



**End of Year 3 Report for:
University of the Highlands
and Islands**

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
<p>1. Supporting student resilience through resources and events</p> <p>a. Collating good practice case studies in supporting student resilience through learning, teaching, and assessment activities</p> <p>b. Collating and upgrading staff- and student-facing resources related to student mental health and wellbeing, including self-study mental health modules for PGR students and their supervisors (https://induction.uhi.ac.uk/pgr-mental-health/)</p> <p>c. Promoting existing 'Developing Resilience' Pathway resource (Pathway</p>	<p>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>We have produced a number of resources and promoted these through staff-facing events. These have focussed on different aspects of student resilience and ways in which these might be supported- career resilience, psychological resilience, and resilience</p>	<p>Staff uptake of resources and events has been good and feedback on their usefulness has been positive. The longer-term impact will be on the practice of academic staff in using resources with their students and then on the students themselves.</p>	<p>Some topics have been more difficult to engage staff with, particularly career resilience which in turn impacted on the uptake of these resources and narrowed the number of students able to benefit from them.</p>	<p>Mental health resources were promoted at a time when they were desperately needed. We also had a team of staff centrally based within the university who were able to promote these resources outside of the core Enhancement Theme consultation group.</p>	<p>You cannot define staff priorities for them, so finding out what these are at the beginning of the Theme would have been beneficial.</p>

<p>resources are short self-study resources for students aimed at developing their wider skillset) and developing further Pathway resources for using with particular groups or embedding within curricula</p>		<p>through learning and teaching.</p> <p>The range of resources and events has addressed different aspects of our student community: PGR students, online students, and students within different disciplines</p>				
<p>2. Supporting staff resilience through events and research initiatives</p> <p>a. Assessment and feedback symposium</p> <p>b. Reflective Practice research and workshops</p>	<p>What will our learning communities look like by 2023? And what can we do now to prepare for them?</p> <p>How do we ensure we are able to support our diverse learning communities? What might this</p>	<p>We engaged a range of staff in thinking about sustainable assessment and how they might achieve this within their own discipline.</p> <p>The Reflective Practice project involved a successful</p>	<p>Staff attendance at the Assessment and Feedback Symposium was good, and feedback was extremely positive. There is evidence of impact on the practice of academic staff in that two discipline</p>	<p>Mainly staff time and all those involved in the research have been doing this on top of their day jobs. However, the level of dedication has ensured the success of this activity.</p>	<p>A great research team which has forged a strong bond, and which means the work will continue beyond the conclusion of the Theme.</p>	<p>As above, this work has been successful due to the staff members involved already being interested and engaged with the topic.</p>

	<p>mean for our staff and our infrastructure?</p>	<p>piece of research which was disseminated to staff, and the outputs from this were used to inform a series of staff-facing events.</p>	<p>areas requested follow-up bespoke events to consider how they might apply the techniques within their own context.</p> <p>The research project initially was set to run for one year but continued across the three years of the Theme, engaging another member of academic staff in the research, which was published in a peer-reviewed journal. A large number of staff have benefited from learning about reflective practice</p>			
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			techniques and evaluation data shows that they have continued to use these techniques.			
<p>3. Developing a resilient curriculum: micro-credentials:</p> <p>a. Desk research to establish current practice internally and externally in relation to micro-credentials.</p> <p>b. Developing two micro-credential courses (data awareness and accessibility)</p> <p>c. Developing institutional policy and process to support the development of micro-credentials.</p>	<p>How should we anticipate, influence and respond to the changing external environment? How can we engage with our stakeholders and ensure we are influencing strategy and policy both in Scotland and beyond?</p>	<p>This work has been instrumental in setting our institutional direction for micro-credentials, and we have benefitted greatly from working with the rest of the Scottish sector on this.</p>	<p>We now have a group of people from across the university who are developing, or have developed micro-credential courses, and a clear appetite for an institutional policy to enable these to be approved more swiftly.</p>	<p>The slow pace of institutional change has been a challenge, and particularly as this is a new area of curriculum where the perception of risk may be higher.</p>	<p>A working group composed of key individuals representing the different areas of expertise necessary to make microcredentials work: technology, pedagogy, quality assurance etc.</p>	<p>We spent too long worrying about the definition of a micro-credential rather than starting by considering what the curriculum needs of our students was and working out from there.</p>
<p>4. Learning analytics project</p>	<p>Who are our current and future students and how will they want to learn? How can we gain a clear understanding of their needs?</p>	<p>The aim of this work was to use learning analytics as a tool to improve both learning and teaching and to enhance the</p>	<p>We have deployed a learning analytics tool to every VLE module and unit space, and staff engagement</p>	<p>Raising awareness of the tool amongst staff has been a challenge, even though the analytics tools are</p>	<p>Again, this work has been championed by enthusiastic individuals and taken forward by a working group with the right expertise.</p>	<p>We did spend a lot of time considering GDPR and privacy issues which were a distraction when the use of analytics is</p>

	What information do we need to enable us to best support their learning?	support that we offer individual students.	has been fair, but not as good as anticipated. We are currently undertaking research to understand the reasons why staff are using or choosing not to use the tool.	accessible to everyone. The slow pace of institutional change has again been a challenge, and for learning analytics there are many issues concerning the legitimate use of student data that need to be worked through.		our 'business as usual'.
5. Embedding resilience within the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy (LTES)	What will our learning communities look like by 2023? And what can we do now to prepare for them?	We engaged a wide range of staff and students in co-creating the new LTES and have values within the strategy that clearly support different aspects of resilience: Supporting student-centred and flexible learning;	All Academic Partners of UHI have committed to adopting the LTES, and we have a steering group comprising representatives from academic and professional services. Outputs from the first year of the Strategy's implementation	An institution-wide strategy is a challenge in a federated and geographically dispersed institution such as UHI.	Consulting all levels of the organisation has ensured shared ownership of the LTES.	Having named individuals with responsibility for the Strategy in each Academic Partner and area of professional services would have assisted with the roll out of some activities.

		learning for personal growth and employment; Integrated and sustainable learning and teaching.	have all been met in terms of raising awareness of the Strategy amongst staff and students.			
6. PARC Collaborative Cluster	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?	<p>We worked with partners in the collaborative cluster to explore the potential of a core diagnostic tool. We refined an existing tool and used it in a small programme pilot.</p> <p>We presented this work at QAA conferences and the European First Year Experience conference.</p>	<p>Small numbers of staff and students at UHI engaged with the tool, and staff feedback was positive.</p> <p>The main impact of this work was on the institutional team in giving us a framework to support the use of the tool, and to allow us to explore and evaluate in a wider sectoral context.</p>	There has not been the resource at UHI to take this work forward as much as we would have hoped in terms of more programmes piloting the use of the tool.	Creating a community of practice with colleagues from across Scotland. This has been immeasurably valuable, and we have created networks and relationships that will persist well beyond the life of the Theme.	

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)

A really successful Reflective Practice project which has brought together a research team that will continue beyond the three years of the Theme. We will continue to run events and evaluate the impact of these on staff practices. We are already talking about further research and then linking the outcome of this to other university initiatives. This feels like such a step change in terms of Theme activities for us.

What is the most challenging issue? (Challenges column)

Staff and student engagement is always the most difficult thing, when staff have very full timetables and multiple competing priorities. Asking them to do or attend anything additional is always challenging, even though the interest and enthusiasm is there.

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

Working with and consulting all levels of the organisation in relation to the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy has supplied a firm foundation on which to embed the strategy throughout the university's work over the next five years.

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	<p>Creating and promoting events and resources.</p> <p>Engaging individual programme teams with specific initiatives.</p>	Using the existing communications channels through the University's Learning and Teaching Academy (LTA) was an effective way to reach a wide audience.	Staff and student time is always a challenge, particularly when asking staff to engage with something beyond their day-to-day teaching, as they are very time poor.	We approached interested individuals and allowed projects to develop organically rather than relying on responses to open calls for participation.	Aligning projects more closely with existing priorities and interests of staff and students, rather than trying to get them interested in something new.
Effectiveness of organisational and management structures	We created an Enhancement Themes Consultation group to oversee our institutional activity for this Theme.	Having our student association, HISA represented on the consultation group was an effective way of representing the student voice and keeping these channels of communication open.	We had hoped that more group members would be able to actively engage in the Theme projects but not all were able to give the time commitment to do so.		A smaller group membership to focus on the activities within the Theme rather than just the high-level reporting of these activities.
Evaluating activity and projects	Using a theory of change model to define outputs, outcomes, impacts, and measures for these, and gather appropriate data.	Discussing our evaluation approach at the start of the Theme helped to sharpen the focus of each of the projects and forced us to think about how the	Time consuming to gather the data around outputs, outcomes, and measures, and often left to individuals to	Evaluation outcomes and measures were defined at the start of every year of the Theme, so we were able to focus on	Having a more defined 'audience' for each of the projects. I think this would have generated more focused data

		activities connected to impact.	undertake this work as staff and students involved in projects were already giving their time freely and could not spare any more to undertake evaluation as well. Also, difficult to gather some data e.g., via surveys which tended to have low response rates.	capturing the relevant data for that year.	collection methods. Where the audience was board (e.g., 'academic staff') we tended to rely on surveys to gather data regarding impact, and getting engagement with these was difficult,
Disseminating outcomes and findings internally and externally	We used LTA events and communication channels to disseminate findings internally. Externally we have presented at the QAA Enhancement Theme conferences, European First Year Experience conference	Using the existing communications channels through the University's Learning and Teaching Academy (LTA) was an effective way to reach a wide audience.	Findings were very short term and so we will have more to say after the Theme has finished!		Having a clearer sense of the direction of travel for each project could have helped in developing a more structured dissemination plan.
Collaborating with other institutions/other organisations	PARC collaborative cluster, microcredentials cluster, RPL cluster	These pieces of work were assisted greatly by the involvement of other institutions with which to share the workload and learn from each other. Professional networks and communities of practice were	Maintaining relationships online was a challenge as COVID impacted the ability to run face to face meetings for the first half of the Theme.		I would engage with more Collaborative Cluster work in the future as I feel this is so beneficial.

		established that will last beyond the Theme.			
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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)

Collaborative activities were definitely the most rewarding.

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

Professional networks and communities of practice were established that will last beyond the Theme.

Which was most difficult and why? (Challenges column)

Staff and student time is always a challenge, particularly when asking staff to engage with something beyond their day-to-day teaching, as they are very time poor.

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

Changes made were on the basis of trying to engage more staff and students with Theme activities and outputs.

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

Overall, the university tried to do too much within this Enhancement Theme, and having only a small central resource to support this work meant that this was challenging to sustain. In future, we will focus on fewer activities with the view to making a deeper impact with these.

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