



## Resilient Learning Communities

### Institutional Plan for: University of Dundee

#### Context

The University of Dundee strategy 2017-22 (Appendix 1 and see <https://www.dundee.ac.uk/strategy/>) gives clear direction for areas of activity that will promote our overall aim of transforming lives, locally and globally. The development of “our high performance community” is underpinned by a range of key strategic areas, five of which align closely with the Enhancement Theme. These are:

- Widen access (Grow and diversify our student community)
- Be a uniquely welcoming community (Grow and diversify our student community)
- Enhance personal development and performance (Enable our people to flourish)
- Promote equality, diversity and inclusion (Advance our values)
- Develop employability, enterprise and work-based learning (Intensify our impact locally and globally)

#### Institutional team

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Institutional lead	Dr Linda Martindale		
TLG staff representative	Erica Hensens-Russell		
TLG staff representative	Dr Lorraine Anderson		
TLG student representative	Martha Umeh Ude-Eze One TBC		
Representatives from each of the Academic Schools	Dr Diana Swales Dr Seaneen MacDougall Christine Kingsley Jill Shimi Dr Cate Kennedy Others TBC		



## Planned activity: Year 1

### Overall outcomes/activity

#### Priorities

Our key priorities are based on the University strategy, ensuring that the Enhancement Theme work is in synergy with other activities going on across the institution. As we progress through the three-year period the priorities shift from internally focused and smaller level activities, to more outward focused activities, work that is larger scale and sustainability.

**Year 1:** institutionally focused, with some sector activity. Key priority to raise awareness and discussion and to undertake small scale changes and evaluation work.

**Year 2:** institutional and sector-wide activities. Key priority to implement larger scale change, based on the activities in year 1.

**Year 3:** institutional and sector-wide activities. Key priority to look at spread and sustainability, ensuring ongoing enhancement and improvement. Legacy and future focus will also be considered.

#### Outcomes

- Raise awareness of what resilience means to our learning communities and identify how we can build resilience
- Engage with different learning communities throughout the institution to help to integrate resilience as part of our learning culture
- Undertake a range of project work that supports resilience for students and staff. This project work will align with the five components of the University strategy outlined above.
- Develop and apply models and methods to support spread and sustainability in building resilience
- Contribute to sector wide developments around resilient learning communities, through Collaborative Clusters work, dissemination to the wider Enhancement Theme community and other engagement activities nationally and internationally

#### Activities

Key activities can be themed into micro and macro level work around resilient learning communities:

- Micro work: at the level of the individual student, staff member or School
- Macro work: building resilience at institutional level

Broadly we will undertake three areas of activity. In each year projects will be undertaken and these may be both sponsored by the working group with individuals / groups already working in the area of resilience or through a competitive process. Projects are anticipated to be smaller-scale and

Schools-based in year 1, with larger and follow-on projects in subsequent years. An important component of the projects will be to use established change and improvement methodologies, as a way to measure impact and improve sustainability. There will be activities related to dissemination and engagement both within the institution and externally. Finally other activities will relate to the wider Enhancement Theme community and particularly getting involved in the Collaborative Cluster activities. Across all activities the student community will be involved in design and delivery of activities.

### **Benefits**

The overarching benefit to the institution will be to embed resilience across the diverse learning communities in our institution. This will help to ensure that resilience is a core component of University culture, positively impacting on students and staff. An important outcome will be the overt inclusion of resilience in the new university strategy that will be in place from 2022.

As an institution we also expect to benefit from developing a range of resources and practices based on project and engagement work that will enhance resilience in learning communities, particularly in terms of supporting diversity and inclusion. This will come from internal work but also from sharing of good practice across the sector.

Externally we will contribute to sharing of best practice, ensure any resources produced are made available through Creative Commons licensing, and engage with other institutions through the collaborative clusters and other dissemination work.

## **Year 1 outcomes/activity**

### **Priorities year 1**

Our key priority in year 1 is to engage with Schools, students and other stakeholder groups across the institution to raise awareness and facilitate discussion of what resilience is in our context. We will also undertake small scale project and evaluation work based on five components of the University Strategy linked to resilience. The project work will be centred around the Schools and a key principle will be collaboration between students and staff.

### **Outcomes for year 1**

- Ensure institution-wide awareness of the enhancement theme, including definition / understanding of resilience
- Promote debate about what resilience and learning communities mean to us, particularly within Schools
- Use outputs from the project work to improve resilience in our School learning communities and
- Disseminate outputs and resources to showcase good practice and support staff and students across the institutions.
- Engage in collaborative work with colleagues involved in Enhancement Theme work in other institutions.

### **Activities for year 1**

- Enhancement Theme Working Group meetings and collaborations to embed the Resilient Learning Communities theme within the University
- Awareness raising activities
- Work with existing institutional groups and communities (e.g. distance learning forum, DUSA, healthy universities) to define and promote resilience
- Small project work in Schools
- Showcase / dissemination activities on campus and online, including social media
- Join in selected Collaborative Clusters and take part in other external activities

## Benefits

- Use a focus on resilience to support achievement of University strategic goals noted above
- Better understanding of resilience and what helps to support this

## Dissemination of work

A working group has been set up that includes student representation and representatives from all Schools. Other key individuals can be co-opted on to the working group as needed (for example an individual involved in collaborative cluster work). This will help to ensure that activities and outputs are disseminated across the University. Internally existing channels will be used to increase awareness and engagement with the theme, including: email, staff newsletter, student newsletter, social media, presentations / discussions with existing learning communities. A blog or website may also be created to promote the group and store resources.

Externally social media will be used to promote our work. Opportunities to present on project work and the impacts of the Enhancement Theme work at workshops and at conferences will be encouraged, particularly in years 2 and 3.

## Collaborative cluster work

In year 1 we will be involved in some of the collaborative clusters and this is being explored to ensure engagement with those that align most closely with institutional activities.

In year 2 we will aim to lead a collaborative cluster, based on work carried out in year 1.

Members of the working group will be involved in the collaborative cluster work. If a collaborative cluster is being led by the University then a small working group will be set up to take this forward, including students and staff from across the university who have experience and expertise in the area.

## Supporting staff and student engagement

The work will be supported by the Enhancement Theme Working Group which will co-ordinate activities related to the theme (see terms of reference, appendix 2). The working group has representatives from all Schools, as well as student involvement. The working group will also link to with established learning communities in the University to enhance institutional level engagement and support the planned activities.

The work has formal support at institutional level, from the Vice-Principal Education, the Director of Quality and Academic Standards and the Assistant Director and Head of the Academic Skills Centre. The Enhancement Theme working group reports to the University Learning and Teaching Committee, a Sub-Committee of Senate.

## Evaluation

An action plan will be developed from the institutional plan to monitor progress and evaluate impact. This will be managed through the working group. The action plan will include named responsibilities, timeframes, measurements to be applied and expected evidence.

All activities, including project work, will be managed through the action plan.

The broader, institutional level impact may be more difficult to evaluate, i.e. how culture and values may change over the three years. This may be best done through external evaluation and the possibility of using a more creative approach, such as buddying with other institutions and evaluating each other (e.g. in a mini-ELIR process) will be explored.

<b>Plan author:</b>	Dr Linda Martindale and the Enhancement Theme Working Group
<b>Date:</b>	14/12/20

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# Appendix 1: University Strategy

<https://www.dundee.ac.uk/strategy/>



## Appendix 2: Terms of Reference, Enhancement Theme Working Group

### **Enhancement theme working group**

### **Resilient learning communities 2020-2023**

#### **Overall purpose**

To lead, manage and evaluate the University's activities relating to the enhancement theme

#### **Membership**

Enhancement theme institutional lead

Director, Quality and Academic Standards

Assistant Director Student Services (also Head, Academic Skills Centre)

Dundee University Student Association Vice President Academia

Second student representative

Representative from each School

Other student and staff representatives to be co-opted as required

#### **Frequency**

Approximately every 8-10 weeks

#### **Venue**

Teams

#### **Terms of reference**

The purpose of the committee:

1. Co-ordinate institutional activities relating to the QAA Enhancement Theme, Resilient Learning Communities
2. Act as champions within the University for the Enhancement Theme, promoting activities and dissemination
3. Work with other individuals and institutions in sector-related activities
4. Evaluate University activities relating to the Enhancement Theme
5. Report internally to the Vice Principal Education and University Learning and Teaching Committee
6. Prepare the annual report for QAA Scotland

## Resilient Learning Communities

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#### Financial Annex Year 1

There are two key areas for funding in the first year of the Resilient Learning Communities theme, which are:

- Funding for Schools-based small scale projects and evaluation work
- Funding for institutional dissemination and engagement activities

Most of the funding will be directed to Schools-based projects. Each of the 10 Schools will undertake a small-scale project over January – August 2021 to explore and evaluate an aspect of resilience within their School learning community. This will include awareness-raising for the Theme and will involve staff and students in collaboration. Schools are being asked to identify a project to take forward and the Enhancement Theme Working Group will review and oversee the project work and its outputs.

The remainder of the funding will be used to enhance engagement with the Theme across the University, including dissemination of outputs and best practice. It is anticipated that the School-based projects and any resources developed will be shared across the institution using a range of approaches, including on campus events (as possible) and online / social media promotion.

#### Indicative budget for 2020/21

Funding activity	Notes	Amount £
Schools-based projects	Ten projects to explore and evaluate aspects of resilience	5000
Dissemination and engagement	Awareness raising across the institution, including activities to share outputs from the projects	1000
<b>Total</b>		<b>6000</b>

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