Innovation Projects 2011

Themes for this round of funding included:
• Assessment and feedback to students: supporting elements of the University’s Assessment and Feedback Strategy
• e-learning (efficient and effective use of resources)
• Employability and connections to professions
• Research and Enterprise in Teaching and Learning

In addition the following criteria were prioritised:
• the promotion of collaboration across Schools and Services
• the potential to feed into external bidding to generate further income
• further embed existing Teaching and Learning Projects with real potential to make a major impact through publication or generating external funding
• take forward ideas raised in the 2010 Teaching and Learning Conference.

The following projects were funded and ran from January 2011 to the end of the year:

1. **VERiFy: Video Enhanced Response in Feedback Loops**: Led by James McDowell from Computing and Engineering, the VERiFy Project aims to provide an innovative approach to the provision of feedback to learners in video form.

Building on both the work of the UoHTube Project at the University of Huddersfield and research into the use of audio feedback at Edge Hill University, the VERiFy Project aims to provide an innovative approach to the provision of feedback to learners in video form, accessed through personal computers and mobile telecommunication devices, encouraging learners to engage in a conversational framework by responding to feedback using video.

[View the VERiFy final report](#)

2. **Taking a Bigger Byte: Providing a Next Step for Supported Staff Development in eLearning**: This project proposes to trial a sustained course in eLearning that focuses both on pedagogic and technical skills, where participants can learn about new technologies and make enhancements to their teaching and learning practices. It will be co-led by Sue Folley from Computing and Library Services, Cath Ellis from Music, Humanities and Media and Liz Bennett from Education and Professional Development.

The aims of the project are:
• To develop a support mechanism for approximately 30 staff from across the University (a mixture of Academic and Support staff) in working through the Epigeum materials.
• For all staff involved to produce some effective change in their practice – either a redesigned module for academic staff or a project for support staff, such as the creation of some support or training materials for academic staff.
• To validate the module (made up of the suite of 7 Epigeum ‘courses’) and incorporate it as part of the CPD framework for internal/external clients to be able to package together with other available modules for claiming awards. This could allow the institution to generate third stream income by attracting CPD clients to the institution.
• To trial the use of these Epigeum materials for future use and deciding if they, together with our supporting framework are effective in bringing about better teaching practice and increased
engagement for students via technology in all types of delivery formats.

You can find more information in the Taking a Bigger Byte interim report July 2011

The project has now finished and you can read about the outcomes in the Taking a Bigger Byte Final Report Jan 2012

This project builds on the success and momentum gained from the Learning Bytes sessions; a Teaching and Learning project funded last year, to increase awareness and use of learning technologies. It also builds on a popular open session at this year’s Teaching and Learning Conference on how to create the engagement of staff with learning technologies.

3. Citizenship in Communities: Led by Andrew Mycock from Human and Health Sciences, this project seeks to mainstream volunteering and active citizenship within a modular framework that meets student expectations whilst also enhancing the University’s established reputation as a key institution in local and regional civil society.

This project seeks to mainstream volunteering and active citizenship within a modular framework that meets student expectations whilst also enhancing the University’s established reputation as a key institution in local and regional civil society. It addresses two key policy drivers, the government promotion Big Society and the Browne Review and subsequent higher education reform proposals. It seeks to promote greater social responsibility through volunteering and similar schemes, whilst also enhancing employability skills and the student experience. This offers opportunities for the University and its students to build on existing good practice and develop activism in local communities through the promotion of social responsibility and active participation to build a stronger, more cohesive and involved society.

The project seeks to draw on previous work within the Politics Subject Group to develop a pilot module that encourages civic leadership and active citizenship. We seek to establish a modular programme of volunteering that builds a community of citizens and learners that connects the University to wider society and allows students to broaden their learning experience and academic research skills through linking theory with practice. The key aims are to build on the Politics Subject Groups’ existing strong links with local government, schools and third sector agencies to develop networks facilitating employability and civil society. It will enable Politics students to further develop transferable skills by developing a module that avoids a top–down model of citizenship in favour of activism, advocacy and critical reflection. We believe such a module that will be of immediate benefit to the university in terms of recruitment, student satisfaction and employability that will establish a module template that can be used beyond social science disciplines without creating additional costs for the University.

The project recognises that active citizenship and volunteering are essential research interests of members of the Politics Subject Group at the University of Huddersfield. The project would provide an opportunity to develop research agendas to assess the impact volunteering. Students will take part in a pilot whereby they design a project and undertake a period of 50 hours volunteering in the community. They will be assessed by a range of A longitudinal study will draw on data that would allow for the development of a critical body of staff–led academic work on the impact of volunteering on students. The project will lead to the publication of a number of journal articles and subsequent bid for external funding for further research.
4. A study into optimising inclusive teaching and learning strategies for dyslexic arts students (Art & Design, Music, Drama):

Led by Robert Clarke from Art, Design and Architecture, this project aims to research, design and evaluate modes of teaching, learning and assessment which may offer more flexible alternatives to enhance student achievement.

Using examples of best practice in the field and through consultancy advice of renowned experts, this project aims to research, design and evaluate modes of teaching, learning and assessment which may offer more flexible alternatives to enhance student achievement. Furthermore, such alternatives may provide insights into how assessment of arts students’ critical thought could be applicable in wider contexts than just for those with dyslexia-type learning difficulties. A key outcome of the project will be to provide evidence on which to base a substantial bid for external funds to support deeper research into the particular learning needs of arts students. We see this project as the beginning of a series of potential research initiatives into support for students learning needs within and beyond dyslexia.

For more information, take a look at the and a short project presentation (PowerPoint) by Robert Clarke or View the Dyslexia Project Final Report.

5. Integrated formative assessment through blended learning:

Building on previous TQEF work, this project aims to ensure that feedback linked to formative assessment is made as accessible as possible. It will be led by Nadio Granata from the Business School.

The proposed project will build on the previous TQEF funded project on formative assessment. One strand which developed from the TQEF project was the use of online quizzes delivered via Blackboard for students to check their discipline understanding. This work has continued but needs to develop further so that feedback linked to the formative assessment is made as accessible as possible.

By developing a bank of formative assessment opportunities which are made available to students via learning technologies the project supports the key strategic themes of assessment and feedback and e-learning which have been identified by the Teaching and Learning Institute, as well as having direct relevance to the current EQUIP project by contributing to our ability to meet our students’ learning needs.

View the Integrated Formative Assessment through Blended Learning final report

6. Lemon Tree: Led by Andrew Walsh from Computing and Library Services, Lemon Tree seeks to increase student achievement through better use of library resources and engagement with new technologies in the form of a social, game based elearning platform. Users will register with the system and be able to earn points and rewards for interacting with library resources, such as leaving comments and reviews of library books. Integration with other social networks such as Twitter and Facebook will be built into the system. You can find more information in the Lemon Tree interim report July 2011 and view a presentation (PowerPoint) introducing the project by Andrew Walsh

Follow project progress on the Lemon Tree project blog View the Lemon Tree Final report
7. **An e-Portfolio system (extending functionality of ePDP/mPDP):** This research project builds on work undertaken in two of the 2010 Teaching and Learning projects - research undertaken in e-portfolio systems and the development of a mobile portfolio application. It will be co-led by Rupert Ward from Computing and Engineering and Stephen White from Human and Health Sciences.

In the first of these projects an evaluation of a range of existing portfolio approaches has been undertaken, which, whilst yet to provide final determinations, has identified that many institutions have a preference for bespoke portfolio systems. In the second project a mobile portfolio app has been produced which has been published on iTunes, and is currently being tested and evaluated with approximately 70 students from the School of Computing and Engineering; results to be presented in January 2011.

You can find more information in the *ePortfolio System interim report July 2011*

8. **Are placement students better psychologically prepared for life and work?** An International Comparative Study: Co-led by Lisa Ward from the Teaching and Learning Institute, Dr Tina McAdie, and Professor Nigel King both based in Human and Health Sciences,

An international research project hosted by the University of Waterloo in Canada is looking at if there are significant psychological outcome differences between students who pursue work integrated learning (WIL) and those who pursue a traditional (full-time) programme. The study is the first of its kind and research partner universities are in Sweden, Australia, the USA and the UK. In particular the study will measure: self-concept, self-efficacy, hope, procrastination, tactical knowledge, and study skills/work ethic, with WIL as the independent variable. The Teaching and Learning Institute and Centre for Applied Psychological Research are joining this international research collaboration.

You can find more information in the Work placement *project interim report July 2011* in the *Marketing briefing Power Point presentation* by Fiona Purdie (Research Assistant) and the *marketing poster* designed to promote and publicise the project.

The International Partners started the project earlier and have already been involved in sharing their results. An academic poster “Academic Attitudes & Behaviours of WIL and Non-WIL Students from Four Countries “ (PDF) was presented at The World Association for Co-operative Education Conference in Philadelphia. The academic poster is designed as a mini paper, and contains the same layout as you would expect of a paper, it is standard practice in Psychology to present posters this way.

9. **Employability Challenge: Led by Debbie Bridge from University Campus Oldham,** Employability Challenge will ask employers to tell us what they think are the skills gaps of our students, and then challenge them to make a contribution towards closing the gaps through engagement with student groups across the Oldham campus.

A significant resource is currently dedicated to the delivery of skills related modules on Campus; currently around 600 hours of tutor time. The quality of delivery and assessment ranges from excellent to what has been described as ‘an exercise in filing’. Much of the excellent delivery now involves the development of professional development portfolios, but a key element often missing even in the best
areas is the voice of the employer, the person who is expected to pay the salaries of our future graduates.

Employability Challenge will ask employers to tell us where they think the gaps are, and then challenge them to make a contribution towards closing the gaps through engagement with student groups across campus. The Oldham business community supports a range of forums for employers to consult and network with each other formally and informally. The Employability Challenge asks them to share their expertise and experience with the next generation of professionals.

View the Employability Challenge final report

10. Chinese Students’ Learning Experience: This research project led by Dr. Yun Gao from the School of Education and Professional Development, seeks to understand the learning needs of Chinese students at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels and the main characteristics of Chinese students’ learning style.

Through a gradually focused process including bilingual questionnaires, written responses, focus group discussions and a programme of seminars organised in each school, the project will consult with Chinese students on their learning experiences at the University of Huddersfield. Chinese students’ views and perspectives will be gathered to assist in analysis. The research seeks to understand the learning needs of Chinese students at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels and the main characteristics of Chinese students’ learning style. The project provides a potential group learning experience to support Chinese students on relevant issues in relation to academic study in the UK. The research outcome will contribute to knowledge regarding the cultural, social and intellectual barriers to full participation in university life that Chinese students face. It will therefore inform wider practice and service in the HE context.

You can find more information in the Chinese students’ experience interim report July 2011 and the interim report PowerPoint Presentation. Also read Chuanyan Zhu’s short article on the Social cultural context of international students from China

View the Chinese Students’ Learning Experience final report

11. Engaging the digital native: Developing a high fidelity product visualisation archive to support teaching & learning, led by Claire Allen and Claire Evans from the School of Art, Design and Architecture, this project aims to develop VLE resources to engage with and enhance the research and learning of digital savvy art, design and architecture students. Specifically sample pages for a VLE that engages the digital savvy learner (digital native) who have a heightened visual spatial intelligence and respond to rapid changing signals. The pedagogical intention is to use the fashion archive pieces to respond to this cultural shift and shape the way our students use and interact with VLE technologies for their practical studies with the aim to trial strategies to harness the ‘live node’ behavioural response. The archive would not only be a resource for research and critical analysis of garments but would also become a key teaching aid. We intend to move forward producing high resolution images that can be viewed from all angles inside and out and can be interacted with intuitively.

You can find more information in the Engaging the Digital Native Interim report July 2011 and the Engaging the digital native Final Report Dec 2012