



Staffordshire
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A Study of Policy & Organisational Implications of Resourcing & Supporting WBL in a Consortium

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A report from the SURF X4L Work Based Learning Project, a JISC Exchange for Learning Phase 2 Project

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Drawing on:

"The Shrewsbury Story" by Richard Booth and David Shearan, Shrewsbury College of Art and Technology,
"The Stoke Story" by Steve Blakemore, Stoke-on-Trent College.
And
"The Burton Story" by Mike Parker

Caveat:

The SURF WBL project would not describe this as a guide to BEST practice. In the areas covered by this document, it is probable that "best practice" does not yet even exist. This guide describes the conclusions about approaches that work well drawn by the SURF WBL partners from their experiences of undertaking developments in their own contexts, and the reason behind the conclusions. This document is a "concentration and synthesis" of the college reports and readers should use those for greater detail/ depth.

Date:

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Other Outputs and Documents from the SURF WBL Project

The “Stories”

This document has been built on a synthesis of the accounts and evaluation of work done at each of Stoke on Trent College and Shrewsbury College.

These “stories are each available:

SURF WBL - The Stoke Story¹

Author: Steve Blakemore, Educational Technologist Team Leader, Stoke-on-Trent College

SURF WBL – The Shrewsbury Story²

Authors: Richard Booth, ILT Co-ordinator and Dave Shearan, E-learning Project Champion, Shrewsbury College of Arts and Technology

SURF WBL – The Burton Story³

Author: Mike Parker, Burton-Upon-Trent College

Lists of Resources Produced

Each College has produced a list of the resources produced as a result of the Project, which has been combined into the main list in Appendix A. The list indicates which resources will be made available outside of SURF via deposit in JORUM.

- Resources from Stoke on Trent College
- Resources from Shrewsbury College of Arts and Technology
- Resources from Burton Upon Trent College
- Resources from Staffordshire University

COSE

New versions of COSE are being developed to allow further interoperability of content and it now incorporates a version of RELOAD. The beta versions are available from the dplus Website⁴.

¹ <http://www.staffs.ac.uk/COSE/SURFWBL/documents/>

² <http://www.staffs.ac.uk/COSE/SURFWBL/documents/>

³ <http://www.staffs.ac.uk/COSE/SURFWBL/documents/>

⁴ http://dplus.staffs.ac.uk/cose_reload/

Introduction

The issues covered in this guide are, in the authors' experiences, highly contextual. Therefore it is important, before describing the findings of the project and giving the recommendations the partners would make, to understand the context and history in the area of eLearning of the SURF WBL partners and the expectations they had when the project was conceived.

1. Context

SURF

SURF⁵ (Staffordshire University Regional Federation) is a consortium of the nine Staffordshire FE colleges, two Shropshire FE colleges and Staffordshire University, created in 2000 to develop a strategic partnership approach to the provision of higher education through FE colleges in this region.

SURF operates through a formal Agreement which has been approved by the University's Academic Board, all the colleges' corporations and HEFCE. The consortium is managed by a board, and a management committee, with additional sub-committees for curriculum, quality assurance and marketing.

SURF is made up of the following institutions:

- Burton College
- Cannock Chase Technical College
- City of Stoke on Trent Sixth Form College
- Leek College
- Newcastle College
- Rodbaston College
- Shrewsbury College of Arts and Technology
- Stafford College
- Staffordshire University
- Stoke on Trent College
- Tamworth & Lichfield College
- Walford & North Shropshire College

The partners' objectives in creating SURF were:

- To extend participation in higher education.
- To develop higher education provision that is accessible and socially inclusive, based on student demand and skills shortages.
- To establish learning pathways between further and higher education within the national qualifications framework and by working with employers.
- To develop staff through the dissemination of good practice in curriculum design, learning and teaching, quality assurance, student support and the administration of provision.
- To maximise the learning and teaching potential of the broadband network linking members of SURF.
- To work together to provide high quality support for students within the constraints of the available resources so as to promote high student retention and achievement.

⁵ <http://www.surf.ac.uk/>

- To work together to maximise funding opportunities for widening participation in higher education.
- To share SURF's experience of collaborative working within the wider educational community.

In the academic year 2005 – 6, SURF colleges enrolled 2,225 students, of which 784 are participating in Foundation Degrees.

SURF plays an active role in the provision of staff development opportunities, although staff development is primarily the responsibility of each member. However, members normally waive tuition fees for all their award-bearing programmes for all staff members on a reciprocal basis, and SURF member staff normally has access to open staff development events across SURF.

Individual members are responsible for the level of student support provided to students on programmes in their institutions. Wherever possible, however, they seek to make reciprocal arrangements. For full members, the University provides the following:

- Access to University library and learning resource information and electronic sources.
- Access to the University's IT facilities.
- Access to Careers information.
- Provision of financial advice and guidance via in-College sessions and electronically.
- Electronic communication and information to provide student support.
- Management of the HEFCE Access Funds administration and returns to HEFCE.

Staffordshire University

The process of change that led to the introduction of eLearning at Staffordshire University began in 1996 with the introduction of a (then) radical Learning and Teaching strategy "Building a Learning Community". This has been described in detail elsewhere⁶. This strategy, which had its focus on "learning not teaching", was revised in 1998 to include the institution-wide introduction of the use of a Virtual Learning Environment and a focus on Resource Based Learning⁶⁷⁸.

These overall initiatives did bring about a genuine focus on issues of learning across the University, but did, in hindsight, produce a somewhat content centric view of eLearning which did not exploit its fuller educational potential for change. One major problem was that both teaching staff and those charged with staff development did not learn well enough from each other. One major cause is seen as the isolated developer or "Fred in shed" approach caused by a focus on in-department projects⁹.

However, a more subtle cause is seen as one of "mixed messages" around

⁶ Steve Outram, "Building a Learning Community" in: A Guide to Staff and Education Development, edited by Peter Kahn and David Baume, (RoutledgeFalmer, 2003)

⁷ Stiles, M.J. (2003) "Embedding eLearning in a Higher Education Institution", Keynote Paper for: *At the Interface - 2nd Global Conference on Virtual Learning and Higher Education*; 12th - 13th September 2003, Mansfield College, Oxford. Pre-print available at <http://www.staffs.ac.uk/COSE/cosenew/ati2stilesrev.pdf>

⁸ Mark Stiles and Paul Orsmond, "Managing Active Student Learning with a Virtual Learning Environment", in *Educational Development Through Information and Communications Technologies*, edited by Stephen Fallows and Rakesh Bhanot, (Kogan Page, 2002)

⁹ Mark Stiles and Jennifer Yorke, "Designing and Implementing Learning Technology Projects – A Planned Approach", Workshop paper for "EFFECTS - Embedding Learning Technologies Seminar, University College London, 8th April 2003, (23 August 2003). Available at <http://www.staffs.ac.uk/COSE/cosenew/eltfinal.doc>

Quality processes. Although considerable effort was put in on developing these, eLearning was treated separately from mainstream delivery, and the focus was very much on "assurance" as opposed to "enhancement" – whilst "the spirit of continual improvement" was invoked, no processes were put in place to enable its actual incarnation. The process put in place compounded these problems by using "Quality Assurance Checklists", thus encouraging a focus on issues of content.

Whilst the University had got a lot of things right, and by 2000 the use of eLearning was widespread across the institution, it had fallen into a number of traps:

- The content trap – eLearning was focussing overmuch on content and not on the learning experience
- The technology trap – staff were seeing their developmental needs as technological rather than educational
- The accountability trap – the QA processes were not owned by staff, who saw them as "imposed" and "mechanistic" – as a result the process was not always carried out in the intended spirit
- The "isolated development trap" – leading to a failure to learn from each other and spread good practice

From 2000 onwards, a number of catalysts for change emerged which drove the University to addressing the issues discussed thus far. These were:

- The development and introduction of "full-tilt" complete distance learning, eLearning awards, which forced issues of course design, delivery and support to be addressed.
- The creation of SURF (Staffordshire University Regional Federation – a directly HEFCE funded HE/FE consortium involving the University and 11 partner FEIs) with its focus on Foundation Degrees and widening participation and inclusion. This raised similar issues to distance learning, but also those of cross-institutional working and cultural differences.

These led to:

- The "Integrative Development Process"⁹
- Quality Enhancement for eLearning Phase 1¹⁰
- eL-P2R2 – a review of policies, procedures, roles and responsibilities affecting eLearning⁷

The development process has been described in detail elsewhere⁹, but can be summarised as appointing a Learning Development and Innovation team member as project manager (along with other "experts" from across Information Services) to work with an academic team to carry out the following using a "project management" approach:

- Planning and management of development
- Preparation for approval/validation
- Staff development
- Pedagogy and course design
- Building the VLE course structure
- Identifying and clearing resources
- Content creation

¹⁰ Stiles, M.J., and Yorke, J.M.E.Y., "Embedding Staff Development in eLearning in the Production Process and using Policy to Reinforce its Effectiveness", paper for 9th SEDA Conference, Birmingham, November 2004. Available at <http://www.staffs.ac.uk/COSE/cosenew/embedding.pdf>

- Populating the VLE course
- Planning induction & delivery
- Supporting delivery
- Supporting monitoring and evaluation

To ensure that staff development and other supportive interventions could occur as early as possible in the development process, an eLearning threshold statement was introduced as part of a reworking of quality processes. This defined eLearning as where:

“A student cannot reasonably be expected, without due provision of individually focused accommodations (to meet the needs of disability, for example), to meet the learning outcomes of the course without accessing and/or engaging with the electronically delivered and/or supported components of the course.”

This was accompanied by a requirement for those planning new course developments to identify eLearning requirements as part of the academic planning process and to consult LDI at that stage. In addition, validation requirements and the institutional QA handbook were revised to give a focus on the intended “eLearning experience” rather than just on the course content. The point of delivery “QA Checklists” were also changed to focus more on the learning experience and to overtly address course evaluation and enhancement.

As a result of the review of policies, procedures, roles and responsibilities, a working group, led by one of the authors, and made up of practitioner representatives of Faculties and relevant services, was created to develop a University eLearning Policy. This policy, approved in 2004 by the University Learning and Teaching Enhancement Committee, provides 10 principles which define the way that eLearning, and the use of technology to support learning, will be conducted at the University. Two example principles are shown below:

Principle 6: The University, through its quality processes, will ensure that eLearning provision meets the standards expected by the University and funding bodies and that it is accessible, educationally sound, engaging and appropriate to its target populations, whilst ensuring that course developers and those facilitating learning have the scope to innovate and fully employ their professional skills and Judgement.

Principle 7: To ensure that the potential of eLearning to innovate learning and meet the needs of an increasingly diverse range of potential learners is realised, the University will actively encourage research, scholarship and development in all aspects of eLearning. In addition, it will, via appropriate staff development, ensure all management, administrative, support and teaching staff have the skills, and understanding of each others’ roles, required to play their part effectively in the provision of eLearning.

This policy now acts as a significant enabler for future developments by providing rules of conduct for future changes at the operational level and a context for the development of those University strategies which see eLearning as one of the tools to be used in achieving there objectives.

Both the work on Quality Assurance/Enhancement and the eLearning Policy have received considerable national attention, and were cited as “exemplars of good practice” in the 2005 Institutional Audit of Staffordshire University by the QAA. The audit team recognised eight areas of ‘good practice’ for Staffordshire University, placing the University among the very best performers in the UK’s higher education sector - its score double the national average.

Burton Upon Trent College

Burton Upon Trent College covers the East Staffordshire/West Derbyshire area, and enrolls 10,000 students each year. Until involvement with the SURF (Staffordshire University Regional Federation) Work Based Learning (WBL) Project Burton Upon Trent College had largely worked alone to develop an ILT (Information Learning Technology) infrastructure, with individuals responsible for developing/promoting materials in a non-traditional format. Although within the project Burton could be considered the same size as Shrewsbury College of Arts and Technology it had less experience than Shrewsbury in project work and supporting the creation of learning objects.

In 2004 the college made ILT a development priority after it was identified as a weakness at the last inspection. It set up an ILT strategy group to monitor the purchase and distribution of hardware, the introduction of the MLE and to equip staff with skills to ensure that all parts of the curriculum incorporate and utilise ICT wherever it is beneficial to learning. The college has invested in a commercial VLE and has also started investigating the use of Moodle based on the experiences of other colleges, including Shrewsbury.

The money allocated to Burton College from the SURF WBL project was used to fund a full time learning technologist. The role of this person was to specifically manage and undertake the project work, repurpose learning content and assist staff in developing course material for the VLE.

Shrewsbury College of Arts and Technology

Shrewsbury College of Arts and Technology is the largest general further education (FE) college in Shropshire. In 2005/06, the college enrolled 8,560 students on FE programmes, 79% of whom were aged 16 to 18 and 21% aged 19 and over. Just over half of the students aged 16 to 18 attended full-time courses. Of the adult students, 87% were part-time.

The College's policy regarding Higher Education (HE) is an important backdrop to this project. Prior to the unsuccessful Ofsted inspection in 2002 the policy was to expand HE into all curriculum areas and to locate it all (except Education) with SURF. However in the following two years, influenced by the inspection results, and by management and funding changes, HE development was very limited and courses were dropped due to lack of numbers. By 2005 the policy had returned to one of having appropriate HE courses in each curriculum area with an emphasis on Foundation Degrees. At the start of the project in April 2005 a number of Foundation Degrees were in the planning stage, all targeted for delivery starting in September 2006, but none were active.

The money allocated to Shrewsbury College from the SURF WBL project was partly used to fund the post of eLearning Project Champion. The role of this person was to specifically manage and undertake the project work, repurpose learning content and assist staff in developing course material for the VLE.

Stoke on Trent College

Stoke on Trent College is one of the largest providers of FE in the country. It is based on two main campuses and has a number of outreach and neighbourhood colleges. Having weathered a turbulent period in the late 1990s, the college was in a period of relative calm and stability. Unfortunately, this was not to last; during the project, changes of focus in governmental policy and interests, coupled with the attendant radical changes in funding structures meant that a round of redundancies was announced and carried out. This had the expected destabilizing effect on all academic and support staff and made the job of fostering co-operation with the

project rather harder than it could have been in more stable and predictable circumstances.

Ongoing development activities for the project staff have been afforded by the need to raise skills levels and awareness of software and practices that support the work of the project and the wider life of the College. Indeed, it may be observed that a clear continuity of practice may be seen between the outputs of our earlier work with the consortium and those of the current one. This is evident in areas such as the tools selection for work undertaken, the styles of learning addressed and in the engagement of staff at whatever level is appropriate in the authoring and evaluation processes. In addition, the administrative framework for projects previous and current have informed the working practices of the entire EdTech team in terms of quality assessment and in issues relating to IPR and copyright.

2. Expectations

Planned Deliverables

The project originally planned to have the following summative outputs and deliverables and formative technical outputs and contributions:

- **A Practical Guide to the Resourcing and Support of WBL.**
This would be targeted at FE and HE educators and cover both practical and pedagogic issues. It would be designed to be a practical guide rather than a study.
- **A Study of Policy & Organisational Implications of Resourcing & Supporting WBL in a Consortium.**
The SURF WBL project focused further on the pedagogic implication of the repurposing and reusing of materials based on the outputs of the SURF X4L Project.

This report, along with the three local stories, is designed to fulfil these two deliverables.

Expectations

Work was planned to focus on supporting work based learning in foundation degrees. It was found that some partners Foundation Degrees (FD) were not as successful as thought, as stated in the Shrewsbury Story

“The project started by establishing a clear picture of the status of Foundation Degrees within the College. The results ... were that the only active qualification was due to be discontinued, and that there were seven Foundation Degrees under development and not due to commence until September 2006.”

Interviews with staff involved in the development and delivery of foundation degrees resulted in a number of generic areas identified for the development of materials.

Further development in the support of WBL in FD will be taking place with the next JISC project, SURF WBLWay. This project will involve the main three partners from the SURF WBL Project, in addition to Harvest Road. The project will be looking at delivering the materials to specific groups of individuals including employers, tutors, award leaders etc. As a by product some materials will continue to be developed.

Expectations of Partners

The three partner expectations were coloured by past experiences in projects and their local histories. Shrewsbury hoped to engage staff with their Moodle Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and get them involved developing materials to support

learners, and other members of staff. They discovered early on that the project could be used to create generic materials for use in the college. Stoke college, along with Shrewsbury, had previous project experience and a number of dedicated ILT members of staff, and were interested in developing skills, reviewing their processes and looking and software being developed in the eLearning arena. Burton on Trent were the least experienced of the project partners, and were hoping that the project could be used to raise awareness of eLearning in the college and that they would be able to develop their VLE.

Regardless of their diverse experience and perspectives the project partners had some shared expectations:

- **Embedding and uptake;** It was hoped that the projects use of SURF X4L processes and policies would continue to be used and developed within the colleges, helping to enhance ILT support and raise awareness with senior staff.
- **Develop Resources;** The project partners focused on creating materials based around existing resources. The resources were focused around generic areas that could be used throughout the institutions involved and shared across institutions. It was envisioned that these materials could be embedded into partner VLE's and used for supporting learners and tutors.
- **Review tools available;** New tools are coming out all the time and it was hoped that the project team would be able to build an understanding of existing tools available and providing staff with advice as to which tool would suit their needs. By reviewing tools used within the community it was hoped that the partners would be able to get a clear idea of what was being achieved across the country, and indeed the world.
- **Staff Development;** On previous experience the partners expected both support and academic staff to increase their knowledge and skills based on this project, they also expected the project to help guide future staff development processes in resource development and passing on awareness of existing materials. This included promoting the use of JORUM.
- **Strengthen Relationships within SURF;** The colleges expected that the involvement in the project would strengthen their relationships within SURF, increase their chance of further project work in this area and establish links with other institutions involved in eLearning projects.

3. Awareness & Engagement

Develop sample materials to raise awareness and engage staff in the creation of content. Staff need to see immediate benefits.

Following the experiences from the first stage of the X4L project all the colleges involved in the SURF WBL project found that it was important to demonstrate existing materials created locally to engage staff in creating materials. Partners used the same techniques as the X4L project to demonstrate their materials¹¹, including:

- Use of existing materials for internal training sessions on VLE's and particular subject areas
- Formal Dissemination Events run across institutions
- Interviews with particular staff members

¹¹ Stiles, M.J., "Introducing the Reuse and Repurposing of Content as part of the embedding of eLearning A guide to good practice and problem areas in cultural, educational and organisational change", August 2005. Available at <http://www.staffs.ac.uk/COSE/X4L/SURFX4Lmain.pdf>

Due to the unique situation Shrewsbury College were in at the start of the project they focused on raising awareness of foundation degrees. They focused on creating materials based on existing resources identified through informal interviews with relevant members of staff. Shrewsbury looked at providing a number of materials based on the needs of the college that could be used by learners at different levels and with different skills.

Burton College was able to focus more on raising awareness in centralised support of foundation degrees and their work based learners as they, along with Stoke, had established courses running in a number of areas. They used Shrewsbury's model from X4L phase one to hire a member of staff in to help with promotion of the project.

ILT Staff at Stoke College moved their culture of being permanently being available further, to attending lectures by staff who expressed an interest in the project, allowing staff to capture the most amount of data given in a class.

"The sessions we attended provided early dissemination opportunities for the aims of the project and profile raising for the staff involved."

Barriers should not be trivialised. They can include:

- Incursion of work into the home life
- Technophobia
- Adding to workload
- Giving material to competitors
- Perceived lack of senior management support

As with the SURF X4L project staff responses ranged from enthusiasm to indifference and negative concerns, and it was clear those with negative concerns or felt indifference would either be hard or impossible to engage with.

Incursion of work into the home life

This appears to be a concern raised from working with WBL as well as with e-learning / e-Supported courses. A comment from the Stoke report shows:

"Concerns on the potential incursion of work into the home life when the students can seek contact via e-mail"

This tied in with concerns raised at Staffordshire and reflected materials created by the university focusing on expectations in communication by the learner, tutors, mentors and employers.

The work into home life was seen from the Staffordshire University team as materials were commissioned from individuals in faculties. These individuals recognised that converting materials would take some time, however this time was underestimated with the need to develop the existing materials to include more information on the pedagogical value of the materials and guidelines for tutors using the materials. The time invested however was seen as positive as tutors envisioned the ease of use of materials in the future and the ability to easily modify the resources across different awards, thus saving time in the future. A good example of this is the case study by Creative Arts who were able to use resources created by the project to speed up the validation process of a number of foundation degrees in faculty even though the original documents were created by the Engineering department. Through the use of learning objects created by the project the team were able to identify that award validation as a problem for tutors in both the

university and in partner colleges, and this will be discussed further in this document.

Technophobia

Although all colleges in this project are working at improving the skills of staff in their institutions this is a reoccurring barrier, first raised during the SURF X4L project. Experience at Shrewsbury showed that the technical difficulties with their first VLE resulted in reducing engagement by staff to use and develop materials for student use, with only 3 or 4 courses running with students. By increasing the profile of ILT, and by changing the VLE in the college Shrewsbury demonstrated that it was possible to re-engage staff who had become disillusioned.

Adding to workload

As with the SURF X4L project this was a major feature for all colleges involved in the project. Staff need to see immediate benefits to keep motivated, along with help from dedicated support staff to help develop materials in a way that would be useful to the individual and to the wider community. This was more of an issue with tutors at the colleges than at the university as university faculties may be involved in a number of different awards and recognise the fact that documents can be created across those awards staff in partner colleges focused very much on the modules they were delivering, seeing the university as the provider of main core materials.

Giving material to competitors

With Stoke college this was a big issue, as shown in this quote:

“The course team leader has instructed her to withhold any further materials as they were deemed to have commercial value; unknown to the staff member who had already been collaborating with us the team leader was already in negotiations with a college elsewhere in the country to sell the entire suite of materials as a package enabling them to quickly establish a course to meet local demand.”

Fortunately this was less of an issue with the other colleges and the university, in the main the feeling was that the content was not king (as demonstrated by OpenLearn¹² by Open University and MIT's OpenCourseware¹³) and that the pedagogical wraps given to the content and the support the institution can give to the learner were of more value.

Perceived lack of senior management support

Less of a problem with the two partner colleges involved in previous project work this was an issue with Burton, where they had no dedicated ILT staff and management were reluctant to hire key project staff.

Getting staff from feeling motivated to getting them engaged involved working with staff who are already involved in ILT projects or formal training.

Burton & Stoke both used staff already involved with ILT projects or participating in formal training including the use of ILT. In Burton's case they used staff taking higher awards in Education that encouraged the use of innovative ILT.

As with earlier projects motivation and engagement was driven by the ILT specialists, especially if the barriers are technical confidence or workload concerns.

¹² <http://openlearn.open.ac.uk/>

¹³ <http://ocw.mit.edu/index.html>

Existing relationships between ILT specialists and teaching staff also helped with staff confidence in being able to share their content. The partners experience was reflected at Staffordshire University where the initial material was developed by tutoring staff but the ILT specialist was able to assist with the conversion of it to e-Supported materials and to help structure the material so it could be used by other tutors.

Use existing materials to promote engagement

Each partner college used existing materials to promote engagement, either to engage new members of staff or to help staff already involved to stay engaged. This practice was developed in the SURF X4L project and continued to be successful within the SURF WBL project. Materials used for the demonstrations were both large and small in size, and in most cases did not do anything “flashy” and were in small chunks of information.

One of the interesting notes to this project has been staffs unawareness of JORUM and their inability to easily access it. To encourage staff to use existing materials the (lack of) use of JORUM has been a big issue with the project, and has also been a barrier to sharing the resources created due to lack of promotion by Library staff of this resource.

4. *The Process*

Managing the Process

It is important to use ILT staff to support staff and empower them to create and own their materials.

Managing the process continued on the theme from the last X4L project of devolving control. Burton followed the processes used by Shrewsbury and Stoke, along with workflows and procedures developed at the start of the project. The learning technologist was involved in discussing with staff what resources where needed, what already existed and how they could be involved in creating resources.

All three colleges identified the same factors as influencing “who does what” which was reported in the first X4L project and included factors such as the willingness of the academic participants to develop new skills, the amount of time they can commit and the urgency of need. In Shrewsbury’s case the urgency of need precluded the use of academic staff in the creation of materials.

By using Foundation Degrees in the field of teaching Burton were able to raise college awareness, and encourage innovative development by tutors on the course, and by those delivering the course. Creating resources was at a very basic level by the tutors, and the learning technologist was a facilitator and not there to judge the materials created, giving tutors the courage to create further resources. Tutors also then were able to change, modify and update the materials as they were using a technology they were familiar with.

Shrewsbury now has eLearning processes and policies in place, and have been able to strengthen their ILT team with the permanent position of an ILT Development Officer. Their ILT strategy includes requiring a percentage of all courses to be made available via the college VLE. These changes have heavily influenced the work done on the project and team members are now responsible for the delivery of the PGCE “Innovations” module at the college.

Quality Control and Copyright

The project used the experiences from the X4L project to create a number of workflows and procedures to enable clarity of the roles and responsibilities of the different team members. This was especially important with the process of identifying learning objects to created by the project, without which there would have been problems of duplication as two of the colleges concentrated heavily on working in the area of study skills. Fortunately with the workflows and policies on communications in place the materials could be significantly different to each other, and in some cases learning objects created by one partner then inspired another partner to make some complementary learning objects.

The project felt it was important to formalise the review process of materials when converting paper materials to e-Supporting learning objects, Appendix B shows the Review Workflow used successfully by the project. This ensured that materials were not “lost” or steps such as Quality Assurance (QA) were not missed. The QA process was very similar to the universities process and was used to give members of staff a feeling of pride in the work that they had done and ensure that areas of copyright and accessibility had been addressed within the university requirements.

The project put in place a number of controls and a work flow to enable all members of the team to be responsible for the copyright of the materials created by their institution. A flowchart was used to help team members identify when to consider copyright and what to do at different stages, a copy of this is in Appendix C. This flowchart was used in conjunction with a template copyright letter (Appendix D) was sent to anyone contributing to the project with an agreement for signing (Appendix E). A standard template spreadsheet where all content was recorded, with where the source materials were located, and if/when copyright was obtained by each college and then a master spreadsheet was held at the university.

Cultural Change

Use of VLE’s to control access to materials impacts on staff engagement in creating materials

Shrewsbury’s story reflects that their existing VLE failed to have an impact on staff to make use of the system, develop courses and use materials despite the constant training sessions and one to one sessions given by the ILT team. This was due to technical problems experienced at the college and also by distances learners. Moving to a new VLE after a number of evaluation days with staff proved to be a success, along with the progression of the new ILT strategy.

Management support is important when trying to effect cultural change throughout an institution

Both Shrewsbury and Stoke on Trent have a prior history with the use of “eResources”. Stoke on Trent, within the period of the project, have focused on encouraging staff in the use of new technologies. Stoke on Trent have been able to further recruit staff as a result of their participation on the X4L project, and along with Shrewsbury has a management team enthusiastic about the use of ILT. The following quote covers Stokes experiences well:

“As has been our previous experience, engagement with consortium projects and JISC has had significant impact on thinking and working practices at several levels of the organisation. The spin-offs in terms of supporting wider dissemination of ILT ideas and in raising the awareness of wider issues

relating to the working methods and styles of support available for our learners will guide much further development and training, both within the scope of the consortium projects and beyond."

Shrewsbury is moving from "adoption of elearning" to "embedding" with support from senior staff and the growth of the ILT team. Burton, starting at a less experienced position, are still addressing initial awareness. ILT staff are still attempting to get complete support from senior management and wider adoption within the institution. Their experiences can be mapped to Shrewsbury's in the last report, and again they did not feel that they had effected cultural changes at an institutional level but that there was a noticed change in staff and management attitudes and behaviours. ILT staff there though felt that it was against the odds and that it was easy to feel unsupported when seeing the support given to the other colleges by their senior management.

The SURF consortium agreement has now been modified to include the copyright of materials created by members of staff at different institutions to avoid any issues if any of the colleges chooses to leave the consortium.

5. Evaluation and Dissemination

Dissemination Days

The project worked at disseminating the project learning objects by holding a number of dissemination days, these started off as half days held at the partner colleges (with invitations to external colleges and universities) and then holding day events at external institutions including Bedfordshire University. The days included presentation from the university and the partner colleges and then allowing staff to play with the materials online using a Moodle site.

The moodle dissemination site was made available to the individuals who expressed an interest in the project at the fdf conference in 2005 and to attendees of the dissemination days. The site included forums where individuals could give their feedback on the learning objects, including how they intend to use the learning objects. This site will continue to be used beyond the life of the project to disseminate any new materials created by the SURF WBL-Way project and continue to promote the work taken during the WBL project, encouraging staff to share experiences and to reuse and repurpose existing learning objects within their own subject area.

JORUM

With the dissemination of the project outputs JORUM became a big focus for the project. The project found however that there were problems with delivering the learning objects to tutors, employers and mentors through JORUM. The main problem was there was no way for non educational users to gain access to the materials. The next problem was tutor access, most tutors spoken to were unaware of JORUM, of what it was about and how to access it. Although JORUM used Athens accounts these accounts appeared to be different to the standard single login accounts that tutors were used to using. Therefore demonstrations of JORUM and how to find the resources created by the project were limited to Flash movies.

Case Studies/ Feedback

The project encouraged staff using the project learning objects to write short case studies on how the materials have helped them. The case studies and feedback from the dissemination days were used to review university procedures and policies, and the learning objects themselves.

One of the areas where it was identified that the learning objects created by the project was in the area of validation and supporting the development of new foundation degrees. Validation was discovered to be a difficult process for staff from FE developing the materials for foundation degrees, by creating generic supporting learning objects including the Student Project Handbook and Negotiated Learning the validation process was made a little easier. This was an area that was identified as a problem from other JISC projects including COVARM¹⁴ as being resource intensive and requires a high amount of collaboration between institutions. The SURF WBL-Way project will be investigating supporting individuals (both institutional staff and employers) during the validation process.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

One size does not fit all

The conclusions from this report support those made by the first report, and it is important to repeat them. The three colleges involved approached this project in ways suitable to their experience and situation. It is important to read the first project reports before reading the ones from this project. The stories from Shrewsbury and Burton could be of specific interest to those institutions starting, or about to start, the process of developing and reusing / repurposing learning materials. Especially to chart the progress made from an institution that has moved forward over a five year period. For those institutions already involved in developing materials the Stoke Stories may be of more interest.

Organisation

You need a dedicated support team

Stoke, Shrewsbury and Burton have all noted in past and present project that without dedicated staff to support and guide ILT developments staff can not be expected to develop and repurpose materials. It is an important part of motivating staff to become involved.

Commitment to, and the Resourcing of, the ILT team is essential

It is important that there is a constant need for staff to be able to continue to develop their skills and keep abreast of new tools and new ways of working. These skills can then be cascaded down to staff developing materials. (Stoke on Trent)

A strategic approach is essential to move towards embedding

As demonstrated through the cultural change section it is important to have a long term view to enable the embedding of eLearning into the institution. Support from senior management is needed to give encouragement to staff, and this support needs to be more than just by creating a number of policies but following them through (Burton).

¹⁴ <http://covarm.tvu.ac.uk/covarm/index.jsp>

Process

Building and maintaining awareness is a continuous NOT one-off process.

Continued awareness of materials available, work being done by colleagues, and demonstrating tools that will make academic staffs jobs easier is important.

Encouraging staff to share experiences allows other staff to see that the barriers they experience have been experienced by staff who have gone on to create resources. Stressing personal gains with immediate personal benefits worked effectively (Stoke). Shrewsbury go on to say:

“The dissemination event has created a new desire to promote the use of shared resources within the College and to share the responsibility for doing this.”

Showing staff tools that will give immediate benefits to their teaching helps keep them engaged.

Good communications and regular contact between ILT support and relevant staff is essential to ensure engagement and ownership

Each of the institutions involved found that by developing good communications with relevant staff (both in Learner Support and Tutors) they were able to develop valuable materials and keep them engaged and give them ownership of the created materials beyond the life of the project. By using the “cup of tea and biscuit” approach staff have been encouraged to approach ILT staff for any help that they might need.

And Finally...

There are some general points that should be considered

- Not everyone will be enthusiastic about engaging, this should be respected
- It is important to attend local and national events to help with identifying resources and useful tools
- Quality Assurance and Copyright are important to get right when creating materials to share across institutions.

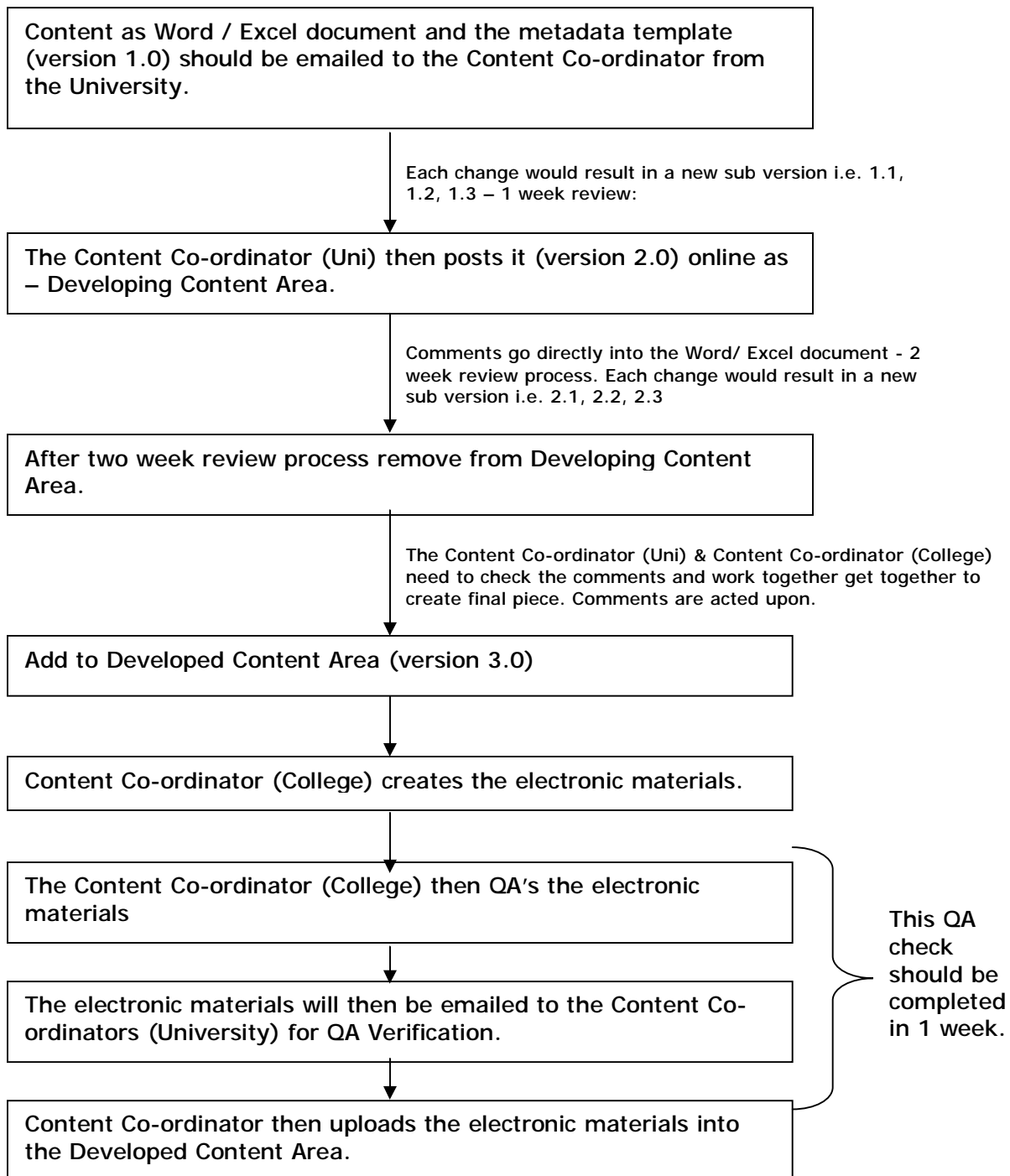
Appendix

Appendix A: Learning Objects

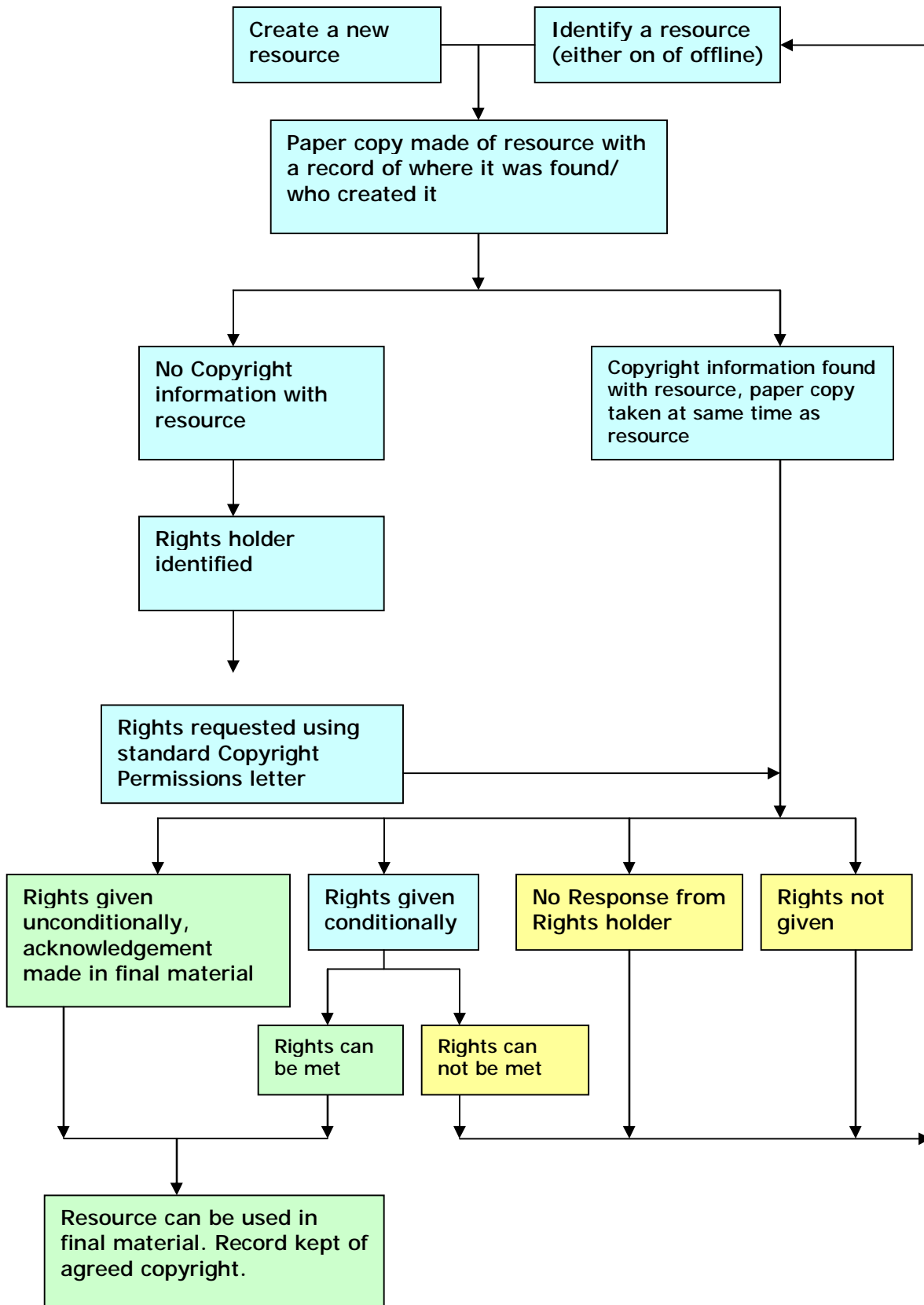
| Learning Object | Institution |
|--|--------------------------|
| Creating Effective Handouts | Burton Upon Trent |
| Harvard Referencing Activity | Burton Upon Trent |
| Advice on Presentations | Burton Upon Trent |
| Advice on Styles of Writing | Burton Upon Trent |
| Speech and a Guide to Using Course Genie | Burton Upon Trent |
| Motivating Student Personal Development Planning | Burton Upon Trent |
| Managing Teaching | Burton Upon Trent |
| Using a word processor to format an essay | Shrewsbury |
| A Students Quick Guide to Essay Writing | Shrewsbury |
| A Students Quick Guide to Literature searches | Shrewsbury |
| A Students Quick Guide to Report Writing | Shrewsbury |
| A Students Quick Guide to Research Methods | Shrewsbury |
| A Students Quick Guide to Time Management | Shrewsbury |
| Newspaper Searches | Shrewsbury |
| APEL Handbook | Staffordshire University |
| Assessment and the use of APEL in Assessment | Staffordshire University |
| Ethics in WBL | Staffordshire University |
| Quality Assurance Guidance | Staffordshire University |
| U4: A1 Producing CV's and Completing Application Forms | Staffordshire University |
| U1: A1 Skills and Personal Qualities | Staffordshire University |
| U1: A2 Values and Motivations | Staffordshire University |
| U1: A3 Preferred Work Activities | Staffordshire University |
| U2: A1 Exploring Available Types of Job activity | Staffordshire University |
| U2: A2 Exploring Progression Routes activity | Staffordshire University |
| U2: A3 Matching Personal Profile to career Aims and Job Opportunities activity | Staffordshire University |
| U3: A1 Growing a Job or Growing within a Job activity | Staffordshire University |
| U3: A2 Seeking out New Opportunities activity | Staffordshire University |
| U3: A3 Setting, Monitoring and Achieving Goals | Staffordshire University |
| U4: A3 Writing a Business Plan | Staffordshire University |
| U5: A1 Assessment Centres | Staffordshire University |
| U5: A2 Networking and creative job hunting | Staffordshire University |
| U4: A2 Writing Application Forms | Staffordshire University |
| U5: A3 Interviews and Presentations | Staffordshire University |
| Guidelines on Communication in WBL | Staffordshire University |
| Behavior Types: Assertiveness | Staffordshire University |
| Guide to Report Writing | Staffordshire University |
| Health and Safety and Risk Analysis Checklist | Staffordshire University |
| Interpersonal Communication & Neuro logistic programming | Staffordshire University |
| Learning Styles and Reflection | Staffordshire University |
| Managing Stress | Staffordshire University |
| Research Skills and Referencing | Staffordshire University |
| Written Skills, Essays and Report Writing | Staffordshire University |
| Critical Analytical Thinking | Staffordshire University |
| Meetings and Procedures for Meetings | Staffordshire University |
| Presentations | Staffordshire University |

| | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Working in Groups | Staffordshire University |
| Curriculum Design, Development and Assessment | Staffordshire University |
| Mentor Handbook | Staffordshire University |
| Role of the Mentor in The Award Management Committee | Staffordshire University |
| Monitoring the WBL Process - The Learner Agreement | Staffordshire University |
| WBL Project Handbook | Staffordshire University |
| Non Verbal Communication - Student Notes | Staffordshire University |
| Non Verbal Communication - Tutor Notes | Staffordshire University |
| Note Taking - Student Notes | Staffordshire University |
| Note Taking - Tutor Notes | Staffordshire University |
| Quick Guide to Media in PowerPoint | Staffordshire University |
| Short Guidelines on Referencing - Student Notes | Staffordshire University |
| Short Guidelines on Referencing - Tutor Notes | Staffordshire University |
| Time Management - Student Notes | Staffordshire University |
| Time Management - Tutor Notes | Staffordshire University |
| PDP in Engineering | Staffordshire University |
| Time management | Staffordshire University |
| Understanding Assessment Techniques | Staffordshire University |
| Understanding PDP | Staffordshire University |
| Writing Business letters | Staffordshire University |
| Business maths | Staffordshire University |
| Using MS Office applications in business | Staffordshire University |
| Quick Guide to Discipline and Motivation | Stoke on Trent |
| Quick Guide to Assessment | Stoke on Trent |
| Quick Guide to Finding your way to learn | Stoke on Trent |
| Quick Guide to Knowing where you are starting from | Stoke on Trent |
| Quick Guide to Learning methods (Analyser / Driver) | Stoke on Trent |
| Quick Guide to Managing Stress | Stoke on Trent |
| Quick Guide to Measuring Learning | Stoke on Trent |
| Quick Guide to Organising your life | Stoke on Trent |
| Quick Guide to Presenting your work | Stoke on Trent |
| Quick Guide to Research | Stoke on Trent |
| Quick Guide to Time Management | Stoke on Trent |
| Quick Guide to Understanding Learning Styles, making a cup of tea | Stoke on Trent |
| Models of Learning | Stoke on Trent |
| Developing the Work Based Learner Agreement to include rights and responsibilities | Stoke on Trent |
| Teacher Training: Assessment | Stoke on Trent |
| Understanding the role of Human Resources | Stoke on Trent |
| Writing a Lesson Plan | Stoke on Trent |

Appendix B: Content review process



Appendix C: Copyright Flow



Appendix D: Sample Covering Letter for Copyright

[Sending Institution Name]
[Sending Institution Address]
Date: Friday, 17 March 2006

Dear [Name of the person or institution contributing]
Subject: Contribution of Content to [content name from institution]

This is on behalf of [Institution Name]
[Discription of Institution, department and how the materials will be used, if sharing with other institutions etc]

I would like thank you for agreeing to contribute the following content to the project:
[List what is being contributed]

Enclosed you will find a permissions letter enabling the project to use your content. Could you please read this, complete the relevant details and return it to me in the envelope provided. If you require further information about the use of your materials please do not hesitate to contact either contact me, you will find my details at the bottom of this letter

Regards,

[Name of the person sending on behalf of the institution]
[title]
Tel:
Email:

Appendix E: Sample Copyright Permission Letter

This declaration is for the purpose of confirming the ownership of copyright and for the granting of permission to {HE Institutional Name / Consortium Name}, to deposit deliver and disseminate content via the JORUM National Repository and to make available for use by members of the {HE Institutional Name / Consortium Name},.

[Please complete the following information]

Name:

Address:

[Please delete the incorrect statement]

I agree / On behalf of the institution it is agreed that:

I warrant that I am the copyright and database rights holder or authorised representative of the copyright and database rights holder for all items ("Items") described in Section 3 of this document. I further warrant that either I am the owner of any Moral Rights in the Items, or I am the authorised representative of the owner of any Moral Rights in the Items, or that there are no Moral Rights associated with the Items, or that any Moral Rights in the Items have been waived. I further warrant that publication of the Items will not contravene any laws, including but not limited to the laws of defamation and contempt of court (or concepts approximating thereto). I indemnify the {HE Institutional Name}, against all actions, suits, proceedings, claims, demands, damages and costs (including any legal costs or expenses properly incurred and any compensation costs and disbursements paid by {HE Institutional Name}), on the advice of its legal advisors to compromise or settle any claim) occasioned by Staffordshire University in consequence of any breach or alleged breach of the above warranties.

- I declare that the necessary assignments of intellectual property rights (this term includes, but is not limited to, copyright, database right, patents and trademarks) from all staff, students or agents involved in the development and production of the project resources on its behalf has been obtained.
- I confirm that all resources have been clearly marked identifying that the copyright is owned by the authoring person / institution in the case of existing materials contributed to the project, or by {HE Institutional Name} in the case of project resources produced using funding provided by the project.
- I grant to the other Parties a non-exclusive royalty-free licence to use the developed project resources for the purposes of carrying out the Project and a non-exclusive royalty-free licence in perpetuity for teaching and research purposes
- I will cooperate fully with the JISC to make the project resources available free at the point of use to the UK teaching, learning, and research communities.
- I will supply such copies and to grant such non-exclusive licences as may be required by HEFCE

{HE Institutional Name }, shall be under no liability for any loss or for any failure to perform any obligation hereunder due to causes beyond their control including, but without limitation, industrial disputes of whatever nature, acts of God, hostilities, force majeure or any other circumstances which they could not reasonably foresee and provide against.

Description of Items to be Included

On behalf of:

Name:

Signature: