

HEFCE 01/37

June

**Guide**

# Strategies for learning and teaching in higher education

**A guide to good practice**

## **Strategies for learning and teaching in higher education**

### **A guide to good practice**

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To Heads of HEFCE-funded higher education institutions  
Heads of universities in Northern Ireland

Of interest to those responsible for Management; Strategy writing; Planning; Learning and teaching

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## Executive summary

### Purpose

1. Following the submission of institutions' initial statements on widening participation and learning and teaching strategies, the Council commissioned an analysis of the documentation submitted. The Action on Access team, which coordinates the Council's widening participation activities, undertook the analysis of the widening participation statements, whilst the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund (TQEF) National Coordination Team undertook the analysis of the learning and teaching strategies. These analyses have identified examples of different approaches and of good practice, which may be helpful to institutions as they develop their strategies. We will publish the full analyses on the web.
2. We recently held two seminars which addressed the relationship between widening participation, learning and teaching, and strategic planning. (Presentations from the seminars will be published shortly on the web-site under 'Learning and teaching'.) In recognition of these relationships and in order to enable a coordinated approach, this good practice guide and another on widening participation strategies have been produced as companion volumes. We intend to issue further, more detailed, guidance in spring 2002 using case studies to show examples of action plans and targets.
3. The companion guide for widening participation strategies is published as HEFCE 01/36.

### Key points

4. The guidance in both documents builds on what is currently taking place, and what has been learnt by institutions, so as to share best practice. Institutions vary enormously and are at different stages of development of their strategies, and there is much to learn from each other's experience. Brief case studies have been included from English higher education institutions (HEIs), with contact details for further information.
5. This guide is in four main sections:
  - the first draws out good practice in relation to key strategic themes from a review of strategies in the sector
  - the second section contains case studies from institutions which link with the strategic themes, and with the widening participation guide
  - the third section contains case studies relating to student success
  - the fourth section summarises the support available to institutions from HEFCE in developing and implementing their strategies.
6. The guide has been written in conjunction with the TQEF National Co-ordination Team (NCT). Both the NCT and the Council would like to thank all those who have provided case studies.
7. All the publications mentioned in this guide can be downloaded from the HEFCE web-site, [www.hefce.ac.uk](http://www.hefce.ac.uk) under 'Publications'.

### Action required

8. This report is for information and guidance.

## Background

9. In HEFCE 99/48 'Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund (TQEF)' we announced that funding would be made available in relation to three strands of activity: one associated with institutions, one with subjects and one with individual academics. We allocated £49.5 million to the institutional strand to support the development and implementation of learning and teaching strategies over the three years 1999-2000 to 2001-02. The invitation to apply for funds identified five national priorities: staff development (recognition and reward, membership of the Institute for Learning and Teaching – ILT); innovation (employability and work experience); exploitation of communications and information technologies (C&IT); widening access; and learning resources.

10. Funds were allocated by formula and released on receipt of a strategy document and details of activities to be funded. In the first year, 40 per cent of institutions chose to submit an emerging strategy. Institutions were supported in their development of strategies by a good practice guide developed by Professor Graham Gibbs of the National Co-ordination Team for the TQEF (HEFCE 99/55). In addition we held a number of regional seminars, and HEFCE regional consultants gave developmental feedback on emerging strategies.

11. HEFCE 99/55 addressed a range of issues, including change mechanisms and rewarding excellent teaching. It also identified the 12 components that make up a coherent and comprehensive learning and teaching strategy:

- context
- process of creation
- goals
- culture
- targets
- curriculum
- learning, teaching and assessment practices
- quality assurance
- quality enhancements and infrastructure changes
- implementation
- monitoring
- evaluation.

12. We commissioned Professor Gibbs to review the development of learning and teaching strategies in English HEIs (see Section one) and to produce a report. From this research Professor Gibbs identified case studies (Section two) to illustrate the ways in which institutions are learning to implement their learning and teaching strategy.

## Section one **Lessons from a review of learning and teaching strategies**

13. Professor Gibbs' analysis demonstrates that there have been a number of positive outcomes from the development and implementation of learning and teaching strategies since 1998. The full version of the research will be mounted on the HEFCE web-site.
14. Key findings were:
- a. Two years prior to the initiative, 32 HEIs had developed their first strategy, while in the second year of the initiative 70 institutions developed one.
  - b. The documentation has considerably improved. This is particularly true for implementation components: for example, change mechanisms are present in 76 per cent of learning and teaching strategies submitted in 2000, but were only present in 10 per cent in 1998. Change mechanisms most commonly cited were staff development, ILT membership, exploitation of C&IT, and rewards for excellent teaching.
  - c. Two-thirds of learning and teaching strategies were predominantly or partly strategic, with new management and implementation structures and procedures. In 1998 half the strategies relied solely on policies and committees, and did not identify clear implementation procedures or task groups to translate policies into actions. Coupled with this was a lack of devolution to faculties or departments – only 6 per cent adopted this approach – whereas 35 per cent had devolved models by 2000. Some institutions used almost the entire fund to support innovations, and linked these to a strategy that was effectively limited to specifying the criteria for funding projects. Others had holistic approaches which provided guidelines for devolution, and retained central monitoring and evaluation and a central vision of what was needed. The latter are likely to lead to a stronger strategic direction.
  - d. By 2000 the strategies submitted to us were more comprehensive and sophisticated. On average, institutions covered six of the 12 components for a comprehensive strategy as outlined in HEFCE 99/55.
15. The case studies in this guide have been selected to address the areas where there has been most progress since 1998.

### **Joined-up strategic thinking**

16. Higher education institutions have been increasingly concerned to develop an integrated approach to strategic planning. In January 2001 we held seminars which addressed the relationship between widening participation, learning and teaching, and strategic planning. The concept was demonstrated in the College of Ripon and York St John's widening participation statement:

'College recognises powerful demands for change which diversity of learners and the lifelong learning agenda impose on both the architecture of the curriculum and the context.... An enlarged role in combatting social exclusion and supporting community and economic regeneration will demand support from a transforming learning and teaching strategy.'

17. We have assisted this process through this good practice guide, the companion guide HEFCE 01/36 and further seminars, and by encouraging institutions to think about learning and teaching issues when revising their widening participation strategies and action plans. We recently requested (see HEFCE 01/29) revised strategies, following a consultation with the sector on our funding for widening participation (see HEFCE 00/50).

18. Professor Gibbs' analysis of institutions' learning and teaching strategies submitted in January 2000 shows that only 35 per cent made explicit cross-reference to their widening participation statements. However, institutions did generally address widening participation issues in their strategies, particularly student support, the development of students' skills, and issues associated with employability.

19. Case studies in the guide to widening participation strategies relate to the student lifecycle: aspiration raising, pre-entry, first term/semester, moving through the course, and employment. Learning and teaching strategies often address issues associated with the fourth and fifth stages ('moving through the course' and 'employment') and sometimes the third stage ('first term/semester'). However they are unlikely to look at the first two stages ('aspiration raising' and 'pre-entry phase'). Where institutions are changing their curriculum to meet the aspirations or needs of new types of students, or where they are changing their teaching methods to be more appropriate to mature or part-time students, this is likely to be presented in their learning and teaching strategy rather than in their widening participation statement. An example of changes to the curriculum would be developing more applied or employment oriented, or more skill-focused, courses. An example of changes to teaching methods would be emphasising student independence and flexibility rather than being teacher- and classroom-driven.

20. As student recruitment is affected by the course content on offer, and student retention is affected by teaching and learning methods, the learning and teaching strategy is central to comprehensive attempts to widen participation. When developing widening participation strategies, institutions need to think through what they need their learning and teaching strategy to deliver for them.

### **Students with disabilities**

21. Institutions are not required to submit strategies to us in relation to provision for people with disabilities. However, we would encourage institutions to include strategy and policy relating to disability in both their widening participation and learning and teaching strategies. Guidance on establishing baseline provision for students with disabilities was published in 1999 (HEFCE 99/04). It suggested that providing an inclusive learning environment for students with disabilities is an issue for the whole institution. This is particularly important in the light of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001, which extends the 1995 Disability Discrimination Act to higher education.

22. HEFCE 99/04 also contains examples of learning and teaching practices which may be important in establishing base-level provision for students with disabilities, such as application and admission procedures, learning needs, examinations and assessment, and staff development. The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) Code of Practice for students provides a framework for the consideration of these issues.

23. The case studies that do refer to disabled students have generally not been driven by institutional strategy but are more 'bottom up' initiatives, funded by discrete programmes. This is not to say that the learning needs of disabled students are not ever made explicit in teaching and learning strategies, nor

that disabled communities have never been a target group in widening participation strategies, but simply that this has not normally been the case. The advent of the new disability legislation – which requires that disabled students are not placed at unfair disadvantage, and reasonable adjustments are made to include them – means that strategic planners will necessarily be making explicit what might formerly have been implicit or merely understood.

24. Institutions may want to connect their strategies for disability with the disability statements submitted to us in 2000. These provide applicants and students with information on an institution's provision for students with disabilities.

### **Key themes**

25. Professor's Gibbs' research also highlighted a number of key areas for consideration when HEIs are developing their learning and teaching policies:

- strategic planning
- implementation
- monitoring and evaluation
- disseminating and embedding good practice
- human resource management
- enhancing teaching through research and scholarship
- communications and information technology.

26. The following paragraphs show how the case studies in Section two of this guide reflect these broad themes in practice.

#### Strategic planning

27. Institutions may find it helpful to review their context, both internal and external, as the basis for addressing future scenarios. They can then set high level, broad goals. Such goals are most useful if they are broad, but not ambiguous: for example the goal 'to achieve quality in teaching' is ambiguous. Goals are more likely to be effective if they reflect the institutional mission, relate to the internal and external context, and look beyond a three year funding cycle. HEIs can find it helpful to consider a longer planning horizon (five to 10 years) because it is likely that project gains and outcomes from policies and strategies will be embedded over a longer, rather than shorter, timescale. Once the goals have been identified, HEIs need to decide what changes are necessary, for example in culture and infrastructure, to enable those goals to be met. (See case study 1.)

28. HEIs are increasingly coordinating their thinking in relation to their strategies. Therefore it is helpful if HEIs specify in strategic statements how strategies for different areas are linked together. These relationships need to be carefully considered, particularly in relation to the information strategy (see case studies 25, 26, 27), and research strategy (case study 24), as well as to widening participation, human resources and estates strategies. As well as co-ordinating the strategies it is obviously necessary to co-ordinate the implementation (case study 11). Links with the corporate plan, the use of capital funds, and disability statements need to be made clear. For those who develop learning and teaching strategies it might also be appropriate to indicate how other strategies need to be modified to meet the needs of the learning and teaching strategy.

29. Case studies 3-7 show that once the context has been established, the goals and activities to be undertaken need to be clearly linked back to the context.

### Implementation

30. Once the goals and activities have been defined, HEIs need to develop a plan for implementation (case studies 10-12 and 18-23). This can be done by establishing:

- mechanisms for overseeing and co-ordinating the activities, for example by using existing committees or specially established bodies
- whether new roles need to be created – for example a learning development manager or director of innovation
- what responsibilities will be assigned to bodies or individuals
- appropriate teams to tackle discrete issues
- how the existing organisational structures (central and local – faculty, school, department) will be utilised
- a mechanism to consider the funding implications of the proposed activities, and the potential sources of funding
- the relationship between teaching and research
- staff development and information technology needs
- reward strategies.

31. Change mechanisms also need to be identified. A number of different mechanisms are likely to be necessary, which might include:

- staff development and continuing professional development (CPD)
- ILT membership
- improvements in C&IT
- promotion and rewards for excellent teachers
- funding for projects and innovation
- training of teachers
- student feedback mechanisms
- appraisal of teachers
- new types of post
- educational development support services
- facilities for production of learning materials.

32. It is also important to attach appropriate, measurable targets to the activities identified (case study 18), with a timescale for delivery (case study 19). Examples of targets for inputs, outputs and outcomes are:

- inputs – the changing of promotion criteria to reward excellent teachers
- outputs – the proportion of promotions awarded on the basis of teaching excellence
- outcomes – the changes in priority given to teaching by staff as a consequence of changes in promotion mechanisms; or for example where graduate employability is an institutional goal, specified changes to employment rates.

## Monitoring and evaluation

33. Appropriate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms can help HEIs to analyse the effectiveness of the learning and teaching strategy. The review of strategies demonstrates that:

- monitoring can only be undertaken effectively if there are clear targets against which progress can be measured
- milestones are helpful if the activities are to take some time or the goals are a long way ahead
- mechanisms for monitoring need to be established, which might be the overseeing or co-ordinating bodies referred to in implementation above
- evaluation of the effectiveness of the strategy is important; funds or posts might be allocated to undertake this as an integrated component of implementation.

## Disseminating and embedding good practice

34. Information about the activities that constitute good practice on learning and teaching is available from a wide range of sources, both externally (such as this guide and subject review reports produced by the QAA) and internally. Case studies 15-17 focus on how HEIs can disseminate their own good practice across the institution effectively. Methods include:

- conferences, workshops and other staff development activities
- practitioner networks
- peer observation schemes
- awards for departments that disseminate successful practice.

35. In order to establish good practice in dissemination it is helpful to consider the differing roles of the centre and faculties, and to:

- establish mechanisms for innovators to inform the centre about aspects of the institution's infrastructure that block the spread of good practice
- identify what central support is needed for the activities
- consider how to manage the adaptation of ideas across different academic areas
- manage the transfer of ideas in a way that minimises innovation costs
- link the good practice to existing institutional priorities and strategic goals.

## Human resource management

36. Institutions might like to review their learning and teaching strategies in the light of their human resource strategies, as staff development cuts across both areas. Case studies 22, 28 and 30 show that institutions are using a wide range of approaches to encourage and support staff – to enhance their teaching, identify development needs, and recognise and reward excellence in teaching.

37. Mechanisms include:

- providing awards for teaching excellence
- reviewing the promotion criteria to address teaching
- enhancing appraisal schemes
- funding attendance at conferences and symposia
- developing support mechanisms for innovative teachers
- providing internal staff development activities including workshops on teaching large groups, benchmarking and lecturing; and IT training targeted at work groups

- establishing a 'teaching week' to focus on issues of teaching, learning and assessment
- encouraging staff to join the ILT and providing financial support for fees
- providing training for teachers.

#### Enhancing teaching through research and scholarship

38. Some HEIs are examining the relationship between learning and teaching and research strategies. In particular, making the benefits of research strengths more explicit to undergraduate teaching, and maximising those benefits, might be a key feature for those institutions claiming that teaching excellence is based on excellence in research. This might be achieved by collating examples where there is an effective relationship between research and undergraduate teaching (case studies 19-21).

39. Scholarship and research are used in a number of institutions as a means of improving teaching. Specific activities include:

- funding research projects into aspects of learning, teaching or assessment
- funding research assistants to evaluate and conduct research on developmental activities
- establishing Teaching Fellowships to conduct pedagogic research
- funding attendance at conferences
- supporting collaboration with research-centred organisations
- staff development activities to improve research skills.

#### Communication and information technology

40. Learning and teaching strategies need to be co-ordinated with information strategies. (See case studies 24-27.) Specific examples drawn from the case studies include:

- developing management information systems for student tracking
- developing access to a range of library and information sources both on and off campus
- developing electronic learning environments by providing:
  - access to the library catalogue
  - study skills support
  - templates for on-line assessment
  - automatic e-mail lists so staff can contact their students
  - discussion forums
  - progress records for each student
- support for distance learning.

## Section two **Case studies of practice in institutions**

41. This section illustrates a selection of those features of learning and teaching strategies which have developed most markedly since the previous HEFCE analysis (HEFCE 99/55). Case studies clustered around nine features:

- setting a learning and teaching strategy in context, to explain why the strategy takes the form it does and how it relates to other institutional plans and management structures
- using a learning and teaching strategy to address particular agendas, such as the development of skills for employability, or developing flexible curricula to support access by students with disabilities
- managing the implementation of a learning and teaching strategy, to ensure effective implementation both centrally and within departments
- developing and sharing good practice, to support innovation and spread its benefits quickly and effectively across the institution
- improving teaching through research and scholarship, rather than only through staff development or policy initiatives
- implementing a learning and teaching strategy in a research environment, where values and management styles make some forms of implementation less appropriate
- promoting the use of communications and information technologies through institution-wide strategies rather than relying on enthusiasts
- staff development initiatives, and in particular institutional support for membership of the ILT
- recognising and rewarding excellent teaching, and commitment to implementing the institution's strategy.

42. Case studies have been selected from a wide range of institutions to illustrate both the range of practices being developed and their common features, independent of institutional context. In order to include several examples, most case studies are brief, but contact information has been provided to encourage exchange of ideas between institutions. The permission to use this material, and assistance of institutions in drafting the case studies, are gratefully acknowledged. There were many more excellent examples from other institutions which could not be included for reasons of space.

### **Setting a learning and teaching strategy in context**

43. Some early examples of learning and teaching strategies appeared unconnected with the external environment and its changing pressures, and also with the internal institutional context. In particular, learning and teaching strategies were often poorly articulated with parallel statements about the institutional mission; with parallel strategies concerning, for example, estates, widening participation or C&IT; and with policy statements on, for example, assessment or promotion. It is important that these other strategic statements support the learning and teaching strategy in a coherent manner.

44. The first case study here illustrates an institution providing a rationale for its learning and teaching strategy in relation to the external context. This example is unusual in that it also shows some awareness of the literature on teaching and learning.

## **Case study 1 Placing a learning and teaching strategy in a wider context**

**Manchester Metropolitan University**

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Manchester Metropolitan University began a comprehensive review in 1997 with the aim of setting a course for the next 10 years. Its learning and teaching strategy contains the following (edited) section.

### *The wider context – forces for change*

In recent years several factors have brought pressure to bear on the HE sector in general and the university in particular to address matters concerning learning and teaching. These might be summarised as follows:

- increasing awareness of the need to prepare people for individual and societal futures that are not susceptible to confident prediction. In consequence, the ability to adapt to a fast changing, information and knowledge based society and to a relatively indeterminate future, demands learners who have greater independence
- the seminal literature on learning theory which focuses on the need to develop ‘deeper’ learning outcomes through the allocation of more active roles to learners (Bruner, 1974; Kolv, 1983) – a literature widely drawn on and informing much of the recent work on learning and teaching in higher education by writers such as Boud, Gibbs and Laurillard
- recognition of the need to ensure enhanced flexibility and adaptability of the workforce. Concern has been expressed by employers and governments that HEIs have given insufficient attention to the relevance of their curricula to the world of work (from NAB, 1986 to Blunkett, 1999). In particular, it is claimed that skills required in everyday work situations, such as problem solving, self-reliability and critical evaluation, are not being developed sufficiently
- the emergence of ever more powerful and cost effective digital technologies, bringing together computer, telecommunications and broadcasting, are facilitating the emergence of new services and new ways of working and learning, both within education and in society at large, that are radically different from those of just a few years ago
- several factors have combined to raise questions about the nature and purpose of the sector and the appropriateness of existing learning structures and cultures. Among these factors are:
  - the increasingly diverse make-up of the student population, in particular driven by the widening participation agenda and the broader implications of government policies to enhance social inclusion
  - the need to apply a tightening resource base ever more skilfully so as to promote effective learning in students and effective support from both staff and physical resources
  - increased awareness and expectations on the part of students of the choices available to them in terms of how, when and where to study
  - the exploration of alternative learning environments and experiences ...given that much valuable learning can, and does, take place outside of lecture halls and seminar rooms
  - issues which arise in relation to retention rates and the extent to which developing learning strategies can address these
- increasingly, quality assessment judgements within HE are based on assessments of the quality of the student learning experience and of student achievement. A particular focus is placed on the effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment methods including: the development of intellectual and personal skills; questions of employability and employment; and on whether the student experience is enhanced through effective academic and personal support.

This statement of external context is followed by a more specific analysis of the institutional context before going on to state the aims of the strategy and its 15 'key strategic elements'. These elements emerge logically from the preceding analysis of context.

45. It is still common for institutions to make few links to parallel strategies, or only to mention other strategies rather than to be explicit about what links exist or what might need to be adjusted to produce a coherent plan of action. It is not always clear where particular components of institutional plans should sit. For example, should the use of C&IT to support learning be within the information strategy, and should an aspect of a widening participation statement concerned with support for the development of learning skills be within the learning and teaching strategy? Different strategies are usually developed in parallel but to different time scales, and are not easy to co-ordinate, particularly for the purpose of setting targets and reviewing their achievement. Case study 2 illustrates how 'joined-up thinking' can be expressed within a learning and teaching strategy.

### ***Case study 2 Linking policies and strategies across the institution***

#### ***University of Essex***

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The University of Essex includes in its learning and teaching strategy a section which summarises the relevant parts of other strategy documents which frame or support the learning and teaching strategy, namely the strategies for:

- finance
- capital building
- staff development
- information systems
- widening participation
- key skills
- regional policy
- equal opportunities
- admissions
- quality assurance.

Several elements of the learning and teaching strategy build on initiatives already under way as a consequence of parallel strategic initiatives, for example:

- a web-based portfolio system to enable students to reflect upon and record their skills development, and the establishment of the Essex Skills Award in collaboration with employers (key skills strategy)
- compulsory initial training and ILT accreditation for new lecturers' training (staff development strategy)
- construction of a Learning Resource Centre (capital building strategy)
- the allocation of project funds to support teaching and learning innovation in academic departments (financial strategy).

Co-ordination of the different elements of the learning and teaching strategy is facilitated by the planning officer, and the learning and teaching development officer, whose remit includes work with academic departments to support innovation in the design and delivery of the curriculum.

46. Institutional strategies are not all of equal status: many are 'sub-strategies' in support of the main mission of the institution. Some institutions are clear that their learning and teaching strategy is the central element which everything else supports. Others place their learning and teaching strategy and their research strategy alongside each other, under the institutional mission and operating statement, with all other strategies and policies in support of teaching and research.

### **Using a learning and teaching strategy to address a particular agenda**

47. A feature of some learning and teaching strategies in 1998 was their lack of clear goals or agendas, other than a general intention to maintain the quality of teaching. It is now much more likely for institutions to have identified what they want to change or develop, and to have specific agendas for action. The most common agendas of learning and teaching strategies are now shared by many institutions, regardless of their type, as are the most common mechanisms for implementing these agendas.

48. Case studies 4-7 illustrate the ways in which strategies are being used to implement one of the most common agendas: the development of students' employability, skills and 'graduate attributes'.

Mechanisms include:

- an institution-wide definition of what these skills consist of and what graduate attributes should be expected
- requirements to re-draft course documentation to specify which key skills, transferable skills or graduate attributes are being addressed, in every module
- requirements to specify where and how these skills are being assessed. This may include rules about the minimum proportion of marks allocated explicitly to skills, and the minimum number or size of courses involving specific skills
- requirements to provide a record of achievement, portfolio or profile which logs the acquisition of skills for each student
- requirements to build work experience of a specified minimum duration into all degree programmes
- mechanisms to recognise and give academic credit to work-based learning and off-campus learning of many kinds
- timescales for meeting these requirements and implementing these mechanisms, with methods to check their achievement, for example through modified course review procedures
- staff development, funding, provision of expert consultancy and other support to enable teachers to make these extensive and rapid changes.

49. Such centrally driven mechanisms are found in research-oriented as well as in teaching-oriented institutions. They are also evident in institutions that had already received 'Enterprise in Higher Education' funding for similar purposes during the 1990s, but which had failed to achieve wide implementation due to the lack of an institution-wide strategy.

50. The companion good practice guide on widening participation is based on the student life-cycle to provide HEIs with a framework for considering the issues that relate to planning a comprehensive widening participation strategy. The phases of the life-cycle are:

- aspiration raising
- pre-entry phase
- admissions phase
- first term/semester

- moving through the course
- employment.

51. The following case studies (3-6) are also reproduced in the widening participation guide because they illustrate the final stages of the student life-cycle as well as the learning and teaching considerations.

***Case study 3 Enhancing student employability***

***Lancaster University***

***Contact: Terry Wareham, e-mail t.wareham@lancaster.ac.uk***

Lancaster University's learning and teaching strategy includes five elements targeted on enhancing student employability:

- personal development profiling for students. A web and paper-based personal development profile is being piloted in three departments in the academic year 2000-01. In 2001-02 this will be expanded to other departments, with full implementation planned for 2002-03
- increasing opportunities for work experience for students on professional courses. This is a long-term project, which involves setting up effective employers' panels and developing opportunities within the public and private sectors for greater integration of work and study
- integrating students' parallel work experience into their overall learning experience. The implementation of personal development profiles will enable students to articulate and reflect upon the skills and experience developed in their work placement, and gain insights into their learning and working practices
- integrating key skills into every programme of study. The '5D' project, started as a pilot in 1998-99 with five academic departments, is now supporting departments across the institution in developing programme specifications for all schemes of study, and using this process to undertake a fundamental review of learning objectives, learning and teaching methods and assessment. The integration of key skills into the curriculum for each programme is an integral part of this review and development process
- 'career management skills' are being integrated with key skills and profiling.

***Case study 4 Focusing a strategy around student skills development***

***Queen's University of Belfast***

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Some institutions have spread their efforts and funding across a wide range of goals. The Queen's University of Belfast has targeted much of its efforts towards the development of students' skills. This involves:

- using a 'developing learning and teaching fund' to ensure that all degree programmes provide opportunities for students to develop personal and employability skills, by 2003; this is supporting 30 projects over three years
- developing student records of achievement with profiles of skills for all students by 2003-04, to encourage students' ownership of skills
- extending opportunities to develop skills through work-based learning, and experience abroad
- developing generic skills modules for non-vocational students

- seconding the equivalent of one member of academic staff per annum to the University Skills Initiative.

### ***Case study 5 Implementing a strategy concerned with graduate attributes***

#### ***University of Leicester***

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A central component of the University of Leicester's learning and teaching strategy is the specification of the attributes of a 'Leicester graduate', and mechanisms to ensure that the development and assessment of these attributes is designed into every degree programme. The attributes have been defined centrally and guidelines have been developed for each one. The university's guidelines on 'team working skills' are reproduced below. These specify minimum requirements for degree programmes.

Each degree programme must define within existing provision, or as a part of new curriculum elements, an appropriate range of opportunities for students to develop team working skills. These should enable them to function effectively as a member of a team to facilitate the collective achievement of a designated task.

The following is the minimum outcome for which learning opportunities should be provided within all programmes. By the end of the programme students should be able to:

- work with other team members to identify, distribute and undertake tasks necessary to complete a project
- identify and work with the strengths and weaknesses of individual team members
- communicate effectively with other team members to ensure effective operation of the team
- deal sensitively with dissent and disagreement
- evaluate the contribution of themselves and other team members to the completion of a project; appreciate the strengths and weaknesses of team working; describe those tasks which are most effectively achieved by team effort, and a range of activities designed to facilitate team building.

Appropriate learning opportunities must be a fully integrated part of each programme of study. A range of opportunities must be provided in order to ensure that:

- there is progression of skills development through the programme of study
- all students undertake supervised working in groups for a significant fraction of timetabled time. The work should be task oriented, and may include:
  - tutorial or seminar work which is substantially interactive and not primarily tutor-led
  - practical classes or field work
  - any other activities in which students interact with one another to complete specified tasks
- all students undertake at least one substantive group-based project during their course. A variety of different experiences are suitable, but the key features are that it should be:
  - autonomous – the students must work in teams mostly without tutorial support
  - task based – there must be specified outcomes
  - assessed – the outcomes must be assessed by methods that include evaluation of team working
  - the project will normally constitute one module, usually with 10 credits, but other arrangements are acceptable provided they accord the activity equivalent weight in the degree programme
- assessment of team working forms a part of all programmes of study.

Accommodation must be made for students with disabilities and specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia.

Each degree programme has a programme co-ordinator who prepares templates specifying how the attributes are designed into programmes. Examples from two departments are appended to the learning and teaching strategy to model how this can be done. The templates are submitted to faculty learning and teaching committees by a specified date.

Once an overview of existing provision is clear, the university will put in place support programmes to help fill gaps and develop practices and share these developments across the university.

The university will provide materials, exercises, marking criteria, staff development programmes and opportunities for individual guidance, and workshop programmes for students.

52. Many institutions use the terms 'student-centred learning' and 'lifelong learning' in their learning and teaching strategy. However, few have defined what these terms mean in practice, or put in place mechanisms for making progress or identifying whether progress has been made. An exception is illustrated in case study 6, which involves specifying, for example, the minimum requirements for all programmes for the volume of project-based learning, compulsory training for all programme directors, and a schedule and targets for implementation.

***Case study 6 Developing student-centred learning and lifelong learning  
University of Birmingham  
Contact: Alison Chantrey, e-mail a.c.chantrey@bham.ac.uk***

The first goal of the learning and teaching strategy of the University of Birmingham is 'to give greater emphasis to student-centred learning and the development of all students as effective lifelong learners'. To achieve this the strategy, the university has set the following targets (among others):

- project work is included in all undergraduate programme proposals for students entering from October 2000 – normally at least 40 credits at level 3
- programme specifications, defining skills and knowledge achieved, to be developed by the start of the 2001-02 session (for subjects early in the QAA academic review cycle) or by the start of 2003-04 for all remaining subjects
- embedding and articulation of key skills in all programmes to be encouraged through a staff development programme on writing programme specifications and defining learning outcomes, which is to be instituted from 2000-01. Attendance by school programme directors and directors of learning and teaching will be compulsory
- guidance documentation to facilitate accreditation of work-based learning to be developed for approval by the Academic Board by the end of 1999-2000
- formal schemes for recognising learning achieved away from the university (for example during the year abroad or in industrial placements) will be considered by the Academic Board during 2001
- student progress files to be developed and implemented by all schools for entrants in the 2001-02 session

- the enhancement of student learning through C&IT, within the context of a 'web-enabled campus': the West Campus Learning Resource Centre to provide over 800 teaching spaces including PC clusters from 2001-02
- schools to determine targets within their own learning and teaching strategies (by the start of 2000-01) for the development of appropriate IT-based learning resources; and a learning development unit to be established to enable secondment.

53. The following case studies 7-8, which focus on deaf students, demonstrate how important it is to take a linked approach when addressing a particular agenda. New cohorts of disabled students cannot be drawn in without setting in place all the components of a good learning and teaching strategy to ensure success for individual learners.

***Case study 7 Developing and enhancing study skills for deaf students***

***University of Central Lancashire***

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The university has developed a Year 0 course for deaf students supporting progression internally or to 'progression partners' with good services. It is disseminating to the sector its Year 0 and model of deaf student support, including research-backed understanding of interactions between deaf students and lecturers in the classroom.

In particular the university is working with Manchester City College to develop access provision for deaf students. This involves a qualification route at Year 0 for full-time students who are deaf, provision to incorporate bespoke study skills packages, and a foundation level in a range of higher education subjects. The provision will encompass guaranteed progression to level one of a degree programme at the university and a negotiated progression to other HEIs.

***Case study 8 Extending education and career opportunities for the deaf community***

***University of Wolverhampton***

***Contact: Judith Mole, e-mail J.C.Mole@wlv.ac.uk***

The university – which currently has the largest number of profoundly deaf students of any higher education institution in Britain – has a number of linked projects running in the Innovations Fund programme. One of these also involves a Year 0 course.

Project One: the research and production of a web-site which uses current art and design students and deaf practitioners to promote positive role models for deaf students wishing to enter higher education, and to provide information for deaf people and potential employers.

While many deaf students study art and design, it is important to encourage uptake in all available subject areas and ensure that employment opportunities are open to deaf practitioners.

Project Two: research, development and accreditation of an introductory year in English for deaf learners which introduces specialist subject orientation in art and design.

Many deaf students struggle with essay writing and completing a dissertation as they receive all instruction through one language (British Sign Language) and then have to translate their written work into another (English). Completion of Project Two will mean that students have the opportunity to improve their English in preparation for a degree course as well as continuing their studies in their chosen subject.

Project Three: research and production of a specialist British Sign Language glossary to support undergraduate art and design study. This glossary will cover technical, critical, contextual and professional practice terminology.

Terminology in art and design can be complicated and ambiguous. Deaf students who receive teaching through a sign language interpreter have to rely on the interpreter's understanding of the terminology. Additionally, there are many words for which signs do not exist, or where the meaning of the sign does not convey the meaning of the term, but rather is a direct translation from the English.

The glossary project has employed both a deaf and a hearing researcher to select, define and translate common art and design terms and themes, which will be included on a web-based glossary. It is intended to be used as a resource for deaf students, sign language interpreters, and art and design teachers in schools for the deaf.

Project Four: preparation and production of a guidance and support pack and code of practice for lecturers working with deaf students.

Guidance materials aimed specifically at art and design teachers and lecturers will look at issues such as health and safety considerations, practical dilemmas and good practice when teaching deaf students.

Project Five: a sector-wide staff development session for art and design staff teaching, or wishing to teach, deaf students.

Project Six: dissemination of the project research information and a careers event at the Deaf Film Festival 2002.

Information gained through research for Project One will be disseminated through a careers event at the Deaf Film Festival 2002 where deaf students, practitioners and potential employers will be brought together and the Project One web-site will be launched.

54. Some institutions have titled their strategy a learning, teaching and assessment strategy in recognition of the importance of assessment. Assessment is addressed by 45 per cent of learning and teaching strategies and is seen as central to other changes to teaching and learning by many institutions. Case study 9 illustrates a strategy which contains a separate section on assessment.

### **Case study 9 Developing assessment practices through a learning and teaching strategy**

**Nottingham Trent University**

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During 1999 the university's Academic Review and Development Committee (ARDC) published new assessment policies to secure further developments across the institution in the quality of assessment regimes. In tandem with this the ARDC used the university's teaching and learning enhancement fund to support a range of projects on reviewing and developing assessment practices, including one total faculty review of its assessment strategy and schemes. In doing this, the university has recognised the significance of assessment for:

- student learning styles and approaches
- verifying the effectiveness of programmes of study in achieving the intended learning outcomes.

This institutional learning and teaching strategy incorporates further phases by setting the following targets:

- dissemination of resulting developments in assessment, by the university's central support offices for quality management and quality enhancement, by project teams, and by learning and teaching co-ordinators
- review and development of assessment strategies within all faculties of the university, in line with the development of their learning and teaching strategies, supported centrally and by learning and teaching co-ordinators
- inclusion in these assessment strategies of particular emphasis on clarity and explicitness of assessment criteria, schemes for ensuring continuing formative feedback to students on assessments, and moderation systems to ensure consistency, fairness and rigour in assessment practices.

HEFCE funds are being used to support the achievement of these targets. By the end of academic session 1999-2000, dissemination seminars will have been held on the outcomes of the existing assessment projects. By the end of 2003, all programme assessment regimes across the nine university faculties will have been reviewed and developed in line with a rolling programme of reviews of assessment strategies and approaches over the academic years 2000-01, 2001-02 and 2002-03. Intensive work will be undertaken in three faculties in each of the academic years. A task group has been established to oversee, monitor and evaluate this target area of the strategy.

### **Managing the implementation of a learning and teaching strategy**

55. Institutions often have difficulty turning policy into action using existing committee structures. Institutions with some experience of implementing a strategy have developed a range of approaches. They tend to involve one or more of four kinds of new mechanisms:

- establishment of a new central management group to oversee implementation across the whole institution
- establishment of department or school groups to develop and implement the strategy at grass roots level
- co-ordination between the institutional and departmental implementation
- task groups associated with each of the main components of the strategy (such as the development of students' employability), to lead change and facilitate the sharing of specific practices across departments.

56. This may involve the establishment of new posts or roles, both centrally and in departments, as illustrated in case studies 10-13.

***Case study 10 Re-organisation to implement a strategy***

***University of Lincolnshire and Humberside***

***Contact: Mike Cook, e-mail mcook@ulh.ac.uk***

In developing its learning and teaching strategy over a two year period, the University of Lincolnshire and Humberside established an organisational structure for implementation. This involves:

- a Learning and Teaching Strategy Group (LTSG) reporting to the deputy vice-chancellor
- faculties each have a director position, responsible for enhancing learning and teaching; these directors are members of the LTSG
- each faculty has a committee with a remit for enhancing the learning and teaching process within the faculty, developing faculty learning and teaching strategies, and overseeing their implementation. The faculty learning and teaching strategy documents were appended to the institutional learning and teaching strategy document
- a learning and teaching development fund is administered by the LTSG, ensuring that innovation is targeted at strategic goals. Faculties bidding for funds contribute more than half of total project funding.

***Case study 11 Co-ordinating the implementation of a strategy***

***Liverpool John Moores University***

***Contact: Sue Thompson, e-mail s.e.thompson@livejm.ac.uk***

Liverpool John Moores University has established a new structure, and new posts, to co-ordinate developments and to support local implementation relating to the five themes of its learning, teaching and assessment strategy: assessment, learner support, employability, C&IT and staff development.

The main elements are as follows:

- a director of innovation has been appointed whose remit is to ensure implementation of the strategy
- a Learning Innovations Committee has been set up, chaired by the director of innovation. All schools are represented by their learning and teaching co-ordinator; all central teams that support learning are represented, as is the students' union. The committee has responsibility for reviewing developments, monitoring and evaluation, and for ensuring that the learning, teaching and assessment strategy has synergy with other policies and strategies
- a project management panel, a sub-group of the Learning Innovations Committee, acts as the steering group for the learning, teaching and assessment strategy and oversees the allocation of teaching quality enhancement funds
- working groups have been set up, drawing on university-wide expertise, each with a specific task-focused remit for: assessment review, promoting and rewarding good teaching, web-supported learning, key skills and personal development planning, programme specification and staff development. These working groups will develop recommendations on policy and strategy in each area for approval and implementation with immediate effect
- a new Learning Development Team has been established: a small group of specialist staff supplemented by theme co-ordinators (see below) and part-time secondments from funded projects,

and led by a new permanent post of learning development manager. The focus of the team's work is to promote, co-ordinate, support and disseminate learning, teaching and assessment strategy initiatives. In addition to meetings and events, the team is developing a learning and teaching web-site

- each of the five themes of the learning, teaching and assessment strategy has a co-ordinator, who will work across the university to develop networks, liaise with schools and teams, support developments and share practices associated with the themes
- a 'forum' is being established for each theme to bring together those active in developing new approaches and to disseminate good practice. The forums will be both real and virtual and managed by the appropriate theme co-ordinator
- each school has a learning and teaching co-ordinator whose role is to provide a link between learning, teaching and assessment activities in the school and those at the institutional level. The role is key in helping to develop local tactics to implement the strategy.

### ***Case study 12 Establishing a new structure to implement the strategy***

***University of Sunderland***

***Contact: Dr Judith A. Kuit, e-mail [judith.kuit@sunderland.ac.uk](mailto:judith.kuit@sunderland.ac.uk)***

The University of Sunderland has operated for over a decade with a learning and teaching strategy which has the specific aim of enhancing the students' learning experience. It has had school learning and teaching co-ordinators since 1993, an annual teaching and learning conference since 1994, 'teaching fellowships' since 1995, and a certificate of higher education which has been compulsory for new inexperienced staff since 1996. To help implement its 2000-02 strategy it has also created a Learning Enhancement Board and developed the terms of reference of its schools' learning, teaching and assessment groups.

The Academic Board has supported the creation of the new Learning Enhancement Board. This includes the learning and teaching co-ordinators and one other elected member from each school, the directors of the three services that directly support learning, the head of the staff development unit, the learning and teaching staff development officer, the head of the quality support unit, and student representatives.

The board has editorial control over the learning, teaching and assessment strategy and is responsible for evaluating and monitoring its implementation and outcomes. It co-ordinates the development of specific initiatives to implement the strategy, and advises the university on principles for the distribution of identified learning and teaching resources. It receives local (at school/programme/individual level) interpretations of the learning, teaching and assessment strategy, and monitors that they are compatible with the original. It advises on the provision of academic staff development where this relates to the enhancement of the students' learning experience, and it acts as the commissioning body for the university's certificate in higher education. The board also handles issues relating to the ILT, promoting membership and acting as a communication channel between the institute and the university.

Each school has had a learning and teaching assessment group since 1992, chaired by the learning and teaching co-ordinator. The terms of reference of the groups now include local interpretation of the institutional strategy, as well as monitoring its implementation and that of Learning Enhancement Board policies. Through general promulgation of this interpretation and direct cross-representation with the School Quality Board, they ensure that the development and approval of all awards at every level includes consideration of the university learning, teaching and assessment strategy and all appropriate

local adaptations. These local groups advise their school management teams on progress with learning enhancements, and members act as individual agents for change throughout their own school.

57. One of the interesting features of these mechanisms is the extent to which there is collaboration between departments. Instead of the responsibility for improving teaching being located either within a specialist educational methods unit, or within separate departments operating in parallel, institutions are setting up cross-institution teams and groups to encourage collaboration and rapid sharing and embedding of developing practices. This sometimes involves substantial funding in order to give departmental academics the time to collaborate.

### ***Case study 13 Forming a team to implement the learning and teaching strategy***

#### ***Middlesex University***

**Contact: Professor Barry Jackson, e-mail [b.jackson@mdx.ac.uk](mailto:b.jackson@mdx.ac.uk)**

In order to implement the learning and teaching strategy across the university, and to provide local support within each school, Middlesex University has established a learning and teaching strategy team (LTS team). This consists of eight 0.5 academic staff secondments (LTS leaders), one from each school and one to provide co-ordination through the Centre for Learning Development. The main role of the leaders is to identify, and then implement, with the support of the Centre for Learning Development, locally appropriate activities to support curricular change and/or staff development within each school to meet the objectives of the strategy.

The strategy sets broad targets for schools to achieve in each year, for the three main themes of the strategy, starting with an audit of the current situation and progressing over the three years through actions intended to improve on that position. The LTS leaders receive additional funds to support this work, annually, when their action plans are agreed with the Centre for Learning Development. Leaders are brought together for workshops in the Centre for Learning Development to develop their skills and knowledge in ways which will support their role.

The LTS leaders also act as a team, with representatives from information and learning resources and computing services. One important purpose of the team is to share perceptions, practices and progress reports from the various schools. The team has a responsibility to progress cross-university actions identified in the strategy. In the first year, for example, it will identify and inform the university about structural or procedural obstacles in the path of strategic progress; in subsequent years it will propose solutions. The team will also monitor progress in implementing the strategy, both within schools and across the university, and report to the Academic Board.

The majority of HEFCE funding is used to support the LTS team.

58. A characteristic of many learning and teaching strategies at an early stage of development or implementation is that they tend to give much more detail about the role of central management than they do about the role of departments or teachers. As most implementation needs to be undertaken at local level, it is likely to be necessary to engage departments in thinking about implementing the strategy, beyond simply discussing the institutional document. One approach is to require all departments to develop their own learning and teaching strategy. This might be expected to show how the main priorities

of the institutional strategy are being addressed, and perhaps to set explicit targets against which progress could be gauged. Where institutional targets have already been set, these may need to be revised in the light of the totals derived from departmental targets.

59. There are, as yet, few examples of well developed departmental strategies. Institutions that expect departments to develop strategies have experienced variable responses in terms of quality and understanding of what is required. In this sense departments are perhaps two or three years behind institutions in the development and use of learning and teaching strategies. Case study 14 is from an institution which is in its third year of asking departments to submit strategies which address centrally agreed priorities.

### ***Case study 14 Departmental learning and teaching strategies***

#### ***London Guildhall University***

***Contact: Paul Coyle, e-mail coyle@lgu.ac.uk***

London Guildhall University requires departments to develop and implement their own learning and teaching strategy to address five institutional priorities:

- observation of good practice elsewhere
- measures to improve study skills
- measures to improve employability
- computing and IT course delivery
- teacher observations.

Departments report annually to the Academic Council, using a standard form of report. The learning and teaching strategy below is from the Department of Art and includes elements of review of achievement, and plans for development, in relation to those five priorities.

#### ***Observation and dissemination of good practice***

The department over the last academic year has again been under scrutiny from external sources. The department was subject to a Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) inspection in February 2000: a Grade 2 was achieved for each aspect of provision (Grade 2 – good provision in which the strengths clearly outweigh the weaknesses).

In addition Art and Design was reviewed by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) in the previous session, an aggregate score of 23 out of 24 was achieved. Grades of 4 were achieved for curriculum design, content and organisation; teaching, learning and assessment; student progression and achievement; student support and guidance; quality assurance and enhancement.

To disseminate good practice the following mechanisms have been used during the academic year:

- annual staff conference (two-day event held in September)
- departments' peer observation scheme for teaching staff
- two departmental staff development events during the academic year
- dissemination of good practice via annual monitoring process
- learning agreements project
- computerised student assessment project
- staff appraisal

- student feedback
- external examiner reports.

The department appointed its first principal lecturer in learning development in September 1999. Much sharing of good practice has occurred and many joint activities are planned for the forthcoming academic year.

#### *Measures to improve key skills*

Key skill statements are now embedded within the curriculum of all courses within the department, however further refinement will occur once the QAA benchmarking statements have been produced for art and design (July 2001). A member of the university staff sits on the QAA benchmarking group for art and design, and the department will use her expertise to refine departmental statements as progress is made.

During the academic year, revision to key skill statements have been made to the following FE courses: BTEC ND design crafts (silversmithing, jewellery and allied crafts) and BTEC diploma in art and design foundation studies.

#### *Measures to improve employability*

All HE courses in the department include curriculum elements, which mirror or simulate working activities in the relevant professions. The range of activities includes:

- work placements
- live project briefs working with external clients
- internal and external exhibitions
- work with local schools and local community groups
- national and international competition success.

In addition, the department has a strategic planning committee with members drawn from industry. The role of the committee is to advise the department on industry employment and training needs.

#### *Communications & information technology (C&IT)*

All courses within the department now include an element of computing technology within the curriculum. HE courses in particular are well advanced, and computing technology is now routinely used to a high level by a high proportion of students. The department achieved a Grade 4 for curriculum design, content and organisation in the QAA subject review of art and design.

#### *Course delivery*

With the completion of the new jewellery centre, computer-aided design (CAD) has been introduced to all full-time students of silversmithing, jewellery and allied crafts. Methods are now being explored to enable the large number of part-time students in these subjects to use CAD technology. Computing technology is gradually being used in course delivery, however there is still much work to be done.

### *Student feedback (from students, to students)*

The department expects student feedback from each unit of delivery within the department's courses, this information is formally considered as part of the annual course monitoring process. The department will continue to operate this method.

The following student feedback methods are also used:

- departmental student forum – meets three times per year and is chaired by a member of the senior management team
- course board membership
- direct feedback to unit teaching staff.

### *Staff development, including teaching observation*

During the 1999-2000 academic year, the department's peer observation process focused on the FE staff within the department, in part as preparation for the FEFC inspection, which took place in February 2000. The department's principal lecturer in learning development oversaw the peer observation scheme. The peer observation scheme operates on a bi-annual basis, which means that each member of staff is observed once in two years.

A mixture of internal (staff conference) and external events are supported for staff development. The department produces annually a prioritised plan, which outlines the focus for staff development events during the forthcoming academic year.

The department's operating objectives for 2000-01 are as follows:

- prepare staff for ILT membership
- continue to operate peer observation as an integral pedagogic activity within the department
- pilot a learning agreement prototype and guidelines
- personal training/staff training/implementation of key skills in department courses
- re-establish the department teaching and learning group
- establish identified staff members as mentor co-ordinator within the department
- initiate department teaching and learning bulletin to disseminate examples of good practice, information on training opportunities and staff development activities at the university and elsewhere
- the department will monitor attendance and punctuality on all courses
- the department will develop a tutorial policy, which specifies minimum expectations
- improve identification on entry of those students in need of additional learning support
- implement recommendations from staff conference (September 2000)
- explore Investors in People (IIP) accreditation
- ensure that key employability skills are progressively embedded at each level within all HE course programmes
- implement and monitor the HEFCE Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning project.

### **Developing and sharing good practice through a learning and teaching strategy**

60. Forty-nine per cent of learning and teaching strategies include the use of an innovations fund to support development of new approaches to learning, teaching and assessment. A small number of institutions have operated such funds for as long as two decades, but the HEFCE funding has greatly

extended the reach and scale of such mechanisms. What is new about the operation of such funds within a learning and teaching strategy is the way they are being oriented explicitly to the goals and priorities of the institution, rather than simply supporting whatever ideas the innovators come up with. Case study 15 is an example of this. Criteria or agendas linked to the strategy may be specified, and bids to the fund may be expected to address this agenda and to specify relevant targets and how they will evaluate the extent to which the project achieves the aims of the strategy.

***Case study 15 Orienting the funding of innovation to strategic goals***

***University of Central England***

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The University of Central England (UCE) has allocated the majority of its HEFCE funding to support innovation projects within faculties or units. Each project is targeted on one or more of seven specific goals of the learning and teaching strategies. For example goal 6 'to encourage curriculum innovations designed to increase the employability of UCE graduates' is targeted by a Linked Teaching project described below.

Linked Teaching is an approach to the development of skills which involves a recently qualified practising nurse and a UCE physiologist jointly preparing and delivering teaching sessions to pre-registration students. The principal aim is to develop the ability of students to apply physiological knowledge to aspects of their nursing practice.

The approach relies upon the establishment of a discussion between the physiologist and the nurse in which students can take part. This participation is aided by the presence of a recently qualified nurse who is able to act as a role model for the students as they seek to apply their physiological knowledge.

Each Linked Teaching session has an associated template which identifies the physiological framework to be covered. Aspects of nursing practice and the way that they relate to this framework are identified and discussed during a comprehensive preparation process that precedes each session. Thus, Linked Teaching sessions are not led by content alone but rather they focus on the demonstration and development of skills of application.

The main focus for evaluating the project to date has been to elicit students' perceptions of their classroom-based learning experience and to provide evidence of the students' grasp of the concepts in each session. Feedback from students has been very positive. Typical comments include: '...the most interesting, relevant and helpful thing we have done so far on our course'; 'I actually felt I knew something and that I had learnt something relevant'. This positive evaluation is leading to expansion of the initiative into subject areas other than physiology.

Post-registration evaluation is closely linked to the university's strategy to increase the employability of UCE graduates. A pilot study is exploring the value recently qualified staff attach to their pre-registration Linked Teaching experience as well as to the general provision of biological science teaching at UCE.

61. A difficulty that many innovation funds face is that new ideas often do not spread beyond the local context in which they were formed, even if they were well funded and the project well run. It may be

possible to innovate 'at the margins', despite the infrastructure, but not possible to 'mainstream' an innovation without changing, for example, the availability of new types of learning spaces or of additional networked computers. Mechanisms need to be put in place to inform the centre about barriers to embedding innovation, and to identify what kind of central support is essential if good practices are to be adopted widely.

62. Staff in one department may not know about innovations in other departments or may not recognise what is transferable across disciplinary boundaries. Failures may be repeated several times in different departments without learning from mistakes. Short-cuts that reduce innovation costs may be missed. Institutions are beginning to use a variety of mechanisms to share good practice quickly and effectively across the institution and to 'mainstream' and embed successful innovations instead of leaving them isolated. For example, the University of Bournemouth has a project supported by the HEFCE's Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning. Called PAL – Promoting Peer Assisted Learning – the project is taking successful peer tutoring practices from one department and managing the adoption of similar practices across the university.

63. Case studies 16-18 illustrate a range of mechanisms for sharing practice in different contexts.

### ***Case study 16 Sharing practice in a specialist institution***

#### ***Falmouth College of Arts***

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Sharing teaching and learning practices across a small specialist institution requires different processes than in a large, multi-discipline institution. Falmouth College of Arts is using its learning and teaching strategies to support a range of sharing mechanisms:

- continuing professional development (CPD). As part of a developing CPD profiling scheme, academic staff are asked to specify objectives in relation to sharing practice, on an annual basis, at appraisal
- changing practices in relation to learning resources. A library user group publishes details of arrangements for closer sharing of practice between library staff and academic staff
- proposals for flexible curriculum units. It is proposed to encourage flexibility to enable staff to share expertise within and beyond current patterns of provision. This is currently managed through the Erasmus scheme but more work is required to make such flexibility more easily achievable across the institution
- sharing contractual understandings. A review of the resourcing model and the interpretation of part-time contract hours will help to share best practice concerning the use of valued part-time staff
- IT training, survey and delivery. A key issue is the ongoing training of staff in IT. Targeting IT training on working groups across the institution is intended to lead to new delivery patterns and a greater impact on learning and teaching
- workshops have been planned on a range of topics, including teaching large groups, benchmarking, drawing, communications, and lecturing. A bid fund is supporting academic staff in working in a number of areas for the aims of the learning and teaching strategy. All projects supported by the fund will report to colleagues through the workshop programme, which will be run and supported by the learning and teaching co-ordinators.
- practitioner networks. The college will support activity to develop its 'delivery partner status' within the Learning and Teaching Support Network (LTSN) centre for art and design, in particular to further the development of practitioner networks. The college will offer a workshop series for the LTSN.

### **Case study 17 Sharing good practice through a range of new mechanisms**

**Lancaster University**

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Lancaster University has established a range of mechanisms with the intention of spreading good practice effectively across the institution. These include:

- an annual 'teaching week' – five days spread throughout the year that allow the opportunity to focus on specific issues currently of concern to staff. The first of these days, in December 2000, focused on various aspects of assessment: assessing creatively, programme specifications and assessment, using assessment strategies to improve the learning experiences of students, using IT in assessment, and so on
- five teams of staff (the '5D' project) involving 25 per cent secondments of staff to enable them to work with colleagues. Each team consists of a mix of academic and administrative staff, the academic staff coming from departments across the faculty. The teams work with individual departments, helping them clarify their teaching and learning goals and philosophies and identifying and transferring good practice
- funding for 'retreats' for cross-department groups to meet over an extended time period. For example, the biological sciences department is planning a two-day retreat to follow up comments made in its subject review. The focus will be on how they can make teaching more interactive. This will be followed up by further work in the department and subsequent review
- awards for departments to disseminate successful teaching, learning or assessment practices to other departments. Where a department can demonstrate that it has assisted another department in adopting an innovation it will be rewarded with funding to further assist in its teaching and learning development
- a 'teaching development database' to collate information about innovations. Over the years there have been numerous developments in learning, teaching and assessment, sometimes as part of externally funded initiatives, such as the Enterprise in Higher Education initiative, and sometimes as the result of a particular interest of an individual or a department. In order to capture these so that others can explore the possibilities for their own departments, a web-based database has been developed which is searchable in a number of ways: by discipline, by key word, by staff name and by date of the development. This information is easily available to anyone within the institution who wishes to look at good practice in other departments. Contact details on each entry allow staff to go to the innovating department to find out more and explore the possibilities for transferring the practice to their own context.

### **Case study 18 Building a learning community to implement a learning and teaching strategy**

**University of Wolverhampton**

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In planning to implement its learning and teaching strategy, the University of Wolverhampton has emphasised the creation of a 'community of teaching practice' that links institutional goals to school strategies. Each school has produced its own strategy, according to a harmonising framework which addresses university-wide aims:

- defining discipline-specific learning outcomes

- establishing mechanisms to improve quality
- encouraging wider participation and improved retention
- developing collaborative links with other HE institutions
- undertaking projects concerned with study skills and key skills
- improving efficiency of provision
- encouraging use of C&IT
- developing assessment practice
- evaluation of the impact of the strategy.

Each school has a co-ordinator for learning and teaching. These co-ordinators are responsible for implementing the school strategy, chairing the school committee for learning and teaching and representing the interests of the school in the cross-university Learning and Teaching Working Group, which manages the university strategy. The co-ordinators are appointed at the level of principal lecturer. Additionally, central service departments are represented on the working group.

A second management team is formed through the Technology Supported Learning project. This group manages the exploitation of C&IT in support of student learning. The group meets monthly to share practice and collaborate on school-based initiatives.

This community also includes three focus groups which contribute to developments in learning and teaching. All staff apply on an annual basis for funding and support to pursue projects in one of three areas:

- teaching innovations
- research into student learning
- university scholarships.

There are currently 14 innovations, nine research projects and three scholarship projects.

Each focus group meets once a month, and the Learning and Teaching Working Group meets weekly. All groups meet together once a semester. Cross-university seminars and reports disseminate projects across the university and an annual conference, the 'learning and teaching week' showcases innovations. All these activities are designed to address the university's first strategic priority, which is to 'grow a learning community'.

### **Improving teaching through research and scholarship**

64. Increasingly institutions are seeing the potential for using research in various forms as a way to improve teaching and learning. This is variously termed 'pedagogic research', 'action research' and the 'scholarship of teaching'. It is characterised by an enquiry-driven and scholarly approach to making changes in teaching and learning which takes the existing literature on learning and teaching seriously and which collects and uses evidence, rather than being based on tradition or fashion. The increase in the use of such change mechanisms may turn out to be one of the more important recent developments, being in closer alignment with academic culture than some other approaches to change. Case studies 19-21 illustrate three different approaches to using research and scholarship to improve teaching. Interestingly, none of these is from a research-intensive institution.

### **Case study 19 Supporting research into teaching and learning within a discipline**

#### **Kent Institute of Art and Design**

**Contact: David Buss, e-mail [dbuss@kiad.ac.uk](mailto:dbuss@kiad.ac.uk) or Jackie Cobb, e-mail [jcobb@kiad.ac.uk](mailto:jcobb@kiad.ac.uk)**

Kent Institute of Art and Design (KIAD) has made the promotion of research into teaching, learning and assessment in art, architecture and design one of its 'strategic aims'. It intends to collaborate with other research-oriented centres within the discipline, such as the new Centre for Learning and Teaching at the London Institute, and to bid for research funding. Its outcomes, commitments and targets are listed below.

Outcomes: KIAD will be an important participant in the development of a body of research into teaching, learning and assessment issues in art, architecture and design in FE and HE. KIAD teaching, learning and assessment practices will increasingly be informed and underpinned by research.

Commitments:

- appoint an institute teaching, learning and assessment co-ordinator with relevant experience to initiate and oversee research into pedagogic topics
- support pedagogic research from the institute's research funds
- collaborate with the LTSN subject centre and participate actively in research projects supported by that source
- continue to support staff who undertake higher degrees where the pedagogic dimension of art, architecture and design is the focus for study and research
- offer staff development events which provide training in the skills necessary for pedagogic research.

Key performance targets:

- two major pedagogic research projects initiated in 2000-01 for completion and report by the end of 2001-02
- staff development and training sessions in pedagogic research issues held at each campus during 2000-01
- additional research projects initiated and funding secured from other sources by the end of the duration of the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund.

### **Case study 20 Fostering the scholarship of teaching**

#### **Southampton Institute**

**Contact: Professor Claire Donovan, e-mail [claire.donovan@solent.ac.uk](mailto:claire.donovan@solent.ac.uk)**

Staff development, and especially human resource development, has characteristically been pragmatic rather than scholarly. A number of institutions are using their learning and teaching strategy to foster a more scholarly approach to developing teaching and learning. The learning and teaching strategy of Southampton Institute is underpinned by just two 'key principles':

- to create independent learners
- to foster scholarly approaches to teaching.

It identifies a number of characteristics of scholarly approaches to teaching, including:

- systematic, objective enquiry, based on reflection and investigation
- openness to scrutiny by peers, and sharing ideas and good practice
- making best use of available evidence, including analysis of action and student feedback

- undertaking research projects on the pedagogy of the discipline, including writing up and disseminating findings.

Activities within the strategy that foster the scholarship of teaching include:

- regular seminars and discussions
- biannual conferences
- a 'learner experience and achievement' project with a full-time researcher, to obtain data to inform developments
- a series of funded teaching development projects, most of which involve a researcher and research components rather than just development components. Some explicitly involve review of practice elsewhere
- teaching fellowship appointments (12 by 2002) to enable key staff to engage in scholarship and research involving teaching and learning
- ILT membership (240 staff – 50 per cent of all staff – by 2002). ILT accreditation requires an underpinning knowledge-base to teaching.

### ***Case study 21 Using pedagogic research to support implementation of a learning and teaching strategy***

***Sheffield Hallam University***

***Contact: Ranald Macdonald, e-mail r.macdonald@shu.ac.uk***

Sheffield Hallam University has a Learning and Teaching Institute with a core staff of eight academics and one research assistant. Their main role is to advise on the learning, teaching and assessment strategy at university and school levels and to support schools with implementation. This makes up over half their work. Other work underpins educational development generally – for example through taking a lead role in enhancing quality in specifying learning outcomes and assessment criteria, and through their contribution to the university's validation process.

The Learning and Teaching Institute has a research wing, which consists of a core group of two professors and two research assistants who support pedagogic research involving over 50 lecturers across all schools of the university, and combine this with responsibility for the whole range of educational research.

Some of the university's HEFCE learning and teaching strategy funding is used to support an additional five full-time research assistants. Their role is to undertake evaluation and research associated with about 30 developmental activities currently under way within the university's 11 schools. Each school has its own learning, teaching and assessment strategy which addresses the university's three priority development areas: flexible course delivery, support for diversity of students, and appropriate use of technology to facilitate learning.

The research assistants work, often in pairs, on developmental activities within the schools, undertaking a range of activities such as:

- reviewing current practices in order to establish a base-line for development
- literature searches on topics of concern to schools
- evaluating specific innovations and comparing student learning with conventional alternatives
- reviewing staff requirements for learning software and investigating alternative software.

The research assistants meet as a 'learning set' to discuss educational theory and also fortnightly to share information and ideas on their research work. Academic staff from the two parts of the Learning and Teaching Institute also contribute to these activities. Outcomes are disseminated across the university through publications and presentations, where appropriate.

The Learning and Teaching Institute aims to relate its very practically-oriented work to contemporary education theory, and research assistants play a key role in this respect.

### **Implementing a learning and teaching strategy in a research environment**

65. The change processes commonly adopted by teaching-oriented institutions may not always fit the culture, values and management style of more research-oriented institutions. Some institutions have affirmed their research-orientation, in the introduction to their learning and teaching strategy, but have then adopted a strategy indistinguishable from that of a more teaching-oriented institution. This is so common that there are few differences between types of institution in the make-up of learning and teaching strategies.

66. A small number of institutions have placed their research-orientation at the centre of the rationale of their learning and teaching strategy and have adopted research-like processes to engage academics with the development of teaching and to bring about change. The following case studies illustrate a range of approaches to implementing a learning and teaching strategy in a research environment.

67. One characteristic of a research orientation is an emphasis on individual academic excellence and on academic autonomy, reflected in a focus on processes for improvement of teaching, and on individual teachers rather than on courses, policies or infrastructure. Case studies 22 and 23 illustrate this orientation to individual teachers; case study 23 also emphasises the importance of the improvement process for teaching itself being a research process.

#### ***Case study 22 Staff development provision in a research environment Imperial College***

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Imperial College has a devolved approach to implementing its strategy, which relies on individual teachers. It therefore emphasises individual staff development and employs a wide range of staff development mechanisms including:

- establishing a Centre for Educational Development with a new head, to support staff
- extending the role of the London Imperial Network for Educational Development, which currently involves over 100 staff
- establishing educational development co-ordinators in each department, and meetings between these co-ordinators and the network
- making 20 'teaching excellence awards' and three 'teaching fellowships' with a financial award of £1,500 each
- encouraging membership of the ILT and paying application and membership fees for one year for 30 staff
- funding attendance of staff at conferences, symposia and courses concerned with teaching and learning, such as those mounted by LTSN subject centres

- using a teaching development grant scheme to support innovative teachers (maximum single award £20,000 per annum)
- using a teaching research grant scheme to support pedagogic research (in total £45,000 per annum)
- establishing a certificate programme, compulsory for probationary staff
- training for those in departments who will themselves train postgraduates who teach.

### ***Case study 23 A learning and teaching strategy for a research-led environment***

#### ***University of Oxford***

**Contact: Suzanne Shale, e-mail [suzanne.shale@learning.ox.ac.uk](mailto:suzanne.shale@learning.ox.ac.uk)**

Institutions with strong research cultures and a tradition of the scholar's autonomy require learning and teaching strategies with distinctive features. The University of Oxford strategy has three underlying aims:

- to engage in practitioner-led research on learning and teaching and to foster a research-informed approach to learning and teaching
- to develop understanding of the diverse needs of high-achieving students and to enhance the ways in which those needs are met
- to recognise the contribution and enhance the professional skills of all staff who teach or support learning.

Specific objectives are built upon three assumptions: that learning and teaching are strongly discipline-based; that graduate, as well as undergraduate, education is significant in its scale and importance to the university; and that all staff aspire to excellence in learning, teaching, research and administration. The learning and teaching strategy promotes:

- learning and teaching informed by educational, as well as disciplinary, research. It establishes an Institute for the Advancement of University Learning led by a 'teaching-active' as well as 'research-active' director. University lecturers lead educational development work in the sciences, and provision for graduate students and learning support staff. Another post-holder leads educational development work in humanities and social sciences. A three year study of the learning needs of high-achieving undergraduates is led by the principal research fellow, and a research officer who also provides support to lecturers undertaking educational research. The institute teaches a part-time, research-based diploma in learning and teaching in higher education to academic staff, many at professorial and reader level, and is developing pathways for graduate students and learning support staff. It is creating research and development links with comparable institutions in the UK and internationally
- professional development provision within graduate programmes and the provision of a generic 'graduate school' programme
- enhanced provision for students with disabilities
- in conjunction with the widening participation initiative, work to broaden the base of recruitment to full-time undergraduate courses
- the view that all university staff support learning directly or indirectly. The institute provides an integrated educational and professional development service, and will introduce accredited development programmes for academic-related and non-academic staff.

68. Despite some institutions asserting that the quality of their teaching is derived from the quality of their research, very few have a learning and teaching strategy which in any way attempts to back up this claim with action. In fact most go on to describe ways of developing teaching which have no connection with

research. In contrast, case study 24 is an example of a learning and teaching strategy which involves explicit attempts to strengthen the benefits to students, and to teachers, of being in an environment which supports research and consultancy.

### ***Case study 24 Strengthening the links between research, consultancy and teaching***

***Oxford Brookes University***

***Contact: Alan Jenkins, e-mail alanjenkins@brookes.ac.uk***

The Oxford Brookes University learning and teaching strategy and 1999 annual operating statement, states that:

'The university is committed to enhancing the links between research activity and teaching in order to ensure that all students and staff are able to benefit from learning and teaching in a research environment.'

This is happening in a context where the institution is developing a stronger research base and postgraduate course portfolio to complement and link to its tradition of innovative undergraduate teaching. Before the explicit formulation of the institutional strategy, the drive to link teaching and research was stimulated by research on undergraduate students' perceptions of staff research, a university-wide conference on strategies to strengthen the links, and a web-site to disseminate the issues and examples of good practice. In addition, pedagogic research was fostered through £40,000 of institutional support to a range of projects across the university.

Since the institutional strategy to link teaching and research has been promulgated, further efforts to strengthen the teaching/research nexus have been initiated, including:

- successfully bidding to the HEFCE for a £250,000 project entitled 'Linking teaching with research and consultancy' in the disciplines of planning, land and property management, and building. Operating from within the schools of planning and architecture (and with three other institutions), this project will also disseminate and implement its findings within the university
- extending the research on undergraduate students' perceptions of staff research to postgraduate level and disseminating findings into policy and practice.

In 2000-01 as part of the university's strategic review, a working group has been set up with one of its central remits to recommend policies to strengthen the links. Strategies under consideration include:

- funding for projects in evidence-based teaching and pedagogic research
- a university-wide audit of courses for evidence of, and strategies for, teaching-research links
- student participation in research events such as conferences and colloquia
- greater emphasis on the dissertation and on synoptic elements in the undergraduate programme
- research training for undergraduate students
- undergraduate and postgraduate involvement in staff research.

### **Strategic implementation of C&IT**

69. Eighty per cent of institutions include the exploitation of C&IT in teaching, learning and assessment processes among their strategic priorities. Many institutions have been supporting the use of C&IT for many years, but this has often involved small scale innovation at the margins rather than large scale implementation. This has tended to lead to a small cadre of enthusiasts exploiting the latest technology

rather than large scale use of standard capabilities.

70. Learning and teaching strategies are starting to be used to achieve institution-wide adoption. This can involve:

- co-ordination with an information strategy, for example involving full implementation of a management information system that allows tracking of student progress, links between student registration information and course-specific web-sites, or links between assessment software and student record systems
- adoption of a single electronic learning environment or platform across the whole institution (for example Web CT or Blackboard) with extensive support for this environment and no other
- policies addressing the mounting of all course documentation and learning support material on the internet
- extensive funding for innovation coupled with mechanisms for the rapid spread of successful new uses of C&IT across departments.

***Case study 25 University-wide implementation of an electronic information system for students  
Leeds Metropolitan University***

***Contact: Professor Gaynor Taylor, e-mail g.e.taylor@lmu.ac.uk***

Leeds Metropolitan University's learning and teaching strategy includes a 'key commitment' to increasing flexibility of course delivery, in the service of widening participation. One element of this involves the development of a 'student information portal' which will provide all students (on and off campus) with access to a range of library and information sources. Targets for the implementation of this system include:

- the majority of all course handbooks and module information on-line by July 2002
- all booklists on-line by July 2002
- access to the university's library catalogues and the catalogues of other libraries.

To support this initiative the learning and teaching strategy also involves establishing a range of posts:

- a 'student information portal' co-ordinator
- an information officer
- technical staff for web design and programming
- a network of 'change agents' (one per school).

A staff development programme is also planned for faculty staff, to enable them to exploit this information system.

***Case study 26 Managed institution-wide implementation of C&IT  
Coventry University***

***Contact: Dr Andy Syson, e-mail a.syson@coventry.ac.uk***

Many institutions have attempted to implement the use of C&IT in a 'bottom-up' piecemeal way, relying on individual enthusiasts and small scale projects using a great variety of approaches. A few institutions have managed strategic, large scale implementation with considerable support from the centre, and have made much faster progress.

Coventry University has implemented a commercial electronic learning environment (Web CT) across all its modules (over 2000), for all lecturers and all students. By entering their user name every student can access their own list of modules and a range of tools and facilities for personal use. These include past exam papers (automatically mounted unless requested not to) links to student services and standard course documentation. Every module has its own web space and has its class-list updated automatically each night from the central administrative systems. Within each module web space, standard facilities include:

- access to the library catalogue
- facilities for linking to other web-sites
- maths support and study skills support for all students
- templates for module materials and for teachers to mount content
- templates for a course timetable
- templates for on-line assessment, for both feedback and marks
- automatic e-mail lists to enable teachers to contact their students
- a discussion forum
- on-line help
- a personal glossary, note-taking facility and progress record for each student.

By the end of the first full year (June 2000) over 600 modules were actively using Web CT. This scale of use has required a strong 'champion' (the pro vice-chancellor for learning and teaching), and significant investment over three years: approximately an additional £300,000 for cabling, hardware and software and £1 million for a 'task force' of 20 school-based champions. The technical and educational expertise from computing services and the Centre for Higher Education Development was met from within existing budgets.

Implementation has involved:

- planning to take two years to reach full implementation
- a comprehensive review of alternative technical options and the selection of a single 'good all round' solution rather than a range of specialised solutions which are excellent for some things and weak for others
- defining Web CT as the only supported on-line learning environment
- very large scale piloting, involving over 200 modules, mainly in one school, before rolling the system out across the whole university the following year
- emphasis on creating a robust infrastructure so that the system works reliably everywhere. Parallel actions as part of the technology strategy and the estates strategy have included the building of a £16 million library with over 200 networked PCs as well as upgrading an additional 500+ open access computers
- very extensive publicity, staff development and access to technical support for teachers, and sharing of developments and expertise across schools, involving scores of meetings and events
- induction to Web CT for every student, as they enter the university
- plenty of on-going evaluation which feeds into a Web CT management team which manages implementation.

Student response has been overwhelmingly positive, with the largest number of complaints being about the relative lack of exploitation of Web CT on other modules.

**Case study 27 Supporting the use of C&IT and distance learning  
Loughborough University  
Contact: Professor I C Morison, e-mail [i.c.morison@lboro.ac.uk](mailto:i.c.morison@lboro.ac.uk)**

Loughborough University is using its HEFCE funds to support a variety of developments involving C&IT and distance learning:

- the development of web-based computer-assisted assessment with a target of 10 departments running 80,000 student test sessions by 2002
- enhancement and dissemination of student-centred, computer-based learning support materials, building on the Engineering LTSN centre and extending to departments outside engineering
- funding 17 one-semester secondments to develop academic staff's C&IT skills and for these staff to act as a focus to support further curriculum development
- extending activities of the Mathematics Learning Support Centre to develop web-based mathematics support and extend its use outside science and engineering
- the appointment of a distance learning manager to support staff who are developing distance learning material.

As a campus university, Loughborough was later than some in broadening its modes of teaching delivery. But following the establishment of its Flexible Learning initiative (now Learning and Teaching Development) in the early 1990s, it is now at the forefront of such developments.

### **Staff development and ILT membership**

71. Staff development and support for ILT membership are among the most frequent uses of HEFCE funds and the most common activities built into strategies. A good deal of this activity involves the development and operation of postgraduate certificate courses in teaching in higher education for new academic staff, accredited by the ILT and leading to ILT membership. Many of these programmes are compulsory for new academic staff.

72. Other forms of staff development within strategies involve:

- programmes for part-time teachers and graduate teaching assistants. These may increase now that the ILT has established an associate membership category. Given the extent of quality problems associated with part-time teachers identified by audit reports, teaching quality assessment and subject review reports, this may become more of a priority
- programmes associated with other activity within the strategy: for example training all staff to write learning outcomes and revise assessment, as part of the implementation of skills curriculum, or training staff to use Web CT as part of institution-wide implementation of an electronic learning environment
- induction programmes for new teachers of all kinds, to orient them to the strategy and the kind of teaching they will be engaged with at that institution.

73. Support for ILT membership may include:

- workshops explaining the ILT system and providing support in preparing a teaching portfolio for direct entry
- mentoring support for less experienced teachers as they develop their portfolio over time
- payment of application fees or membership fees for the first year of membership, perhaps for the first 100 members

- changes to personnel systems such as making ILT membership compulsory for probation or promotion.

***Case study 28 Encouraging membership of the ILT through policy and support  
Institute of Education***

**Contact: Professor R Barnett, e-mail [r.barnett@ioe.ac.uk](mailto:r.barnett@ioe.ac.uk)**

The Institute of Education, University of London, has made membership of the ILT a central feature of its learning and teaching strategy, as the following extracts demonstrate.

For us, the establishment of the UK's Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (ILT) is significant and is providing a spur to considering the extent to which the Institute of Education should be promoting the teaching effectiveness of its own staff. This institute has established a course for lecturers and, while attracting staff from other institutions, it is also looking to gain benefit from it for its own staff. Members of staff who are newly appointed to established posts are required to complete the course as part of the completion of their probation requirements. We are currently reviewing the extent to which short-term and part-time staff should be expected to participate in the programme.

Action point: That, so far as practicable, all new academic staff complete the institute's programme for lecturers.

So far as our more experienced teaching colleagues are concerned, our intention is to develop an in-house system for validating individuals' portfolios of teaching evidence, which we hope will be accredited by the ILT. We recognise that there is a challenge to the institute in determining the extent to which it wishes to encourage and give support to lecturing staff, who have many other pressing duties, in preparing such applications for individual accreditation.

In the early stage of its formation, the opportunity is being extended to individuals to apply directly to the ILT, via a streamlined system. We are taking steps to encourage and support colleagues who wish to apply through this route. As well as establishing a support structure, we shall be offering to provide staff with financial support in undergoing the application process.

We consider that, to an initiative of this kind, there should be attached some further incentive if it is to attract a significant take-up across the institute. We have noted the recommendation of the Bett Inquiry that a salary enhancement of £1,000 per annum be awarded to those becoming members of the ILT: we do not consider that that level of recognition can be justified in the institute but will monitor the matter in the light of national developments. For now, we have determined that a sum of £20,000 should be made available across academic groups in support of individuals securing individual membership. Such an approach should do much to facilitate a collaborative response between individuals and their immediate academic colleagues.

We recognise, for an institution which aspires to sustaining 'excellent' teaching and course provision, that there should be some parity in the criteria by which applications for academic advancement are made. Accordingly, we have determined that, in future, individuals seeking the title of senior lecturer, reader or professor should normally have gained membership of the ILT. (Measures that we are putting in hand will assist research staff in gaining the necessary teaching experience and expertise.)

Action point: That this policy – of individual membership of the ILT being a condition for academic promotion – be built into our promotion procedures and introduced at the earliest opportunity.

***Case study 29 Academic staff development for enhancing support of disabled students  
University of Nottingham***

**Contact: Margaret Herrington, e-mail [margaret.herrington@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:margaret.herrington@nottingham.ac.uk)**

This case study is an example of staff development work that does not focus on the ILT. The University of Nottingham is currently co-ordinating a project to promote and transfer expertise regarding staff development and disability to an existing regional network of non-disability specialists, the M1/M69 staff development network.

The network includes 10 universities: Aston, Central England, Coventry, De Montfort, Derby, Leicester, Loughborough, Nottingham, Nottingham Trent and Warwick. The expertise will be used to create and embed 'good practice' regarding disability into the existing short course programme on 'teaching and learning issues'; and to generate 'good practice' in a selection of courses provided by network members in their own institutions (IT courses and the institutions' programmes for accreditation of academic practice).

The key objectives are to:

- transfer the organic model framework, developed at the University of Nottingham, to staff development officers and trainers involved in the M1/M69 network
- review, evaluate and amend materials and processes for 40 short courses on teaching and learning in the M1/M69 joint programme, ensuring good disability practice
- investigate 10 courses within the network institutions (including C&IT) with a view to generating good practice; then to produce 10 case studies for dissemination in the sector
- embed disability issues within the current postgraduate certificate in academic practice. Two programmes seeking ILT accreditation will be developed
- assemble five exemplars of academic staff supporting disabled students as part of their mainstream responsibilities within the network of universities. These will be available to existing members of academic staff to assist them in assembling ILT portfolios; thus demonstrating the possibility of embedding support for disabled students within general teaching and assessment practices.

Anticipated outcomes:

- recommendations on curriculum design, teaching and assessment methodologies to incorporate disability considerations on all short courses within the network
- agreed criteria made available for future course development
- 10 in-house network courses reviewed and changed to incorporate disability considerations and the provision of case studies for the sector as a whole
- disability awareness to be embedded in two of the current courses organised by network members for probationary academic staff (which are seeking ILT accreditation)
- materials from the courses run in each university circulated across the network
- re-evaluation of the organic model as a dynamic mechanism for achieving change outside the context of Nottingham
- findings publicised and disseminated across the sector to ensure that universities have access to wider expertise.

## **Recognising and rewarding excellent teaching**

74. Two-thirds of institutions have built into their strategy mechanisms to recognise and reward excellent teachers. In many cases this is an aspiration rather than a developed plan, and many details of promotion and reward schemes are yet to be worked out.

75. Examples of mechanisms already developed include:

- changing criteria to make it more likely that excellence in teaching will be taken into account in promotion decisions. Evidence from schemes which have relied on this mechanism alone is not encouraging
- developing parallel career structures for teachers and researchers
- establishing new kinds of posts, such as teaching fellowships or readerships in teaching, with their own criteria, so that strong teachers are not competing with strong researchers
- rewarding innovation or exceptional commitment to implementing the learning and teaching strategy, rather than simply excellence in teaching
- rewarding the spreading of innovation to others or other departments, in effect acting as a change agent, rather than only rewarding individual achievements
- using additional increments or financial awards as well as, or instead of, promotions
- linking promotions, new titles and salary increases to the performance of a teaching development role (such as 'teaching co-ordinator') over a set period of time
- using such financial rewards to recognise the efforts of teams of teachers rather than just of individuals.

76. The use of such mechanisms has been gradually spreading for the past decade. What is new is the sudden increase in the rate of progress, the extent to which criteria for reward are being aligned to strategic goals, and the way those rewarded are being allocated roles as leaders of change. Some institutions have adopted several reward and recognition mechanisms at the same time, as illustrated in case study 30.

### ***Case study 30 Recognising and rewarding excellent teachers, in support of a strategy***

#### ***Coventry University***

***Contact: Professor Liz Beaty, e-mail e.beaty@coventry.ac.uk***

Coventry University has been implementing an ambitious learning and teaching strategy since 1997. This has involved a 'task force' of 26 half-time secondments, led by a Centre for Higher Education Development, and university-wide implementation of an electronic learning environment. The task force gives status to those leading change within each school.

To support widespread engagement of teachers with the strategy, and to recognise the achievements of those leading change in teaching, the university has developed a range of reward mechanisms. These include:

- new criteria for the conferment of principal lecturer posts and professorships. A review of all promotion criteria resulted in changes to make teaching excellence of equal status to research excellence. Recent appointments have demonstrated that this change has resulted in leadership roles for those with proven effectiveness underpinned by scholarship in teaching

- teaching awards for both individuals and teams. Each year up to three teaching awards are made of £1,000 each. Awards are targeted on specific areas plus an open category; they are made on the basis of an application including evidence, and judged against published criteria. Awards are presented to individuals or groups at the annual staff conference 'Enhancing the Learning and Teaching Environment' (ELATE)
- teaching fellowships. In 2000, teaching fellows were appointed to principal lecturer positions in each of eight schools for a period of three years, and seconded for half their time to work on teaching and learning developments. They work closely with the Centre for Higher Education Development to form a link between institutional strategy and developments in the schools.

The university is using both HEFCE funding and its own funding to support these initiatives.

## Section three **Case studies of student success**

77. Student success is the theme that binds this guide with the companion publication on widening participation, and is the context within which the strategic planning for both these areas will take place. As the recent request for revised widening participation strategies highlighted we need to continue to build on the successful recruitment of under-represented groups by ensuring the successful retention and eventual progression of students into employment.

78. Institutional diversity will dictate whether the issue is approached from a course/departmental base or centrally by the institution as a whole. These are different strategies but are not mutually exclusive. Much will depend on the culture of the institution and the type of student generally recruited. For example, an institution with a devolved admissions process that relies heavily on departmental ownership will understand awareness-raising strategies in a different way to an institution with a heavily centralised system. It is therefore important to develop an approach that fits both the institution's aims and its ability to deliver to the target group.

79. To monitor and evaluate the success of the institutional approach it is helpful to have integrated management information systems that track the student from pre-entry to moving on phases. Institutions may also like to consider whether their student support service functions are contributing effectively to the successful recruitment, retention and progression of students. Earlier this year we commissioned KPMG to audit a number of institutions in relation to the systems that administer student support funding (hardship, bursary and fee waiver funds). Based on the evidence of the audit we have produced a self-assessment checklist which can be used by HEIs to audit their systems, as a simple check, or as part of a more in-depth review. The checklist will be made available to the sector later this year.

80. The following case studies have been published in both this guide and HEFCE 01/36 as they demonstrate good practice in relation to the generic themes of retention and student success.

81. HEIs might find it helpful to consider developing a specific retention strategy, which could be targeted at specific groups of students if required. One such example is the Open University, which has developed a retention strategy that concentrates on part-time students.

### ***Case study 31 Retention strategy***

#### ***The Open University***

**Contact: Sue Tresman, e-mail [s.m.tresman@open.ac.uk](mailto:s.m.tresman@open.ac.uk)**

During the last two years, through the work of the university's student retention programme, valuable new insights have been gained into students' perceptions of quality and flexibility at the interface with the institution. A strategy for student retention is evolving which is based on the critical factors that appear to affect the persistence of students. These factors have been deemed 'value indicators' – sources of value to the student at critical points in their learning journey. In a similar way 'value inhibitors' detract from the learning experience in such a way as to encourage withdrawal. Put together they form a 'student value chain': the retention strategy is based on modelling and inputting new sources of value into the chain, attending to the value inhibitors and thus improving retention.

The university's vision is to ensure that students have a successful higher education experience and fulfil their aspirations by making informed decisions, gaining their preferred qualification, and continuing to

study in a lifelong learning context. The university aims to ensure that when students encounter difficulties there are flexible systems of rewards for their endeavours, and rescue measures which encourage students to return in the future to continue learning.

The university decided to consider proposals to manage open entry in the context of student retention. The strategy needed to:

- meet the need for enquirers to make informed choices about the right course of study. In particular it was necessary to:
  - communicate the necessary information, advice and guidance to facilitate choice in a variety of means including electronic, personal, paper-based text, advice from peers and so on. To highlight, in particular, the amount of time needed for distance study and the impact this will have on their lives
  - direct students to the appropriate level of difficulty of course
  - provide course preview materials to give an accurate picture of what the course is like
  - direct students to the relevant starting point and level of difficulty of course
  - understand students' study intentions and measures of success. This information should be collected at registration and disseminated to relevant staff so that the university can evaluate student progress and target effective interventions during study
  - 'reward and rescue' students. Significant numbers of students on their first level 1 course withdraw before the end of the course, but almost a third of these have completed three or more pieces of assessed work. Reward and rescue could be achieved by developing a simple integrated framework for study which would allow students to suspend study if they encountered serious difficulty and rejoin the next presentation of the course with 'banked' completed assessments. Significant slices of work leading to a meaningful suite of learning outcomes gained part-way through a long course would be rewarded with appropriate credit at that point. The invitation would be extended to rejoin the 'second half' of the course in a subsequent presentation
  
- assist students to feel integrated into and valued as a member of the academic community:
  - theories of student retention all recognise the critical importance of achieving social and academic integration of the students if they are to be retained within the academic community. The retention strategy emphasises the importance of establishing relationships in the first few weeks of the course. Key issues in securing the early relationship are encapsulated in an induction strategy
  - at this time brand recognition and the quality of the educational product should be reinforced through establishing dialogue with the student and providing them with essential, coherent information to embark on the course, thus avoiding information overload
  
- produce courses that are more suited to students' needs:
  - evidence obtained by the retention programme reveals a compelling case that the most important academic factors leading to drop-out in the distance, part-time environment are: workload, density of concepts being taught, pace and manageability of study and the poor management of student expectations about time needed for study
  - the new strategy therefore centres on developing internal workload templates so that all elements of the course or programme that need to be studied in order for specified learning

outcomes and other QAA requirements to be met can be achieved in an appropriate amount of time

- key retention data will also be incorporated into course approval and annual internal review processes, and evidence given of the actions taken in the light of the previous year's retention data as a central part of the review process
- track student progress and provide key elements of student service:
  - university evidence shows that certain interventions are highly valued by students and are cited as reasons why 'at risk' students stayed with the university. The retention programme is in the process of establishing objectives and ownership for a series of interventions across the study year that will establish and maintain a dialogue with the student. The key value indicator in relationship retention is shown to be the associate lecturer who acts as personal tutor to the student. New opportunities for a more proactive role for the tutor, especially in the very early part of the study year, should find a place in the strategy, along with other interventions such as the provision and mediation of exam feedback and increased flexibility in patterns of study and submission of assessed work
  - students who leave the university by any route will receive a retention-friendly contact which will encourage their immediate or longer-term return. The type of contact should reflect the level of the student's 'engagement' and hence the previous 'investment' by both the student and the university
- monitor and evaluate:
  - undertake effective shifts in measurement and review so that key institutional information is communicated to the university community, and thus provides the motivation for change.

The university has devised key milestone data about the retention of its students. This has been vital in shifting the agenda about recruitment and retention and fostering new attitudes and new behaviours. New behaviours have begun to take shape as colleagues have been prompted to notice – and, on an institutional level, are increasingly being required to respond to – critical retention information.

The following diagram summarises the value enhancers and value inhibitors that relate to retention.

## Open University: Student retention programme

Sense of community

Wider university links

Maintain dialogue

Strategic recommendations	Managing open entry	Early relationships	Courses to meet needs & track progress and student needs					
<b>Stages in the learning journey</b>	Enquired to OU	Reserved a place	Registered and paid-up	Course start	First assessed work handed in	Completed one third of course	Completed Course	Continue to study
<b>Value enhancers: result in a tendency for students to persevere</b>	Clear information  Help with locating starting point	Provide a named contact  Well structured literature  Same message	Early contact with tutor  Reaffirm brand quality  Coherent, brief guide to getting started	Peer-mentoring  Early contact with tutor  Integration, social and academic	Prompt feedback  Manage workload  Dialogue with tutor leads to ongoing integration and builds study skills	Tutor – ongoing dialogue  Belief in early academic success confirmed by academic feedback	Helpful with new skills to prepare for exam  Give feedback on exam  Congratulate & explore options	Continue dialogue between exam and start of new course  Good course choice information
<b>Value inhibitors: result in a tendency for students to withdraw</b>	Mass of complicated information  Burden of choice too great	Conflicting messages  Confusing array of contact points and information  Cost	Overload of generic institutional level information  Lack of information about chosen course	Mismatch between expectation of course and the reality  Too difficult to juggle study & work/home	Workload too high  Difficult to get back on track when get into difficulty	Lack of dialogue  Not enough help with ongoing management of study  Workload too high	Lack of exam feedback and mediation of study options  Lack of early chance to re-sit exam	Cost of next course transfer to another HEI  Dissatisfaction with OU experience

82. The final case study shows how an HEI has taken a student-centred approach at both the strategic and operational levels which, as the performance indicators demonstrate, is helping the institution to have a successful widening participation and retention record. This has been achieved by using joined-up thinking and integrating widening participation and learning and teaching with the student experience.

### **Case study 32 A student-centred approach**

#### **Staffordshire University**

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The institution works to widen participation and to open its doors to those who might otherwise not enter higher education; it is very proud to have a socially and culturally diverse student body. Staffordshire works towards a staff base who believe that the whole 'student experience' is important.

It has established a number of mechanisms to help aid the progression of local students from FE to HE:

- the SURF (Staffordshire University Regional Federation of the University and FE partners) consortia. The university leads a consortia involving a number of local colleges, which facilitates the rationalisation of provision, the strengthening of relationships and the consolidation of progression routes
- the PALS scheme (Preferential Access for Local Students). This scheme guarantees the offer of a place at Staffordshire University to every local student who meets the minimum entry requirements
- SULC (Staffordshire University Lichfield Centre). Established in collaboration with Tamworth and Lichfield College, the centre offers information and guidance on HE to local people.

The university is involved in a number of funded projects, one of which is the Staffordshire Universities Maths Summer School (SUMSS). This project is led by Staffordshire in partnership with Keele University and nine local FE colleges. It involves the creation of a six week summer school, building on the good practice established by other universities in combining study in mathematics to GCSE equivalent with opportunities to develop personal transferable skills, the provision of career and academic guidance sessions, and familiarity with university environments. Of the 33 students who enrolled on the first summer school in 2000, 27 achieved GCSE equivalence.

The main objectives of the project are:

- direct access onto sub-degree or degree courses for successful students, or referral to an appropriate access route
- identification of the skills mix between the two universities in order to develop their ability to operate collaborative initiatives
- to establish a process for identifying and targeting students from disadvantaged groups
- to establish an effective and positive approach to assessment and interview for places on SUMSS
- provision of practical structures and features (childcare, transport and so on)
- evaluation and dissemination of the model and the experience.

A larger version of the summer school will be run in 2001, with 80 students in North Staffordshire and 40 students in South Staffordshire.

The university is also a minor partner in the FE-led project run by the Workers' Educational Association (WEA). The main aims of this project are to:

- develop a partnership of universities across the West Midlands with the WEA
- map the WEA Access to HE curriculum against relevant university courses
- co-ordinate programmes and activities designed to assist WEA adult students to progress into HEIs
- identify ways to use access funding to support cohorts of WEA students as they move into HE
- provide staff development for WEA and university teachers and admissions and guidance workers.

## Section four **Support for institutions from the HEFCE**

83. We are committed to supporting institutions to develop the sophistication and effective implementation of their learning and teaching and widening participation strategies. To do so we have set up expert support teams to support HEFCE-funded projects. There are currently five such teams:

- Action on Access
- National Disability Team
- Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund National Co-ordination Team (NCT)
- Foundation Degree Support Team
- Innovations Support Team.

84. The advice and expertise of the teams is available for the sector to draw upon. Further information on the teams is available from the following web sites:

- [www.actiononaccess.org](http://www.actiononaccess.org)
- [www.natdisteam.ac.uk](http://www.natdisteam.ac.uk)
- [www.ncteam.ac.uk](http://www.ncteam.ac.uk)
- [www.foundationdegree.pwcglobal.com](http://www.foundationdegree.pwcglobal.com)
- [www.innovations.ac.uk](http://www.innovations.ac.uk)

85. The NCT has identified a series of activities to facilitate HEIs' continuing development of strategic and operational plans for learning and teaching. These include:

- extending the NCT web-site, which already contains many examples of the full text of institutions' learning and teaching strategies and links to institutions' own web-sites containing useful documentation
- further research to identify the most effective ways to implement widely adopted components of learning and teaching strategies.

86. Best practice will then be shared through publications, the NCT web-site, and events. The topics to be explored first will include:

- developing and managing the implementation of faculty and departmental strategies
- recognising and rewarding excellent teaching
- maximising the impact of innovation funds
- maximising the benefits to teaching of research.

87. Support and advice is also available from the Institute for Learning and Teaching (ILT) and the Learning and Teaching Support Network. Information is available from their web-sites at:

- [www.ilt.ac.uk](http://www.ilt.ac.uk)
- [www.ltsn.ac.uk](http://www.ltsn.ac.uk)

88. The Council also intends to disseminate examples of international best practice to English HEIs where appropriate. This will be done via the HEFCE web-site ([www.hefce.ac.uk](http://www.hefce.ac.uk)) and seminars.