



## End of Year 2 Report for: Edinburgh Napier University

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.

TLG student representative: both Heloisa Fyfe and Matthew Akinpelu contributed to Enhancement Theme activity this year, but have now completed their terms as Sabbaticals. Alasdair Roach (ENSA Student Voice Coordinator) and Paul Mitchell (ENSA Head of Student Communities and Engagement) have been involved in the production of this end of year report to ensure continuity of the student voice.

Louise McCarte (DLTE Administrator) has left her post, and is replaced for the Enhancement Theme work by Wendy Aitken (DLTE Administrator).

Campbell Millar (Head of HR Capability & Engagement) has left his post, and has not been replaced on the Institutional Team.

### **Evaluation of activities/outcomes**

To make evaluation processes more accessible and user friendly, we have attempted to simplify (not minimise) the evaluation reporting process into 7 key questions (see below). Prior to completing these, it would be useful to refer to the QAAS website resource: [A Guide to Basic Evaluation in HE](#) (specifically, Section 8, Summary overview on page 23, and the Evaluation Checklist – Appendix A, on pages 28-29).

Please report each activity/intervention against the following questions in the Evaluation part of the template.

N. B. You may have already realised some of your objectives and/or these might be ongoing, so please delineate each question according to whether activities or interventions have been completed already in this reporting year or are in process.

(Easiest way is to delete **either/or** options highlighted in **red** in questions below):

## Evaluation

Please complete the following 7 questions for each activity or intervention (N.B. Just cut and paste the table below as many times as necessary)

### Title of project/activity - Resilient Learning Communities – Student Staff Collaborative Mini Projects

An open call across the University was made for student-staff collaborative projects on the theme of resilient learning communities.

This mirrored the approach undertaken during year one of the theme, except we were able to put out the call and provide funding earlier this academic year.

This year we received 12 applications for our Enhancement Themes Mini Projects and following consideration by an internal panel featuring staff and student representatives – eight of these projects were funded to be undertaken this year, one of these projects sought to continue work undertaken during year 1 of the ET Theme. Unsuccessful projects included those already receiving support and funding from other sources.

#### 1. What change **has been** made? (Brief description(s) of overall activity/intervention)

The following projects received funding:

1. Building Flexible Curriculum around Midwifery Community of Care Models (School of Health & Social Care). This study sought to co-create with students a flexible curriculum around continuity of care/carer models and help to build student resilience around workforce demands
2. Lions Gate Design Intervention (School of Arts and Creative Industries and Student Futures). This project involves the student-led design of a mural on the theme of mental wellbeing for the Lions Gate Garden at our Merchiston Campus. The purpose of this project sought to create a space on campus designed by students in response to their, and their peers', need for a space centred in mental health and wellbeing.
3. Building International Learning Communities (School of Applied Sciences/Business School). This project sought to use Lego Serious Play to explore aspects of resilience and transition to UK HE to two groups of postgraduate students (on two of our campuses) and apply the resilience doughnut in the design of the tasks.
4. Building resilient learning communities through global connections (School of Applied Sciences). This student-staff collaborative project sought to identify approaches to connecting students on undergraduate biology programmes delivered in Edinburgh, Hong Kong and Sri Lanka
5. Examining the impact of recorded material on student learning (School of Applied Sciences). This student-led project assess sought to assess the impact of pre-recorded lectures on student's university workload and wellbeing, and highlight possible issues that might arise from the shift to remote learning
6. Developing Dialogue to improve the student experience for care experienced students at Edinburgh Napier University (DLTE, Widening Participation, School of Applied Sciences). This study built upon work undertaken in year one and provides the opportunity to gain a clearer understanding of the support and learning needs of care experienced students at Edinburgh Napier University

<p>7. Film for Positive Change (School of Arts &amp; Creative Industries). This project seeks to foster the development of a student charter to address misogynistic behaviours and support positive change through the development of a co-created film.</p> <p>8. Heads Together: PGR Learning Community (Research, Innovation and Enterprise Office). This project sought to develop and evaluate a University-wide PGR forum to foster positive mental health amongst research students.</p>
<p>2. Why <b>are we making</b> it? (Rationale for the change)</p>
<p>Each mini-project had a different rationale for the change it was seeking to make.</p> <p>Addressing issues around mental health were themes in projects 2 and 8 and both of these projects, as well as project 4 are based on initiatives to foster a sense of community and belonging. Project 3 is specifically focussed on this through the theme of international student transitions.</p> <p>Projects 1 and 5 are more focussed on the role pedagogy and curriculum design can have on student resilience.</p> <p>Projects 6 and 7 have their focus on inclusion and improving practices at the University.</p>
<p>3. What difference <b>will hopefully occur</b> as a result? (Tangible change made successfully or envisaged)</p>
<p>Again, each individual project will have its own impact. It is anticipated that continuing to allocate Enhancement Theme funding to a range of small-scale projects continues to raise the profile and extend the reach of the QAA Enhancement Themes and ultimately lead to wider impact across the Edinburgh Napier community.</p>
<p>4. How <b>will we</b> know? (How is the change measured)</p>
<p>Evaluation reports for the mini projects are not due to be submitted until the end of June 2022 as we wished to allow project leads as much time as possible to undertake their studies and obtain data to support evaluation. All project leads will be required to complete a standardised evaluation form (utilising materials generated through the previous Enhancement Theme).</p>
<p>5. Who <b>has been</b> involved in making any judgements? (Who decides on effectiveness)</p>
<p>The evaluation reports for each mini-project will be submitted to members of the Institutional team and this will inform dissemination activity and planned theme work for next year.</p>
<p>6. Any lessons learned to apply already? (Applied ongoing learning)</p>
<p>The projects are still in the process of being completed, but it is important to note that a number of the mini-projects have started to disseminate their findings. For example, projects 1, 3 and 6 submitted poster presentations for Edinburgh Napier's Learning &amp; Teaching Gathering in June 2022, and project 8 is a featured lightning talk for the same conference. Project 2 will be showcased during a launch event in August 2022.</p>
<p>7. Any things you <b>need to stop</b> doing? (Any unsuccessful elements)</p>
<p>It is too early to report on this with respect to the mini projects.</p>

<b>Title of project/activity - Student buddying (ENSA)</b>
Student Buddying Scheme (student-led project)
<b>1. What change <b>has been</b> made? (Brief description(s) of overall activity/intervention)</b>
<p>This project was a continuation of the year one, student-led collaboration between ENSA and the School of Computing (SoC). The project aimed to create an online 'Buddy System', and associated resources, to facilitate peer-support through matching students new to the University with continuing students, who signed-up as 'Buddy Volunteers'.</p> <p>In year one of the project, a Student Intern was recruited from the SoC to develop the technical infrastructure to algorithmically match 'Buddies' based on their preferences and interests.</p> <p>This year, the Buddy System was launched and promoted to students, through ENSA's website, social media, on-campus screens, publications, and newsletters. 135 students signed up to the system and an evaluation of the user experience was conducted both in Trimester 1 and Trimester 2.</p> <p>The information provided to students can be found at: <a href="https://www.napierstudents.com/buddy/">https://www.napierstudents.com/buddy/</a></p>
<b>2. Why <b>are we making</b> it? (Rationale for the change)</b>
<p>The student buddy system aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance integration and confidence for new students</li> <li>• Strengthen the Edinburgh Napier community spirit</li> <li>• Prepare new students to the next years of their University life</li> <li>• Foster a sense of belonging amongst students</li> <li>• Improve peer to peer connection post-pandemic</li> <li>• Develop a sense of purpose and care in current students</li> </ul>
<b>3. What difference <b>has occurred</b> as a result? (Tangible change made successfully or envisaged)</b>
<p>This academic session, a total of 135 students registered to be part of the buddy system.</p> <p>In trimester 1 (21/22), 83 students signed up to the buddy system.</p> <p>In trimester 2 (21/22), 52 additional students signed up to the buddy system.</p> <p>Most buddy volunteers were given 4 or 5 new students to mentor.</p> <p>We are confident that the scheme has supported students to make new friends and feel integrated when they arrive at the University.</p>
<b>4. How <b>do we</b> know? (How is the change measured)</b>
<p>We sought feedback from all participants, though only 28 of the participants responded to this request to provide feedback. Many of the comments provided were positive, or constructive in making suggestions that would continue to improve the scheme.</p> <p>Examples of feedback from buddies:</p> <p>'I am in touch with my buddy and he is really a nice person. The project is indeed a nice one, it's good to know you have someone who can help you around campus.'</p> <p>'One of my buddies, I haven't heard from at all. However, my other buddy, we get on incredibly well! We have met up and messaged each other- almost like an instant friendship which is lovely. We don't see each other all the time (because of deadlines etc) but we do keep in touch every so often to help them get used to the university.'</p>

5. Who **is** involved in making any judgements? (Who decides on effectiveness)

The evaluation and continued development of this project is overseen by ENSA, with reports presented to ENSA's Trustee Board.

Moreover, the project has been included as an objective in the ENSA/Edinburgh Napier Student Partnership Agreement (SPA) as part of the Community & Inclusion Theme, with the goal of "reducing feelings of isolation and enhancing the Napier Community spirit".

The SPA is jointly overseen by ENSA and the University's Department of Learning & Teaching (DLTE), with reports given to both the University & Students' Association Forum (USAF) and the Learning, Teaching, Assessment and Student Experience Committee (LTASEC), attended by Elected Student Officers and members of senior management from both the University and ENSA.

This project was also featured in ENSA's annual summary of work for 2021/22, which was disseminated directly to all ENSA's student members, as well as widely throughout the University community.

6. Any lessons learned to apply already? (Applied ongoing learning)

Feedback for enhancement included:

- Promoting the system earlier, before the new students arrive in the city
- Organising a 'Buddies Social' event to further enhance the networking and peer-support potential of the project (suggested by 3 different students)
- Providing a list of potential 'buddy activities' to help 'break the ice'
- Adding more specific interests on the sign-up form to improve the matching process, such as specific genres of music/movies

As some Covid restrictions were still in place at the time of launch, this may have impacted on engagement with the system. In particular, the continued 'blended learning' approach may have made it difficult for students to align their time to meet face to face.

This feedback is being considered as part of the buddy system being integrated into standard ENSA business going forward as this initiative embeds.

7. Any things you **need to stop** doing? (Any unsuccessful elements)

The buddy scheme has been working effectively in its first year of operation, however, some students were more engaged and involved than others.

Following feedback from Buddy Volunteers, we plan to reduce the maximum number of 'Buddies' they can choose to accept (initially five reduced to three). It was found that as academic and other commitments increased throughout the term, some Hosts felt that they no longer had enough time to engage with their Buddies as much as they had hoped.

**Title of project/activity - ENhance strand (incl Student Stories)**

In year 2 we have begun the two-year project of incorporating Enhancement Theme activity into work on our new ENhance Curriculum Framework, which aims to strengthen the culture of curriculum enhancement at ENU (this was previously referred to as the Gold Standard Curriculum). We are aligning this work with the learning from our evaluation of the Digital Support Partnership Project to help us identify and further explore the ways in which our curriculum can become more flexible and resilient across the disciplines. We have sought to empower the newly established School Curriculum Leads to lead on collaborative work with staff and students to develop and co-create guidance and resources to support curriculum design. We have been gathering a range of data as it accumulates over the year, including focus groups, and other student outputs relating to their engagement with the curriculum.

1. What change <b>is being</b> made? (Brief description(s) of overall activity/intervention)
As engaging students in the creation of a curriculum framework during the pandemic has not been straightforward, we have begun this work by conducting student focus groups as part of research to inform our work. This will be developed further next year with the addition of a survey. We have also employed a student who is gathering and capturing as short narratives from 7-10 students' responses to the question 'What does my lecturer need to know before they teach me?'. A further strand of this work is the gathering of autobiographical accounts of students' experiences from which to create digital artefacts, which will help staff to shape their practice.
2. Why <b>are we making</b> it? (Rationale for the change)
To ensure resilience, curricula need to be designed to address student learning needs effectively in the face of change. The different strands of this project are allowing us to gather student perspectives on the curriculum, identifying key areas of importance for future work. This means we can develop effective student- and staff-facing resources to support curriculum development, and better evaluate our curriculum framework's effectiveness in shaping curricula to be fully resilient.
3. What difference <b>will hopefully occur</b> as a result? (Tangible change made successfully or envisaged)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curricula that are more effective in supporting learning.</li> <li>• A strengthened, shared understanding among staff and students of what makes resilient and effective curricula</li> <li>• Visible student engagement improving students' confidence that the university is listening to them, and leading to further engagement</li> </ul>
4. How <b>do we/will we</b> know? (How is the change measured)
<p>We will expect to see positive feedback from staff as these resources and the knowledge gained from this work are used to support them to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Staff will enhance and design curricula on the basis of insights into a range of student perspectives.</li> <li>- fewer conditions made at scrutiny and approval</li> <li>- Positive feedback from stakeholders, such as students and employers during the approval and review events</li> <li>- Feedback from staff that they have greater confidence in building resilience into their curriculum design</li> </ul>
5. Who <b>has been/is</b> involved in making any judgements? (Who decides on effectiveness)
A small team of colleagues in DLTE working on the project led by Dr Marita Grimwood, who will judge effectiveness. The framework is overseen by Learning, Teaching, Assessment and Student Experience Committee.
6. Any lessons learned to apply already? (Applied ongoing learning)
Holding student focus groups online exacerbated some of the power discrepancy issues. Students in the first group kept their cameras off, which limited interactions. Next time, we will try to ensure they are held face to face. An ethics application was held up relating to part of this work. We are considering factoring this into timescales; and being sure from the outset whether or not ethical approval is necessary for data that is already fully anonymous at source of collection.

7. Any things you **have stopped/need to stop** doing? (Any unsuccessful elements)

We have had delays to carrying out further work, due to the above-mentioned issue with ethical approval, and a strategic revision to the curriculum framework. Some of this work will therefore take place after the summer.

### 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 Year 1 miniprojects were presented at a joint symposium with Heriot Watt University (see next box). A number of this year's proposals were submitted to disseminate theme activity at the Enhancement Theme conference in June 2022, unfortunately due to demand, many of these were not selected for presentation. Instead, some of the Year 2 miniprojects will be presented at our annual Learning and Teaching Conference - "The Gathering" - taking place 21-22 June, and we're looking to arrange another Autumn sharing practice event when all mini-projects have completed.

The student buddying system is live and accessible at <https://www.napierstudents.com/buddy/>. The buddy system has also been promoted to current and new students through the ENSA and ENU comms (social media, newsletters, on-campus screens, etc).

One of our Year 1 strands was the Digital Support Partnership research project. The recruitment of a Research Fellow onto the project enabled the evaluation, research and dissemination of the project internally and externally. The research focused on communities of staff and students in the university and how they experienced being part of the university learning community during lockdown. Part of the research conducted was an Equality Impact Assessment and student focus groups. This strand of work built institutional knowledge about the impact, both positive and negative, on protected groups. This work, including recommendations to develop community-building within learning, teaching and other areas of activity, was disseminated internally, including at University's Learning Teaching, Assessment and Student Experience Committee. Findings from the analysis of the interviews with staff surveys were shared at a staff seminar for the Learning and Teaching Network on 6th October. Findings of the project were also presented at two external conferences.

External conference papers:

Zike, J. and Drumm, L. (2021), Title: 'Radically reconfigured or just broken? How emergency online teaching has altered staff conceptions of learning and teaching', Society for Research in Higher Education's Annual Conference, 8th-10th December 2021.

<https://www.slideshare.net/louisedrumm/radically-reconfigured-or-just-broken-how-emergency-online-teaching-has-altered-staff-conceptions-of-learning-and-teaching>

Zike, J. and Drumm, L. (2022), Title: 'Evolving ecologies in digital education - A perspective from Scotland' Irish Learning Technology Association's Annual Conference 'EdTech 2022', University College Cork, 26th-27th May 2022. <https://www.slideshare.net/louisedrumm/ilta-edtech22-presentation-zike-drummv5pptx>

### Collaboration outwith your institution

How have you collaborated with other institutions? This could be informally by growing networks or contacts, or more formally for example, through collaborative clusters or sector work. If you have been collaborating with others, briefly explain what this has involved and what have been the



benefits and challenges.

Heriot Watt University also runs mini-projects. In November 2021 as part of the Heriot-Watt University Learning & Teaching Symposium we held a joint session “Connecting Cross-Campus: Heriot-Watt and Edinburgh Napier Universities Sharing Practice” where Year 1 mini-project leads from both universities presented their projects and the outcomes. This was well attended and gave a great overview of the scope of what can be achieved through this approach.

## Supporting staff and student engagement

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

The mini projects were an open call for collaborative student/staff projects and all funded projects required the engagement and involvement of students.

Funding was specifically allocated to the Students Association to support them in embedding the Student Buddying Scheme.

Work for the ENhance Curriculum Framework closely involves staff from across the university. The 'student stories' strand within this project is aimed specifically at including the student voice and ensuring it is heard.

## 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?

This has been an exceptionally taxing year across the university. With some staffing changes we had reduced capacity and the work on the Enhancement Theme has been more quiet than anticipated. Due to workload pressures, we took the decision that we would only convene a meeting of the institutional team if and when necessary. As can be seen from this report, ET work on the three strand has progressed steadily during the year without the requirement of additional meetings.

We are working towards ensuring that ET theme work is shared on our dedicated Enhancement Themes staff intranet page (<https://staff.napier.ac.uk/services/dlte/QAATHemes/RLC2023/Pages/Resilient-Learning-Communities-2020%e2%80%932023.aspx>). In addition, announcements will be made through the Learning & Teaching Network to alert colleagues to outputs from this work.

## Looking ahead

In session 2022-23 we will be starting to consider what the next Enhancement Theme might focus on. We are interested to know about the discussions, hot topics and issues that are emerging in your practice and gaining increasing attention. Please share your thoughts and views below.

Some topics that have emerged in conversations are:

- Post-covid reflections: what are we keeping from our online practice, what not?



- Student & Staff wellbeing
- College /HE partnerships – Tertiary Review of Quality changes?

*At the end of 2021-22 we have one year of the current Theme remaining. Looking beyond this Theme, please share any observations and views to help shape the final year of the current Theme and to identify a topic for the next Theme.*

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