

Enhancing and Supporting the Student Experience:

Student Voice, a Scottish Accent and a Strathclyde Perspective.

**Brian Green - Deputy Associate Principal (Learning and Teaching),
University of Strathclyde**



University of
Strathclyde
Glasgow



OVERVIEW

1. Scotland, Glasgow & University of Strathclyde
2. Students: the City and Strathclyde
3. Academic Quality and Enhancement in Scottish Higher Education: Characteristics and Current Practice
4. Student Voice - Scottish perspective
5. Student Voice - Strathclyde perspective
6. Next Steps and Integrated Insights



Scotland's HEIs

UHI campuses:

- Argyll College
- Highland Theological College
- Inverness College
- Lews Castle College
- Moray College
- NAFC Marine Centre
- North Highland College
- Orkney College
- Perth College
- Sabhal Mór Ostaig
- SAMS UHI
- Shetland College
- West Highland College



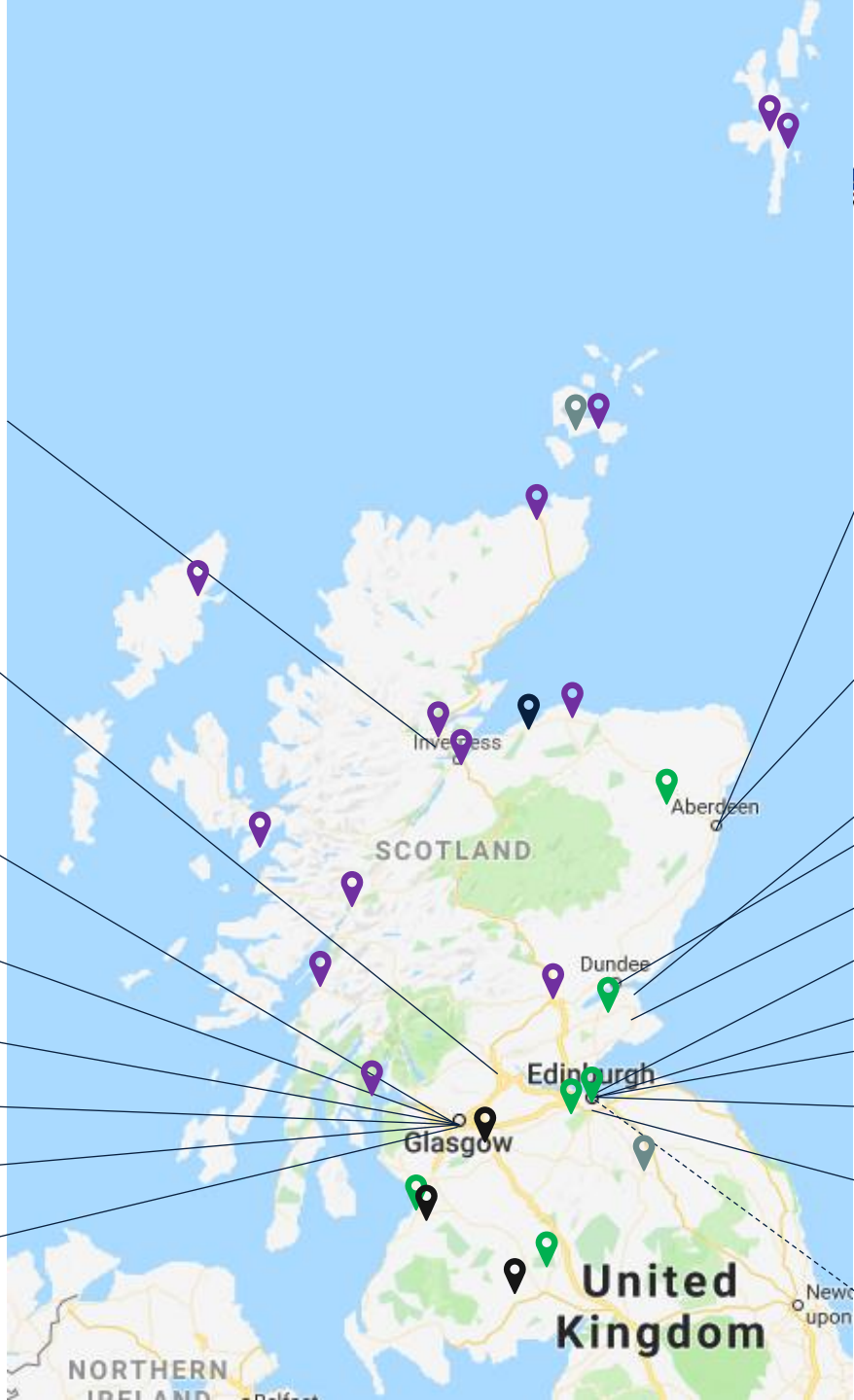
Glasgow School of Art campuses:

- Glasgow
- The Creative Campus, Highlands and Islands



UWS campuses:

- Ayr
- Dumfries
- Hamilton



Heriot Watt campuses:

- Edinburgh
- Scottish Borders
- Orkney



SRUC Campuses:

- Aberdeen
- Ayr
- Barony
- Edinburgh
- Elmwood
- Oatridge



Scotland's students



282,875 students



Including 81,915 postgraduates



68,180 students from outside the UK

Source: HESA (2020-21)





Glasgow

- **Scotland's largest and most cosmopolitan city**
- **Host to COP 26**
- **“World's friendliest City” (Rough Guide Readers)**
- **World class shopping and nightlife**
- **UNESCO City of Music**
- **A city of sport: Commonwealth Games 2014, European Championships 2018, Euros 2021**
- **Universities in the heart of the city**
- **Easy access to train and bus stations**
- **Easy links to airport**

Glasgow's 3 Universities

University of Glasgow (37,000 students)

"World Changing Glasgow"

Glasgow Caledonian University (19,000 students)

"University for the Common Good"

University of Strathclyde (24,500 students)

"The Place of Useful Learning"

UG 16,000

PGT 7000

PGR 1500

Source: HESA 2020/21





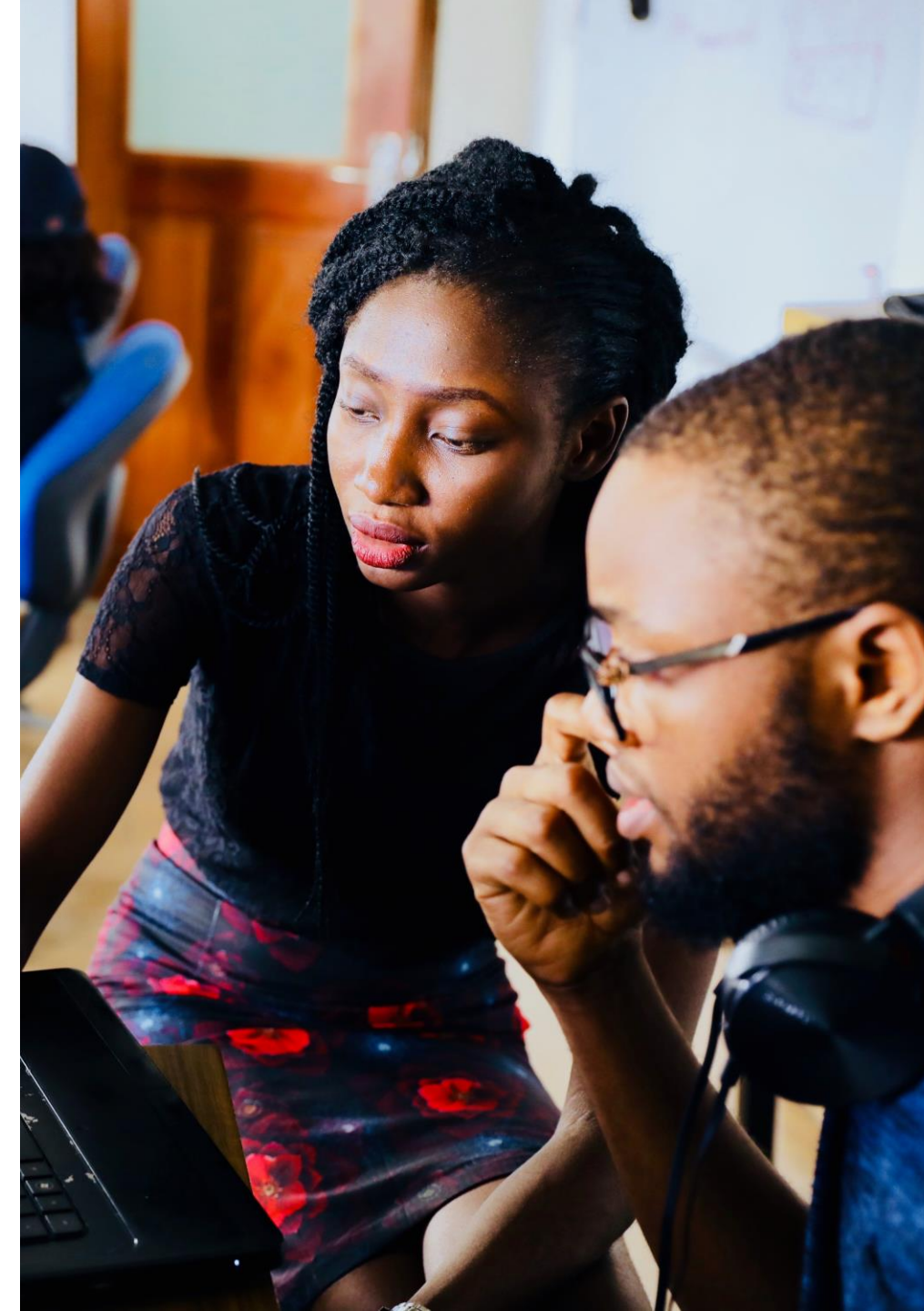
Strathclyde

- Scotland's 3rd largest University
- **4 Faculties:**
 - **Engineering**
 - **Humanities and Social Sciences**
 - **Science**
 - **Strathclyde Business School**
- Top 20 research-intensive universities in the UK (REF 2014)
- THE UK University of the Year (2019 & 2012)
- Scottish University of the Year 2020
(The Sunday Times Good University Guide 2020)
- Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education (2019 & 2021)
- Scotland's Best Large Employer (200 employees or more) at the S1 Jobs Recruitment Awards (2022)

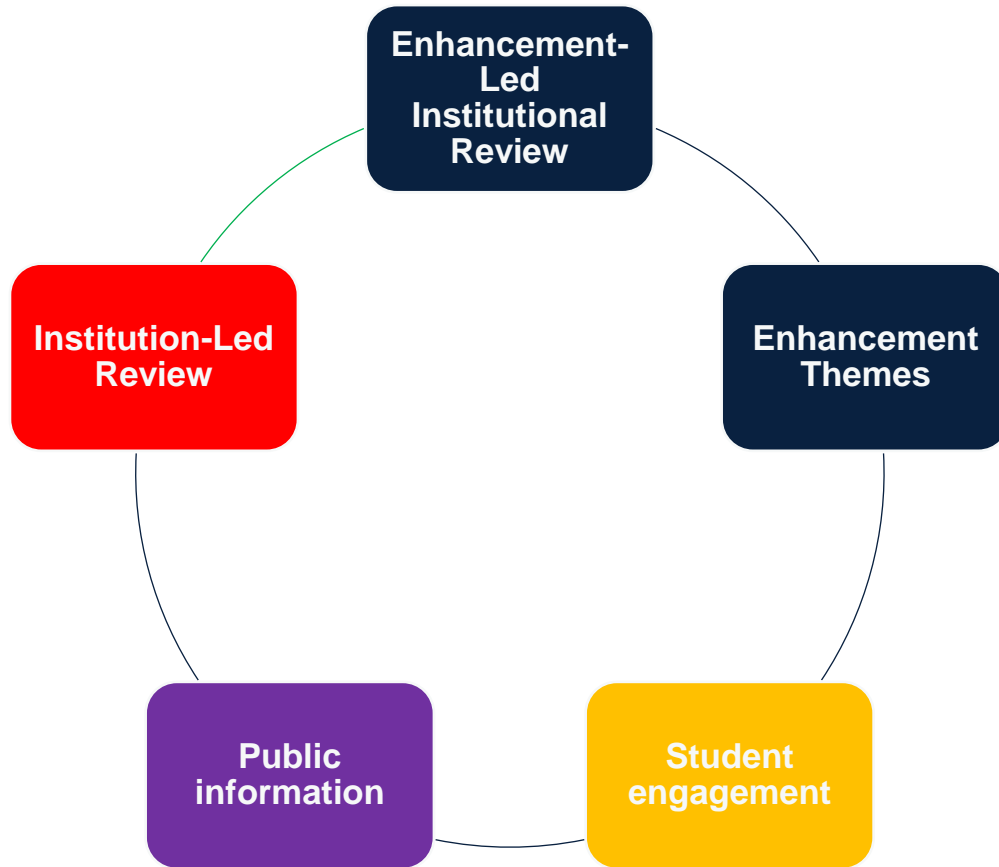
Academic Quality and **Enhancement** in Scottish higher education.

*Deliberate steps to bring about **improvement** in the effectiveness of the learning **experiences of students***

- Aims to enhance the student learning experience and encourage student engagement and participation in learning and in quality processes
- Emphasis is the quality of the student experience of learning rather than on QA systems and processes themselves



Scotland's Quality Enhancement Framework



Evaluating the quality of learning & teaching through an enhancement-led approach since 2003

Partnership of agencies



QAA
Scotland



Scottish Funding Council
Promoting further and higher education



The Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba



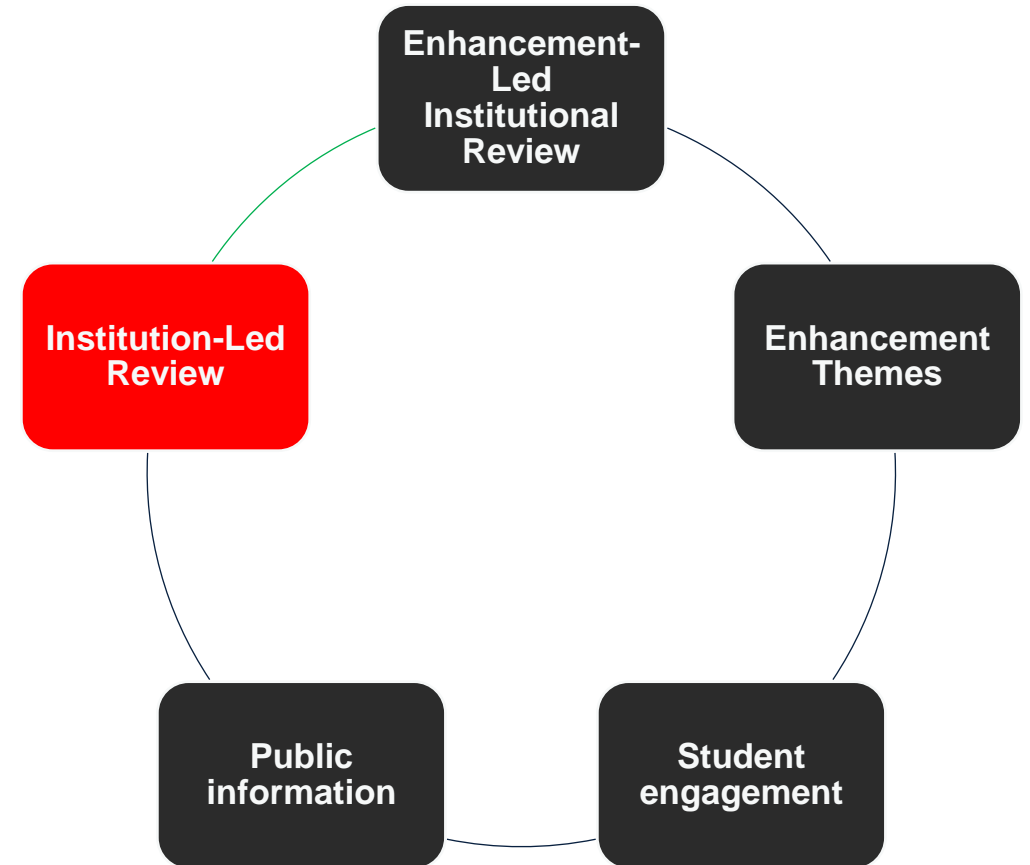
nus
national union of students

sparks
student partnerships in quality Scotland

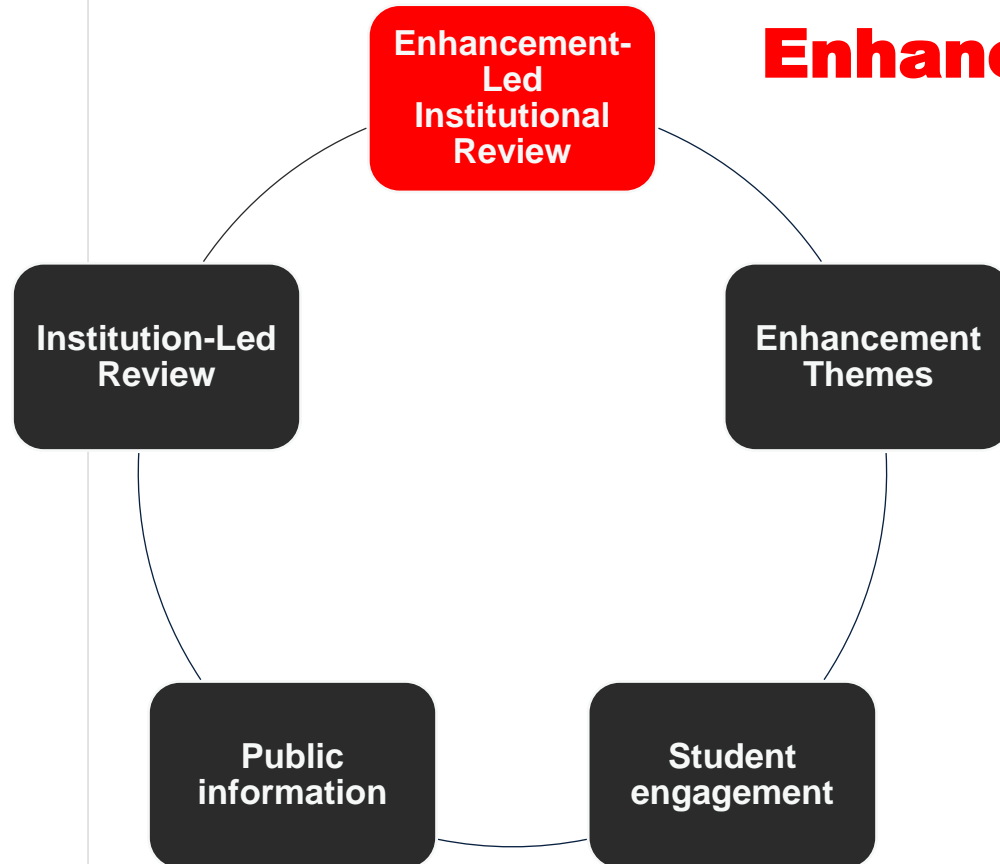
Quality Enhancement Framework

Institution-led review

- Scottish Funding Council (SFC) guidance & UK Quality Code
- All subject areas reviewed within maximum six year cycle
- External involvement
- Student engagement
- Involvement of professional support services



Quality Enhancement Framework



Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR)

- **Peer review** of all Scottish HEIs on a four or five-year cycle
- **Student reviewers since 2003**
- International reviewers since 2008
- First cycle: 2003-2007
- Second cycle: 2008-2012
- Third cycle: 2012-2017
- ELIR 4: 2017-2022
- Threshold (Quality) judgement plus commendations & recommendations (Enhancement)

Focus On projects

Focus On projects cover topics & themes that occur frequently in ELIR outcomes as recommendations or commendations

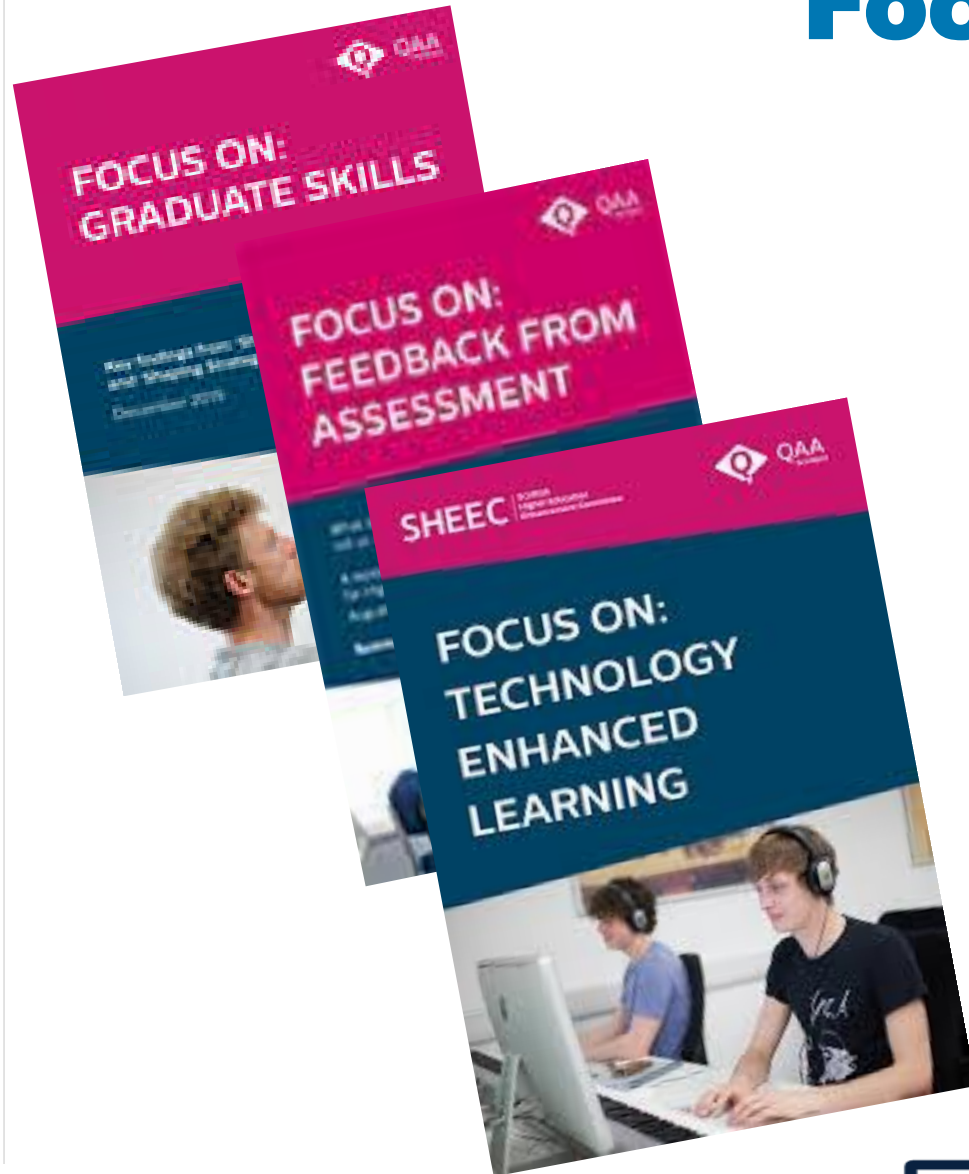


- All institutions work collectively to promote policy and practice on the topic
- One topic is chosen each academic year
- Staff and students identify priority areas and a programme of activity is designed to ensure a positive impact on practice in the sector



Resources from all projects are available on the QAA Scotland website

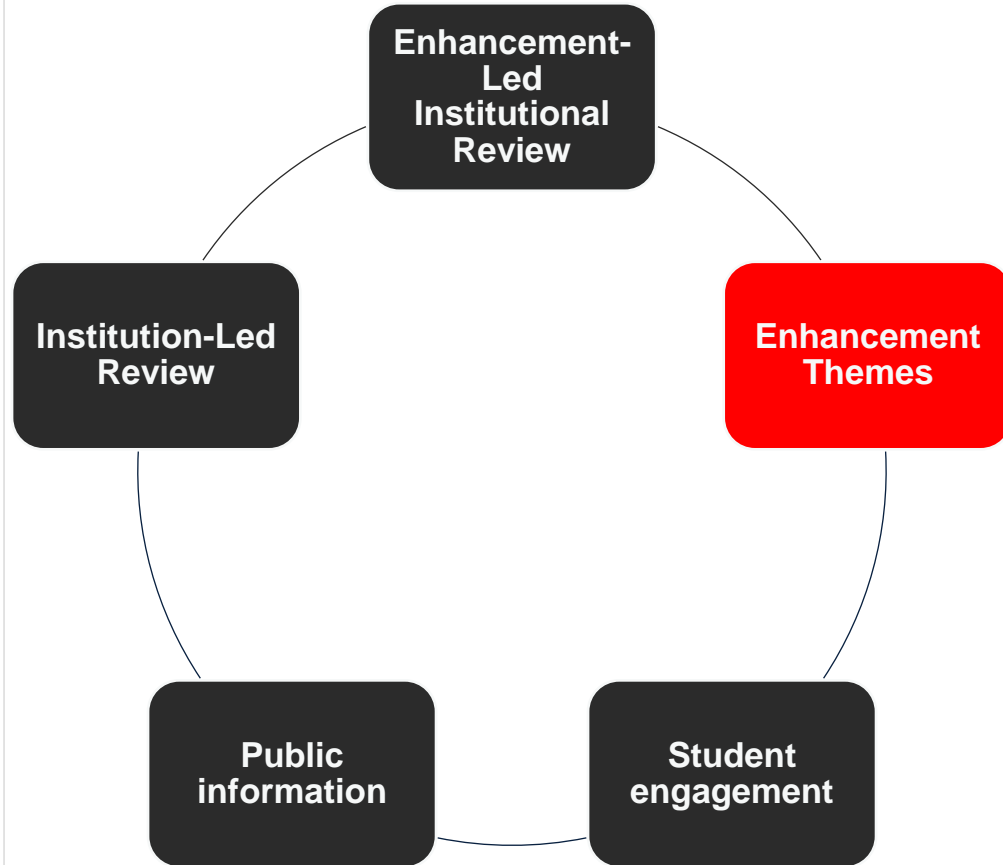
Focus On



Completed projects:

- **Professional Services Partnership (2021-22)**
- Technology Enhancement Learning (2019-20)
- Graduate Skills (2018-19)
- Feedback from Assessment (2017-18)
- Postgraduate Student Experience (2016-17)
- Institution-Led Review (2016-17)
- Collaborative Activity (2015-16)
- Assessment & Feedback (2015-16)

Quality Enhancement Framework



The Enhancement Themes

- Key element of the QEF
- Distinctive aspect of Scottish HE
- Theme chosen and delivered by sector in collaboration with QAA Scotland
- Fosters partnership and collegiality
- Allows us to achieve things collectively that we might not be able to do individually
- Focus on developing strategies, shaping policies and innovative practice



Enhancement
Themes

The Enhancement Themes



19 Years of Enhancement Themes



- Assessment and Integrative assessment (2003-04)
- Responding to student needs (2003-04)
- Employability (2004-06)
- Flexible delivery (2004-06)
- First year: engagement & empowerment (2005-08)
- Research-teaching linkages: enhancing graduate attributes (2006-08)



- Graduates for the 21st century (2008-11)
- Developing and supporting the curriculum (2011-14)
- Student Transitions (2014-17)
- Evidence for Enhancement: Improving the Student Experience (2017-20)



- **Resilient Learning Communities (2020-23)**



What makes a good Theme?

- Relevance to students and staff at all levels
- Inspires people to make a real difference
- Timely response to major issues in HE
- Resonates across the UK and beyond



How does it work?

- Scottish Higher Education Enhancement Committee – VPs (Learning and Teaching)
- Theme Leaders' Group – staff and students
- Institutional teams

Enhancement Theme

Sector Projects

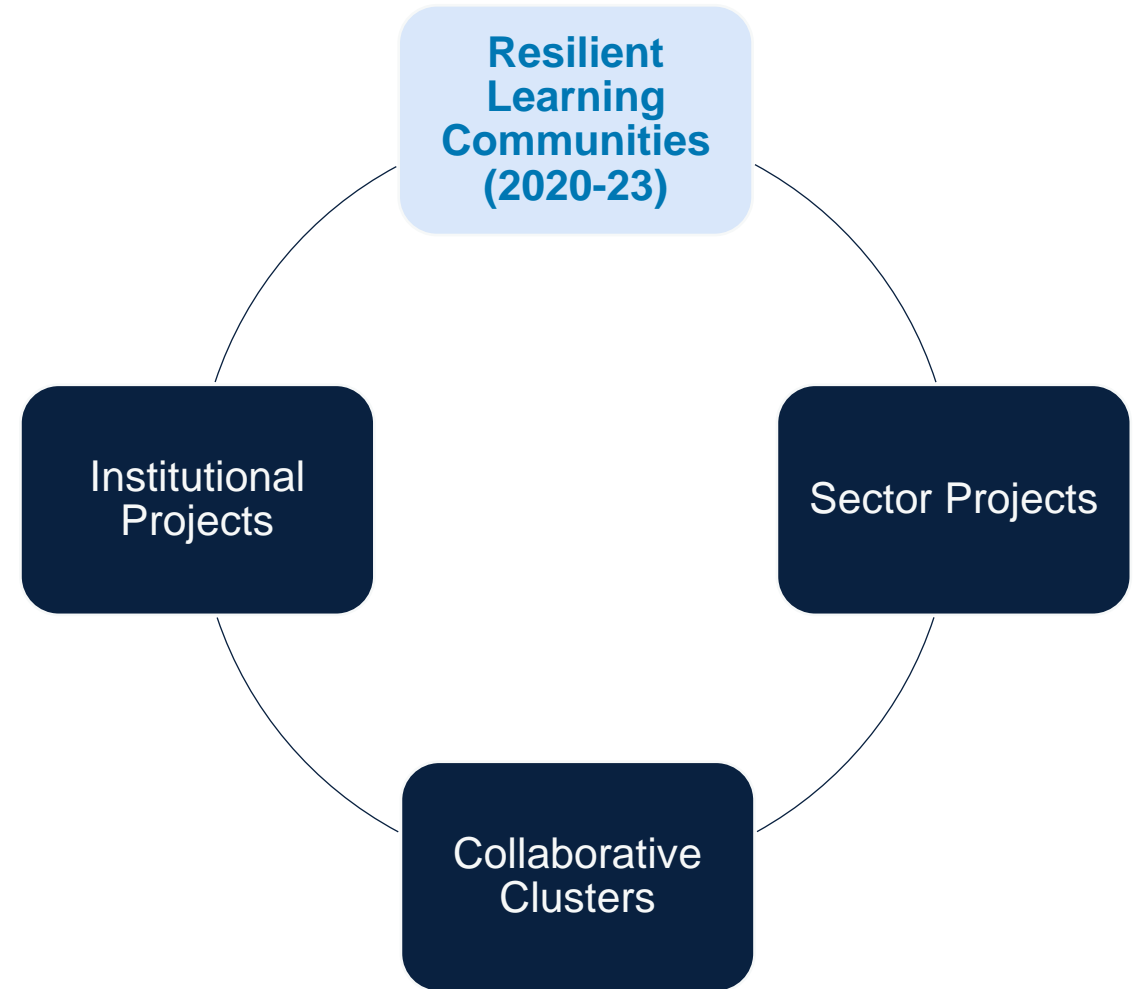
- Equality and diversity
- Flexible accessible learning
- Addressing the digital divide
- Community and belonging
- Supporting staff and student success

Institutional Projects

- Determined locally (80 ongoing)
- Internship Opportunities
 - Assessment integrity
 - Curriculum developments
 - Digital learning and teaching

Collaborative Clusters

- Small Groups
- Internship Opportunities
 - Decolonising the curriculum
 - Resilient academic leadership
 - Programme leadership





Enhancement
Themes

Student Engagement in QEF & Enhancement Themes



- Student representation and participation **throughout** and **across** management and delivery of the Theme.
- Specific student engagement strand with supported **student-led project**:
 - 2019-20 Digital Student Communities
 - 2020-21 Promoting the Equity of the Student Learning Experience



Student Voice – Scottish Sector Best Practice

- Quality Enhancement Framework
- Scottish Higher Education Enhancement Committee
- ELIR Student Reviewers
- Enhancement Theme and Leaders Group
- Collaborative Clusters and Internship Opportunities
- sparqs



sparqs Vision is that:



Students are partners in shaping the quality of learning, making positive change to their own and others' experience, however and wherever they learn.



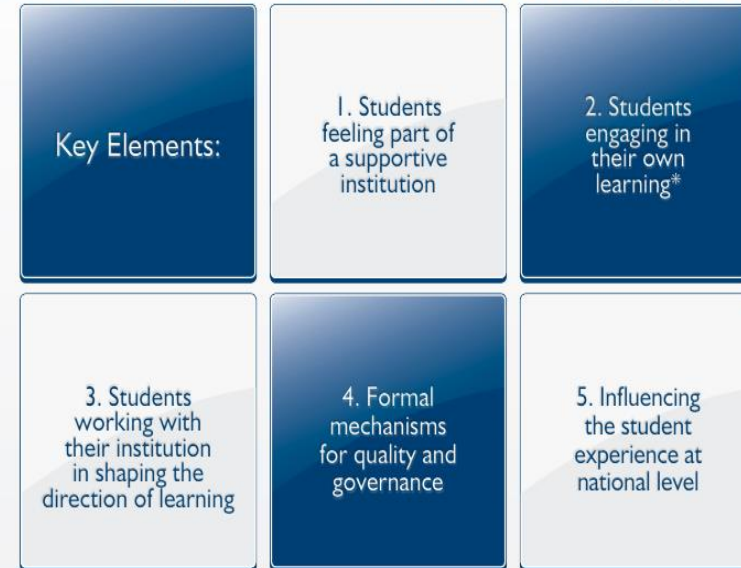
@sparqs_scotland

Scottish Student Engagement Framework



Partnership is a key concept – students have a role in shaping their experience which when fully realised goes beyond feedback, problem solving and membership of committees, to opportunities for real enhancement.

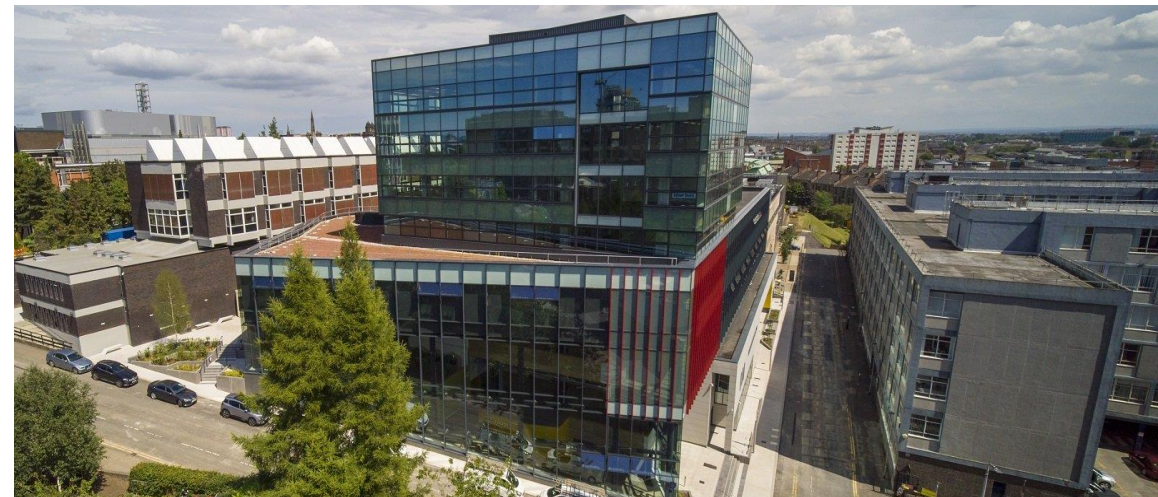
The Five Key Elements of Student Engagement



@sparqs_scotland

Student Voice – Strathclyde's Approach

- Student Voice – An embedded culture
- More than feedback and surveys
- Staff / Student Liaison Committees
- Student Experience Committee (Student President Convenes)
- Full and Active Participation
- All Formal Committees, Working Groups & Major Projects
- StrathReps





Student Voice at Strathclyde: StrathReps:



Our challenge:

- Staff, student and StrathUnion feedback highlighted challenges for electing and registering reps were not fit for purpose:
 - Departments used different methods to elect reps including show of hands, paper ballots and various online tools.
 - Delays in registering reps with Strath Union were common, leaving gaps in representation and a lack of timely training or support.
 - Some reps withdrew or disengaged and fellow students reported not knowing who their rep was or how to contact them.
 - Some departments registered few or no reps at all, particularly amongst the post-graduate cohort



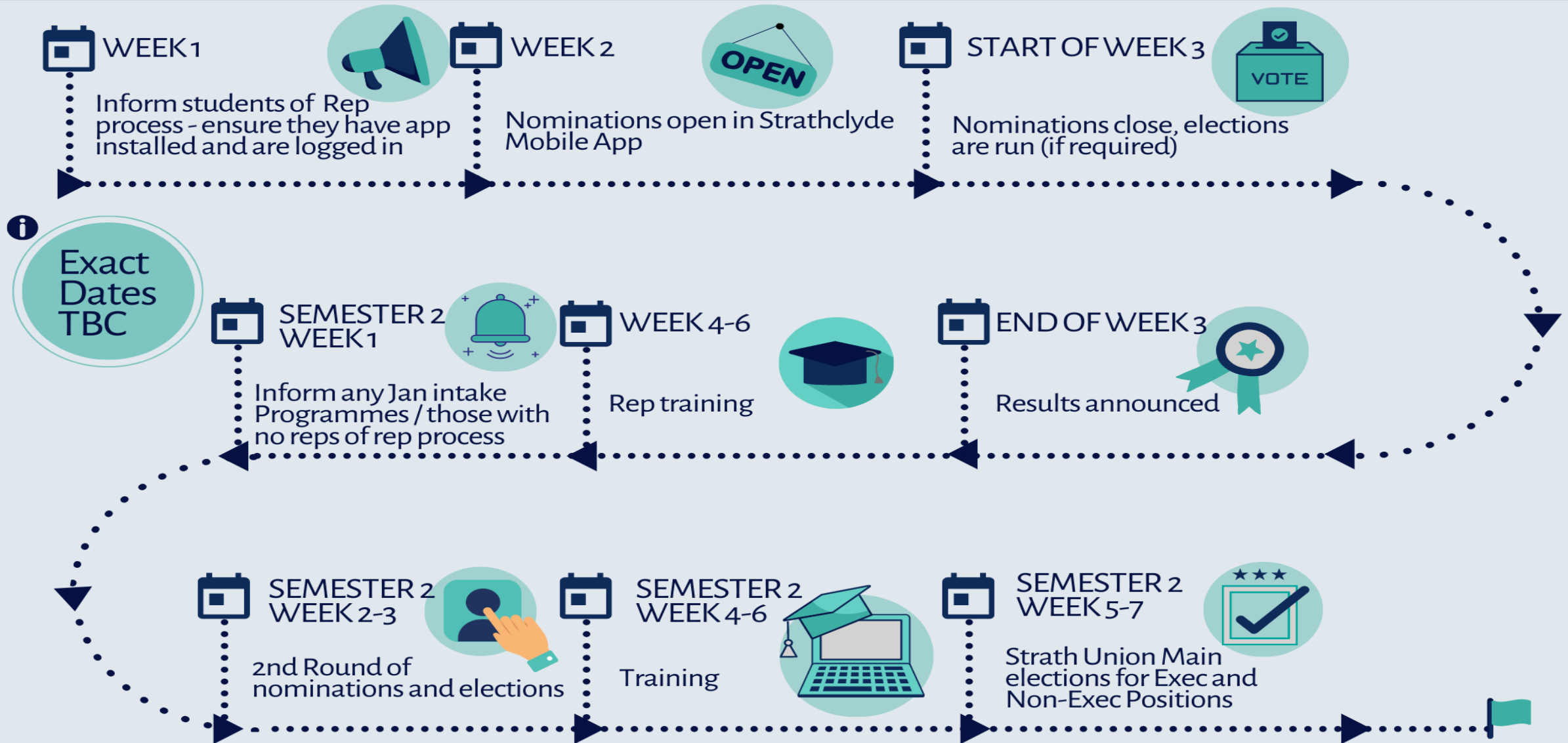
StrathReps:



Our solution:

- StrathReps project used digital technologies to support student representatives, through the University's mobile App and VLE (MyPlace).
- Using core student platforms ensured we reached the greatest number of students.
- StrathUnion and our Student Experience Directorate provided a companion suite of services to our reps with an aim of being fully inclusive.
- StrathReps utilised 'anywhere, anytime, any device', development approaches
- Students involved in development and delivery process every step of the way: Sabbatical Officers, Faculty Reps.
- Student Reps from all 4 faculties joined our project board and we made decisions together.

STRATHREPS TIMELINE



[CLICK HERE TO READ THE STUDENT REPRESENTATION POLICY](#)



StrathReps - Successes



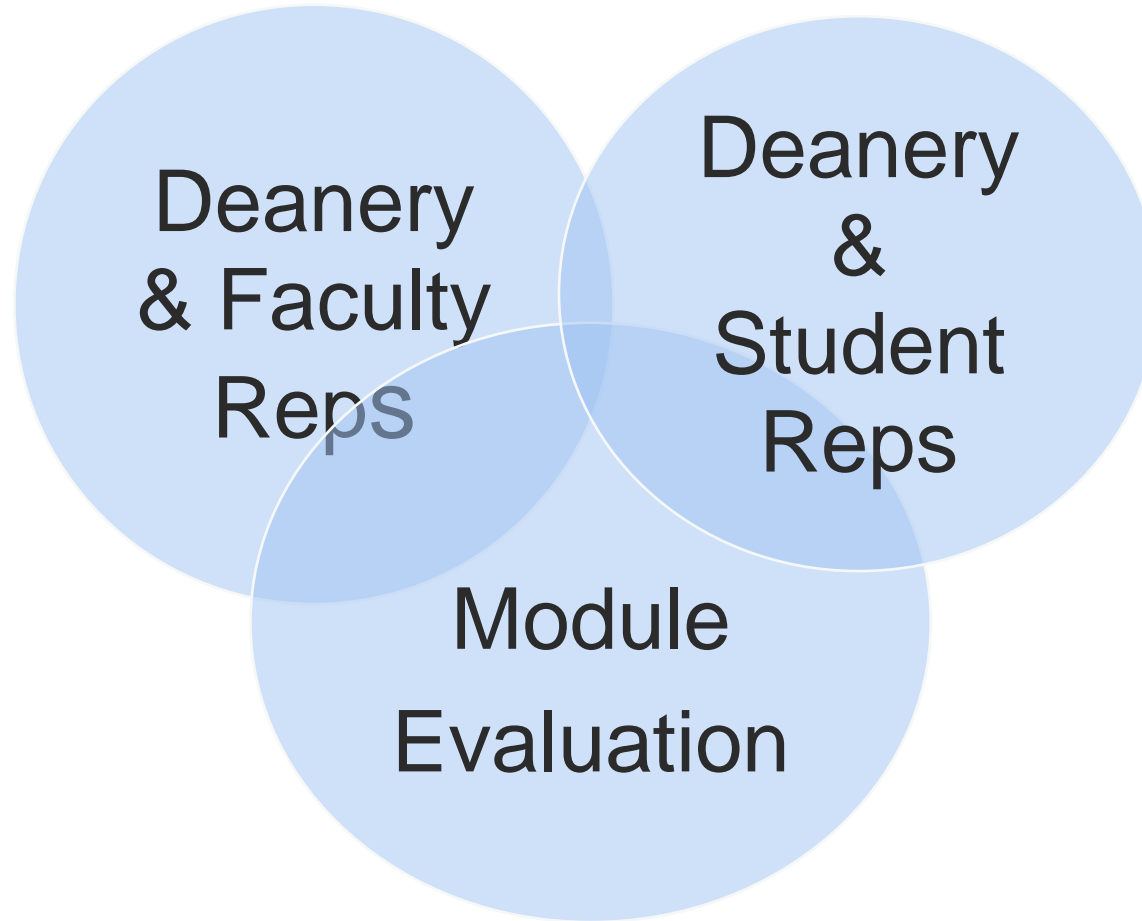
- We now have a 680+ Academic Rep community (in addition to sabbaticals)
- April 2022 - 688 total Reps
 - 678 programme (or equivalent)
 - 10 Faculty Reps
- Promoting greater levels of participation in student representation at all levels
- Reps more engaged and proactive and feeding into other initiatives and projects
- Impact of their collective voice is far-reaching and has sustained beyond the project.
- Strengthened communications between organisations and departments
- Enhanced Accessibility and inclusion

Student Voice – A Faculty Example

- Faculty Annual Reporting (QAA / ELIR Commendation)
- Module Evaluation
- Impact of StrathReps
- Enhanced Communication



Faculty Overview



Student Voice – Sector Next Steps

- Build on Strengths at a key time for the sector: Tertiary Quality Framework
- Student Partnership remaining at the core (Tertiary Sector)
- Remain enhancement-focused
- Stay connected and collaborative (Building on QEF)



Student Voice – Strathclyde Next Steps

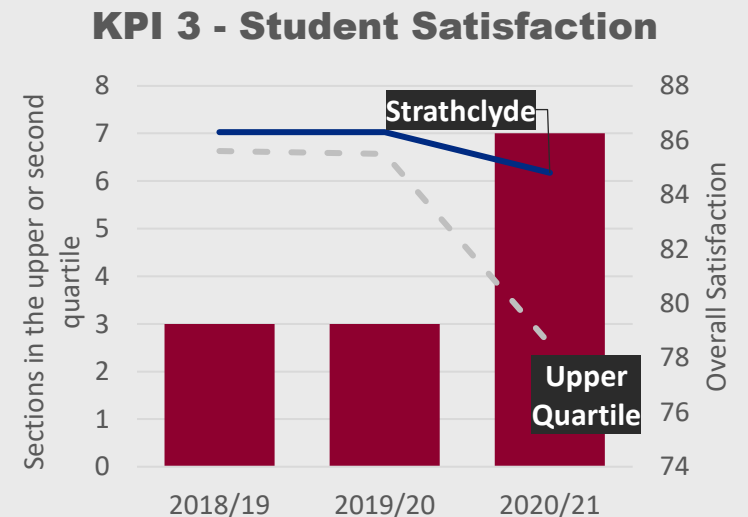
- Embed and continue to evolve StrathReps
- Remain agile and responsive (flexible and blended delivery, greater cohort diversity)
- Share examples of good practice and link to staff development activity (e.g. *Supporting Staff to Make Sense of Student Module Evaluation*)

NSS 2021

5th in UK
(150 institutions,
Times Higher Education)

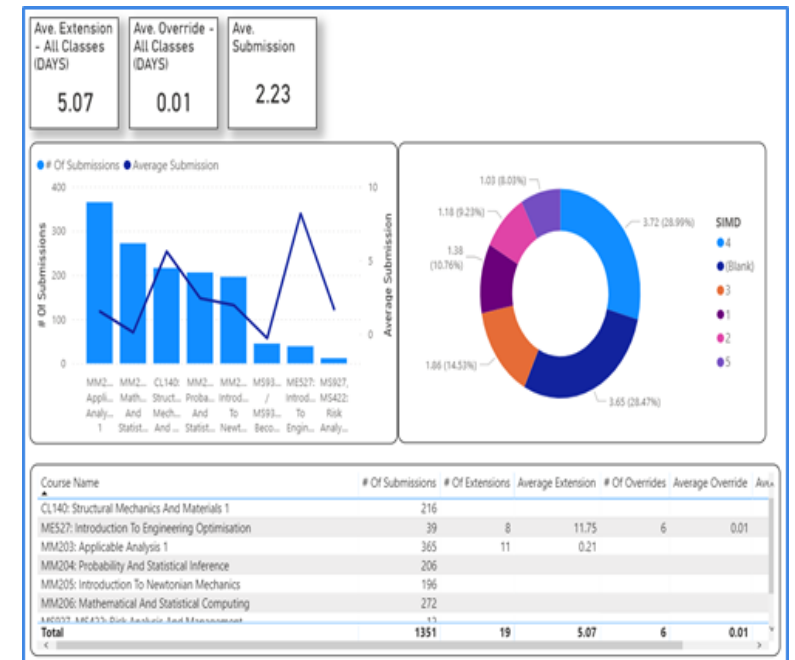
↑ 28
places

KPI 3: met **overall satisfaction**
target, **3rd** year in row



Strathclyde Next Steps

- Data-informed Education Enhancement - Integrated Strathclyde Insights
- Thematic reporting: Surveys, Module Evaluation, Departmental Data Sets, Annual Reporting
- Learning Analytics:
- High Level “pulse checks”
- Activity based “focused insights”
- Dashboard development
- Free text analysis and summaries



Acknowledgements and Thanks:

- Strathclyde Colleagues: Module Evaluation Team, OSDU, Faculties and StrathUnion
- sparqs
- QAA Scotland
- Explorance



Questions?





University of **Strathclyde** Glasgow