



STEP

Scotland's Tertiary
Enhancement Programme

STEP Bulletin April 2025

Welcome to your third 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 Three: How will we know we are making a difference?

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 26 March, we were delighted to welcome over 60 students and staff from Scotland's colleges, universities and sector agencies to the third of our Discovery Days. **STEP Three: How will we know we are making a difference?** took place at The Studio in Glasgow.

Student engagement strategies for our emerging projects

At our previous online Navigation Session, we had asked our project teams to consider how they would manage student engagement and partnership as part of their project. We started Discovery Day 3 with some plenary feedback on this, with each group saying a little about their anticipated approach.

As well as refreshing our collective memories about our eight emerging projects, this plenary discussion surfaced some important points about student engagement across STEP as a whole. It is clear that we need to coordinate our efforts, particularly in terms of how we ensure that students' voices are heard (such as taking care not to over-survey, or otherwise over-rely on the same student groups), how we ensure students are trained and supported, and how they are remunerated for engaging in STEP projects.

Evaluating impact

We then moved on to tackling our key question: **how will we know we are making a difference?** Clare Parks and Heather Fotheringham from QAA led us through an engaging activity in which we asked each team to write a headline from a future news story reporting on their success. In the afternoon Clare and Heather introduced the Theory of Change model and each team was asked to work on their own Theory of Change, considering the aim of their project before thinking about its process and outcomes. What activities might each project involve? What would the inputs and outputs of these activities be? And how would the team measure outcomes in the short, medium and long term?

Recording the day



We were joined by a small film crew who captured some footage (and interviews with our Topic Leads) for a short explainer video. This will be published on the STEP website, and we hope that it will also support colleagues in promoting STEP in their own institutions.

We were also joined by a small team of illustrators, who captured the day in the form of a visual minute. Taking our 'grid' motif as inspiration, they envisaged STEP as a trellis that will support our projects as they grow. We hope you like the finished illustration, which will be on display at Discovery Day 4. It will also be published on the STEP website so you can share it with your colleagues.

Next steps

We will be asking project teams to write a formal proposal. The work you have been doing throughout the year – thinking about your project membership and scope, aims and objectives, outcomes and impact, and approach to student engagement and partnership – should mean that you have much of the content you need. The final Discovery Day and Navigation Sessions will be designed to support you to develop the rest: planning and costing your project, as well as thinking about how your team will manage it.

One suggestion from Discovery Day 3 was that we should produce a 'STEP So Far' bulletin in addition to this regular one, to help you bring your colleagues up to speed with what we have been doing this year. To help us do this, please make sure that your team adds its news headline and 100-word project synopsis to the [Miro](#). If you have any questions about any of the above, please drop us a line at info@step.ac.uk.

Registration is now open for our next events. **STEP Four: How will we deliver?** will take place on 28 May 2025 in Dundee and is open to STEP Network members. Our third **Navigation Session** will take place online on 28 April 2025 and is open to STEP Network members and any of their colleagues who think they may be interested in the emerging projects. Please also save the date for our event **Understanding and Supporting Student Transitions in Scotland**, which will take place on 29 May in Dundee at the same venue as the Discovery Day. We hope that as many of you as possible will be able to join us for both days to celebrate the success of our Discovery year.

