



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

CiCS

LEARNING & TEACHING STRATEGY
2008 – 2013

1. PURPOSE

As part of its overall purpose to support the University's mission and strategic objectives, CiCS aims to play its part in achieving the University's aspiration 'to ensure that the highest standards of excellence are maintained within the student learning experience' (University LTA Strategy).

More specifically:

CiCS will seek to play a 'catalytic' role to enable the University to provide the best possible learning experience for its students by encouraging and supporting the effective use of technology and space.

The University has articulated its vision to be a world leading University that produces distinctive graduates. The purpose of this document therefore is to align those CiCS objectives that affect the student experience with those of the University; and to support and influence the policies, processes and strategies elsewhere that also seek to contribute to this aim.

2. CONTEXT

CiCS has always played its role in support of learning and teaching at this University, mainly through the delivery of technology and spaces. However, the context in which these are delivered has changed quite significantly over the last few years. New collaborative and interactive technologies have emerged and have become the dominant model for many forms of interaction, and alongside these there have been similar developments in the thinking about how learning spaces work and teaching might be delivered. The Information Commons being a 'concrete' example.

In light of this, and so as to provide direction and impetus to the work of CiCS in this area, this current document describes a framework to be used to develop the support for learning and teaching provided by CiCS. In doing so it describes areas of work and roles that are also in the domain of other departments within the professional services as well as academic colleagues and formal processes of the University.

The intention is not to suggest that CiCS is the only or dominant contribution in any of the areas mentioned (although it may be in some), but more to map out the areas in which CiCS currently makes a contribution and where this should be increased or otherwise developed. In this way it is hoped that this document will also facilitate collaboration and alignment with other departments working in this area.

3. OBJECTIVES

In order to help the University provide the best possible learning experience for its students, CiCS will:

- provide innovative yet robust infrastructure and systems that will deliver ‘high quality learning and information resources in a variety of formats’
- maximise learning and teaching space utilisation while providing flexibility and the scope for innovation
- provide and manage high quality functional learning and teaching spaces that meet current and future needs
- evaluate and deploy new technologies that enable and facilitate collaboration both amongst students, and between staff and students
- ensure that CiCS services support existing teaching methods, and enable those that are emerging
- seek greater involvement and collaboration with the University’s learning and teaching community
- provide support for the development of students’ skills in the use of information and computing technology
- support the University assessment processes through the provision of technology and physical space

4. IMPLEMENTATION

The overall strategy will be to provide technology, physical spaces and support to ensure that students have the highest standard learning experience in our research-led learning environment. We will manage the use of our learning and teaching spaces ensuring that we maximise usage and develop them in flexible and innovative ways. This development will be in collaboration with others working in the same area, and informed by wide consultation within the University and best practice across the sector and beyond.

4.1 TECHNOLOGY:

Provide and develop ubiquitous, reliable and appropriate ICT infrastructure and systems.

- Investigate and deploy innovative, flexible and robust technology that supports both existing and emerging teaching methods.
- Retain flexibility to respond to innovations and changes whether driven from within the University or elsewhere.
- Aim to deliver access to all services via the portal.
- Deliver academic applications for teaching and self-directed learning via a centrally managed service. Aim to make these applications available on staff and students’ own computers via the portal.
- Provide systems to manage access to licensed electronic library resources and services through the portal.

- Provide and manage the University VLE system (currently Vista WebCT) and work closely with others to develop its functionality.
- Implement and promote systems that facilitate collaboration and the sharing of resources (includes blogs and wikis, media hosting service).
- Provide flexible and robust room, course and exam timetabling systems.
- Provide secure systems for storing, presenting and managing student information (including student admission, registration, academic records, module choice, regulations, assessments). Use information from these systems to drive and control access to and use of other systems.
- Provide support for access to the on-line plagiarism checking service.
- Deliver systems to support the electronic submission and assessment of student work.

Support the use of students' own computers to access information, learning and teaching materials.

- Provide and support University network infrastructure to University owned student residences.
- Increase the range of services available (e.g. via the portal) to students' own computers.
- Extend the availability of services to portable devices.

4.2 PHYSICAL SPACES:

Provide high quality, functional learning and teaching spaces and ensure the maintenance and development of these spaces.

- Manage the use of teaching spaces to maximise utilisation whilst still providing flexibility. Promote and develop the flexible use of space to ensure maximum use.
- Develop and promote spaces that support and encourage the adoption of innovative technologies, different learning styles and emerging teaching methods.
- Specifically develop and promote the Information Commons and its vision so that it continues to lead the way in the delivery of innovative learning and teaching spaces.
- Seek to provide a range of different types of spaces to suit different needs.
- Improve the quality of spaces through a rolling programme of physical works
- Ensure the best possible support for different accessibility needs
- Provide high quality IT and AV equipment in all spaces
- Monitor all spaces to understand how they are used, investigate best practice elsewhere, and actively promote services where underused
- Provide training for teaching staff in use of rooms and their technology
- Maintain the use of the Drama Studio as a learning space through appropriate development and refurbishment.
- Support the use of IT room as exam facilities for those with additional support needs.

4.3 SUPPORT:

Become trusted partners alongside academic and other professional staff in supporting the use of spaces and technology for learning, teaching and assessment.

- Be fully engaged with the University's learning and teaching community through involvement in its committees, groups, and capital projects.
- Contribute to University wide initiatives and projects. Involve others in CiCS led projects.
- Support academic departments and faculties in implementing their own learning and teaching strategies.
- Using the Information Commons as a collaborative starting point, develop improved support for students as learners in their use of information and technology.
- Work closely with colleagues in CILASS to provide ongoing support for the technologies and spaces they deliver. Aim to embed the support for these within CiCS at the end of the funding period.
- Develop the capacity, both within CiCS and by working collaboratively with other professional services, to support the innovative use of technologies and spaces to deliver different methods of teaching.

Enable students to develop their own use of technology to support both their learning as well as their development of skills for life:

- involve students on projects that directly affect their own use of technology for learning and teaching, and on other CiCS projects that will deliver services in this area
- provide services (such as access to ECDL for basic skills) that facilitate the development of ICT skills
- ensure that our systems and services are accessible to all users and provide good information on how we support different accessibility needs

5. ALIGNMENT

The objectives in this document attempt to align CiCS strategy with objectives contained in the University's Corporate Plan (Our Shared Vision) and the University Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy. It is also in line with the University Information Strategy and other CiCS planning documents.

It is recognised that CiCS makes its contribution to University processes in these areas by working in partnership with the faculties, departments and other professional services. The document will be discussed with colleagues in these areas and reviewed regularly to ensure that CiCS continues to support the University's vision for the student learning experience.