Introduction to the Special Interest Groups
Learning Community Fora
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Following a wide spread consultation within the University, I am pleased to announce the introduction of a new framework for internal communications for teaching and learning. I hope that you will seek to be involved in the Special Interest Groups which have been established in a number of key areas. There are also plans to hold issue-based meetings, discussion fora, seminars and conferences as well as a programme of visits to Schools.

In this edition, the three Grand Challenges sponsored by Teaching and Learning Board with the support of Management Board are being introduced. The first Grand Challenge set up is ‘Assessment in the Digital Age’, led by Professor Martin Binks. Further information on this Grand Challenge appears on page 14. The second Grand Challenge to be established is on ‘Personal and Academic Tutoring’ led by Professor Peter Stockwell, with further details on page 16. The final Grand Challenge to be established is on ‘Course Internationalisation’, led by Professor Stephen Doughty. Stephen gives the background to this Grand Challenge on page 17.

I am delighted to report that the University has done well this year in two national measures. The University has leaped 12 places up the National Student Survey rankings from 42nd to 30th nationally; the results of the 2010 Survey, summarised on page 18, demonstrate the University’s continued improvement in the assessment and feedback, personal development and academic support aspects of the survey. Staff are to be congratulated on their continued efforts to respond to student feedback. The second national measure has been the University’s outstanding performance in the HEFCE Research Degree Qualification Rates, achieving a completion rate of 88 per cent for full-time Home and EU doctoral students who began their courses in the years 2000/1, 2001/2 and 2002/3.

I very much hope that you enjoy this edition of The Hub, as ever I would welcome feedback and ideas on how it could be further improved.

Professor Saul Tendler
PVC Teaching and Learning
Lord Dearing Fellowships for Teaching and Learning 2010/11

Learning and Teaching Board is pleased to announce the award of the first five Lord Dearing Fellowships for Teaching and Learning for 2010/11 to staff from all three campuses. The following members of staff have each been awarded the sum of £10,000 for the following projects:

Alexander Kalashnikov, Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering (UNUK) and Gobbi Ramasamy (UNMC): a project to design and test a novel learning environment to deliver remotely a first hand laboratory experience

David Hassell, Department of Chemical and Environmental Engineering (UK): a project to promote sustainability in both course content and course implementation within Chemical Engineering

Don Peterson, School of Computer Science (UNNC): further work on a project to help 2+2 students who spend two years at Ningbo then come to Nottingham to complete their degrees to commence integration into their UK experience before they commence course at the Nottingham campus

Liz Mossop, School of Veterinary Medicine and Science (UK): a project to identify elements of the hidden curriculum within the Veterinary School in order to drive the teaching of professional skills and the personal tutoring system, in preparation for the work place

Richard Field, School of Geography (UK): the aim of Richard’s project is to develop a system of e-learning and e-assessment which provides both formative and summative assessment that can be personalised to the student and which is suitable for use across all UoN campuses.

The award is for £10,000 and can be used in a variety of ways to support projects that present new ideas, approaches and thinking in areas of teaching and learning that are strategically important for the University. This is the second year of these Fellowships, and the calls for bids for Session 2011/12 will be made in April 2011.
The University has been reviewing its communication strategy and as a result new Special Interest Groups have been set up in Workspace, in which all interested staff are invited to participate.

Earlier this year, there was a wide consultation within the University about communications with and between schools in relation to teaching and learning. The outcome of this consultation was that there is a widespread desire to be better informed about University initiatives and policy developments with regard to teaching and learning and that staff would prefer additional forms of communication over and above those currently used. In addition, staff feel there is a need to raise the overall profile of teaching and learning within the University.

Six new Special Interest Groups have therefore been set up in the Workspace area to improve internal communications by giving regular reports on policy developments affecting Schools, updates on teaching and learning activities and initiatives, information about innovations and examples of best practice. These fora would enable views from a wide range of staff across all campuses to be sought in order to shape policy formulation and strategy. In addition, it is planned to hold regular lunchtime meetings to which staff will be invited, to ensure that face-to-face discussions take place.

The planned Special Interest Groups are currently:
- Assessment policies, including appeals and offence issues
- Research Degrees
- Innovation in Teaching and Assessment
- Tutoring
- Curriculum developments
- Teaching and Learning Spaces and Facilities

Sibell Ali, Teaching and Learning Development Manager, will be in touch with colleagues in Schools inviting them to participate in the Special Interest Groups, and let people know about lunchtime sessions.

If you would like further information, or wish to be involved in any of the Special Interest Groups, please contact Sibell at sibell.ali@nottingham.ac.uk

http://workspace.nottingham.ac.uk/display/TLN/Welcome

A New Communication Framework

Watch this Space!

The University has been reviewing its communication strategy and as a result new Special Interest Groups have been set up in Workspace, in which all interested staff are invited to participate.

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http://workspace.nottingham.ac.uk/display/TLN/Welcome
The 2009 QAA Institutional Audit of Nottingham advised the University ‘to strengthen institutional oversight of the outcomes of annual monitoring conducted by schools’. In response to this recommendation, Quality & Standards Committee is establishing a working group to review all aspects of annual monitoring and propose necessary changes.

The draft terms of reference of this group are:

1. To implement a system for the annual monitoring of programmes that:
   - provides the University with a mechanism for detecting any shortcomings in the maintenance of academic standards or in the expected quality of learning opportunities for students.
   - ensures the effective identification and dissemination of good practice.
   - operates consistently across all campuses of the University.
   - provides appropriate input to the periodic review of provision taking place within School Review.

2. To consider the role of the following elements in annual monitoring for taught programmes and make recommendations for changes in procedure to support Aim 1, above:
   - External Examiner reports
   - Module review
   - SET
   - SEM
   - Quantitative data regarding admissions, progression, completion, and classification.
   - National Student Survey scores.
   - SSFCs

3. To specify the elements of annual monitoring for research degree programmes and any differences in mechanisms for monitoring taught and research degree programmes.

4. To provide recommendations on any aspects of considering and responding to external examiner reports (taught and research) that may be additional to the annual monitoring system.

5. To monitor national developments with regard to Teaching Quality Information, the QAA Academic Infrastructure, and External Examining in so far as they may affect the above items.

The working group will be seeking views on all of the above matters during its deliberations. In the meantime, any comments would be gratefully received by Christine Bexton, who will be acting as secretary to the group, at christine.bexton@nottingham.ac.uk.
There has been considerable commotion at a national level in recent months regarding quality assurance and this looks likely to continue for the rest of the year. This spurt of activity has been prompted to a large extent by parliamentary and media interest in such topics as the comparability of degree standards, contact hours, and support for international students. The Browne review of student finance has further highlighted ‘value for money’ issues and the quality of provision offered by universities in return for funding from the state and individuals.

Leading the national work has been a newly instituted Quality in Higher Education Group (QHEG) formed by HEFCE and Universities UK (UUK). Professor Saul Tendler, Nottingham’s PVC for Teaching & Learning, is a UUK representative on QHEG. Current activities are:

- Revision of QAA Institutional Audit. The QAA will be consulting the sector on the operational description of a ‘more flexible and responsive’ audit process in autumn 2010. The main change is to be the introduction of a thematic element, varying from time to time, common to all audits.

- Judgement Terminology. The QAA has been asked to rethink the current ‘confidence’, ‘limited confidence’, ‘no confidence’ judgements arising from Institutional Audit. QHEG would like the judgements to be clearer but without providing fodder for league tables.

- Institutional Audit Reports. QAA has also been asked to provide ‘plain English’ summaries of these reports for a wider audience.

- External Examiners. UUK has recently issued a discussion paper on external examining arrangements. The outcomes of its review are due to be published in December 2010.

- Public Information. The HEFCE Higher Education Public Information Steering Group (there are very few snappy titles in this field) is considering the information that should be published by universities e.g. on the contact hours students can expect with staff. A HEFCE/UUK consultation on this subject will take place in autumn 2010.

- QAA ‘Academic Infrastructure’. QAA is reviewing its Code of Practice for HE (on which the University’s Quality Manual is based), benchmark statements, and qualifications framework. Proposals for changes to this ‘academic infrastructure’ will be circulated for consultation in autumn 2010.

Alongside all of the above, the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills has launched a Student Charter Working Group to develop an outline charter for individual universities to use. The group is scheduled to report by December 2010. Finally, the HEFCE Online Learning Task Force is also expected to report towards the end of the year.

Do you have an interest in national developments in these areas? Are you concerned at how they might impact on your school or area? Would you like to contribute to Nottingham’s response to any of these various consultations? If so, please contact the University’s Director of Academic Services, Robert Dowling, at robert.dowling@nottingham.ac.uk
Students’ Union Executive – Will Bickford Smith

A few words from the incoming Education Officer 2010/11

The forthcoming academic year is shaping up to be the most formative period for Higher Education (HE) in modern history. After a decade of economic imprudence, the UK is waking up to the reality of the fiscal conservatism required to balance the Government’s books. In no uncertain terms, this means that the public sector is facing its largest cuts for a generation, with the HE sector being no exception.

As cuts in the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) funding arrive, universities will inevitably seek new ways in which to raise more income with which to close this funding gap, and students will invariably be asked to contribute more personally towards the cost of their education. As such, we must now work harder than ever to ensure that students enjoy value for money. But what does this mean in reality for students at the University of Nottingham?

• It means working on developing an innovative, first-rate personal tutor system which monitors and enhances a student’s personal development, whilst encouraging them to develop their intellectual curiosity.
• It means creating world-class libraries which are perceived as vibrant centres of learning rather than stacks of books and rows of desks.
• It means implementing a system of exam and coursework feedback which is thorough, detailed, and tailored to each individual student.
• And it means developing new and effective ways of both teaching and assessing courses.

These are the areas I intend to work on this year to ensure that all students at the University - from undergraduate school-leavers, to part-time mature students - continue to enjoy a world class academic experience, and the quality expected in return for their investment of time and money.

As the new academic year begins, we should never forget the excitement and optimism of new students coming to study at the University. Thus rather than letting economic realities act as a hindrance to progress, we should use this moment to up our efforts in order to ensure that the University of Nottingham continues to enjoy its prestigious status in the future.

Will Bickford Smith
Education Officer, University of Nottingham Students’ Union
As part of its ongoing work with Schools, the recently established NSS Partnership has been working on a number of developments to enhance the University’s activities in support of teaching & learning and ultimately in working with students while they study. One area of focus has been the operation of what were formerly known as Student-Staff Feedback Committees (SSFCs), particularly in the light of student concerns about their effectiveness and transparency.

A number of changes have been made to help deal with these problems. First, after running a competition amongst the student body which elicited a large number of responses, the SSFC has now been renamed as a Learning Community Forum (LCF), a term that will start to be applied in 2010-11. Second, an online space has been developed for LCF on which all Schools will have a presence for all their LCF – undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research - for posting minutes of meetings, students representatives’ details (names and e-mails) and external examiners’ reports. In effect, the idea is to have a single site for LCF on which each School has its own section, all of which will be open to members of the University but not to the general public.

The site is not intended to replace the face to face meetings held within Schools; these will of course continue as previously. However, in Semester One of the 2010-11 Session, a pilot will be running across a number of Schools whereby an online discussion forum will sit alongside the other materials on the site and allow an ongoing interaction between staff and students that can help shape the agenda for the face to face meetings when they occur. Outcomes from the pilot will be reported in a later edition of The Hub.

Learning Community Forum
The new name for SSFC

Professor Wyn Morgan
Director of Teaching and Learning

...I am delighted at the formation of the new Learning Community Forums. We should all support any move to improve accessibility for student representatives to engage with the learning process, and I firmly believe that the LCFs will facilitate this...

Will Bickford Smith,
Education Officer (SU)

http://workspace.nottingham.ac.uk/display/LCForum/Welcome
The recent consultation exercise about the potential issues of enabling students to access Turnitin received a not surprisingly mixed response. However, the University has decided to make Turnitin available to all students from September 2010 because of its potential as a source of valuable formative writing support. Additionally, it is felt that many students already use a text matching service before submitting an assignment, choosing from the many that can be found through a straightforward Google search. By providing access to Turnitin with the associated support and information to all students, the University can ensure that all students become aware of such software and its potential to improve their academic writing.

The following brief details will be expanded nearer to the launch date.

Technical details of Student Access

Turnitin will be accessible via WebCT to all students from the beginning of the Autumn Term. The system will be ‘set’ in the following ways:

- Access will not be related to School set assignments but will be open for any student to use at anytime they choose. Students will be able to submit work to the system once every 24 hours.
- Submitted work will not be saved in the student assignment database to prevent the assignment matching to itself.
- The system will be set so that each assignment submitted will be overwritten by newer versions submitted.
- ‘Omit quoted text and bibliography’ will also be set to be permanently on. This will prevent false matches for correctly presented work.
Communicating Arrangements to Students

Students will be informed of the new arrangements in the following ways:

- Announcement on WebCT

Information through training offered by Professional Development:

- The annual plagiarism course will be developed to give full information about using Turnitin, analysing the ‘similarity reports’ and using it as a formative writing tool
- Information will also be given about the follow-up checks through Turnitin run by Schools and the range of checks carried out by academics marking work
- Packs of information and PowerPoint slides will be offered to Schools to use on their own induction events

Supporting Information in WebCT

Student access through WebCT will be supported by detailed information regarding the use of Turnitin:

- Information on how to use Turnitin to improve student writing
- Information about ways to analyse a similarity report and the steps to be taken if the report returns a high matching percentage
- Information on the ways in which plagiarism is identified through common marking checks which do not require the use of Turnitin

Support for Student Writing

Schools are advised to consider providing students with information about academic writing conventions, constructing a critical argument, correct citation & referencing and correct creation of a Bibliography. This sort of information will assist students in avoiding plagiarism and will help to ensure the correct use of Turnitin as a formative writing tool. Professional Development can help with the provision of ideas and materials for such information.

To ensure that the information and supporting materials for the release of Turnitin to students reaches the correct staff in Schools, I would encourage you to supply the name of a member of staff who will help co-ordinate the provision of this information to students at a School level.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to discuss any aspect of the roll-out plan, especially if you have ideas about further information you would like to see supplied to students accessing Turnitin.

David Burns
Director of Professional Development
Three postgraduates from the University of Nottingham have been awarded the Postgraduate Teaching Assistant Award for 2010. The award recognises and celebrates examples of high quality or innovative teaching and/or the support of learning. The award is open to all postgraduate research students who teach; either individually or as part of a group. Nominees can support teaching through, for example, demonstrating in laboratory classes, lecturing, leading seminars or assessing and giving feedback on student work.

The three winners are:

**Suzy Freake** - Department of Art History  
Suzy described an innovative and exciting approach to engaging students with complex texts and generating different viewpoints and perspectives for discussion. She recognised that people learn in different ways and so adapted the seminars to take this into account.

**James Gilks** - School of Chemistry  
James described a broad range of ways in which he has adapted his teaching to meet the needs of a wide range of students. This included demonstrating in first year labs, small group work, one to one sessions, marking, small group teaching with 2nd year students, University outreach to GCSE and A level students and mentoring a Masters student.

**Asam Latif** - Division of Social Research in Medicine and Health  
Asam showed a good example of how research can be used to enhance teaching and demonstrated the range of possible responses to a new initiative. He has taught both Pharmacy students utilising the fieldwork from his PhD and postgraduates through the Graduate School.
Due to the extremely high calibre of applications this year, six postgraduates were also awarded a ‘Highly Commended’ certificate for evidence of good practice in teaching.

They are:

John Durkin – School of Sociology and Social Policy
Richa Dwor – School of English Studies
Eva Giraud – Department of Cultural Studies
Claire Mann – School of Veterinary Medicine
Martin Nelson – School of Mathematical Science
Nicholas Wilshere – Department of Classics

Further details about this award and information about how to apply for 2011 can be found on Professional Development’s website at http://pd.nottingham.ac.uk/ Learning-Teaching/New-to-Teaching. Or you can contact Helen Cowley at Professional Development, Lenton Lodge, University Park NG7 2RD or email Helen.cowley@nottingham.ac.uk.
e-Assessment is a catch all term for a diverse set of electronic assessment activities covering both formative and summative evaluation. For some these offer a useful and often timesaving addition to the variety of assessment approaches used. For others e-assessment holds the potential to revolutionise the ways by which student learning and understanding is enhanced and measured. Some aspects of this broad range of practice are developing rapidly, raising important strategic issues for all areas of education and learning. This is the background to the University’s grand challenge to address ‘Assessment in the Digital Age’ (ADA).

From the evidence available to date it would be expected that e-assessment could make a significant contribution in many disciplines and that the nature of usage and deployment would vary widely according to context and subject. Given this expected diversity in applications the approach of the review will consider a number of issues. The enquiry is considering existing usage both within the University and in Higher Education more generally. Evidence will be gathered to assess why and how some existing practitioners have adopted and applied e-assessment approaches and why others have not. The potential benefits and costs of different applications in practice will be identified and the question as to how these can be made clearly accessible to all concerned will be addressed. Greater transparency in terms of the issues involved will support more effective decision making and thus move the University closer to the optimal deployment of e-assessment in terms of the nature of applications and their scale.
Many existing examples of these techniques are incremental in terms of the extent of innovation involved. Our present experience suggests that radical innovations in this area may be fewer because of the inverse relationship between the scale of change involved and its take-up. The scale of investment involved both for the Institution as a whole in terms of infrastructure and software and individuals in terms of the development of new approaches and materials can be considerable. In the case of Institutions, for example, very large investments in computer facilities may be required to accommodate large numbers of students undertaking an assessment simultaneously. For individuals the development of robust materials such as question banks may represent a significant commitment in terms of staff development, preparation and maintenance. Existing infrastructure and staff capabilities may be sufficient for incremental changes at the margin but inadequate for a radical shift in approach.

The review will also need to consider the potential benefits and risks of first mover advantage ‘leading edge’ or ‘bleeding edge’ as it is sometimes referred or ‘fastest wins’ versus ‘It’s the second mouse that gets the cheese!’ It is also important to investigate the extent to which e-assessment should be designed in response to existing practice on the assumption that things continue as they are or whether a radically different approach to assessment practices may be required. Some of these broader issues are beyond the scope of the current review but are being considered at a more strategic level in the University.

The initial evidence gathering process is being augmented through the employment of an intern for sixteen weeks. This resource will enable a relatively comprehensive but focused review and recommendations. Radical innovation could refer to the deployment of new technologies and significant staff development; it could equally well refer to a new blend of past and present technologies such as for example a combination of additional optical mark reader technology with significantly advanced software and analysis. Whatever the outcome this is a fascinating project to undertake so for further developments please continue to watch this space.
Personal Tutoring: the Grandest of Grand Challenges

Professor Peter Stockwell from the School of English Studies talks about tutoring - a diversity challenge

Before I went to University, my idea of the place was formed largely from books and their adaptations: Thomas Hardy's Jude the Obscure, Evelyn Waugh’s Brideshead Revisited, even Malcolm Bradbury’s The History Man. At the core of the experience was the student's meeting with a personal tutor, where you came face-to-face with a tweedy and cantankerous but fiercely brilliant and inspirational figure; the greatest minds of their generation passing on their wisdom to the next. University wasn’t, in the event, quite like that, but the original medieval idea of a university as an association or community (‘universitas’) of teachers and students remains a strong ideal in modern times. And the personal tutorial remains its emblem.

We live, though, in the age of the professional, corporate and internationally dynamic university, and this personal contact between academic and student has gradually been squeezed to the edges of large lectures, crushed by the weight of module material, and shrunk to a brief termly chat as the pressures of course teaching and research take priority. Academics largely no longer know their students very well; students regard the corporate image of the University as being faceless or remote. At best, there is a diminishment of the experience. At worst, the consequences of this are a lowering of expectations and aspiration, a mistrust of motives, and an overly mechanistic view of university as merely material and assessment. We can do better than this.

So ‘the University’ (with the face of Saul Tendler and his colleagues on Teaching and Learning Board) have set us a ‘Grand Challenge’ of making personal tutoring at Nottingham work to enhance the experience, performance and legacy of a student’s time spent in this academic community. It is not an easy task, because there is no such thing as the typical student. We have variation across three dimensions: different disciplines mean that we cannot adopt a one-size-fits-all pattern; students are on many different types of course, involving full-time and part-time study, placement, exchange, distance, vocational, accredited, occasional or lifelong learning; and students’ needs change from their first year to their final year. Equally, academic staff come in different shapes, from professors to teaching fellows, from the aged and wise to the bright, young and enthusiastic.

Further, those with long memories will recall that the University has addressed personal tutoring issues roughly every four years for at least the last two decades. Various schemes, old innovations and reformations litter the landscape like archaeological ruins. Rather than sweeping these away yet again, we need to make them work coherently so that this report on personal tutoring is the last for a generation. All of this is why the work is a Grand Challenge and not just a challenge.

A working group of students and academics from across the University has been gathering perceptions, identifying the key difficulties and formulating solutions over the last few months. We are moving towards a scheme in which we suggest several models of personal tutoring and invite Schools to adopt one of them, and we also have some resources available to support Schools who wish to develop a new pattern. We will report back at the beginning of the new academic session, with a view within the year of presenting a 21st century model of personal tutoring to the world.
The third and most recent Grand Challenge to be established by Teaching and Learning Board is in the area of Curriculum Internationalisation. The University of Nottingham is evidently a global institution – hoardings and posters around University Park make this point very clearly, and staff and students at the International Campuses in Malaysia and China recognise this from their very location. But what does this mean to Nottingham students? How does the Nottingham global reach and impact affect each and every one of our students? Will a Nottingham graduate be able to look back and identify the ‘value-added’ that they obtained from studying at a truly global institution? That is the challenge set down in this Grand Challenge.

As the newest Grand Challenge, the working group is currently being established and will meet for the first time in early September 2010. It is highly appropriate that this group will be chaired not by a member of staff based in the UK, but from one of the International Campuses – again, highlighting the importance and equivalence that the University places in its International provision.

The Grand Challenge will set out to consider how we can be best placed to develop students who are both prepared and able to be global citizens and through this have increased employability. This will likely involve challenging Schools and central units with respect to:

- Internationalising the content of existing programmes and courses
- Developing internationally focussed portfolios of programmes
- Increasing language skills and competencies of students
- Providing generic provision with a global emphasis

as well as supporting and encouraging Schools in meeting this challenge.

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An aspiration might be to reach a point where students are able to undertake learning components (maybe optional, maybe compulsory) that introduce them to a global theme. These components might be either integral to the programme of study, embedded within the curriculum of study, or else standalone generic modular components. Such components might cover different topics such as language, global cultures and society, global politics, global health, sustainable environment, or other globally-focussed topics. There will also be consideration of whether the emphasis should be on knowledge and content or on skills and competencies. All of these issues will be worked through, and relevant tools developed as this Grand Challenge progresses and as Schools and central units consider this theme.
National Student Survey 2010

Responding to student feedback

The University of Nottingham has jumped 12 places in the National Student Survey rankings — from 42nd to 30th place, with an overall satisfaction score of 87 per cent. The University rose in the assessment and feedback, personal development and academic support aspects of the survey, which polls all final year students at UK universities on their student experience.

The rise in the national rankings reflects continued staff efforts to respond to student feedback highlighted in the survey in previous years. The graphs below show how the University has performed in the Surveys since 2007, comparing its results with those of the Russell Group of institutions and those of the sector as a whole. They show how Nottingham continues to build on the steady improvements reported in the last three National Student Surveys.
Funding to Support Teaching and Learning

Professor Wyn Morgan, Director of Teaching & Learning outlines funding opportunities

To support the vision outlined in its Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy (TLAS) the University is offering a number of ways to support teaching and learning at both the individual and School level. The aim is to ensure that funding is focussed on key strategic goals and to maximum impact for the University as a whole. To that end, the sources of funding and how to access them is outlined below:

**Grand Challenge Funds**

The TLAS has established a number of Grand Challenges (see pages 14, 16 and 17) and substantial funding has been provided to allow Schools to respond to the challenges set by the various working groups leading them. Schools will be able to bid for funds once the working groups have reported their findings.

**Contact:** Academic Services Division  
**Allocation Decision:** working groups in conjunction with Teaching and Learning Board (TLB)

**Strategic Development Fund**

This fund allows TLB to establish projects that run across the campuses and for which volunteer Schools would be sought, working in conjunction with other Schools and the Director of Teaching and Learning, to help pilot ideas, test new processes or simply offer to engage with staff time to support the development of new approaches.

**Call date:** as and when TLB determines  
**Administration:** Academic Services Division  
**Allocation Decision:** TLB

**NSS Partnerships Fund**

The NSS Partnership aims to work with Schools to promote activities that support student learning and development in line with the themes in the NSS. Funding has been allocated to support the work of the Partnership who can provide Schools with small sums to engage in: focus group activities, small pilots of new approaches or other innovative ways to help tackle problem areas identified in the NSS results.

**Call date: none (allocated as and when)**  
**Administration:** Academic Services Division  
**Allocation Decision:** NSS Partnership
Lord Dearing Fellowships

The Lord Dearing Fellowship scheme is open to all members of academic staff on all the campuses of the University and up to five Fellowships will be awarded each academic session. The award can be used in a variety of ways to support the proposed project (e.g., buy-out of time of the Fellow, project research assistance etc.). Proposals for Fellowship awards should centre on areas identified in the University’s Teaching, Learning and Assessment strategy (http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/courses-office/curriculum/lts.htm) including the specific aspects identified in the Grand Challenges

Maximum of £10K per bid
Call dates: April
Administration: Academic Services Division
Allocation Decision: TLB

Individual Learning and Teaching Development Fund

Designed as a pump priming fund for those individuals interested in piloting ideas and is only available to individuals, including those completing PGCHE.

Maximum £5k per bid
Call dates: September and January
Administration: Professional Development
Allocation Decision: Director of Professional Development, PGCHE Course Leader and Director of Teaching and Learning

Staff Development Funds

Individual Development Fund

Support designed to help an individual to attend conferences or undertake qualifications outside the University.
Limited to £100 plus 1/3 payment of any fees
Calls: September and February

School Staff Development Fund

Designed to support away-days, workshops or any events where staff are gathered together to discuss a range of School-level issues
Capped at £10 per capita
Calls: September
Administration: Professional Development
Allocation Decision: Director of Professional Development

These details and other links will be made available shortly on the Special Interest Group (SIG) Innovation in Teaching & Assessment which can be found on the Teaching & Learning Network Workspace:
http://workspace.nottingham.ac.uk/display/TLN/Welcome
Teaching and Learning Spaces

Tim Brooksbank, Development Director for Estates reports on the teaching and learning spaces review

A Strategy for provision

Teaching and Learning Board tasked a small group to review teaching and learning spaces and to produce a strategy for review and assessment of spaces to meet the challenges of future innovations and aspirations for the University’s teaching agenda.

The group comprised Wyn Morgan (Director of Teaching and Learning), Alison Clarke (Director of IT Systems) and Tim Brooksbank (Development Director – Estates) who initiated the review with a detailed workshop in the Hallward Library in Spring 2010 that was well attended with both internal and external input. The group instigated desktop reviews of benchmarked University provision of teaching and learning spaces both within the UK and abroad all of which have been included in the Workspace (http://workspace.nottingham.ac.uk/) for wider dissemination.

The Strategy has been submitted to the Chairs of Teaching and Learning Board and Space Management Committee for approval and subsequent publication in the Workspace. Key elements of the review centre on: the need for wider collaboration in the assessment of spaces; identification of opportunities for enhancement (both in physical and technological facilities) together with a recognition of the importance of Central Timetabling; and the beneficial use of space and equipment which represent a significant investment by the University. Developments in e-assessment, training and awareness also need to be recognised in any review of teaching and learning spaces.

Commitment to enhancement of teaching and learning facilities

Space Management Committee has responsibility for the maintenance and allocation of Centrally Timetabled facilities and has had a rolling programme of investment in excess of £3 million in the period 2007-10. This excludes new facilities included in new developments such as the 550 seat lecture theatre (Coates Road Auditorium) completed adjacent to the Centre of Biomolecular Sciences, and the current construction of a 380 seat lecture theatre at the new Mathematics Building (extending and incorporating the former IESSG building), both at University Park.

New Spaces!

Current investment also includes new teaching room facilities at the Engineering & Sciences Learning Centre and the Humanities Building at University Park together with the Biosciences/School of Veterinary Medicine and Science Building at Sutton Bonington.

These multi million pound investments incorporate a substantial improvement and increase in the learning and teaching spaces available to the University community.

Innovation in technologies

Information Services continue to identify opportunities for improved facilities and working with Estates have provided significant enhancement to wi-fi coverage across the academic buildings of the campus. Additional to this, there has been a recent investment to provide laptop power supplies in the major libraries and in available seating areas in the central area of University Park campus.
Audio Visual services continue to seek to provide up to date provision which is readily usable by all, together with the support services in case of emergency! Interactive technologies have been provided in a number of lecture theatres across the University to enable the recording of lectures for later podcasts and other uses. This has been recognised by some lecturers as a significant opportunity to get students to concentrate on the substance of lectures rather than the need to focus on note taking.

Video Conferencing facilities have been extended across the campuses both in the UK and in China and Malaysia both to reduce the University’s carbon footprint and to enable greater communication. These are generally bookable through the Central Timetabling system.

And finally

With in excess of 16,300 centrally timetabled seats, the variety of teaching facilities is extensive across all the campuses and represent a genuine opportunity to try out alternative teaching methods.
The University successfully secured funding from the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund (TQEF), a Government initiative via the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). From 2007/08 the University was awarded £650K per annum for 3 years to support initiatives to enhance teaching quality, whilst satisfying national strategic priorities for teaching and learning in HE. As a result the Teaching Committee was able to fund over 50 projects across Schools and Central Services and crucially, it provided valuable opportunities to consider the University’s relevant institutional priorities – an example of which is provided below:

**Developing** new programmes that reflect needs in the marketplace not currently being fully satisfied

A number of successful bids were received from across the University to develop both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. A collaborative bid from Electrical & Electronic Engineering and Physics & Astronomy introduced the Science Foundation Programme providing an alternative route of entry for students identified with having potential to succeed but without appropriate qualifications on entry; Art History used TQEF funding to roll-out their 3D computer software programme ‘Curata’ (funded by the Centre for Integrative Learning) to a new MA Pathway ‘Modern Art, Criticism and Display’. Curata allows students to develop an abstract idea for an exhibition using models of real space such as the Djanogly Art Gallery or the Castle Museum’s Long Gallery whilst ensuring that students realise three-dimensional space; a Natural Sciences degree programme was established between Biology, Biosciences, Chemistry, Mathematics and Physics & Astronomy to offer students the opportunity to explore a broader range of topics, helping to meet wider career objectives but also to complement the broader range of A levels now currently offered in sixth form colleges.

**Identifying** means of reducing the assessment load on staff and students, while still adequately testing learning outcomes of programmes

With students increasingly demanding more support outside of the classroom and to accommodate the growing undergraduate population of seven hundred plus, the School of Economics investigated alternative forms of assessment, particularly with an online component to be used for both formative and summative assessments. The School was also interested in exploring e-learning as an alternative to the traditional ‘content’ found on module web pages and to provide students with a richer learning environment that would support them to engage with their subject whilst encouraging them to take responsibility for their own learning.
Introducing flexibility into the curriculum and its delivery so as to facilitate student and staff mobility and promote employer engagement

As a global institution it is vital that academic mobility is regarded as a high profile issue. TQEF was allocated to fund a substantial review of the MSc International Business and to increase the international exposure received by home students. As well as providing ways to continually improve provisions made available to students it was also seen as an imperative step for enhancing employment opportunities.

Flexibility into the curriculum and alternative learning environments are also crucial to employer engagement, enhancing the overall student experience and reducing the pressures and time constraints for both staff and students. To this end, Medicine and Health Sciences embarked on filming real cases of spinal surgery to assist their students in gaining a clearer understanding of the principles involved in intricate cases but also elements of spinal surgery not currently part of the students existing timetable. These resources were edited down to ten minute clips but the entire procedures were also available for students to access independently and regardless of which training centre they were based.

Looking at alternatives to formal examinations, both for mobility students and overall student population

The department of Chemical & Environmental Engineering have been working to introduce e-Learning as an integral part of the curriculum, allowing their students to regularly engage with their learning. The department have now successfully delivered summative assessments through Question Mask Perception (QMP). Formative assessments were also available via an e-learning toolkit for Numerical Calculations using Xerte, which is customisable for different modules. This model could be easily adapted to serve other Schools and has been readily embraced by students.

Providing students with experiences away from the University, either as formal academic exchanges, work placements, or other skills development opportunities

In today’s competitive market it is increasingly important to provide students with experiences away from the University to prepare them for employment or further study. The School of Politics and International Relations have been working to establish a formal system of placements and secondments for their students with MPs and other political organisations, similar to schemes currently running at several universities across the UK including LSE, Leeds and Hull; The School of Biology used TQEF money to fund part of an exchange between the University of Nottingham and Suez Canal University in Egypt. Benefits include training in essential research skills and valuable life experiences, whilst at the same time stimulating both undergraduate and postgraduate recruitment.

For further information about TQEF funded projects please contact sibell.ali@nottingham.ac.uk
Success in the HEFCE Research Degree Qualification Rates

The University of Nottingham has come joint second – alongside Bristol University – in the recently published HEFCE Research Degree Qualification Rates, a national measure of PhD completion rates over seven years which considered data from 111 English universities in total. Nottingham's completion rate of 88% for its full-time Home and EU doctoral students was well above the benchmark set at 82% - the level at which it was expected to perform based on a profile of its students. In addition, Nottingham's qualification rate was 84% for its international students, again higher than the institution's benchmark of 76%, which ranks it seventh among English universities.

The full information on the Research Degree Qualification Rates are available at: http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2010/10_21/

Forthcoming Visits to the University of Nottingham

Craig Mahoney, new Chief Executive of the Higher Education Academy (HEA), will be coming to Nottingham in September, as part of the HEA's consultation process with the Sector on the future of the Academy. Professor Mahoney commenced his post on 1 July 2010 and originally came from Australia, though has lived in the UK for the past 24 years. Before joining the Academy he was Deputy Vice-Chancellor at Northumbria University, and prior to that was the founding Dean of the School of Sport, Performing Arts and Leisure at Wolverhampton University.

Anthony McClaran, recently appointed Chief Executive of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) for Higher Education, is due to visit the University in October. His visit will include a short tour of the University's teaching and learning facilities, including the refurbished Hallward Library. Anthony's career in Higher Education commenced in the 1980s, and he worked at the Universities of Warwick and Hull before moving to UCAS, where he eventually took on the role of Chief Executive before his move to the QAA in October 2009.

Heather Fry, Director (Education and Participation) at the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), is also visiting in October. Heather Fry joined HEFCE in November 2008 as Head of Learning and Teaching. She became Director (Education and Participation) in April 2010. In this role she has responsibility for HEFCE's work in learning and teaching and widening participation, and for the North institutional team. She also has other responsibilities, including HEFCE's links with JISC.

Prior to joining HEFCE Heather worked in universities for many years.