



**7th Annual Enhancement Themes Conference
2 and 3 March 2010
Edinburgh Conference Centre
Heriot-Watt University**

Workshop Proposal From

Workshop proposals should be submitted electronically to QAA Scotland at enhancement@qaa.ac.uk by end of **Tuesday 8 December 2009**.

Please complete the form below.

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Details of other contacts (include **all** who will be involved, adding lines as needed):

Name:	Dr Sara Parvis
Institution:	University of Edinburgh
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Workshop title¹:	Should an academic skills course be compulsory – a debate		
Workshop to be presented on:	2 March		
Would you be willing to repeat your workshop?			No

Which of the Enhancement Themes does the workshop address?

Please tick (✓) as many as apply

Graduates for the 21st Century: Integrating the Enhancement Themes	✓
Research-Teaching Linkages: enhancing graduate attributes	✓
First Year: engagement and empowerment	✓
Flexible Delivery	✓
Employability	✓

¹ Maximum of 80 characters including spaces recommended, to ensure clear display in the conference booking pages

Responding to Student Needs	✓
Assessment and Integrative Assessment	

Abstract:

Our experience of running an academic skills course for first year students for the last two years has been of mixed success. This course includes skills in essay writing, use of Library and general IT skills – skills required for their academic work and also for their future career. Due to timetabling issues this course is presented online, supplemented with a few short lectures. It is zero credit bearing but it does appear in student transcripts. Currently the course is not compulsory, although all first year students are enrolled on the course and have two years to complete it. We are currently debating whether to make the course compulsory and a requirement for all our degree programmes.

This workshop will debate the question whether such a course should be compulsory by dividing the participants into four groups. Each group will be asked to take the side of either a student or a practitioner and agree or disagree with the question under discussion. After time to put their case together the groups will hold a debate. At the end of the debate there will be a final vote via clickers. This process will allow the sharing of insights into academic skills course issues and inform the future development of such courses indifferent contexts.

Structure of workshop:

- * 10min - participation discussion to define “What should be in an academic skills course?”
- * 10min - presentation on our work ending with a “clicker” vote on “Should such courses be compulsory or not?”
- * 20min 4 group discussion on this question for debate split into:-
 - yes - student side
 - practioner side
 - no - student side
 - practioner side
- * 15min over all debate ending with a vote to see how changed by the end
- * 5min sumup

Equipment:

We will provide a laptop, data projector and clickers for the session

Understanding that I need to bring my own laptop and projector, I plan to access the internet during this workshop. **No**

Points to note:

All those whose workshop proposals are accepted are required to register and attend the conference.

Successful submissions may be published in future display/exhibition material, in publications/newsletters, news releases or on QAA's internet and intranet site. To this end, please only use photographs if you have gained signed permission from those people appearing in them