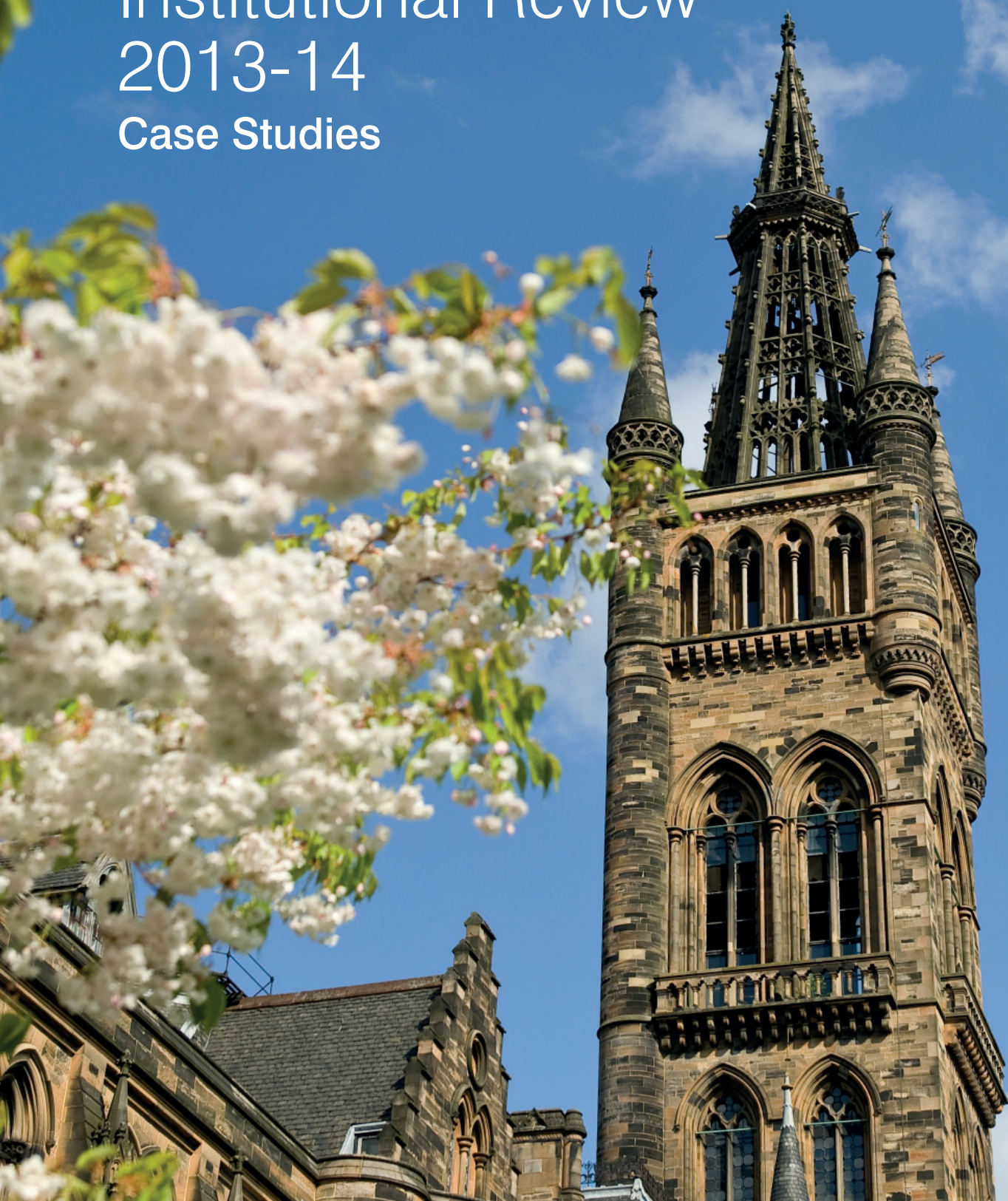# University of Glasgow

Enhancement-led Institutional Review 2013-14

Case Studies

Enhancement-led Institutional Review 2013-14

Case Studies

Case Study 1: Widening Access and Success

1

Widening Access and Success

1   Rationale for the Selection of the Case Study

1.1.1   The following case study explores the evidence-based approach the University of Glasgow has taken to supporting widening access and success as part of its core strategy. The case study examines and reflects on the way in which the University is supporting widening access students to transition into the University learning environment through initiatives that integrate their academic development with formal admissions pathways. The case study also reflects on how holistic and targeted approaches to retention and success, building on the ELIR 2 case study 'Improving Student Retention', are being developed to support these students throughout the student lifecycle.

1.1.2   More broadly, the Case Study outlines the University's effective approach to recognising and responding to Scottish Government and Scottish Funding Council priorities and the commitment, during a period of significant growth and change, to a long-standing fundamental strategic priority.

2   Background to Widening Access and Success

2.1.1   Despite operating in a global context, the University of Glasgow continues to draw a significant proportion of its undergraduate student population from Greater Glasgow and the surrounding districts of the West of Scotland. This local area[1] contains 670 of the 976 most deprived areas of Scotland[2]. The University places considerable value on its role in engaging with and supporting the broader community and in providing access to Higher Education for all. Our commitment to this is reflected in one of the core objectives in our 2011-15 Learning & Teaching Strategy:

> Via a robust and fair admissions policy, to attract the best talent, irrespective of background, to engage in and successfully complete their study at the University. In doing so, to remain the leading University of choice for talented students from under-represented groups.

2.1.2   Since the last ELIR, the Scottish Government have put widening access at the forefront of the political agenda; making widening access a high priority in the strategic thinking of the Scottish Funding Council. Latterly, Outcome Agreements have been negotiated and signed between every Scottish Higher Education Institution and the Scottish Funding Council with widening access and retention being key elements of these agreements. Further, in September 2012, the Scottish Funding Council invited bids from the ancient and pre-92 Higher Education Institutions for 850 extra fully-funded places dedicated to students from the 40% (MD40) most deprived areas by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD[3]). The University was awarded 200 of these places, the most of any Higher Education Institution and further deepening its commitment to widening access.

2.1.3   The University has developed various initiatives and programmes, funded by central University resources, national and local government, individual donors, or a combination of these. The

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[1] East Ayrshire, East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Glasgow City, Inverclyde, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, South Ayrshire, South Lanarkshire, West Dunbartonshire
[2] Areas categorised as 15% most deprived, Scottish Government SIMD report 2012
[3] Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation: www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/SIMD

University describes its activities as 'widening participation' as these initiatives are aimed at supporting the success of widening access students through their University career. Widening participation provision and programmes delivered by the University are targeted primarily at pupils in secondary schools with low progression rates to Higher Education, adult returners to education and applicants in multiple deprivation postcode areas.[4]

2.1.4 The University currently delivers the following programmes, individually or in partnership with other organisations. These include access routes with built-in progression agreements to every subject area within the University of Glasgow for school-leavers and adult returners and also a range of support mechanisms, including financial, to remove barriers to successful integration into the Higher Education environment:[5]

2.1.5 Schools Programmes

- The Top-Up Programme – works with 40-50 secondary schools to provide pupils with learning skills required for Higher Education to aid student transition and retention in: Arts; Social Sciences; Sciences; Engineering; Education; Nursing
- Summer School – provides alternate routes into Higher Education for school-leavers and adult returners, and prepares students for the reality of study in higher education. The Summer School facilitates entry to: Arts; Social Sciences; Sciences; Engineering; Education; Law; Nursing
- Reach Scotland (Access to the High Demand Professions) – targets S4-S6 pupils across 92 secondary schools, who have shown an interest in and the commitment and academic ability to progress into: Medicine; Veterinary Medicine; Dentistry; Law
- Access to Primary Education – works with pupils interested in Primary Education in S5 and S6, in partnership with Glasgow City Council and the University of the West of Scotland
- Student Network – allows current and prospective students to contact existing students for support. Widening participation student mentors are identified for particular support
- Talent Scholarships – £1,000-a-year bursaries for fifty students per year to support students with limited financial means to enter University of Glasgow. This scheme has been running since 2007 and over 300 scholarships have been awarded to date
- Care Leaver Provision – including a guaranteed offer with a two grade adjustment, 365-day-a-year accommodation, Care Leaver Bursaries worth £1,000 per year of degree (seven have been awarded since 2008) and access to a single point of contact within the University of Glasgow, for advice and guidance and advocacy across the institution

2.2   Adult Returner Programmes

- The University of Glasgow Centre for Open Studies Access Courses provide part-time one year routes for adult returners into:[6] Arts & Social Sciences; Law, Business & Accountancy; Science, Engineering & Nursing

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[4] MD20 and MD40 are the most disadvantaged postcode areas within Scotland, quintiles four and five of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), the index used by the Scottish Government and Scottish Funding Council for measuring deprivation in Scotland, targeting widening access funding and measuring Higher Education Institutions' performance.
[5] A summary of each programme is provided in Appendix 1.
[6] An adult returner is a student over 21, who has been out with mainstream education for 3-5 years. These Access Courses provide a customised and accessible route back into Higher Education for an otherwise disenfranchised group.

- The Scottish Wider Access Programme provides one year full-time Access courses for adult returners, taught in FE Colleges across the west of Scotland, which allow entry to: Arts; Social Sciences; Sciences; Primary Education; Engineering; Medicine; Veterinary Medicine; Dentistry; Nursing

3   Strategic approach

3.1.1   The current range and content of widening participation programmes offered by the University has evolved through a process of reflection and refinement. Importantly, considerable emphasis has been placed on ensuring that developments are evidenced-based. Institutional research, which has supported the evolution of our approach throughout, demonstrates that students who enter from non-traditional backgrounds are in fact more likely to succeed and progress than students from traditional backgrounds, provided they have participated successfully in one of the University's pre-entry programmes.[7]

3.1.2   Intensive joint work between Admissions and the central widening participation team has been a key and distinctive part of the general approach. This has allowed a consolidation of the admissions progression agreements in place around our pre-entry programmes since ELIR 2, to create the robust and transparent admissions system required to ensure widening participation applicants have an equal chance of entry. In recent years, despite significant increases in the general tariff for entry, tariffs have not risen for widening access applicants from the most deprived areas who perform well in our pre-entry programmes.

3.1.3   Pupils participating in the pre-entry programmes receive a Student Profile which is used by central and devolved Admissions across the University of Glasgow as contextual data to inform decision-making and enable adjusted offers of entry to be made. This allows applicants who have fallen short of the required tariff to be made offers of entry based on the environment in which they have achieved their qualifications, i.e. a low progression school. This use of contextual data for admissions was highlighted as a model for the HE sector by the Scottish Government and Scottish Funding Council in 2011.[8] It was also used by the Equality Challenge Unit as a case study of good practice for its publication, *Equitable Admissions for Under-Represented Groups.*[9]

3.1.4   The close link between Admissions and the widening participation team has ensured that the admissions pathways are continually reviewed and revised. In 2010-11: the Top-Up Programme admissions agreement was adjusted; the Summer School secondary school participation model and admissions process was restructured; and a similar admissions model was created, with the devolved professional degree Admissions, for the Reach Scotland Programme. As a result, each subject area within the University now has a formalised access route with widening access places secured within the general Admissions system.

3.1.5   Effective approaches to widening access not only provide pre-entry preparation and admissions routes but also support students in achieving success. Our ELIR 2 case study, 'Improving Student Retention', described our institutional approach to supporting student progression and success at that time. This approach continues to evolve and undergraduate student progression remains as

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[7] This research is outlined in the appendices
[8] *Learning for All* Key Discussion points, www.sfc.ac.uk/access/learningforall/LearningforAll2011.aspx
[9] Equality Challenge Unit, (2012), *Equitable Admissions for Under-Represented Groups.*

one of the University's Key Performance Indicators. Since 2010, overall undergraduate student progression, has steadily improved from 83.4% to 88.1% and recent developments such as the reshaping of the Student Learning Service and establishment of the Writing Centre described in Case Study 3 will continue to bring improvements in future years. There is much to be learned through collaboration with and learning from partner institutions and we actively seek this kind of engagement through, for example, our current participation in the Higher Education Academy strategic change programme on Student Retention and Success.[10]

4 Evaluation of Impact

4.1.1 The University has demonstrated significant success in delivering against its widening participation targets and objectives. This success has been recognised by the Scottish Government and Scottish Funding Council through the recent award of an additional 200 funded places for widening access students from MD40 postcodes. In effect, this represents a major commitment to widening access from the University. Sustaining this level of increased intake in the years ahead presents a significant challenge that can only be addressed through an enhanced strategic direction informed by careful reflection on our current approach.

4.1.2 The effectiveness of the current University of Glasgow approach to widening participation is demonstrated by:

- Top-Up participants performing better in Year 1 at University of Glasgow and being less likely to withdraw than their student peers from the same schools, but also from higher progression comparator schools in the same areas
- Top-Up participants completing their degree in greater numbers than their student peers from the same schools, but also from higher progression comparator schools in the same areas
- Top-Up entrants having increased each year from 2004-2013, with the exception of 2010. An Admissions tariff increase caused this blip; this was redressed in 2011 by redeveloping the Top-Up progression agreement
- The University Reach programme covering 92 target schools - more than all the other Reach institutions' target schools combined and over a quarter of Scottish secondary schools
- In 2012, Reach securing a 192% increase in the number of target school students entering Medicine,[11] a 100% increase in students entering Veterinary Medicine[12] and a 43% increase in students entering Dentistry.[13]
- Glasgow outperforming all other Scottish Ancients, plus a good proportion of Scotland's Traditional and post-92 Universities, in terms of its intake of MD20 and MD40 students

4.1.3 The University was one of the first three Scottish HEIs to be awarded the Buttle UK Quality Mark in 2007 for care leaver provision. This was renewed in 2010 and 2013 with an exemplary rating, the highest rating awarded on both occasions. University of Glasgow Care Leaver provision and the evolving Care Leaver Action Plan have been highlighted by Buttle UK as an example of best practice for the UK HE sector to follow.

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[10] Reflective Analysis 3.1.18
[11] Entrants increased from 13 to 38.
[12] Entrants increased from 4 to 8.
[13] Entrants increased from 7 to 10.

4.1.4   The University has also experienced success in developing direct partnership working with west of Scotland Local Authorities (Glasgow City Council; West Dunbartonshire; South Lanarkshire; North Lanarkshire) to support the Top-Up Programme. The partnerships with Local Authorities reflects the value they place in the support the University offers and allowed the University to diversify the funding dependency on the Funding Council.

4.1.5   In formulating a more strategic approach the University engaged with and listened to a range of stakeholders in addition to drawing on the evidence base of our own institutional research and experience. From this, the key outcomes of our future strategy will be to:

- Provide a clear, coordinated and signposted pathway for support from S1-S6, relating to areas of interest, career and study options
- Enable more pupils from an earlier age to make informed subject choices and benefit from the most appropriate support available
- Feed into existing programmes and support current initiatives across the sector
- Broaden the range of subjects covered, feeding pupils into a wider range of University of Glasgow programmes
- Improve the capabilities and integration of systems and procedures
- Improve communication and engagement with stakeholders via new or improved online and in-person resources and activities

4.1.6   The expansion from individual programmes to an integrated, multi-route widening participation pathway will enable increased awareness and participation amongst pupils, parents, teachers, partners and funders.

4.1.7   In parallel with the development of the new integrated approach to WA, the University is re-evaluating its approach to supporting retention and success for students who have entered the University from WA backgrounds. Until now, all support has been holistically applied across the entire student cohort. The significant growth in the MD40 intake, however, has the potential to change the dynamic of the cohort and the implications of this are not yet clear. For this reason, the University has formed an MD40 support action group that draws its membership from both academic and student-facing service areas of the University. The group, which also interfaces directly with the Retention Working Group, is looking at a range of monitoring and intervention strategies specifically for the MD40 cohort. The intention here is to develop support strategies that are targeted, but which do not stigmatise or differentiate the MD40 students from their peer group. This work is at an early stage and will evolve over the next few years.

5   Impact on future enhancement

5.1.1   As outlined above, our widening participation strategy has evolved significantly since 2008-09. This will continue in the forthcoming years as University of Glasgow strives to further enhance and increase provision intended to widen participation from the surrounding communities and as Scottish Government and Scottish Funding Councils' priorities continue to evolve.

5.1.2   The case study is set against the background of an institution that is one of the UK's major research-intensive universities and, in recent years, has been growing its global profile and reputation through its Internationalisation Strategy. The Case Study illustrates that, while this kind of

institutional profile and direction may challenge a commitment to widening access, the University has been able to maintain and, indeed, develop its approach further. On the basis of this, and in response to changing Scottish Government and Scottish Funding Council priorities, the University has made a substantial commitment to growing its cohort of students from deprived backgrounds.

5.1.3   The case study also highlights, more broadly, the commitment of the institution to ongoing self-evaluation and review. In the case study, this is reflected in the ability to identify failings in the University Summer School, identify the root (not surface) cause of the problem and adopt an appropriate solution for this particular area – in this instance, taking a nuanced approach to admissions requirements.

5.1.4   The Case Study also highlights the importance of communication and interaction between the central unit and localised supporting structures. This is reflected also in the Reflective Analysis (3.1.15-3.1.17) and the University's structured approach to staff engagement following University Restructuring (4.2.15-4.2.16).

6 Appendices

6.1 Appendix 1 - Programme summaries

6.1.1 **The Top-Up Programme**, devised and delivered by the University of Glasgow (University of Glasgow) and formerly part of the GOALS Programme, now runs as a senior element of FOCUS West, the West of Scotland rollout of the SFC Schools for Higher Education Programme (SHEP). Top-Up also works with schools, identified as WP schools, by their respective Local Authorities. The programme has worked annually with around 1,200 S5 and S6 pupils across circa 40 secondary schools since 1999 (around 12,000 pupils). Engagement has increased in recent years: 1,500 pupils across 44 schools participated in 2012-13; 2,000+ pupils across 53 schools are expected to participate in 2013-14.

6.1.2 From 2004-2012, annual Top-Up entrants to University of Glasgow have increased by 112%, from 81 to 172 pupils. This steady increase is shown by the following graph:
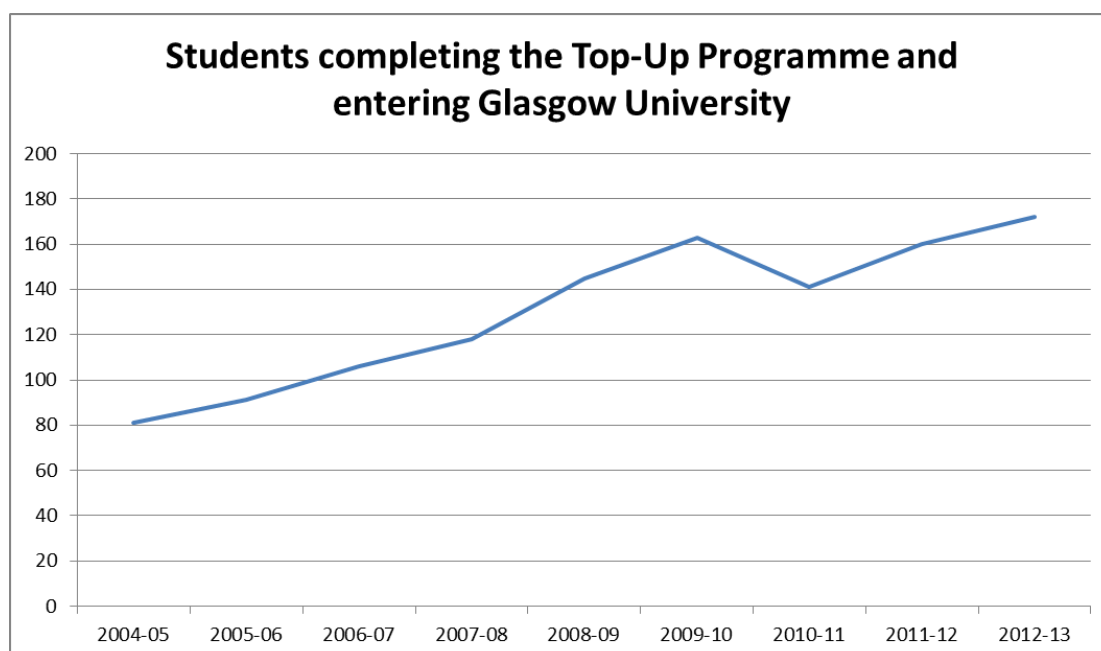
6.1.3 The Top-Up Programme Student Profile is now accepted as an additional measure of a student's potential to succeed in HE by nearly every university in Scotland. At the University of Glasgow, the profile is taken into account by every College and applicants may have offers adjusted by 1-2 Higher Grade points. The 2012 University of Glasgow progression agreement was as follows:

- FOCUS West and Top-Up Programme admissions agreements at the University of Glasgow apply to all Top-Up Programme applicants to Arts, Business, Social Sciences, Education, Sciences, Engineering, Nursing and Music.
- All Top-Up applicants to Arts, Social Sciences, Sciences and Engineering will be given a conditional offer subject to successful completion of the Top-Up Programme. The standard offer for SQA Highers / Advanced Highers (over either one or two sittings) will be reduced by one grade in two subjects if the applicant has a Top-Up profile of BBB or above. This does not apply to any subject that may be pre-requisite for a particular course.

- All Top-Up applicants to Business, Education and Nursing will have the standard offer reduced by one grade in one Higher if the applicant has a Top-Up profile of BBB or above. This does not apply to any subject that may be pre-requisite for a particular course.
- Applicants to the Bachelor of Music, achieving BBB or above in the Top-Up student profile, will have one Higher/Advanced Higher adjusted by one grade, excluding Higher/Advanced Higher Music - applicants will undergo audition for entry.
- Each application will be considered on its individual merits.

6.1.4 Alongside access, the main thrust of Top-Up is to provide school pupils with the learning skills needed to be successful independent HE students and prepare them for the transition to HE study. Top-Up Student Profiles are accepted by HEIs across Scotland.

6.1.5 In addition, research conducted over the period 2004-2012 and updated in the past year, on the effectiveness of the programme within the University of Glasgow, indicates that the Programme has had a positive impact, leading to more pupils from WP backgrounds enrolling, being better-prepared for university and increasing retention. Top-Up participants perform better in Year 1 at the University of Glasgow and are less likely to withdraw than their student peers from the same schools, but also from higher progression comparator schools in the same areas.

6.1.6 A study of three cohorts of Top-Up participants, who completed the Programme from 2004-06 and progressed on to the University of Glasgow was also conducted in 2013. This shows similar results: Top-Up participants have completed their degree study within the University in higher numbers than their student peers from the same schools who did not complete Top-Up, and also those from higher progression comparator schools in the same areas. It appears that former Top-Up students are being helped by the Programme in the early part of their degree study and are progressing strongly beyond to the point of graduation. The research provides an evidenced case for continuing with the progression agreements established over the previous years. Students and the University are benefiting from this widening participation admissions policy.

6.1.7 Contact with Top-Up students, who progress to the University of Glasgow, is maintained and employment as student mentors offered. Successful transition and retention of these WP students is central to the programme's aims.

6.1.8 The University's **Summer School** has been running for over 25 years. It offers an alternative route of admission for adult learners and school leavers alike and the quality of preparation impacts heavily on the retention of the WP students who participate.

6.1.9 Unlike most other Scottish summer programmes, the University of Glasgow Summer School is a multi-exit programme; Student Profiles are accepted by most institutions across Scotland as an aid to admission for students. Summer School has been re-shaped since the last ELIR and has developed into a central component of our WP strategy going forward.

6.1.10 In 2012, 137 students successfully completed the Summer School and this rose to 158 in 2013. These were substantial rises from 59 completions in 2011 and indicates the Summer School is recovering from the low-point of this year.

6.1.11 Going forward, the Summer School will increase further in size, to provide transition support for students admitted under the extra MD40 student places. The Summer School is again a central part of the University of Glasgow Widening Participation strategy.

6.1.12 A spin-off from the Summer School has been the **University Taster Weeks,** introduced in 2006. Three such weeks are held in June/July each year: two for Glasgow City Council schools and one (residential) for Dumfries & Galloway schools.

6.1.13 All Glasgow City Council and Dumfries & Galloway schools are involved in Taster Week and up to 160 targeted Glasgow City Council pupils and 40 targeted Dumfries & Galloway pupils, entering S5 or S6, take part. They experience circa 15 different academic subjects, alongside information sessions and workshops on other aspects of being a student, i.e. study skills, finance. Early indications are that the Taster Weeks are having a positive impact, with around one-third of participants progressing to study at the University of Glasgow. (Participants also progress to other HEIs, but precise numbers are unknown.) The experience gained in Taster Weeks aids pupils in deciding if university is the correct destination for them and is intended to ease the transition from school and aid retention in the early part of year 1.

6.1.14 The Reach (Access to the High Demand Professions) Programme, a new initiative since the last ELIR, was developed and launched in 2010-11.

6.1.15 The Scottish Funding Council had been reviewing Medical Schools in Scotland and the small number of students entering from the lowest percentiles of areas of Multiple Deprivation. The initial proposal was to tackle this under-representation and ultimately enable improved social mobility by targeting a single profession per year (starting with Medicine). However the institutions involved (Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, St Andrews, Dundee) encouraged the Scottish Funding Council to consider multiple high demand professional degrees (e.g. with high applicant numbers), but with low MD40 applications. The University of Glasgow selected Medicine, Dentistry, Vet Medicine and Law as target degrees.

6.1.16 Reach is targeted to work with students from S4-S6 who have shown interest in progressing into these professions and have demonstrated evidence of academic capability.

6.1.17 In order to reach a critical mass of students, Reach is targeted at students in Schools which have lower than the national average progression to University (32%) and as a result, the University of Glasgow works with 92 Schools across the West of Scotland.

6.1.18 Targets were set for:

- increasing number of applications
- increasing number of offers made
- increasing number of acceptances
- increasing number who register to study

6.1.19 Latterly an increase in the number of interviews was added and all targets are in terms of both the actual number and % of intake.

6.1.20 S4-S6 pupils in these schools that show an interest and ability to progress on to study Medicine, Law, Dentistry or Veterinary Medicine, complete a three-year programme which has been devised

with collaborative input from each University School. In-school and on-campus sessions are held for each year group, with a Summer School week held for each subject area for S5 pupils. Pupils are introduced to the idea of studying a professional degree, complete case study work on their specific subject of interest and attend sessions covering the UCAS process, including the applicable aptitude test (National Admissions Test for Law (LNAT); UK Clinical Aptitude Test (UKCAT) for Medicine and Dentistry), interview preparation and personal statement workshops.

6.1.21 Progression agreements were formulated with admissions officers in each professional subject area and successful completion of the programme was taken into account for the first time in the 2011-12 academic year. Variations on grade reductions and/or reductions in the UKCAT aptitude test were introduced, to aid Reach applicants towards reaching the interview stage.

6.1.22 SFC targets were set for 2013, but significant impact was made for 2012 entry. The targets for Medicine, Veterinary Medicine and Dentistry were surpassed whilst further progress is still needed for Law.

6.1.23 2012-13 participants are as follows:

Year Group	Total Participants
S4	1,000
S5	650
S6	265

6.1.24 2012 entrants from the target schools and percentage of the student entrant cohorts were as follows:

Subject	2011	2012
Medicine	13 (14%)	38 (29.2%)
Vet Medicine	4 (8.3%)	8 (16.7%)
Dentistry	7 (12.1%)	10 (18.5%)
Law	26 (14.5%)	24 (12.6%)

6.1.25 The progress made at the University of Glasgow far outstrips that at other institutions over the same time period, partly as a consequence of the scale of the operation. In the west of Scotland we have the biggest number of MD40 postcodes and schools with less than 32% progression to HE. Our 92 target schools is more than all the other institutions' target schools combined.

6.1.26 The **Access to Primary Education** (APE) Programme has existed for 14 years. This is a partnership between the University of Glasgow, the University of the West of Scotland and Glasgow City Council. Academic and WP staff from both HEIs facilitate a two-year course for selected pupils in GCC schools who are interested in progressing to study Primary Education. Successful

performance guarantees an interview at UWS and is taken into account in decision-making at the University of Glasgow, where interviews are not used.

6.1.27 **The Student Network**, the University of Glasgow e-mentoring programme, allows current and prospective students to get in touch with existing students in their academic area and gives those without a family background of HE an opportunity to familiarise themselves with university life before they start. Within this group, WP student mentors are identified and utilised at WP events so that pupils can talk through issues with current students who can relate to their situation. **Scholarship funding** for WP students is now firmly established. The Talent Scholarships were launched in 2007/08 and 50 new scholarships worth £1,000 per annum are awarded annually. These scholarships are being used to support applicants with evidence of high achievement that face financial hardship in attending university. Over 300 scholarships have been distributed to date. Care Leaver Bursaries were established from the Talent Scholarships in 2008; seven students have benefited to date.

6.1.28 The **Teaching, Learning and Participation Project**, a project run at the Dumfries Campus to provide pupils from three local High Schools who have the ability to go on to university but perhaps not the confidence or support from family with two days on campus experiencing a lecture on learning, followed by attendance at a lecture of their choice (earth systems science, Spanish, contemporary health issues – all normally running with level 1 students in attendance), and finishing up with some group work on their perceptions of higher education compared with the reality of their experiences on the day.

6.2 Appendix 2 – Participation at Scottish Universities from MD20 and MD40

Table of participation at Scottish universities from MD40 and MD20 , 2010-11

	Institution - ranked by %	Students from 40% most deprived areas			Institution - ranked by type	Students from 40% most deprived areas
1	0105 The University of the West of Scotland	44.9%		1	0168 The University of Glasgow	24.1%
2	0106 Glasgow Caledonian University	38.1%		2	0170 The University of Aberdeen	15.4%
3	0095 University of Abertay Dundee	35.0%		3	0167 The University of Edinburgh	15.4%
4	Open University	31.8%		4	0173 The University of St Andrews(#6)	10.8%
5	0169 The University of Strathclyde	27.9%		1	0169 The University of Strathclyde	27.9%
6	0196 University of the Highlands and Islands(#4)	27.1%		2	0174 The University of Stirling	27.0%
7	0174 The University of Stirling	27.0%		3	0097 Glasgow School of Art	25.5%
8	0107 Edinburgh Napier University	25.5%		4	0172 The University of Dundee	25.4%
9	0097 Glasgow School of Art	25.5%		5	0101 Royal Conservatoire of Scotland(#4)	20.5%
10	0172 The University of Dundee	25.4%		6	0171 Heriot-Watt University	20.3%
11	0100 Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh	24.9%		7	0175 Scottish Agricultural College	20.1%
12	0168 The University of Glasgow	24.1%		8	0096 Edinburgh College of Art	17.8%
13	0101 Royal Conservatoire of Scotland(#4)	20.5%		1	0105 The University of the West of Scotland	44.9%
14	0171 Heriot-Watt University	20.3%		2	0106 Glasgow Caledonian University	38.1%
15	0175 Scottish Agricultural College	20.1%		3	0095 University of Abertay Dundee	35.0%
16	0096 Edinburgh College of Art	17.8%		4	Open University	31.8%
17	0104 The Robert Gordon University	16.3%		5	0196 University of the Highlands and Islands(#4)	27.1%
18	0170 The University of Aberdeen	15.4%		6	0107 Edinburgh Napier University	25.5%
19	0167 The University of Edinburgh	15.4%		7	0100 Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh	24.9%
20	0173 The University of St Andrews(#6)	10.8%		8	0104 The Robert Gordon University	16.3%
	Total	27.2%			Total	27.2%

Scottish Domiciled Studnets Only

Source : Learning for All: sixth update report on measures of success 2012 - SFC

Ancient	
Traditional	
New	

6.3   Appendix 3 – MD40 students as a percentage of the University student population

MD40 students as a percentage of the entire UoG student population
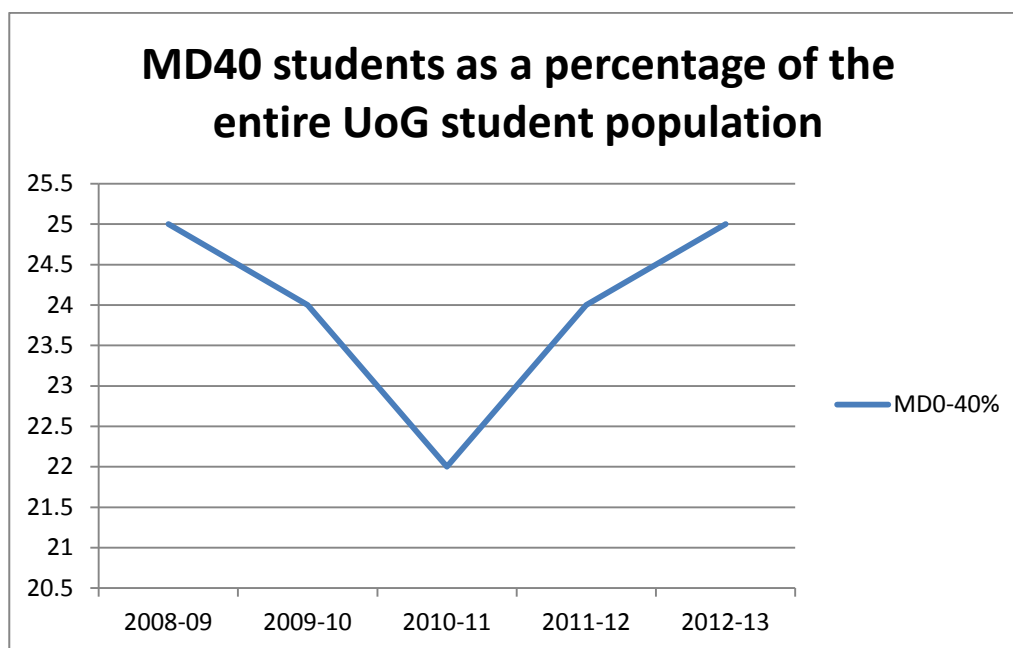
Case Study 2: Developing Academic Writing Skills

2

Developing Academic Writing Skills

1   Rationale for the Selection of the Case Study

1.1.1   This case study explores the effectiveness of the University's routine and periodic review processes in stimulating enhancement. It demonstrates how the need for writing support, identified by both academic staff and students through Annual Monitoring and Periodic Subject Review, is progressively being addressed through a process that has fostered innovation, encouraged reflection and evaluation throughout and has enabled strategic change.

1.1.2   The case study specifically highlights aspects of the University's enhancement-based processes in learning and teaching, namely:

- institutional support for bottom-up initiatives
- sharing good practice across the institution
- mainstreaming initiatives that have demonstrated their strategic value.

2   Background to the Establishment of the Writing Centre

2.1.1   The Writing Centre has its roots in staff concerns around writing skills highlighted through quality enhancement processes in the years leading up to 2006.[1] At the same time, the importance of writing skills in relation to student retention was also being recognised across the institution and, in response, academic staff were beginning to develop interventions to enhance writing skills amongst the student body. One of the primary mechanisms used to support bottom-up innovation is the Learning and Teaching Development Fund (LTDF)[2] and this was used by two groups within the University to pilot different approaches to writing skills development between 2006 and 2009. The two approaches could not be more different. The Academic Writing Skills Programme[3], involved a direct intervention at entry to the University, initially for Arts students, and the Writing for Results[4] project provided scalable online support, initially for Science based students, in their later years. Both were recognised, by the University Learning and Teaching Committee during the Development Fund selection process, to address specific needs and to have real potential for extension beyond their initial subject areas. The reporting structure of the Development Fund also provided an ideal mechanism to reflect on and evaluate the success of the initiatives.

2.1.2   Both writing programmes demonstrated success and received extended support after the first year of funding to expand and refine their approaches. For example, the Academic Writing Skills Programme was initially implemented in the then Faculty of Arts in 2006 and expanded in 2009 to include the then Faculty of Law, Business and Social Sciences.

2.1.3   During this period, the Student Learning Service, which provides central support for student engagement with learning, was being expanded to include NUMBER, a specific unit established to provide numeracy support. Given the success of the two strategic academic writing initiatives and

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[1] ASC October 2008 – ASC 08/11 - https://frontdoor.spa.gla.ac.uk/commdoc/senate/ARC/Papers/asc0811.pdf
[2] Learning and Teaching Development Fund: www.gla.ac.uk/services/learningteaching/awardsandfunds/developmentfund/
[3] Writing Skills Support LTDF Final Report: www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_102299_en.doc
[4] Sustaining Writing for Results LTDF Proposal: www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_167328_en.pdf

the fact that the Student Learning Service already provided writing support workshops, it was timely to review the future shape of Student Learning Service including its role in supporting writing skills.

2.1.4   In November 2010 the University Learning and Teaching Committee initiated a root and branch review of the Student Learning Service. The remit for the review specifically included the requirement to 'consider what the appropriate balance within the Service, between generic support of student engagement in learning and targeted support in areas such as numeracy and literacy, should be. In doing this, the review should take account of the impact and sustainability of initiatives supported through the Learning and Teaching Development Fund…'

2.1.5   The Review recognised the need for the Student Learning Service to support and embed the outcomes of strategic initiatives supported through the Learning and Teaching Development Fund and its report to Learning and Teaching Committee in February 2012 triggered a major reshaping of the Student Learning Service, including the establishment of the Writing Centre.

2.1.6   In establishing a Writing Centre, the University sought to:

- consolidate and mainstream Learning and Teaching Development Fund-funded initiatives which had proved their effectiveness and their capacity to be scaled up
- maximise benefits from the reorganisation of the Student Learning Service to provide better-targeted and more joined-up support to students
- improve student academic support by drawing on work done within the University on retention, school-university transitions, employability and graduate attributes

2.1.7   The decision to base the Writing Centre within the Student Learning Service reflected

- the value of centralised provision in view of the importance of writing skills to students in all academic disciplines
- the desirability of allocating the workload associated with the Academic Writing Skills Programme and Advanced Academic Writing to central services and no longer to academics in separate Schools and Colleges
- the need for longer-term management and financial planning to support the two projects, instead of frequently-renewed short-term funding
- the demonstrated success of embedding NUMBER, the University's mathematics support service, within the Student Learning Service.

2.1.8   In addition, the restructuring of the Service in 2012 created an opportunity to make the work of the Writing Centre central to and prominent in the reshaped Service, with alterations to some Effective Learning Advisers' job descriptions and recruiting of new staff and GTAs.

3 Chronological Development

2006	Working group in (then) Faculty of Arts develops Academic Writing Skills Programme (AWSP) in response to Faculty QA report highlighting staff perception of a need for writing support
2007	AWSP runs in Faculty of Arts, supported by grant from Learning and Teaching Development Fund (LTDF)
2009	Expansion of AWSP to include part of (then) Faculty of Law, Business and Social Science (LBSS)
	Writing for Results (later, AAW) is developed in Department of Computing Science. Initial resources produced, supported by LTDF grant
2010	AWSP runs in Arts and LBSS, supported by direct grant from office of Vice-Principal for Learning and Teaching
	Expansion of Writing for Results (later, AAW) resources to new subject areas, supported by additional LTDF grant
	Review of Student Learning Service initiated by University Learning and Teaching Committee
2012	Restructuring of Student Learning Service creates opportunity for formation of Writing Centre
	Writing Centre formed
	Appointment of Dr Carol Collins (Senior Effective Learning Adviser within Student Learning Service) as Director and Dr Jennifer Boyle as Convenor of Writing Centre
2013	Expansion of AWSP to School of Education

4 The Writing Centre

4.1.1 The Writing Centre's purpose is to provide support in academic writing skills for students in all areas and at all levels.

4.1.2 The Centre is an organisational unit rather than a physical structure, and central University funding to support it has been agreed, in the first instance, from September 2012 until July 2015.

4.1.3 The Centre is one of the three branches of the Student Learning Service, which in turn is a unit of the University's Learning and Teaching Centre. The Centre is managed by the Senior Effective Learning Adviser, and employs a 0.5 Coordinator and eight Graduate Teaching Assistants, 2 drawn from each of the University's Colleges (see Appendix for staffing chart). An Advisory Board has oversight of the Centre's activities and contributes to its forward planning.

4.1.4 The Centre strategically aligns three strands of work addressing academic writing previously undertaken in different parts of the University and via different methods:

- the Academic Writing Skills Programme (AWSP)
- the Advancing Academic Writing project (AAW)
- a suite of workshops offered by the Student Learning Service

4.1.5 It offers provision via online resources, via face-to-face teaching in small groups and workshops, and via individual face-to-face support. The delivery through a single, central unit allows for a more coherent approach and broadens the engagement to potentially all undergraduate students.

4.1.6 From September 2013, the Writing Centre employed two Writing Advisers for PGT and PGR on a 0.5FTE basis. The PGR Writing Adviser works closely with the Postgraduate Research Service to ensure consistency of advice and practice. The PGT Student Adviser is funded by the Royal Literary Fund. These appointments expand the scope of the Writing Centre.

4.2 Constituent Programmes

4.2.1 Academic Writing Skills Programme: A one-hour diagnostic exercise undertaken by Level one UG students during Freshers' Week, plus a short course. The exercise consists of three questions, selected randomly from a question bank; the final question is a short discursive essay. All students' exercises are marked by specially trained Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) and feedback is returned within two weeks. Students with the lowest marks (c. 20% of the cohort) are asked to attend a short course made up of weekly one-hour sessions over five to six weeks taught by GTAs to small groups (<10 students). Students with higher marks may opt to attend the course on a voluntary basis. At the end of the course, students take the exercise again with different randomised exercises; those who pass are recognised with an entry on their transcript.

4.2.2 Advancing Academic Writing: A bank of specially-developed online resources on common writing problems, typically including punctuation, sentence structure, referencing. The resource was originally piloted in the former Departments of Computing Science and History before expanding to provide multiple different versions, each tailored to the needs of one of seventeen subject areas across the University and using materials familiar to students in that area. Each resource includes material for self-teaching and exercises yielding immediate online feedback. The resources are accessible via a dedicated Moodle site. Another similar set of resources is dedicated to 'Writing for Employability'.

4.2.3 Workshops: A flexible suite of writing-related workshops has been developed for each of the four Colleges. These workshops are delivered by Student Learning Service staff throughout the academic year. Additionally, academics may invite the Effective Learning Advisers to develop and deliver course-specific or assessment-specific workshops as needed.

5   Reflecting the University Approach

5.1.1 The development of the Writing Centre reflects all of the guiding principles for quality enhancement at the University:

- evidence of connectivity between routine and periodic monitoring and review processes and enhancement activity
- various local initiatives winning pump-prime funding through the Learning and Teaching Development Fund

- upon evidence of success from pilot projects, mainstreaming approaches with required investment and resource structures
- establishment from the outset of clear metrics for measurement of success and creation of an Advisory Board to oversee and evaluate the Centre
- articulation between QAE, academic and student support activities and personnel.

6   Measuring Success

6.1.1   Throughout the process towards the development of the Writing Centre, there has been reflection and evaluation. Due to the various individual projects being funded through the Learning and Teaching Development Fund they were required to present initial proposals (including agreed metrics for evaluation), provide update reports and final reports outlining the relative success of the project to the University Learning and Teaching Committee.

6.1.2   These reflective and evaluative processes helped inform the development of meaningful metrics with which to evaluate the success of the Writing Centre. As noted above, an Advisory Board was created to oversee this significant development.

6.1.3   The Advisory Board is at present the main channel for evaluation of and reflection about the Writing Centre. The Board includes the Senior Effective Learning Adviser, the Coordinator of the Centre, the SRC Vice-President Student Support, the originators of the Academic Writing Skills Programme and Advanced Academic Writing, and a small group of academics drawn from across the University who have special experience of supporting academic writing, particularly at Level 1 and 2. The Board reports to the University Learning and Teaching Committee.

6.1.4   The Board's remit is to:

- develop a clearly defined remit for the Writing Centre in terms of the sectors of the student population it supports and the nature of the support it provides. This remit will recognise the need to evolve support in response to changing patterns of demand in the future
- provide advice and guidance to Student Learning Service and Writing Centre staff in terms of shaping and delivering writing support across the University
- receive periodic updates on progress from the Writing Centre and identify actions to overcome specific difficulties identified in these reports
- develop a strategy to raise awareness of the work of the Centre amongst the academic community and, where the Centre offers responsive support, to raise awareness amongst the student community.

6.1.5   The Advisory Board is constituted for the first three years of the Writing Centre's operation; it is therefore scheduled to complete its work in the summer of 2015. By that time, the Board is expected to have evaluated the work of the Centre using the following mechanisms:

- quantitative measures of engagement: numbers of students undertaking online or taught activities offered by the Centre; numbers of academic staff contacting the Centre
- quantitative measures of benefit: numbers of students achieving improved marks following Academic Writing Skills Programme course
- qualitative measures of benefit: feedback from students taking Academic Writing Skills Programme course; feedback from students taking workshops; feedback from students using

Advanced Academic Writing resources; feedback from academic staff recommending Advanced Academic Writing activities to students

- more speculatively: retention outcomes for students taking Academic Writing Skills Programme course in level 1.

6.1.6 Annual Monitoring was also used to elicit feedback on the development of student writing skills and the provision of support. In 2011-12, a 'hot topic' was included in School Annual Monitoring Summaries inviting comments. The summarised feedback highlighted "The School Annual Monitoring Summaries reported a great deal of engagement with writing skills programmes including evidence of excellent practice at local practice which could be disseminated more widely."

7 Effectiveness of Management of Change

7.1.1 The development of the Writing Centre demonstrates successful change management at several levels:

- negotiation with local line managers and teaching staff in order to establish Academic Writing Skills Programme and Advanced Academic Writing in Departments and Schools
- successful and continuing negotiated roll-out of Academic Writing Skills Programme and Advanced Academic Writing from original Departments and Schools to new units
- maintenance of Academic Writing Skills Programme and Advanced Academic Writing during University-wide restructuring
- successful transition of provision from local units to Student Learning Service

7.1.2 These stages have been achieved through a combination of dedicated work by local staff (including, and often led by, junior staff) and high-level vision and support from two successive Vice-Principals for Learning and Teaching.

7.1.3 The overall success of the Writing Centre and its constituent parts reflects the fact that at each stage, bottom-up initiatives have demonstrated their effectiveness and scalability, and been adopted by a wider segment of the University. At each stage, the various provision now mainstreamed in the Writing Centre has been recognised as serving a clearly-identified and widely-felt need, and as contributing to improved student performance.

7.1.4 The Advisory Board seeks to help the Writing Centre continue to develop its provision in accordance with this successful model of bottom-up initiatives supported by strategic vision from the University centre. Close collaboration with academics in local units will continue to be crucial in informing the range and shape of the Centre's offerings.

8   Appendices

8.1 Student Learning Service/ Academic Writing Centre Business Plan

8.2 [Learning and Teaching Development Fund bid for funding for Academic Writing Skills Programme](#)

8.3 [Final report on Learning and Teaching Development Fund bid for Academic Writing Skills Programme](#)

8.4 [Learning and Teaching Development Fund bid for funding for Writing for Results](#)

8.5 [Final report on Learning and Teaching Development Fund bid for Advanced Academic Writing](#)

8.6 [Sample diagnostic exercise material from Academic Writing Skills Programme](#)

8.7 [Advanced Academic Writing Moodle](#)

8.8 Student Learning Service/ Academic Writing Centre Staffing Structure

8.1 Student Learning Service/Academic Writing Centre Business Plan

The ideal full complement from 1st September 2012 for this Service will be:
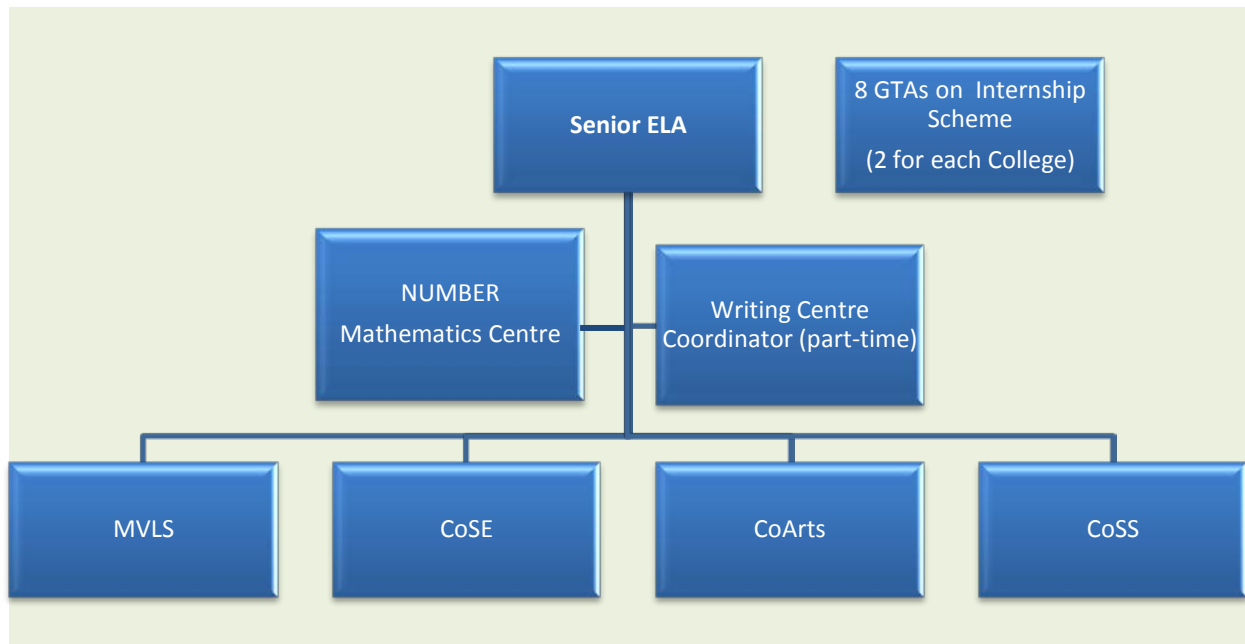
- A Senior Effective Learning Adviser (SELA) (will also have responsibility to support one of the Colleges)
- 3 Effective Learning Advisers (one for each of the other Colleges)
- 1 NUMBER Coordinator
- 1 part-time **Writing Centre Coordinator** (Will work in collaboration with the Senior ELA to coordinate the GTA Internship Scheme as well as being responsible for scaling up response to writing support demand across the University).
- **GTA Internship Scheme** This initiative is related to review recommendations for expanding one-to-one service provision; responding to strategic need to offer GTAs more teaching opportunities; requirement for outline of Writing Centre responsibilities, Appendix 5 of the review documentation

Why have a Writing Centre?
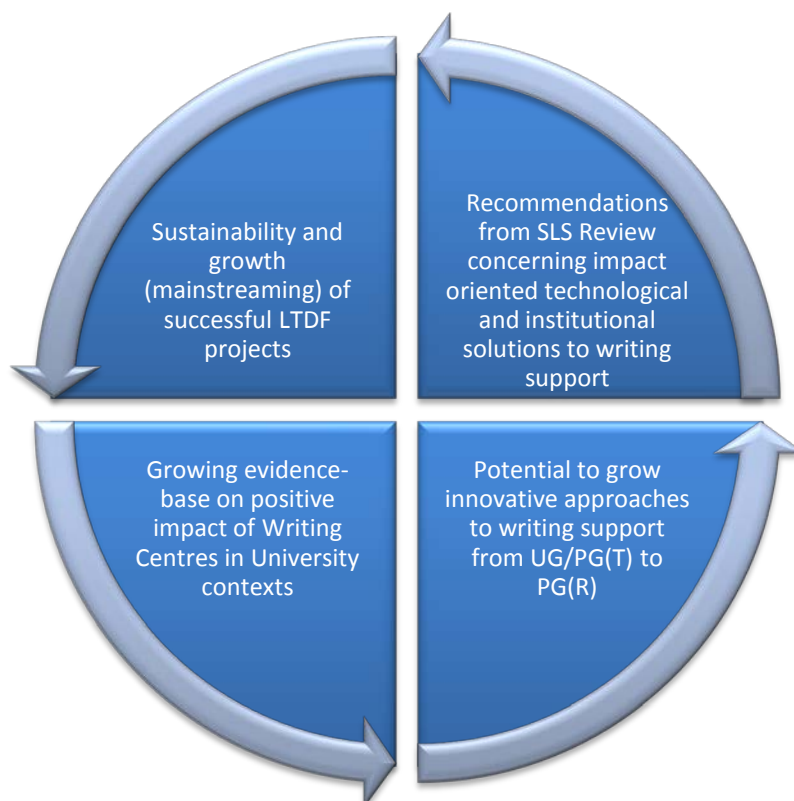
The quality (or lack of) of student writing is a well known, oft-spoken of aspect of retention and progression at Glasgow University. A Writing Centre is one way of meeting the demand for students' writing to be enhanced. Such a Centre would focus on developing a range of writing support, both discipline-specific and relevant across all levels.

Two successful LTDF projects concerning writing support are not sustainable or capable of being mainstreamed in their current context:

- Advanced Academic Writing: (Led by Quintin Cutts. AAW for Employability led by Vicky Gunn). This is based on discipline-specific materials made available through a moodle plug-in. The on-line resources allow for self-diagnostic testing and correction of written work.
- Academic Writing Programme: (Arts/ Social Sciences. Led by Alice Jenkins/ Rhona Brown, CoAs). This project was dependent on GTA 'intern equivalents' who administer, coordinate, and deliver the programme. It thus dovetails nicely with the SLS review recommendation that GTA internships should be used to increase the capacity of SLS to offer student learning support as well as evidence from PG surveys that PG(R)s are concerned about the lack of teaching opportunities on campus.

Both of these projects have had demonstrable impact on student writing. Not only have they had immediate impact in the areas they have been implemented, if scaled up they can respond to growing demand for writing support in the PG(T) community (as well as across more UG programmes). At the moment both projects stop being funded from 31st July and will, as a result, be discontinued. A fully coordinated approach to their mainstreaming will deliver clearly positive outcomes in terms of both student experience and visibility of the Student Learning Service. Linking the work of these projects

with the ELAs, through a Writing Centre Coordinator, draws on a model of increasing impact/ mainstreaming used to great success for Maths support (NUMBER). *Addendum*: interest in AAW has been shown by other institutions, particularly those overseas and might fulfil a useful internationalisation agenda role. Additionally, the SLS review outlined the demand for and thus need for writing support to be addressed across the institution in a manner that:

- increases impact on the number of students who are affected and engaged with,
- changes the ways in which writing support is delivered.

Key to this is a central push around writing development as a specific area of student learning experience. Also central to this is the use of technological advances to improve access to writing support approaches. Both LTDF projects could fulfil such requirements at the same time as being a platform for future strategic development. Such strategic development would focus on collaborative approaches to writing of all types (from assessments to post-graduation forms of writing) between the Effective Learning Advisers and the Writing Centre Coordinator.

There is a growing evidence-base for the efficacy of Writing Centres as core to a good student learning experience at university. This is especially true in the face of the changing student demography at the University of Glasgow.

There is a need for the University of Glasgow to extend writing support beyond UG & PG(T) to include PG(R)s and early career researchers. A writing centre focused on the developmental aspects of different types of writing should be able to expand the current horizons of writing support on campus and increase the Learning & Teaching Centre's potential to be viewed as an essential service for academic development.

GTA Internship Scheme

To fulfil both the requirements of the Academic Writing Programme (AWP) and the recommendations of the SLS review, the following is suggested –

8 GTA internships (2 from each College) would involve the following responsibilities:

- 6 seminars per week (on relevant writing with first years in their Colleges) for the first six weeks of semester one;
- Setting, marking homework (roughly 300 on line exercises and 60 final assessments each);
- Administering attendance (including organisation of seminar groups (with assistance from the College ELA & the SLS administrator, Fiona Bell), managing numbers and contacting non-attenders;
- Updating the AWP Moodle as relevant to their College.
- After the first six weeks of the AWP, each GTA would be allocated up to 3 hours of time per week for the next 3 weeks in semester one & first 7 weeks in semester 2 to support students' writing in their Colleges (either through a direct self-referral system for first years OR through referrals from their College ELA). It would be intended that the GTAs for each College would design how that time was best spent (ie either group work or tutorials) depending on the College needs and through the supervision given by their ELA. This service would cover all

levels of UG/ PG(T). Depending on the College, it might be worth identifying one GTA for UG at this point and one for PG(T) support. This might primarily suit Social Sciences.

- This would effectively upscale AWP to cover all the Colleges

Costing:

- Total individual internship face-to-face hours:
    - 36 hours AWP
    - 30 hours tutorial/small group/ on-line writing support (as relevant to the College)
- Preparation, marking, administration, being mentored costed into this as an additional hour per contact hour for AWP + extra for subsequent prep (ie 36 hours (AWP) + 5 extra prep hours)
- GU Scholarship of £2,000 (This is calculated using a full hourly paid cost which includes NI/ tax)
- Total to be ring-fenced £16, 000 (with rate of inflation for successive years)

Data Concerning Use and Experience of the two LTDF Projects

AAW usage statistics:

Total logins[5] from inception:	144,000
Total logins from 01.09.11 to 22.05.12:	29,435
Number of subject sites:	18
Number of exercises:	2432

Evaluations:

1. ***Earth Science student evaluation (abridged)*** (undertaken by Fiona Meade, University Teacher, School of Geographical and Earth Sciences, 2011)

Method:

Level 1 students were given a short report to write with a deadline in week 4. Reports were returned, with action sheets attached, in week 6. The students' main essay (15% of final grade) was due in week 8, after which these questions were asked:

Did you use the writing skills website?

76% yes   24% no

Amongst those who used the website, how was it?

Helpful or very helpful	83%
Undecided	14%
Not helpful	3%

Has your writing been improved by using the site?

78% yes	22% no
Class size	183

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[5] Logins include staff, guests and KMG logins as well as student use

2. Computing Science and Arts student focus group evaluation (2010 trial)

'For me, it was a lifeline …'
'I could have done with it sooner'
'I'll definitely use it [the website] when we do our redraft'
'It [the website] left me with a feeling of achievement'
'I felt a real sense of achievement.'
'The website could help to unlock grades.'
'… it was good to have a different medium to learn from.'
'I thought it was going to be dull but found it engrossing. I did more than the [prescribed] two hours.'
'I'd like the website incorporated into the marking sheets so that you can see just how poor grammar and essay construction hold you back.'
The website was 'helpful', 'accessible', 'confidence-building', a 'failsafe'.

3. *Staff evaluation* (distilled) solicited spring 2011

Classics:

'At our exam board today, our externals were warm in their commendation of the AAW resources for Classics students and I hope that they will include remarks to that effect in their reports.' *Professor Catherine Steel*

'Where it was most obviously valuable, though, was in the case of students on Access Classical Civilisations. Several of the students had not written anything for years and, in the reflection that they produced for their portfolios, several of them highlighted its usefulness and their intention to make greater use of the resource in future to help continue their development. I had quite a good look at it and have to say that I think it is a great resource.' *Graduate Teaching Assistant*

Psychology:

'…useful – it saved me time, in terms of being able to circle bits on the form and so trust that the student would go to the website for extra help, rather than having to explain in what way their use of semi-colons was wrong, or why their sentences were ungrammatical.' *Psychology tutor*

History:

'… the site can be helpful in giving feedback to first years on their essays, particularly where there are multiple writing problems that need to be resolved asap. It really helps to be able to show them the website on my computer during the tutorial …' *History tutor*

Evidence of impact

Arts student scores from 2010 trial:

First Test = number of mistakes made in script before using AAW

Retest = number of mistakes made in script after using AAW

Student No.	First Test	Retest
1	80	46 (3rd year)
2	52	16
3	31	16 (4th year)
4	33	14
5	34	28 (1st year)
6	63	26
7	48	26
8	78	36
9	54	34

N.B. The startling improvements must be treated with caution. Though the test and retest contained the same number of errors for the student to correct, the students sometimes corrected the errors in different ways, or rewrote to avoid the issue altogether. What can be said, however, is that all the students improved; all were more aware of errors; and all said that the site, particularly the information behind the blue question marks, had clarified things they thought they knew but clearly did not.

Academic Writing Programme

The programme runs in the first semester of the academic session and begins with students completing an online diagnostic exercise in week 0. They receive feedback on this within the first two weeks of arriving at the University. All students enrolled on the programme complete this exercise and in this academic year 1645 incoming level 1 students in Arts and Social Science took the diagnostic exercise.

Depending on performance, a significant number of these students are then invited to attend a weekly class, entitled "Introduction to Academic Writing", which runs from weeks 3 to 9. In the penultimate week, the students undertake their final online assessment and receive one-to-one feedback at the end of the course. In the academic year 2010-11, 220 students undertook this part of the programme and the pass rate was 95%.

Student feedback on the course is universally positive including praise from External Examiners. Selected quotes include:

- "More students should have a chance to attend it'
- "I noticed the difference by the contrast between an essay I did before the course and one I completed after the course. The essay I wrote after the course was so much more structured, punctuated and overall a vast improvement on the previous essay."
- "I now have a solid understanding of grammar."

Numbers of students involved have shown a year on year steady increase:

	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Took the diagnostic exercise	550	579	1430	1645	1316
Took the course	107	178	205	220	231

8.8 Student Learning Service/Academic Writing Centre Staff Structure

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│      Senior Effective Learning Adviser        │
│             Dr. Carol Collins                 │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                      │
                      ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│          Student Learning Service             │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
        │             │             │
        ▼             ▼             ▼
┌────────────┐ ┌────────────┐ ┌────────────┐
│ Effective  │ │  Student   │ │  Writing   │
│  Learning  │ │Mathematical│ │  Centre    │
│  Advisers  │ │  Support   │ │            │
└────────────┘ └────────────┘ └────────────┘
        │             │             │
        ▼             ▼             ▼
┌────────────┐ ┌────────────┐ ┌────────────┐
│ Science &  │ │   Maths    │ │  Writing   │
│Engineering │ │  Adviser   │ │  Centre    │
│ Lorna Love │ │   Shazia   │ │ Co-ordinator│
│            │ │   Ahmed    │ │  Jennifer  │
│   MVLS     │ │            │ │   Boyle    │
│Scott Ramsay│ └────────────┘ └────────────┘
│            │
│    Arts    │        ┌────────────────────┐
│Carol Collins│       │ Graduate Teaching  │
│            │        │    Assistants      │
│Social Science│      │                    │
│  Barbara   │        │   2 per college    │
│ Weightman  │        └────────────────────┘
└────────────┘
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Case Study 3: Developing Graduate Attributes

3

Developing Graduate Attributes

1 Rationale for the Selection of the Case Study

1.1.1 The following case study covers the development and implementation of the University of Glasgow's institutional graduate attributes model. The case study sets out the strategic drivers behind the graduate attributes agenda at the University. It illustrates the distinctively research-informed, collegiate and consultative approach that we have followed in developing and implementing our graduate attributes framework. It also shows how, through this approach, we have fostered connectivity between institutional ('top-down') strategy and enhancement and empowerment of local activities ('bottom up'). The development of the Graduate Attributes also included innovative student engagement which has since become normalised in our approach to supporting the Quality Enhancement Themes.

1.1.2 Our approach was as a direct result of reflection on the successes and challenges of previous strategic enhancement initiatives at Glasgow. In this respect, it also illustrates the natural cycle of reflection and refinement that characterises our institutional enhancement activity.

2 Background to the inception of the Graduate Attributes Agenda

2.1.1 The 2008 review of our Employability Strategy identified several strands of developmental activity contributing to the employability agenda: core employability, personal/professional development planning (PDP) and work-related learning and enterprise. Despite their closely aligned goals and outcomes, the review identified that these developmental strands were nonetheless organised at the time as separate initiatives:

- Employability was generally associated with the centralised support provided by the Careers Service

- PDP implementation was devolved to the Faculties (now Colleges) by an institutional policy approved by Senate in February 2008

- Work-related learning was primarily being driven through the University's leadership of the cross-institutional Scottish Funding Council-funded Aiming University Learning at Work project

- Enterprise and entrepreneurship were led by a standalone University Service, Glasgow Student Enterprise

2.1.2 The review concluded that significant progress that had been made by these developmental strands in isolation, but that we were failing to capitalise on the advantages which a more holistic, integrated approach could bring.

2.1.3 Alongside this internal review the University was engaged with the QAA Enhancement Theme 'the *Research Teaching Linkages: enhancing graduate attributes'.* This Theme foregrounded graduate attributes as an emerging concept from Australia, which had not yet permeated the Scottish higher education sector. In the University of Glasgow 2008 final report for the *Research Teaching Linkages: enhancing graduate attributes* enhancement theme we recognised that the following were required to drive future enhancement work:

- Integration of institutional imperatives

- Sharing good practice across different parts of the institution

- More student engagement in enhancement processes within the institution

- Explicit articulation of research-teaching linkages from first year onwards

2.1.4   We had also identified a set of generic graduate attributes that were fostered by alignments between research and teaching.

2.1.5   In considering these two reports, our institutional Learning and Teaching Committee recognised that the strength of the Australian graduate attributes concept lay in its ability to facilitate staff-student reflection on employability within a familiar and shared understanding of academic development. As such, the agenda was the ideal vehicle to rationalise our disparate employability strands within a single, cohesive framework. At the same time, the Committee also recognised the potential for graduate attributes to describe holistically the wider student experience and reflect the range of opportunities for personal development across the spectrum.

2.1.6   The Learning and Teaching Committee subsequently established a Graduate Attributes Working Group to lead an institution-wide consultation and develop a framework for the embedding of the graduate attributes agenda at the University. Membership of this group was drawn from across the (then) 9 University Faculties and key University Services, and was led by the current Vice Principal for Learning and Teaching.

2.1.7   The work of the Working Group aligned well with the *Graduates for the 21st Century* Enhancement Theme's own focus on graduate attributes and so the GAWG also served as the University's institutional enhancement theme team.

3   The Methodology

3.1.1   The first key stage in the project was the development of a clear understanding of the fundamental nature of the outcome that we aimed to achieve. We set out to develop a graduate attributes framework at Glasgow that would be systematically integrated into the entirety of the student experience and would be valued by both students and staff. It would not be a "nice to have" additional activity, or an initiative that sought to characterise superficially graduates in terms of narrowly defined skill sets; rather, it would engage both staff and students in true reflection about attribute development and would recognise disciplinary diversity. It would also recognise that, for an individual student, attribute development is a life-long process that neither begins nor ends in Higher Education, and so no two students would necessarily enter or leave the University with identical attributes.

3.1.2   The approach taken for the institutional consultation around the graduate attributes framework and its subsequent implementation was informed by the 2008 *Research-Teaching Linkages* final report. This had highlighted the need to integrate previous work, share good practice and engage from the bottom-up in future enhancement work. While these were sensible principles for any future activity, they were perceived by the Working Group as particularly critical to the success of our graduate attributes framework due to the scale of strategic shift it represented.

3.1.3 Higher education has a long-standing tradition of discipline sovereignty: students are taught with reference to the perceived skills, knowledge and understanding required by the discipline, not the broader needs of society or industry. A meaningful, embedded approach to graduate attributes challenges this primacy by asking staff to reconceptualise their curriculum with increased emphasis on these external factors and a re-evaluation of the disciplinary relevance of generic attributes – in other words, graduate attributes in its purest form represents a programme of fundamental curriculum reform.

3.1.4 While the last decade brought significant progress in developing students' readiness for work through the previous employability-related enhancement themes, our success had been limited by the overt challenge posed to discipline sovereignty by the employability agenda. Previous approaches had relied too heavily on centrally-led initiatives; employability development was not contextualised within disciplinary realities, and a result it was often perceived by staff as a narrowly focused, bolt-on imperative that disrupted, rather than a pedagogical development that enhanced. This consideration reinforced the decision to take an embedded approach rather than developing, as others in the sector had, a skills award or equivalent. The agreed approach to development of graduate attributes was not intended to limit the development of additional or supplementary programmes in Colleges. Examples of these programmes are detailed in the Reflective Analysis 4.9.1-4.9.7.

3.1.5 As an even wider strategic agenda, our challenge with graduate attributes was to convince the University community that:

- We were not abandoning previous enhancement activity, but integrating the working elements of the previous themes within a new unifying framework that contextualised skills development within a student-to-graduate narrative of personal development.

- We could inspire students to take ownership of the development of their transferable skills and their identification with the institution as a 'Glasgow graduate' in a manner that complemented and celebrated individual disciplinary identities, rather than threatened them.

- We were seeking to enact a long-term strategic shift in learning and teaching strategy – that graduate attributes represented a long-term commitment rather than a short term initiative.

3.1.6 To achieve this, The Working Group agreed that we would need to:

- Consult as many of our stakeholders as possible during our development work to ensure their early ownership of the agenda

- Align and integrate our plans with existing initiatives that complemented the graduate attributes ethos, including existing work around employability, personal development planning and work-related learning

- Build student engagement into our work from day one, and harness their ideas to drive user-led change

- Develop a vision for implementation based on a long-term strategic shift rather than a short-term imperative-led approach

4 Consultation and Development

4.1.1 The consultation and development stage of the graduate attributes project was particularly important in fostering collaborative ownership amongst stakeholders, particularly academics. The Working Group intended the purpose of the consultation to be threefold:

- Working in partnership with stakeholders to articulate the value of a University of Glasgow education in terms of its contribution to students' personal development and transferable skills

- Enacting change management amongst staff, challenging them to reconceptualise their teaching as a means of fostering students' specific disciplinary and generic graduate identities

- Building a network of buy-in, identifying key individuals driving local enhancement through peer-to-peer referral

4.1.2 The starting point for the consultation was a preliminary identification of a set of graduate attributes that were implicit within University-level strategic documents, particularly the University Strategic Plan and the Learning and Teaching Strategy. In essence, this initial attribute set should have embodied the collective views of the University community in terms of what attributes characterised a Glasgow graduate, if these were correctly reflected in our strategic thinking. Using this set as a point of reference therefore provided the opportunity to both test this hypothesis and to explore whether the language used to describe the attributes was universally understood by staff and students.

4.1.3 To achieve a high level of qualitative stakeholder engagement the University appointed a full-time research assistant to facilitate the consultation process. The research assistant was tasked with carrying out 1:1 interviews with key staff across the University. As part of these interviews, staff were asked to nominate colleagues who they felt made a significant contribution to students' personal and professional development and should also be interviewed as part of the consultation: this enabled the Working Group to build a community-led map of key advocates and best practice examples across the institution.

4.1.4 An open electronic consultation was implemented via survey to sit alongside the 1:1 interviews, consisting of 10 Likert scale questions and space for open comment as respondents saw fit. The e-consultation helped to expand the range of staff consulted, and engender a broader sense of collaborative development in the shaping of our final graduate attributes model. In addition to the staff consultation, the research assistant also carried out a group consultation with the Students' Representative Council.

4.1.5 The Working Group recognised the importance of the student voice to the graduate attributes agenda from day one and was concerned that a staff-led consultation of students might struggle to unlock the true student perspective. Therefore a parallel student-driven project was devised that would form one of the most significant, far-reaching and fundamental inputs of the entire consultation process. The Learning and Teaching Centre employed a cross-institutional team of students to carry out their own 1:1 interviews with staff and students, mirroring the format of the research assistant's primary staff consultation.

4.1.6 The project employed twelve students as 'student enquirers' – one undergraduate from each of the nine faculties, and three postgraduates from across the University. Each enquirer was tasked with

interviewing at least three staff and three students, primarily identified using their own contacts and personal social networks. This student-led model of bottom-up stakeholder engagement was a useful counterpart to the top-down model favoured in the main consultation strands: instead of starting with staff and student representatives who had existing links into the enhancement culture, the enquirer team were engaging a broader set of stakeholders – expanding our network of consultees with a more organic cross-sectional slice of seniorities, disciplines and dispositions towards employability.

4.1.7 Interviewees were also asked to participate in a follow-up interview two months after the initial meeting; this gave the student research team an insight into the attitudinal shift that 1:1 qualitative interviews could enact in stakeholders as a result of their engagement. Broadly speaking, the second interviews revealed a slight shift in stakeholder attitudes over the course of the project:

- Staff and students who had previously had little cause to think about the relationship between student attributes and their curriculum had become more capable and articulate on the relationship they perceived between university study and transferable skills development

- Stakeholders with an existing understanding of this relationship developed (in some cases) a sense of increased personal agency, becoming more aware of their ability to impact upon student development outcomes

4.1.8 Additionally, as part of the project, the enquirer team were also invited (but not required) to participate as interviewees, answering the same questions and participating in the same 'before and after' interview model. All of the enquirers agreed to participate and underwent two interviews with the research assistant. The enquirers were found to have undergone a more noticeable shift in their disposition and self-awareness than their staff and student subjects; most of them placed a greater value on the importance of intra-curricular skills development, and they were more confidently able to articulate the contribution that their university learning had made to their personal graduate attributes development.

4.1.9 Our experiences with the student enquirer project thus demonstrated that student-led action research projects have numerous advantages when used as a form of change management surrounding institutional cultural shifts:

- A coordinated team of student enquirers can quickly establish a more diverse network of consultation than a single research assistant

- University staff are encouraged to enact change as a result of non-confrontational dialogue with students as stakeholders in their own learning, rather than challenged through top-down imperatives

- Students are engaged in quality enhancement initiatives through direct peer-to-peer contact, creating a ripple effect of bottom-up awareness and driving genuine stakeholder-demanded change in the curriculum

4.1.10 Appropriately, the process had significant developmental benefits for the student enquirers themselves: from developing the questions to presenting their findings in publications and at the national Enhancement Themes Conference, the team developed a range of useful and transferable

skills connected to their developing graduate attributes. As such, the project is an excellent example of connecting enhancement theory with pedagogical practice.

4.1.11   It was clear from the findings of all of the consultation strands that the draft attributes we had identified within the University's strategy documents had resonated positively with the expectations of our stakeholders: while some of the specific terminology used to describe these attributes altered as a result of feedback from the consultation, our final attributes model is very recognisably an evolution of the previous implicit approach within our strategy than a revolutionary shift.

4.1.12   The consultation process as a whole revealed that there was a much stronger consensus as to the developmental goals of higher education than previously suspected, but it was the student enquirers' project that made it most evident that staff, students and employers conceived of attributes development occurring within the University in markedly different ways. Our unorthodox dimension-based approach to describing attributes in our finalised graduate attributes model is based upon this key insight – an understanding which is the direct result of our willingness to engage students as equal partners in enhancement-based consultation.

5   Outcomes and Implementation

5.1.1   The consultation findings led the Working Group to develop a distinctive 'graduate attributes matrix'[1] rather than emulating the list-based approaches adopted elsewhere. Each of our graduate attributes is described in three 'dimensions', highlighting the different ways that the core attributes manifest within the context of students' academic, personal and professional development. The cross-developmental links between these three social learning environments are explained in greater detail on the University's graduate attributes website for students.[2]

5.1.2   The Working Group recognised that the development of a new model for articulating student competencies would not in itself lead to fundamental curriculum reform. It was essential that the underlying ethos of graduate attributes was embedded into every aspect of the quality assurance and enhancement culture at the University – that graduate attributes was not seen as simply another initiative, but the articulation of a fundamental goal of higher education.

5.1.3   The Working Group identified a framework of 22 supporting recommendations to act as catalysts for the embedding of graduate attributes into the institutional culture. These recommendations covered three broad strategic approaches to implementation:

- **Quality assurance for enhancement:** the University has a mature and robust Academic Quality Framework. The Working Group set out a number of recommendations to embed consideration of graduate attributes within programme and course design and the Academic Quality Framework, ensuring that all programmes of study would be challenged to reflect upon their contribution to students' personal development within the ordinary cycle of institutional quality assurance and enhancement from course and programme development to monitoring and review.

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[1] Case Study Appendix 2
[2] Graduate Attributes Information for Students: www.glasgow.ac.uk/attributes

- **Supporting and fostering innovation**: the Working Group believed that graduate attributes implementation required ownership by the academic community, not the institutional centre. Rather than set out a proscriptive vision of implementation, the Group would empower staff to develop their own sense of what was required to embed graduate attributes within their areas effectively.

- **Student engagement:** continuing on with the principles adopted in the consultation phase, the Working Group reaffirmed the strategic importance of using students' own expertise to introduce graduate attributes to their peers. Student engagement would be enacted through student agency wherever possible.

5.1.4 While the implementation principles were centred on enabling staff and students to respond to the graduate attributes agenda, the Working Group remained convinced of the need for a central committee of key contacts to monitor progress and connect up pockets of excellence as required. The Working Group therefore recommended that its membership be reviewed and expanded to form a new Graduate Attributes Implementation Group who would be charged with overseeing the rollout of the framework of recommendations.

5.1.5 The University further demonstrated its commitment to the success of the graduate attributes agenda by the creation of a new 'Graduate Attributes Development Adviser' post based within the Careers Service to both support the Implementation Group and to provide continuity during the subsequent implementation phase. The post is a permanent full-time position with a broad remit to support any activity that contributes to the embedding of graduate attributes within the institution. This centrally managed post is now complemented by four College-based 'graduate attributes champions'. The champions are academics with a particular responsibility for supporting initiatives and spreading best practice in their College and who also sit on the Implementation Group. This combination of a central coordinator and local advocates helps to ensure a joined-up approach to implementation, facilitating partnership between central and local initiatives where needed.

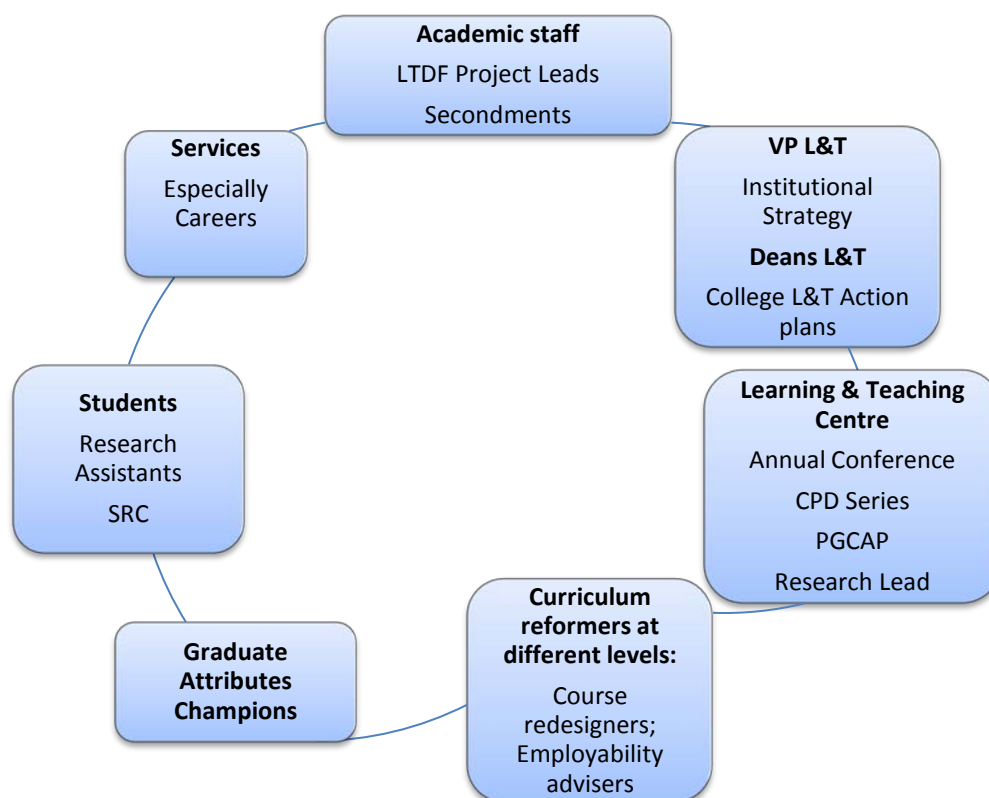5.1.6 Examples of the implementation approaches in practice can be found in Appendix 3.

Figure 1: stakeholder relationships in implementation

6   Evaluation of impact to date

6.1.1   The approval of our graduate attributes framework coincided with the launch of the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy 2011-15.[3] The Strategy itself set a clear priority on embedding graduate attributes within our institutional culture over the length of the strategic period, reflecting the Working Group's original view that every care should be taken to represent graduate attributes as a transformative long-term enhancement agenda rather than short-term disruptive imperative.

6.1.2   To date, we are about to move into the latter half of the strategic period represented by the Strategy. While much progress has been made in embedding the graduate attributes framework within our institutional practice, we are understandably cautious about overstating its impact at this point in the process: year to year impact is not necessarily a true reflection of the eventual legacy of the agenda over a strategic cycle.

6.1.3   The work of the Implementation Group to date has had a strong focus on building capacity amongst academics as advocates of the agenda, rather than engaging directly with students from the centre. This trickle-down approach to awareness raising and engagement has been part of an intentional effort to ensure that staff have time to act upon the implications of graduate attributes for their discipline and ensure a tangibility and practicality to the agenda for their students beyond the matrix model itself.

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[3] Learning and Teaching Strategy: www.gla.ac.uk/services/senateoffice/policies/learningandteachingstrategy/

6.1.4   Our most recent *Internationalising Graduate Attributes* student research project has provided clear evidence of broad staff awareness of the agenda, with more than 80% of those interviewed aware of the matrix model and the principles surrounding graduate attributes. However, student awareness of the graduate attributes agenda is low in all but a few early adopter areas.

6.1.5   Reflecting on this, the Implementation Group have decided that the time is right to transition into a more overt period of direct engagement with students. Recent work to develop introductory materials for students has resulted in the creation of student-conceived and -designed video and booklet guides to graduate attributes, which will enable to take a more proactive approach to awareness raising amongst students from early on in session 2013-14. In addition, there has been a convergence of a number of new and upcoming developments that will provide a strategic means to address student engagement in the coming year:

- Expansion of the Club 21 Internship Programme[4]: the University's internship scheme has been augmented by two new members of staff to enable rapid growth in the number of students and businesses, participating in the scheme each year. Interns are supported throughout their placement to reflect on their experiences and the development of graduate attributes.

- Appointment of an International Opportunities Manager: the Careers Service has recruited a new staff member with a responsibility for growing the number of international opportunities (including placements) offered – this will be complemented by a new Global Careers Week including talks on the value of international experiences to graduate attributes development

- A new policy and toolkit is being developed to aid staff in developing local work-related and work-based learning provision. These resources demonstrate practical models of delivery that align with and complement an embedded approach to graduate attributes.

- The College of Social Science's Graduate Skills Programme is overhauling its central handbook and other resources to explicitly focus students' reflective activities around the graduate attributes matrix.

- The launch of our alumni volunteering network will see the mainstream introduction of a number of new initiatives, including a sustained series of afternoon talks with alumni that focus in on the transferable value of a Glasgow education. Alumni profiles will also act as an invaluable source of testimony for further developing the student graduate attributes website.

- The Students' Representative Council's Student Volunteer Support Service now requires its volunteers to fill out reflective diaries based around the graduate attributes matrix for recognition of the role on their Higher Education Achievement Report.

- We have piloted a seminar series that focuses in on the connection between developing University graduate attributes and future employment, known as the Employability Accelerator Seminar Series (EASS). EASS will be offered more widely in 2013-14, and the scope of the series will further be expanded based upon student feedback from the initial pilots. In addition,

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[4] Club 21: www.glasgow.ac.uk/club21

The College of Science and Engineering is investigating a new joint pilot to offer an embedded version of the EASS to its students.

6.1.6   In addition, the Implementation Group is also currently reviewing its Student Engagement Strategy[5] with a view to developing a new action plan for 2013-14.

7   Impact on future enhancement

7.1.1   While the long-term vision for graduate attributes implementation at Glasgow is far from over, there are already a number of lessons that we can draw for our future enhancement work. One of the great successes of our approach to date has been that we have been able to harness existing convergent agendas to drive the momentum behind graduate attributes. Rather than discarding previous initiatives, we have integrated the enhancements made through employability, personal development planning and work-related learning within the graduate attributes agenda; as a result, staff have bought into the agenda more readily and adapted to it with minimal upheaval.

7.1.2   Similarly, we have shown that implementation does not need to involve imperative-driven centralised reforms. While other institutions have pursued an overt and heavily top-down approach to graduate attributes via curriculum reform or the introduction of a skills award, we have instead focused on a more embedded means of widespread engagement through our existing QA&E processes. Using course and programme design and approval and other channels to influence staff into engaging with graduate attributes has ensured systematic exposure of the agenda to each subject area in turn over the length of the strategic period without the need for a disruptive overhaul of the curriculum.

7.1.3   Finally, we have created a practical model for mainstreaming student involvement in driving enhancement activity. While we have benefitted greatly in the past from student input into enhancement work, the graduate attributes project has seen us challenge the traditional advisory dynamic and instead actively enlist the support of students as partners in enhancement activity design and execution. The quality of data and insight gained from the two student-led enquiry projects has demonstrated the value of this sort of partnership approach for institutional enhancement, and we have adopted a similar student interviewer model for the curriculum mapping and blueprinting project that we are undertaking as part of our work for the new *Developing and Supporting the Curriculum* enhancement theme.

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[5] Graduate Attributes Student Engagement Strategy: www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_272565_en.pdf

8 Appendices

8.1 *Appendix 1 - Chronology*

2009-2013	
MARCH 2009 - Introduction of the GA Working Group (GAWG)	
24 March 2009 the first meeting of the Graduate Attributes Working Group established	
Contextual and emerging factors through the initiation and implementation of the Graduate Attributes initiatives	
Internal recognition amongst a range of academics and services of the need to bring two agendas together which had hitherto had separate working groups (employability and personal development planning), with a complementary understanding of the need for both embedded within-programme and run-alongside approaches to enhancing student engagement; Institutional desire to enhance engagement by students in extra-curricular opportunities; Recognition from learning and teaching literature that: - Encounters with teaching approaches most likely to facilitate a range of attributes could be lost across the levels of study as enhancements were done at a course rather than a programme level; - Assessment regimes emphasise this as they embed the focus of learning within a course rather than across a programme; - Programme ILOs attended to more within professional programmes (different curriculum structure) than the broader subject degrees. External debates concerning developing students for academic study and their futures outside of the university represented by: - SFC Horizon's Fund focus - QA QEF theme 'Research-Teaching Linkages: Enhancing graduate attributes' - Publication of CBI's report: Future Fit: Preparing graduates for the world of work (2009) Introduction of the HEAR	
Activities of the Working Group	
August 2009	Appointment of Project Officer (Graduate Attributes) – a full time post joint-resourced from QAA Enhancement Themes funding and SFC Strategic Funding for Employability
September 2009	One to one consultations with key teaching staff – population of a matrix of activities (represented then-current activity within the institution)
December 2009	Focus group consultation with Students' Representative Council members
January – March 2010	Student-led, enquiry-based project - student researchers gathering qualitative data concerning staff and student perceptions of graduate attributes and their development in a research-intensive institution
March 2010	Electronic consultation questionnaire focused on senior academic staff, at the level of Dean / Associate Dean / Chair of central committees and new lecturers
April – June 2010	Synthesis of staff and student-led consultations Development of the draft Glasgow graduate attributes matrix
June 2010	Open forum consultation with Glasgow's key graduate recruiters
November 2010	Draft final report and matrix discussed at Learning and Teaching Committee (formal approval by key staff and student representatives)
February 2011	Final report of the Graduate Attributes Working Group discussed and approved by University Senate (Appendix document) Learning and Teaching Strategy 2011-15 approved by Senate – strategy explicitly references the importance of the GA agenda over the next strategic period.

11

MARCH 2011 - Implementation Group (GAIG)	
13 June 2011 – the first meeting of the Graduate Attributes Implementation Group	
Aims of GAIG	
To oversee the institutional rollout of the graduate attributes framework across the University and the implementation of the 22 recommendations of the final report of the Graduate Attributes Working Group:	
Implement GAWG recommendations	Oversee the implementation of recommendations made by the Working Group, and constructing a timetabled action plan around these
Strategic coordination of implementation	Maintain oversight of local implementation efforts through College representatives (and later champions)
Change management	Identify new initiatives and actions to accelerate the cultural buy-in of stakeholders to graduate attributes, and drive distributed adoption.
Implementation activities: staff support phase	
August 2011	Appointment of the Graduate Attributes Development Adviser – a full time, permanent position based within the Careers Service and explicitly designated for supporting the advancement of the agenda at Glasgow.
October 2011	Commencement of HEA Internationalising Graduate Attributes project (until July 2012) (Funded by Higher education Academy) (Appendix document)
January 2012	Student Engagement Strategy approved and circulated (Appendix document); Commencement of LTDF funded Mahara Example Portfolios Project (Appendix document)
March 2012	Presentation of HEA Internationalising Graduate Attributes project initial findings at QAA ET Conference / University of Glasgow Internationalisation Conference
March - April 2012	Pilot 1: Employability Boot Camp
April 2012	Presentation of Mahara Example Portfolios Project at the University of Glasgow Learning and Teaching Conference
May 2012	Graduate Attributes Spotlight Papers (GRASP) approved and published to website (Link to website)
May 2012	HEA Internationalising Graduate Attributes Project – HEA funded seminar for dissemination of findings to externals
November 2012	Pilot 2: Employability Accelerator Seminar Series (EASS) Employer Open Forum 2
February 2012	Presentation of students-as-researchers consultation model at HEA "Disseminating Innovative Practice" seminar
March – April 2013	College Sharing Symposium events: lunchtime seminars to promote the exchange of best practice in developing students' graduate attributes through work-related learning
Implementation activities: student engagement phase	
March - June 2013	Student-led introductory / teaser video for graduate attributes, scripted and produced by Glasgow University Student Television
July 2013	Refreshed and expanded student guide to graduate attributes, a co-branded publication with the Students' Representative Council

University of Glasgow graduate attributes

The academic abilities, personal qualities and transferable skills which all students will have the opportunity to develop as part of their University of Glasgow experience.

Attribute	Academic Dimension	Personal Dimension	Transferable Dimension
Subject Specialists	Understand and respect the values, principles, methods and limitations of their discipline(s).	Possess a breadth and depth of knowledge within their disciplinary area(s).	Possess discipline-relevant professional skills, knowledge and competencies.
Investigative	Are intellectually curious and engage in the pursuit of new knowledge and understanding.	Are able to locate, analyse and synthesise information from a variety of sources and media.	Are able to investigate problems and provide effective solutions.
Independent and Critical Thinkers	Identify, define and assess complex issues and ideas in a researchable form.	Exercise critical judgement in evaluating sources of information and constructing meaning.	Apply creative, imaginative and innovative thinking and ideas to problem solving.
Resourceful and Responsible	Are experienced in self-directed learning and authentic research-led enquiry.	Are motivated, conscientious and self-sufficient individuals capable of substantial independent work.	Manage their personal performance to meet expectations and demonstrate drive, determination, and accountability.
Effective Communicators	Articulate complex ideas with respect to the needs and abilities of diverse audiences.	Present their ideas clearly and concisely in high quality written and spoken English.	Communicate clearly and confidently, and listen and negotiate effectively with others.
Confident	Defend their ideas in dialogue with peers and challenge disciplinary assumptions.	Possess excellent interpersonal and social skills fostered within an internationalised community.	Demonstrate enthusiasm, leadership and the ability to positively influence others.
Adaptable	Experience multi-disciplinary and/or inter-disciplinary learning in an internationally renowned institution.	Respond flexibly and adapt their skills and knowledge to excel in unfamiliar situations.	Demonstrate resilience, perseverance and positivity in multi-tasking, dealing with change and meeting new challenges.
Experienced Collaborators	Engage with the scholarly community and respect others' views and perspectives.	Are experienced in working in groups and teams of varying sizes and in a variety of roles.	Conduct themselves professionally and contribute positively when working in a team.
Ethically and Socially Aware	Consider and act upon the ethical, social and global responsibilities of their actions.	Welcome exposure to the richness of multi-cultural and international experiences, opportunities and ways of thinking.	Have a practical and contemporary knowledge of relevant professional, ethical and legal frameworks.
Reflective Learners	Use feedback productively to reflect on their work, achievements and self-identity.	Set aspirational goals for continuing personal, professional and career development.	Identify and articulate their skills, knowledge and understanding confidently and in a variety of contexts.

www.glasgow.ac.uk/attributes

8.3 Appendix 3 – Examples of implementation approaches

Examples of implementation through quality assurance for enhancement

8.3.1 The Implementation Group were mindful of the need to take a phased approach to embedding graduate attributes within the Academic Quality Framework, balancing the desire to challenge existing practice with the need to give staff time to orientate themselves within the agenda.

8.3.2 The Group started the rollout by introducing graduate attributes as a topic to address within the programme/course design and approval process, complementing this new requirement with updated guidance issued by the Learning and Teaching Centre. This effectively ensured that any new or substantially updated courses being brought online would be aligned with the graduate attributes agenda.

8.3.3 Subsequently, our Periodic Subject Review process was amended to encourage subject areas to reflect on their contribution to students' development of graduate attributes. This was tied into existing reflective questions around aligned subjects such as employability, personal development planning and work-related learning. We believe that this helps staff to see the links between these subjects and reconceptualise their existing good practice in supporting students' personal development through the graduate attributes framework, while still challenging subject areas to reflect further on how they could advance the agenda over the next strategic cycle.

8.3.4 More recently, we have phased in graduate attributes as a 'hot topic' within our Annual Monitoring process. The delayed introduction of the agenda to AM was intended to eliminate the possibility of alienating staff with immediate and repeated calls for updated action against a far-reaching development; similarly, we made use of the less formal 'hot topic' reporting requirement in the first instance to provide staff with annual monitoring responsibilities a transitional period to adjust to the new reporting implications that graduate attributes bring. The Implementation Group are currently reflecting on how best to embed graduate attributes within annual monitoring on a more fundamental basis.

Examples of implementation through student engagement

8.3.5 Alongside these top-down staff-oriented changes to the Academic Quality Framework, we have also pursued a bottom-up student driven approach through our student representatives and the institutional staff-student liaison committee structure. The Students' Representative Council have embedded training on the graduate attributes matrix and framework within their training for student reps, with an encouragement to consult their peer constituents on their sense of how successful their course is in developing graduate attributes. Alongside this, the Implementation Group have asked the Deans for Learning and Teaching to ensure that graduate attributes features as a standing agenda item at all staff-student liaison committee meetings: this joint approach has ensured that student representatives have the time and training to engage their subject areas in thinking about graduate attributes from a student perspective.

8.3.6 While it is important to enlist the support of the student voice in getting academics to engage with the graduate attributes through channels such as staff-student liaison committees and periodic subject review, it is perhaps even more vital that the student voice has the opportunity to shape the

agenda itself. It is not surprising then that student engagement has been at the forefront of the Implementation Group's mind since its inception.

8.3.7 The Implementation Group recognised at an early stage that widespread rollout of the graduate attributes agenda to students from the centre could do more harm than good if local academics had not had time to respond to the agenda and embed it in their practice. As such, the Group agreed that they should focus their efforts around previously engaged advocates such as student representatives in the first instance, empowering them to help shape the initiative and its implementation, and in doing so lay the groundwork for broader engagement of the student body at a later date.

8.3.8 One of the key student engagement actions carried out in the early stages of implementation was the drafting of a student engagement strategy in consultation with the Students' Representative Council (see appendix). The strategy focused on three strands of engagement:

- Positioning graduate attributes as a central narrative of the student experience

- Engaging students as partners in the curriculum

- Working in partnership with internal and external stakeholders

8.3.9 Each strand carried a number of core actions and delivery implications for staff and services, and the strategy was disseminated across the institution through our College Learning and Teaching Committee structures. The strategy is currently being reviewed to reflect our more mature phase of implementation and will be accompanied by a new strategy action plan for implementation in 2013-14.

8.3.10 Building on the success of our student-led, enquiry-based consultation project, Implementation Group members successfully applied to the Higher Education Academy's Teaching Development Grant scheme to run a follow-on project concerning international students' development of graduate attributes. Paradoxically, the consultation project had indicated that, while international students tended to place a greater importance on their development of graduate attributes through higher education, they were also the most likely to be inhibited from making the most of developmental experiences due to language and cultural barriers.

8.3.11 The *Internationalising Graduate Attributes* project employed a team of international students to interview staff, students and employers in order to identify and propose solutions to any perceived barriers to international students' development of graduate attributes. The output of the project was an executive summary of their findings and best practice proposals for dissemination across the HE sector. More than this, however, the project further helped to seed the graduate attributes ethos through bottom-up engagement within the staff and student communities, and tie in with the wider internationalisation agenda.

8.3.12 More recently, the Implementation Group have focused on commissioning student-designed materials to support the wider rollout of graduate attributes. The earlier student guide to graduate attributes that formed one of the outputs of the student-led consultation project has recently been redesigned based on student feedback that the original corporate visual identity was not engaging to students. The guide has been redesigned by one of the Students' Representative Council's own

designers, and augmented with all-new case studies of recent graduates to give an authentic face to the messages within.

8.3.13 Similarly, the University's Student Television network, GUST, was commissioned to produce a short introductory video on graduate attributes. The video was produced with the cooperation and participation of all four of the student organisations on campus, and features current and recent elected student representatives talking about the value of extracurricular experience in the development of graduate attributes. The video will be used in 2013-14 to front a social media campaign and serve as a teaser to encourage students to visit the student-focused graduate attributes web pages.

Examples of implementation through supporting and fostering innovation

8.3.14 As with students, it was important to enable academics to take ownership of graduate attributes implementation and its success; more than this, they needed the space and funding to explore means of embedding graduate attributes within their own disciplines in a way that met their students' specific needs.

8.3.15 The Implementation Group agreed that the University's Learning and Teaching Development Fund should prioritise bids in relation to the embedding of graduate attributes for two academic sessions. During this 2 year period, £85.7k was awarded to projects under the graduate attributes strand (48% of total funding). Examples of projects funded include:

- Developing approaches and materials to map a programme of study's intended learning outcomes to the graduate attributes matrix

- Employing students to design new templates to aid reflection within our ePortfolio software, Mahara, and to create example portfolios to illustrate the value of reflection to others

- Developing new software to aid peer marking amongst students and develop their ability to critically appraise others' work

- Identifying the unique analytical and problem solving skills required in scientific disciplines, and designing a new cross-disciplinary credit bearing course to teach these

- Providing on-campus fieldwork experience to Earth Sciences students by construction of an 'artificial' geological fieldwork resource by placing large rocks in strategic locations around campus.

- Developing new online journals to showcase students' work and foster a range of graduate attributes through its student-led operation

- Developing a new 'advanced academic writing' module to aid students' development into effective communicators

8.3.16 While the initial priority funding period for graduate attributes focused projects has now ended, graduate attributes continues to feature as a priority in the latest call for bids; it is anticipated that we will continue to see a number of graduate attributes related bids each year. In many cases the work enabled by the prioritised LTDF funding has become embedded in long-term provision or led to further developments: for example, the advanced academic writing module has become part of

the core offer promoted through the Student Learning Service's new Writing Centre. Similarly, the project to create generic reflective templates in Mahara has led to a successful bid in the 2013-14 LTDF for funding to build on these initial resources and contextualise them for the specific needs of Archaeology students.

8.3.17 Complementing the priority funding for graduate attributes innovations, we also provided a priority platform for dissemination of the work through the University's annual Learning and Teaching Conference in 2012 and 2013. Many of the LTDF projects funded during the priority phase were presented at these conferences, and it is hoped that these successful case studies of embedded practice will encourage even broader and more diverse approaches to embedding graduate attributes in the years to come.