



Accelerating English Language Learning in Central Asia

Strand 1

From Learning to Practice: Mini-Project Guide

UNIVERSITY OF
WESTMINSTER



1. Introduction to Strand 1: Mini-Project Guide

Strand 1 is central to AELLCA III, focusing on turning professional learning into sustainable institutional practice. It provides a structured space for participants to adapt ideas, strategies, and approaches from earlier phases of the project to their own university contexts through small-scale mini-projects. These projects are practical, needs-driven, and directly connected to the realities of English language teaching, assessment, and curriculum development in participating institutions. Strand 1 promotes flexibility and institutional ownership rather than a single fixed model. Participants, individually or in groups, identify priorities based on local needs and opportunities. These may include adapting teaching materials, improving assessment and feedback, strengthening inclusive teaching practices, developing reflective practice systems, enhancing curriculum and continuing professional development (CPD), and establishing new CPD modules. Through monthly workshops, mentoring, peer support, and reflective dialogue, participants will plan, implement, review, and refine their projects over time. By the end of Strand 1, each mini-project should provide clear evidence of implementation and impact, contributing to wider project outcomes such as conference presentations, potential research development in Strand 3, and dissemination through the English in Central Asia website and CPD Forum.

What is a Strand 1 Mini-Project?

A Strand 1 mini-project is a small-scale, practical initiative that enables participants to apply and embed learning from earlier project phases within their institutional contexts. It is designed to move professional development into action by testing and adapting approaches to teaching, assessment, curriculum, or professional development. Mini-projects are realistic, focused, and manageable. They are not large research projects or major institutional reforms, but targeted interventions that can be implemented, reviewed, and improved over time. Their value lies in creating meaningful local change while supporting wider institutional development.

Because each university has its own priorities and challenges, mini-projects are flexible and context-sensitive. Participants are encouraged to identify areas for development that align with their teaching contexts, departmental goals, and institutional strategies. A key aim is to move beyond individual experimentation towards wider professional and structural impact.

Key Principles

To ensure mini-projects are meaningful and effective, all Strand 1 projects should be guided by the following principles:

- **Practical** (Projects should address real challenges or opportunities within participants' teaching, departments, or institutions);
- **Focused** (Projects should have a clear aim and a manageable scope);



- **Context-sensitive** (Projects should respond to local realities, priorities, and institutional conditions);
- **Reflective** (Projects should include opportunities for reflection, peer dialogue, and review);
- **Collaborative** (Where possible, participants should involve colleagues or wider stakeholders to strengthen ownership and sustainability);
- **Sustainable** (Projects should aim to create changes that continue beyond AELLCA III and contribute to long-term institutional development).

What a Strand 1 Mini-Project Can Lead To

Although small in scale, mini-projects can contribute to wider institutional outcomes, including:

- improved teaching practices and learning experiences
- more inclusive and effective assessment systems
- adapted and localised teaching materials
- stronger reflective practice and peer observation cultures
- new CPD opportunities for colleagues
- curriculum improvement and innovation
- stronger departmental collaboration and communities of practice
- increased confidence in practitioner inquiry and educational research
- dissemination of good practice through conference presentations and online platforms

In this way, Strand 1 mini-projects act as a bridge between professional learning, institutional development, and long-term educational sustainability, helping the knowledge, skills, and values developed through AELLCA continue to influence English language education in Central Asia.

2. Strand 1 Project Pathways

To support flexibility and institutional ownership, Strand 1 mini-projects are organised into a number of broad project pathways. These pathways reflect the key areas of professional and institutional development identified within AELLCA III and provide participants with clear directions for designing and implementing their mini-projects. Participants may choose the pathway that best aligns with their professional interests, institutional priorities, and immediate teaching or curriculum needs. Across all three pathways, the principles of wellbeing, inclusivity, and equitable participation should be embedded as overarching considerations, ensuring that all project work supports accessible, supportive, and sustainable educational practice.

Pathway 1: Teaching and Materials Innovation

This pathway focuses on improving teaching practice through the adaptation, redesign, and implementation of teaching materials, methodologies, and classroom approaches.



Participants may work on:

- adapting existing teaching materials to suit their local contexts
- redesigning classroom tasks to increase engagement and accessibility
- trialling new teaching strategies and methods
- integrating digital tools and educational technologies
- developing resources that promote active, student-centred learning

This pathway encourages participants to use AELLCA I and II materials to critically reflect on how materials and methods can better support diverse learners, promote wellbeing, and create more inclusive learning environments.

Possible outputs:

- adapted lesson materials
- micro-teaching demonstrations
- reflective teaching portfolios
- peer observation reports
- resource banks for departmental sharing

Pathway 2: Assessment and Feedback Development

This pathway focuses on strengthening formative and summative assessment practices to improve fairness, transparency, and student learning.

Participants may work on:

- redesigning assessment tasks for greater inclusivity and clarity
- improving feedback practices and feedback literacy
- introducing peer- and self-assessment strategies
- aligning assessments more closely with learning outcomes
- developing assessment criteria or rubrics

Using the resources from AELLCA I and II, this pathway supports participants in creating assessment systems that not only measure learning effectively but also promote student confidence, wellbeing, and access to success.

Possible outputs:

- revised assessment tasks
- new rubrics or marking criteria
- student feedback analysis
- assessment guidelines for colleagues
- examples of inclusive assessment practice



Pathway 3: Curriculum and Institutional Development

This pathway is designed particularly for more senior colleagues or those in leadership roles who are interested in developing sustainable structures for teaching, curriculum, and CPD within their institutions.

Participants may work on:

- reviewing and enhancing elements of the curriculum
 - embedding inclusive and innovative practices at programme level
 - developing internal CPD units or professional learning structures
 - establishing peer observation or mentoring systems
 - strengthening departmental collaboration and communities of practice
- This pathway focuses on creating structural and cultural changes that can support long-term professional growth and institutional sustainability.

Possible outputs:

- curriculum enhancement proposals
- departmental CPD frameworks
- peer observation systems
- mentoring structures
- institutional teaching and learning guidelines

Embedding Wellbeing and Inclusivity Across All Pathways

Wellbeing and inclusivity are not separate project areas, but core principles that should shape the planning, implementation, and evaluation of every Strand 1 mini-project. This ensures that all project outcomes contribute to the wider AELLCA III commitment to sustainable, inclusive, and innovative English language education. Regardless of the chosen pathway, all mini-projects should consider how their work supports:

- student wellbeing and engagement
- inclusive participation and accessibility
- diverse learning needs
- equitable teaching and assessment practices
- supportive and reflective professional cultures

3. Project Structure and Planning

Once participants have selected a project pathway, they will be expected to design their mini-project using a simple and structured planning process. This will help ensure that projects are clear, manageable, and aligned with both institutional needs and Strand 1 objectives.



Each mini-project should include the following components:

1) Project Title

A clear and focused title that reflects the main area of development.

Example: Improving Formative Feedback Practices in First-Year Writing Classes

2) Context

Participants should clearly describe where the project will take place, which helps situate the project within its specific educational environment. It may include:

- department or faculty
- programme or course
- student group or teaching context
- institutional setting

3) Identified Need or Focus Area

Participants should identify the challenge, opportunity, or area for development that the project will address. This section should explain why the project matters. It might include:

- a teaching challenge
- an assessment issue
- a curriculum gap
- a CPD need
- an institutional priority

4) Project Aim(s)

Participants should define one or two clear aims. Aims should be realistic and specific.

These aims should answer: *What do I want to improve, develop, or change?*

5) Planned Activities

Participants should outline the key actions they will take, which will form the practical core of the project. For example:

- adapting materials
- redesigning assessment tasks
- conducting peer observation
- piloting new teaching approaches
- running CPD workshops
- collecting feedback

6) Evidence of Implementation and Impact

Participants should identify how they will document and evaluate their project. This evidence will support reflection and final dissemination. Possible evidence may include:

- lesson materials
- assessment samples
- peer observation notes



- student feedback
- reflective journals
- workshop attendance
- curriculum drafts

7) Sustainability

Since sustainability is a central principle of AELLCA III, participants should consider: How can this continue after Strand 1? This may include:

- departmental adoption
- resource sharing
- integrating into CPD
- expanding to other modules
- informing wider curriculum review

4. Implementation Timeline

Strand 1 begins on **1 July 2026** and will follow a structured cycle of planning, implementation, reflection, and dissemination. The timeline below provides an overview of the expected stages:

July and August 2026 – Project Design and Agreement

This stage establishes the foundation for implementation. Participants will:

- select their project pathway
- identify their focus area
- complete their mini-project plan
- discuss project aims with mentors and institutional leads
- agree on expected outputs
- read on the topic

September and October 2026 – Initial Implementation

Participants will begin collecting evidence and piloting their project activities within their teaching, departments, or institutions. This may include:

- adapting materials
- introducing assessment changes
- beginning peer observation cycles
- launching CPD sessions

November and December 2026 – Development and Refinement

This stage supports deeper embedding of practice, and participants will continue implementation while reviewing progress and making adjustments. At this stage, they should:

- reflect on challenges and successes
- gather feedback from colleagues and students



- refine approaches and strengthen institutional engagement

January 2026 – Consolidation

Participants will begin preparing project outcomes and documenting impact. This may include:

- summarising findings
- organising evidence
- identifying lessons learned
- preparing dissemination materials

February 2027 onwards (it is possible that continuation funding is secured)

Where possible, participants may extend their work into:

- wider institutional implementation
- conference presentations
- planning future research and dissemination

5. Support and Mentoring Structure

Strand 1 is designed as a supported process rather than independent project work. Participants will be guided through regular engagement, mentoring, and collaborative reflection. The support structure includes:

Monthly Online Workshops (announced on the [Strand 1 webpage](#))

Participants will attend structured online workshops focused on key aspects of the project and themes such as:

- inclusive teaching
- assessment and feedback
- reflective practice
- educational technology
- curriculum innovation

Weekly or Flexible Check-In Sessions

Where needed (by request), additional shorter meetings will be organised to:

- review progress
- discuss challenges
- provide targeted support
- share examples of practice

Peer Support and Collaboration

To help strengthen communities of practice, participants will be encouraged to work collaboratively through:

- peer observation
- reflective dialogue



- shared project discussions
- exchange of materials and ideas

CPD Sessions from UoW Team

Participants will receive academic and professional support from University of Westminster colleagues at the Centre for Education and Teaching Innovation ([CETI](#)) on a range of topics.

6. Outputs and Dissemination

The mini-projects are expected to generate both practical and professional outputs that contribute to wider project sustainability and knowledge exchange. These outputs will form an important part of AELLCA III dissemination.

Project Documentation

To provide a record of practice, each participant or project group should produce:

- a project summary
- evidence of implementation
- key reflections and learning points
- examples of materials or resources developed

Conference Presentations

To create opportunities for wider knowledge exchange, all mini-projects will contribute to Strand 4 through presentations at the hybrid conferences:

- 1) English Education in Turkmenistan: Everybody's Responsibility! (held in Turkmenistan)
- 2) AI in language learning: opportunities and challenges (held in Tajikistan)

Website and CPD Forum Contributions

To support ongoing professional exchange, participants' outcomes will also be posted on the [English in Central Asia](#) website and [CPD Forum](#) through:

- reflective blog posts
- teaching materials
- project summaries
- videos of micro-teaching
- examples of assessment innovation

Through these outputs, Strand 1 mini-projects become more than local interventions; they contribute to a wider professional community, support institutional development, and strengthen sustainable English language education.

