



End of Year 2 Report for: University of the Highlands and Islands

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.

Three changes in updated membership below: Fiona Skinner and Scott Connor now part of the team; Heather Innes replaces Jack Shehata as Student representative on TLG

TLG Staff representative and institutional lead

Dr Heather Fotheringham, Evidence-Based Enhancement Lead

TLG Student representative

Heather Innes, VPHE Highlands and Islands' Student Association (HISA)

Institutional team (Internal Enhancement Themes Consultation Group)

Professor Keith Smyth, Dean of Learning and Teaching (Chair, Enhancement Themes Consultation Group)

Andrew Bowie, Student Voice Assistant, HISA

Elaine Dalloway, Educational Design and Development Leader

Dr Fiona Skinner, Subject Network Leader (Applied Life Studies)

Dr Heather Fotheringham, Evidence-Based Enhancement Lead

Heather Innes, VPHE Highlands and Islands' Student Association (HISA)

Iain Eisner, Careers Manager

Dr Iain MacInnes, Subject Network Leader (Humanities and Gaelic)

Dr Iain Morrison, Dean of Students

Kevin Sinclair, Student Engagement Manager

Rhiannon Tinsley, Academic Registrar

Scott Connor, Digital and Open Education Lead

Evaluation

Title of project/activity
Resilience resources
1. What change has been/is being made? (Brief description(s) of overall activity/intervention)
<p>We are gathering together, creating and promoting staff and student engagement with a range of resources to support student resilience. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collating good practice case studies in supporting student resilience through learning, teaching, and assessment activities (an ongoing piece of work) • Collating and upgrading staff- and student-facing resources related to student mental health and wellbeing, including self-study mental health modules for PGR students and their supervisors (https://induction.uhi.ac.uk/pgr-mental-health/) • Promoting existing 'Developing Resilience' Pathway resource (Pathway resources are short self-study resources for students aimed at developing their wider skillset) • Developing further Pathway resources for using with particular groups or embedding within curricula
2. Why are we making it? (Rationale for the change)
We wish to support and develop resilience amongst our student body
3. What difference will hopefully occur as a result? (Tangible change made successfully or envisaged)
<p>The short-term objective of developing and promoting these resources is for staff and students to read and engage with them.</p> <p>We hope that this will in turn lead to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff changing their practice and including new activities in their learning, teaching and assessment that develop and support resilience in students • Students being aware of the mental health support services available to them and accessing these services when they need them • Staff being aware of student mental health support and signposting students to these services • Students reflecting on and developing skills for employment
4. How do we know? (How is the change measured)
<p>We have developed eleven new pathway resources in total:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four course-specific pathway resources (BA Creative Writing, BA Drama and Production, MSc Applied Social Sciences, BSc Psychology) • Two for our students' association, HISA • Five topic-based pathway resources (Discovering your earning potential, Applying to roles with a disability, Securing Work Experience, Work Placement part 1 and part 2) <p>159 students participated in a Pathway over this academic year with around 120 of those engaging with the Work Placement pathways. At the moment it is too early to have feedback from participating students.</p> <p>We have evidence of good staff engagement with the mental health resources and positive feedback on these:</p> <p><i>"I cannot stress enough how much I appreciate the resources & support available to us all. Keep up the good work"</i></p> <p><i>"We look forward to receiving the mental health induction material currently under development and will include that in our planning for next Academic Year. It would be our intention to provide induction topics to students in short sessions over the early weeks of the semester as we know there is often far too much information for them to absorb in the early days."</i></p>

5. Who has been involved in making any judgements? (Who decides on effectiveness)
Feedback from academic staff is sought to ascertain the usefulness of the resources.
6. Any lessons learned to apply already? (Applied ongoing learning)
Uptake of resources has been most successful when accompanied by a training or awareness-raising session and we will seek to continue this
7. Any things you need to stop doing? (Any unsuccessful elements)
We want to review going forward how we engage students and academics in the creation and take up of the Pathway resource. As things stand this is very patchy and we need a more UHI-wide approach to making students aware of these Pathways and getting staff to buy into the potential.

Title of project/activity
Resilience events
1. What change has been made? (Brief description(s) of overall activity/intervention)
We have held a number of events to raise staff and student awareness of ways to support and develop both student and staff resilience. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suicide Prevention and Intervention Guidance: information sessions for staff • Two Roads Suicide Prevention: training for staff • Workshops to promote PGR mental health resources for staff and students • Assessment and Feedback Symposium: event for staff • Building Effective Learning Communities: event for staff • Reflective Writing for personal and professional development: event for staff
2. Why have we made it? (Rationale for the change)
We wish to support and develop resilience amongst our staff and student body
3. What difference has occurred/will hopefully occur as a result? (Tangible change made successfully or envisaged)
The short-term objective of holding these events is for staff and students to attend and engage with them. We hope that this will in turn lead to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff being aware of how to support student mental health and signposting students to relevant support services • Students being aware of the mental health support services available to them and accessing these services when they need them • Staff innovate in their assessment and feedback practices • Staff to start thinking about creating learning communities amongst their students and instigating activities both in and out of the classroom to foster these communities • Staff developing reflective writing techniques in order to become more reflective in their lives and their teaching practice
4. How do we know? (How is the change measured)
We have evidence of the staff attendance at these events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suicide Prevention and Intervention Guidance information sessions; 6 sessions run and 61 attendees • PGR – two workshops delivered with a total of 18 attendees • Two Roads Suicide Prevention training – offering in June 2 sessions, capped at 10 people in each = 20 people trained. • Psychology degree year 1 wellbeing presentation – 50+ students attended • Assessment and Feedback Symposium: 80+ attendees over 2 days • Learning Communities event: 45 attendees • Reflective writing event: 44 attendees

We have also had positive feedback on these events and evidence that attendance will translate into changes in behaviour:

“On behalf of the student support team here at UHI Shetland I would like to formally record our thanks to you and your team for the enormous help and support you continue to provide.” (Mental Health resources event)

“We are grateful for the work done on the Suicide Intervention Policy and the information sessions led by Kate and made available to all staff.” (Suicide Prevention event)

“I liked the idea that community building starts in the classrooms which we can then build on with the wider community. I also liked the approach of our staff living the behaviours and leading them to engage students.” (Learning Communities event)

“I was left feeling very motivated and driven to look at the way in which my assessments can be more sustainable and flexible for the student's needs” (Assessment and feedback symposium)

“I thoroughly enjoyed the session. There was a good mix of listening and doing, and the breakout was really good. All activities were well thought out and well timed and the presenters were easy to listen to and engaging. really helpful.” (Reflective writing event)

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

Feedback from event attendees is sought to ascertain the usefulness of the events

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

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

Title of project/activity

Micro-credentials

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

We are taking forward two pieces of work in the area of micro-credentials:

- Two pieces of desk research to establish current practice internally and externally in relation to micro-credentials
- Developed two micro-credential courses in the following topics:
 - Data Protection
 - Accessibility

2. Why have we made it? (Rationale for the change)

To expand the University's offering by creating an agile and flexible range of courses which can serve the needs of a wider range of potential students, thereby increasing institutional resilience.

3. What difference will hopefully occur as a result? (Tangible change made successfully or envisaged)

Through these activities we hope to achieve:

- An institutional understanding of and approach to micro-credentials that is informed by research and the rest of the sector
- A robust set of micro-credential programmes that meet the needs of local employers, and that can act as attractors into longer programmes at UHI

4. How **will we** know? (How is the change measured)

The micro-credential programmes have yet to be launched but we hope they will result in:

- Additional student numbers and revenue from registration on to the micro-credential programmes

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional registration and student numbers on to longer programmes at UHI
5. Who has been/is involved in making any judgements? (Who decides on effectiveness)
Micro-credentials work is overseen by the Vice-Principal for Students and is part of the broader Curriculum Review work currently being undertaken within the University.
6. Any lessons learned to apply already? (Applied ongoing learning)
<p>We can see from the two research reports that the landscape and issues faced by the university mirrors very closely to the wider academic landscape, nationally and internationally.</p> <p>We need the time and expertise of academic staff to quality assure the content of future micro-credentials so securing this resource is essential to their success.</p>
7. Any things you have stopped/need to stop doing? (Any unsuccessful elements)

Title of project/activity
Learning analytics
1. What change is being made? (Brief description(s) of overall activity/intervention)
The university is now developing our learning analytics practices and processes through the work of our Learning Analytics Steering Group (LASG). In the first phase of work, we have sought to build upon our work for the previous and current Enhancement Themes by operationalising 'student engagement indicators' linked to supportive interventions within our institutional VLE Brightspace.
2. Why are we making it? (Rationale for the change)
Our focus is on using data concerning individual and cohort engagement in the VLE to identify students who may need additional support, to identify and resolve 'crunch points' that may impact on student engagement (e.g., clustering of assignment deadlines across modules), and also to identify enhancements to online supported learning and teaching.
3. What difference will hopefully occur as a result? (Tangible change made successfully or envisaged)
Enhanced student support, through more timely interventions, enhanced and more resilient student engagement, and enhanced learning and teaching including through improved and more effective use of blended and online approaches.
4. How will we know? (How is the change measured)
Data pertaining to engagement, retention and attainment, and student and staff feedback (as part of evaluation of the learning analytics initiatives being progress by the LASG and also ongoing evaluation through established internal review and enhancement processes).
5. Who has been/is involved in making any judgements? (Who decides on effectiveness)
6. Any lessons learned to apply already? (Applied ongoing learning)
Feedback from staff who have engaged with our first pilot is positive and indicates that the data being presented is useful in enhancing their learning and teaching practice and supporting their students. We still need to undertake qualitative research to better understand more about the impacts and also around those who have not engaged.
7. Any things you have stopped/need to stop doing? (Any unsuccessful elements)

Title of project/activity

Embedding resilience within the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy (LTES)
1. What change has been made? (Brief description(s) of overall activity/intervention)
Devise the University's new Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy (LTES), embedding the concepts and values of resilience and resilient learning communities in the content of the strategy
2. Why have we made it? (Rationale for the change)
To ensure that long-term strategies are formulated to encourage student, staff, and institutional resilience.
3. What difference will hopefully occur as a result? (Tangible change made successfully or envisaged)
Teaching, student support, curriculum and staff development can withstand changing landscapes (education, economy, culture)
4. How do we/will we know? (How is the change measured)
The new strategy aligns with notions of staff, student, and institutional resilience, specifically in the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Values and Enabling Practices of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting flexible and student-centred learning • Learning for personal growth and employment • Engaging students in reflection and research • Integrated and sustainable learning and teaching • Engaging in reflective practice for continuous enhancement • Active and collaborative professional development <p>Longer term evaluation of the LTES should reveal that it has helped the University adapt quickly to change</p>
5. Who has been/is involved in making any judgements? (Who decides on effectiveness)
New LTES has been developed through extensive consultation with staff and students and co-produced through a LTES Development Group before final approval by Academic Council
6. Any lessons learned to apply already? (Applied ongoing learning)
The consultation process ensured staff and student input at every stage from review of existing LTES to inform the development of the new LTES, through to authoring of LTES Values and the strategy itself. This process has ensured we have a new LTES that has strong collective ownership prior to initial implementation, and which has also been scrutinised and sense-checked to ensure relevance across the university partnership and all our curricula.
7. Any things you have stopped/need to stop doing? (Any unsuccessful elements)

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 events have been an effective way of disseminating outcomes internally. We have also used the website to share overview information about the Theme (<https://www.uhi.ac.uk/en/learning-and-teaching-academy/innovation/enhancement-themes/>), and the blog site of the Learning and Teaching Academy (LTA) to explore issues in more depth. A blog post about micro-credentials can be found here: <https://ltauhi.wordpress.com/2022/04/19/small-is-beautiful-are-micro-credentials-the-future-for-learning/>

Externally, we have shared examples of work through the TLG meetings, and three colleagues (Scott Connor, Heather Innes and Heather Fotheringham) presented at the Enhancement Themes Conference in June 2022.

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.

We have been involved in the following Collaborative Clusters this year:

- Micro-credentials
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
- Personal Approaches to Resilience and Community (PARC)

All of these have been incredibly useful in informing our institutional position on these topics. Our student lead was involved in the student-led project towards the end of this year.

Supporting staff and student engagement

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

An open call went out to staff and students to become involved with the Theme, either by aligning their activities to the work of the Theme, becoming a member of the Consultation Group, attending relevant events, or proposing a project for Years 2 and 3 of the Theme. Whilst no funding has been attached to involvement in Theme activities, colleagues have been supported by the additional expertise of the Learning and Teaching Academy to plan and evaluate their work, and the LTA (Learning and Teaching Academy) has also provided a channel to share outputs via its calendar of events.

Student engagement has been managed by our students' association HISA, who have aligned many of their activities this last year to the different strands 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?

The consultation group continues to be a successful way of organising the Theme work and our approach of co-opting new members as they become involved in Theme work has been beneficial this year.

Our Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee (QAEC) has institutional oversight of the Enhancement Theme, and the consultation group reports to QAEC four times per year, including disseminating the start of year plans and end of year reports.

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.

The key issue for UHI this year has been addressing the issue of staff workload/staff burnout which has arisen as a result of the pandemic, and the additional support that staff have been offering to students during this time. We would like to explore this further perhaps through the following lenses: using technology, addressing marking and student feedback, creating more autonomous learners

We are also interested in the topic of enhancing learning and teaching in tertiary contexts.

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Date:	30.06.22