# End of Year 1 Report for: University of St Andrews

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.

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### 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.

Our Deputy-Lead, Kerith George-Briant, is no longer on our Team as she has left our institution. Our new Deputy-Lead is Dr Julie Oswald.

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### 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 |
| --- |
| Invited Lecture and Workshop on Assessment Feedback Literacy with Dr Naomi Winstone |
| 1. What change is being made? (Brief description(s) of overall activity/intervention) |
| Assessment feedback literacy is an important new area of development for both students and lecturers. The key idea is to think about how we can support better use of feedback by students, both by delivering the feedback in better ways and by building feedback literacy for students into the teaching program. The goal of this project is to promote discussion amongst teaching staff about the best ways to deliver feedback so that students will engage with it, and how student feedback literacy can be built into the curriculum. This will be achieved by inviting Dr Winstone (Director of the Surrey Institute of Education), a recognised leader in this field, to deliver a seminar and workshop session to staff, providing a platform for discussions to be begin and networks to be formed. |
| 2. Why are we making it? (Rationale for the change) |
| It is commonly understood that in spite of the huge time and material cost of producing and distributing detailed assessment feedback for students, many students do not engage productively with feedback and may even actively avoid feedback. A number of staff at St Andrews are already engaged in research looking at feedback processes and student engagement. We want to expand this interest and build a network of people actively trying new practices to improve feedback engagement. We see the invited lecture and workshop as a trigger for building a network of researchers, teachers, and students. |
| 3. What difference will hopefully occur as a result? (Tangible change made successfully or envisaged) |
| We hope to see the initiation of a network of research and practice, to see changes in assessment feedback practices and see an increase in feedback engagement from students rather than feedback avoidance. The ability to engage with and use feedback will increase student resilience in the learning process. |
| 4. How will we know? (How is the change measured) |
| • Establishment of the network with named members<br>• Modules where assessment feedback change has been initiated<br>• Surveys of students indicating more feedback engagement versus avoidance (tracking these measures over time before and after changes) |
| 5. Who is involved in making any judgements? (Who decides on effectiveness) |
| To be decided by network of practice once established. |
| 6. Any lessons learned to apply already? (Applied ongoing learning) |
| Research carried out in collaboration between St Andrews and Glasgow already shows that students are more likely to engage in feedback if it is available for a period of time prior to release of grades. Other research has shown that higher engagement with the discipline of study leads to higher feedback engagement – that is, feedback engagement shows similar patterns to other good student learning practices and can be approached as a form of learning practice in the same way. |

| 7. Any things you need to stop doing? (Any unsuccessful elements) |
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| N/A |

| Title of project/activity |
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| What is Higher Education Anyway? Stakeholders' Beliefs about the Purposes of Higher Education in the 21st Century |

| 1. What change is being made? (Brief description(s) of overall activity/intervention) |
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| We are currently planning a project that investigates what secondary school students, university students, and university lecturers consider the purposes of higher education to be. Data will be collected via online survey. This project relates to the Enhancement Theme strand 'Learning Communities of the Future'<br><br>Before carrying out our survey, we will collect data using Prolific to test the reliability and construct validity of 24 items within a survey instrument. After carrying out factor analysis and Cronbach's alpha, a version of these items will be used within the project described above.<br><br>We have gained ethical approval for the Prolific study. Our next steps will be to:<br><br>• apply for funding to allow us to carry out the Prolific study<br>• analyse the data from the Prolific study and make any changes necessary to the items within the survey.<br>• after we have made the necessary changes to the survey, apply for ethical approval to use the survey with secondary school students, university students, and university lecturers. |

| 2. Why are we making it? (Rationale for the change) |
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| Locke and Latham's Goal-Setting Theory (see Locke & Latham, 2006) asserts that human action is caused by purpose, and for action to take place, goals must be set and pursued by choice. Under this premise, the purpose of HE is a precursor to goal setting and therefore the focal point of our collective endeavours, fundamentally determining the actions we take in relation to our work. As you will notice, there is a significant caveat to this assumption. If purpose determines action, then for all stakeholders to work in synergy towards a shared 'future valued outcome' (ibid., p. 265), there must be a consensus amongst stakeholders about what the collective purpose is, or at the very least a recognition of what our goals are. The centrally important role that purpose holds in determining our collective direction makes first understanding and then aligning or making room for all stakeholders' beliefs about the purpose of HE fundamental to the success of the sector. |

| 3. What difference will hopefully occur as a result? (Tangible change made successfully or envisaged) |
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| This is an exploratory piece of research. In carrying out this research we hope to gain a better understanding of what stakeholders think about the purposes of HE, in particular, lecturer and student beliefs. As Chan's (2016) qualitative meta-analysis shows, there has been far more research conducted which looks at the purpose of higher education from an institutional level, rather than at a lecturer or student level.<br><br>This is a first step in finding out what stakeholders think, after which an intervention can be planned. It is difficult to say exactly what an intervention might look like before we have data that tells us how stakeholder views may differ, but one way in which alignment of goals between students and lecturers has been achieved, are staff-student/student-staff partnerships (e.g. Little, 2010, Bovill, 2017). Piloting a series of staff-student/student-staff |

partnerships, and then reassessing the stakeholders' beliefs about the purposes of higher education is a possibility.

Understanding what stakeholders think about the purposes of HE will allow us to more effectively develop interventions to increase the resilience of future HE students by better understanding the expectations of students and staff.

| 4. How will we know? (How is the change measured) |
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| As mentioned above, this is an exploratory piece of research, and further steps will have to be planned after this initial phase of the project. |
| 5. Who is involved in making any judgements? (Who decides on effectiveness) |
| The Enhancement Theme Team will be involved in analysing the results of this research, which will then inform how the project evolves. |
| 6. Any lessons learned to apply already? (Applied ongoing learning) |
| N/A |
| 7. Any things you have stopped/need to stop doing? (Any unsuccessful elements) |
| N/A |

| Title of project/activity |
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| Monthly Meeting of the Core Enhancement Theme Team |
| 1. What change has been made? (Brief description(s) of overall activity/intervention) |
| We have instituted a monthly meeting of the core Enhancement Theme Team to create Working Groups, allocate responsibilities, manage funding applications and awards, and discuss progress being made by groups across the University. Three Working Groups have been formed within the Team: 1) Learning Communities of the Future, 2) Student Attributes and 3) Supporting Diverse Learning Communities. |
| 2. Why have we made it? (Rationale for the change) |
| We meet regularly to make sure that good practice is being communicated to all members of the Team and to build a strong network within the University. |
| 3. What difference has occurred as a result? (Tangible change made successfully or envisaged) |
| Three Working Groups have been formed and are actively working to develop projects and events in line with their focus within the Enhancement Theme. Key figures within the University have given presentations at the Team meetings. These types of presentations act to inform Team members of the overall institutional and sector dimensions of enhancement. |
| 4. How will we know? (How is the change measured) |
| Change will be measured by evaluating the success of projects and events (which are currently ongoing). Evaluation methods will be specific to each project or event (e.g., attendance at events and feedback from attendees, change in policy or practice at our institution, presentation of work at a conference). |

| 5. Who is involved in making any judgements? (Who decides on effectiveness) |
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| Self-assessment by Working Groups and the overall Enhancement Theme Team, monitored by the Proctor and other Senior Management. Feedback from participants in events organized by Working Groups (in the future). |
| 6. Any lessons learned to apply already? (Applied ongoing learning) |
| We have identified how to gather existing institutional data and how to engage with different Schools/Units when gathering information. We have also realised the benefits of working with a diverse group of staff and students. |
| 7. Any things you have stopped/need to stop doing? (Any unsuccessful elements) |
| N/A |

| Title of project/activity |
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| How to Identify the Needs and Contributions of Diverse Communities |
| 1. What change is being made? (Brief description(s) of overall activity/intervention) |
| We plan to gather data from across the University on what is currently known within Schools and Units about the needs of diverse student groups. This will help us to identify areas of best practice and any common issues to help us provide a focus. We want to know who makes up our diverse communities, and what their common and distinct learning needs are. In addition, we hope to find existing areas of good practice which can provide models to broaden support, as well as identify any groups who would benefit from additional forms of support. |
| 2. Why are we making it? (Rationale for the change) |
| We need to understand who our diverse communities are, what their needs are, and what we are currently doing to support them in order to identify any existing gaps, and to plan interventions to fill those gaps and/or build on existing good practice to improve things overall. |
| 3. What difference will hopefully occur as a result? (Tangible change made successfully or envisaged) |
| We aim to develop appropriate support and services to ensure the learning needs of diverse students are better met. Engagement with students from diverse learning communities, and staff in Schools and Units who are currently involved in supporting these students is key to the success of this project. |
| 4. How will we know? (How is the change measured) |
| 1) The development of new interventions and feedback from staff and students on how well those interventions meet their goals. This feedback will be provided in the form of survey answers.<br><br>2) The identification of existing good practice and new ways to support these areas. Feedback will be collected from staff and students before and after support actions have been taken. |
| 5. Who is involved in making any judgements? (Who decides on effectiveness) |
| The Enhancement Theme Team will be involved in analysing the data gathered, to determine if there are areas of good practice which may be broadly applicable across the University to |

support diverse learning communities; and to identify areas where support and services could be developed. We will also seek feedback from students when new practice is put into place.

| 6. Any lessons learned to apply already? (Applied ongoing learning) |
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| There are various networks in existence already across the University, and we appreciate the importance of building connections with those established groups. |
| 7. Any things you have stopped/need to stop doing? (Any unsuccessful elements) |
| N/A |

| Title of project/activity |
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| Student Internship Programme |
| 1. What change is being made? (Brief description(s) of overall activity/intervention) |
| We have hired two undergraduate student interns to work with us over the summer (one fulltime and one parttime) and are in the process of hiring up to four more parttime interns. |
| 2. Why are we making it? (Rationale for the change) |
| We believe that the student voice is critical to the success of our Enhancement Theme work. We have completed some excellent groundwork for this theme and are now at a point where we need to seek input from a wider range of students. The student internship project provides a mechanism for engaging undergraduate and postgraduate students in the Enhancement Theme in a substantial and meaningful way. These positions will provide an invaluable experience for our student interns as they will have the opportunity to contribute to the planning, design and implementation of research projects, events and/or resources with a team of dedicated staff and students. |
| 3. What difference will hopefully occur as a result? (Tangible change made successfully or envisaged) |
| Engaging students in our work will ensure that the student voice is heard and that the projects and initiatives we employ will achieve the best possible outcomes for our students. We intend to evaluate the success of the various projects that our interns will be involved in and collectively this will help us determine how successful our Student Internship Program has been overall. We hope that the work of our interns will help shape policy and practice at our institution. We also hope that these internship experiences will help our interns to develop a variety of skills and to build their overall confidence. |
| 4. How will we know? (How is the change measured) |
| We have an evaluation and reflection document that our interns will complete at the end of their internship. This will help us understand their experiences overall, what they have valued most from their internship and what areas of this programme could be improved for potential future interns. The interns' work will be presented to the Proctor's Office and at a dissemination event at our institution and we will seek feedback via these avenues. In addition, we will evaluate the success of each individual project that our interns are involved in. |
| 5. Who is involved in making any judgements? (Who decides on effectiveness) |
| Judgements will be made by a number of people linked to the Enhancement Theme. These include the Enhancement Theme Lead and Deputy-Lead who sat on the appointment panels, the mentor of the student interns, the wider Enhancement Theme Team as appropriate (based |

on which projects the interns are involved in), representatives from the Proctor's Office and attendees at dissemination events that we hold. We will also seek feedback from the interns themselves so that we can learn from this initiative and gauge the success of this programme from the intern's perspective.

| 6. Any lessons learned to apply already? (Applied ongoing learning) |
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| N/A |

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

## 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.

**Internally:**
Presentations from the Enhancement Theme Team are a standing item for several groups within St Andrews. These include the Learning and Teaching Committee, Postgraduate Research Committee, Flexible Learning Pathways Group, and the Education Strategy Management Group. The Theme Lead is also in contact with the Vice Principal of Education, the Head of Education Policy and Quality, and the Associate Dean for Education. The Director of Education from the Students' Association shares Enhancement Theme information and news with students via social media and various student contacts (e.g., School Presidents and Class Representatives). Information relating to the Enhancement Theme (e.g., funding calls) is also disseminated via University newsletters (e.g. Wednesday Memos and In the Loop) and emails (e.g., emails sent to the Directors of Teaching and Unit Heads to forward to relevant staff).

**Sector Wide:**
We have found the Theme Leaders Group meetings to be incredibly helpful and effective this year as an avenue for sharing work outside of our own institution (e.g., opportunity to meet colleagues from other universities and learn about the approaches they are taking while explaining our approach; valuable opportunities to share good practice; identify potential collaborators for future work through sharing details of our own work). Collaborative Clusters have also been key in disseminating our work (e.g. attending the Decolonising the Curriculum events that have been held this year and sharing this work with colleagues from across the sector, UK wide; we hosted our own institutional event related to Decolonising the Curriculum with external guests and speakers sharing good practice – due to connections made at the earlier Collaborative Cluster events we were able to engage colleagues from outside our institution and keep these important conversations going).

## 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 have been involved in three collaborative clusters this year and have found them to be extremely valuable and rewarding collaborations.

**1) Re-imagining Resilience for Taught Postgraduate Students**
The work of this cluster to date has involved four meetings, each hosted by one of the partner institutions who led on discussions around the idea of what resilience means to the PGT communities (for staff, students and everyone involved in the delivery of PGT Programmes). This cluster includes the University of Edinburgh, University of St Andrews, Heriot-Watt University, and the University of the West of Scotland. Each partner institution's participants included staff and students with experience of PGT studies. The cluster has worked really well together, with each meeting drawing out different issues and approaches to overcoming them. The institutions are very different and the PGT cohorts reflect that, with some partners having more part-time students who are mostly home-fee status and others having mostly full-time students with large international cohorts. This hasn't necessarily been a challenge, in fact it meant that there were a wide range of perspectives to draw upon. Having the students' perspectives has also been a huge benefit to this work.

**2) Exploring the Potential of Micro-credentials and Digital Badging**
This collaborative cluster is led by colleagues at Heriot Watt University and brings together staff from a wide range of universities. Our involvement in this cluster came at an opportune time with St Andrews starting to plan involvement in micro-credentials. The cluster had representatives from institutions at different stages of maturity in terms of micro-credentials and functioned as a very open, supportive environment, sharing questions, resources, and best practice. The cluster had a Teams site on which members shared key articles and reports, and members met regularly online throughout the duration of the project. The activities and outputs of the cluster include: three cross-sector events for different stakeholders, think pieces from plenary speakers, and a scoping review of micro-credentials internationally. All these materials will be available to the sector via the QAA. The ability to meet online as a cluster, and to organise country-wide events online was a very effective way of working on this short-term project and helped it all to run smoothly and with maximum engagement.

**3) Decolonising the Curriculum in the Time of Pandemic**
This cluster, led by colleagues at the University of Stirling, seeks to develop and expand our understanding in the HE sector of what decolonising the curriculum means in practice. This is particularly important at present given the impact that Covid is having on how we deliver our education. This cluster has been extremely successful, bringing together a large number of collaborators from a diverse range of disciplines. This has led to fruitful meetings with the group where colleagues have discussed and brainstormed ideas around decolonising the curriculum in a supportive space. As a result of these planning sessions, the cluster has held three very successful cross-sector workshops. These interactive sessions have been well attended by colleagues from a range of institutions and it is clear that this is a topic that people want to keep discussing. Students from a range of Scottish institutions have also joined this group which we feel is vital to the success of this project. Ultimately this cluster aims to develop a set of resources that can be utilised and adapted by HE institutions widely. We are really looking forward to our continued involvement in this group.

## Supporting staff and student engagement

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

We have been able to support the engagement of students and staff from across the University via our funding call (advertised via University newsletters). Applicants have been able to apply for up to £1000 to support work related to the Enhancement Theme. Applicants were able to meet with the Theme Lead before submitting their application to ask any questions they may have about the application form or the process. Five projects have been funded to date:

- *DiverSTEM - Celebrating POC in Science:* A student submission applying for funds to support a 2-week long event highlighting people of colour (POC) in STEM. Twelve speakers across multiple disciplines discussed their research and attendees had the opportunity to engage in the event through Q&A sessions and social events. DiverSTEM was inspired by the desire to encourage resilience in education by promoting diversity through various POC leaders in research.
- *Investigation of PGT Student Well-Being across the Academic Year:* A student and staff submission applying for funds to support an ongoing piece of longitudinal research dedicated to better understanding the wellbeing levels of postgraduate taught (PGT) students and the factors that impact their wellbeing. Using the results of this study, the researchers aim to develop interventions and tools that can be implemented by universities to support PGT wellbeing.
- *Toolkits for Supporting Disabled Students to Transition to and Thrive at University*: A submission from Professional Services staff. This project is aimed at providing additional and targeted support to students with ADHD and autism. There is a growing number of students declaring a disability. This increase, coupled with the challenges of studying in a dual delivery model and transitioning to university life, means that there is greater need to ensure that we can better prepare and support this student cohort.
- *How do lecture capture style, closed captions, and presenter background effect information recall in lecture capture?* This is a submission from staff and students. The research project aims to better understand how lecture capture can be used effectively to enhance learning. Learning more about lecture capture is important as universities continue to engage in blended learning.
- *Studentsof.org*: This is a student initiative to increase career support for students. This team has developed a webpage that presents testimonials from alumni and allows current students to build resilience by learning from the insights and experiences of previous students.

The Enhancement Theme Team have benefited from full team online meetings held monthly. These meetings begin with an update from the Theme Lead, with any administrative issues addressed. Dedicated time is then provided for each Working Group to break off into separate meetings to continue planning their projects. Finally, the groups come back together and present their work to the full group to allow for sharing of ideas and thorough discussion. We have also invited guest speakers to this Team meeting to inform the group about related work ongoing in the university.

We have recruited student summer interns to add a student voice to the Working Groups and to join a new group investigating the impact of online learning during the time of Covid. We provide support for these interns by assigning them with a mentor from the core Team.

Engagement with collaborative clusters has been encouraged across the institution. We have a member of the core Team who has joined one cluster, and we have colleagues from the wider University community who sit on two additional clusters.

## 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?

At the start of the Theme, we created a large core Enhancement Theme Team consisting of Professional Services staff, Academic staff, and students (16 members in total). We identified three key areas of the Theme that we would like to investigate and established a Working Group for each area. We hold monthly meetings with the core Team, with the Working Groups

meeting in between our monthly meetings as needed. Building this network has been very successful.

Throughout our first year we have really valued the opportunity to have regular meetings that encourage collaborative brainstorming with colleagues from across all areas of the University. Members of our Team bring with them a wide range of experiences, views, and perspectives. This has ensured that we plan our work in a thoughtful, creative, and informed way. This approach has allowed us to: engage with existing literature and carefully define key factors that are of interest; identify relevant existing data within the University to allow for a targeted approach going forward; identify ongoing work across the University that is relevant to the Theme and to provide the support of our Team for this work; and design new projects and initiatives that we are confident will have long lasting impact.

Working with this large group of colleagues has also helped us to build resilience by accommodating flexible working patterns. Working Groups have continued to make progress, even when some Team members are absent from meetings. This has been particularly important during the pandemic with overall workloads increasing, and Team members having different work pressures at different times of the academic year.

We are particularly enthusiastic about our University's engagement with Collaborative Clusters and the very high standard of funding applications that we have received from both students and staff in our institution. We are keen to see these valuable aspects of the Enhancement Theme work continue into Year 2.

This report will be distributed to the various committees across the University where the Enhancement Theme is included as a standing item (as listed in 'Dissemination of Work' section above). This report will be used as a guide for discussions with the Enhancement Theme Team as we plan for Year 2. We will also include key aspects of this report on our webpage.

| **Report Author:** | Paula Miles |
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| **Date:** | 29/06/2021 |

**Resilient Learning Communities**

**End of Year Report for: Name of Institution**

**Financial Annex Year 1**

*Please provide an overview of actual spend against planned expenditure, based on the information in the Institutional Work Plan Year 1 financial annex.*

*If you have obtained funding from a third party for your delivery of part of the Institutional Work, please include the amount of such funding in this report together with details of what that funding has been used for.*

*Please note that this information remains confidential and will not be made available on the web.*

To date we have awarded **£3586** for five funded projects/initiatives.

The remaining funds will be used for a second funding call (that closes on 7$^{th}$ July) and to support the salary of parttime interns.

We have secured some additional funding from the University of St Andrews to support student interns over the summer **(£2864.25)**.

| Author: | |
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| Date: | |