



enhancement
themes

Scotland's Quality Enhancement Themes: a creative approach engaging the sector and embracing institutional diversity



Scottish Funding Council
Promoting further and higher education



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Workshop objectives are to:

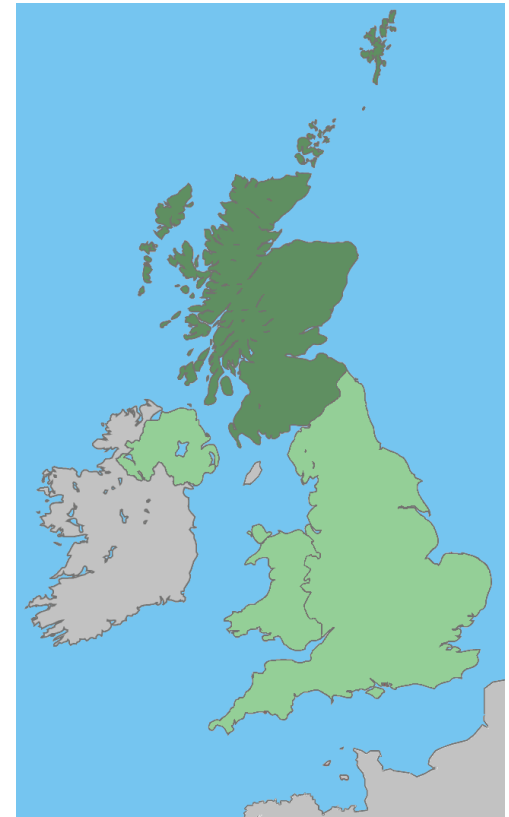
- present the Scottish Quality Enhancement Themes, a national approach to quality enhancement that recognises institutional diversity
- discuss the:
 - evolving and creative approach of the Quality Enhancement Themes
 - engagement of institutions within the Themes
 - benefits of this type of approach to quality enhancement: at an individual, institutional and national level



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A little Scottish background...

- Scotland is part of the United Kingdom
- devolution with own parliament since 1999
- education system has always been different in Scotland





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A little sectoral background...

- 20 higher education institutions including:
 - two specialist art colleges
 - one conservatoire specialising in music and drama (and from 2009-10, dance)
 - agricultural college
- no undergraduate student fees
- undergraduate curriculum based on four-year honours and three-year non-honours degree programmes
- participation in higher education which exceeds 50%



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A little QAA background...

- The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
- QAA checks how UK universities maintain their own academic standards and quality...
- UK-wide body but different arrangements in each part of the UK



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Enhancement-led approach

Emphases:

- partnership: Universities Scotland, Scottish Funding Council, National Union of Students (NUS) Scotland, student participation in quality Scotland (sparqs), QAA Scotland and the Higher Education Academy
- enhancing the student learning experience
- student engagement



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Quality Enhancement Framework

Since 2003

Five elements:

- institution-led quality review (internal subject review)
- student engagement in quality management
- public information
- national programme of Quality Enhancement Themes
- Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR)



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Discussion questions:

1. What might be the added value of engaging institutions (individually and collectively) in addressing areas of concern relating to learning and teaching?
For example, in addressing assessment



Enhancement Themes

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- Topics of interest to the Scottish higher education sector that are explored and developed with the aim of enhancing the student learning experience



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Who manages them..?

The work of the Enhancement Themes is planned and directed by the Scottish Higher Education Enhancement Committee (SHEEC)

- Chair: vice principal
- Members: institutional and student
- Observers: SFC, Universities Scotland, HEA, sparqs and NUS
- Supported by QAA officers

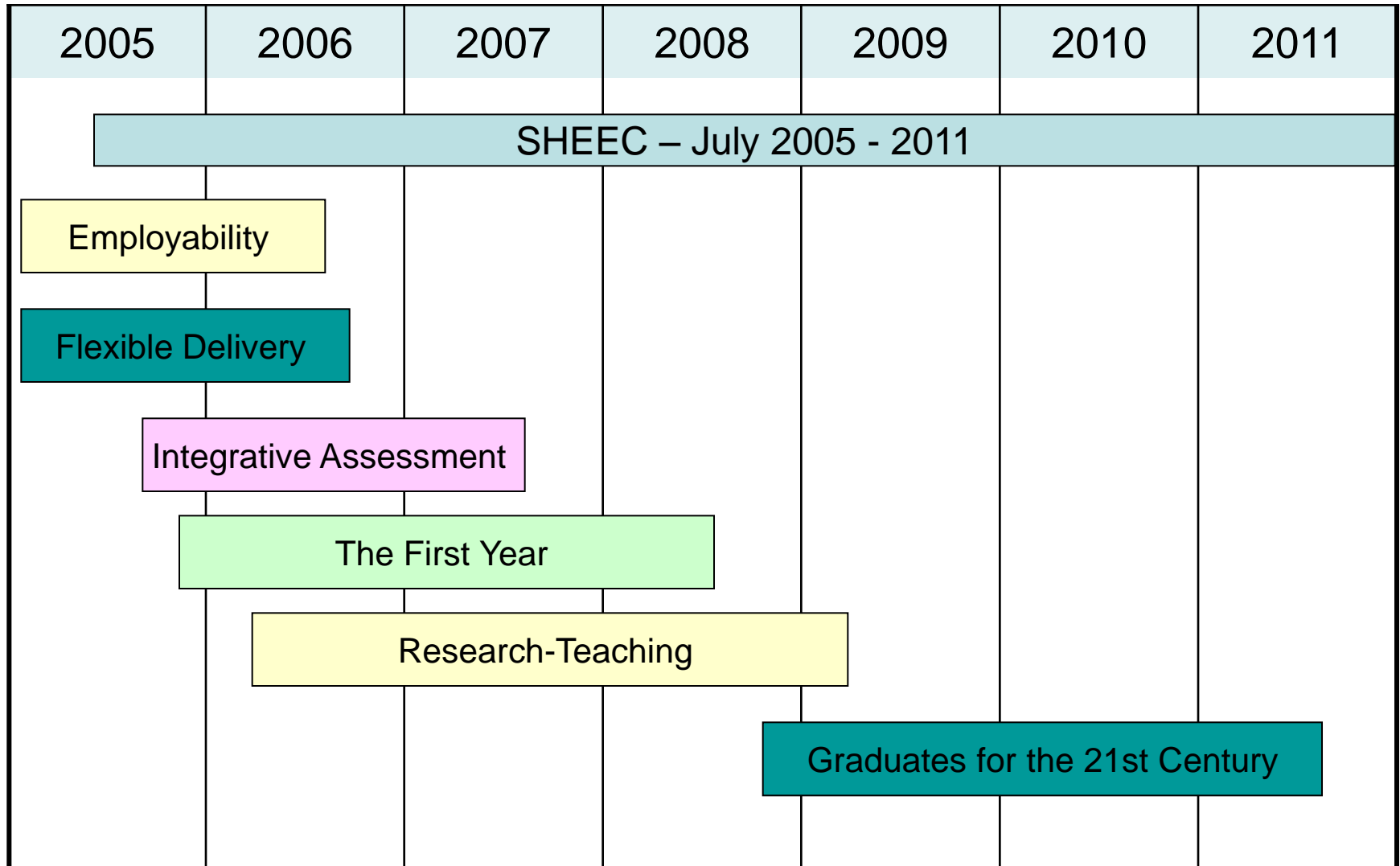


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Chosen topics to date...

- Assessment and Integrative assessment
- Responding to student needs
- Employability
- Flexible delivery
- First year: engagement and empowerment
- Research-teaching linkages: enhancing graduate attributes
- Graduates for the 21st Century: integrating the Enhancement Themes

Plan of Enhancement Themes





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How are they set up...?

- scoping study and sector consulted
- steering committee, institutional contacts
- scope, aims and objectives
- focus on student learning experience, identify emerging good practice nationally and internationally
- programme of public and institutional events: conferences, workshops, seminars, expert national and international consultations



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Outcomes

- published outcomes
 - projects reports on specific sub-themes
 - Themes web-site and ET newsletter
 - workshops, seminars, conference, institutional discussions toolkits
 - models and exemplars of good practice, case studies, templates,
- annual Enhancement Themes conference
- time relevant: consideration of outcomes



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Some things to remember...

- Themes are not the panacea nor will they be able to answer all questions
- time and resource limited but
- cumulative reflection to enhance the student learning experience



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Discussion questions:

2. How does this approach align with your own experience of quality enhancement?
3. What good practice can you identify from your own experience or from the Scottish experience (as outlined in the presentation) which could be shared with other institutions/systems?



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Are they worth it...?

- identify sector-wide strategic needs/aspirations
- sector-led and owned
 - engages with the academic community at all levels
 - engages with the student body
- national and international good practice
- support the management of change
- enhancement of the student learning experience



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Graduates for the 21st Century: integrating the Enhancement Themes

- integrating and consolidating approach that will consider aspects of all the previous Themes
- *What should be the attributes of a graduate from Scottish Higher Education in the 21st century and how can the achievement of these attributes best be supported?*



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Graduates for the 21st Century

- shift in approach: process rather than product
 - steering committee
 - driven by institutions: the creation of teams, allows for individual institutional priorities to be addressed
 - areas of shared interest: the completed Themes, emergent, facilitated by project facilitators, collective consideration
 - Sectoral: what is the point of higher education, the symposium series



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The plan...

- steering committee began work February 2009
- Theme will continue throughout 2009-10 and 2010-11
- evidenced through institutional activity and Enhancement Themes website
- Enhancement Themes Annual Conference 2 and 3 March 2010



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Discussion questions:

4. What might be the benefits of this type of approach to quality enhancement: at an individual, institutional and national level?
5. What barriers could there be at each of these levels?



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The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.
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Enhancement Landscape

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- **HEA:** Higher Education Academy
- **NUS:** National Union of Students
- **QEF:** Quality Enhancement Framework
- **SFC:** Scottish Funding Council
- **SHEEC:** Scottish Higher Education Enhancement Committee
- **sparqs:** student participation in quality scotland
- **US:** Universities Scotland