



End of Year 3 Report for: Abertay University

Table 1: Evidencing effectiveness and reporting impact

Cumulative descriptor of institutional/ cluster/ Student-Led Project activity over RLC Theme period	Which overarching RLC Theme questions (1-5) were prioritised?	Evidence of effectiveness in addressing chosen RLC theme priorities	Suggested outcomes and impact measures used to assess effectiveness (refer to Theory of Change model)	Challenges	Made most difference?	Hindsight
Formative Diagnostic testing of students within microcredentials and the QAA PARC initiative	Flexible and accessible	<p>The PARC initiative has its own QAA report and further details can be found at: www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/en/resilient-learning-communities/flexible-and-accessible-learning/parc</p> <p>PARC presented at the QAA international enhancement conference in June 2023.</p>	<p>This effective collaboration has brought together universities and staff from across the UK and is now starting to have international and private sector influence.</p> <p>The detailed website link introduces the partners of which Abertay, GCU, UHI, Warwick and BCU have been core. New partners continue to come on board to explore how a diagnostic approach might benefit their universities.</p> <p>Abertay continue to evolve its own discovery tool to better support and develop its new students across years 1 and 2.</p>	<p>The flexible and welcoming approach that enables partners to address any aspect of the student experience from undergrad to postgrad means that there are some challenges in maintaining momentum and this can, on occasion, see discussion getting side tracked. However, the multiplicity of approaches has added to the richness of conversations.</p> <p>A learning analytics company is interested in supporting the work in the future and this will need to be carefully considered so that the relationships and purpose are enhanced.</p> <p>Abertay’s challenge is to better integrate student outcomes from the tool with the</p>	<p>The culture of and relationships developed within the PARC group.</p> <p>Within the Abertay work the key element was the integrated approach that saw clear decision making and embedding with ABE 101 mandatory microcredential.</p>	<p>At Abertay, the proposal developed as planned. Outcomes appear positive. If we had more resource, we would have liked to have greater research capacity for analysis of student outcomes. It is hoped that this may become available in</p>

				programmes and key personnel across the university. For this we need to have more analysis of usage and need to identify the resource to do that.		the near future.
Engaging microcredits to develop successful student attributes and skills	Flexible and accessible and PARC	The microcredential approach at Abertay continues to attract great interest across the sector in Scotland and beyond. Two universities in Scotland are actively exploring and learning from Abertay. International partners in Portugal, Greece and USA are also in contact with Abertay for guidance.	Student outcomes from the individual microcredentials in year one are very impressive with 97% pass rates over the two years of operation. However, the overall impact on retention behaviours is still something we need to see evidence of. Abertay hopes that the confidence building activities of these modules will lead to improved retention rates across all programmes.	Two thirds of programmes have chosen to run the microcredentials in term 2. This is not what the creators envisaged, but may be useful if it allows students to test themselves in term 1 and then reflect and develop skills in term 2. Statistical analysis needs to be undertaken to identify any impact of this change against those programmes that operate the MCs in the planned way in term 1.	Leadership from the MC leaders and the co-ordinator in AbLE Academy. The plan saw this as a coherent package of interrelated MCs and this has been maintained through these leaders.	Would like to have scheduled these all in term 1 of year 1, but the balance had to be struck with demands on curriculum change during the pandemic.
Student Success Officers	Flexible and Accessible and Student led work	The SSOs, who are recent graduates from the schools in which they work, harness existing data analytics processes to implement targeted interventions and provide a	Qualitative data is very supportive of the role. Student stories recognise the individual and personalised approach. Evidence around outcomes in the schools in terms of improving retention rates is still to be developed.	The SSO role and the provision of data on student progress by them has exposed significant institutional issues within schools and services. A key challenge has been around the ability to withdraw students at the appropriate time when they are showing no signs of engagement. If this is done before day 50 of term 1,	Commitment of the SSOs. This is their first job out of University as they seek to learn professional values and develop themselves. Their	Better understanding of institutional processes might have helped, but we are two years in with the work and

		personalised approach to support and development. This personalisation of the student journey sees the SSO provide a focal point and a constant for students as they seek to navigate through the university.		the student will not be counted in retention data. Evidence is being created on those students who could have been withdrawn and subsequently failed year 1, but were not due to institutional indecision, failure in process or student support issues. Abertay is determined to develop a process model that best supports engaged students and enables withdrawal of those who are not.	performance has been outstanding.	you have to experience the process to see how to fix it.
New approaches to orientation and the 'relentless welcome'	Flexible and Accessible and Student led work	This work has only just started and the first year of implementation will be in September 2023. Teams across professional services and programmes are now developing this new approach within their own contexts.	Staff and student feedback will be collated and analysed to determine future improvements.	The welcome process has been organised by a small team for a number of years and institutional change may take a little time as existing resource needs to be utilised and those leaders brought on board with new approaches.	Senior Management Team and Teaching and learning Committee have offered support.	To be determined after first delivery.
Hosting of European First Year Experience conference, June 2023	Flexible and Accessible and Student led work	The conference provided Abertay and Scottish sector the opportunity to showcase the work of the enhancement theme over the past three years	The conference was delivered from 27-29 June 2023. Participation numbers went well beyond what was expected. 333 attendees from 24 countries attended. Nearly 30 staff and students attended from Abertay and have been infected with the best	Organisation was the key challenge. The conference also had to not lose money and this has been achieved.	Having a fabulous conference team helped. Special mentions to Jack Hogan, Julie Blackwell Young and Zbynek Gazdik (student)	This conference was a complete triumph so there is very little we would wish to

			practice from across the world			change.
EnAbLE Learning and Teaching projects	Flexible and Accessible and Student led work	<p>The project titles were:</p> <p>Comfortable in my skin: Examining the impact of using avatar skins in the virtual classroom on student satisfaction, engagement, and sense of community.</p> <p>Enhancing & Enabling Student Carer Experience & Retention</p> <p>Levelling the Playing Field: Supporting Student Success in Mathematics for Games</p> <p>Developing Problem Solving Logic++</p> <p>Walking, talking, and the blended campus: Exploring the potential of informal walking groups for enhancing the</p>	<p>All projects were required to focus on the enhancement theme and award criteria was constructed on those lines.</p> <p>Project evaluation will take place in summer 2023 to reveal initial outcomes. Where possible this will relate to retention measures on specific modules and programmes.</p> <p>The walking, talking project was presented at the QAA international enhancement conference in June 2023.</p>	<p>Generic projects prove more difficult to measure outcomes. Those projects that focus on a specific module or programme may prove to provide clearer data.</p> <p>However, qualitative data may also be insightful as we look to embed activities.</p>	<p>Imposition of co-creation criteria as the message around students as partners is built into all our work.</p>	None

		learning community				
		Securing a Digital Campus with Students as Partners				

When considering information provided in Table 1:

What is the ONE most positive aspect to report over the 3-year period? (Evidence of effectiveness column and Suggested outcomes and impact column)

The integrated and coherent focus on retention through Diagnostics, Microcredentials and Student Success Officers which culminates in EFYE to bring fresh impetus to Abertay.

What is the most challenging issue? (Challenges column)

Across all aspects funding and time have been key constraints.

What has made the most difference and why? (Made most difference column)

Quality of staff and students in addressing challenges and working collaboratively.

What would you NOT do again, in hindsight and why? (Hindsight column)

Nothing, the plan is coherent and we anticipate will produce positive outcomes in coming years as we continue to learn and evolve.

Table 2: Ways of working/engaging in the Resilient Learning Communities Themes work

Theme process	Activities' description	Positive aspects/difference made	Challenges	Changes made during process	Hindsight - could be improved by:
Supporting staff and students to engage with Theme activity	Microcredentials initiative	The Students' Association leadership of a module is perhaps unique to the sector	Curriculum reform and change to create space in year 1 and 2 to make this happen	Year 1 learning has seen some microcredentials evolve	Consistency of delivery timing in term1 would have been ideal
Effectiveness of organisational and management structures	Student Success Officers	Institutional identification and proposal of the idea to a charity body that could fund the posts	New role and introducing it to staff who were unfamiliar and processes that were not necessarily enabling of impact	We are delighted that two of the SSOs have moved on to full-time posts elsewhere. However, this causes retraining needs and additional work for all in bringing new SSOs up to speed.	We chose to implement a devolved model with each SSO based in the Schools. This has worked, but we could have made them more centrally controlled. However, we are not sure that would have been beneficial.
Evaluating activity and projects	Microcredentials initiative	Student and staff qualitative feedback has been collated and basic retention data collected	The intricacies of which combination of MCs has the best impact on student retention and an exploration of diagnostic responses could be revealing, but there is little ability/resource to do this work at present.	None as no ability to resource analysis. There is a proposal underway at present that may help address this need.	None
Disseminating outcomes and findings internally and externally	European First Year Experience conference	333 attendees from 24 countries helped to inspire Abertay staff and students. A small selection of tweets is	The future challenge is to make sure the momentum is not lost.	None	None

		attached below.			
Collaborating with other institutions/other organisations	PARC and diagnostics	This very successful collaborative project that has engaged with over 10 institutions and has attracted interest from across the world. Abertay staff have also been involved in QAA Programme leaders project and the Decolonising work that has helped steer Abertay developments.	Funding has now finished and now requires universities to participate in their own time. Commitment is there to make this work.	New members came and went, but core stayed – Abertay, GCU, BCU, UHI and Warwick. New members continue to arise.	None

Which ONE process from each of those listed within the Theme processes column in Table 2 worked best? (Activities description and Positive aspects columns)

They all worked to some degree, but we believe the microcredentials work could be the longest lasting and most impactful as it continues to evolve.

Why was it the best? (Positive aspects/difference made column)

Institutional buy in and enthusiasm from those parts of the university that may not normally deliver curriculum.

Which was most difficult and why? (Challenges column)

Student Success Officers initiative has been challenging as there was not one model of ways the SSOs worked as they were all embedded in different schools. Schools were encouraged to engage SSO in ways that best supported student development.

Why did you make any changes? (Could be reported as Positive or via Challenges column)

Institutions should learn and adapt, so all activities made changes. Microcredentials are evolving each year as we respond to student feedback and new challenges arise, such as AI.

What would you NOT do again, in hindsight and why? (Hindsight column)

We would remove flexibility and seek to impose Microcredentials in term 1 and perhaps may still see this as a development.

A sample of EFYE Conference 2023 Tweets



Catriona Bell
@CatrionaEBell



V.kind colleague got in touch with lovely feedback for our @QMUniversity Student Champions after the #EFYE2023 conference

"I attended the session at EFYE where four students you work with presented their work on mapping the learner journey. It was an inspiring session ..."



6:36 pm · 6 Jul 2023 · 446 Views



Conor Naughton
@ConorNaughton_



Loved co-delivering a workshop with @DrSBroadberry this morning to a full house at #EFYE2023 on the topic of team based learning and it's role in building community and positive student transition.

Thanks to all who attended, engaged and made it a brilliant workshop!



TILT Student Transitions & Social Mobility and 2 others

4:59 pm · 29 Jun 2023 · 682 Views

2 Retweets 19 Likes



Carly Emsley-Jones
@CarlyEmsley



I'm always proud of the work we do with the @cardiffuni Student Mentor Scheme but even more so today...

Being able to share the impact we have on the first-year experience at @EFYE2023 has been incredible. Lots of interest and questions from the delegates, diolch 🙌 #efye2023



6:07 pm · 28 Jun 2023 from Dundee, Scotland · 2,495 Views

4 Retweets 49 Likes 1 Bookmark



Jamie O'Hare @TheHairyJ · 29 Jun



This week I was at the @EFYE2023 conference hosted @AbertayUni, where I spoke about the Hack Pack project.

Conversations at #efye2023 were awesome to bounce ideas and get feedback.

Perhaps improvements for next year's packs 🙌

@PieterjanBonne



Jamie O'Hare @TheHairyJ · 18 May



After a ton of hard work, I am over the moon to report that the Hack Packs will be in the post soon! 📬

Students joining @AbertayCyber's BSc Ethical Hacking degree this September will receive a Hack Pack, ...



♡ 12

📊 417





Tiffany Chiu
@yltiffanychiu

...

Thank you so much @efye2023 #efye2023 for inviting us to this wonderful conference! I truly enjoyed our keynote, a lot of thought-provoking discussions. Thank you all ❤️ Hope to see you next year in Copenhagen! @billybwong



You and 2 others

9:10 am · 29 Jun 2023 · 604 Views

3 Retweets 23 Likes



Jamie Morris
@jamie_m2609

...

Always great to see student-led presentations at conferences. Looking forward to this talk on a student champion mission which feeds into a student experience strategy! #efye2023 #studentled



3:18 pm · 28 Jun 2023 · 741 Views

4 Retweets 14 Likes



Report Author:	Prof Luke Millard
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