



STEP

Scotland's Tertiary
Enhancement Programme

STEP STEM Case Studies and Sector Recommendations - Student Feedback Updated

Updated evidence base: project proposal and Gantt commitments, current-practice mapping across 29 Scottish tertiary institutions, student interviews and focus group, and the new Student Review and Reflection session on the proposed model. The latest student feedback broadly validated the model, while asking for a simpler student-facing version, stronger visibility of technical/laboratory support, peer support, student choice, VLE/portal integration, and continued real-world testing.

Updated composite case studies

Case 1: Programming and software troubleshooting

A computing student understands the theory but cannot implement a solution in code and is unsure whether to ask a lecturer, technical staff or peers. The updated pathway directs the student through a simple support map to programming support, specialist software help, peer support and named academic follow-up.

Case 2: Laboratory and test-bench support

An engineering student begins missing practical sessions because they are struggling with hardware, wiring and test-bench procedures. A staff check-in treats the indicator as a prompt, not a judgement, and connects the student to a rapid technical drop-in and laboratory demonstrator support.

Case 3: Mixed academic, financial and wellbeing difficulty

A student appears to be struggling academically, but the issue is linked to stress, finances and personal circumstances. The pathway avoids a single-service response and coordinates academic advice, wellbeing support and financial guidance with named follow-up.

Case 4: First-year transition and choice

A first-year student feels overwhelmed by the number of possible contacts. The simplified map begins with 'Start here', gives problem examples, shows who can help and explains what happens next. The student can choose an online or in-person route.

Case 5: Group project disengagement

A student stops attending group meetings and contributes less to design work. The pathway treats group-project difficulty as a support need and connects the student to academic guidance, peer/group-work support and follow-up.

Case 6: International student adjustment

An international student is unsure whether their difficulty is academic, cultural, financial or wellbeing-related. The pathway makes international transition visible and directs the student to a central entry point that can triage multiple needs.

Updated sector recommendations

1. Create a simplified student-facing route based on 'Start here, Who can help, What happens next'.
2. Place the support map where students already work: student portal, VLE/course platform, programme pages and induction materials.
3. Repeat support information throughout the year, not only at induction.
4. Make STEM technical support more visible, including laboratories, specialist software, programming, circuits, test benches, project work and rapid troubleshooting.
5. Build peer support and group-project support into the model.
6. Use early indicators as prompts for supportive check-ins rather than assumptions.
7. Use warm referrals, named follow-up and, where possible, referral status tracking.
8. Build student choice into support routes, including online, in-person, email, drop-in and scheduled options.
9. Train both students and staff so the model is understood and used consistently.
10. Retain a common core across institutions while allowing local service names, systems and structures to be adapted.
11. Continue involving students after introduction and test the resources in real situations before full sector adoption.