

The Higher Education Academy

Subject Network

Prospectus



The
Higher
Education
Academy



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The Higher Education Academy

The Higher Education Academy's mission is to help institutions, discipline groups and all staff to provide the best possible learning experience for their students.

Central to this aim is the Academy's Subject Network of 24 Subject Centres providing discipline-based support to individual academics, subject departments and communities of practice. A mix of single-site and consortium-based centres located within relevant subject departments and hosted by higher education institutions (HEIs), the Subject Centres are an integral part of the Academy.

The Academy's Subject Network has a unique discipline approach. It recognises that for many staff in higher education, most networking and exchange takes place at the subject level. The Subject Centres are the primary way in which the Academy reaches and engages with individual academic and related staff supporting learning and teaching.

Information and resources

All Subject Centres provide information and resources. Every centre has its own website and many have active databases and knowledge banks of learning and teaching practices, case studies, question banks and materials.

All Subject Centres publish newsletters and updates detailing their services and looking at emerging issues and subject-based information. They also produce a wide range of publications such as research journals, issue-based reports, briefings, learning and teaching guides and case studies. In addition, most Subject Centres run well-used and active enquiry services.

Engaging with the community

Engaging with the academic community is vital as it is this interaction that ensures that Subject Centres have an understanding of academics' concerns. Between them, Subject Centres have thousands of key contacts in departments acting as conduits for information both to and from the Subject Centres.

Individuals engage with Subject Centres in many different ways. There is a wide range of national and departmental events, special interest groups (SIGs), networks and projects.

Brokerage and collaboration

Subject Centres are brokers: they connect practitioners, experts, developers, innovators and employers. They forge links between generic and subject-specific interests, and build bridges across and between institutions.

All Subject Centres actively engage in collaborative activities, establishing partnerships and initiating special interest groups on different themes and issues. Examples of activities in this area include External Examiner databases, lecturer surveys and discussion networks.

Subject Centres also broker interdisciplinary collaboration as a number of disciplines face similar challenges and have similar concerns. Many Subject Centres work across subjects to address these issues.

Pedagogical research

One of the Academy's key aims is to lead the development of research to improve the quality of the student learning experience. Subject Centres support and further this aim in many ways, undertaking literature reviews, surveys and interviews.

Academy Subject Network

Subject Centres also organise a number of activities to encourage and promote pedagogic research in their disciplines. For example, a number publish journals which act as vehicles for promoting peer-reviewed material covering all aspects of developments associated with pedagogic research in their disciplines.

Many also run mini-project schemes funding subject-specific pedagogical research. The results of this research are then shared across the discipline communities, allowing wider benefit.

Professional development and recognition

Professional development is at the heart of everything that Subject Centres do. Subject Centre activities and services (resources, good practice guides, workshops and conferences) all contribute to and support individuals in their continuing professional development.

Subject Centres support the development of new staff, providing events and resources for new lecturers. In particular, Subject Centres are working with staff and educational developers to provide discipline-based activities and resources for professional development. One example is the Supporting New Academic Staff (SNAS) Online Database which contains annotated lists of discipline-specific and generic resources that provide a starting point for new academic staff.

Subject policy and development

In addition to responding to the immediate needs of their communities, Subject Centres look to anticipate future needs. It is important to identify the challenges facing each discipline and develop tools and services to help communities respond to those challenges.

It is also important to provide practitioners with a voice. Subject Centres provide input and evidence to policy development and contribute to policy making in the areas of learning and teaching in higher education.

Engaging with students

Everything the Academy does is ultimately aimed at improving the student learning experience. Subject Centres are expanding activities to support students more directly. Examples include student surveys, project funding and events that are aimed directly at students.

Subject Centres hold an annual student essay awards competition. These essays give a valuable insight into the student experience. A number of Subject Centres also conduct student surveys, feeding back vital information to departments.

This prospectus aims to give you a taste of the work being done in each Subject Centre.

“It is subject specific, staffed by people from the discipline, designed to assist and not audit.”

“Something I make time to include in my work, because of the high quality of the service and the relevance of the materials to my own development and that of my colleagues.”

Art Design Media

Information and resources

Our website contains a wealth of resources including: a searchable bibliography of pedagogic research; a series of case studies of learning, teaching and assessment in art, design and media subjects; and a collection of reviews of resources for teachers and researchers in the field. Practitioners representing the broad range of subject coverage have also written 27 case studies to date.

Online support materials including course planning, virtual learning environments (VLEs), critical thinking and widening participation are also available. We produce and distribute four newsletters a year and have a periodic project supplement that documents work undertaken on projects that we have commissioned and supported.

Engaging with the community

We maintain a database of contacts that includes approximately 2,000 individuals across 1,045 departments. In September 2005, we held 'Spread the word', an event which brought together three national projects focusing on dissemination of outcomes and their impact on future practice. The projects covered student writing (WritingPAD), e-Learning (e-Studio) and support for part-time teaching staff (ADEPTT). The event was attended by 60 academic staff.

We facilitate a network for five discipline-related Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETLs). This network will disseminate CETL resources across the sector. We work closely with teachers and departments through events and assist departments with staff development aimed at enhancing the students' learning experience. We also regularly engage with and are advised by 40 representatives drawn from higher education institutions across the UK and national subject associations through our two Reference Groups.

Brokerage and collaboration

We are involved in two major national projects: Entrepreneurship Education for Creative Industries which aims to enhance entrepreneurship education for art, design and media students, and e-Spaces which is focused on the use of e-learning technologies in practice-based art, design and media learning.

We fund a number of learning and teaching projects including:

- Postgraduate networking: case studies of completed research degrees in Media, Communication and Cultural Studies
- For real: a review of "live practice" within 3D design education in the UK
- Materials collection online – a web-based resource for fashion students.

'The development of a research culture in a specialist art and design college' is one of four HE in FE projects. This project explored the different methods that have been used by a range of specialist art and design colleges to develop the research culture required to support their growing higher education programmes focusing on case studies chosen for their varying approaches. These included a college which had transferred from further education to the higher education sector, one large art and design department within a mixed economy FE college and, for comparison purposes, a third college whose specialism is in the performing arts. Further details of this project can be found at www.brighton.ac.uk/adm-hea/html/projects-HEinFELeeds.htm.

We have funded 28 learning and teaching projects to date, for example "Future faculty: doctorate education in Communication, Culture and Media Studies in the UK". This project conducted an investigation into the educational

experience of doctoral students in communication departments in the UK. The aim was to provide an analysis of the relationship between teaching, learning and research in the lives of research students, focusing particularly on the ways they balance the various demands made of them as students, as teachers and as researchers. Further details on this project can be found at www.brighton.ac.uk/adm-hea/html/projects/report-FutureFac.htm.

Subject policy and development

We collaborate with subject associations and other related agencies on a number of initiatives and projects. The Entrepreneurship Education for Creative Industries project is supported, among others, by National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA) and the Council for Higher Education in Art and Design (CHEAD) which also receives support from the Subject Centre for its 'Widening Access in Higher Education Art and Design' project. We fund the successful Media, Communications and Cultural Studies Association (MeCCSA) Postgraduate Network which has been running since 2004.

We actively engage in projects with the Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) including a project on accreditation for industry skills with Skillset (audio-visual industries). We are in discussion with Skillfast-UK (apparel, textiles and footwear) and CCISkills (Creative and Cultural Industries) regarding collaboration on further projects.

We work with all three SSCs on Diploma Development Partnerships (DDP). The DDP is tasked to deliver the 14-19 Diploma in Creative and Media Skills and we are undertaking research on student entry requirements for art, design and media courses. We work with other national and regional agencies, either through joint project work or consultation. These include projects with the Design Council, Foundation Degree Forward (FDF), the National Council for

Graduate Entrepreneurship (NCGE), the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and many more. We work closely with national subject development organisations, for example the Association of Art Historians (AAH), the Design Education Association (DEED), the Group for Learning in Art and Design (GLAD) and Media, Communications and Cultural Studies Association (MeCCSA). We also participate in Academy/Subject Network events to disseminate issues and feedback to our communities on sector-wide issues.

We seek to enhance the capacity of individuals, teams of academics, and departments to undertake educational research and development work. In 2006 we will invite project proposals to deliver collaborative work on a broad range of issues including: assessment and feedback, supporting new academic staff, visual research and visual literacy.

Feedback from a recent seminar:

"This event was my first contact with the Subject Centre – it was stimulating, informative and reassuring."

Main location

University of Brighton

Subjects covered

Art, Design, Media, History of Art and History of Design.

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Bioscience

Our activities are tailor made for the broad bioscience community. We share and disseminate good practice as well as learning and teaching resources. We also encourage innovation in teaching and provide leadership on current issues and developments in bioscience.

Information and resources

We provide real examples of others' experience, such as case studies and reflective articles which describe academics' approaches, actions and ideas on varying aspects of teaching practice. Our audits (including assessment, work placement, work related learning and employability) are highly popular, providing a structured approach to initiating discussion and development of a curriculum issue.

Self- and Peer-Assessment: Guidance on Practice in the Biosciences is the first in our new Enhancing Learning series. These guides will provide an accessible introduction to good learning and teaching practice within the context of competing research and institutional pressures. They offer a persuasive overview of the pedagogic reasons for adopting a particular practice and give practical guidance to turn these ideas into reality.

Our **ImageBank** contains over 4,000 quality bioscience-related images contributed by learning and teaching practitioners, researchers and publishers. Copyright remains with the contributor, with the images free to download and use for educational purposes.

Knowledgebase is a database of learning and teaching resources suggested by the community.

Engaging with the community

Named contacts in the majority of bioscience units in the UK ensure we communicate with staff who are directly involved with students and know the current issues in teaching and learning. We

send contacts occasional briefings which they share with colleagues. We communicate with the wider bioscience community through newsletters, monthly email briefings and our website. We regularly survey academics on subjects for future workshops and tailor events to these requirements.

Brokerage and collaboration

We support networks based on issues such as assessment, ethics and widening participation. We had a strong role in assisting 19 successful Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) bids, and our relationships with those relevant to bioscience will continue to evolve.

Our collaborative work focuses on dissemination activities and networking across projects. Externally funded projects, along with those funded by our own Teaching Development Fund, have established a core of like-minded individuals interested in sharing ideas and undertaking pedagogic research. The cross-fertilisation of ideas and practice makes these networks successful.

Our Country Consultants provide regular reports noting issues of particular interest or concern to our communities in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, ensuring we address local needs.

We work collaboratively with cognate Subject Centres on STEM, the Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths group.

Pedagogical research

BEE-j (Bioscience Education Electronic-journal) publishes a range of articles on tertiary level biosciences education, including peer-reviewed research and practice papers. This free online journal promotes and disseminates research, good practice and innovation in tertiary level teaching and learning within the biosciences disciplines.

Tom Treganda

Our Teaching Development Fund provides grants to the bioscience community for small-scale pedagogic investigations. We also undertake our own research. Most recently we surveyed graduates to discover their destinations and what their course did, and did not, equip them for.

Professional development

Our Professional Development Programme is well received. Events, workshops and presentations on themes such as practical skills, employability and teaching ethics have been held across the UK. We offer new lecturers a resource pack containing subject-specific information and support. This is designed to complement the support given by their own staff or educational development unit. The pack introduces new lecturers to Subject Centre activities as well as current developments in bioscience learning and teaching. It includes details of resources that are particularly useful for those new to teaching in the biosciences.

Subject policy and development

The Biosciences Federation, launched in September 2003, is an umbrella organisation established to represent over 100 learned societies and their 60,000 members. We were consulted on their recent publication *Enthusing the next generation* and are delighted to have permanent membership on their Education Committee.

Engaging with students

We ran a student essay competition in 2004-5 which was open to all UK undergraduates studying for a degree in pure or applied biological sciences. The essays explored what makes the best learning experience for a degree in a pure or applied biological science and provided perceptive observations and helpful ideas to bioscience teaching staff. Our winner went on to win the overall competition and is now a member

of our Advisory Group, representing the student interest. A similar competition is being held again in 2005-6.

We worked alongside the Society for Experimental Biology in their student outreach programme and with the Biosciences Federation at their Careers Fairs. Staff have provided CV clinics for students and produced a number of resources for students (e.g. '13 reasons why I binned your CV' and web-liography of careers related websites) which are available from the student section of our website.

"We have been very impressed with the efficiency of the Centre... we particularly liked the fact that bureaucracy was minimised. It is the best resource for HE staff that we have found."

Main location

University of Leeds

Other sites/collaborators

University of Reading

University of Leicester

Subjects covered

The Centre has a broad remit covering the diverse range of disciplines within the life, biomedical, food and agricultural sciences.

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Built Environment (CEBE)

Information and resources

The Centre for Education in the Built Environment (CEBE) provides a wide range of resources and information. Our online peer reviewed journal, *CEBE-Transactions*, publishes case studies, project reports and research findings. Our newsletter, *Newsupdate*, keeps the community informed of subject-based developments, emerging policy issues and Centre activities. This is supplemented by a monthly e-bulletin. In 2006, we will be launching a new international pedagogic research journal, the *Journal for Education in the Built Environment (JEBE)*.

Our online topic-based briefing guides and working papers series aim to support and stimulate academic practice and development. Along with our collection of case studies, they provide a range of examples of good and innovative practice to provide inspiration for re-shaping existing subjects and curricula.

Our website is a valued and well-used resource providing access to relevant news, publications, events information, and over 450 carefully selected and reviewed records of a wide variety of teaching and learning resources.

Engaging with the community

Each year we organise national conferences, workshops and seminars. The Built Environment Education Conference (BeeCon) is jointly sponsored by CEBE, the Construction Industry Council and ConstructionSkills. This international event provides a meeting point for those engaged in industry, education and research. Our annual Studio Culture Conference provides an excellent platform for teachers and students of architecture and landscape to come together to discuss issues and ideas for studio-based education.

A programme of departmental visits improves our understanding of priorities 'on the ground' and enables us to discuss specific needs and areas

of interest. We also provide a programme of workshops tailored to departmental requirements. We have good grass roots engagement with representatives in 97% of higher education departments and schools.

Brokerage and collaboration

By providing networking opportunities, we help academics share ideas and practices. To date, we have funded 20 special interest groups (SIGs) looking at a variety of key issues. Our educational development grants programme provides small scale project funding to develop and share innovative resources and materials and enable experimentation with new approaches.

We have initiated partnership arrangements with Heriot-Watt University to provide outreach and customised activity in Scotland. We also have links with Sheffield Hallam University to provide dedicated support to the real estate community.

We are working with Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETLs). In particular, we have been working closely with Kingston University's C-SCAIPCE CETL and in 2006 are jointly funding a PhD studentship in conjunction with Kingston and the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI), to focus on sustainability and work-related learning issues.

Subject policy and development

We work with our professional bodies and Sector Skills Councils to bring industry and education together to work towards common approaches on issues that affect both communities. The Centre holds the chair of the Construction Industry Council's Education College and has initiated an annual high level forum for open discussion of educational concerns in the sector.

We also work with the Construction Industry Training Board and ConstructionSkills as part

of the Accelerating Change in Built Environment Education (ACBEE) initiative. The partnership is researching and publishing case studies of good practice in university-industry teaching and learning links, which are designed to make courses more engaging, relevant and employment-oriented.

In partnership with the Royal Town Planning Institute and the Conference of the Heads of Schools of Planning, we have run high level forums on UK urban planning curricula.

Engaging with students

We run an annual Student Symposium for final level Built Environment students and academic staff from universities throughout the North West of England, together with employers with an interest in research. This provides an opportunity to exchange ideas and study experiences and allow exploration of the potential use of innovative research within industry. Supported by the Chartered Institute of Building, Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors, the Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists, the Association of Building Engineers and the Construction Industry Council, student prizes are awarded in the categories of best presentation and best paper.

CEBE stages an annual student essay award, launched in 2005, which offers students the opportunity to express views on their higher education learning experience. Run as part of the wider Academy student award scheme, this has been very successful with the 2005 shortlisted essays being featured in *CEBE-Transactions*.

We work closely with and support student networks in the community. Centre staff participated in the 2005 Edinburgh national forum organised by the architectural students' body (archaos). With part sponsorship from CEBE, 70 students across 28 UK schools of architecture

met to focus on education, studio cultures and the future of the profession. archaos have a regular feature in *Newsupdate* to provide a student view on activities and developments in the sector.

“CEBE played a key role in helping us revise the syllabus, so the professional architects of the future will have a better, broader and more focused training thanks to some of the work we’ve done with CEBE... I find it quite impressive the way they bring together educationalists and practitioners.”

Main location

CEBE is a partnership between the Welsh School of Architecture and School of City and Regional Planning, Cardiff University and the School of Construction and Property Management, University of Salford.

Subjects covered

All Built Environment disciplines, including Architecture, Landscape, Planning, Housing, Transport, Construction, Surveying and Real Estate.

Contact

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Construction, Surveying, Real Estate
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Business, Management, Ac

Information and resources

The Business, Management, Accountancy and Finance (BMAF) website includes a wide range of case studies, news, events, project reports and themed resources.

We have produced a series of ten employability case studies which are available on the website. These case studies showcase examples of good practice, and explain how to use partnerships with employers to create courses. They also give guidance in embedding employability and making it explicit within the learning experience.

Visitors to the website have access to learning and teaching resources which can be searched by theme. The topics covered include assessment, diversity, retention and postgraduate support.

Our Annual Conference is both successful and popular, with esteemed contributors from many different institutions. Full sets of abstracts from each of the conferences are available to download from the website.

The External Examiner Database is a valuable service which matches up prospective external examiners with business schools who require individuals for these roles. Anyone from a UK higher education institution can join the register. Senior departmental staff are provided with access to the list by contacting the Subject Centre.

We have two main publications. An electronic *e-news* is distributed to all Subject Centre contacts, and highlights forthcoming aspects of our activities, such as workshops, projects and resources. It is an efficient and effective way to stay updated with Subject Centre developments, as well as with business, management, accountancy and finance education matters in general. The *International Journal of Management Education* is a peer-reviewed

academic journal published twice a year and includes papers on educational research and development within the subject areas.

Engaging with the community

We engage with members of the academic and subject-based communities in many different ways. Our network of key contacts is made up of individuals within UK business schools who act as the main link between the Subject Centre and academic departments. Meetings for key contacts are held twice a year to provide opportunities for updating, sharing of practice and discussing priority issues.

The Teaching Research and Development Grants are available for individuals to undertake research and/or development work in an area of their interest related to learning, teaching and assessment. The outcomes of these projects are then disseminated across the subject communities via the Subject Centre website and publications.

Workshops are offered across the UK on topics of concern and interest to anyone involved with the student learning experience. Recent examples have included work-based learning and personal development planning. These events are hosted by business schools and supported by the Subject Centre to facilitate widespread sharing of ideas and practice.

Brokerage and collaboration

We work in collaboration with a wide range of individuals and organisations with whom mutual interest and shared priorities can create opportunities for joint activity. There are a considerable number of associations and bodies that relate to our subject areas. Effective liaison is essential to ensure a co-ordinated approach to the support of student learning.

Accountancy and Finance

The Association of Business Schools (ABS) is a partner of the Subject Centre, providing direct access to Deans and Heads of Department, allowing effective communication and identification of priority issues in learning and teaching.

Our Advisory Board has members from across relevant subjects, institutions and UK countries. The Board provides advice and guidance to the Subject Centre team, and acts as a champion of our work.

The Teaching Resources in Business Education (TRIBE) project is being undertaken in partnership with the British Business Schools' Librarians Group (BBSLG) to identify and catalogue online learning and teaching resources that might be used in the delivery of courses and content.

We work with the five Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning (FDTL) projects that relate to our subject areas by supporting their development activity and helping with the dissemination of outcomes.

We also work with a range of Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETLs) whose activities relate to our disciplines. We aim to identify expertise and make it accessible to the wider community.

Brokerage between members of the academic community is an important element of our work, enabling networking and sharing of practice. This ranges from informal gathering of ideas at Subject Centre workshops and conferences, to more formal mechanisms, such as the External Examiner Database mentioned above.

Subject policy and development

As described, we liaise and work with a wide range of organisations that have a subject-specific interest or remit, including the Association

of Business Schools and various professional bodies. We seek to update our academic community on the latest developments within the subject areas and to facilitate ongoing discussion about the nature of student learning in business, management, accountancy and finance.

A baseline survey of business school deans and key contacts was conducted during 2005, and is forming the basis for the development of existing and future services.

"The workshop gave me lots of practical ideas for using virtual learning in the workplace and provided an excellent networking opportunity in a great venue. A very useful day which made the journey worthwhile. Thank you!"

Delegate from a work-based learning workshop

Main location

Oxford Brookes University

Subjects covered

All aspects of Business, Management, Accountancy and Finance.

Contact

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www.business.heacademy.ac.uk



Economics Network

The Economics Network offers a comprehensive range of resources, events and networking opportunities that seek to support academic economists in reflecting on and improving their learning and teaching practices.

Information and resources

We provide a wealth of resources that range from short, anecdotal case studies to pedagogical research papers.

The *Handbook for Economics Lecturers* is a set of guides that seeks to inform and improve practice. The guides are grouped under four section headings: teaching, assessment, course design and evaluation. Written and edited by academic economists with subject and educational experience, they can be ordered from the Network at a subsidised rate or accessed online.

The *International Review of Economics Education* is a twice-yearly journal that provides a forum for high quality research in the areas of curriculum design, pedagogy, assessment, innovation and evaluation. It promotes critical dialogue on educational theory and practice in economics and demonstrates the relevance of research to good professional practice.

The *Computers in Higher Education Economics Review* (CHEER) has published papers and reviews on the use of information technology in economics education since 1987.

The Good Practice Showcase is an archive of over 70 case studies submitted by lecturers on a particular innovation. Each case study contains a brief description of the purpose of the innovation, its integration into the curriculum, advantages and disadvantages, and feedback from students.

Our website offers:

- a catalogue of more than 4,000 economics textbooks categorised by level (introductory, intermediate or advanced) and subject
- a database of more than 600 Internet resources, categorised by level and subject. Each entry describes the tool and further delineates between types of resources
- the Internet Economist online tutorial, helping economics researchers, students and lecturers get the most out of the Internet
- a conference and event diary for economists.

Engaging with the community

We have a contact in each department and school that offers a degree in economics. Contacts receive a monthly email newsletter and are subscribed to a dedicated mailing list. We also maintain a general email list for anyone interested in Network-related news.

Supporting economics lecturers by providing staff development opportunities is one of our key activities. We facilitate this in several ways. We liaise with economics departments to run tailor-made, free workshops on a range of topics. These include 'Active learning in lectures and seminars', 'Creative uses of assessment' and 'Virtual learning environments'.

We have a programme of free national workshops, which run throughout the academic year. We also facilitate joint away days between two or more economics departments, giving them an opportunity to share experiences and ideas on specific issues.

In addition, we host the biennial international conference, Developments in Economics and Business Education (DEBE), and run residential workshops for Graduate Teaching Assistants and new lecturers.



Our annual Learning and Teaching in Economics Awards seek to recognise and reward exemplary practice from within the economics community. Each year we invite nominations across the categories of Outstanding Teaching, Outstanding e-Learning/Electronic Resource and Student Nominated.

We fund small projects (mini-projects) undertaken by economics lecturers to address the development, implementation and evaluation of innovative approaches to teaching, learning and assessment. Topics include: 'Using personal development plans'; 'Embedding sustainability and sustainable development'; 'Skills for enterprise'; and 'Embedding problem-based learning'.

We work closely with the four Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning (FDTL) projects in economics. We regularly bring the project teams together along with the mini-project teams to exchange and develop ideas and practice, and to support dissemination of their results.

Brokerage and collaboration

We provide a service to match up external examiners and departments. Current or prospective external examiners submit their details online to a database which can be accessed by heads of economics departments. More than 60 examiners have registered so far.

Since 2001 we have been running a programme of research into learning and teaching in economics, which includes biennial student and lecturer surveys, an alumni survey (2004) and employer interviews.

We provide support for particular themes or specialisms within economics. For example, the Network has taken a leading role in the Education for Sustainable Development initiative, making a key contribution both within the economics community and across the Academy.

Subject policy and development

We are represented on the Conference of Heads of University Departments of Economics (CHUDE) Steering Group and report to each CHUDE meeting. We work closely with the Royal Economic Society (RES) and the Scottish Economic Society.

Engaging with students

We collaborate with the RES on an initiative to promote the study of economics in HE. The resulting 'Why Study Economics?' website (www.whystudyeconomics.ac.uk) provides a range of materials and information for prospective economics students, including six films made by students to show what studying economics at degree level is like. The website also provides materials for teachers and lecturers, including ideas and activities for events such as open days and conferences.

In addition to our biennial student survey, we also engage with students and their experiences of studying economics through the annual student essay competition and regular student focus groups.

"You do have a sense that this is being run by economists for economists."

Main location

University of Bristol

Contact

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www.economicnetwork.ac.uk

Education (ESCalate)

Information and resources

Our website provides access to the majority of our resources for both staff and students, including a newly introduced external examiner database. Members receive our regular bi-monthly e-bulletin, and choose what other information they want to be sent.

We reach almost 100% of our constituency through our contacts database. We also publish a paper-based newsletter each term. The newsletter trails more substantial articles that appear independently in our two publications series, *Discussions in Education* and *Online Academic Papers*.

The ESCalate network

Three highly successful institutions support the work of ESCalate. Stirling offers expertise in higher education in further education (HE in FE), continuing education, lifelong learning and adult learning, as well as contributing to the dissemination of the Scottish Quality Enhancement themes including the 2005-06 themes of integrative assessment and the first-year experience.

A one-day seminar on assessment in continuing education, organised by Stirling staff in Manchester, gave practitioners the opportunity to present case studies on assessment in continuing education.

The project 'Widening participation to university study through flexible delivery' and its related conference held in conjunction with the Forum for Access and Continuing Education (FACE) brought together delegates from across the UK. The conference explored a range of flexible delivery practices.

St Martin's is a key player in the field of teacher education. Current projects include electronic support for learning, bridging the gap between university and school-based learning, the Every

Child Matters agenda and supporting new teacher educators in their transition to the HE working environment. This is a project which includes researchers from Brunel University, supported by an ESCalate development grant.

The St Martin's seminar series and the annual conference provide the initial teacher education community with a welcoming and supportive environment in which to share developments in teaching, learning and assessment.

The University of Bristol has a long tradition of work in the Education Doctorate (EdD) programme, which it pioneered in UK HE, in counselling in education and in education policy. Current activity includes research into group work in Education Studies programmes, collaborations with the Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning (FDTL) projects and the emerging Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETLs). Plans are underway to support a network and discussion forum for Education Studies teachers, and to continue work in the area of ethical decision-making in education settings.

The development grants programme provides nearly £50k annually to colleagues in Education departments throughout HE and FE. Funding is used to bring partnerships together across departments, faculties and institutions to engage with curriculum enhancement and to improve the quality of the student experience. Expansion of this programme will see funding offered in research and increasingly direct engagement with postgraduate students.

Active collaboration with the Centre for Sustainable Futures (University of Plymouth CETL) is a vehicle for working on the Academy's Sustainability project. Our staff contribute to two Academy working groups on supporting the CETL community, and on professional development and learning. We have hosted



a Supporting New Academic Staff (SNAS) event and are currently cataloguing resources for the Academy's SNAS database.

Engaging with the community

In order to engage with and support the community further we are conducting a series of consultations at departmental level. We liaise with a wide range of organisations including national bodies within Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. We engage with professional and other bodies involved in teacher education across the UK and, for example, are the main supporters and sponsors for Early Childhood annual conferences and events.

Brokerage and collaboration

Education practitioners increasingly need to link with other subject areas. Recognising this, our own links with other Subject Centres are strong. We have a joint project with the Physical Sciences Subject Centre to repurpose employability resources for the education community. We are researching the teaching of psychology and neuroscience to initial teacher education students in partnership with Psychology and with neuroscience researchers funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and based at the University of Bristol. In collaboration with the Social Policy and Social Work (SWAP) and Health Sciences and Practice Subject Centres, we are offering an event for CETLs working in the area of early childhood.

Subject policy and development

We promote the work of various groups through our extensive network of contacts. We continually explore ways of promoting education, most recently by planning online discussion forums for special interest groups and pre-conference discussion.

We continue to work closely with and support related professional bodies. This is usually through sponsorship of events and conferences, for example the Forum for the Advancement of Continuing Education (FACE), British Educational Research Association (BERA) and Universities Council for the Education of Teachers (UCET), where staff also regularly present papers.

ESCalate has links with the Training and Development Agency (TDA) and with the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). We have an academic consultant who also works as a special adviser to the Welsh Assembly Minister for Education, attending cabinet meetings and briefings. In addition, we work with stakeholders on the Every Child Matters agenda, which is having a significant impact across the HE sector.

“When asked by colleagues how the ESCalate workshop had gone, I began to explain what we'd done and I suddenly realised the event has had a profound effect on my thinking and the way I go about my job.”

Main location

University of Bristol

Other sites/collaborators

St Martin's College, Lancaster
University of Stirling

Contact

Tel: 0117 331 4291

Email: heacademy-escalate@bristol.ac.uk

www.escalate.ac.uk

Engineering

Information and resources

The provision of information and resources is a major part of our service and we aim to produce resources that meet the evolving needs of our community. Practice guides, reports and case studies have been produced for a number of topics which include approaches to lecturing, assessment, employability, entrepreneurship, sustainability, disability, and working with schools. We also publish book, video and software reviews to assist academics in choosing materials to use with their students.

All these resources are available free of charge from our online Resource Database which is also linked to SearchLT Engineering, our database of computer-based resources for use in teaching.

We keep our community up-to-date with the latest activities relevant to engineering education through our range of publicity including the newsletter *translate*, a fortnightly e-bulletin and the news and events sections of the website.

Engineering Education: Journal of the Higher Education Academy Engineering Subject Centre was launched in 2006 as a peer-reviewed, international journal and will promote and disseminate research and good practice in all aspects of engineering education.

Engaging with the community

Our mission is to improve the student learning experience in partnership with the UK engineering community. We therefore work closely with all the stakeholders in engineering education, including engineering academics, professional bodies, engineering education networks, and industry. Our main route to engineering departments is through our network of departmental contacts whose role is to be the first point of contact and to disseminate information to their colleagues.

We offer learning and teaching support to departments through the provision of tailored workshops; presentations to departmental/school/faculty meetings on what the Subject Centre can offer to academics; or a contribution towards the costs of learning and teaching meetings.

We conduct student focus groups as part of our visits to engineering departments and also engage with students through the Teaching Award scheme and the Student Awards essay competition. These activities are designed to help students think about their learning and teaching experience and provide our community with valuable feedback on how they are contributing to the learning experience of their students.

Our programme of national events and workshops offers valuable networking and professional development opportunities. Events provide an opportunity to share good practice across the community, for example through the presentation of case studies from engineering departments across the UK. Wider dissemination opportunities are offered through the International Conference on Innovation, Good Practice and Research in Engineering Education held every two years in collaboration with the UK Centre for Materials Education.

The professional institutions and organisations – including the Engineering Council UK (ECUK), Royal Academy of Engineering, Engineering Training Board and Engineering Professors' Council (EPC) – are supportive, often asking us to engage with their activities and to provide a link to engineering academics. We also work collaboratively with Foundation Degree Forward and Sector Skills Councils and are developing international links through discussions with engineering academics in Australia, Europe and America.

We have a further remit to support the teaching at HE level within further education colleges and we have a programme of activities specifically targeted at lecturers in the FE sector.

Subject policy and development

We co-operate with a number of organisations, acting as a two-way conduit between the academic community and those who develop policy. For example, by 2004 there existed three output standards for engineering: the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), UKSPEC (the ECUK Accreditation document) and the EPC output standards. Our survey of engineering academics showed an overwhelming desire (95%) to have a single standard. The QAA accepted this as evidence that the community sought a revision of the existing benchmark statement and convened a panel to implement that revision. The revised benchmark has adopted UKSPEC and therefore achieves the aim of providing a single statement. In addition to contributing to the consultation process, we have run workshops on the assessment of output standards, a key element in the new accreditation regime. The QAA regards the alignment achieved with professional accreditation requirements as a model for future revisions of benchmark statements in other subject areas where there is a significant accreditation requirement.

Brokerage and collaboration

We provide national recognition for outstanding learning and teaching practices in HE Engineering through the Engineering Subject Centre Teaching Awards. Each year six individuals are shortlisted to work with a member of our team to develop a case study of their work and an overall winner is selected to receive £500 towards further dissemination.

Our mini-project grants aim to stimulate interest and provide motivation for academics to get involved in learning and teaching development

projects. The resources and experiences from these are disseminated to benefit the wider engineering community. We also provide funding for special interest groups to develop a network of people to discuss particular learning and teaching issues from an engineering perspective.

Collaboration with other Subject Centres enables us to offer a wider range of services. We work closely with other Subject Centres on joint projects including Education for Sustainable Development, entrepreneurship, employability, ethics and support for disabled students. We have also set up links with the Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETLs), helping with dissemination where there is a relevance to engineering.

“The Engineering Subject Centre’s publications have proved to be an invaluable, easily accessible and robust source of information...”

Dr Anil Kumar, Director, Education and Policy, the Engineering and Technology Board

Main location

Loughborough University

Subjects covered

All Engineering disciplines, including Aeronautical, Automotive, Chemical, Civil, Electrical, Electronic, Manufacturing and Mechanical.

Contact

Tel: 01509 227170

Email: enquiries@engsc.ac.uk

www.engsc.ac.uk

English

Information and resources

Our philosophy is to deliver information and resources to our community in a variety of ways that are lively and appropriate to the content. The main content of the website is selected and written to meet the needs of English lecturers, and also provides news about our activities and events as well as developments in the discipline which impact on teaching. A new feature of the website is the interactive *T3 – Teaching, Topics, Texts*, a collection of teaching ideas especially designed for hard-pressed English lecturers.

Our biannual newsletter contains a mix of reflective articles, shorter reports and updates on Subject Centre activities. It is distributed to every English department in the UK, with sufficient copies for each lecturer to have one. A major publishing venture with Palgrave Macmillan, a book series entitled *Teaching the New English*, is approaching fruition. Each volume will focus on the pedagogy of a particular area of the discipline; the first three volumes are: *Teaching Children's Fiction*; *Teaching the Gothic*; and *Teaching, Technology, Textuality*.

We also publish occasional reports on topics of current interest, most recently on the transition from A-level English to degree level, and the use of living writers in the curriculum. A report on teaching Shakespeare and a study of the taught MA are underway this year. We have also supported the production and distribution of two DVDs: one profiling seven enterprising English graduates who have set up their own businesses and another aimed at potential students illustrating a typical 'day in the life' of an English student.

Engaging with the community

We run an extensive and varied programme of events, which includes both regular events that are offered each year, and 'one-offs' that respond to current needs or circumstances.

Some events we initiate and organise ourselves; others emerge from the ideas and enthusiasm of individuals or departments, and the Subject Centre provides the administrative and financial support to make the event happen. We are arranging more events collaboratively with other Subject Centres: for example a recent one-day workshop on Education for Sustainable Development was a joint venture with Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies.

Our regular events include a networking day for heads of department and another for administrators: these provide a space for participants to discuss matters of common concern and share problems and solutions. Other events tend to focus on teaching particular areas of the curriculum: for example Victorian poetry, Scottish and Irish literature or Tudor literature. We also run at least one event each year around an e-learning theme. A major three-day international conference 'Renewals: refiguring university English in the 21st century' is being planned for July 2007 at our host institution.

Brokerage and collaboration

We have a well-established system of awarding grants of about £5,000 to support mini-projects in departments. Mini-projects cover a range of themes: those in the 2005-06 round include: creative writing, Joint Honours, writing skills, Old English, DH Lawrence manuscripts, provincial press archives, Education for Sustainable Development and use of digital video and computer animation. We see the project grants as enabling lecturers to devote time to the development of teaching in ways that benefit themselves, their departments and the wider community. Outputs come not only in the form of reports, but also digital resources and events, as well as the development of expertise and the raised profile of pedagogy within the discipline.

We have also been active in developing networks among academic-related staff with an interest in English and the humanities. We invited careers advisers to apply for small grants to support enhanced services to English students and this resulted in the development of a number of services and resources tailored to their needs. Humanities subject librarians also worked with us to produce a guide to *Making the Most of your Library Services*.

Our emphasis on, and expertise in, e-learning has meant that we have developed an informal but lively network of those interested in sharing ideas and practice in this area. Events are very well attended and discussion (both face-to-face and online) is animated.

Professional development

We run a two-day conference each year specifically for new lecturers in the discipline. It is designed to complement the institutional programmes undertaken by newly appointed staff. The blend of activities enables participants to take a reflective approach to their roles as teachers and facilitators and includes a blend of plenary discussion, short presentations, and structured group work in different configurations. Throughout, participants are invited to reflect upon the relationship between scholarly performance and student-focused teaching. The conference is supported by a virtual learning environment (VLE) which enables participants to experiment and continue their discussions after the event.

Subject policy and development

We respond frequently to consultations from education policy-makers, often in collaboration with relevant subject associations, such as the Council for College and University English, with whom we undertook an initial review of the subject benchmark statement.

The importance of English as a school subject means that we are often called upon to give the HE perspective on issues which go beyond the university curriculum. We were active participants in 'English 21', a Qualifications and Curriculum Authority initiative to consider the shape of English in 2021. We have also convened a group considering the introduction of a creative writing module for A-level. Much of our work centres on trying to improve the understanding between teachers in the HE and secondary sectors with the aim of facilitating student transition. We have commissioned a guide to the English A-levels for HE lecturers who may have lost touch with the school curriculum and teaching methods, and are working with the Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies to look at transition issues in relation to English Language.

"The Subject Centre has acknowledged that there are people working in e-learning who need support. I felt quite marginalized and 'alone' in working in this area so official recognition is helpful."

Lecturer from Oxford University

Main location

Royal Holloway, University of London

Other sites/collaborators

King's College, University of London

Subjects covered

English Literature, English Language, Creative Writing

Contact

Tel: 01784 443221

Email: esc@rhul.ac.uk

www.english.heacademy.ac.uk

Geography, Earth and Environ

We see one of our key roles as helping our communities to anticipate and be responsive to new developments, opportunities and pressures in the world of higher education. Through our many and varied contacts with professional bodies, Government agencies and other links we are able to maintain a leading edge view. We endeavour to be both pro-active in providing information and resources on new agendas and responsive to the needs of our discipline communities.

Information and resources

Sharing examples of practice and learning from our own and others' experiences of learning, teaching and assessment is a key feature of our Subject Centre.

Our regular publication *Planet* and our online Resource Database each contain case studies, abstracts and other materials on a wide variety of themes written by colleagues in the GEES communities. *Planet* is a biannual magazine, including occasional thematic editions. It provides an opportunity for colleagues to write up case studies of their practice, to outline their research into learning and teaching (either completed or work-in-progress) or to discuss key issues in the disciplines in higher education. It is an excellent arena for those wishing to publish on learning and teaching and provides a useful complement to other peer-reviewed journals in the disciplines.

Engaging with the community

Formed through a collaboration of individuals and professional bodies across the three disciplines, the GEES Subject Centre is very much located within the Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences communities. All our activities and services are run in partnership with colleagues from across the UK.

While the majority of our activities span the three disciplines, we are aware of their individual needs. Our three discipline-based Senior Advisers provide additional support and services for each of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences as appropriate.

Brokerage and collaboration

Our work is mostly focused on learning and teaching at undergraduate and taught postgraduate level, though we are mindful of issues relating to foundation degrees and research postgraduates.

We are keen to work with all those who teach and support learning; our activities are open to academic and support staff, including cartographers, lab technicians, departmental administrators and subject librarians.

We work with colleagues in the GEES communities through thematic networks and collaborative projects, for example on topics such as: e-learning; employability (including personal development planning, career development, skills, entrepreneurship and corporate/social responsibility); pedagogic research; and Education for Sustainable Development.

We have developed a wide range of international contacts through individuals, publications and events. These are extremely useful for promoting our work, sharing experiences and resources, and showcasing good UK practice.

Pedagogical research

A commitment to scholarship underpins all the processes and outcomes of the GEES Subject Centre. By building on prior experience and research, we aim to support and enhance learning and teaching and to promote professionalism. This aim is achieved through our activities in two main areas: research into

Environmental Sciences (GEES)

learning and teaching (pedagogic research), and professional development.

Through our events, publications and Resource Database we provide information on and examples of generic and discipline-based pedagogic research to everyone who engages with our activities. In addition we also provide support to the GEES disciplines in developing the capacity to undertake discipline-based pedagogic research. This support includes:

- individual small-scale project funding
- opportunities to engage in collaborative research
- workshops and events
- networking opportunities
- information and advice to those interested in pursuing research through links to resources, expertise and mentoring services
- opportunities for the dissemination of learning and teaching research methods, practice, results and analyses.

Professional development

Professional development is at the heart of what we do at the GEES Subject Centre. All of our activities and services can contribute to and support both initial and continuing professional development (CPD). For example, colleagues can engage in:

- our annual residential workshop for new and recently appointed lecturers (now in its seventh year)
- national conferences
- departmental workshops
- bidding for and running small-scale research and development projects
- writing case studies for *Planet* or our Resource Database
- contributing to a collaborative project or network.

There are also many development opportunities through directly supporting the work of the Subject Centre by, for example, contributing to our Advisory Board or Feedback Group, participating in development training to become a departmental workshop facilitator, or reviewing resources informally or formally (e.g. through the *Planet* editorial board).

We also offer a 'CPD Advisory Service' to support practitioners in reflecting on their participation in our activities in the context of their own CPD profile, and to advise generic educational developers on how we might contribute to their schemes. In addition, we are working closely with the appropriate professional bodies to discuss affiliation of our activities and services with their CPD schemes.

Delegate from our residential
Entrepreneurship workshop:

"Thank you for a wonderfully entertaining and enlightening few days. I learnt such a lot and found the interaction between staff and students very beneficial."

Main location

University of Plymouth

Subjects covered

Human Geography, Physical Geography, Earth Science, Marine Science, Environmental Science and Environmental Studies.

Contact

Tel: 01752 233530

Email: info@gees.ac.uk

www.gees.ac.uk



Health Sciences and Pract

Information and resources

Our website provides theme pages, resources, news, events and opportunities to actively engage with special interest groups or e-discussions.

Our printed newsletter is produced three times per year and carries articles, reviews, announcements and summaries of various projects. Monthly e-bulletins provide up-to-date information on events, news, opportunities and new resources.

Thus far, we have published seven (commissioned) occasional papers on various aspects of interprofessional education; critical reflection; practice-based learning and numeracy issues for nursing education.

Our learning and teaching resource database comprises both web-based resources and non-Internet resources, e.g. books, articles, case studies, and computer-based software on diskettes, CD-ROM or DVD. It includes free links to the Internet resources in health and life sciences from BIOME.

Engaging with the community

We have established a strong network to support the sharing of innovation and current practices in learning, teaching and assessment. It consists of the following:

- a Learning and Teaching Consultant Team, with expertise in different areas, who facilitate the production of materials and resources and deliver workshops
- subject advisers, with specialist knowledge in their own discipline, who review materials, answer relevant enquiries, produce informed articles and facilitate workshops. They provide links between the Centre and the specific disciplines within our community

- departmental key contacts who disseminate materials and information from the Centre to colleagues within their department and provide feedback on particular queries and activities within their institution.

Our staff, consultants and advisers attend departmental learning and teaching events and professional body meetings or conferences. We have also staged several two-day 'Festivals of Learning'. These events are a blend of workshops, keynote presentations and panel debates as well as special interest group and poster sessions.

For feedback on student perspectives about learning and teaching in higher education we are participating in the Higher Education Academy Student Essay Award Scheme.

Brokerage and collaboration

Since 2001 we have funded 44 mini-projects (usually around £5,000), conducting research and development and producing materials and resources for dissemination.

We also support 16 of the 38 Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning (FDTL) projects with dissemination and evaluation advice and activities; we also have representation on all of their steering groups. We are working closely with all the health-related Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning.

We are committed to working collaboratively with other Subject Centres and, where appropriate, other organisations in order to maximise the potential for success and avoid duplication. Examples of collaboration with other cognate Centres include the TRIPLE project (Three Centre Research on Interprofessional Practice in Learning and Education); the ETHICS project (Ethics Teaching Highlighted in Contextualised Scenarios); the MHHE project (Mental Health in

Higher Education); Employability, and the Linking Research and Teaching Project.

In conjunction with the Subject Centres for Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Medicine (MEDEV) and Social Policy and Social Work (SWAP), we were awarded two years of funding from the Leonardo da Vinci Programme to develop a European Interprofessional Education Network (EIPEN).

There are also eight special interest groups focusing on: reflective practice, employability, practice learning and support, ethics, mental health, interprofessional education, foundation degrees, and problem-based learning. They operate on a semi-autonomous basis and feedback regularly to the Centre.

We work closely with the Centre for Advancement of Interprofessional Educational (CAIPE) and have run a number of workshops with them.

Subject policy and development

The large community of the Health Sciences and Practice Subject Centre incorporates a wide range of health disciplines and so our main policy focus is on interdisciplinary issues and interprofessional education.

We aim to transmit the views of the grass roots education and profession practitioners to the various professional bodies and Government departments, and to help inform the educators about the national priorities in both education and health that are likely to have an impact on their work. This is achieved by carrying out needs analyses within the community, by maintaining links with the professional bodies, and by keeping watch on Government initiatives and responding to consultation documents.

We also participate in educational policy development of the professional bodies by sitting

on their education committees, such as the Health Professions Council and the Royal College of Nursing. The main themes that arise from these consultations form the basis of our activities such as the Festivals of Learning, workshops, occasional papers and mini-projects.

"I really enjoyed reading the Occasional paper. It was informative and interesting. It filled a gap."

Main location

King's College, London

Subjects covered

Art Therapy, Audiology, Chiropody & Podiatry, Chiropractic, Clinical Science, Complementary Medicine & Therapy, Drama Therapy, Environmental Health, Gerontology, Health Promotion & Education, Health Science/Health Studies, Health Visiting, Healthcare Ethics, Medical Engineering, Medical Imaging including Radiography, Medical Physics, Midwifery, Music Therapy, Nursing, Nutrition & Dietetics, Occupational Therapy, Operating Department practice, Optometry, Orthoptics, Osteopathy, Paramedic Services, Pharmacy, Physiotherapy, Prosthetics & Orthotics, Public Health, Rehabilitation Sciences, Speech & Language Therapy.

We also work in collaboration with cognate Subject Centres to support other related subjects. Our Advisory Board represents a cross-section of disciplines, professional and government bodies, as well as the four UK countries.

Contact

Tel: 020 7848 3141

Email: info-hsap@kcl.ac.uk

www.health.heacademy.ac.uk

History, Classics and Arch

Information and resources

Our website is the first point of access to our publications, events and any topical information of concern to our disciplines. It offers a wide range of up-to-date information about the resources, services, events and activities that we provide to support the development of teaching and learning in our disciplines.

Publications include surveys and case studies of good practices and innovations, and subject-based annotated bibliographies. We have produced briefing papers on topics such as *Learning to read an image* and *Making your first course website*. There are also tutor guides to teaching practices and reports from the Teaching and Learning Development Projects that we have sponsored.

Information on news, events and resources is disseminated to our subject communities through our monthly electronic bulletin.

Engaging with the community

History, Classics and Archaeology (HCA) and its constituent disciplines engage with the disciplinary community directly through regional and topic-based networks, as well as a network of key contacts in institutions throughout the UK. Through these channels, we obtain information about issues of concern to the disciplines which we should address, and distribute information about our activities.

Each of our disciplines has its own Advisory Panel which consists of members drawn from the teaching communities as well as representatives from key subject associations.

Our central Advisory Board has representatives from each of our three disciplines and includes three international corresponding members.

They meet regularly to review progress and to offer support and advice concerning the distinctive challenges and opportunities that we face. Each year we organise national conferences, colloquia and seminars for each of our disciplinary communities. These can be either practice-based or address some issue of wider concern, such as widening participation, employability or enterprise.

We also hold a special conference for heads of departments in History and, on request, provide tailor-made workshops for departments on topics of their choice. In 2006, Classics will be organising meetings for new staff, postgraduate teachers, and teachers of minority and related aspects. Archaeology is already running a series of successful workshops for graduate teaching assistants and new staff.

Our concern is with HE courses and programmes, wherever taught and studied. We work with continuing education units and with FE institutions which provide HE courses in our disciplines. We maintain close contact with secondary education, given the centrality of the issues of transition to HE and of widening participation, and the continuing debate on reform of the 14-19 syllabus and its examinations. The impact of reforms on HE programmes requires careful and imaginative consideration and it is appropriate for us to be fully involved in those debates.

Brokerage and collaboration

To promote the sharing of good practices and innovations, we have established a range of collaborative and networking facilities, and are always keen to develop more. We have networks that promote generic issues, such as employability. There are nine regional networks of history departments, and a web-based external examiners brokerage service.

We have a programme of Teaching Development Grants which encourage a culture of sharing good practice in teaching and learning. Following completion of the projects, reports and any resulting resources are disseminated through the website as well as conference and workshop papers. These grants provide incentive as well as recognition to scholars whose teaching is informed by a student-centred approach.

This year's round of Teaching Development projects includes e-learning projects on the use of technologies such as interactive whiteboards and their impact on the learning experience of the undergraduate historian, and the use of weblogs to encourage reflective learning. This fits in with a major scoping study we have just undertaken into the use and sharing of e-learning resources in all three of our communities, funded by the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC). The results of this study will be embedded into our future work.

Together with the Archaeology Data Service we are working on a series of virtual tours of archaeological sites and will shortly launch a bank of images of archaeological sites and activities.

Subject policy and development

We aim to support all kinds of educational development and enhancement throughout the UK, while respecting the rich diversity of teaching and learning contexts and traditions through which our subjects have evolved.

We work closely with our disciplinary communities and associations to ensure that our activities and services are of practical benefit to all staff and students. We are also keen to raise the status of teaching, and, with the support of our disciplinary associations, have established annual national awards for History teaching in higher education.

We are active in discussions about the impact of the changing research agenda on teaching at under- and postgraduate level, as well as the relationship between disciplinary research and student learning.

We have worked with the Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Network on the topic of 'Heritage' and with the Subject Centre for English on student reading of texts.

Feedback from a recent event:

"I came away with as many questions as I came with, though for the most part, they were different questions, and I had some encouragement that the way I'm approaching the matter is not so very different from the approach in other disciplines."

Main location

University of Glasgow

Other sites/collaborators

Bath Spa University
University of Durham
University of Liverpool
University of Nottingham

Subjects covered

History, Classics, Archaeology

Contact

Tel: 0141 330 4942
Email: hca@gla.ac.uk

www.hca.heacademy.ac.uk

Hospitality, Leisure, Sport

Information and resources

Our website provides a range of resources which have been designed to meet the needs of subject staff. These include:

- resource guides – providing information about materials on specific subject-related topics (e.g. sports history and events management) or learning and teaching issues (e.g. employability and personal development planning)
- case studies – offering brief examples of teaching methods and practices that work
- a ‘what’s new’ section – providing links to items of news and topical interest
- an events listing – promoting conferences and workshops.

The *LINK* newsletter is distributed to all subject departments and is produced three times a year. Each issue concentrates on a themed topic of interest, such as assessment or supporting student learning.

The Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Education (JoHLSTE) is our biannual international, online refereed journal. It includes peer-reviewed academic articles, shorter practice papers and research notes.

Engaging with the community

As a result of our neutrality and wide range of contacts, we are able to offer a number of services that provide unique information for subject staff.

- Our External Examiner Register lists people who may be appropriate for validation panels and as external examiners.

- Our Student Course Experience Survey offers a confidential service, enabling departments to compare their students’ evaluation of their study experience with a national average for the subjects.

We offer annual funding for pedagogic research and development projects. A wide variety of projects have been undertaken so far, investigating aspects such as skills development, the enhancement of students’ career management skills, and the use of computer-mediated learning to support work placements. More information on these projects is available on our website. We also run an annual pedagogic research and development day in the spring of each year.

To enable direct interaction with and between the subject communities, we also facilitate a series of workshops and seminars on topics of current interest and a programme of departmental visits to discuss specific needs.

Brokerage and collaboration

There is a small full-time team based at Oxford Brookes which is responsible for the organisation of the Network’s core activities and for working with subject staff. In order to achieve both subject and geographic coverage, the Network supports:

- four liaison officers (one for each subject), who maintain links with subject associations, highlight issues of importance identified through this liaison and ensure that subject needs are met
- ten institutional partners located in subject departments in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, who contribute departmental, institutional and geographical context to our planning and activities.



and Tourism Network

Both the liaison officers and the institutional partners are actively involved in the planning and review of the Network's activities, as well as being one of our primary routes for dissemination. Our key links with the subjects are through our communications with the Network's departmental contacts located in the majority of institutions offering our subjects. These individuals maintain two-way contact with the Network by receiving and forwarding monthly updates from us, and by working with us to provide contributions to our publications, suggestions, examples of practice or requirements.

Subject policy and development

It is often difficult to find out about current practice in learning, teaching and assessment within departments and across institutions. We are developing a benchmarking service to help departments and course leaders evaluate their practice against that of others.

So far we have conducted two surveys, the first on the assessment of dissertations, and the second on assessment more broadly. The most recent survey indicated that assessment of personal development planning (PDP) is an issue for departments and this will be investigated in the next survey. The survey results and summaries are available in the current activities section of our website.

The Network also holds occasional meetings with students to find out more about their experiences of higher education and ways in which those experiences can be enhanced.

We consult with and contribute to the work of the various established hospitality, leisure, sport and tourism subject associations in relation to learning and teaching within the subjects. In the last year, we have had active contact and liaison with the Association for Tourism in Higher Education (ATHE), the Council for Hospitality Management

Education (CHME), the Leisure Studies Association (LSA), the British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences (BASES), the Institute for Consumer Sciences and the Association for Event Management Education (AEME). We have also established links with the Institute of Consumer Sciences. Similarly, we engage with the work of professional bodies such as the Hotel & Catering International Management Association (HCIMA) and the Institute for Leisure and Amenities Management (ILAM), and the Sector Skills Councils for our area.

The work undertaken by the Network confirms that there is much that can be done to support learning and teaching within our subjects, and a significant contribution to enhancing the student learning experience through active sharing of experience and learning about effective practice.

"I think it is a fabulous site for any researcher in the area of sport management, sociology, pedagogy as well as a host of other areas."

Main location

Oxford Brookes University

Subjects covered

All aspects of hospitality, leisure, sport and tourism in higher education, including events management and consumer sciences.

Contact

Tel: 01865 483861

Email: hlst@brookes.ac.uk

www.hlst.heacademy.ac.uk

Information and Computer

Information and resources

The Information and Computer Sciences (ICS) website contains links to learning resources, book reviews and case studies of good practice in learning, teaching and assessment. Online subject resource guides and issues-based briefings provide direct links to materials and relevant readings. A monthly email keeps the community informed of subject-based developments and emerging policy issues as well as our activities.

Our electronic peer-reviewed journal *ITALICS (Innovations in Teaching and Learning in Information and Computer Sciences)* is a vehicle for the dissemination of scholarly activity. Recent themed issues include 'Artificial intelligence and intelligent agents: challenges and perspectives', 'The state of ICT skills education' and 'Information literacy: the challenges of implementation'.

The enquiry service is supplemented by the frequently asked questions section of the website – this is a unique and well used resource, which is greatly appreciated by the community.

Engaging with the community

Active engagement with the academic community is central to our role and is provided through a comprehensive and diverse programme of events. Within the rapidly changing ICS disciplines, practitioners welcome the opportunity to meet with colleagues, share knowledge and evaluate achievements. Our annual conference provides further opportunities for raising debate on topical issues and sharing approaches to academic practice.

We have established a network of key contacts across the UK who act as a conduit to staff and provide us with vital information about what is happening in departments. Regional events help to nurture this important

practitioner network and serve as a forum for representatives to tell us what they want and need. ICS staff are also available to attend and facilitate departmental teaching away days and similar events, thus enabling us to contribute directly to pedagogical activities.

Brokerage and collaboration

We actively engage in building and supporting networks and communities of practice, both physically through our workshop programme and virtually via a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). We support a number of focus groups including ethics, programming, retention and student support.

We work with academics, employers and professional bodies forging links between relevant stakeholders. Excellent relationships exist with related professional bodies including the Council of Professors and Heads of Computing (CPHC), British Computer Society (BCS), Chartered Institute for Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) and British Association for Information and Library Education and Research (BAILER).

We offer a number of small grants (up to £3,000) through the ICS Development Fund. These projects bring into wider use exemplary techniques, methods or materials already developed and used successfully in local departments. Dissemination is central to this activity and the outcomes from all projects are available on our website.

Subject policy and development

The ICS disciplines are at the forefront of the knowledge economy and, as such, must respond quickly to a constantly changing social and economic landscape. Academics must constantly revise and update syllabi and curriculum materials, leaving limited time to

er Sciences (ICS)

pursue innovative pedagogical developments and respond to national policy agendas. We provide a range of services and support to help our community face these challenges.

The IT industry is forecast to grow at five to eight times the UK average over the next ten years. This represents a significant shortfall in the supply of graduates ready to enter the marketplace. HEFCE's recent report (2005/24) on 'Strategically important and vulnerable subjects' identifies the need for a considerable increase in the number of computing graduates. We are working with the British Computer Society (BCS) and the Council of Professors and Heads of Computing (CPHC) on the need for specific intervention to sustain and enhance the subject.

The strong vocational nature of the disciplines has meant that there have been significant developments in terms of the design and delivery of foundation degrees and other HE provision delivered in FE. We have been working nationally to establish the status of the planning and implementation of foundation degrees within Computing Science and related disciplines.

Employability remains a key issue for the ICS community, owing to the vocational nature of the disciplines and the strong requirement for programmes of study to address key professional skills required by employers.

Engaging with students

We have been actively involved in a number of new activities which concentrate on working with students. In addition to a student essay competition, we have introduced a software development competition for the development of Reusable Learning Objects (RLOs). Developing RLOs to support various aspects of the computing curriculum has proved attractive to both staff and students whilst increasing our resource of RLOs.

For Information and Library Studies/Science (ILS), the competition focuses on postgraduate students who are required to complete a dissertation or project as part of their course, and requires students to develop learning materials which explore innovative aspects of teaching and learning within their discipline.

We also work with employers in the sector who are seeking to increase awareness about the wide range of career opportunities available. In liaison with the professional bodies and individual departments, we organised two events directly aimed at students about the career opportunities available in digital gaming and mobile technologies. We have also developed a student zone within our website. This facility is used to promote all aspects of our work that is directly relevant to students.

"[The ICT event] gave me an insight into what other people were researching in the area and also what they considered important."

Main location

University of Ulster

Other sites/collaborators

Loughborough University

Subjects covered

Computing, Software Engineering, Multimedia Technology, Information Systems, Information Science, Librarianship

Contact

Tel: 028 9036 8020

Email: heacademy-ics@ulster.ac.uk

www.ics.heacademy.ac.uk

Languages, Linguistics and

Information and resources

We have a wealth of hard copy and online resources. Our website provides up-to-date information on our events and projects but is also an invaluable repository of reports and articles of interest to those teaching in our subject areas.

The *Good Practice Guide* comprises commissioned articles on areas of pedagogy and overview articles on a particular discipline. The website also hosts downloadable teaching materials.

Our newsletter is published three times a year and is sent free of charge to all those on our mailing list. We also publish *ATLAS*, a newsletter for the area studies community.

700 Reasons for Studying Languages is a report identifying the key motivations for language learning. It has proved to be an invaluable promotional tool for languages in all sectors of education and is distributed free with an accompanying poster.

We are producing *Why Study Languages?*, a CD with a number of lively, fun and interactive presentations, which demonstrate the value of studying a language at all levels. One complementary copy will be sent to each higher education institution (HEI), further copies being available at a cost of £15.

Also published in 2006 will be a report describing research into attitudes of undergraduates to reading in a foreign language. We will be producing a report based on interviews with graduates in the humanities who have been in employment for several years. It describes the skills they feel they acquired as a result of studying a humanities subject.

Engaging with the community

Colleagues on our mailing list receive a monthly e-bulletin giving information about forthcoming Subject Centre events and pointing to the latest additions to the website.

Each year we organise a full programme of workshops. Themes range from promoting our subject areas to teaching phonetics and area studies. We have a very effective partnership with CILT, the National Centre for Languages, and together we organise a biennial conference on teaching and learning in higher education. We also run a programme of workshops and seminars in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. These are organised locally through partnerships established by the Subject Centre.

Brokerage and collaboration

We have established a number of working groups and special interest groups to advise us on our proposed programme of activity and to assist with the development of the *Good Practice Guide*. The specialist groups for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies each meet at least twice a year. In addition to these groups we have convened special interest groups for literature and culture, learning technologies, and those with a departmental role as learning and teaching co-ordinators.

LLAS is keen to collaborate closely with those Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETLs) who are working in our subject areas. We are carrying out research into the use of multimedia technologies in modern language teaching for the CETL based at the University of Ulster and we organised the launch of the 'Languages of the Wider World' CETL hosted by the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) and University College London (UCL). We are also leading a consortium of a number of other Subject Centres considering issues in the area of interdisciplinary learning and teaching.

Area Studies (LLAS)

We are working on international themes such as supporting international students, and the implications of the Bologna process for those teaching in the humanities in UK higher education.

Pedagogical research

We are committed to developing pedagogical research and have funded a number of mini-projects over the last three years in the areas of pedagogical research and materials development, notably for less widely used, lesser-taught languages. Calls for bids are issued in our e-bulletin and are posted on our website.

We have also been involved in a review of pedagogic research in the humanities led by the Subject Centre for Philosophical and Religious Studies. In addition, we hold several workshops each year giving training in research methods.

Subject policy and development

The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) published the National Languages Strategy in 2002. For more information, go to www.dfes.gov.uk/languages. In 2004, the University Council of Modern Languages (UCML) and LLAS were awarded funding to carry out a research project on the implications of the strategy for HE.

Our staff are members of the HE Implementation Group convened by the DfES to assist with implementing the strategy for HE. We have recently been awarded funding research into outreach activities carried out by HEIs to promote language study.

LLAS has strong European connections. We are represented on the European Language Council and have received funding for a number of EU projects, the most recent being 'Opening the Door to Language Learning' which sought to develop ways of making resources in HE more accessible to local communities.

We support a Linguistics Strategy Group convened by Linguistics subject associations. The group aims to promote the discipline both in the secondary and higher education sectors.

In 2004 a number of Area Studies associations collaborated to form the United Kingdom Council of Area Studies Associations. The Subject Centre works closely with the Council to promote and support Area Studies in higher education.

About the 700 Reasons report:

"I'd like to say first, congratulations on the work done and on the accessible presentation of the results. It's so encouraging to read your positive conclusions."

Main location

University of Southampton

Subjects covered

Modern Languages degree programmes, language programmes for all disciplines, English as a foreign language, Linguistics, all Area Studies programmes, literary, media, film, cultural and social studies associated with Modern Languages and Area Studies programmes.

Contact

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Email: llas@soton.ac.uk

www.llas.ac.uk

Law (UK Centre for Legal Education)

Information and resources

The UK Centre for Legal Education (UKCLE) offers a range of information services, all of which can be accessed via the website. Key services include the resource bank, the Committee of Heads of University Law Schools (CHULS)/UKCLE external examiners register, and leGATE, the legal education gateway, a searchable database of legal education. Our 'what's new in legal education' section includes up-to-the-minute listings of news and events of interest to law teachers.

Directions, our biannual newsletter, includes news and current awareness items, as well as more thoughtful contributions looking at developments in research and practice. We also distribute a monthly e-newsletter containing the latest legal education news. We plan to launch a peer-reviewed collection of research papers and reports and a series of working papers, focused on sharing practice and provoking discussion.

Engaging with the community

The Learning in Law Initiative (LILI) is now a well established network supporting the interests of law teachers nationwide. The latest annual LILI conference attracted nearly 30 papers and more than 125 delegates. The parallel Vocational Teachers Forum conference is also developing into a successful and supportive network.

Our seminars bring our community up to speed with and provide a forum for debate on current issues in education, such as personal development planning (PDP), employability and entrepreneurship. Workshops are more hands-on, practical sessions, providing law teachers with ideas and materials they can take away and use in their own teaching. We also run a roadshow programme of individually tailored staff development events, and are increasingly being asked to run regional events and take part in departmental teaching and learning days.

UKCLE has recently established an Associates scheme as a means of involving and rewarding the growing number of law teachers who are committed to various Centre activities, such as facilitating events, contributing to publications or scrutinising research proposals.

Brokerage and collaboration

Our current portfolio of research projects includes the Enterprise in Law project, focusing on the notion of enterprise and the different approaches law students can take to their learning to make them more enterprising. We are working with two law schools to develop learning materials which can be customised for reuse.

A project on virtual learning environments (VLEs) in legal education is developing case studies on VLE usage in law schools and creating a web-based community where law teachers can post their own experiences of using VLEs.

Internationally, we have a 'legal education elsewhere' section in *Directions*. We also have a book fund enabling UK law schools to dispose of superseded editions of textbooks for the benefit of law schools in the developing world.

Pedagogical research

Our research strategy is based on the assumption that support for and engagement in research is vital for educational development. We adopt approaches designed to nurture research capacity and raise the profile of legal education research.

We are involved in a range of research projects and initiatives aimed at enhancing the legal education research base, and make available a variety of research support mechanisms, including funds for pedagogical research and development, publishing opportunities and staff development events. We also support law

Education – UKCLE)

subject surveys into how individual subjects are taught, with surveys on contract law and criminal law under development.

A regional fund to support initiatives in the area of learning, teaching and assessment in law in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales has been established. This fund has supported a major project on legal education in Wales and a longitudinal survey of law students in Scotland, now into its fourth year.

Professional development and engaging with students

We work with both law teachers and students to enhance the student learning experience. We support the professional development of teachers through our events programme, which includes two annual events tailored to the needs of graduate teaching assistants and other new academic staff, and through our work with staff development units within individual institutions.

We encourage student contributions to our events – two papers at LILI 2006 were delivered by students. Our student essay competition is now in its third year, with students this year asked to write on whether their law degree was what they imagined it would be and what, if anything, they would like to change about it.

Subject policy and development

We keep abreast of and are actively involved in developments in legal education and training. We are closely tracking the Law Society's review of solicitors' training (the Training Framework Review), and, as well as responding in our own right, contributed responses from other interested parties.

Biannual meetings are held with the head of education and training at the Law Society of England and Wales, in which we exchange

information about our respective areas of work. We have close links with the equivalents in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Our annual Vocational Teachers Forum conference attracts delegates from both training providers and professional bodies from the UK and abroad.

We recently organised an event for CHULS on managing a law school in the 21st century. We have established effective working relationships with the law subject associations, acting as the secretariat for the British and Irish Law, Education and Technology Association (BILETA) and hosting the website for the Association of Law Teachers, with whom we also collaborate closely on the development of events.

Feedback from a recent event:

"[The event] was very effective indeed. The main issues were set out in a highly interesting and effective manner, providing a framework in which attendees could examine those issues in a constructive way."

Main location

University of Warwick

Subjects covered

Law

Contact

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Email: ukcle@warwick.ac.uk

www.ukcle.ac.uk

Materials (UK Centre for

Information and resources

Our website is a gateway to an extensive collection of news, information and resources. It provides details of funding opportunities, forthcoming events, Materials education projects, good practice guides, and electronic learning and teaching resources. The database of resources is a fully searchable catalogue containing many thousands of resources on various topics in education and Materials. We also have an electronic resource bank containing diagrams, images, photographs, micrographs, video clips and assessment questions.

In addition to collating and disseminating information from a broad range of external resources we also publish our own. Examples are *Materials Education – 12 Guides for Lecturers*, and our booklets on *Teaching Mathematics to Scientists and Engineers*. To keep our community up-to-date with our activities, we have produced a portfolio of activities, and also distribute periodic electronic bulletins and newsletters.

Engaging with the community

We engage with our community of academic colleagues on a number of different levels, for example, by providing information, conducting departmental visits, advising on learning and teaching practice, working closely with individual departments or facilitating staff away days.

We organise a range of workshops and seminars, either national events or based in departments, encouraging participants to reflect on not just their individual practice, but that of their department. They are a forum to share experiences, raise awareness of ongoing developments, and encourage reflection. These events also provide an opportunity for us to consult with our community, explore key issues and define priority actions.

We provide support to staff and departments from across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, addressing both generic issues and specific regional agendas.

In conjunction with other cognate Subject Centres, we co-host two biannual national education conferences: the Science Learning and Teaching Conference and the Innovation and Good Practice in Engineering Education Conference. These expose delegates to a broad spectrum of learning and teaching, and bring together wide groups of practitioners.

Brokerage and collaboration

One of our key functions is to stimulate and enable the development of networks across the community – between individual academics, educational developers, staff development units, education support agencies, and professional bodies. Our aim is to foster a culture of mutual support and information sharing. One way we promote collaboration is through the annual funding of projects that address the development and widespread adoption of innovative approaches to learning, teaching and assessing Materials education. Our Teaching Development Grant scheme funds academics to develop and evaluate small-scale approaches to Materials education, as well as providing grants to enable academics to try for themselves new approaches that have already been adopted elsewhere.

The Supported Change programme provides funding that promotes larger-scale development within a department. This generally relates to implementation of changes to the curriculum or to the mode of delivery, or both, over a long-term period of at least two or three years.

We have a number of ongoing special interest groups to address themes ranging from student recruitment, through several specific teaching approaches, to enhancing graduate employability.

Materials Education)

These groups have been useful in co-ordinating national activity, and their discussions have allowed a consensus on best practice to evolve.

In addition we work closely with industry, professional bodies, and organisations such as Materials Teaching Educational Resources (MATTER) who produce Materials education software. By positioning ourselves at the centre of the Materials education community we can maintain a comprehensive view of ongoing activity and policy issues, thereby ensuring individuals can connect with the information, resources, knowledge and experience they need.

Pedagogical research

In addition to our annual allocation of funded projects, we also provide grant support for a range of pedagogical research activities. These help create a culture of research in learning and teaching issues amongst Materials staff, and also enable us to further build partnerships with educational/staff development units in universities.

Professional development and recognition

We hold a biannual Recently-Appointed Materials Lecturers course that introduces new lecturers to different approaches to teaching and a variety of learning experiences. The event fosters a sense of community within the discipline and encourages ongoing communication. It has been designed and developed by the Centre to supplement generic accredited programmes in participants' own institutions.

Subject policy and development

We are working to help departments raise public awareness of the discipline of Materials and promote it as an attractive option for university study. For example, to address the issue of student recruitment, we have published a

Materials Interactive CD-ROM that promotes the discipline and illustrates employment opportunities. It is designed to be used by university departments and careers services in schools and colleges, and has been distributed widely across the sector.

Engaging with students

Each year we deliver a residential course for students from institutions across the UK who have been elected to represent their peers studying the discipline of Materials. This event raises awareness of issues (such as the discipline, learning and teaching, careers, etc) for students, increases their capabilities/skills, and establishes social networks – thus enabling them to be more credible with teaching staff in representing the views of their peers.

“Materials offers something that is unique and very important... having a specific national Centre enables us to maintain a profile for the discipline.”

Senior Academic

Main location

University of Liverpool

Subjects covered

Materials Science, Materials Engineering, Product Design, Metallurgy, Polymers, Ceramics, Natural Materials, Nanotechnology

Contact

Tel: 0151 794 5364

Email: ukcme@liv.ac.uk

www.materials.ac.uk

Maths, Stats & OR Network

Information and resources

Our comprehensive and ever-growing website contains news and activities; funding opportunities; resources from events and projects; a monthly e-journal on computer-assisted assessment (CAA) in mathematics; and full electronic versions of all printed publications and guides. In addition, our website now contains a fully searchable catalogue of both online and print-based teaching resources that will be of use and benefit to students, academics and support staff. We are currently involved in developing e-learning and e-assessment resources.

Our quarterly publication, *MSOR Connections*, contains articles on current practice and emerging issues in a range of HE departments, both from the UK and overseas. It contains regular columns (*Something that worked for me* and *Have you seen this?*), as well as updates on both Network and community-wide activities, reviews of books and courseware, conference and workshop reports, and a comprehensive three-month diary of events.

We have a number of other publications to support both students and staff:

- *Facts and Formulae for Students*
- *Algebra and Calculus Refreshers for Students*
- *Learning and Teaching in MSOR: an Occasional Series of Good Practice Guides*
- *MathsTEAM Booklets, case studies to support the learning of Mathematics in Science and Engineering*
- *Effective Learning and Teaching in Mathematics and its Applications*, edited by Peter Kahn and Joe Kyle.

Engaging with the community

We have a network of contacts in almost all discipline-related departments to which we actively distribute information on news, events, resources, and key learning and teaching issues. Our key contacts:

- distribute information
- identify experts and potential contributors to our events or publications
- highlight local issues of concern to inform future Network activity
- provide feedback on current national issues.

We run a regular programme of events and workshops, including the DayBreak programme, which focuses on issues of topical interest and addresses issues of national concern to the community. Building upon the success of the Helping Everyone Learn Mathematics (HELM) conference in 2005, the Network will host its first major annual conference in 2006 in collaboration with the related Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETLs).

Brokerage and collaboration

Each year we commission three to five projects to investigate an aspect of learning and teaching. Through these projects we encourage a culture in which innovation in learning, teaching and assessment are valued and acknowledged. Good practice is promoted and disseminated for the benefit of the subject community as a whole. Recent examples include: Piloting the Wider Use of DyscalculiUM; In Service Teacher Training of Mathematics Lecturers in HE; Enhancing a Study Skills Website; and e-Learning Statistics Modules for Modern Regression Methods and Design of Experiments.

We continue to support the MSOR projects funded under phase 4 of the Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning (FDTL) as their work on transferability gets

ork (MSOR)

underway. We will also work closely with the recently commissioned CETLs, assisting with dissemination.

We take an active role at the major subject-specific conferences, by running seminars, workshops and briefings, ensuring that everyone within the community has the chance to engage with learning and teaching issues, and that learning and teaching remains a high priority area.

Professional development and recognition

We remain committed to providing and developing support for new academic staff, and the cornerstone of this programme is our annual induction course for new lecturers. We offer the distance-learning based Teaching Statistics in HE course which is accredited jointly by the Royal Statistical Society and the Academy.

We have a group of experienced academics providing input into resources for new academic staff. A recently commissioned project will produce a guide detailing how new academic staff can be supported by mentoring from more experienced colleagues. This will provide individual departments with the opportunity to engage in supporting the professional development of fellow academics.

We have a programme of events which provide discipline-specific advice to postgraduate students who undertake teaching. A dedicated teaching guide for postgraduate students will be available from 2006-07.

Subject policy and development

We enjoy excellent links with our professional and learned bodies and subject associations (Heads of Department of Mathematics Sciences, the Institute of Mathematics and its Applications, the London Mathematical Society, and the Royal

Statistical Society). We regularly collaborate on projects of national concern, and our Advisory Committee consists of members from across the spectrum of the MSOR community. We are involved in a major national study, funded directly by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), to investigate mechanisms to increase the number of mathematics undergraduates within higher education. The Moremathsgrads project has recently sought views from the community and developed strategies for action.

"The induction course offered by the MSOR Subject Centre is an excellent introduction to maths lecturing and everyone who has been on it has found it both useful and enjoyable."

Chris Budd, LMS Education Secretary

Main location

University of Birmingham

Other sites/collaborators

University of Glasgow

Nottingham Trent University

Subjects covered

Mathematics, Statistics and Operational Research. Because of the core nature of these disciplines, we work closely with cognate Subject Centres, notably Economics, Engineering, Information and Computer Sciences, Materials and Physical Sciences.

Contact

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www.mathstore.ac.uk



Medicine, Dentistry and Vet

Our philosophy is to work with our constituency to enable individuals, groups and organisations to identify and resolve challenging educational issues. Faculties harbour teaching excellence, and we seek to encourage innovation and the sharing of good practice by brokering collaborations between practitioners and experts to enhance the student learning experience. We work closely with cognate Subject Centres (particularly Health Sciences & Practice) and collaborate with subject associations.

Information and resources

Our website is an excellent place to discover what is happening in medical, dental and veterinary education as news and educational resources appear daily. Content is selected as relevant to our community, and news, events and funding opportunities are delivered to desktops. The link of the month highlights free, online teaching materials relevant to our disciplines. We are constantly seeking teaching materials and welcome your comments and reviews. Reports and resources (from meetings, workshops and conferences) and examples of good practice in healthcare education cover a wide range of subject-specific and generic topics. A moderated JISCmail list is used for announcements and discussion, and carries a monthly eBulletin containing a digest of leading articles from the website.

The full colour 36-page newsletter contains articles about innovative educational research and development projects, case studies and updates on the work of the Centre. Special reports and teaching and learning guides cover a wide range of topics such as leadership development and problem-based learning. We run a busy telephone and email enquiry service, and maintain a frequently asked questions page on the website.

Engaging with the community

Primary contacts in each school of Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Medicine disseminate information and resources on our behalf, and also advise us and guide the direction of our work. Specialist advisers are appointed in recognition of their expertise and contribution to our work.

Our free workshops and conferences typically attract over 1,000 participants per year. These are run by members of our constituency and cover a broad range of topics including training Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCE) examiners and examination standard setting, formal appraisal of undergraduate students, and educating the healthcare educators. Proposals for events can be submitted via the website and are always welcome (facilitators receive £500). In addition, we run an annual conference aimed at senior managers, academics, practitioners and educationalists. Online events and blogs are hosted for some of our special interest groups, such as: e-moderating for healthcare educators, communication skills teaching, and resource activities for teacher trainers.

We have funded over 80 mini-projects and subject-specific activities to develop educational practice and innovation in learning and teaching, and assist with disseminating outcomes. Topics include disability and widening participation, development of dental ePortfolios, systematic reviews of educational evidence, promoting reflective learning, involvement of 'service users', humanities in medicine, and veterinary communication skills. Our call for proposals typically closes in late spring, and we encourage potential applicants to contact us.

Teaching and learning champions can win places at major conferences, and student essay competitions carry either a cash or free conference prize. We also endorse local applications for teaching fellowships.



Veterinary Medicine (MEDEV)

Brokerage and collaboration

Brokerage and collaboration is an essential part of our work to support sharing good practice to enhance the student learning experience across the sector. Our website has many examples of good practice, with contact names of practitioners who can be approached for advice.

We exhibit at major educational conferences such as the European Association for Dental Education, Association for Medical Education in Europe, Association for the Study of Medical Education, and the Association of Veterinary Teachers and Research Workers.

We co-sponsor information-sharing projects and events on specific topics with other Subject Centres (particularly Health Sciences & Practice and Social Work & Social Policy) and organisations such as the Centre for the Advancement of Interprofessional Education. The RAFTT project promotes the sharing of resources and staff development activities between teacher trainers, and we work with other Academy professionals to support the development of new staff.

We have assisted over 100 'strategic engagement' projects funded by other agencies. We can facilitate collaboration, help with drafting proposals, support project staff with management, advise on copyright and other legal issues, and assist with dissemination and exit strategies to ensure long-term availability of project findings.

Our track record in e-learning has helped schools to attract funding for innovation and mainstreaming online support for programmes, contributing to a Queen's Anniversary Prize.

Subject policy and development

The role of education in improving patient and animal health is critical to the success of new legislation and policy changes. We strive to work with our constituency when shaping

and responding to the latest information and interpretation of the rules. We regularly advertise and respond to current consultations.

Our primary contacts, specialist advisers and Advisory Board help us to monitor changes and influence policy development. Many primary contacts are involved in statutory visitations to schools on behalf of the professional bodies, and we were directly involved in the benchmarking statement for medicine and updating *Tomorrow's Doctors*. We periodically update Pro-Vice-Chancellors on how their schools use our services.

The outcomes of our activities have directly influenced national policy; others have contributed to sector-led initiatives (such as psychometric testing and assessment).

*"Interesting... enjoyable...
worthwhile ... informative...
valuable... practical... instructive.
Superbly helpful staff!"*

Delegate from Breaking
Boundaries 2005

Main location

University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Subjects covered

Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Medicine

Contact

Tel: 0191 222 5888

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www.medev.ac.uk



PALATINE – Dance, Drama

Information and resources

We provide information, guidance and resources on issues, topics and themes that are relevant and of interest to our communities of practice.

Regular briefing papers and newsletters (electronic and hard copy) provide up-to-date news, information and comment on national policy and educational developments, details of our events and projects (past, present and future), and items of general interest.

Our website is a major and well-used resource. The Directory is a searchable database containing a growing list of over 4,000 reviewed links to web-based resources for learning and teaching.

The skill and experience of PALATINE's staff is also an important resource. We engage in a range of activities including contributing to national and international higher education events and projects; undertaking consultancy and staff development work; and writing papers and articles for journals, newspapers and magazines.

Engaging with the community

Awareness of PALATINE and its activities is very high in the sector, and there is an official PALATINE contact in virtually every department and institution in the subject area. These contacts undertake to pass to their colleagues information from and about the Subject Centre.

An important element of our work is the close formal and informal links with the three main subject associations in the discipline area. These provide us not only with direct access to the membership of the associations, but also with an important level of credibility, validity and visibility with the various subject communities.

One of the indicators of the support for and interest in our work is the permanent queue of departments and institutions offering to host and, in many cases, help organise a PALATINE event. There are 10-15 such events a year, and they range from small seminars on specialist subjects to large-scale events such as the successful Creative Enterprise in Higher Education conference held at Lancaster University in November 2005. All PALATINE events are accompanied by detailed online reports.

In addition to events, PALATINE initiates online discussions and debates on a range of topics such as the assessment of performance work and the use of the full range of marks in the performing arts disciplines. These discussions frequently

“The academic life of my particular subject area is ever the richer for the existence of PALATINE. I can remember life before PALATINE, and life after PALATINE is that much better with it.”

Drama lecturer

“If you asked any of my colleagues they would absolutely support the work that PALATINE has done – their views would be very similar to mine that what PALATINE has set out to do and achieved has been valuable for the discipline.”

Professor of Drama



na and Music

develop into material for further investigation, publications, or a future PALATINE event.

Brokerage and collaboration

Our Development Award scheme provides small grants (up to £5,000) for individuals or small groups to undertake research and development in learning and teaching, and to create innovative resources and ideas that are of use to the wider learning and teaching community. Over 30 peer-reviewed awards have been funded under the scheme, and outcomes from the scheme include websites, books, guides, conferences, workshops and DVDs.

We are also closely involved in a number of collaborative projects and initiatives – regionally, nationally and internationally. These include Academy initiatives on professional development, student assessment, and evaluation; advising several Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning; co-ordinating the Imaginative Curriculum Project Network; and collaborations with the European Knowledge Media Association (EKMA) and the European League of Institutes of the Arts (ELIA).

Subject policy and development

We are involved in a number of subject area and national policy initiatives. The CAREER and Performing Arts Creative Enterprise (PACE) projects were established by PALATINE, with external funding, to provide major web-based resources, publications and events on employability and enterprise in the performing arts and creative industries.

The interdisciplinary PRISM project, funded by the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) via the Academy, is a web-based resource that creates new connections between key works of some 20th-century Anglo-European art movements across performing and creative arts.

“The [workshop] they did was very impressive and seems to have been talked about by an awful lot of people.”

Dance lecturer

“PALATINE is an incredibly useful organisation as it provides a forum for discussing teaching and learning issues.”

Senior Lecturer Music

Main location

Lancaster University; hosted by the Lancaster Institute for the Contemporary Arts (LICA).

Other sites/collaborators

This single-site Subject Centre has formal links with its host as well as with De Montfort University, the National Association for Music in Higher Education (NAMHE), the Standing Conference on Dance in Higher Education (SCODHE), and the Standing Conference of University Drama Departments (SCUDD).

Subjects covered

Dance, Drama/Theatre Studies, Music and Performance. These disciplines are taught in a range of institutions including university departments, specialist academies, colleges and conservatoires. They encompass a wide range of subjects and approaches to learning and teaching including the theoretical, historical, practical, technological and vocational.

Contact

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Philosophical and Religious

At the heart of all our activities and services is the aim of promoting the disciplines we support and the goal of an enhanced learning experience for all.

Information and resources

Our website features news, events, reviews and funding opportunities. There is also a large collection of scholarly articles on learning and teaching and other issues relevant to our subject communities, including diversity and employability. The front page carries feeds from national resources such as our Resource Discovery Network (RDN) hub, HUMBUL, and our own resources are embedded in other sites.

We publish a respected biannual peer-reviewed journal – *Discourse: Learning and Teaching in Philosophical and Religious Studies* – now in its fifth volume, and a newsletter for key change agents – *Discourse Supplement*. Recent issues of *Discourse* have carried special sections on logic, religious studies, employability and international perspectives on philosophy learning and teaching.

We also publish a series of *Faith Guides for Higher Education*. Drawing on our expertise in the field, these specially commissioned guides for academic and support staff in all disciplines provide for a better informed and more inclusive environment for students of various faiths. So far, guides to Christianity, Islam and Sikhism are available, with coverage of other faiths to follow.

Engaging with the community

Almost all departments covered by the Subject Centre have departmental representatives, and we offer a range of workshops and visits to departments and faculties throughout the UK. Workshops are tailor-made for each occasion; can cover any topic in subject-specific learning and teaching practice and policy; and can be

run in face-to-face and electronic formats. Additionally, there are local, regional and national events on teaching particular topics such as medical ethics, philosophy of science, Islam, and the use of texts.

In addition to our work with established academics, we are building links with a whole new generation of university staff with a series of events for new teachers (now in its second year) and a two-day residential workshop for post-graduates organised in conjunction with the Arts and Humanities Research Council. These events aim to give support and encourage excellence in teaching and learning from the very beginning of an individual's academic career.

We are also conducting a detailed consultation with our whole subject community to evaluate the impact of the Subject Centre and develop improved engagement strategies.

Following on from our highly successful international conference for learning and teaching in philosophy in 2005 – Future Discourse (with a second conference planned for 2007) – 2006 will see a new international conference for the Theology and Religious Studies (TRS) community – Theology and Religious Studies or Theology vs Religious Studies? – with contributions from around the globe.

Through funding for mini-projects, over the last three years we have established or expanded communities of active development on topics as diverse as critical thinking for international students in religious studies MA programmes, e-learning and virtual dialogue for philosophy students.

Brokerage and collaboration

The Subject Centre covers disciplines at the forefront of interdisciplinarity and strives to

explore and support the diverse ways the subjects are taught throughout the UK. We work across traditional subject, faculty (arts and humanities) and other academic groupings, redefining the boundaries for excellence and innovation.

Our Advisory Board comprises representatives of the major discipline networks, professional bodies and subject associations including the British Philosophical Association, the Association of University Departments of Theology and Religious Studies, the British Society for the History of Science and the British Society for the Philosophy of Science.

Examples of our groundbreaking collaborative work are wide ranging. In 2005 we organised a popular event on Religions and the Environment in conjunction with the Subject Centre for Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences.

For 2006 we have organised an interdisciplinary workshop on Logic and Proof, in conjunction with the Subject Centres for Mathematics, Statistics and Operational Research, and Information and Computer Sciences, and are working closely with a number of Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETLs) including the IDEA (ethics) CETL at the University of Leeds.

Pedagogical research

Alongside the funding we provide for mini-project pedagogical research and development across the UK, we are actively engaged with networks aimed at enhancing the status of subject-specific research in learning and teaching. *Discourse* is central to dissemination of this research and is now well-established as the leading journal for scholarship in pedagogy in our disciplines in the UK.

Amongst many other mini-projects, we have commissioned a project studying the experience of dyslexic students in our subject areas, in line with the widening participation remit. We are also

involved in researching the relevance of Education for Sustainable Development in our disciplines.

Subject policy and development

In 2005 we brokered a meeting between leading TRS academics and the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA). This enabled university teachers to have input into decisions about how best to improve the A-level Religious Studies syllabus and exam, in order to ease the progression to higher education.

“[The AHRC post-graduate event was] extremely useful... lovely people... a rare exhibition of enthusiasm and passion for academia from presenters and participants alike. A welcome and valuable experience.”

Main location

University of Leeds

Other sites/collaborators

University of Wales, Lampeter

Subjects covered

Philosophy, Religious Studies, Theology, History and Philosophy of Science, Technology and Medicine

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Physical Sciences

Information and resources

On our website, you can browse an extensive database of resources; national initiatives such as widening participation; software resources; and book and website reviews. We produce a wide range of publications including regular newsletters, a journal, practice guides, briefing papers and toolkits. All publications are provided in electronic format and so are free to download but we also produce paper versions and multiple copies are available upon request.

We have a thriving community of academics across the UK who keep up-to-date with developments via our email lists. If you would like to know more about our wide range of activities and resources, news and funding opportunities you are welcome to join our lists.

We respond to meet the needs of our community of physical science academics and develop publications and resources. These cover such topics as assessment, e-learning, laboratory work and pedagogic research on a wide range of themes. If you need help locating resources or would like assistance in developing new resources which we can add to our growing database then please contact us. We can offer support, advice and access to expert help in physical science related issues.

Engaging with the community

We strive to engage the physical sciences community in a number of ways. One way is to raise the profile of our activities by enlisting the help of staff in all UK higher education departments to act as departmental representatives. We currently have departmental representatives in about 90% of physical sciences departments and are always keen to bring in new volunteers.

As part of our remit to engage actively with our community many of our staff are often out

and about organising regional and national workshops. We also offer departmental visits that are tailored specifically to the needs of the local institution. These can include seminars, workshops or consultancy on topics that are relevant to a department's needs.

Brokerage and collaboration

One way we promote brokerage and collaboration is through the funding of small-scale development projects. Each year we make funds available for individuals or collaborations from different institutions to investigate a particular topic or produce resources aimed at improving teaching and learning provision within the sector. Each project makes any resources available to the whole community and engages in other appropriate forms of dissemination, so each project benefits many colleagues within the physical sciences.

As a broker we work to put people with similar interests together so that they can share ideas and resources. The Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) initiative is one example where we work closely with a number of science-related CETLs to share good innovative practice and to disseminate this work to all of the physical sciences. We also co-ordinate meetings and special interest groups which attract people across the sciences to work together.

One example of our effective brokerage is demonstrated by an institution that approached us for help organising an event on forensic science, where they wanted to bring people together to discuss national developments. We helped them to organise the event, provided some sponsorship and put them in touch with key people in the area. This event has now grown into a regular national conference for the academic forensic science community.

Subject policy and development

As a key organisation in UK higher education we are well placed to co-ordinate consultations with, and on behalf of, the HE physical sciences community.

We engage with our associated professional bodies, such as the Royal Society of Chemistry and the Institute of Physics, and Sector Skills Councils to bring industry and education together to work towards common approaches on issues that affect both communities in order to inform national policy developments. One such collaboration with SEMTA, the science Sector Skills Council, resulted in a national report on forensic science which was specifically cited at the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee: Forensic Science on Trial.

Engaging with students

We are expanding our range of activities to support students more directly. As with each of our fellow Subject Centres we run an annual student essay awards competition. These essays give a valuable insight into the student experience and how we can best support them in their studies.

In addition, we run events directly aimed at students, where we collaborate with academics to visit departments to run employability workshops. These events give students an example of some resources contained in our employability resource pack, aimed at supporting student skills development. Students find the sessions valuable and they help prepare them for the world of work.

Pedagogic research

As well as supporting and promoting good practice for everyday teaching, we also support research into the development of teaching in the physical sciences. We engage with this process in a number of ways. Recently commissioned

publications about getting started in pedagogical research in the physical sciences have been very successful, with several re-prints being required. Through development projects we also provide funding for individual research.

On a national scale, we run the national Science Teaching and Learning conference with some of our cognate Subject Centres. This event provides a platform for scientists to share the outputs of their teaching innovations. A range of national workshops on pedagogical research for different topics such as e-learning are also organised on a regular basis.

“The range of activities offered and promoted provides much needed motivation and encouragement to those interested in science education.”

Main location

University of Hull

Other sites/collaborators

Liverpool, Surrey

Subjects covered

Physics, Chemistry, Astronomy

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Psychology Network

Information and resources

We aim to be a key source of information and advice relating to the student learning experience within psychology. Policy updates, funding opportunities, examples of teaching practice, details of events and compilations of resources are actively disseminated through electronic communications, newsletters and meetings, in addition to being accessible on our website.

Our peer-reviewed journal, *Psychology Learning and Teaching*, provides a forum for scholarly reporting and discussion on all aspects of teaching and learning in our discipline, bringing together current research and promoting critical discussion on current innovations. We also commission and produce evidence-based reports and workshop materials that focus on specific issues.

Our website primarily provides a repository of information intended for 'just-in-time access' relating to issues around teaching practice. This includes student feedback, assessment and diversity, and whenever possible we try to provide specific examples from Psychology. The website also contains links to teaching and learning resources relevant to different areas of Psychology. Related to this we are currently working on an integrated site to support the practical and research methods components of Psychology programmes.

Engaging with the community

There is considerable variation between departments of Psychology, both in terms of the diversity of students on their programmes and the balance between teaching and research activity. Nonetheless, we frequently come across innovations and practical solutions in one department that are suitable for adoption by others.

Psychology is taught in many different programmes of study ranging from Psychology as

a single subject to, for example, sports science, medicine, organisational behaviour, health sciences and neuroscience. We have set-up a number of network groups, led by academics in particular areas, to identify and support this diversity. These groups may be virtual in nature, for example, the network of contacts in UK Psychology departments, or more focused, for example, the working group for the teaching of social psychology.

Workshops are held across the UK throughout the academic year focusing on a wide range of issues. These provide the opportunity for discussion and sharing of practice as well as shaping the work of the Subject Centre in specific areas of activity.

Our highly successful biennial conference provides an excellent platform for raising debate, sharing approaches to academic practice and encouraging excellence in current teaching practice. This international conference takes place within a friendly and supportive environment, welcoming everyone from students to experienced practitioners.

Brokerage and collaboration

The Psychology Network is well-placed to co-ordinate and broker activity within the community. This may be through acting as 'the honest broker' in collaborative bids for funding, bringing together groups with shared interests, or working with the Association of Heads of Psychology Departments or the different sections and divisions of the British Psychological Society on policy issues.

Cross-disciplinary work often involves liaison with other Subject Centres or the Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. We also work with a number of international organisations including the National Institute for Teaching of Psychology, the American Psychological Association Education Directorate, the Carrick



Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education and the European Federation of Psychology Teachers' Associations.

Our Advisory Board is made up of committed experts in learning and teaching from across the discipline at both undergraduate and postgraduate level, and representatives from student bodies and professional organisations.

Pedagogical research

In our day-to-day work we endeavour to provide the community with evidence-informed information and to this end undertake literature reviews, surveys and interviews to inform our work. Recent examples of reports include: *Creating ethical research: understanding ethics committee decision-making*; *Widening and increasing participation: challenges and opportunities for psychology departments*; and *Applying psychology disciplinary knowledge to psychology teaching and learning*. We also work on larger research projects, a recent example being the National Disability Team Project: Improving provision for disabled psychology students.

We have two mechanisms for funding scholarship within the discipline: a mini-project scheme for small research or development projects; and a departmental teaching enhancement scheme intended to have a wide impact across one or more departments. All funded projects are required to evaluate their work and to report on the outcomes for the benefit of the wider community. Much of this work is published in *Psychology Learning and Teaching* (PLAT) and presented at our PLAT conference series.

Professional development and recognition

We are committed to providing continuing professional development and recognition for

all staff engaged in supporting the psychology student's learning experience.

In addition to our regular workshops and conference, we have set up specific support for those starting out on teaching. This includes regional networks for postgraduates who teach and these offer regular workshops that provide development opportunities and mentoring. We also provide a limited number of free places for a six-week online training course, 'Preparing to teach psychology', to staff embarking on course design for the first time.

Each year we run a two-day forum for new lecturers led by highly experienced practitioners. To support institutional Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education (PGCHE) courses we have developed an annotated bibliography of psychology-specific reading relating to teaching as well as a set of case studies focusing on the integration of research into teaching.

"The newsletter is terrific: probably the most useful piece of paper to flood through my in-tray."

Main location

The Psychology Network is situated within the Department of Psychology at the University of York with a partner site at the University of Strathclyde.

Subjects covered

All areas of Psychology.

Contact

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Social Policy and Social Work

Social Policy and Social Work's (SWAP) overall aim is to support the Social Policy and Social Work educator subject communities in order to enhance and develop the student learning experience.

Information and resources

Our website delivers resources, news, policy alerts, workshops, learning and teaching case studies, events and conferences to your desk. Individuals interested in learning and teaching can register to receive monthly e-bulletins and biannual hard copy newsletters.

From time to time we disseminate paper-based documents that we author or commission and which are also available to download from the our website. Two recent project reports are:

- *Recruitment and employability issues in social policy degree courses in UK higher education*, produced jointly with the Social Policy Association and JUC-Social Policy Committee (Darvill and Ashford, 2005)
- *Building skills into the curriculum: a guide to meeting the requirement for social work degree students to achieve information and communication technology skills* (Holt and Rafferty, 2005).

RoutledgeFalmer have undertaken a reprint of the book *Effective learning and teaching in social policy and social work* (Burgess and Taylor, 2004) which is authored by members of the SWAP team and educators. The book received an excellent review in the *British Journal of Social Work*.

Engaging with the community

In addition to the activities described above, we also undertake a range of face-to-face activities with our subject communities. SWAP offers two-

to three-hour consultation sessions for teaching teams/schools/departments and/or groups of colleagues with teaching interests in common to explore different themes. These have included e-learning, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Act 2001 (SENDA), problem-based learning, and curriculum development and teaching methods. We also run or jointly organise regular workshops throughout the UK on 'hot topics' such as:

- social work admissions: sharing issues: developing good practice
- Social Policy and Social Work e-Learning champions think tanks
- a workshop to support applications for the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Doctoral Recognition Exercise 2005
- implementing personal development planning - challenges and opportunities
- External Examining Symposium
- workshop on the new framework for post-qualifying education in social work.

Educators can participate in online discussion lists for Social Policy and Social Work educators, topic-based lists on admissions and e-learning, and the Mental Health in Higher Education project. We have a database of key departmental contacts, which provide a valuable link to our subject communities.

SWAP provides small grants to promote the use of effective learning, teaching and assessment activities and to encourage the development and sharing of good practice and innovative approaches. As a new venture we contributed funding, along with the Social Care Institute for Excellence and the Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work Education, to a University of Bristol-led three-year pedagogic research project that has recruited six courses to be involved in a learning set "Evaluating the outcomes of social work education".

Work (SWAP)

Brokerage and collaboration

To work effectively we must build partnerships and work collaboratively with a range of key stakeholders. SWAP is represented on a number of key committees and associations and this enables us to contribute to subject debates and policy development. We are engaged with regulatory bodies such as the Care Councils and working groups of the Department of Health and Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and others such as Skills for Care, the Practice Learning Taskforce, Social Care Institute for Excellence and the Scottish Institute for Excellence in Social Work Education.

We are represented on the UK Social Policy Association (SPA) Executive and on their Teaching, Learning and Recruitment sub-committee and we attend the Joint University Council Social Policy Committee (JUC-SPC). We have worked with both the SPA and JUC-SPC to develop recruitment strategies and employability within social policy programmes.

We also participate in the Joint University Council's Social Work Education Committee (JUC-SWEC) as well as contributing to three sub-committees: Learning and Teaching, Research, and International. This has led to a variety of joint work and events.

Brokerage and collaboration are strong elements in our multi- and interdisciplinary work. The Mental Health in Higher Education (MHHE) project funded by the Department of Health and the Academy originated from collaboration between four Subject Centres: SWAP, Psychology, Health Sciences and Practice and Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Medicine. Our support for the Centre for Excellence in Interdisciplinary Mental Health has led to an additional joint funded MHHE post, based alongside the University of Birmingham Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL).

We actively support 15 CETLs through partnerships with cognate Subject Centres and the Academy. A final example of brokerage is our voluntary register for external examiners. This web-based system has developed a network of existing and potential examiners who are able to let courses know they are available by registering through our website. This area of work has led to SWAP negotiating a joint event with the General Social Care Council and JUC-SWEC to support the enhancement of standards of reporting.

"Thank you for a fabulous site: www.swap.ac.uk. When looking for sensible and balanced guidance that can be used at an introductory level, but is not of the 'utterly obvious' and therefore somewhat offensive kind, I keep coming back to this resource."

Main location

University of Southampton

Other sites/collaborators

University of Bristol
University of Sussex
Lancaster University
University of Birmingham

Subjects covered

Social Policy and Social Work

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www.swap.ac.uk



Sociology, Anthropology and

Information and resources

We regularly distribute information on news, events and resources to our subject communities through monthly e-bulletins, tri-annual newsletters and frequent mailings.

Our journal *Learning and Teaching in the Social Sciences* (LATISS), sponsored by C-SAP and the Social Policy and Social Work Subject Centre (SWAP), aims to use the subjects of sociology, anthropology, politics, international relations and social policy to reflect critically on learning and teaching practices in higher education and to analyse their relationship to changes in higher education policies and institutions.

Each project funded by us is required to write a C-SAP *Findings* report. *Findings* are intended to be useful for those wanting either to learn from a particular approach or to implement a similar innovation.

We also commission C-SAP *Overviews*. These are concise scholarly reviews of learning and teaching topics within higher education written from the perspective of the social sciences.

We have produced a series of publications dealing with learning and teaching issues in the Social Sciences. These publications expand on core C-SAP activity, such as our workshops and events.

Our website is regularly updated with new resources, findings reports, relevant news and event details. It also provides a searchable interface into other collections of web resources.

Engaging with the community

We offer a range of workshops, conferences, department visits and resources to staff and students in our subject communities. Information is distributed through our department links, reference and advisory groups and website.

We work with our discipline groups through both thematic topics and national priority areas.

C-SAP's Academic Co-ordinators and administrative staff run a successful programme of workshops, annual lectures and one- and three-day conferences.

Our annual three-day conference offers an opportunity to debate local, national and international perspectives on learning and teaching practice. The conference consists of a range of high profile speakers, presentations of teaching practice and spaces for debate and discussion.

Our reference groups are made up of a range of experts from the subject communities, professional association representatives and other teaching professionals. They assist us in supporting the community through consultancy and writing case studies and topic-based overviews.

Brokerage and collaboration

C-SAP offers funding for teaching and learning projects each year for academic staff and students. These grants offer the opportunity for individuals to develop innovative practice, share good ideas and participate in developing national debates. The projects have gained institutional, national and international recognition in many cases.

We also work with academic colleagues and professional associations through themed working groups. Our Race and Ethnicity working group, run in association with the British Sociology Association (BSA) study group for 'race', has produced three publications and two successful one-day conferences. Through our international links we have been able to invite colleagues from America, Africa and Europe to share their experiences of teaching and exchange ideas with our subject communities.

and Politics (C-SAP)

Pedagogical research

C-SAP has a successful history of bidding for funding and commissioning pedagogical research. Much of this research is commissioned or led by our Academic Co-ordinators. These research projects are useful in providing us with insights into how policy is affecting practice and how teaching is changing.

These research projects have explored national issues such as widening participation, training for new lecturers, career destinations and impacts of e-learning. We have also looked at staff responses to changes in higher education through reviewing the history of and changes in the social science curriculum and teaching practices.

Through these research projects and surveys conducted with the subject communities we are able to assist in informing policy debates and plan future work.

Engaging with students

We are involved with a range of student-focused activities and offer opportunities for both postgraduate and undergraduate students to develop learning and teaching projects. Students are able to apply for funding from us on an annual basis.

There is an essay-writing competition for students. The competition is open to all students on a higher education course in one of our discipline areas.

We have developed a range of resources and bibliographic sources for new postgraduate teachers. This has also led to the development of a network of postgraduates.

In collaboration with the Subject Network for Social Policy and Social Work (SWAP), we have produced the Companion for Undergraduate Dissertations website. This resource provides advice and guidance for undergraduate students

during the process of researching and writing a dissertation or other final-year project.

In 2005 we were awarded a grant from the Academy Employability and Enterprise initiative to set up work-based placements in labour movement Non-Governmental Organisations in Asia. After a recent visit to Hong Kong, student placements have been planned for April–October 2006.

“One of the reasons I think it attracts good attendance from a variety of folk and facilitates excellent levels of debate is that it is free of the teaching and learning jargon; it is very much rooted in the subject communities’ own language. Everybody I spoke to said that the conference was very good and they were learning a lot from it.”

Conference delegate

Main location

University of Birmingham

Subjects covered

Sociology, Anthropology and Politics. In conjunction with other Subject Centres C-SAP is providing support to Criminology and Cultural Studies staff working in the social sciences.

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Subject Network Prospectus

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Front cover picture (centre): Paul Rycraft

