



# STEP

Scotland's Tertiary  
Enhancement Programme

## STEP Bulletin February 2025

Welcome to your second STEP Bulletin. We plan to produce these after each of our Discovery Days and at other key points as STEP progresses. They are intended to be short, accessible and engaging updates on STEP to support dissemination of our collective work. We would encourage you to share as widely as possible within your institution. Please do also bring your colleagues' attention to our [website](https://step.ac.uk) – step.ac.uk – and encourage them to sign up to our [mailing list](#).

### Reflections on STEP Two: How will we work together?

Our first STEP topic, which will run until 2028, is **Supporting Diverse Learner Journeys**. During session 2024-25, staff and students from Scotland's colleges and universities are coming together for a series of Discovery Days – spread geographically across Scotland – to establish collaborative partnerships and design projects that will form the core of the programme.

On 29 January, we were delighted to welcome over 60 students and staff from Scotland's colleges, universities and sector agencies to the second of our Discovery Days. **STEP Two: How will we work together?** took place at the Glen Mhor Hotel in Inverness. It was wonderful to see so many colleagues for another active and engaging day of collaboration.

### STEP in your institution

We started the day with a presentation from **Professor Steve Tucker** and **Miles Rothoerl**, who talked us through the institutional approach to managing and embedding enhancement work at the University of Aberdeen. The presentation explored the benefits, challenges and enablers of embedding STEP in our institutions, before outlining the model that Aberdeen has adopted. This is relatively informal, with a Quality Enhancement Steering Group playing a key role along with a Learning and Teaching Enhancement Programme that supports a community of practice and is aligned to STEP activity. The

institution also holds an annual one-day Academic Development Symposium aligned with the STEP topic. Student partnership is supported by creating a mix of formal, semi formal and informal spaces and ensuring that students have the resources to be able to contribute meaningfully.



*Photo credit: Tim Winterburn*

## Transition Learning

Next, we had a presentation from **Nicola Mulholland** from New College Lanarkshire about one of the three collaborative projects on student transitions that were launched in summer 2024. The collaborative partners in this project are Dundee and Angus College, Fife College, SCQF Partnership and SWAP. The project will review learning and guidance programmes that have been developed in colleges and universities to support student transitions and disseminate findings about the shape of this current landscape to the rest of tertiary sector. It also aims to build awareness of how programmes can achieve SCQF credit-rating and how this can support students to enter higher education.

Nicola has prepared a short survey that we have circulated to STEP Network members. This will be open until 31 March. [Please do complete the form](#) with as many examples as you can and also share with relevant colleagues – this will help us build a valuable resource for the sector.

## Developing STEP Projects

We then split into groups, based around the four broad themes that emerged at the Navigation Session on 20 January:

1. Learning, Teaching and Assessment; Accessibility and Inclusion, UDL
2. Community and Belonging; Transitions and Pathways
3. Staff Development
4. Student Engagement and Partnership; Student Support

Colleagues were free to choose a project idea to work on, with many choosing to continue working on the same idea as they did at the Navigation Session. We asked each group to capture a working title and clear aim for their project, along with a rationale. We also asked groups to consider the scale of their project, taking into account its duration, the number of institutions involved, and the breadth of its scope. Finally, we asked institutions to provide a list of partner institutions and their roles, including project lead, collaborative partners and consultative partners.

| Project Lead   | Collaborative Partner   | Consultative Partner   |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Contract (institution)</li><li>• Funding (institution)</li><li>• Coordinating project team in-between STEP Network meetings / Implementation Days (individual)</li><li>• Attending meetings of the Topic Leadership Group (individual)</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Are fully involved with project – developing resources, organising events, undertaking research in their institution, hosting project events in their institution etc.</li><li>• Support the Project Lead</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Will be kept up-to-date with project progress</li><li>• Act as critical friend / sounding board</li><li>• Road test / pilot resources and feed back</li><li>• Attend STEP Network meetings / Implementation Days</li><li>• Support the Project Lead and Collaborative Partners</li><li>• Support dissemination of the project work</li></ul> |

*Project roles*

In the afternoon, each group presented their project idea. We had eight groups, with two proposing projects on assessment, two proposing the establishment of sector networks, one project on language accessibility, one on student engagement and partnership for time-poor and cash-poor students, one on supporting access, progression and successful outcomes in diverse student communities, and one on staff development. These ideas are being considered by the STEP Steering Group, whose feedback will help to shape activity for the remaining events this year.

Participants have been asked to go back to their institutions and continue discussions about their preferred areas of work, thinking about what work needs to be done to secure support, what work is already underway, and who should be involved. At our forthcoming events we will be thinking more carefully about the intended outcomes of these projects, how we will evaluate them, and how we can support student partnership and engagement. If you have any questions about any of the above, please drop us a line at [info@step.ac.uk](mailto:info@step.ac.uk).

Registration is now open for our next events. **STEP Three: How will we know we are making a difference?** will take place on 26 March 2025 in Glasgow and is open to STEP Network members. Our second **Navigation Session** will take place online on 17 March 2025 and is open to STEP Network members and any of their colleagues who think they may be interested in the emerging projects.