

Week 1 Review

Background:

In September 2014 Edinburgh Napier University's Undergraduate and Postgraduate academic years were realigned, which was managed by a working group chaired by Brian Webster, Assistant Dean FHLSS under the strategic leadership of Professor Sambell, the then Vice Principal.

This included redesigning our approach to week 1, in order to ensure all our students got a great first experience, in the context of a programme focus. Given compressed timescales the working group wished to have a one-day workshop to deal with the outstanding issue of responsibility for week 1 in particular, critical to when students arrive.

The goal of this day was to "have a clear **vision on the principles and shape of week one** September 2014/January 2015 within the University's developing **programme focus agenda**"

Activity:

Sustainable futures were approached and agreed to facilitate this event. We consulted with key staff across the University to design the event, which was completed with representatives across each **faculty, central services**, and the **Napier Students' Association** off-site at Edinburgh Zoo.

Specific aims included to:

- Share a common understanding of **current week 1 activities**
- Gain a shared understanding on the developing **programme focus agenda**
- Generate **new ideas** for week 1 that meet the expectations of a programme focussed student experience
- Define **roles and responsibilities** to meet this new vision
- Identify **clear actions** to implement for 2014/15, including communication plan

The day consisted of a series of plenary sessions to review current provision, design future provision, and ensure roles and responsibilities were clear to support this change.

Outcomes:

As a result of the workshop full responsibility for week 1 programming was passed to faculty level, with Student and Academic Services acting as an internal service provider to the faculties in this.

We retained light-touch but regular contact with the working group chair and strategic lead to support implementation.

Week 1 of the academic year 2014-15 was successful. Some programmes took the opportunity to undertake more activity with their students, and it is reported that the week went fairly smoothly. Anecdotally, the academic community feels more satisfied with the week, and this builds a good base in which to further develop academic involvement on a programme level.

The difference involving Sustainable Futures made:

Feedback from the strategic lead was that we offered an **excellent job facilitating** around the difficult issues involved here.

Hosting the event as a one-day discussion allowed the activity to be prioritised, and critical decisions taken within enough time frame to deliver improvements in time.

"Our facilitated workshop was a times emotionally charged, but it was spot on, and we needed to get through that to get where we are now."