

## **SCONUL Task Force on Information Skills**

**Notes of meeting, Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2001**, at the SCONUL Offices, London

Present: Hilary Johnson (Convenor)  
Deborah Bragan Turner  
Sheila Corral  
Helen Hathaway  
Martin Jenkins (UCISA)  
Janet Peters  
Stephen Town

Apologies: Margaret Oldroyd  
Jo Parker

NB Due to late running of trains from the west, agenda items were not taken in order. These notes reflect the order of items at the meeting rather than that on the agenda.

### **1. Statistics and Performance indicators** (agenda item 6)

ST reported having submitted a proposal for a paper on this topic to the Northumbria conference towards the end of the year, which would enable a synthesis of thinking.

### **2. Glasgow SCONUL Conference** workshop (agenda item 7)

As the issue of statistics and performance indicators was one which required on-going work, it was suggested that this would be a useful focus for a workshop at the conference. (ST to devise title, ST & HJ to work on content)

### **3. CAUL information literacy standards** (AOB)

HJ tabled copies of CAUL proposed adoption of an Information Literacy standards, based on those devised by ACRL in the US, adapted for the Australian situation. The meeting considered whether going down the path of standards was one to follow. However, the 'standards' approach was not felt to be right for the UK situation. The group wished to see what emerged from the current work on applying the 7 Pillars model to specific subject areas, and felt that the 'generic' approach in the standards was not the most applicable in relation to issues of subject norms and employment angles. The setting of standards for information literacy for students in HE needed to be done in conjunction with subject teaching staff, or through liaison with employers groups in relation to specific professions or groups of workers, and linked with other skills agendas. It was agreed that the TF would continue to monitor developments with the CAUL Standards (HJ)

### **4. Links with UCISA Tlig** (agenda item 3)

Martin Jenkins outlined arrangements within UCISA membership for consideration of Learning and teaching issues. The 'TLIG' itself had a wide remit, so a sub-group is considering issues such as 'VLE's' and has a link with the CITSCAPES Project re IT training for students. The UCISA Staff Development Group were taking forward work on the ECDL, as a staff training tool. The meeting agreed that at the practical level as well as the more conceptual level, there was considerable common ground between people working with students on IT skills and those developing IS, and that this was not solely in 'converged' organisations. The idea of a joint meeting aimed at both 'streams' is a possibility for later in the year or early next. In the meantime there is a CITSCAPES meeting in September which features 'information literacy' in the title, for which brief information had been received. (HJ to forward details to TF). Janet Peters planned to attend the February meeting of the UCISA TLIG, and will keep the TF apprised of developments.

5. **JCALT JISC Circular 9/00** (agenda item 2)

The TF welcomed the JISC call for proposals, and that this would enable further work to be done which we had identified as desirable in our work plan. Noting that the 'I-SEE' project proposal had gone forward to JISC which incorporated inputs from all TF member institutions, the meeting also acknowledged that this proposal may not be the successful one. The TF would need to establish links with said project. To await developments.

6. **Learning outcomes – subject dimensions** (agenda item 5)

3 areas had been explored – Chemistry (HH), Education (JPe) and Theology (DBT)

Chemistry – HH has documented the current IS work at Reading in relation to the 7 levels of IS. She had set up discussions with academic staff in Reading at both PG and UG levels. Chemistry at Reading had piloted a 'careers' module which might prove a useful precedent. HH had found that the Royal Society of Chemistry has produced a 'skills' booklet for Chemistry undergrads. One of the Professors at Reading was willing to take ideas relating to IS to an RSC meeting. There was also a link with Oxford University teaching staff – (might be useful to involve chemistry subject librarian or equivalent at Oxford?) HH also intended to pursue a connection with the subject centre for Chemistry.

Theology – DBT had begun discussions with relevant staff at Nottingham, a new Professor being thought to be potentially interested. There was a TQA visit on the horizon for the subject which it was felt might make for greater receptivity. DBT had documented what was currently being delivered, to match against the model. As the number of institutions dealing with theology as a subject is likely to be small, might be worth establishing links with others. Also useful to check regarding the QAA subject benchmark for the subject – does it exist/is it being worked on?

Education – JPe had pursued ideas of a generic outline for education as a subject by questioning practitioners in the field. 9 responses to an online questionnaire

had been received so far. Qs related to tools used, learning outcomes identified, assessment issues, and delivery. The most common elements looked to be referencing and compiling of bibliographies. The picture on assessment was mixed. Delivery was mainly by library staff.

Other points included whether the TTA ICT module guidelines included relevant skills/criteria, and to what degree the concept of personal development profiles might be applicable (MJ to provide some info).

Discussion ensued about reasons for different situations – different underlying assumptions about content and aims of course, different kinds of sources being pre-eminent in particular subjects, different structures to the literature reflecting different ‘norms’. Agreed that the work on subjects should go forward, and that different approaches taken so far may prove useful in revealing different kinds of insight into what is implicit about the way each subject area approaches this field. Possibilities for investigating a clear ‘professional’ subject area as well include law and medicine. (HJ offered to contact law librarians group; contact in medical libraries to be ascertained).

7. **Date of next meeting** - Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> March (to be confirmed), at SCONUL Offices

HJJ 1/2/01