedback practices (Law)
- Running an honours module fair to improve student understanding of final year study options and smooth the transitions into the final year (Law, History & Politics)
- Launching a ‘Think Outside the Box’ Employability Fair to showcase the full range of career options open to those graduating with a degree in Health Sciences or Sport (Health Sciences, Sport)
- Fostering a stronger staff: student community within the Faculty of Social Sciences, through the Big Social Sciences Quiz (Sociology, Social Policy and Criminology).
- The Annual Education Ball: Enhancing the opportunities for cross-disciplinary engagement and community building between trainee teachers (Initial Teacher Education).
- Co-creating the curriculum within honours Computing Science and Mathematics; providing a wider range of final year elective study options (Computing Science and Mathematics)
- Improving the consistency of and approach to feedback on assessments, to inform staff practices (Psychology)

We have encouraged our officers to ensure they gather evidence of the impact these projects have had on the student experience within their Faculties. An exercise will be
undertaken by the Students’ Union over the summer to distil this evidence to provide a better indication of the overall impact of the Faculty Officers in 2017/18. This will be shared around the faculties and service areas to increase staff understanding of their role.

Lesley Grayburn and Matt Adie have actively participated in the Theme Leaders Group.

**Dissemination of work**

*Which mechanisms have been most effective in disseminating outcomes and resources internally, and to the sector – please provide examples?*

*If there are materials and resources you can share with the sector, please provide details below.*

Regular updates on the on-going work have been disseminated through our governance committees, in particular our Education and Student Experience Committee which has membership from all Faculties, central services and students. This is then cascaded down through faculties. This also reports upwards to Academic Council where the updates are noted.

Regular updates have appeared in the weekly Staff and Student Round-Up publications which are issued electronically. This has included information on the progress of our institutional work; news of sector events and encouragement to participate in events such as the Enhancement Themes conference.

Student faculty officer work has been disseminated through Faculty Learning & Teaching Committees and to the student body through the Students’ Union. Faculty Officers use Facebook and other social media to engage with students in respect of the work they undertake.

Our website presence has been problematic this year as we are undergoing a web transformation. This will be completed in the coming months and then a better presence will be apparent.

Three colleagues are presenting papers at the forthcoming Enhancement Themes conference to share with colleagues in the sector developments at Stirling such as the student engagement toolkit.

**Inter-institutional collaboration**

*What was achieved with respect to collaborative working with other Higher Education institutions and what do you perceive as the benefits and challenges – please provide examples. Note that this relates to work funded through institutional contract finance rather than the collaborative cluster activity.*

Matt Adie, VP Education of our Students’ Union was appointed Student Theme Lead by QAA in October 2017. As such, he has sat on the Themes Leadership Team and has led, in partnership with QAA Staff, the sector-wide Student Engagement strand. This has involved chairing the inter-institutional steering group for the “Student Voice: Communicating the Impact” project and hosting the Student Voice Think Tank event in April 2018 to explore current practice within the sector.

We have actively participated in the Focus on Assessment and Feedback event in March and shared best practice with the sector. The event was useful and helped us reflect on the journey we have travelled since the last event on this theme.
### Sector-wide work

*Identify the ways in which your institution has contributed to collaborative sector-wide work project strands (work funded beyond institutional contract finance).*

Members of our team have attended meetings for the collaborative clusters on both employability and learning analytics. Our learning analytics team have agreed to accommodate and support 2 of the 3 interns employed through the cluster to develop horizon scanning reports for the sector and are actively engaged in the work of the cluster. Our employability team hope to contribute to the cluster work on the Graduate Outcomes survey, which is at an early stage.

### Supporting staff and student engagement

*How have staff and students been supported to engage in Theme activities? Please provide examples.*

Please report on any work (current or planned) around upskilling staff and students in the use of evidence to improve the student experience. Would you be willing to share any of your materials with the sector?

Our approach has been to focus activities onto the three strands highlighted above. A steering group has been formed and remit agreed. It has overseen the activity of each of the strand leaders on a bi-monthly basis. The strand leaders have produced action plans and are implementing them through working groups, which they chair. In addition, project management has been provided by a project management professional to ensure each strand is supported.

Administrative assistance has been provided to the group by an Enhancement Theme Project Officer.

Students undertaking projects have been supported by their faculties (in the relevant subject areas and by the Associate Dean for Learning & Teaching) and by the Students’ Union and particularly the VP Education who meets the Faculty Officers every 2 weeks. In the next phase of implementation we will scope the training required for staff and students to better use the data we produce.

Currently work is being undertaken to produce guides to a variety of learning & teaching roles including role descriptors, training and development profiles and support materials. Training for staff will be integrated into these resources.

### Evaluation

*Reflecting on the monitoring and evaluation of your Theme work, what is changing with respect to strategy, policy and practice?*

**Outcome 1:** the work on this outcomes has increased awareness and understanding of the range of related work going on across the institution and is encouraging us to look for ways to be more ‘joined up’ in our approach.

**Outcome 2:** the work on this outcome has brought together disparate efforts to advance the learning analytics agenda, and importantly has placed the student voice at the heart of the conversation. Opportunities to advance pilot exercises have been presented, allowing us to more rapidly explore solutions and increase wider awareness and understanding of the learning analytics agenda.

**Outcome 3:** the work on this outcome has increased awareness and understanding of the range of related work going on across the institution and is encouraging us to look for ways to be more ‘joined up’ in our approach.
## Processes

**What are you learning from the processes, approaches and structures you are using to support this Theme?**

**How will this report be used/distributed within your institution?**

We are finding the outcomes approach, which we have adopted under this theme, to be more effective than previous approaches. This approach, and the working group leadership structure, has aligned more closely to our governance structures. This has helped us achieve an integrated approach to other enhancement work going on in the University and has enabled better dissemination and engagement.

This document will be reported through our governance committee structure through the Education and Student Experience Committee and Academic Council. In addition, we will share it through Faculty Learning & Teaching Committees as we hope to access further case studies and encourage wider dissemination through direct engagement with the faculties. It will also be reported through our student and staff Round up weekly publications. The website will be updated as soon as we have access to our new website.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Report Author:</th>
<th>Prof Alison Green</th>
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<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td>29/5/18</td>
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</table>
## End of Year 1 Report for University of Strathclyde

### Institutional team

| Institutional lead, TLG staff representative and TLG staff representative alternate have all remained the same as disclosed in the First Year Plan. |
| For the upcoming year 2, the TLG student representative has changed and this is now Eyram Ahadzie, our newly elected Vice President Education. |

### Outcomes/activity

In Year 1, our main focus is on understanding, with years 2 and 3 focusing on using, and embedding, respectively.

For our Learner Experience Framework strand, we are undertaking student engagement activities, such as surveys and focus groups, through the use of student research interns, who have been recruited and will work from June-September 2018. The student research interns will provide a student voice to the measures outlined in a draft version of the Framework, and will explore the potential of a student-owned Learner Development Portfolio, for students to record and be recognised for their enhanced learning activities. In addition to this, Learning & Teaching datasets utilising institutional data have been explored via the strategic leads on our Surveys and Metrics Working Group.

For our learning analytics strand, we planned staff and student engagement activities, such as focus groups, to gain an understanding of the requirements for a learning analytics approach to the assessment and feedback institutional and sector wide challenge. Due to an increase in online learning provision, i.e. Graduate Apprenticeships, a new strategic priority to analyse the engagement of students either studying on fully online, distance learning programmes or Graduate Apprenticeships was identified. This resulted in a number of collaboration sessions, delivered jointly by Education Enhancement and the Organisational and Staff Development Unit, to undertake a needs analysis of the requirements of a tool/system that would support staff teaching on these categories of programmes. This also included a prioritisation exercise which has identified the requirements for a tool that would provide a 'prompt for intervention’ for staff. This tool is currently in development and will be available for staff to use from 17th June 2018 onwards. A number of related workshops have been organised to demonstrate the tool to the target staff and it is anticipated that this will also run as a staff training session within the Strathclyde Teaching Excellence Programme. A student intern will also undertake student engagement activities relating to learning analytics. This will involve the student working within a team of interns to understand student views and needs with regards to learning analytics. This student will also work alongside an intern funded as part of the learning analytics collaborative cluster activity. These students are being recruited in early June and will work throughout the summer months. The interns will be investigating the different categories of students and undertake a needs analysis for each category to
document and understand their requirements from learning analytics. This will support strategy development within institutions to support all student groups, and not just those deemed ‘at-risk’ from failing or leaving the university. It is expected that these interns will also work, engage and collaborate with a wider group of interns funded by the learning analytics collaborative cluster funding, such as the two students investigating best practice in learning analytics framework based at the University of Stirling.

For our using data effectively strand, we have formed an institutional team to support the development of this new strand of work. Representatives from the Organisational and Staff Development Unit will lead this strand with support from Strategy & Policy and the Enhancement Theme project team. A postgraduate research student has been recruited as a student intern for this strand and is undertaking a research project to explore staff knowledge and understanding of the institutional data available, and their data literacy at interrogating that data, and using it for enhancement. This project is starting by defining institutional definitions in relation to data, learning and educational analytics. The intern will also undertake qualitative research in exploring data at Strathclyde. An internal scan of Programme Directors will provide understanding of the institutional data available, awareness of this data, what we used, who uses it and why? The intern is also undertaking an external scan to determine if there is any academic development support available and the types of academic development support resources available to support data literacy. This research will also feed into a new programme targeting the support and development of Programme Directors.

**Dissemination of work**

At the moment, as we are in the ‘understanding’ phase of the project, there is currently no anticipated changes to strategy, policy and practice at this time. Evidence gathered in this year will be evaluated and used to inform and changes in year 2 and 3 of the Theme work.

We currently don’t have any materials and resources we could share with the sector other than those being captured already as part of the learning analytics collaborative cluster work.

**Inter-institutional collaboration**

We have not undertaken any inter-institutional collaborative working using institutional contract finance as we have been involved in leading a collaborative cluster in learning analytics.

**Sector-wide work**

The University of Strathclyde has engaged in the sector strand student-led project on Student Voice. We completed the Student Voice survey and returned this on time as requested. An institutional team consisting of a Deputy Associate Principal, Learning Enhancement Manager, Senior Learning Enhancement Adviser, and our Vice President Education from our Student Association attended and participated in the Think Tank event that was held on 26th April 2018.

There are synergies in the learning analytics collaborative cluster work led by the University of Strathclyde and the optimising data and the student demographics, retention and attainment sector strands of work, with outputs from the workshops provided to QAA informing these strands of work. The time required to organise and host these workshops is being provided in kind by the institution.
Supporting staff and student engagement

Staff have been supported by the institutional Enhancement Theme team to advance work in the three strands of institutional Theme activity. As this year of the theme we have focused on primarily understanding the landscape of our three strands, we anticipate greater staff engagement in year 2 and year 3.

Student interns will undertake full inductions and are linked to staff leading each strand of work to ensure they are fully supported in their intern role. The students undertaking the LEF and LA internships will be supported in the use of focus groups to obtain qualitative data, the analysis of quantitative data, producing a key themes report, and other organisational and administrative duties such as room bookings and recruiting participants for the focus groups. The intern undertaking the internship in the using data effectively strand is a PGR student, who has previously been involved in the last Enhancement Theme, will also be fully supported in her project.

Evaluation

At the moment, as we are in the ‘understanding’ phase of the project, there is currently no anticipated changes to strategy, policy and practice at this time. Evidence gathered in this year will be evaluated and used to inform and changes in year 2 and 3 of the Theme work.

Processes

What are you learning from the processes, approaches and structures you are using to support this Theme?

How will this report be used/distributed within your institution?

For the first time, this Theme is being led by a group rather than an individual Theme lead. This has been particularly helpful due to the nature of the Theme, multiple stakeholders, and the collaboration required across faculties and Professional Services departments.

This report will be shared with the institution’s Learning Enhancement Committee and reported up to the Education Strategy Committee, our highest strategic learning and teaching committee.

Report Author: Dr Ainsley Hainey & Helyn Gould

Date: 30/05/2018
End of Year 1 Report for University of the Highlands and Islands

Italicised text can be removed as it is advisory.

The key purposes of this report are to:-
- provide a framework for HEIs to report on their Theme activity that has taken place over the year
- help share information across the sector on the benefits and challenges around Theme engagement.

Please report under the headings below. The report should be about 6 to 8 sides of A4 in length.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional team</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify any changes in Theme leadership, TLG and institutional team membership since details were reported in the institutional plan developed at the start of the academic year.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme leadership</th>
<th>remains unchanged as follows:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sorcha Kirker</td>
<td>Vice President for HE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlands and Islands Students Association</td>
<td>(Student lead and TLG representative)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor Keith Smyth</td>
<td>Professor of Pedagogy and Head of Learning and Teaching Academy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highlands and Islands Students Association</td>
<td>(Institutional lead and TLG representative)</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal Steering Group</th>
<th>membership has been expanded and is now as follows (please note specific enhancement theme roles for a number of colleagues noted in brackets):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jessica Borley</td>
<td>Head of Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perth College UHI</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Liz Cook
Quality Manager
Inverness College UHI

Dr Gary Campbell
Dean of Science, Health and Engineering and Assistant Principal for Curriculum Enhancement
(Chair UHI Enhancement Theme Steering Group)

Dr Heather Fotheringham
Quality Enhancement Impact Officer
(Enhancement Themes Project Officer)
Outcomes/activity

Outline what was achieved in relation to your year 1 planned outcomes and activities, at the time of submitting this report.

Have there been any unintended outcomes/unexpected findings?

Please report on any aspect of work that you are particularly proud of and want to promote.

If there is work, which is not yet completed but will be by the 31 July, please comment below.

In our institutional plan for Year 1 we identified the following three ‘project strands’ as priorities for our institutional work for the enhancement theme:

1. Linking evidence to learning (Lead: H Fotheringham)
2. Linking student representation to enhancement and belonging (Lead: S Kirker)
3. Linking feedback to progression (Lead: K Smyth)

Our stated priorities for year one were “to further refine the projects we have identified, review relevant literature and exemplars within the sector, and use this work to (i) benchmark and inform our own approaches in the three priority areas of activity, (ii) develop a project plan for each project to be undertaken, (iii) form project implementation teams, and (iv) design and produce the guidelines, plans and resources that will allow the interventions in each area to be implemented”. Our intention, outlined in the Year 1 plan, is to undertake three longitudinal projects over the duration of the Enhancement Theme, with the above activities being completed in Year 1 and implementation in Year 2.

To this end, we have:

- Produced and began the implementation of three detailed project plans for each key strand of project activity above. Each project strand has a nominated lead (given in brackets above), and we have begun forming reference groups who will support our implementation and evaluation activities in Years 2 and 3.
- Undertaken and produced a ‘benchmarking’ report synthesising previous research and current and recent initiatives in the sector, for each project strand.
- Identified a number of module and programme teams, in each of the above strands, which we will be working with from the outset of Year 2 to enhance current
practice, evaluate effectiveness of interventions, and to produce outputs in the form of case studies, exemplars, toolkits and reusable resources.

- Facilitated a range of initial engagement activities, including webinars and symposia, to raise awareness of the enhancement themes work and to engage staff in relevant professional development activities related to our project strands (one of these events – a two day symposium - was run in partnership with sparqs)
- Begun to revise related institutional policy and strategy that will either support or provide good practice exemplars relating to our three key project strands
- By the close of July 2018 we will have finalised arrangements for a joint student and staff learning and teaching conference, to be held in the autumn after the publication of NSS results, and which will comprise a series of participative workshop and sessions focused on students and staff working together to design evidence-based learning and teaching enhancements and interventions. The joint conference is a major engagement activity for each of our three project strands.
- At the time of writing, our Learning and Teaching Academy have announced the call for proposals for our next round of LTA Scholarship projects which provide funding for staff-led educational research and scholarship projects. The main focus of the new scholarship call is for proposals for projects that relate directly to, and will produce academic outputs for, our three enhancement theme project strands.

**Dissemination of work**

*Which mechanisms have been most effective in disseminating outcomes and resources internally, and to the sector – please provide examples?*

*If there are materials and resources you can share with the sector, please provide details below.*

Our dissemination activities in Year 1 were mainly focused firstly on internal awareness raising through papers and updates to relevant groups and committees, and secondly on the first round of professional development events (webinars and symposia as mentioned above) that have provided our initial opportunities for staff engagement.

The various outputs produced thus far (project plans, benchmarking reports, webinar materials and recordings) are to be published on a project site (with internal working spaces and outward facing sections) at the start of the new academic year. This will coincide with the announcement and call for registration for our student staff conference.

**Inter-institutional collaboration**

*What was achieved with respect to collaborative working with other Higher Education institutions and what do you perceive as the benefits and challenges – please provide examples. Note that this relates to work funded through institutional contract finance rather than the collaborative cluster activity.*

As indicated in our Year 1 plan, we did not anticipate significant engagement in inter-institutional collaboration until later in Year 1 but are now in discussions with Edinburgh Napier and QMU in relation to joint working and initiatives to support programme leaders in their use of evidence, and implementation of evidence-based enhancements.

**Sector-wide work**
**Identify the ways in which your institution has contributed to collaborative sector-wide work project strands (work funded beyond institutional contract finance).**

We have engaged with the work of cluster exploring distance and belonging, and at the time of writing are exploring a potential collaboration for the new expressions of interest for collaborative clusters. Several members of the UHI team participated in the Student Voice event in April, and H. Fotheringham and K. Smyth both presented well received papers relating to our institutional work at the Enhancement Conference in June.

In addition to the above, K. Smyth (in his role as journal co-editor) has liaised with QAA Scotland to invite colleagues to submit papers based on their Enhancement Conference presentations to the Journal of Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice. K Smyth and colleagues from JPAAP had a stall at the Enhancement Conference, and the above invitation to submit was also communicated by QAA Scotland following the conference. The collaboration above follows JPAAP working with the QAA Scotland and the leaders of the last Enhancement Theme to publish a Special Issue relating to the previous theme.

**Supporting staff and student engagement**

*How have staff and students been supported to engage in Theme activities? Please provide examples.*

As detailed in Outcomes/Activity and Dissemination sections. In addition, further student engagement has been enabled through HISA (Highlands and Islands Students Association) meetings, and direct liaison with UHI’s Class Representatives Group.

**Evaluation**

*Reflecting on the monitoring and evaluation of your Theme work, what is changing with respect to strategy, policy and practice?*

Beyond initial changes to policy and strategy as outlined above, the bulk of our evaluation activity and related to changes to policy and practice will commence during Year 2.

**Processes**

*What are you learning from the processes, approaches and structures you are using to support this Theme? How will this report be used/distributed within your institution?*

With respect to what we are learning from the processes and approaches we are using to support the theme, we expect to have more to share from the commencement of Year 2 when our various implementation activities get underway in earnest.

In relation to this report, it will be disseminated to and through our internal Steering Group, to our Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee, HISA, and various internal fora who have a stake in our enhancement themes activity including our Class Reps Group.

**Report Author:** Professor Keith Smyth, Institutional Lead and TLG staff representative.
| Date: | 09.07.18 |
End of Year 1 Report for University of the West of Scotland

*Italicised text can be removed as it is advisory.*

The key purposes of this report are to:-

- provide a framework for HEIs to report on their Theme activity that has taken place over the year
- help share information across the sector on the benefits and challenges around Theme engagement.

Please report under the headings below. The report should be about 6 to 8 sides of A4 in length.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Institutional team</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify any changes in Theme leadership, TLG and institutional team membership since details were reported in the institutional plan developed at the start of the academic year.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Institutional team has been expanded to include Nina Anderson-Knox (Head of the Quality Enhancement Support Team) and Gail Sinclair (Business Intelligence). In addition, Peter McGuire (programme leader in the School of Business and Enterprise) has replaced Darryl Gunson.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Outcomes/activity</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outline what was achieved in relation to your year 1 planned outcomes and activities, at the time of submitting this report.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Have there been any unintended outcomes/unexpected findings?

Please report on any aspect of work that you are particularly proud of and want to promote.

If there is work, which is not yet completed but will be by the 31 July, please comment below.

Our original plan was to explore the use of all of the various data sources available to staff, including our learning analytics package, MyJourney; however, early in 2018 the institution took the decision to undertake a review of MyJourney. The review is being led by the Director of Student Life who is a member of the institutional team and our hope is that her review will be included as an outcome of our year 2 work but not to duplicate the work here. Instead we focus on other sources of evidence in the projects outlined below.

The two remaining proposed areas of work were an investigation into what and how module and Programme Leaders (PLs) use the data available to them, and a second student-led investigation into how student engage with the feedback processes available to them.

Jane MacKenzie oversaw the first project aided by a current PhD student, Katie McQuade, who undertook the data gathering and primary data analysis. The project as initially proposed was to be an audit of practice across UWS, but what emerged at an early meeting of the institutional group was that an audit approach was likely to discourage staff from engaging with the Enhancement Theme. We therefore decided to take an appreciative enquiry approach, actively seeking examples of good practice. Emma Shotter and Sabina Lawrie of the Students Association led the second project assisted by three undergraduate research
interns. Both projects sought and were granted ethical approval prior to their inception. The outcomes of these two projects are outlined below.

1. Programme leaders’ approach to using evidence for enhancement
An appreciative enquiry (AI) approach was adopted in order to identify and examine the positive and good practices used by PLs within UWS to enhance the student experience so that these might then be shared across the University.

The data for the research was gathered via semi-structured interviews. The interview protocol was designed to encourage broad responses that focused on data sources used as well as ways in which these data were used to enhance programmes and modules. Ten PLs across UWS’s Paisley, Ayr and Hamilton campuses were interviewed and all five Schools were represented. The recruitment of PLs to the project started with the PL members of the Theme Institutional group. Interviewees were asked to suggest other ‘good’ PLs – those they believed were doing good work to enhance their programmes. The data from the interviews were analysed for themes using the AI rather than a problem-solving lens (Cooperrider and Srivasta, 1987; Cooperrider, 1990).

What was abundantly clear from the research that these PLs are particularly dedicated to enhancing the student experience within UWS. As one PL stated: “everything we do is for student enhancement.”

The research found that in particular PLs make use of data from the following sources:
- Module Evaluation Questionnaires
- Staff Student Liaison Groups
- Informal conversations with students
- National Student Surveys
- Moodle/Dashboard/Banner
- Feedback from industry colleagues

These are briefly outlined below. This is followed by areas that have been enhanced in response to this variety of evidence.

Module Evaluation Questionnaires
At the end of every trimester, Module Evaluation Questionnaires (MEQs) are administered to students. They can ascertain whether or not students have enjoyed a module’s content and the approach to teaching. Every participant agreed that MEQs are best administered in person. Many have found that when completed online response rates drop, with one PL explaining that “We’ve generally found that students are less likely to complete them online.”

PLs described MEQs as being a useful source of data in both qualitative and quantitative terms. As a result of the data gathered by MEQs, they are able to inform PLs as to whether the lecturer was prepared, enthusiastic, knowledgeable etc. and if not, what changes could be made to address these issues.

Staff Student Liaison Group (SSLG)
The Staff Student Liaison Group (SSLG) is a discussion forum used for staff to consult with students in order to plan and develop. It is usually a platform where two student representatives can liaise with staff on behalf of students, generally on a quarterly basis. SSLGs provide students with the opportunity to present points, queries and questions, and staff the opportunity to feedback directly to them. PLs agreed that SSLGs can be used to show over the course of a year that faculty have responded to what students have said.

Informal Conversations with Students
Although not an official method of data collection, informal conversations with students have been described by all PLs who participated in this research as being important. One PL explained that: “the informal chat is where I get the most information.” Informal conversations consist of lecturers or PLs chatting with students face to face or via email. The PLs in this study have said that informal chats can help them to identify things which they once maybe made assumptions about, however which the students may see differently. PLs explained that generally informal chats allow them to get a feel for how students view a module, and therefore are not surprised by the data that emerges in, for example, MEQs.
National Student Surveys (NSS)
The National Student Survey (NSS) was mentioned as a useful source of information particularly for planning upcoming programmes, as it highlights what students were satisfied with, and where they believe improvements may be made. It is also useful for programmes to look where they stand in accordance with other programmes, across the universities and across student campuses. This can then allow PLs to look at how others are operating in comparison to themselves and see what they can learn from that.

Dashboard/Moodle
UWS provides staff with a ‘dashboard’ that brings a range of data sources together including student recruitment, the outcomes of national surveys, graduate destinations, and good university guides. This allows PLs to ‘monitor the health’ of their programmes. Participants believed it was useful for providing snapshots of quantitative data.

Moodle was also mentioned by six PLs as it has a feedback and questions option which is more informal than MEQs, and that can often lead to valuable data from students.

Industry Feedback
It emerged that half of the PLs interviewed use their connections within industry to ensure that learning outcomes and teaching are relevant, and also to obtain feedback. One PL stated that: “Staying in touch with industry ensures that we are still relevant and current.” PLs also said that they talk to graduates who have gone on to work in industry to get feedback on what the University is doing well or what it could do better.

What emerged from interviews was that our PLs are making changes to their programmes in response to the different types of evidence. We outline a few of examples below.

Enhancements in response to evidence
The most frequent change reported related to timetabling. PLs gave examples such as taking the feedback from the MEQs and modifying the timetable for the 2nd trimester timetables, in order to suit students’ needs as best as possible. Others pointed out that they tried to take those travelling long distances, and those with children into consideration when timetabling.

Throughout the research it became apparent that PLs use the data available in order to forecast and plan for the students they have coming into a class. This allows for the appropriate planning of room size and room layout.

Our interviewees also provided examples of where they had changed teaching format changing in response to student feedback, for example where for a particular topic students voiced a preference for a tutorial over a lecture, or vice versa.

PLs have also listened to student feedback regarding assessment. One PL explained that as a result of the feedback: “We did make big changes concerned with timing of assessments really, to spread things more kindly.”

2. Students’ perceptions of feedback mechanisms at UWS
The aims of this second piece of work was to explore feedback mechanisms within the university that actively allow staff and students to communicate their opinions and concerns about a specific issue or general ideas as well as to praise teachers and modules where appropriate. We wished to assess whether students feel they are listened to and if they feel their feedback is making a difference- thus the ultimate goal is to find potential areas of improvement.

Fourteen individual students and 10 staff members were interviewed for the project, a further six students participated in two group interviews. In addition, 171 participants, including undergraduate students, postgraduate students and staff members completed an online survey about feedback that asked a range of questions about personal experiences using the current mechanisms. Students were recruited for interviews, focus groups and the survey through email, personal connections, schools forwarding information to their students. Staff were recruited through email and going door to door throughout the campuses. Here we briefly summarise the outcomes of the student interviews.
The interviews lasted around 15 minutes and involved the interviewer asking participants about their experiences using current student to staff feedback mechanisms within the university including MEQs, SSLG meetings, email and informal mechanisms like corridor chats and after lecture chats. Participants were given the chance to share personal experiences, both positive and negative, and the chance to share any ideas for improvement. Interviews were audio recorded, transcribed and the research interns undertook a thematic analysis of interview transcripts. The results are presented around the two main instruments of feedback available to students: MEQs and Student Reps; sub-themes are presented in bold.

Module Evaluation Questionnaires
Students often saw MEQs as a ‘tickbox exercise’ where the same questions were asked each time for bureaucratic purposes rather than demonstrating any real interest in change and enhancement. Students also voiced concerns about MEQs being at the end of the module so they had no evidence of change in response to their feedback leading them to feel discouraged to give further feedback. Students also believed that staff were busy and are already dealing with too much to deal with feedback; our participants felt they were harassing staff by pointing out a small issue of concern. Some participants were also concerned that MEQs lacked the necessary anonymity presumably in very small cohorts where lecturers might recognise their handwriting.

Student Reps
There was a consensus around the lack of engagement of the student body with the rep system. Some participants voiced the opinion that some reps were undertaking the role to enhance their CV rather than having an interest in representing students. Some participants complained of a lack of transparency regarding their reps. Some said they either did not have student reps or did not know who they were, this further contributed to a lack of engagement with the rep system.

The interviews also included a number of suggestions for improvements to the feedback gathering mechanisms including the provision of two-way dialogues between lecturers and students perhaps through an online forum, or more frequent opportunities for providing feedback prior to the end of the module. Students would also welcome encouragement to engage with feedback processes.

Conclusion:
The first project has confirmed that PLs are aware of and make use of a range of data sources from individual module feedback to the outcomes of national surveys. It also uncovered many examples of changes made to programmes in response to student feedback. These findings will inform the support and development opportunities that the University will provide for academic staff around curriculum design and enhancement. All of the examples of changes identified in this project are fairly minor, structural ones. We did not find evidence of wholesale programme revision in response to the full range of data sources available to staff and this will inform our future work. SAUWS is taking forward the outcomes of the second strand of work here particularly, in relation to the student rep system.

One of the main purposes of this work was to get a better sense of what is already happening at UWS and the projects have enabled us to do this. An unexpected consequence is that we have also identified a number of individual PLs who use a greater range of evidence sources than we might have expected. These ‘experts’ will be approached to develop resources and training sessions to share their expertise with other UWS staff.


Dissemination of work

Which mechanisms have been most effective in disseminating outcomes and resources internally, and to the sector – please provide examples?

If there are materials and resources you can share with the sector, please provide details below.

The data we have gathered is rather preliminary and we see it as representing a base line from which to work rather than a complete story to share with the sector. Having said that, the undergraduate research interns presented the findings of the student-led project at UWS’s Learning, Teaching, and Research Conference last month. UWS Academy will host a half-day symposium for its staff in 18/19 around the Enhancement Theme: Evidence for Enhancement and the outcomes of both projects will be presented along with workshop opportunities to consider how to optimise our evidence gathering processes.

UWS Academy is a new service at UWS and part of its remit is the provision of CPD opportunities for staff in order to enhance the student experience. Part of that provision in 18/19 will be around feedback gathering methods and responding to data, informed by the projects presented here.

Inter-institutional collaboration

What was achieved with respect to collaborative working with other Higher Education institutions and what do you perceive as the benefits and challenges – please provide examples. Note that this relates to work funded through institutional contract finance rather than the collaborative cluster activity.

There are benefits in meeting colleagues across the sector when we are gathered together for the purposes of Enhancement theme work; however, we have not set up any formal inter-institutional collaborations as yet.

Sector-wide work

Identify the ways in which your institution has contributed to collaborative sector-wide work project strands (work funded beyond institutional contract finance).

UWS Academy who is leading this work has undergone a major restructure this year and is currently operating with a skeleton crew while recruitment is ongoing. We have therefore focused on setting up the institutional group and undertaking the project work this year but expect to engage more broadly with the sector next year.

Supporting staff and student engagement

How have staff and students been supported to engage in Theme activities? Please provide examples.

Please report on any work (current or planned) around upskilling staff and students in the use of evidence to improve the student experience. Would you be willing to share any of your materials with the sector?

As stated above, this year of the Theme has been about establishing structures and establishing baseline activities. Our Institutional group consists of academic and professional service staff who have not previously been involved in Enhancement Theme work (with the exception of the Theme lead). It also includes the SAUWS President and we plan to work in collaboration with SAUWS for the remaining years of the Theme.

It was always our intention to use subsequent years of the Theme to focus on staff development and it is timely that UWS is also in the process of developing its CPD provision for staff. As mentioned above, part of UWS Academy’s provision in 18/19 will be around feedback gathering methods and responding to data. The resources and materials used in that provision can be made available to the sector.
Evaluation

Reflecting on the monitoring and evaluation of your Theme work, what is changing with respect to strategy, policy and practice?

Despite our appreciative enquiry approach, the changes staff reported making in response to evidence were small scale, structural ones rather radical changes to enhance student learning. In 18/19 UWS is to have an institutional theme around Assessment and Feedback; it also sees the opening of its new Lanarkshire campus. Both of these will provide drivers for change. Part of this work will be the provision of support to undertake module and programme curriculum re-design: Module Makeovers. One aspect of this work will be to ensure evidence is used to inform the design/re-design of programmes/modules.

A clear message that has emerged from this work is that, while there are elements of good practice around gathering feedback and acting on that feedback, students, and to some extent staff, are rather cynical about the purposes of our evaluation methods and have become disengaged. In particular, MEQs are not engaging students, in part because they cannot see any evidence of change in response to their feedback.

Processes

What are you learning from the processes, approaches and structures you are using to support this Theme?

How will this report be used/distributed within your institution?

The Theme has provided us with an opportunity to trial a new-to-us way of supporting research projects through the creation of internships in SAUWS aimed at involving undergraduate students while offering them training and supporting their development. It has worked well and this is an approach we will use in similar enhancement projects where we collaborate with SAUWS.

The report will be shared with the institutional group in the first instance and will be used to inform the content of the planned institutional Enhancement Theme symposium.

Report Author: Jane MacKenzie

Date: 31/07/18