



Institutional Plan for: University of Stirling

This document will form your year 2 plan and should be around three to four sides of A4. You can find your year 1 plan 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.

The Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on Higher Education sets this plan, indeed the whole sector, in an unprecedented context. As we emerge from the pandemic, there continue to be significant challenges for all the communities of the University.

Whilst recognising these challenges, this plan aims to identify ongoing and potential opportunities for the enhancement of Learning & Teaching at Stirling, specifically in ways that strengthen the resilience of our learning communities. Our aim is to continue to support our students and staff through this period, whilst also developing insights, evaluations and innovations which will inform the future direction of Learning & Teaching.

The projects described in this plan are strategically aligned to the [University Learning and Teaching Quality Enhancement Strategy](#) and are approved through our governance structures as appropriate. These projects form just a part of the enhancement work being undertaken at the University but do provide an indication of the breadth and depth of the work involved.

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

Professor Alison Green
Dean for Teaching Quality Enhancement

TLG staff representative and activity lead: 6	Dr Tom Cunningham Academic Development Partner
TLG student representative and activity lead 5	Mr Calum Brown VP Education, Student's Union
Students' Union	Ms Rosamund Vickers Democracy & Representation Coordinator Students' Union
Activity lead: 1 & 2	Dr Ruth Watkins Head of Student Learning Services
Activity lead: 3	Ms Jill Stevenson Director of Student Services and Dean EDI
Activity lead 4	Mr Derek Robertson Digital Learning Manager
Activity lead 7	Professor Iain Docherty Dean Institute for Advanced Studies

Overall outcomes/activity

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

Our key priorities remain the same but the activities we will undertake will build on the work undertaken last year.

1. Support for Students

We continue to focus on supporting students through and beyond the Covid-19 pandemic, ensuring academic success and meaningful, valuable, student experiences. We want our students to achieve their potential, develop resilience and thrive; to be prepared for life beyond university and into employment. Supporting student mental health and wellbeing is central to this. Over the past two years, we have invested additional resources to increase staff in the counselling, wellbeing, mental health and student money teams. We have also recently launched a new joint University and Students' Union Mental Health Strategy. Key priorities include increasing mental health awareness training for staff and students, increasing mental health support in student residences, developing a student mental health module to be included in Stirling Essentials, and increasing resources to support staff who support students.

Through work in the first year of the Theme we are now delivering enhanced academic skills support and a new student life programme as part of this proactive approach to encourage successful students with good mental health.

2. Technology Enabled Education (TEE)

Following the evaluation of our learning from the experience of moving to TEE we will go on to consider how we wish to use this knowledge to embed good practice, meaningful change, and sustained improvements in Learning & Teaching at Stirling. The challenge is to embed the recognised advantages – such as in enhanced content delivery, module design and authentic assessment – as we return to more on-campus teaching. This will include consideration of how our Learning Spaces (both online and on-campus) can be best used and developed for the future.

This work will help shape the future direction of the University; the kinds of teaching we will offer, the learning experience for students, and how best we use our unique campus to shape our ongoing identity. It will feed into ongoing sector discussions about the scope, value and nature of Higher Education in Scotland.

3. Students as Partners in Learning (SPL)

Building on the success of this project in the first year of the Theme, when we recruited a group of students to “roadtest” modules in the new VLE template for academic staff, sharing their student perspective. This grew to include student partners involvement in staff development sessions, and student engagement officers employed in the work of Academic Development.

We wish to develop that work further this year to investigate de-colonising the curriculum and further developing peer mentoring. Further, we will continue to work with students as partners in the creation of a joint Anti Racism and Race Equality Strategy and in the delivery of recently approved joint strategies to promote mental health and prevent and respond to Gender Based Violence.

Year 2 outcomes/activity

In answering the following, identify what is continuing from year 1 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?

1. Support for students

Activity 1: (continuing) Academic Integrity

Priorities: We want to ensure our students fully understand good academic practice and are supported to act in an appropriate ethical manner towards their studies. We wish to raise awareness about academic integrity amongst staff and students.

Outcomes: We hope to increase awareness of academic integrity amongst our students and reduce the incidence of academic misconduct.

Activities: We will provide enhanced training and development for staff; launch our new academic integrity module for students; and raise awareness of academic integrity issues through guides and campaigns for staff and students.

Activity 2: (continuing) Transitions

Priorities: Building on the significant work done in AY20/21, we want to enhance support for transitioning students and ensure they are ready to undertake university study with the right skills, knowledge and attitudes.

Outcomes: We hope to support confidence, attainment and retention in transitioning cohorts.

Activities: An enhanced range of online workshops focusing on academic skills; digital skills; wellbeing while studying; and international language and cultural support. An improved version of our Stirling Essentials transition module. Masters' students will receive a new masters version of "Stirling Essentials" supported by academic skills transition workshops and enhanced study skills materials. Finally, we will develop more support for students moving into honours to support this transition.

Activity 3: (continuing) Student Life

Priorities: To extend our BeConnected Programme into a full student life programme on campus and online for the whole university community to engage with. We were able to deliver a range of events and activities online last year, supplemented by a small programme of face-to-face activities for students. We want to develop this further in AY21/22.

Outcomes: to improve community and a sense of belonging, support retention and encourage good mental health.

Activities: We have created a calendar of events and activities throughout the year with input from across the whole university community. The programme is based on the 5 ways to wellbeing themes and our aim in doing to so is to build community, support retention and support good mental health.

2. Technology Enabled Education (TEE)

Activity 4: (new) Hybrid Learning

Priorities: To introduce the technology and support pedagogy to deliver hybrid teaching as many of our students will be unable to attend campus due to Covid restrictions. This will offer us an additional approach for our TEE toolkit, which is evolving as we exit pandemic restrictions.

Outcomes: Some students will experience simultaneous sessions, with some attending online and some in-class.

Activities: we will support colleagues to deliver hybrid teaching through training and practical sessions and evaluate this activity with staff and students.

3. Students as Partners in Learning

Activity 5: (continuing) Peer support

Priorities: Our Students' Union hope to build on the success of our peer mentoring scheme (STEER) and our befriending scheme (Pandemic Pals), by transitioning that support out of the pandemic context into mainstream activity and expanding its reach. The "Pals" scheme operates with the Union matching students into small groups, based on year of study, degree and other shared interests.

Outcomes: recruit more students than in previous years as mentors and participants in STEER and to extend the number of students participating in the Pals scheme.

Activities: SU to train more mentors for the STEER scheme and participants to the Pals scheme by communicating the benefits to students. To work with the community to support participants and develop the schemes with the students as co-creators. Increasing awareness amongst students and staff of the STEER and Pals programmes.

Activity 6: (new) Decolonising the curriculum student audit

Priorities: Building on the successful events of last year in the collaborative cluster on decolonising the curriculum (led by Dr Catriona Cunningham previously of UoS) we will appoint student auditors to interrogate identified degree programmes. They will explore what more can be done to decolonise the programmes involved.

Outcomes: A student written report with some suggested recommendations for each Programme.

Activities: complete student led project on actions required to de-colonise a small range of programmes. Develop action plans to implement recommendations

Evaluation

How do you intend to evaluate your year 2 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 2 report.

Title of project/activity
Priority 1: Academic Integrity
What change is being made? (Brief description(s) of overall activity/intervention)
The University approved a new academic integrity policy in September 2020 (refined 2021) and signed the QAA Academic Integrity Charter in 2021. In 2020-21 we developed an academic integrity module for students which will launch in Autumn 2021.
Why are we making it? (Rationale for the change)
We want to ensure our students fully understand good academic practice and are supported to act in an appropriate ethical manner towards their studies. International students, for example, can sometimes struggle to understand the UK approach in this area.

Priority 1: Academic Integrity

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

The University approved a new academic integrity policy in September 2020 (refined 2021) and signed the QAA Academic Integrity Charter in 2021. In 2020-21 we developed an academic integrity module for students which will launch in Autumn 2021.

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

We want to ensure our students fully understand good academic practice and are supported to act in an appropriate ethical manner towards their studies. International students, for example, can sometimes struggle to understand the UK approach in this area.

What difference will hopefully occur as a result? (Tangible change envisaged)

By doing so we hope to increase awareness of academic integrity amongst our students and reduce the incidence of academic misconduct.

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

Monitoring academic misconduct behaviours and data. Monitoring student engagement with the new Academic Integrity module.

Title of project/activity

Priority 2: Transitions

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

We have increased resources in our Student Learning Services team to offer a hub and spoke style support structure for students in faculties

Enhanced support for the transition into university, including online workshops and an improved version of Stirling Essentials transitions module. We will develop more support for students moving into Honours to support this transition. Masters' students will be offered a version of Stirling Essentials appropriate to their need in addition to revised study skills materials.

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

In 2020-21 we focussed development on supporting student transition into higher education particularly addressing impact of Covid19 and potential learning gap experienced by many students. This challenge has, if anything, grown over the course of the pandemic.

What difference will hopefully occur as a result? (Tangible change envisaged)

Students will be confident in the skills they require to success through key transition points.

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

Feedback from students and monitoring module grades and retention figures.

Title of project/activity

Priority 3: (continuing) Student Life

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

To extend our BeConnected Programme into a full student life programme on campus and online for the whole university community to engage with.

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

We were able to deliver a range of events and activities online last year, supplemented by a small programme of face-to-face activities for students. We want to develop this further in AY21/22

What difference will hopefully occur as a result? (Tangible change envisaged)

To improve community and a sense of belonging, support retention and encourage good mental health.

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

Recording the numbers of students engaging in the events and activities and analysing scores in the NSS and Student Experience Survey on feeling part of a community.

Title of project/activity

Priority 4: (continuing) Hybrid Learning

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

To introduce the technology and support pedagogy to deliver hybrid teaching.

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

Many of our students will be unable to attend campus due to Covid restrictions.

What difference will hopefully occur as a result? (Tangible change envisaged)

Students will experience simultaneous sessions, with some attending online and some in-class.

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

Monitoring usage of the technology and by gathering feedback from staff and students on their experiences.

Title of project/activity

Priority 5: (continuing) Peer support

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

Our Students' Union hope to build on the success of our peer mentoring scheme (STEER) and our befriending scheme (Pandemic Pals), by transitioning that support out of the pandemic context into mainstream activity and expanding its reach.

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

We wish to develop more peer led support as an important element of support transition, mental health and retention.

What difference will hopefully occur as a result? (Tangible change envisaged)

To work with the community to support participants and develop the schemes with the students as co-creators. Increasing awareness amongst students and staff of the STEER and Pals programmes

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

Recruit more students than in previous years as mentors and participants in STEER and to extend the number of students participating in the Pals scheme.

Title of project/activity

Priority 6: (new) decolonising the curriculum

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

Building on the successful events of last year in the collaborative cluster on decolonising the curriculum (led by Dr Catriona Cunningham previously of UoS) we will appoint student auditors to interrogate identified degree programmes.

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

This project will inform change in those programmes and share best practice across other programmes.

What difference will hopefully occur as a result? (Tangible change envisaged)

This project will also feed into and align with a new University and Students' Union Anti-Racism and Race Equality Strategy (under development, coordinated by the Race Equality Strategy Group.)

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

A student written report with some suggested recommendations for each Programme.

Dissemination of work

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

We use internal staff and student communication channels including a digital "Round Up" each week along with social media to spread news of developments. The work of the Theme, including the Collaborative Clusters, is shared on our internal Learning & Teaching Sharepoint site. Our annual Learning & Teaching Festival shares the work of the Theme – in 2021 this included a keynote from the leaders of the Resilient Academic Leadership cluster, sharing their work with colleagues at Stirling

We will also have poster campaigns on some of the projects as students return to campus.

Externally we will disseminate through the Enhancement Theme leaders' group, SHEEC; social media and possible workshops which are open to the sector.

Supporting staff and student engagement

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

We will work closely with our Students' Union and other student networks to support engagement ensuring they are communicated well, accessible and inclusive. Staff who are undertaking substantive work under the theme will have time negotiated with their line managers to do so and the rest of the staff community will be encouraged to engage through good communication.

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