



## Resilient Learning Communities

### Institutional Plan for: Glasgow Caledonian University

#### Context

During AY 2020-21, a number of important contextual factors underpin our engagement with the new Enhancement Theme:

- The University has just launched its **Strategy 2030** with a commitment to deliver amongst other things, a transformative education experience for our students, underpinned by our commitment to University Values of Confidence, Responsibility, Integrity & Creativity, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- The associated refreshed **Strategy for Learning 2030** is being consulted upon with the aim of finalising in the spring. The new strategy is anticipated to be founded upon promoting sustainability for the Common Good for an increasingly diverse set of learners through a blended learning model that aims to enhance student flexibility, personalisation, participation, engagement and attainment.
- The University is emerging from **ELIR** cycle, ready to build on recognition of its strong record in equality and diversity, student partnership, widening participation and coherent approach to Enhancing the Student Experience as well as working to further develop a coherent blended learning experience for our students, streamline quality assurance and enhancement procedures, and improve consistency of assessment feedback across the University.

#### Institutional team

	Year 1	Yr 2	Yr 3
Institutional Chair	Professor Alastair Robertson, Director of Academic Development and Student Learning		
TLG staff representative	Dr Colin Milligan, Senior Research Fellow, Department of Academic Development and Student Learning		
TLG student joint representative	Tabitha Nyariki SA VP SHLS		
Student joint representative	Zoe Nicholson SA VP SCEBE		
Staff representative	Dr Alison Nimmo, Head of Academic Development, Department of Academic Development and Student Learning		
Staff representative	Professor Nicky Andrew, Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement (Senior Associate Academic Registrar) Department of Quality Assurance & Enhancement		
Staff representative	Jackie Main, Director of Student Life		

Staff representative	Dr Claire McGuinness, Assistant Head, Learning and Teaching Quality, School of Health and Life Sciences		
Staff representative	Dr Alexis Barlow, Senior Lecturer, Department of Management and HRM School for Business and Society		
Staff representative	Dr Mary Maclachlan, Assistant Head, Learning and Teaching Quality, School of Computing, Engineering and the Built Environment		
Staff representative	Marty Wright, Academic Head of School, IU2B		
Staff representative	Dr Ruth Marciniak, Learning, Teaching and Quality Lead, CGU London		
Staff representative	Adrian Lui, Equality and Diversity Adviser, People Services		
Staff representative (Collaborative Cluster Lead)	Dr Heather Gray, Head of Department Department of Physiotherapy and Paramedicine		
Staff representative	Alen MacKinley, Associate Academic Registrar (Quality Assurance and Enhancement) Department of Quality Assurance & Enhancement		
Staff representative	Lesley McAleavy, Senior Quality Officer (Policy and Student Engagement), Department of Quality Assurance & Enhancement		
Staff representative	Jacqueline Ramsay, Planning Officer (Access and Articulation), Strategy and Planning		
Staff representative	Prof Bonnie Steves, Graduate School		

### Planned activity: Year 1

Overall outcomes/activity
<p>The priorities for GCU in relation to the new Enhancement Theme, Resilient Learning Communities” are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To embed the ethos of resilience and ‘<b>Resilient Learning Communities</b>’ in the context of our forthcoming Strategy for Learning 2030 and associated refresh of our Common Good Attributes for our students,</li> <li>To link current <b>institutional work</b> on Microcredentials, Diversifying the Curriculum, Community and Public Engagement, widening participation and student engagement during a predominantly online (supplemented with on campus teaching for activities that cannot be done online) pedagogic approach, with theme activity to ensure external best practice informs our progress.</li> <li>To benefit from our contributions to the various <b>Collaborative Cluster</b> projects (GCU is leading on three and is a named partner in another two)</li> <li>To undertake all of the above in active partnership with our <b>Students’ Association</b>.</li> </ul> <p>We wish to achieve the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong <b>Student and Staff communities</b> that provide support and foster Resilience</li> <li>Continued strong <b>Partnership with Students</b> across all enhancement activities.</li> <li>Engagement with a broad range of <b>Collaborative Cluster</b> activities to look at ideas of resilience from a range of different perspectives ensuring two-way flow of knowledge into and out of the University.</li> </ul> <p><i>What activities will you deliver?</i></p>

*(see under Yr 1 activity)*

**At Sector Level**, GCU brings a highly engaged staff cohort, and considerable enhancement experience across a range of areas. We have a commitment to sharing and learning from others across the sector. A major focus of GCU's work in year 1 of the Theme will be through our extensive Collaborative Cluster engagement (see below) with a number of other Scottish Universities. Tackling Racism is a particular priority for GCU and we are involved in the Tackling Racism project co-ordinated by Advance HE. We are happy to share progress with the wider sector.

**At Institutional Level**, we will continue to align Enhancement Theme activities with Institutional focus to ensure maximum value from our participation. We have learned from our involvement in previous themes that it is important to manage activity to ensure effort occurs at the right time in the innovation cycle.

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

For Year One, our key priorities are:

- Establishing an effective **Institutional Team** and creating structures and processes that ensure the University and all its staff and students are able to benefit from the work of the Theme.
- Developing a partnership with **Students' Association** which supports continuous engagement across the three years of the Theme.
- To **integrate Theme activity** effectively with existing activities
- To **engage staff and students** in the overall goals of the theme.

We wish to achieve the following in Year One:

- Successful completion of five **Collaborative Cluster** projects for which we have lead/co-lead involvement.
- A degree of engagement with the other two Collaborative Clusters and **sector wide theme activity**.
- Successful initial implementation of GCU's new **Strategy for Learning 2030** incorporating the ideas of resilience within learning, teaching and the wider student experience.
- Build on our positive **ELIR** outcome by establishing further enhancement activity that builds on our strengths and addresses less developed areas of practice.

Year One Activities will include:

- Engagement with **Collaborative Clusters**. We are lucky to be centrally involved in five collaborative cluster communities in AY 2020-21 and will use our activity in these projects to drive engagement and set the tone for continued strong engagement of staff and students with the new Enhancement Theme.
- Our **Teaching and Learning Conference** to be held in early Summer will have a strong focus on Resilient Learning Communities highlighting our Theme-linked activities.
- Work that builds on the findings of our internal **BAME Student Experience Survey** (conducted Jan 21), including dissemination of findings, and development of recommendations and proposals for new processes.

- Desk study to develop ideas and explore sector needs around resilience at the **transition from college to University and to further enhance our engagement with communities beyond the confines of the University.**
- **Active dissemination** of theme engagement opportunities and theme outcomes to staff and students across the University using established routes.

**Student-led activity**, centres on the Students' Association which includes Liberation and Representation groups who run campaigns and events to help support and highlight the diverse student community. Current campaigns include the 'we all stand together' campaign' our 'no room for racism' campaign. Aligned to wider activity within the University, the Students' Association are also working on embedding the SDG's into our activities.

**At sector level**, our contribution to the initial set of collaborative clusters will hopefully result in benefit beyond cluster partners leading to a strong start for this new Theme.

**At institutional level**, our year one activities will result in a coherent and informed approach to enhancement across the institution.

### Dissemination of work

- As with our Theme Activity for 'Evidence for Enhancement', we have found that the existing **Student Experience Action Plan (SEAP)** is well aligned with the goal of the Theme. Theme Activity will therefore be reported at regular meetings of the **Enhancing the Student Experience Gp (ETSE)** which oversees SEAP. This group, comprised of staff and students from across the University has now been coordinating enhancement activities across the University for around four years and provides an effective route for dissemination amongst staff engaged in Enhancement activities.
- **Institutional Team:** As oversight of theme activity will occur in other fora, our institutional team meetings provide an opportunity to engage key staff in thinking how we can best utilise the work of the theme and promote and integrate our theme activity back to the benefit of the University.
- GCU uses **SharePoint** to provide internal information for our staff. We will establish an institutional page to record and promote theme activity and opportunities.
- **University Learning and Teaching Day.** Our annual learning and teaching event provides an opportunity to raise awareness of theme activities to the whole staff and student body. An enhancement theme session will be included, offering an opportunity to highlight activity and opportunities, and anyone who has received theme funding will be encouraged to present.
- We encourage staff from across the University to attend, and where possible to contribute to the annual **QAA Conference** as a key networking and awareness raising opportunity for the Scottish HE sector.
- **Students' Association** Full Time Officers are included in the Institutional Team and will assist in disseminating activity and opportunities to the wider student body.

### Collaborative cluster work

We recognise the benefits of the Collaborative Clusters in allowing GCU to foster cross-institution collaboration and enable us to gain feedback on our own changing practice. As in previous years, we have encouraged staff from outwith the Academic community to engage in Collaborative Clusters. Glasgow Caledonian University is leading two Collaborative Clusters this AY:

- Building on the success of the Mental Health and Wellbeing cluster GCU led in the last yr. of the previous theme, Heather Gray along with former Student President Rachel Simpson, who now works in our Student Life Directorate are leading a Cluster which takes a closer look at **Mental health and wellbeing within our BAME and LGBTQ+ learner communities**
- Alison Nimmo is leading a Cluster entitled '**Resilient Academic Leadership: an exploration within the Principal Fellows Network Scotland**' that explores the importance of resilience as an attribute of University staff communities.

We are also formal partners in three other Collaborative Cluster projects:

- Heather Gray represents GCU on the related '**Decolonising the Curriculum in the Time of Pandemic: what does this look like in practice?**' cluster led by Catriona Cunningham (University of Stirling). This cluster provides an opportunity to bring external expertise into a range of projects underway within GCU looking at our BAME student experience from a number of perspectives.
- Colin Milligan is a core partner in the **PARC (Personalised Approaches to Resilience and Community)** Collaborative Cluster, led by Luke Millard at Abertay University. This project explores the promise of diagnostic testing as a means of meeting the needs of our increasingly diverse student body. This work promises to help us address key challenges faced by our Articulating and International student groups and has wider applicability across the whole student cohort.
- Alen MacKinlay, from our Department of Quality Assurance and Enhancement brings his experience of TNE and external partnerships as a member of the Cluster project '**Exploring the Potential of Micro-Credentials and Digital Badging**' led by Anne Tierney and Robin Westacott at Heriot-Watt University, again, leveraging external expertise in an area where GCU activity is nascent.

## Supporting staff and student engagement

As highlighted above, the **Enhancing The Student Experience Group** brings together a group of staff engaged with driving enhancement activity across the University. This group will monitor Theme activity and identify opportunities for staff engagement with specific projects. Theme funds can be used to fund short-term projects which enable students and staff to engage and leverage value for the University.

As a complement, the **Institutional Team meetings** provide a dedicated forum for consideration of Theme activity/opportunities.

IN AY 2020-21, the rollout of **Strategy 2030**, new **Learning and Teaching Strategy**, and follow on activities from our recent **ELIR** all provide opportunities to integrate Theme activity into high profile staff and student events.

GCU has a close working relationship with its **Students' Association** with SA Full Time Officers on the Institutional Team and committed to engagement with the Theme. For this theme, the Students' Association Equality and Diversity Committee, as well as the Student Parliament (Student Voice) provide appropriate routes to engage students with the work of the Theme. Encouraging students to become active contributors to theme activity will be supported with a portion of Theme funds reserved for paying student interns.

While **COVID** has created many challenges for institutional work, one of the positive outcomes of the move to remote working has been the development of new communities and communication

routes across the University. Two communities in particular will be of key importance to the success of staff engagement with Theme activities:

- the **Digital Learning Leads**, which is a group of academic staff representing each of the 22 departments that make up the University with a special remit to lead on online learning,
- the **Staff SFHEA Network**, a newly established community of staff who are able to demonstrate sustained effectiveness in a range of teaching and learning modes, including in the leadership and development of people and projects. Senior Fellows lead the way, and as committed expert teachers, offer significant professional expertise to GCU.

## Evaluation

Staff and Students involved in **Collaborative Cluster** projects will be asked to share evaluative and reflective outputs with the Institutional Team. Other relevant institutional activity will be monitored informally through regular updates to GCU Institutional Team meetings and ETSE Steering Group. Our approach encourages continuous self-evaluation and reflection and enable the collection, analysis and synthesis of all outputs.

Formally, QET progress and impact will be monitored by the **GCU Learning and Teaching Sub-Committee (LTSC)** and the outputs reported to the Academic Policy and Practice Committee (APPC).

Beyond the University, we will engage with Theme Evaluation activities related to the **Evaluation Strand** to ensure that we build a clear understanding of the impact of theme activity over its three-year term.

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