End of Year 2 Report for: University of Glasgow

The key purposes of this report are to:-

- provide a framework for HEIs to report on their Theme activity that has taken place over the year
- help share information across the sector on the benefits and challenges around Theme engagement.

Please report under the headings below. The report should be about 6 to 8 sides of A4 in length.

Institutional team Identify any changes in Theme leadership, TLG and institutional team membership since details were reported in the institutional plan developed at the start of the academic year.
Institutional team as noted in the updated Year 2 Plan submitted on 28 January 2022.

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
Workstream 1 (Peer enabled activity) **Note – as advised to QAA in January 2022, there was some delay with the setting up of this workstream activity: "***As noted in our Year 2 plan, Workstream 1 involving the development of larger scale Peer Assisted Learning and/or Study Support (PAL/PASS) across the University, was based on project funding relating to investment in the new Learning and Teaching Strategy. Unfortunately the project funding has been delayed and so the work on appointing staffing to implement, deploy and develop the peer programmes cannot proceed until the investment request has received final approval."*
1. What change is being made? (Brief description(s) of overall activity/intervention)
A variety of new resources created throughout Year 1 have been published. This includes a webpage dedicated to providing showcase/testimonial space for UofG staff currently undertaking various forms of peer-enabled activity (https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/leads/students/peer/activity/). In addition, we have created resources on good practice in the implementation of peer-enabled activity, and an annotated bibliography with links to further resources, reading and materials to act as a guide to staff. As a result of the work undertaken in Year 1, we have been able to provide clarity of definition and detail on the forms, types and models of peer-enabled activity in use across the institution, and have mapped this work to enable the new peer-focused staff (see below) to begin the process of expansion of peer activity across the institution. The following recommendations arose from the conclusion of our Year 1 activity which will support the design for the activity planned for Year 2 which will also roll into Year 3. Work is underway to develop an institutional programme of Peer Assisted Study Schemes (PASS), housed centrally within Student Learning Development (SLD). In addition, new peer-enabled programmes will be created in a variety of Schools/Colleges by the SLD staff in collaboration with subject area staff. This work is made possible by the recruitment of new staff within SLD. We have employed a new Peer Learning Facilitator, peer learning GTAs, and peer learning student interns. This team's immediate work is to: • Identify key pilot courses/Schools to collaborate in the expansion/implementation of peer enabled activity.   ○ The School of Life Sciences has already been identified as a key priority as have areas within the School of Education. • Embed centralised peer enabled activity through SLD. • Begin process of evaluation of expansion of peer enabled activity. Lastly, we have developed a four-year plan for the Peer Learning Facilitator and SLD with regards to peer enabled activity and evaluation of measurable impact.

2. Why are we making it? (Rationale for the change)

To support the ongoing development of a strong student community through the expansion of peer enabled activity across the institution. Providing staff across the University with best/good practice resources on peer enabled activity.

We aim to improve student retention/success, student engagement and student sense of belonging/mattering.

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

The difference we anticipate on completion of this work is a wider availability of peer enabled activity for students demonstrated through:

- Increased number of PAL/PASS projects running with which students can engage. Some of these will be run within various subject areas/Schools/Colleges, in collaboration with SLD, and others will be run centrally by SLD.
- Increased uptake of optional peer-enabled activity across the institution.
- Increase in the different types of peer-enabled activity on offer.
- Increased institutional awareness of range and type of peer-enabled activity.
- Improved student retention, progression and success outcomes.
- Improved student sense of community/belonging/mattering.

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

The project will be measured in three key areas:

- student engagement;
- student progression/retention rates;
- staff and student feedback.

Student engagement will play a key role in developing, measuring, and improving the roll-out of provision. A student-led working group (organised by the student interns) will be created to provide opportunity for peer-led feedback and monitoring. This working group, alongside SLD staff, will work to conduct a variety of investigations on student engagement. For example:

- Students who participate in the scheme as mentors and those who are tutored will take a self-efficacy questionnaire used previously within the School of Psychology. They will retake this after serving as mentees/participants and as mentors/tutors. The data from these questionnaires will demonstrate the extent of skills development for our students. The questionnaire will be adapted to map to the Graduate Attributes framework, thereby supporting students' awareness of graduate skills development.
    - This analysis will adopt the established practices and scholarship conducted by colleagues in the School of Psychology and Neuroscience in looking at articulation and realisation of explicit Graduate Attributes, and it will adopt the results of the work from the Graduate Attributes and Employability Working Group.
- Student engagement in this scheme is expected to benefit students' academic attainment. Participating Schools will be asked to collaborate with SLD in the analysis of student grades before and after participation in peer mentoring, reporting any indication of increased academic performance.

- We will utilise comparable data from SoTL (Scholarship of Teaching and Learning) projects, and develop our own SoTL projects, to analyse this data and the impact on student academic attainment.
    - These SoTL projects will be undertaken, where relevant, in collaboration between SLD and relevant Schools.
- Focus groups will be undertaken with staff whose students are involved with the scheme to explore observed differences in class participation and to provide feedback for future years of the scheme.

Student progression and retention rates will similarly be monitored in the initial pilot areas to track the impact of peer learning opportunities on student success.

- Analysis of student progression and retention in the participating courses will be conducted annually. Members of the University's Retention and Success Working Group and SLD staff will compare these alongside traditional retention and progression trends.
- The SIMD20 and SIMD40 student cohorts will be a particular focus of attention. Currently, they are disproportionately represented in withdrawal data. We anticipate a significant reduction in the withdrawal rates when comparing those who engage with PASS and those who do not based on previous scholarship (e.g. van der Meer, Wass and Scott, 2017).
    - A key measure of success will be the recruitment of SIMD20 and SIMD40 as future peer supporters and we will aim for a representative number of peer supporters within supporter cohort within 2 years of the scheme being initiated.
- Mature students will also be a focus of peer learning work. Through targeted provision, and in collaboration with the Mature Students' Association, we will monitor mature student retention, progression and success rates. It is anticipated that engagement with peer learning will promote mature student retention and success. As above, this will be analysed via SLD and the Retention and Success Working Group.
- Glasgow International College (GIC) students will provide the last focus of peer learning staff. In collaboration with the GIC Performance Monitoring Working Group, pre- and post-peer learning intervention success measures will be gathered through GIC student retention, progression and success.

Lastly, **staff and student feedback** will be sought each semester to provide ongoing mechanisms for development and enhancement of provision. This work will be incorporated into a wider evaluation framework, the Kirkpatrick Evaluation Model, through which the impact and value of the peer learning interventions can be gathered. The Kirkpatrick Evaluation Model, usually used to evaluate staff training, encourages participants to reflect on interventions in a meaningful way.

- This model takes participants through four stages of reflection and evaluation: reaction (initial reaction to the initiative, e.g. did the students enjoy and feel value from the intervention); learning (what take-away messages, attributes, experiences and attitudes were adopted/adapted as part of the initiative); behaviour (e.g. what behavioural changes were enacted as a result of the initiative over the medium- to longer-term); and results (e.g. self-perceived benefits as a result of the intervention). This approach, alongside the data-driven analysis discussed under the examples above, aims to provide a holistic understanding of the benefits of the peer initiatives.

This **three-pronged approach** to the review of the implementation of peer learning opportunities will provide a solid evidentiary base:

- We will provide evidence of student engagement and student attainment/improvement through utilisation of peer learning opportunities.
    - This evidence will cover both accounts of student uptake, student utilisation, student self-perception of self-efficacy and confidence, and SoTL outputs to highlight Glasgow's key strengths in this area.
- We will provide evidence of impact on retention, progression and success.
    - Adopting practices and approaches from elsewhere in the institution, as well as other institutions, we will conduct analyses on target cohorts and specific courses/programmes to provide a solid, data-driven understanding of the impact of the peer learning initiatives.
- Lastly, we will provide evidence of impact on students' practice and their approach to study/peer learning.
    - Through the use of an established evaluation model, we will draw out and clearly articulate the benefits/impacts felt by students by undertaking peer learning opportunities.

This evidentiary base will be used to establish, highlight and promote the value of peer learning initiatives to our student body, as well as to contribute to the innovation in our pedagogical approaches and investment in the student experience.

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

As mentioned above, the project will be underpinned at all stages by widespread consultation with students and staff across the institution.

In addition to the above, SLD will instigate a student-led steering group for ongoing evaluation, discussion and conversation around all elements of peer-enabled activity. This steering group will be led by the student interns and will include student volunteers from across subject areas.

Staff feedback and evaluation will also form a key component in the development of peer-enabled activity at all stages.

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

Our key approach and philosophy has been to fund staff who will work specifically on peer-enabled activity. Our Year 1 work, alongside previous research, has highlighted the need to avoid having organisation/facilitation/creation of peer-enabled activity as an additional workload pressure on staff already juggling too many commitments. Our new staff are, as a result, focused on peer-enabled activity.

7. Any things you need to stop doing? (Any unsuccessful elements)

N/A.

Title of project/activity

Workstream 2 (Maths/Numeracy Gap Analysis)

8. What change is being made? (Brief description(s) of overall activity/intervention)

Work is in progress for the scoping work to develop support for numeracy.

The work has built on previous informal analysis which indicated that students without Higher Maths on entry had a higher drop-out rate than those with this or an equivalent qualification. This project sought to understand if a data science approach could understand the importance of Maths, alongside other variables, in predicting student progression outcomes.

Throughout the data investigation life cycle, several iterations were made to make the analysis more robust. This included measuring progression across more years, extending the student population to consider students from all parts of the UK and readjusting our approach to calculating maths tariff on entry.

During the data analysis phase, we trialled three machine learning models allowing us to find the most accurate model for different Colleges and Progression outcomes. Different approaches to the analysis also had to be undertaken, for example due to the varied nature of entry requirements, the cohorts in the Schools of Engineering, and Maths & Statistics were excluded from the College of Science and Engineering and treated separately.

During the process of building these models we encountered some challenges - most notably not many of the models could satisfactorily determine the importance of Maths on progression from Year 2 to Year 3.

Results varied across the four Colleges, and were presented at project meetings and shared with the Deans of L&T.

It was agreed that the outline of the outcomes and how these related between the first informal analysis was extremely useful and would provide valuable insights on where to focus on student support – also allowing consideration of Maths qualifications in relation to other variables.

9. Why are we making it? (Rationale for the change)

This work will provide the foundation for the development of projects for Maths/numeracy support for students in order to support student retention. The analysis will identify areas of need for student support in maths and numeracy and therefore ensure appropriate design and objectives for support initiatives.

10. What difference has occurred as a result? (Tangible change made successfully or envisaged)

This phase of the project produced a report on insights arising from the data analysis to identify the significance of Maths ability (qualifications) in student success (e.g. retention and progression). These insights will also lead to recommendations to facilitate the development of maths and numeracy support for students across the University, taking account of variable levels of Maths ability.

The findings showed that Maths ability was a significant predictor for progression from Year 1 to Year 2 in Social Sciences, Arts and Engineering subject areas. For MVLS there was very little variability in our predictors and our models struggled to distinguish the importance between these variables. The picture was more mixed when considering progression from Year 2 to Year 3, or between Years 1 and 3, where Maths ability was less of a predictor in the Colleges of Arts, and Social Sciences, and in Life Sciences subjects.

Other variables were found to have an impact on progression in different subject areas including:

- Socio-economic background.
- Term-time University accommodation.

- Distance of home/accommodation from campus.
- Student age.
- Entry tariff in other subjects (non-Maths).

The findings will be disseminated and discussed with Colleges and Schools over the summer of 2022 in order to consider the different results in different areas, and potential action to take in local areas. The results will also be fed into the following strands of relevant University-wide activity:

1. The University's current review of support for Mathematics and Statistics for students with a view to helping to identify key areas of demand within the University and to prioritise areas of activity in AY 2022-23 as well as develop a full profile of support for the following session.
2. The Student Retention Working Group.
3. The Home Students Working Group – which focusses on students who commute to University from their parental home.

There will also be some further data analysis to understand the direction of some identified variables to establish with they support or hinder progress. The data analysis will also be extended to consider progress rates in more recent academic sessions (2019-20, 2020-21).

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

- Outcome report from the Workstream (this report contains sensitive data and is therefore confidential to the University).
- Recommendations for development of maths and numeracy support – following dissemination and discussion of data insights.

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

The Enhancement Theme Project Team will receive the report and agree on final recommendations which will then be referred to the Learning & Teaching Committee.

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

The collaboration between Planning Insight & Analytics (PIA) and our intern from the School of Mathematics and Statistics has been a mutually beneficial experience. The project has allowed both PIA and Katarina to experiment with different decision tree models and understand the strengths and weaknesses of each one. It has also taught us how to creatively use HESA data and highlighted some of the limitations with this data in fully understanding factors behind student progression. The project has also revealed how we can build future machine learning data products that we could offer to Colleges and Schools to aid future retention and progression initiatives.

14. Any things you need to stop doing? (Any unsuccessful elements)

The project has highlighted that the data we used for Dentistry, Medicine and Nursing needs to be reviewed and expanded to fully understand the causal factors behind student progression especially in Schools with really good progression outcomes.

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.

The Year 2 theme plan was shared with the Deans of Learning & Teaching and the University's central Learning & Teaching Committee. Progress with the activity detailed in the plan was reported to the University's Enhancement Theme Project Team.

Workstream 1

The role of peer-enabled activity within Student Learning Development has been discussed at length across the institution and across the sector. Peer-enabled activity as a component of the work of Learning Development is, for example, the focus a recently-published article by a former member of SLD staff (https://journal.aldinhe.ac.uk/index.php/jldhe/article/view/647). Peer-enabled activity has similarly been the focus of multiple sector-wide discussions (e.g. the Scottish Higher Educational Learning Developer (ScotHELD) network).

Workstream 2

As noted in 10) above, there will be extensive dissemination of the insights on the impact of Maths ability (and other variables) on student progression. The focus will be to work collaboratively across the institution to understand the data and identify areas to develop in terms of supporting students. This will include contact with College Deans of Learning & Teaching, College Business Partners based in Planning Insights Analytics (PIA) and with School Learning & Teaching Committees, plus interactions with some key working groups which are developing maths and statistics support for students, supporting student retention and considering the experience of commuting students.

Given the sensitive nature of this work, scope for external dissemination of the detailed data findings will be limited. However it will contribute to more general discussion with colleagues across the sector on approaches to supporting student retention and support to students in specific groups including some protected characteristics.

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.

Workstream 1

Work in this area has allowed for tangible collaboration and networking across the sector. For example, new connections have been made with a variety of institutions across the UK in discussion of the implementation, development and enhancement of peer-enabled activity. This has ranged from informal email communications (e.g., a friendly forum for question-asking and problem troubleshooting) to more formal work on the potential for joint projects (e.g., working alongside private companies to look at promotion of sense of belonging and mattering amongst our student body). The new peer-focused staff within SLD will be tasked with building on these connections to further foster collaboration across the sector.

Workstream 2

The College of Social Sciences (CoSS) is piloting an intervention aimed at improving student retention and success through the use of reflective pedagogies and coaching models. The project, On Track, provides students with structured opportunities to develop their academic skills and behaviours through independent reflective activities, 1:1 coaching, and group workshops. The pilot will also evaluate the use of a self-assessment "diagnostic" tool which students complete prior to participation in the programme. This tool is used to encourage students to reflect on their academic skills and readiness, and support tailored signposting and support by Academic Advisers and Student Support Officers. The project team have had conversations with colleagues at universities across Scotland, and the wider UK (via SEDA) to understand how colleagues are using similar tools at other universities, and to share lessons learned. The findings from the CoSS pilot will be shared internally via the Retention and Success Steering Group, as well as with colleagues at other universities via existing partnerships and communities of practice.

Supporting staff and student engagement

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

The activity conducted under this Enhancement Theme is embedded in existing work that aligns with the University's priorities particularly within the Learning & Teaching Strategy and its implementation.

For Workstream 1, we have engaged with staff across the institution in the collection and dissemination of best practice (see Workstream 1 discussion above). Staff have been actively encouraged to share what has worked – and what has not worked – in their peer-enabled activity. Moreover, multiple contacts across the institution have been involved in discussion of good practice and how to enhance/expand provision with the new peer-focused staff within SLD. The Retention and Success Steering Group also supported this dissemination of best practice, and there has been further local engagement in the Colleges and Schools through the Retention and Transitions Officers sharing information with School Learning & Teaching Committees. This work has focused on community-building and embedding peer-enabled activity into courses and programmes.

The recruitment of student interns as part of the SLD team will further embed students in engagement with the Theme activities.

Staff engagement in workstream 2 is described in the above sections referring to the dissemination of the insights from the data analysis across the University.

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?

As noted in last year's report, the use of interns is considered to be highly successful. It provides an excellent opportunity for students to gain experience – enhancing their future

graduate attributes and employability, and also brings a fresh approach and energy to our project work.

Looking ahead

In session 2022-23 we will be starting to consider what the next Enhancement Theme might focus on. We are interested to know about the discussions, hot topics and issues that are emerging in your practice and gaining increasing attention. Please share your thoughts and views below.

The Project Team has identified Work Related Learning as an area of interest which may have potential for the next or a future Enhancement Theme. This area would provide opportunities for joint engagement across the Tertiary sector given its focus in both FE and HE contexts. Within this broad area, work related student experience in the context of virtual mobility is also of interest as this is considered to be an under-explored area. There would therefore be an interest in investigation in this area to review the types of virtual work related learning on offer, and its effectiveness in terms of the benefits it can provide to students as an alternative to more traditional work related learning activity.

Report Author:	**Helen Butcher, Darrell Butler, Andrew Struan.**
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