

Title: **The Focus On: Assessment and Feedback Project - Supporting the Scottish HE sector to enhance partnership, policy and practice**

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Session Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

- Understand the approach taken in the Focus On project to facilitate development in the Scottish sector around policy, practice and partnership in assessment and feedback.
- Reflect on the three project strands:
 - The use of technology to enhance assessment and feedback **practice**
 - Consistent implementation of assessment and feedback **policy** and,
 - Students' associations working in **partnership** with institutions to improve feedback on assessment.
- Engage with a large number of resources and case studies that were developed as part of this project.
- Consider the implications of this work for scholarship and educational practice in their own institutions/areas.

Session Outline

Analysis of ELIR reports identified a need for most institutions to develop assessment and feedback in two main areas: implementing policy and practice more consistently across institutions; and improving communication with students to ensure they have a clearer understanding of the nature and timing of feedback they can expect to receive.

QAA Scotland conducted a scoping exercise with institutions and students' associations to ensure the project would cover the areas of highest priority to the sector. This resulted in three key strands being identified for the project. Activity around the three strands included:

1. **Use of technology to support assessment and feedback practice** – 12 case studies were presented at an event for practitioners (over 80 delegates attended). There were two keynotes, and delegates identified ten key messages for institutional policy makers aimed at promoting the use of technology to enhance feedback on assessment.
2. **Consistent implementation of assessment and feedback policy and practice** – a Policy and Practice Summit for senior managers and student representatives was held.

Every Scottish institution was represented and each shared their policy initiatives and approaches. Participants also worked in institutional groups to consider what improvement would look like in their own institutions and debated the ten key messages developed for them by practitioners attending the event above.

3. **Students' associations working in partnership to improve feedback on assessment** – we collated information on student-led activities to improve feedback on assessment that have taken place across Scotland and classified the activities by theme.

We will discuss the benefits experienced from a highly inclusive and participatory approach to this work which ensured high levels of engagement from practitioners, students and policy makers from all Scottish HEIs. Delegates will have the opportunity to engage with the range of resources developed and discuss the effectiveness of the developmental approach taken.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

The session will commence with a short presentation on the Focus On: Assessment and Feedback project including its aims, outcomes and impact (15 minutes).

There will then be a facilitated discussion in small groups, each group assigned to consider one of questions 1 – 3 and all groups considering question 4. (15 minutes discussion time and 15 minutes feedback in plenary)

1. The Focus On project intentionally links review outcomes (from ELIR) with a developmental, enhancement-led approach to sharing positive practice and addressing common challenges. How can we benefit even more from this type of link?
2. How can we capitalise further on a sector-wide approach to enhancing assessment and feedback? What can we do collectively as a sector to [more effectively] share and embed the lessons learned from the Focus On project (and similar projects on assessment and feedback)?
3. Are we doing enough to engage students' associations and the wider student body in educational development work that influences both sector and institutional policy and practice? Is there genuine and/or wide enough partnership with students that would allow us to do this? How can we do this better?
4. How can you use the outcomes of the project to support policy and/or practice in your own institution?

References

- QAA Scotland. (2014) **Thematic Report on Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) Technical Reports 2013-14: Assessment and Feedback** [online] Available at: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/publications/information-and-guidance/publication?PubID=2845> [Accessed 4 November 2015]
- QAA Scotland. (2015) **Focus On: Assessment and Feedback** [online] Available at: www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/focus-on/assessment [Accessed 4 November 2014]