



CITSCAPES Case Study

Lauder College

Dunfermline (Scotland)



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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. Purpose of this Study

This report is part of the case-study activity strand of the Citscapes Project, which has been commissioned by JISC to investigate the current situation in ICT skills provision in higher and further education across the UK. The report is one of four major studies that have been carried out in order to gain a qualitative snapshot of good practice in the development of ICT skills provision for students. In recent years IT and learning technology have come closer together than ever. This is why the report also sheds light onto issues such as e-learning and e-business and staff ICT training. The development and implementations of ICT strategies in the FE sector can however not be seen as being independent from a number of other current drivers in education, such as social inclusion, community learning and widening access and participation. Whilst the focus of this document will be ICT skills development for students at Lauder College, the above named areas interplay with this theme and will be considered where appropriate.

1.2. Methodology

This report has been compiled using a variety of sources and methods, e.g. qualitative document research, interviews with senior managers and support staff and observation carried out by a qualified researcher of Glasgow University. As part of the CITSCAPES Project an Overview Study has been developed, which summarises a number of governmental initiatives and by FE colleges across the UK to develop ICT skills programmes for students. This document was used to put the study into a political perspective.¹ College policy documents include the Strategic Plan 2000-2003, the Operational Plan 2001-2002, the ICT Strategy, the College Annual Report 2000-2001, publicity leaflets and information published on the College website (www.lauder.ac.uk). In addition, interviews and discussions with the Assistant Principal (Curriculum) and the Development Manager (Education) have formed the basis of chapter 3. For chapter 4 information has been gathered from College Curriculum Group Development Plans and from a number of semi-structured interviews with the Curriculum Managers in IT Core Skills, Computing & Mathematics, Creative Technology, Student Development Service, Staff Development Manager, Community Learning Centre Managers, the Library Resource Manager and the E-learning Co-ordinator. Structured observations of the learning environment at the Learner Bases and the remote Community Learning Centres also took place. Here opinions of learners have also been gathered.

1.3. College Profile and Background

Founded 1899 by Andrew Carnegie, Lauder College is situated on outskirts of Dunfermline (Fife) in Scotland. The College has a student population of ca. 11000. Almost two-thirds of students are male and half of all students are adult learners (24-44 years of age). Nearly three-quarters of all students are enrolled in a part-time further education programme. The College has set itself the mission: “as a learning organisation, the Lauder College Group will maximise the potential of all its staff to offer client-centred lifelong learning opportunities, through innovative, high quality and enterprising services, accessible to all.” In order to achieve this goal, the College has set itself a number of strategic objectives in which ICT pervasiveness is an underlying feature. A further College characteristic is its extensive network of Community Learning, Enterprise and Employment Centres. Strategic partnerships exist with Napier University, Heriot-Watt University, Queen Margaret University College, St

Andrews University, local businesses and enterprise as well as Fife Council in order to drive the social inclusion, widening access and lifelong learning agenda.

1.4. Strategic Objectives and Policies in ICT Skills Provision

A comprehensive ICT strategy has existed since 1994 and has been continuously developed as a working document in order to accommodate the Colleges objectives to deliver a learner centred innovative learning environment. The overarching theme in this strategy is to achieve ICT 'pervasiveness' and to promote 'a college without walls'. Therefore the development of ICT skills for students and staff play a crucial role in achieving this aim. Further, College Senior Management believes that ICT skills are an important vehicle in responding to governmental initiatives in lifelong learning, social inclusion and widening access. Senior responsibility for ICT skills development for staff and students and other related initiatives rest with the Assistant Principal (Curriculum) and the Senior Management Team as a whole.

In order to create a flexible learner-centred learning environment and to achieve ICT pervasiveness outwith the College, four main directions are followed. Firstly, the Curriculum Managers are charged with embedding ICT into learning and teaching and are also responsible for the development of new courses, materials and products. Secondly, the Development Managers are responsible for driving the development of new markets, the consolidation of partnerships and the liaison with other educational bodies. Third, the College is working towards implementing a comprehensive HMI/SFEFC Quality Self-evaluation Framework in order to ensure the effectiveness of investment into ICT infrastructure and learning methods. It is also a priority to the College to be able to evidence to its customers and to the Funding Council that investment has been well managed. The whole process of quality assurance can also benefited the learner by improving the College's understanding of the level of ICT skills and support required by the individual learner, and to put an inclusive, flexible and learner-centred learning environment into practice. In this process the E-learning Coordinator has an important role to play.

1.5. Current Situation - Practice

ICT skills training takes place either at the main campus, at the outreach centres (Community Learning Centres) and at the Business Learning and Conference Centre. The IT Core Skills Group, Computing and Creative Technology are the providers of ICT skills training on and off the campus. Only for commercial clients external consultants are brought in when required. The IT Core Skills Curriculum Group is also responsible for the delivery of ECDL and other stand-alone IT courses. All four groups/departments are working towards open, flexible and learner/customer-centred provision to provide learning solutions that fit the learner and support their students in the community learning centres. The level of ICT skills training is dependant on the learners' requirements and existing skills, the Scottish Qualifications Framework as well as on the skill level required by a particular curriculum Group. There is no easy 'one size fits all' solution as to what learners need and the mandatory completion of an ICT skills programme depends on the requirements of the course programme in which the learner is enrolled in as well. The level of entry competence that learners bring to College is established in face-to-face interviews with the learner. Learner Assistants take a crucial part in this induction process, which is a unique approach found only in the Scottish FE sector.

As part of the College's goal to provide a more supportive and inclusive learning environment, the Student Development Centre offers assistance to all learners with disabilities and special educational needs. The Library and the IT Helpdesk provide support services for learning too. The former deals with information literacy requirements and the latter unit deals

with maintenance of equipment and the development of an interactive College website. In order to ensure quality in learning and teaching and to achieve 'ICT pervasiveness' throughout the College, staff development and ICT skills are seen as paramount. All lecturing and support staff are now required to complete ECDL as the baseline to evidence ICT competence.

1.6. Emerging Directions

Investment into staff development is seen as vital in order to drive 'ICT pervasiveness' and to use Information and Learning Technology more effectively in order to drive the social inclusion, widening access and lifelong learning agenda. A College working group, the Learning Solutions Team, which is comprised of a number of key staff, explores and drives the implantation of the College's ambitious e-learning and e-business strategy. Currently workshops are organised for staff in order create awareness of how ICT can be used to improve the learning experience. It is also intended to launch a College wide-VLE in September 2002. The mounting of online content and online learner support is accompanied with provision to develop skills in academic staff to be effective online tutors. A new e-learning contact centre is currently in planning and will open in September 2003, providing extensive support for online and distance-learning, but also for face-to-face and telephone contact between learner and staff.

The College has recognised that a successful reengineering of the learning environment in accordance with Governmental initiatives will only be successful if students and staff possess at least a basic level of ICT competence. Hence the College will continue to regard this area as an important objective. Although, ICT skills training may not remain a major driving force for attracting people back into learning, ICT literacy is vital if the College's plans to develop e-learning and e-business are to succeed. The successful realisation of this objective is however also dependant on secure Governmental funding and investment into staff development and a flexible learner support systems.

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2. COLLEGE PROFILE AND BACKGROUND

2.1. *Introduction and Locality*

Lauder College is one of 43 incorporated Further Education Colleges in Scotland. It operates from a main campus in Halbeath, Dunfermline in Fife (ca. 30 km north of Edinburgh), two secondary campuses in Cowdenbeath and Rosyth and over 30 Employment and Enterprise Centres and Learning Centres in southeast and central Scotland. The College prides itself on its reputation as 'one of Scotland's most dynamic, innovative and farsighted Colleges'.

The College was founded in 1899 through the generosity of Andrew Carnegie, who asked that the College be named for his uncle, George Lauder. A new campus in Halbeath opened its doors to students in August 1970. By 1995 Lauder College had modernised its image and had expanded its operations outwith Fife through winning contracts in Edinburgh, Falkirk, Tayside, the Borders, Grangemouth and elsewhere from the Employment Service to support and assist unemployed people back into work (Three Plus Programme).

In 2000, over 25% of Napier University MBA students were graduates at Lauder and over 72% of full-time HNC/HND students progress to employment or higher education. Lauder College also won a major contract to provide education in prison learning centres in five of Scotland's prisons. Cisco selected Lauder as the first and only Scottish college to become a Cisco Foundation Supercollege, giving the college access to leading-edge thinking and expertise in e-learning and new technology applications in education. A full interactive history is available from the College website.²

2.2. *The Lauder College Group and its Organisational Structure*

Lauder College: provides part-time, full-time courses and lifelong learning services from the Halbeath campus, the Cowdenbeath campus, and community learning centres, primarily funded by grant-in-aid and fees.

Employment and Enterprise: provides employment-related services to unemployed people and employers from Employment and Enterprise Centres in four geographical regions, primarily funded through contracts with Employment Service, Local Employment Companies, Councils and employers.

Enterprise Lauder Limited: Lauder College's wholly owned commercial development company: offering a range of profitable business-related services in and from the Business Learning and Conference Centre.

Babcock Lauder Technology: a new campus in the Rosyth Europarc area formed by the acquisition of the former Babcock Rosyth Training: offering a centre for engineering education and training and a community learning centre, accredited by LearnDirect Scotland.

The Organisational Structure of the College itself, after its reorganisation, has implemented a flat management structure, with the Curriculum and Development Managers reporting directly to the Senior Management Team. Each curriculum group develops its own operational Development Plan in accordance with the objectives of the College strategic and operational plan. In addition, Curriculum and Development Managers have an active input in College-wide working groups and standing committees, which make recommendations to the Senior Management Team with the Management Board overseeing the work of the Senior Management Team.

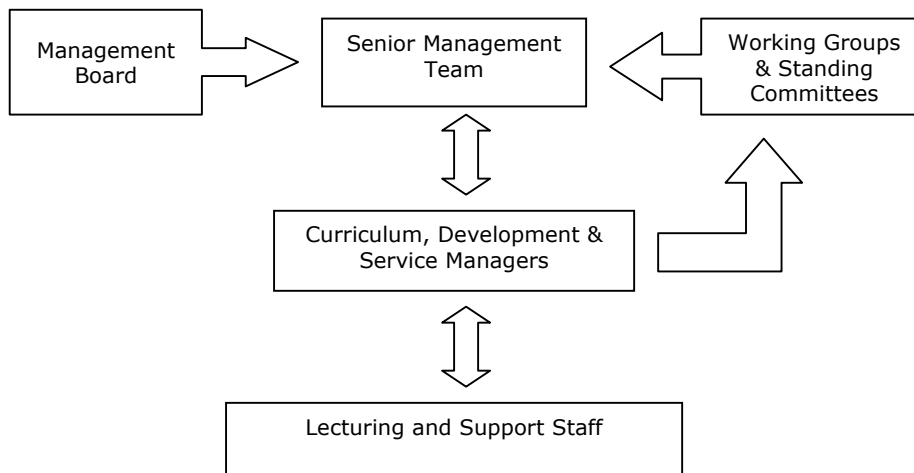


Fig. 1: Organisation Structure of Lauder College

2.3. Mission Statement, Portfolio and Strategic Focus

Mission: ‘As a learning organisation, the Lauder College Group will maximise the potential of all its staff to offer client-centred lifelong learning opportunities, through innovative, high quality and enterprising services, accessible to all.’³

Education portfolio: includes full-time and part-time programmes at non-advanced and advanced (HNC/HND/Diploma/Degree) level together with opportunities for students with learning difficulties and leisure courses. All modes of learning are offered - open, flexible, work-based, distance, and community-based study.

Employment portfolio: provides nationally recognised services for unemployed people through a unique Employment and Enterprise Centres, together with vocational and work-based skills programmes for employers and their employees. The College is a major provider of SVQs, Skillseeker and New Deal programmes, Modern Apprenticeships and through the currently suspended Individual Learning Accounts (ILA).

Enterprise portfolio: mainly offered through Enterprise Lauder Limited and the Business Learning and Conference Centre, includes a suite of customised training services and short courses, together with business development and growth services. Lauder is the only College in Scotland to run contracted business start-up services for Local Enterprise Centres (LEC), which the College has offered now for over six years.

Strategic Focus: the strategic directions for 2000-2003, updated in 2001, are designed to take Lauder College towards a new vision of learning, inclusion and economic development.

- Becoming a vibrant, participative, inclusive learning organisation by improving lifelong learning opportunities, contributing to social justice and equality of opportunity by actively promoting access and choice, in all of the College’s learning locations.
- Establishing modern, flexible, learner-centred learning environments goals by integrating learner support services, extending to all the learning locations including e-learning provision, in which all learners can pursue their chosen.
- Developing world-class workforce and career development services by implementing innovative models of skills and career development and to extend continuing professional development opportunities. Further, to drive social and economic inclusion by embracing the central role of the Employment and Enterprise Centres in lifelong learning.

- To develop specialist learning environments relevant to the new industries of the knowledge economy by building on existing client-centred services, processes and systems.
- To grow Enterprise Lauder Limited as a profitable commercial development company offering training, company development and conference services in and from the Business Learning and Conference Centre and in partnership with Lauder College and to position e-Com Scotland Ltd as a successful provider of e-business services.
- To establish the Lauder College Group as a quality e-business and provider of diverse e-learning services. In order to achieve this, 'ICT pervasiveness' and ICT competency for students and staff throughout the Group and to encourage employees and employers to increase their uptake of ICT skills training.
- To implement an ambitious estates strategy for the Halbeath and Rosyth campuses and to improve the infrastructure for e-learning and e-business by achieving broadband connectivity for up to 16 locations.
- To achieve 'ICT pervasiveness' and ICT literacy for students and staff throughout the Lauder College Group not only as a recognised strategic objective, but it is also underpinning the efforts made in other areas (such as e-business and e-learning), which would not be realisable without 'ICT pervasiveness'.
- Lauder College has a strategic commitment to ensure that all learners are given a choice of ways to study and learn which fit in with their individual lifestyles. New ways of learning include: the Learner Base, online learning, Community Learning Centres and work-based learning, which will be continuously enhanced and developed.⁴

2.4. Trends in the Regional/National Employment and Customer Profile

The **Fife Economy** traditionally relied on heavy engineering, farming, fishing and mining are industries that have been heavily in decline in Fife during the last two decades, which led to considerable unemployment and social deprivation, above the Scottish national average. However, in recent years, tourism, the semiconductor and service industry have become the main sources of social and economic recovery, revitalising the economy by providing employment and increasing prosperity in Fife. The College has realised that in order to improve individual employment prospects and career advancement, regardless whether people work directly in a new IT-based industry, they are required to be able to use technology in some form or another at work or at home.⁵ Secondly, the need to adapt quickly to changes in the labour market in order to stay in employment has given the College an opportunity to offer a wide range of ICT related and state-of-the-art programmes in order to fulfil its educational purpose in Fife and to be at the forefront of innovative change.⁶

The **UK employment market** and national initiatives in the education sector have identified that without knowledge and technology competency, a revitalisation of the British industry is not possible. Secondly, the observations made about the Fife economy can almost be seen as typical for the British Economy as a whole with traditional manufacturing in decline and the service and semiconductors industry improving. Hence, at Lauder College the majority of full-time courses now have a compulsory ICT courses element in them to meet the challenges of a changing regional and national labour market and its skill requirements. The College is therefore dedicated to a continuous modernising and adjusting of its curriculum and services primarily within the framework of the Scottish Qualifications Authority.⁷ Since for the learner the demand on ICT skills competency is increasing, most full-time and part-time courses already demand some sort of ICT competency in the course programme.

The **Learner Profile** at Lauder College consists of a diverse range of people and organisations from different social backgrounds, age groups, different ambitions, goals and educational needs. The College aims to accommodate this diversity by offering a flexible learning and service provision to all of its clients. The range of qualifications and different mode of study indicate that Lauder College is already moving in the right direction. The figures below show a predicted increase of the student population by 4% in each of the following years.

| DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAMME | Student Numbers | | |
|--|-----------------|---------------|---------------|
| | 2001-2002 | 2002-2003 | 2003-2004 |
| Higher National Certificates | 809 | 841 | 875 |
| Higher National Diplomas | 237 | 246 | 256 |
| Leisure Programmes | 928 | 965 | 1,004 |
| NVQs/SVQs/Modern Apprenticeships | 1,092 | 1,136 | 1,181 |
| National Qualifications/Higher Still/GSVQs | 856 | 890 | 926 |
| Advanced Certificates/Prof. Dev. Awards/Diplomas | 450 | 468 | 487 |
| HN Units | 394 | 410 | 426 |
| NQ Units | 2,107 | 2,191 | 2,279 |
| City & Guilds | 50 | 52 | 54 |
| Other | 3,889 | 4,045 | 4,206 |
| TOTAL (the numbers exclude withdrawals) | 10,812 | 11,244 | 11,694 |

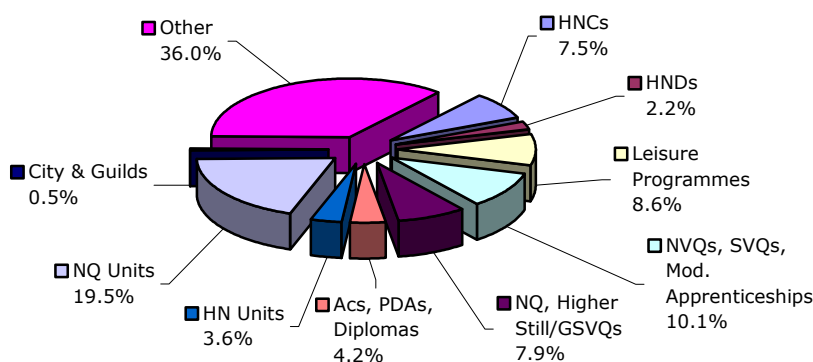


Fig. 2: Student Enrollment in % 2001-2002

| MODE OF STUDY | Student Numbers | | |
|--|-----------------|---------------|---------------|
| | 2001-2002 | 2002-2003 | 2003-2004 |
| Full-time | 1,355 | 1,409 | 1,466 |
| Part-time | 3,724 | 3,873 | 4,028 |
| Evening | 1,038 | 1,080 | 1,123 |
| Block Release | 157 | 163 | 170 |
| Day Release | 414 | 431 | 448 |
| Flexible | 3,544 | 3,686 | 3,833 |
| Work Based | 580 | 603 | 627 |
| TOTAL (the numbers exclude withdrawals) | 10,812 | 11,244 | 11,694 |

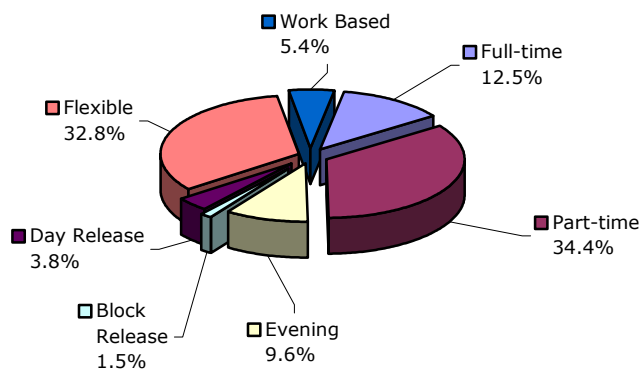


Fig.3: Student Enrollment by Type 2001-2002

Note: 100% = 10,812 students in 2001-2002

| Learner Age Group 2000-2001 | % |
|-----------------------------|-------|
| <18 | 12.0% |
| 18-24 | 21.5% |
| 25-44 | 44.1% |
| 44+ | 22.3% |

| Learner Gender Profile 2000-2001 | % |
|----------------------------------|-------|
| Male | 63.7% |
| Female | 36.3% |

| Learner Type Profile 2000-2001 | % |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| Full-time FE | 8.6% |
| Full-time HE | 2.7% |
| Part-time FE | 74.2% |
| Part-time HE | 8.4% |
| Part-time Leisure | 6.1% |

2.5. Strategic Partnerships and Funding

Lauder College intends to achieve its strategic aims and objectives through an extensive network of alliances with other organisations including: working with the Employment Service in Scotland as a lead provider of Programme Centres and New Deal services, contractual partnerships with four Local Enterprise Companies, strong and growing links with Fife Council, signed agreements with Napier University, Heriot-Watt University, Queen Margaret University College and St Andrews University and an innovative partnership with Inverkeithing High School. Other collaborative arrangements exist with six other local schools, other Colleges in Scotland, England and Europe through European-funded projects, substantial training contracts with major employers such as the Army, Babcock Rosyth Defence Ltd, the Dunfermline Building Society, Scottish Amicable and Lexmark International.

Many of the facilities and support services that are designed to benefit the learners have been greatly enhanced by grants from the European Union. European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) has been used to help fund projects including improvements to the library and other learner resource centres, upgrading of computer networks and contributing to the building of the Business Learning and Conference Centre. The European Social Fund (ESF) has also helped to build the economic growth of areas like Fife by providing a range of support to improve lifelong employment prospects to raise skill levels for employees, promote opportunities for lifelong learning and in the community.

To boost the Colleges commitment to flexible and on-line learning and to achieve 'ICT pervasiveness', substantial investment of £171.125 has taken place in 2000-2001 by the Funding Council for purchasing new equipment and to support developments within the Creative Technology, Computing & Mathematics and IT Core Skills Curriculum groups.⁸ A

further expansion of study places is intended and a further £500k will be invested with the development of a new flexible learning and contact centre (see chapter 5).

In July 2000 SFEFC also invited colleges and partner organisations to bid for funding to support Strategic Innovation in the use of ICT for learning and teaching. One of eight of these Strategic Innovation Projects is led by Lauder College and about Managing flexible learning environments. Additional funding and support has been provided by the Funding Council in areas such as Staff Development and Support for Content Development through the Scottish Further Education Unit and Learning & Teaching Scotland.⁹

3. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES IN ICT SKILLS PROVISION

3.1. *The ICT Strategy in the Strategic Framework of Lauder College*

Lauder College was one of the first FE colleges in Scotland that recognised the need for strategic investment into ICT facilities. A comprehensive IT strategy has existed since 1994, when on the basis of the recommendations of Her Majesty Inspectorates (HMI), a working group looked into the issues of purchasing new equipment and replacing old equipment set out in 'IT – an Acquisition Strategy'. The Strategy was further developed in the College Infrastructure Development Plan 1994-1997. An IT Support Manager was appointed to develop greater integration and networking access across the College. As a result of the 1995-1998 IT Development Plan, a review of technical staff and requirements was undertaken, which recommended the establishment of IT Services; a service that would incorporate IT engineers and technicians. Between 1998 and 1999 major investment into IT infrastructure was undertaken to allow fully integrated networking-access with the College's remote sites.

In the same academic year and as part of Lauder College's Organisational Change Programme, a working group was set up, called Learning for the Millennium, to look into possibilities of how the College needed to develop in order to support the learner of the 21st Century. The report produced by this group was highly influential for the development of the current College ICT Strategy, which all FE colleges are required to produce by the Scottish Funding Council. This strategy is reviewed continuously by the College's ICT Strategy Development Group, which is headed by the Assistant Principal (Curriculum). Inside the organisation curriculum groups, library and learning support services are charged to drive innovation and learner-centred support services. In order to enhance the quality of the College ICT Strategy, external collaboration is sought with a wide range of organisations and educational bodies, such as the JISC Regional Support Centres, UKERNA, SUFI, COLEG, NILTA, Learning and Teaching Scotland, NGfL Scottish Enterprise and the Funding Council.

Along side the rapidly developing Internet technologies, the College has recognised that there is a growing potential and demand for e-learning. Many companies now recognise the need to engage their workforce in continuous professional development through education and training. Increasingly, the preference is for employers to organise e-learning as it minimises loss of productivity whilst an employee is learning. It also provides cost-effective solutions to education and training, delivering quality training to a geographically dispersed workforce and can integrate learning with business and personal commitments. Individual learners are also beginning to understand the merits of learning via the Internet, enabling them to learn from a number of locations: home, work, college and learning centres in their communities. The College has recognised that this demand for e-learning is changing the face of learning world-wide. Hence, the College intends to continue to develop its ICT Strategy so that the College can successfully participate and compete in this growing, global e-learning market. This has recognised implications for the nature of ICT skills provision for staff and students, which are essential to drive the e-learning and distance learning agenda.

A recent report published by the Scottish Executive on the *Knowledge Economy Cross-Cutting Initiative* states: "Innovation will be the key to transforming knowledge into new products, processes and services and greater prosperity for all".¹⁰

To respond to these and other political challenges to drive innovation in teaching and learning the College, in its **2000-2003 ICT Strategy**, has set out a number of ICT specific **strategic aims**, which have a bearing on the ICT skills provision for students and staff and which are set to drive the overall strategic aims within Lauder College.¹¹

1. Continue to re-engineer the learning environments, the learning and teaching methods and to invest in the learning and learner support service infrastructure
2. Continue to develop staff's ICT literacy and skills such that they can contribute to Lauder College as an e-business and participate in the emerging e-learning industry
3. Be a "College without walls": applying new technology solutions to extend the quality and accessibility of learning opportunities into community and workplace locations
4. Continue to source and develop on-line accessible content and learning resources to support the learning programmes, and incorporate them into the product portfolio
5. Continue to develop broadband network infrastructure, including the integration of video conferencing and telephony services, linking selected sites using broadband technologies
6. Continue to improve access to appropriate ICT equipment for all students and staff, ensuring that they can access information, core applications, services and products through common staff and student Intranets
7. Develop business to consumer processes to support all existing or potential learners by enabling remote access to an extensive range of administrative, support and information services
8. Continue to remain at the forefront of best practice with regard to governance and internal control in view of the changing technological environment.

The overarching **Objective** in the Lauder College ICT Strategy is to make Information and Communication Technology pervasive across all areas of learning, teaching, research and support and business. **Student and staff entitlement to ICT** is paramount to the College and should become a reality in all aspects of learning, teaching, support and enterprise with the intention to ultimately empower the customers/students to be able to learn when they want, where they want and what they want.

Three main objectives have been identified in the College ICT strategy that have a direct impact on ICT skills provision for students and staff:

| Area 1: ICT embedment in Learning and Teaching | Area 2: ICT Networks and Infrastructure | Area 3: ICT in Business & Enterprise |
|---|---|---|
| Encouraging the update of ICT skills training courses such as ECDL, MOUS, Core Skills for students | Improve the Learner Bases and assessment facilities | Incorporate Internet technologies into work-based SVQ and modern apprenticeship programmes |
| Embed ICT in the Curriculum | Offer online support and resources for staff on embedding ICT into the curriculum | Improve information services and College website |
| Improve staff ICT literacy levels – all staff should have ECDL as min. qual. | Installation of college-wide VLE 'Granada learn wise' | Re-develop administrative and support processes to enable clients to access services electronically via the intranet. |
| Encouraging uptake in online tutor qual. and enhance ICT CPD opportunities | Contact Centre for e- & distance learning | A pre-requisite to the introduction of any e-business solution will be that sound control systems exist and function. |
| Sharing good practice and enhancing collaboration with outside organisations about online learning and skills requirements to use facilities effectively. | More workshops org. by e-learning co-ordinator and Library Resource Manager | Re-engineer customer, marketing and promotion functions on the website, to enable current and potential consumers to access information and products. |
| Enhance the Services of the Library and the Student Development Centre | Improve Broadband tech., video-conferencing etc. | Enhance e-business opportunities |

In comparing the aims and objectives of the Strategic Development Plan and the College Operation Plan with the College ICT Strategy, it became apparent that the objectives are fully incorporated into both documents. It was also recognised by the Senior Management that other objectives such as e-learning, distance learning and e-business initiatives could only be realised if ICT pervasiveness is achieved across the College. Hence, an essential aspect of the College's learning and teaching strategy is 'ICT pervasiveness'.

3.2. *The Role of Senior Management in ICT Skills Development*

The senior responsibility for ICT skills development for staff and students and other related initiatives rest with the Assistant Principal (Curriculum). One of the targets for this senior manager identified in the ICT Strategy was to establish a Curriculum Development Monitoring Group and to associate processes to integrate ICT into programme design proposals. This objective was realised through the establishment of a Programme Design and Approval Committee (PDAC) in 2000, which is charged with overseeing the curriculum development and to ensure that ICT is not only incorporated into the programme design, but also that this incorporation of ICT is planned according to set quality standards.

The College Senior Management Team reports to the Board of Management on three main strategic aims involving ICT: 1) ICT strategic/operational development planning; 2) the impact of ICT on learning and teaching and curriculum development, 3) ICT budget and management accounts. Besides the full Board of Management, the Curriculum and Student Affairs Committee and the Resource and General Purchase Committee have a remit for dealing with ICT provision in general and students ICT skills provision in particular on a regular basis.

The main areas of responsibility for the Assistant Principal (Curriculum) with regard to ICT skills development in its widest sense, is to look at the supply side of learning, which are effectively the objectives of the College curriculum portfolio, in particular with regard to course materials and learning support services. The main focus of this senior position is the development of products and ensuring that the College offers a wide and diverse range of courses to a similarly diverse range of clients, according to their needs and requirements. At present this means re-engineering the curriculum, by reviewing course content, design and mode of delivery of course programmes. ICT facilities and ICT skills development is pervasive in the whole range of these services and products. Without extensive ICT literacy provision and a customer/learner centred approach, a successful redesigning of the curriculum would not possible.

Other key staff in this process are the Curriculum Managers and the Development Managers. With regard to ICT embedment into the curriculum and the delivery of ICT skills training, responsibility is shared between the Curriculum Managers Core Skills, Computing and mathematics, and Creative Technology. With respect to the development of new markets and the marketing of existing products, the Development Manager (Education) has a key role to play in order to facilitate the development of community learning and to drive forward initiatives such as widening access, social inclusion and lifelong learning.

In order to achieve 'ICT pervasiveness' in the College and to assist the curriculum groups in the successful introduction of ICT into their curricula, the E-Learning Co-ordinator holds an important role. Regular liaison with other e-learning co-ordinators in each curriculum group and with senior managers are progressing the 'ICT pervasiveness' agenda successfully. Actions include: the organisation of workshops to raise awareness for ICT in learning and teaching for staff and providing additional support for staff in order to help them to use ICT more frequently and effectively in their own work. This is also supported by the staff development services and by learner assistants.

3.3. *Developing a Flexible, Learner-Centred ICT Skill Portfolio*

The College has recognised both at strategic and practical levels that a flexible, learner-centred approach in learning, teaching and support can only succeed if the changing levels of student ICT competency is taken into consideration. Also, some programmes when commencing require the learner to already possess a particular level of ICT skills, and are supposed to enable the student to leave the College with an increased level of ICT competency.

The level of ICT skills requirement is specific to the curriculum of the particular courses and qualifications. Hence, the level of ICT skills training varies depending on course requirements and individual capabilities.

By using a student/customer-orientated approach, Senior Management and College staff seek to establish what skills are required by the learner. The following main means have been identified:

- 1) By assessing the social and economic factors and peculiarities of the Fife economy.
- 2) By considering general national trends in employment, education and Funding Council Initiatives.
- 3) By considering the nature of the student body, investigating the existing level of skills and future aspirations of the individual learner.
- 4) By considering the learner's ICT skill levels acquired, where appropriate and by taking community issues and initiatives, such as social and digital inclusion into account.
- 5) By working according to national standards and cooperating with organisations and initiatives to embed ICT into the curriculum (Fento ILT Standards, SQA, NGfL, NILTA and SFEFC guidelines).
- 6) By working with HEIs to improve articulation routes and offer skills that are useful to the learner when progressing to higher education.
- 7) By cooperating with schools via School Liaison Groups to establish the level of competency that school leaver bring with them from secondary education.

All these areas are interlinked when the learner level of ICT competence is assessed and taken into account for his/her specific educational needs.

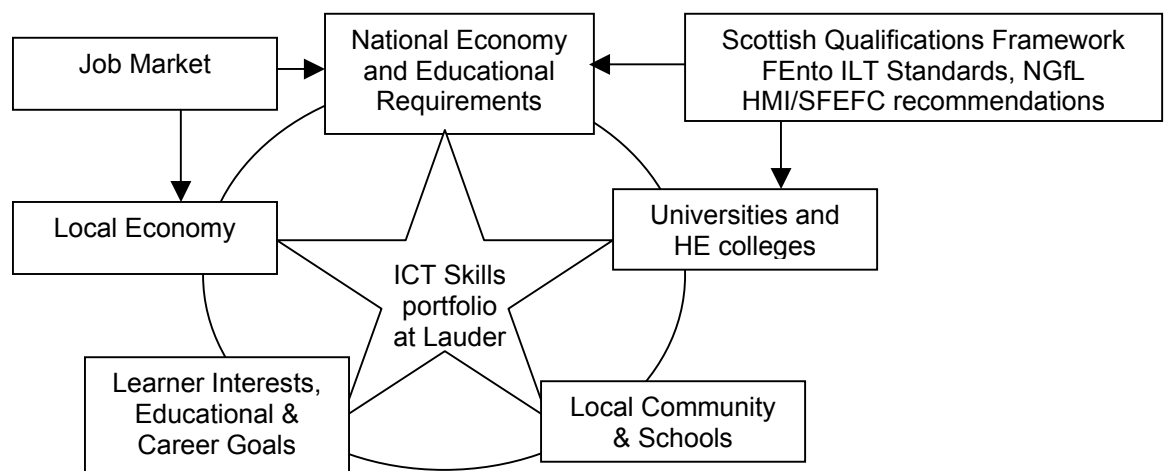


Fig.4: Factors in determining ICT skills portfolio for the learner

3.4. Student Induction and ICT Induction Policy

It is College policy and strategy to inform all learners about ICT induction, support and guidance facilities at the College.

1. The **IT Core Skills Learner Base** offers flexible ICT provision to equip learners with core ICT skills, ECDL and open access (drop-in) facilities.
2. The **Student Development Centre**: offering a range of ICT guidance for learners who require additional support to build up confidence and basic skills to use ICT. The Centre also supports students with special educational needs and disabilities.
3. The **Library**: offers induction sessions on electronic and traditional information retrieval skills.
4. The **Community Learning Centres** offer a range of ICT skills programmes including ECDL to support learning in the community.
5. The **Business Learning and conference Centre (BLCC)** offers customised courses and services at commercial rates in order to cater for cooperative training needs. Lauder College is working with employers towards work-based qualifications known as Skill Seeker Programmes and modern Apprenticeships.
6. The **Employment and Enterprise Centres** help unemployed people to develop ICT skills to improve their employment prospects.
7. ICT training and induction is also delivered in partnership with the Scottish Prison Services in the **Scottish Prison Learning Centres**.

Through College publications, the student and staff intranet, student diaries and staff awareness courses, all learners are informed about ICT skills courses, open access facilities in the College and courses offered in the Community Learning Centres. All learners must be informed about ICT skills courses through College publicity and curriculum groups.

3.5. ICT Skills and Articulation Routes to Universities

Lauder College has signed memoranda of agreement with four universities: Napier University, Queen Margaret University College, Heriot Watt and St Andrews University. There is an ever-increasing number of articulation routes with individual universities. To give two examples: It was agreed that all Lauder HNs now articulate with 66 Heriot Watt degrees and all HNs now articulate with St Andrew's University part-time evening MAs. A further good example for the fruition of this liaison process is that last year 16 students completed their BSc in Computing at Lauder College, which was a direct result of the collaboration between the Lauder College and Napier University.

As learners prepare to progress from the College to their chosen university, it is important that HEIs recognise the skills learners possess. Whilst this matching of skills is often done between subject specific areas, it is not always done with Core skills. As a result, learners can find themselves having to participate in compulsory core skills development programmes such as ICT literacy modules. Further work is required between FE colleges and HE institutions to ensure a certain ICT skills level and provide mechanisms for awarding accreditation for previously acquired skills.

3.6. Quality Monitoring Provision

The College has a good reputation for quality, underpinned by national standards in teaching, learning and management such as ISO9001, SQMS, Investors in People and SQA standards. During 1999, the College underwent a full inspection by HM Inspectorate. The report, which was published in September 1999, is very positive and reflects the progress made from the mid 1990s onwards.¹²

The implementation of the HMI/SFEFC Self-Evaluation Framework (July 2000) requires the Colleges to provide evidence of quality improvement in programme design, accommodation for teaching, equipment and materials, staff self-evaluation and professional development, in teaching and learning processes, student achievement, guidance and learning support.

In connection with this framework colleges are facing the challenge of implementing the recommendations of the Beattie Report, which has inclusiveness at its heart. “The vision of Inclusiveness is that young people should be able to have their needs, abilities and aspirations recognised, understood and met within a supportive environment which encourages them to achieve their goals and to make real, measurable progress” (Scottish Executive). With regard to quality this means that Colleges should tailor their services around the learner’s needs and to provide and improve guidance and support arrangement at any stage of the learning process.¹³

The emerging Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework offers a route map for lifelong learning and sets out levels and credit points for all qualifications from Scotland’s main awarding bodies.¹⁴

4. CURRENT SITUATION - PRACTICE

4.1. *Approach to ICT Skills Induction and Training*

College strategic documents entitle students and staff to ICT skills provision. The level of induction and compulsory completion depends on the particular course of study that the learner has chosen. A general induction policy for all students has been put in place, and students are made aware of this at enrolment and in their student diaries. Besides specific programme induction, introductory campus tours are offered and students are entitled to register for an email address, and are introduced to the library and the network computing facilities. An induction CD-ROM, which is issued to all students, provides more specific details on ICT facilities and support services. Self-teach paper-based and on-line training packages are open to everyone in various Learner Bases. Once the student has enrolled for a particular course, the level of mandatory ICT skills is set out in the regulations and developmental documents of the Curriculum Groups. The delivery of ICT skills courses is the responsibility of three Curriculum Groups **IT Core Skills, Computing and Creative Technology**. All three groups work closely with the **Community Learning Centres**, the **BLCC**, the **Employment and Enterprise Centres**, the **Student Development Centre** at the Halbeath Campus, the **Library** and the **Scottish Prison Learning Centres**. In respect of this provision, the IT Core Skills Curriculum Group is the largest provider offering a range of ICT units at non-advanced and advanced levels, ECDL and other ICT programmes which focus on skills development not qualification.

4.2. *IT Core Skills and Flexible, Learner-Centred Provision*

IT programmes in the College are now delivered in Learner Bases where students have open and flexible access to learning materials instead of the old class-room based tuition. The IT Core Skills operates from two centres of 38 workstations each, which are permanently staffed during opening hours. A third centre with 14 workstations is used as a ECDL test centre but can also be utilised if demand requires. Nowadays the College is also able to establish the starting point and suitable attendance mode in discussion with the learner before they start the course. If the learner has a lower ICT skills competence than required, more time is set aside to improve competency or level required for the course. If it is above the required level, the process can be speeded up or the students can progress more quickly to other modules. Where the learner lacks the very basic skills to work with a computer, the Student Development Service will provide one-to-one help and assistance.

At **induction**, a Learner Assistant introduces individuals or groups of students to the facilities, procedures and to their course. These members of staff assists also ICT lecturers in the learner base to provide hands-on support to the learner. Students usually attend in two-hour sessions at a time and day that suits their needs. After enrolment, the Learner Assistant would establish the level of competence and assistance required via a questionnaire and a face-to-face interview. If the learner already possesses a number of skills and can demonstrate them during the Skill Scan, he or she would not be required to start afresh with the very basics, but at the level of competency he/she already has.

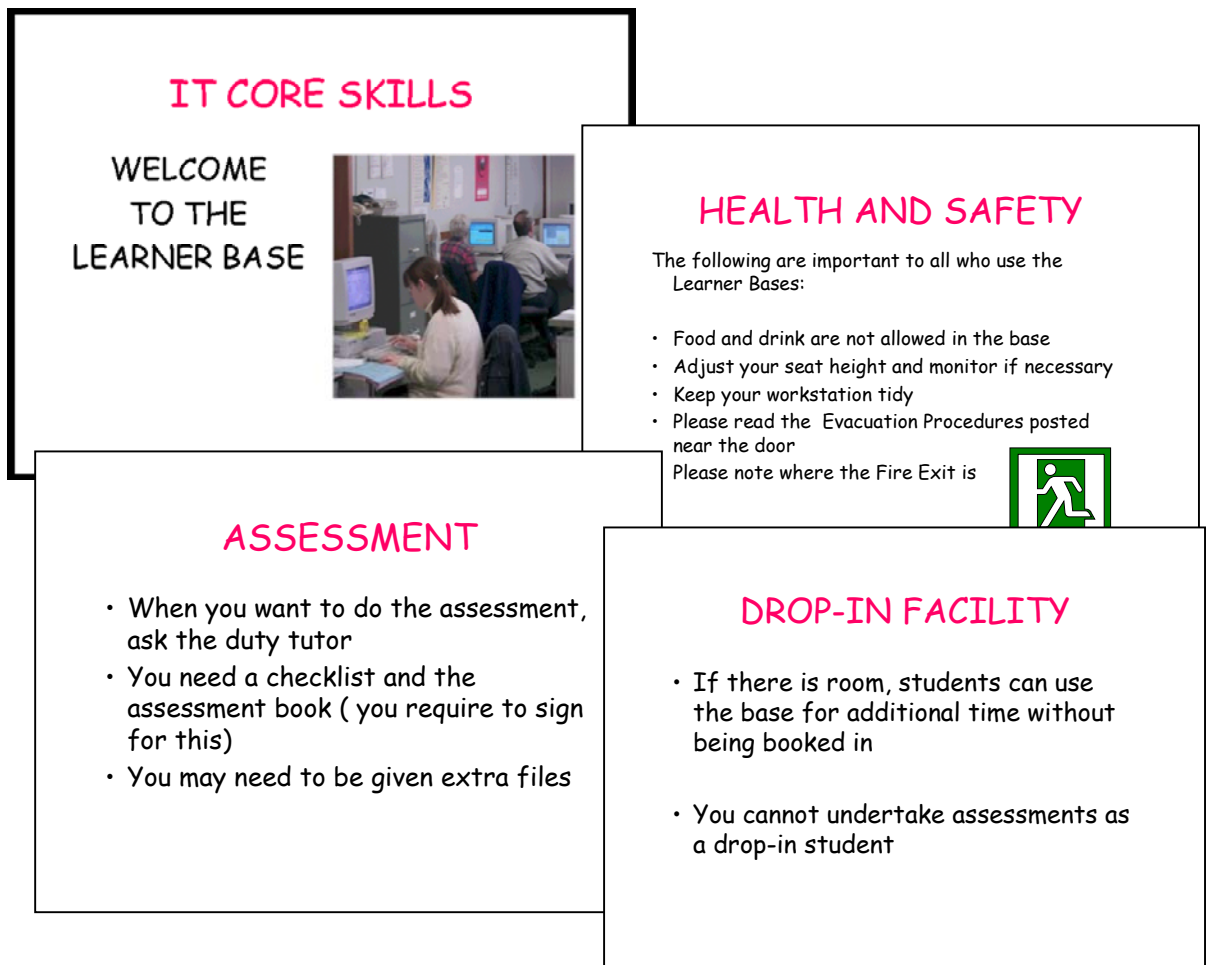


Fig.5: Induction in the Learner Base

Students using the Base fall usually into four main categories: full-time FE/HE, part-time FE/HE, Day Release/Schools students and members of the general public (leisure students). Both Learner Bases and the Test Centre can also be used as a drop-in facility offering all students regardless of their curriculum group the opportunity to complete course work, surf the Internet or send and receive email. Places are nevertheless subject to availability.

Although the College aims to put a completely flexible attendance policy into practice to suit the learner's needs, block bookings, especially for NQ and HNC full-time students are still arranged where appropriate to motivate students to complete their course work. In particular this learner group needs to be actively encouraged to attend as many sessions as possible since the College has also recognised that pass rates and attendance are connected.

Attendance is monitored though not compulsory. In order to monitor student progress more effectively, and to ensure the Learner Base is used to capacity, an online database is currently being developed to allow members of staff to record and monitor attendance, student progress and achievement. This database will also be used to identify tutors and student assessment markers. It is also intended that learners can book a space in the Learner Base from home or from anywhere else in the College. Currently, bookings can be made over the phone or in person at the Customer Service Desk. ICT assessments, however, can only be sat after prior arrangement with staff in the Learner Base.

The current ratio of student to workstation across the College is 5:1. However, during the course of this case study observation revealed that although the Learner Bases are generally busy, odd places are mostly available bearing no or very little waiting time for the student.

An optimal room usage survey is also currently underway to ensure that facilities are used at capacity.

All students, no matter of their subject area or whether they are enrolled in an ICT course, can use the facilities in the Learner Base, type up an essay, check their email or practice their ICT skills with one of the many online self-teach packages.

Help is available to students from both lecturers and learner assistants in terms of monitoring progress, preparation for assessments and assignments. The flexible learning provision at the learner bases was introduced not as a cost-cutting measure but as a means to meeting the needs of students.

The **course materials** for each course are available in the Learner Base in paper format and on CD-ROM. Some course materials such as ECDL are also available on-line. Development of all new ICT courses and revision of existing course materials is carried out by members of the IT Core Skills.



Fig. 6: The Learner Base



Fig. 7: Course materials available in the Learner

ECDL is currently one of the most popular courses, in particular amongst leisure students and company employees. The College has put resources in place to deliver Advanced EDCL from April 2002. ECDL is also a significant source of income for the College and provides a platform to introduce other College services and products to the learner.

Student Numbers in the IT Core Skills Learner Base

| | Student Numbers 2001-2002 | Proportion |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| NC/NQ Modules | | |
| Full-time/part-time students | 668 | 26.6% |
| Flexible Learning students | 561 | 22.3% |
| HN Units | | |
| Full-time/part-time students | 313 | 12.4% |
| Flexible Learning students | 116 | 4.6% |
| <i>Non modular courses</i> | 70 | 2.8% |
| MOUS (new) | 12 | 0.5% |
| ECDL courses | | |
| On campus | 618 | 24.6% |
| In-house for companies | 158 | 6.3% |
| Total number of students | 2516 | |

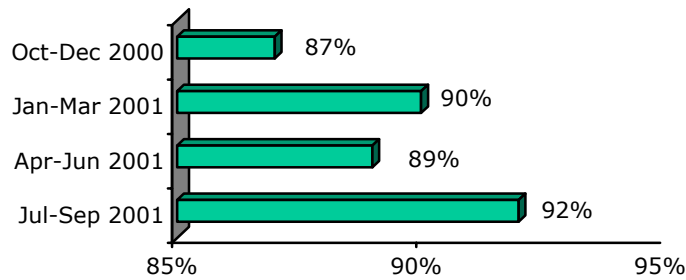


Fig. 8: ECDL first time passes

Besides ECDL and Core Skills modules, self-teach materials are available at all workstations. **Knowledge Bank**, for example, is an on-line software package that allows learners to practice and improve their ICT skills. Making this package available campus-wide is by no means a cheap solution, but it is thought to be effective since it allows the student to access ICT learning materials in their own time and at no extra cost, which helps to drive ICT pervasiveness and skill competence. A comprehensive testing system identifies strengths and weaknesses to the learner, which can be used to target the improvement of specific skills and tasks. The package is not accessible via the Internet, but at the workstations in each Learner

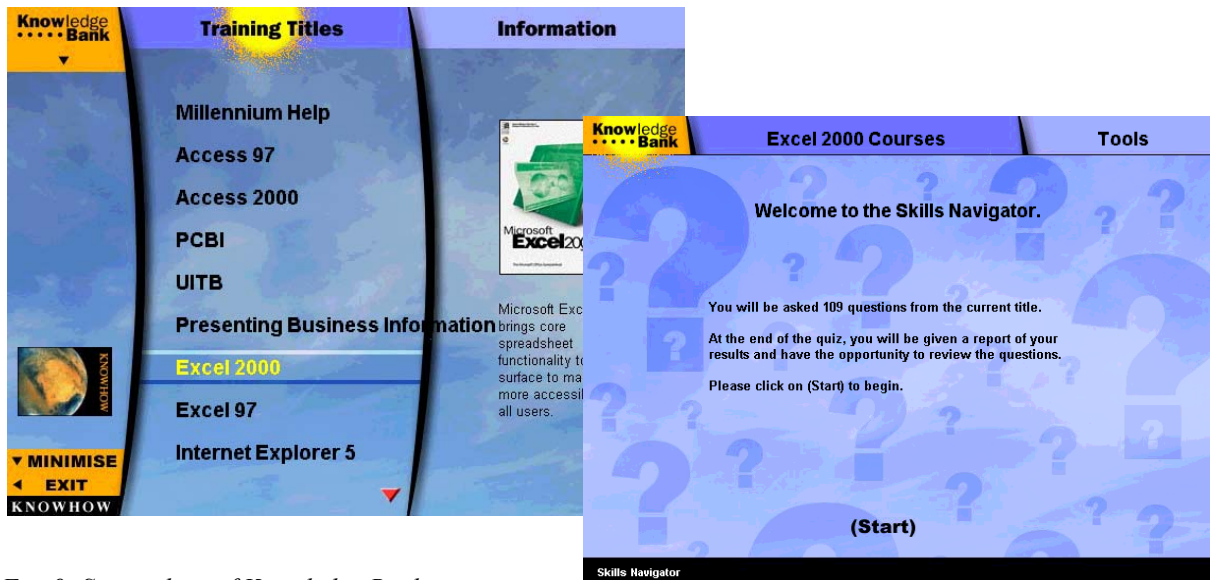


Fig. 9: Screenshots of Knowledge Bank

Although it became evident from observation and from interviews with students that they enjoy the flexible and open environment in the Learning Base, the new system of long opening hours pushes staffing resources to its very limits. Currently, the Group has five full-time and five part-time lecturers, all possessing adequate ICT and teaching qualifications. The flexible approach to learning can only succeed if adequate resources continue to be deployed and organisational difficulties can be overcome.

4.3. Embedded ICT Programmes and Creative Technology

A significant amount of students (ca. 430) complete a Core Skills Information Technology Module as part of their academic programme. All HNC/HND, but also some HN students are required to do Information Technology during their course of study. Currently, students in multimedia (Creative Technology), computing, maths, communications, engineering and business administration tend to require a higher level of ICT training than social science

students, for example. The latter group often bring a lower level of ICT skills with them. Ultimately all curriculum groups work closely with Core Skills, Computing or Creative Technology and the Community Learning Centres to ensure that their students receives the appropriate level of ICT training. It is intended to customise core skills materials to the degree that they include specific exercises relevant to the main subject area of the student.

In the process of reengineering course materials and in the development of new innovative learning objectives, the Computing and Creative Technology Curriculum Groups play an important part. The Creative Technology website <http://www.creative-technologies.co.uk> for example, offers a variety of links, information and services including a resource database, course timetables, leisure classes, and a number of online modules (e.g. Multimedia Higher, Graphics Intermediate and Internet Higher). The group also piloted the VLE BlackBoard to explore new ways of communicating with students and offering course materials online.

This site is designed to be used by students and staff to access course information and course materials, and is also a resource gateway to explore new possibilities in interactive an on-line learning. The underlying idea in Computing and Creative Technology is that Information and Learning Technology can break down barriers to education by allowing students to express themselves using new media technology, such as video editing and music sampling. Students in these curriculum areas also found that ICT helps them to overcome a lack in numeracy and literacy skills.

4.4. ICT Skills Provision in the Local Community

A strategy decision was made four years ago to become a 'college without walls' and to go out to clients rather the clients having to come to the College. As a result of this, Lauder College now works in close collaboration with Fife Council, Community Services. Over the last three years the Development Manager (Education) has developed this new market and the college now operates learning centres in five major community centres and various smaller satellites.

IT is seen by the College as a hook to encourage people back into learning, and IT community outreach tutors act also as 'spotters and referrers' for the acquisition of numeracy and literacy skills. Community learning Centres provide a safe environment where learners can gain self-confidence and a sense of achievement as well as where they can develop core skills. Crucial for the successful delivery of programmes in community outreach centres is excellent collaboration with external agencies. Fife Council is responsible for the development of the Community Learning Plan, which is implemented through Fife Learning Network of which Lauder College is a partner. The Development Mnager (Education) works closely with external partners whilst also collaborating internally with the three Curriculum Managers who are subject specialists.

Most of the provision at Community Outreach Centres at Lochgelly, High Vallyfield, Parkgate, Abbeyview Community Centre and Cowdenbeath Opportunity Centre is IT-based, from Webwise to HN units and ECDL. Recently received CMF money was invested to upgrade IT equipment and for refurbishment.

IT subjects offered in Community Outreach Centres straddle three College Curriculum Groups: IT Core Skills, Computing and Creative Technology. These groups are responsible for internal moderation and quality control for IT throughout the College.

The flexible learning system has also had a positive effect on the flexible commencement of courses. At the moment learners studying for an HNC, HND or NQ level can enrol at the beginning of each of the three annual blocks, running from August-November, December to March and April to June. Leisure and flexible learning students can join a specific module or course at any time, given places are available. This also applies to the Community Learning Centres.



Fig. 10: The Babcock Community Learning Centre



Fig. 11: Learners at the Parkgate Learner Centre

4.5. The Business Learning and Conference Centre

This state-of-the-art facility, located two minutes from the main campus, is marketing its services in particular to small and medium size businesses in and around Fife and Dunfermline. ICT training for customers is either delivered on-site, usually in a series of one-day or half-day courses, or off-site at the client's own premises. The length, intensity and type of course is assessed and discussed with all clients during face-to-face interviews, where a whole range of customer requirements are discussed. Depending on the specific course requirements a price per course or learner is negotiated between the client and the Centre.

The type of course varies from ECDL, to single software package courses such as Access 2000 or MS project to courses that include ICT elements, but are not solely focused on such skills (e.g. Project Management or Business Admin). Depending on the type of course and level of expertise (e.g. introduction, intermediate, or advanced), course materials are developed in-house in collaboration with IT Core Skills, Computing and Creative Technology, or are bought in. If possible, the most experienced College staff from the IT Core Skills Curriculum Group carry out the training. For specialised courses such as MCSE, consultants are hired with the cost passed on to the client. The Centre does not follow a 'one size fits all' policy, but rather a client-centred approach. To help the Centre to improve the quality and customer orientation of its services, pre- and post-course evaluation takes place.

4.6. *The Student Development Centre*

In order to put the recommendations of the Beattie Report into practice, to promote inclusiveness and to better understand people's educational needs, abilities and requirements, the Student Development Centre at Lauder College fulfils an essential role to provide support for students with disabilities, special needs and learning difficulties. A further task for the Centre is to help students to regain confidence and to provide one-to-one advice and support about any learning related matters that the student may have. The need for more support is particularly evident amongst adult learners. This group of people may not only lack basic ICT skills, but also have often no self-confidence in achieving learning objectives.

This centre employs nine members of staff and has an important part to play in retaining students and communicate any major difficulties that students are experiencing with their course work back to the Curriculum Groups. The open and friendly atmosphere and welcoming attitude of staff is immediately striking. The Centre operates on the same flexible basis as the IT Core Skills Learner Bases. However, ICT training constitutes only one of many activity of the Centre in supporting students. Disabled access facilities are available as well as additional study space. Staff are advising students on particular tasks or helping them to set up their workstation to suit their requirements. The Centre is well equipped with PCs and relevant software, a job resource base, and also offers careers advice. ICT skills training is fully integrated in the general support services. The Centre also runs an 'Early Bird' programme during the summer to introduce students to basic ICT skills and learning facilities.

It became apparent at interviews, and by consulting the Group's Development Plan, that Centre staff are very active in liaising within the College with Curriculum Groups, Senior Management and Community Learning Centres. External liaison with disability groups and special needs organisations allows the unit to develop and implement guidance policies and to be able to support and understand students' special needs with meaningful tools and methods. Examples are: developing on-line guidance and links to outside organisations for students (e.g. UCAS) and working with Fife Adult Guidance Services and work with Disability Statutory and Voluntary groups.

4.7. *Library Services*

The Library is located on the first floor of the College and is fairly small in size. The opening hours are similar to the Learner Bases. ICT skills are not taught by the Library, but Information Literacy is regarded as a very important area to ensure students can fully take advantage of online information resources.

Whilst many full-time students come to the Library with some ICT skills, others possess little or none. This applies in particular to part-time and adult learners who often lack basic ICT skills, making it very difficult to introduce them to concepts of information literacy. The learner's ability to use the on-line catalogue, evaluating web pages and learning how to navigate the Internet, is inextricably linked to basic ICT competencies without which Information Literacy would simply remain a phrase. Where IT skills are non-existent or rudimentary, the students are referred to the IT Core Skills Learner Base and training packages, which can be accessed from the student desktop.

The Library advertises its services in leaflets, in the student diary and on the College student/staff intranet, although it was felt that the publicity for the Library services could be improved by making staff more aware of it through workshops, which are organised in co-operation with the E-learning co-ordinator and the Staff Development Manager.

Currently, the Library runs short one-off 30 minute induction courses, showing students around and introducing the call number system and online facilities, which can be accessed via the College intranet. The induction courses run at the beginning of the term or academic block for all full-time and part-time students in groups of ten or so. The Library relies on support from the curriculum groups or student advisors to encourage learners to attend these induction sessions. However, it was noted that student awareness of the services on offer needs to be increased, and the Library has identified a restructuring of the induction sessions as an area for improvement. In particular students taking practical courses, such as construction, do often not see the point in using library resources.

In tandem with the E-learning co-ordinator, the Library Resource Manager organised a number of awareness workshops for members of staff about library and Internet resources and resources to motivate staff to use these resources more actively in teaching. This would also help student in building competence in using on-line facilities more actively.

The Library intranet is designed to be a gateway to information sources, which was developed jointly between the library and Creative Technology. Web links are available to JISC, Learn Direct Scotland and the National Learning Network.

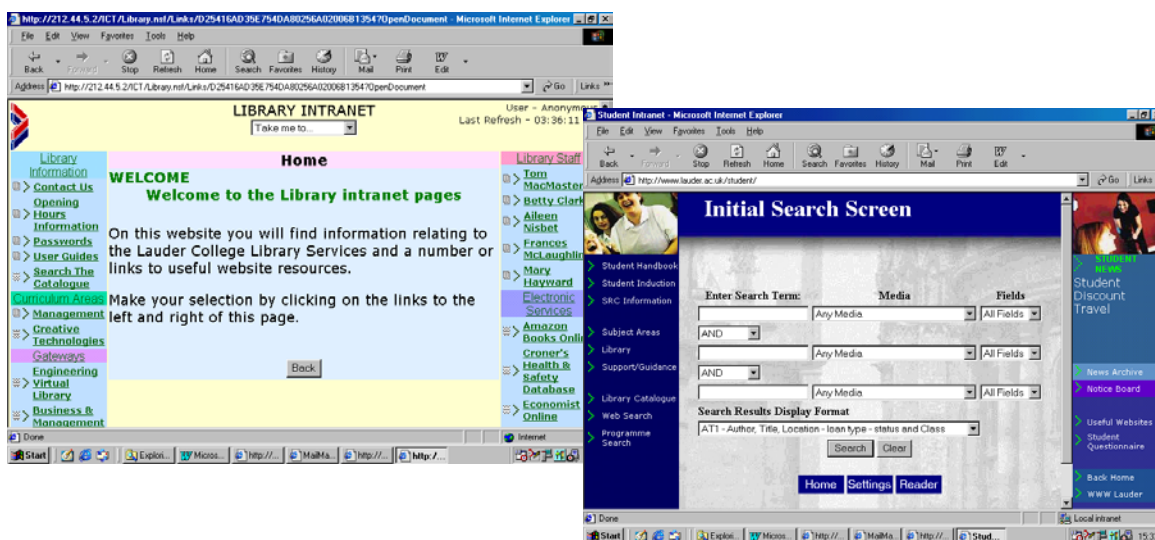


Fig 11: The Library website and online catalogue

The Library also offers open access to PC workstations. About 14 terminals allow students to access on-line resources. If places are available students are also allowed to complete course work, type up essays or check their email.

4.8. IT Support and Helpdesk and College Information Services

The IT Support Manager is responsible for the technical maintenance and improvement of IT services throughout the College and in the community learning centres. Through a helpline staff can contact the helpdesk if they are experiencing difficulty with their computer equipment. This is not a facility open to students. It became apparent by interviewing staff that the help desk reacts swiftly and competently to technical problems. The IT Support Manager, who is in charge of the Helpdesk is also involved with the ongoing redevelopment of the College website.

The College website (www.lauder.ac.uk) provides comprehensive additional information about courses, support services, funding, community learning and the College in general. Besides this, brochures and leaflets are available to the public at the College entrance, which

can also generated through a product Database. The advantage of such a tool is that the College can supply specific customer groups swiftly and at little extra cost with targeted information materials. In addition, all learners are issued with a Student Handbook, which informs about online learning, library services and ICT facilities as well as many other student services.¹⁵ For members of various projects, including the Business Training Network, the College has set of discussion forums, which requires a login and password.

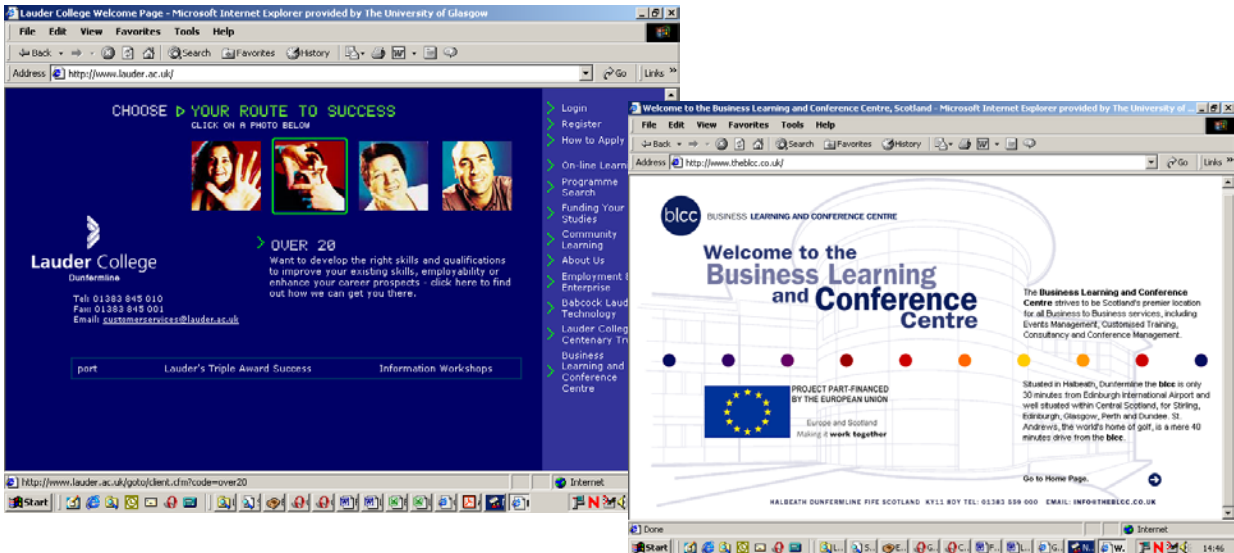


Fig. 12: The College Website and BLCC Website

The College website used to be a flat information gateway, but with the development of innovative Internet marketing solutions, the need for more interactive features and development was recognised. Having won a major Marketing Award by the Scottish Further Education Unit, the College is currently investing in the redevelopment the website during 2001-02. The site provides comprehensive support services for learners, and will soon enable the College to give customers an individualised platform through which e-customised customer relationship management and personalised services can operate. The student intranet is currently under redevelopment, and there are strategies in place to ensure consistency of design and the remote access to the intranet

4.9. ICT Entitlement for Staff and ICT Skills Training

The successful implementation of an innovative learning environment not only rests with sound college management and adequate resource deployment, but also with the implementation of robust and flexible quality models and frameworks, to monitor the effective use of staff and to provide the quality of services and products.

Staff entitlement to access to ICT is a prerequisite for implementing 'ICT pervasiveness'.¹⁶ The College is working towards equipping all members of staff with their own workstation. The ratio of part-time staff to workstation is 2:1. ICT drop-in facilities are also available in the staff common room.

Through the Staff Development Manager, the College aims to encourage the uptake of ECDL amongst all of its 650 lecturing and support staff. Currently, only 29 staff have successfully completed ECDL, and further 146 staff are in the process of completing this certificate. A Staff Development Day in January 2002, organised by the Staff Development Manager, emphasised the need to encourage in particular more lecturing staff to continue and complete ECDL, though many of them are experiencing difficulties in finding the time to complete the course.

Staff Development in collaboration with Library Services, Core Skills, Computing and Creative Technology are seeking ways forward to support staff in implementing ICT into the curriculum.

5. EMERGING DIRECTIONS

In order to move a culture of innovation in teaching and learning forward with a wider range of products and in order to achieve 'ICT pervasiveness' throughout the College, it is essential that all staff and eventually all students have the basic skills and confidence to use ICT in order to benefit from a wider a range of new products. Otherwise the implementation of online course content and to introduce e-learning opportunities will not be successful. The following directions are emerging:

1. At strategic level, College Senior Management has developed an E-learning Strategy that ties in with other strategic objectives such as 'ICT pervasiveness', social inclusion and learning in the community. The e-learning model is based on three development strands: 1) online delivery of course materials, 2) online support for learners and assessment, 3) a hybrid model of online and face-to-face contact.
2. In order to bring the College ICT Strategy forward, E-learning Coordinators have been recently appointed. They support academic staff to develop new ICT skills and embed the use of ICT into the curriculum models across the College. For example, a special website has been set up and provides ideas and information on how Information & Learning Technology maybe integrated into the curriculum. Here efforts are also underway to encourage and assists lecturing staff to use video, audio, general multimedia, graphics, digital imaging etc in the classroom environment. Further, it is intended of establish a centralised material development unit
3. Online course content is being developed to emerging IMS standards. Content will be used to support a range of online and hybrid course delivery models.
4. A College-wide VLE will be launched in September 2002 and will be used to support elements of course delivery online.
5. A new Professional Development Award from the SQA in Supporting Online Learning will become a key baseline qualification for all academic staff from September 2002.
6. A new learner contact centre is in planning and scheduled to begin to operate in September 2003. The new centre will support especially remote learners using ICT in order to have access to learning resources whenever and wherever they require so.
7. After large numbers of learners have enrolled and successfully completed ECDL, Advanced ECDL will be offered to ensure learners can continue to improve their ICT skills.
8. A process is in place to ensure the ongoing development of ICT programmes to support ICT Core Skills of new National Qualifications and Higher National Frameworks.
9. Further work is considered to research the impact of ICT on the quality of learning and teaching and on student progress and achievement.
10. Lauder College is therefore keen to demonstrate that it can deploy resources effectively to put an inclusive, flexible and leaning environment into practice. Besides creating quality services and products for its customers, the College is keen to explore new technological directions. For example, JISC has recently approached the College to request support for a study on the possibilities of handheld mobile technology in learning.

CONCLUSION

Lauder College has developed a variety of strategic directions that are intended to support innovation in teaching and learning. The ICT Strategy and the commitment by Senior Management to implement ICT pervasiveness throughout the College are clear evidence of this. The development of ICT skills amongst its learners is seen as a major priority for the College. Here the College has clearly recognised that in order to implement an inclusive, flexible and learner-centred learning experience 'one size does not fit all' learners. Hence, a great variety of courses are offered that learners' needs. A comprehensive system of needs analysis is in place and quality assurance in learning and teaching is a major priority for the College, in order to achieve 'ICT pervasiveness'. The College has recognised that a successful reengineering of the learning environment in accordance with Governmental initiatives will only be successful if students and staff possess at least a basic level of ICT competence. Hence the College will continue to regard this area as an important objective. Although, ICT skills training may not remain a major driving force for attracting people back into learning, ICT literacy is vital if the College's plans to develop e-learning and e-business are to succeed. The successful realisation of this objective is however also dependant on secure Governmental funding and investment into staff development and learner support systems.

BIBLIOGRAPHY, RESOURCES & NOTES

Lauder College Annual Report 2000-2001: <http://www.lauder.ac.uk/annualreport2001/00.htm>

Lauder College Operational Plan 2001-2002

Lauder College ICT Strategy 2000-2003

Lauder College Strategic Plan 2000-2003

The Student Handbook can also be accessed on-line at

<http://www.lauder.ac.uk/student/new/induction/handbook.pdf>

Digital Scotland Task Force Report (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/digitalscotland/report.htm>), Opportunities Scotland of 1998, which was the prerequisite of Lifelong Learning Report by the Scottish Executive (http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/official_report/cttee/enter.htm)

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Scotland: Towards the Knowledge Economy. Report of the Knowledge Economy Taskforce by The Scottish Office, 12 April 1999.

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NOTES

- ¹ Overview of Current Development in Further Education © CITSCAPES Project 2002 See www.citscapes.ac.uk
- ² <http://www.lauder.ac.uk/dynamic.cfm?id=000355a>
- ³ The Mission Statement, a Statement of Corporate Intent and a Statement of Values can be accessed at <http://www.lauder.ac.uk/goto/area.cfm?code=102>
- ⁴ See also ICT Strategy § 4.3. p. 11.
- ⁵ See also Lauder College Strategic Plan §2.5. p. 14.
- ⁶ See also Scotland: Towards the Knowledge Economy. Report of the Knowledge Economy Taskforce by The Scottish Office, 12 April 1999. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library/documents-w9/knec-00.htm>
- ⁷ More details can be obtained from the SQA website at <http://www.sqa.org.uk/>
- ⁸ See also <http://www.sfefc.ac.uk/content/library/media/2001/prfe0501.html> for details
- ⁹ See <http://www.sfefc.ac.uk/content/sfefc/qli/feqli.html> and CITSCAPES Overview p.45 f., p. 49.
- ¹⁰ Details of the report are available on the Executive's website at www.scotland.gov.uk/government/ketf_ccr.pdf p. 5.
- ¹¹ Other governmental initiatives and reports have also shaped an influenced change at Lauder College. See, for example, *Digital Scotland Task Force Report* (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/digitalscotland/report.htm>), *Opportunities Scotland* of 1998, which was the prerequisite of *Lifelong Learning Report* by the Scottish Executive (http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/official_report/cttee/enter.htm) and the Beattie Commission Report <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/who/ellid/beattie.asp> All these reports pointed to a 'C' change in terms of learning and in the assumption that the future of learning would be in part-time and flexible rather than in full-time learning.
- ¹² The Lauder College HMI report and reports on other Scottish FE colleges are available at the HMI website: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/hmie/reportstypfefecolleges.htm>
- ¹³ See Lauder College Strategic Plan 2000-2003 ch. 7.1 p. 47 ff for more details.
- ¹⁴ See <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/>
- ¹⁵ The Student Handbook can also be accessed on-line at <http://www.lauder.ac.uk/student/new/induction/handbook.pdf> A PowerPoint introduction is also available for students at <http://www.lauder.ac.uk/student/new/induction/induction2.ppt>
- ¹⁶ ICT Strategy § 5.4. p. 20.