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# TEACHING THAT MATTERS



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million+ commissioned the University of Wolverhampton to undertake the research which forms the basis of this report. Both million+ and the research team are grateful to all the universities that participated in the research and for supplying valuable information for this study. The conclusions reached are those of million+.

## Foreword

Modern universities are dynamic, innovative and diverse. As hubs for creativity, learning, debate and the development of new ideas, they drive economic, social and cultural developments at the individual, local, regional and national level. Teaching, research, consultancy and knowledge transfer activities propel innovation and entrepreneurship and ensure that modern universities make an outstanding contribution to economic regeneration, business development and the delivery of public services.

Teaching and learning are central to the mission of modern universities which provide opportunities for people at different stages of their lives and their careers. The students at these universities are more likely to come from a wide range of backgrounds and bring a multitude of experiences and expectations to their higher education courses that benefit the universities at which they study.

Modern universities have a transformational impact upon the aspirations and life chances of their students. *Teaching that Matters* investigates how these universities support high quality teaching and learning and thousands of students, many of whom in previous generations would not have had the opportunity to benefit from the opportunities that higher education provides. These opportunities have been founded on teaching, learning and qualifications of relevance but also on innovation and the development of best practice to ensure that students really are at the heart the system. To achieve these impacts modern universities connect with the experience of students, make them central to the education process and maximise the educational resources they have available.

## Introduction

In the last decade successive UK governments as well as the governments of the devolved administrations have made commitments to improve and reward teaching excellence and ensure that students benefit from the high quality student experience that they deserve.

After the decline in state funding for higher education in the 1980s and 1990s, these governments have frequently sought to balance a commitment to improve and maintain the unit of resource per student in real terms with the equally important commitment of funding additional student numbers to meet the aspirations of students and employers as well as rising levels of attainment.<sup>1</sup> For their part, universities and the funding councils have often been required to use teaching funding to support strategic developments and in England, there has been an increasing expectation and requirement that graduates will contribute to the costs of their higher education.

In spite of a significant overall increase in the funding of higher education, public investment in research increased by more than investment in teaching during this period. A commitment made in 2008, by the then Labour Government, to make higher education a high priority with an average increase of investment of 2.5 per cent each year compared to an increase in overall planned public spending of 2.1 per cent to 2010-11<sup>2</sup> was subsequently undermined by the global economic crisis. In 2010, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) announced a reduction of funding of £449 million in 2010-11 alone<sup>3</sup>. The expansion in the number of additional funded student places was also curtailed by successive Ministers.

In its response to the Browne Review of higher education funding in England,<sup>4</sup> the Coalition Government indicated that it intended to reduce direct public investment in university teaching in favour of allowing the higher and lower tuition fee caps to rise, with funding following the student via the student loan scheme. At the same time investment in research and science was ring-fenced. In comparison to teaching, the principle of direct investment by the state in research and science has been retained (although it will decline in real terms).

The Government's intentions to reform higher education in England were further outlined in a White Paper published in June 2011<sup>5</sup>. This also introduced student number controls which have the potential to reduce the unit of resource for teaching that will be available in the future via the student loan system. The transition to the new funding system in England commences in 2012. The extent to which it will deliver the ambitions of Ministers remains the subject of debate.

However, the HE White Paper did signal a renewed and very welcome interest in placing students and high quality teaching at the heart of the university system. *Teaching that Matters* seeks to provide answers to key questions about how high quality teaching and learning is delivered and assessed in modern universities, how students are involved in teaching and learning and how innovation and best

practice are fostered and promoted in a holistic way across universities. It also outlines how modern universities work with employers and others to ensure that their graduates can enter or remain in employment with the knowledge and life-long skills that will enable them to contribute to society and the wider communities in which they live.

### The impact of modern university graduates

Through an innovative array of teaching and learning activities, modern universities educate graduates who make significant contributions to the intellectual, cultural and civic life of their countries and who thrive in a rapidly changing global environment.



#### Peter Bebb

Peter Bebb graduated from the University of Wolverhampton with a BA (Hons) in 3D design in 1996 and then gained an MA in Computing in Design from Staffordshire University in 1998. He was part of the team that won an Oscar and a BAFTA for the visual effects in the film *Inception* in 2011. He has said that "my course had great links with the industry which helped to put everything into perspective and it was Wolverhampton that introduced me to Computer Generated Imagery (CGI) machines... By the end of the degree I knew I wanted a career in CGI."



#### Rt Hon Sadiq Khan MP

The Rt Hon Sadiq Khan MP is currently Shadow Lord Chancellor and Justice Secretary and was Minister of State for Transport in the last Labour government. He was the first Asian or Muslim to ever attend Cabinet and first ever Muslim politician to be made a privy counsellor. Before entering Parliament, he was one of the country's leading human rights solicitors and Chair of Liberty for three years. He graduated from the University of North London, now London Metropolitan University, with a Bachelor of Laws degree and was also a visiting lecturer at the university. He has praised modern universities which "change the lives of millions of people like me through the opportunities, the education and the research which they provide".

<sup>1</sup> See for example The Rt Hon Charles Clarke MP Annual grant letter to HEFCE (13 Dec 2004).

<sup>2</sup> The Rt Hon John Denham MP Annual grant letter to HEFCE (18 Jan 2008).

<sup>3</sup> HEFCE circular letter 02/2010 (1 February 2010).

<sup>4</sup> Browne Report (2010) Securing a sustainable future for higher education.

<sup>5</sup> BIS (2011) Higher Education White Paper: Students at the Heart of the System.

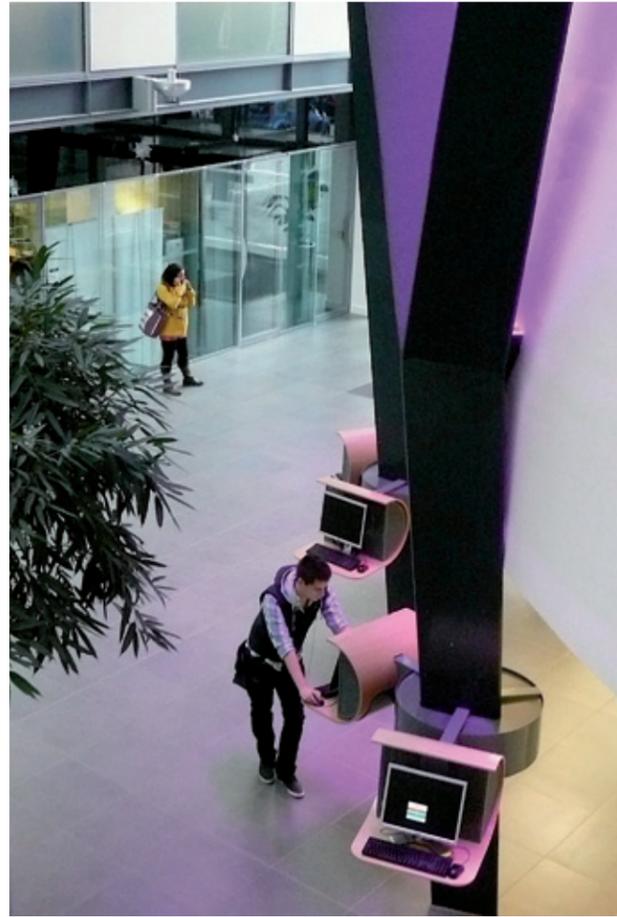
## Teaching in Modern Universities

### Putting teaching at the centre of universities

With diverse missions and strengths, UK universities have developed extensive expertise in the field of teaching and learning and enjoy a global reputation for the quality of teaching. They educate more than 2.5 million students annually including 400,000 students from outside the UK.<sup>6</sup>

The subjects taught at UK universities cover the full range of pure and applied disciplines with many institutions providing new areas of study to meet economic, environmental and social challenges. The courses available to students are wide ranging in terms of the subjects that can be studied, either as single honours degrees or in combination with other subjects as joint or specialist honours degrees. Courses in subjects as diverse as archaeology and zoology, philosophy and physics, computer science and the performing arts of dance and music are offered to undergraduate and postgraduate students through both full and part-time modes of study.

As well as the more academically focused provision which offers in-depth study of a single subject, many universities work in partnership with professional bodies to offer courses linked to the full range of professions for example, medicine, law, accountancy, teaching, nursing and the allied health professions. Many professional courses are postgraduate level programmes designed to meet statutory and regulatory standards that confer 'a licence to practice' in a number of key professions.



Postgraduate provision is a vital part of the investment in the advanced knowledge and skills required by employees and employers to sustain economic competitiveness in a global economy.

Between 1994 and 2010 the total number of undergraduate students in the UK increased by 55 per cent from 1.2 million to 1.9 million.<sup>7</sup> HESA data indicates that first degree undergraduate students increased in universities overall by 12 per cent between 2005-6 and 2009-10. In modern universities this rise was higher at 18 per cent, highlighting the success of these universities in growing their student population and the role they have played in expanding academic provision while maintaining the quality of teaching and learning.

<sup>6</sup> Universities UK (2011) Patterns and trends in UK higher education.  
<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

The overall trend data also indicates that modern universities play a key role in linking academic learning with the development of employability skills in the workplace by providing learning opportunities through part time and sandwich modes of study.<sup>8</sup> Modern universities have a much higher proportion of part-time students (34 per cent) than 1994 and, especially, Russell Group universities where only 19 per cent of students study part time.

As Figure 1 indicates, in 2009-10 as many as 40 per cent of all postgraduates and almost half of all undergraduates were studying in modern universities. Part time students are more likely to be working while studying or have caring responsibilities that prevent them from studying full-time. Modern universities have therefore played a unique role in expanding the number of students in higher education and in increasing the opportunities available to people from a wide range of backgrounds.

The number of people undertaking postgraduate education in the UK has grown even faster than the undergraduate population – by 36 per cent over the last 12 years. Now, almost a quarter

of students in UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are studying at postgraduate level and half of international students studying in the UK are taking a postgraduate qualification.<sup>9</sup> Modern universities have also led the way in this expansion. Using their course design skills and support for innovative teaching, they have created numerous programmes that provide the all-important first taste of postgraduate study for many students. In total, modern universities awarded 10,695 postgraduate certificates in 2009-10, proportionately more than any other group of universities, providing a vital initial step for many students as they pursue masters and doctorates. Postgraduate provision has been of enormous value to the UK and will continue to be crucial in driving innovation and growth.<sup>10</sup>

Figure 1: Breakdown of undergraduate and postgraduate students in 2009-10



Source: Higher Education Information Database for Institutions (HEIDI): All students 2009-10 (full person equivalents)

<sup>8</sup> HESA (2011) Data held on the Higher Education Information Database for Institutions (HEIDI).  
<sup>9</sup> Smith, A. et al (2010) One step beyond: making the most of postgraduate education.  
<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

### Putting students at the centre of teaching

The new environment for higher education that places 'students at the heart of the system'<sup>11</sup> not only firmly puts teaching at the centre of future developments in universities but places students at the centre of its design, implementation and quality assurance. This means that students have to be more than consumers or purchasers of university services. They must instead be partners actively engaged in the development of their university's approach to learning. This requires a shift in the traditional role of lecturers and tutors and modern universities have been at the cutting edge of imaginative teaching approaches and new learning and assessment methods. An example of this approach to teaching is the central role students adopt as e-champions in teaching and learning on courses at the University of Wolverhampton.

### Students as e-champions, University of Wolverhampton

A teaching innovation introduced in courses in computer studies and applied sciences involves second year students taking on the role of e-champions to help other students learn information technology and management of information skills. Lecturers from different disciplines organise teaching and learning for large numbers of students from diverse educational, social and ethnic backgrounds using the skills of students as e-champions.

#### Impact

The innovation shows significant increases in the grades achieved by students in both information technology and applied science modules. The e-champions in two modules, *Managing Information Technology* and *Health and Disease*, attained the top grades (grade A) and overall pass rates in computer studies rose by 10%.

Modern universities have long advocated the notion of student-centred teaching in part because as an approach it is well supported by research into effective practices in the higher education sector.<sup>12</sup>

Student-centred teaching reflects the aspirations of universities to have a transformative impact upon students by providing a learning experience that is dynamic, interactive and inspirational. It shifts the focus and responsibility from the lecturer to the learner. At its simplest, this is about creating activities and giving opportunities for students to discuss, explain and debate during class. At its most complex it involves them in co-designing their learning with lecturers. Of course, there is still a role for lectures given by academics who convey a passion for their subject and instil a love of learning and enthusiasm for creating new knowledge and understanding. An undergraduate history student at the University of Derby explained what they valued about one of their lecturers:

**“He can keep a captive audience by involving them and by giving visual demonstrations.”**

The main source of inspiration and motivation lies in the thoughts and ideas of fellow students and others outside the university. For many years universities have used a wide range of group-based teaching methods so lecturers can engage with students more interactively both to test out ideas and to monitor learning. Group-based methods traditionally made use of seminars and tutorials but now increasingly entail real life projects in which students need to collaborate amongst themselves and with employers and local communities to develop and apply new ideas to challenging problems.

<sup>11</sup> BIS (2011) Higher Education White Paper: Students at the Heart of the System.

<sup>12</sup> Biggs, J. and C. Tang. (2007) *Teaching for quality learning at university*; & Ramsden P. (2003) *Learning to teach in higher education*.

## Definitions

**Action learning sets** are a method of organising group learning in which students work in groups of 4-7 members to discuss real issues and problems and identify actions to solve the challenges they have discussed in their learning set.

**Problem-based learning** is a holistic approach to structuring courses where student activities are centred on a series of problems or scenarios. Students acquire subject knowledge and skills through a staged sequence of problems, often presented within a professional context e.g. project design briefs in landscape architecture.

**Role-play and role-play scenarios** draw on drama techniques in learning and development and enable students to develop language, communication, team working and problem solving skills by enacting a 'role' in a specific situation e.g. an interview.

**Simulations and stimulated work environments**, which replicate realistic work environments, support students in developing work-related knowledge and skills through practise in learning environments which closely resemble the functions and demands of real work situations.

These group-based methods often draw on learning from the business and community sectors to include approaches such as action learning sets, problem-based learning, role-playing scenarios, simulated work environments and joint projects with external groups to the university. The external groups include providers of business and service industries, such as the financial services sector and public services, including health and care services.

Well-embedded examples of the use of action learning sets can be found in the financial capability module at London Metropolitan University (see Annex 1, page 34) and in mental health nursing

programmes at the University of Greenwich (see overleaf). This method of organising group learning consists of tutors placing students in 'action learning sets' consisting of between four to seven members and facilitating learning to find solutions to real problems and challenges in work-related practice.<sup>13</sup>

These types of innovative methods require a shift in the role of lecturers and tutors so that they become facilitators of learning. They have to develop skills and expertise in using a range of imaginative and creative teaching, learning and assessment methods, as well as being experts in their own subjects.

The Head of Curriculum Development at Leeds Metropolitan University stated:

**“Students now don't just sit in rows all the time looking at PowerPoint slides but they're actually engaging, learning from experience and internalising what they see and it really brings it to life for them.”**

<sup>13</sup> Teaching expertise (2011) Action learning sets.

**Students at the heart of quality processes**

Adopting a student-centred approach is a challenge for individual tutors, but giving students a voice at the centre of a university's quality assurance processes is a much bigger challenge. It requires not only institution-wide change but a dramatic shift in organisational cultures. Currently the quality of teaching in all universities is monitored and assured by both external and internal quality assurance processes, including regular audits, inspections and institutional reviews by the Quality Assurance Agency for higher education (QAA) and a range of professional bodies. An important

recent development has been the introduction of the National Student Survey (NSS). Launched in 2005, this annual survey gives all students the opportunity to comment on the quality of their course and their satisfaction with their university's overall offer. The most recent survey took place in 2011 and found that 84 per cent of students at all universities in the UK were satisfied with the quality of teaching on their course.<sup>14</sup> Some of the most highly-valued courses in the survey are run in modern universities which also have large numbers of mature and part-time students.

The quality of teaching and learning is key to high levels of student satisfaction in both academic and technical subjects. For example, in the 2011 NSS, Mathematics and Statistics courses were rated highly at the University of Central Lancashire, London Metropolitan University and the University of Greenwich.

An undergraduate mathematics student commented:

**“I have always been intimidated by mathematics, so the thought of advancing the highest level of technical mathematics was very concerning. The lecturer was new to us and we instantly warmed to him. He installed the basics in us, and filled the blanks we each missed before exposing us to high level calculus, statistics and matrix problems and much more. I had never felt so confident when applying mathematics as a result of his methods and I was very proud to gain an overall B. More than this though is the mathematical confidence he has installed in me and the fact that my overall studies have improved for the skills I gained.”**

<sup>14</sup> NSS (2011) 2011 National Student Survey results for the UK.

**“The teaching has been superb. Our teachers genuinely care about our learning experience, helping us to become competent nurses. The subject matter has been appropriate and inspiring. We have been assessed in a number of modalities, giving everyone the chance to ‘shine’ in something. It has been a truly marvellous journey.”**

**Undergraduate nursing student**  
University of Wolverhampton

**Action Learning Sets,  
University of Greenwich**

The Department of Family Care and Mental Health has introduced the use of Action Learning Sets in mental health nursing programmes. As a result students have become more confident in challenging existing practice and in solving problems.

A postgraduate mental health nursing student explains the impact of this group-based method of learning on the development of her professional practice:

**“The support of the group has given me the confidence to go back to practise and test out some of my new ideas about rehabilitation.”**

Similarly, on average, nursing courses at modern universities scored over 90 per cent in the 2011 NSS, for example scoring 96 per cent at Staffordshire University, 92 per cent at the University of Wolverhampton and 91 per cent at Leeds Metropolitan University.<sup>15</sup>

The NSS gives potential students some objective data about the subjects they are thinking of studying and provides vital feedback to staff and managers in universities. When university staff act on the NSS feedback, it is one part of how students can be at the centre of their concerns. Modern universities work closely with their students' unions and through their quality assurance systems to ensure that any issues raised by students are fully discussed and addressed, typically by including students on course and university-wide committees.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

These universities also encourage students to contribute to nominations for teaching excellence awards, such as the Student-Led Teaching Awards (SLTA) scheme pioneered in Scotland, to ensure that the student voice is at the centre of teaching and learning (see Annex 1, page 37).

This means that modern universities have developed robust internal quality assurance and enhancement systems into which NSS data are integrated and form a key measure of success. University-wide committees create a common structure for such systems. Examples of this would be quality and enhancement or learning and teaching committees, which are linked with similar committees operating at faculty, department or school level. Together these committees provide robust monitoring, reviewing and reporting procedures.

### Face-to-face legal advice clinic, London South Bank University

London South Bank University launched a free drop-in legal advice clinic in September 2011. The drop-in clinic is staffed by trained student volunteers from the Law Department who work under the supervision of practising solicitors who are experienced in front-line legal advice services.

Working closely with the Southwark Legal Advice Network and local specialist solicitor firms, LSBU students have already advised 50 clients on a mix of housing, family, employment and welfare benefit problems. Students provide a valuable community service whilst gaining real-world legal experience, developing transferable skills and enhancing their employability prospects.

These systems and their operation are in turn open to examination by external quality assurance and enhancement processes. Responsibility for external quality assurance lies with the funding councils. In England it is HEFCE which distributes public money for teaching and research to universities and colleges and also plays "a key role in ensuring accountability and promoting good practice".<sup>16</sup>

HEFCE is legally responsible for the quality of education in the universities and colleges it funds and it contracts the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) "to devise and apply ways of assessing educational quality"<sup>17</sup>. The QAA uses a quality assurance framework (QAF) to assess the quality of education of UK higher education through a number of processes. For all universities, the 2011-12 QAF includes institutional review and a collaborative provision audit.

### Students at the heart of local businesses and communities

Teaching, learning and assessment in modern universities are increasingly linked to graduate employability. Students not only develop the intellectual capabilities and skills required for the world of work but also develop the social and moral dispositions needed for active engagement and civic duty in local communities as part of their learning experience at university. This is achieved through the well-established links that modern universities have developed with employers, public services and local communities and their responsiveness to business and entrepreneurialism.

As the case studies featured in this report and in Annex 1 illustrate, employer organisations and professional accrediting bodies are involved as partners in course design, teaching and assessment of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. This allows students to connect with experienced practitioners in workplace settings as a part of their learning experience. Modern universities engage with employers and work in partnership with them to develop higher skills. For example, the University of Derby provides programmes focusing on management and leadership skills for the quarrying industry and Middlesex University (see Annex 1, page 39) has developed and delivered a range of mental health programmes in partnership with the NHS.



This type of engagement with employers is recognised in national awards, such as the Times Higher Education (THE) award for outstanding employer engagement, won by University of Derby Corporate in 2011.<sup>18</sup>

Increasingly in modern universities employability skills are embedded in courses and modules. This can be seen in case studies such as the Public History module at the University of Derby (see Annex 1, page 30) and the ACU scheme at Coventry University (see page 17). While generic employability

skills are often embedded in courses, universities also work with public services and professional bodies to develop specialist courses to meet emerging employer needs. The development and delivery of courses with the police service to enhance the future employability of forensic science students at Staffordshire University and the involvement of employers in the development of a Professional Studies in Dance module at Middlesex University are both good examples of this (see Annex 1, pages 39 and 40).

Modern universities make a significant contribution to developing employability skills for the knowledge economy and engage with local communities to prepare students for their wider role in civic life.

Many universities offer modules in volunteering as part of their courses and provide benefits to local communities, often in deprived areas, through the skills of their students. These students not only give their time but also apply their knowledge and expertise to provide solutions to immediate problems.

Examples of this include the PDSA project at Leeds Metropolitan University (also see Annex 1, page 36) and London South Bank University's legal advice clinic.

### PDSA store project, Leeds Metropolitan University

Students worked with the PDSA charity to rebrand a failing local branch, one of its 180 retail stores. By using their skills in marketing and business management to rebrand and revitalise the local store the project was a huge success gaining a lot of media coverage. Some of their initiatives, including the name they gave the shop (The Attic) have been rolled out to other stores around the country.

Some students went on to gain management positions with the PDSA after graduating, for example one became the manager of the PDSA store in York. The work that students did in multidisciplinary teams to rebrand and revitalise the store was shared nationally and is available on YouTube.

**"It was like a relaunch of a major London store, but it was our charity shop in Leeds."**

<sup>16</sup> HEFCE (2011) What HEFCE does.  
<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> THE (2011).

## Innovative Teaching

In order to meet the needs of students, and society as a whole, modern universities draw on traditional teaching and learning methods and integrate them with innovative approaches at the cutting edge of curriculum design to offer academic and professional qualifications at all levels.

The curricula on offer in any of these universities will range from traditional full-time, campus-based courses and part-time flexible courses to those that combine learning at work with academic study. All seek to boost the employability of their graduates by developing the knowledge, skills and attributes valued in a knowledge economy. Teaching in modern universities reflects the core principles of effective curricula:

- > Making learning relevant to students and their future employers by linking learning inside the university with experiences in the wider world.
- > Providing seamless learning support that addresses the different aspects of students' personal and professional development.
- > Ensuring assessment is holistic and integrated so that it is both formative, motivating the learner and helping them to direct their efforts, and summative, resulting in nationally and internationally recognised qualifications.
- > Providing learning experiences that are informed and shaped by research into effective teaching.

### Making learning relevant

Modern universities have developed a number of imaginative ways of organising teaching and learning to ensure its relevance to students' current needs and their future hopes and aspirations. They combine the best of traditional approaches with innovative ways to integrate academic and professional qualifications for students from a diverse range of backgrounds.

A good example of this integration are the business 'Pods' central to the redesign of the first year business programme at the University of Bedfordshire (also see Annex 1, page 24). Here the learning experience is closer to working in a modern business than a traditional university course. The students work in teams on real-world projects and manage their own meetings and brainstorming sessions, with personal appraisals replacing essays. An undergraduate business studies student said:

**“The opportunity to work on real projects for real businesses helped me to build up a range of knowledge and skills... I would definitely recommend the course to my friends.”**



### Making learning seamless

By maximising the support on offer to students, modern universities respond to student demands and help students to achieve at the highest levels. This has placed these universities at the forefront of numerous professional development innovations that support students at all stages of their careers as they face the challenge of working in new ways, trying out new ideas, and improving their practice. In these circumstances it is important to link the support on offer by coordinating the input of university-based tutors, workplace mentors and fellow students. NHS engagement with courses in mental health nursing at Middlesex University and in conflict resolution training for healthcare students at Birmingham City University are good examples of this (see Annex 1, pages 38 and 39).

The e-portfolio development at the University of Wolverhampton (also see Annex 1, page 26) enhances the support on offer to students, ensuring ongoing learning, which results in more effective professional practices. Students use 'PebblePad', an electronic portfolio, during work placements to maintain contact with their peer group and tutors. This e-portfolio not only allows students to capture their thoughts and experiences immediately but also contains spaces for communication with tutors and other students about the practical problems (and successes) they experience on placement. An undergraduate teacher training student noted:

**“Last year on placement we were working individually, miles away. We could share on the blog our experiences, the hard bits, the celebrations and the issues we faced.”**

### Making assessment meaningful

Assessment in modern universities is an integral part of putting students at the core of teaching and learning. It is used as a means of giving students the information they need to drive their own learning forward and the motivation to succeed. This requires assessment processes that not only provide accurate and informative feedback but do so in ways that ensure that students' work meets academic and professional standards that match all similar university degrees and qualifications.

Modern universities have set themselves the challenge of ensuring that their assessment processes are rigorous, fair and reliable. They also exploit new and emerging approaches and technologies to improve the quality of feedback to students which gives them more control of their learning. These universities deploy the full range of traditional assessment methods, such as examinations and written assignments and integrate them with innovations such as online projects, peer assessment of presentations and performances.

A good example of innovation in assessment is the use of video media on a psychology course at the University of Greenwich (also see Annex 1, page 28). Here students were centrally involved in piloting and reshaping a traditional assessment method, the poster presentation, as a 'video poster' that would provide greater feedback on a wider range of skills and dispositions while involving students in making materials that would benefit others. A student on the course reflected:

**“We had to work together regardless of differences, which in turn boosted our communication skills.”**

## Innovative Teaching continued

### Learning through research

Modern universities have developed imaginative teaching and learning activities that link academic research and scholarship and ensure that students are capable of independent learning at work. Two good examples of developing research skills through innovative teaching and learning activities are the history conference at the University of Derby and the research internship scheme at the University of East London (also see Annex 1, pages 30 and 32).

History undergraduates at the University of Derby organise, promote and present a public history conference in a module called Public History: Marketing and Presenting the Past. They work in small groups to undertake a research project and write a conference paper which they present at a one-day public conference to an audience of external history societies and heritage organisations. By organising and promoting the conference, students gain valuable transferable skills such as research, team-working, communication, organisation and presentation skills. A student illustrates the value and enjoyment of learning through this activity:

**“It was hard work and extremely challenging, but ultimately seriously rewarding. Once it was over I wanted to do it again! Presenting our findings on the day was a real buzz and I’m seriously jealous of those who get to do it next semester.”**

Undergraduates at the University of East London are offered the opportunity to undertake a ten-week research internship in which they participate in research activities as paid interns during the summer. This offers an important career development opportunity to students as they gain experience on real research projects creating high quality outputs. At the end of the project there is an exhibition of posters with prizes for the best.

The impact of the scheme is summarised by an undergraduate International Politics student who commented:

**“I want to forge a career in political research and recognise that as well as being able to explore intellectual ideas, track-down information, data and people, soft skills like persuasion are useful to have on a CV.”**



### Building the capacity to innovate

Many universities can provide examples of innovative teaching often developed through the enthusiasm of a small number of staff. However, the greater strategic challenge is to develop the capacity for innovation in teaching at all levels across a university. This requires sustained commitment to developing the skills of individuals, building teams of staff, and changing organisational structures, and sometimes cultures, so that they support risk-taking and innovation.

There have been a number of national programmes aimed at developing the quality of teaching in which many modern universities have been involved. For instance modern universities led 12 of the HEFCE-funded Centres for Teaching and Learning (CETLs) which were established in 2005 and in many cases now form the basis of university-funded centres for improving teaching and learning.

The Associate Dean in the School of Education at Cumbria commented:

**“It encourages staff to reflect critically on their own practice, to acknowledge the synergy that should exist between theory and practice and to consider carefully how you develop learners through approaches to learning and teaching that they may not have considered before. In some instances this also means that they are then able to act as confident agents of change within their teaching teams.”**

Such centres play a central role in building the capacity to innovate as they take a lead in developing and disseminating good practice and promote research into learning and teaching. They also develop individual capacity by providing a range of professional development opportunities and courses for teachers and lecturers.

Modern universities have also invested in other initiatives to develop and recognise professional practice in teaching. For example, The University of Cumbria has developed a Masters in Academic Practice for its own staff. The programme uses a range of learning and teaching technologies to provide work-based professional development that is flexible enough to be completed alongside the teaching commitments of lecturers (also see Annex 1, page 33).

## Innovative Teaching continued

A key challenge in the university sector has been to raise the profile of teaching so that its status is comparable with that of carrying out research. A range of schemes and awards have been developed to recognise and reward inspirational teaching of which the National Teaching Fellowship Scheme (NTFS) is one of the most well-known. Each year over fifty lecturers are provided with fellowships to develop and disseminate innovations in teaching and learning. Since their establishment in 2000, modern universities have been awarded 87 fellowships.<sup>19</sup>

Another example of raising the profile of teaching is the Teacher Fellow Network at Leeds Metropolitan University (also see Annex 1, page 34). Teacher Fellows form a dynamic network of teaching champions who are involved in spreading good practice, developing innovative learning materials, mentoring colleagues and contributing to staff development activities across the University. A Teacher Fellow who is also Head of Academic Staff Development at Leeds Metropolitan University said:

**“I’m delighted to be a Teacher Fellow, and to utilise all the opportunities this great network brings to further promote, research and introduce creative and inspiring new approaches to learning and teaching.”**

<sup>19</sup> HEA (2011) 2011 National Teaching Fellows.



In line with their emphasis on placing students at the centre of teaching and learning, modern universities are developing their own schemes to recognise and reward teaching which highly-value the recommendations and input of students as well as staff.

Edinburgh Napier University has developed its own Student Led Teaching Awards (also see Annex 1, page 37). With categories for the most ‘outstanding teacher’ and most ‘innovative teacher’, 11,000 students cast their votes in last year’s awards. A physics tutor at Edinburgh Napier University commented:

**“It’s always nice to get any kind of recognition in your professional life, but from students it’s particularly gratifying because they’re the reason why you teach in the way you do.”**

## Employability and the Knowledge Economy

The transition towards a knowledge economy in the UK<sup>20</sup> has profound implications for universities. Sufficient numbers of graduates, with advanced skills and employability attributes, are needed to contribute to economic growth and a knowledge-intensive economy.

The three main challenges are to:

- > Develop approaches to teaching and learning that ensure graduates have the skills and dispositions to apply their knowledge in the workplace and adapt to changing circumstances.
- > Ensure that the UK draws on all the available capacity within society and has sufficient numbers of graduates to support growth across all sectors of the economy.
- > Match the increasing graduate population with the demands of the economy and employers.

### Ensuring graduates have the requisite skills and dispositions

Increasing the employability of graduates enables them to make a better contribution to the development of a knowledge economy but has implications for teaching. Technically, this is relatively simple to address. UKCES provides clear evidence<sup>21</sup> of the kinds of teaching and learning that provide the foundation for the development of the key employability skills and dispositions:

*“In broad outline, developing employability skills entails: experiential action-learning: using skills rather than simply acquiring knowledge, placing emphasis on trial and error, and with a clear focus on the pay-offs for the learner in employment and progression work experience: a work placement in an actual business, or an authentic classroom simulation based on a real workplace opportunities for reflection and integration.”<sup>22</sup>*

The major challenge is therefore cultural rather than technical so that more staff recognise the importance of introducing such approaches to teaching and learning into their own courses.

The following case study (and those in Annex 1) are evidence of how modern universities are at the forefront of this cultural shift.

### Add+vantage Coventry University (ACU)

Introduced in 2006, Add+vantage Coventry University (ACU) is one of the first institution-wide, whole curriculum approaches to developing undergraduate employability skills and attributes. ACU develops the generic skills that all students, regardless of area of study, should possess alongside the specific knowledge and skills of the degree discipline.

Establishing ACU involved major structural, systems and procedural changes to the existing undergraduate curriculum framework, affecting around 10,000 students. It is designed to develop core attributes (personal and generic graduate attributes) and employability competencies.

ACU has made employer engagement and involvement integral to the curriculum. 3,000 students have taken ACU work experience modules that have extended personal and professional networks and developed their employability skills. Students are eligible for Add+vantage Employability Awards, and for professional accreditation through bodies such as the Chartered Management Institute, Prince 2, CISCO, ECDL.

<sup>20</sup> Brinkley, I. (2008) *The knowledge economy*.

<sup>21</sup> UKCES (2009) *The employability challenge*.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

Modern universities have been at the forefront of extending the provision of sandwich courses, which include a placement element in industry or abroad. This is an area where UK universities have traditionally been weak compared with their continental European counterparts.<sup>23</sup> Modern universities have also been effective at introducing new delivery models such as Foundation Degrees, which are HE-level qualifications that combine academic study and work-based learning. These developments in teaching and learning have made modern universities more attractive to mature students and professionals seeking to change their career or improve their qualifications. These programmes provide real world learning experiences that reflect and explore students' professional experience and needs. As a result of the popularity of Foundation Degrees with students and employers, over 20,000 students studied for Foundation Degrees in modern universities in 2009-10.

**Drawing on all the available capacity in society**

Just as growth in the wider economy will in part come from the development and expansion of small to medium-sized enterprises, a knowledge economy will require more graduates from families and sectors of society which have not previously considered a university education. Modern universities have led the way in attracting non-traditional students. HESA data for 2009-10 shows that more than a third (37 per cent) of students at modern universities came from the lower national statistic socio-economic classifications 4-7 compared to 22 per cent at 1994 Group and 20 per cent at Russell Group universities.

Modern universities also teach a higher proportion of young students from low participation neighbourhoods (13 per cent), state schools (96 per cent) and minority ethnic backgrounds (21 per cent of degrees awarded in 2009-10 in modern universities were to BAME students). These universities also teach more mature students (29 per cent of all students in modern universities in 2009-10 were aged 30 or over).

Through raising aspirations, proactively recruiting students from areas and groups not traditionally engaged in higher education and combining traditional approaches to teaching and learning with more flexible and innovative methods to meet the needs of students and employers, modern universities also make an outstanding contribution to social mobility. Further economic growth and the development of a knowledge economy will be dependent on sustaining and increasing this expansion.

**Matching increases in the graduate population with the demands of the economy and employers**

Nearly 246,000 students (49 per cent) graduated with a first degree from modern universities in 2009-10. Modern universities are not only educating more graduates, they are also educating graduates with the kinds of skills required by 21st century knowledge economy employers.

Analysis of data on first degree graduates indicated that 62 per cent of 2009-10 graduates who responded were employed six months after graduation, an increase of 2 per cent over the previous year.<sup>24</sup> Student destination data from HESA indicated that leavers from modern and other universities were more likely to work part-time than leavers from Russell or 1994 Group universities and more likely to move on to combine work and further study. However, graduates from Russell and 1994 Group universities were slightly more likely to move into voluntary or unpaid work.

**Table 1: Graduate employment destinations**

	Mgr/Snr	Prof	Assoc Prof	Admin	Skilled	Pers Services	Sales	Process	Elem
Modern	10%	28%	33%	7%	1%	6%	10%	0%	5%
Russell	7%	46%	27%	7%	0%	3%	6%	0%	4%
1994	10%	40%	26%	8%	1%	5%	7%	0%	4%
Other	10%	33%	29%	7%	1%	6%	9%	1%	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>4%</b>

Source: HESA Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey 2009-10

Using the HESA Destination of Leavers from Higher Education longitudinal study and ONS classifications, it is also possible to track employment destinations three and a half years after full-time students have graduated and compare these with their family backgrounds when they entered university. Modern universities with the most socially inclusive profiles made a positive contribution to social mobility with graduates moving into higher socio-occupational groups compared to their family backgrounds. Moreover, the earnings of these graduates were likely to be 15 per cent higher than the earnings of people with lower qualifications, many of whom could have progressed to university but did not do so.<sup>25</sup>

Received wisdom that the rapid expansion of higher education has led to graduates increasingly moving into 'non-graduate' jobs has been widely questioned. For instance a recent study by the Work Foundation found that: "graduates remain in strong demand in OECD member countries and a greater proportion are entering 'graduate' jobs in the UK."<sup>26</sup>

The OECD has also confirmed that graduates continue to earn more than those with lower qualifications despite an increase in their supply.<sup>27</sup> There is also a strong case to update the UK definitions of what constitutes 'graduate' employment to reflect demand for high skills in non-traditional areas of the economy.

Over 70 per cent of leavers from all university groups who entered employment moved into managerial, professional, associate professional and technical occupations. Graduates from modern universities figure strongly in such knowledge occupations and reinforce the fact that they are developing what have been called "softer skills, such as team working and communication"<sup>28</sup> that are essential for graduate employability in a knowledge-intensive economy.

Unemployment among both graduates and those under 25 has increased since the economic downturn but graduates remain significantly less likely to be unemployed than people without a degree, even among the 21-24 age group.<sup>29</sup> With their interest in building partnerships with students, employers and the local community, modern universities are particularly well placed to address residual concerns amongst some employers that graduates lack the skills they require.

<sup>23</sup> Brennan, J., Patel, K. and Tang, W. (2009) Diversity in the student learning experience and time devoted to study.  
<sup>24</sup> Higher Education Careers Services Unit (HECSU) (2011).

<sup>25</sup> million+ (2009) Social mobility: Universities changing lives.  
<sup>26</sup> Levy, C. and Hopkins, L. (2011) Shaping up for innovation.  
<sup>27</sup> OECD (2011) Education at a Glance.

<sup>28</sup> Wright, J., Brinkley, I. and Clayton, N. (2011) Employability and skills in the UK.  
<sup>29</sup> Hopkins, L. (2011) Are graduate prospects really getting worse?

Teaching and learning are absolutely central to the mission of modern universities. Through an innovative and constantly evolving array of teaching activities designed to enhance student learning and graduate employability, these universities educate nearly half of all undergraduates and more than 40 per cent of all postgraduate students.

Modern universities cater for people of all ages, from diverse backgrounds and at different stages of their careers and in many cases have a transformational impact upon the aspirations and life chances of students. The graduates of modern universities make a substantial contribution to social, cultural and economic life in the United Kingdom and beyond.

As the funding system for higher education in England shifts from the state to the student, all universities will need to connect with the experiences of learners, place them at the heart of the education process and work to maximise investment in teaching and learning.

As one Vice Chancellor has emphasised this represents both a considerable challenge and an opportunity for universities:

**“Teaching will need to push, stretch, innovate and excite the students. We will need to invest more in teaching.”**

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**Kathryn Jeffs**  
BSc Biological Imaging  
University of Derby

Kathryn Jeffs is currently a BBC Producer for the BBC 1 series Frozen Planet. She started as a researcher at the BBC speaking to scientists who are the life-blood of any wildlife programme. She outlines her career path: I was working in the Natural History Unit at the BBC in Bristol. I then went on to work in the field and spent four years working on Frozen Planet, which took 7,000 crew hours to shoot in the Antarctic with the temperature plummeting to -50 degrees Celsius at times.

**“I chose science because I wanted to engage with the world and explore wildlife and acquire fact based knowledge. My course was niche at the University of Derby which enabled me to be a stronger candidate amongst my peer competitors.”**

**Alexa Morton**  
Certificate in Marketing  
Leeds Metropolitan University

Alexa Morton currently works as a Visitor Experience & Marketing Manager at Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal, a World Heritage Site in North Yorkshire. She believes that postgraduate study gave her the opportunity to enhance her knowledge of marketing in a way which complemented her work at Fountains Abbey. Alexa highlights that an important aspect of her course was the ability to study for a postgraduate course part-time so that she could continue to work full-time.

**“I had no formal marketing training before undertaking my CIM qualification. I therefore wanted theoretical knowledge to underpin my experience in the field.”**



**Anna-Marie Millbank**  
BA (Hons) Playwork  
University of Gloucestershire

Anna-Marie Millbank undertakes a number of volunteer roles within a local council-run playscheme, mentors site leaders at various play settings and offers advice and guidance to playworkers, parents, children and managers. She comments: The contacts made during my time networking with high level academics has provided the opportunity to continue my studies and I will be starting a Masters programme in New York.

**“The University of Gloucestershire was the only university to deliver the BA Hons in Playwork via distance learning, which enabled me to progress through the course at a pace suitable to my needs and was dependent on having an active role as a playworker in a play setting.”**

## Annex 1 Making learning relevant Business Pods at the University of Bedfordshire

The Business Pods have been central to the redesign of the first year business programme at the University of Bedfordshire. Here the learning experience is closer to working in a modern business than a traditional university course. The students work in teams on real-world projects and manage their own meetings and brainstorming sessions, with personal appraisals replacing some essays.

The Business Pods were launched in October 2007 and a large diverse cohort of first year undergraduate students (more than 450 students) in the Business School now follow the Pod programme on courses such as advertising and marketing communications and human resources management.

Figure 2 shows the floor plan of the Pods with the areas for project team working at the round tables, the board room, the creative room, a coffee area and extra computers as well as an office for staff.

Induction consists of three sessions of team-building activities aimed at enhancing social integration. This replaces activities such as library inductions or briefings on referencing and plagiarism which are now provided in Business Pod sessions when students need them.



Figure 2

Learning activities integrate the most successful, interactive tasks used in the past with new elements. For example, small group seminars support students during the essay phase, allowing staff to offer personalised support to students.

The first project students undertake requires them to assess the potential to recruit student members to a local gym, encouraging them to draw on skills in marketing, data analysis, accounting and presentation. A 'triage' game focuses on developing a person specification for recruiting a tour leader for a holiday project, forcing them to prioritise and make decisions. Finally, reflecting business practice, self-appraisals have replaced reflective essays.

### Impact

Students value the programme's individualisation of learning, as demonstrated by a business student:

**"Throughout the Pod sessions, tasks were continually developed and evolved in order to personalise the experience, maximising the learning benefit."**

The use of authentic learning experiences was highlighted by another student on the course:

**"The opportunity to work on real projects for real businesses helped me to build up a range of knowledge and skills. I am glad I had a chance to work in the Business Pods and I would definitely recommend the course to my friends."**



There is also evidence that the programme has attracted students to the University. One student commented:

**"The Business Pods were actually the reason for my choosing to come to University of Bedfordshire. I read a lot about other universities but none had such a creative looking environment."**

Staff highlight the importance of the learning environment, which they feel fosters collaborative learning and replicates the work environment, while also expanding the curriculum. A senior lecturer commented:

**"Initially I was sceptical whether this was appropriate for accountants but I can see that it works. It gives them a broad foundation across the business spectrum which they would not otherwise be exposed to in their accounting degree."**

## Annex 1 Making learning seamless e-portfolios at the University of Wolverhampton

The development of an electronic or e-portfolio system at the University of Wolverhampton is designed to increase the support on offer to students, enhance on-going learning and improve professional practices. Students use 'PebblePad', an electronic portfolio system, during work placements to maintain contact with their peer group and tutors. This e-portfolio allows students to capture their thoughts and experiences immediately and contains spaces for communication with tutors and other students about the practical problems (and successes) they experience on placement.

Embedding initiatives such as this, across the University's eight academic schools, requires commitment and investment from senior managers, lecturers and students but liberates teaching and learning from the constraints of physical spaces and set times.

The School of Education and the School of Health and Well-being have embedded the use of e-portfolios in courses for education and health care professionals. The video case study illustrates the ways in which PebblePad facilitates communication and supports teaching, learning and assessment from the management, lecturer and student perspectives in teacher training courses, foundation degrees and midwifery courses.

The use of PebblePad has a positive effect on learning by enabling contact between students on and off campus and reducing the chances of students experiencing feelings of isolation while on placement.

A Foundation Degree student has highlighted how the blogging elements of PebblePad supports peer-peer learning:

**"So when I go away from here we can throw ideas between each other... You find that you're learning a lot from the others."**

Senior staff members in the School of Education have emphasised that PebblePad draws people outside of the University into a community of practice which analyses and reflects on the experience of students. It also removes barriers such as time constraints, particularly for employer-led courses such as Foundation Degrees (FD).

Catherine Lamond, a senior lecturer on FD courses, has highlighted the benefits of using PebblePad as FD students move from the workplace into higher education. Students can track their learning journey and see how all their modules and areas of learning interlink. Head of Department Julie Hughes analysed the value in teacher training and professional development:

**"As a personal learning space it belongs to the learner. Students control their area and are often very proud of their work."**

In the School of Health and Wellbeing, a student on the BSc Midwifery course felt that using PebblePad enhanced her learning and work methods:

**"It's a clear, precise way of keeping all my thoughts and my academic work in one place where it's easily accessible and easily shareable."**



The importance of providing flexibility in learning has been highlighted by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for academic development:

**"If students want flexible delivery, whether that's blended learning, on campus or distance learning, we need to be able to provide that for them, and at the same time make sure that we are enhancing the experience they receive."**

The School of Health and Wellbeing has used the e-portfolio as a one-stop shop where students learn with others to develop a community of practice. Students can personalise their space, using technology to make learning more enjoyable and enhance their employability. This is how technology is increasingly used in the clinical world.

Midwifery lecturer Debbie Holmes has given an insight into how lecturers use the system and the benefits over the former paper portfolios:

**"Assignments are submitted through PebblePad, so students don't have to rush in from their placement for 4 o'clock."**

## Annex 1 Making assessment meaningful Video Posters at the University of Greenwich

Psychology students at the University of Greenwich have been centrally involved in piloting and reshaping the traditional assessment method of the poster presentation as a collaboratively produced video poster. This provided greater feedback on a wider range of skills and dispositions while involving students in making materials that would benefit others.

Sandra Rankin and Rob Willson at the University of Greenwich have developed a creative approach to this assessment task by piloting and reshaping the use of video posters with approximately 125 students.

The tutors initially attempted to introduce this activity into seminars to see how receptive the students were to the idea of making a video instead of drawing a poster. Students were allocated into groups within their seminars and were provided with a WebCT chat room for group discussions.

A detailed task sheet with deadlines was provided, so that students had a time frame in which to work and a checklist of the various implementation stages they needed to achieve to successfully complete their videos. However, it seemed students were unwilling to engage with other students who they did not know personally or, alternatively, thought that the tutors should organise communication within groups. It seemed that tutors had overestimated student willingness to engage in any activity that was perceived as time consuming, required a degree of persistence, and possibly most importantly, was not formally assessed. Very few groups completed the activity at this stage.

### Engaging students

Thereafter, the activity became a graded assessment and therefore the whole process of engagement by the students was different.

Additionally, more guidelines were provided, which broke the task down into four parts, making the process more transparent:

- > Individual activity
- > Group engagement
- > Video proposal submission
- > Video production

Further details about student responsibilities (learning and management) and tutor responsibilities (teaching and management) were provided and two formative quizzes were designed to further engage and develop student understanding of the task requirements.

A checklist and group chat rooms, with contact information, were set up so students could initiate contact with each other. No technical expertise was required from any student beyond having a mobile phone with a video facility. Students were also allowed to use their own video cameras or camcorders, but departmental equipment was made available on a first-come, first-served basis. Students were encouraged to use mobile phones for convenience and to emphasise the simplicity of the video required.

### Impact

Tutors were so impressed by the efforts and final production of the first year students' work that they decided to showcase all the student groups' videos. This led to the creation of a Departmental YouTube Channel for Psychology and Counselling to showcase the work. All videos were vetted before publication and have been viewed by many students and staff alike. The YouTube Channel has now developed into an invaluable resource for student learning as it plays many listed videos in specialised topics about Psychology as well as hosting future video posters.

Feedback from students highlights the positive aspects of the activity as well as the effort needed for the task, illustrated in the following comments:

**"The video poster was useful as it placed us in different groups and we had to work together regardless of differences, which in turn boosted our communication skills."**



**"I enjoyed doing the video poster as it was something I had never done before. Also it was a challenge as people have different ideas of how things should be done."**

## Annex 1 Learning through research Public History Conference at the University of Derby

History undergraduates at the University of Derby organise, promote and present a public history conference in a module called Public History: Marketing and Presenting the Past. They work in small groups to undertake a research project and write a conference paper which they present at a one-day public conference to an audience of external history societies and heritage organisations.

Students are also responsible for organising and promoting the conference. These activities enable undergraduate students to develop their academic and professional profiles and to gain the wider transferable skills, such as team-working, communication, organisational and presentation skills that are highly prized by employers.

The public history conference is the culmination of tutor and student effort. Students work in groups (usually comprising four individuals) on a range of tasks to prepare for the conference and each group has a weekly tutorial with the teaching team. These tasks encourage learning from peers, support the development of note taking and time management skills and contribute towards the assessment of the module and marks awarded to students.

One of the group assignments for the module involves the creation of a range of publicity materials to promote the conference. Thus, in addition to developing traditional academic research and writing skills, the task enables students to demonstrate a wider range of creative talents. The range of materials produced include websites, posters, bookmarks, postcards, leaflets and t-shirts. Students have also been interviewed on local radio about their papers. The 'Crown, Politics and People' poster (reproduced on the right) is an example of a student designed poster for the 2009 Conference.

### Impact

Public History: Marketing and Presenting the Past has been running for four years and plays an important part in preparing second year students for the demands of their final year. The module enables students to develop confidence and skill in articulating arguments and defending their own ideas, resulting in highly stimulating presentations and rousing seminar debates.

Although the idea of speaking at a large public event is a daunting prospect for most students, the challenging nature of the experience ensures that they emerge from the module with a real sense of achievement and the desire to stretch themselves at third year level. The teaching team at the University of Derby have noticed a marked increase in the quality of third year seminar debates since this module came on stream as part of the History degree. In 2011, 73% of History graduates achieved good degrees.

Feedback from students illustrates the success of the module:

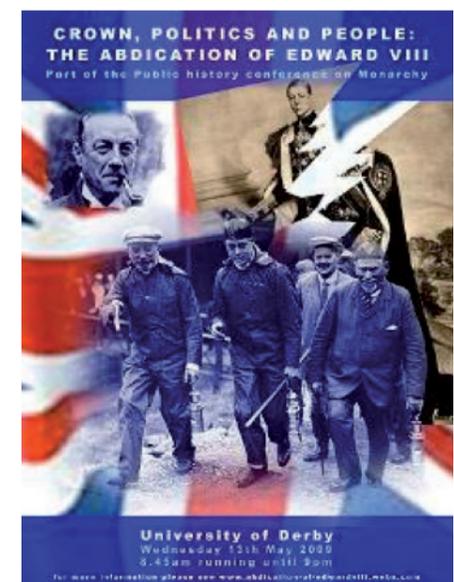
**“The conference is without a doubt one of the best modules on the programme. I was able to show my skills as a leader and as a co-operative member of a group, which I feel helped the team as a whole. In addition I was able to improve my ability to speak to a public audience.”**

The academic and personal challenge of organising, preparing and presenting a public history conference is summed up by another student:

**“It was a lot of hard work, and at times extremely challenging but ultimately seriously rewarding; and once it was over I wanted to do it all over again! Presenting our findings on the day was a real buzz and I’m seriously jealous of the current second years who get to do it next semester!”**

This innovative approach to teaching, learning and assessment is reflected in external measures of success, such as student satisfaction levels and annual scores in the NSS. The course also scored 100% for being intellectually stimulating.

Particularly interesting, in view of the role of the Public History module, are the NSS scores for Personal Development. The headline score in this area was 94%, which is 14% above the sector average for History.

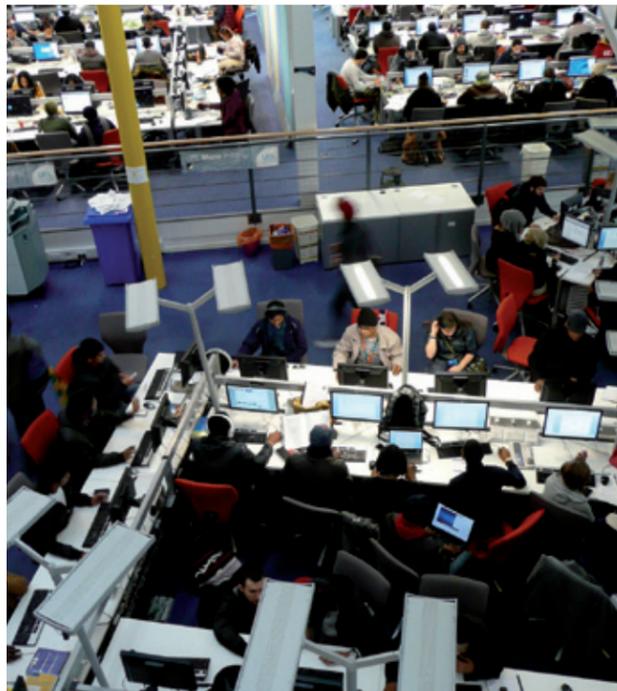


## Annex 1 Learning through research Research Internship Scheme at the University of East London

The Research Internship Scheme offers undergraduate students at UEL an opportunity to participate in research activities as a paid intern for a period of ten weeks during the summer.

UEL is currently investing significantly in its research community as part of its research strategy. In summer 2011, UEL sponsored a limited number of internships for undergraduate students. This offered an important career development opportunity to students.

Applications were invited for projects which gave students experience of working with staff on real research projects with high quality research outcomes. The scheme was open to all UEL staff engaged in teaching and research; staff could bid for up to two interns for projects; 63 members of staff applied to offer internships; and 43 applications were successful. The scheme received 500 student applications for the 43 internships and at the end of the project there was an exhibition of posters, with a prize for the best.



### Impact

All but one of the research internships ran to completion and feedback from research staff and student interns has been overwhelmingly positive from a learning, research and employability perspective. The scheme commenced in the 2010-11 academic year and feedback shows that it has made students aware of new career progressions and motivated them to take up further study. Whilst the longer term impact of the scheme will be evaluated over a five year period, data from the first year of implementation show huge benefits to students personally, professionally and academically. UEL plan to offer 150 research internships in 2011-12.

**“I want to forge a career in political research and recognise that as well as being able to explore intellectual ideas, track down information, data and people, soft skills like persuasion are useful to have on a CV.”**

**“I learnt transferable skills such as explaining my ideas better, gathering information, analysing and categorising data, establishing and maintaining good relationship at work, motivation and goal setting.”**

## Annex 1 Building the capacity to innovate MA Academic Practice at the University of Cumbria

The Masters in Academic Practice at the University of Cumbria uses a range of learning and teaching technologies to provide work-based professional development that is flexible enough to be completed alongside the teaching commitments of lecturers. The programme draws on the University's experience of technology-based learning, developed to meet the needs of its multiple locations throughout Cumbria while remaining close to practice.

The Masters in Academic Practice is designed to enable staff to develop knowledge, skills and understanding of the full range of academic practice; meet national professional standards; and extend digital skills to enhance learning, teaching and research. The programme embeds digital skills development in all activities and uses e-portfolios to enable individuals to manage and collate their assessed work throughout the programme. Participants undertake continuous peer review of teaching and learning practice. They share formative assignment work in all modules using a patchwork assessment method and participate in peer dialogue and feedback throughout the programme.

Crucially, many students also build a portfolio during the course, which demonstrates to employers how they meet the professional standards most appropriate to their role. Examples include UKPSF in HE Teaching & Support of Learning, the Nursing & Midwifery Council, the Health Professions Council, and the General Social Care Council. Such portfolios are thus integrated into their continuing professional development and review process.



### Impact

The impact of the programme is evident from participants' increased confidence in using technology and their ability to draw on the teaching and learning expertise of their colleagues to become innovators in their own departments.

**“It encourages them to reflect critically on their own practice, to acknowledge the synergy that should exist between theory and practice and to consider carefully how you develop learners through approaches to learning and teaching that they may not have considered before. In some instances this also means that they are then able to act as confident agents of change within their teaching teams.”**

Associate Dean  
School of Education

Annex 1  
**Building the capacity to innovate**  
Action Learning at London  
Metropolitan University

The Financial Services Authority's (FSA) 'National Strategy for Financial Capability in Higher Education' enabled staff at London Metropolitan University to develop a module on financial capability as part of a formal university course.

Competency based Action Learning (CoBAL) at London Metropolitan University was awarded an FSA grant for 'unique ideas', one of only four universities recognised in this way by the FSA. In implementing CoBAL within course modules, students are required to form Action Learning Sets and identify an actual financial issue to address during seminars via their learning set. The 'Financial Capability' module is available as an option to students on all courses at the University.

**Impact**

In module evaluations and other feedback students have reported improved financial performance and thinking strategies as a result of this activity. Tutors have also commented that the initiative has had a significant impact on improving individual students' financial capability and thinking processes.

Annex 1  
**Building the capacity to innovate**  
The Teacher Fellow Network  
at Leeds Metropolitan University

The Teacher Fellow Network is an institutional scheme that brings together academics from across the University who, through a competitive selection process, have been recognised for their excellent practice in learning and teaching.

The network, which has developed over a number of years and now has 40 staff, including a number of National Teaching Fellows, facilitates the diffusion of excellence in learning and teaching, developing innovative teaching materials, mentoring and developing colleagues and helping to shape learning, teaching and assessment across the university. The Teacher Fellows have played a leading role in developing course design principles and in supporting colleagues in the process of refocusing the undergraduate curriculum across the University.

**Making qualifications relevant to employers' needs**

Undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in Business Studies, Management and Corporate Governance have been mapped against the learning outcomes for the Chartered Management Institute's awards. This has resulted in students on a number of programmes being able to complete professional qualifications alongside their studies, saving them time and money and also giving them alternative routes to career progression and development. The National Teaching Fellow leading the initiative is working to develop the concept more widely within the University.

**Improving learning and assessment in practice settings**

Assessment and Learning in Practice Settings (ALPS) is an award-winning initiative, involving 16 healthcare professions and five regional universities, which focuses on improving the learning and assessment of students through the use

of resources, support and assessment tools on smart phones. The programme developed core competency maps for communication, teamwork and ethical practice, which led to the creation of student-led assessment tools in an e-portfolio. Such authentic assessment, combined with the ability to capture immediate feedback, is proving beneficial to students, service users and tutors. It has helped to inform the use of e-portfolios, mobile learning and reflective tools which allow students to access materials and capture and submit evidence with ease wherever they work and study.



**“We encourage staff to be creative in the way that they’re designing the teaching and specifically in the way that they are trying to engage students in experiential learning.”**

Annex 1  
**Building the capacity to innovate**  
The Teacher Fellow Network  
at Leeds Metropolitan University  
continued



**Learning beyond the classroom**

In an innovative partnership with the Youth Hostel Association (YHA) the BA in Physical Education course provides an opportunity for new students to learn through outdoor and adventurous activities during a week's residential in the Lake District.

The experience allows students to establish friendships quickly and to develop personal and social skills. Tutors attend to deliver classroom sessions, whilst outdoor activities are led by inspirational explorers who are potential employers. Assessment methods involve reflective practice and group presentations.

**“The key priority is to make sure that every graduate leaves their course highly employable. Employers are involved at all stages... course design, giving guest lectures, assessment.”**

**Enhancing employer engagement**

An initiative brokered by Teacher Fellows helped the PDSA charity to rebrand a failing local branch. The project was coordinated by course leaders who devised assessment criteria for students to suit the needs of their courses and offer real hands-on retailing, marketing and business experience. This provided a valuable opportunity for students to undertake work in a multi-disciplinary team and build attractive CVs. A number of students have since gained management positions with the PDSA on graduation.

**“The retail students also did a personal reflection, advising me on how they had gained some extra skills whilst working on this project. They identified how the class-based learning was really useful and how they used it in the real world.”**



Annex 1  
**Building the capacity to innovate**  
Student Led Teaching Awards  
at Edinburgh Napier University

High quality teaching in modern universities has also been recognised by student awards. In Scotland, the HEA and the National Union of Students (NUS) have pioneered the Student Led Teaching Awards (SLTA) which in 2010-11, saw 11,000 student nominations submitted over a wide range of categories and institutions.

In this initiative, students rather than academics or senior university managers, nominate individuals for awards in various categories, such as 'outstanding teacher', 'innovative teacher' and 'teaching in an international context'.

Edinburgh Napier University, which has nearly 16,000 students including almost 4,000 international students from over 100 countries, and the University of Abertay Dundee with around 5,084 students, have been involved in the pilot scheme in Scotland and are supporting the HEA in spreading the initiative across the UK. Thus, modern universities are also at the forefront of encouraging student-led recognition of practice and reviewing quality in partnership with students.

A physics tutor who received an award for innovative teaching said:

**“It's always nice to get any kind of recognition in your professional life but from students it's particularly gratifying because they're the reason why you teach in the way you do.”**

**Impact**

Both students and tutors welcome the SLTA scheme as it gives students a central role in celebrating and rewarding innovative and inspirational teaching. The President of the University of the Highlands and Islands Students' Association has commented:

**“The Teaching Awards have been a huge success and really captured the imagination of our students. Everyone has that particular tutor or lecturer whose sessions they really look forward to and it's great for students to be able to give something back by nominating that person for an award.”**



## Annex 1 Building the capacity to innovate Simulations in health education at Birmingham City University

**Conflict Resolution Films**  
A brand new initiative at BCU involves an innovative way of teaching conflict resolution and management of personal safety, preparing students for situations they may encounter on healthcare placements. Univeristy staff have created 15 films which highlight difficult situations students may encounter.

### Making it real

BCU used professional actors to produce the films. The actors were directed to address the camera as if they were interacting with a student or qualified professional.

The person operating the camera was directed to back away from the actor, move into the actor's personal space and avoid eye contact when the dialogue in the script called for appropriate or inappropriate responses. Students were then invited to consider how they might respond.

Each film is made up of three scenes: the first sets up the scenario, the second shows how the situation might deteriorate if the student does not respond in a helpful way and the third scene depicts a more successful outcome following the use of interpersonal and de-escalation skills.

### Placement-ready

This initiative is delivered prior to their first work placement and gives students an opportunity to reflect on their concerns about working in practice. Therefore each film clip is accompanied by relevant questions to encourage individual and group reflection about actions and responsibilities. This is unique within healthcare education.

### 3D imaging

The Department of Skills and Simulation within the Faculty of Health has formed a national multidisciplinary symposium group to support people with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD). This national group includes nurses, carers, physiotherapists, basic life support (BLS) trainers, health facilitators, speech & language therapists, directors of nursing care and directors of medical care. The group work in NHS Trusts, private and charitable organisations and hospices in Devon, Oxfordshire, Bristol, Kettering and Northumbria.

The group have developed a 3D image of a person with a distorted body shape to use as a resource in training and workshops to help nurses and carers manage emergency situations, including basic life support, for people with a distorted body shape. A comment about the 3D image from a workshop participant:

**“I think it is a fantastic resource for assessment, development of individual care plans and as a training aid.”**

## Annex 1 Employability Engaging Employers and Professionals

**Professional Studies in Dance: Middlesex University**  
Employer engagement in curriculum development at Middlesex University ensures that courses are dynamic, contemporary and relevant to employer needs.

One example of this vibrant development is the undergraduate Professional Studies module which engages employers in the Dance Profession with curriculum development and delivery through consultation about the content of the module and invitations to dance professionals to give guest lectures on their specific field of expertise. In these ways the module aims to bridge the gap between education and employment in dance and better prepare students for the demands of a rapidly changing workforce.

### Impact on student learning

There has been a demonstrative impact on students' preparation and successful entry into the workforce. Student awareness of the diversity of careers available in dance beyond performing is heightened and they recognise more fully their employability as dance graduates.

Students are able to network with dance professionals and employers through the series of lectures given by them during the teaching of the module. Students also gain further experience of the industry through observation of dance practice during placements with dance companies.



## Involving service users in health education: Middlesex University

A key challenge for health programmes is reducing the gap between theory and practice.

One strategy that University tutors use to maintain an up-to-date curriculum that encompasses contemporary practices is by giving service users and carers important roles in teaching, learning and assessment:

- > as co-facilitators for small informal discussion groups with students
- > leading seminar discussion groups
- > giving lectures/presentations
- > co-assessors for student nurse viva examinations.

Promoting and supporting service user involvement in all aspects of health education has been a key focus at Middlesex University for over six years. Service users form part of a mental health advisory group made up of representatives from the main service user organisations in five local boroughs.

This group is facilitated by academic staff and its members offer their own opinions and experiences, while also reporting back to and canvassing views from their home organisations. As well as bi-monthly meetings to discuss developments relating to departmental work, the group provides representatives for other developments, for example on steering groups for the validation of programmes.

The University has also developed other initiatives in response to the professional development and service needs of local NHS Mental Health Trusts. Two examples of this are initiatives aimed at developing the leadership capabilities of NHS staff and the development of programmes for new ways of working in mental health.

**Enhancing the employability  
skills of forensic students:  
Staffordshire University**

Police recruitment criteria in England and Wales is having to change to meet an increasing complex set of demands. In the future it is likely to require graduate entry and previous experience. Staffordshire University has developed a partnership with Staffordshire Police aimed at ensuring that curriculum development is dynamic and meets the needs of the police authority as an employer, while at the same time enhancing the learning experience of students by helping them apply theory directly in the work environment through work placements.

The initiative centres on recruiting students studying on the Policing & Criminal Investigation (PCI) and Forensic Investigation (FI) Awards to take on the role of Special Constables. Feedback from both the Police and students engaged in the scheme has been extremely positive. The students have benefited from the additional training provided by the Police about criminal law and police procedures and their levels of confidence have notably increased.





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