Student Transitions

- **Investigation into the retention and progression issues impacting upon care leavers and identification of effective transition support throughout their academic career** — Care leavers as a distinct group of students within higher education (HE) in Scotland have very little presence: “only a small percentage, in comparison to the national average, go on to study at university” (Scottish Care Leavers Covenant 2016). Professor Les Ebdon, Director of Office for Fair Access puts it bluntly “there’s almost no more underrepresented group in higher education.” Without significant support mechanisms many often struggle to cope financially and emotionally which impacts on their ability to academically achieve.

  The paper reports on a study, conducted by a research intern at the University of Strathclyde, which investigated the retention and progression issues impacting on care leavers, specifically in relation to their experience with the University. It seeks to identify a positive environment for care experienced students and pinpoint best practice of effective transition support for students who encounter difficulties in their academic career. In addition to looking at the academic career of a care experienced student, the potential barriers of care leavers in accessing placements, internships and international opportunities were also investigated. Furthermore, a study of contemporary literature was used to identify key themes relating to care experienced students. To examine best practice elsewhere the study was conducted in collaboration with an intern at the University of Strirling whom had a similar remit. It is hoped that outcomes of the study will influence future developments in this area at the University.

  This project was supported by Enhancement Theme funding from QAA Scotland.

- **Postgraduate Research Student Transitions beyond Strathclyde** — This student-led project has constructed a picture of the skills and graduate attributes that former Strathclyde Postgraduate Research (PGRs) students perceive as valued by employers. The project has explored previous students’ perceptions of the strengths and skills gained during their PGR experience that helped them to secure employment, as well as the support they accessed at Strathclyde when preparing for their transition beyond academia. This project is timely as the first cohort from the Postgraduate Certificate in Researcher Professional Development (PG Cert RPD) graduate this year, and as OSDU plan to redevelop supervisor training in light of policy changes over the coming year. Furthermore, this research also coincides with the revision of graduate attributes within the university. The recommendations for this report include further training and support for students in areas where there are perceived skills gaps, and training for supervisors in supporting the personal development of PGR students.

  This work was supported by Enhancement Theme funding from the Quality Assurance Agency Scotland.

- **Beyond University: Where are our Access students?** — The Pre-entry Access course is delivered by the university’s Centre for Lifelong Learning and is designed to assist students who would like to attend university to study for a degree who do not have traditional entry qualifications. Data is available on students’ recruitment to university and retention during their studies, however very little is known about the students’ experience after graduation.

  This project gathered data from the Pre-Entry Access course students on their experiences during their course and after graduation.

  The project sought to gather data on mature students’ experiences of their transition beyond university which could be used to capture the longer term impact of the Pre-entry Access course and enhance the student experience of future cohorts.

  The full research report is available to download below.

  This work was supported by Enhancement Theme funding from the Quality Assurance Agency Scotland.

- **BGE pupils’ analysis of soils in Scottish schools** — This project allowed primarily S2 students to learn about the soil, and its properties, in their school playground. Students collected samples which were sent to the Department of Pure and Applied Chemistry and analysed by Y4 and Y5 masters students. Throughout the year long project schools were updated with progress through a series of newsletters. They also participated in a poster competition and the winning teams and their teachers were invited to the Grand Environment Day held in the Department in September 2018.

- **Direct entry students in the Science Faculty** — This short project was designed to investigate how students who entered the University through non-standard routes found the transition from school to University. The project was designed to fall in with the QAA theme relating to Students’ Transitions into Higher Education. The focus of our study was aimed at those students who had entered the University at 2nd year with Advanced Highers or A-Levels. The full report is available below.

  This work was supported by Enhancement Theme funding from the QAA.
Initially, the study focussed on capturing the current experience of Engineering Academy students, specifically:

Two engineering student interns carried out the study in collaboration with key academic and engineering academy staff. The student interns, who had just completed second and third year respectively, had both taken non-traditional access routes to studying engineering at the University of Strathclyde. Specifically this project focussed on Engineering Academy students making their transition into year 2 of an engineering degree at the University of Strathclyde from a network of Further Education colleges.

Two student interns were employed with assistance from the careers service, one final year student from HASS and one 2nd year student from SBS. The student interns researched and developed the CPD programme with support and guidance from the Academic Development Team.

In order to examine the experiences of Widening Access students in particular, the survey included questions which allowed for the identification of certain Widening Access indicators. Students were regarded as Widening Access if they met one or more of the following criteria:

- First generation of their immediate family to go to university
- Attended a low progression to Higher Education school
- Attended a SHEP school
- Had a home postcode at point of application which was classed as Quintile 1 or Quintile 2 according to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)
- Had spent any time in local authority care
- Were a mature student (aged 21 or over on the first day of their course at the University of Strathclyde)

The survey data therefore allowed for a comparison between the reported experiences of Widening Access students and non-Widening Access students. In some areas they reported very similar experiences, but in others there were notable differences.

The full research report is available below.

This work was supported by Enhancement Theme funding from the QAA.

- Co-ordinating and supporting induction — A project to gather best induction practice and develop a toolkit to support staff in delivering appropriately co-ordinated induction activities across the first few weeks of teaching.

This work was supported by Enhancement Theme funding from the QAA.

- What about me? Supporting staff, supporting students —

  In this student-led project, the Academic Development team in OSDU employed two student interns to design and develop a staff training course “What about me?: Supporting staff, Supporting students”. The course is aimed at supporting staff teaching students in their first year at university through examining issues faced by students using a storytelling case study approach.

  We obtained £1K in funding from University of Strathclyde Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) funding for projects to support the current ‘transitions’ enhancement theme. This was used to provide match funding for a further successful bid to the Higher Education Academy (Scotland) for £10K.

Two student interns were employed with assistance from the careers service, one final year student from HASS and one 2nd year student from SBS. The student interns researched and developed the CPD programme with support and guidance from the Academic Development Team.

Initial work focussed on the interns researching student transition issues and interviewing a number of students from diverse backgrounds in order to collect authentic stories of student transitions. These stories were recorded and transcribed so that they could be used in future research deliverables for the project.

The interns then designed the staff development course materials, based on activities suitable for both face-to-face and online delivery formats. This included the development of a video-based case study which was designed to thread throughout the course, using a story-telling approach to enhance staff engagement.

Resources were developed that contributed to a toolkit in fulfilment of the HEA grant requirements.

The course has been delivered through the Strathclyde Teaching Excellence Programme (STEP) at Strathclyde University both as a face-to-face and as a fully online class. A further offering is scheduled for June 2016.

There are research outcomes associated with the evaluation of impact of this project and these will be disseminated at appropriate conferences and in peer-reviewed publications.

This work was supported by Enhancement Theme funding from the QAA, and grant funding from the HEA (Scotland).

- Engineering Successful College to University Transitions - The Engineering Academy — The main aim of this project was to understand and co-develop successful support approaches and mechanisms for students making transition into their first year of study in Higher Education, by direct entry into second year from Further Education colleges. Specifically this project focussed on Engineering Academy students making their transition into year 2 of an engineering degree at the University of Strathclyde from a network of Further Education colleges.

Two engineering student interns carried out the study in collaboration with key academic and engineering academy staff. The student interns, who had just completed second and third year respectively, had both taken non-traditional access routes to studying engineering at the University of Strathclyde. One through the engineering academy route whilst the other came to first year engineering through a further education college HNC route.

Initially, the study focussed on capturing the current experience of Engineering Academy students, specifically:

- Interaction with University during HNC study
- Social and academic integration
- CV and employer engagement
- Departmental practices
- Summer schools
- Student union groups and societies
- Library and on-line services
Social media

Opportunities for improvement were then explored, specifically:

- Interaction with University during HNC study
- Induction to University
- Managing expectation and informing choices
- Social and academic integration
- Mentoring including peer mentoring
- Student event
- Summer schools

In order to fully understand the Engineering Academy student transition experience and develop appropriate support mechanisms the following methodology was adopted:

- A literature review
- Survey of Engineering Academy students
- Interviews with EA staff
- Case studies from other institutions
- Library and on-line services
- Social media

A full research report is available below.

This work was supported by Enhancement Theme funding from the QAA.

- Vertically Integrated Events for Degree Programmes in Chemistry — These activities were developed to provide a networking opportunity for students on individual degree programmes. These informal events are held in the first semester each year and students from every year of each degree programme are invited. Refreshments are served and a number of speakers give short, informal presentations. The speakers include students who have completed study abroad, placements and internships, recent alumni who are now in employment, recent graduates who have chosen to continue into postgraduate study and, in some cases, an industry representative who will present an industrially sponsored prize to a recent prize winner.

- Embedding personal development into undergraduate curriculum — Central to the BSc Hons Speech and Language Pathology course is a 4-year programme of Personal and Professional Development (PDPP). As a vocational course training students primarily for NHS based careers as Speech and Language Therapists, the course includes 4 modules, one per year, promoting progression from novice (1st year) to advanced (4th year) in terms of the skills and attributes essential for optimum functioning at graduate level and beyond. Uniquely, the PDPP programme dovetails with a 4th year module (Continuing Professional Development - CPD) embedding the programme within a framework of lifelong learning and development.

The Townhead Homework Club

The Townhead Homework Club was established in November 2014 by final year BEd students from the School of Education. The homework club runs in the Townhead Village Hall on St Mungo Avenue behind the University Library. The club runs after school every Tuesday and Thursday during term time from October to May. Students from different year groups of the undergraduate Primary Education programme, the Professional Graduate Diploma in Education and Psychology work together to run this club. The overall running of the club is overseen by a final year Primary Education student.

How to Overcome Barriers to Student Engagement with Work Based Placements

To review all undergraduate and postgraduate taught placement and internship activity across the Faculty of Science. To identify the benefits perceived by students who have participated in such activities and align these with existing evidence from industry. To identify the perceived barriers to student engagement from those with non-participation. To create a range of resources that addresses any gaps identified that will empower students to take advantage of opportunities to gain work experience and ultimately assist their transition from university to graduate employment.

This project was supported by Enhancement Theme funding from QAA Scotland.

The full report is available at the bottom of the page.

Transitioning the year abroad – Before / During / After — “Transitioning the year abroad – Before / During / After” is a student-led project which aims to look into the major transition phase the year abroad represents for language students. By gathering feedback from current students who are either about to go on their year abroad, currently abroad or have just come back from their intercalary year, the team will, firstly, aim to produce a clear picture of the current situation in terms of challenges, support available, and training requirement and, secondly, aim to develop an innovative approach to supporting students in transitioning the year abroad.

This project was supported by Enhancement Theme funding from the QAA Scotland.

The full report is available at the bottom of the page.

Impact of commuting to placement and university for student speech and language therapists: results of a student-led mixed-method investigation. — Although student feedback consistently suggests that travel to placement causes significant strain, the impact on learning and student well-being is under-explored. In this project, student interns with ‘lived experience’ of commuting to placement explored the experiences of student speech and
Internships and placements in the faculty of engineering — This is a two year project of which one year has been completed. The main aims of this project are:

1. To understand the Engineering Academy student placement/internship experience
2. Together with the EA students co-develop mechanisms for maximising the benefits of internships
3. Integrate key learning experiences in to the Engineering Academy student experience.
4. Investigate and identify key opportunities for transferability across the faculty of engineering and wider university.

Objectives 1 & 2 will be addressed in 2016, with 3 & 4 taking place in 2017.

The Engineering Academy (EA) at the University of Strathclyde provides a widening access transition route for students from a partner Further Education college into second year of a BEng honours/MEng stream within a range of engineering disciplines across six faculty of engineering departments. The EA is currently unique within the Faculty of Engineering in that all Engineering Academy students are provided with the opportunity to undertake a placement or internship during the summer months. This proposal will focus, initially, on the Engineering Academy using it as a rich data source surrounding placements and internships as EA students make their transition through and beyond Higher Education. In 2014/15 the first cohort of over 40 EA students undertook a wide range of summer placements and internship opportunities from employers including Allied Vehicles, ABS, Babcock International, Aggreko, Alexander Dennis and Star Refrigeration. By 2017 approximately 70 EA students will be undertaking placements and internships. In 2015 (the first cohort of EA students undertaking placement opportunities) reporting and reflection on learning gained from EA placements was limited. There is a clear opportunity to maximise the learning and benefit from these placement experiences and integrate them as a core part of the student experience both within the Engineering Academy and in a wider university context.

This project was supported by Enhancement Theme funding from QAA Scotland.

HaSS Unite: A student-led support system for first years — In October 2016, a support system organised by first year students for first year students was established in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. Named HaSS Unite, the group ran a drop in session every Wednesday afternoon throughout semester one and organised bespoke support sessions for personal development in semester two. Students created their own e-mail account to manage communication with their peers and sent regular messages to first year students via Myplace to keep them updated on the group’s progress.

Enhancing Student Transition from Study to Employment Through Student Driven Engagement with Alumni — The five departments in the Faculty of Science engage with alumni in a variety of ways. For example, during 2015/16 the Careers Service organised successful alumni events for M&S, Physics and Biomedical Sciences generating positive student feedback on the benefits. In January 2017, SIPBS held a similar alumni event. The Faculty would like to introduce an annual careers networking event in all five departments, creating a framework to streamline implementation. These events will be supported by staff in each Department within the Faculty of Science and colleagues in Professional Services but fundamentally will be student led.

This work was supported by Enhancement Theme funding from the Quality Assurance Agency Scotland.

Internships and Placements in the Faculty of Engineering - Stage Two — The Engineering Academy (EA) at the University of Strathclyde provides a widening access transition route for students from a partner Further Education college into second year of a BEng honours/MEng stream within a range of engineering disciplines across six faculty of engineering departments. The EA is currently unique within the Faculty of Engineering in that all Engineering Academy students are provided with the opportunity to undertake a placement or internship during the summer months. There is a clear opportunity to maximise the learning and benefit from these placement experiences and integrate them as a core part of the student experience both within the Engineering Academy and in the wider faculty of engineering and university context.

This project was completed in two phases which were undertaken in the summer of 2016 and 2017 respectively. The main and overall aims of this project were:

1. To understand the Engineering Academy student placement/internship experience
2. Together with the EA students co-develop mechanisms for maximising the benefits of internships
3. Integrate key learning experiences in to the Engineering Academy student experience.
4. Investigate and identify key opportunities for transferability across the faculty of engineering and wider university.

This report focusses on the findings from the 2017 study covering objectives 3 & 4. Objectives 1 & 2 were addressed in the summer of 2016 with the findings being reported in a previous SPELT study (http://spelt.strath.ac.uk/display/SPELT /Internships+and+placements+in+the+faculty+of+engineering).

This study aims to embed findings from stage 1 of the study carried out in summer 2016 within the Engineering Academy and widen opportunities for the impact of these findings across the faculty of engineering and beyond. Findings from the initial project stage included identifying strengths, benefits, challenges, barriers and areas for improvement in the existing engineering student placement experience. An interactive tool which guides students through the placement experience from application to returning to university was developed. This tool highlights how students can harness benefits and opportunities in addition to strategies and tips for overcoming common challenges and barriers.

Key learning strategies from stage 1 that were identified for integration into the Engineering Academy and transferability across the Faculty of Engineering were:

- Providing opportunities for reflection on placement experiences on return to university through provision of a feedback learning loop
- Implementation of a peer mentoring scheme to facilitate the reflection and feedback learning loop opportunities
- Investigate opportunities to collaborate with clubs and societies to help launch a peer mentoring scheme and facilitate the reflective learning process.

The first stage of this work was reported in an earlier SPELT case study: http://spelt.strath.ac.uk/display/SPELT /Internships+and+placements+in+the+faculty+of+engineering.

This work was supported by Enhancement Theme funding from the Quality Assurance Agency Scotland.

Autism and careers: Ensuring positive transitions out of university for autistic students — Autism affects individuals in a number of different ways. This includes the way autistic students might engage with careers services. There are often small adaptations that services can make which will greatly improve the experiences of autistic people accessing those services. Current research highlights a lack of meaningful employment opportunities for
autistic individuals, including autistic university graduates. The aim of this project was to develop an autism specific careers guide for the University of Strathclyde Careers service. The guide is designed to give recommendations, hints, tips and good practice guidance to enable the careers service to better meet the needs of autistic graduates.

This work was supported by Enhancement Theme funding from the Quality Assurance Agency Scotland

- Transitioning the year abroad — Before / During / After - Stage Two — Transitioning the year abroad — Before / During / After is a student-led, cross-faculty project which aims to look into the major transition phase the year abroad represents for all language students, whether they be on a purely language degree (2 languages) or joint degree (Law + a language, Master's in International Business and Modern Languages, etc.). By gathering feedback from current students who are either about to go on their year abroad, currently abroad or have just come back from their intercalary year, the team aimed, firstly, to produce a clear picture of the current situation in terms of challenges, support available, and training requirement and, secondly, aimed to develop an innovative approach to supporting students in transitioning the year abroad.

The first stage of this work was reported in an earlier SPELT case study: http://spelt.strath.ac.uk/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=11765326

This work was supported by Enhancement Theme funding from the Quality Assurance Agency Scotland

- From Being (a Student) to Becoming (a Graduate): Exploring Graduate Attributes in the 21st Century - Summary of Research Findings — The project aimed to contextualise Graduate Attributes by developing a model of innovative learning and teaching practices to support Initial Teacher Education (ITE) students transitioning beyond Strathclyde. To do this, we drew on real work-based learning experiences encountered by recent graduate teachers in their Probationary year. Some interesting data emerged from focus group discussions with graduates, and initial analysis of the data identified some of the challenges new teachers tended to face, and the ways in which they used knowledge and skills developed during their ITE studies to negotiate these.

Employing the P21 Framework for 21st Century Learning[1], we developed a Problem-Based Learning (PBL) task which we then used with current students, This focused on the following skills and attributes: self-direction, critical thinking & problem-solving, and collaboration.

Utilising a PBL approach, students were first presented with the problem. They then worked within their own group to brainstorm, research, and discuss this. Once they came to a shared solution to the problem, they presented it to other groups. They also had a chance to learn from the probationary teachers' problem-solving process, while developing their own solutions. Emerging data allowed for an understanding of the ways in which current students engage with authentic work-base problems.

A case study from this project is also available: http://spelt.strath.ac.uk/display/SPELT/From+Being+%28a+Student%29+to+ Becoming+%28a+Graduate%29+Case+Study

This work was supported by Enhancement Theme funding from the Quality Assurance Agency Scotland

- From Being (a Student) to Becoming (a Graduate): Exploring Graduate Attributes in the 21st Century - Case Study — The project aimed to contextualise Graduate Attributes by developing a model of innovative learning and teaching practices to support Initial Teacher Education (ITE) students transitioning beyond Strathclyde. Drawing on work-based learning experiences encountered by recent graduates in their Probationary year, we developed an authentic Problem-Based learning (PBL) task that was used with current ITE students. Students followed the PBL procedure (see links/attachment) as they worked through a given scenario. They reflected on the attributes and skills developed during their studies and discussed solutions. More specifically:

Firstly, recent graduates were invited to a focus group conducted by the intern, where they shared experiences and challenges they faced in their workplace during their probationary year. While the main purpose was to use the focus group data to develop the PBL activity for current students, it also became apparent that this was an opportunity for these early-career teachers to share common issues encountered in their probationary year and to discuss solutions to these issues. Different perspectives allowed them to offer each other support, making this reflective process more relevant and meaningful. Initial analysis of the focus group data identified a range of work-based learning experiences and attributes.

We then mapped participants' accounts onto the P21 Framework for 21st Century Learning[1]. We identified five different 21st century skills particularly relevant to our focus group:

- Critical thinking & Problem-solving
- Communication & Collaboration
- Creativity & Innovation
- Flexibility & Adaptability
- Initiative & Self-direction

Based on initial analysis and synthesis of the data, eight themes emerged exemplifying Graduate attributes in the context of teacher professional learning. These themes formed the basis for developing the PBL activity for current students. Utilising a PBL approach, students were first presented with the problem. They then worked within their own group to brainstorm, research, and discuss the problem. Once they came to a shared solution to the problem, they presented it to other groups. They also had a chance to learn from the probationary teachers’ problem-solving process, while they developed their own solutions.

A summary of the research findings from this project is also available: From Being (a Student) to Becoming (a Graduate): Exploring Graduate Attributes in the 21st Century - Summary of Research Findings

This work was supported by Enhancement Theme funding from the Quality Assurance Agency Scotland

- Advanced Undergraduate Entrants: Enhancing employability and supporting positive graduate destinations — Students entering university at second year or above face a number of challenges, such as integrating into pre-existing social groups and adjusting to pedagogical changes. The literature on advanced college entrants tends to focus on transitions into university but there is limited evidence on the career prospects of this student group at the point of graduation. This project aimed to fill this gap. Our research focused on City of Glasgow College (DipHE Business) students articulating into Strathclyde Business School (SBS) at third year, with a view to informing policies and practices that will enhance employability and support positive graduate destinations.
This work was supported by Enhancement Theme funding from the Quality Assurance Agency Scotland.

- Uncovering the boundaries for learning through a Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP) and Communities of Practice (COP) lens: A case of civil engineering students in post-summer placement transition through university — Students returning to university from an industrial summer placement are in transition through two different learning environments. They leave behind a culture where their knowledge construction is undertaken in a collaborative space, guided through mentoring by a community of professional engineers. They are exposed to real-world problems, vocabulary and artefacts that assist them to take on an identity as a civil engineer. On return to university they re-enter a learning space that is largely characterised by competitive learning whereby a different identity is shaped through learning codified knowledge and where academic staff can be ‘gatekeepers’ to a curriculum of knowledge that is often simulated rather than real-world. Negotiating the boundaries between these two environments (often on multiple occasions over a 5 year MEng degree) en-route to a graduate position is known to be troublesome for students. Employing a social learning systems approach, particularly the concepts of LPP and COP can provide a lens to understand and improve the transition process for students and faculty. This work was supported by Enhancement Theme funding from the Quality Assurance Agency Scotland.

- How to Overcome Barriers to Student Engagement with Work Based Placements - Stage Two — The aims of the project were:
  - To review all undergraduate and postgraduate taught placement and internship activity across the Faculty of Science.
  - To identify the benefits perceived by students who have participated in such activities and align these with existing evidence from industry.
  - To identify the perceived barriers to student engagement from those with non-participation.
  - To create a range of resources that addresses any gaps identified that will empower students to take advantage of opportunities to gain work experience and ultimately assist their transition from university to graduate employment.

The first stage of this work was reported in an earlier SPELT case study: [http://spelt.strath.ac.uk/display/SPELT/How+to+Overcome+Barriers+to+Student+Engagement+with+Work+Based+Placements](http://spelt.strath.ac.uk/display/SPELT/How+to+Overcome+Barriers+to+Student+Engagement+with+Work+Based+Placements)

This work was supported by Enhancement Theme funding from the Quality Assurance Agency Scotland.

- The Use of Social Media in Mathematics and Statistics — We obtained a small grant to employ a couple of students to set up and monitor a Facebook page for new students starting maths based degrees within our department.

- Industrial Placement Big Buddies-Little Buddies Programme — Twenty-three students (with relevant summer industry experience) from years 2-5 volunteered to take on the role of ‘Big Buddies’ (BB’s) to mentor groups of first year students. Little Buddies (LB’s). Each of the BB’s will meet their group in a formal setting on two occasions during both semesters (during a CL120 Construction & the Environment timetabled class) and facilitated rolling programme of informal meetings and communication through social media will be established.

- A Peer Mentoring System, where 4th Years Mentor 1st Years — As part of our revised curriculum we introduced sessions where the final year students mentored the new intake of students in workshops related to the production of a health promotion campaign.

- Using Online Forums: A Tool to Enhance Experimental Engineering Laboratories — This case study describes the introduction of online asynchronous forums in experimental engineering laboratory classes, to facilitate discussion and comparison of results from different experiments.

- Introducing a Programme of Report Writing in Undergraduate Engineering Classes. — It was identified that there was no formal approach used to instruct students in report writing within the undergraduate classes of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering. Classes were identified where guidance could be included. Online lessons were developed to be presented on MyPlace alongside assignments requiring technical reports. The basis for the structure of any technical report was standardised to reflect the dissertation guidelines for the Departments 4th Year Individual Project.

Guidance was given in the following areas:

- Formatting
- Writing Style
- Word Count
- Headings & Content.
- Referencing (Sage Vancouver)
- Figures
- Plagiarism (links to the Student Guide on Good Academic Practice and the Avoidance of Plagiarism and guidance on Turnitin)
- Online Submission

Classes in first, second and third year were identified and online activities concerning specific assignments were developed. An online lesson was also developed to take 4th Year individual project students through the guidance for dissertation and technical paper submission.

The Faculty librarian, Sally Bell, was involved in discussions.

- First Year HaSS BA Community Placement — The first year community placement is part of an Education module available to all BA students in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. Students undertake a seventy hour placement with an organisation of their choice working with children and young people 0 – 14 years. The students’ learning on placement is supported by an on-campus module where lectures and tutorials are designed to explore topics related to placement as well as using the students’ own placement experiences to promote the learning of others. Students gain 20 credits for their participation in this module as well as their ability to maintain a placement file and to write a reflective evaluation of their time on placement.

- Introducing Fresher Civil Engineers to the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) — This case study examines the data (coursework’s and questionnaires) collated from an innovative undergraduate (n=428) assessment (2010-2015). The first-year students were required to select and read six inaugural addresses by former ICE presidents (2 from the 19th century; 2 from the 20th century and 2 from the 21st century) and use these as a catalyst for writing their own ICE student president address (circa 2000 words) whilst keeping an eye towards 2050. The voters are informed that their selection criteria should be based on (1) confidence in delivery / communication (2) visionary ideas towards 2050 (3) quality of information on the slides used.

The students who receive the top five grades for their coursework are invited to present (now 2nd year students) an abridged version (10mins each) of their address to the new first-year students during the following academic session. These new fresher students are asked to vote on their preferred candidate to become the Strathclyde ICE Student President. The voters are informed that their selection criteria should be based on (1) confidence in delivery / communication (2) visionary ideas towards 2050 (3) quality of information on the slides used.
The winner receives a trip to London (sponsored to £300 by an engineering company) to visit the ICE HQ and a prestigious civil engineering project and for the past three years we have also toured landmark Scottish bridges.

- **Newspaper Coursework for 1st year Civil Engineering Students** —

  This paper discusses a coursework initiative that required 1st year civil engineering students (n=162) to undertake regular reading of UK newspapers as a means to find articles that they believed were relevant to their studies. In small groups (4-5) the students were tasked to produce a collage from their newspaper cuttings and a fictitious front page newspaper poster. The results show that 'on large' the students found the coursework to be interesting and enjoyable and that it allowed them to demonstrate initiative and creative thinking. Consultation of broadsheet newspapers was most prevalent and 67% agreed/strongly-agreed that the articles that they found enhanced the image of civil engineering and 82% agreed/strongly-agreed that weekday newspapers should carry more stories about this industry sector. The results suggest that the initiative can be easily replicated and that it can act as a catalyst to encourage engineering students to become more regular and critical readers of news media throughout their studies.

  Newspaper image by Silke Remmery, Flickr CC-BY-2.0

- **Using a Weekly Trade Magazine (New Civil Engineer) for Learning & Assessment.** —

  This case study presents evidence from an initiative employing a weekly industry magazine - New Civil Engineer (NCE) - as a vehicle for introducing construction technology to first year students (N=153).

  Using one or more hard copy editions of the magazine (from inaugural edition in 1972 onward) available in the university library, and following guidance regarding the definition of construction technology, the students were required to select six technological themes from any section (news, projects, adverts, etc.) of the NCE magazine.

  Students were required to produce six drawings/sketches on either A3 or A4 paper and annotate each sketch and provide further notes indicating evidence of further research (i.e. consultation with text books/scholarly journals/ manufacturer’s websites etc.)

- **A student-led exchange in Education** — In September 2016, a group of second and third year Education students were challenged with arranging their own exchange trip to Maynooth University in Ireland. They were linked with a similar group in Maynooth, County Kildare and left to organise an exchange opportunity that was purposeful but manageable in terms of timetabling, finances and content for both cohorts of students. The week-long exchange took place in March 2017 with students spending equal amounts of time together in Glasgow and Maynooth. Both groups organised a range of academic, professional, cultural and social experiences with very limited support from university staff. There were no costs involved for either university for this exchange.

- **Transition to employment: Alumni stories about dyslexia from the Civil Engineering and Law disciplines.** — This project investigated the transition into employment of university graduates with dyslexia.

  This work was supported by Enhancement Theme funding from the Quality Assurance Agency Scotland