

The 'Focus on Assessment and Feedback' project

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The origins of the [Focus On Assessment and Feedback project](#) were the analysis of the outcomes of eight [Enhancement-Led Institutional Review \(ELIR\)](#) reports from 2013-2014, which suggested that there would be benefit in QAAS carrying out development work to support the sector in enhancing feedback to students on their assessed work.

While good practice in this area is evident in the institutions reviewed, it was also identified as an area for development in seven of the eight reports – and has also been a frequently-occurring topic in analyses of the National Student Survey.

QAAS follow up ELIR outcomes with each institution individually, and QAA Scotland can also undertake work across the sector to support institutions working collectively on common areas for development through the national [Enhancement Themes](#), each theme running for three years.

The 'Focus On Assessment and Feedback' project was intended to promote collaborative working and was undertaken with support from the [Scottish Higher Education Enhancement Committee \(SHEEC\)](#). The 'Focus on Assessment and Feedback' project was intended to run for one year and provide a targeted activity intended to help institutions with the outcomes of ELIR.

The project was launched with a scoping exercise involving all 18 Scottish institutions and student associations to determine the areas where development activity could best be targeted. We received detailed responses from 16 institutions and three student associations. This feedback identified a number of areas for cross-sector development including: the use of technology to support assessment and feedback; sharing institutional policy and practice in this area; and student-focused activity aimed at developing feedback on assessment.

During this session, we will outline the programme of work that was undertaken under the following headings:

- 1. The use of technology to support assessment and feedback** – we held an event aimed at practitioners, and included topics such as: using technology for: e-assessment; how to provide targeted and timely feedback; how to detect plagiarism, and data security. There were two plenary presentations from experts in the electronic management of assessment and feedback: Gill Ferrell from JISC/Northumbria University and Sally Jordan from the Open University. In addition, there were 12 case study presentations and posters from a range of Scottish institutions. There were x number of delegates. The event attracted considerable attention from Scottish universities as well as some demand from the College sector and from outside Scotland. An outcome of the event was the distillation of ['10 Key messages from practitioners to policy makers'](#) on the use of technology to support assessment and feedback.
- 2. Student-friendly feedback: how feedback is created and used by students** – we ran a project intended to provide an overview of current or recent work relating to assessment and feedback that is student-led or is being managed in

partnership with student associations. We worked with student associations, sparqs and NUS (Scotland) to form a clear picture of the projects that have taken (or are taking) place so this information can be shared across the sector. This work is intended to help us to think imaginatively about how existing experience can inform discussions on policy, practice and the design of student-friendly feedback. Student Associations from across Scotland provided examples of the work they have been doing to inform the project.

3. **Assessment and feedback policy and practice summit** – we ran this event to build on the outcomes of the other elements of the Focus On work and to address needs outlined in the scoping exercise. The intended audience was senior institutional colleagues and student representatives. The summit provided institutional representatives with an opportunity to present and discuss current policies, to share ways of working and inform good practice and consider the messages from the technology event and student association work.