

Topic 5.2: The Universal University.

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Topic Description

Demographics indicate that the University of the future will not be a predominantly undergraduate organisation. Many Universities in the developing world have gradually taken more mature students on post-graduate and certificated courses and are well experienced with the problems of teaching, for example, in-service teachers, returned servicemen and late entrants into degree courses. This trend will undoubtedly continue in a Lifelong Learning Society. The Open Universities have learned to teach in quantity the more mature students who wish to study for a degree, and they have performed this function well, usually through distance learning methods allied to a system of local tutoring.

Lifelong Learning will encourage many more adults to study and special provision will have to be made in the traditional university. Wider access is the key to this, not only by those maturer students who may not have the required qualifications (but have the capability to learn) but also those under-graduates whose life opportunities may not have been as privileged as many, but who have overcome the problems of their environment. New lifelong learners include upwardly mobile MBA students, engineers and technicians in fast-changing fields, executives looking for a new career, women re-entering the job market after raising children, and a vast army of people displaced by the new technologies and by company downsizing. Maturer students who have been away from study for some time will need assistance to recover learning skills. Some will need courses tailored to their own special time constraints; groups of mature students may need courses in a place of their own choosing. If they have no facilities at home, these will have to be provided at the university. Some may require part-time residential accommodation and many will not be as committed to the life of the university as the captive undergraduate.

More and more there is a new concept of students as independent learners as a natural concomitant of the transition towards systems catering for Lifelong Learning. They will be more mature, self-directed students with a strong sense of self and experience of the world of work. Thus the challenge which Lifelong Learning presents to higher education is to adapt its offerings, both in terms of objectives, of content and of presentation to the disparate age range of its future clientele. This will put immense responsibility on those specialists responsible for teaching methods and on staff development.

Universities are being encouraged by government to invest more in continuing education as a major source of income. At the same time, continuing education itself is undergoing development and being subsumed into the larger concept of Lifelong Learning which can entail periods in and out of education as a right for everyone, and a radically different mission and way of working for many industrial and educational organisations. The immediate implications of this for universities are apparent. There are opportunities for increased revenue, for further education/industry partnerships, for participation in local, national initiatives. New roles for many faculties and departments are also outcomes of a greater investment in continuing education. It is not only the content-based faculties such as engineering and science which can satisfy the needs of Industry for continuing education. The humanities also have a contribution to make, as have the faculties of management, of computer science, of law, and of the social sciences. A spin-off from such co-operation is the likelihood of an increased number of joint research projects.

At the same time the 21st century university will need to reach out to new populations in its community, delivering its courses wherever, whenever, however and, if possible, from whoever the students want it, much in the same way that the mission of the American land-grant universities is to reach out to students in the extended community.

The lessons in this topic therefore cover these issues and promote debate and discussion for university administrators and others on the challenges and opportunities presented by wider participation and partnership with non-traditional organisations and people.

Topic Objective

The major objective of this topic is to present the issues raised in adopting new populations, new technologies and new partnerships with the outside world and to suggest some of the solutions and opportunities for universities prepared to meet these challenges.

Target Audiences

There are a variety of target audiences for this module.

- a) Initially there are the decision-makers – the university leaders appointed to give direction to the organisation and to respond to the demands of a rapidly changing environment within which the university operates.
- b) Secondly there are the administrative staff and lecturers who are preparing students of all ages to live in a vastly different society in the future, one where change is constant, where employment depends on adaptability and flexibility and where learning is for everyone and for life.
- c) Thirdly there are the decision-making staff in the outside organisations, mostly, but not exclusively, from industry or from the city administrations who believe that the university can help them to achieve some of their goals and who wish to have a greater partnership with the university in this respect
- d) Fourthly, there are the students themselves who should be included in this crucial debate about their own futures.
- e) Fifthly, there are the National Government Advisers, Inspectors and Civil Servants who exert influence over the university's policy and provide resources for it.
- f) Lastly there are the ordinary citizens whose interest arises from the sort of inclusive and interactive society created in the concept of the learning city. All of these can profit from the seminars this module generates.

Lesson 5.2.1 Widening participation in higher education.

Statement: As many of the quotations below illustrate, there is a great deal of pressure on Universities from Governments to increase the number of under-graduates they take. This mostly because of the need for a step increase in capability levels in order to cope with greater complexity at work and in life.

Therefore it is necessary to widen the common insights in the values of and needs for higher education. If that is well done, the collective knowledge of society is lifted to levels that are necessary for our time. The need for more sophisticated competence is higher also because of the competition with the rest of the world.

Higher education must be shared by many more than is the case today. This among other things demands that the possibilities to participate are widened - and that the new students are supported in such a way that they can cope with the special demands of higher studies.

Most developed countries realise this – however it may change the role of the university and the way it goes about implementing that role. The new students are not necessarily the normal undergraduates at age 18. Already in the United States for example more than 50% of students are over the age of 30, and there is already a conflict between the university's traditional role of providing non-vocational education and that of satisfying political needs for employability in the future.

This lesson therefore explores the issues and solutions around the widening of participation.

Suggestions for Learning Leaders

In addition to the statements and questions above and the quotations and questions below, toolbox items 1 to 4 are provided to assist in raising the level of debate, in providing ideas and reference sources, and in stimulating discussion among the class participants. You are advised to use the former as ways of introducing the topics for discussion, and the latter as handouts to be deployed in an innovative way by energising large and small group discussion, encouraging the display of results and bringing together the full details of these discussions into plenary sessions. As always the experience and the ideas and skills of the participants are the drivers for lessons. This is why the toolbox items contain both points for debate and spaces for the addition of the participants own thoughts and beliefs? In view of the multiplicity of quotations below these can be used as an extra toolbox item.

Lesson 1.1 The quotations below present several challenges to the university of the future. It is suggested that they are divided between groups in the class which will report back in plenary on the nature of the challenge and how it might be met. The rest of the class can then add their own ideas.

1. 'The universality of higher education implies the use of varied forms of intervention in order to meet the educational needs of all at all stages of life.. The facilities they can provide include modifying its approach to individual needs - part-time courses, linked work and training, distance learning, modular courses, virtual delivery methods and the decentralization of training groups. If Universities exist to serve individuals, they have to be prepared to take risks, try out new systems and processes, and make full use of the potential of new technology and distance learning.'

(UNESCO Higher Education Panel)

2. Lifelong Learning embraces individual and social development of all kinds and in all settings – formally in schools, vocational, tertiary and adult education institutions, and non-formally, at home, at work and in the community. The approach is system-wide; it focuses on the standards of knowledge and skills needed by all, regardless of age. It emphasises the need to prepare and motivate all children at an early age for learning over a lifetime, and directs efforts to ensure that all adults, employed and unemployed, who

need to retrain or upgrade their skills, are provided with an opportunity to do so. (OECD, Lifelong Learning for All)

3. At the entry point, many universities are trapped in a time-warp of academic determinism based on a Burtian notion that those who have successfully jumped all the intellectual hurdles put in their way during schooldays are those most fitted to complete the journey at university. In this they sometimes have the collusion of Governments. This is the self-fulfilling prophecy of the existing examination system in many countries. It survives by being rationalized into 'maintaining standards' or 'ensuring excellence'. Unfortunately the real world is not like that. Burt's research into IQ was fatally flawed as soon as it was discovered that he manipulated the data to suit his conclusion. And social factors are known to have a huge influence on academic success in school. (Longworth and Davies: Lifelong Learning)

4. I am not an advocate for frequent changes in laws and constitutions. But laws and institutions must go hand in hand with the progress of the human mind. As that becomes more developed, more enlightened, as new discoveries are made, new truths discovered and manners and opinions change, with the change of circumstances, institutions must advance also to keep pace with the times. We might as well require a man to wear still the coat which fitted him when a boy as civilized society to remain ever under the regimen of their barbarous ancestors. (Thomas Jefferson)

5. Sir Christopher Ball and David Stewart, in the 'Action Agenda', remarked that 'universities should treat the whole community as comprising past, present or future students'. How that would open up new perceptions of the purpose of the university. How it would provide a challenge to the more entrenched and immobile. Instead of an institution for educating an elite of highly intelligent undergraduates and researchers, it becomes a universal university, open to all irrespective of background, of qualification, of age, of subject. And if we believe in the power and the value of learning, and if we can create the sort of society in which learning is natural and pervasive, that is the way the traditional university must go. It will demand wise leadership. (Ball and Stewart: Action Agenda for Lifelong Learning)

6. You see, we have wasted long years fighting, and re-fighting, the battle between traditional and progressive education. We have sought to devise still more ways of tweaking the system, but we have been blind to the emerging evidence which could (and I believe most assuredly will) lead to a far better understanding of how humans learn. If we understood all this, I'm convinced, we would start to see endless possibilities for future growth. We don't need to fight the old fight any longer. (Abbott: Learning: the Big Picture)

Lesson 1.2 The first questions in toolbox 1 below raise vital questions about the university of the future. In the same way divide the class into groups to discuss, report back and attempt to reach conclusions.

3.

Lesson 5.2.2 The Changing University population

Statement: In the past much of the education at European universities is for undergraduates starting under the age of 21 and leading to first degrees. While some universities have a high or low proportion of post-graduate and doctorate students the support systems are in general geared towards the young.

This can discourage many adults from participating, either because they do not have time or because they would feel excluded in the university environment. Nevertheless the advent of lifelong learning and continuous improvement schemes in industry together is putting pressure on many universities to enlarge greatly the number of mature students, supported by the finance available from industry to pay for these studies.

At the same time the rapid obsolescence of knowledge exerts a requirement for scientists, technicians and managers to stay up to date and once again universities are expected to bear the brunt of satisfying that requirement. In one way this influx of finance is useful for hard-pressed universities, but in changing the mix of the university population it also imposes a new set of demands in content, methodology and support services. More part-time students for example, more distance learning, more understanding of industry's needs and more monitoring of courses to ensure that the quality level remains high.

We have already seen that the mix of the USA university population has changed radically in favour of mature students but also, as a result of the growth of lifelong learning concepts, we are beginning to see a huge increase in the 'grey learner' – people of retirement age who can afford the fees for university courses and are taking undergraduate and graduate level education in order to keep themselves alive and thinking.

There also is a question of justice. Many members of society pay for the universities with their taxes and other contributions even though they themselves have not had the benefits associated with a university education. Perhaps they too should have an entitlement to profit from their contribution in acquiring (new) academic knowledge if they so wish.

However, this is not necessarily a new situation. It has been a feature in the history of universities and higher education. What is new is that it has never before in the history of mankind been so possible as now to take such radical steps to increase the participation of maturer students in academic activities.

Suggestions for Learning Leaders

The Learning leader has several tools at his/her disposal. The statements and questions above can be used to set the parameters of the debate and participants can use the toolbox 2 to develop ideas, actions and solutions. At all times the learning leader is encouraged to be innovative in the way he/she uses these tools. A mix of small and larger group discussion is recommended together with exercises that require participants to find out more where there are gaps in their knowledge.

Lesson 2.1 Divide the class into groups of 2 or 3. Ask them to read the statement above and discuss its implications among themselves. Then report back in plenary.

Lesson 2.2 In groups or individually, look at the questions and dialogue topics in Toolbox 2 below and suggest answers on a separate piece of paper.

Lesson 2.3 The quotations in tool box 2 offer a more authoritative source of information, knowledge and belief. Divide the class into groups to study, discuss and report back.

Lesson 5.2.3 The flexible University – Providing Learning wherever, whenever, however, whatever and from whoever.

Statement: The modern university is a combination of traditional teaching and learning methods and the use of the new technologies. Further than that it will be required to go further and wider to seek out its students – and its finance.

The amazing growth of corporate, distance and virtual universities and higher/further education providers can represent a threat to existing universities by taking potential students from them because of their flexibility in offering courses when, where and how students want them and by examining when the student feels ready to be examined. Or the university can pick up the gauntlet and use this as an opportunity to learn and then to act, implementing its own strategy for flexible learning. They can also act as 'providers to the providers' – meshing their own courses with those offered from the new providers.

Flexibility also extends to the delivery of courses. Those universities willing to outreach into the community and to take the courses to where the people are, whether it be through technology as many USA land-grant universities do, or by physically placing them in the community as at Sunderland, are the ones which will survive the changes that the 21st century Higher Education scene imposes.

There are other issues – catering for individual learning styles, reaping the benefits of new research into how people learn, the extent to which the university cooperates with industry in continuing education schemes, the effective uses of the learning technologies, the internationalisation of its courses, the financial implications of all of these....

All of this makes the future of the university an exciting and dynamic one, in keeping with the rapid changes that exist in society as a whole.

Questions and Dialogue topics: Many questions are raised in the area of flexibility. How will a University seek out and expand its student base in the locality? How does it know which courses to offer and where? How can it develop the links and contacts with local organisations and people to be able to offer its courses in a wide range of places.? How does it meet the threat, or opportunity, of the new corporate, distance learning and virtual universities?

How can it cope with the different learning styles of its students? What use will make of the new learning technologies? How can it make its courses more nationally and internationally acceptable? What effect does this have on examinations, assessment and evaluation? How does it train its staff to cope with flexibility? how can we develop appropriate multichannel approaches for effectively using these technologies -- is there are "right" mix;

How to produce and adapt meaningful content that is consistent with and responsive to the needs, interests and aspirations of individual learners and their local contexts/ communities;

How does it find the finance to install the necessary equipment? How can it cope with the e-learning explosion? Does it have a strategy for development?

Notes for Learning Leaders

A range of toolbox aids is available for your use in this lesson. Toolbox items 4 to 7 taps into the creativity and experience of the participants in general, before asking specific questions and making specific suggestions about flexibility in your own university in item 7. Item 8 raises the issue of corporate and virtual universities and stimulates discussion on how the university might react to such a development. Items 9 and 10 deal with issues concerning the use of the learning technologies and the university's investment in the future growth of learning through these. In addition the statements and questions for dialogue above are offered as ways of identifying some of the issues involved and the quotations below give some authority to the topic - you may wish to ask for example what issues they raise for your own university. In all of this be innovative – use the toolboxes to tap into the experience and ideas of the participants rather than as 'givens' for memorising.

Quotes you can use

As we move into the Knowledge Age, our understandings of what learning is, where and how it takes place, and for what kinds of purposes, are changing. We increasingly expect teaching and learning methods and contexts to recognise and adapt to a highly diverse range of interests, needs and demands, not only of individuals but also of specific interest groups in multicultural European societies. This implies a major shift towards user-oriented learning systems with permeable boundaries across sectors and levels.

Sir Christopher Ball, Action Agenda for Lifelong Learning

In USA the public and private sector work together or compete in the North American education market. Sylvan Learning systems has 48 sites in shopping malls and business centres... The Jones education company wants to get the cost of real estate out of education, Michigan Virtual automotive college has 115 courses, 27 providers and 95 subject areas. CASO internet university has 2440 courses and Global network academy 250 providers, 770 programmes and 10000 online courses. If the UK is to compete globally then strategic partnerships will need to be made between the Higher and Further Education Sectors to ensure economies of scale.

Prof M Thorne, Strategic future of FE and HE links.

Technology provides flexibility to cater to different learning styles (through aural, visual, pictorial, oral, physical means, etc.), learning needs, and learning styles. It is capable of engaging individuals and reflect on their own conditions and communities in different kinds of learning processes. It also provides the opportunity for greater relevance and sociocultural specificity to content and activities. It can be used to support the development and legitimization of local knowledge systems. It opens up learning to any time and any place. It allows learners to be given a greater role in planning their own learning programmes and producing their own learning materials. Technology can support the development of local knowledge systems and cultural diversity.

UNESCO Technology and Open Learning Communities

Toolbox Item 1 –

Questions to debate for lesson 2.1

1. Is it necessary to change the way that universities operate in order to make wider participation possible?
2. Is this 'dumbing down'- lowering standards to suit political ends?
3. How can standards be maintained in a world of wider participation?
4. Is there a limit to the pool of university-able talent in society?
5. What criteria have been used in the past to measure university-level intelligence?
6. How and why is the argument being moved on?
7. What value does experience have in fitting people for higher studies?
8. How can this be measured?
9. Can the process be used in order to enlarge the outlooks of academia?
10. Is vocational education any part of the university's mandate?
11. Is it necessary to create new kinds of courses, with low demands on the students?
12. Is it necessary to arrange preparatory courses for the new kinds of student?
13. Does all this mean that the university teachers have to renew and to develop their understanding of differences between participants in order to handle the new situation better?
14. Does that in its turn mean that the need for research about universities and university work is enhanced?
15. What about the economic questions?
16. Who pays for the studies?
17. For the new members of staff?
18. What effect does it have on student-lecturer ratios and methods of teaching?

Intelligence and University Entrance

1. The university which gives the impression of being aloof from its potential clients, looking inward on itself, rigidly applying the entry rules lest there should be a diminution of standards, is the university which will continually struggle to survive in the world of the future. 'There is little proven correlation between advanced level qualifications and the level of degree obtained at university, except that which is automatically built into the system. Nor is there any reason why the demonstration of a good memory and individual application in examinations at the age of 18 should take precedence over the late developer, the unusual thinker, the disadvantaged learner or the sick examinee.

2. Modern day research into multiple intelligences tends to belie the notion of a pre-determined common intelligence which fits one for academic study. Conversely there are many examples of people who blossom later in life. Each time political leaders recommend a widening of participation in Higher education, some universities, and many newspapers, protest that this is 'dumbing down' the university. It happened when 5% of the population was increased to 8% and again when 8% ran to 15% and then to 20%. The cry goes out that there isn't enough higher intelligence in the nation to support such an increase.

3. There are of course many with learning difficulties who would struggle in the university mill, but it is a debatable point whether it is the system itself which creates and increases some of those learning difficulties. Certainly there is strong evidence that we consistently underestimated peoples' capacity to learn. Equally there is a pressing need to increase the level of learning throughout society in order to cope with increasing complexity in both employment and life. In the universities of the developed nations the average figure for university attendance is over 30% and rapidly rising. In 2001 The UK Government announced plans to increase this to 50%, to the same chorus of disapproval from those who hadn't noticed that Cyril Burt actually manipulated his data to fit his notion of IQ. Korea has embarked on a systematic

programme to introduce Lifelong Learning throughout society, and France's stated aim is to raise the educational level of 80% of 18-year-olds to university entrance standard within the next five years.

4. Hannan supports this view. 'The move to Lifelong Learning makes demands on HE,' he says, and goes on to name three.

- ✓ **Vertical integration:** The content of the curriculum and methods of teaching and learning should facilitate the progression of learners from feeder institutions into a similar culture of learning 'how to learn' in formal and non-formal contexts.
- ✓ **Horizontal integration:** Accreditation of informal and experiential learning (APEL) and a more relevant curriculum vis a vis the outside world (problem based learning, work-based learning, practical projects, emphasis on skills)
- ✓ **Greater flexibility** to allow learners in and out of courses at various points of their lives through modularisation of accreditation procedures, continuous assessment, and the use of new technologies.

5. Universities may choose to isolate themselves from this world, defining a restricted role based on ancient traditions, or they may pick up the gauntlet of leadership and use their power and their reputation to move into the twenty-first century as truly universal organizations. They will make an effort to attract new customers, whether they be a new breed of student from local, national and international industry, or students with talent from a disadvantaged background. And when the Lifelong Learning Society increases ten-fold the number of potential learners, will it be a university ready with welcoming arms to embrace the new breed of learners?

(From Longworth – Lifelong Learning on Action)

Toolbox Item 2

Questions and dialogue topics for lesson 2.2: 'Grey Learners'

1. Is it inevitable that your university will need to take in more older students?
2. Do you think that examination systems before and after study are compatible with the new kinds of development of the universities?
3. What does the university need to do to develop links with industry in order to attract more mature students?
4. What needs to change at the university to cope with a changing population?
5. How can distance learning and other learning technologies be developed and used to support these changes?
6. What are the new requirements for quality assurance in courses?
7. What are the implications for assessment and evaluation?
8. What are the implications for the training of lecturers?
9. What are the implications for support systems for the older learner?
10. What are the implications for entrance qualifications?
11. How vital is this change for society?
12. How vital is it for the development of the universities?
13. Does the university operate an APEL system for older learners?
14. Should APEL be implemented? If not, why not?
15 Please think of other implications and write them in below.
15.1
15.2
15.3
15.4

2.3

1. 'If you were to set out on a journey across a large desert, you could not carry enough water to last the entire way. It would make sense to have stations along the way where you could get water as you needed it. Education is much the same – why should youth be expected to attain all of the learning they will need for their entire life – why not have stations throughout life where one can learn as needed?'

Dr. Edmund Gleazer, former President/CEO of the American Association of Community Colleges

2. 'The universality of higher education implies the use of varied forms of intervention in order to meet the educational needs of all at all stages of life.. The facilities they can provide include modifying its approach to individual needs - part-time courses, linked work and training, distance learning, modular courses, virtual delivery methods and the decentralization of training groups. If Universities exist to serve individuals, they have to be prepared to take risks, try out new systems and processes, and make full use of the potential of new technology and distance learning.' (UNESCO Higher Education Panel)

3. 'Universities and other educational organisations are not generally accustomed to the idea of learners as customers. But when the focus is on the needs and demands of the learner in order to promote a more personal commitment, this is what they become. They are accountable to the learner as customer. In order to facilitate better learning, learning providers must take into account the learning styles and preferences of each individual and tailor courses to them. It must also use a wider variety of learning approaches and be much more acutely aware of how learning takes place in each individual. This is a radical shift both in mission and expertise for all learning providers'
(Longworth – Making Lifelong Learning Work)

4. 'At the same time the field of continuing education itself is undergoing development and being subsumed into the larger concept of lifelong education which, among other things, can entail periods in and out of education as an opportunity for large numbers of people.. The immediate implications for higher and further education are readily apparent. A vastly increasing demand for advanced level education in industry represents an opportunity for increased revenue, further education/industry partnerships, participation in local and national initiatives and a new role for many faculties and departments. It also represents great change, and the opportunity to be innovative in its role as provider of this education. In accepting this challenge, however, higher and further education should be aware that industry has its own, sometimes quite different, approach to education, based on what it regards as 'quality'. This includes:

- ·the copious use of high quality (in content and presentation) support materials;
- ·the frequent administration of educational quality measurement tools (in some cases, this extends beyond the course itself into the measurement of subsequent performance on the job and eventually into a company's results);
- the use of distance and open learning strategies involving a mixture of presentation methods from local, national and international sources.

It can also involve the use of electronic networking and conferencing software to create student/student and student/staff communication forums, to develop and deliver education jointly with the company, and to access databases and information sources. On-line video delivery, with feedback facilities, to classrooms based all over the country would require special instructional techniques to master the processes and higher education would need to understand these.

Lifelong Learning challenges the traditional university role as a repository of the intellectual capital of a nation and as a centre for research and excellence only. It is enough to make many higher education staff, from vice-chancellors to lecturers, shudder, but radical change is inevitably coming, and those organizations which are prepared for it will be the best fitted to survive in a poly-accessible educational world.'

Longworth and Davies: Lifelong Learning

Toolbox Item 3 – Flexible University Entrance

One measure of commitment to wider participation is its policy towards the non-traditional student. A definition of “non- traditional” might be “any student who comes to the university outside of the traditional ways of selection by examination pass for under-graduate study’. So where is your university’s degree of flexibility in the selection of the students who attend it.

1	Does your University have a flexible entry policy for	yes	no	In plan	Not rel
1.1	people from industry without minimum entry requirements to take continuing education courses				
1.2	Students who have not achieved minimum entry passes but who demonstrate personal qualities that will enable them to do well				
1.3	Students who have not achieved minimum entry passes because of social factors				
1.4	Have severe physical handicaps				
1.5	International students				
1.6	Third age students				
1.7	Mature students studying for a new career				
1.8	Women returners				
1.9	Students younger than 18				
1.10	Students younger than 16				
1.11	Students with learning difficulties (e.g. dyslexia)				
1.12	Ethnic minority students				
1.13	Shift workers				
1.14	People sick or in hospital during a course				
1.15	People without own transport				
1.16	Part-time students				
1.17	Any Other? (please state in the boxes below)				
2	Are there faculties or disciplines to which your flexible entry policy is not applied if yes please list in the boxes below				

Toolbox Item 6 - Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)

It is absolutely essential to develop high quality systems for the Accreditation of Prior and Experiential Learning (APEL), and to promote their application in a wide variety of contexts. Employers and admissions tutors in education and training institutions, including universities, also need to be persuaded of the worth of this kind of certification. APEL systems evaluate and recognise individuals' existing knowledge, skills and experience gained over long periods and in diverse contexts, including in non-formal and informal settings. The methods used can uncover skills and competencies that individuals themselves may not have realised they possess and can offer to employers. The very process requires the active participation of the candidate, which in itself raises individuals' confidence and self-image' (European Memorandum on Lifelong Learning)

In the boxes below, in groups of 3, brainstorm a list of the prior experience that might be taken into account when determining the award of credits

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

APEL can be an important tool for wider participation. Here we explore together your University's commitment to Accreditation for Prior Learning/ Accreditation for Prior Experiential Learning.

		yes	no	In plan	Not rel
6.1	Does your University have an APEL policy				
6.1.1	If yes, is the policy freely available to the general public				
6.2	Does it apply to all faculties				
6.3	Is there a specific person charged with the implementation of the policy				
6.4	Does each faculty/department have an APL/APEL advisor				
6.5	How are students expected to present their application				
6.5.1	simple application				
6.5.2	portfolio based				
6.5.3	Simple interview				
6.6	Other (please say)				
6.6.1					
6.6.2					
6.7	Are students afforded help or advice in relation to their application prior to admission				

On the lines below list some points for debate about why your university should and/or should not operate an APEL policy.

Toolbox Item 7 - Flexibility and Access (Wherever, Whenever, However, Whatever, from Whoever)

A lifelong learning university is a flexible university. Sunderland University, for example, delivers courses in more than 40 locations within its catchment area. Many of the American Distance Learning Universities offer courses to start at any time with a choice of tutors and examined when the student is ready. We, therefore, explore together the way in which your university is making efforts to take the right education to where the students are and providing it when, how and from whom they require it.

7.	In the boxes below name some of the places in your city where the university might be able to take its courses to in order to reach and teach people.
7.1.	
7.2.	
7.3.	
7.4.	
7.5.	
7.6.	
7.7.	
7.8.	
7.9.	
7.10.	
7.1.1	Provide a list of people in the community who may be able to profit from a university course but who cannot for various reasons.
7.1.2	
7.1.3	
7.1.4	
7.1.5	
7.1.6	
7.7.7	

3. Name some other ways in which the university might be flexible?

Toolbox Item 8 – Your University and Flexibility

Where possible put in some of your own ideas from the previous exercise in toolbox 7.

		yes	no	In plan	Not rel
8.1	Does your university have an outreach policy?				
8.2	Does your University run courses in any of the following places				
8.2.1	Shopping Centres				
8.2.2	Public houses, bars etc				
8.2.3	Neighbourhood Community Centres, Church Halls etc				
8.2.4	Sports Stadia				
8.2.5	Theatres and other places of entertainment				
8.2.6	Industrial sites				
8.2.7	Hospitals				
8.2.8	Prisons				
8.2.9	Homes				
8.2.10	Libraries				
8.2.11	Museums				
8.3	Do courses and lessons at your university:				
8.3.1	start at different dates during the year eg for new people moving into the area, returning from abroad etc and people who have been ill?				
8.3.2	start at different times during the day eg for shift workers, hospital staff etc				
8.4	Is there any flexibility in courses to allow people who have missed lessons because of illness, home crises etc. to catch up?				
8.5	Does your University examine courses as soon as the student is ready?				
8.6	Does your University individualise courses according to the learning styles of its students?				
8.7	Has your University ever carried out a learning requirements survey to find out what people in its catchment area want to learn in any of the following places				
8.7.1	local workplaces				
8.7.2	the community as a whole				
8.8	Does your University offer a choice of teachers/lecturers/tutors to the student				
8.9	Insert below any other flexibility points you have made in your discussions				

Toolbox Item 9:

Please read the piece below and answer the questions below.

PRESS RELEASE: BRITISH AEROSPACE APPOINTS MANAGING DIRECTOR AND VICE CHANCELLOR FOR VIRTUAL UNIVERSITY OF THE 21st CENTURY

Information Technology harnesses excellence and creativity in a unique concept for the millennium

A unique Virtual University for the 21st Century - a university without brick and mortar utilising information technology - was announced today by British Aerospace, with the message that people are the company's greatest strength.

"People and leadership are the key to the company's competitive position in the global economy in the years ahead," says Dr Geraldine Kenney-Wallace, who has been appointed as the first Managing Director and Vice Chancellor of a new millennium approach to providing learning, strategic research and technology acquisition.

"British Aerospace's new centre for educational excellence technology will provide educational opportunities not only for 44,000 employees but, eventually, for partner companies, customers and suppliers.

"British Aerospace wants to develop people across the organisation - this is seen as the key to the future. This Virtual University will increase the company's ability to offer educational opportunities relevant to the business and to as wide a cross section of the work-force as possible.

"While other companies in Britain and abroad have set up their **own** Training institutes to address their individual needs, the British Aerospace Virtual University is unique. It combines continuous learning with research and technology acquisition; with strategic development focused directly on the local and global needs of the business and our employees," says Dr Kenney-Wallace.

"Education and attitudes are critical for international competitiveness universities also have a role to play as partners towards winning in a world economy. One of the underlying concepts of the British Aerospace Virtual University is the improvement of communications between academia and the Company, and to create innovative

Through the very strong partnerships we intend to develop with world class universities and colleges, we intend to have qualifications underwritten and accredited, from NVQs to Ph.Ds," says Dr Kenney-Wallace. British Aerospace Chief Executive, Sir Richard Evans, said today:

"I believe that the cohesion this innovative concept can provide will amplify the value of the activities which are currently undertaken in individual parts of the company in the field of learning. Its success will be of fundamental importance in our journey to becoming a benchmark company."

Some questions

1. What do you understand by the term 'Virtual University'?

2. How can the establishment of a Virtual University threaten existing universities?

3. How can the establishment of a virtual university help existing universities?

4. Identify the faculties and departments in your university that might contribute to a Virtual University. What would they be able to contribute?

Toolbox Item 10: Distance Learning and e-learning

Let's look at your university's facilities for Distance and e-learning

		yes	no	In plan	Not rel
10.1	Does your university have the capability for delivering courses at distance				
10.1.1	To learners in classrooms etc within your university				
10.1.2	To learners in locations outside your university				
10.2	If yes what is the main delivery technology				
10.2.1	Cable				
10.2.2	Satellite upload				
10.2.3	ISDN				
10.2.4	Other (please say)				
10.3	Is there at your university a strategy to increase broadband facilities for learning?				
10.4	Is there a distance learning studio?				
10.5	Is there a videoconferencing facility?				
10.6	Is there a course development facility for distance delivery in your university?				
10.7	Is there a defined strategy to improve the knowledge of educators at the university about the effective uses of distance learning systems				

7.11.. Name 5 advantages of using distance learning tools and techniques

7.11.1

7.11.2

7,11.3

7.11.4

7.11.5

7.12. Name 3 disadvantages of using distance learning tools and techniques

7.12.1

7.12.2

7.12.3

7.13. On balance what is your opinion on the use of such tools?

Toolbox Item 11 E-learning, the Internet and international networks:

Let's explore issues relating to the use of communications technology as a teaching and learning medium at your university.

In the answers below 1= all 2= most, 3= about half, 4= a few, 5= none

11.1	To what extent are the following aspects of communications technology provided in your university's learning strategies	
11.1.1	Email facilities for staff	
11.1.2	Email facilities for students	
11.1.3	Using the internet as a reference source	
11.1.4	Using the internet as a learning source	
11.1.5	The development of e-learning courses	
11.1.6	The delivery of e-learning courses	
11.1.7	Formal linking with students/staff in other countries	
11.1.8	Collaborative Learning with students in other countries	
11.1.9	Collaborative administration with other organisations	
11.1.10	The joint development of databases with students from other parts of the world	
11.1.11	The development and delivery of courses for the local authority	
11.1.12	The development and delivery of courses for industry	
11.2	Do you wish to add more in the boxes below?	

		yes	no	In plan	Not rel
11.2.1	Is there a formal plan to increase this type of activity within your university				
11.2.2	Is there a formal course for staff on the effective educational use of e learning and the internet				
11.2.3	Does your university participate in any European or National projects involving electronic networking as a learning medium/environment				

11.3. What do you understand by the term e-learning?

11.4. What advantages are there for your university in using it?

11.5. Add any other comment you wish to make about the use of technology for learning below

