



Resilient Learning Communities

Institutional Plan for: University of Edinburgh

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Institutional lead	Professor Tina Harrison (Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance)		
TLG staff representative	Nichola Kett (Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement)		
TLG student representative	Fizzy Abou Jawad (Vice President Education)		
PhD Intern	To be appointed		
Edinburgh University Students' Association staff member	Stuart Lamont, Academic Policy Coordinator		
Institute for Academic Development	Dr Jon Turner, Director		
Doctoral education/researcher development representative	Dr Fiona Philippi (Head of Doctoral Education/Deputy Head of Researcher Development, Institute for Academic Development)		

Planned activity: Year 1

Overall outcomes/activity

Overall aim: to identify activities that effectively build a sense of community and belonging and share these across the University in order to enhance the student experience.

Outcomes and activities that develop throughout our work on the Theme will be detailed in future reports.

Year 1 outcomes/activity

1) Gather examples of community building in the hybrid context

This work is underway and will continue throughout the academic year, linking to existing quality processes where good practice examples are identified.

2) Share examples

Examples will be shared through the methods outlined below. We will also explore new ways of sharing examples both within the University and across the sector.

3) Support new activity

We are keen to support new community building activities, particularly those that are student-led. It is hoped that two PhD interns will be appointed, to work on behalf of the Doctoral College, in the Institute for Academic Development to strengthen the sense of community and belonging for postgraduate research students, with one intern focussing on the use of social media. We are also seeking to appoint up to 5 PhD interns to develop student-led activities as part of the University's work on Student Support, Community and Belonging.

4) Evaluate

Consideration will be given to how to evaluate activities throughout our work on the Theme.

5) Appoint a PhD intern to support Theme work

The post holder will support and contribute to the University's work on community building. Main responsibilities will be to:

- Support staff and student involvement in Enhancement Theme work.
- Assist with gathering and sharing good practice examples of community building from across the University and Students' Association.
- Develop and provide support for a network of PhD interns working on community building activities, to ensure oversight and coordination.
- Undertake external benchmarking activity to inform the University's work on the Enhancement Theme.
- Support communication, reporting and evaluation activity related to the Enhancement Theme, including assisting with drafting the end of year report to the Quality Assurance Agency Scotland.
- Participate in relevant internal and external events and meetings.

We previously identified the following existing University activities and priorities that link to the Theme:

- [Near Future Teaching](#) – the future of digital education
- Curriculum Review
- [Graduate attributes](#)
- Equality and diversity
- [Widening Participation Strategy](#)
- [Sense of belonging](#)
- Review of the Student Mental Health Strategy

Dissemination of work

Communication methods:

- Internally: email; Institutional Team; Senate Quality Assurance Committee; Doctoral College Forum; Directors of Teaching Network; Teaching Matters blog; Learning and Teaching Conference; Students' Association groups/networks.
- Externally: Scottish Higher Education Enhancement Committee (SHEEC); Theme Leaders' Group (TLG); Enhancement Themes conference; and the University's and Students' Association's websites.

The Institutional Team will use existing committees, groups and networks to communicate about the Theme, to engage staff and students in Theme work, and to disseminate University and sector Theme outputs.

Building community is a sub-theme of the University's Learning and Teaching Conference, which takes place in June 2021. The Institutional Team will be involved in shaping Conference contributions.

Community and academic community are established tags on the [Teaching Matters blog](#).

An outcome of Theme could be a graphic representation of good practice activities similar to that produced for the [student transitions Enhancement Theme](#) to support dissemination of work.

Collaborative cluster work

Postgraduate Taught (PGT) Communities

Colleagues from the Institute for Academic Development and the Moray House School of Education and Sport, plus involvement from the Universities of St Andrews and the West of Scotland, are leading a collaborative cluster looking at PGT learning communities.

Supporting staff and student engagement

As outlined above the Institutional Team will use existing committees, groups and networks to communicate about the Theme, to engage staff and students in Theme work, and to disseminate University and sector Theme outputs.

Staff and students will be kept informed of the work of the Theme through the communication methods outlined above. Support and guidance can be provided by the Institutional Lead and Theme Leaders Group staff member. Students will be supported through the Students' Association.

Evaluation

Consideration will be given to evaluation of impact as the areas of work develop.

Plan author:	Nichola Kett with contributions from Institutional Team members.
Date:	14 December 2020

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Financial Annex Year 1

Activity	Estimated expenditure
Appointment of PhD Intern	£3500
Support for academic community building initiatives	£2500
Total	£6000

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