



# Evidence for Enhancement: Improving the Student Experience

## Overview of Institutional Plans

1. This paper provides an overview of the information presented in Enhancement Theme institutional plans for Session 2017-18.

## Background

2. All institutions have submitted their first year plan and these are posted on the Enhancement Themes web pages.
3. Institutions have reported that this Theme aligns well with current and planned activities. Within most institutions, there is significant current and planned work in re-developing elements of institutional strategy. The Theme comes at an opportune time when institutions will be using evidence to support and evaluate these strategic developments. Beyond the evident business need, the plans show an enthusiasm and real interest for the Theme. Some institutions are also using this Theme to link to the Student Transitions Enhancement Theme work, looking at the impact of Transition interventions.

## Institutional teams

4. The composition of institutional teams varies in number of members and members' roles. In some cases members' details are to be confirmed and it is likely that team memberships will change over the course of the first year of the Theme. Students are well represented; there are 36 students as team members from a total of 179 team members; students comprise 20% of institutional teams. Team members are drawn from a range of functional areas including: senior managers; academic areas; academic development; quality; planning; data/statistical analysis, careers, human resources, support services. Academic roles contribute the highest number of team members, at 41. Some institutional teams also include members from overseas campuses.

## Proposed activity

5. The table in the appendix shows the main areas of activity proposed by each institution, identified under the three Theme strands, areas of interest in collaborative cluster work and activity relating to the Focus On: Feedback from Assessment project. The information in the plans supports the potential cluster topics identified at the Theme launch event. A number of institutions are interested in assessment and assessment feedback work and this will help to inform this year's Focus On activity. Much of the activity is inter-related, for example there is potential for overlap between the three strands, the cluster activity and the Focus On project. We are conscious of the need to ensure that the work is joined-up, avoids duplication and shares learning effectively so that project outcomes inform each other. TLG will play a key role in coordinating and sharing information between and across institutions.

## **Dissemination of work**

6. A variety of actions are planned by institutions to communicate and disseminate work internally and externally and are summarised, as follows:
- establishing a communication strategy or plan
  - using existing management, communication and committee structures (with Theme work as a standing agenda item) and also establishing new groups
  - working closely with student union/association and communicating through student publications
  - running a range of internal events (seminars, workshops, symposia, conferences, staff development sessions) that will focus on staff or students or both and engaging other institutions or co-hosting with local institutions
  - participating in sector events/activity such as the Theme Leaders' Group meetings and Enhancement Themes conference
  - using paper and electronic ways of sharing work and communicating; journal articles, social media (Twitter, including co-badging Tweekchats with QAA Scotland), wikis, podcasts, VLEs, SharePoint, web pages (institutional and QAA Scotland), e-publications, video-conferencing
  - using named contacts to champion the work of the Theme and help the flow of information/communication
  - appointing new staff to undertake aspects of Theme work
  - using Theme branding to effectively promote Theme work
  - extending external reach through institutions' alumni network and engaging with discipline related organisations and bodies
  - thinking of creative ways to tell the individual, human stories behind the data/evidence (for example a comic/graphic novel or a play).

## **Wider inter-institutional collaboration**

7. Beyond the collaborative cluster work there is an enthusiasm among institutions to work with each other, on areas of mutual interest, sharing ideas and working in other collegiate ways, in a manner similar to the Student Transitions Theme. Several key sector organisations are highlighted where linkage would be very valuable: Scottish Planners Group; Teaching Quality Forum; Universities Scotland Learning and Teaching Committee; Higher Education Academy; UK Council for Graduate Education; Vitae; and Staff and Educational Development Association, Scottish Higher Education Developers.

## **Supporting staff and student engagement**

8. Institutional plans show a range of ways for supporting staff and student engagement. These include:

For staff and students:

- opportunities for formal and informal interaction, including sharing practice
- funding opportunities to develop new activities and attend sector-wide events
- investing resource in effective publicising of sector and institutional training and development events
- linking to strategic activities which already have student and staff buy-in
- ensuring a core aspect of each project will be staff and student engagement activity

- providing training and development opportunities
- creating easily accessible resources, drawing on infographics and other visualisation-based approaches
- Institutional Team members providing or brokering support
- drawing on colleagues with expertise who will then also be local ambassadors for and change agents of the proposed activities
- posing open questions that are relevant to all members of the community and providing mechanisms for them to respond in a way that suits their learning and creative preferences.

For staff:

- providing administrative support
- recognising time commitment by, for example: defining involvement with the theme as scholarship activity for staff on T&S contracts
- allocating time spent on Theme activities in the workload model.

For students:

- using Open badges to recognise and reward work by students
- making student involvement with the theme part of extra-curricular awards
- working closely with student/union association which could be through the Student Partnership Agreement
- piloting the employment of Student Voice Support Officers assigned to Schools.

## **Evaluation**

9. Institutions are working on this aspect of the Theme in two ways:

- identifying the reporting and monitoring structures (committee and groups) that will provide the mechanism for monitoring and tracking progress
- developing approaches to measuring change and impact.

10. In terms of the latter, institutions are working on overarching approaches (evaluation plan or framework, logic model) which establish outcomes, a means of measuring these and associated deadlines. Institutions are interested in qualitative and quantitative measures. Institutions are engaged in thinking about measuring aspects of Theme process (stakeholder engagement, use of Theme resources, volume and reach of Theme activities) and also measuring actual impact of the student experience. Institutions are also thinking about the Theme in the context of existing processes (such as annual monitoring, subject review, strategic planning and student partnership work) and how these can be used to help deliver and/or evidence Theme impact.

Sector/Institution Work	Optimising data	Student Demographics, Retention and Attainment	Student Engagement	Collaborative Cluster	Focus On: Feedback from Assessment
<b>Abertay University</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better data integration between systems</li> <li>Better use of data in annual monitoring and portfolio review processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning analytics</li> <li>Retention</li> <li>Attainment</li> <li>Graduate employability</li> <li>Evaluating Student Transitions initiatives</li> <li>Evaluation of new learning spaces</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluation of student voice initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students as partners in evidence based enhancement</li> <li>Learning analytics (willing to lead)</li> <li>Targeted interventions</li> <li>Attainment, retention and employability either with regional Universities or Post-92s</li> <li>LEO data (willing to lead)</li> </ul>	
<b>University of Aberdeen</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Making better use of evidence (specific interest in PGT experience)</li> <li>Student and staff upskilling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning analytics</li> <li>Exploring use of technology to enhance student experience (what aspects of the VLE have most impact on learning)</li> </ul>		Willing to lead on : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fostering a sense of community</li> <li>Online learning</li> <li>Rural learning</li> <li>Employability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage students to make better use of the feedback they receive and monitor how this improves performance</li> </ul>
<b>University of Dundee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop systematic approach to reviewing evidence across entire student journey</li> <li>Staff and student upskilling/support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Widening access (as part of the student journey)</li> <li>Impact of Student Transitions initiatives</li> <li>Attendance monitoring and retention</li> <li>Work based learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maximise responsiveness to student voice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence for creative disciplines</li> </ul>	
<b>University of Edinburgh</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data access including dashboard developments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Widening participation</li> <li>Learner analytics</li> </ul>	Seven projects including analysing teaching awards and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student voice</li> </ul>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mature students</li> <li>• Employability</li> <li>• Lecture recording</li> </ul>	enhancing student representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data skills for non-specialists (quantitative and qualitative)</li> <li>• Student surveys (what works)</li> <li>• Learning analytics (beyond retention)</li> <li>• Sharing evaluation expertise</li> </ul>	
<b>Edinburgh Napier University</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making data accessible and useable where it can make most impact</li> <li>• Upskilling staff</li> <li>• Embedding evidence in quality processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploring learning analytics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaging with student voices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicating data to help staff 'make a difference'</li> <li>• Sharing approaches to building evidence-informed practice</li> <li>• Supporting Programme Leaders</li> <li>• Student Voices: Creative approaches to listening and responding to students</li> <li>• What evidence 'works' for the creative industries?</li> <li>• Learning Analytics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amplifying learning from innovative engagement of students with assessment feedback</li> </ul>
<b>Glasgow Caledonian University</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal and external student surveys</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stratified and differentiated student groups</li> <li>• Widening participation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culture, identity, belonging, community, student voices</li> </ul>		
<b>University of Glasgow</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Optimising the use and reporting of existing evidence on student performance, progression, attainment and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhanced understanding of the student population and their needs, to target support and interventions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhancing understanding of the student experience</li> <li>• Strengthening and diversifying the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental health services</li> <li>• Widening access</li> <li>• Employment</li> <li>• Graduate apprenticeships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently developing an Assessment and Feedback Toolkit</li> </ul>

	<p>outcomes (use of data visualisation techniques)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhancing evidence used in annual monitoring and subject review</li> </ul>	<p>concerning transition into, through and out of study (e.g. cohort analysis of direct entry students, widening participation students, students from FE or other pathways)</p>	<p>ways in which the student voice is captured annual monitoring and subject review processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting students' use of evidence through more consistently and clearly closing the feedback loop following student evaluations of teaching</li> </ul>	<p>Effective interventions</p>	
<b>Glasgow School of Art</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building capacity with existing evidence and building new creative forms of evidence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employability</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence for creative disciplines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and renew GSA's Code of Assessment</li> </ul>
<b>Heriot-Watt University</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance analysis of student surveys</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student retention</li> </ul>			
<b>University of the Highlands and Islands</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Linking feedback to progression</li> <li>Linking evidence to learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Linking student representation to enhancement and belonging</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not identified – TLG will help inform position</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Linking feedback to progression</li> </ul>
<b>Queen Margaret University</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gain better understanding of evidence</li> <li>Improve staff and student use of evidence (including dashboards)</li> <li>Improve use of NSS/survey data</li> <li>Building on output of Student Transitions Theme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Widening access, inclusion, retention</li> <li>Learning analytics</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning analytics</li> <li>Impact of student services, and using data for intervention</li> <li>Widening access</li> <li>Direct entrant support</li> <li>Online learning</li> <li>Graduate apprenticeships</li> </ul>	
<b>Robert Gordon University</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Phased roll-out of a new business intelligence reporting tool</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning analytics</li> <li>Employability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Closing the feedback loop</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Willing to lead a cluster on "student voice"</li> </ul> <p>Interested in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning analytics</li> <li>Understanding data/data methodologies</li> </ul>	

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Graduate Apprenticeships</li> <li>• Widening Access</li> <li>• Online learning/learners</li> <li>• Impact of student services</li> </ul>	
<b>Royal Conservatoire of Scotland</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing a shared language of learning and teaching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build understanding of student perceptions of success</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effectiveness of student support mechanisms (mental health) – link with Student Transitions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence and creative disciplines</li> </ul>	
<b>Scotland's Rural College</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening core quality processes through improved use of evidence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploring apprenticeship delivery models using evidence based approach</li> <li>• Assessing digital technologies in curriculum delivery</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sense of community, dispersed HEIs and rural learning; and</li> <li>• Graduate/Technical apprenticeships</li> </ul>	
<b>University of Stirling</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data usability and access</li> <li>• Staff upskilling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student retention</li> <li>• Learning analytics</li> <li>• Employability – develop a new approach to personal development planning</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employability (DLHE/LEO)</li> </ul>	
<b>University of St Andrews</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved understanding of what data is currently collected, and the aspects of student experience enhancement that might be informed by it</li> <li>• Focus on improving postgraduate student satisfaction</li> <li>• Use evidence to improve the design of learning and teaching space (improved teaching and student satisfaction)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use evidence to improve the design of learning and teaching space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analysis of student-led teaching awards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparedness of students entering university (especially regarding modern languages)</li> <li>• Use evidence to improve the design of learning and teaching space</li> <li>• Student survey design</li> </ul>	

<b>University of Strathclyde</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using data effectively (focus on Programme Directors) and staff upskilling</li> <li>Development of data collection/collation methods in support of “an outstanding student experience”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning analytics</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning analytics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessment and feedback</li> </ul>
<b>Open University in Scotland</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More effective sharing of learning from evidence based practice</li> <li>Staff and student skills development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retention, employability, career progression, success</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keen to collaborate in areas of mutual interest</li> </ul>	
<b>University of the West of Scotland</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring that data gathered is used effectively in programme portfolio curriculum design decisions</li> <li>Developing staff to make sense of learning analytics and other data sets</li> <li>Identify gaps in data collection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Retention and success as focus of institutional work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhancing student representation</li> <li>Ensuring that data gathered is acted upon</li> </ul>	<p>Interested in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Widening access</li> <li>Sense of community Impact of student services, using data for intervention</li> </ul>	