



## **The Scottish Quality Enhancement Framework**

<http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/background/>

This unique Quality Enhancement Framework (QEF) has been designed to support higher education institutions in Scotland in the management of the student learning experience and to provide public confidence in the quality and standards of higher education. It is coordinated by a Quality Working Group, which has members from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), Universities Scotland, QAA Scotland, the Higher Education Academy and the National Union of Students, Scotland. Student Participation in Quality Scotland (sparqs) further assists and supports student engagement in quality assurance and enhancement activities, working closely with student associations. The framework consists of five inter-related aspects:

- Institution-led subject review
- Enhancement-led institutional review
- The gathering of public information published by institutions about their provision
- Effective involvement of students in quality management
- Enhancement Themes

## **The Enhancement Themes**

<http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/>

This resource pack is built around the Enhancement Themes developed as part of the Scottish Quality Enhancement Framework. This thematic approach to quality enhancement aims to help Scottish higher education institutions, both individually and collectively, to:

- Address the problems and challenges inherent in twenty-first century mass and global higher education
- Find high quality and effective solutions to improve the student experience
- Be more efficient and effective in delivering transformational change

The Enhancement Themes are planned and directed by the sector through the Scottish Higher Education Enhancement Committee (SHEEC). SHEEC manages the programme of Enhancements Themes activity in the context of a five-year rolling plan of topics. The latest Theme to come on stream is Graduates for the 21st Century: integrating the Enhancement Themes. This Theme will work to consolidate and integrate all past Themes whilst considering the nature of the graduate for the 21st century. The most recent Themes include: 'Research-Teaching Linkages: enhancing graduate attributes' and 'The First Year: engagement and empowerment'. Past themes have included 'Assessment', 'Integrative Assessment', 'Flexible Delivery', 'Employability', and 'Responding to Student Needs'.

# Assessment

## Quality Enhancement Theme Work on Assessment

'Assessment' was the first Enhancement Theme to be announced along with 'Responding to Student Needs'. The work began in 2003 and was completed at the end of 2004. The main focus of the work was on improving efficiency and effectiveness. Papers arising and further information about the activities under this theme can be found at: <http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/themes/Assessment/>

The theme was re-visited in 2005-06 in the context of 'Integrative Assessment'. Four publications were produced and are available at <http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/themes/IntegrativeAssessment/>

## Assessment. Lines, D. & Mason, C. (2005)

"This paper summarises the main outcomes from the [Quality Enhancement] work on Assessment, including possible ways of addressing the challenges identified, as well as matters that merit further work and reflection. It is intended that this paper, in conjunction with the individual workshop reports and case studies, will provide the sector, subject groups, student and support services groups, and appropriate professional and statutory bodies with a valuable resource that will enable the important issues raised to be handed over and taken forward, as appropriate."

**Publisher:** Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

**Availability:** Download (14kb pdf) from [http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/documents/assessment/Assessment\\_A5\\_booklet.pdf](http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/documents/assessment/Assessment_A5_booklet.pdf)  
For a hard copy email: [qaa@linneydirect.com](mailto:qaa@linneydirect.com)

## Assessment in the Earth Sciences, Environmental Sciences & Environmental Studies. Hughes, P. & Boyle A. (2005)



This is one of a series of guides that aims to provide academics teaching these disciplines in higher education with support and ideas for their practice. This guide covers not only the principles of assessment, including alignment of learning outcomes, timing and feedback, but also subject specific assessment issues and themes. Interdisciplinarity, the use of contested material, real-world focus and the assessment of fieldwork and practical/laboratory work are all discussed, as is the use of computer-aided assessment and assessment in virtual environments.

**Publisher:** GEES Subject Centre

**Availability:** Download (465kb pdf) from <http://www.gees.ac.uk/pubs/guides/eesguides.htm#assess>  
Free hard copies also available. Email: [info@gees.ac.uk](mailto:info@gees.ac.uk)

## Assessment in Geography. Bradford, M. & O'Connell, C. (1998)

This guide is part of the Geography Discipline Network (GDN) Series 'Dissemination of Good Teaching, Learning and Assessment Practices in Geography' and suggests ways to review assessment practices in geography, both for individual units and degree programmes. It also contains ideas and examples of how students can be involved in the assessment process through self and peer assessment. The authors consider how the students may be involved in the assessment of group work and reviews some aspects of using new technology, particularly with regard to objective testing, which superficially may seem a way of saving staff time. Case studies are included which outline various methods by which geography departments have set student assessments.

**Publisher:** Geography Discipline Network (University of Gloucestershire)

**Availability:** Purchase for £3.95 from <http://resources.glos.ac.uk/ceal/gdn/>

## Assessing Learners in Higher Education. Brown, S. & Knight, P. (1998)

This book explores the full range of assessment methods available, evaluates their effectiveness, and provides guidance on their implementation. It includes practical examples and stimulus activities for improving assessment within courses and provides welcome guidance to lecturers, educational developers and managers in higher and further education.

**Publisher:** Routledge

**Availability:** From online bookstores (2008 price at Amazon: £19.94)

### **Re-Engineering Assessment Practices in Scottish Higher Education (REAP)**

The REAP project received funding from the Scottish Funding Council during 2005-07 under its e-Learning Transformation Programme. It drew on current educational research to redesign large-enrolment first year classes across a range of disciplines. Nineteen higher education modules have been redesigned across a range of disciplines exemplifying innovative formative assessment practices with students actively generating their own feedback and scaffolding the development of their peers. The redesigns show both learning and staff efficiency gains as well as how technology can add value. Although not specifically focused on the GEES disciplines, the project website provides a variety of useful resources for developing assessment and feedback.  
<http://www.reap.ac.uk/>

### **The ASSHE Inventory: Changing assessment practices in Scottish Higher Education.** Hounsell, D., McCulloch, M. & Scott, M. (Eds. 2001)

The ASSHE Inventory is a rich source of information and ideas on assessment in higher education. It brings together over 120 descriptions by Scottish university and college teachers of changes in how they assess their students' progress and performance.

**Publisher:** LTSN Generic Centre

**Availability:** Download (pdf) from [http://www.palatine.ac.uk/themes/chapter\\_index/](http://www.palatine.ac.uk/themes/chapter_index/)

### **QAA Code of Practice: Assessment of Students** (2006)

The Code of Practice is a statement of good practice that has been endorsed by the higher education community. It provides information on a broad spectrum of issues relating to assessment including contribution to student learning, assessment panels and examination boards, marking and grading, feedback, regulations, and recording, document and communicating assessment decisions. Academic staff in departments and schools do not necessarily need to be familiar with the detail of all of the various sections of the Code of practice, although they might well be expected to be familiar with the institutional policies it informs and any parts which are particularly relevant to their own responsibilities.

**Publisher:** Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)

**Availability:** View (html) or download (129kb pdf) from <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/codeOfPractice/>

### **Assessment for Learning (AfL) Centre for Excellence in Teaching & Learning (CETL)**

The CETL AfL aims to accelerate a transformation in assessment, building on excellent practice in Education, Childhood Studies, History, English, Psychology and Engineering. Assessment for Learning means that students will benefit from assessment which does far more than simply test what they know. They will take part in the kinds of activities that are: valuable long term, help them to develop, provide them with guidance and feedback and they will learn how to assess themselves as future professionals. Although originating in non-GEES disciplines, this initiative provides examples of practice and resources of relevance to any subject in higher education.  
[http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/cetl\\_afl/](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/cetl_afl/)

### **JISC Plagiarism Advisory Service (JISC-iPAS)**

The Plagiarism Advisory Service provides generic advice and guidance on all aspects of plagiarism prevention and detection to institutions, academics and students.  
<http://www.jiscpas.ac.uk/>

These are just a few examples of generic and discipline-specific resources. For more visit:

The HE Academy Assessment web page: <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/learning/assessment>  
Scottish Enhancement Themes: <http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/>  
The Higher Education Academy Subject Centre for Geography, Earth & Environmental Sciences (GEES)  
<http://www.gees.ac.uk/>

# Responding to Student Needs

## Quality Enhancement Theme Work on Responding to Students' Needs

"Over the last twenty years institutions have faced an increasing challenge to develop and adapt their provision to support mass higher education into the 21st century. Student numbers have increased dramatically and there is a much greater diversity of learners. In response to the changing environment, the HE sector is increasingly aware of the need for a change of approach in the ways in which we engage with students. More complex student needs require a learner-centred approach, not only in terms of teaching itself, but in terms of the variety of support and administrative systems which underpin delivery." The QE work began in 2003 and was completed at the end of 2004. It focused on two main areas:

- Student Needs in the First Year of Study (including induction, personal tutor systems, approaches to integrating student support, and the first year learning experience) and
- Student Evaluation of and Feedback on their Learning Experience.

Details of the activities and outcomes from this activity can be found at:  
<http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/themes/StudentNeeds/>

The aims of the student feedback project were to determine both the main issues and barriers to improving practice in collecting and using student evaluation of and feedback on their learning experience. More information on this area of activity can be found at: [http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/student\\_evaluation/](http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/student_evaluation/)

## Responding to Student Needs – Student Evaluation and Feedback Toolkit. Gordon, G. (Ed. 2005)

This booklet summarises the outcomes arising from the Responding to Student Needs Scottish quality enhancement theme and brings together in a single volume the reports from all four strands of the Responding to Student Needs Theme including the Student Evaluation and Feedback project.

**Publisher:** Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

**Availability:** Download (873kb pdf) from

[http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/documents/studentneeds/Student\\_Needs\\_Full\\_Outcomes\\_FINAL29\\_6\\_05.pdf](http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/documents/studentneeds/Student_Needs_Full_Outcomes_FINAL29_6_05.pdf)

For a hard copy email: [qaa@linneydirect.com](mailto:qaa@linneydirect.com)

## (Formative) Assessment in the Geosciences. Slattery, W. (2005)

This US-based website provides information, examples of practice and a glossary of terms on the theme of formative assessment / evaluation. This type of assessment is described as "the process of observing and measuring learning. Assessments provide [lecturers] with a better understanding of what [their] students are learning and [helps to] engage students more deeply in the process of learning geoscience content. By deliberately using different [assessments] at specific times during the learning process students will have a clearer vision of what is expected of them." Although there are slight differences in terminology (faculty = academic staff; assessment = formative assessment) this resource is appropriate and relevant to higher education colleagues in UK.

**Publisher:** Science Education Resource Center (SERC)

**Availability:** Available at <http://serc.carleton.edu/introgeo/assessment/>

## Evaluating the GEES Student Learning Experience

This one-day event was held in December 2007 for GEES academics and support staff who were interested in what and how their students are learning. The aims of the event were to demonstrate a range of evaluation techniques, from instant feedback through end-of-course surveys to pedagogic research; to showcase examples of current practice; and to provide resources and information on research and evaluation - whether for personal or departmental use, as well as for publication. PowerPoint presentations from the event are available to download from:  
<http://gees.ac.uk/events/2005/evstle05/evstle05.htm>

## Evaluation of Teaching: A Physical Sciences Practice Guide. Johnstone, A. (2005)

This practice guide looks at evaluation of teaching and asks readers to consider basic starting questions such as: what is evaluation?; what is to be evaluated?; how can it be evaluated? There is also special consideration of evaluation of a course, issues with evaluating practical work and how to evaluate using longitudinal attitude measurement as a mechanism.

**Publisher:** Physical Sciences Subject Centre

**Availability:** Download (5.05Mb pdf) from <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/physsci/publications/practiceguides>

### **Student Enhanced Learning through Effective Feedback (SENLEF)**

The SENLEF project is a resource for practitioners wishing to improve their feedback practice or get some exciting new ideas. The project has explored feedback issues with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) across Scotland. They have collated case studies, devised a set of principles for good practice and developed a range of resources including a literature review, web links and workshop materials.

<http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/learning/assessment/senlef>

### **Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers.** Angelo, T.A. & Cross, K.P. (1993)

"Through close observation of students in the process of learning, the collection of frequent feedback on students' learning, and the design of modest classroom experiments, classroom teachers can learn much about how students learn and, more specifically, how students respond to particular teaching approaches. Classroom Assessment helps individual [higher education lecturers] obtain useful feedback on what, how much and how well their students are learning. [Lecturers] can then use this information to refocus their teaching to help students make their learning more efficient and more effective." This revised and expanded edition of the 1988 guide offers lecturers at all levels of experience detailed advice on evaluation (classroom assessment), including what it is, how it works, and planning, implementing, and analysing evaluation projects. The authors illustrate their approach through twelve case studies that detail the real-life classroom experiences of teachers in higher education.

**Publisher:** Jossey Bass; 2nd Edition

**Availability:** From online bookstores (2008 price at Waterstones: £24.50)

### **Collecting and using student feedback: a guide to good practice.** Brennan, J. & R. Williams (2004)

This guide aims to help higher education institutions make the best use of their student feedback to enhance learning and teaching. The guidance is based on a previous HEFCE-funded project, published on the web in May 2003, Collecting and using student feedback on quality and standards in learning and teaching in HE. It draws on the experiences of the sector to highlight existing good practice, and some of the problems in using student feedback.

**Publisher:** Learning & Teaching Support Network (LTSN)

**Availability:** Download (1.07Mb pdf) from

[http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/id352\\_collecting\\_and\\_using\\_student\\_feedback](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/id352_collecting_and_using_student_feedback)

These are just a few examples of generic and discipline-specific resources. For more visit:

Scottish Enhancement Themes: <http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/>

The Higher Education Academy Subject Centre for Geography, Earth & Environmental Sciences (GEES)

<http://www.gees.ac.uk/>

# Employability

## Quality Enhancement Theme Work on Employability

There are various interpretations of the term employability. Knight and Yorke define Employability as "A set of achievements, understandings and personal attributes that make individuals more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen careers." This definition arose from the work carried out by the LTSN Generic Centre (now part of the Higher Education Academy) and ESECT team in England and became the preferred definition for the 2004-05 Enhancement Theme of Employability in Scotland.

The main aims of the Employability Enhancement Theme were to:

- raise the profile of employability, including its benefits to students, employers and academic staff
- create a clearer understanding of what is meant by Employability
- encourage and provide assistance for the Scottish higher education sector in developing institutional Employability strategies
- aid the embedding of Employability within the curriculum
- implement its strategy in parallel with work on Personal Development Planning (PDP) as part of the Effective Learning Framework (ELF) project.

More information on the theme and details of the activities and outcomes can be found at <http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/themes/Employability/>

## Employability: Overview of the work of the Employability Enhancement Theme. (2006)

"The aim of this publication is to provide an overview of the work of the Employability Enhancement Theme." The audiences for this booklet include "front-line academic and support staff who are primarily responsible for what and how students learn, and who may not have time to attend national enhancement events, read the resulting publications or check out the Enhancement Themes website." "This overview also identifies the key issues, findings and challenges that have emerged from the Theme, and suggests how they might be addressed."

**Publisher:** Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

**Availability:** Download (152kb pdf) from [http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/documents/employability/Employability\\_Overview\\_QAA113.pdf](http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/documents/employability/Employability_Overview_QAA113.pdf)  
For a hard copy email: [qaa@linneydirect.com](mailto:qaa@linneydirect.com)

## Employability within Geography, Earth and Environmental Science. Gedye, S. & Chalkley, B. (2006)



This publication originates from research carried out by the GEES Subject Centre and opens with a brief discussion of what is meant by employability and why it has become such a key issue in HE today. Later chapters deal with specifics such as curriculum design, work-based learning, employee attributes and the development of students' career management skills. As well as a discussion of the key issues, the publication provides a mixture of principles and practice with ideas illustrated by examples and case studies.

**Publisher:** GEES Subject Centre

**Availability:** Download (1.5Mb pdf) from <http://www.gees.ac.uk/pubs/guides/eesguides.htm#empguide>  
Free hard copies also available. Email: [info@gees.ac.uk](mailto:info@gees.ac.uk)

## Employability in Geography, Earth & Environmental Sciences.

These web pages developed and maintained by the GEES Subject Centre contain a wide variety of resources on many aspects of employability including key skills, work-based learning, career development, personal development planning (PDP), enterprise & entrepreneurship, corporate / social responsibility and ethics.

<http://www.gees.ac.uk/projtheme/emp/employ.htm>

**Learning and Employability Series.** Yorke, M. (Ed. 2006)

The Higher Education Academy's Learning and Employability series of guides is intended for staff in higher education institutions who are considering the enhancement of their students' employability. The publications will be of interest to colleagues new to the area as well as those who are already engaged in developing employability and who wish to broaden their understanding of the topic.

**Publisher:** Higher Education Academy

**Availability:** Download (pdf) from <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/publications/learningandemployability>  
Free hard copies available. Email [employability@heacademy.ac.uk](mailto:employability@heacademy.ac.uk)

**Graduate Employability: What do employers think and want?** Archer, W. & Davison, J. (2008)

This report highlights the findings of a survey of 233 employers and emphasises the importance of generic employability skills such as team working and communication. The research aims to add value to the debate on the high level skills agenda but also seeks to help HEIs to address the needs of business to ensure that graduates are equipped with the skills and experience they need to compete.

**Publisher:** Council for Industry in Higher Education (CIHE)

**Availability:** Download (1.52Mb pdf) from <http://www.cihe-uk.com/docs/PUBS/0802Grademployability.pdf>

**Learning to Work: Enhancing employability and enterprise in Scottish further and higher education.** (2004)

"Learning to Work presents ideas for learners, educators and employers to work together to create new and better learning experiences. This paper aims to propose a definition for employability and enterprise in the context of further and higher education; challenge some common assumptions and show how employability and enterprise can fit within the context of the wider purposes of education; and offer some thoughts on a more holistic approach for further and higher education, which integrates many of these aspects within a core framework embedded in the whole learning experience."

This paper provided the impetus for the Quality Enhancement theme of employability and was followed up in 2005 by an implementation plan (available at [http://www.sfc.ac.uk/about/new\\_about\\_council\\_papers/about\\_papers\\_10nov05/paper\\_sfc0527.pdf](http://www.sfc.ac.uk/about/new_about_council_papers/about_papers_10nov05/paper_sfc0527.pdf)).

**Publisher:** Scottish Funding Council

**Availability:** Download (266kb pdf) from [http://www.sfc.ac.uk/publications/pubs\\_other\\_sfefcarchive/learning\\_to\\_work.pdf](http://www.sfc.ac.uk/publications/pubs_other_sfefcarchive/learning_to_work.pdf)

**QAA Code of Practice: Career education, information and guidance** (2001) and **Work-based and placement learning** (2007)

The Code of Practice is a statement of good practice that has been endorsed by the higher education community. There are two sections relevant to employability. Section 8 of the Code of Practice is intended to help higher education institutions to ensure both that they are meeting students' expectations in respect of their preparedness for their future career, and that they are producing graduates equipped to meet the demands of the employment market of today and tomorrow. Section 9 is intended to provide guidance on work-based and placement learning aspects of a higher education award and to support such arrangements where they are a pre-determined and integral part of the award, and where their learning outcomes clearly contribute to its overall aims.

Academic staff in departments and schools do not necessarily need to be familiar with the detail of all of the various sections of the Code of practice, although they might well be expected to be familiar with the institutional policies it informs and any parts which are particularly relevant to their own responsibilities.

**Publisher:** Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)

**Availability:** View (html) or download (40kb & 151kb pdf) from  
<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/codeOfPractice/>

These are just a few examples of generic and discipline-specific resources. For more visit:

The HE Academy Employability & Enterprise web page: <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/learning/employability>

Scottish Enhancement Themes: <http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/>

The Higher Education Academy Subject Centre for Geography, Earth & Environmental Sciences (GEES)  
<http://www.gees.ac.uk/>

# Flexible Delivery

## Quality Enhancement Theme Work on Flexible Delivery

"Institutions in Higher Education face a growing challenge to develop and adapt their provision to support mass higher education in the 21st century, and to allow greater flexibility for today's large and diverse student body. In addition, there is the fast pace of change which impacts on Higher Education from the external environment. Flexible Delivery was interpreted in the widest possible sense, to encompass not only modes of study, but also methods of delivery, together with underpinning support and infrastructure. By providing a picture of, and tools for a learning environment that addresses the diverse needs of different types of learners, the Committee aimed to transform the way HEIs in Scotland consider flexible delivery, taking into account the work of JISC and the SFC." Work began in 2004 and was completed at the end of 2006.

More information on the theme and details of the activities and outcomes can be found at <http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/themes/FlexibleDelivery/>

## A practical guide to providing flexible learning in further and higher education. Casey, J. & Wilson, P. (2006)

This guide, one of the outcomes of the Enhancement Theme work, "is intended to help those involved with planning, managing, designing and delivering flexible courses, as well as those working on the preparation of teaching and learning materials." The guide provides an overview of what is meant by flexible learning, a variety of tools to support curriculum design, a discussion on implementing flexible learning within organisational structures and additional case studies and resources.

**Publisher:** Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)

**Availability:** Download (1Mb pdf) from

[http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/documents/flexibleDelivery/FD\\_Flexible\\_Learning\\_JCaseyFINALWEB.pdf](http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/documents/flexibleDelivery/FD_Flexible_Learning_JCaseyFINALWEB.pdf)

## e-Learning in GEES

These web pages developed and maintained by the GEES Subject Centre contain a wide variety of resources that explore the use of technology in learning and teaching in the disciplines. These include podcasting and screencasting, the use of technology within and to support fieldwork, visualisations and the development of on-line resources.

<http://www.gees.ac.uk/projtheme/elearning/geesel.htm>

## Distance Learning in GEES at the Taught Postgraduate Level. Various authors (June 2005)

These two papers discuss distance learning for postgraduate students in the GEES disciplines. "GIS teaching via distance learning: experiences and lessons learned" by Elsner, draws on seven-years' experience of postgraduate teaching GIS via distance learning mode in geography. "Taking the Distance out of Distance Learning" by Skerratt & Murphy, explores how a range of web-based distance learning environment/sustainability taught postgraduate awards have been received over the last five years, both from the learners' and from the tutors' viewpoint, and also discusses the importance of student-tutor interaction in determining the quality of delivery and ensuring learner retention.

**Publisher:** GEES Subject Centre

**Availability:** Download (pdf) from <http://www.gees.ac.uk/pubs/planet/#P14>

Free hard copies also available. Email: [info@gees.ac.uk](mailto:info@gees.ac.uk)

## E-learning for Geography's Teaching and Learning Spaces. Lynch, K. et al (2008)

Abstract: The authors embed their advocacy of educational technology in a consideration of contemporary pedagogy in geography. They provide examples of e-learning from a wide range of teaching and learning contexts. They promote the idea that considering best practice with reference to educational technology will increase the versatility of teaching geography in higher education. On the basis of reviewing the pedagogic options associated with e-learning using a variety of technologies, and their promotion of versatility in the use of e-learning approaches, they find and illustrate the new spaces that have become available to teachers and learners of geography.

**Publisher:** Journal of Geography in Higher Education, Carfax Publishing Ltd. Volume 32 No.1 pp135-149

**Availability:** Institutional or personal subscription

**Does distance e-learning work? A comparison between distance and face-to-face [Earth Science] learners using e-learning materials.** de Freitas, S.& Roberts, G.P. (2003)

Abstract: This study compares continual assessment data, intake numbers, retention numbers and final examination grades of a mixed cohort of face-to-face and distance learners against similar data from previous years where e-learning materials were not used in order to test whether e-learning materials can support the same quality and quantity of teaching and learning for both face-to-face and distance learners. The results for this cohort of learners demonstrate that: (i) distance e-learners score as well and sometimes better than face-to-face learners; (ii) face-to-face student numbers have increased; (iii) overall, student retention and student attendance have been maintained; (iv) final examination results have been maintained or in some cases improved; (v) lecturer workload was high, but not unmanageable, and it is clear how manageability can be improved.

**Publisher:** ALT-J, Routledge, Volume 11, Issue 3 , pp69 – 87

**Availability:** Institutional or personal subscription

**Effective Practice with e-Learning Guide.** JISC (2004)

This guide illustrates some of the key implications in designing for learning and offers an insight into how e-learning can be integrated into established practice to benefit both learners and practitioners. It is built around a sequence of 10 case studies illustrating practitioners' solutions to day-to-day challenges. An updated version is due to be released in Spring 2009.

**Publisher:** JISC

**Availability:** Download (490kb pdf) from <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/programmes/elearningpedagogy/practice.aspx>

**Mind the gap: students' expectations and perceptions of induction to distance learning in higher education.** Forrester, G. & Parkinson, G. (2004)

This paper reports on research which investigated students' experiences of induction to distance learning. The research sought to illuminate students' expectations and perceptions of their induction experiences in order to inform the provision of services offered to 36 students commencing three distance learning programmes. The paper concludes that the approach of identifying gaps has facilitated in gauging students' needs as distance learners, the level of student satisfaction with their induction and also has revealed specific areas where developments in the induction process can be made.

**Publisher:** University of Leeds

**Availability:** Download (153kb Word) from <http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/00003842.doc>

**QAA Code of Practice: Collaborative provision and flexible and distributed learning (including e-learning)** (2004)

The Code of Practice is a statement of good practice that has been endorsed by the higher education community. 'Flexible and distributed learning' is used here to characterise approaches to teaching, learning and assessment that do not require a student's place of study to be physically located within the institution (the awarding institution) whose academic award is being sought through successful completion of the programme of study; do not assume that a student's programme of study is necessarily delivered directly by the awarding institution; do not assume that a student is necessarily directly supported by staff of the awarding institution; do not assume that a student is routinely working with other students; and do not necessarily require assessment of a student's achievement to take place at the location of the awarding institution. Academic staff in departments and schools do not necessarily need to be familiar with the detail of all of the various sections of the Code of practice, although they might well be expected to be familiar with the institutional policies it informs and any parts which are particularly relevant to their own responsibilities.

**Publisher:** Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)

**Availability:** View (html) or download (189kb pdf) from <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/codeOfPractice/>

These are just a few examples of generic and discipline-specific resources. For more visit:

The HE Academy e-Learning web page: <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/learning/elearning>

Scottish Enhancement Themes: <http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/>

The Higher Education Academy Subject Centre for Geography, Earth & Environmental Sciences (GEES)

<http://www.gees.ac.uk/>

# The First Year: Engagement and Empowerment

## Quality Enhancement Theme Work on The First Year

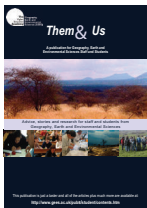
"The focus for the First Year steering committee was 'What do we really want students to gain from their first year in higher education?' For the purposes of the Theme, the first year was defined as year one entry into a higher education programme, as this is when most students have their initial experience of higher education. However, the committee was mindful of the relevance of aspects of its work to direct entry to later years. The committee's initial discussions were informed by a scoping paper written by Professor Terry Mayes. The result being to consider how the first year experience can promote student engagement and empowerment, with the overall aim being to make the first year a transformational experience:

- Student engagement: This is seen as a challenging area, its scope including strategies to raise the level of student engagement with the first year, personal development and HE life more generally.
- Student empowerment: This concerns equipping students to take control of their learning and to become autonomous learners. Two key ideas here are the personalisation of taught provision and the development of an extended transition process."

Details of the activities and outcomes from this activity can be found at: <http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/themes/FirstYear/>

Publications include Personalisation of the first year; Transition to and during the first year; Personal Development Planning in the First Year; Curriculum design for the First Year; Sharing and reflecting on international experiences and initiatives; Peer support in the first year; Introducing scholarship skills: academic writing; Transforming assessment and feedback.

## Them & Us - A publication for Geography, Earth and Environmental Science Staff and Students. Evans, S. (Ed. 2007)



'Them and Us' is a publication themed around the student learning experience. It contains articles, advice, information and research written by students and staff. It is intended that this will help staff and students to understand what it is like to be on the 'other side of the fence' and work together to create a single discipline community rather than two communities within a discipline. As well as the hardcopy publication a collection of links to other related projects, additional articles and further information can be found on the associated wiki pages.

**Publisher:** GEES Subject Centre

**Availability:** Download (1.2Mb pdf) from <http://www.gees.ac.uk/pubs/student/contents.htm>  
Free hard copies also available. Email: [info@gees.ac.uk](mailto:info@gees.ac.uk)

## Recruitment and Retention in the GEES Disciplines. Tilson, E. (Ed. 2008)

This publication provides a variety of papers arising from the 2007 GEES Subject Centre conference on the same theme. The papers follow the 'lifecycle' of a student from secondary school (GCSE, AS and A-level) into higher education (undergraduate and postgraduate) and on to employment. Each of the papers in this issue has been written from a different perspective—and each is interesting and adds to the debate on how HEIs can move forward in recruitment and retention in the GEES disciplines.

**Publisher:** GEES Subject Centre

**Availability:** Download (1Mb pdf) from <http://www.gees.ac.uk/pubs/planet/index.htm#P19>  
Free hard copies also available. Email: [info@gees.ac.uk](mailto:info@gees.ac.uk)

## Approaches to Learning: a study of first year geography undergraduates. Maguire, S., Evans, S.E. & Dyas, L. (2001)

This journal paper reports the findings of a survey conducted to investigate how a cohort of geography undergraduates approach learning. The students were exposed to a geography-based skills development programme which emphasised a deep approach to learning. The learning approaches they adopt and how their perceived confidence levels change after one year in higher education are discussed.

**Publisher:** Journal of Geography in Higher Education, Carfax Publishing Ltd. Volume 25 No.1 pp95-109

**Availability:** Institutional or personal subscription

### **Starting Point: Teaching Entry Level Geoscience**

This USA-based website is designed for staff and postgraduate students who teach undergraduate entry-level geoscience, environmental science, or related courses. Each section describes a teaching method, why/when it is useful, how it can be implemented, and a set of examples spanning the Earth system that can be used in your class. Although there are slight differences in terminology (e.g. faculty = academic staff) this resource is appropriate and relevant to higher education colleagues in UK.

<http://serc.carleton.edu/introgeo/>

### **Student Transition and Retention (STAR) Project**

The STAR project is based at the University of Ulster with the aim of increasing student retention. It focuses on the identification, analysis, dissemination and uptake of good practice in supporting students during periods of rapid transition from one learning environment to another. The project aims to address student needs at a variety of stages from pre-entry and induction to curriculum and staff development. The web pages provide a variety of resources, papers and case studies.

**Publisher:** Student Transition and Retention (STAR) Project, University of Ulster

**Availability:** Resources freely available from <http://www.ulster.ac.uk/star/>

### **The First Year Experience. A Literature Review.** Harvey, L., Drew, S. & Smith, M. (2006)

This literature review aims to consider the research literature and institutional 'grey material' exploring the undergraduate and postgraduate first-year experience and to identify key emerging issues to inform university policy makers, practitioners, researchers and other interested parties. In this review 'first year' refers to the first-year of study of an undergraduate or postgraduate student in a higher education institution. However, almost all the published literature refers to students in their first year of undergraduate study.

In addition to the executive summary and full review, a set of four briefings papers on key themes arising from the review are also available:

Briefing paper on induction

Briefing paper on integration [into the academic community]

Briefing paper for higher education policy makers

Briefing paper for researcher

**Publisher:** Higher Education Academy

**Availability:** Download (pdf) from [http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/projects/detail/lr\\_2006\\_harvey](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/projects/detail/lr_2006_harvey)

### **Higher Education Academy First Year Experience Project.** Yorke, M. & Longden, B. (2007/2008)

This project looked at first year full-time undergraduate students in specific disciplines from a number of varied institutions from across the UK. The project was divided into two phases: phase one surveyed students about their perceptions of their experience as students and phase two reviewed all those who were recorded as not continuing their studies. The outcomes of this project are summarised in two freely available reports.

**Publisher:** Higher Education Academy

**Availability:** Download (314kb pdf) from <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/research/surveys/fye>

These are just a few examples of generic and discipline-specific resources For more visit:

Scottish Enhancement Themes: <http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/>

The Higher Education Academy Subject Centre for Geography, Earth & Environmental Sciences (GEES)

<http://www.gees.ac.uk/>

# Research-Teaching Linkages: enhancing graduate attributes

## Quality Enhancement Theme Work on Research-Teaching Linkages

The focus of the Theme was on taught programmes and looked at how best at institutional and programme level, links between research strategies and activities can support the student learning experience in ways that can enhance learner achievement of research-type attributes. The Theme was concerned with:

- the progressive development of these types of skills and attributes throughout the continuum of the undergraduate and postgraduate programme i.e. from commencement of the undergraduate learning and
- how best to support the achievement of such attributes through utilising research, creative, scholarly and performance work to inform the curriculum; teaching, learning and assessment activities and; the learning environment.

The institutional strand comprised all 20 HEIs in Scotland reflecting on and exploring Research-Teaching Linkages and how they can be maximised to enhance the achievement of graduate attributes. There were nine discipline projects representing cognate areas of study focussing on, the sharing of and developing on, current and emerging practice at the discipline level. The Theme commenced in July 2006 and has just completed its programme of work.

More information on the Theme and details of the activities and outcomes can be found at <http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/themes/ResearchTeaching/>

## Linking Teaching & Research and Undertaking Pedagogic Research in GEES. Various authors (2003).

This special edition of PLANET brings together 25 short papers on pedagogic research and linking teaching and research in Geography, Earth & Environmental Sciences. It is organised into two main sections. Part A focuses on linking teaching and research. Part B focuses on pedagogic research. With respect to linking teaching and research, contributors in this edition demonstrate how these links can be managed through curriculum design, national and international field work training, multi-media and GIS packages, departmental research conferences, utilising case studies from business, adopting problem-based and team-work approaches in the classroom and through working in partnership with the local community to understand better environmental problems.

**Publisher:** GEES Subject Centre

**Availability:** Download (0.5Mb pdf) from <http://www.gees.ac.uk/pubs/planet/#PSE5>  
Free hard copies also available. Email: [info@gees.ac.uk](mailto:info@gees.ac.uk)

## Linking Teaching and Research in GEES.

In 2002-2003 the GEES Subject Centre was involved in a multi-disciplinary, UK-wide project to explore the linkages between teaching and research including the identification of case studies in the disciplines. Since then, the Centre has built on this work, continues to gather more examples of practice and includes linking teaching and research as a major topic in its departmental workshops programme and other key activities. This web page provides a useful collection of examples of practice, discussion pieces, links, key reading and other resources.  
<http://www.gees.ac.uk/projtheme/linktr/linktr.htm>

## Integrating Research and Education in the Geosciences.

This US-based website contains educational modules for use by teachers, students and researchers. These collections offer numerous ways in which digital library technologies can be used to translate exciting new scientific discoveries into effective instructional practice. It includes instructional materials that link scientific content to teaching activities. Instructional modules focus on three themes: Earth System Science, Diversity in the Geosciences, and Using Geoscience Instrumentation, Databases, and the New Cyberinfrastructure.  
[http://serc.carleton.edu/research\\_education/](http://serc.carleton.edu/research_education/)

**Engagement in Authentic Geoscience Research: Evaluation of Research Experiences of Undergraduate and Secondary Teachers.** Jarrett, O & Burnley, P (2003)

This paper reports findings of the first year of a three-year summer geoscience program funded under the National Science Foundation Research Experiences for Undergraduates (NSF-REU) initiative. In this program, undergraduates and high school teachers work with a consortium of faculty from five southern colleges and universities. Eight undergraduates and four high school teachers engaged in four research projects initiated by faculty teams. This paper examines the effect of the program on the participants' interest in research, career plans, and attitude toward science.

This volume also contains many examples of geoscience research experiences / partnerships with schools and the public. Although not all focused at HE students there are still many interesting ideas.

**Publisher:** Journal of Geoscience Education, NAGT. Volume 51 No.1, pp85-90

**Availability:** Full text of all articles can be downloaded from <http://nagt.org/nagt/jge/abstracts/jan03.html>

**Teaching and research in Geography: An introduction** Butlin, R A (Ed) (1999)

This article introduces a symposium on the complementary and conflicting roles of teaching and research. It argues that a pluralistic view of the combinations of teaching and research should be favoured and financially rewarded, given the wide range of sizes, histories and missions of departments of geography in the UK. Issues needing further debate and understanding include: the degree of correlation between teaching and research and the role and value of pedagogic research.

**Publisher:** Journal of Geography in Higher Education, Carfax Publishing Ltd. Volume 23 No.3 pp397-411

**Availability:** Institutional or personal subscription

**Case Studies of Linking Discipline-based Research and Teaching in Disciplines, Departments, Institutions and National Systems.** Healey, M. & Jenkins, A. (2007)

These various case studies illustrate ways in which teaching and research have been brought together in higher education with examples drawn from Australia, Canada, Denmark, Ireland, Hong Kong, Netherlands, New Zealand, UK and the USA. They focus on links between teaching and disciplinary research and cover 7 disciplines including geography, earth and environmental sciences.

**Publisher:** Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

**Availability:** Download (424kb pdf) from

[http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/documents/events/20070308/ResearchTeaching\\_Case\\_Studies\\_AJenkins.pdf](http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/documents/events/20070308/ResearchTeaching_Case_Studies_AJenkins.pdf)

**Linking Teaching and Research in Disciplines and Departments.** Jenkins, A., Healey, M. & Zetter, R. (2007)

This paper seeks to support the effective links between teaching and discipline-based research in disciplinary communities and in academic departments. Suggestions are offered as to how disciplinary communities and departments can strengthen the good practice that already exists. The arguments are evidenced and illustrated by research and case studies drawn largely from Australasia, Europe and North America.

**Publisher:** Higher Education Academy

**Availability:** Download (858kb pdf) from

[http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/York/documents/LinkingTeachingAndResearch\\_April07.pdf](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/York/documents/LinkingTeachingAndResearch_April07.pdf)

These are just a few examples of generic and discipline-specific resources. For more visit:

The HE Academy Teaching and Research web page: <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/research/teaching>

Scottish Enhancement Themes: <http://www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/>

The Higher Education Academy Subject Centre for Geography, Earth & Environmental Sciences (GEES)

<http://www.gees.ac.uk/>

## Endorsements / Reviews from Scottish colleagues

*"The Enhancement Themes are a Scottish sector wide initiative designed to support and engage the sector in collective consideration of learning and Teaching and the enhancement of the student learning experience. It is important that the Themes engage with as wide arrange of constituencies as possible to ensure dissemination and embedding of outcomes and we very much welcome that GEES has undertaken this work to support the discipline in engaging with the Themes. The pack provides an interface between the large repository of Theme documents and the subject specific information for the GEES area. It is a very welcome development and we hope colleagues in the GEES area will find it useful resource and reference point for continuing engagement with the work of Themes in Scotland."- SQE*

*"This guide provides an excellent example of joined-up thinking and collaboration, aligning the large range of Enhancement Theme resources with those developed by the Subject Centre which have a discipline-specific focus. We hope that the information in this resource pack will be of interest and will help stimulate the sharing of practice and discussions surrounding enhancing learning and teaching in the GEES discipline areas. Although primarily targeted at colleagues in Scotland, the valuable resources developed by the Enhancement Themes are relevant and of potential interest to colleagues throughout the UK."- Alastair Robertson, Senior Advisor, Scotland, Higher Education Academy*

### **Further Information**

Further information about this resource pack including a downloadable version can be obtained from the GEES Subject Centre:

Tel: 01752 233 560

Email: [info@gees.ac.uk](mailto:info@gees.ac.uk)

Web: <http://www.gees.ac.uk>

The Subject Centre intends to revise and update this resource pack on a regular basis, thereby keeping the recommended resources useful and relevant. Please feel free to get in contact if you are aware of any other resources that you think would be particularly useful to others, we very much value your input.

