End of Year 1 Report for: Glasgow Caledonian University

The key purposes of this report are to:-

- provide a framework for HEIs to report on their Theme activity that has taken place over the year
- help share information across the sector on the benefits and challenges around Theme engagement.

Please report under the headings below. The report should be about 6 to 8 sides of A4 in length.

Institutional team

Identify any changes in Theme leadership, TLG and institutional team membership since details were reported in the institutional plan developed at the start of the academic year.

Prof. Nicola Andrew has now retired from the University and is no longer a member of the Institutional Team. Alen MacKinley Associate Academic Registrar (Quality Assurance and Enhancement) is on the group so they are assured that there is no significant gap? We are currently working with the Students' Association to identify a new member of the team to replace Zoe Nicholson who has now finished her term of office.

Evaluation of activities/outcomes

To make evaluation processes more accessible and user friendly, we have attempted to simplify (not minimise) the evaluation reporting process into 7 key questions (see below). Prior to completing these, 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 report each activity/intervention against the following questions in the Evaluation part of the template.

N. B. You may have already realised some of your objectives and/or these might be ongoing, so please delineate each question according to whether activities or interventions have been completed already in this reporting year or are in process.

(Easiest way is to delete either/or options highlighted in red in questions below):

Evaluation

Please complete the following 7 questions for each activity or intervention (N.B. Just cut and paste the table below as many times as necessary)

Title of project/activity
Understanding What Resilience means to our students
1. What change is being made? (Brief description(s) of overall activity/intervention)
This activity is a small-scale research study designed to explore our students understanding of the concept of 'resilience'. A student-intern will be employed to undertake a desk study, internal consultation, and then to collect data from students across the University. No 'change' is being made. We are currently preparing for the study which will be conducted once students are back on campus to study in AY2021-22.
2. Why are we making it? (Rationale for the change)
Understanding our students' conception of resilience, will allow us to better plan how we incorporate activities that develop resilience into the curriculum. We are specifically interested in the particular experiences of differentiated student groups such as our Graduate Apprentice cohort who have a very different student experience than the wider UG community. Although we will target all students with the survey, focus groups will be held with key differentiated groups to identify their particular experiences and needs.
3. What difference will hopefully occur as a result? (Tangible change made successfully or envisaged)
A project output is planned, for presentation at our Learning and Teaching sub-Committee (October meeting) with recommendations for how students as a whole, and particular groups of students, can be supported to develop resilience within and alongside their study. The findings of the study will be used to plan developmental activities for our students. For example, understanding student needs and expectations will be used to inform the development of in-house career resilience training being planned by our Careers Service.
4. How will we know? (How is the change measured)
As this is not a change or traditional intervention but rather an exploratory study, 'success' criteria are somewhat different: the project report, submitted to the relevant committee will be evidence of success.
5. Who is involved in making any judgements? (Who decides on effectiveness)
Staff with responsibility for specific differentiated student groups will be consulted during the design of the study and its analysis, to ensure that the study meets their needs.
6. Any lessons learned to apply already? (Applied ongoing learning)
Not yet.
7. Any things you have stopped/need to stop doing? (Any unsuccessful elements)
Not yet.

Title of project/activity
Common Good Attributes and Employability

1. What change has been/is being made? (Brief description(s) of overall activity/intervention)
We have commissioned a study exploring how our revised (for our new Strategy for Learning 2030) Common Good Attributes, including Resilience can best be articulated for our students as employability skills. While Common Good Attributes are defined in the Strategy for Learning, it is important that they are presented to students in a way that they can engage with them, and relate them to their own experience and use them to reflect on their future personal development. This will involve collecting student views on what the Common Good Attributes mean to them and what support they would like to develop these attributes in class, and beyond. Examples of best practice (in course, and co-curricular) will be collected and the project will produce student facing resources that demonstrate Common Good Attributes in action.

2. Why have we made/are we making it? (Rationale for the change)
Our new Strategy for Learning includes a re-fresh of our Common Good Attributes which now include an additional attribute entitled 'Resilience, Compassion and Empathy. The SfL also includes an action (3) to *enhance the employability, knowledge, skills and attributes of all our students through curricular and co-curricular activities that will prepare them for a competitive global marketplace'*. As we begin to implement the Strategy for Learning, it is important to raise student awareness of the Common Good Attributes (particularly the new ones, including Resilience, Empathy and Compassion), how they form a key component of the GCU learning experience, can be developed through an engaging curriculum, and how they will contribute to students' overall employability as they complete their degree at GCU.

3. What difference has occurred/will hopefully occur as a result? (Tangible change made successfully or envisaged)
This project aims to generate a range of examples of Common Good attributes in practice. These resources will be presented in a manner that is relevant and appealing to our students. Our students will be more aware of the new Common Good Attributes, understand why they are important, and how their learning experience at GCU is shaped by them.

4. How do we/will we know? (How is the change measured)
The success of the activity will be monitored through the following measures: - Awareness of CGA and employability activities across the University will increase - We will monitor use and utility of resources created. - Students can apply to obtain a Common Good Award, and as part of the portfolio they submit, we should see evidence of engagement with all attributes.

5. Who has been/is involved in making any judgements? (Who decides on effectiveness)
The work will be overseen by a short-life working group on Employability which has been established. This group reports in to our Learning and Teaching sub-Committee where outputs from this activity will be tabled and reviewed.

6. Any lessons learned to apply already? (Applied ongoing learning)
Not yet

7. Any things you have stopped/need to stop doing? (Any unsuccessful elements)
Not yet

Title of project/activity
Embedding the Sustainable Development Goals in the Curriculum

1. What change has been/is being made? (Brief description(s) of overall activity/intervention)
Over the summer, we are conducting a student-led audit/mapping exercise that will document the various ways in which UN Sustainable Development Goals (part of the new Strategy for Learning) are embedded in our course curricula, in ways that meet the needs of our diverse student communities. The purpose of this mapping is to identify existing good SDG-related practice at GCU; open up a discussion within and across faculties; and establish a quantitative baseline of the presence of SDGs in the curriculum, with a view to measuring progress over time. A key aspect of the approach is to actively involve students in curriculum change. The audit takes place using module descriptors. Pairs of student auditors review module descriptors to identify to what extent the themes encompassed by the SDGs are included (scale: 'explicit, implicit, or 'not at all'). In addition to this, students can use the same scoring system to assess the extent that wider aspects of sustainability learning are included. Student evaluators will note any further information they wish to highlight (e.g. particularly strong examples or areas of opportunity for further embedding of sustainability) and will also flag any questions which have arisen. The exercise will generate a series of examples of best practice for showcasing across the University.

2. Why have we made/are we making it? (Rationale for the change)
Our new Strategy for Learning includes a commitment to the UN SDGs, and includes an action (4) to 'embed a commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals within our research-led, globally aware curriculum'. As we implement the Strategy for Learning, it is important to raise awareness of our commitment to Sustainable Development Goals and to demonstrate how our research-led curriculum embeds them. Students who have engaged with Sustainable Development Goals during their studies will be more globally aware, responsible, and take these attributes forward into their chosen career.

3. What difference has occurred/will hopefully occur as a result? (Tangible change made successfully or envisaged)
We hope that this student-led mapping exercise will lead to: - to identify existing good SDG-related practice at GCU - generate examples of good practice in embedding of SDGs into the curriculum. - open up a discussion within and across faculties; - establish a quantitative baseline of the presence of SDGs in the curriculum

4. How do we/will we know? (How is the change measured)
The success of this exercise will be evaluated through reflective discussions with key stakeholders, post-mapping surveys of student auditors, and the production of a bank of examples of practice.

5. Who has been/is involved in making any judgements? (Who decides on effectiveness)

The short-life working group on Sustainable Development Goals will oversee work on this topic. The group reports in to the Learning and Teaching sub-Committee where outputs from this activity will be tabled and reviewed.

6. Any lessons learned to apply already? (Applied ongoing learning)
Not yet

7. Any things you have stopped/need to stop doing? (Any unsuccessful elements)
Not yet

Dissemination of work

Which mechanisms have been most effective in disseminating outcomes and resources internally, and to the sector? Please provide examples.

If there are materials and resources you can share with the sector, please provide details below.

Our institutional team includes staff from across the University, with strong representation from professional services, as well as the Students Association. The institutional team (and associated MS Teams Space) has been the primary mechanism for discussing and disseminating Theme activity with team members cascading information at local level. We have also made use of our newly established Senior Fellows (of the HEA) community on MS Teams. This newly established virtual community of experienced and engaged staff has been particularly engaged with the collaborative cluster work.

The networks created by the Collaborative Clusters have made our involvement in these projects particularly awarding this year. Forced to adopt an online approach by COVID, the webinar (as opposed to day conference) nature of events has allowed cluster activities to extend their reach and made the more visible.

Collaboration outwith your institution

How have you collaborated with other institutions? This could be informally by growing networks or contacts, or more formally for example, through collaborative clusters or sector work. If you have been collaborating with others, briefly explain what this has involved and what have been the benefits and challenges.

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. Glasgow Caledonian University is leading two Collaborative Clusters this Theme Year:

Dr 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.** The project has held 4 professional development seminars have concluded with 600 attendees in total. The seminars focused on both BAME and LGBTQI+ Student Communities to highlight intersectionality: the second explored specific barriers and support for STEM Students, and third Trans Students. Students are currently being recruited for nominal group sessions to be conducted before the end of June. Resources and Reports are in preparation.

Dr 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. The cluster has produced a series of five blog posts to communicate its ideas, and has adapted the Evidencing Value Framework (created for the previous enhancement theme) to explore Resilient Academic Leadership around three areas of Identities and Places, Positions and Paradoxes, and Lived Practice, and a range of metaphors to guide practice.

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

Dr 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 has provided 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.

Dr 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. Our involvement in the project has led to many internal discussions to check the appetite for a similar approach internally. 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.

Dr 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

How have staff and students been supported to engage in Theme activities? Please provide examples.

The main route to engagement with the Theme for staff and students has been through the institutional Team which includes representation from across the University Institutional team meetings are held after each TLG to discuss activities. TLG papers and bulletins are shared. These meetings are an effective decision-making forum and staff cascade news and decisions to their own part of the university. Institutional Team meeting discussions and Them updates are shared on the inst. SharePoint Pages. The newly established Senior Fellows (HEA) MS Teams forum provides a mechanism for more informal dissemination. Our major dissemination activity was to have been through our Annual Teaching and Learning event in May but this was postponed until Jan 2022.

Several of our collaborative cluster projects have consulted local staff and students.

It has been more challenging to engage our wider student community in the work of the theme to date. In previous years, this has been through on campus campaigns but with all students studying remotely, this tried and tested route has been unavailable.

Processes

What are you learning from the processes, approaches and structures you are using to support this Theme?

How will this report be used/distributed within your institution?

In the previous theme, we integrated Theme work alongside the work of the enhancing the student experience steering group, a key strategic grouping in the University. While this was effective in integrating Theme work, it became difficult to clearly highlight theme activity across the University. For this theme, we have reverted to a more traditional model, with an Institutional Team acting as a steering group. This has the advantage of providing a dedicated forum for Theme discussions (e.g. agreeing priorities and activities) and seems more appropriate for the topic focus of 'resilient learning communities'. The compressed nature of year 1 of this theme has been a challenge, with all our activities only now being finalised. It takes some time to slot activities into the natural rhythm of strategic enhancement activity in the University. This has been even more difficult in 2020-21 as staff and students have had to cope with the additional demands of COVID. Nevertheless, new comms channels have been established and are proving effective.

This report will be tabled at our Learning and Teaching Support Committee. The evaluation summaries will be used for ongoing monitoring of key ET activities through regular meetings of our Institutional Team.

Enhancement Theme outputs, including this document when on the ET website, are linked from our Institutional SharePoint page (internal) and University Enhancement Theme web page (public).

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