



Learning & Teaching Enhancement Programme Case study

As a way of capturing the detail and impact of your Learning & Teaching Enhancement Project, please complete the questions below, which align with the QAA Scotland reporting template. *Please answer all questions in 200 words or fewer.* Case studies may be published on the University's website and elements may be used in reports for QAA Scotland. Project teams may be asked to contribute a Blog or Podcast to help to share project activities and outcomes. Any questions, please contact cad@abdn.ac.uk.

Building My Skills: Preparing for Success in Higher Education

Dr Heather Branigan, Dr Jacqui Hutchison

Context

This section should provide brief details about the context of the project/activity, highlighting any specific challenges and/or strategies it is intended to address.

Text in this section should not exceed **200 words**.

This project aimed to develop student-led resource focusing on transferable skills, for the purpose of supporting transitions to Higher Education (HE), particularly for students entering L2 or L3 from college (Advanced Entry). This project builds on/extends an established project to support educational transitions between college and university. Previous studies have identified that transferable skills such as independence, proactivity and resilience are important for success at university (Egan et al., 2022; Theobald, 2021) as well as being key employability skills (Qizi, 2020; Succi & Canovi, 2020). Despite this, evidence suggests that graduates are often perceived by employers to lack transferable skills important for the world of work (Okolie et al., 2020). The [MySkills](#) framework provides a platform to allow students to reflect on and build transferable skills throughout their studies: Working with others, Active Citizenship, managing yourself, enterprise + innovation, analytical skills and career readiness. The School of Psychology has a clear focus on transferable skill development across our programmes, but less focus is provided on these skills in materials preparing students to succeed in HE. This project sought to be the first step in filling this gap by focusing on transferable skill development throughout the transition to HE.

Description of activity

In this section, you should provide brief and descriptive details of the project/activity. Please include information on student engagement in the project here.

Text in this section should not exceed **200 words**.

The intended outcome for this project was to develop a student-generated resource to support transitions to HE. We intended for the developed resource to be utilised for broader outreach activities with schools and colleges, focused on equipping students with transferable skills essential for succeeding in HE.

The project centered around the work of a student intern, Faye Campbell. Faye was tasked with surveying her peers to generate feedback about transferable skills and skills gaps surrounding the transition to HE. Faye designed an online survey to generate peer feedback. From this, she identified self-directed study (AKA independent learning) as a key skill that was consistently identified by her peers. Following identification of this skill, Faye created a series of student-led resources focusing on self-directed study: (1) a leaflet about self-directed study at university, (2) a study tips poster, and (3) a series of worksheets relating to weekly and assignment planning. Student engagement in this project was this two-fold: Firstly, the project was student-led at its core, through the activities of our intern, Faye. Secondly, the identification of a resource as well as feedback on the types of resource that would be useful was guided by student voice in Faye's questionnaire.

Evaluation and impact

This section should provide an analysis of evaluation and impact of the project.

To support evaluative activity, institutions are encouraged to use the [resources](#) developed by Professor Stella Jones-Devitt and Dr Liz Austen, particularly the Enhancement Themes Theory of Change model and the Universal Evaluation Framework (UEF).

Text in this section should not exceed **200 words**

Evaluation of this resource is still underway. It will primarily be achieved through feedback from students who use the resource throughout the transition process, as well as from colleagues at NESCol who we intend to meet in the coming months with the view of planning to attend some sessions at NESCol in the upcoming academic year to trial out the resources. At this point, we have not made the resource available to students, but we will include printed copied in offer holder days, as well as a digitised pack as part of our [Advanced Entry Transitions Toolkit](#) (developed as part of a previous LTEP-funded project). We have sent to the toolkit team and plan to work with them to develop into a digital resource appropriate for the Toolkit. We have also shared the developed resources with the Access and Articulation Team and are awaiting feedback.

Lessons learned and next steps

In this section, you should reflect on the key learning points drawn from this activity for the institution. You might also consider what learning other universities or the tertiary education sector could take from this activity. If there is any planned follow-on activity, please provide brief details here.

Text in this section should not exceed **200 words**

When interviewing for the post, we considered candidates with a range of skills and experiences. Our intern Faye had little experience of research or resource generation, but

she was extremely reflective and candid about her transition experience. We believe this lived experience was incredibly valuable- Faye took initiative and was confident in advocating for her decisions. This is an insight that may benefit other projects- sometimes the best fit of an intern relates to lived experience rather than specific skills.

A challenge was negotiating time to visit NESCol for scoping sessions (an original aim of the project). The timing of the project (and differing term dates) meant that it was not possible to find a time to visit, meaning the project had to pivot slightly to focus on the experiences of post-transition students. The future learning from this is acknowledgement of the differing workloads – colleagues in colleges are often much more restricted in their time, and ideally, colleges would be able to support future projects through time out of teaching for meetings/planning. Despite this, the project was still very valuable in developing collaborations with NESCol and we are confident that there will be future opportunities to visit and share resources.

References

Please provide links to any relevant websites or further information about the activity in this section.

Please see attached draft resources, created by Faye (attached by email to CAD, University of Aberdeen).