

TEL Strategy - Background

CCCU has a relatively long history in the use of technology to enhance learning, spurred partly by the necessity to connect students on work placement with learning and teaching activities at the CCCU campus. We were pioneers as well as early users of a digital learning platform. However, the increasing pace of change in the sector and emerging new directions in the digital environment now require a refreshed strategically driven approach. A new *Technology Enhanced Learning Strategy* will outline how the university will position and strengthen its technology-based learning offer in 2016 and beyond.

CCCU has ambitions to build upon its success by implementing the *CCCU Strategic Framework 2015 – 2020*. Integral to the success of this venture will be the use learning and teaching technologies to provide a high quality Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) and technology enhanced student centric blended learning. Learning technologies will underpin CCCU strategic objectives in all of its core domains:

- * Student Experience (1, 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7)
- * Education (2, 3, 4 and 6)
- * Research and Knowledge Exchange (2, 3, 5 and 7)
- * Resources (3 and 4)

Additionally, learning and teaching technologies/TEL will need to support *CCCU Learning and teaching Strategy 2015 – 2020* in its four key priority domains as well as aligning to the following principles:

- * Building learning communities
- * Students as partners in learning
- * Supporting success for all students
- * Outstanding learning, teaching and assessment practices
- * Curriculum transformation
- * An integrated approach to graduate employability
- * Flexible and responsive learning environments

However, there are numerous challenges in the current increasingly competitive Higher Education landscape, these include:

- Increased expectations for digital engagement
- Familiarity and access does not equal digital literacy
- The growing ubiquity of social media
- A growing demand for flexibility
- New modes of competition
- Keeping pace with change

Challenges and opportunities

Increased expectations for digital engagement The use of technology in learning is a given in the modern educational context, where children, young people and adult learners engage, and expect to engage increasingly, with the world around them through digital media. Learning anytime, anywhere; accessing research and study information effortlessly; engaging in networked learning in collaborative and interactive environments; and utilising online tools for peer and self-directed learning are all an integral part of 21st century education.

Familiarity and access does not equal digital literacy Numerous research studies have shown that, in spite of incoming students' familiarity with a wide variety of digital technologies, this does not necessarily translate into easy and effective use of technology for scholarly and professional purposes. Students' development of professional digital literacy needs to be carefully structured and supported throughout their programmes.

The growing ubiquity of social media This has been identified as one of the key trends expected to affect technological innovation in higher education in the next few years (The *NMC Horizon Report: 2014 Higher Education Edition*). The high use of Facebook, Twitter, blogs, YouTube and other social media signals two significant educational shifts. First, it represents a shift from audience as consumers to users as creators and producers. Second, it is a move from technology to deliver content to networked systems, which enable relationships. Enabling and enhancing creativity and production, and enabling and deepening networks of relationships, are the key factors that must underpin any contemporary technology-enriched/enhanced learning strategy.

A growing demand for flexibility Increasingly mobile and time pressured, students expect to use technology to complete learning tasks in gaps in their busy day, as they often balance significant work or carer hours with their study, commute for long distances and/or engage in work-based learning at off-campus locations. Undergraduate, postgraduate and international students typically have part-time jobs and third of students report regularly missing classes because of work.

New modes of competition Technology is now a major factor in university efforts to be positioned as distinctive in the competitive higher education landscape. This competitiveness hinges not only on the relationship of education and technology but also how technology is used to support the whole of the student life cycle, including before entry and after graduation. The market for fully online post-graduate education is becoming very competitive worldwide, with new partnerships between major universities and new online providers offering programmes at very competitive prices. In the open learning area, a further challenge is the availability of high quality online educational content, such as MOOCs, provided by elite institutions free of charge.

Keeping pace with change Schools and universities have been relatively quick to embrace technology in learning, but many challenges remain, not least the ability to match and adapt strategies and resources to the pace of innovation, the ability and willingness of staff and students to engage in cultural change associated with new tools and patterns and the foresight of institutions to re-engineer their products and modes of delivery. The effect of fast paced developments in technology also impacts on the infrastructure demanding that the architecture to support platforms and software is robust and agile enough to adapt to needs.

Pressures on funding Reduced public funding is a pressure will impact on learning and teaching quality unless universities are able to adapt. At the same time, student numbers are likely to increase as universities pursue growth strategies. In the very near future, it will therefore become imperative to find ways to work with technology which both offer cost benefits *and* enhance learning.

B Current CCCU Context

CCCU Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2015-2020

Vision

Our strategic objective is ‘develop increasingly flexible modes of delivery including through part-time and blended learning opportunities’: *CCCU Strategic Framework 2015 – 2020*.

Strategic context

Our purpose is to build our digital capacity to ‘provide flexible and responsive learning environments to enable effective learning to take place in a wide variety of physical and virtual spaces supported by up-to-date learning technologies where appropriate’: *CCCU Learning and Teaching Strategy 2015 – 2020*.

Additionally, Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) will underpin the following strategic aspirations:

- Access to learning opportunities and support for learning should increasingly be delivered 24/7 in our physical and virtual environments to meet the needs of local, national and international students at all levels. ^[1]_[SEP]
- Students and staff are encouraged to use technology and a wide range of digital media to maximise and support learning. ^[1]_[SEP]
- The development of innovative learning and teaching pedagogies, particularly those mediated by technology will be encouraged. ^[1]_[SEP]
- Curricula design should take into account the need for increasingly flexible modes of delivery. ^[1]_[SEP]
- Infrastructure and systems are required to be robust to support different approaches to learning ^[1]_[SEP]
- The University will continue to invest in technologies for learning, in particular those which support increased flexible learning in order to meet the challenges of students who may be learning in different modes, places and pace. ^[1]_[SEP]

CCCU Curriculum Model (Under Development)

Under development.

Digital Learning Thresholds (endorsed by Academic Board June 2016)

For a number of years CCCU has recognised the need to develop its VLE via a consistency pathway to improve the student online learning experience. To support the transition to VLE Consistency and the CCCU Curriculum Model, a set of digital learning thresholds have developed for CCCU. These thresholds have been designed to be implemented in two stages, considering both the institutional responsibilities as well as the requirements for programmes/modules:

Stage 1 (Operational by end Academic Year 2016 – 17) The institution will provide a sound strategy with necessary resources and training to support digital learning at CCCU. In addition to this an evaluation process will be established. All modules/programmes will provide detailed digital “modules packs” for students, including assessment details. Content for the modules will also be uploaded along with a clear communication strategy and tools for students. All these features will be checked for technical functioning.

Stage 2 - (Operational by end of Academic Year 2017–18) The institution will examine staff workload policy in relation to online teaching, as well as evaluation of the infrastructure. By the second stage all modules will also allow for digital submissions, recording of grades, feedback mechanisms and self-assessment. Content will also include digital media. Guides to support digital learning will also be developed and made available to support teaching and learning.

C Technology Enhanced Learning Task & Finish Group

A Task and Finish Group (TFG) was established to progress a technology enhanced strategy for CCCU in January 2016. Membership of the group consisted of:

Head of Learning Technology – Bill Ashraf	Faculty Director of Learning and Teaching (Health and Wellbeing) – Alison Eyden
Head of Career Development – Helen Gleaves	Faculty Director of Learning and Teaching (Arts and Humanities) – Kath Abiker
Student Enterprise Manager – Nicola Burr	Faculty Director of Learning and Teaching (Education) – Gemma Van Vuuren-Cassar
Head of IT User Support – Sal Parker	Faculty Director of Learning and Teaching (Social and Applied Sciences) – Kristina Masuwa- Morgan
Head of Student Engagement – Sue Riddell	Senior Lecturer Policing Suite – Jane Owen
Interim Head of Academic Professional Development – Rayya Ghul	Student Communications Manager – Ruth Wood
Manager of Student Disability Services – Margaret Scott/James Saward	Faculty Liaison Librarian – Manfred Gschwandtner
Learning Technology Skills Developer – Stephanie Engel	Student Union President- Krum Tashev or nominees
Learning Technologist – Wayne Barry/Lynne Burroughs	IT User Support Operations Manager – Iain McCracken

The first task that this group carried out was to initiate a self-assessment exercise, based on an international benchmarking exercise, to ascertain CCCU's current strengths and areas for development. This was conducted through the ACODE benchmarks that were developed to assist institutions in their practice of delivering a quality technology enhanced learning experience for their students and staff. Eight benchmarks were revised for the 2014 exercise:

1. Institution-wide policy and governance for technology enhanced learning
2. Planning for institution-wide quality improvement of technology enhanced learning
3. Information technology systems, services and support for technology enhanced learning
4. The application of technology enhanced learning services
5. Staff professional development for the effective use of technology enhanced learning
6. Staff support for the use of technology enhanced learning
7. Student training for the effective use of technology enhanced learning
8. Student support for the use of technology enhanced learning.

The group initially conducted an internal benchmarking exercise focussing on benchmarks 5 to 8, examining practice across faculties and central units. This found uneven levels of staff expertise in teaching using technology and uneven take-up and/or access to staff development opportunities. For students, with some exceptions there was little support for technology-enhanced learning or digital literacy.