



Roundtables: a means of collaborative change

All educational institutions need to make the most effective and efficient use of the opportunities afforded by technology for enhancing learning. The successful deployment of learning technologies, however, requires consideration of:

- Technical e.g. robust systems which fully interact
- Support (for academic, students and support staff themselves)
- Awareness e.g. the benefits a VLE/MLE and other technologies for the student, member of staff and the institution

To facilitate the successful and appropriate use of learning technologies systems need to be integrated and those who are responsible for them need to collaborate. Information is needed within institutions about the efficacy of implemented learning technologies and about the issues when considering new ones. Roundtables provide one means of enabling this collaboration and strategic, grounded thinking. They bring people together to share concerns, frustrations and goals and provide opportunities to work together to enhance the learning experience throughout the institution, thus acting as a means of change management for learning technologies.

Roundtables

A Roundtable brings together a wide-ranging group of relevant individuals to **direct** and **support** learning technology initiatives, be they small or large scale. This group may include, for example:

- Academic staff
- Technology professionals
- Administrative staff, including Registry
- Librarians
- Students.

A Roundtable meets regularly, developing recommendations to enhance teaching and learning through uses of technology and to improve communication and collaboration amongst its members and across the institution. The Roundtable, with its cross-departmental awareness, agrees its own focus and goals to enhance technology related learning and teaching within the institution. The Roundtable progresses these goals as task areas; establishing working groups consisting both of its own members and asking others to join where appropriate. It combines a strategic approach with grassroots knowledge and enthusiasm.

Praise from both academic and support staff for Roundtables from institutions has included:

- *I believe that the Roundtable is important for bringing together the technologists and the educators*
- *I really appreciate these meetings – professional development for me, understanding of IT technicalities... it helps me speak to students with confidence*

Roundtables: General Information Sheet 1

- *It was great to see [the academic members of staff] so interested. In many committees I have seen academics disengage when IT-related subjects are discussed*
- *As a learning technologist I find it a really useful vehicle*
- *We are making solid, steady progress*
- *Friendly and relaxed atmosphere... people can be pretty candid in their remarks so we get nearer the 'truth' about issues*
- *I look forward to the next meeting*