



# **TELRI Transferability**

Institutional reviews



Comparative report

May 2003



**Compiled by the TELRI project team**

**Sue Band, Centre for Educational Development, Appraisal and Research (CEDAR), University of Warwick**

**Dr Jay Dempster, Centre for Academic Practice (CAP), University of Warwick**

**Frances Deepwell, Centre for Higher Education Development (CHED), Coventry University**

# Contents

<b>TELRI institutional review tools</b> .....	<b>3</b>
Data from other sources.....	3
Use of the review data.....	4
<b>Comparison of institutional information</b> .....	<b>5</b>
Student profiles .....	5
Deployment of staff.....	5
<b>SECTION ONE: ORGANISATION AND DIRECTION</b> .....	<b>6</b>
Shared/Overlapping Responsibilities.....	6
Integration of E-learning.....	<b>6</b>
<b>SECTION TWO: RESPONDING TO INNOVATION</b> .....	<b>7</b>
Impact of initiatives on local practices.....	7
Incentives and rewards for innovation and teaching excellence .....	7
<b>SECTION THREE: INSTITUTIONAL THINKING</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Exploration and development of new practices.....	8
Key movers and shakers.....	8
Evaluation of effective practice.....	9
Sharing practice and collaboration between services.....	10
<b>SECTION FOUR: SUPPORT FOR EMBEDDING</b> .....	<b>10</b>
Engaging staff and departments.....	10
The introduction of ICT: strategic impact and legacy .....	11
Measures for more effective embedding in HE .....	12

## Shared and distinctive issues and approaches among institutions

### TELRI institutional review tools

Completed review tools were received from the following universities during the period from January to April 2003.

**Bristol:** Eight responses using interviews by the institutional co-ordinator to gather Review Tool data from a senior representative from E-learning, a senior representative from Information Services and Library, an academic adviser in the Teaching Support Unit, a management representative, Learning Technology Support Service, a senior representative from the Teaching Support Unit, a head of department, a learning technology adviser and a senior administrator (teaching and learning).

**Coventry:** Five responses through interview as above, from a dean of school, a senior manager in Computing Services and a senior manager in Learning Technology, an educational developer and a senior administrator.

**Manchester:** Seven responses, from a senior member of the Teaching and Learning Support Unit, two senior administrators, a deputy head of department, a faculty secretary, a senior member of Curriculum Innovation and a senior member of Distributed Learning.

**Oxford:** Six responses, from an E-learning manager, two heads of department, an educational development manager, an ICT Committee administrator and a principal research fellow.

**Sheffield Hallam:** Six responses, one from a senior staff developer who filled in the questionnaire directly and five through interviews undertaken by the institutional co-ordinator with the leader of an e-learning project, a senior administrator, a senior manager of the Learning and Teaching Institute and from two senior management team members (subject heads).

**Warwick:** Ten responses, from an E-learning consultant, a senior administrator, a senior manager in IT, an academic development adviser, a senior manager in the Centre for Academic Practice, a development manager from E-lab, an educational technology manager, an educational developer, a lecturer and a librarian.

Replies from individual members of staff were analysed, with summaries for each of the four sections of the Review Tool, and finally highlighting key issues for each institution. With the exception of institutional information, which is freely available on the universities' public web sites, the review findings in this comparative report have been anonymised.

Overall, there was good representation at the above universities from those in key senior administrative roles and those engaged as educational developers or in an academic advisory role. There were fewer replies, however, from those characterised (at least before the age of e-learning) as "at the chalk face" – lecturers, except at the level of head of department. An exception here was the composition of the focus group at Coventry University, which favoured those in a teaching role.

### Data from other sources

At **Coventry** University, data from the review tools was supplemented by a focus group session, which comprised a central educational developer, an E-learning representative from Coventry Business School, a former member of the university's "Taskforce" in the School of Engineering, a teaching

fellow in the School of Mathematics and Information Sciences, a representative from the Centre for Lifelong Learning, and a teaching fellow from the School of Science and the Environment.

While **Southampton** University elected not to send review tool responses, a contribution was nevertheless forwarded in the form of an overview of the university's "*capacity to evaluate its own practices and development in the area of the adoption and embedding of innovative L&T*". Their report is based on documentation available on-line to staff, supplemented by interview responses from key members of staff, as well as minuted material from university committee meetings. This research undertaken by the University of Southampton was informed where possible by elements of the TELRI Review Tool.

As this section of the transferability study was being prepared, two Review Tool responses were received from **UMIST**, and data from these responses has been included in this comparative analysis.

The Review Tool responses from **Sheffield Hallam** University were accompanied by a report from a senior member of staff, providing a summary of responses section by section, with her overall conclusions.

At **Warwick**, the opportunity was taken to conduct face-to-face interviews with the staff who responded to the Review Tool exercise, producing fuller qualitative data than was the case with the other universities. This facility to engage face-to-face with respondents turned out not to be feasible with other institutions, and its lack, particularly where very brief replies to questions have been given in the boxes provided, has inevitably detracted from the ability to write fully about the significance of responses.

### **Use of the review data**

Given the small set of replies, it is not possible to make firm claims about the generalisability of data within individual institutions. It follows that comparisons between institutions must also be somewhat conjectural. However, the data do provide valuable insights into the issues, challenges, aspirations and hopes of staff in different roles in the institutions, particularly at senior administrative level, and at the level of those in developmental or advisory roles. Overall, this offers important indicators to factors which work well, and less well, in implementing and embedding innovative teaching and (e-)learning practices.

## **Comparison of institutional information**

*See Appendix 1 for a summary table.*

### **Student profiles**

There was a patchy response to the request for this information, possibly because the information sought was not immediately to hand for representatives, who may well have relied upon this being supplied by some other contact in their organisation.

In terms of numbers of students, Sheffield Hallam is easily the largest institution, with 28,249 students in total (full-time, part-time, undergraduate and postgraduate), followed by Manchester with 21,500 full-time students; UMIST has about 6,500. Warwick and Coventry universities reported total student numbers to be around 17-18,000, Southampton around 19,000, and Bristol was slightly lower with about 13,000. In all cases, these figures include undergraduate and postgraduate students, although at Bristol, it is made clear that these are full-time students only. At Oxford, the total student population is over 16,500.

### **Deployment of staff**

Data on the number of academic teaching staff and their deployment is rather inconsistently recorded among institutions. At Manchester, for example, the number of academic teaching staff is 1340 (fte), with 1800 (fte) academic-related staff, but the number of departments/sites to which they belong is not recorded; UMIST records 460 academic teaching staff, and 230 academic-related staff, employed in 22 academic departments. From Coventry there are around 900 full-time academic teaching and approximately 1100 academic-related staff (though this includes manual and clerical categories). There are 6 schools, incorporating 36 subject groups on an integrated, single-site campus. Ten academic departments are recorded for Sheffield Hallam, on 3 sites, taught by 950 academic teaching staff, though their full or part-time status is unknown, as is the number of academic-related staff. Similarly, at Southampton, the total number of academic teaching staff is reported as 963. These are based across 8 Faculties incorporating in excess of 70 departments, currently undergoing reconstruction into a smaller number of Schools and 3 super Faculties. From Bristol there is more information: 1025 full-time, 128 part-time academic staff, 512 full-time and 148 part-time academic and related staff, with 795 full-time and 166 part-time research staff; all distributed among 60 departments in 6 faculties. At Oxford, 1361 academic teaching staff are employed in 96 academic departments in 3 principal geographical blocks, plus about 3500 based in about 150 departments on one main campus and at a hospital. From Warwick there are a reported 775 academic teaching staff (full and part-time), with an estimated 1000 academic-related staff in manual/technical administrative positions, all based on 3 closely located campuses.

The relative ratio of staff to students is fairly clear from these figures, though the force of these ratios is likely to be felt differently according to the proportion of full or part-time students, and the proportion of postgraduates. It also seems likely that the distribution of staff will differ between departments. At Warwick, for example, among some 8,000 Social Studies students, 52% are postgraduates, while among some 5,500 Science students 31% are postgraduates, as against only 12% of Arts students. (These figures were not supplied for project, but appear on the University's web site home page).

## SECTION ONE: ORGANISATION AND DIRECTION

### Shared/Overlapping Responsibilities

At two institutions there was a perception of decision-making evenly spread across the stakeholders suggested in the Review Tool's relevant section. At another, data (largely from L&T support roles) reflected an emphasis on L&T responsibility across all areas of decision making and resourcing, whereas a single respondent in a different institution (a senior administrator) indicated responsibility for all areas except web/tools development, which fell to the L&T strategy group and L&T support unit, with VC/PVC input. At one of the old universities, the autonomy of departments and colleges was emphasized, though the IT-based e-learning group felt involved in all processes. Similarly at another, the 'devolved' nature of the institution is described as underpinning considerable independence in the mode of operation of its Faculties and Departments. One institution indicated that decision-making and resourcing was seen as the responsibility mainly of senior management, with planning and co-ordinating more evenly spread across stakeholders, whereas at one university there was no overall consensus on the distribution of responsibility.

As regards web tools development, three of the old universities felt that this rested with IT policy committee and IT based groups, and in another, this responsibility was seen as evenly spread. Both new universities saw this as the role of the L&T committee/support unit.

Overall, respondents saw some benefits from overlapping responsibilities, particularly in enabling links to be made between best practice in pedagogical approaches and IT skills training as a basis for better understanding among academics. However, the benefits would be maximised where boundaries of roles were clearly drawn, avoiding "reinventing the wheel", "turf wars" and confusion. Following this model, examples were given of helpful overlaps, also of some tensions between centres.

### Integration of E-learning

No institution felt a clear need for a different set of structures or processes for e-learning development from those in place for teaching and learning development more generally (though there were exceptions among individual respondents). The emphasis was upon an integrated model and overall, respondents to a greater or lesser degree followed the preference of one respondent "*to utilize existing structures more effectively*". An element of this effectiveness would be that T&L support staff should be able to engage with pedagogical as well as technical issues (a new university), moreover that IT support staff should be able to ensure linkage with subject specific knowledge (an old university).

In the context of the strong institutional impetus to implement e-learning, there was heightened concern at one institution with the preservation of a pedagogical focus against a technology driven agenda, and that targets for implementation should remain appropriate for a pedagogically based approach. A need was expressed for a central team to steer e-learning development and provide support for lecturers is brought into focus by quantitative data from the Review Tool which indicates that only somewhere between most and some (but not all) academic staff understood the importance of ICT and its useful role in teaching and learning. A further institution also indicated that there was no overall consensus and that staff all understood its importance, and at the other universities representatives felt only that "most" academics did so. There was nevertheless a perception here (as at other institutions) that progress was being made towards "*mov[ing] the institution towards greater involvement in e-learning...*".

At the level of changing teaching practice and provision of course materials for e-learning, however, there was acknowledgement at two (old type) institutions, that *some* different structures and processes would be needed, albeit with the ultimate aim of integrating e-learning with generic teaching and

learning development, for example: “*Writing content for e-learning is a very different process. Technical authors are needed*”.

## **SECTION TWO: RESPONDING TO INNOVATION**

### **Impact of initiatives on local practices**

Overall, respondents felt that e-learning was leading to increased interest and changes in teaching styles only to a limited extent, and two representatives at one institution indicated that the projects having the greatest impact were not always external or institution led. Nevertheless, one respondent pointed out that simply by deciding to post material on the web (undertaken by a great number of academic staff at all the institutions), teachers needed to reconsider both their teaching approach and the content of their material. “*Emergent*” is a word used to describe impact on local practice by a number of institutions.

The relatively low indication of the impact of initiatives in one institution is surprising in view of the suggested strong impetus for change at institutional level. An explanation for the rather reserved response lies perhaps in quantitative data suggesting that unless directly involved in a project, individuals are not necessarily aware of them, and presumably, the impact they may have. Moreover, the variability between Schools and course teams identified at the stage of institutional visits may be a factor. During these visits some were regarded as actively involved and innovative, while others remained disengaged with LT strategy.

In a similar vein, the response of a representative at one of the larger institutions concerned the slow speed at which even leading national initiatives, whether e-learning focused or more traditionally based, impact on local practices. This may explain the perceived limited impact of initiatives: evidence of broad impact from projects may yet surface for some individuals and in some departments.

At one institution highly active in L&T and e-L initiatives and innovation, there were varying impressions of the impact of initiatives. Several respondents perceived a lack of “joined up” strategic approach to embedding new initiatives. Where there was impact, this was attributed to the enthusiasm of individual initiative. This was a view shared by another institution, where it was suggested that impact had been localised, limited to individuals or departments directly involved either as a partner or case study provider. Impact here had been “*patchy*”.

One institutional contribution remarked on a pilot project to implement and develop the use of a VLE over the last few years, stating that while many departments and schools “*have taken intermediate pathways*” to implementing a VLE, most have not yet produced a departmental policy or strategy on its use.

Overall there was remarkable agreement among institutions that institutional/ departmental policy and strategy focused on innovation and teaching excellence should be reinforced by incentives and rewards.

### **Incentives and rewards for innovation and teaching excellence**

Examples of rewards for innovation included teaching and learning fellowships (mentioned for example at four institutions), funds for projects, included teaching development funds (a £30K annual award), curriculum innovation fund and distributed learning fund for smaller projects mentioned in a couple of institutions, and another example were award schemes for recognition of teaching excellence. The opportunity for staff to “*apply for financial rewards for exceptional work*” was mentioned by one institution and there were a limited number of buy-out schemes and commendation through the committee structure in one case.

Representatives at one institution indicated, however, that apart from these incentives, limited in scope, there was no explicit central system of reward for innovation or recognising and rewarding excellence in teaching. It is interesting to note that engaging staff and colleges/departments with teaching development was identified here as a main issue during the institutional visits undertaken in the summer of 2002. At institutions which mentioned the teaching fellowship, there was a similar criticism of their limited application, and occasionally criticism of the lack of a standardised approach and confusion surrounding them.

Underlying criticism from most institutions was the perception that even though *"in theory, teaching has the same status for promotion as research or administration"* (old university), this was not borne out in practice: *"so far this is more true in spirit and in actuality"* (another old university).

In the spirit of raising the status of teaching to that of research, a number of additional incentives were suggested, including a central fund on which staff could draw to develop their teaching, equal to that available for developing research; the inclusion of research into teaching in RAE submissions (3 of the old universities). The danger was perceived that the ethos of a research driven institution may regard time spent developing teaching as a distraction from its main thrust. (one institution). One respondent from a different institution did not feel that the issue of additional rewards and incentives was *"particularly relevant"*, however, suggesting that this was eclipsed by the availability of a technology infrastructure and informed, intelligent support staff

Lack of time emerged as an important issue for very many individuals in most institutions and suggestions for additional rewards/incentives included more time buyout for teaching staff (mentioned across 4 institutions). At one in particular, it was suggested that teaching innovation could be linked explicitly with promotion at a departmental, rather than institutional level.

## **SECTION THREE: INSTITUTIONAL THINKING**

### **Exploration and development of new practices**

At one institution there were large variations in views among the representatives as to how new teaching, learning and assessment practices were most explicitly explored, debated or developed within the institution. Other institutions, too, indicated multiple mechanisms at work here and important examples were teaching staff and course teams at departmental level. Individual responses from institutions indicated disparate views, however. For example one member of departmental staff at a large research institution suggested that the process always occurred through pedagogic research centres and the teaching research development networks, while other representatives indicated that these approaches were used only sometimes or hardly ever.

### **Key movers and shakers**

Responses from institutions were extremely mixed regarding to the influence of various stakeholders in developing e-learning practice across the institution. At one of the larger institutions, as well as the roles of the PVC for teaching and learning, deans and heads of department (all of which were highlighted too in other institutions), the support centre for teaching and learning was identified as highly influential. It is noteworthy that the drive, vision and personal credibility of individuals within it and in the specialised development groups featured strongly in their success as movers and shakers.

One institution indicated the *"fairly influential"* status of heads of department as movers and shakers was supplemented by a *"very influential"* head of IT services, with *"keys to the cupboard"*.

Apart from the highly regarded influence of the PVC for teaching and learning, representatives at other institutions gave mixed responses, indicating influence variously from the library, IT and e-learning heads and other heads of department.

Some representatives singled out individual academic staff members as movers and shakers, or observing the role of the central unit for teaching and learning research and development in promoting new ideas.

PVC influence was perceived important by most respondents at one of the new institutions, and in addition the influence of individuals in central educational development support was felt to be significant. The devolution of decision making across different levels was highlighted here, as this enabled individuals to benefit from autonomy in their own area of expertise.

### **Evaluation of effective practice**

One of the institutions with a highly devolved faculty/departmental structure, the focus was on describing the institution's capacity to evaluate its own practices. Development in the area of the adoption and embedding of innovative L&T comprises a principal part of its contribution to the TELRI transferability project. A conclusion drawn is that its capacity for such evaluation specifically with regard to the institution's chosen VLE, following traditional pathways, is *"substantial, but possibly at present insufficient at present to meet its own aspirations"*.

Other institutions shared this traditional approach to evaluation of effective practice, and representatives reported typically that student and staff feedback contribute to evaluation. At one of the old universities, it was suggested that the university committees' increasing use of the central teaching and learning unit's research capacity would enable knowledge from evaluating new practices to inform institutional decision-making more readily.

A number of respondents at a further institution seemed unclear about methods in place to evaluate the effectiveness of learning and teaching practice, one representative suggesting that the emergent education and learning and teaching strategies would provide a good basis on which to build links between evaluation and decision-making. In the view of one representative here, evaluation practices had still to develop a systematic approach, though individual representatives highlighted liaison between the faculty groups and central support, and reports on specific projects by a central L&T group.

The range of responses from one institution suggested that evaluation processes were not perceived to impact significantly upon decision-making in the university, though forming *"the basis for substantial debate"*. There was a general perception at other institutions too that evaluation methods had little impact on decision-making in the university, though there were comments indicating that evaluation processes were undergoing continuing evolution, exemplified by the appointment of a new evaluation role in one institution to provide individual and institutional guidance. Interestingly, an e-learning consultant in one institution felt that a lack of co-ordination had resulted from devolution down to individual level, which had proved unsuccessful in the case of IT infrastructure, and this he contrasted with the university-wide implementation of a single VLE package at a neighbouring institution.

A senior administrator (PVC) from one university pointed out the need for primary awareness that evaluation is taking place, before there arises any question of influence on decision-making. His remark chimes with that of a computing services representative from a different university who referred to the localised nature of evaluation practice which *"needs to be brought out"*.

Overall, a systematic, rather than an ad hoc approach to evaluation processes, with an emphasis on shared practice were found to be effective, or were aspired to, within the institutions.

## **Sharing practice and collaboration between services**

At one of the new universities, there was emphasis upon the evolutionary nature of developments being made by individuals and course teams, requiring a collaborative relationship between central teaching and learning support and departments, and between other central departments including a staff-student committee, a learning centre and the academic registry. The relationships were variously considered well developed/in need of further improvement.

Representatives at a number of institutions emphasized the success of individual, rather than whole group relationships. For example, the good working relationships reported within the teaching and learning support unit in one institution find resonance with the individual efforts reported at another institution in building collaborative links. The view of a curriculum innovator at the former was that though collaboration between services was improving, this was based upon expediency rather than upon any well thought out strategy.

While members of staff at one institution cited the introduction of an institutional VLE as an example of successful collaboration between learning and teaching support and the IT department, a learning technology advisor perceived difficulties surrounding ongoing collaboration between services in the form of *“poor communications and unclear responsibilities”*.

In a similar vein, representatives from a further institution reported on the successful promotion of the use of VLE's through *“ad hoc”* collaboration between the teaching and learning support and IT service. Though collaboration was improving with clearer definition of roles to develop and support e-learning, there was nevertheless a perceived ongoing need to address difficulties arising from *“different mindsets”* between centres.

Similarly at one of the old universities, examples of collaboration were given, including that between central teaching and learning services in assisting the embedding of a VLE. An ICT committee member observed a good level of co-operation on planning and development in teaching and (e-)learning between all the academic services, also with academic divisions. Nevertheless, the good collaboration perceived between research, education and professional development groups within the central research, development and support unit, was challenged by a representative who could identify no examples of specific collaboration and found links limited to *“good working relations”*.

Despite the role of faculty meetings identified by one respondent here in encouraging staff to share or develop expertise, and the learning technology group highlighted by another, others felt that encouragement to share expertise was only *“emergent”*.

## **SECTION FOUR: SUPPORT FOR EMBEDDING**

### **Engaging staff and departments**

As regards approaches to engaging staff and departments, there were mixed responses in all the institutions from respondents, though all felt their institution to be successful in the area of educational leadership. The area of greatest contention was that of engaging and securing commitment from Chairs/Heads of schools/departments (receiving limited support from representative at 3 institutions), but endorsed with a more enthusiasm at two others). At another old institution, this was the issue which produced greatest divergence of views among respondents, with departmental representatives perceiving success in engaging and securing commitment from Chairs/Heads of department/faculty and engaging academic staff, while learning and teaching support staff reported more limited success.

By contrast, there was overall consensus at this same institution that the institution provided adequate staffing and resources to support demand to develop teaching and (e-) learning, but a divergence of views on this issue at a different but also research-led university. 3 institutions indicated overall agreement that this was an area of more neutral or limited success. At one, there was particular concern with perceived lack of effective methods of evaluation to measure success in quality enhancement, while views on this were fairly neutral at two others and mixed at another.

As regards transferring the outcomes of initiatives/innovations more widely across the institution, views from two of the institutions were mixed. There was a range of views at both these universities and one other regarding the importance of factors such as a policy driven approach or a high local focus for L&T, whereas at another institution, all respondents considered these factors important. The most consensus at the one was seen in terms of a central unit for development and close internal communications for transferring outcomes, and this was the case too at two of the other institutions. In a further institution, all factors suggested were seen as important in transferring outcomes, with departmental learning and teaching co-ordinators and their respective committees.

Representatives at all the institutions supported a view of neutral or limited success in having effective methods to measure success in quality enhancement.

All representatives at one of the universities felt that all the factors suggested in the questionnaire were important for embedding effective new e-learning practices, though separating e-learning development from L&T development received a neutral or fairly negative response.

In another institution, all representatives supported L&T strategies that allow for a variety of interests and interpretations and adaptability of ICT to meet local needs, but responses to the presence of a specialised e-learning team and separating e-learning development from teaching and learning development produced very positive, fairly negative and very negative views, as did the suggestion of an academic development programme specifically focused on e-learning. By contrast, all respondents at two institutions felt positive about the presence of a specialised e-learning team along with IT training and a specially focused academic development programme, while all respondents were negative about the idea of separating e-learning development from teaching and learning development. Representatives at one of the other institutions also responded negatively to the idea of separate development for e-learning, but all other factors suggested were seen by the majority of respondents to have a very positive influence on embedding effective new e-learning practices.

### **The introduction of ICT: strategic impact and legacy**

For one (new) university, the implementation of a university-wide VLE, with the facility offered for easy communication between students and between students and staff was put forward as both the greatest strategic impact and greatest legacy from the introduction of ICT in the institution. One senior manager (Dean) commented that the introduction of ICT had facilitated more flexible approaches of delivery to *all* students is particularly pertinent in the context of the university's large population of very diverse students, and their reported varying levels of IT skills at entry. Nevertheless, ongoing provision of resources for development and prioritisation of ICT infrastructure was highlighted as a challenge, in particular resources to support e-learning in the form of, for example, local support staff to assist academics with the preparation of teaching materials.

The decision to implement a university-wide VLE coincided at this institution with the establishment of a teaching and learning team made up of more than twenty academic staff seconded part-time. Responses from another new university reinforced the benefits, reported in this first example, of introducing an e-learning solution at a time of high level support (PVC). Here, the introduction of a (different) VLE package with the help of a central learning and teaching support unit and a specialised e-learning team, represented both the most important strategic impact and the greatest legacy for the

institution. In the context for both of a diverse student population the need was for a focus upon pedagogical approaches rather than upon a technology driven model of development. This is a theme echoed at one of the older universities, where a senior teaching and learning support representative suggested that the greatest strategic impact of introducing ICT in the institution lay in introducing people to uses for new technology, including the development of viable teaching methods which do not involve face-to-face contact.

Notwithstanding the emphasis upon pedagogical approaches referred to here (and the implicit concern that e-learning approaches should bring learning benefits to students) the learning environment at these three universities, and indeed elsewhere, contrasts sharply with the 1:1 tutor/student learning ratio at some old universities. It is noteworthy that the educational developer at one such institution warned of the significant cultural change which would be needed for effective embedding of e-learning at his institution in a context where academics may experience dissonance with the ethos of e-learning practices. Here, the effects of the introduction of ICT were also seen in terms of the impact of the student information system, and a pragmatic value was seen in the trialling of a research-based course experience questionnaire and in the introduction of networked research resources.

Another institution's respondents felt too that the most important impact from the introduction of ICT had been felt in information dissemination in the form of, for example, lecture notes and reading lists on the web, and the widespread use of e-mail. There was no overall support here for the suggestion that innovations and initiatives per se had provided a significant legacy across the institution. Nevertheless, it was suggested that a possible lever for change in academic thinking lay in the current piloting of tools being developed centrally, increasing availability of these tools and the provision of support in using them. Moreover, the suggestion was made by a senior IT manager that increasing familiarity with, and expectations of, the web would in itself create momentum for change. It is interesting to note here that other institutions also cited "student demand" as a motivating factor in implementing change

A senior teaching support adviser at one institution perceived legacy from the introduction of ICT in the institution "*where innovations can be embedded into existing teaching practices and where students support them*". Examples of student support were identified by various representatives in the form of the provision of data projection facilities, e-mail support for academic work, and the provision of on-line learning materials on the web.

A representative from elsewhere noted a legacy in the requirement to develop an institutional standard for the platform environment that supports product development (pertinent in the context of problems of standardisation on the institution's particular VLE package).

### **Measures for more effective embedding in HE**

Representatives appeared frequently to tailor replies to their own institutions, notwithstanding the question's focus on HE more generally.

At one university, funding was highlighted as an important issue, with decisions reached at high levels to be underwritten by resources to support e-learning, in the form of local support staff to help academics in preparing teaching materials, and perhaps learning teams at school level. At the level of funding, representatives from central support at another institution suggested a funding stream to maintain project staff between projects with a view to aiding the retention of knowledge and expertise. A number of respondents felt that embedding would be supported by more attention to staff rewards, including offering permanent posts for externally funded project staff, with raised value given to teaching and learning activities in relation to research activities, and this was a view expressed too by a learning technology adviser at a different university.

At one institution, several members staff in educational development and in other central support departments felt the need for more sharing of experience and knowledge. A team approach to support was suggested which would combine the work of the separate units, and which would enable course development to be moved away from the centre.

Another institution, too, emphasized the need for assistance to departments and individual lecturers in the form of infrastructure and support staff, and it was felt that more of both would encourage more effective embedding, against the background of a higher level of funding.

Fundamentally, however, a respondent in a teaching and learning support role observed that effective embedding would depend upon staff being of the view that a particular innovation was appropriate for them. This assumption appears to correspond with the current situation reported at one other institution, that “*considerable freedom [is] given to individuals and groups for interpretation*”, but seems at odds with this institution’s latest learning and teaching strategy which “*aims to establish agreed targets for academic groups to engage with e-learning*”, and with a view expressed at another institution that a mix of incremental and “grand plan” approaches to teaching and learning might be both appropriate and compatible in support of a range of practical needs. Support for an integrative approach was given by an academic adviser one other institution, who suggested that the term “embedding” implies a limited need for fundamental management or organisational change, so long as there are changes in attitude in favour of e-learning. In this context, a representative in the teaching support centre here suggested that departments could demonstrate commitment and support e-learning directly through informal support networks, though a representative in a learning technology advisory role felt that this type of support occurred too rarely, and with too little departmental steer to influence developments. Here it can be noted that the effectiveness of departmental/central support features on the list of issues highlighted at the close of the institutional analysis for this university.

Issues highlighted at the end of each university’s analysis can be traced in part to the individual institutional profiles, and it should be made clear that these are not comprehensively selected. The purpose of compiling the lists was primarily to draw out issues that might form the basis for some discussion amongst the universities involved, and some care was therefore taken to avoid too much duplication across the institutions, which could stifle interest. The prevalence of the view that teaching is insufficiently valued at institutional level, with a lack of rewards and incentives for engaging with innovation is, however, striking.

**Appendix 1: Table summarising the institutional data**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Number students (ft+pt, ug+pg unless otherwise stated)</b>	<b>Academic staff fte (pte, if known)</b>	<b>Academic related staff (fte)</b>	<b>Departments</b>	<b>Schools</b>	<b>Sites</b>
Sheffield Hallam	28249	980	1306	10		3
Manchester	21500	1340	1800			
Warwick	17904	775	~1000	30	4	3
Coventry	17348			36	6	1
Oxford	>16500	1361/3500		96/150		3/1+hospital
Southampton	18936	963		70+	8	6
Bristol	13420 (ft only)	1025 (128)	512 (148)	60	6	
UMIST	6500	460	230	22		



# **TELRI Transferability**

Institutional reviews



Comparative report

May 2003



**Compiled by the TELRI project team**

**Sue Band, Centre for Educational Development, Appraisal and Research (CEDAR), University of Warwick**

**Dr Jay Dempster, Centre for Academic Practice (CAP), University of Warwick**

**Frances Deepwell, Centre for Higher Education Development (CHED), Coventry University**

# Contents

<b>TELRI institutional review tools</b> .....	<b>3</b>
Data from other sources.....	3
Use of the review data.....	4
<b>Comparison of institutional information</b> .....	<b>5</b>
Student profiles .....	5
Deployment of staff.....	5
<b>SECTION ONE: ORGANISATION AND DIRECTION</b> .....	<b>6</b>
Shared/Overlapping Responsibilities.....	6
Integration of E-learning.....	<b>6</b>
<b>SECTION TWO: RESPONDING TO INNOVATION</b> .....	<b>7</b>
Impact of initiatives on local practices.....	7
Incentives and rewards for innovation and teaching excellence .....	7
<b>SECTION THREE: INSTITUTIONAL THINKING</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Exploration and development of new practices.....	8
Key movers and shakers.....	8
Evaluation of effective practice.....	9
Sharing practice and collaboration between services.....	10
<b>SECTION FOUR: SUPPORT FOR EMBEDDING</b> .....	<b>10</b>
Engaging staff and departments.....	10
The introduction of ICT: strategic impact and legacy .....	11
Measures for more effective embedding in HE .....	12

## Shared and distinctive issues and approaches among institutions

### TELRI institutional review tools

Completed review tools were received from the following universities during the period from January to April 2003.

**Bristol:** Eight responses using interviews by the institutional co-ordinator to gather Review Tool data from a senior representative from E-learning, a senior representative from Information Services and Library, an academic adviser in the Teaching Support Unit, a management representative, Learning Technology Support Service, a senior representative from the Teaching Support Unit, a head of department, a learning technology adviser and a senior administrator (teaching and learning).

**Coventry:** Five responses through interview as above, from a dean of school, a senior manager in Computing Services and a senior manager in Learning Technology, an educational developer and a senior administrator.

**Manchester:** Seven responses, from a senior member of the Teaching and Learning Support Unit, two senior administrators, a deputy head of department, a faculty secretary, a senior member of Curriculum Innovation and a senior member of Distributed Learning.

**Oxford:** Six responses, from an E-learning manager, two heads of department, an educational development manager, an ICT Committee administrator and a principal research fellow.

**Sheffield Hallam:** Six responses, one from a senior staff developer who filled in the questionnaire directly and five through interviews undertaken by the institutional co-ordinator with the leader of an e-learning project, a senior administrator, a senior manager of the Learning and Teaching Institute and from two senior management team members (subject heads).

**Warwick:** Ten responses, from an E-learning consultant, a senior administrator, a senior manager in IT, an academic development adviser, a senior manager in the Centre for Academic Practice, a development manager from E-lab, an educational technology manager, an educational developer, a lecturer and a librarian.

Replies from individual members of staff were analysed, with summaries for each of the four sections of the Review Tool, and finally highlighting key issues for each institution. With the exception of institutional information, which is freely available on the universities' public web sites, the review findings in this comparative report have been anonymised.

Overall, there was good representation at the above universities from those in key senior administrative roles and those engaged as educational developers or in an academic advisory role. There were fewer replies, however, from those characterised (at least before the age of e-learning) as "at the chalk face" – lecturers, except at the level of head of department. An exception here was the composition of the focus group at Coventry University, which favoured those in a teaching role.

### Data from other sources

At **Coventry** University, data from the review tools was supplemented by a focus group session, which comprised a central educational developer, an E-learning representative from Coventry Business School, a former member of the university's "Taskforce" in the School of Engineering, a teaching

fellow in the School of Mathematics and Information Sciences, a representative from the Centre for Lifelong Learning, and a teaching fellow from the School of Science and the Environment.

While **Southampton** University elected not to send review tool responses, a contribution was nevertheless forwarded in the form of an overview of the university's "*capacity to evaluate its own practices and development in the area of the adoption and embedding of innovative L&T*". Their report is based on documentation available on-line to staff, supplemented by interview responses from key members of staff, as well as minuted material from university committee meetings. This research undertaken by the University of Southampton was informed where possible by elements of the TELRI Review Tool.

As this section of the transferability study was being prepared, two Review Tool responses were received from **UMIST**, and data from these responses has been included in this comparative analysis.

The Review Tool responses from **Sheffield Hallam** University were accompanied by a report from a senior member of staff, providing a summary of responses section by section, with her overall conclusions.

At **Warwick**, the opportunity was taken to conduct face-to-face interviews with the staff who responded to the Review Tool exercise, producing fuller qualitative data than was the case with the other universities. This facility to engage face-to-face with respondents turned out not to be feasible with other institutions, and its lack, particularly where very brief replies to questions have been given in the boxes provided, has inevitably detracted from the ability to write fully about the significance of responses.

### **Use of the review data**

Given the small set of replies, it is not possible to make firm claims about the generalisability of data within individual institutions. It follows that comparisons between institutions must also be somewhat conjectural. However, the data do provide valuable insights into the issues, challenges, aspirations and hopes of staff in different roles in the institutions, particularly at senior administrative level, and at the level of those in developmental or advisory roles. Overall, this offers important indicators to factors which work well, and less well, in implementing and embedding innovative teaching and (e-)learning practices.

## **Comparison of institutional information**

*See Appendix 1 for a summary table.*

### **Student profiles**

There was a patchy response to the request for this information, possibly because the information sought was not immediately to hand for representatives, who may well have relied upon this being supplied by some other contact in their organisation.

In terms of numbers of students, Sheffield Hallam is easily the largest institution, with 28,249 students in total (full-time, part-time, undergraduate and postgraduate), followed by Manchester with 21,500 full-time students; UMIST has about 6,500. Warwick and Coventry universities reported total student numbers to be around 17-18,000, Southampton around 19,000, and Bristol was slightly lower with about 13,000. In all cases, these figures include undergraduate and postgraduate students, although at Bristol, it is made clear that these are full-time students only. At Oxford, the total student population is over 16,500.

### **Deployment of staff**

Data on the number of academic teaching staff and their deployment is rather inconsistently recorded among institutions. At Manchester, for example, the number of academic teaching staff is 1340 (fte), with 1800 (fte) academic-related staff, but the number of departments/sites to which they belong is not recorded; UMIST records 460 academic teaching staff, and 230 academic-related staff, employed in 22 academic departments. From Coventry there are around 900 full-time academic teaching and approximately 1100 academic-related staff (though this includes manual and clerical categories). There are 6 schools, incorporating 36 subject groups on an integrated, single-site campus. Ten academic departments are recorded for Sheffield Hallam, on 3 sites, taught by 950 academic teaching staff, though their full or part-time status is unknown, as is the number of academic-related staff. Similarly, at Southampton, the total number of academic teaching staff is reported as 963. These are based across 8 Faculties incorporating in excess of 70 departments, currently undergoing reconstruction into a smaller number of Schools and 3 super Faculties. From Bristol there is more information: 1025 full-time, 128 part-time academic staff, 512 full-time and 148 part-time academic and related staff, with 795 full-time and 166 part-time research staff; all distributed among 60 departments in 6 faculties. At Oxford, 1361 academic teaching staff are employed in 96 academic departments in 3 principal geographical blocks, plus about 3500 based in about 150 departments on one main campus and at a hospital. From Warwick there are a reported 775 academic teaching staff (full and part-time), with an estimated 1000 academic-related staff in manual/technical administrative positions, all based on 3 closely located campuses.

The relative ratio of staff to students is fairly clear from these figures, though the force of these ratios is likely to be felt differently according to the proportion of full or part-time students, and the proportion of postgraduates. It also seems likely that the distribution of staff will differ between departments. At Warwick, for example, among some 8,000 Social Studies students, 52% are postgraduates, while among some 5,500 Science students 31% are postgraduates, as against only 12% of Arts students. (These figures were not supplied for project, but appear on the University's web site home page).

## SECTION ONE: ORGANISATION AND DIRECTION

### Shared/Overlapping Responsibilities

At two institutions there was a perception of decision-making evenly spread across the stakeholders suggested in the Review Tool's relevant section. At another, data (largely from L&T support roles) reflected an emphasis on L&T responsibility across all areas of decision making and resourcing, whereas a single respondent in a different institution (a senior administrator) indicated responsibility for all areas except web/tools development, which fell to the L&T strategy group and L&T support unit, with VC/PVC input. At one of the old universities, the autonomy of departments and colleges was emphasized, though the IT-based e-learning group felt involved in all processes. Similarly at another, the 'devolved' nature of the institution is described as underpinning considerable independence in the mode of operation of its Faculties and Departments. One institution indicated that decision-making and resourcing was seen as the responsibility mainly of senior management, with planning and co-ordinating more evenly spread across stakeholders, whereas at one university there was no overall consensus on the distribution of responsibility.

As regards web tools development, three of the old universities felt that this rested with IT policy committee and IT based groups, and in another, this responsibility was seen as evenly spread. Both new universities saw this as the role of the L&T committee/support unit.

Overall, respondents saw some benefits from overlapping responsibilities, particularly in enabling links to be made between best practice in pedagogical approaches and IT skills training as a basis for better understanding among academics. However, the benefits would be maximised where boundaries of roles were clearly drawn, avoiding "reinventing the wheel", "turf wars" and confusion. Following this model, examples were given of helpful overlaps, also of some tensions between centres.

### Integration of E-learning

No institution felt a clear need for a different set of structures or processes for e-learning development from those in place for teaching and learning development more generally (though there were exceptions among individual respondents). The emphasis was upon an integrated model and overall, respondents to a greater or lesser degree followed the preference of one respondent "*to utilize existing structures more effectively*". An element of this effectiveness would be that T&L support staff should be able to engage with pedagogical as well as technical issues (a new university), moreover that IT support staff should be able to ensure linkage with subject specific knowledge (an old university).

In the context of the strong institutional impetus to implement e-learning, there was heightened concern at one institution with the preservation of a pedagogical focus against a technology driven agenda, and that targets for implementation should remain appropriate for a pedagogically based approach. A need was expressed for a central team to steer e-learning development and provide support for lecturers is brought into focus by quantitative data from the Review Tool which indicates that only somewhere between most and some (but not all) academic staff understood the importance of ICT and its useful role in teaching and learning. A further institution also indicated that there was no overall consensus and that staff all understood its importance, and at the other universities representatives felt only that "most" academics did so. There was nevertheless a perception here (as at other institutions) that progress was being made towards "*mov[ing] the institution towards greater involvement in e-learning...*".

At the level of changing teaching practice and provision of course materials for e-learning, however, there was acknowledgement at two (old type) institutions, that *some* different structures and processes would be needed, albeit with the ultimate aim of integrating e-learning with generic teaching and

learning development, for example: “*Writing content for e-learning is a very different process. Technical authors are needed*”.

## **SECTION TWO: RESPONDING TO INNOVATION**

### **Impact of initiatives on local practices**

Overall, respondents felt that e-learning was leading to increased interest and changes in teaching styles only to a limited extent, and two representatives at one institution indicated that the projects having the greatest impact were not always external or institution led. Nevertheless, one respondent pointed out that simply by deciding to post material on the web (undertaken by a great number of academic staff at all the institutions), teachers needed to reconsider both their teaching approach and the content of their material. “*Emergent*” is a word used to describe impact on local practice by a number of institutions.

The relatively low indication of the impact of initiatives in one institution is surprising in view of the suggested strong impetus for change at institutional level. An explanation for the rather reserved response lies perhaps in quantitative data suggesting that unless directly involved in a project, individuals are not necessarily aware of them, and presumably, the impact they may have. Moreover, the variability between Schools and course teams identified at the stage of institutional visits may be a factor. During these visits some were regarded as actively involved and innovative, while others remained disengaged with LT strategy.

In a similar vein, the response of a representative at one of the larger institutions concerned the slow speed at which even leading national initiatives, whether e-learning focused or more traditionally based, impact on local practices. This may explain the perceived limited impact of initiatives: evidence of broad impact from projects may yet surface for some individuals and in some departments.

At one institution highly active in L&T and e-L initiatives and innovation, there were varying impressions of the impact of initiatives. Several respondents perceived a lack of “joined up” strategic approach to embedding new initiatives. Where there was impact, this was attributed to the enthusiasm of individual initiative. This was a view shared by another institution, where it was suggested that impact had been localised, limited to individuals or departments directly involved either as a partner or case study provider. Impact here had been “*patchy*”.

One institutional contribution remarked on a pilot project to implement and develop the use of a VLE over the last few years, stating that while many departments and schools “*have taken intermediate pathways*” to implementing a VLE, most have not yet produced a departmental policy or strategy on its use.

Overall there was remarkable agreement among institutions that institutional/ departmental policy and strategy focused on innovation and teaching excellence should be reinforced by incentives and rewards.

### **Incentives and rewards for innovation and teaching excellence**

Examples of rewards for innovation included teaching and learning fellowships (mentioned for example at four institutions), funds for projects, included teaching development funds (a £30K annual award), curriculum innovation fund and distributed learning fund for smaller projects mentioned in a couple of institutions, and another example were award schemes for recognition of teaching excellence. The opportunity for staff to “*apply for financial rewards for exceptional work*” was mentioned by one institution and there were a limited number of buy-out schemes and commendation through the committee structure in one case.

Representatives at one institution indicated, however, that apart from these incentives, limited in scope, there was no explicit central system of reward for innovation or recognising and rewarding excellence in teaching. It is interesting to note that engaging staff and colleges/departments with teaching development was identified here as a main issue during the institutional visits undertaken in the summer of 2002. At institutions which mentioned the teaching fellowship, there was a similar criticism of their limited application, and occasionally criticism of the lack of a standardised approach and confusion surrounding them.

Underlying criticism from most institutions was the perception that even though *“in theory, teaching has the same status for promotion as research or administration”* (old university), this was not borne out in practice: *“so far this is more true in spirit and in actuality”* (another old university).

In the spirit of raising the status of teaching to that of research, a number of additional incentives were suggested, including a central fund on which staff could draw to develop their teaching, equal to that available for developing research; the inclusion of research into teaching in RAE submissions (3 of the old universities). The danger was perceived that the ethos of a research driven institution may regard time spent developing teaching as a distraction from its main thrust. (one institution). One respondent from a different institution did not feel that the issue of additional rewards and incentives was *“particularly relevant”*, however, suggesting that this was eclipsed by the availability of a technology infrastructure and informed, intelligent support staff

Lack of time emerged as an important issue for very many individuals in most institutions and suggestions for additional rewards/incentives included more time buyout for teaching staff (mentioned across 4 institutions). At one in particular, it was suggested that teaching innovation could be linked explicitly with promotion at a departmental, rather than institutional level.

## **SECTION THREE: INSTITUTIONAL THINKING**

### **Exploration and development of new practices**

At one institution there were large variations in views among the representatives as to how new teaching, learning and assessment practices were most explicitly explored, debated or developed within the institution. Other institutions, too, indicated multiple mechanisms at work here and important examples were teaching staff and course teams at departmental level. Individual responses from institutions indicated disparate views, however. For example one member of departmental staff at a large research institution suggested that the process always occurred through pedagogic research centres and the teaching research development networks, while other representatives indicated that these approaches were used only sometimes or hardly ever.

### **Key movers and shakers**

Responses from institutions were extremely mixed regarding to the influence of various stakeholders in developing e-learning practice across the institution. At one of the larger institutions, as well as the roles of the PVC for teaching and learning, deans and heads of department (all of which were highlighted too in other institutions), the support centre for teaching and learning was identified as highly influential. It is noteworthy that the drive, vision and personal credibility of individuals within it and in the specialised development groups featured strongly in their success as movers and shakers.

One institution indicated the *“fairly influential”* status of heads of department as movers and shakers was supplemented by a *“very influential”* head of IT services, with *“keys to the cupboard”*.

Apart from the highly regarded influence of the PVC for teaching and learning, representatives at other institutions gave mixed responses, indicating influence variously from the library, IT and e-learning heads and other heads of department.

Some representatives singled out individual academic staff members as movers and shakers, or observing the role of the central unit for teaching and learning research and development in promoting new ideas.

PVC influence was perceived important by most respondents at one of the new institutions, and in addition the influence of individuals in central educational development support was felt to be significant. The devolution of decision making across different levels was highlighted here, as this enabled individuals to benefit from autonomy in their own area of expertise.

### **Evaluation of effective practice**

One of the institutions with a highly devolved faculty/departmental structure, the focus was on describing the institution's capacity to evaluate its own practices. Development in the area of the adoption and embedding of innovative L&T comprises a principal part of its contribution to the TELRI transferability project. A conclusion drawn is that its capacity for such evaluation specifically with regard to the institution's chosen VLE, following traditional pathways, is *"substantial, but possibly at present insufficient at present to meet its own aspirations"*.

Other institutions shared this traditional approach to evaluation of effective practice, and representatives reported typically that student and staff feedback contribute to evaluation. At one of the old universities, it was suggested that the university committees' increasing use of the central teaching and learning unit's research capacity would enable knowledge from evaluating new practices to inform institutional decision-making more readily.

A number of respondents at a further institution seemed unclear about methods in place to evaluate the effectiveness of learning and teaching practice, one representative suggesting that the emergent education and learning and teaching strategies would provide a good basis on which to build links between evaluation and decision-making. In the view of one representative here, evaluation practices had still to develop a systematic approach, though individual representatives highlighted liaison between the faculty groups and central support, and reports on specific projects by a central L&T group.

The range of responses from one institution suggested that evaluation processes were not perceived to impact significantly upon decision-making in the university, though forming *"the basis for substantial debate"*. There was a general perception at other institutions too that evaluation methods had little impact on decision-making in the university, though there were comments indicating that evaluation processes were undergoing continuing evolution, exemplified by the appointment of a new evaluation role in one institution to provide individual and institutional guidance. Interestingly, an e-learning consultant in one institution felt that a lack of co-ordination had resulted from devolution down to individual level, which had proved unsuccessful in the case of IT infrastructure, and this he contrasted with the university-wide implementation of a single VLE package at a neighbouring institution.

A senior administrator (PVC) from one university pointed out the need for primary awareness that evaluation is taking place, before there arises any question of influence on decision-making. His remark chimes with that of a computing services representative from a different university who referred to the localised nature of evaluation practice which *"needs to be brought out"*.

Overall, a systematic, rather than an ad hoc approach to evaluation processes, with an emphasis on shared practice were found to be effective, or were aspired to, within the institutions.

## **Sharing practice and collaboration between services**

At one of the new universities, there was emphasis upon the evolutionary nature of developments being made by individuals and course teams, requiring a collaborative relationship between central teaching and learning support and departments, and between other central departments including a staff-student committee, a learning centre and the academic registry. The relationships were variously considered well developed/in need of further improvement.

Representatives at a number of institutions emphasized the success of individual, rather than whole group relationships. For example, the good working relationships reported within the teaching and learning support unit in one institution find resonance with the individual efforts reported at another institution in building collaborative links. The view of a curriculum innovator at the former was that though collaboration between services was improving, this was based upon expediency rather than upon any well thought out strategy.

While members of staff at one institution cited the introduction of an institutional VLE as an example of successful collaboration between learning and teaching support and the IT department, a learning technology advisor perceived difficulties surrounding ongoing collaboration between services in the form of *“poor communications and unclear responsibilities”*.

In a similar vein, representatives from a further institution reported on the successful promotion of the use of VLE's through *“ad hoc”* collaboration between the teaching and learning support and IT service. Though collaboration was improving with clearer definition of roles to develop and support e-learning, there was nevertheless a perceived ongoing need to address difficulties arising from *“different mindsets”* between centres.

Similarly at one of the old universities, examples of collaboration were given, including that between central teaching and learning services in assisting the embedding of a VLE. An ICT committee member observed a good level of co-operation on planning and development in teaching and (e-)learning between all the academic services, also with academic divisions. Nevertheless, the good collaboration perceived between research, education and professional development groups within the central research, development and support unit, was challenged by a representative who could identify no examples of specific collaboration and found links limited to *“good working relations”*.

Despite the role of faculty meetings identified by one respondent here in encouraging staff to share or develop expertise, and the learning technology group highlighted by another, others felt that encouragement to share expertise was only *“emergent”*.

## **SECTION FOUR: SUPPORT FOR EMBEDDING**

### **Engaging staff and departments**

As regards approaches to engaging staff and departments, there were mixed responses in all the institutions from respondents, though all felt their institution to be successful in the area of educational leadership. The area of greatest contention was that of engaging and securing commitment from Chairs/Heads of schools/departments (receiving limited support from representative at 3 institutions), but endorsed with a more enthusiasm at two others). At another old institution, this was the issue which produced greatest divergence of views among respondents, with departmental representatives perceiving success in engaging and securing commitment from Chairs/Heads of department/faculty and engaging academic staff, while learning and teaching support staff reported more limited success.

By contrast, there was overall consensus at this same institution that the institution provided adequate staffing and resources to support demand to develop teaching and (e-) learning, but a divergence of views on this issue at a different but also research-led university. 3 institutions indicated overall agreement that this was an area of more neutral or limited success. At one, there was particular concern with perceived lack of effective methods of evaluation to measure success in quality enhancement, while views on this were fairly neutral at two others and mixed at another.

As regards transferring the outcomes of initiatives/innovations more widely across the institution, views from two of the institutions were mixed. There was a range of views at both these universities and one other regarding the importance of factors such as a policy driven approach or a high local focus for L&T, whereas at another institution, all respondents considered these factors important. The most consensus at the one was seen in terms of a central unit for development and close internal communications for transferring outcomes, and this was the case too at two of the other institutions. In a further institution, all factors suggested were seen as important in transferring outcomes, with departmental learning and teaching co-ordinators and their respective committees.

Representatives at all the institutions supported a view of neutral or limited success in having effective methods to measure success in quality enhancement.

All representatives at one of the universities felt that all the factors suggested in the questionnaire were important for embedding effective new e-learning practices, though separating e-learning development from L&T development received a neutral or fairly negative response.

In another institution, all representatives supported L&T strategies that allow for a variety of interests and interpretations and adaptability of ICT to meet local needs, but responses to the presence of a specialised e-learning team and separating e-learning development from teaching and learning development produced very positive, fairly negative and very negative views, as did the suggestion of an academic development programme specifically focused on e-learning. By contrast, all respondents at two institutions felt positive about the presence of a specialised e-learning team along with IT training and a specially focused academic development programme, while all respondents were negative about the idea of separating e-learning development from teaching and learning development. Representatives at one of the other institutions also responded negatively to the idea of separate development for e-learning, but all other factors suggested were seen by the majority of respondents to have a very positive influence on embedding effective new e-learning practices.

### **The introduction of ICT: strategic impact and legacy**

For one (new) university, the implementation of a university-wide VLE, with the facility offered for easy communication between students and between students and staff was put forward as both the greatest strategic impact and greatest legacy from the introduction of ICT in the institution. One senior manager (Dean) commented that the introduction of ICT had facilitated more flexible approaches of delivery to *all* students is particularly pertinent in the context of the university's large population of very diverse students, and their reported varying levels of IT skills at entry. Nevertheless, ongoing provision of resources for development and prioritisation of ICT infrastructure was highlighted as a challenge, in particular resources to support e-learning in the form of, for example, local support staff to assist academics with the preparation of teaching materials.

The decision to implement a university-wide VLE coincided at this institution with the establishment of a teaching and learning team made up of more than twenty academic staff seconded part-time. Responses from another new university reinforced the benefits, reported in this first example, of introducing an e-learning solution at a time of high level support (PVC). Here, the introduction of a (different) VLE package with the help of a central learning and teaching support unit and a specialised e-learning team, represented both the most important strategic impact and the greatest legacy for the

institution. In the context for both of a diverse student population the need was for a focus upon pedagogical approaches rather than upon a technology driven model of development. This is a theme echoed at one of the older universities, where a senior teaching and learning support representative suggested that the greatest strategic impact of introducing ICT in the institution lay in introducing people to uses for new technology, including the development of viable teaching methods which do not involve face-to-face contact.

Notwithstanding the emphasis upon pedagogical approaches referred to here (and the implicit concern that e-learning approaches should bring learning benefits to students) the learning environment at these three universities, and indeed elsewhere, contrasts sharply with the 1:1 tutor/student learning ratio at some old universities. It is noteworthy that the educational developer at one such institution warned of the significant cultural change which would be needed for effective embedding of e-learning at his institution in a context where academics may experience dissonance with the ethos of e-learning practices. Here, the effects of the introduction of ICT were also seen in terms of the impact of the student information system, and a pragmatic value was seen in the trialling of a research-based course experience questionnaire and in the introduction of networked research resources.

Another institution's respondents felt too that the most important impact from the introduction of ICT had been felt in information dissemination in the form of, for example, lecture notes and reading lists on the web, and the widespread use of e-mail. There was no overall support here for the suggestion that innovations and initiatives per se had provided a significant legacy across the institution. Nevertheless, it was suggested that a possible lever for change in academic thinking lay in the current piloting of tools being developed centrally, increasing availability of these tools and the provision of support in using them. Moreover, the suggestion was made by a senior IT manager that increasing familiarity with, and expectations of, the web would in itself create momentum for change. It is interesting to note here that other institutions also cited "student demand" as a motivating factor in implementing change

A senior teaching support adviser at one institution perceived legacy from the introduction of ICT in the institution "*where innovations can be embedded into existing teaching practices and where students support them*". Examples of student support were identified by various representatives in the form of the provision of data projection facilities, e-mail support for academic work, and the provision of on-line learning materials on the web.

A representative from elsewhere noted a legacy in the requirement to develop an institutional standard for the platform environment that supports product development (pertinent in the context of problems of standardisation on the institution's particular VLE package).

### **Measures for more effective embedding in HE**

Representatives appeared frequently to tailor replies to their own institutions, notwithstanding the question's focus on HE more generally.

At one university, funding was highlighted as an important issue, with decisions reached at high levels to be underwritten by resources to support e-learning, in the form of local support staff to help academics in preparing teaching materials, and perhaps learning teams at school level. At the level of funding, representatives from central support at another institution suggested a funding stream to maintain project staff between projects with a view to aiding the retention of knowledge and expertise. A number of respondents felt that embedding would be supported by more attention to staff rewards, including offering permanent posts for externally funded project staff, with raised value given to teaching and learning activities in relation to research activities, and this was a view expressed too by a learning technology adviser at a different university.

At one institution, several members staff in educational development and in other central support departments felt the need for more sharing of experience and knowledge. A team approach to support was suggested which would combine the work of the separate units, and which would enable course development to be moved away from the centre.

Another institution, too, emphasized the need for assistance to departments and individual lecturers in the form of infrastructure and support staff, and it was felt that more of both would encourage more effective embedding, against the background of a higher level of funding.

Fundamentally, however, a respondent in a teaching and learning support role observed that effective embedding would depend upon staff being of the view that a particular innovation was appropriate for them. This assumption appears to correspond with the current situation reported at one other institution, that “*considerable freedom [is] given to individuals and groups for interpretation*”, but seems at odds with this institution’s latest learning and teaching strategy which “*aims to establish agreed targets for academic groups to engage with e-learning*”, and with a view expressed at another institution that a mix of incremental and “grand plan” approaches to teaching and learning might be both appropriate and compatible in support of a range of practical needs. Support for an integrative approach was given by an academic adviser one other institution, who suggested that the term “embedding” implies a limited need for fundamental management or organisational change, so long as there are changes in attitude in favour of e-learning. In this context, a representative in the teaching support centre here suggested that departments could demonstrate commitment and support e-learning directly through informal support networks, though a representative in a learning technology advisory role felt that this type of support occurred too rarely, and with too little departmental steer to influence developments. Here it can be noted that the effectiveness of departmental/central support features on the list of issues highlighted at the close of the institutional analysis for this university.

Issues highlighted at the end of each university’s analysis can be traced in part to the individual institutional profiles, and it should be made clear that these are not comprehensively selected. The purpose of compiling the lists was primarily to draw out issues that might form the basis for some discussion amongst the universities involved, and some care was therefore taken to avoid too much duplication across the institutions, which could stifle interest. The prevalence of the view that teaching is insufficiently valued at institutional level, with a lack of rewards and incentives for engaging with innovation is, however, striking.

**Appendix 1: Table summarising the institutional data**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Number students (ft+pt, ug+pg unless otherwise stated)</b>	<b>Academic staff fte (pte, if known)</b>	<b>Academic related staff (fte)</b>	<b>Departments</b>	<b>Schools</b>	<b>Sites</b>
Sheffield Hallam	28249	980	1306	10		3
Manchester	21500	1340	1800			
Warwick	17904	775	~1000	30	4	3
Coventry	17348			36	6	1
Oxford	>16500	1361/3500		96/150		3/1+hospital
Southampton	18936	963		70+	8	6
Bristol	13420 (ft only)	1025 (128)	512 (148)	60	6	
UMIST	6500	460	230	22		