Jisc **Digital Student exemplars**
Enhancing the digital experience of students

Stepping up to postgraduate study in the Arts

This exemplar is relevant to Digital Student challenges:

Prepare and support students to study effectively with digital technologies

Birkbeck College, a higher education college of the University of London, has traditionally taught part-time students who fit evening classes and self-study around other commitments. A recent Changing the Learning Landscape project worked across the curriculum to include more blended and online learning, with the aim to support more flexible engagement. However, Birkbeck students are often returning to study after a long break, and it was recognised that they might need help to develop the relevant information and digital literacies and the ability to study independently online.

A pilot module, '*Step Up to Postgraduate Study in Arts*', has been designed to address information and digital skills as an aspect of general academic skills, and in relation to subjects of study. Students undertake a self-assessment in six areas, then follow up with tasks relevant to their chosen arts subject, using a range of learning technologies such as Collaborate, Turnitin and an online journal tool. Tutors have found that Step Up graduates are entering their MA programmes already 'up to speed' and are participating in seminars with greater confidence and skill.

The module is now being used as a template for similar pre-postgraduate study modules in other schools. There is also interest in developing further blended modules in the Arts now that Step-Up has primed students (and staff) for a more blended mode of delivery, that is with a large component of independent study, online tasks, and online reflection/production.

How does this meet the challenge?

- Students are better prepared for postgraduate work as a result of taking a module dedicated to study methods.
- The College has recognised the need to prepare students (and staff) for independent, flexible and online modes of learning.
- The model is subject-specific but the pattern of learning and many of the generic tasks and materials can be shared across subject areas.

Find out more

Downloadable slides about the Step-Up course

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