



Resilient Learning Communities

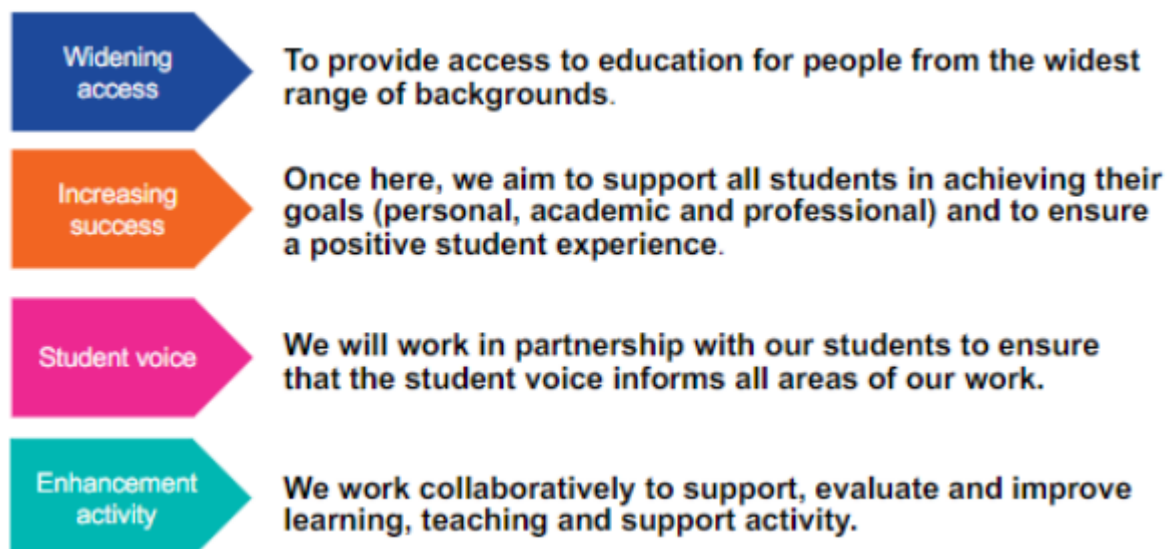
Institutional Plan for: The Open University in Scotland

This document will form your year 3 plan and should be around three to four sides of A4. You can find your year 1 and plans through this [web page](#).

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. Any context statement could draw on salient points from the previous year's learning/outcomes from Theme work and reflect any changes in the strategic direction of your institution.

Enhancement theme activity in the OU in Scotland is led and coordinated by the Access, Participation and Success Scotland (APSS) team. Our Year 3 Institutional Plan is aligned with our Access, Participation and Success Scotland Plan, which was reviewed for 2021 and embeds enhancement activity as a core principle. The APSS Plan sets out the guiding principles that underpin our activity, as follows:



Our Year 3 Institutional plan will draw on learning from Year Two of our enhancement activity, specifically in relation to evaluation and impact assessment. Throughout our Year Two Theme activity, both within our institution and sector wide, we focussed on development of our evaluation skillset to allow us to demonstrate the impact of Theme activity more clearly and create a series of Outcome Statements to evaluate activity against. The Outcome Statements rationalise our data gathering in the

short, medium and long-term and allow us to better evidence the overlaps between each project within our Institutional Plan; highlighting the wider impact of our Theme activity against institutional strategy.

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.	
Institutional lead	Shona Littlejohn: Depute Director (Student Experience & Widening Access)
TLG staff representative	(Interim Rep) Viki Soper: Senior Manager, Operations & Fees
TLG student representative	Paul Reid: Student Volunteer Student Leadership Team Students Association
Add additional rows for additional members	Carla Anderson: Senior Manager, Student Support (Operations) Eddie Tunnah: Senior Careers and Employability Manager Ewe Grzanka: Access, Participation & Success Manager Katrina Rae: Engagement Support Coordinator Kitty Chilcott: Staff tutor (Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences) Moira Weir: Information Analyst Patty Watters: Manager, Student Support (Operations) Sally Crighton: Staff Tutor and Associate Lecturer (Faculty of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) Sylvia Warnecke: Staff Tutor (Faculty of Wellbeing, Education and Language Studies) Paula Cuccurullo: Senior Advisor, Student Support Rebecca Boyd: Senior Careers and Employability Consultant, Academic Services

Overall outcomes/activity

Are there any changes to your key priorities, outcomes and delivery activities that you identified at the start of the Theme?

In January 2022, the Open University published our new Learn & Live Strategy for 2022/27. Our mission remains to be open to people, places, methods and ideas. A key strategic goal within our Learn and Live strategy continues to be success for our students; supporting them to achieve their goals wherever and whenever they are, with outcomes that are equitable and open up new opportunities in life and work. It is through our scale, reach and our ability to support students to succeed that we can achieve our positive impact on society and the economy. A key priority for us for the final year of our Theme activity continues to retain a focus on initiatives to improve student success and comprehensive evaluation of these.

Throughout Year Two, we focused on upskilling staff in using evidence to improve enhancement and evaluation, and through this learning we have created the below outcome statements that we will use to evaluate the impact of our Theme activity:

Short Term: Awareness raising (Are students/staff aware of the initiatives? Does engagement reflect this? Micro outcomes; lived experience of students and quantitative/qualitative data to evaluate engagement with these)

- Student awareness, registration and attendance are monitored individually. Numbers for each are high (relative to numbers invited)
- Students engage with events or programmes during the sessions
- Feedback surveys are sent to students after events and opportunity to collect qualitative feedback through open questions is embedded in these
- Students should have the opportunity to make suggestions within these so that future planning is informed by student voice
- Internal communication methods are utilised to raise staff awareness so they can signpost students appropriate initiatives

Medium Term: Behavioural change (What is the impact of the initiatives on students and/or staff. How is it benefitting them? Meso outcomes; potential for change to organisational processes, curriculum, staffing etc. following evaluation against these)

- There is an increase of engagement with OpenLearn resources and registration for Access and/or Stage One modules following the initiatives
- Support needs identified to help students through their learner journeys are implemented and existing policies are adapted to support these
- Initiatives promoted more meaningfully using social media and marketing channels
- FIKA sessions used to disseminate information about enhancement activity to staff. Other channels for internal communication to be utilised & surveys to be sent to staff to check awareness
- Feedback surveys are sent to students after events and opportunity to collect qualitative feedback relating to impact is embedded in these
- Behavioural change is observed through student actions

Long Term: Student Outcomes (Retention, progression and APSS objectives. Macro outcomes; what will these mean for the sector. Consider scale and dissemination of evaluation across the sector)

- Widening Access: To provide access to education for people from the widest range of backgrounds
- Increasing Success: Once here, we aim to support all students in achieving their goals (personal, academic and professional) and to ensure a positive student experience

- Student Voice: We will work in partnership with our students to ensure that the student voice informs all areas of our work
- Enhancement Activity: We work collaboratively to support, evaluate and improve learning, teaching and support activity.
- Sense of Belonging and Student Community: We will foster a sense of belonging for our students as part of the Open University student community and help them forge their student identity

Year 3 outcomes/activity

In answering the following, identify what is continuing from year 2 and what is new:

What are your key priorities?

What outcomes do you want to achieve?

What activities will you deliver to achieve your key priorities?

Theme activity that continues from Year Two is:

Open to People: Forced Migration project evaluation and development

Our key priority for Year Three is evaluation of this pilot as delivery has finished. The learning from this will inform our considerations around scaling up the project. It will also help us identify what works and how the model can be adapted to meet the challenges that impact the most disadvantaged groups from accessing education or employment in Scotland. The impact of the pilot will be assessed against our medium-term Theme outcomes:

- There is an increase of engagement with OpenLearn resources and registration for Access and/or Stage One modules following the pilot
- Support needs identified to help students through their learner journeys are implemented and existing policies are adapted to support these.

Sense of Belonging Toolkit refresh

Our priority activity in Year Three of the Theme will be baselining awareness of the resource across the sector and use this information to make decisions on next steps. We hope that the resource will support educators in taking their teaching online and will lead to an improved sense of belonging for students in online learning communities.

Supporting Students from Deprived Backgrounds 'Unlocking Potential'

For our final year of activity for this Theme, we are moving into stage two of the Unlocking Potential project. The focus of this stage is to deepen our understanding of those living in areas of multiple deprivation and identify the most important barriers and concerns to access further or higher education. From this we hope to have clear recommendations on how best to develop inspirational communications that inspire, encourage and increase in the number of potential students from these areas returning to further / higher education.

EmployAbility

Within our Theme activity for Year Three, our Careers and Employability Services are currently deciding whether the collaboration with EmployAbility is continued in its existing form, is enhanced, or is discontinued. Levels of engagement by students and alumni were relatively low, but those that did engage reported that the sessions were beneficial. If we do continue with the collaboration, we will consider how this could be focussed as a four-nations offering.

Big Blether Series

It has proven challenging to have enough student volunteers to co-create the event, particularly at certain times of the year when students have end of modules assignments or examinations. Attracting volunteers continues to be a challenge at the OU. We are hoping to address this with the recruitment of a Student Consultant and creation of a Student Voice Reference group in 22/23 which will be our priority area of focus for this activity in

Year Three of the Theme along with ongoing evaluation of individual events and a continuous improvement perspective on the series.

Theme activity that is no longer continuing is:

Student Community & Computing Club

After stalling in 2020 after the student chair graduated, the project lead also left her role at the Open University in Scotland. The project was not restarted and no further activity has taken place over the reporting period.

Using Theme resources from sector projects

In the year 3 report we will ask you what resources you have used and which you have found to be most valuable. It would be helpful for us to know now, how, and which resources, you may be planning to use in year 3 of the Theme and beyond (from the Anti-Racist Curriculum project, Valuing and Recognising Prior Learning and Experience, Understanding Micro-credentials and Small Qualifications in Scotland, the Student-Led Project, Student Mental Wellbeing).

Building Confidence in Using Data and Evidence for Enhancement 6-week programme offered by QAA: We had two staff members attending this course and the value was evident in relation to understanding how to better evidence impact of our enhancement activity. This was a hugely valuable course and run alongside the independent sessions on survey design and the individual feedback sessions provided by the external evaluators, this focus on evaluation has had a huge impact on our approach.

Student Led Project Steering Group: We have had staff representation on the SLP steering group for Years One and Two of our Theme activity. We have found this to be hugely valuable for understanding and sharing best practice across the sector and gaining insight into the student experience in the context of an attendance university.

Evaluation

How do you intend to evaluate your year 3 projects and activities?

Prior to completing this section, it would be useful to refer to the QAAS website resource: [A Guide to Basic Evaluation in HE](#) (specifically, Section 8, Summary overview on page 23, and the Evaluation Checklist – Appendix A, on pages 28-29).

Please complete briefly the following 5 questions for each activity or intervention (N.B. Just cut and paste the table below as many times as necessary). This will help you complete your end of year 3 report.

Title of project/activity

Open to People: Forced Migration project development (Lead: Gill Ryan/Sylvia Warnecke)

1. What change is being made? (Brief description(s) of overall activity/intervention)

In partnership with the Scottish Refugee Council and Bridges Programmes Glasgow we have run a pilot programme for two cohorts of learners from a forced migration background, providing study support from an OU tutor to develop readiness for higher education. This started in November 2021, starting with 22 participants, and ran for 18 weeks. This part of the programme has now been delivered and 13 learners have completed. Finally, we have been providing information, advice and guidance (IAG) sessions for learners planning their next steps into higher education, including entry level Access Courses, micro-credentials, or OU modules.

2. Why are we making it? (Rationale for the change)

In January 2021, we invited third sector and community groups that support forced migrants in Scotland to a virtual roundtable event called Open to People. We invited them to contribute ideas for how the OU in Scotland could support their work and partner with them to improve learning opportunities for these communities. The projects build on the ideas and contributions of participants, who identified gaps in provision that the OU's expertise in online learning could help address.

The implementation of this partnership project contributed to us meeting three of the long-term outcomes of our work within the Theme:

- Widening Access: To provide access to education for people from the widest range of backgrounds
- Increasing Success: Once here, we aim to support all students in achieving their goals (personal, academic and professional) and to ensure a positive student experience
- Enhancement Activity: We work collaboratively to support, evaluate and improve learning, teaching and support activity.

This activity also contributes to the OU's bid to become a University of Sanctuary. Engaging with forced migrant communities also aligns with priorities in our Access, Participation & Success Scotland Plan and Outcome Agreement to make learning accessible to the widest range of learners, with specific targets for BAME and SIMD20 communities and for disabled people. Forced migrants are disproportionately represented in all three groups and experience intersectional disadvantage as a result.

3. What difference will hopefully occur as a result? (Tangible change made successfully or envisaged)

This programme will support their integration in Scotland and help them rebuild their lives. The Pathways into Study programme will support the development of the skills and confidence participants will need to succeed in higher education. We intend to track learner journeys through the programme and into formal study with the OU or other providers.

The learning from the pilots will inform how we respond and scale up the project in subsequent years. It will also help us identify what works and how the model can be adapted to meet the challenges that impact the most disadvantaged groups from accessing education or employment in Scotland.

The impact of the pilot will be assessed against our medium-term Theme outcomes:

- There is an increase of engagement with OpenLearn resources and registration for Access and/or Stage One modules following the pilot
- Support needs identified to help students through their learner journeys are implemented and existing policies are adapted to support these.

4. How will we know? (How is the change measured)

During the programme, the tutors had regular 1:1 review and planning sessions which will help us identify the progress they have made. We will follow up with a survey and request for interview in June 2022 to evaluate learners' experiences and identify outcomes such as intended journeys into formal education, improved confidence and increased skills for study. We will also interview the tutors and the partners who have supported learners through the programme, to enable us to capture all the learning from the pilot. This learning will inform future programmes.

We hope to create case studies, where students consent to this, which will contribute to a possible toolkit for organisations supporting forced migrants on their learning journeys. This toolkit will also include the programme and resources used in the pilot. We hope to host this on our OpenLearn Create platform.

Along with evaluation against these short-term outcomes, we will also evaluate against the medium and long-term outcomes mentioned above to ensure that the impact of the pilot is supporting our institutional strategic objectives.

Title of project/activity

Sense of belonging Toolkit refresh (Lead: Linda Thomson)

1. What change is being made? (Brief description(s) of overall activity/intervention)

The Sense of belonging toolkit is an output from a collaborative cluster from the previous theme, but the work fits in with current theme. The toolkit is focussed on creating a sense of belonging in online communities. It is an existing resource but needs updating with learning from COVID and we need to promote it more effectively to ensure that the learning from it can be embedded in practice across the sector.

2. Why are we making it? (Rationale for the change)

The changes to the resource are being made as a response to COVID-19 which has highlighted issues of isolation and loneliness within our student body and to tie-in with the current Theme activity within OUIS.

3. What difference will hopefully occur as a result? (Tangible change made successfully or envisaged)

We hope that the resource will become widely used across the sector, that it will support educators in taking their teaching online and will lead to an improved sense of belonging for students in online learning communities.

4. How will we know? (How is the change measured)

Measuring the impact of the resource has been challenging so far as there is no requirement to enrol before using the toolkit so we are not able to obtain data as to how many people have accessed it or ask users for feedback. Part of the work being done under this current Theme will be to incorporate a feedback loop into the toolkit to provide us with clear data as to how it is being used and its impact.

Title of project/activity

Supporting Students from Deprived Backgrounds' project (Lead: Anne Farquharson (Unlocking Potential)/Ewe Grzanka (PLA Retention pilot))

1. What change is being made? (Brief description(s) of overall activity/intervention)

As part of our 2017-20 Enhancement Theme activity, we researched and produced a report to better understand the extent of the SIMD20 attainment gap and to gather evidence to inform targeted interventions to support student success. This project was formed in three phases; research activity, collation and analysis of data and designing potential interventions based on work completed in phases 1 & 2 to reduce isolation and facilitate a sense of belonging. Phases 1 & 2 of the project in Y1 of this theme and by the previous project lead. The plan was to move onto phase 3 – disseminating the report outcomes and designing interventions. This phase has not been completed due to a change in staffing and capacity within the team.

At the start of 2022, OUIS began a new project called 'Unlocking Potential'. This project was led by the Marketing and Communications team with input from the Access, Participation and Success (APS) team and External Engagement and Partnerships team (EEP). The overarching objective is to identify how best to give those living in the most deprived areas of Scotland the capability, motivation and opportunity to access further or higher education.

The main objectives were as follows:

OU Outcomes:

- How better to reach out to this audience through your communications

- Enable you to focus on the most important barriers and concerns through your marketing
- To produce communications that inspire and increase the number of potential students that will step back into further or higher education

Wider Outcomes:

- To support wider development plans
- To provide insight to support government lobbying

PLA Retention Pilot

As part of the commitment of APS Scotland to supporting students from deprived areas, the new initiative will commence with collaboration from Personal Learning Advisor (PLA) Services at the Open University. This project is one of the test-and-learn initiative that will aim to address retention issues for learners from SIMD20 areas and offer enhance support at the early stages of their study journey. PLA Services offer mentoring and coaching session supporting student success, motivation and module retention. The offer will be advertised to a specific cohort of students starting their study journey with the OU in Scotland in October 2022.

Main objectives of the project are as follow:

- Offer early intervention support to 22J presentation to address the retention issue
- Reduce awarding gap - improve the rate of TMA returns for a pass
- Increase module completion rate
- Impact on students’ perceived image of themselves, build confidence and increase success and motivation
- Collaboratively work with PLA services to deliver one to one / one to many sessions support for a sustained amount of time
- Engage students from SIMD20 background, first in the family, low-mid pass probability range, and new to the OU

2. Why are we making it? (Rationale for the change)

Unlocking Potential

The new project was the result of discussions with the marketing teams and within the wider OUIS on how we could increase our engagement with people who may not consider university as an option.

The primary focus for stage one was to understand and explore the journey of OU students who have returned to study with the OU. Understanding the triggers / motivations and challenges overcome by OU students from deprived areas of Scotland will enable the OU to help others in multiple areas of deprivation to return to education

Stage two, which is a pilot of 2 areas, is to deepen the understanding of those living in areas of multiple deprivation and identify the most important barriers and concerns to access further or higher education. The OU will have clear recommendations on how best to develop inspirational communications that inspire and encourage an increase in the number of potential students from these areas returning to further / higher education.

PLA Retention Pilot

Pilot is a result of ongoing commitment to supporting SIMD20 students. Moreover, recently published results of Student Service Design approach conducted at the OU revealed original understanding how effectively enhance our services to increase student success including students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

- Human touch – when students ask for help, institutions need to understand their perspective and where they are in their journey. In this pilot, advisors will work with students and understand where they are starting their journey.
- Commitment – balancing life and study is hard and disadvantaged students tend to struggle for a long time before asking for help. Proactively offering the support at the beginning of the module will allow students to ask for the support much earlier in their journey and hopefully preventing withdrawal and increase retention.
- Accessibility & equity – disadvantaged students struggle to get help and submit their work. Mentoring support will be able to address this with the support during the regular sessions.

Pilot will provide an interesting data set for APSS team to consider future initiatives addressing the retention gaps among SIMD20 learners.

3. What difference will hopefully occur as a result? (Tangible change made successfully or envisaged)

Unlocking Potential

Phase 1 (students) of our research project was completed in May 2022. Phase 2 (potential students) has also been completed in the two pilot areas; one rural (Dumfries & Galloway) and one urban (Rutherglen & Cambuslang). The analysis of the data is currently underway.

PLA Retention

Long – terms impact of the project on the student cohort that will increase their students success with enhance mentoring support at the start of their journey, resulting in the increased module completion rate and positive impact on their confidence.

4. How will we know? (How is the change measured)

The data collected will help us to understand why students/potential students/those with no intention to study do and do not engage in university study, with a particular focus on the Open University.

Pilot will be monitored and evaluated by PLA Services and the student progress post-programme will be tracked.

Title of project/activity

EmployAbility programme (Lead: Eddie Tunnah)

1. What change has been made? (Brief description(s) of overall activity/intervention)

EmployAbility is a not-for-profit organisation that offers and charges employers for their consultancy services, so that they can provide free support to further the rights of disabled people. In early 2021 they offered a one-year collaboration with 10 universities in Scotland for a reduced charge to support disabled students and alumni. Three activities were delivered as part of this collaboration:

1. Three dedicated and tailored one-hour webinar sessions for Scottish university students were delivered between June 2021 and March 2022. These sessions were each run twice to maximise attendance.
2. Student 1:1 sessions were offered to provide individualised support and advice.
3. A two-part Empowering your students webinar was run for staff.

A key feature of EmployAbility's offer is an advocacy role around issues of disclosure and reasonable adjustments. The service was implemented as an enhanced offering to our students.

2. Why have we made it? (Rationale for the change)

The service provided additional support to enable disabled students and alumni to achieve positive career and personal development outcomes.

Positive employability outcomes for disabled qualifiers are significantly lower than those for their non-disabled peers.

- 59% of disabled OUIs respondents to the Employability of Qualifiers (EQS)* surveys of 2017, 2018 and 2019 (combined) were in employment and 36% of these were employed in professional occupations.

- 78% of non-disabled OUIs respondents to the EQS surveys of 2017, 2018 and 2019 (combined) were in employment and 50% were employed in professional occupations

- The OU's Employability of Qualifiers Survey (EQS) is a survey of OU leavers that takes place approximately 3.5 years after qualification. It is run to collect additional information that is not collected through the Graduate Outcomes (GO) survey, such as career change and career progression, and to get a picture of performance further out from time of qualification.

Implementation of this service contributes to meeting the long-term outcomes of our work within the Theme.

- Increasing Success: Once here we aim to support all student in achieving their goals (personal, academic and professional) and to ensure a positive student experience.

3. What difference will hopefully occur as a result? (Tangible change made successfully or envisaged)

83 OU students and recent alumni signed up to attend the webinars run by EmployAbility. The exact numbers of students and alumni that attended is unknown, but 20 OU students completed webinar evaluation forms and it is likely others attended too but didn't complete these forms.

Feedback from the OU students that did attend the webinars was generally positive, for example one recent alumni commented *'this was an excellent session hosted by two extremely knowledgeable and supportive representatives of EmployAbility. They provided invaluable guidance'*.

Unfortunately, the student 1:1 sessions didn't happen in a way that was possible to offer them to OU students. Nine OU staff attended the 'empowering your students' webinars, and informal feedback received was that the sessions were useful and informative.

We hope that attendance at the sessions contributes to meeting our medium-term Theme work goal of:

- Support needs identified to help students through their learner journeys are implemented and existing policies are adapted to support these.

4. How will we know? (How is the change measured)

It is too soon to measure the longer-term impact that attending the EmployAbility webinars had on the students. We are planning to check whether the students and alumni that attended the webinars have gone on to seek support from the OU's Careers and Employability Services department.

This data will allow us to understand whether the service has contributed to meeting the long-term outcomes expected, and therefore whether it is supporting our institutional strategic objectives and therefore contributing positively to the overall student experience.

Title of project/activity

Big Blether Series: Ewelina Grzanka

1. What change is being made? (Brief description(s) of overall activity/intervention)

The APS Scotland team has led on developing a series of 'Big Blether' events over the course of 21/22 where students can come together online in an informal setting to discuss areas of interest. The sessions are co-produced with the OU Students Association, by students for students, supported by staff at the Open University in Scotland. The 2021-22 pilot was funded from The Small Grants Scheme from the Think Positive Project of NUS Scotland, to deliver on actions in the Student Mental Health Agreement (SMHA).

The initial pilot ran in March, June and November in 2021 and in March 2022. This has been extended with the next session taking place in June 2022, to coincide with the end of exams at the OU.

2. Why are we making it? (Rationale for the change)

The implementation of the Big Blether series aims to meet the long-term outcomes of our work within the Theme:

- Increasing Success: We aim to support all students in achieving their goals (personal, academic and professional) and to ensure a positive student experience
- Student Voice: We will work in partnership with our students to ensure that the student voice informs all areas of our work
- Enhancement Activity: We work collaboratively to support, evaluate and improve learning, teaching and support activity.

Sense of Belonging and Student Community: We will foster a sense of belonging for our students as part of the Open University student community and help them forge their student identity.

3. What difference will hopefully occur as a result? (Tangible change made successfully or envisaged)

The aim of the series is to engage students meaningfully in the development of healthy cultures and communities, promoting good mental health and wellbeing through the sharing of knowledge and expertise. We will assess the impact of the series against medium term outcomes:

- Support needs identified to help students through their learner journeys are implemented and existing policies are adapted to support these
- Initiatives promoted more meaningfully using social media and marketing channels

Feedback surveys are sent to students after events and opportunity to collect qualitative feedback relating to impact is embedded in these.

The feedback obtained after each session has helped us shape the next iteration of the event. For instance, we obtained feedback and suggestion about improving accessibility and inclusion, so we included questions about accessibility needs in our registration, to allow us to plan better.

Student feedback suggests the events have contributed to a sense of belonging:

*"The session was well organized, welcoming, and inclusive. It was engaging and fun."
"I enjoyed being online amongst other people from OU and hearing them talk about things I related to. It made me feel motivated and less alone."*

4. How will we know? (How is the change measured)

In the short-term, we will be able to measure awareness and engagement through:

- Student awareness, registration and attendance are high
- Students engage with events or programmes during the sessions
- Feedback surveys are sent to students after events
- Students should have the opportunity to make suggestions within these so that future planning is informed by student voice
- Internal communication methods are utilised to raise staff awareness so they can signpost students to the series

Following each event, we will evaluate against these short-term outcomes, but also the medium and long-term outcomes mentioned above to ensure that the impact of Big Blether series is supporting our institutional strategic objectives and therefore contributing positively to the student experience.

Dissemination of work

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

Communication remains at the forefront of our approach to disseminating Theme work within OUIs and the sector. In Years One and Two we focused on sharing detail of our Theme activity with colleagues within OUIs to ensure an awareness of Theme work and to invite interest from colleagues who wanted to be involved within Theme activities. We utilize our Access, Participation and Success Steering Group, and Senior Staff Group meetings to disseminate the work that we are doing across our institution.

To share outcomes and resources internally, will continue to use our FIKA sessions which were an output of the last Enhancement Theme and have continued into this period. These are informal staff events where all staff can come together and learn about a project or initiative that other teams are working on to foster cross-institutional collaboration and engagement in an informal setting. These sessions used to be held as face-to-face events in our office however we have successfully moved them online since the pandemic. These events may well stay online as it allows for colleagues across Scotland and the other nations to attend.

The APS team and other teams that feed into the Enhancement themes work have collaborated more closely with the marketing and communications team(s) this year to allow us to better understand the engagement with our social media posts on enhancement related work. We have recently begun to scope a cross-service project relating to our approach to social media that we hope will allow us to disseminate some of this work to students in a manner that is engaging for them; highlighting the benefits of a student community to support resilience. If successful, this collaboration could be adapted for other social media channels allowing us to disseminate our Theme activity sector-wide.

Supporting staff and student engagement


How will you support your community to engage with planned activities?

The monthly ETIG (Enhancement Themes Institutional Group) meets to discuss individual project updates but also ideas and suggestions for the Enhancement theme work. The ETIG meeting for May 2022 focused on how the meeting could be more effective as attendance and engagement have been

decreasing over this academic year. The ETIG meetings have been paused over the summer to allow a focus on the lead up to our October registration period however the discussions on the focus, purpose and effectiveness for the ETIG will begin again in Autumn, with the aim of having a new format in place by the end of the year.

A key focus for us in increasing staff engagement has been relating to sharing the learning from the Building Confidence in Using Data and Evidence for Enhancement 6-week programme offered by QAA. OUIS had two staff members attending this course and the value was evident in relation to understanding how to better evidence impact of our enhancement activity and the importance of asking critical questions when engaging with evidence. Through this course we have been able to rethink our approach to the ETIG group and consider members in relation to their role as data subjects as well as key stakeholders.

We hope that by reframing our approach in this way, we will be able to better engage staff by mutually beneficial collaboration; sharing our learning from this course for others to embed into their own practice but also gaining an enhanced understanding of the work being undertaken within the institution that supports enhancement activity and its impact on both students and staff. In addition, learning from this course and feedback on our Year One report from the external evaluation specialists lead us to develop outcome statements against which we have been able to better evidence the impact of the projects listed above. These outcome statements allowed us to rationalise our data gathering to understand what we really wanted to know.

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