



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH
Academic Development

Surfacing student voice during curriculum development and impact evaluation

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University of Edinburgh Learning & Teaching
Conference, 16th June 2026

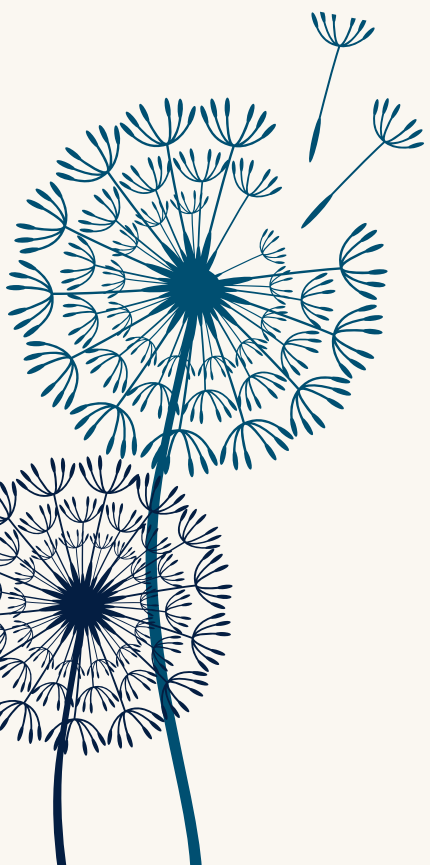


Curriculum design and review: Pillars of impact

Aims of Project

This project aims to develop a curriculum design, review and evaluation framework with a set of supporting ‘pillars of impact’ case studies and resources to help key stakeholders to design and evaluate impactful curricula which enhances the quality of the student learning experience.

QAA Collaborative Enhancement Project: [Pillars of Impact](#)



Project Partners

- Kingston University (project lead)
- University of Brighton
- University of Edinburgh
- University of Staffordshire
- University of Warwick

[in collaboration with the SEDA Curriculum Development Network]



[Image: Hilary Wason](#)



Pillars of Impact: Development and Evaluation of Curriculum Design Framework

Purpose & Focus: what are you trying to achieve?

Use these pillars to design your curriculum development or evaluation activities

Student Voice

- Centring student perspectives & experiences throughout the curriculum design process

Collaborative Working

- Building collaborative ways of working between course teams, departments and stakeholders

Support, Skills & Knowledge

- Developing staff & stakeholders' capacity and capability for sustained change

Curriculum Enhancement

- Transforming learning, teaching and assessment practices

Strategic Alignment

- Ensuring coherence with institutional values, goals and policies

Wider Context

- Connecting to external drivers, benchmarks and contexts



UoE Case Study: Challenge Courses

“Challenge Courses are institution-wide interdisciplinary courses dealing with issues that are unbounded, complex and resisting straightforward definition. Drawing on our strengths in research and scholarship, as set out in the University’s research priorities and institutional mission, they provide an opportunity for students to explore and build understanding of globally significant themes and topics from multiple disciplinary perspectives, without the need for prior knowledge.”

[UoE Learning and Teaching Strategy: Challenge Courses \(SharePoint\)](#)

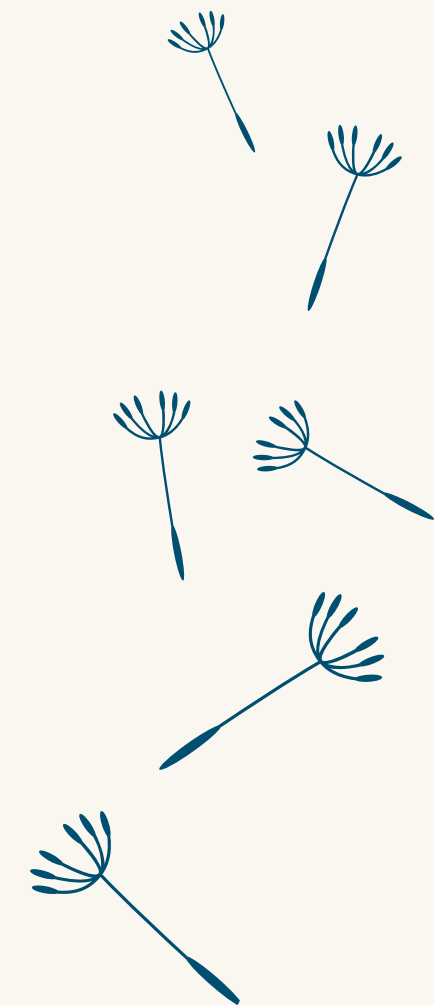
Preliminary findings

Participants agreed that the Pillars were appropriate.

Discussing the framework prompted reflections about the design of their Challenge Courses and prompted discussions about future course activities and plans.

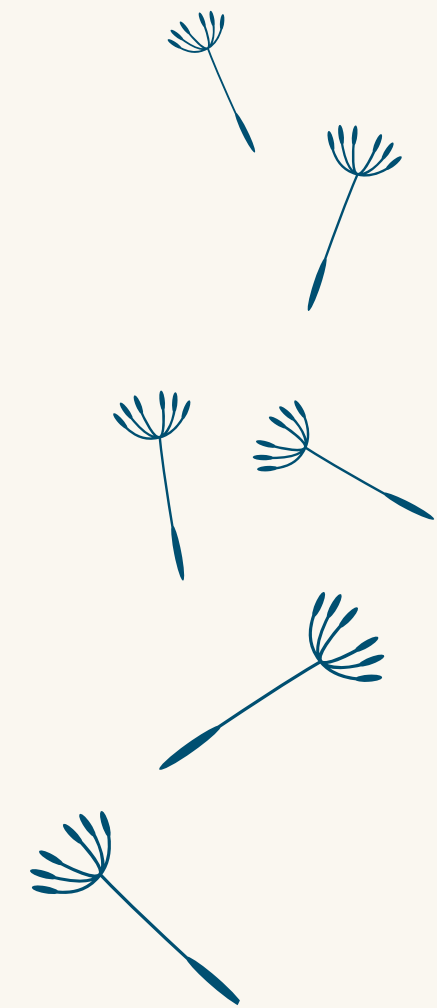
The Pillars helped move beyond a focus on content.

The discussions about strategic alignment encouraged connections and awareness that were previously less visible.



Prompted awareness (visibility) and further reflection to delve deeper into the curriculum design process:

“And I think there's something about that codification that is important and helping kind of people recognise that what they're already doing or prompting further activity in an area that they were thinking about, that they're thinking about anyway, but kind of maybe stop at stage one and there are two or three other things that you might be prompted to do as a result of kind of continuing questions.”



Pillar 1 - Student Voice

Definition: Actively centring diverse student perspectives and experiences throughout the curriculum design process

Prompts: themed questions to encourage stakeholders to explore meaningful partnership with students in curriculum transformation.

**Inclusivity,
Representation and
Power**

**Mechanisms &
Opportunities**

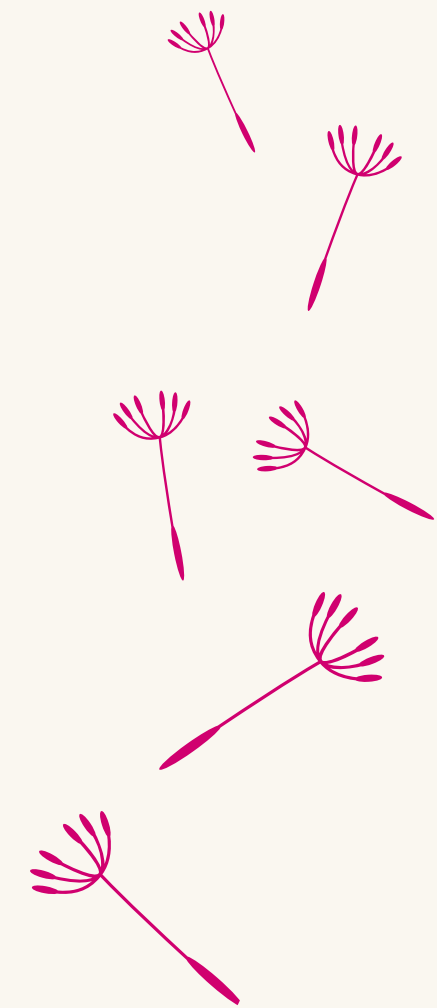
**Student
Expectations &
Choices**

**Building Student
Agency**

**Ethical
Considerations**

Student Voice: difficult to achieve

“I think all of these pillars, kind of really reflect what we were trying to achieve [when designing the Challenge Course]. I think the one that we were maybe least successful at was actually the student voice and getting the student voice in and that was partly because accessing students was difficult at certain moments of the year, but also because it was a course that didn't sit with anyone's School, actually kind of then getting hold of any students who might kind of fit was more difficult.”



Insights from discussing the Student Voice Pillar



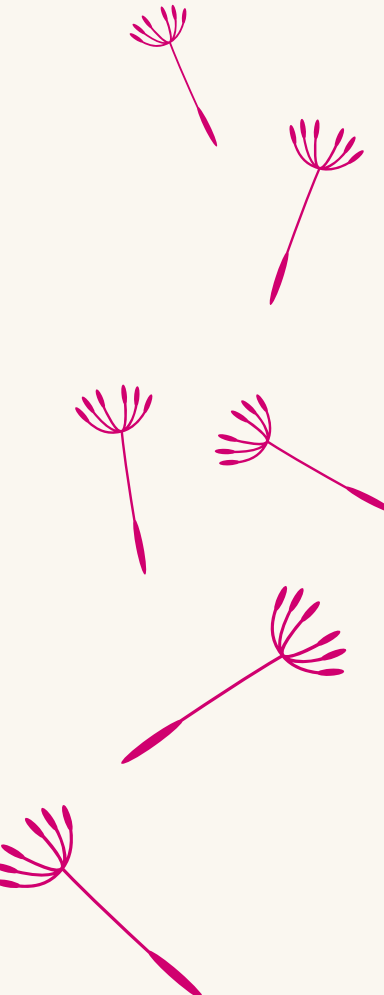
The level of Challenge Courses (SCQF 7 & 8) made it more difficult to get representative student voice(s).

Sources of capturing student voice include formal document such as mid and end of course feedback.

Course activities including assessments can provide valuable insight and feedback from students.

Listening to Student Voice while teaching Challenge Courses

“...there have been various moments where we have engaged with and listen to the student voice. That might have been conversations and tutorials that are kind of completely informal and non-documented but are really important for getting a sense of how the course is going for a student through to mid-semester feedback, course evaluations.”



“So there were two reflective blogs that were part of the assessment for the course and that's maybe where there were some really rich kind of insights into the students' experiences and the reflections were focused on the students' choice of a two week block within the course and then their experiences and the process of doing a group project.”

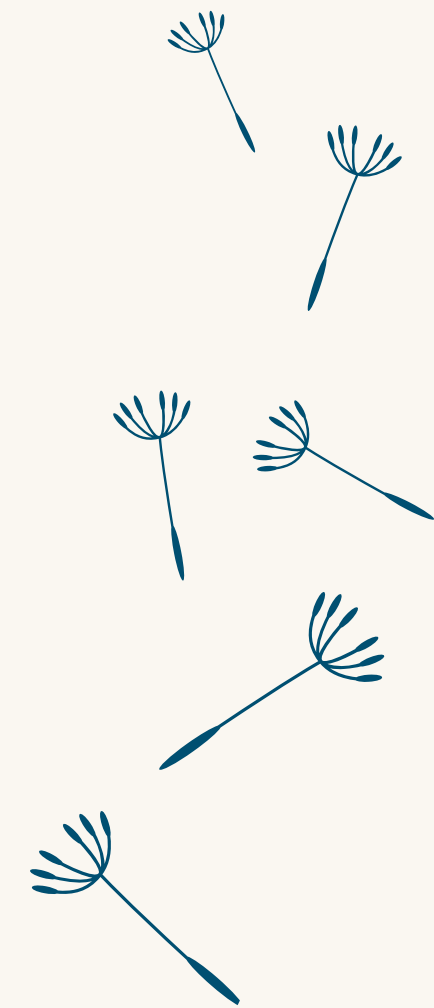
Collaborating with students

Students as collaborators to co-present at conferences:

“So I guess kind of another kind of channel for working collaboratively and including student voice that's about kind of sharing the practice in the course, which is not just those of us who are involved in delivering the course, but also some of the students who experienced what we had created and kind of bringing that into a dialogue.”

Importance of student agency being built into the curriculum design process:

“...building student agency or kind of degrees of choice were really kind of important to how we were thinking about the course. But I think it would be fair to say that not everyone who was involved in the course design would necessarily have thought about those things initially, but the way in which we were putting together the various workshops we had to design the course, kind of make sure that people were prompted to do things that if they were left on their own and designing their own course in isolation, they might not have done.”





The potential of the framework

- Strengthen curriculum design processes through structured planning and evaluation
- Identify gaps and opportunities in curriculum design processes
- Enhance collaboration and stakeholder engagement
- Improve student outcomes and experiences
- Demonstrate the strategic value of investing in structured curriculum design processes
- Contribute to sector-wide knowledge and best practice

10 September 2026

2026 Curriculum Development Conference

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📍 Location	📅 Date	🕒 Time	£ Ticket Cost	📅 Event Type
<u>Penrhyn Road, Town House</u>	10 September 2026	09:30 - 16:00	Free - but tickets are limited	Conference



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