



Evidence for Enhancement: Improving the Student Experience

Institutional Plan for: University of St Andrews

Context

This plan of work was drafted in consultation with key stakeholders and the following strategies:

[University Strategy](#)

[Student Experience Strategy](#)

[Learning and Teaching Strategy](#)

[Quality Enhancement Strategy](#)

Key priorities for the institution in Academic Year 2017-18 were to: enhance the postgraduate student experience (taught and research); review teaching and learning space; and introduce new technologies to enhance and transform the student learning experience.

Context – year 2 update

If you would find it useful to update contextual information, please add text below.

You may want to reflect on your year 1 end of year report to help complete your updated year 2 plan.

In year two, we plan to take a streamlined approach to managing our portfolio of Theme work. The large institutional team will be replaced with a small steering group (comprising the Theme lead, strand leads and the Director of Education from the Students' Association). The group will meet monthly instead of three times per semester. Other colleagues involved in the portfolio of Theme work will continue to provide support to the strand leads. The Enhancement Theme is now a standing item on the agenda of the University's Academic Monitoring Group, and a member of the steering group will formally report into the University's Student Experience Committee.

The University recently appointed a new Assistant Vice-Principal (Provost) and Director of the Graduate School (for interdisciplinary studies) who is responsible for improving the experience of all postgraduates (taught and research students). One of her priorities is to re-introduce a survey for PGRs, use an evidence base to identify areas working well/for development, and track improvements over time.

Preparations have now commenced for ELIR in anticipation of a Spring 2020 visit. Gerald Prescott will temporarily replace Ros Campbell as Theme Lead in Semester two of Academic Year 2018-19 to enable Ros to assist with the production of a Reflective Analysis report.

Institutional team

Year 1: Ros Campbell (Theme Lead and TLG staff representative); Zach Davis (TLG student representative); Nikki Broughton (Clerk to the institutional team); Jenni Awang (Information Analyst, Planning); Paul Gardner (Senior Lecturer, Psychology & Neuroscience); Elise Hugueny-Léger (Senior Lecturer, Modern Languages); Graham Kirby (Pro Dean Admissions and Advising [Science]); Sharon Leahy (Pro Dean Curriculum [Science]); David Rathel (Postgraduate Representative); and Stephen Tyre (Pro Dean Admissions and Advising [Arts & Divinity]).

Year 2: Ros Campbell (Theme Lead and TLG staff representative); Alice Foulis (TLG student representative); Nikki Broughton (Clerk to the steering group); Jon Issberner (Associate Dean [Science & Medicine]); Graham Kirby (Pro Dean Admissions and Advising [Science]); Sharon Leahy (Pro Dean Curriculum [Science]); Gerald Prescott (Senior Lecturer and TLG staff representative alternate); and Stephen Tyre (Pro Dean Admissions and Advising [Arts & Divinity]).

1. Overall outcomes/activity for the 3-year theme

What are your key priorities? What outcomes do you want to achieve? What activities will you deliver? What do you anticipate will be the benefits at sector and institutional levels?

- a. Understand the nature of evidence in relation to the student experience, gather the right data and use this effectively to enhance the student experience.
- b. Contextualise and present data in an accessible and meaningful way.
- c. Deploy a better understanding of evidence in relation to learning and teaching space.
- d. Deploy a better understanding of evidence in relation to the postgraduate (PG) experience.
- e. Design a toolkit for staff who wish to enhance and evidence their teaching practice.
- f. Engage students and staff in the work of the Enhancement Theme.
- g. Work collaboratively across the sector.
- h. Contribute to at least one collaborative cluster.
- i. Learn from practice elsewhere in the sector and outwith Scotland.
- j. Share good practice internally and externally.
- k. Contribute to a common methodology at sector level for gathering evidence to demonstrate teaching quality to enable the sector to understand what good teaching means.

2. Year 1 outcomes/activity

What are your key priorities? What outcomes do you want to achieve? What activities will you deliver? What do you anticipate will be the benefits at sector and institutional levels?

Our key priorities were aligned to the University strategies noted in the 'Context' section on page 1 of this document, and the sector strands set out by the QAA:

- 1. Optimise the use of evidence to improve the student experience:** Activity beyond regular discussion at institutional team meetings involved presentations and discussion at a learning and teaching away afternoon and two lunchtime workshops, focused respectively on "what we currently do" and "what would we like to do and how could we do it". A summary paper distilled conclusions and recommendations from the workshops, and informed next steps. Outcomes included an improved understanding of what data is currently collected, and the aspects of student experience enhancement that might be informed by it.
- 2. Use evidence to improve the design of learning and teaching space:** A professional survey of learning and teaching space was conducted, with a report published in February 2018. Anticipated outcomes included concrete plans to equip our learning and teaching spaces more

effectively; increased student satisfaction; staff better equipped to develop teaching; and a contribution to learning and teaching methodology at a sector level.

3. **Optimise the use of student-led teaching awards data:** Nominations from the student-led teaching awards were analysed for the first time to identify common themes and trends for dissemination and further use. Outcomes included the identification of good practice and excellence within learning and teaching, and an insight into factors that contribute to a high quality student experience.
4. **Explore potential opportunities to diversify the student demographic.** Preliminary work was carried out in year one to identify work streams and desired outcomes.

In addition, we identified markers to measure success and set up a funding scheme.

Year 2 outcomes/activity

What are your key priorities? What outcomes do you want to achieve? What activities will you deliver? What do you anticipate will be the benefits at sector and institutional levels?

1. Optimise the use of evidence to enhance the student experience

- a) **Investigate factors influencing degree outcomes:** This project will analyse existing institutional data on students' backgrounds and their academic records to investigate whether there are significant correlations between background and academic engagement, and academic outcomes. The outcome of this project will be to identify correlations, with the aims of providing insights to: better inform the recruitment and admissions process; and support targeted interventions with particular student cohorts. An analysis will be carried out, subject to ethics and data protection approval, of correlations between: previous school, previous school qualifications; postcode; academic alerts received; academic intervention warnings received; previous marks and grades; and patterns of access to learning resources on degree award, degree classification and success in progression between years. The benefits are unknown, depending greatly on whether not significant and interesting correlations are identified.
- b) **Create an online dashboard to make statistical analysis for survey data more accessible:** This project will make statistical analysis for survey data more accessible to schools and units via an online dashboard. We frequently collect views and/or information from staff and students and it is often useful to produce a report (with digested results) for easy decision-making. The outcomes will be an online tool that can be used to upload data, perform analysis and automatically generate a report for data routinely collected by the university. This will enable evidence-based decision making when making interventions to improve the student experience for both undergraduate and postgraduate communities. Enabling activities will include code writing for the analysis and automatic report generation for the survey data. An interpretation guide will also be produced to ensure the results are easy to understand by all. The benefits at the sector and institutional levels will be systematic treatment of routinely collected data with robust statistical methods, which provide 'colour coded' results for easy inspection. This will provide context for (point estimate) data which on its own may be unreliable for decision making.
- c) **Use nomination data from teaching awards to identify and share good practice:** Nomination data gathered as part of the student-led teaching awards was analysed for the first time in AY 2016-17 as part of the Theme. This report will be disseminated to academic

staff at Learning and Teaching Committee, and the Enhancement Theme steering group will discuss how to improve the template for annual reporting.

Activities in year two will include: the creation of a template report for the annual analysis of nomination data, the delivery of Master Classes (in Small Group Teaching, Taught Postgraduate Supervision, and Innovation) by award winners/nominees; the production of best practice guides (e.g. What makes a good lecturer?), and the creation of a guide for Directors of Education on how to effectively run Teaching Awards. We will also examine how the awards are advertised to students, and the ratio of nominations to students in each school. This work will take us further in our goal of capturing student perspectives on the factors that contribute to a high-quality student experience, and disseminating this good practice in a range of formats to support enhancement.

2. Gather and analyse evidence to inform the development of learning and teaching spaces:

This project aims to build a body of evidence from staff and students to allow us to evaluate the impact that modernised teaching spaces can have on learning and teaching. Through this process, we aim to establish a methodology for evaluating similar projects in the future. Using both formal and informal feedback methods, we will investigate and report on: the types of learning activities which work best in these spaces; any perceived changes in teaching practice and class interaction as a result of the changed environment; any effect on motivation; and the appropriateness and scalability of the furniture and technology provided in the new spaces. Benefits include the provision of a methodology that can be reused to evaluate future projects, the gathering of evidence which will ultimately help us to support a wider range of pedagogies and inform future procurement decisions for the University, and the sharing of the results and the methodology across the sector.

3. Enhance attainment and build diversity across the student demographic: This project aims to increase University staff involvement in the First Chances School outreach Programme to raise attainment levels in Fife Schools. Additional outcomes include enhancing the longevity of support to Schools through online resources, and greater staff understanding and expertise in relation to the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE). Activities will include the delivery of Science, Maths and English Workshops in schools, and the creation of a bank of online materials for these classes.

Anticipated benefits are as follows:

- a) Increased engagement with, and enhanced commitment to, schools in the local area.
- b) Increase in widening access applications to the University.
- c) Further promotion of the University and its courses within the local area.
- d) Increased awareness of CfE at University level.
- e) Contributing to a unique outreach practice model, which may be rolled out in other local authorities.
- f) Contributing to the national framework by raising attainment and reducing the attainment gap.

4. Develop the link between evidence and pedagogy: This strand of work aims to: (a) raise awareness of the need for pedagogical research and (b) publicise existing research. Activities will include delivering a series of workshops designed to facilitate pedagogical research across the University, and sharing existing projects which link evidence to pedagogy development.

3. Dissemination of work

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

- a. **Internal:** Institutional team; Learning & Teaching Committee; Students' Association's Education Committee; School Presidents' Forum; PG Executive Forum; Student Experience Committee; Enhancement Theme web pages; annual Good Practice Exchange; and other events organised as part of our strands of work.
- b. **External:** Scottish Higher Education Enhancement Committee (SHEEC); Theme Leaders' Group (TLG); conferences including the Enhancement Theme conference; the University's website; meetings with counterparts in the sector.

Dissemination of work – year 2 update

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

As above with the following additions: Postgraduate Research Committee and the introduction of Enhancement Theme champions in Schools. We will promote and communicate our work in relation to strand two ('Gather and analyse evidence to inform the development of learning and teaching spaces') via webpages and blog posts, social media, and the production, presentation and sharing of the final report.

4. Collaborative cluster work

What is your intended involvement in formal collaborative cluster work? Do you intend leading a cluster? Who might be involved in cluster activity? (Formal bids for collaborative cluster work will be managed separately.)

We would encourage the QAA to ensure that collaborative clusters are ambitious in nature and drive the sector forward. As clusters are not yet established, we are unable to confirm our intended level of involvement. Areas of interest for the University are:

- a. The learner journey: collecting evidence for the preparedness of students entering University study. St Andrews is particularly interested in testing the assumption in the sector that students with Scottish school qualifications underperform at 1000 level Modern Languages. We would be interested to work with other institutions that may have a different approach.
- b. Sensitive contextualisation for measuring student employment and graduate outcomes across Scottish institutions.
- c. Student survey design. Many surveys are issued within institutions and are of varying quality.

Collaborative cluster work – year 2 update

How will you be involved in collaborative cluster work in year 2?

Learning Analytics: St Andrews is part of a Learning Analytics collaborative cluster led by the University of Strathclyde. Colleagues from St Andrews attended two scoping workshops in year one. Two student interns based at the University of Stirling developed and implemented an information gathering strategy to collect an overview of the operational framework used by Scottish institutions when implementing the use of learning analytics.

Year two work will involve the development of a web-based resource populated with the research gathered by the Stirling interns, to enable the sharing and promotion of good practice across the sector. In addition, a sector-wide project will be undertaken to gain student views on learning analytics and the specific needs required by particular groups of students, leading to a report distributed to the sector. It is proposed that student interns take forward both these pieces of work.

Collaborative activities will include hot-desking support for the interns, liaising between the interns and student groups, and work around the creation of the framework, which will become clearer once the year one report is available.

Retention and progression: The Open University is undertaking commissioned work on retention and progression under the student demographics, retention and progression sector strand of the Theme. They have completed phase one of the project, which involved desk research, and have moved to phase two, in which they would like to explore issues related to retention, progression and the use of data and evidence in more depth. St Andrews agreed to complete a short survey and participate in a telephone interview in September 2018 to assist with the research.

5. Wider inter-institutional collaboration

Who will you work with, and how, to help deliver on planned activities?

Potential inter-institutional collaborative work will become clear once Theme Leaders have met as a group and had sight of institutional plans. The sector will then be in a position to identify areas of commonality in relation to key institutional priorities and collaborative clusters.

Wider inter-institutional collaboration – year 2 update

Who will you work with, and how, to help deliver on planned activities?

The St Andrews Learning and Teaching Initiative (SALTI) will reach out to other University pedagogical research groups in the Scottish Sector and invite colleagues to contribute to the series of workshops. SALTI will hold an annual conference at which external speakers will be invited to speak and present data from their institutions.

The June 2018 Enhancement Theme conference featured a workshop on the use of nomination data from teaching awards. The session was delivered by colleagues from sparqs, Edinburgh and Stirling. Colleagues from Aberdeen, Abertay and Dundee were also in attendance, and expressed their interest in making better use of nomination data. We will make contact with these institutions in order to share our methods, learn from each other and generate ideas in relation to this strand of work.

6. Supporting staff and student engagement

How will you support your community to deliver on planned activities?

Staff and students will engage and be kept up to date with Theme planning and activities via the communication methods outlined in section 3. Wider student engagement could be achieved through School President emails and the Weekly Sabbaticals email. The institutional lead and team members will provide support and advice to the community, and discuss this area at the team meeting scheduled for 5 December. The team will provide funding to Enhancement Theme projects in a mixture of open bidding and commissioned strategic projects.

Supporting staff and student engagement – year 2 update

How will you support your community to deliver on planned activities?

As above with following strand-specific additions:

Create an online dashboard to make statistical analysis for survey data more accessible: The dashboard tool will be advertised to the Directors of Teaching in academic schools and relevant staff in service units via email. The tool will also be accompanied by a user guide available for download.

Gather and analyse evidence to inform the development of learning and teaching spaces

- a) By providing supported open access opportunities to the refurbished rooms
- b) By clearly communicating how valuable staff and student feedback is for both sets of stakeholders
- c) By providing both formal and informal opportunities to feedback
- d) By dealing with any technical or environmental problems identified through the feedback quickly, and communicating this to users.

Enhance attainment and build diversity across the student demographic

- a) By working closely with the two First Chances coordinators within the University's Admissions Unit to develop a workshop programme.
- b) By promoting the benefits of the programme to lecturing staff in the Sciences and English and invite staff to contribute to these workshops.
- c) By working with local teachers for guidance on CfE and appropriately aimed activities for the age group and academic level of the pupils involved.

Develop the link between evidence and pedagogy

- a) By actively disseminating previous Proctor's Office funded teaching development projects to self-identified members of the pedagogical research community.
- b) By developing the University wide pedagogical research themes into e-learning and assessment.
- c) By promoting the benefits of evidence based pedagogical innovation at annual meetings.

7. Evaluation

How will you monitor progress and impact of the enhancement activities?

The logic model issued during the previous theme was very helpful, particularly during the evaluation phase of the project. The team will identify outcomes and impact indicators to measure progress and impact during institutional team meetings and as the Theme progresses.

Evaluation – year 2 update

How will you engage with the formal Theme evaluation work?

What other evaluation/monitoring activity will you be engaged with in your HEI?

We look forward to hearing QAA's plans for formal Theme evaluation work at the first Theme Leaders Group meeting of year two. We have agreed to participate in a telephone interview in September to assist Liz Thomas with a research project commissioned by the QAA.

Progress with the online dashboard will be monitored via milestones which can be checked with the outputs generated. For example, a prototype will be developed, and this will be tested by potential users, and error checked in stages.

Progress reports for the strand of work 'Gather and analyse evidence to inform the development of learning and teaching spaces' will be shared with the relevant committees, i.e. the Teaching Infrastructure Steering Group and Student Experience Committee.

In terms of our attainment and diversity project, we will continue to track pupil attainment across the programme, ask for pupil feedback after each session, ask lecturers for feedback to inform best practice going forward, and track destinations after high school.

We will monitor engagement in the workshops designed to facilitate staff who want to begin pedagogical research. As new projects are generated, they will be used to exemplify the links between evidence and pedagogy, as well as evidence of the development of pedagogical research within the University. The rate of new and completed projects can be monitored over time to track research output.

Plan author:	Ros Campbell
Date:	27 November 2017

Year 2 sign-off

Plan author:	Ros Campbell
Date:	17 September 2018

Evidence for Enhancement: Improving the Student Experience

Institutional Plan for: Name of Institution

Financial Annex Year 1

£4,250: Funding scheme for student and staff-led projects

£1,000: Launch of strand 'Engendering a culture of pedagogical scholarship' (a portion of the conference costs including prizes)

£250: Workshops in connection with strand 'Reflecting on the nature and use of evidence'

£500: Travel, accommodation, catering for meetings, other incidentals

Author:	Ros Campbell
Date:	27 November 2017

Evidence for Enhancement: Improving the Student Experience

Institutional Plan for: University of St Andrews

Financial Annex Year 2

Please provide a breakdown of the allocation of funding given through the Enhancement Theme institutional contract. This should be high level, not detailed.

At the time of the end-of-year report, you will be asked to comment on actual spend against planned expenditure.

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

£5,000: Enhance attainment and build diversity across the student demographic

- Travel costs (likely to be £50 per workshop)
- Staffing costs – for preparation and giving workshop – 10hrs max per workshop (approximately £145 per workshop per lecturer)
- Set up costs for online resources (tbc)
- Staff time (approx. 25hrs per subject = £350)
- Development of online storage area (approx. £2000 for online development costs)
- Material costs for sessions – dependent on lectures (budget £1,000 across all sessions).

£1,000: Develop the link between evidence and pedagogy

The delivery of two research technique workshops

The University will provide an additional £4k of funding to increase the Enhancement Theme budget to £10k for year two. This will enable us to employ interns for the creation of an online dashboard and the evaluation of our refurbished teaching spaces.

Author:	Ros Campbell
Date:	7 September 2018