Resilient Learning Communities

Institutional Plan for: University of Edinburgh

This document will form your year 2 plan and should be around three to four sides of A4. You can find your year 1 plan through this [web page](#).

Context
Provide any statements that might be helpful in explaining your institution's context and approach and how this plan supports the achievement of institutional priorities. Any context statement could draw on salient points from the previous year's learning/outcomes from Theme work and reflect any changes in the strategic direction of your institution.

- The recommendations from the year one PhD internships have affirmed the continuing importance of the University focussing on community building as the main priority for year two of the Theme.
- The recent Enhancement-led Institutional Review resulted in a recommendation relating to attainment gaps, and this is reflected in our plan below.
- We are aware that there have been a vast number of online activities taking place across the University and the Students' Association to support community building. Reflections on the past year highlight the accessibility of such activities but also the impact on engagement due to digital fatigue.

Institutional team	
Please specify for each member whether staff or student and for staff, their role title. Where the Theme Leaders' Group (TLG) staff or student nominee is unable to attend meetings, an alternate can attend on their behalf.	
Institutional lead	Professor Tina Harrison, Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance
TLG staff representative	Nichola Kett (Head of Quality Assurance and Enhancement)
TLG student representative	Tara Gold (Vice President Education)

Edinburgh University Students' Association staff member	Stuart Lamont, Academic Policy Coordinator
Institute for Academic Development	Dr Jon Turner, Director
Doctoral education/researcher development representative	Dr Fiona Philippi (Head of Doctoral Education/Deputy Head of Researcher Development, Institute for Academic Development)
PhD Interns	To be appointed

The Institutional Team will remain small and focused, engaging with existing groups, committees and networks as appropriate. Additionally, students and staff who are working on community building activities will be invited to attend all or parts of relevant meetings.

Overall outcomes/activity

Are there any changes to your key priorities, outcomes and delivery activities that you identified at the start of the Theme?

Our overall aim remains the same: to identify activities that effectively build a sense of community and belonging and share these across the University in order to enhance the student experience.

Year 2 outcomes/activity

In answering the following, identify what is continuing from year 1 and what is new:
What are your key priorities?
What outcomes do you want to achieve?
What activities will you deliver to achieve your key priorities?

Our main activities remain the same but build on the outcomes of year 1.

1. **Appoint two PhD Interns to support Theme work**
   Main responsibilities will include:
   - To progress the recommendations from the 2020/21 PhD Interns relating to communication and coordination, including working with the Students' Association to align actions with student representative structures;
   - Analyse student feedback (quantitative and qualitative);
   - Provide engaging summaries of activities and plans for stakeholders and update websites/SharePoint sites;
   - Support pilot projects to test interventions to reduce attainment gaps (links to an Enhancement-led Institutional Review recommendation);
   - Develop and support an evaluation plan for Theme activity.

2. **Share examples and support new activity**
   - Continue to gather and share good practice and to support pilot activity, with a focus on those activities that make the most impact and that reduce attainment gaps (links to an Enhancement-led Institutional Review recommendation).

- Aligning with institutional strategic priorities as appropriate, primarily: the Curriculum Transformation programme; the Student Support and Personal Tutor project; and the Digital Education strand of the Digital Strategy.
- Revisit the School of Health in Social Sciences project to improve the experience for students with disabilities (funded June-July 2021).
- Explore the option of developing a framework or toolkit to support community building.

3. **Progress specific recommendations from the 2020/21 PhD Internships**
   - Implement a Postgraduate Researcher Representative Roundtable (to be supported by a PhD Intern)
   - Update Giving Feedback: A Student Guide

Evaluation

How do you intend to evaluate your year 2 projects and activities?

Prior to completing this section, 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 complete briefly the following 5 questions for each activity or intervention (N.B. Just cut and paste the table below as many times as necessary). This will help you complete your end of year 2 report.

Title of project/activity
Appoint two PhD Interns to support Theme work
What change is being made? (Brief description(s) of overall activity/intervention)
A variety of actions as detailed above.
Why are we making it? (Rationale for the change)
To build on year one Theme work through more targeted activities and to continue to engage students in our Theme work.
What difference will hopefully occur as a result? (Tangible change envisaged)
This will be determined as the PhD internships progress.
How will we know? (How the change is measured)
This will be determined as the PhD internships progress.

Title of project/activity
Share examples and support new activity
What change is being made? (Brief description(s) of overall activity/intervention)

A continuing exercise to gather and reflect on good practice examples of community building activities from across the University and Students' Association.

Supporting pilot activity, with a focus on those activities that make the most impact, that reduce attainment gaps and align with institutional strategic priorities as appropriate.

Why are we making it? (Rationale for the change)
• To enable sharing of good practice examples of community building activities. • To learn what activities make a positive impact in order to inform policy and/or practice.

What difference will hopefully occur as a result? (Tangible change envisaged)
• An increase in good practice examples being shared and action taken as a result. • For activities which make a positive impact on community building to have informed policy and/or practice. • Ultimately, an increase in the effectiveness of community building activities.

How will we know? (How the change is measured)
• An increase in good practice examples being shared e.g. in network meetings and through Teaching Matters and examples of where action has been taken as a result of this. • Changes to policy and/or practice have been implemented. • Ultimately, through student feedback and attainment data.

Title of project/activity
Progress specific recommendations from the 2020/21 PhD Internships

What change is being made? (Brief description(s) of overall activity/intervention)
1) Implement a Postgraduate Researcher Representative Roundtable 2) Update [Giving Feedback: A Student Guide](#)

Why are we making it? (Rationale for the change)
In response to recommendations from PhD Interns appointed in year one of the Theme.

What difference will hopefully occur as a result? (Tangible change envisaged)
1) Postgraduate researcher student representatives will have had the opportunity to find out about different community building practices and to share successes and failures. 2) Students will be clearer on the student voice mechanisms.

How will we know? (How the change is measured)
Student feedback

Dissemination of work

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

Communication methods:

- Internally: email; Institutional Team; Senate Quality Assurance Committee; Doctoral College Forum; Directors of Teaching Network; Teaching Matters blog; Learning and Teaching Conference; Students' Association groups/networks.

- Externally: Scottish Higher Education Enhancement Committee (SHEEC); Theme Leaders' Group (TLG); Enhancement Themes conference; and the University's and Students' Association's websites.

The Institutional Team will continue to use existing committees, groups and networks to communicate about the Theme, to engage staff and students in Theme work, and to disseminate University and sector Theme outputs. Additionally, the PhD Interns will support communication of Theme work as outlined above.

Community and academic community are established tags on the [Teaching Matters blog](#).

Supporting staff and student engagement
How will you support your community to engage with planned activities?

As outlined above the Institutional Team will continue to use existing committees, groups and networks to communicate about the Theme, to engage staff and students in Theme work, and to disseminate University and sector Theme outputs.

Student and staff involvement with the Theme itself has primarily been through the Institutional Team. However, we have supported staff and student engagement with Theme activities (not necessarily badged as such) through mechanisms such as the Learning and Teaching Conference and the Directors of Teaching Network.

The year one PhD Interns made recommendations about student engagement in the University's Enhancement Themes work and these will be taken forward in year two.

Staff and students will be kept informed of the work of the Theme through the communication methods outlined above. Support and guidance can be provided by the Institutional Lead and Theme Leaders Group staff member. Students will be supported through the Students' Association.

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Date:	17 September 2021

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