**Learning and Teaching Futures Group**

**Minutes of the meeting held 4th October 2012, Hazlerigg 201.2.13**

**Present:** Morag Bell (MB) – Chair, Melanie King (MK), Caroline Pepper (CP), Carol Robinson (CR), Steph McKeating (SM), Julie Holland (JH), Liz Chahal (LC), Jan Tennant (JT), Yvonne Hamblin (YH), Helen Smith (HS), Charles Shields (CS), Jenny Narborough (JN) – Secretary.

1. **Welcome and Introductions**
2. **To discuss background to and purpose of the group**

MB introduced the purpose of the group; members represent units or centres, academic Schools, and support services involved in contributing to learning and teaching. The group aims to work together in a coordinated way to meet initiatives from the Enhancement Agenda and to help direct and shape future enhancements. A key question will be for the group to agree on what to deliver and how to measure success.

1. **To comment and agree on Terms of Reference**

The ToR reflect working together, contributing to the curriculum, sharing resources and identifying areas for new developments in the way students learn. Items are to be considered in terms of teaching and learning, the use of technology, and within the physical and virtual learning environments.

The group will meet approximately 4 times a year

CS noted the group will be taking over some of the remit of the E-learning Advisory Group (ELAG) which no longer exists. Concerns were raised that due to this group’s wider remit, some matters, including e-learning strategy and progress against the e-learning implementation plan, may be missed.   
In particular CS noted an important decision made by ELAG regarding a change to the visibility of Learn resources at roll over. This change had a significant impact Learn modules and tutors, and the decision has required official backing to be implemented. CS asked where this kind of discussion would take place?

MB stated LTC’s ToR includes monitoring the e-learning strategy and implementation plan. It is also under the ToR of the Quality and Standards Sub-Committee to discuss specific issues. It was recognised it must be clear where matters are addressed, and MB welcomed further discussions relating to particular issues outside of this meeting.

MB agreed to circulate the governance structure for LTC, showing the four sub-committees. This group will feed into Quality and Standards Sub-Committee; however MB did note this may not be the correct arrangement in the long term.

**Action:** All to raise any issues with MB relating to where particular matters are to be addressed outside of this meeting.

**Action:** MB to circulate the governance structure for LTC.

JT raised concerns that potential issues/projects will often have an impact on, or are dependent on the IT infrastructure. With no IT services representative within this group, what is the procedure to include IT services with the process?

MK noted discussions with IT will be linked with the current reorganisation of SISG which would have been the forum for such discussions. To date the reorganisation has not been resolved.  
MB noted how important this matter is, and mentioned Phil Richards would like someone from IT services to be in this group in the near future.

MK welcomes the group as a great opportunity to report on activities as an institution.

1. **To share programme of activities proposed for Schools for 2012/13**

MB briefly ran through the Key Enhancement Activities document, noting the headings map onto the University Implementation plan.

Information to note:

* The Student Charter was launched last year, with this year’s focus being on embedding it within schools. Links from Charter to University information is underway and will be circulated when complete.
* Student Learning opportunities; work placement activity. The University has agreed that all undergraduates will have the opportunity of a work or study placement during their undergraduate years.
  + HS informed the group of a new professional work experience unit, primarily to develop tools and resources which offer a range of work experience opportunities to all students across the university (mainly working with the 3 Schools where placements are less firmly embedded than elsewhere in the University). Alongside this, a key area will be to support employers in addition to students.
* Student learning resources and support; a student engagement programme has run for a number of years with several projects under this heading. A project of interest is Skills and attributes in the curriculum.

Current activities within this area:

* See activities noted by HS above.
* SBE runs a module throughout the 1st year in relation to student skills and employment. Other schools are seeking advice on how they can run similar module/workshops for their students. Students inform them they are drawn to the course as this is included within the curriculum.
* MEC offers help and workshops to all students within the university on basic employability skills relating to maths and statistics, as well as the more advanced maths support. It was acknowledged that the centre is leading on this both Nationally and Internationally.
* The Library is involved in embedding more study skills into the curriculum. They are currently working on mapping where they are delivering skills in departments.
* The Student Support Centre is involved by dovetailing with modules but the content is not directly credit bearing. Results include approx. 94% attendance, and discussions are underway with Geography and Civils about doing something similar.
* CEDE produced a series of Presentation Skills workshops directly for students with the workshop material now available to the other Engineering Schools. They have also produced a Research study on Lab skills with recommendations for academics.
* FM are conducting a student survey relating to teaching rooms and informal teaching spaces which will be conducted mid November. A staff survey was previously conducted, of which this student survey will triangulate with. Information from these will feed into a functional suitability to identify where areas of investments are needed.
* CS introduced Box of Broadcasts (BOB), a new online facility which enables tutors to identify and make recordings available online. This facility also works alongside current facilities such as Learn and lecture capture.
* Careers deliver approximately 70 timetabled sessions relating to study skills throughout the year, with some now contributing to the assessment and are keen to build this within Schools/Departments more.

The group agreed it is important to identify where support is required. CR noted the MEC used School contacts for communication but also suggested to link activities to NSS, to review and target specific areas.

Consideration of staff skills and staff engagement is essential, linking to student expectations. JH noted by engaging with modules does encourage staff to be included. Methods of how to communicate with Schools/departments/individuals requires consideration, and it is likely a range of methods is needed.   
CS and MB noted the updating of the Online Min Presence Document followed up with an audit as one method of gaining buy in from the University and from Schools.   
CR also mentioned a statistics forum for staff, bringing staff together to discover what each offers and share best practice. This format works well and has good attendance as individuals can see the benefit of the event.

Timing and delivery is vitally important. It is acknowledged centrally offered skills don’t always attract attendance from those who really need them; however, working with departments and modules seems to benefit more students. The downside, it is more time consuming to design and deliver embedded/dovetail sessions with modules.

Working together; a good example of how this group can work together has been the purchase and integration of BOB (although currently at the initial stages) which can then be used within the physical and virtual teaching spaces.

1. **To agree shared priorities 2012/2013**

The group agreed to collate and audit the range of activity initiatives that each of the support services can offer, and what we are offering this year, with a focus on being able to market this for Schools/Departments to know what support is available. These activities should be able to be mapped against the Key Enhancement activities.  
It was also agreed to identify which programmes and modules these activities are taking place within, and if the activity is within the curriculum or available centrally.

The audit should also fit into an overall framework that indicates the attributes and characteristics required of Loughborough graduates/postgraduates. It should be possible to identify areas of good practice and those requiring further attention, with developments requiring to be measurable.

Suggested framework terminology:

Competencies; Attributes; Skills; Qualities

Mapping initiatives suggestions: A number of possible headings were proposed.

Numerical skills; Study/Academic skills; Entrepreneurial skills; Employability skills; Enterprising skills; Writing; Critical thinking; Digital literacy; Communication; Leadership; Negotiation skills; Personal awareness

**Action:** All to send information to JN by early November, JN to collate and circulate asap after this date.

1. **To agree date of next meeting**

Next meeting to be scheduled for late November; to review the audit of activities and match with attributes.

Caroline Smith from the Teaching Centre will attend in place of JT