Developing staff, developing courses, developing students

This exemplar is relevant to Digital Student challenges:

> *Take a strategic, whole-institution approach to developing the student digital experience*
> *Engage in dialogue with students about their digital experience and empower students to effect change in their digital environment*

At Sheffield Hallam University, feedback from the NSS and Student Barometer showed that students were concerned about a lack of consistency in their digital experiences. In response, the University decided to implement a set of 'minimum expectations' for how learning should be supported digitally in courses of study. Similar models were reviewed at other institutions and a draft set of expectations was produced. These were refined through a consultation process which included face-to-face workshops and email consultations with academic staff. Once approved by the Learning and Teaching Committee, the final version was sent to all teaching staff.

To help course teams with the new requirements, a roadshow visited every department and subject area to offer support. The IT team has begun a project to automate the creation of Blackboard sites and add in basic course information, removing one obstacle to change. In one of the four Faculties, a pilot project employed students to evaluate course Blackboard sites against the minimum standard and report back to the relevant departments. The University is extending this to a full review of all sites, starting in the current academic year. The minimum expectations are being refined to become a policy of 'threshold standards' with the expectation that many course teams will want to go further.

Teaching staff have also been supported by a Changing the Learning Landscape (CLL) project which encouraged them to go beyond the minimum expectations through a focus on trying new pedagogies. The project team worked with staff and students to produce a 'menu' of teaching and learning approaches, each one mapped to relevant technologies and their potential benefits.

How does this meet the challenge?
- The threshold standards have been developed collaboratively with staff and student partners.
- Course teams know clearly what they are aiming for (entitlement) but also how they can exceed this (enhancement).
- Resources have been put in place to help staff meet the standard, both technical (via the VLE automation improvements) and conceptual (e.g. the teaching approaches menu).

Find out more

- [Minimum expectations document](#)
- [Learning and teaching approaches](#)

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