



# **End of Year 3 Report for: University of Strathclyde**

**Table 1: Evidencing effectiveness and reporting impact**

Project	Cumulative descriptor of institutional /cluster/Student-Led Project activity over RLC Theme period	<a href="#">Which overarching RLC Theme questions (1-5) were prioritised?</a>	Evidence of effectiveness in addressing chosen RLC theme priorities	Suggested outcomes and impact measures used to assess effectiveness (refer to <a href="#">Theory of Change model</a> )	Challenges	Made most difference?	Hindsight
<p>Student Engagement in Race Equity Work</p> <p><i>[This is a two-year project set to complete in October 2023.]</i></p>	<p>The aim of this project was to support Strathclyde's ongoing commitment to race equality, specifically within diversifying its learning and teaching practices and spaces. In a collaborative approach, the Equality &amp; Diversity team and Strath Union is employing a student intern in a supportive role to raise awareness, build community and support practice amongst our students and staff in decolonising, anti-racist, and inclusive curriculum approaches.</p>	<p>1) What will our learning communities look like by 2023? And what can we do now to prepare for them? 2) Who are our current and future students and how will they learn? How can we gain a clear understanding of their needs?</p>	<p>Outputs include: the creation of a community of practice working towards a decolonised, anti-racist and inclusive curriculum, a communication plan including events, social media campaign, engagement, and case studies; the curation of resources in a centralised space for easy access; and a written report on the scoping, research and good practice identified during the course of this project.</p>	<p>Project aims to connect students with a number of equality projects<sup>1</sup> to support implementation of the <a href="#">Race Equality Action Plan</a> (2021-2023). This will be monitored through student engagement with planned events.</p> <p>The Project will conclude by integrating this work with the institution's Race Equality Steering Group, an evolution of our Race Equality Working Group, which produced a report of recommendations for the institution to adopt and creates a tangible legacy directly from the project.</p>	<p>The project aims were purposefully open in order to allow the interns the opportunity to explore priorities for students 'on the ground'. This level of openness proved a barrier at times, and more structure would have been helpful.</p>	<p>The creation of a community of practice working towards a decolonised, anti-racist and inclusive curriculum ensures the institution continues to have a dialogue as our understanding grows and best practice emerges.</p>	<p>Setting clear expectations with project partners at the outset of the project, and ensuing support mechanisms/ planning for the interns' objective setting.</p>
<p>Best Practice Award</p>	<p>This project collected and celebrated stories from each faculty, of innovative and effective practice that took place during the pandemic. The project recognised and rewarded the achievements of staff during the Covid period – demonstrating and developing the resilience of the institutional Strathclyde learning and teaching community as a whole, while supporting faculty learning communities. Recognition was achieved through publication and dissemination of the stories,</p>	<p>1) How can we prepare for the learning communities of the future? 4) How do we ensure we are able to support our diverse learning communities? What might this mean for our staff and our infrastructure?</p>	<p>A <a href="#">report was published</a> highlighting 66 of the best innovations Strathclyde staff implemented throughout the pandemic, recognising the value and excellent activity of colleagues during a very difficult time.</p>	<p>The project aimed to support the development of a resilient staff community following the immediate shift in delivery of learning and teaching during covid by sharing innovative practice and ideas across the institution. The benefits of this project fall into the intangibles category, by which aren't directly measurable but did form part of a provision that supported behavioural change.</p> <p>However, the outputs and outcomes have fed into other projects, including the Infrastructure Project, and there was a noticeable increase in the</p>	<p>Few recipients of the award engaged fully with the scholarship aspect of the project.</p>	<p>An unexpected outcome was feeding into the Infrastructure Project, and thus facilitating and enhancing the engagement with the Enhancement Themes. Informal feedback revealed that the best practice shared via the SharePoint repository</p>	<p>Reflecting on how staff are engaged in the scholarship aspects of the project would be a priority.</p>

<sup>1</sup> For example, [Tackling Racism on Campus \(TRoC\)](#), the [Anti-Racist Curriculum \(ARC\)](#) and [NUSDecoloniseEducation](#).

	which support staff in feeling valued and encourage them to continue development of their practice through scholarship.			diversity of project applications received in subsequent years of the theme.		inspired colleagues to develop and submit their own projects.	
Student Perspective on Feedback	A Faculty of Science project that reviewed student perspectives on feedback alongside interviews with staff to produce good practice resources.	2) Who are our current and future students and how will they want to learn? How can we gain a clear understanding of their needs? What information do we need to enable us to best support their learning?	Designed and produced a series of resources with posters showing good practice in feedback and assessment. Produced a report highlighting student perceptions on feedback process – with a focus on inconsistency across departments in terms of feedback timeliness, scoring matrices and expectations.	The Intern shared the resources and good practice with Faculty staff at Assessment and Feedback Workshops.  As a result of the project, faculty and departmental colleagues responsible for monitoring assessment and feedback are collaborating to ensure greater consistency for students, with inbuilt evaluative measures to ensure long-term benefits.	Limitations were the engagement levels of staff and students in the process.	Staff are considering new practices in their Assessment and Feedback processes, and the resources will continue to be used.	This reflective exercise provides enormous value and would be even more valuable if paired with student feedback data from institutional and national student voice mechanisms.
Looking at Retention	This exploratory project utilised available data to identify relevant literature on student retention, identify factors that may relate to increased retention, identify appropriate methodological approaches and shared findings across the institution.	2) Who are our current and future students and how will they want to learn? How can we gain a clear understanding of their needs? What information do we need to enable us to best support their learning?	The creation of a student-led retention report, with analysis and recommendations on how to address the additional factors identified. This included addressing gaps in student data collection and retention, and a review of the impact of atypical assessment styles on students on non-traditional pathways.	The goal of the project was to identify areas for intervention relating to retention in HaSS. This goal was achieved, with the second year of this project dedicated to exploring what specific actions could be taken.  Additionally, alongside this project and other available research, the institution is planning to form a task force to examine an intersectional approach to attainment in an effort to reduce the gaps faced by marginalised groups.	The limitations caused by available data was reported by the students as the most obvious barrier.	The report has influenced wider conversations across the institution and is feeding into key strategic committees and priorities.	
A Success Infrastructure for a Diverse Student Community Project	This project focused on reviewing the mechanisms and frameworks in place to support students. As student communities and approaches to learning and teaching in continue to diversify, the growth of these frameworks may be organic, and the breadth of support	2) Who are our current and future students and how will they want to learn? How can we gain a clear understanding of their needs? What information do we need to enable us	Students developed recommendations on improvements to Strathclyde Student Support Services based upon sector benchmarks determined during the project. Recommendations included development of	There are several outcomes from this project: the opportunity to learn from activity in the wider HE sector and shape resources to fit Strathclyde's specific needs; a set of recommendations of how better to support students, and a wider contribution to activity of the institution (including the ongoing Thematic Review of Student-	Implementing a wide array of recommendations requires additional work and resourcing applications that have led to delays in moving forward. These	Staff are considering the recommendations to determine the feasibility of implementation.	

	consequently may not be adequate. This project supported two students to familiarise themselves with external frameworks and carry out a mapping exercise with the current Strathclyde framework. Any gaps uncovered informed the development of a set of recommendations.	to best support their learning?	provision in faculties and departments to enhance early intervention support, the signposting and supporting of additional services and support available to students, and the proposal of a project focusing on support for international and atypical learner journeys where integration and a sense of belonging may be difficult to cultivate.	facing Professional Services, which focuses on Online Support for the Learner Journey). Following from the recommendations, a project is in development to focus on integration for atypical learner journeys, and part of this project will monitor long-term impact data.	will hopefully be resolved soon.		
Thesis Mentoring Programme Pilot	This project examined the impact of mentoring of PGR resilience and thesis completion, whilst providing tailored, targeted support for PGRs who have been impacted by COVID-19.	2) Who are our current and future students and how will they want to learn? How can we gain a clear understanding of their needs? What information do we need to enable use to best support their learning.	The creation of a formalised PGR/PDRA network, which emphasised peer-to-peer learning. This was supported by activities and opportunities outside of the individualised peer mentoring.	Individual reflection was seen as the most appropriate way to collect feedback, with 2/3rds of PGR mentees involved in the pilot programme feeling that their personal resilience was enhanced by participation, alongside additional feedback from PDRAs of having more confidence in supervision and supporting PGR students.  Long term impact, which is still being measured, focuses on whether a formalised network improves completion rates and the mental wellbeing of PGRs.	Engaging participants in support network activities outside of the mentoring partnerships proved a challenge.	Providing a network which simultaneously offers skills enhancement, opportunities, personal development, and a safe space to reflect/grow has proven immensely valuable to students.	Increasingly the duration of the pilot would have been useful to draw more valuable information for future assessment.
Widening Access Student Transitions: UG to PGT	The project aimed to create a series of online resources for widening access students transitioning from UG to PGT study in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.	2) Who are our current and future students and how will they want to learn? How can we gain a clear understanding of their needs? What information do we need to enable use to best support their learning.	The creation and implementation of a repository divided into two sections: one with links to support services available at Strathclyde and one with information on academic requirements and expectations – including an area designed for skill development.  This webpage has yet to go live as it is being incorporated into a wider	The core objective is to remove barriers and provide support to students form a non-traditional background move into postgraduate study, build their confidence and understanding of expectations, and ultimately enrich their experiences.  Informal and formal feedback has indicated that the resources have value, though it is still relatively early to identify whether this is having an impact on widening access student numbers and attainment in HaSS.	No challenges were reported.		Implementing evaluation measures at the beginning of the project would have prevented delays in drawing medium term conclusions.

			new institutional project on Employability run by the Careers and Employability Working Group.				
A mismatch in Mathematics and Statistics	The project aimed to review the skills mismatch experienced in a single Department, following staff recognition that their expectations of student knowledge did not align with the cohort on arrival. They aimed to investigate this by speaking to academics and students within the Department, and schoolteachers from the local area.	2) Who are our current and future students and how will they want to learn? How can we gain a clear understanding of their needs? What information do we need to enable use to best support their learning.	The creation and implementation of a short course designed to help address imbalances in skills identified during the project.	The overall goal of the project was to ease the transition of students coming into the university without the necessary skills, as a result of changing curricula at school level.		Alongside the benefits already reported, a stronger collaborative partnership with the University of Glasgow.	
Enhancement Theme Infrastructure Project	A one-year project that sought to build an accessible and sustainable digital ecosystem. The system would provide resources, guidance, and support to staff and students to facilitate engagement and growth with the Enhancement Themes.	4) How do we ensure we are able to support our diverse learning communities? What might this mean for our staff and our infrastructure?	<b>The creation of <a href="#">SharePoint Repository</a> accessible to staff and students which acts as a hub for information on the current and historic themes. Alongside, guidance and advice are provided on topics including applications, project management and effective evaluation – with exemplars (simultaneously sharing best practice to other colleagues).</b>	<b>Beyond access statistics, the impact for this project was measured long-term through the monitoring of project proposers. Reviewing engagement from beyond traditional recruitment circles can indicate (among other factors) that the themes are more widely recognised and understood at the institution.</b>	<b>Staff capacity – not just with the project, but with the Theme generally. A slightly unexpected (though not unreasonable) additional barrier to engagement.</b>	Interest from across the institution has always been high, but feedback indicated a lack of familiarity with the Themes and the processes to engage. Providing guidance and exemplar applications has already shown a diversified project pool.	This challenge of staff capacity could be addressed, in part, by expanding the Theme management group and bringing in colleagues and students with skills to facilitate growth further.
Resilience Toolkit Project	The project aimed to recruit faculty-based student interns who sought to understand the immediate needs of students during the pandemic and provide co-created but self-led support resources.	4) How do we ensure we are able to support our diverse learning communities? 5) How should we anticipate, influence, and respond to the changing external	Faculty-based student interns collated feedback from peers to peer interaction to create a toolkit of resources aimed at building resilience during the immediate lockdowns of the global pandemic.	It was originally anticipated that this toolkit would become available to all students across the institution, following a pilot that sought to measure effectiveness.  The Toolkit has since been made available to students in the Science Faculty, with impact assessments postponed until	Willingness to engage with the pilot was a barrier amongst staff whose workload was, at the time, substantially more than anticipated.	Bringing students together from different faculties to collaborate on an institutional project highlighted the value of distinct	Identifying staff earlier who were willing to engage their programmes with the resources may have facilitated

		environment?	This included a <a href="#">resilience anthem</a> , and a Spotify playlist – among others.	student engagement/staff workload had settled.		and different learning experiences.	better engagement.
Neurodiversity in the Curriculum	A project that sought to identify small-scale localised changes in the delivery of learning and teaching that would improve the experience of the neurodiverse learning communities.	4) How do we ensure we are able to support our diverse learning communities?	The production of user-friendly student-facing resources to signpost and support students in learning, and the production of staff-facing resources highlighting inclusive practice for students with neurodiversity.	Impact was measured through student engagement with the materials and resources created – alongside traditional feedback channels. Collaboration with the new student society for neurodiverse and ADHD students ensured that the students who needed the support most were able to access it promptly.  Long term impact is planned via changes to learning and teaching provision on the back of the staff facing resources created. The project intends to monitor and provide support where they can.		The identification of the biggest challenges in both the physical and virtual learning environments for neurodiverse students.	
Decolonising the Curriculum	Alongside QAA funds, Strathclyde also funded a larger project on decolonising the curriculum, which tasked each of the four faculties to explore decolonisation within their respective subject areas.  This larger project involved students from each of the four faculties, working in conjunction with faculty equality, diversity, and inclusion committees to undertake research and implement bespoke strategies to aid efforts to decolonise the curriculum locally.	4) How do we ensure we are able to support our diverse learning communities? What might this mean for our staff and our infrastructure?	This multi-stage interdisciplinary project has numerous outputs of value, but a key recommendation from the work of our student interns was to remove the longstanding exclusion of a diversity of voices from institutional activity.  Another key recommendation was to ensure a wide range of disciplines inputting into the discussion, to reflect that decolonising the curriculum will take various guises dependent on the subject area. Professional service colleagues and Library and IS colleagues have also been involved.  Over the course of the project, data has been	Long term project goals include a better understanding on how to decolonise the curriculum effectively, student and staff views on decolonisation, and a better understanding of the actions needed to do so properly.  Project leads from across the faculties met regularly to ensure progress remained consistent, alongside student intern meet ups to ensure resourcing was appropriate.  Department and Faculty strategic committees monitored the project on a medium term basis, to assist in analysis insights and dissemination/communication activities.  Over the long term committees will undertake further research over the next academic year to reflect on the resources and guidance disseminated. This will be fed	Projects like this face the issue of self-selection – by which those who are most passionate or interested in decolonising the curriculum will likely be already undertaking some form of work to address the inequalities in their provision.  Involving a much wider and less engaged audience was an issue. It is hoped that some of the long term reflections/evaluations can reveal more	An institution-wide approach to decolonising the curriculum, with insights from across the four faculties. These insights will continue to be of use as the work continues and institution projects addressing wider inequalities take place.	Most recent reflections, following the Enhancement Themes Conference, was the revelation (at least on the surface) that Decolonising the Curriculum activity and attainment are more distinct than first appeared. The fact that some institutions with significant attainment gaps also have

			gathered, and resources created for general use by staff (this includes a zine created by students on how staff can decolonising their curriculum themselves).	back to institutional strategic committees including Learning Enhancement Committee.	insight into how to address this.		substantial decolonising programmes is leading to a reflection and possible adjustment to planned activity going forward.
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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)**

Our work around the new theme site has worked as an accelerator for all the projects and is a legacy resource that will grow, providing more benefit. (See bold in table)

**What is the most challenging issue? (Challenges column)**

Staff capacity due to Covid-19.

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

As per bullet one – it is a boost to each project that will roll forward.

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

Not having the evaluation baked in from the project application stage onwards as explicitly earlier in the theme. This has been beneficial and would have been more useful to our overall evaluation if we done it sooner.

<b>Table 2: Ways of working/engaging in the Resilient Learning Communities Themes work</b>					
<b>Theme process</b>	<b>Activities' description</b>	<b>Positive aspects/difference made</b>	<b>Challenges</b>	<b>Changes made during process</b>	<b>Hindsight - could be improved by:</b>
<b>Supporting staff and students to engage with Theme activity</b>	<b>Alongside the Enhancement Theme infrastructure project, funds were made available for projects to hire student interns to facilitate wider engagement and student co-creation. The institution provided additional funds, alongside the QAA grant, to ensure more projects were able to be undertaken.</b>	<b>The Themes were more widely engaged with as each year progressed, as the financial support and project guidance created became more well known. Colleagues who had previously not engaged were enabled to create their own projects in collaboration with students and see them address specific issues within their localities.</b>	COVID-19 had a long-term impact upon the engagement of the theme. The implementation of hybrid delivery, and the phased return to campus likewise impacted staff and student capacity to engage. We recognise this has been a sector-wide experience, but feel it merits highlighting.	Changes made during the Theme were relatively small scale, but potentially high impact. These were predominantly focused on increasingly flexibility for staff and students to engage with the provision, develop and run projects, etc.	Reflection and discussion by the Enhancement Theme steering group, and strategic-level committees, has led to a decision to reintroduce the Learning and Teaching Conference following a period of absence during COVID-19. This conference highlighted the excellent work undertaken during the themes, alongside best practice taking place.  Alongside the institution intends to hold a seminar series reflecting back upon the three-year theme and the outcomes/learning that has come from it.
<b>Effectiveness of organisational and management structures</b>	Following consultation with university strategic committees, the Institutional Theme Team undertook a consultation and review of the internal management of the Theme, with address of work being identified for reflection and development. These areas included dissemination streams for activities and outputs, events organisation and promotion, and the desire to strengthen student-staff partnerships in the localities.	A positive element of this reflective and consultative exercise has been the recognition that greater resourcing is requirement to build the Enhancement Themes further at Strathclyde. This was received through Executive Team support providing additional supplementary funds, and by recruiting new colleagues to help lead/steer the theme.	The biggest challenge of the organisational and management structures of the Enhancement Themes has been the impact of covid-19 on engagement rates and staff capacity over the past three years. We have experienced a real decline in staff availability to engage in additional institutional activity as they dealt with the immediate transition to online, and the subsequent transitions to blended and hybrid teaching and learning.	During the process, the decision was made to expand the Institutional Theme Team and to recruit faculty representatives to help promote engagement and improve the communication of opportunities for further involvement in projects. Within a short space of time we saw a marginal increase in engagement, with applications from colleagues who have not been involved in any previous themes. We anticipate that these marginal increases will continue.	



<b>Evaluating activity and projects</b>	<p>Through working with Stella Jones-Devitt and Liz Austen, we were afforded the opportunity to pilot the Universal Evaluation Framework. From the lessons learned we were able to integrate evaluation into all aspects of the project, from application to feeding back. Guidance and advice on evaluation was also included on the institutional ET SharePoint, with plans to share the UEF resource when it becomes publicly available.</p>	<p>A key difference made has been the increase in confidence in undertaking reflective exercises, especially 'meta' evaluations from the perspective of the institutional theme team.</p> <p>Being able to provide additional evaluation resources going forward will continue to provide positive contributions to the project leads.</p>		<p>During the three year theme, evaluation processes were adapted and revised alongside the progress of the Stella Jones-Devitt and Liz Austen project. Though these resources remain in their infancy, and are still being embedded institution-wide, it is anticipated that this will be a major benefit to evaluation activity.</p>	<p><b>Having earlier access to the UEF would have made evaluation a lot more valuable, especially as a tool for projects. It is apparent that a number of our projects have focused on increasing knowledge and understanding, or have sought to improve or measure an intangible element of the student journey – which has made determining outputs a greater challenge.</b></p>
<b>Disseminating outcomes and findings internally and externally</b>	<p>Strathclyde project leads have participated in each of the Annual Conferences as part of the theme, presenting on a wide range of enhancement theme activity.</p> <p>Alongside this, projects have shared good practice with other institutions in the sector, and findings have been shared internally via mailing lists and strategic committee structures.</p>		<p>Covid-19 presented a unique barrier to sharing best practice and learning at a sector level. This has somewhat alleviated in recent years, and we anticipate that dissemination activities will continue over the next year.</p>		<p>Due to the delays caused by covid-19, it was determined that an internal reflection year (23-24) will be added to this theme, to help finalise evaluation activity, and ensure that project outcomes and practice is shared appropriately across the institution and the wider sector. It is anticipated that this will include a seminar series, workshop, student exhibition and a public conference.</p>
<b>Collaborating with other institutions/other organisations</b>	<p>Strathclyde has been involved in a number of Collaborative Clusters including: Exploring the Potential of Micro-credentials and Digital Badging; Programme Leadership; Student Mental Wellbeing within our BAME and LGBTQ+ Learner Communities; Decolonising the Curriculum in the Time of the Pandemic.</p> <p>The clusters organised numerous events held with employers, university staff, students and alumni to explore what micro-credentials means to them in their individual context; and webinars focused on creating inclusive learning communities. Additionally,</p>		<p><b>Covid-19 presented a unique challenge to institutional collaborative efforts, in that traditional forms of networking became defunct. The unexpected enormous workload had significant impacts on the willingness of colleagues across the sector to engage in larger projects. We anticipate this is a short-lived consequence</b></p>		<p>Staff capacity during the initial years of Covid-19 had a significant impact on the scale of this Enhancement Theme.</p>

	<p>in terms of micro-credentials, a researcher was employed to write up a final report and to create a list of recommendations to hopefully take forward in further applications to support this work.</p> <p>Individual projects also collaborated with other institutions, such as University of Glasgow and the University of Aberdeen sharing best practice regarding resilience short courses for undergraduate students.</p>		<p><b>of the global pandemic and will readjust for the next theme.</b></p>		
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Which ONE process from each of those listed within the Theme processes column in Table 2 worked best? (Activities description and Positive aspects columns) **See in bold above**

Why was it the best? (Positive aspects/difference made column) **In bold above**

Which was most difficult and why? (Challenges column) **As above**

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

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

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<b>Date:</b>	<b>30/06/2023</b>