



Student Transitions Enhancement Theme: End of Year 3/End of Theme Synopsis

The key purposes of this report are to:-

- provide a framework for HEIs to report on their Year 3 activity
- help share information across the sector on the benefits and challenges around Theme engagement.

Institution	
Heriot-Watt University	
Theme Leaders' Group institutional representative(s)	
Name(s) here: Dr Irene Malcolm, Centre for Academic Leadership and Development	
Institutional team membership	
Dr Mohanaraj Balakrishnan	MFP, Malaysia
Ms Angela Cassidy	SoTD
Dr Santiago Chumbe	MACS
Dr Alasdair Gray	MACS
Dr Amanda Hughes	EPS, Dubai
Dr Hans-Wolfgang Loidl	MACS
Dr Manuel Maarek	MACS

- 1. Outline what was achieved in relation to your Year 3 plan of work at the time of submitting this report.**
- 2. Identify what future outcomes are anticipated to be delivered by the end of the Theme.**
- 3. Have there been any unintended outcomes/unexpected findings?**

1. Achievements

The University's Enhancement Panel approved seven learning and teaching development projects that draw on the theme of Student Transitions. This was the outcome of a detailed process of engagement and peer-feedback that took place between 15.11.16 and 19.12.16. The project teams include colleagues and students from all Heriot-Watt's international campuses, with all projects offering students opportunities to show leadership (see Heriot-Watt University's "media element"). Each project has involved student team members and each project submitted student reviews.

Liaison and information-sharing with other Scottish universities

Liaison with other Scottish universities has been on-going. Heriot-Watt hosted a very successful Enhancement ideas-sharing meeting on 22.2.17. Attendees from other universities included representatives from the Universities of Glasgow, Edinburgh and Queen Margaret University. All HWU projects attended and the information exchange that took place led to some further collaboration and networking (see below).

Selected project achievements

All seven projects are on target to achieve their planned outcomes. Every project has had one or more student reviewers. The student reviews (submitted to QAA in April, 2017) indicate high levels of student participation and leadership. The projects are very innovative and their success is considerable, particularly in view of the short time-scale and small budget. For example, one project is developing virtual reality for manipulation and student interaction with new engineering rigs. The project is a test-bed for the remote use of engineering rigs as part of reconfiguring lab teaching. This is extremely innovative and represents a significant step forward in Engineering education that promotes student engagement and student autonomous learning. The augmented reality project has been run jointly by the Schools of Engineering and Maths and Computing; it has been led by staff and students at the Dubai campus, working with colleagues and students in Edinburgh. The project team has suggested that an augmented reality approach may be useable in other areas and disciplines. A video will be available to demonstrate the result of the project.

Another project run by the School of Maths and Computing with Registry has produced an APP that is linked to the new HWU student portal. This project has contributed substantially to University strategic developments and, once again, students have played an important leadership role. By connecting an APP to the new HWU portal, the project has facilitated better content and a dashboard for students at all international campuses. Questions to support the refinement of this are now included in the annual student survey. The Portal went live in March and, so far, feedback has been very positive.

Another project has further developed the assessment of computer programming skills in a way that is formative and summative. This project has involved both the Edinburgh and the Dubai campuses. The project has promoted self-paced learning and learning beyond the classroom.

The project team has liaised with the School of Social Science where the approach will also be used. This work makes an important contribution to Heriot-Watt's strategy by building on a pilot study and linking to the Graduate Apprenticeship programme.

2. Future outcomes

- A number of the projects will be presenting at the QAA International Enhancement Conference in June 2017.
- A number of projects have plans to publish papers in scholarly, peer-reviewed journals.
- The Enhancement ideas-sharing meeting in February, 2017 led two projects to consider further the issue of android or iPhone and what technology platforms are most appropriate for use and wide dissemination.
- The APP for the new student portal will be available over time and will enhance communication with students during their transitions to university study.
- Heriot-Watt University's Degree Apprenticeships will be informed by practices developed as part of these projects.

3. (Un)intended outcomes

The project teams at HWU have been very focused on achieving the agreed objectives and they have been encouraged, through feedback and the redesign of the application form, to consider their objectives strategically by focussing on specific steps to meet these. The teams have been encouraged to focus on scholarship, but also on producing results that directly affect teaching practices and the student experience. This targeted approach and the support provided has received positive feedback from project teams.

Networking and liaison across campuses, HWU Schools and the Scottish sector

A collateral effect of the work programme this year has been networking among HWU Schools and campuses, in addition to networking with other Scottish universities. For example, a project run at the Heriot-Watt School of Textiles and Design is now working with Maths and Computing to access the student portal for the development of a personal tutoring scheme that is student-centred and accessible: this liaison offers scope to enhance both projects. Some specific outcomes of the February ideas-sharing meeting were:

- The University of Glasgow has liaised with HWU School of Maths and Computing on the use of automated feedback.
- The School of Maths and Computing at HWU has talked about experiences with webPA to share this more widely; HWU project teams have had the opportunity to make contact with colleagues in Glasgow interested in similar work.
- Queen Margaret University has shared information on ICAL with HWU.
- The University of Edinburgh has approached colleagues who are working on APPs and personal tutoring and has liaised with HWU School of Textiles and Design and the School of Maths and Computing.

In what ways have institutional team members (including students) engaged in Theme activities during this session?

It would be helpful to reflect on the following aspects: developing the institution's plan of work, contributions to institutional team meetings, participation in the Theme Student Network and TLG meetings, participation in the International Enhancement Conference, participation in the institutional team event held in November 2016, institutional work undertaken as part of the year 3 plan etc.

- The institutional team members (including students) have led the projects. The plan of work and the outcomes for the student experience have been achieved by the members of the Institutional Team.
- HWU Student Union representatives have attended and contributed to Student Network and TLG meetings.
- A number of HWU staff and students are presenting at the QAA International Enhancement Conference.

Identify good practice in supporting the TLG representative/alternate both in their TLG role and in their institution.

Leading the seven projects to meet their objectives for learning and teaching Enhancement was delegated to Dr Irene Malcolm, Centre for Academic Leadership & Development (ALD), during this theme. Dr Malcolm attended QAA Theme Leader Group representative meetings when possible, and an ALD colleague, Dr Rob Daley, also attended on occasion.

Which mechanisms has your institution employed to disseminate outcomes and resources internally, and to the sector?

Which approaches have been most effective?

Illustrative examples would be valuable.

- The Deputy Principal has hosted an annual Learning and Teaching Symposium which has been successful in promoting dissemination within the University.
- The ideas-sharing meeting in February 2017 was welcomed by projects and achieved specific outcomes that supported the work of the projects and sector (see above).
- There have been a number of published papers as a result of Enhancement work.
- A number of colleagues and students have presented conference papers, including at international conferences.

Outline your approach to collaborative working with other Higher Education institutions and what you perceive as the benefits and challenges.

Examples of activities and outcomes through inter-institutional collaboration would be helpful.

This was an important development and welcomed by HWU staff and students. Some specific achievements were (see above):

- The University of Glasgow has liaised with HWU School of Maths and Computing on the use of automated feedback.
- The School of Maths and Computing at HWU has talked about experiences with webPA to share this more widely; HWU project teams have had the opportunity to make contact with colleagues in Glasgow interested in similar work.
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To help facilitate the sharing of practice please provide:

- **a list of the case studies further developed during Year 3 to include student reflective commentary on successful transitions practice (5 examples)**
7 EXAMPLES SUBMITTED BY HWU, April 2017
- **details of your student-facing multimedia resource:**
SUBMITTED BY HWU, APRIL 2017

You might also wish to report on any aspect of work that you are particularly proud of and want to promote.

All of the work submitted by HWU is of a high quality. The projects at HWU showcase the strong international dimension of Scottish higher education. There is much innovative work, some of which may be considered sector-leading, such as the project on augmented reality in Engineering education.

Identify the ways in which your institution has contributed to Theme evaluation and other commissioned work.

Participation in the Theme Leader Group Meetings and Enhancement Theme conferences (including acting as conference paper reviewers).

As a result of engaging with the current Enhancement Theme, what has changed/is done differently within your institution and across the sector?

It may be helpful to reflect on changes in strategy, policy, practice and how these changes have affected the student learning experience.

As a result of the projects, approaches to teaching have developed in some areas of HWU in an innovative and student-centred way. There are many examples, of work in this theme and that has had a considerable effect on the student experience. For example, staff and students at HWU have developed innovative tools to give automated and formative feedback to students. This quick feedback has had a considerable effect on students' abilities to direct their own learning and will have a continued effect on the new Degree Apprenticeship at HWU. In engineering education, staff have produced virtual guides that enhance student autonomy. This stream of work has been strengthened and further developed to employ virtual reality. In computing and linguistics, interpreting students have worked with computing students to develop cross disciplinary-communication that is vital for employment in the software industry, for example. The linking of

teaching practice with realistic industry scenarios through cross-disciplinary pedagogies is an example of good practice in preparing students for professional transitions.

Reflecting on the totality of Theme activity what are your perceptions of both the short and longer term impact of the Theme?

It may be useful to refer to the Theme's Logic Model here.

The Theme has encouraged Heriot-Watt staff and students to undertake a range of innovative projects related to the topic of "Student Transitions", and the sharing of best practice across disciplines and with other institutions has helped build networks with potential future collaborators on Learning and Teaching Enhancement

Recognising that this is the end of the current Theme, what one piece of advice would you give to colleagues supporting the next Theme?

The Enhancement Themes offer an opportunity to focus on a particular area of enhancement and engagement with them should stimulate new ideas and build collaborative networks.