

Higher Education Academy
Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism
Network

Annual Report 2007/8

September 2008

Higher Education Academy Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Network

Annual Report 1st August 2007 to 31st July 2008

1. Overview

This has been a difficult year for the HLST Network. Whilst the network benefits from a strong team and most systems are firmly in place, financial constraints have made 2007/08 a year in which we have had to closely monitor and control spending, and subsequently curtail activity. This is largely due to increases in salary which are not reflected in increases in our funding. Despite these limitations, our responsiveness to the needs of the subject community has been maintained in all major areas of activity: publications, projects, resources and events. Representation has been made regarding our financial position both to Academy York and at Oxford Brookes where difficulties in integrating HLST and systems with those of Oxford Brookes University Business School have been experienced.

In real terms, HLST is effectively operating with a deficit of £30,000 in comparison to the 2004/05 funding level. In 2007/08, this has resulted in workshops being cancelled, newsletter publications being reduced from 3 to 2 issues, the funding of only 3 pedagogic research and development projects, with the withdrawal of this fund in 2008/09. Funding availability for such projects has been much valued by our subject communities, reflecting a culture of innovation and creativity in curriculum development and we hope that this withdrawal will be only temporary.

The year has, however, seen successes for HLST. JoHLSTE, our peer reviewed academic journal, goes from strength to strength; the number of resources available to support enhancement of the learning opportunities available to students continues to grow; the subject communities in our network continue to expand into new and exciting areas in HE; and there is good evidence of innovative in curriculum development. With careful management, the HLST Network has coped in a difficult year and is looking to 2008/09 for a return to more operational stability.

“The network has provided a valuable resource for all those associated with our subject area. In particular new members of staff have found the website very helpful.”

2. Resources

The HLST offices continue to be co-located with those of the BMAF Subject Centre, but following a restructuring of departments in the Business School, have returned to the original College Close premises. The membership of the HLST team has remained unchanged since the formal separation of administrative roles from the previous joint BMAF/HLST arrangement last year. This has enabled the incoming BMAF/HLST Subject Centres Manager to review roles and activity. He is currently engaged in developing an HR strategy for both Subject Centres that will meet the new challenges anticipated over the next funding period, as well as affording opportunities for the career progression of support staff. Our core structure, including four liaison officers each working with particular subject communities in our subject grouping, continues to be effective. Financial

constraints have, however, necessitated a rationalisation of our working relationships with our ten institutional partners and the roles of our institutional representatives.

Given the scope, scale and complexity of the HLST subject grouping, we remain concerned that the level of support we can provide is constrained by current staffing levels. With current staffing levels, however, HLST continues to “punch above its weight”.

3. Communications

The launch of the new HLST website as part of the Academy web portal offers a potentially much more powerful tool for interaction with our subject communities. There has, however, been a good degree of frustration caused by the variable support provided by the Academy York teams responsible for maintenance and development of the site. This has had a significant impact on the workload of our Projects and Information Officer, who has had to spend a disproportionate amount of time working on the web site. HLST is part of the web users group of subject centres involved in the first phase of the web portal pilot, with an aim to share experiences and make representation to Academy York. We look forward to early confirmation by the Academy of the direction which developments of the web portal will now take and to appropriate levels of staff support and expertise being available to us.

Lack of support from Academy York was initially experienced regarding training and support for the implementation of the INTEGRA CRM, which could potentially enhance capacity for managing events and network contacts as well as providing a tool for market research and annual reporting. Academy York staff have, however, visited HLST this year to help in efforts to continue to improve both our web site and CRM systems.

HLST is working with other subject centres that have already made progress with the implementation of INTEGRA. In line with the implementation of Integra, a full review of our contacts information has been instigated to ensure that our data is up to date and accurate.

4. Events

Our programme of events is targeted at a range of different groups of staff. Our aim continues to be to maximise our impact in a cost effective way. We thus continue to support and contribute to activities run by subject associations, particularly their national conferences, and this remains a key feature of our approach to awareness raising and the dissemination of effective practice within our subject communities.

Unfortunately, the financial position described above has meant that several events planned for 2007-08 had to be cancelled: the student experience workshops, pedagogic research and development day, and student lifestyle and credit workshops. Following the cancellation of the student events, which have become a valuable feature of our annual programme, our liaison officers were able to run student focus group sessions at two student conferences offered by subject associations (one in Sport and one in Hospitality). The outcomes were published on our website and we plan to repeat this approach in 2008/09.

4.1 Workshops

New Lecturers' Forum

11th and 12th February 2008, Nottingham

This event for new staff was once again organised with contributions from the HLST subject associations. 18 delegates attended.

One delegate commented “*I really enjoyed the forum and felt I learnt much that I will use in the future.*”

From PDP to CPD

30th April 2008, Gloucestershire

This event was run in conjunction with the Meta FDTL project and the programme included a presentation from the centre for excellence in leadership and professional learning at Liverpool John Moores University.

20 delegates attended.

One delegate commented “*An excellent seminar. I have found out where we are with respect to other institutions and have drawn up an extensive action plan that will undoubtedly keep me busy for many years.*”

Enhancing Assessment and Feedback

2nd May 2008, Ulster University; 29th May 2008, Oxford Brookes; 16th June 2008, Birmingham City University.

This was a series of 3 workshops that were run jointly by the HLST, BMAF and Economics Subject Centres, and which hosted a programme provided by the ASKe CETL. 68 delegates attended in total. A copy of the programme can be found in Appendix 1.

4.2 Annual HLST Conference 2007:

“Our Olympic Goals - Raising the Profiles of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Education in the Wider World”

Our conference this year was held at Missenden Abbey Conference Centre on 17th and 18th September 2007. As a keynote speaker, HLST was pleased to welcome Sarah Winckless, 2004 Olympic medallist and Athletes Services Manager to the British Olympic Association, who provided an inspirational start to the conference.

Further valuable contributions were made by Kate Potter, Head of Podium (LondonHigher), Stephen Studd, CE of SkillsActive, Ian Brittain, researcher on the Paralympics, Celia Brackenridge on the 2012 International Convention of Science, Education and Medicine in Sport, and Vassil Girginov on the role of academia in promoting Olympism.

Workshops and poster sessions provoked lively discussions on how higher education, and HLST subjects in particular, can benefit the opportunities afforded by the 2012 London Olympiad. One of the key messages to emerge was that there is a “long sunrise and a short sunset” with such major events and that our engagement must begin now if we are to gain maximise benefit to be achieved. We intend this to be a key area in which to develop learning and teaching resources and approaches to curriculum design.

The programme appears in Appendix 2.

5. Publications

5.1 *Journal of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Education (JoHLSTE)*

The JoHLSTE website template was re-designed for us by staff at Academy York and now has a more appealing and contemporary design. As in previous years, two editions of JoHLSTE were published online this year, Volume 6, number 2 in November 2007, followed by volume 7, number 1 in April 2008. The editorial advisory board was extended during the year to reflect the growing number of national and international submissions.

It is a notable success that JoHLSTE is now registered with the Thomson Scientific 'Current Contents/Social and Behavioural Sciences' and the 'Social Sciences Citation Index', the British Education Index, Ebsco and the Publishers International Linking Association enabling Digital Object Identifiers to be attached to each article.

5.2 *LINK*

Our LINK publication remains extremely popular within our subject communities and this year demand for LINK 21, on the Scottish Enhancement Themes, exceeded supply. QAA Scotland requested that 50 copies were sent directly to their offices. Unfortunately, budget constraints made it necessary to reduce the number of LINK publications to two rather than three this year:

- ***Link 20 Going for Gold*** - providing resources on events management and the Olympics
- ***Link 21 Learning from the Scottish Enhancement Themes*** - sharing good practice from the implementation of the Scottish enhancement themes to other parts of the UK.

A Director of Educational and Staff Development from one institution commented that receiving LINK is looked forward to as it is '*one of the better publications sent to institutions.*'

5.3 *Case Study Book Series*

Following the resounding success (with a second print run) of the joint HLST/BMAF ***Enhancing Graduate Employability*** publication, another two case study books on ***Internationalisation*** and ***Student Centred Learning*** are being produced, again in collaboration with BMAF. The two books provide examples of current thinking and practice in the topic areas and have been written by academics in our subject communities. A total of 33 chapters have been contributed from 25 different institutions, and these include chapters based on work initiated through FDTL projects, through CETLs and in projects funded by the subject centres.

Continuation of the series into 2008-09 is being considered, with a collection of case studies on assessment and feedback, a key contemporary issue in higher education, likely.

6. Projects funded by HLST

HLST Pedagogic Research Grants for 2007-08

Limited funding during 2007/08 resulted in only 3 pedagogic research and development projects being supported this year.

Proposals for projects are routinely invited during the April of the year prior to funding commencing in the September of the next academic year. For the forthcoming year (2008/09) it was not feasible to offer sufficient funding to support pedagogic research and development projects given that the projected funding was forecasted at £10,000. Therefore this amount has been committed to the development of subject guides rather than research and development projects.

Published in LINK 21, the third in a series of benchmark surveys was carried out. This investigated how PDP is being carried out in subject departments. 26 institutions participated, and the report provides a useful overview of current practice and issues.

7. Resources and Services

7.1 HE in FE Resource Exchange

Set up during 2006/07, the resource exchange has been available throughout 2007/08. Whilst it has proved difficult to attract new submissions to the resource, those that have been submitted are regarded as relevant and useful.

7.2 External Examiner Database

We were one of the first subject centres to develop a database for the identification of external examiners and those available to participate in external advisory panels by institutions. Our database continues to grow in terms of both registrations and users. A new system is now in development in collaboration with Academy York. Progress has, however, been greatly affected by staff resource level issues within the relevant teams at Academy York.

7.3 Register of Experts

The possibility of developing this register through Academy York information services was investigated this year. It was not, however, possible to secure support for this. Due to insufficient funds the development of the database has not been pursued but further avenues will be explored during the coming year.

7.4 Information Listings

We provide three information listings that are continuously updated, and a monthly e-update. The three information listings are:

- Events Listing – a list of events on our web site which are relevant to the HLST subject communities
- Catalogue of New Publications – to save academics valuable time we list new books suitable for adding to reading lists
- News Listing – a list of news items (including funding opportunities), relevant consultations, policy statements and reports, and subject related information

Our e-update is a regular monthly and highly regarded bulletin emailed to all our contacts and containing items of current interest with a subject or teaching related focus.

7.5 Case studies and Resource Guides

These continue to be the most used and commented upon resources on our website. 14 new case studies and 4 new resource guides were published on the website this year. There are now a total of 128 case studies and 39 resource

guides available on the site. Our concern remains to ensure that these are regularly updated or renewed.

8. Community Engagement

8.1 Engagement with Host Institution

The HE Academy and the HLST Network enjoy excellent support and recognition within our host University, Oxford Brookes University. Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Janet Beer, is a long time and active supporter of the Academy and contributor to its work as a member of its Board. Our Advisory Board has been chaired since its inception by the university's Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and in this role Dr Petra Wend has been an active member of the Chairs of Advisory Boards Forum. She has also contributed to the PV-C Network. Dr Chris Rust, Head of the university's staff development unit (the Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development), is a Senior Fellow of the Academy and is a member of the HLST Network Advisory Board. With a portfolio which includes a senior role within the university and Directorship of the HLST Network, Clive Robertson is also the institutional link person for the Academy. As such, he is able to ensure that liaison with the university is informative for the Academy through meetings with key individuals involved in learning and teaching developments from across the university and that the university is quickly alerted to Academy developments.

Working Links

The Hospitality, Leisure Sport and Tourism Network has been based at Oxford Brookes since its inception in 2000. It is now hosted by the university's Business School at its Wheatley campus, where it is co-located with the BMAF Subject Centre. The Oxford Brookes University staff working for the Network in 2007/08 were:

- Clive Robertson – Director (0.4FTE)
- Nina Becket – Assistant Director (0.81FTE)
- Patsy Kemp – Academic Developer (1FTE)
- Paul Radford – Subject Centre Manager (0.5FTE)*
- Terri Morris – Projects and Information Officer (1FTE)
- Dorota Maton-Mosurska – Administration Co-ordinator (0.75FTE)
- Anna Willmore – Centre Administrator (1FTE)
- Samantha French – Publications Officer (0.5FTE)*
- Maureen Brookes - Liaison Officer for Hospitality (fractional post)
- Lyn Bibbings - Liaison Officer for Tourism (fractional post)

**Post shared with BMAF and 1FTE in total*

In addition, a new text 'Enhancing the International Learning Experience in Business, Management, Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Education' is being published by the HLST Network and includes four chapters by Oxford Brookes staff:

- Jude Carroll - Assessment issues for international students and for teachers of international students
- Judie Gannon - Developing intercultural skills for international industries

- Maureen Brookes and Nina Becket - Assessing the international dimensions of degree programmes
- Patsy Kemp (and Mary-Jo Pesch) - Managing diversity, an American perspective

Wherever possible the Network contributes to Brookes events, including in 2007/08 the Brookes Student Learning Experience Conference on 14th May 2008.

In 2007/08, 2 pedagogic research and development projects were funded by the Network within the Department of Hospitality, Leisure and Tourism Management at Brookes:

- Getting the message across: One Way + Another
- More sustainable tourism – resource and curriculum guide and international reusable learning objects on tourism and climate change

Reciprocally, Maureen Brookes and Nina Becket were jointly awarded funding during 2007/08 to research the internationalisation of undergraduate hospitality management degree programmes by the Business School. The work undertaken as part of that project has been included within the new HLST publication '*Enhancing the International Learning Experience in Business, Management, Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Education.*'

Maureen and Nina have also been jointly awarded funding through the Brookes Student Learning Experience Strategy to research engaging students through personalised learning experiences within Business School programmes.

Contributions to committees/policy/strategy

As Head of Student Learning Experience at Brookes, Clive Robertson is responsible for the Brookes Student Learning Experience Strategy and its implementation and a member of senior university committees as well as a range of working groups informing policy and practice. He is able to bring to them the wider perspectives and experience afforded by his Academy role. Likewise his role as Network Director is informed by the institutional insights which his Brookes role brings. He is a member of the Business School Learning and Teaching Development Committee.

Clive represents Brookes on the Executive Board of the LLN, Progress South Central, which includes Reading, Surrey and Bucks New Universities and their associated FE Colleges. Again this brings valuable perspectives to his role as Director, as does his membership of the Board of Directors of the Open College Network South East Region.

Nina Becket has contributed to work of the Internationalisation of the Curriculum Working Group at Brookes and thus to the establishment of a new Centre for International Curriculum Inquiry and Networking.

Paul Radford attends the Business School Team Managers meetings and HR & Team Managers Operations Group.

Support for CETL and FDTL projects at Brookes

Clive Robertson and Nina Becket are both members of the Enhancing Graduate Employability FDTL project steering group, which Clive chairs, and Clive Robertson is also a member of the ASKe and Re-invention centre CETL steering groups.

The HLST, BMAF and Economics subject centres collaborated with the ASKe CETL to run a series of 3 workshops facilitated by the CETL team on 2nd May at the University of Ulster, 29th May at Oxford Brookes and the 16th June 2008 at Birmingham City University. In total 68 delegates attended these events.

HLST has actively promoted the work of the Brookes FDTL and CETL initiatives by circulating materials through mailing lists and at events.

Subject centre committees

Brookes Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Dr Petra Wend, continued as chair of the HLST Advisory Board for the 2008/09 academic year. Dr Chris Rust, Head of the university's Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development and a Senior Fellow of the Academy, is a member of the Advisory Board

8.2 Engagement with Subject Associations

The strong links that are maintained, particularly through the work of liaison officers, with subject associations are a key factor in the success of our Network. Contributions have been made by the liaison officers to all national subject association events, and in addition the liaison officers undertake various roles within the key subject related associations, including:

- The chair of the ATHE and Tourism South East and representation on the Tourism Society Board
- Membership of the Educational and Professional Development Division Committee of BASES
- Chair of the BASES Workshop Committee
- Chair of the Skills Active Diploma HE consultation Group
- Member of the CHME Executive Committee.

Extensive contributions have been made by the liaison officers to consultations on the development of the new 14-19 diplomas in hospitality, tourism and sport related topics. HLST and Subject Associations representatives were members of the panel convened by QAA to review update the Subject Benchmark Statement for Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism which is now published

A Subject Associations Meeting was held in January 2008, as in previous years. This continues to be a very useful forum for discussion and dissemination across subject communities. The opportunity for collaboration and identification of areas of common interest is a key feature of this regular meeting. Interest in joining this HLST sponsored forum is growing and this year we developed links with an emerging association representing programmes in Spa Management. Subject Associations in Retail Management, Event Management and Consumer Sciences have already found value in involvement in the forum and we are considering other subject associations, particularly those with an international dimension, with which to establish formal connections.

8.3 Engagement with Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

The HLST Network has continued to maintain a contractual relationship with Institutional Partners in Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Each of these partners was visited at least once during the year. In addition:

- A presentation was made by the Network at a University of Ulster HE in FE event for partner colleges in October 2007
- LINK 21 focused on the Enhancement Themes in Scotland
- HLST attended the Academy meeting for Scottish institutions in May 08

Furthermore, a consultant was contracted to represent our Network in Scotland and the liaison officer for sport is based at the University of Wales Institute, Cardiff.

We continue to encourage and receive contributions to our publications from colleagues in all regions, including Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Our Institutional Partners meetings, two each year, provide a forum for the exchange of perspectives, ideas and good practice, and are well attended by representatives representing the geographical spread achieved through our partnership model. We plan to extend the invitation to attend these meetings to all institutions, including those with whom we do not have a contractual relationship.

8.4 Engagement with FDTL Projects and CETLs

FDTL Projects

The seven FDTL5 projects in the HLST subjects are now complete or nearing completion. HLST has been represented on their steering groups and meetings related to the following projects were attended in 12007/08:

- Enhancing Graduate Employability, Oxford Brookes University
- "BioLab", University of Bedfordshire
- "META" - from PDP to CPD, University of Gloucestershire

A workshop was run with the META project at the University of Gloucestershire on 30th April 2008. The programme included a presentation made by the Centre for Excellence in Leadership and Professional Learning (at Liverpool John Moores University).

The META project has also published a chapter in the Joint HLST/BMAF publication on student centred learning

CETLs

HLST is represented as a member of the Steering Groups of the following CETLs:

- ASKe (Oxford Brookes University)
- Re-invention centre (Oxford Brookes and Warwick Universities)
- The Centre for Excellence in Leadership and Professional Learning (Liverpool John Moores University)
- HELP (University of Plymouth)

The HLST, BMAF and Economics subject centres collaborated with the ASKe CETL to run a series of 3 workshops facilitated by the CETL team on 2nd May at the University of Ulster, 29th May at Oxford Brookes and the 16th June 2008 at Birmingham City University. In total 68 delegates attended these events.

The Centre for Excellence in Leadership and Professional Learning has contributed a chapter to the HLST/BMAF publication on student centred learning.

Sport was an IDEAs (University of Leeds) CETL theme this year and collaborative work to enhance the teaching of ethics within sport programmes will continue into the forthcoming year.

8.5 Engagement with Sector Skills Councils and Profession Bodies

Skills for Success

This project, funded by the Academy, was completed in the autumn of 2008. The aims of the project were to understand more fully and thus be better able to respond to the needs of employers, to encourage effective support for employees in their career progression, and to enhance working relationships between HLST and SSCs. SkillsActive (Sport and Active Leisure), People 1st (Hospitality, Leisure, Travel and Tourism) and Skillsmart (Retail) were our partners in the project.

The main outcome of the project, which involved interviews with a range of employees identified through the SCC links with employers, is our publication *Skills for Success: Progressing Careers in the Hospitality, Leisure and Retail Sectors*. This outlines the career histories of 34 managers at different career levels and with different backgrounds and their reflections on the skills they recognise as important to their success. Materials will also be available through the HLST web site and through those of the SSCs.

Routine engagement with the Sector Skills Councils is primarily through the work of our Liaison Officers and extensive contributions have been made to consultations on the development of the new 14-19 diplomas in hospitality, tourism and sport related topics. The Liaison Officer for Leisure is chair of the SkillsActive Diploma HE consultation group.

We enjoy good working relations with a number of professional and industry bodies, primarily through their representation on our Advisory Board. In 2007/08 we worked with the Tourism Management Institute on development of their CPD provision and in selection of a partner HEI to be engaged in this work. Our routine working links to professional bodies and industry bodies in different subject areas are through our Liaison Officers.

8.6 Network/Institutional Partners

HLST continues to value its work with the 10 institutional partners, each partner was visited as usual by the network and meetings provide a valuable opportunity to maintain a two-way flow of information between the centre and its partners. Two meetings of the Institutional partners were held this year, in November 07 and April 08.

As a result of funding constraints, it has been agreed that the role of the institutional partner's nominated representatives will be re-focussed and rationalised in the forthcoming year.

An Institutional Partner evaluation summary appears in Appendix 3.

9. Contribution to themed work

9.1 Assessment and Feedback

The HLST, BMAF and Economics subject centres collaborated with the ASKe CETL to run a series of 3 workshops facilitated by the CETL team on 2nd May at

the University of Ulster, 29th May at Oxford Brookes and the 16th June 2008 at Birmingham City University. In total 68 delegates attended these events.

There are currently 37 assessment case studies on our website.

The LINK newsletter and JoHLSTE routinely include articles and resources related to assessment.

9.2 Employability, Enterprise and Employee learning

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9.3 Supporting and Championing teaching

A new staff course was run on 11th and 12th February 2008, in conjunction with Subject Associations.

The LINK newsletter and JoHLSTE routinely include articles related to this area.

9.4 HE in FE

Set up during 2006/07, the HE in FE resource exchange has been available throughout 2007/08. While it is still proving difficult to attract new submissions to the resource, those that have been submitted are regarded as relevant and useful.

HLST has also funded ten resource development projects for £1,000 each.

9.5 DEL 2

This project was subject to significant disruption following the unexpected departure of the learning technologist employed to carry out related work. In order to continue work on the project, the remaining funds have been devoted to a number of relevant projects.

A Sports CD was produced, to promote the use of entrepreneurship related learning objects in sports programmes. The CD also links through to resources on the main Academy website.

10. Collaboration within the Academy

10.1 With other Subject Centres

HLST has benefited from its collaboration with the BMAF Subject Centre. A joint HLST/BMAF management committee has met on a bi-monthly basis where matters of operational concern are shared and resolved. In addition, HLST and BMAF have continued the practice established during 2005-6 of meeting twice a year with the Economics Subject Network Team and were instrumental in the expansion of these meetings in 2007/08 to include the UKCLE, ESCalate and C-SAP Subject Centres. This has led to further sharing of insights, effective practice and collaborative working.

During the year, HLST worked jointly with BMAF and the Economics subject centre to host 3 workshops on Assessment and Feedback in Oxford, Bristol and Ulster with contribution from the ASKe CETL based at Oxford Brookes.

Following contact through our institutional partner representative at the University of Gloucestershire, HLST co-ordinated the input of the SWAP and Health Sciences and Practice subject centres to, a learning and teaching festival within the Faculty of Sport, Health and Social Care at Gloucestershire.

10.2 With Academy York

HLST has continued to make an active contribution to the work of the Academy as a whole. Our Director, Clive Robertson, has attended the Higher Education Academy Senior Executive Group meetings as a Subject Centre Directors' representative on a regular basis in 2007-08. He has also convened meetings with senior officers of the Academy and Subject Centre Directors to support development of the Academy's strategic plan and to respond to the evaluation of the Academy on behalf of HEFCE by Oakleigh Consulting.

Whilst the positive commentary in the Oakleigh Evaluation report on the work of Subject Centres is appreciated, there is still some uncertainty felt within Subject Centres as regards longer term financial viability and job security. This, of course, influences morale, motivation and ambition. Clarity, transparency and effective communication across the Academy continue to be essential.

We remain concerned about the variable level of response by Academy York to our communications and requests for support. For example in relation to budget setting, response to our annual report, co-ordination of Academy-wide initiatives, and the maintenance and development of the web site and the INTEGRA CRM. These issues along with concern about future funding were discussed with the Director of Networks, David Sadler, and with Linda Challis during her work on Subject Centres and responding to Oakleigh during their visits to HLST and BMAF in April 2008.

HLST staff are involved in the Web Portal Toolkit 1 users group, the Gateway Project, and the Internationalisation Working Group.

The Subject Centre participates in the Academy's annual student essay competition.

We wish to establish channels for communication with Fellows of the Academy in our subject areas and look to the Academy to facilitate this. Likewise we are interested in work which the Academy is pursuing with the NSU to establish links with students within subject communities.

11. Evaluation

We continue to adopt a process of ongoing reflexive evaluation of our activities throughout the year. Additionally, we employ the services of an external evaluator although funding in this area as in others has been reduced and evaluation focussed 2 specific areas. Firstly, a follow up on the experience of a dissertation management workshop hosted by HLST in April 2007 was undertaken and, secondly, a review was undertaken of the opinions of staff within partner institutions regarding the work of our Network. Full reports of the evaluations can be found in Appendices 4 and 5.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 HLST/BMAF/Economics/ASKe event programme**
- Appendix 2 Annual Conference Programme**
- Appendix 3 Institutional Partner Evaluation Summary**
- Appendix 4 Evaluation – Staff Survey Report**
- Appendix 5 Evaluation – Impact Evaluation Report**

Appendix 1 HLST/BMAF/Economics/ASKe event programme

ASKe/HLST Workshop, 29th May 2008, 10.30-3.30
 BG01 and BG05
 Buckley Building
 Headington Campus
 Oxford Brookes University

Enhancing assessment and feedback: an evidence-based approach

This workshop is for academics interested in improving their assessment and feedback practice. Assessment practices are a key driver of student learning, so it is important that they are effective, and yet it is clear from the literature, the NSS survey and more recently the Burgess Report that this is not the case in most HE contexts. This session will build on the work of ASKe, a Centre for Excellence in assessment, and is based on a theoretical model which we have developed. We will consider practical ways, demonstrated to improve student learning, of engaging students with assessment and feedback. Using practical examples, participants will be encouraged to explore how they might involve students right through the assessment process cycle in their own courses.

Workshops led by Berry O'Donovan and Chris Rust, Oxford Brookes University and ASKe project

Programme

- 10.00 Coffee and Registration**
- 10.30 Welcome and introduction**
- 10.50 Activity**
- 11.30 Tacit knowledge & the social-constructivist assessment process model**
- 11.50 Student engagement with criteria - 4 case study examples**
- 12.30 Lunch**
- 1.30 Improving feedback - preparing students**
- 1.45 Activity**
- 2.15 Improving feedback - making it fit for purpose**
- 2.35 Activity**
- 3.10 The rest of the cycle**
- 3.20 Summation & evaluation**
- 3.30 Tea and departure**



6th Annual Conference
Our Olympic Goals – Raising the Profiles of Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism
Education in the Wider World

17 -18 September 2007
Missenden Abbey, Buckinghamshire

Monday 17 September	Tuesday 18 September
<p>Afternoon</p> <p>12:00 -13:30 Arrival, registration and lunch Coffee area adjacent to Carrington Room</p> <p>13:35 -13:45 Welcome, introductions and housekeeping – Clive Robertson Carrington Room</p> <p>13:45 – 14:20 Lyn Bibbings & Peter Burns Carrington Room Will the Olympic colour be green? What tourism lecturers think, do and teach on climate change</p> <p>14:30 – 15:30 Parallel Sessions Richard Shipway Chiltern Room 1 Education, Culture, Olympic Sport and the London 2012 Games: a regional perspective from Dorset</p> <p>Helen Pussard & Eileen Kennedy Chiltern Room 2 I love the Olympics! Developing experiential learning in students on sport-based degree programmes</p> <p>15:30 – 16:00 Refreshments Coffee area adjacent to Carrington Room</p> <p>16:00 – 17:00 Parallel Sessions Rob Griffiths & Paul Rainer Chiltern Rooms 1 Enhancing the employability of sports graduates – the integration of community placements</p> <p>Charles Little Chiltern Room 2 Developing a collaborative cross-disciplinary approach to studying the 2012 Olympic Games: some observations from practice</p>	<p>Morning</p> <p>7:30 - 8:30 Breakfast Dining Room</p> <p>08:30 Registration Coffee area adjacent to Carrington Room</p> <p>09:00 - 09:05 Welcome, introductions and housekeeping – Clive Robertson Carrington Room</p> <p>09:05 – 10:00 Keynote Speaker: Kate Potter Carrington Room Sharing the Podium</p> <p>10:00 – 10:40 Stephen Studd Carrington Room Workforce Development to support the Olympic Games</p> <p>10:45 – 11:15 Refreshments Coffee area adjacent to Carrington Room</p> <p>11:15 – 12:00 Ian Brittain Carrington Room London Paralympics 2012 – The Forgotten Games?</p> <p>12:00 – 12:45 Plenary and networking opportunities Carrington Room</p> <p>Afternoon</p> <p>12:45 -13:45 buffet lunch Dining Rooms</p> <p>13:30 – 14:00 Poster Sessions 1st floor coffee gallery</p>
<p>Evening</p> <p>17:00-18:30 Free time and networking</p> <p>18:30-19.00 Keynote Speaker: Sarah Winkless Carrington Room An Olympian's Perspective</p> <p>19:00 Drinks reception Garden Room & Bar</p> <p>19:30 Carvery Dinner Dining rooms</p>	<p>14:00 – 14:45 Celia Brackenridge Carrington Room The 2012 International Convention on Science, Education and Medicine in Sport</p> <p>14:45 – 15:25 Jim Parry and Vassil Girginov Carrington Room Promoting Olympism: The role of Academia</p> <p>15:25 – 15:45 Clive Robertson Carrington Room Future action for the HLST subject grouping</p> <p>15.45 Refreshments & close Coffee area & Carrington Room</p>

Appendix 3 Institutional Partner Evaluation Summary

Institutional Partner Evaluation Summary

Top Issues:

Employer Engagement

Teaching and Learning (student centred, e-learning, efficiency, teaching skills, widening participation impacts, experiential learning, balancing academic and vocational skills)

Assessment (integrative, formative)

Student attendance and engagement

Plagiarism

Most useful resources:

Website

Case studies and resource guides

Newsletters (link and E-news)

Events

JoHLSTE

Reasons for not using site:

Lack of subject relevance

Lack of time

Areas where there could be improvement:

More events for subject interests / and on regional basis

Building communities

More resources

Pack for new staff

Appendix 4 Evaluation – Staff Survey Report

SUBJECT CENTRE FOR HOSPITALITY, LEISURE, SPORT AND TOURISM

HLST STAFF SURVEY 2008

INTRODUCTION

As a part of its continuing work to evaluate its activities and to respond to the needs and views of its community the HLST asked partner institutions to conduct a survey of staff colleagues to help in its planning for 2008/09. They were asked to obtain responses to the following questions:

What they feel are the top 3 issues in LTA in our subjects

What HLST services/resources (if any) they have used/found useful

If they have never looked at our website, then any reasons for this

Any areas where they feel we could improve our services/activities or topics that they would like covered

Seven partners responded and this report draws together their findings. The respondees are as follows:

Sandie Randall	Queen Margaret University
Steve Jones	Leeds Metropolitan University
Kevin Nield	Sheffield Hallam University
Pauline Gordon	Queen Margaret University
Sarah Nixon	Liverpool John Moores University
Crispin Farbrother	Bournemouth University
Elsbeth Dale	University of Wales Institute, Cardiff

METHOD

The partners were not directed to survey their colleagues in a specific way. It was suggested that they may wish to convene a small focus group or to email them with the questions. Seven of those contacted have returned their findings but it is not known by which process their colleagues' views were gathered. Also, the data has not been submitted in a common form and only in some cases is there an indication of the number of colleagues who were surveyed. Consequently it has been difficult to analyse the data and this has been compounded by the wide range of comments made. In some cases there are clear similarities between comments and they have been easy to group together, in others this has not been possible. Further, analysis of the findings in a quantifiable way has been impossible because although in some cases the institution has submitted its findings with a clear indication of the numbers of people involved, in others they have reported results with no information about the number surveyed or individual views.

However, only for the first question in the survey might these problems matter. This question sought to discover the top three current issues amongst the staff groups. The ability to quantify responses would clearly have helped but fortunately the results show that some issues are regarded clearly as more important than others. The accompanying table consolidates all the responses received and groups them under appropriate topic headings. All the raw data is available separately.

THE FINDINGS

The results of surveys such as these are open to interpretation in different ways. Lists of issues can be grouped under many or few generic headings. It is to be hoped that others will consider that the way the results have been grouped in the accompanying table will be regarded as reasonable and fair in the circumstances. The following comments may be helpful.

In about half of the institutional responses the comments made could be traced back to individuals and therefore a 'score' could have been established to enable comparisons to be made between the issues raised. However, as the other half of institutional responses did not enable comments to be traced back to their source no attempt has been made to quantify the popularity of various issues. On the other hand an indication of the institutional source of each individual comment is included at its end.

The responses to Question 1 did appear to fall into obvious groups under the headings: Employer Engagement Issues, Issues of Teaching and Learning, Assessment, Student Issues, Plagiarism and Internationalisation. Within the last group headed Miscellaneous it is possible to consider that some of the comments there could be included in other groups. However, the overall impression presented by the comments would be unlikely to change.

The most commented upon area is that of Teaching and Learning. This might be sub-divided but with little benefit. Therefore, the impression given by this survey is that rather than to try to identify the three top issues as requested in the question we should simply note that the four issues of Employer Engagement, Teaching and Learning, Assessment and Student Issues are regarded as the most important. Plagiarism and Internationalisation were also noteworthy.

In listing the responses to questions 2, 3 and 4 no attempt has been made to count the popularity of various comments but they have been grouped where they are similar. Question 2 sought to establish which of the HLST services/resources were most useful. The results speak for themselves. Question 3 was about the number of people who claim to have used the website. Assuming that respondents were answering honestly then the website can be regarded as a very popular source of help and support with only a few people claiming it was not relevant to their needs or that they were unaware of it or short of time to look at it. The comments made in response to Question 4 are a straightforward mixture of individual views with perhaps a suggestion of a strong desire for more networking events.

David Pierce
August 2008

**RESPONSES TO HLST SURVEY OF STAFF
SPRING 2008**

QUESTION 1

What do you feel are the top 3 issues in LTA in your subject?

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT ISSUES

The importance of employer engagement in the curriculum. LMU

Industry relevance. LMU

Employability agenda. B

Pressure on RWE due to costs, but the need to develop employability skills within students. B

Creative tension between the academic requirements and rigour of degree programmes and the employment needs of industry and their perceptions of graduates. B

Linking teaching, industry relevance and research activities. UWIC

Linking teaching to industry. UWIC

Employability. QMU

ISSUES OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

Use of blended ALT strategies. LMU

Move towards more student centred learning; integration with industry in the curriculum (ie not work placements but in the classroom)B

Ensuring an excellent student experience - not just more hours - with tight financial resources. B

Pressure on staff having less contact time with students and developing independent learners yet widening participation is not a natural partner for this approach. B

Providing a quality experience for students in large tutorial groups. QMU

Using technology effectively to provide a quality experience for students. QMU
Student Centred Learning. QMU

Pedagogic research by HE and FE practitioners. QMU

Maintaining a balance between student expectation and the need to ensure graduates are independent learners equivalent to graduates in traditional subjects. B

Over reliance upon virtual learning environment. B

Reliance on Internet. B

Inquiry based learning. QMU

The utilisation of the virtual learning environments. QMU

The use of VLE's in teaching and assessment. UWIC

Variety of methods and feedback. UWIC

Enhancing student experience via e-learning. UWIC

Making student learning as important as tutor research and publication. Recognising that generic everything in teaching delivery creates much stronger opportunity for mediocrity. B

Recognition that T&L are key roles in the faculties and staff engaged in these should be recognised as contributing to a field of knowledge like any other researcher. LJMU

Strategic learning and lack of engagement in non-assessment related activities - including weekly reading. LMU

Lack of innovation. LMU

Innovative approaches to teaching LJMU

Developing tutors' skill base and then placing trust in them rather than reliance on monitoring systems. B

Lack of practical experience. B

Lack of teacher trained lecturers. B

Recruiting qualified/appropriate lecturers. B

Lack of basic study skills upon entry. LMU

Entry level ability. B

Facilitating learning in students with limited academic skills. B

New courses which we need new strategies for could be problematic. LMU

Application of theory to practice. LMU

Feedback. UWIC

Learning support. UWIC

Academic rigour. LMU

Balance of vocational skills versus academic skills (and related link to employability). LJMU

Consistency of support. LJMU

Engaging our students in an appropriate HE study ethic dealing with volume of assessment and still giving quality feedback. B

RIT (Research Informed Teaching) in sport. LJMU

Interface with professional body and the role of undergraduate programmes in creating a graduate profession in the UK. This will require embedding the professional body requirements into the courses which in turn will present some challenges in terms of ALT and the balance between competency-based practice and 'academic rigour' for honours level study. LMU

Following on from above there is a real need to develop more authentic, situated learning experiences for undergraduate students, particularly if we want to graduate students to a vocational profession that have sufficient knowledge, skills, experience and a licence to practice. This presents a number of ALT challenges particularly regarding the logistics and management of placement / access to and engagement with young people either as curricular or extra curricular activity. LMU

ISSUES OF ASSESSMENT

Getting a balance between staged assessing to provide feedback and over assessing. LMU

Assessment procedures/quality and effectiveness of feedback. LJMU

Formative assessment. LJMU

Assessing WBL. LJMU

Development of innovative teaching and assessment. B

The integration of theory and practice in assessment. B

Assessment. QMU

Combining academic content and application in assessment. UWIC

Integrative assessment. QMU

Developing formative assessment. UWIC

Innovative assessments that can engage students with 'real life' situations more and breaking down traditional lecture/seminar scenario. UWIC

How to implement more formative assessment opportunities with students. UWIC

There is a real danger that we set up experiential modules with inadequate quality assurance processes. Firstly in order to harness the power of authentic situated learning our students need mentorship and feedback – clearly staff teams on traditional undergraduate programmes do not have the time or resources to go on (unfunded) 'student visits'. Secondly it raises some questions regarding the type and appropriateness of current assessment practices – clearly the diet of assessment need to enable students to demonstrate a range of outcomes, not just academic,

further there is a real danger that we assess learning outcomes only and if the learning outcomes are not appropriately designed and suitably structured we are in danger of developing procedural robots, not independent resourceful, critically reflective practitioners that have an ability to use their declarative knowledge to develop their own procedural methods. LMU

STUDENT ISSUES

Too many students opting out - for a variety of reasons, then non-engaging, not submitting - and the effect on the rest of the group. Too much 'remedial' work needed. LMU

Student attendance (or lack of). LMU. SHU. UWIC

Student engagement. LMU

Student engagement – the changing student, priorities, working etc. LMU

Changing students but methods of LTA not changed to reflect this. LMU

Currency with student generation. LMU

Teaching of large numbers of non-EU students SHU

PLAGIARISM

Dealing with plagiarism in a culturally sensitive way and the problem of students not reading books; cutting and pasting, lack of referencing; Wikipedia. SHU

Growth of plagiarism as an issue. B

Plagiarism B

Plagiarism QMU, UWIC

INTERNATIONALISATION

Internationalisation of the curriculum. QMU. B

Internationalisation QMU

MISCELLANEOUS

Continuing? role of practical activities and the negative view of hospitality in centres such as Strathclyde. Reinforced by the prejudice about hospitality research and the low rating of hospitality journals. SHU

Quality and diversity agenda QMU

Sustainability QMU

That sport development is interdisciplinary - creates all sorts of problems trying to justify learning outcomes against programme outcomes for sport studies or sport science or something that is similar but not the same. LJMU

Authorship LJMU

PDP. LJMU

Importance of PDP process and hours recognition for this. LJMU

Importance of sharing practice within teams and external to teams, this develops good practice but also ensures commitment toward continual improvement. LJMU

Efficiency of delivery. B

Student dissertations - considering new approaches. B

Exam/Coursework balance. B

Integration of discipline bases throughout subject specialism. QMU

Fostering a cohesive programme within a modular system (with choice). QMU

Effective embedding – particularly research methods and information systems – unconvincing evidence to date. QMU

Best practice case studies. QMU

Quality enhancement. QMU

Practical aspects on vocational courses in the light of increasing student numbers. UWIC

Under-funding. UWIC

Duplication of effort between institutions. UWIC

QUESTION 2

What HLST services/resources (if any) have you used/found useful?

CASE STUDIES

Case studies QMU

Case studies and PDP materials LMU

Case Studies LJMU

Personally, I have found the case-studies really interesting LJMU

Case studies really useful LJMU

Case studies LJMU

Case studies LJMU

case studies LJMU

Case studies UWIC

Case studies;

How to write sections- e.g. annotated bibliography and literature review with examples. LMU

CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS

Staff development sessions and seminars LMU

Conferences/ SHU

I have in the past appreciated workshops (in particular, I remember a very useful workshop on online databases).QMU

WEBSITE

Website. UWIC

Website. UWIC

Website. QMU

Website. SHU

Website good resource. LJMU

Look at website monthly, prompted by e-mail update. LJMU

Website. LJMU

Regularly check the HLST web-site for conferences and new presentations. LJMU

Website. QMU

RESOURCE GUIDES

Resource guides and case studies. SHU

Resource guides. QMU

Employability resources. LJMU

Sports Entrepreneurship CD Rom. SHU

Learning resource guides. QMU

Resources section - good for Link articles and Guide to good current practices. QMU

The resource guides are excellent and I've used them frequently. They are a key resource to the area. QMU

I find the resource section very helpful, particularly when I am struggling for ideas in terms of assessment and teaching materials. It is also useful to use as an evaluation or benchmark tool for my own work. QMU

All resource support is useful. QMU

Good practice. QMU

Resource guides. B

Resource Guides and some case studies. B

Resource Guides. B

Resources/downloads. B

Use and will shortly have written 2 of the resource guides. B

NEWSLETTER ETC

Newsletters. QMU

Info Sheets. LJMU

HLST - subject guides, journal papers. LJMU

Updates from HEA generally and the HLST, JOHLSTE. LJMU

Newsletter. QMU

E – Newsletter. B

Events subject guide/handbook. UWIC

LINK. QMU
 Journal. B
 Link. B
 JOHLSTE. B. UWIC

LINK. UWIC
 LINK. UWIC
 LINK. UWIC
 LINK. UWIC

OTHERS

External examiner register. SHU. B

I look regularly at the events, news and and funding sections. B

The material on Entrepreneurship and the reading lists. B

Funding of L & T projects. B

Role as general source of HLST information and intelligence. B

None recently but have found LINK, JOHLTSE and conferences useful in the past.
 UWIC

To be perfectly honest I have had spent little time exploring the Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism web site since writing the degree. I found some of the ALT guides very helpful in structuring the degree curriculum, module curriculum, and particularly taxonomy and learning outcome information. When I spent more time engaging in assessment learning and teaching and particularly in my formative years in HE I found some of the guides on assessment really helpful.

In terms of my subject area specifically a resource guide was very helpful at the time. I have only used the sustainable development case studies - useful as can quickly source issues in other areas of the service sector. LMU

Yes – resource material for events management UWIC

Yes- to keep up to date with events/research being conducted. UWIC

Yes – events subject handbook. UWIC

Yes – mostly I Use it for references and teaching guidance. UWIC

Various subject specific pedagogic issues and current research. UWIC

Yes – to check journals
 -to make sure we (UWIC) are not re-inventing the wheel
 -to find externals

All 10 members of staff have accessed the site. QMU

Regular user. B
 Regular user. B
 User. B
 User. B
 User. B
 I do use it. B

I do use it. B
I do use it. B

QUESTION 3

If you have never looked at the subject network website, then any reasons for this?

Haven't felt the need to. LMU

Most of my teaching is not in HLST it is public health, so I have [perhaps incorrectly] a perception that it would be less helpful to me and that there are other sources of information I would use instead. An example would be my own engagement in research and consultancy and engagement in national and international working groups/conferences. For the ALT I tend to use local sources e.g SALT centre/colleagues who are trying new approaches to ALT. LMU

I have not looked at other areas as I feel relevance to Events is limited and currency can be better sourced with industry website, personal contacts for case studies and other association resources. LMU

Time - or lack of discipline to make time. LMU

Unaware/time. SHU

I have not used it as it does not meet my subject specialist needs. If it was to cover excellence and performance measurement it may be of some use. B

No, Time. B

QUESTION 4

Any areas where you feel the network could improve its services/activities or topics that you would like covered?

Networking events, bringing colleagues together in the same disciplines to share good practice. UWIC

I think there could be more of an attempt to build an effective community by using some of the modern technologies and tools to foster contribution and interaction among community members with our shared interests. QMU

Regional workshops. QMU

Concur with above and also HLST may wish to provide further one tutorials and professional development for teaching staff leading to award certificate in subject area (similar to US model of Certified Hospitality Educator). QMU

Development of networking activities within regions; Topics - Sharing of good practice around live events assessment. QMU

Events management case studies. UWIC

Perhaps some 'appearances' at individual institutions by LTSN personnel, possible workshops. UWIC

More online resources, perhaps workshops/webinars. QMU

Pleased with HLST. UWIC

Most would like to see internationalisation and sustainability. QMU

Since internationalism is becoming such a huge topic of concern for ALL British universities, I would like to see this area covered and for other partners to share their problems, their experiences and best practice. QMU

Like the new look and think it provides a great range of resources and contacts. LMU

Sometimes it is difficult locating what you want from the web site.
I think they do a very useful and good job. LMU

-It would be unfair to comment, given that I don't engage HLST. LMU

I don't feel that I am in a position to comment on this given that I haven't engaged with the site very much in the last year or two. LMU

Industry links. SHU

Placements. SHU

The journal might get higher exposure. SHU

If it was to cover excellence and performance measurement it may be of some use. B

Basic teaching skills packs for new staff with no teaching experience, like the computer driving licence, should be compulsory for all new Lecturing staff without a formal teaching qualification, something meaningful. B

My feeling is the Academy does a good job with many different interests represented. Research issues are becoming more important for many institutions so the balance between teaching and research issues is useful. I suspect what limits the development of the academy might be the lack of time that many academics have to engage in debates etc, rather than a lack of any services or activities. B

Retail is not included. B

Appendix 5 Evaluation – Impact Evaluation Report
SUBJECT CENTRE FOR HOSPITALITY, LEISURE, SPORT AND TOURISM

FINDING IMPACT

An evaluation of a dissertation seminar

INTRODUCTION

The HLST network has always strived to expose and measure the impact of its activities amongst its community. Its evaluation activity has of course always featured in its annual report and this has included close studies of the effectiveness of its small scale pedagogic and research projects. A comparatively small but traditional part of HLST work has been an annual programme of conferences and seminars. These have also been reported upon within the annual report and feedback from participants has been routinely captured at the end of each event. However, until now little has been done to follow up colleagues' attendance at such events to assess the impact in terms of their own learning and potential changes in practice. This report is about the comments of 12 people who attended a seminar about student dissertations in April 2007 and who were contacted a year later about their reflections and actions since.

The seminar Managing Student Dissertations was held at Leeds Metropolitan University on 19th April 2007. Recognising the ongoing debate about the problem of managing dissertations, the resource problems and even the appropriateness of them to students, the 'event aimed to provide the opportunity for staff involved in the organisation of student dissertations to discuss current approaches and future possibilities'. It consisted of three formal presentations. The first was about the effectiveness of dissertation supervision and how to gain consistency of practice. The second was about an approach to group supervision at Leeds Metropolitan University. The third sought to provoke discussion about alternatives to dissertations.

Twenty people, including presenters, were involved in the seminar and 12 of these were contacted by telephone during April and May this year. The conversations sought to explore to what extent the seminar was remembered and whether respondents had found their attendance to have been worthwhile. Importantly, they were asked to say what they had learned from the seminar and whether they had gone away from it with any ideas for changes in their own practice. Finally they were asked to describe what they had done since the seminar to either disseminate their learning more widely or to implement change in practice as a result.

FINDINGS

The overall impression made by the seminar can be judged by the following typical comments: 'It was extremely useful', 'An excellent event', 'Definitely worthwhile' but the first striking thing to note is that all those contacted had no difficulty in recalling the event twelve months previously and in most cases the details of speakers, content and discussions. The most common reason for attending the seminar, unsurprisingly in view of its purpose, was to see how their dissertation management could be improved and how practice compared with others. There was also a desire expressed to 'catch up with others from other universities' or even from other departments within Leeds Met. A few had

broader aims e.g. 'addressing basic questions such as why we have dissertations.' Another specifically remarked that her motive for attending was not about resource issues but about the difficulties that students have with dissertations. She and others wanted to know 'Is there a better way?'

Given the overriding motive for their attendance therefore most were happy to be given an opportunity to benchmark their practice against others. One had 'wanted to learn from other people and found that what they are doing' at her university was 'pretty good'. Another 'was delighted to find evidence that he was not alone in thinking that the traditional dissertation model was not the most suitable for the employability of Tourism graduates'. Others mentioned more specific ideas they had taken away with them. One 'picked up especially on the taught workshop. Although they have a dissertation handbook it can be interpreted in different ways, so instead of repeating the same things to a lot of students next year we're going to deliver a workshop'. A number of respondents echoed this remark in their references to the group supervision model operating at LMU.

There appeared to be two or three different main areas of concern and discussion within and arising from the seminar. There were those who were inclined to move away from the traditional dissertation model, not merely for reasons of resource or difficulties of managing it but because of 'the changing nature of students and the jobs they go to'. This group questioned whether 'research skills and literature reviews are appropriate for them'. One thought that if he was in business and needed some research to be done that he would engage someone to do it rather than asking his tourism professional. The dissertation should be retained for Masters Level study some thought, and the opportunity taken to equip students with more relevant employability skills by means of live projects and work experience. Others strongly disagreed, arguing that dissertations should be retained 'to maintain academic rigour' and that they are an excellent way of developing relevant employability skills. However, amongst this group there was clear concern about the burden and problem of managing them. 'But how do we supervise them all? Should we give them a prescribed list of topics from which to select? Should there be group supervision?' asked one. Consequently even amongst this group there was great interest in the alternatives outlined at the seminar and some went away 'uncertain if dissertation is the right thing'. Another wanted 'to consider some alternatives to dissertation' but was 'bothered about how to maintain academic rigour'.

The 'robust discussion' recalled by one at the seminar did not appear to result in a unanimous conclusion. There remains a divide between two groups. On the one hand there are those that are inclined to favour a replacement for the dissertation model by a more project or work based learning approach. In that way the skills expected by employers are more likely to be developed and it is more appropriate for the students joining today's programmes. On the other there are those that want to retain the academic rigour that a dissertation contributes to a degree and which in any case, they argue, produces the skills that they believe employers expect. On the other hand they were all united in their concerns about the resource and control issues necessary to maintain the tradition of the dissertation model. 'Everybody seems to be in the same position'.

Most of those interviewed reported that they had by some means or other disseminated and discussed the content of the seminar to others at meetings or more formal staff development days. When asked whether their attendance and subsequent dissemination had resulted in any real and visible change there were mixed responses. One summed it up by saying, 'There is systemic inertia, change happens slowly' and he had only limited influence within his school. Another had produced 'a substantial dissertation handbook' and another said that after discussion with colleagues the general view had been not to introduce any change to practice. Others were constrained by ongoing university practice. 'Our courses have just

been re-written..... and there's a lot of work entailed in getting things through re-validation' said one. Another reported that following the seminar and discussions with colleagues he had introduced some small changes whilst others would need to wait for revalidation. These changes both addressed specific problems that students had been encountering with the dissertation. They were not prepared well for meetings and so this respondent had introduced a form that they must complete and bring with them to the meeting. Also, students were not referencing their work correctly even though there had been a dissertation handbook in existence, and so the handbook now includes examples. Another interviewee said that he had particularly noted the comments in one presentation about a taught workshop. 'Although they have a dissertation handbook it can be interpreted in different ways, so instead of repeating the same things to a lot of students next year we're going to deliver a workshop', he said. Clearly there does appear to have been some small but tangible impact attributed to the seminar. In addition, in one Department where changes to the traditional model had recently been introduced 'the seminar has contributed/endorsed these changes'.

Finally, there is no doubt that all interviewees were more than content with the overall management and usefulness of the seminar. Typical comments were: 'One of the best organised events I've ever been to'; 'The seminar was very well organised with time for everything'; 'Organisation was very good. It was very helpful. To debate with others from other universities rather than going round in circles with immediate colleagues'. There was also strong support for another seminar on the same topic to which they would encourage colleagues to attend.

CONCLUSION

This has been a limited but very useful exercise. It has demonstrated without doubt that the dissertation seminar has had an impact. This impact can be shown to have occurred at a number of levels.

- 1) There has been no attempt to compare the recollections of this group of seminar attendees with another cohort a year after their attendance at a seminar. Suffice to say that this group's memories of the event, its content and the discussions within it was very impressive and surprising.
- 2) The value that respondents placed upon the opportunity to meet and discuss with colleagues and to compare and contrast their practices and experiences with them has often been mentioned as good reason for such opportunities to be offered. All these attendees mentioned that benefit and it is one kind of impact.
- 3) It was an effective learning event. Participants learned about practice in other universities and even from colleagues in their own university about which they knew little or nothing before the seminar.
- 4) They reported how they had disseminated this knowledge to their own colleagues and in so doing multiplied the impact of the event.
- 5) If impact is more important when it can be shown to create changes in the student experience then this small evaluation demonstrates that this was achieved in some areas. Such work to introduce change is of course continuing in other areas.

By any measure explored with respondents the seminar can undoubtedly be judged effective and successful and in achieving more than it perhaps expected to.

David Pierce

June 2008