Technology Enhanced Learning Strategy
for the University of Liverpool

Introduction

Technology enhanced learning is learning which is enhanced, supported, mediated or assessed by the use of electronic media. Technology enhanced learning may involve the use of new or established technology and/or the creation of new learning material; it may be deployed both locally and at a distance. It can cover a spectrum of activities from the use of technology to support learning as part of a blended approach (i.e. a combination of traditional and e-learning approaches), to learning that is delivered entirely online. Whatever technology is used, however, the student learning is the vital element.

The context in which we are delivering higher education is changing. Liverpool has a growing number of international students and international links as well as a number of potential new campuses and collaborations. A significant proportion of undergraduates are studying on professional programmes where workplace learning is commonplace. All of these present challenges for a traditional model of learning and teaching and the Technology Enhanced Learning Strategy needs to deliver creative ways of managing these developments. It is not enough for our graduates to be technologically competent. In order to succeed in the current employment context they need to have a high level of digital literacy. A successfully implemented strategy will enable the University to meet is strategic ambitions relating to reputation, excellence, equity of student experience and financial effectiveness.

The research culture that we operate in demands digitally literate researchers so we must also ensure that our research students are appropriately prepared to meet this challenge.

This document outlines a Technology Enhanced Learning Strategy for the University of Liverpool and results from an initial discussion in the recently established Technology Enhanced Learning Working Group. Our Technology Enhanced Learning Strategy should not be a static document but a set of interlinking processes and implementation plans with clear outcomes that make Liverpool University demonstrably among the best HEIs for students and staff in this area.

This document uses the term “technology enhanced learning” to reflect the title of the University Working Group.

This Strategy was approved by the Technology Enhanced Learning Group in March 2013.

Aim and outcome of the strategy

The aim is to provide an excellent academic student experience that is enhanced by appropriate technology. This contributes to the University’s vision that “Our staff and students will be given the best intellectual, social and physical environment to research, teach, and learn in, at the cutting edge of their disciplines and with world-class facilities”.

The University’s vision states that “The Liverpool Graduate will be a global citizen, benefitting from an international curriculum and experience, and empowered to address global challenges”. Technology enhanced learning can contribute to this by enabling interactive, creative and constructive learning with the potential for this learning to take place in an interdisciplinary and/or international context. It can support placement learning and extend and enhance classroom activities as well as support a diversity of assessments and
improved learning through feedback on assessments. This Strategy will contribute to the **outcome** of the Liverpool Graduate as a global citizen.

**THE FORMAT OF THE STRATEGY**

The Strategy is represented diagrammatically with the high-level, overview statement forming the centre of the diagram. This is supported by a number of **processes, policies and plans** that are needed in order to achieve the strategy. The first section “Technology Enhanced Learning at the University of Liverpool” can be used as a shortened statement of the full strategy.

**DEVELOPING THE STRATEGY – THE STUDENT AND ACADEMIC VOICE**

This Strategy has been developed by a group comprising academics from each of the Faculties, key members of Professional Services and students. The academics were selected in consultation with the Student Experience Leads. The Deputy President of the Guild was a member of the group throughout and the Strategy has been informed by the findings of the Guild’s recent consultation “Make the Most of IT”. Early drafts were reviewed by critical readers and all members of the e-Learning Unit have had the opportunity to comment.

**IMPLEMENTATION**

The key issue for successfully implementing the plan will be to identify the appropriate balance between centrally delivered services and Faculty engagement. A separate implementation plan is being developed but it will have the following key features:

- Identification of a project lead for each area of the Strategy;
- Iterative discussion of the implementation with the three Student Experience Leads to identify the appropriate balance between central activity and Faculty plans;
- Continued involvement of student representatives in the implementation;
- Identification of two “quick wins” for example lecture capture, electronic submission and feedback;
- Budgeting for the implementation will be tied into the normal planning process;
- The implementation will be managed and monitored by the Technology Enhanced Learning Group.
Technology Enhanced Learning at the University of Liverpool

1. Identifying, Prioritising and Integrating Innovation
A process for:
• Identifying good practice at the grass roots
• Mainstreaming good practice
• Prioritising, acquiring and evaluating software and hardware
• Resourcing this process

2. A staff development plan

3. A Student Skills Development plan

4. Evaluation, Engagement and Research
A mechanism for engaging the owners of the Technology Enhanced Learning Strategy with best practice in the sector including contributing to and benefiting from pedagogical research and the evaluation of the student experience.

5. Establishing a Base-Line
A policy on the standard (minimum) Technology Enhanced Learning expectations for each programme and module and a mechanism for updating the policy
TECHNOLOGY ENHANCED LEARNING AT LIVERPOOL UNIVERSITY

This is the “high level” articulation of the strategy

Students at Liverpool University will:

- Develop digital literacies and appropriate technical skills that equip students for life-long learning, graduate level employment and professional practice;
- Be empowered to learn how to learn with technology;
- Use technology to engage in interactive, creative and co-constructed learning with the potential for learning in an interdisciplinary and international context;
- Use technology to engage in learning with and from people from anywhere in the world;
- Be supported on placement and in workplace learning through mobile applications and other supportive technologies that facilitate their leaning whilst away from the classroom;
- Have access to innovative methods of learning teaching and assessment that are the foundation of a research-led academic environment;
- Engage with the University in developing, implementing and reviewing the Technology Enhanced Learning Strategy.

1. IDENTIFYING, PRIORITISING AND INTEGRATING INNOVATION

It is important to build a capacity for agility in to the Strategy so that we can respond quickly to innovation and trends. There are many examples where academics working in isolation or in small groups have developed innovations that have had a positive impact on students’ academic experience but these have remained isolated to particular modules or occasionally programmes. The aim of this process is to identify the good practice and innovation that is being developed and to prioritise those that have the potential to make a significant contribution to improving the academic student experience at School, Faculty or Organisation level. This process will also plan the resources necessary for such integration. In addition, the process would evaluate and prioritise large scale software and hardware requests. An important part to this process will be to ensure the integration of products and packages that staff and students regularly use to make routine working and access as seamless as possible. Decisions about administrative technologies should not be taken in isolation before assessing the impact on teaching and teaching staff.

Existing mechanisms for identifying and sharing good practice such as the annual Learning and Teaching Conference could be incorporated into this process.

This approach provides an opportunity to integrate a variety of pedagogically sound and effective learning, teaching and assessment methods into programme development and review. This could be achieved by linking to the on-line programme planner and involving experts from the e-Learning Unit in curriculum planning, development and review.

The Technology Review Group and SPARK have already started to address the issues outlined in this section and it is suggested that they become the vehicle for delivering this process.

Potential projects include:

- E-submission and feedback for all programmes;
- Lecture capture for all programmes;
- Roll out the ENGRich/KRITIKOS Project to each Faculty;
- Support placement learning with mobile applications (through LIFTUPP where appropriate);
- Develop LUMINIS as a portal for students to access all relevant information.
2. **STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

As part of specifying and committing to a base line technology enhanced learning activity, we will define base line skills that academics need to embed the technology into their learning activities. Ensuring that all academics have the opportunity to develop these skills will require a well-resourced and flexible approach that takes into account the barriers that have prevented colleagues from doing this in the first place. Staff need to be empowered to develop and learn the skills necessary to deliver the Strategy.

The proposed learning and teaching CPD framework (ULTRA) will incorporate development of specific skills and attributes for technology enhanced learning. There will be an opportunity for colleagues to develop as technology enhanced learning specialists with responsibility for leading technological innovation and development. Faculty or School specific priorities could be addressed by negotiating specific staff development with the eLearning Unit.

In addition, a range of techniques such as expert facilitation, coaching and peer support will be used to support individuals, groups or larger academic units who are embarking on major technology enhanced learning projects. Staff engagement may also be facilitated through incorporating technology that is used in staff research and/or professional activity that can be incorporated into their teaching.

3. **STUDENT SKILL DEVELOPMENT**

We need to understand how students understand technology and learn with it, therefore the emerging digital literacy strategy needs to be considered as part of the overall strategy as well as the relevant skills development in the Employability Strategy. The TEL strategy will make it clear that students will develop technical skills the appropriate level for graduate employability and professional practice.

4. **EVALUATION, ENGAGEMENT AND RESEARCH**

The Technology Enhanced Learning Working Group is the forum for discussing external developments that are of strategic importance, understanding and evaluating current best practice and research and understanding and evaluating the strategic contribution that pedagogical research and student feedback can have on strategy, policy and practice. The eLearning Unit is responsible for informing and educating the TELWG. This could be done by, for example, providing a short digest of relevant information for each meeting and by setting aside a proportion of each meeting to discuss a topic of particular strategic interest. Members of the TELWG could commit to attending specialist technology enhanced learning seminars to ensure that they are well informed.

Academics that haven’t got a specialist interest in technology enhanced learning will need relevant information at an appropriate time. This could be provided at a Departmental, School or Faculty Level and this will have clear links to the staff development plan.

Current mechanisms and activities, such as the annual Learning and Teaching conference as well as the seminar series run by CLL and specific Faculty/School led activity would be part of this mechanism.

As part of the University’s research–led teaching policy, all development in learning and teaching should be underpinned by sound pedagogic research evidence, some of which will be created at Liverpool. A small fund should be made available to enable pilot projects to be developed to enable bids for larger external funds.

5. **ESTABLISHING A BASELINE**

Although it is impossible to predict the packages and platforms that will be important in the long term, we currently support learning though our VLE based on Blackboard (VITAL). Other e-learning systems are also
important in some areas and we should have a debate to determine what is our “baseline” provision. As we develop new and innovative approaches to structuring technology enhanced learning, it is clear that students would value consistent use of VITAL across all modules that they study and they need to feel that they are getting a similar experience to their friends studying on other programmes. This could be seen as part of the contract that the University is developing with current and potential students, describing minimum standards in the use of VITAL. In parts of the University where this has worked, there has been strong leadership, audit of VITAL pages and individual support to enable staff to meet the baseline. It might be possible to allow local definitions of this baseline, perhaps at School, Department or Programme level. Whatever level we define it at, we should put it in our student handbooks and stick to it. This is a particularly important area to develop in collaboration with students and the Guild is currently engaged in a consultation plan about use of technology in learning and the results of this project would be a good starting point. The implementation plan could look at ways that the University could support this such as by defining specific criteria that are used in programme and module approval.

**LINKS TO OTHER STRATEGIES**

This strategy needs to make reference to or link in with the following strategies and other areas of the University’s work

- All current policies relating to teaching, learning and assessment;
- CSD’s strategies and policies;
- Estates (especially provision of flexible student learning spaces);
- On-line Learning (both in partnership with Laureate and by ourselves);
- Corporate Communications (e.g. to use some open access learning resources in marketing activity);
- Centre for Lifelong Learning and the eLearning Unit;
- HR – Organisational Development and Recognition and Reward.
APPENDIX CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS DOCUMENT

The original draft of this document was the result of contributions from the following:

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