



## Resilient Learning Communities

### Institutional Plan for: Edinburgh Napier University

*This document is intended to be a cumulative plan for your institution, which you will add to year on year as the Theme progresses. At the end of the Theme, this document will show how plans may have developed and changed over time. The plan for each year should be around three to four sides of A4.*

*Italicised text in this document can be removed as it is advisory.*

#### **Context**

*Provide any statements that might be helpful in explaining your institution's context and approach and how this plan supports the achievement of institutional priorities. In subsequent years, any context statement could draw on salient points from the previous year's learning/outcomes and reflect any changes in the strategic direction of your institution.*

This Enhancement Theme commences as the world is in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic. At Edinburgh Napier University (ENU) we sought to develop our organisation resilience to support staff and students with the transition to online / blended learning and teaching through the establishment of our [Digital Support Partnership](#) Project in Summer 2020. This project recognised the wealth of online education experience in Edinburgh Napier University and sought to build networks to collate and disseminate that knowledge, along with research-based evidence on what works when teaching online. There is a natural connection between this ongoing project and the objectives of the new Enhancement Theme and we intend to align our institutional work between the two.

Our University is developing its new learning and teaching strategy to 2025. Our strategy seeks to build on our reputation as an accessible and applied University, strengthening our external links with businesses and employers and creating opportunities for upskilling, work-based education and life-long learning that is fundamental to the skills agenda in Scotland. The new Enhancement Theme provides an excellent opportunity to align our activity with objectives aligned to this emerging strategy.

It is important to us that the Enhancement Theme provides opportunities for staff and students from across the University to influence and shape our Institutional activity. We would seek to ensure that our own community is able to determine its own definition of what a resilient learning community means to them and to showcase initiatives and projects demonstrating what this looks like in practice for us all to learn from.

We also committed to working in closer and more effective partnership with our Edinburgh Napier Students Association (ENSA). Our ELIR outcome report published in early 2020 highlighted a number of recommendations related to student representation and engagement and we have made positive strides during the course of this year. The Enhancement Theme offers another opportunity to continue to work in partnership in developing resilient learning communities.

### Institutional team

*Please specify for each member whether staff or student and for staff, their role title. Where the Theme Leaders' Group (TLG) staff or student nominee is unable to attend meetings, an alternate can attend on their behalf. This need not be named individuals, which may help support Theme involvement across a range of staff and students.*

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Institutional lead & TLG staff representative	Dr Ingeborg van Knippenberg Lecturer, Department of Learning & Teaching Enhancement (DLTE)		
TLG student representative	Heloisa Fyfe, ENSA Vice President for Representation and Volunteers		
Team members:	Louise McCarte, DLTE Administrator		
	Katrina Swanton, Head of Quality & Enhancement, DLTE		
	Campbell Millar, Head of HR Capability & Engagement  (replacing Kerry Dewar who is leaving the university in Jan 2020)		
	Dr Stuart Taylor, lecturer, DLTE  Dr Sam Campbell		

	Casey, lecturer, School of Applied Sciences (representatives of the Learning & Teaching Network)		
	Additional members will join the Institutional team throughout the year (see below)		

### Planned activity: Year 1

*This Theme will focus on meeting the changing needs and values of an increasingly diverse student community, and a rapidly changing external environment.*

#### Overall outcomes/activity

*What are your key priorities?*

*What outcomes do you want to achieve?*

*What activities will you deliver?*

*What do you anticipate will be the benefits at sector and institutional levels?*

We will align our Institutional work to our new University Learning & Teaching Strategy to maximise efficiency and support the achievement of successful outcomes.

We intend to ensure that our Digital Support Partnership has a legacy beyond the scope of the project (which is due to end in 2021). The Enhancement Theme provides an opportunity to evaluate its impact in terms of strengthening resilience within the University and to shape the ongoing Theme Work. We want to ensure that our learning from this project, and its approach can be shared more widely in the sector and continue to shape the HE learning and teaching landscape into the future.

It is a priority to engage students and staff from across the University in the work of the Theme and allow them to shape and form our own activities throughout its duration. We intend to replicate the approach applied during the previous Theme to invite bids for funding collaborative projects or initiatives on topics related to resilient learning communities (mini-projects). We would encourage a broad interpretation of the Theme and allow our own community to put forward activities and projects that they would wish to prioritise and take forward under the theme of Resilient Learning Communities. It is our intention that we should be responsive to the work that arises during the first year and use this to inform our ongoing plans into years 2 and 3. For example some of the funded projects might be ripe for investing in further and expanding their scope, or we might choose to repeat the open call for funding to surface new and different projects and initiatives. One of the principles for each mini-project is that they should be student co-created to foster greater partnership working.

As part of our commitment to strengthening our partnership with the Students' Association

we intend to ensure that the priorities of ENSA and its Sabbatical Officers inform and influence our Enhancement Theme work throughout its duration.

### **Year 1 outcomes/activity**

*What are your key priorities?*

*What outcomes do you want to achieve?*

*What activities will you deliver?*

*What do you anticipate will be the benefits at sector and institutional levels?*

### **Key priorities:**

We plan to undertake three strands of work during this first year.

1. Evaluation work associated with the Digital Support Partnership Project
2. Fund a series of student co-created mini projects
3. Establish a framework to support student buddying

### **Outcomes:**

1: Analyse the impact of the DSP in order to disseminate the good practice lessons learned from it, both locally across the university and nationally.

2: Undertake a diverse range of small-scale projects exploring resilient learning communities. These will actively engage students and staff and provide opportunity for evaluation and dissemination.

3: Produce a framework & toolkit to enable an efficient student buddying scheme for peer support and increase resilience

4: Obtain approval for any necessary ethics applications for evaluation of our approaches in order to facilitate publication of our findings to benefit the sector.

5: Scope out further approaches to implement in year 2 and 3.

### **Activities:**

- Call for mini projects to be delivered and evaluated in year one.
- Gathering data on DSP, establish research project parameters.
- Establish the team to implement student buddying work, trial community-building tools and identify appropriate means of evaluation.
- Regular meetings of the Institutional team to monitor progress in year one and to commence scoping to develop plans for the second year of the Theme.

### **Benefits at sector and institutional levels**

- mini projects will have immediate benefits for local group involved; outcomes will be disseminated within the University and more broadly within the sector and can benefit other

groups within institution by serving as good practice examples

- student buddying scheme will benefit students across institution and dissemination of this approach can serve as good practice example for sector

- DSP is benefitting staff and student communities across ENU already; analysis of this project will provide data for sector-level research output.

### **Dissemination of work**

*How will you promote and communicate your work internally and externally?*

We will take advantage of a range of approaches to promote and communicate our Institutional work. This will include, but not be restricted to:

- Establish an Institutional Theme webpage to provide updates on activities and to share resources produced.
- Regular updates on progress to ENU community via Learning & Teaching Matters and Bones newsletters and through ENSA newsletters
- Promotion of activity through our social media channels (internally and externally).
- Reporting through University Governance structures, such as University Learning, Teaching, Assessment & Student Experience Committee (which reports to Academic Board and includes representatives from across all Schools and student-facing Professional Support Services).
- We will plan to hold a mini-project symposium and produce a collated pamphlet (electronic) of key activities and findings.
- The student buddying scheme intends to produce a framework which will be shared as an open resource to benefit students across the sector
- The Digital Support Partnership Project evaluation outcome is to be published both internally and externally

### **Collaborative cluster work**

*What is your intended involvement in formal collaborative cluster work? Do you intend leading a cluster? Who might be involved in cluster activity?*

*(Formal bids for collaborative cluster work will be managed separately.)*

During the first year of the Project, Edinburgh Napier will not be leading a collaborative cluster though we intend to contribute to cluster activity.

We are continuing to contribute to the Programme Leadership Cluster (Previously led from Edinburgh Napier) with colleagues actively engaged in the cluster team.

Dr Fiona Smart – Head of DLTE – is also co-leading a Principal Fellow Cluster Project (with

Dr Alison Nimmo, GCU.

We are joining the micro-credential collaborative cluster to contribute to this work. This topic aligns closely to themes within our emerging University Learning & Teaching Strategy.

We are also aligning our work in the BAME Short Working Group (SWG) with the AdvanceHE project *Embedding race equality in FE/HE*. This working group is further linked to our BAMEish network of BAME community staff and 'allies'.

### **Supporting staff and student engagement**

*How will you support your community to deliver on planned activities?*

We have taken a conscious decision to keep our core Institutional Theme team centralised to ensure that we have a fair and transparent approach to engage staff and students more widely in our Institutional work and to ensure greater clarity in terms of roles and responsibilities of the Institutional team.

Our call for mini-projects will go out University-wide shortly to allow projects to commence early next trimester and be complete by June 2021. Successful mini-project leads will be invited to join the year one Institutional Team.

It is our intention to form a pool of 'critical friends' to offer more informal support to the Institutional team – colleagues active in previous themes and active within our Learning & Teaching Network will be invited to contribute to support colleagues engaging in Theme Activity in Year one in a mentoring capacity. This may be particularly valuable for offering additional support to student-led projects.

The Digital Support Partnership Project has already made significant progress in achieving staff engagement and we would hope to take advantage of the communities already engaged within that work.

The Institutional team will retain oversight of activity and provide additional support as required.

### **Evaluation**

*How will you monitor progress and impact of the enhancement activities?*

The Institutional Theme team will ensure that the funded mini projects complete a light touch evaluation during the summer of 2021 (applying a similar approach from the previous theme). These evaluations will shape and inform year 2 activity. The presentation and discussion of these mini-projects in October 2021 will support the gathering of data to inform an evaluation of this whole strand of work.

The strand of work associated with the DSP project will be focussed primarily on evaluating this project in terms of building resilience and the impact that it has had.

Concerning the student buddying system, the first objective is to produce a framework which explains how the buddy system will operate – this will inform whoever will be working on the buddy scheme. The second objective is to organise a pilot test of the system with the help of student volunteers. The outcomes of this pilot will then be used to shape the development of

the buddy system for the years to come.

<b>Plan author:</b>	Ingeborg van Knippenberg
<b>Date:</b>	8-12-2020

Return to: <mailto:ARCAAdmin@gaa.ac.uk>

## Resilient Learning Communities

Institutional Plan for: <Name of Institution>

### Financial Annex Year 1

*Please provide information on how the funding given through the Enhancement Theme institutional contract will be used to support work within the HEI in relation to the Theme. This should be high level, not detailed.*

*At the time of the end-of-year report, you will be asked to comment on expenditure against financial plan information.*

*Please note that this information remains confidential and will not be made available on the web.*

Hiring a research assistant to evaluate DSP project, grade 4, 20 days	£ 2710
Miniprojects	£ 2500
Student buddying	£ 790
<b>Total:</b>	<b>£ 6000</b>

<b>Author:</b>	Ingeborg van Knippenberg
<b>Date:</b>	8-12-2020

Return to: <mailto:ARCAAdmin@gaa.ac.uk>