

fieldwork, procedural, manipulative, virtual, C&IT, etc). It is hoped that synchronous and/or asynchronous discussions will be facilitated on key topics.

- » identify and disseminate information on what works and what does not!
- » commission discussion papers on key topics for publication on the web site – but if you have a particular interest in a ‘hot’ topic and would be prepared to write a discussion paper for our web site, please let the team know.
- » encourage debate about strategic approaches to practical work (preparation, group-work, assessment, curriculum development, etc)
- » facilitate informed discussion on important and often sensitive aspects of practical work such as the use of dissection and the ethics of experimentation;
- » discuss and disseminate good practice with regard to disability and practicals / fieldwork;
- » discuss the incorporation and integration of Personal Transferable Skills (PTS) into the practical curriculum;
- » facilitate discussion of the problems of assessing practical work within the concept of constructive alignment of the curriculum; and

» discussing the particular question of the role of peer and self-assessment in practical work.

These activities will be developed mainly through:

- » the web site pages;
- » meetings to be held at sites in both the north and south of the UK;
- » development of discussion areas within an asynchronous or synchronous chat room context;
- » commissioned ‘expert’ discussion documents to stimulate debate on particular topics; and
- » the *Compendium* collection of practical work (<http://bio.ltsn.ac.uk/resources/bioscience/compendium/index.htm>).

I am very keen to develop interactions with other interested persons so if you have any comments or suggestions, please contact me or the LTSN Bioscience team. ■

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ECOLOGICAL PROJECT COMPENDIUM

The British Ecological Society is developing an innovative on-line resource for lecturers and others teaching ecology in Higher Education. The project is currently accepting contributions of successful practical exercises in ecology ranging from examples of student-centred learning and project case studies to more lecturer-directed activities and effective strategies for dealing with large student groups. If you would like to submit work for publication, instructions for authors and more details about the project are available on-line (at www.britishecologicalsociety.org). The Compendium is also seeking suitably qualified individuals to referee submitted work for the quality of the science and the pedagogic approach. You do not need to be a member of the British Ecological Society to contribute to this new resource as an author or as a referee. If you would like to find out more please contact the Managing Editor, Jac Potter, at j.potter@chester.ac.uk

GUIDANCE FOR STUDENT PROJECTS

When conducting final year research projects, the level of guidance and assistance that students receive can vary considerably. Guidance for Student Projects (GSP) is an online learning resource to assist students with the planning, execution and presentation of research projects (<http://bio.ltsn.ac.uk/hosted/gsp/introduction.html>). This resource is targeted at undergraduate students in the biological sciences who are expected to undertake final year research projects. However, the content should be more widely applicable to MSc and PhD students, and to other disciplines.

One of the strengths of GSP is its breadth of coverage of issues that arise during student projects, from the selection of a research topic, the assessment criteria used for dissertations, advice on experimental design and data presentation to the formatting of research reports. The major topic headings in GSP are: dissertation assessment; project management; literature review; experimental design; data presentation; and compiling the report.

Within each of these topic headings a number of relevant issues are presented. So, for example, the section ‘Project Management’ contains suggestions and advice on how student and supervisor should interact, how to plan and schedule a project (including a detailed case study), and highlights important transferable skills (e.g. time management, computing and information management).

Throughout the website, we provide advice and guidance from our own experience as project supervisors and researchers e.g. see the list of common problems in ‘project management’, ‘data presentation’ and ‘compiling the report’. We provide numerous hyperlinks to websites and references to literature that provide quality learning resources for student researchers.

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