



STEP

Scotland's Tertiary
Enhancement Programme

STEP Bulletin June 2026

Welcome to the latest STEP Bulletin. We produce these after each in-person meeting of the STEP Network 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 – step.ac.uk – and encourage them to sign up to our mailing list.

Reflections on STEP Eight

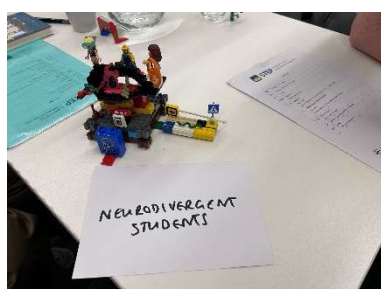
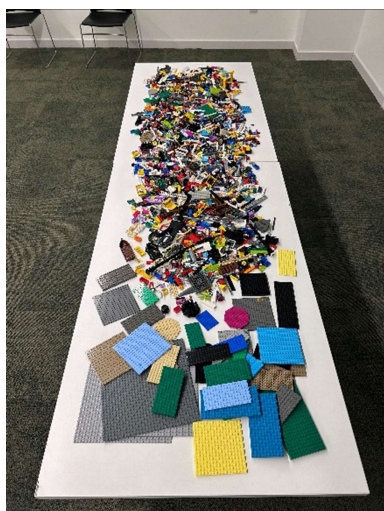
At-a-glance:

- Around 80 staff and students joined us for our final in-person meeting of 2025-26
- Teams took part in a LEGO® Serious Play® workshop to reflect on progress and impact
- Teams had the opportunity to work on their projects
- Three project teams updated members about their work
- We welcomed members for an evening social at the GCU Students' Association

Our fourth and final in-person meeting of the year took place in Glasgow on Tuesday 26 May. Around eighty staff and students from across Scotland's colleges and universities braved the heatwave to join us at Glasgow Caledonian University, including members of eight out of our nine current project teams.

Brick by brick

In the morning, Valerie Jackman (CDN) led project teams in a LEGO® Serious Play® workshop, encouraging delegates to explore collaboration, challenge and change through a creative, hands-on approach. Individual members had an opportunity to create a model that reflected their own perspective on their project, which they could choose to present to the rest of their team. These models were then combined to create collective models representing each project. Teams were then invited to consider from four different perspectives.



As at our other STEP Network meetings, we had set aside some time in the afternoon for project teams to work together. Teams were encouraged to look ahead to the end-of-year reporting deadline and take stock of what had been achieved as a team as well as within the member institutions. We hope that the in-depth and reflective LEGO® activity supported teams in their reporting, so that we will have a complete picture of the excellent work that has taken place in session 2025-26.

Project updates

Teams from three projects (Appreciating Belonging and Enabling Change: From Strategy to Practice, Regional Enhancement and Collaboration in Tertiary Scotland (REACTS), and Supporting Neurodivergent Students with Professional Dialogue in Work-Based Learning Settings) provided updates on their work, highlighting collaboration and shared learning across the programme.

Three of our project leads (Adelayo Adebayo, Emma MacIsaac and Derek Robertson) offered some closing reflections before many of us headed over to GCU's Students' Association for a social gathering.

Stepping Over the Threshold: Belonging and Inclusion in Scotland's Tertiary Sector

On Wednesday 27 May, we stayed at Glasgow Caledonian University for the 2026 STEP Conference. **Stepping Over the Threshold: Belonging and Inclusion in Scotland's Tertiary Sector** attracted exceptionally high interest and we were operating a waiting list two weeks in advance of the event. The Conference focused on belonging, inclusion and the transitions shaping learner experiences.

We opened with a Provocations Panel chaired by CDN's Gordon Hunt. Panellists included New College Lanarkshire student Colin Campbell, Glasgow Kelvin College's Principal & CEO Joanna Campbell, and Edinburgh Napier University's Deputy Vice Chancellor Professor Nazira Karodia, who reflected on the Conference themes and sector-wide efforts to support diverse learner journeys.



A series of lightning talks highlighted practice across work-integrated learning, neurodiversity support in practice-based settings, student and staff experiences of learning, and approaches to strengthening belonging through curriculum design and mentoring.

Workshops led by STEP project teams and partners explored inclusive assessment, regional collaboration, personalised support in STEM pathways, disabled student experiences, neurodiversity-affirming practice, and student voice and representation.



The day was enlivened by two engaging keynote speakers. Poet Bethany Rose kicked the afternoon sessions off with her Invitation to the Party. Comedian, author and poet Robin Ince talked about the importance of Letting the Wild Minds and the Quiet Minds Thrive – with spontaneous tap-dancing from CDN's Jo Turbitt.



Call for papers: special edition of JPAAP

With the Conference fresh in everyone's minds, the editors of the Journal of Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice (JPAAP) have just launched a call for papers for a special issue on the same topic. Project teams and other Conference contributors are strongly encouraged to consider submitting proposals - this is a great way to bring your work to wider attention. The deadline is 24 June and all the information you need is [here](#).

That's all in terms of events for 2025-26 - but there will be plenty of STEP activity over the summer. Project teams will be working hard to complete and disseminate their work, and to prepare for next session. Meanwhile, we will work on the calendar of dates for 2026-27, as well as updating the STEP website with resources from the 2025-26 projects and events.

We'll also be recruiting for new student Topic Leads - this is an exciting opportunity for two students (one from a college and one from a university) to get more involved in the leadership of STEP. For now, thanks to all of you for your hard work in session 2025-26 - and especially to Adelayo and Emma, our outgoing Student Topic Leads.