Resilient Learning Communities

Institutional Plan for: University of Strathclyde

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.

In recent years, the University of Strathclyde has invested in our learning communities through a number of collaborative, student-led and student-focused projects that focus on the various types of student journey and learning experience. These include:

- The expansion of the Learner Experience Framework, to include indicators around resilience, innovation, and atypical learning experiences (such as industry placements);
- The development of our online learning capacity and capability, with the development of institutional standards, governance and oversight, amidst the expansion of our Graduate Apprenticeship and Degree Apprenticeship programmes and the expansion of our online learning degree portfolio;
- The implementation of a Learning Analytics system that allows us to identify where students may need further support to assist in improved experience and retention;
- The continued development and use of Strathclyde's system for academic management information, through the work of the Institution's Strategy and Policy Directorate and the SUnBIRD system (Strathclyde University Business Intelligence Reports and Dashboards) to provide data-informed student insights to programme leaders;
- Substantial expansion of mental health and wellbeing services;
- The establishment of a Race Equality Working Group;
- The foundation of the Strathclyde Doctoral School and an institution-wide project aimed at producing a sector-leading PGR student lifecycle that supports positive outcomes, innovation, and world-leading research; and
- The promotion of a positive, healthy, and people-orientated working environment to enhance staff and student work/life balance.

All of these can be clearly mapped against our Strategic Plan 2020-2025 to provide an outstanding experience for students and staff. These activities have proven to be of

significant benefit in our ability to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, and provide the foundation on which we will explore the impact of the pandemic and evaluate our response to the changed learning and teaching environment and the consequent impacts to our learning community and its diverse needs.

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	Helyn Gould, Deputy Associate Principal, Learning and Teaching
TLG staff representative	Chris Bovis, Learning Enhancement Officer
TLG student representative	Savvina Kritharidou, Vice-President Education
TLG staff representative alternate	Brian Green, Deputy Associate Principal, Learning and Teaching

Overall outcomes/activity

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

Through discussion with colleagues across the institution, Strathclyde adopted a community-led approach with departments/schools/faculties and other teams identifying areas within their own remits for prioritisation. Colleagues were encouraged to put forward proposals on areas that benefit from student-staff partnership and intern involvement.

Given that the theme has the potential to reach out to a broad range of colleagues, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic response, it was felt that this enhancement theme would offer the opportunity to empower colleagues to identify, collaborate and enhance their learning communities.

During the first year of the Theme, Strathclyde identified a number of key priorities for the overall theme:

1. Defining what a learning community looks like (in the context of online and blended learning precipitated by the pandemic response) and what resilience means for students and staff;
2. Exploring the ways in which these learning communities have proven resilient, identifying best practice, and sharing amongst colleagues;
    a. This includes investigating what has and hasn't worked, and why that was within those contexts; and
3. Instituting the findings of the above key priorities to ensure that the 'new normal' at Strathclyde includes all students (undergraduate, postgraduate taught, and postgraduate research) and staff, regardless of their learning experiences.

These key priorities remain in place for theme. Year Two will be focused on the transition to the 'new normal', and exploring potential activities and structures that facilitate, support and enhance our learning community. Year Three would be focused on developing future

pathways for enhancement and identifying what the future of Higher Education at Strathclyde would look like (beyond the Enhancement Theme activity), and how new structures and systems can be resilient, ensuring the theme legacy.

By the end of the three-year Enhancement Theme, the expected outcome would be a range of case studies exploring resilience within our learning community, and potential activities, structures and best practice that will support our communities beyond these exceptional circumstances.

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?

In line with the overall outcomes and activity, Year 2 will be focused on the transition to the 'new normal', and exploring potential activities and structures that facilitate, support, and enhance our learning community. For Strathclyde, this was a theme where it was important to empower students and staff to bring about change in their own departments, schools and communities, with the institutional team and relevant committees providing oversight and strategic direction.

The key priorities for Year Two are:

1. To reflect on ongoing activity and existing projects;
2. Consider activity and project milestones in order to identify areas for targeted projects;
3. To establish an institutional wide community of practice with an integrated tool of resources for supporting enhancement theme activity;
4. To support ongoing activity around e-First (education – Future Innovation and Reflection on Strathclyde's Teaching) ensuring resilience in future thinking.

We at Strathclyde are keen to ensure that all our learning communities have the opportunity to feed in and shape this Enhancement Theme. This means continuing our engagement with all types of student learning experience (such as the experiences of BAME students, overseas students, students with disabilities, mature students, students with families and caring responsibilities, and LGBTQ+ students), especially those communities who often face difficulties in Higher Education in 'normal' times. For this we will undertake student and staff engagement activities, such as surveys and focus groups, through the use of student interns, to gain an understanding of the pandemic response landscape (and a greater move towards blended learning – on and off campus).

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
The specific projects will be selected through a competitive bid process during the coming academic year.

What change is being made? (Brief description(s) of overall activity/intervention)
The bid process will require this information to inform the evaluation and award process.

Why are we making it? (Rationale for the change)
The rationale will be clearly identified in the bid stage

What difference will hopefully occur as a result? (Tangible change envisaged)
For some projects, this will be focussed on exploration and building understanding, therefore the potential changes will organically emerge rather than be predefined. Others will have clear plans up front. Our evaluation will be managed appropriately for all instances.

How will we know? (How the change is measured)
Identification of appropriate measures will be incorporated in the expected planning and reporting activities from the start of all activities.

Dissemination of work

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

Dissemination of this work will primarily be communicated through internal workshops, however papers may be presented at external conferences if appropriate.

Supporting staff and student engagement

How will you support your community to engage with planned activities?

The broader institutional activity will be overseen by the institution's Learning Enhancement Committee. Through this the intern-supported projects will report to the Learning Enhancement Committee and also through targeted showcase events to the wider Strathclyde community.

A panel of senior staff and student executive members, supported by the Education Enhancement Directorate, will manage the project bids and funding for interns, following the same model successfully utilised during the Student Transitions theme.

Supported for the ET Student Interns will be delivered through the existing infrastructure developed for this purpose, as Strathclyde continues to work with student interns across a number of enhancement activities beyond the Enhancement Theme.

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