

Strategic Staff Development Project

Theme Two: Defining and supporting the strategic leadership role

Operating Strategically in Staff Development

Andrew Wilson

Director of Professional Development, Loughborough University

August 2006

Contents

Strategic Staff Development Project.....	1
Theme Two: Defining and supporting the strategic leadership role	1
Operating Strategically in Staff Development	1
Contents.....	3
Figures	4
Introduction.....	5
The approach within this Guide.....	5
Strategy and the staff developer	6
What does being strategic look like?.....	6
I know what being strategic looks like, but I can't do it	6
I'm being strategic but the institution doesn't recognise this.....	7
I want to be strategic but my institution won't let me	7
Becoming strategic.....	7
Strategies.....	8
Aspects of strategy	12
Drivers	12
Stakeholders	13
Decision-making.....	15
Implementation.....	23
Recognition and review.....	25
Sustainability.....	29
Personal strategic behaviours.....	34
Conclusion	38
Appendices	39
Dr Andrew Wilson ~ BSc, MA, PhD, RPHEA	40
Current Responsibilities.....	40
Current Externally-funded Projects.....	40
HE Client List.....	40
HE Activities	40
Past Projects	40
International Activities.....	40
Consultancy.....	40
Development Plan for Professional Development ~ October 2004	41
Present Position and Position Envisaged in 3 Years' Time	41
PDQ OMR Paper November 2005	43
The Use of OMR in Assessment (Revised Version).....	45
Executive Summary.....	45
Current OMR System Shortfalls	45
New OMR System Benefits	45
Examples of the New Approach	46
Ongoing Work.....	46

Figures

Figure 1 - Levels through Time.....	11
Figure 2 - Drivers Diagram	14
Figure 3 - Stakeholders' Drivers.....	15
Figure 4 - Triangle and Trash	21
Figure 5 - Strategic Triangle	21
Figure 6 - Strategic Trashcan	22
Figure 7 - Clouds and Buckets.....	28
Figure 8 - A-M-L Pressures	31
Figure 9 - Network Categories.....	32
Figure 10 - Staff Development Dimensions	35
Figure 11 - Excel Version of the Dimensions	36
Figure 12 - Traffic Lights	38

Introduction

It is often alleged that university staff developers are insufficiently strategic. Even if this is a myth it is nevertheless a very powerful one. This Guide aims to help staff developers in HE to think systematically about their role and to be – or be seen to be – more strategic.

This view of staff developers could have arisen for several different reasons, including:

- Staff developers really are insufficiently strategic
- Staff developers are strategic but are not seen to be so
- Staff developers could be strategic but are blocked by their institution

The first and second of these reasons are addressed in this Guide. It focuses on being strategic and being seen to be strategic. The second and third reasons recognise that institutions and their senior managers play a key role. If their complaint is that their staff developers are not strategic enough, then to a very large extent the solution lies in their own hands. The work of Theme One of this project, including its Executive Briefing and Case Studies, provides valuable guidance for senior managers, and indeed for staff developers. The Executive Briefing, in particular, could well be used by staff developers to help promote a dialogue with senior managers on what their institution feels it needs.

The approach within this Guide

This Guide offers a very personal perspective on operating strategically as a staff developer, in part as a deliberate counterpoint to the approach taken in the Theme One papers. It is drawn very largely from my own experience and has all the advantages and disadvantages associated with this. Please take what is useful and discard what is not!

To help you understand my background and biases a one-side of A4 CV is attached as an Appendix A.

The Guide begins by offering some preliminary comments on **Strategy and the staff developer**, it then discusses six key areas:

- Drivers
- Stakeholders
- Decision-making
- Implementation
- Recognition and review
- Sustainability

Each of these sections offers a framework to help you think about the issues. **Drivers** deals with the factors that can influence the activities of staff developers. **Stakeholders** considers those who will have an interest in or be affected by your work. **Decision-making** looks at how you can make decisions about your aims and strategies, and **Implementation** at how you can put these into effect. **Recognition and review** is about being seen to be acting strategically and **Sustainability** looks at

a bundle of issues – some personal and some professional – concerned with making it all continue.

Finally there is a section on **Personal strategic behaviours**. This offers a capability framework for staff development leaders – and other more general strategic frameworks – to help you to reflect on your personal practice.

The Guide has four strands running through it, these are:

- General text
- Examples – italicised within indented boxes
- Key points – bold within boxes
- Tasks – bold italics within shaded boxes

Strategy and the staff developer

The four likely problems for staff developers in this area are:

- I don't know what being strategic looks like
- I know what being strategic looks like, but I can't do it
- I'm being strategic but the institution doesn't recognise this
- I want to be strategic but my institution won't let me

What does being strategic look like?

We asked this question of staff developers – and of their managers. The results are described in Richard Dales's and my companion paper, *Survey Report on Staff and Educational Development Leaders including Views on Strategic Leadership*. Alignment between the institution's strategies was seen as critical and one particular comment, from a senior manager, encompasses much of what was offered.

“Strategic staff development requires a knowledge of the external drivers acting upon the institution and its staff, combined with a very close understanding of the institutional priorities and direction. Leadership then requires knowing how to prioritise the beneficial activities that the staff development unit can do and aligning these to the dictates of the external pressures and the university's own sense of direction.”

So it is not enough just to read the institutional strategy documents and align with those, it is essential that the staff developer has (a) a thorough understanding of the external drivers and the internal priorities and direction, and (b) the ability to reflect these in staff development activity.

I know what being strategic looks like, but I can't do it

There is evidence that a number of staff development leaders are in this position. The suggestion sometimes offered is that staff developers who have become highly skilled in the delivery of workshop programmes can find it difficult to make the transition to the more facilitative or consultancy-based approach that is likely to be required if staff

developers are to align more closely with organisational needs. This comment is reflected in the growing emphasis on “organisational” rather than “staff” development.

It seems likely that institutions, staff developers, and in some cases both, are finding it difficult to define the appropriate roles and structures to enable this transition.

For the staff developer this argues for the strategic dialogue with senior managers mentioned earlier, as well as conscious efforts to develop skills in new ways of working.

I'm being strategic but the institution doesn't recognise this

Some staff developers do make this argument. For me it is the high-level equivalent of the “It's a good workshop but the participants don't appreciate it” comment. And the response is the same, you either change the workshop or you change the participants.

At the strategic level you change the former by developing your thorough understanding of your institution's external drivers and internal priorities and direction and adjusting your offering accordingly; you change the latter by educating – or upwardly managing - your senior managers. It's a mixture of high strategy and low cunning.

I want to be strategic but my institution won't let me

When this happens it will typically be because the institution doesn't know how to make the best use of its staff developer. Their advice is not sought and often they are not close enough to senior managers to learn enough about what the institution really needs. If this is the case then the approach will probably need two strands. One will concentrate on building an internal reputation (paradoxically, perhaps, external projects can help with this), and the other will be – at some carefully chosen time – a conversation about how you can help your institution.

Becoming strategic

Looking across these four areas, the suggestions are easy enough to offer but they are very high level and general. Putting them into effect at the operational level is much more difficult. Immersed as we all are in the day-to-day business of supporting staff, delivering sessions, attending committees, writing papers, etc, it is often hard to carve out the time to think about these issues. And to do so without support is really difficult.

So although this Guide offers practical ideas to help you with this process, you are almost certainly going to need to tap into other forms of support. This is where all the other mechanisms being promoted by this project, and subsequently supported by the Staff Development Forum, come into play. These are outlined in the overview paper *Operating Strategically in Staff Development – Support and Development Mechanisms*.

In the meantime, here are some thoughts on operating strategically in staff development.

Strategies

A strategy is a plan to help you achieve something. Being strategic means:

- being clear about what you want to achieve
- developing an appropriate plan
- implementing, monitoring and adapting your plan
- doing this at a level that will have a significant impact within your institution

Key Point

It also, critically, means being clear about what you are NOT going to do.

The following comments are important general points that are sometimes forgotten as people move into more detailed stages of the process. They are clustered under the following headings:

- Leading or led?
- Living it
- Levels
- Links

Leading or led?

Strategies will emerge whether you like it or not. A series of minor decisions made on a purely reactive basis can, over time, develop into a *de facto* strategy. This is rarely a good thing. It is important that you should lead your strategic development rather than leaving a vacuum to be filled by others. And stay alert for what might look like minor things, but which can cause problems in the future. This applies, for instance, to the membership or terms of reference of committees. If you're not on the right groups then you won't hear and you won't be heard, and terms of reference do set the purposes of groups.

Example

Here's the first item from the initial draft of a committee's terms of reference:

"To co-ordinate the university's response to student diversity issues."

The word "response" needs changing as it indicates a passive approach. This is especially important because the area is one where the legislation imposes positive duties.

Living it

All-too-many institutional strategic documents are shelf-ware. They are produced, often with considerable angst and effort, and are then left on a shelf and never referred to again. It is sometimes quite interesting, and indeed surprising, to revisit old strategy documents to see what you were supposed to have been doing.

Some documents go to the other extreme and absolutely everything has to conform to the plan. Strict adherence to such an approach can inhibit preparation for the future.

The important thing for any strategic aims that you produce is that they should be lived. Every decision you take should be aligned with your strategy. Some important decisions can seem to be very low-level but can have a big impact.

Example

It's hard to be living an inclusive approach if you don't cater for diverse dietary needs.

Levels

Part of living your strategy is thinking about your work at different levels. Here's one way of doing this. The precise terms don't matter a lot, but what does matter is that serious thought should go into the upper levels and that you should check from time to time whether what's happening at the lower levels is consistent with your ideas at the higher levels.

Values	How you want to be.
Vision	What you want to achieve.
Strategy	Ways of achieving your vision.
Operational	Day-to-day approaches.
Detailed	The minutiae.
Trivial	Things that don't really matter.

Values and **vision** are critical. Where difficulties occur that don't have an obvious cause, they can often be tracked back to mismatches between different people's values and vision, or to a lack of clearly articulated values and vision.

Staff developers can have particular difficulties here because of the range of activities and people that they engage with. There can also be tensions between the commitment of individual staff developers to the growth of their individual colleagues and the unit's requirement to deliver against institutional strategies.

Values and vision are a powerful aid to decision-making. If it is proving hard to decide on something, then ask how the different options relate to your values and vision. So it is at this level that you will want to flag up and make explicit some core commitments. And such statements need to be shared.

Example

As you might expect, I've been thinking a lot about the recent awayday and how we make sure we build on it.

This made me think about some high-level purposes. For me, I think the top level is for us to be recognised as the leading integrated professional development unit in the UK.

More personally, again for me, it's...

- doing a good job - so that we enjoy the esteem of our peers (both internal and external to our institution)*
- growing professionally - so that we feel fulfilled*
- being valued personally*

It is also at this level that you will want to highlight a commitment to such things as: innovation, continuity (see sustainability later), diversity, ethics, etc.

It can be helpful to discuss a **strapline** for your unit. This tries to capture the essence of how you want to be and how you want to be seen. Any mismatch between the strapline that you produce, and that of your institution, should ring warning bells.

Key Point

If you want to understand what your institution really values, look at who it promotes.

Task

Write down what is or would be your unit's strapline and then consider how well this aligns to that of your institution.

So it is important to make sure that your unit's activities are consistent with your values and vision. Hence, over time, you do need to be able to move up and down between the levels as is indicated below. And people throughout the unit should be encouraged to think in this way too. Note the avoidance of the trivial level.

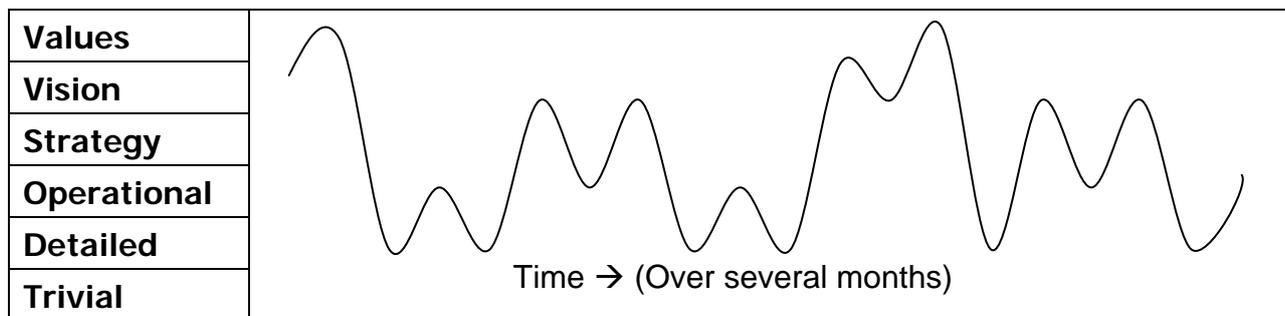


Figure 1 - Levels through Time

It helps to have a mindset that always asks the higher-level or broader question. So if the discussion is about the department or faculty, ask what the impact is on the institution. If it's the institution, then consider the region or sector. If it's a detailed discussion, have the strategic questions in your mind.

Example

Here is a set of strategic questions relating to learning and teaching:

- *What sort of students will we recruit?*
- *What characteristics do we want our graduates to have?*
- *What learning experiences will we need to give our students?*
- *What patterns of employment of staff will we need to deliver this experience?*
- *What infrastructure will we need?*
- *How will we lead and manage all this?*

Key Point

Always be willing to look at an issue from a higher level.

Links

It is very hard to operate strategically without good links. They are important in three particular ways:

- seeing the big picture
- working across interfaces
- operating efficiently

Strategic-level working requires a good grasp of the **big picture**. This understanding is extremely difficult to acquire without links outside your unit and also outside the institution. It is surprisingly easy to become trapped within a parochial mindset. People who have good links with key people and key organisations – both internally and externally – will find out about things sooner than those who don't and will have the opportunity to acquire a much deeper understanding of the issues. There is no substitute for these links; they are looked at in more detail under Networks.

Strategic work is usually seen as high-level. As your level of operation rises so the spread of topics that you need to be aware of increases. This means that you are likely

to be **working across interfaces**. If you don't have good links then it will be harder for you to manage these interfaces.

It is also the case that some very interesting areas of work sit at these interfaces. For instance e learning and staff development come together in e staff development and major national bodies have funded such work.

Having good links across these interfaces will make it much easier for you to see - and to seize - such opportunities. And since many projects require consortia, having good links will make it easier to put good consortia together.

The final key area where links can help is **operating efficiently**. Even with modern search facilities and so much material on the web, there is no better way of getting to grips with an issue than by talking to someone who has been there, done that, and got the T-shirt.

Key Point

Build – and maintain – strong internal and external networks.

Aspects of strategy

With your values and vision clearly articulated, and your knowledge enhanced through your links, you now need to decide what strategies you are going to adopt and how you are going to deliver them. This sections looks at:

- Drivers
- Stakeholders
- Decision-making
- Implementation
- Recognition and review
- Sustainability

Drivers

It's always worth thinking about the range of drivers that can be pushing an issue forward – and the converse, the drags that are holding it back. There are lots of checklists that can help you consider the full range of factors. PEST – Political, Economic, Social and Technological – is a common one. Here is a more extended one that adds: Individual, Institutional, Legal and ethical and Sustainable.

PITILESS

- Political
- Individual
- Technological
- Institutional
- Legal/ethical
- Economic
- Socio-cultural
- Sustainable

Using a list like this is a good way of making sure that you have looked at an issue from every angle. Sustainable is a relatively recent addition to the list, but nowadays it is very dangerous not to consider it, not least because it is something that funding councils are concerned about.

Stakeholders

A key point with drivers is to recognise that different people have different drivers. So it's very important to consider everyone who will have an interest in, or be affected by, your work. And the list is often surprisingly long.

Task

Think about one area within your remit.

Make a list of all the people who will have an interest in, or be affected by, your work.

It's very easy to assume that you know what someone's drivers are. Make sure you really do know before you act on that knowledge.

Example

Some years ago, when we were more naïve, we proudly told a project sponsor at our final steering group meeting that we had been very economical and had underspent. The sponsor went pale and urged us to spend our full allocation.

Somebody somewhere had argued long and hard for the funding, and for it not to be spent would have been extremely embarrassing.

You can also combine an analysis of drivers and different people using a diagram like the one shown below. The lines radiating out from the centre indicate the various drivers, the three octagons indicate the power of each driver, with low close to the centre and high at the outside.

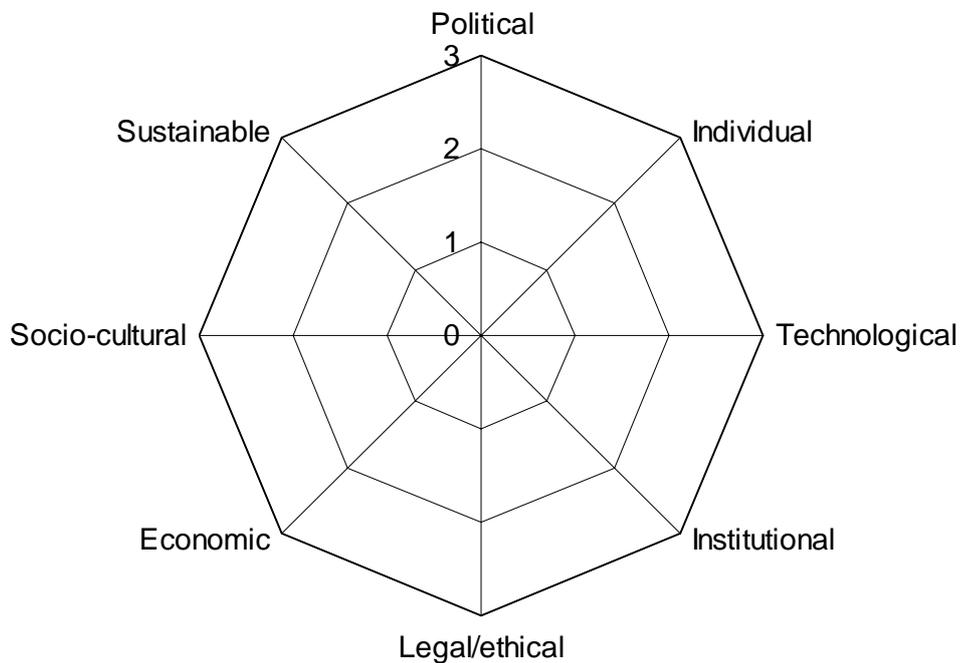


Figure 2 - Drivers Diagram

The diagram can then be used to compare the drivers of different groups or individuals, as is shown in the version below. Where the shapes are the same there is a shared set of drivers, where they are very different, as they are here, then those differences need managing.

(The diagram shown below is fairly easily produced within Excel using the Radar chart.)

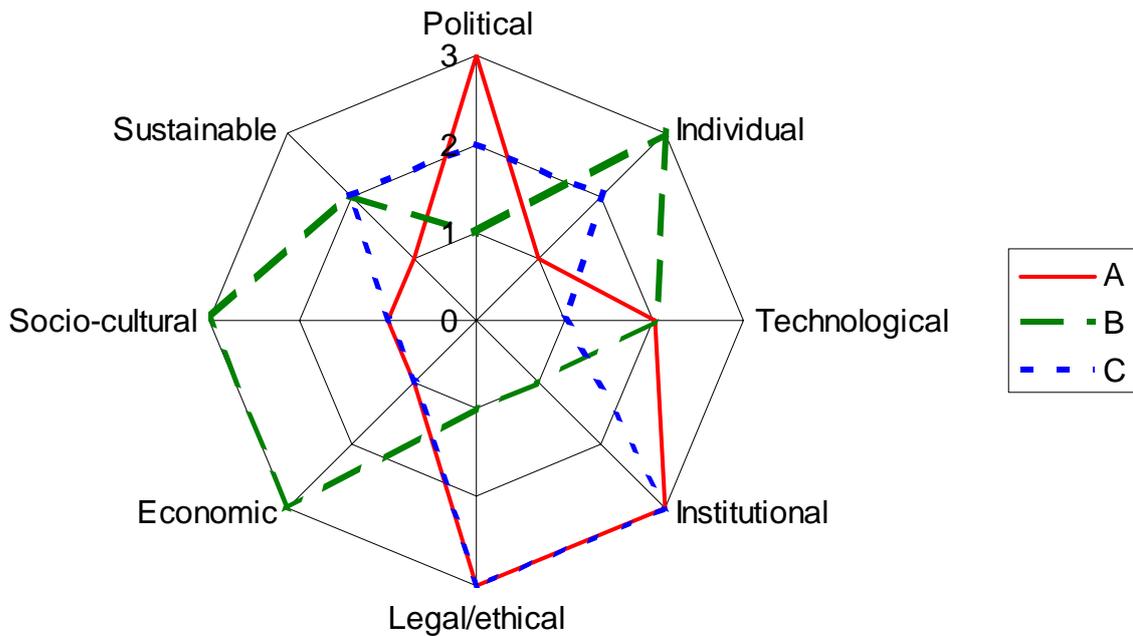


Figure 3 - Stakeholders' Drivers

Key Point

It's not enough to understand people's expectations; you also need to manage them.

Decision-making

The core activity in operating strategically is to make decisions strategically, and to be aware that you are doing this.

The role of minor decisions in influencing strategy was discussed earlier, this section looks at the bigger decisions that you will need to take and considers:

- Realities
- Risks
- Range
- Resolution

Realities

There is a great deal of rhetoric in higher education and a great deal of coded language too. What is said – and what you think is said – are not always what is meant. You need to be able to understand the realities behind the rhetoric. It's also very interesting to listen for what isn't said, this can often be very revealing.

Example

A PVC was describing the membership of the committee that made decisions about staff completing probation. They failed to mention the faculty teaching co-ordinator even though that person is a member.

What does that tell you about institutional priorities?

We say “realities” rather than reality because no two people will have exactly the same views on anything. And since all activities involve people this means that it is dangerous to think that there is some objective truth out there.

Formal documents have their uses, but there is no substitute for hearing the words – and their tone – and seeing the body language of the speakers. This means that you need to get close to senior managers if you possibly can. So seek membership of committees, tedious though they can sometime be, and foster links with senior managers. If you are to make sensible strategic decisions you need to understand the different players’ versions of reality. (This links to the earlier discussion of drivers and stakeholders.)

Key Point

Do your very best to be in a position to hear what senior members of your institution have to say.

A key concept that emerges from discussions with staff development leaders is **political astuteness**. Developing both the contacts to give you the necessary information, and the skills to analyse it, will help you to understand the realities around you. Keep your antennae tuned to help you gather this political intelligence.

Risks

Risk is relevant in two particular ways. One is the idea of a portfolio, the other is risk analysis.

Your unit’s work – and your own - will consist of a **portfolio** of activities, in much the same way that someone may personally have a financial portfolio. And just as a personal portfolio may contain some low-risk and some high-risk items, so your unit’s work should also consist of activities bearing different degrees of risk. If everything is low-risk, then you are not pushing at boundaries or trying new things; if everything is high-risk, then your unit is vulnerable and your staff are probably uncomfortable.

To have a portfolio of activities with different risks implies that you are able to assess those risks. This means doing a **risk analysis**.

When thinking about risk analysis it is helpful to distinguish between probability and consequence.

Probability is the likelihood that something will happen. Consequence is what happens if it does. So a low probability with a high consequence can be more worrying than a high probability with a low consequence.

This distinction is helpful because you manage the two aspects in different ways. It also often helps you to see that the real risks are not quite what you expected. On many projects, for example the major risk is not the loss of the director - they are normally easily replaced - it's the loss of a more junior colleague with key and critical skills.

Example

In several of our projects the main risk has been the loss of our database/web officer. We have tried to reduce the probability of their departure by doing our best to make their job interesting and secure, and by valuing their contribution. We have tried to minimise the consequence of their departure by requiring thorough documentation and by having someone else work alongside them where possible.

Doing a risk analysis may lead to you not doing things that you could do and would like to do. If the funding is such that you will probably not be able to continue doing something, then it may be better not to start because the consequences of stopping are worse than those of not starting.

Key Point

Manage different risks in different ways. Consider probability and consequence.

Risk also links to sustainability and succession planning, which are discussed below.

Task

Thinking about the work of your unit...

What major risks are you carrying?

What are you doing to reduce the probability of it happening?

What are you doing to reduce the consequence if it does happen?

Range

There are a number of aspects about strategic decision-making that relate to range. Two key ones are the range of activities that you can manage and the other concerns the range in terms of the distance from your personal control

The **range of activities** for staff developers can be considerable. As you become more senior or the size of your unit increases, it is likely that the range of activities that you are involved with will increase. Paul Blackmore points to a series of changes associated with this, all of which will require leadership and management effort:

- More visible and more expensive
- Purpose and boundaries potentially more volatile
- External communication is more complex
- Disparate activities produce tensions
- Unspoken values are tested
- Trend towards formalising the informal
- Different organisation is required
- The leader's relationship with other staff changes

These all add to the burden on the staff development leader. Many of them are not strategic, but a lack of clarity over strategy will make them much harder to manage. For

instance, it is extremely dangerous to change your form of organisation without being very clear about your purposes.

Key Point
Strategy must come before structure.

The issue of **distance from your personal control** links to risk. The closer something is to you then the more confident you are that it can and will be done. If you are either working through other people, or moving into areas that are some distance from your core competences, then there is more uncertainty.

Overall, then, the greater the range in terms of either spread or distance the more effort you are likely to need to put into leadership and management. That all takes time; so it is important to put your effort where it will give the greatest strategic benefit in the long term. And since leadership and management capacity is not infinite, this also means that you may decide not to do something largely because you do not have the capacity to manage it.

Key Point
Don't underestimate the time it takes to manage something.

Resolution

At some point you need to come to a resolution about your strategic priorities.

This also involves the resolution of different interests. The most important five are:

- What the institution wants
- What the institution knows that it needs – and doesn't want
- What the institution doesn't know that it needs
- What the future will require
- What you can deliver

What the institution wants

If you are to survive, you must give the institution quite a lot of what it wants. It may not always be very clear what it wants, and different people want different things, but you can never go far wrong by mapping your activities against the institution's strategic aims.

This, though, is nothing like enough.

What the institution knows that it needs – and doesn't want

These can be tricky. They are often things that external drivers require the institution to do, and to be seen to be doing with enthusiasm (and staff developers can often be used to demonstrate this enthusiasm). But there is no real commitment by the institution, just compliance. So there may be a substantial difference between the rhetoric and the reality and it is important not to be carried away by the rhetoric.

What the institution doesn't know that it needs

Institutional strategic plans are never complete. They take lots of things for granted and they may ignore important areas. Individual staff, for instance, may feel like pawns in such plans and there is often a need to do things that make them feel more valued. The institution may well not be aware of this need, and will not highlight it within its strategic planning, but for it not to be done could be quite dangerous. Staff developers are often the ones who do it.

What the future will require

Strategic plans may not take adequate account of future needs. It may well be, for instance, that you – through your external links – are aware of impending legislation or of some technical development that you will need to address. You need to be able to meet these needs when they appear and that will involve your unit in some activities that may not – at this stage – appear to be strategic.

Example

Even though the requirements of SENDA (Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001) had been known for some time, most institutions had failed to take any account of it in their planning. By using our networks to engage in work in this area we were ready to provide an answer to the university as soon as it realised it had a problem.

What you can deliver

What you can deliver depends on the sorts of things that are discussed below in Implementation, but the significance here is two-fold. It is dangerous to offer something – however strategically important it may be – if you do not have the ability to deliver. It is usually better to avoid an area, than to deal with it badly.

The second point is that capacity-building, in its broadest sense, is an important part of strategic thinking. How will you be able to meet the changing needs?

These issues are looked at in more detail under Implementation.

Key Point

Planning your own development – and that of your team – is a key strategic activity.

You can map the possibilities of what you can deliver using the concepts below. They looks at wants, needs and the future. They also consider things that you shouldn't be doing. There's a strategic triangle and a strategic trashcan...

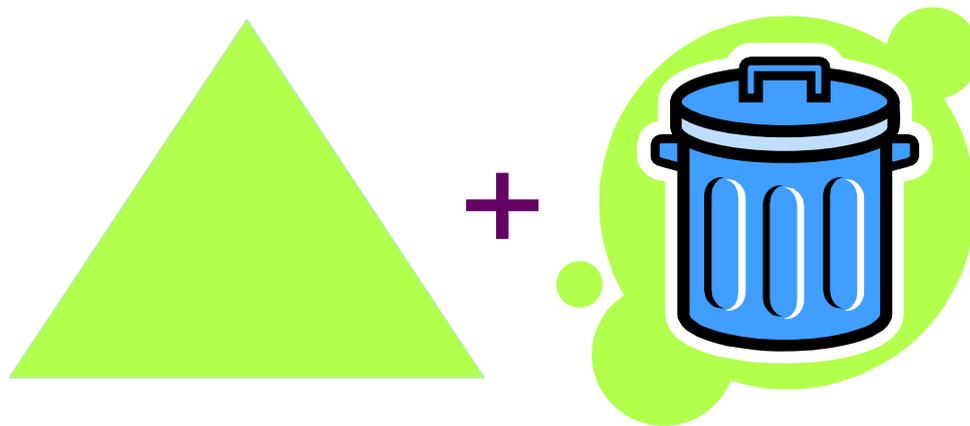


Figure 4 - Triangle and Trash

...and the argument is that what you're doing should either fit the strategic triangle, or you should stop doing it and put it in the trashcan.

The idea of aligning with institutional strategies is seductive, but incomplete. Strategies will not cover everything that the institution needs and they will not include some things that you can see coming over the horizon but that the institution is not yet aware of. So the three elements in the strategic triangle are...

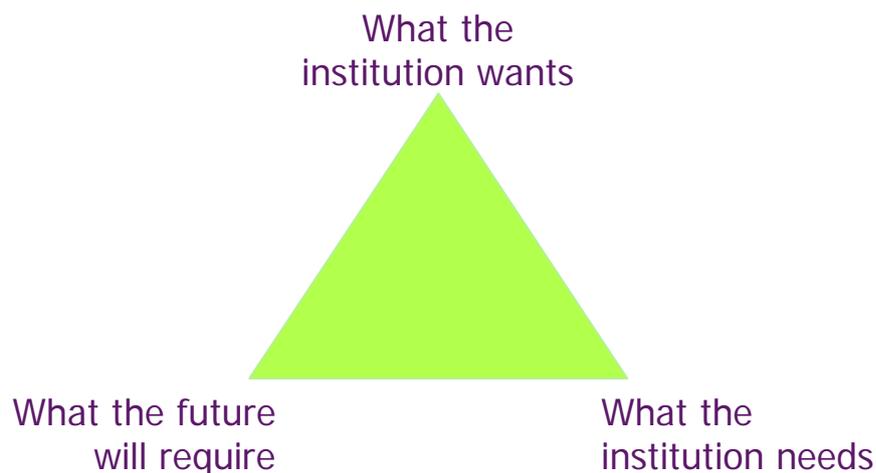


Figure 5 - Strategic Triangle

To be sustainably strategic you need some of each of these items. What the institution **wants** is the most straightforward. You must do quite a few of these, otherwise you won't continue in post, but they are the easy bits in that the institution will usually signal these requirements quite clearly and will be inclined to resource them.

What the institution **needs** (but does not want) will be harder. An example of this is employee well-being. Some institutions have adopted this in their strategies, others have not, but all institutions need to pay some attention to it and staff development units will often contribute to it. If you don't address issues such as this then the long-term viability of the institution will be threatened, but you need to be careful about how you do them. You probably need to find ways of:

- badging them so that they look acceptable
- educating the institution to recognise the need, and/or
- doing them in the background

What the **future will require**, but the institution has not yet identified, is really important for you to consider. Because of your professional knowledge and your networks you will be able to see things coming and if you can prepare for their arrival you will be able to shape their introduction and you will be seen as helpful. Examples, some of them going back some time, include: appraisal, quality systems, diversity, disabled students, personal development planning, VLEs, etc.

So your portfolio should include something in each category. If it doesn't you are probably not being as sustainably strategic as you could be, and you may be forced into reactive behaviour.

That leaves the trashcan.



Figure 6 - Strategic Trashcan

The idea here is that anything that you are currently doing that doesn't fit the strategic triangle should go here. These may be things that used to be needed, but no longer are, or things that someone wants you to do that don't fit the triangle.

There may be strong personal preferences here, perhaps one of your team loves doing it – perhaps you do! – in which case it needs careful handling. Possible examples could be:

- People running sessions in other institutions that add nothing to their CVs
- Running courses because “we always have and the participants like them”
- Doing things **for** individuals and groups rather than **with** them

If you have items like this in your portfolio then you should consider trashing them. But do recognise that there may be emotional attachments to manage.

Then it's time to ask which of these you can deliver, and all of this needs to be embodied in a development plan – see below.

Key Point

There is a huge benefit in being able to solve your institution's problem just as it realises that the problem exists. Position yourself to be able to do this.

Implementation

The process of deciding what to do must take some account of your ability to do it. So the factors that follow should be looked at – at least in outline – under the What you can deliver heading. Some of the key factors that bear on implementation are:

- Commitment
- Competence
- Capacity
- Co-operation

Commitment

I said earlier that strategies have to be lived. If there isn't sufficient commitment to making something happen, then it won't. So part of the planning and the risk analysis is whether there is enough commitment. If there isn't, then you may just have raised expectations only to frustrate them later.

Critical to this is your own commitment. As the leader of the group people will look to you for indications of how much importance they should attach to an issue. Do you have the time to commit to an activity? You may be able to delegate some of this, but not all, so this becomes one of the "things that only you can do" that we will look at under Sustainability below.

Competence

I make a distinction here between competence and capacity. We see competence as the skills, knowledge, understanding and attitudes to do something. Capacity – looked at in the next section – is about having the time (it's mainly time) to do it.

You certainly don't need to have all the competences for all the activities yourself, and you don't necessarily have to have the competences within your unit, but you do need to consider where you are going to get them from and the associated risks. The further the competences are from your personal control, the higher the risk. Any task needs to be tightly specified, but tasks that involve outsiders need to be made very formal and explicit.

Example

As HEFCE's Fund for the Development of Teaching and Learning (FDTL) projects progressed from round to round, the advice about producing written contracts for collaborating institutions became more and more emphatic.

It is very common to use activities to develop competences. This is great, but if you are doing this it is important to recognise that these activities are running in parallel and not just to assume that competences will automatically be acquired. It will take someone longer to do something if they are both doing the work and learning how to do it. There

may be conflicts between the two purposes and there will probably be knock-on effects on other people too.

Capacity

Capacity is about how much of a competence you have available. It's worth highlighting the difference, especially in relation to you personally. It's very easy for the highly committed to say, "Yes, we can do that!" and for it to be true in terms of competence and utterly false in terms of capacity.

So you need to manage capacity by not overloading your staff, or yourself, and by seeking to build capacity. You also need to consider whether your unit's capacity in a critical area is based on just one person, that would certainly need attention.

Do bear knock-on effects in mind. If you build capacity in, say, leadership by developing a colleague and delegate new duties to them, what parts of their former job are they not now able to do? And who else will do them?

One of the most helpful ways of creating more capacity is to develop your admin support. This can be done by increasing the resource, by automating processes, or by buying in casual support – often students. Such an approach can liberate other members of your team from more mundane activities and shows that they are valued.

Example

By appointing a Database Development Officer we have been able to produce a powerful and flexible system for managing our whole workshop provision. This is now largely administered by one person. Of course it does bring the risk of dependency on key players...

Key Point

To create space for the strategic you will need to stop doing some things; there may be a real sense of bereavement about this. But you still need to do it.

Co-operation

A tempting way of increasing capacity is to co-operate with another group, either internally or externally. This is great for all sorts of reasons, but the key advice here is not to enter into such partnerships lightly. Different groups have different interests and it is easy for this fact to be forgotten in the excitement of a new initiative. It is very important to have an explicit discussion about:

- who is going to do what and by when
- the finances (often a contentious area)
- possible pitfalls
- mechanisms for resolving difficulties.

It is very dangerous to build a consortium for a particular project, you need to work with people you can trust.

Example

Collaboration, noun.

The suppression of mutual loathing in pursuit of government funding.

Key Point

The difficulty of managing a project rises as the cube of the number of partners. Be very explicit about expectations at the outset and review progress - and relationships - periodically.

Recognition and review

It is not enough to act strategically, you also need to be seen to be doing so. Since staff developers often operate indirectly, and since they often work through persuasion rather than power, it is easy for the strategic nature of their work to go unrecognised. But although it is important not to make excessive claims for your unit's contribution, it is also dangerous if this is allowed to be undervalued.

Various processes can contribute to the institution having a better grasp of your unit's work:

- Development plans
- Papers
- Mutual understanding
- Options and recommendations
- Involving senior staff
- Reports
- Evaluation
- Projects and publications
- Entrepreneurship
- Intellectual property

Development plan

Even if it were not an invaluable aid to recognition and review, you would want to have a development plan for your own purposes. This needs to indicate – as succinctly as possible – what your priorities are for the next year and the next three or five years. It's not fixed, it's essential that it's seen as a flexible working document, but without it you will lack internal clarity and external understanding.

An example of a very brief development (whose structure is driven by institutional requirements) is included as Appendix B.

Papers

The ability to write clear, concise and convincing papers is critical. All universities have their bureaucracies, and they are all different, but papers are universally important. You have to meet the committee deadlines; you have to follow the required format; you have to make a convincing case. And you can only do this if you understand your stakeholders and their drivers.

Examples

In Appendix C I offer before and after versions of a paper. The first is written by someone who is very technically informed about the topic but unaware of the mindset of their readers. The second is a redraft done by someone who knows the readers, and their concerns, much better.

Mutual understanding

Work hard to develop a good rapport with senior managers so that there is mutual understanding. This needs to be a two-way process through which you develop a better grasp of their expectations and they develop a better understanding of what you can offer. Appraisal can be a useful aid and you might want to involve senior members of your institution in a 360 degree diagnostic of your performance, this can be a powerful way of promoting a consideration of your role. The Executive Briefing from Theme One is another useful basis for a conversation.

Options and recommendations

A good way of developing shared understanding is for you to offer options, together with the pros and cons of each of these and your recommendation. Don't be too dogmatic; senior managers will usually want to play some role in shaping major initiatives so it is best to provide a structured framework for this that limits their scope.

This can promote a useful exchange and is certainly much better than asking open questions about what they would like you to do. This presents you as uninformed and indecisive and leaves open the possibility that the response might be, "Nothing!"

Involving senior staff

An excellent way of engaging with senior staff is to involve them in your unit's activities. Ceremonial duties or photo-opportunities - such as presentations of awards or certificates - are not to be derided but ideally the involvement should also demonstrate your understanding of, and engagement with, strategic aims.

Example

Invite your PVC(R) to run a session for new lecturers on the Personal Research Planning system that the PVC(R) has created.

Reports

It is often helpful to produce an annual report on achievements and issues. This provides an opportunity to map your unit's activities onto your institution's strategic aims and to present some - similarly aligned - future plans. If your institution has standard processes for reporting, planning and budgeting then, of course, you will follow these, but do maintain a strategic and future-oriented approach. Above all, don't whinge.

Bear in mind, too, that reports can have internal as well as external purposes. They may need to be presented somewhat differently but internal reports can be useful in keeping your colleagues informed.

Evaluation

Evaluation is often seen as a difficult area, and certainly the complexity of staff development units can make it tricky. General evaluation issues are not part of this Guide, but evaluation is an important area in terms of strategy because it can:

- help you to do more and better
- enhance your knowledge
- model good practice
- meet the accountability requirements of your institution or funder

...all of which can support your strategic vision.

Bear in mind, too, that since your different stakeholders will have different expectations, your evaluation processes need to take account of those differences.

Although you will have developed an evaluation plan that takes account of these factors and that operates at different levels, it is important to recognise that many key decisions are taken on the basis of impressions and untested beliefs rather than the outcomes of rigorous evaluative processes. Take account of this and seek to influence those impressions and beliefs, sometimes in quite informal ways.

Key Point

Make sure that senior staff hear the good news about your unit's work.

Projects and publications

If you want recognition for yourself or your unit it is helpful to understand the recognition and reward mechanisms that apply generally across your institution. You will probably not want, or be able, to align your work exactly with these but it is worth recognising that your colleagues will have an inherent tendency to judge you as they themselves are judged. So if you have been successful in gaining external funding, especially from a competitive and prestigious source, then this will do you no harm at all. In a similar way publications, keynote addresses, membership of national committees, etc can all enhance your esteem. (And "esteem" itself is a valuable word to use in some contexts as it is a key concept within the current RAE.)

Such activities provide lots of opportunities for promoting recognition: external income is always valued; senior staff can be invited to chair the steering groups of major projects; and your involvement in national projects does get you talked about.

You must, of course, be wary of being seen to be too interested in external rather than internal activities, but there is probably not much risk of this.

Entrepreneurship

External earnings are enormously liberating. They bring esteem and they bring flexibility. They are often a good indicator that you are operating strategically. This factor will become increasingly important, in England at any rate, as HEFCE pushes enterprise and as institutions appoint PVC(E)s.

The key concept here is selling. Funders are buying something. Have you got something to sell that they want? It's essentially about positioning and the model of clouds and buckets can be a helpful way of thinking about this.

You are operating in a landscape and you have some choice about where within that landscape you choose to be. Above that landscape there are clouds that are blown around by the changeable winds of policy. These clouds contain funding, and at some point in the future they will drop their funding onto the ground. If you are positioned beneath the clouds when they do this, then you may get some of the funding. The amount you get will depend on the size of your bucket, and this is determined by your relevant experience and expertise. You therefore need to judge where the clouds will be and when, and you need to be there beneath them with the biggest possible bucket. This requires good networking, political astuteness, and credibility.

Key Point

Think clouds and buckets.

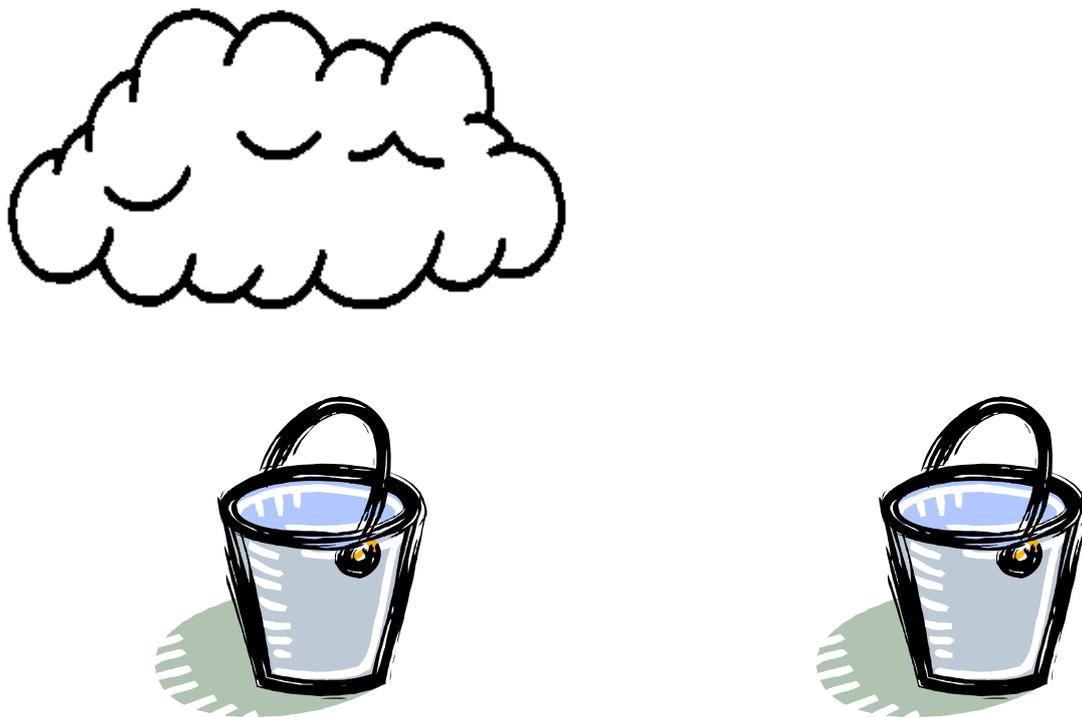


Figure 7 - Clouds and Buckets

Task

Consider what buckets you have and where you could best position them.

Intellectual property

An important aspect of recognition is how to handle intellectual property. You should, of course, be careful not to steal other people's intellectual property (though it happens a lot, sometimes inadvertently). More importantly, how should you handle your own intellectual property?

If the resources have been developed with external funding then you should have addressed intellectual property issues at the outset. Typically you will need to make them freely available across the sector.

For your own materials, my advice is to err on the generous side, though probably not with your most recent ideas. I say this because the positives are very strong, and the negatives quite weak.

Positives?

- You look helpful
- People will be grateful
- It's good publicity

Negatives?

- People can use it unattributedly – but at least the ideas are getting out there
- You lose a market – but the effort involved in marketing something is huge
- Other people can use your ideas – but they're more likely to ask you to

Key Point

Share your materials generously, on the understanding that your intellectual property is acknowledged.

Sustainability

Sustainability relates to you and your role in five main ways:

- Continuation
- Personal

- Succession planning
- Embedding
- Networks

Continuation

A key question for any activity is, "How will this activity be sustained?" This is a very standard question when short-term funding is being used and most funders now – quite rightly – ask you to think about continuation right from the outset. It is just as important even if funding is not so obvious an issue. It is easy to make a short-term offer that turns into a long-term commitment. So continuation needs careful thought; do you, for instance, have an exit strategy?

This may lead to your adopting a very different approach. Rather than doing something for another group within your institution you might prefer to do it with them, building capacity within the group, and then withdrawing and move on to something else.

If there is not a clear continuation then it may in fact be better not to do something at all; the alternative to this may be frustrated expectations or under-resourced activities.

Key Point

For everything that you do, ask how you will be able to continue it and how you will be able to disengage from it.

Personal

A key aspect of sustainability is you. As you operate at a more senior level you are also likely to be dealing with a wider range of topics and with more – and more complex – interfaces between groups. You will probably do more travelling. (And you will probably read fewer books and more committee papers.) All this takes time and energy; your role will not be sustainable unless you can create capacity for this.

It's helpful to think about those aspects of your role that only you can perform.

Within your role you will have a continuum of functions. At one end is the mundane and repetitious (such as signing expense claims) and at the other is the high level work (like developing strategy and sharing this with staff). This continuum is sometimes represented like this...

Administration	Management	Leadership
----------------	------------	------------

All of these things have to be done, and they are all worthy, but there is a key danger here. From the point of view of others, administration is both urgent and important, and leadership is neither. So most of the pressures are in this direction...

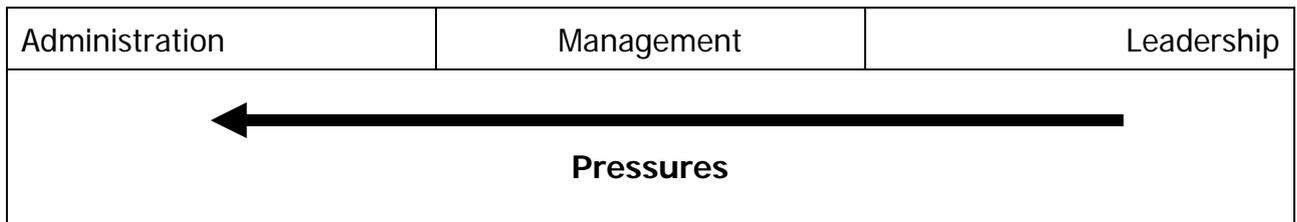


Figure 8 - A-M-L Pressures

...away from leadership and towards administration, and the administration can keep you really busy.

Quite a lot of the things on the left or in the middle can be delegated to someone else. But most of the tasks on the right can only be done by you. So to do your job well, and sustainably, you do need to carve out time for leadership.

Task
Look for things that you can:

Stop doing

Automate

Delegate

Succession planning

Part of your job is to ensure that the strategies continue. You will not be there for ever so you need to plan for the time after you.

Succession planning, in the sense of developing people who may become your successor is in many ways an extension of the sustainability discussion. If you can enable people to take on some of the tasks that used to be yours, then this both develops them and eases your load. For the more demanding tasks this can be difficult for two reasons. In many institutions there is a grade gap between the head of the unit and the next level of staff and it can feel unfair to ask people effectively to act above their grade. (The answer is probably openness about the situation.) The second reason is that the institution will tend to want to talk to you rather than to a colleague; you may have to work quite hard to wean them off you.

Embedding

It's easy for your vision to be very clear in your head, but nothing like so clear to others. Making things explicit will be a helpful way of creating a shared vision that is more likely to continue.

More formal processes can also be needed and it is sometimes helpful to think about there being the three levels of:

- policy
- procedures
- practice

Often your more interesting work will be in areas where policies and procedures have not yet been developed. It's helpful for the continuity of your vision if practices can be embedded in procedures and policies.

These may start as internal documents within your unit, but for full embedding they will often require formal institutional endorsement.

Networks

As was argued under Links, networks are key. They're part of your sustainability because they can recharge you, and can keep you up-to-date and visible. It's helpful, from time to time, to review your networks to identify any gaps. You can do this by mapping your networks using the following diagram and working on the task.

On the basis of your answers to the questions you can develop a strategy for improving your networking. Bear in mind that people will want to network with you if they find it useful to do so.

Key Point

Don't think that good networks are free; you get value out of networks because you put value into networks.

Key Point

There are good reasons why there are "the usual suspects".

Error! Objects cannot be created from editing field codes.

Figure 9 - Network Categories

Task

Figure 9 breaks your network contacts into four categories. Write the contacts that you or your colleagues have links with in the appropriate segments – you may well be surprised at how many there are, staff developers tend to have a lot – and then review your list using questions like these:

Are there contacts in all the segments?

If there aren't then you probably need to do something about this.

Are there any gaps, major players that you haven't listed?

If there are then you need to change this.

Are there committees that you should be on and are not?

If so, then how can you get on them?

Are the contacts strong and positive?

If they're not, then how can you improve them?

Are your contacts unbalanced, all in a small number of areas or types?

If so, then you should probably try to increase your diversity.

Are your contacts all within the HE sector?

Would you benefit from more links outside the sector?

Personal strategic behaviours

Much of the Guide so far has been devoted to personal behaviours, but it may be helpful to try to set these within a more structured framework.

One of the activities of Theme 2 has been to look at a capability framework for staff development leaders; this overlaps with the work of Theme 3 for practitioners and we have agreed a common approach across the two themes. This does not seek to replicate the many capability frameworks that are available but, as a complement, to offer something specific to staff developers.

In the case of Theme Two this is a focus on the strategic elements of the staff development role rather than the broader set of capabilities usually provided. This framework is discussed in more detail elsewhere, what is offered here is a summary.

The purpose of the exercise was to agree a framework within which the diverse manifestations of strategic staff development could be set. Key players in these discussions were Richard Dales, Sue Petrie and Sandy Wilkie and we benefited greatly from a consultation event. This process generated three key dimensions:

- Extent
- Range
- Mode

Extent refers to the extent that you do something, ranging from Not at all to, To a very great extent. And since the behaviours within the framework are seen as positive, strategic leaders will be towards the Great extent end of the continuum.

Range refers to your sphere of influence. This ranges from self to global, with differing options in between depending on your organisation. In the simple form it covers self, group and global but, in the case of a large and multi-function unit, the elements could be: self, team, unit, institution, region, national, global.

Mode refers to a spread of behaviours that focus on knowledge, judgment and action. So it is one thing (and an important one) to know about something; it is another to exercise judgment in relation to it; and it is something else again to be taking action.

These combine to produce a Rubik's cube of staff development behaviour.

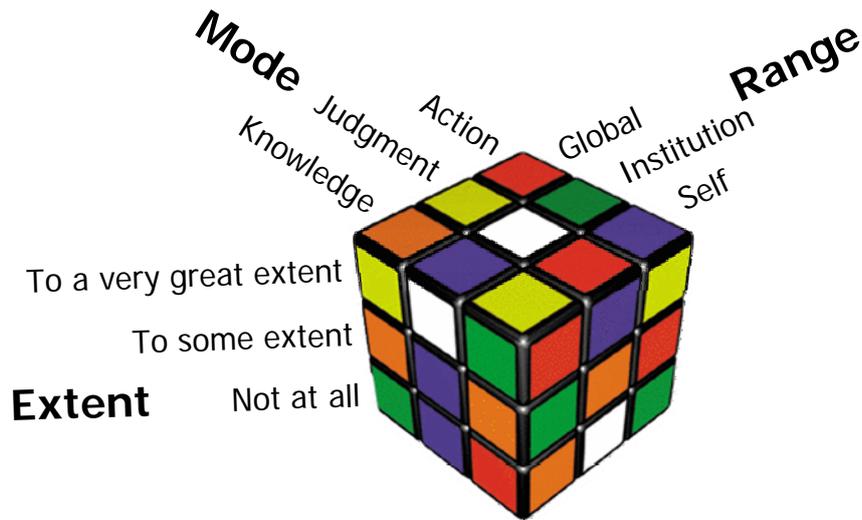


Figure 10 - Staff Development Dimensions

It is important to recognise that these dimensions relate to the individual and not the post. So strategic or vision and values are not restricted to those in senior staff development roles; any staff developer will operate at this level, but for more junior staff the range of their work at this level will be more limited.

The approach seeks to encourage reflection on where you currently operate, and where you aspire to operate. This reflection can be a self-directed process, but it will benefit from the more supported and supportive mechanisms that the Staff Development Forum will be putting in place. This will include the availability of the more detailed capability framework for strategic staff developers that Richard Dales and Sue Petrie and have produced within this framework, and the outputs from the work of Paddy Anstey and John Doidge on Theme Three.

More immediately you can do a quick self-diagnostic using an Excel tool developed by Richard Dales. The file, downloadable from the website, provides a three-dimensional representation of where you are and where you want to be. It can produce various outputs, including this overall representation.

Capability Framework - Self Diagnostic 'Where I am now'

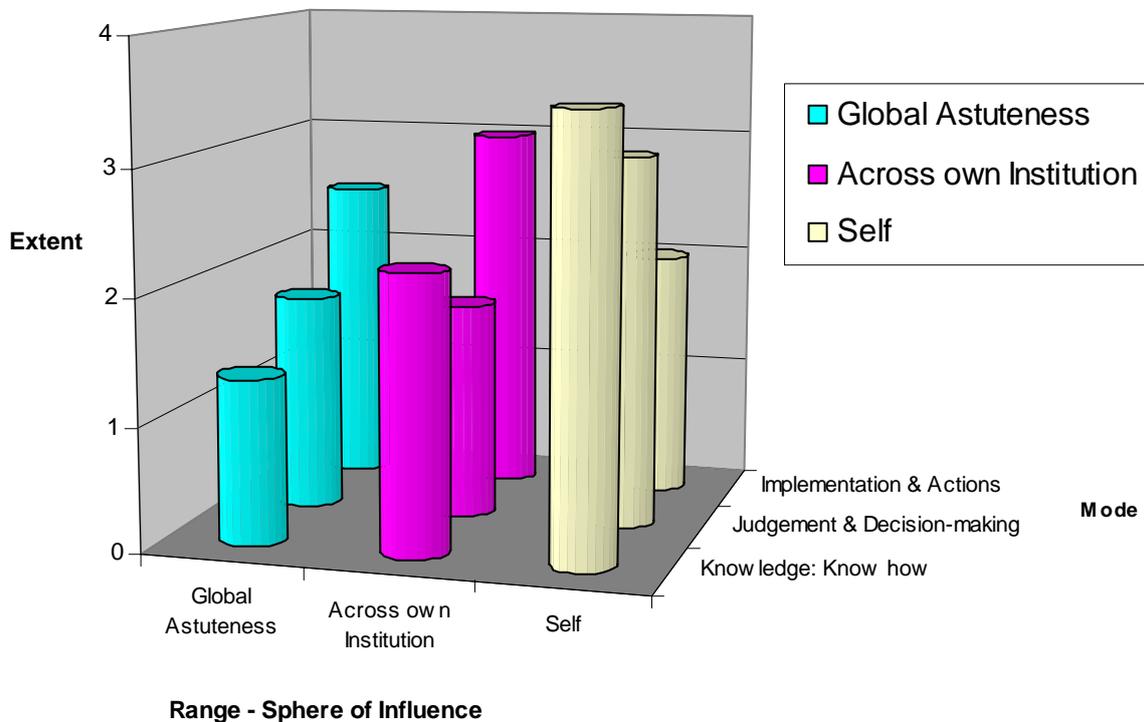


Figure 11 - Excel Version of the Dimensions

Changes in the data table are dynamically represented in the chart. The original 3 x 3 structure has been expanded to create more sensitivity and this version offers:

- **Extent** – Not at all ~ ... ~ To a very great extent
- **Range** - Self ~ Institution ~ Global
- **Mode** - Knowledge ~ Judgment ~ Action

The following lists offer another perspective on strategic behaviours. It is an extract from the capability framework used by the Management Standards Centre and shows the items from the sections most closely related to strategy.

They are intended to allow you to reflect on the behaviours seen as relating to strategy.

The numbered columns will allow you – or others – to rate your performance against the items. You can also rate the extent to which something should occur. The numbers are...

0	Not at all
1	To a slight extent
2	To some extent
3	To a great extent
4	To a very great extent

Source	Management Standards Centre					
Section	B Providing Direction					
Item	0	1	2	3	4	Comment
<i>To what extent should this occur?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Tick one.</i>
<i>To what extent does this occur?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Tick one.</i>
B1 Develop and implement operational plans.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
B2 Map the environment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
B3 Develop a strategic business plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
B4 Put the strategic business plan into action.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
B5 Provide leadership for your team.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
B6 Provide leadership in your area.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
B7 Provide leadership for your organisation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
B8 Ensure compliance with legal, regulatory, ethical and social requirements.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
B9 Develop the culture of your organisation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
B10 Manage risk.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
B11 Promote equality of opportunity and diversity in your area of responsibility.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
B12 Promote equality of opportunity and diversity in your organization.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

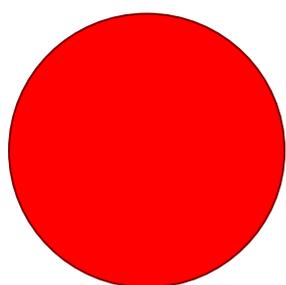
Conclusion

The purpose of this Guide is to help staff developers in HE to think systematically about their role and to be – or be seen to be - more strategic.

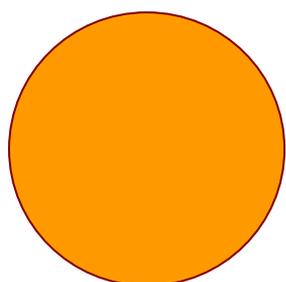
So it should lead to action. This action may be to do more or something, less of something, or to carry on doing something.

Task

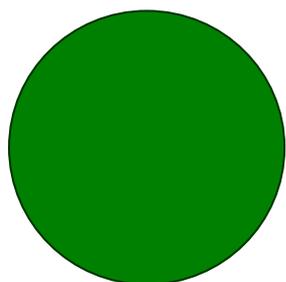
As a penultimate task, please apply the Traffic Lights approach to your work as a sustainably strategic staff developer.



Things I'm going to stop doing or do less of...



Things I'm going to keep doing, carefully...



Things I'm going to start doing or do more of...

Figure 12 - Traffic Lights

Task

***And as a final task, please send any comments on this Guide to...
<mailto:d.a.wilson@lboro.ac.uk>***

Appendices

A	A4 CV
B	Development Plan
C	Committee papers, before and after

Dr Andrew Wilson ~ BSc, MA, PhD, RPHEA

- Director, Professional Development, Loughborough University, LE11 3TU, UK
- Phone 01509 222380 - Fax 01509 223992 - Email D.A.Wilson@lboro.ac.uk
- www.lboro.ac.uk/service/pd/



Current Responsibilities

- Managing Professional Development - a unit of 27 staff dealing with: academic practice and quality, diversity, management development, online learning, support staff, and PGR student training.
- 500 sessions for 5,400 participants in 2004/5.
- Member of Learning & Teaching Committee, Programme Development and Quality Team, Human Resources Working Group, university email project
- Member of Management Group HEA Engineering Subject Centre
- Member of Engineering CETL Management Group
- Internal Evaluator of Maths/Stats Education CETL
- Member of Leadership Foundation Diversity Advisory Group
- Member of UKGrad PGR Evaluation Group

Current Externally-funded Projects

- Member of management groups for HEA/HEFCE/ JISC/LF-funded projects...
- Contract Researchers Online Survey
- Developing Action Learning Expertise and Knowledge
- Disabilities: Academic Resource Tool
- E-Staff Development
- Helping Engineering Learn Mathematics
- i-skills
- Leadership and Development needs of Principal Investigators
- Recording Academic, Professional & Individual Development

- Staff Development Drivers
- Strategic Staff Development

HE Client List

- Aston, Bristol, Cambridge, Dublin City, De Montfort, HEA ESC, HEQC, HESDA, JISC, Kent, Leadership Foundation, Leicester, LTSN Engineering, Lincoln, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham, Nottingham Trent, Oxford, Oxford Brookes, Queens Belfast, RAGNet, Salford, Southampton, UEA, Ulster, Worcester, Warwick

HE Activities

- Numerous sessions and consultancies for other HE institutions on action learning, appraisal, diversity, IIP, learning technologies, management and organisational development, mentoring, project management, quality, time management, working with groups, etc

Past Projects

- On topics such as: appraisal, CAL, disabled students, IIP, management development, management of research staff, online surveys, quality systems, recording achievement, research centre management, student feedback systems

International Activities

- Work funded by British Council, EU, ODA, World Bank, etc in...
- Bangladesh, Brazil, Bulgaria, Colombia, Czech Republic, India, Malawi, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, on...

- Strategic development, training skills, institutional development, learning and teaching, learning technologies, research planning, staff development, team development

Consultancy

- Work on: course design, evaluation, facilitation, management development, surveys, video scripting, training manuals, etc
- Work on topics such as: appraisal, continuing education and training, Computer Aided Engineering, computer control of electricity transmission systems, computer training, counselling, employee development schemes, engineering design, equal opportunities, health and safety, management & organisational development, quality, racial incidents, security, training needs analysis, team development, etc
- Working with: Abbey National, Alliance & Leicester, ASDA, British Gas, British Midland Airways, Co-operative Bank, Emergency Planning College, GEC, Her Majesty's Dockyards, Home Office, ICI, Institution of Chemical Engineers, Leics Constabulary, Logica, Lucas Varity, Manpower Services Commission, Perkins Engines, Police Staff College - Bramshill, RAC, Unilever, voluntary sector organisations
- Manager of employee development scheme for UK sites of TRW

Development Plan for Professional Development ~ October 2004

Present Position and Position Envisaged in 3 Years' Time

Area	Current Position	Developments During Next Year	Target Position in Three Years	Comments
Academic Practice & Quality	<p>We are currently establishing the new Academic Practice & Quality Team following the retirement of Derek Blease.</p> <p>Work in this area, and others, will need to take account of developments such as the Higher Education Academy, top-up fees, and new QAA codes of practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Deliver newly (re)accredited pathways, taking account of Panel recommendations ○ Agree criteria for awards and rewards ○ Revitalise team of assessors ○ Undertake review of Teaching Excellence Route ○ Produce PDP policy and implementation plan ○ Deliver/evaluate new Teaching Skills for PGs/RAs ○ Identify priorities for, and undertake initial development of, online learning resources ○ Respond to HEA Standards agenda and CETLs ○ Review workshop provision linked to research ○ Engage with PPRs and Departmental Reviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Integrated CPD framework in place to support L&T for all groups ○ Generic and discipline-based online resources supporting L&T provision ○ Increased provision to support development of research practice ○ Our position on Standards established and agreed with HEA ○ PDP policy being implemented ○ Active engagement with CETLs ○ Mechanisms to identify and share good practice emerging from PPRs 	<p>New posts and new activities in this area will increase the burden on the Admin Team.</p>
Development for Support Staff	<p>An existing and expanding strand now supported by HR2 money. We have good links with both Burleigh and Loughborough Colleges to provide training that leads to qualifications. Substantial discounts have been negotiated.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conduct a needs analysis and investigation into appropriate future development activities for support staff across the faculties, business units and central services using extra time approved by Ops from December ○ Promote new University Sponsorship Scheme aimed primarily at support staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Extended and targeted provision of career development opportunities for support staff ○ Internal provision of accredited training for support staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Address HR2 post issue. ○ Realign existing post and appoint new member of staff.
Diversity & Equality	<p>We have recently had approval to extend the contract of the Equality Training Officer, but she will be on maternity leave for much of the year. There are possibilities for co-operation with the Leadership Foundation in this area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue with mandatory training ○ Carry out EO review in PD as model for others ○ Develop curriculum support ○ Liaise with Personnel and Registry on aspects of Diversity and Equality and Impact assessment ○ Engage with national bodies working on the D&E agenda 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Co-ordination of staff D&E training ○ Support for evaluation of diversity ○ Resolved issue of training for students ○ Continuing co-operation with Personnel and Registry ○ Have developed online learning ○ Direct engagement with committees 	
General Training	<p>This is a substantial range of topics including: employee well-being, induction, IT training, policies and procedures, with free access negotiated to c.500 online courses through Learndirect</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue engagement with employee well-being ○ Introduce 40-minute focus sessions on various aspects of University systems ○ Continue to liaise with CS on IT training ○ Further work with Personnel on Induction for all ○ Maintain links with Burleigh College to retain free access to Learndirect courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Embed good practice induction processes for all staff at university and local levels ○ Continue proactive response to upcoming skills gap development needs 	<p>Increasing pressure on training space</p>

Area	Current Position	Developments During Next Year	Target Position in Three Years	Comments
Learning Technologies	<p>LT well integrated in some modules, scant in the rest. We have a good infra-structure that is critically reliant upon on few people. Learn holds up well against currently available commercial systems.</p> <p>The CAA system is now set up on a secure basis and new staff are being appointed in PD and across the faculties to support a significant advance in the use of online learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Agree targets with PDQ, DISS, etc ○ Develop PD Online as exemplar and as more flexible delivery mechanism ○ Get the new staff working as a team ○ Play a key role in the step increase in the take-up of online learning ○ Expand CAA use in a secure fashion ○ Continue to monitor and support work on distance learning ○ Rationalise our use of OMR/ODC technologies and offer new services to the University 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Worked on a long-term strategy for the development of online learning ○ Have delivered against agreed targets ○ All modules have enhanced Learn presence. ○ Policy on reusable learning objects determined ○ Engage with PDP and personal portfolios, accessibility issues, collaborative ventures across faculties/institutions. ○ Have extended the use of CAA/OMR/ODC and the variety of question types 	<p>Increased burden on the Admin Team and others. Infrastructure must continue to develop Integrating T&L/admin depends on SRS</p>
Management and Organisational Development	<p>Significant recent development, but much more to be done, especially in extending the range of opportunities and in meeting the needs of support staff.</p> <p>There are various opportunities for external engagement or funding through the Leadership Foundation, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue with existing programme and direct work with departments and sections ○ Introduce Managers Forums ○ Start Next Generation Programme ○ Run regional Action Learning Sets ○ Explore other regional opportunities ○ Run internal Action Learning Sets for support staff ○ Develop Coaching Team and launch scheme ○ Introduce ILM accredited courses for support staff ○ Implement mechanisms to support support staff in management roles ○ Align opportunities to Hay processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Broaden take-up of management development opportunities ○ Develop regional approaches ○ Make online resources available ○ Internal provision of accredited training where appropriate ○ Develop and implement review procedures and training for support staff reviews 	
Postgraduate Research Students Training	<p>A new half-time member of staff is now in post and the programme is being considerably extended in response to the Roberts recommendations.</p> <p>Methods for recording current student skills training are now agreed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Deliver extended programme of training ○ Develop and implement online recording system ○ Continue to engage with Regional Hub & UKGrad ○ Engage with Departments on transferable skills ○ Introduce method for determining development needs and monitoring progress ○ Facilitate student networking and feedback forums ○ Ensure we conform to QAA code of practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PDP implemented for PGs and policy with respect to RAs decided ○ Workshops and online training to meet the transferable skills requirements ○ Increased recognition of our expertise in transferable skills development ○ Continue to review practice in light of student needs, to recognise diversity 	<p>Increased burden on room availability and on Admin Team. QAA audit will increase pressure on the PGR team.</p>
Internal Administration	<p>We have had major restructuring of the admin team which has resulted in integrating the Admin Team within one building.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop admin procedures ○ Retrain all admin team following reorganisation ○ Extend and develop the database to automate monitoring for new lecturers etc ○ Be proactive in meeting demands of increased activity in the PD teams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue to develop the efficiency of our admin systems ○ Enhance security of our systems, including backup and cover ○ Integrate effectively with any relevant developments of the Trent system 	

PDQ OMR Paper November 2005

DRAFT

Executive Summary

Having run an OMR service for almost nine years PD have developed, and intend to announce, a replacement system offering significant benefits. This document highlights the latest available features, and the potential applications to improve efficiency while maintaining or improving quality. These include Assessment, Examinations, Research Support and Business Processes. We give examples of our activities in these areas. We seek an endorsement from PDQ to pursue the potential applications beyond CAA, to embed the new OMR System within the examinations process (working with Exams Office) and further within departments. Comments and suggestions from PDQ would be gratefully received.

Current OMR System Shortfalls

Problems for Students

Students fail to mark up the forms in the correct manner. There is a lack of error tolerance in the automated processing procedure. This leads to:

Problems for Academic Staff

Staff must educate students in form mark up. A sample of question papers are manually checked by staff and corrections made prior to automated processing. This is a time consuming aspect and is undesirable.

Problems for PD

Idiosyncrasies not limited to the above result in a large manual burden under what should essentially be an automated system. These have been necessary to ensure accuracy in marking (necessary for assessment and examinations). Furthermore the system supports only a single form layout (60 questions with options A – E) and for sometime this has been seen as a barrier to improvements and further uptake.

New OMR System Benefits

- Total flexibility in creating and reproducing documents for scanning. Multi page, double sided, up to A3 size, combination of both questions and responses, dissemination of Word Template to create forms, reproduction of forms in a flexible ad hoc manner to suit academic staff, rather than creating the assessment to fit the form, academic staff can now combine the two.
- Improved flexibility leads to better pedagogy. The automated assessment of deeper learning more suited to Parts B and C becomes possible. OMR is not an MCQ system but is a data capture method. A creative question setter will be able to set questions which address the deeper learning levels (Bloom).
- Combining the questions with the responses on a test paper ensures the questions are never 'in the wild' (students cannot acquire them). Reuse is possible across different modules and year on year. Efficiency is improved.
- On the processing side the marking and analysis now includes automated error trapping in real time resulting in efficiency gains. The amount of manual checking by Academic Staff is diminished significantly.
- Part of the analysis module is now written in-house, allowing greater flexibility and control over the process, and enabling results reporting to be tailored to the individual needs of Academic Staff.
- Form design and processing are now totally flexible allowing the pursuit of application to issues other than assessment such as research questionnaire and

questionnaire / data capture to support other University business processes. PD has both the design and data processing skills to support these areas.

Example Applications

Assessment

The system is live and of the ~3600 tests delivered to date, 15 diagnostic tests were delivered to 1600 students for AAAAA. PD have exploited the benefits of flexible form design and data capture to produce assessments for higher levels of learning. Of particular note 40% of the Academic Staff in BBBBB have benefited from this already including Aaaaa Aaaaa (HOD). CCCCC and DDDDD have also shown interest and have implemented a number of Combined OMR Test Papers (combining the questions and responses) as opposed to separate question and answer sheets.

Examinations and Exams Office Issues

Following discussions with Exams Office it was clear that they prefer Combined Test Papers rather than separate OMR answer sheets as this fits into existing exams preparation procedures much better. We have agreed to offer tailored answer sheets for those Examiners not being in a position to run a combined test paper. All OMR Examinations will be run under the new system. Last year this accounted for 8.5K papers all automatically marked. Bbbbb Bbbbb, Ccccc Ccccc and EEEEE staff are all preparing for the launch. Exams Office are about to announce the procedures.

Research Support

The new PD OMR System will deliver an FFFFF Survey resulting in the automated processing of ~15K returns. It delivered the first ever formal Knowledge Survey on campus for Dddd Dddd (GGGG). We have also had informal expressions of interest from HHHH and IIII and this has been through word of mouth. We wish to promote this more widely to academic staff for research purposes.

Business Processes

The new PD OMR System supported the recent Stress Survey for Occupational Health. Of the ~1470 returns received ~1200 were paper based through the new OMR System. Just ~270 were through the web form alternative. We believe this return rate was significantly higher than other institutions running purely web based data capture.

Conclusions for Endorsement

We hope that PDQ will view the benefits of the new OMR system favourably and support the new initiative. The improvements over the old system are vast for all stakeholders (Academic Staff, Students, PD). The potential for efficiency gains in all aspects (assessment, research support and business processes) are significant. We have demonstrated through the survey returns that paper based data capture has a place now and in the future. It is complimentary to web based techniques, and in some ways superior. We believe that the work undertaken by PD in developing this system is of value to the University and request PDQ support in pursuing further applications and uptake. In particular we propose an awareness raising activity as a formal launch and suggest a brief email to all academic staff to assist with this aspect.

Eeee Eeee and Ffff Ffff, PD, November 2005

The Use of OMR in Assessment (Revised Version)

Executive Summary

For nine years PD has run an Optical Mark Reader service that has provided coursework assessment options for staff. We have now taken advantage of new technologies to allow us to offer an improved service. This paper outlines the benefits of the new facility and seeks PDQ's endorsement for work in conjunction with the Exams Office on embedding the new OMR service within the University's examination system.

Current OMR System Shortfalls

Problems for Students

Students frequently fail to mark up the forms in the correct manner and there is a lack of error tolerance in the automated processing procedure. This leads to....

Problems for Academic Staff

- Staff must educate students in how to mark up forms. A sample of question papers are manually checked by staff and corrections made prior to automated processing. This is time consuming.
- The system supports only a single form layout (60 questions with options A - E). This inflexibility has long been seen as a barrier to further uptake.

Problems for PD

The mark up problems result in a large manual burden within what should essentially be an automated system.

New OMR System Benefits

The new system offers many benefits over the old:

- Total flexibility in creating and reproducing documents for scanning. Rather than creating the assessment to fit the form, academic staff can now create the form to fit their assessment needs.
- Improved flexibility leads to better pedagogy. The new approach allows many alternatives to the old Multiple Choice Questions approach. A creative question setter will be able to set questions that address the deeper learning levels.
- More economical use of questions. Since the questions and the answers are now on the same sheet (Combined Test Paper), the questions are handed in with the answers. This permits the reuse of questions and reduces the effort involved in writing questions.
- Use under exam conditions. The Exams Office view the Combined Test Paper approach very positively and are encouraging its use within exam papers. This will offer the potential to reduce the exam marking burden on staff.
- Greatly improved error trapping. The software now includes automated error trapping in real time. The amount of manual checking by Academic Staff is greatly reduced.
- Customised reports. Part of the analysis module is now written in-house, allowing greater flexibility and control over the process, and enabling results reporting to be tailored to the individual needs of academic staff.

- Wider application of the approach
Form design and processing are now extremely flexible. This means that the approach can be used with research and survey questionnaires.

Examples of the New Approach

Assessment

The system is live and over 3000 tests have already been delivered. It has been used within AAAAA and BBBBB, and CCCC and DDDDD have implemented a number of Combined Test Papers. EEEEE are also benefiting.

Examinations and Exams Office Issues

In discussions with Aaaaa Aaaaa and the Exams Office it became clear that Combined Test Papers fit exams preparation procedures much better than separate sheets. New procedures have therefore been agreed, and these were recently announced to Departmental Administrators by Exams Office.

Web based CAA cannot yet support formal end of semester examinations, primarily due to the campus PC Labs being too small to cope with student numbers. We therefore recommend that the new OMR Service is promoted as the University's preferred method of automated examination marking. This has the potential to save academic staff time and effort.

Research Support

The new PD OMR System will deliver an Institute for FFFFF resulting in the automated processing of ~15K returns. It also delivered the first ever formal Knowledge Survey on campus for Bbbbb Bbbbb (GGGGG). We have also had informal expressions of interest from HHHHH and IIIII even before formally launching the system. We wish to promote this more widely to academic staff for research purposes.

Business Processes

The new PD OMR System supported the recent Stress Survey for Occupational Health. Of the 1470 returns received 1200 were paper based through the new OMR System. Just 270 were through the web form alternative. We are advised that this return rate was significantly higher than other institutions running purely web based data capture.

Ongoing Work

Our work to-date has provided proof of concept. To enable staff to benefit from this new approach we need to continue to:

- develop the service
- work with the Exams Office to extend its use in formal exam conditions
- offer advice and support to staff to enable them to take advantage of the new features.

Without this ongoing work it will be unreasonable to ask academic staff to engage fully with the new system. We ask PDQ to endorse our approach and the ADTs to encourage departments to engage with PD in further development work.

*Ccccc Ccccc and Ddddd Ddddd
Professional Development
November 2005*