



## Resilient Learning Communities

### Institutional Plan for: University of St Andrews

#### Context

This plan of work was drafted in consultation with key stakeholders and will align with the following strategies:

[University Strategy](#)

[Equality, Diversity and Inclusion](#)

[Quality Enhancement Strategy](#)

Teaching & Student Experience Strategy: Academic Year 2020-21 – available on request

#### 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	<i>Paula Miles</i> (Staff - Psychology & Neuroscience, Director of Teaching, Senior Lecturer)		
TLG staff representative	<i>Paula Miles</i> (Staff - Psychology & Neuroscience, Director of Teaching, Senior Lecturer)		
TLG student representative	<i>Amy Gallacher</i> (Student - Sabbatical Director of Education)		

<i>Additional members</i>	<i>Kerith George-Briant</i> (Staff – International Education Institute, Associate Lecturer)		
	<i>Pamela Forbes</i> (Staff – Medical Admissions Officer)		
	<i>Gordon Henry</i> (Staff – Recruitment Marketing Officer)		
	<i>Brenda Marin</i> (Staff – Management, Associate Lecturer)		
	<i>Kenneth Mavor</i> (Staff – Psychology & Neuroscience, Lecturer)		
	<i>Heather McKiggan-Fee</i> (Staff – Centre for Educational Enhancement and Development, Educational & Postgraduate Researcher Developer)		
	<i>Sharon Nangle</i> (Staff – Library, Academic Liaison Librarian)		
	<i>Michael Oram</i> (Staff – Psychology & Neuroscience, Lecturer)		
	<i>Julie Oswald</i> (Staff – Biology, Lecturer)		
	<i>Laura Palmer</i> (Staff – Administrator)		
	<i>Alexander Stanley</i> (Staff – Centre for Educational Enhancement and Development, Student Developer)		
	<i>Eric Stoddart</i> (Staff – Lecturer, Divinity)		
	<i>Jennifer Taylorson</i> (Staff – International Education Institute, Director of Teaching, Associate Lecturer)		
	<i>Penny Turnbull</i> (Staff – Student Services, Assistant Director)		



## Planned activity: Year 1

### 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?*

### Key Priorities

*Internal:*

Our key priorities internally will be to focus on the following three themes:

- 1) What will our learning communities look like by 2023? And how can we prepare for the learning communities of the future?
- 2) How can we capitalise as a sector on the attributes students bring into their learning?
- 3) How do we ensure we are able to support our diverse learning communities? What might this mean for our staff and our infrastructure?

*External:*

We are involved in two collaborative clusters:

- Decolonising the curriculum in the time of pandemic (Lead Institute: University of Stirling)
- Micro-credentials, skills and work-based learning (Lead Institute: Heriot-Watt University)

### Activities, Outcome & Benefits

Our Enhancement Theme work (both internally and externally) will allow us to achieve the following:

- Establish collaborative networks, both within our institution and across the wider sector
- Share and learn from good practice internally and externally
- Contribute to a sector-wide shared understanding of how to develop and maintain a resilient learning community for our students
- Deliver a good practice exchange event to showcase our developing understanding of the Resilience Theme with local colleagues
- Present our work at relevant external events

The institutional team will meet in January 2021 to further discuss and develop these priorities and their related outcomes, activities and benefits.

### 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

### *Internal Workstreams:*

#### 1) Learning Communities of the Future

We aim to examine and better understand the roles that *Choice*, *Flexibility* and *Preparedness* play when considering learning communities of the future.

Example questions for *Choice*:

- What are student and staff views on the purpose of higher education and what impact do these views have on the choices that our students and staff make?
- Will our learners benefit from additional choice in their educational provisions (e.g. offering micro-credentials alongside a traditional linear approach to education)?

Example questions for *Flexibility*:

- Structurally, how do we achieve flexibility in our educational programmes? Can we identify existing examples of structural flexibility, both within our own institution and across the sector? How can these examples of best practice be applied to offer more flexible learning opportunities for our students?
- Can we offer more flexible PhD pathways to our postgraduate students (e.g. flexible enrolment options; incorporating skills development, teaching training and internships into our programmes).

Example questions for *Preparedness*:

- If technology is going to be a key part of future educational provisions, what level of preparedness will we expect from our students and staff? How do we support students and lecturers in meeting these expectations? Are there associated staff workload implications?
- What are the implications for future learners due to the recent changes in schooling as a result of Covid-19? For example, what impact will the cancellation of secondary school exams have on students? Will universities need to address potential gaps in knowledge and study skills due to the disruption that school students have experienced during the pandemic.

In Year One, the intention is to focus on *Choice*, however it is acknowledged that there is crossover between the three areas.

#### 2) Students Attributes

The attributes that a student brings with them when they arrive at university impact their learning experiences. These attributes also contribute to a student's sense of identity, belonging and community. All attributes are critical to the student experience. We aim to identify and recognise the many varied attributes of our students, both academically and otherwise, to help us better understand the starting point of our student body and to provide opportunities for continued growth.

Example questions:

- How best do we identify and categorise student attributes? Is there existing data that can be used for this purpose? Are there gaps in the existing data? If yes, how will we collect new data?
- What kinds of opportunities do we want to create for students to showcase their attributes and how do we implement these opportunities? Do opportunities currently exist?
- How do we engage student groups early in projects, ensuring that individual attributes are brought into a collective structure and collaborate plan? Do we need to review the support and tools provided to ensure this is possible?

### 3) Supporting Diverse Communities

In the first instance, we have decided to concentrate our efforts on *Inclusivity*. Specifically, we want to focus on how to make our learning community more inclusive of different groups of students who may have different needs. Three areas have been identified for initial investigation:

- marketing and recruitment
- the student applicant pool
- conversion during the admissions process

Example questions:

- Are there barriers to inclusivity: if yes, what are they? Is there existing data that can help answer this question? Are there gaps in the existing data? If yes, how will we collect new data?
- Can we identify local and national strategies currently being used to overcome barriers to inclusivity?

The institutional team will meet again in January 2021. We will determine the specific questions, from the above examples, that we will initially focus on. We will continue to discuss the related outcomes, activities and benefits resulting from this work.

#### *Internal Funding Calls:*

We will be holding two funding calls this year (April 2021 and July 2021). All staff and students at the university will be invited to submit applications of up to £1000 for:

- Research Projects (e.g. a study into the wellbeing of first year students)
- Resources (e.g. interactive movies and e-learning guides)
- Events (e.g. mini conferences, networking sessions, and exhibitions)
- Other (e.g. developing a mentoring scheme and a programme to help students reintegrate after a leave of absence)

Our first call for applications has been advertised, with a follow up announcement due to come out in January. The calls for funding strongly encourage applications for collaborative projects (e.g. student & staff joint initiatives, as well as staff from different Departments and Units working together).

#### *External Work:*

In addition to local work, we will be contributing to two collaborative clusters (see Question 4).

## Dissemination of work

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

### Internal

Institutional Team; Learning & Teaching Committee; Students' Association's Education Committee; School Presidents' Forum; Postgraduate Research Committee; Student Experience Committee; the Centre for Higher Education Research; the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity Team; Enhancement Theme web pages; student and staff newsletters/memos; annual Good Practice Exchange event.

### External

Scottish Higher Education Enhancement Committee (SHEEC); Theme Leaders' Group (TLG); Enhancement Theme conference; the University's website; meetings with counterparts in the sector.

## 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.)*

We are involved in two collaborative clusters this year:

- Decolonising the curriculum in the time of pandemic (Lead Institute: University of Stirling)
- Micro-credentials, skills and work-based learning (Lead Institute: Heriot-Watt University)

## Supporting staff and student engagement

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

Our three workstreams (each focussing on one of the identified priorities listed in Question 1) will meet with and report to the full Institutional Team monthly. This will provide an opportunity for colleagues to support the work being carried out by each workstream and allow us to identify any groups who may require additional support to help them meet their objectives.

The Institutional Team will provide continued support and advice to those who receive Enhancement Theme funding – from application to completion. Successful recipients will be required to submit a brief report on what they have achieved (using a pro forma provided for them). They must also produce a media element (e.g. podcast or video), a poster, or provide an image for the QAA's Enhancement Theme web page.

**Evaluation**

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

The Logic Model, implemented during the two previous Themes, was effective in monitoring the progress and impact of our past work. As such, our current Institutional Team and workstreams, and our future recipients of Enhancement Theme funding, will adopt this model to identify inputs, outputs and outcomes as a measure progress and impact.

<b>Plan author:</b>	Paula Miles and Kerith George-Briant
<b>Date:</b>	11/12/2020

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



## **Resilient Learning Communities**

### **Institutional Plan for: University of St Andrews**

#### **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.*

The Year 1 £6000 Grant will be used to support local projects through successful applications to our April 2021 and July 2021 funding calls.

<b>Author:</b>	Paula Miles & Kerith George-Briant
<b>Date:</b>	11/12/2020

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