

End of Year 1 Report for: University of the West of Scotland

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.

The Head of Learning Transformation – Dr Chris O'Donnell has joined the group from July 2021. For year two following the recent round of elections in our Student Union, Luke Humberstone, Vice President Welfare and Wellbeing will join the TLG. Meg Dunn will also join the group to support the work on reviewing the personal tutor system and Emilia Pietka-Nykaza joins the group as a programme leader.

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
Development of the UWS Curriculum Framework
Establish the key themes for the curriculum framework around resilient learning communities given the evolving external environment, the diverse nature of the UWS student body, the impact of delivery in 20/21 and the UWS Corporate Strategy priorities.
1. What change is being made? (Brief description(s) of overall activity/intervention)
<p><i>UWS Strategy 2025</i> sets out the ambitions for the University of the West of Scotland UWS for the next five years as well as laying the foundation for the University towards 2050. The Learning and Teaching Thematic Plan fleshes out that strategy with six overall objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Our portfolio of programmes is contemporary, relevant, sustainable, and allows students to thrive in the rapidly-changing 21st century workplace.2. The delivery modes of our programmes of study are flexible, and student-centred, allowing students to manage the mode, intensity and duration of study. All have hybrid delivery options.3. Our online and physical learning environments are dynamic, technology-rich and support world-class pedagogy.4. Students are at the heart of what we do. The UWS student journey is personal, seamless, and supported by outstanding Personal, Professional and Academic staff and functional, student-centred and user-friendly systems and processes.5. Our graduates are leaders, with world-ready, interdisciplinary meta-skills and flexible, global perspectives.6. Our talented staff employ innovative, student-centred, teaching and learning practice and engage in continuing development in pedagogy, digital learning innovation and student support. <p>Key to the achievement of these objectives is an underpinning approach to curriculum design and teaching delivery. The new Curriculum Framework outlines that underpinning approach and adopts the following curriculum design principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flexible and hybrid, using best-in-class technologies and pedagogies, meeting the learning needs of students in contemporary Scotland;• Simple and coherent, providing carefully-designed linear pathways for students whether part-time or full-time; on-campus or online, starting in first year or joining at any time in their degree pathway;• Student-centred, thus designed to meet the diverse needs of the distinctive UWS student cohorts, using a flexible and agile approach to curriculum that responds better to the needs of each student and considers and seeks to impact positively on the wellbeing of all students;• Authentic, using real-world learning activities and assessments to best prepare students for the complex and ever-changing professional world and society in which they live and work;• Inclusive, recognizing the diversity of the student body, and the need to be accessible to all.• Sustainable, with efficient structures, pathways and number of modules.

This framework will be applied to PGT and UGT programmes and phased in by Schools from 2020/21 onwards as part of a phased implementation within the *UWS Student Experience Programme* (workstream 1: portfolio renewal), with full implementation achieved by 23/24.

The framework was developed in draft by the Vice Principal (Learning Teaching Students) portfolio in consultation with the Provost, Deans and school leadership during January-February 2021. It has received significant university-wide consultation, including at a Vice Chancellors Executive Group workshop in February; two meetings of Education Advisory Committee and its subcommittees; focus groups with all programme leaders, who then workshopped with programme teams and provided feedback; workshops with UWS Academy, Education Futures and Student Services; and a survey of all UWS staff conducted in May 2021. The Student Union (with Support from QuEST) ran consultation and feedback workshops on the draft framework with students to help inform the content and principles.

2. Why **have we made/are we making** it? (Rationale for the change)

The UWS Curriculum Framework is a key component of the new Learning and Teaching Thematic Plan, and the Student Experience Programme (through which that plan will be implemented) The UWS Curriculum Framework aims to articulate the pedagogical and curriculum design principles through which we make real the strategic goals for education in the *UWS Strategy 2025*.

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

The following activities are planned for session 2021/22 and 2022/23 as part of the implementation of the Curriculum Framework and the overarching Student Experience Project and in line with the core principles of the UWS Strategy 2025

- Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Portfolio Review
- Launch of the UWS Curriculum Incubator Project to support programme enhancements
- Move to Aula Virtual Learning Environment
- Implementation of the UWS Curriculum Framework – approved Senate 2021.
- Review of the Student Journey and associated Touchpoints and Systems
- Review of Policy and Procedures

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

Each of these projects is being overseen by a workstream board with representation from across the institution, Schools, Student Union, Professional Services and Trade Unions. The workstreams have engaged with the internal audit and Equality and Diversity teams to ensure that Equality Impact Assessments and Risk Management are informing the work and activities. The Workstreams are supported by our Project Management Office to manage progress and record actions and output and ensure that there is communication between workstreams.

Change will be captured through review of undergraduate portfolio in session 2022 and monitored via ILR, programme approvals and annual monitoring. The Curriculum Incubator project will also support the creation of programmes that embody the CF allowing for the sharing of effective practice across the institution. Full implementation of the CF is scheduled for 2023. Key changes on assessment approaches, NSS results and clearly developed programme specific approaches to hybrid delivery will be core measurables.

5. Who **is** involved in making any judgements? (Who decides on effectiveness)

There will be various stages of evaluation on effectiveness and for some activities such as the UG portfolio review effectiveness may take years to show an impact.

Vice Chancellors Executive Group

<p>Student Experience Overarching Project Boards</p> <p>Individual Workstream Boards and Leads</p> <p>Senate</p>
<p>6. Any lessons learned to apply already? (Applied ongoing learning)</p>
<p>The importance of effective and professional project management in driving forward progress, the need to have the right people in the room at the right time. The need to identify risks at the start and build in mitigations and contingencies.</p>
<p>7. Any things you have stopped/need to stop doing? (Any unsuccessful elements)</p>
<p>We have just launched the framework in 2021, reporting on this aspect will be more appropriate in session 2021/22.</p>

<p>Title of project/activity</p>
<p>Review the Student Representation data to understand our journey over the last 3 years and the impact of development and strategies put in place through the Student Representation and Policy Coordinator</p>
<p>1. What change has been/is being made? (Brief description(s) of overall activity/intervention)</p>
<p>The Students' Union has initiated and carried out a number of changes to the student representation system and to the support provided for student representatives, with a view to strengthening the ability of representatives to be effective bringing about change.</p>
<p>2. Why have we made/are we making it? (Rationale for the change)</p>
<p>A study of the student representation system carried out by the Students' Union in 2019 ("Representation Research 2019 Key Recommendations", by Clare Hunter and Sabina Lawrie of the UWS Students' Union) resulted in a number of recommendations for strengthening the effectiveness of the system. Following these recommendations, changes are being made in order to increase the level of engagement by elected student representatives with the representation system, with the aim of enabling student views to be clearly and effectively made known to the university.</p>
<p>3. What difference has occurred/will hopefully occur as a result? (Tangible change made successfully or envisaged)</p>
<p>There have been several tangible changes in 2020-21.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Students' Union has continued to make improvements to the training of student representatives. Staff of the university have remarked on the increased confidence of student representatives and on their increasing level of engagement with their roles. • A system of online elections for student representatives has been established, to supplement the previous classroom-based system. In 2020-21, 55% of representatives were elected by the online system. Relative to those elected in the classroom, representatives elected by the online system have shown a higher level of engagement: a higher proportion (77%, compared to 55%) has taken part in the training provided by the Students' Union, and their level of attendance at

<p>meetings of the Student Council has been higher (51%, compared to 17%, attended at least one meeting of the Council).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Students' Union has provided a Microsoft Teams site for use by student representatives. This more informal means of communication has proved to be effective, with 90% of representatives being active on the site over a three-month period, and with an increased level of peer support as shown by the numbers of representatives answering questions from other representatives. • A consistently maintained database of student representatives and an annual survey of the views and experiences of representatives has enabled a more detailed analysis of their effectiveness and engagement. • Student Council moved from a 5 Campus Video Conference format to an online Zoom meeting format. This has increased attendance at every meeting, and enabled reps to participate both by speaking and by using the chat which enables greater and overlapping participation.
<p>4. How do we/will we know? (How is the change measured)</p>
<p>As described in the previous section.</p>
<p>5. Who has been/is involved in making any judgements? (Who decides on effectiveness)</p>
<p>The representation team at the Students' Union. The intention is also to include the state of representation as a standing item of business on the renewed Student Experience Committee going forwards.</p>
<p>6. Any lessons learned to apply already? (Applied ongoing learning)</p>
<p>The current system of student representation has not yet been effective for postgraduate research students. Although a scan of systems for PGR representation in other universities has not shown that UWS's practices are out of line with those elsewhere, the Students' Union intends to give consideration to enhancing PGR representation in future.</p>
<p>7. Any things you have stopped/need to stop doing? (Any unsuccessful elements)</p>
<p>We have stopped running Student Council in person, a decision accelerated by the pandemic, and are unlikely to return to in person meetings.</p>

<p>Title of project/activity</p>
<p>Refresh and Relaunch of the Student Experience Committee</p>
<p>1. What change has been/is being made? (Brief description(s) of overall activity/intervention)</p>
<p>Changes to the operation of the Student Experience Committee, intended to strengthen its ability to be active in securing the quality of the student experience.</p>
<p>2. Why are we making it? (Rationale for the change)</p>
<p>In order to strengthen the SEC's effectiveness in fulfilling its remit by playing an active role in securing the quality of the student experience. To strengthen partnership and engagement with students and provide a partnership forum for discussion and debate on key issues affecting and</p>

informing the student experience. To enhance communication between the University and Students (ELIR 2019 outcome)

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

We intend that the SEC will become more active in making recommendations, in overseeing enhancements, and in monitoring and reporting to the Education Advisory Committee in respect of activities which will enhance the student experience across the university. Provision of a stronger voice for our student representatives, ensure appropriateness of agenda items and remit, and provide enhanced clarity on responsibilities to reduce potential overlap with other committees.

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

We will know that the SEC has been more effective when

(1) agenda items for the Education Advisory Committee relating to the quality of the student experience are seen having been arisen from the SEC

(2) enhancements to the student experience, localised or university-wide, are actively monitored and overseen by the SEC

(3) it will established an annual cycle of business which enables it explicitly to align its work with the university's own strategic priorities

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

Chair of SEC

Chair of EAC

Head of QuEST

Current members of SEC

Student Representation Coordinator in SU

Sabbatical Officers

6. Any lessons learned to apply already? (Applied ongoing learning)

An independent study of the work of the SEC over the past three years has led to a number of recommendations with a view to empowering it to be more active in securing the quality of the student experience. This has been used by the university to inform the changes outlined above.

7. Any things you **have stopped/need to stop** doing? (Any unsuccessful elements)

Duplicating agenda items, duplicating membership and reducing communication channels.

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.

Focus Groups and Workshop have been effective in promotion understanding and awareness of the Curriculum Framework. This was also processed through the usual committee structures (EAC/Senate) and promoted through the use of the e-bulletin and updates provided via the Principals All Staff Update Meetings.

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.

Khadija Mohammed, Senior Lecturer at UWS sits on the Project Executive Group for the Anti-Racist Curriculum Project and is a passionate and proactive supporter of this work of this project and has been actively engaging with colleagues from across these sector on this work as well as shaping and supporting the work internally to UWS with our Deputy Principal and Provost.

Supporting staff and student engagement

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

There has been excellent partnership working with the Student Union around the facilitation of student feedback workshop to review the draft curriculum framework and through the review of the student representation work. The review of SEC and creation of the new forum will be a tripartite initiative with the previous members of SEC, EAC and the Students Union to ensure appropriateness of role, remit and membership.

Processes

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

The key lesson has been about including the right people at the right time in terms of ensuring engagement and achievement of goals. The effect of staff absences and the lack of availability of resources and input from key areas due to vacancies has impacted on progress. The support of the Project Officer has been invaluable in providing thinking and reflection space and has also enabled us to progress a core piece of working with this academic year rather than causing a delay into year 2.

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

The report will be shared through the committee and governance structures – namely Academic Quality Committee and Education Advisory Committee/Senate. The content will be explored at the Vice Principal (Learning Teaching Students) Direct Report meeting and will form the basis for the 2021 Enhancement Theme Newsletter will be shared across the University by the all staff e-bulletin. This report and underpinning evidence and reporting will inform the development of the refreshed “Student Partnership Forum”.

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