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The aspiration that every graduate will be information literate: a case study from the University of Sheffield.

Theme: Strategic approaches to Information Literacy

In October 2005, the University of Sheffield launched a new Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy for 2005-10. It outlines the characteristics it is anticipated a Sheffield graduate will have, including the ability to “demonstrate the core capabilities and skills of information literacy, interacting confidently with the nature and structure of information in their subject and handling information in a professional and ethical manner”. This places information literacy high on the agenda of every academic department, as each of them needs to draw up a Departmental Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy (DLTAS).

This paper discusses the University Library’s stakeholder role in collaborating with departments in the preparation of their DLTAS, through attending departmental planning meetings, away days, and working with the Learning and Teaching Advocate for each department. This top down approach is complemented by the availability of our Information Skills Resource, through which the Library has addressed three specific needs: -

- to provide all taught students with access to generic information literacy tutorials within WebCT
- to collaborate with course leaders to embed information literacy in the curriculum including formal assessment
- to provide flexibility in the selection of individual tutorials for subject-specific WebCT modules with material customised to suit particular disciplines and student groups.

The Library is also a partner in CILASS (Centre for Inquiry-based Learning in the Arts and Social Sciences), one of the Centres for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. Funding from CILASS is enabling the Library to further explore how to engage academics with these issues.

The paper will reflect on the different strategic approaches taken to ensure all Sheffield graduates are information literate; whether top down, bottom up or holistic, embracing all stakeholders, whilst taking a pragmatic approach of using every available opportunity whenever and wherever it arises.