



CENTRE FOR

bioscience



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## Supporting teaching in higher education to improve student learning across the biosciences

### Welcome!

Welcome to this, our fourth occasional briefing to our Staff and Educational Development contacts. This briefing is intended to update you on the selection of our activities we believe are most relevant to you and the staff you support. We hope you find the enclosed information interesting and useful.

Should you wish to circulate the contents of the briefing to your colleagues it is also available in electronic format from the Staff and Educational Developers section of our website:

<http://www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/sed/briefing.htm>

Some of you will recently have received a letter from Paul Chin, sent on behalf of the Subject Network. Unfortunately our resource pack, information and briefing could not be included with Paul's letter. We appreciate that a number of you would prefer to receive coordinated communications from the Subject Network rather than individual correspondence from a large number of Subject Centres so the Centre for Bioscience is doing what it can to ensure (where appropriate) this happens in future. You can help us by confirming on the enclosed form, your contact details and your preferences for how we and others within the Higher Education Academy use your information.

### Bioscience Staff Resource Pack – order copies for the new academic year

Once again we have reviewed and updated the content of our resource pack for new and aspiring academic staff. **A sample copy is enclosed for your information.** The pack contains subject-specific material, intended to complement the information delivered in PG Cert and other professional development courses. Included are details of Centre activities and the support we offer to individuals and their institutions, together with lists of selected publications, journals and websites relating to bioscience education.

We are happy to supply you with multiple copies, free of charge. **An order form is enclosed.** We guarantee that orders received by 30th August will be with you by mid-September.

**Literature request form** – request copies of any of our leaflets or publications for your notice boards and resource libraries (also free of charge).

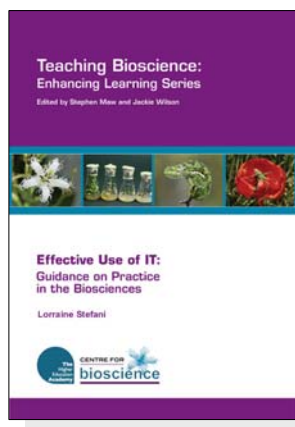
### New Lecturers section of our website - updated

These pages bring together information on our key activities and resources; details of our publications, case studies of current bioscience teaching practice and useful learning and teaching resources, details of journals publishing papers or articles on bioscience education, information about the events and workshops we organise, our funding opportunities and projects, our enquiries service, etc.

<http://www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/network/newlecturer.htm>

## Publications

### Effective Use of Information Technology in Teaching - free guide



Following the success of *our Self- and Peer-Assessment guide*, we are about to publish **Effective Use of IT: Guidance on Practice in the Biosciences**, the second guide in our Teaching Bioscience – Enhancing Learning Series.

These guides are aimed at colleagues in their first year of teaching in Higher Education, particularly those on PG Certificate courses but also include content aimed at more experienced staff.

Each guide includes: a general introduction to the subject of the guide; advice on implementation and embedding of practice, followed by more in-depth information and the opportunity to investigate the topic further, plus a collection of bioscience case studies highlighting how others have introduced the topic into their teaching practice.

The guides are aimed at bioscientists but much of their content is relevant to staff in other disciplines. Copies of both guides will be included in the Resource Packs sent out in September and we will be happy to supply extra copies (order via the enclosed **literature request form**).

Accompanying each guide is a series of web pages containing expanded versions of the case studies, and further case studies and supporting materials.

<http://www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/publications/tbel/>

## Promoting and Supporting Bioscience Education Research

Our journal, **Bioscience Education E-journal** (BEE-j) is

- A source of peer-reviewed research & practice papers
- A place for bioscientists to publish education papers

**Bioscience Education**  
*e journal*

We welcome research papers, descriptive or review articles, and essays on tertiary level biosciences education for publication. Publication dates are nominally May and November annually, with articles appearing on the website once they have been accepted. Volumes 1 to 7 are freely available to browse and read online. PDF versions of individual papers can also be freely downloaded.

<http://www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/journal/>

To complement the work of Staff and Educational Development units we plan to develop a series of web pages to provide additional support to bioscience staff embarking on discipline-based pedagogic research, staff undertaking teaching development projects, and those seeking to publish their work in BEE-j. The intention is not to provide the definitive resource but more to give pointers to existing resources and information from a range of sources and to help staff navigate to key resources and information in the bioscience educational literature. The pages will also contain information and advice on research, evaluation methodology, useful tools, etc. These pages will be connected to the New Lecturers and Staff & Educational Developers sections of our website (amongst others). In due course we anticipate they may also be linked to, or part of, a centralised Higher Education Academy resource.

## Funding Developments in Bioscience Learning and Teaching

Earlier this year we launched our **Departmental Teaching Enhancement Scheme**. This scheme provides bioscience schools and departments with additional funds of **up to £15,000** to develop and implement some aspect of practice that will lead to an improved learning experience for students in their department. The scheme aims to effect change across entire department(s) rather than within a single module or one individual's teaching practice.

A total of £45,000 was earmarked to fund three to five projects (with a maximum award for individual projects of £15,000). Such was the response to the call for bids, with 22 applications, many of a very high standard, the Centre decided to increase the budget for this year to £61,453.

### Successful bids

- Development and implementation of a policy for delivering effective feedback to students within The School of Biology, Chemistry and Health Sciences at MMU (Manchester Metropolitan University)
- Creating a departmental web-based resource centre to support the teaching and learning of numerical techniques (Anglia Ruskin University)
- Combining 'peer' and 'online' assessment methods for large-class laboratory practicals to enhance the effective feedback to and learning experience for students (University of Manchester)
- A 'toolbox' for the development of student research skills and related employability (University of Chester)
- Towards sustainable teaching of bioscience (University of Wales, Aberystwyth)

Next year we will operate a streamlined two stage process; involving submission of expressions of interest by **16<sup>th</sup> January**, and we will then invite full applications by **31<sup>st</sup> March**.

### Teaching Development Fund (TDF)

We continue to fund smaller-scale projects of up to **£3,000** through our Teaching Development Fund. The primary focus of the Teaching Development Fund is to develop and disseminate good practice in bioscience learning and teaching. The annual deadline for TDF applications is **31<sup>st</sup> January**.

**Please alert staff to both these funding opportunities.** Details of how to apply and current and completed projects are available on our website <http://www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/projects/>

## Professional Development Events

In 2006/07 we will again be hosting meetings and events relating to bioscience learning and teaching. Staff participating in events in our **Professional Development Events** series will be sent a certificate of attendance. In due course we will be mapping our activities against the Higher Education Academy's Professional Standards but it will be for institutions to decide whether our activities may contribute towards their PG Certificate and CPD requirements. Details of our forthcoming events and event reports can be found at <http://www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/events/>

We also welcome invitations at a departmental or institutional level.

Our next biennial **Science Learning and Teaching Conference** organised in collaboration with the Materials and Physical Sciences Subject Centres will be held on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> June 2007 at the University of Keele. Registration opens in December 2006; in the meantime we would appreciate it if you would encourage your colleagues to submit paper and poster abstracts.

<http://www.sltc.heacademy.ac.uk/Contributors.aspx>