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**Special points of interest:**

- The LTSN Physical Sciences Subject Centre is a UK-wide resource for teachers of chemistry, physics and astronomy at the higher education level.
  - The new centre will draw upon the combined expertise of the FDTL project IMPROVE, the CTI Centres for Chemistry and Physics and the DfEE funded Physics Discipline Network.
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# LTSN Physical Sciences News

*...supporting learning and teaching in chemistry, physics and astronomy*



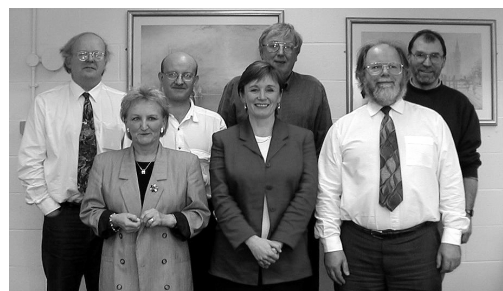
## It's new!

It's a new Centre, a new logo, a new publication and a new opportunity. The Learning and Teaching Support Network Physical Sciences Subject Centre (LTSN Physical Sciences) is the newly established centre to support UKHE teachers of physical sciences. The Centre covers chemistry, physics and astronomy and supports all aspects of teaching, learning and assessment.

This newsletter will be a voice by which we communicate news of the Centre and news about education in the physical sciences. We expect to issue newsletters three times a year both in paper format and simultaneously on our web site.

There will be a real opportunity to engage with us in the promotion of innovation in teaching, learning and assessment in the physical sciences; through our publications, events, discussion lists, web site and focus groups. These will all develop as the Centre extends its range of services.

You can find out more about the LTSN, the Centre and its services within this newsletter. We also give you details of how to contact us and how to join our discussion lists.



**The Team.** From left to right: Ashley Clarke, Jean Quantrill, Lee Sproats, Tina Overton, Steve Walker, Dick Bacon, Roger Gladwin

## A one-stop shop

LTSN Physical Sciences is a part of the LTSN. This new network has 24 centres covering most of the disciplines taught in UKHE. The LTSN was launched at a Summit Meeting held at Centre Point in London on the 8<sup>th</sup> February 2000. The funding bodies have committed to support the network for five years in the first instance and the intention is to build the programme into a long-term support structure for learning and teaching in HE.

The new centres will become the main points of contact within subject communities for information and advice on good practices and innovations in learning, teaching and assessment, and will provide support for the many networks which already exist. The centres will aim to have high visibility within their subjects and ensure they provide both a pro-active and a responsive service to the needs of their communities.



The Centre Director  
Dr Tina Overton

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*“These initiatives have made significant contributions to the advancement of teaching and learning..., particularly through their collaborative efforts.”*

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Centre Administrator  
Mrs Jean Quantrill

## The Centre

The Centre is hosted by the University of Hull where there is a critical mass of staff in the Director, a Development Officer and Administrator.

A partner in the centre is the University of Liverpool where the Co-ordinator is based.

The University of Hull has hosted the highly successful FDTL Project Improve for over 3 years and Liverpool hosted the CTI Centre for Chemistry and the TLTP Chemistry Courseware Consortium. These initiatives have made significant contributions to the advancement of teaching and learning of chemistry, particularly through their collaborative efforts.

The new centre will also draw upon the combined expertise of the CTI Centre for Physics (Surrey) and the DfEE funded Physics Discipline Network (Leeds). The Centre will buy in staff from these institutions in the form of Centre Consultants thereby ensuring a spread of expertise across the disciplines whilst concentrating resources within a central core.

## The aims of the Centre

- To identify encourage and support pedagogical innovation and best practice in teaching and learning in the physical sciences.
- To maintain, support and extend existing networks of teachers in the disciplines of chemistry, physics and astronomy and combine them to form a single network of teachers spanning the disciplines within physical sciences.
- To promote awareness of current pedagogic developments through newsletters, use of e-mail, the World Wide Web, workshops, seminars and support of publication in the relevant journals.
- To encourage discipline-based research and the development of learning and teaching in the physical sciences.
- To maintain, support and extend existing contacts with the professional bodies concerned (IoP RAS, ILT and RSC).
- To collaborate with other LTSN Centres in cognate areas such as materials, engineering, biological sciences and environmental science.
- To set up a searchable database of information on good practice in all aspects of teaching, learning and assessment in the physical sciences.
- To promote the integration of appropriate C&IT techniques to enhance teaching, learning and assessment.
- To organise wide-ranging professional development activities for teaching and learning in the physical sciences.

## Services

### Knowledge brokerage

#### Website

The existing web sites at Hull, Liverpool, Surrey, and Leeds will be combined to produce a single resource for the combined communities with links to professional bodies, other LTSN Centres, other projects etc. The web site will also be used to publish electronic versions of newsletters and other publications and a web-based helpline will be established.

#### Publications

The Centre will publish a Newsletter with 3 issues per year to publicise Centre activities. In addition a house journal with reviews of materials and software covering all aspects of teaching, learning and assessment will be established and published twice yearly.

The Centre will also publish *Briefing papers*, occasional, short papers covering issues of current interest and will commission and publish *Monographs*, occasional in depth reports or critiques on issues in teaching and learning.

#### Resource databases

The existing web-based CTI Chemistry and Physics software databases will be combined and extended to create a searchable resource guide for all physical sciences. In addition a searchable database of innovation and good practise in teaching, learning and assessment will be established and mounted on the web site.

### Events

#### Launch event

The Centre is organising a high profile one day meeting targeting relevant Heads of Departments and Schools in order to publicise the aims of the Centre and build collaboration. The launch will take place on 30th June at the Royal Society. All relevant departments are invited to send a representative.

#### Workshops/Roadshows/Visits

The Centre will organise a wide ranging programme of opportunities for continuing professional development in learning and teaching and provide the mechanism for dissemination of good practice and innovation. Events will include workshops, open days, visits, seminars etc.

#### Annual meetings

When appropriate the Centre will contribute to national meetings in chemistry, physics and astronomy education in order to disseminate the outcomes of the Centre's activity. The Centre may also collaborate with the professional bodies and other groups in organisation of such meetings.

### Networking

#### Baseline survey

A survey will be undertaken to establish the current situation with respect to teaching, learning and assessment and to determine the support required within the chemistry, physics and astronomy communities.

#### Database

The existing mailing databases of contacts held by each of the participants in the Centre will be combined and extended to include a representative from each relevant department in UKHE. Electronic, email discussion lists will also be established.

#### Sub-groups

The Centre will support the development of special interest sub-groups to identify, support, develop and monitor work in specific areas of the curriculum or in specific approaches to learning and teaching. Such sub-groups will be supported in the dissemination and publication of their work.

#### Advice Centre

The Centre will become your one-stop-shop for support in learning and teaching in the physical sciences. Contact us at [itsnpsc@hull.ac.uk](mailto:itsnpsc@hull.ac.uk) and we will ensure that you are able to access support from the most appropriate sources.



The Centre Co-ordinator  
Dr Roger Gladwin

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*“To identify encourage and support pedagogical innovation and best practice in teaching and learning in the physical sciences.”*

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Development Officer  
Dr Lee Sproats

## LTSN Physical Sciences

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[Web from April 2000...  
www.physsci.ltsn.ac.uk](http://www.physsci.ltsn.ac.uk)

### Events Calendar:

- IoP Congress, 27th-30th March 2000 at the Brighton Centre.
- Workshop *Helping Science Post-graduates to Develop Teaching Skills*, 5th May 2000 at Radcliffe House, University of Warwick.
- Centre Launch Event, 30th June 2000 at the Royal Society.
- Variety in Chemistry Teaching, 4th-5th September 2000 at Lancaster University .
- Physics Discipline Network Workshop VI, 14th-15th September 2000 at the University of Leeds.

Contact the Centre for details.

The Centre makes extensive use of mailbase discussion lists, especially for highlighting events.

The lists we use for astronomy, chemistry and physics are...

astro-education@mailbase  
chem-education@mailbase.ac.uk  
physics-education@mailbase.ac.uk

Plus a global list for general physical sciences...

physSci-education@mailbase.ac.uk

To join a list, send an email message from your account to...

mailbase@mailbase.ac.uk

with the text...

join listname your\_first\_name your\_second\_name  
stop

For example...

join physSci-education Jean Quantrill  
stop

## Who are we?

The Director of the Centre is Dr Tina Overton. Tina is Director of Teaching and Learning for the Faculty of Science and the Environment, a member of the University of Hull's Educational Development Team and Director of FDTL Project Improve.

The Centre Co-ordinator is Dr Roger Gladwin (Liverpool). Roger has been the co-ordinator of the CTI Centre for Chemistry since 1989 and manager of the Chemistry Courseware Consortium since 1992.

Development Officer, Dr Lee Sproats (formerly at the Mullard Space Science Laboratory then the CTI Centre for Physics), covers C&IT aspects for physics and astronomy and is based at the University of Surrey. A Development Officer to work at Hull will also be recruited.

Dr Ashley Clarke, co-ordinator of the DfEE Physics Discipline Network (Leeds), Dr Dick Bacon, the Director of CTI Physics and the STOMP project (Surrey), and Dr Steve Walker, the Director of CTI Chemistry and the Chemistry Courseware Consortium (Liverpool), will be Consultants to the Centre.

Mrs Jean Quantrill, formerly Administrator for the FDTL Project IMPROVE, is the Centre Administrator.