Evidence for Enhancement:
Improving the Student Experience

End of Year 2 Report for the 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*
- *start to share learning about the impact of the Theme*

Please address all the questions in each section. 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 institutional steering group membership remains as reported in the start of year institutional plan. As indicated in the plan, Gerald Prescott temporarily replaced Ros Campbell as Theme Lead mid-way through the academic year, enabling Ros to support institutional preparation for ELIR.

Outcomes/activity   *Outline what was achieved in relation to your year 2 planned outcomes and activities, at the time of submitting this report. Please identify the impact of activity, for example how it has it been used by staff and/or students, have colleagues in other HEIs used it, has it been implemented across the HEI or in certain areas, has it brought about an improvement to policy and/or practice?*   *Have there been any unintended outcomes/unexpected findings?*   *Please report on any aspect of work that you are particularly proud of and want to promote.*   *If there is work, which is not yet completed but will be by the 31 July, please comment below.*

Enhancement Theme activities for 2018-19 have focussed on the key priorities outlined in our Year 2 plan;
 1. Reflect on the nature and use of evidence to enhance the student experience;
    a. Investigate factors influencing degree outcomes.
    b. Create an online dashboard to make statistical analysis for survey data more accessible.
    c. Use nomination data from student-led teaching awards to identify and share good practice.
 2. Gather and analyse evidence to inform the development of learning and teaching spaces.
 3. Enhance attainment and build diversity across the student demographic
 4. Develop the link between evidence and pedagogy
 	
 Reflect on the nature and use of evidence to enhance the student experience:
 Progress in year two has centred around discussion with interested parties outwith the core Theme team, and identification of opportunities to link with other ongoing work. An

initial plan to develop tools to facilitate statistical analysis of multi-year trends in survey results—e.g. NSS and internal module evaluation questionnaires—has developed into a collaboration between a PhD student in Statistics and the institutional planning team. An independently initiated project within the SALTI (St Andrews Learning & Teaching Initiative) assessments theme has similar goals to this Theme strand, and discussions are ongoing on how to best align. The project aims to investigate factors influencing module choice and performance, and patterns in grades across alternative forms of assessment e.g. coursework vs exams. Finally, an Institution-wide investigation into correlations between attainment and progression for different demographic cohorts will also feed into the strand and enhance our approach to equality and diversity in the context of the student academic experience.

Use nomination data from teaching awards to identify and share good practice.
Nominations from the Student-Led Teaching Awards (hereafter SLTA) were analysed to identify common themes and trends. A report was submitted to Learning and Teaching Committee at the beginning of the year and this template will be used to write the end of year report for the 2018/19 awards, and onwards. A template timeline was also drawn up to accompany this report, as a 'how to' guide for future Students Association Directors of Education (DoEd), and will be used annually to ensure the awards run efficiently and smoothly. Historic nomination data has been analysed and this will be used to create 'Best Practice' Guides for staff. A selection of categories from the 2017/18 awards were selected by the Deans office, and the data from these are being used to develop Master Classes (in small group teaching, taught PG supervision, and innovation).

An additional improvement to this year's process has been the introduction of a live dashboard to track data whilst the nomination period was active – including a breakdown of schools, award categories, unique nominations vs total numbers, and nominations by year of study. This was particularly helpful in creating excitement around the awards among School Presidents, and they were motivated to advertise the awards to improve their school's 'ranking'. This resulted in a substantial increase in nominations from last year.

A decision was also made by the current DoEd to feed-back individual nominations, firstly to the Director of Teaching and School President in the relevant school (in order that they may see which staff in their school had been nominated, even if they were not shortlisted or award winners), then to the individual staff members themselves. This was twofold: firstly, to increase visibility and engagement with the awards across the University (and not just from those staff who were invited to the ceremony due to being shortlisted), and secondly, so that staff can fully benefit from the SLTA process. These measures received positive feedback across the board and will be standard practice hereafter.

Gather and analyse evidence to inform the development of learning and teaching spaces.
Work in this strand has focussed on evaluating the impact that our refurbished teaching spaces are having on learning and teaching. Survey evidence from students and staff was gathered in two phases. The first phase, conducted shortly after the newly designed rooms were put into use, concentrated on reactions to the environmental changes to the teaching spaces. Evidence gathered from this phase was used not only to identify initial teething problems with the spaces, but to start conversations within our Teaching Infrastructure Support Group on a methodology for future space developments, which balance the (sometimes competing) needs of different stakeholder groups. These discussions centred around scalability, resourcing and managing expectations. The second phase of research was undertaken towards the end of the academic year, and concentrated on trying to discern the impact that the changed space had had on learning

(for students) and teaching (for staff). The results from this phase will be used to detect themes in relation to learning & teaching that we can use to provide not only future space developments but provide appropriate support and staff development. A final report based on the results of both stages, should be complete by the end of May and this will be subsequently used in dialogues with various stakeholders.

Enhance Attainment and Build Diversity across the Student Demographic
This strand aims to extend and enhance the University's First Chances Programme https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/study/access/projects/first-chances-fife/. Three post-graduate staff were hired to develop online resources in English, Chemistry, Physics, Biology, and Mathematics for School level pupils from S4 upwards. Material design is ongoing and on schedule; all materials are added to an online training portal, St Andrews Access Network (StAN), to be used by School students and staff on the First Chances programme. School level teachers and students are reviewing these materials and their helpfulness is being assessed. Based on evidence gathered, relevant changes will be made, giving School students the best possible grounding and resources in these subjects. It is foreseen that this will be a "living resource", which will be continually developed and augmented. This Collaborative project, between Fife Schools and the University, involves an increasing number of staff and students from the University who work in an outreach capacity to engage with pupils and strengthen their learning.

Develop the link between evidence and pedagogy
This is the first year that this strand has run, however much of the work follows on from a previous stand called 'Engendering a culture of pedagogical scholarship'. The strand has focussed on highlighting pedagogical research both within the University and in the wider sector by funding a number of seminars and workshops which are open to the University; creating a website which is populated with upcoming events and national meetings; holding an annual conference on teaching and learning, with this year's theme being Assessment; and by running a webinar training programme designed to support staff interested in beginning pedagogically focussed research, or action research projects.

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, including web page hyperlinks. Please indicate where any resources have been shared across or beyond your institution, and whether any actions or further activity have been prompted as a result of having created them.

Enhancement Theme activities and outcomes are effectively disseminated through formal and informal committees and events. These include the University's Learning and Teaching Committee, Academic Monitoring Group, Proctor's Office Projects (POP) Group, the Student Experience Committee and the Student's Association Education Committee, among others.

Examples of internal dissemination activities in 2018-19 include;
- Contribution to an Academic Forum by Prof Dilly Fung and a programme of training webinars for the University on pedagogical research techniques in conjunction with the St Andrews Learning and Teaching Initiative (SALTI).
- Members of the Enhancement Theme Steering Group are also members of the Student Experience Committee, ensuring strong communication between the two groups and the alignment priorities and activities.

- An annual report on the Student-led Teaching Awards was received and approved by the University's Learning and Teaching Committee. The report will form the basis of an annual report identifying good practice from student-led teaching award nominations.
- The Theme Lead provides the Academic Monitoring Group with quarterly updates on Enhancement Theme activities.
- Student interns have been recruited to support institutional and collaborative cluster Enhancement Theme activities. Adverts for these positions were distributed widely among the student cohort. Four interns in total have been recruited to work on Theme activities in 2018-19.
- In late 2019/early 2020, small projects funded by the Enhancement Themes during 2017-18 will present posters at the University's Annual Learning and Teaching dissemination event.
- The University's Enhancement Theme website has been updated to reflect the current activities being undertaken and the make-up of the Theme Steering Group.

Externally, we have shared our experiences and discussed our work through the Scottish Higher Education Enhancement Committee (SHEEC), the Theme Leaders' Group (TLG) and Enhancement Theme workshops and meetings.

Inter-institutional collaboration

What was achieved with respect to collaborative working with other Higher Education institutions and what do you perceive as the benefits and challenges – please provide examples. Note that this relates to work funded through institutional contract finance rather than the collaborative cluster activity.

St Andrews continues to work collaboratively with other HE institutions within Scotland through several mechanisms, including SHEEC, TLG meetings and engagement in sector events and meetings, including;
1. Using Qualitative Data for Driving Decision-Making at Scale.
2. Using Qualitative Data for Driving Decision-Making at Scale: Follow up event (data driven interventions).
3. Data matters, using data to improve the student experience.
4. Exploring Student Surveys. At this event we contributed a presentation on Post-Graduate Student Surveys.

Using Qualitative Data for Driving Decision-Making at Scale events indicated that many institutions have a common desire to make better use of qualitative data from student surveys. Work that could be undertaken would involve the development of appropriate tools and analysis methods (specialist expertise is required in this area) for the evaluation of qualitative comments. We would encourage the sector to consider whether common approaches to the evaluation of qualitative data could be developed across institutions, potentially representing a substantial saving in terms of replicated effort to develop such approaches.

As part of our Developing the Link between Evidence and Pedagogy strand of work, Scottish HE institutions were invited to attend the inaugural St Andrews Learning and Teaching Initiative (SALTI) pedagogical conference and an Academic Forum on the Connected Curriculum by Prof Dilly Fung (University College London). Institutions will also be encouraged to participate in the 2nd SALTI conference, taking place in September 2019, which we hope to be a national event.

Collaborative cluster

Identify the ways in which your institution has contributed to collaborative cluster work. What benefits and challenges are there in your cluster involvement?

We have been an active member of the Learning Analytics Collaborative Cluster. Work undertaken by the Cluster builds on Year 1 and involved designing and delivering a number of sector-wide student focus groups to obtain student attitudes to learning analytics and the specific needs of each group of students. Four student interns, hosted at separate institutions (Robert Gordon University, and the Universities of Edinburgh, St Andrews and Stirling) were recruited to develop this piece of work, and they are at the stage of collaborating online to design workshops aimed at gathering the student perspective, with a view to organising and delivering the workshops in May 2019. Initial contact has been made with institutional and student Enhancement Theme reps in each institution to maximize recruitment opportunities. The expected outcome of this Year 2 work is to produce and disseminate a holistic evidence-based resource which can be used by institutions to inform their own approaches.

We have benefitted from the Collaborative Cluster by gaining further insight into the approaches taken by other institutions in the use of learning analytics. Engaging student interns in this project has allowed us to offer more students the opportunity to engage with the Enhancement Theme work, while also being of personal benefit to the interns themselves.

Sector-wide work

Identify the ways in which your institution has contributed to sector-wide work project strands. What benefits and challenges are there in your involvement?

The University of St Andrew's has contributed to the Scottish Higher Education Planners Group, working on two projects, the Data Landscape resource and the National Student Survey (NSS) analysis. Both projects have led to extremely valuable resources for Scottish HE institutes and beyond.

We have also contributed to the QAA's Student-led Project by contributing to discussions focussed on student-led teaching award data and through attendance at the 'Students Using Evidence to Improve the Student Experience, Developing Practice workshop.'

Supporting staff and student engagement

How have staff and students been supported to engage in Theme activities? Please provide examples along with an indication of the impact of their engagement.

Please report on any work (current or planned) around upskilling staff and students in the use of evidence to improve the student experience. Would you be willing to share any of your materials with the sector?

How has your institution made use of the materials produced as part of the Theme? For example, have you attended the webinars? Have you used the principles of responding to the student voice activity cards? Where you have used or engaged with materials, please indicate what impact such engagement has had.

Students and staff are encouraged to engage with Theme activities through various institutional structures. Examples include, being a member of the steering group, supporting institutional activities as part of a wide working group, attending and participating in workshops and other Theme-related events. In 2018-19 students have been able to engage in Theme-related activities through paid internships. Three students

have been employed to develop learning materials for high school students as part of our work on building diversity across the curriculum and one student has been employed as part of our collaborative cluster activities. These positions were advertised as open positions to the student community and interviews were held with candidates expressing an interest in the position. In addition to providing an opportunity for students to engage in Enhancement Theme activities, the interview process also allowed students to gain experience of formal interviews, thus contributing to enhancing their employability.

Engagement of staff has focussed on upskilling staff in the use of evidence to enhance the student experience. Examples of activities in this area include;

- A collaboration between a PhD student in Statistics and members of the Planning Team has been established, aimed at upskilling the Planning Team in the statistical analysis of survey data. A key part of this collaboration is developing tools within the statistical software 'R'. It is hoped that this collaboration will allow staff and students access to statistically robust data sets, allowing areas for enhancement to be identified and subsequent activities focussed on these areas.
- The St Andrews Learning and Teaching Initiative (SALTI) has run a series of webinars on pedagogical skills aimed at upskilling staff in gathering and using evidence to inform and enhance their teaching practice. Additional 'advanced' webinars are planned for 2019-20. Through these increasing levels of webinars, we aim to build capacity in our staff to collect, analyse and act upon evidence to enhance the learning experience they offer to students.
- Student-led teaching award data has been analysed to identify examples of good teaching practice. Good practice workshops are under development, aimed at disseminating good practice and with the expectation that awareness of good practice will result in an improved learning and teaching experience for students.

A small concern in relation to the streamlined steering group for the Theme is that less students and staff are engaged with the Theme. As a response to this, we are exploring the idea of developing an enhancement theme newsletter for 2019-20 that could be disseminated to students and staff. We would be interested in learning whether similar newsletters have been successfully instigated by other institutes.

Processes

Detail any changes over the year, in the way the Theme has been organised and delivered within your institution.

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?

A streamlined approach to managing Theme work was introduced in 2018-19. The large institutional team, which met three times per semester was replaced with a small steering group, consisting of strand-leads, which meets once per month. The strand-leads are supported by students and staff from the wider institute as work necessitates. The streamlined approach has brought about several benefits.

The regular steering group meetings has ensured that members of the group are more familiar with all the work occurring as part of the Theme. Additional time is available for discussion, enabling members of the group to identify synergies between the strands of work and also to identify shared benefits and challenges. The regular meetings permit the Theme Lead to quick identify work that requires additional support and those that are running smoothly. This enables the Theme Lead to be responsive to members of the

steering group needs and helps in progressing the strands of work towards their intended outcomes.

A potential concern of the smaller steering group is that less staff and students may feel that they are actively engaged in the Theme's work. In our experience, this has not been the situation and staff and students from the wider university have supported the strand leads in their activities. In response to this concern, we are however considering the introduction of a staff and student Enhancement Theme newsletter that will endeavour to engage a wide audience in the Themes work (see additional information in the supporting staff and student engagement section). Another concern of the smaller steering group is that we are placing additional demands on already busy staff, through both the increased number of meetings and increased responsibility for leading work. Our experience this year is that the additional meetings have not substantially increased the burden on staff. There may be more meetings, but these meetings are shorter and more dynamic. Furthermore, support is more rapidly available when challenges arise. Equally, staff from across the university have been willing to support the strand leads in their work, spreading the engagement.

In a change to previous years, we did not offer a funding call for small Enhancement Theme projects in 2018-19. This decision was taken strategically, allowing us to focus on our core activities at a critical point (midway) through the Enhancement Theme cycle. We feel that this focus has been a benefit this year. However, we expect to offer a limited funding call for projects in 2019-20 to enable all staff to have an opportunity to contribute to the Theme's activities.

This end of year report will be reviewed and approved by the University's Learning and Teaching Committee and subsequently distributed to Schools, Professional Services and the Student's Association through the committee. The report will further be considered by the University's Academic Monitoring Group, whose membership includes the Deans of Faculty and Associate Deans (Education). It will also be published on our website.

A copy of our proposed evaluations is show in Table 1.

Table 1:

Title of key activity or project	**Scale**: Large (cross-institution) or smaller (local)	**Evaluation level** for 2018-19 (in-depth, light-touch, none)
Investigate factors influencing degree outcomes	Small scale	None (Continued into 2019-20)
Develop mechanisms to make the statistical analysis of survey data more accessible to staff	Small scale	Light-touch
Use nomination data from teaching awards to identify and share good practice	Small scale	Light-touch
Gather and analyse evidence to inform the development of learning and teaching spaces	Large scale	In-depth
Enhance attainment and build diversity across the student demographic	Large scale	None (Continued into 2019-20)
Develop the link between evidence and pedagogy	Large scale	Light-touch

After careful review, we believe it is appropriate to adjust our evaluation plans in order to give our strands of work the necessary time to develop strong outcomes.

We attach to this report a Light-touch evaluation for the project; using nomination data from teaching awards to identify and share good practice. An in-depth evaluation of the 'gathering and analysing evidence to inform the development of learning and teaching spaces' strand of work was submitted in January 2019.

We would like to roll the evaluation of the project; developing mechanisms to make statistical analysis of survey data more accessible to staff into 2019-20. This would give the project time to analyse the 2018-19 survey results enabling us to gather stronger evidence as to the short-term and medium-term impacts of the work. Similarly, we would like to role the evaluation of the 'developing the link between evidence and pedagogy' strand into 2019-20. This project has developed into a large project aimed at building capacity in our academic staff. We believe allowing this work to process into 2019-20, when 'advanced' webinars and the SALTI conference will be held, will enable us to more accurately reflect upon the impact of this strand on enhancing the student experience. At this time, we would expect to conduct an in-depth evaluation of the project, rather than the previously indicated light-touch evaluation.

The Theme evaluation work led by Liz Thomas has encouraged us to reflect on the impact our strands of work will have over longer timeframes. Furthermore, we have reflected on the evidence that we need to collect to assess whether our work has significant impact on the student experience, and this meets our goals for the Theme.

Looking ahead

At the end of 2018-19 we have one year of the current Theme remaining. Looking beyond this Theme, please share any observations and views to help shape the final year of the current Theme and to identify a topic for the next Theme.

Initial thoughts for the last year of the theme;
1. There seems to be considerable interest across the sector in developing appropriate tools and methodologies for the analysis of qualitative data from student surveys. Activities in this area may be well received.
2. A strong 2020 Enhancement Theme conference showcasing the work undertaken as part of the Theme would be a good culmination to the Theme. Our view is that this conference should seek to promote the Themes work as widely as possible.

Initial thoughts on possible next topics for the theme;
1. Student's as independent learners, building resilience
2. Postgraduate student experience
3. Digital literacy
4. Mental health and/or wellbeing – both students and staff
5. Enterprise Education
6. Assessment; Understanding the range and purpose of assessment methods.

Report Author:	Gerald Prescott
Date:	22nd May 2019

Evidence for Enhancement: Improving the Student Experience

End of Year Report for: <University of St Andrews>

Financial Annex Year 2

Please provide a breakdown of actual spend against planned expenditure, based on the financial breakdown in the Institutional Work Plan Year 2 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.

Anticipated spend

Enhance attainment and build diversity across the student demographic	£5000
Develop the link between evidence and pedagogy	£1000
Core project funding (interns) and incidentals	£4000
TOTAL	**£10,000**

Actual spend

Enhance attainment and build diversity across the student demographic	£5000
Develop the link between evidence and pedagogy	£1400
Core project funding (interns) and incidentals	£3100
Travel, accommodation and incidentals	£230
TOTAL	**£9730**

Author:	**Gerald Prescott**
Date:	**23rd May 2019**