



## **Diagnosing and Developing the IT Skills of New Entrants to Higher Education**

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### **Keywords**

IT Skills, Widening Participation.

### **Activity**

An approach to the diagnosis and development of student IT skills using computer aided assessment (CAA).

### **Group**

New first year students.

### **Aim**

Following recognition of the increasing diversity in the IT competency of new entrants into higher education, the aim of this intervention was to employ an effective approach which would ensure that all undergraduates have a core set of basic IT skills in the early stages of their university education.

## **Example**

Students are required to complete a self-assessment of their IT skills on WebCT shortly after their arrival at university. This provides guidance on the likely levels of skills development that will be required by individual students and leads into a system of computer-based learning plans and diagnostic tracking and testing using WebCT. Skills development is also supported through provision of printed materials, confidence building sessions and drop in workshops as required.

## **Results/Feedback**

This use of computer aided assessment was considered to be an effective way of identifying and developing the IT skills of students, providing useful feedback to both staff and students. Furthermore, feedback from students suggests that whilst students recognise the importance of IT skills, they may not appreciate the skills that they will need in their studies, and shows that students preferred the flexible delivery approach of this IT skills training.

## **Further information**

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