



End of Year 3 Report for: University of Edinburgh

Table 1: Evidencing effectiveness and reporting impact

Cumulative descriptor of institutional/ cluster/Student-Led Project activity over RLC Theme period	Which overarching RLC Theme questions (1-5) were prioritised?	Evidence of effectiveness in addressing chosen RLC theme priorities	Suggested outcomes and impact measures used to assess effectiveness (refer to Theory of Change model)	Challenges	Made most difference?	Hindsight
Enhancing the student guides to giving feedback	2, 3, 4	<p>The analysis of student survey results showed that only minor amendments are needed to the guides, however, awareness of the guides is low amongst students.</p> <p>Achieved an awareness of the challenge of communicating the guides effectively to students and are exploring options to improve this.</p>	Increased awareness of the guides amongst students with the ultimate aim of supporting an improved sense of belonging and community building	<p>Effective communication within a large, devolved institution.</p> <p>Change to the approach to gathering and responding to student feedback on courses to be accommodated.</p>	The review of the guides by the year 2 PhD Interns identified the need for a different guide for postgraduate researchers.	Identified the need for an ongoing communications plan following initial launch including embedding the guides within core student resources.
<p>Appointing PhD Interns to support our Enhancement Themes work PhD Internships, main outputs:</p> <p>1) Report on analysis of current practice and</p>	3,4, 5	<p>The outputs of each year's PhD Interns have informed the University's work on the Theme.</p> <p>The cumulative</p>	<p>Reach and impact of Teaching Matters posts.</p> <p>The impacts of University strategic activities and the student</p>	Size and complexity of the University means it is not possible to identify and learn about all community building activities.	<p>Student engagement brought different perspectives.</p> <p>During the duration of the Theme, the University has</p>	Postgraduate research student community building works well at local level but requires appropriate resource to develop further at

<p>recommendations</p> <p>2) Developed Theory of Change Model</p> <p>3) Developed Community building guide</p>		<p>outputs will feed into University strategic activities on student support and sense of belonging and also into the Students' Associations' training and support for student representatives.</p>	<p>representation system will be evaluated.</p>		<p>developed roles that have responsibility for community building.</p> <p>Concentrating on key elements to inform a guide which will be applicable/relevant across the University.</p>	<p>University-level.</p>
<p>Community champions – a community building initiative in Moray House School of Education and Sport</p>	<p>1,2,3</p>	<p>A student-led project which focussed on different themes to promote community and sense of belonging. Resulted in the implementation of a community champions team who work in collaboration with staff and students to promote school initiatives, disseminate information produce content for students, identify topics for sharing, and more.</p>	<p>An increase in awareness of community building activities.</p> <p>Engagement with events.</p> <p>An increase in sense of belonging.</p> <p>Community Champion is a recognised role on the HEAR for taught students.</p>	<p>Effective communication methods.</p> <p>Providing the right opportunities for students to engage with across programmes and cultures.</p> <p>Representation across the community champions reflective of the student population.</p>	<p>One of the PhD Interns was a member of the School and was able to engage with the community champions and will continue to do so after their internship ends.</p> <p>The role of the MHSES Community Champion Mentor(s). This is a funded role and plays a key part in supporting and guiding the Community Champions.</p>	<p>Operates within one School.</p> <p>PGR students do not receive a HEAR so an alternative method of recognition is required. This could be achieved through the University's Edinburgh Award.</p>

		Informed the community building guide.				
Gathering and sharing community building good practice examples	1, 4,5	<p>Influencing community building practice across the University.</p> <p>Informed the community building guide.</p> <p>Community has been a priority within the Student Partnership Agreement and associated funding for the last three years.</p>	<p>Reach and impact of Teaching Matters blog posts.</p> <p>The impacts of University strategic activities will be evaluated (community building guide).</p> <p>Increased activity at School level e.g. an outreach network for mature/adult returner students.</p>	<p>Effective communication within a large, devolved institution.</p> <p>Increasing awareness of the resources that are available (i.e. good practice guides, Student Partnership funding)</p>	Use of Teaching Matters – a well-established blog with wide reach.	Review and reduce the list of good practice examples reviewed by the year 3 PhD Interns.
Provided support to the project supporting students with disabilities (Health in Social Science)	3, 4	Surveys and interviews with disabled students resulted in recommendations and actions which are being	Enhanced support for students with disabilities.	Some recommendations and actions will take time to implement and go beyond the remit of the School.	Information on the methodology and outcomes was shared across the University.	Another School has instigated a version of the project.

		progressed by the School.				
Community building guide	3, 4	A community building guide for staff and students is being developed, informed by content drafted by the year 3 PhD Interns following a review of good practice examples. It will feed into University strategic activities on student support and sense of belonging and also into the Students' Associations' training and support for student representatives.	The impacts of University strategic activities will be evaluated.	Distilling a large volume of good practice examples from within the University and external resources and presenting it in an appropriate format to multiple audiences (students with different needs and staff in different roles)	Using our Theory of Change model to inform the development of the guide. Providing continuity for sense of belonging strategic activity which existed before the Theme and has restarted in 2022/23.	Could not be completed by the PhD Interns alone within the timescale of their appointments alongside other activities.
Focus groups with Mastercard Foundation Scholars to explore community building and sense of belonging	3, 4	Outcomes will inform community building strategy for Phase 2 of the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program and have informed the community building guide.	Action taken by the Program in response to the findings will result in increased community building and sense of belonging.	Student engagement	Focus groups run by a member of staff from another Department and the PhD Interns.	Timings of the focus groups ideally would have been earlier in the year.

When considering information provided in Table 1:

What is the ONE most positive aspect to report over the 3-year period? (Evidence of effectiveness column and Suggested outcomes and impact column)

That the learning from current community building good practice will inform a guide which will be used beyond the life of the Theme. This will support wider work across the institution in building community and sense of belonging.

What is the most challenging issue? (Challenges column)

Effective communication of community building practice within a large, devolved institution and at a time when there were other external pressures on staff (e.g. Covid and industrial action).

What has made the most difference and why? (Made most difference column)

Student engagement in the form of PhD Interns as it provided different and valuable perspectives across many areas of Themes work.

What would you NOT do again, in hindsight and why? (Hindsight column)

The scope of the PhD Internships was overly ambitious in the final year. Ideally, we would want to recruit PhD interns at the start of the project and keep them throughout, but that isn't always possible.

Table 2: Ways of working/engaging in the Resilient Learning Communities Themes work

Theme process	Activities' description	Positive aspects/difference made	Challenges	Changes made during process	Hindsight - could be improved by:
<p>Supporting staff and students to engage with Theme activity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings, staff networks and committees. • PhD Internships – six throughout the three years of the Theme. • Learning and Teaching Conference – community building was a Theme in 2021 and 2022. • Teaching Matters blog – sharing good practice • The Student Panel – were invited to respond to a survey to enhance the student guides to giving feedback • The staff Theme Lead and PhD Interns spoke to staff across the University and Students' Association. • Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program students who participated in the focus groups. • The community champions asked to meet the PhD Interns to discuss their role and Themes work. • Promoting opportunities to engage with sector-level activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaged more staff and students to participate in Enhancement Theme activities. • Enhanced sense of belonging among staff and students. • Strengthened collaboration amongst different Schools and disseminated community building good practice across the University and externally. • Range of engagements cover staff, students, and different areas of the University and Students' Association. 	<p>The size and devolved nature of the University and how to communicate opportunities and outcomes effectively.</p>	<p>Continual seeking out ongoing and new opportunities to support staff and student engagement with Themes activity.</p>	<p>More ongoing engagement with University strategic activities throughout the Theme.</p>
<p>Effectiveness of organisational and management structures</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional Team • Senate Quality Assurance Committee • Staff and Student Theme Leads • Deputy Vice-Principal Students (Enhancement) • Cohort Leads (a new role in the new Student Support model) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for planning and reporting. • Representation from key roles, departments and groups. • Opportunities to engage staff and students with Themes work who wouldn't ordinarily be involved. • Dedicated "Cohort Leads" – an academic 	<p>The size and devolved nature of the University.</p>	<p>The Cohort Lead is a new role that began to be implemented in 22/23</p>	<p>Could be improved by more time to embed and monitor. Even in three years it is difficult to embed change and see the outcomes.</p>

		member of staff assigned to a cohort of students with the explicit remit to build community			
Evaluating activity and projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theory of Change model • Analysis of existing data and evidence • Student surveys • Focus groups • Interviews • Engaging with existing projects that are being evaluated 	Development of the Theory of Change model by the year 2 PhD Interns.	Theme work and support structures will conclude at the end of 2022/23.	Evaluation methods developed as different activities progressed.	Many of the activities will result in long term outcomes by which time the Theme will have concluded.
Disseminating outcomes and findings internally and externally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching Matters blog • Learning and Teaching Conference • Enhancement Themes Conference • Other communications methods including email, website and SharePoint. 	<p>Increased awareness of Enhancement Themes activity.</p> <p>Shared Themes resources.</p>	Effective communication across a large, devolved University.	Built conversations with students and staff, increased awareness of Themes activity and shared good practice examples and resources.	The blog post on Prioritising equality, diversity and inclusion activities through the Enhancement Themes was in the top 10 of most read posts in 2022 .
Collaborating with other institutions/other organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theme Leaders Group and SHEEC meetings • Enhancement Themes Conference • Decolonising the Curriculum in the time of Pandemic • Re-imagining Resilience for Taught Postgraduate Students 	<p>Development of the Decolonising the Curriculum Hub and shared resources.</p> <p>Discussion and exchange of ideas and practice with other universities in</p>	There will have been more collaboration with other institutions/ organisations. However, due to the size of the University,	None.	Institutions have different areas of focus underneath the Theme.

		Scotland	it is not possible for engagement with the Themes to be tracked.		
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Which ONE process from each of those listed within the Theme processes column in Table 2 worked best? (Activities description and Positive aspects columns)

Using the Teaching Matters blog to promote Themes work.

Why was it the best? (Positive aspects/difference made column)

It is a well-established blog with a large readership.

Which was most difficult and why? (Challenges column)

Ensuring effective communication across the University.

Why did you make any changes? (Could be reported as Positive or via Challenges column)

To engage more staff and students in Themes work.

What would you NOT do again, in hindsight and why? (Hindsight column)

Wait until the latter stages of our Themes work to engage with the relevant strategic activities that will continue on after the Theme ends.

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