Technology Enhanced Learning Plan 2012 - 2020

PART ONE

Introduction

The UWE TEL Policy 2007-2010 concentrated upon ensuring that structures and systems were appropriate for, and effectively facilitated the development of, TEL across the university. The 2007 - 2010 policy was successfully achieved by 2010. The current plan now moves on to address the development of learning opportunities that utilise these systems in ways that enhance both student and staff experiences, and that enable the university to achieve a sustainable future in a continuously transforming technological context.

The purpose of this planned review of the Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) strategy 2012 – 2017 is to amend and further develop it in the light of progress to date and the introduction of the UWE Bristol Strategy 2020 (Strategy 2020) and create Phase 2 of the plan. To fit in with the changes brought about by Strategy 2020, and to line up with other plans that operationalise the strategy, the previous title of TEL Strategy is now changed to TEL Plan. For the same reasons the time frame for this plan is extended to 2020, but continues to incorporate planned review points every 2 years in recognition of the rapid rate of change in learning technologies and practices. The review on the operation of the TEL strategy from 2012 to 2014 is at Appendix 1.

Governance

This plan is steered and monitored by the TEL Steering Group, which reports to AQEC and then on to Academic Board. Reviews of this plan will take place in June 2016 and June 2018, with the facility to undertake further reviews if circumstances require.

Context

Technology enhanced learning is described by JISC (2010) as a culture where a broad range of learners are provided with a robust technology environment that provides effective learning opportunities, wherever the learner chooses to learn. Most universities are now moving away from earlier, technology-focussed, definitions of “e-learning” and are now emphasising the learning experiences of students and the teaching experiences of staff. As Marshall (2010) comments “… the use of the technology itself is increasingly not a distinguishing factor for organisations, but rather the quality of that use and the way it advances the goals of a change-resilient organisation become essential to success.”

UWE has a robust technological framework upon which to build enhancements in effective and flexible learning, teaching and assessment opportunities. The university also makes a significant investment in staff and student support facilities. These are available centrally, e.g.
- the Learning Development Centre which offers training for staff,
- the IT and library help-desk support for students and staff, and
- the Education Innovation Centre which encourages networking, innovation and development in teaching and learning across the university.

And locally in the Faculties, e.g.
- TEL support teams, and
- local help desks.

There are many examples of innovative and effective uses of technology across the university and an appetite amongst staff and students to engage with new technologies. This plan therefore focusses upon the university’s aspirations for future learning and teaching developments and how our existing practice can be further advanced. UWE recognises that these aspirations require the continuing development of an effective culture, as described by JISC above. It also recognises the importance of active engagement with technology across all the university’s processes.
The university also recognises that students’ experiences are highly dependent upon their interactions with university staff. The staff experience lies at the heart of the student experience, and is also important in its own right.

**Guiding principles**

UWE Bristol Strategy 2020

The university’s core purposes are advancing knowledge, inspiring people and transforming futures. Strategy 2020 states our four ambitions to be achieved by 2020. These are to be best for:

1. Professionally recognised and practice-oriented programmes
2. Connecting and working with our local and regional economy
3. Being digitally advanced, agile and responsive, and
4. Being inclusive and global.

Our four priorities for action are:

1. Outstanding learning
2. Ready and able graduates
3. Research with impact, and
4. Strategic partnerships, connections and networks.

The four strategic programmes that are currently the focus of delivering the strategy and the priorities for action are:

1. Practice-oriented
2. Staff performance and development
3. Technological development, and
4. Campus development

The strategy is also being delivered through corporate level action plans, projects and tasks, which include:

- Teaching and Learning Enhancement plan
- Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) plan (to which this document refers)
- Widening participation strategic statement
- Single equality scheme action plan
- Sustainability plan
- Research plan

and further projects and plans that address other specific areas of action (from “Context setting for UWE Strategy 2013-14”, UWE Policy and Strategy).

This review of the current TEL plan addresses the relevant aspects of Strategy 2020 and aligns with the structure and actions of other corporate level plans.

External considerations

The HEFCE TEL Strategy (2009) states that the benefits of TEL can be measured by reference to three criteria, viz.

1. Efficiency (processes carried out in a more cost-effective, time-effective, sustainable and scalable manner)
2. Enhancement (improving existing student and staff experiences, learning outcomes and accessibility to study), and
3. Transformation (radical positive changes to existing processes or introducing new and innovative processes).

The need for agility in our decision-making and operational processes is clearly demonstrated in the field of TEL. The UK HE market is crowded and competitive, and rapidly-developing learning technologies can give institutions a competitive edge if they are recognised and cultivated early enough. To do this we need effective decision-making, a strong and adaptable IT infrastructure and a workforce that is confident and skilled in the use of learning technologies. This plan therefore focusses upon developing a culture in the university that values:

- Engagement with technology
- Willingness to change
- Optimism
- Open-mindedness
- Responsible risk-taking, and
• Staff and student communities of practice

PART TWO

Key principles

Strategy 2020 makes it clear that we want to enable our students to be ready to contribute to society, and be able to grow and succeed in their work and lives, in a rapidly changing technological environment. The overarching theme to this action plan is the continued normalisation of the use of technology in learning, teaching and assessment, thereby bringing about a culture change that makes UWE an agile leader in the field of TEL. There is a particular emphasis on developing student and staff communities of practice in teaching, learning and assessment, to enable UWE to be responsive both to student needs, and to the wider technological environment.

This action plan contains 4 headline principles, which are each broken down into key themes. The rapidly-changing nature of learning technologies and practices makes it difficult to have specific actions or KPIs, and departments and faculties have differing practices and needs in any case. So, faculties are encouraged to develop their own, more detailed plans, in line with these principles and themes.
## 1. Enhancing student experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Headline principle</th>
<th>Enhancing the experiences of all UWE students through effective, agile and advanced uses of technology, wherever and however they participate in learning and assessment activities, taking account of physical and mental disability, social mobility, physical location and cultural considerations.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>This principle is about enhancing student experience through the effective use of learning technologies. Strategy 2020 stresses being digitally advanced and agile, and the importance of being inclusive and global in our activities. The key themes under this principle are therefore aimed at increasing our sophistication and experience in effective use of learning technologies, and providing flexible, mobile and personalised learning experiences for our students.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
| Key themes          | • Increasing mobile learning opportunities for students.  
• Increasing personalised learning opportunities for students.  
• Increasing the sophistication of use of learning technologies, including using the full range of facilities offered by the Blackboard VLE, lecture capture and associated learning tools, desktop capture and social networking tools.  
• Continuing to develop learning opportunities that are flexible in location and timing. |
2. Enhancing staff experience and creating communities of practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Headline principle</th>
<th>Enhance the teaching, tutoring, assessment, support and research experiences of UWE staff, and develop a <strong>responsive</strong> community of practice in the effective use of learning technologies, comprising both staff and students.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>This principle relates to the staff experience, which lies at the heart of the student experience, and the creation of communities of practice involving both staff and students. Strategy 2020 emphasises a <strong>responsive</strong> digital environment, and an effective way to achieve this is for staff to interact with students to create active learning communities. This principle therefore moves away from the “student survey” approach to responsiveness and takes a more dynamic, constructive and conversational approach.</td>
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| Key themes          | • Fostering networks, connections and communities inside and outside the university.  
                        • Developing inclusive social networking opportunities, both physical and virtual, where staff and students can discuss effective teaching, learning and assessment practice.  
                        • Developing a culture of research and evaluation in learning innovation. |
### 3. Increasing virtualisation for education and sustainability

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Headline principle</th>
<th>Offering learning, teaching and assessment experiences that make increasing use of virtualisation techniques, with a particular emphasis on practice-oriented teaching, learning and assessment.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>This principle develops the aim of increasing virtualisation in relation to learning, teaching and assessment, to enhance education, reduce waste and, optimise our use of energy and resources in providing effective educational experiences for students, and working experiences for staff. This principle cross-references theme 9.6, <em>IT and enabling digital media</em>, in the Sustainability Plan.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Key themes         | • Offering technology-enhanced, practice-oriented opportunities for students that capitalise upon the different affordances of a range of technologies.  
• Moving towards faculty and university meetings being essentially paperless.  
• Encouraging the appropriate use of lecture capture, desktop capture, video-conferencing and similar video technologies to enhance learning, and to increase accessibility to learning experiences for students.  
• Increasing the effective use of desktop communication technologies for teaching, learning and communication. |
## 4. Curriculum and programme design

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Headline principle</th>
<th>Encourage research and innovation in the design of new curricula, and the re-design of existing curricula, to incorporate effective uses of technology for teaching, learning and assessment with a particular focus on developing <strong>practice-oriented modules and programmes</strong>.</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose</strong></td>
<td>The purpose of this principle is to encourage innovative course design, which promotes flexibility, inclusiveness, open access and sophistication. There is a particular emphasis on <strong>practice-oriented</strong> approaches, to help students to be <strong>ready and able</strong> to make an effective contribution to society upon completion of their studies.</td>
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| **Key themes**      | • Producing open content and developing open practices to exploit the potential of current and developing educational technologies.  
• Encouraging a culture of experimentation and innovation in course design.  
• Developing guidance for programme and module teams on designing opportunities for innovation and flexibility.  
• Developing guidance for programme and module teams on monitoring, evaluation and review processes, regarding the effective use of technology for learning. |
References
http://www.jisc.ac.uk/aboutus/strategy/strategy1012/executivesummary.aspx
Marshall S. (2010). Change, technology and higher education: are universities capable of organisational change?