



## **VLE Surveys**

**A longitudinal perspective between March 2001, March 2003 and March 2005 for higher education in the United Kingdom**

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## Executive summary

This report records the results from a national survey, undertaken by UCISA and JISC into issues relating to the acquisition, use and support of VLEs. It complements a similar survey conducted by UCISA in 2001 ([www.ucisa.ac.uk/groups/tlig/vle/VLEsurvey.pdf](http://www.ucisa.ac.uk/groups/tlig/vle/VLEsurvey.pdf)) and a joint UCISA/JISC survey conducted in 2003 ([www.ucisa.ac.uk/groups/tlig/vle/VLEsurvey.pdf](http://www.ucisa.ac.uk/groups/tlig/vle/VLEsurvey.pdf)).

The main thrust of the report provides a longitudinal comparison of the returns from the 2001, 2003 and 2005 surveys.

Why yet another survey? 2005 has witnessed several major initiatives, notably the publication of two highly influential strategy documents on e-learning, which were published in Spring 2005, by HEFCE [www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2005/05\\_12/](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2005/05_12/) and the DfES [www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/e-strategy/](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/e-strategy/). Their timing should, therefore, assist the visibility and relevance of a national survey. E-learning is now on the Government's national agenda. This will prove to be both a catalyst and scrutinising eye. It will, therefore, be instructive to note how well placed the UCISA community is in contributing to the development of e-learning within UK higher education.

In summary, the overall picture is one of a continuation of the trends identified in 2003, ie the picture is one of evolutionary consolidation. Centralisation is increasing in all matters considered strategic, dedicated devolvment is occurring for a range of support activities. Post-92 universities continue to display more centralising tendencies compared to Pre-92 universities but the distinction is becoming less marked. The greatest increase in usage, from a much lower base, is exhibited by HE colleges. There is as yet, little sign of collaboration between institutions and negligible interest in standards.

## Acknowledgements

### *UCISA-TLIG Learning and Teaching subgroup*

Susan Armitage

*Tom Browne*

Anthony Cobb

Colin Dalziel

Helen Fletcher

Roger Hewitt

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Andrew Rothery

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## Preface

The 2001 UCISA survey focused exclusively on asking questions concerning VLEs.

The 2003 UCISA/ JISC survey had a much broader remit. It explored MLEs, as defined by JISC ([www.jisc.ac.uk/index.cfm?name=mle\\_briefings\\_1](http://www.jisc.ac.uk/index.cfm?name=mle_briefings_1)) of which VLEs were regarded as a component. The 2005 survey had a similar remit, appropriately updated and, in particular, it attempted to move the vocabulary away from the poorly understood term *MLE* to the more widely accepted term *e-learning*.

## Background

This report draws upon three surveys that were conducted in the Spring of 2001, 2003 and 2005. The reasoning and justification for the 2001 and 2003 surveys are outlined at some length in [www.ucisa.ac.uk/groups/tlig/vle/VLEsurvey.pdf](http://www.ucisa.ac.uk/groups/tlig/vle/VLEsurvey.pdf). However, for completeness, it is instructive to record the original motivations identified for the 2001 survey. They held true for the 2003 survey and remain highly pertinent for the 2005 survey.

*UCISA is aware that a number of issues relating to VLEs are having a significant impact on Computing/Information services. They also represent cultural challenges for both academic staff and students in how they engage with their learning and teaching. Issues relate to choosing a VLE, its implementation, technical support and a whole range of support, training and pedagogic issues relating to its use. In order to gain an insight into how these questions are being addressed in higher education, with particular reference to their impact on the UCISA community, UCISA commissioned the Teaching and Learning sub-group of UCISA-TLIG to conduct a national survey.*

Both the 2001 and 2003 surveys have been well received and have helped inform some of the resources at JISC InfoNet ([www.jisc.ac.uk/index.cfm?name=mle\\_briefings\\_1](http://www.jisc.ac.uk/index.cfm?name=mle_briefings_1)).

For the 2005 survey, the explicit aims of the study were to:

1. Identify the range of environments supporting e-learning already in place or, which are planned in the HE and FE sector, and the priorities and ambitions for further development.
2. Present an analysis of the approaches taken to the integration of e-learning and business processes.
3. Identify the current, emerging and planning patterns of use in institutions.

In 2003, the survey formed a component part of a much broader project entitled the MLE Landscape Study, involving numerous case studies at a range of HE and FE institutions (see [www.jisc.ac.uk/index.cfm?name=mle\\_study\\_exec\\_summary](http://www.jisc.ac.uk/index.cfm?name=mle_study_exec_summary))

The original group responsible for the 2003 survey agreed to repeat the study and additional individuals were added in response to an Invitation to Tender, to assist in the second MLE Landscape Study. A Reference Group of representatives from key stakeholder organisations was then established to advise on the scope, design and implementation of the study. Martin Jenkins and Tom Browne, as before, represented UCISA. More specifically, this representation came from the Learning and Teaching subgroup of TLIG and another member, Richard Walker as a co-author of this report, joined them.

As with the 2003 survey, Section-4 of the 2005 survey focused on VLEs. As before, this report will focus exclusively on the returns from HEIs. Although it is impossible to prove, the Reference Group were of the opinion that many of the respondents' answers in sections other than Section-4 were completed by people with a VLE mindset, or at least, as recognised in 2003, that VLEs are now a mature component of any MLE mindset, rather than an isolated activity divorced from broader institutional planning, as may have been the case in 2001. So, where appropriate, we have cross referenced to statistics outside Section-4.

## **VLE longitudinal study**

A strong objective was to retain most of the questions used in the 2001 and 2003 surveys in order to permit longitudinal evaluation. But new questions were added, stimulated by research conducted by the JISC *e-learning* programme ([www.jisc.ac.uk/elearning\\_pedagogy.html](http://www.jisc.ac.uk/elearning_pedagogy.html)) which, in particular, has a substantial focus on pedagogic issues from the practitioners' and students' perspectives. These new questions were informed by the JISC *e-learning* and Pedagogy strand of their *e-learning* programme, of which Tom Browne is a member.

The 2003 survey had 102 HEI respondents and the 2001 survey 75, compared with 2005, which had 85. Only 54 HEIs responded to both 2003 and 2005 surveys. We have no information regarding *who* responded at these overlap institutions. These facts should be borne in mind when undertaking any longitudinal comparisons.

In most cases, the questions compared do not have exactly the same wording. The exact wording is given in Appendix 1. Also, not all surveys are available for longitudinal comparison for any given question. In 2001, two parallel surveys were conducted, one targeted at institutions, the other at practitioners. It is the former that is used for longitudinal comparison.

It must also be noted that the companion JISC Report entitled *Study of environments to support e-learning in UK Further and Higher Education* (see [www.jisc.ac.uk/project\\_mle\\_activity\\_repeat.html](http://www.jisc.ac.uk/project_mle_activity_repeat.html)) has also presented the statistics for Section-4 of the Landscape Study, i.e. that section pertaining to VLEs. However, you will note that the statistics are slightly different. This is because the JISC Report analyses returns for both HE and FE. The FE return was only 28% and therefore the data for both HE and FE was weighted as explained in the JISC Report. However, it was agreed that because, taking the HE statistics alone, the return was sufficiently high, it was inappropriate to weight just the HE data for this UCISA Report.

The JISC Report primarily aims to present the statistics from the survey, leaving it to other agencies to extract data relevant to them for subsequent interpretation. This is the purpose of this UCISA Report, focusing on HE and VLEs. But we would caution against anyone attempting to use the statistics as performance indicators. Nor should this report be confused with benchmarking, though it may help to inform such an exercise.

## **Summary of conclusions**

1. Uptake of VLEs has continued to increase, with HE colleges now on a par with pre- and post-92 institutions.
2. The number of VLEs in use at a given institution is beginning to decrease, but with pre-92 universities still displaying the greatest diversity.
3. Blackboard and WebCT continue to dominate. Other proprietary software is declining but there is an increase in in-house and open source approaches.
4. Post-92 universities demonstrate the biggest increases in use by both students and staff.
5. Access to course material continues to account for the greatest VLE usage, but particularly in post-92 universities, there is increasing usage that is not merely supplementary (i.e. optional for students). Usage is conspicuous across a very wide range of subjects.
6. Central IT continues to dominate technical support. Elsewhere, dedicated VLE units appear to be absorbing the support previously provided more diversely.

7. The integration of VLEs with MLEs has increased both in range of activities and in depth. In particular, there is a substantial increase in the creation of student account files for transfer to a VLE. But there is limited progress in integration with portal development and *e*-portfolios.
8. Strategy and decision making are becoming ever more consolidated centrally and are being substantially informed by external agencies. But there is also an increase in local consultation. *E*-learning and VLEs are increasingly being cited in strategy documents.
9. Learning and teaching activities are consolidated as the primary drivers for considering using a VLE. Specialised support such as that required for distance learners and students with special needs are identified as significant factors but have as yet had little impact on the character of resource provision.
10. Availability of funding is now the primary stimulant to VLE development, and a small percentage of this is still as project funding, though assured institutional funding now dominates.
11. Perceptions regarding the use of career enhancement as a means of encouraging VLE usage are very low, but there is an increase in expectation that VLEs will be used by staff.
12. Standards are neither seen as supportive nor as barriers, indeed, they have negligible influence.
13. Most institutions are not yet using innovative technologies such as wireless and mobile phones, though post-92 universities are most active in this area.
14. The requirement to implement Personal Development Planning is beginning to have a small but noticeable impact on VLE usage. The development of *e*-portfolio capabilities is an emerging concern for HEIs.

## 1. Analysis of the data

This section analyses the 2005 survey data, and where available, compares it with the responses from the 2003 and 2001 surveys.

### Response rate

This survey was conducted as part of the wider JISC funded MLE Survey, which surveyed both higher and further education institutions. This report focuses on just the returns from HE. Of the 206 HE institutions that received questionnaires, 85 were returned. This represents a response rate of 41%.

The breakdown of responses by Country and Type of HE institution are shown below, in Tables A and B. These show a comparison of the national breakdown by country (Table A) and type of HE institution (Table B). They show that there were not substantial differences in composition of the UK population and the sample responding to this survey. Breakdowns by Type of HE Institution, using pre-92, post-92 and HE College will be used throughout this survey.

**Table A: Country**

Country	UK	Sample
N=	206	85
England	81%	77%
Wales	5%	5%
Scotland	10%	14%
Northern Ireland	3%	4%

**Table B: Type of HE institution**

Type	UK	Sample
N=	206	85
Pre- 1992	54%	48%
Post- 1992	29%	32%
HE College	17%	20%

## 2 Overview of VLE use

This section explores the range of VLE platforms that have been introduced within the HE sector, and the functions and activities that they support. Table 1 shows that the use of VLEs has now increased to 95% of all institutions compared to 81% in 2001 and 86% in 2003. Growth in use by HE colleges was greatest, reaching the level of both pre- and post-92 Institutions.

**Table 1 : Whether virtual learning environments are used**

	HE – Pre-92		HE – Post-92		HE College		HE all		
	2005	2003	2005	2003	2005	2003	2005	2003	2001
N =	41	45	27	39	17	18	85	102	75
Yes	98%	84%	93%	97%	94%	67%	95%	86%	81%
No	2%	16%	7%	3%	6%	33%	5%	14%	19%

The previous surveys revealed that many institutions were using multiple VLEs (Table 2). The 2003 data suggested some consolidation in this respect, and this trend is reinforced in the 2005 data with 52% of respondents deploying only one VLE. The breakdown in the 2005 data reveals that it is the pre-92 institutions that have the greater number of VLEs with 37% operating with 3 or more platforms. post-92 institutions reflect a different trend, with 70% of respondents reporting only one platform in usage. These results suggest a shift towards centralised management of VLE development at post-92 institutions, which is less in evidence at pre-92 institutions. We may speculate that these contrasting trends reflect differences in organisational culture and decision-making, with departments driving e-learning developments at pre-92 institutions, whereas post-92 institutions appear to be strategically led from the centre.

**Table 2: Number of VLEs per institution**

	HE - Pre-92		HE - Post-92		HE college		HE all		
	2005	2003	2005	2003	2005	2003	2005	2003	2001
N =	41	45	27	39	17	18	85	102	75
No VLE	2%	16%	7%	3%	6%	33%	5%	14%	19%
Using One VLE	37%	27%	70%	49%	59%	33%	52%	36%	29%
Using Two VLEs	24%	29%	15%	36%	24%	33%	21%	32%	24%
Using Three VLEs	20%	16%	7%	8%	12%	-	14%	10%	25%
Using Four VLEs	7%	9%	-	3%	-	-	4%	5%	3%
Using Five VLEs	10%	2%	-	3%	-	-	5%	1%	-
Using Six VLEs	-	2%	-	-	-	-	-	2%	-

The 2005 data shows that Blackboard and WebCT remain the most commonly used VLEs in the sector (Table 3), consolidating their market share across the HE sector. The breakdown in the data reveals a similar market share for both companies amongst Pre-92 institutions, with Blackboard leading amongst Post-92 institutions and WebCT continuing and increasingly to represent the preferred choice of HE colleges.



**Table 3: What VLE(s) are used**

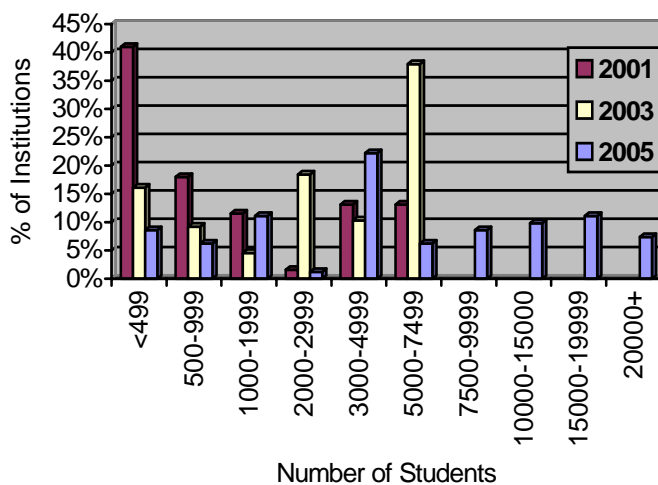
	HE - Pre-92		HE - Post-92		HE college		HE all		
	2005	2003	2005	2003	2005	2003	2005	2003	2001
N =	31	38	19	38	12	12	63	88	62
Blackboard	42%	39%	56%	55%	25%	17%	43%	43%	34%
Colloquia	3%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	1%	-
FD Learning's le®	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	-
FirstClass	15%	26%	0%	13%	6%	17%	8%	19%	29%
Lotus Domino	8%	11%	0%	5%	6%	0%	5%	7%	8%
Lotus Learning Space	5%	8%	4%	3%	0%	0%	3%	5%	16%
Merlin	3%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	1%	-
Top Class	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	0%	-
WebCT	40%	47%	20%	21%	50%	33%	37%	34%	60%
Granada Learnwise	3%	3%	4%	8%	-	0%	3%	7%	7%
MS Sharepoint (2005 only)	8%	-	0%	-	0%	-	4%	-	-
Other commercial VLE (2005 only)	6%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	-
Commercial intranet based product	0%	5%	0%	5%	0%	0%	0%	5%	-
Bodington	13%	5%	0%	0%	13%	8%	8%	3%	-
Moodle (2005 only)	13%	-	4%	-	6%	-	8%	-	-
Other VLE - developed in-house	50%	21%	24%	26%	31%	17%	38%	23%	11%
Other intranet based - developed in-house	20%	29%	16%	24%	13%	25%	17%	26%	-
Other - listed	5%	26%	4%	5%	0%	5%	3%	18%	-
Not answered	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	-

The data does not reveal however the specific product choice for these platforms, and it is therefore not possible to judge the level of system selected by institutions (i.e. Enterprise vs Basic/Campus Edition). Whilst these two companies have consolidated their market share with the introduction of an extended range of products, the data reveals some interesting changes elsewhere within the HE sector. There has been a drop in use of some of the early packages such as FirstClass and Lotus Domino and Learning Space, and a steady increase in the adoption of in-house developments. Over the past two years the open source platforms Moodle and Bodington have gained a foothold within the sector. The development of in-house VLEs appears to be most prominent within Pre-92 and HE colleges, and has overtaken intranet based developments. We therefore see two key trends in evidence: the continuing preference of institutions to buy into commercial solutions provided by Blackboard and WebCT, and an emerging trend towards in-house VLE development, providing a supplement or replacement for a best-of-breed solution. It will be interesting to observe any adjustments in usage following the announcement, in October 2005, of the merger between Blackboard and WebCT. Will the new, single company continue to dominate market share or will the use of open source software, which also offers different, non-USA oriented pedagogic models, increase?

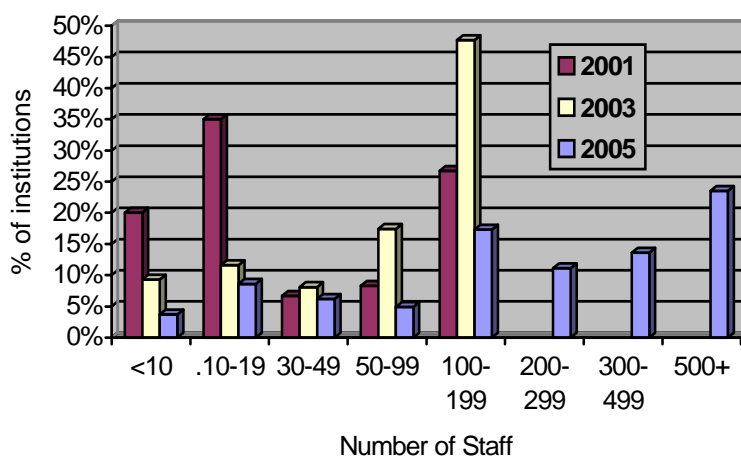
## 2.1 Level of Usage

This section looks at the staff and student usage of VLEs in terms of numbers and subjects involved.

Figs 1, 2 and 3 show that VLE usage continues to grow within institutions, with the numbers of students and staff registered as VLE users increasing significantly since the 2003 survey. A breakdown of this growth by type of institution shows that it is the Post-92 institutions that are making the biggest increases of use, with both staff and students. ( See Tables 4 and 5).

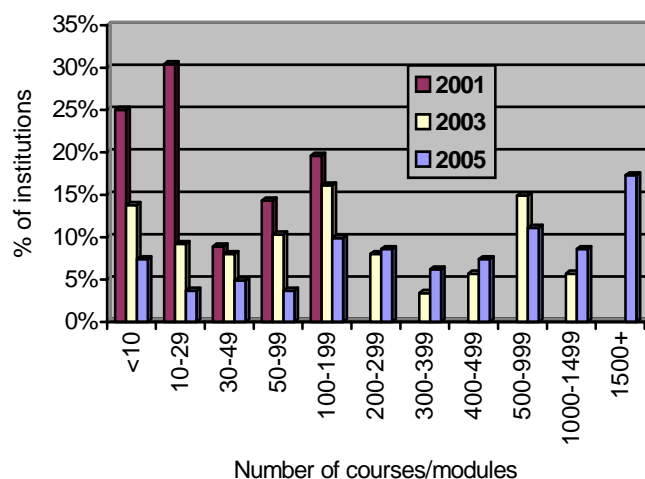


**Fig 1: Number of students using VLEs** (NB for 2001 and 2003 5000-7499 should be read as 5000+)



**Fig 2: Number of academic staff using VLEs** (NB for 2001 and 2003 100-199 should be read as 100+)

20% of respondents from Post-92 universities reported VLE usage by 20,000+ students, reflecting a full institutional deployment of their system. Naturally these figures reflect the number of registered and active users, but do not indicate the extent of usage of the VLE. These figures may well reflect target strategies and the need to register all students within an institutional VLE.



**Fig 3: Number of courses/modules using VLEs**

\*NB in Fig 3 for 2001 category 100-199 should be read as 100+ and for 2003 1000-1499 as 1000+

**Table 4: Cross tabulation of numbers of staff using a VLE versus HE type**

	HE - Pre-92		HE - Post-92		HE college		HE all	
	2005	2003	2005	2003	2005	2003	2005	2003
N =	33	38	25	28	15	12	73	88
9 or less	5%	11%	-	5%	6%	17%	4%	9%
10-29	5%	11%	-	8%	31%	25%	9%	11%
30-49	5%	5%	4%	8%	13%	17%	6%	8%
50-99	8%	16%	4%	13%	-	33%	5%	17%
100-199	18%	13%	16%	18%	19%	-	17%	14%
200-299 (2003 = 200+)	10%	32%	12%	45%	13%	-	11%	33%
300-399	5%	-	16%	-	13%	-	10%	-
400-499	3%	-	8%	-	-	-	4%	-
500+	23%	-	40%	-	-	-	24%	-
Not answered	20%	3%	-	3%	6%	-	1%	2%

**Table 5: Cross tabulation of numbers of students using a VLE versus HE type**

	HE - Pre-92		HE - Post-92		HE college		HE all	
	2005	2003	2005	2003	2005	2003	2005	2003
N =	36	36	24	38	15	11	75	85
Less than 500	8%	13%	4%	13%	19%	33%	9%	16%
500-999	8%	16%	-	-	13%	17%	6%	9%
1000-1999	15%	11%	4%	-	13%	-	11%	5%
2000-2999	-	13%	4%	21%	-	25%	1%	18%
3000-4999	25%	11%	12%	11%	31%	8%	22%	10%
5000-7499	5%	11%	8%	16%	6%	8%	6%	13%
7500-9999	8%	13%	8%	3%	13%	-	9%	7%
10000-12499 (2003 = 1000+)	5%	5%	8%	37%	-	-	5%	18%
12500-14999	3%	-	12%	-	-	8%	5%	3%
15000-17499	10%	-	12%	-	-	-	9%	-
17500-19999	3%	-	4%	-	-	-	3%	-
200000+	3%	-	20%	-	-	-	7%	-
Not answered	10%	3%	4%	-	6%	-	7%	1%

The 2003 survey sought to identify how VLEs were actually being employed and this was in response to other evidence suggesting that VLEs were not having a significant impact on changing teaching and learning practice (Collis and van der Wende, 2002; Bell et al, 2002). The 2003 survey employed the categorisation of VLE usage developed by Bell et al (2002), focusing on three key categories:

*Category A* – web supplemented, in which online participation is optional for students.

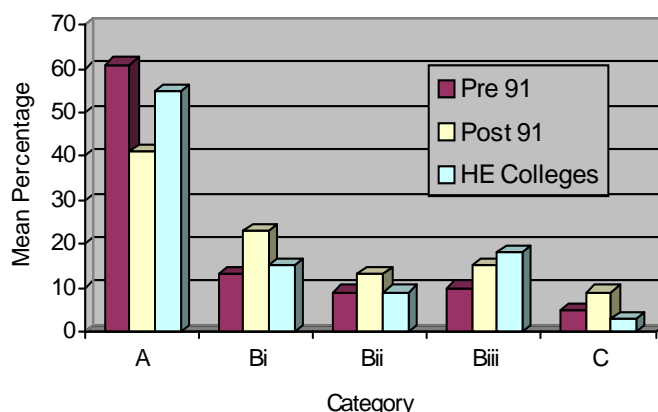
*Category B* – web dependent, requiring participation by the student for an online component of a face to face course, measured against three subcategories of participation: (i) interaction with content; (ii) communication with staff/students; (iii) interaction with content and communication.

*Category C* – fully online courses.

**Table 6: Modules/units of study in VLE(s) characteristics (mean scores of % entered by respondents)**

	HE - Pre-92		HE - Post-92		HE college		HE all	
	2005	2003	2005	2003	2005	2003	2005	2003
N=	35	33	21	35	13	10	69	78
Mean % Category A	61%	55%	41%	55%	55%	75%	54%	57%
Mean % Category B (i)	13%	10%	23%	16%	15%	15%	16%	13%
Mean % Category B (ii)	9%	9%	13%	12%	9%	7%	10%	10%
Mean % Category B (iii)	10%	17%	15%	11%	18%	3%	13%	13%
Mean % Category C	5%	6%	9%	6%	3%	1%	6%	5%

The 2003 survey results were consistent with other evidence indicating that the majority of VLE usage, 57% was only supplementary (Category A). The 2005 data shows a similar pattern with 54% of VLE usage remaining supplementary to class-based learning (Fig 4 and Table 6). A closer look at the data, however, indicates that Post-92 institutions are making changes to the way that they employ the VLEs, increasing the ratio of web dependent courses, with only 41% of courses declared as supplementary to class-based learning. Fully online courses remain a limited activity across all HE sectors at present.



**Fig 4: How VLEs are being used to support learning and teaching (2005)**

## 2.2 Subject areas using VLEs

Table 7 gives the breakdown of subject areas using VLEs. Whilst these figures are useful in indicating general VLE usage across a range of disciplines, they do not reveal the extent to which a specific discipline is using the VLE in teaching and learning activities. The statistics may be of interest to the subject-based LTSNs and reassuring for all staff anywhere, in that there is some use of VLEs within their discipline.

**Table 7: Subject areas/departments using VLE(s) (2005 only)** (Numbers equal number of returns, percentage is of that HE subtype)

	HE - Pre-92	HE - Post-92	HE college
	2005	2005	2005
Art, Design and Media (including Dance and Drama)	19(47.5%)	19 (76%)	12(75%)
Bioscience	27 (67.5%)	13 (52%)	3 (18.8%)
Business Management, Accountancy, Economics, Law	33 (82.5%)	22 (88%)	10 (62.5%)
Education	25 (62.5%)	20 (80%)	13 (81.3%)
Engineering and Materials	22 (55%)	18 (72%)	2 (12.5%)
Humanities (English, History, Philosophical and Religious Studies)	29 (72.5%)	15 (60%)	11 (68.8%)
Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences	27 (67.5%)	15 (60%)	7 (43.8%)
Health Sciences and Practice, Social Policy and Social Work	25 (62.5%)	20 (80%)	9 (56.3%)
Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism	11 (27.5%)	17 (68%)	9 (56.3%)
Information and Computer Sciences	26 (65%)	20 (80%)	8 (50%)
Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies	28 (70%)	14 (56%)	5 (31.3%)
Maths, Stats and OR Network	25 (62.5%)	14 (56%)	5 (31.3%)
Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Medicine	23 (57.5%)	4 (16%)	3 (18.8%)
Physical Sciences	21 (52.5%)	10 (40%)	1 (6.3%)
Psychology, Sociology, Anthropology and Politics	29 (72.5%)	17 (68%)	10 (62.5%)
Other - listed	1 (2.5%)		
Not answered	1 (2.5%)	2 (8%)	1 (6.3%)

For the first time the 2005 survey asked respondents to indicate what they are using their VLE for. The results are shown in Table 8. It is interesting to read this table against the responses in Figure 4. Based on the responses in Figure 4 it is unsurprising that access to resources and course materials shows the highest use. The other returns for collaborative working, peer support and assessment seem high when compared to Figure 4, though Table 8 does not quantify use, and only indicates that such uses are taking place.

**Table 8: Uses made of VLE(s) (2005 only)**

	HE - Pre-92	HE - Post-92	HE college	HE all
	2005	2005	2005	2005
N =	31	19	12	63
e-assessment	68%	79%	42%	65%
e-Portfolio	29%	32%	17%	27%
Peer support	61%	84%	75%	70%
Problem Based Learning	58%	68%	25%	54%
Collaborative working	74%	95%	83%	81%
Online student presentations (individual and group)	52%	74%	50%	57%
Assignment submission	77%	79%	75%	75%
Formative assessment	74%	95%	50%	75%
Access to course material	97%	100%	100%	98%
Access to multimedia resources, incl. simulations and games	65%	58%	42%	57%
Access to web based resources	90%	95%	100%	90%
Learning Design	29%	16%	17%	21%
Other - listed	6%	0%	8%	5%
Not answered	3%	0%	0%	2%

In conclusion, the overall pattern of VLE usage is still directed towards access to content, particularly course materials and web resources. Assessment and collaborative working activities are also strongly featured across HE institutions as established VLE activities. VLE usage is apparent across a wide range of disciplines, although there is no quantifiable evidence as yet to indicate the degree of usage for specific disciplines.

### 3 Technical Support

This section considers the type and range of units that provide technical support for the VLE. Over the three surveys, the level of detail in terms of named units that have been listed in the survey has increased, and a number of new categories have also been introduced focusing on external support, Library/learning resources and e-Learning coordinator. The data does though suggest a dominant steady state in terms of units providing support for installation and maintenance (Table 9). Table 10 (Technical Support) and Table 11 (System Administration) indicate some gradual changes. Central IT support remains consistently high and steady. In other units there is a suggestion of a slight decline in support from Distributed IT, EDU and local support, with this support being picked up by a Dedicated VLE Support unit. Local and outsourced support in contrast, appears to be a limited activity within the HE sector. As institutions adopt centralised management of VLE platforms, it is logical to see a similar trend emerging for technical support activities, perhaps a reflection of institutional maturity in service provision in this area.

**Table 9: Units that install and maintain VLE(s)**

	HE - Pre-92		HE - Post-92		HE college		HE all		
	2005	2003	2005	2003	2005	2003	2005	2003	2001
N =	31	38	19	38	12	12	63	88	
Central Information Technology support	90%	84%	84%	82%	100%	100%	89%	85%	90%
Distributed Information Technology support	26%	26%	11%	13%	8%	25%	16%	20%	21%
Curriculum staff	29%	16%	11%	13%	0%	17%	16%	15%	-
Vendor/external support (2005 only)	6%	-	11%	-	0%	-	5%	-	-
Library/learning resources (2005 only)	3%	-	11%	-	8%	-	5%	-	-
ILT Champions (2005 only)	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	0%	-	-
E-learning coordinator (2005 only)	13%	-	11%	-	17%	-	14%	-	-
Other	0%	18%	0%	24%	0%	8%	0%	19%	9%
Not answered	0%	3%	0%	3%	8%	0%	2%	2%	-



**Table 10: Units providing technical support**

	HE - Pre-92			HE - Post-92			HE college			HE all		
	2005	2003	2001	2005	2003	2001	2005	2003	2001	2005	2003	2001
N =	40	38	25	25	38	24	16	12	13	81	88	62
Central Information Technology support	84%	89%	88%	84%	82%	88%	92%	92%	100%	85%	86%	90%
Distributed Information Technology support	26%	18%	36%	16%	13%	21%	17%	25%	8%	20%	17%	24%
Learning Technology Support Unit (LTSU)	39%	-	28%	16%	-	38%	33%	-	39%	30%	-	34%
Learning and Teaching Support Unit (2003 only)	-	29%	-	-	18%	-	-	8%	-	-	22%	-
Educational Development Unit (EDU)	6%	5%	28%	21%	16%	29%	0%	0%	15%	10%	9%	26%
Dedicated VLE support	23%	18%	12%	26%	37%	-	17%	17%	8%	22%	26%	7%
Local	10%	11%	20%	11%	3%	13%	8%	0%	8%	10%	6%	15%
Outsourced supplier or specialist	10%	8%	-	11%	3%	-	0%	8%	-	7%	6%	-
Library/learning resources (2005 only)	0%	-	-	11%	-	-	8%	-	-	4%	-	-
E-learning coordinator (2005 only)	3%	-	-	5%	-	-	8%	-	-	4%	-	-
Other - listed	3%	3%	-	0%	11%	-	0%	0%	-	1%	6%	-
Not answered	3%	3%	-	0%	3%	-	8%	0%	-	3%	2%	-

**Table 11: Units providing system administration support**

	HE - Pre-92			HE - Post-92			HE college			HE all		
	2005	2003	2001	2005	2003	2001	2005	2003	2001	2005	2003	2001
N =	40	38	24	25	38	23	16	12	11	81	88	58
Central Information Technology support	74%	74%	75%	63%	63%	78%	50%	75%	64%	67%	69%	74%
Distributed Information Technology support	13%	24%	33%	16%	13%	13%	17%	25%	18%	14%	19%	22%
Learning Technology Support Unit (LTSU)	29%	-	17%	26%	-	39%	42%	-	46%	30%	-	31%
Learning and Teaching Support Unit (2003 only)	-	34%	-	-	32%	-	-	17%	-	-	31%	-
Educational Development Unit (EDU)	16%	11%	17%	21%	13%	30%	8%	0%	9%	16%	10%	21%
Dedicated VLE support	19%	11%	4%	21%	34%	4%	17%	25%	9%	20%	23%	5%
Local	13%	18%	21%	11%	5%	17%	0%	17%	9%	10%	13%	17%
Outsourced supplier or specialist	6%	5%	-	5%	3%	-	0%	0%	-	4%	3%	-
Library/learning resources (2005 only)	0%	-	-	11%	-	-	17%	-	-	6%	-	-
E-learning coordinator (2005 only)	3%	-	-	5%	-	-	8%	-	-	4%	-	-
Other - listed	3%	8%	-	0%	11%	-	0%	0%	-	1%	8%	-
Not answered	6%	3%	-	0%	3%	-	8%	8%	-	5%	3%	-

In conclusion, central IT continues to dominate technical support. Elsewhere, dedicated VLE units appear to be absorbing the support previously provided more diversely.

### 3.1 Integration with MIS

The 2005 survey raised more detailed questions on the integration of VLEs with other systems. In 2001 and 2003 (Table 12) the focus was on student records and assessment links. In 2005 (Table 13) a broader range of linkages were explored between VLEs and information systems, inviting reflection on a range of systems including portal, Library and e-portfolio services. The data shows that there has been significant progress across the HE sector in linking VLEs to institutional services. One key area of progress has been in the development of automated links with student records systems and the input of student module choices. Progress is also evident in the use of computer-aided assessment. Post-92 institutions appear to be leading the way in VLE systems integration, confirming the trend established in the 2003 survey results. Over 60% of Post-92 respondents have automated email and student module choices. They also lead the way in creating linkages to Library management systems and embedding computer-aided assessment. A reversal of development progress between Pre-92 institutions and HE colleges is evident with the 2005 results, with Pre-92 institutions overtaking colleges in many areas. E-portfolio, portal development and library integration are emerging concerns within the HE sector, and the 2005 survey data reveals only limited progress so far in these areas.

**Table 12: How are links provided between the VLEs and student records?**

	2003	2001
Automated creation of student accounts in VLE from student records	30%	23%
Creation of student accounts file for data transfer into VLE	42%	10%
Automatic creation of student access to sp courses/modules	21%	13%
Assessment results	2%	5%
Other	5%	-
No link	24%	-
Not answered	3%	-

In conclusion, the integration of VLEs with MLEs has increased both in the range of activities that are supported and also in the depth of processes that are being managed. In particular, there is a substantial increase in the creation of student account files for transfer to a VLE. But there has been limited progress in terms of integration with portal development and e-portfolios.

**Table 13: Systems linked to VLE(s) and nature of link (2005 only)**

		HE - Pre-92	HE - Post-92	HE college	HE all
Input of student records	Automated process	61%	63%	62%	63%
	Manual process	23%	21%	23%	22%
	Not answered	16%	16%	15%	14%
Input of student module choices	Automated process	45%	65%	38%	51%
	Manual process	29%	25%	31%	29%
	Not answered	26%	10%	31%	21%
Library Management System	Automated process	25%	40%	25%	30%
	Manual process	28%	15%	25%	23%
	Not answered	47%	45%	50%	47%
Other library systems	Automated process	19%	47%	15%	27%
	Manual process	26%	16%	23%	22%
	Not answered	55%	37%	62%	51%
Portal	Automated process	30%	26%	23%	29%
	Manual process	7%	5%	8%	6%
	Not answered	63%	68%	69%	65%
e-mail	Automated process	35%	68%	42%	48%
	Manual process	13%	0%	17%	8%
	Not answered	52%	32%	42%	44%
e-portfolio	Automated process	16%	20%	8%	15%
	Manual process	6%	0%	15%	5%
	Not answered	78%	80%	77%	81%
Computer Aided Assessment	Automated process	39%	47%	25%	38%
	Manual process	19%	0%	0%	10%
	Not answered	42%	53%	75%	52%
Other	Automated process	16%	11%	8%	14%
	Manual process	0%	0%	0%	0%
	Not answered	84%	89%	92%	86%

## 4 Strategy and Decision Making

This section focuses on the key drivers to adopting and managing the use of VLEs.

Much use is made of questions that did not form part of Section-4, i.e. the section explicitly relating to VLEs. This is because in 2003, the VLE was regarded as an integral component of an MLE, and the questions selected have a substantial, though not an exclusive VLE implication. In 2005, the language was changed from MLE to *e-learning*, and this gave a particular steer to the way in which the questions were answered.

Table 14 indicates that decision making, which was already substantially centralised, has become more so. The percentage credited to Faculty and School/Department has markedly declined.

**Table 14: Level at which decisions are made**

	HE - Pre-92		HE - Post-92		HE college		HE all	
	2005	2003	2005	2003	2005	2003	2005	2003
N =	32	38	21	38	13	12	67	88
Institution	84%	68%	90%	79%	100%	67%	90%	73%
Faculty	0%	11%	5%	18%	0%	8%	1%	14%
School/department	9%	37%	0%	24%	0%	33%	4%	31%
Principal	0%	3%	5%	11%	0%	8%	1%	7%
Senior management team	0%	34%	0%	58%	0%	50%	0%	47%
Department level	0%	11%	0%	13%	0%	17%	0%	13%
Section staff (2003 only)		5%		3%		0%		3%
Not answered	6%	5%	0%	3%	0%	0%	3%	3%

We need to be circumspect when analysing the results for Principal, Senior Management Team, Departmental Level for 2005. The 2005 survey indicated that these options were only available for FE, though for 2003 they were undifferentiated. HE respondents for 2005 may therefore have felt inhibited in choosing these options.

A closely related question, outlined in Table 15 asked which *staff* were consulted. There is a heartening increase in all explicitly defined categories where comparisons can be made, between 2003 and 2005.

**Table 15: Staff consulted**

	HE - Pre-92		HE - Post-92		HE college		HE all	
	2005	2003	2005	2003	2005	2003	2005	2003
N =	30	43	21	36	13	18	64	97
Academic	100%	95%	90%	78%	100%	83%	95%	87%
Administrative	90%	88%	76%	67%	92%	78%	88%	78%
Learning Resources/Library	97%	77%	90%	78%	92%	89%	94%	79%
IT Support	100%	95%	90%	83%	100%	89%	95%	90%
Senior Managers	90%	79%	86%	75%	100%	89%	91%	79%
Learning Technologists (2005 only)	87%	-	71%	-	69%	-	78%	-
Other groups of staff	20%	28%	24%	14%	15%	22%	20%	22%
Staff not consulted	0%	0%	5%	8%	0%	0%	2%	3%
Not answered	0%	5%	10%	8%	0%	6%	3%	6%

In terms of strategic developments, the 2001 and 2003 surveys both asked if institutions had a stated target for the use of VLEs (Table 16). This question has evolved, as part of the wider MLE survey into a question into plans for *e*-learning developments (Table 17). These tables indicate a gradual move toward having stated strategies.

**Table 16: Does your institution have a stated target for the use of VLEs?**

	HE all	
	2003	2001
N =	85	75
Yes	31%	26%
No	66%	74%
Not answered	3%	-

What is clear from Table 17 is that development of *e*-learning is now universally accepted. The difference lies in whether this is strategically planned or not.

**Table 17: Nature of plans for future development of processes to support e-learning**

	HE - Pre-92		HE - Post-		HE college		HE all	
	2005	2003	2005	2003	2005	2003	2005	2003
N =	32	45	21	39	14	18	66	102
Have strategy in place for future development	56%	51%	67%	59%	64%	39%	61%	52%
Development planned but no strategy	38%	42%	33%	38%	36%	56%	36%	43%
Unsure about further development	3%	0%	0%	3%	0%	6%	2%	2%
Do not envisage any further development	0%	4%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%
Not answered	3%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	1%

Table 18 shows the institutional strategies that are informing *e*-learning developments. The Teaching and Learning Strategy, and the Library/Learning Resources Strategy, which displayed a high percentage in 2003, both illustrate a noticeable increase in 2005. The *e*-learning strategy also illustrates a marked increase.

**Table 18: Institutional strategies informing e-learning development**

	HE - Pre-92		HE - Post-		HE college		HE all	
	2005	2003	2005	2003	2005	2003	2005	2003
N =	32	45	21	39	13	18	66	102
Teaching and Learning strategy	94%	69%	95%	62%	92%	56%	95%	64%
Library/Learning Resources strategy	72%	51%	76%	54%	69%	28%	74%	48%
Corporate strategy (2005 only)	38%	-	67%	-	69%	-	53%	-
Estates strategy (2005 only)	16%	-	38%	-	23%	-	24%	-
Marketing strategy (2005 only)	16%	-	29%	-	23%	-	23%	-
Access/Widening Participation strategy (2005 only)	50%	-	43%	-	62%	-	50%	-
Quality Enhancement strategy (2005 only)	47%	-	48%	-	15%	-	41%	-
Information and Learning Technology (ILT) strategy	47%	31%	38%	36%	15%	28%	38%	32%
E-learning strategy	53%	33%	57%	46%	62%	28%	55%	37%
E-strategy (2005 only)	13%	-	5%	-	8%	-	8%	-
Information and Communication Technology (ICT) strategy	59%	33%	57%	56%	38%	50%	56%	45%
Information strategy	41%	38%	71%	51%	46%	56%	52%	46%
Communications strategy	6%	16%	14%	15%	0%	6%	8%	14%
HR/staff development (2005 only)	0%	-	10%	-	0%	-	3%	-
Other institutional strategy	3%	11%	10%	13%	8%	33%	6%	16%
Not answered	3%	4%	0%	3%	8%	0%	3%	3%

Where other longitudinal comparisons are available, the pattern is more variable, with HE colleges often displaying a different trend to Pre- and Post-92 universities. Returns for 2001 are not available in such a tabular manner, but 76% of responding institutions said that VLEs were cited in

institutional strategy documents, mainly in Teaching and Learning Policy, ICT Strategy, Information Strategy and *E-learning* Strategy, though more so in Post-92 universities.

A new question from the 2005 survey asked the companion question relating to the influence of external agencies on *e-learning* developments. Table 19 shows the external strategies that have informed these institutional strategies. The most common were strategies from professional bodies or agencies (73%), HEFCE strategy documents (68%) and HEFCEs *e-learning* strategy/consultation document (50%). It is interesting to note that the DfES *e-learning* strategy and JISC strategies were noticeably low (12% and 24% respectively).

**Table 19: External strategies informing e-learning development (2005 only)**

	HE - Pre- 2005	HE - Post- 2005	HE 2005	HE all 2005
N =	32	21	13	66
None	0%	0%	0%	0%
DfES <i>e-learning</i> strategy/consultation drafts	13%	10%	15%	12%
HEFCE <i>e-learning</i> strategy/consultation drafts	53%	48%	46%	50%
Other HEFCE strategy documents	63%	76%	69%	68%
Joint Scottish Funding Councils <i>e-learning</i> report	28%	24%	31%	27%
JISC strategies	22%	24%	31%	24%
Strategies from professional bodies or agencies	72%	81%	69%	73%
Learning and skills council	16%	14%	15%	15%
<i>E-learning</i> strategy	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other external strategy	9%	0%	8%	6%
Not answered	6%	5%	8%	5%

In terms of the question type used to determine the reasons for considering the use of VLEs, this has changed during the course of survey. In 2001 and 2003 respondents were asked to identify the reasons. The most common responses were enhancing teaching and learning, which consolidated its position as the highest ranked response between 2001 and 2003, with efficiency substantially declining, though remaining the second ranked response (Table 20). In 2003 and 2005 respondents were asked to rate the significance of a range of factors (Table 21) that affected MLE developments more broadly. These are ranked by order of importance, based on all HE responses. The enhancement of learning and teaching quality is again the highest ranked. Indeed the top three responses all have a student focus. Interestingly, the lowest three ranked in Table 21 refer to how an institution relates to other institutions – clearly not much! Disturbingly perhaps, SENDA (Special Educational Needs and Disability Act) has yet to make a significant impact.

**Table 20: Reasons for considering the use of VLEs (2003 and 2001)**

	HE - Pre-92		HE - Post-92		HE college		HE all	
	2003	2001	2003	2001	2003	2001	2003	2001
N =	38	26	38	24	12	11	88	61
Enhanced teaching and learning	66%	35%	61%	50%	83%	46%	66%	43%
Efficiency	13%	31%	24%	21%		55%	16%	31%
Flexibility	5%	27%	8%	29%	8%	9%	7%	25%
Access and Widening Participation	3%	-	5%	-	17%	-	6%	-
Competitive edge	3%	-	8%	-	-	-	5%	-
Student demand	-	8%	8%	21%	-	-	3%	12%
Funding/cost issues	-	-	5%	-	-	-	2%	-
Distance learning	-	23%	-	33%	-	9%	-	25%
Stable/Advanced Technology	3%	-	-	-	-	-	1%	-
Not answered	-	-	-	-	-	-	18%	-

Table 22 shows the supporting factors, which are ranked by order of importance based on all HE responses. Availability of internal funding is the most significant factor, which was not the case in 2003, it is also interesting to note that the ranking for all items has increased even though the order has changed. However, Table 23 does also confirm that money and time are significant factors in e-learning developments. Availability of relevant standards as the lowest ranked response chimes well with the lowest ranked response in Table 21.



**Table 21: Driving factors for environments and processes that support e-learning (average scores, ranked by Total 2005) (2003 rankings [HE all] in brackets)**

	HE - Pre-		HE - Post-		HE		HE all	
	2005	2003	2005	2003	2005	2003	2005	2003
General enhancement learning and teaching quality (1)	4.46	4.56	4.79	4.71	4.65	4.65	4.60	4.63
Improving access to learning for students off campus (2)	3.78	3.85	4.21	4.35	4.00	4.00	3.96	4.06
Student expectations (5)	4.03	3.67	3.96	3.68	3.75	3.35	3.95	3.61
Improved administrative processes (7)	3.49	3.17	3.54	3.35	3.88	3.71	3.58	3.33
Improving access to learning for part-time students (3)	3.19	3.46	3.88	4.13	3.59	3.71	3.49	3.74
Creating or improving competitive advantage (6)	3.51	3.44	3.46	3.48	3.29	3.41	3.45	3.45
Widening participation/inclusiveness (4)	3.11	3.46	3.58	3.84	3.94	4.00	3.44	3.70
Help to standardise across institution (8)	3.30	3.34	3.33	3.29	2.88	3.06	3.22	3.27
Attracting new markets (9)	3.22	3.10	3.25	3.42	2.94	3.35	3.17	3.26
Attracting home students (10)	3.03	2.79	3.29	3.19	2.94	3.29	3.09	3.02
Keeping abreast of educational developments (13)	3.00	2.61	3.00	3.10	3.00	2.35	3.00	2.73
Attracting EU students (=11)	2.62	2.95	2.88	3.10	1.88	2.82	2.55	2.98
Attracting overseas (outside EU) students	2.95		3.21		2.00		2.83	
Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (15)	2.65	2.42	2.96	2.29	2.71	2.88	2.76	2.46
Improving access to learning for overseas students (=11)	2.62	3.07	3.33	3.03	2.13	2.65	2.74	2.98
Achieving cost/efficiency savings (14)	2.70	2.60	2.08	2.71	2.00	2.29	2.36	2.58
Developing regional role of institution (17)	1.89	2.02	2.83	2.42	2.76	2.06	2.36	2.17
Formation of partnerships with other institutions/organisations (16)	2.14	2.45	2.71	2.52	2.13	2.06	2.31	2.40
Help to standardise institution with others (18)	1.59	2.34	2.04	1.97	1.63	1.71	1.74	2.09

**Table 22: Supporting factors for environments and processes that support e-learning (average scores, ranked by Total 2005) (2003 rankings [HE all] in brackets)**

	HE - Pre-92		HE - Post-92		HE college		HE all	
	2005	2003	2005	2003	2005	2003	2005	2003
Availability of internal funding (3)	3.97	2.41	4.12	2.42	3.65	1.65	3.95	2.27
A committed 'local champion' (1)	3.70	3.29	4.04	3.74	3.88	2.65	3.85	3.33
Technological changes/developments (2)	3.19	2.66	3.29	2.77	3.13	3.24	3.21	2.81
Availability of external funding (4)	3.05	2.05	2.96	2.19	3.56	2.35	3.13	2.16
Availability of relevant standards (5)	1.97	1.83	2.33	2.39	2.06	1.76	2.10	2.01

Table 23 asked the converse, i.e. what *barriers* may be inhibiting the development of processes to support e-learning. Both *lack of support staff* (UCISA community take note!) and *lack of incentives* increased as barriers across all categories of HE. *Too many/diverse standards and guidelines* decreased

as an observed barrier across all categories of HE. Standards are not regarded as an impediment because, as noted earlier, they are little regarded. This may be of concern to much of the standards community, not least, the JISC.

**Table 23: Barriers to development of processes to support e-learning (average score, ranked by Total 2005) (2003 rankings in brackets)**

	HE - Pre-92		HE - Post-92		HE college		HE all	
	2005	2003	2005	2003	2005	2003	2005	2003
Lack of time (2)	3.77	3.2	3.28	3.36	3.79	3.38	3.62	3.29
Lack of money (1)	3.69	3.35	3.24	3.54	3.29	4.06	3.47	3.55
Lack of academic staff knowledge (4)	2.95	2.6	2.60	2.78	2.79	2.88	2.81	2.72
Lack of academic staff development (3)	2.95	2.63	2.52	2.78	3.07	3.25	2.83	2.80
Lack of support staff (5)	3.41	2.85	2.96	2.39	2.71	2.43	3.14	2.59
Institutional culture (2005 only)	2.95		2.64		2.36		2.74	
Lack of incentives (=8)	3.10	1.88	2.48	2.12	2.86	1.43	2.86	1.90
Lack of recognition for career development (2005 only)	3.38		2.54		2.00		2.87	
Technical problems (=8)	1.68	1.64	1.60	2.16	2.57	1.94	1.82	1.90
Changing administrative processes (2005 only)	2.24		2.21		2.14		2.21	
Too many/diverse standards and guidelines (6)	1.49	2.18	1.42	2.40	2.00	2.36	1.55	2.30
Current organisational structure (7)	2.19	1.87	1.60	2.27	1.71	2.06	1.91	2.06
Lack of strategy and leadership (2005 only)	2.23		1.76		1.57		1.96	
Inappropriate policies and procedures (2005 only)	1.70		1.63		1.71		1.68	
Lack of student engagement (2005 only)	1.18		1.08		1.86		1.27	
Too few standards and guidelines (10)	1.11	1.16	1.13	1.97	1.46	1.00	1.18	1.48

In conclusion, the overall picture regarding Strategy and Decision Making is one of increasing institutional centralisation, a heartening emphasis on Teaching and Learning, but not an overwhelming recognition of pursuing national initiatives or forging institutional partnerships.

## 5 Support provided

This section looks at the types of support and encouragement which are given to staff to enable VLE development and management. We have seen in the previous section (Tables 22 and 23) the importance of funding, Table 24 shows that while VLEs are now funded as a service in the majority of institutions (75%), project funding remains an important means of encouragement. Worryingly, the allowance for staff development time, for both academic and support staff as a means of support or encouragement, shows a slight drop overall, though Pre-92 institutions marginally bucks this trend. Looking at institution type, this is greatest in HE colleges.

The opportunities for career development overall remain low, at 11%. However, this is much higher, at 26% for Post-92 universities. This also compares with Table 23, which shows that *lack of recognition for career development* is ranked higher as a barrier in Pre-92 institutions. The 2005 survey asked for the first time whether VLE development was supported or encouraged through its use being a contractual obligation; overall in the sector the response was 28%. Yet it is interesting to note that this is highest in HE colleges and Pre-92 institutions. In Post-92 institutions, those that show highest levels of use and greater prospects for career enhancement have a much lower contractual obligation for use, only 11%.

**Table 24: How VLE development is supported or encouraged**

	HE - Pre-92		HE - Post-92		HE college		HE all		
	2005	2003	2005	2003	2005	2003	2005	2003	2001
N =	40	38	25	38	16	12	81	88	
Not supported or encouraged	6%	3%	0%	3%	0%	0%	3%	2%	
Funded as a service (2005 only)	71%		84%		75%		75%		
Project funding	55%	79%	47%	58%	67%	75%	56%	69%	27%
Allowing academic staff development time	48%	42%	58%	63%	42%	67%	49%	55%	48%
Allowing support staff development time	48%	39%	32%	39%	33%	67%	41%	43%	
Career enhancement	6%	11%	26%	8%	8%	8%	11%	9%	
Contractual obligation/part of job specification (2005 only)	32%		11%		42%		28%		
Other, not specified	0%	3%	0%	5%	0%	0%	0%	3%	
Other – listed	3%	0%	0%	0%	8%	0%	3%	0%	
Not answered	0%	8%	5%	3%	0%	0%	1%	5%	

The increase in learning technology support roles has been well researched [see ELTI Project (2003)]. This survey has sought to identify the extent to which dedicated VLE support is provided, centrally or locally. In 2001 and 2003 this question was asked broadly with no differentiation and showed an increase over that period (Table 25). In 2005, the survey differentiated between different support roles, i.e. system administration, technical support and pedagogic support (Table 26). This shows a similar pattern for both the provision of dedicated system administration and technical support staff, with over 50% having only centrally provided staff. In comparison, for dedicated pedagogic support staff the data shows that a mix of central and local provision is more common. This is most notable in Pre-92 and Post-92 universities with HE colleges having a higher proportion of centrally provided staff only. This suggests that while VLEs may be centrally supported, ownership of their application is managed more by the academic departments.

**Table 25: Dedicated staff employed to support VLEs (2001 and 2003)**

	HE - Pre-92		HE - Post-92		HE college		HE all	
	2003	2001	2003	2001	2003	2001	2003	2001
N=	38	23	38	22	12	14	88	59
Yes centrally and locally	26%	0%	26%	18%	0%	0%	23%	7%
Yes centrally	50%	44%	50%	46%	67%	57%	52%	48%
Yes locally	0%	9%	3%	9%	8%	0%	2%	7%
No (dedicated VLE Support Staff)	16%	48%	16%	27%	25%	43%	17%	39%
Not answered	8%		5%		0%		6%	-

**Table 26: Dedicated staff employed to support VLEs (2005)**

		HE - Pre-92	HE - Post-92	HE college	HE all
Whether dedicated staff are employed to support VLE(s) – system administration	N =	31	20	12	63
	Yes centrally and locally	16%	20%	17%	19%
	Yes centrally	55%	55%	58%	56%
	Yes locally	6%	0%	0%	3%
	No dedicated VLE support staff	19%	15%	25%	19%
	Not answered	3%	10%	0%	3%
Whether dedicated staff are employed to support VLE(s) – technical	N =	31	19	12	62
	Yes centrally and locally	26%	21%	17%	23%
	Yes centrally	52%	58%	67%	55%
	Yes locally	6%	0%	0%	3%
	No dedicated VLE support staff	16%	11%	17%	16%
	Not answered	0%	11%	0%	3%
Whether dedicated staff are employed to support VLE(s) – pedagogical/course support	N =	31	20	13	64
	Yes centrally and locally	42%	45%	23%	39%
	Yes centrally	29%	35%	46%	36%
	Yes locally	16%	5%	8%	9%
	No dedicated VLE support staff	13%	10%	15%	13%
	Not answered	0%	5%	8%	3%

### 5.1 Units providing staff support

Tables Appendix 2.1–2.4 show the responses to questions seeking information on what units provided support to staff for: staff development for learning and teaching use (Table Appendix 2.1); support for creating new courses (Table Appendix 2.2); support in adding content and maintaining courses (Table Appendix 2.3); and support in creating web pages (Table Appendix 2.4). The drafting error in the 2003 report affects the longitudinal value of all this data.

The data clearly shows that VLE support can be provided from a wide range of units. How much this is nomenclature rather than function is difficult to interpret from this data, so similarities in provision may be masked by different names.

These tables are both numerous and may be regarded as somewhat indigestible! Therefore, as another means of comparison, Table 27 below has conflated responses by type of unit. The groups are IT support units (Central and Distributed IT support); Learning Technology Units (LTUs) (Learning Technology Support Unit (LTSU) and Dedicated VLE and E-learning Coordinator); Staff Development Units (SDUs) (Educational Development Unit (EDU) and Staff Development Unit [SDU]); Library and Learning Resource Centres (2005 only) and local. Given the potential for different interpretations it is recognised that while this is not precise it does help to clarify how different forms of support are provided. With specific regard to the UCISA community it can be observed that there appears to be a reduction in involvement of central IT support in providing this range of VLE support, in contrast with Tables 9–11 where involvement remains high, not unexpectedly. This suggested decline in support from central IT units does not appear to have been picked up by any one type of unit. There are indications of slight, though not consistent increases with local provision and more consistent increases in support from learning technology units.

This breakdown, on 2005 data shows the Learning Technology Units providing the greatest proportion of support. Interesting points are the higher level of support for web pages from IT units (though still much reduced from 2003 and 2001), which is lower for LTUs and SDUs. Overall this table presents no great surprises, it is though interesting to note the consistent level across the different categories provided locally (within 2005). This table also highlights that support can be provided by different units within a single institution, which raises an interesting future question in terms of ensuring clarity and consistency of support for staff.

**Table 27: Comparison of staff support by type of unit**

	Staff development of learning and teaching use (Table Appendix 2.1)			Staff support in creating new courses (Table Appendix 2.2)			Staff support in adding content and maintaining courses (Table Appendix 2.3)			Staff support in creating web pages (Table Appendix 2.4)		
	N=	81	88	48	81	88	47	81	88	45	81	88
	2005	2003	2001	2005	2003	2001	2005	2003	2001	2005	2003	2001
IT Support Units	30%	40%	33%	28%	43%	53%	30%	46%	67%	46%	74%	89%
LTUs <sup>1</sup>	67%	58%	54%	68%	61%	60%		58%	47%	44%	31%	36%
SDUs	32%	47%	56%	37%	25%	45%	32%	18%	38%	16%	17%	26%
Library/learning resources (2005 only)	3%	-	-	1%	-	-	3%	-	-	3%	-	-
Local	26%	16%	8%	20%	17%	19%	25%	20%	24%	22%	16%	11%

The 2005 survey asked, for the first time, for respondents to identify the source of their support for staff training and development. Table 28 shows the responses. Interesting variations within the data are the high level of use for Regional Support Centres (RSCs) events by HE colleges, but low by Pre- and Post-92 universities. Conversely ALT events are relatively less well used by HE colleges. Internal staff development events are the most common source, significantly so in Post-92 universities.

<sup>1</sup> The LTSU (Learning and Teaching Support Unit) option from 2003 is included in this category (see Footnote 1)

**Table 28: Support staff training and development activities (2005 only)**

	HE - Pre-92	HE - Post-92	HE college	HE all
	2005	2005	2005	2005
N =	40	25	16	81
Regional seminars	48%	63%	58%	52%
External training courses	74%	74%	75%	71%
Internal staff development	74%	95%	75%	79%
National conferences/seminars	74%	79%	75%	75%
Regional Support Centre (RSC) events	23%	32%	75%	35%
Association for Learning Technology (ALT) events	74%	84%	50%	71%
Universities and Colleges Information Systems Association (UCISA) events	39%	53%	50%	46%
Higher Education Academy (HEA) subject centre events	32%	37%	25%	32%
Other – listed	3%	11%	0%	3%
Not answered	3%	0%	8%	3%

## 5.2 Units providing Student support

Tables Appendix 2.5–2.9 offer detailed breakdowns for the range of units providing support to students through: face to face training as part of course delivery (Table Appendix 2.5); face to face training as part of an IT induction (Table Appendix 2.6); provision of printed guides (Table Appendix 2.7); information on the intranet/internet (Table Appendix 2.8); and online training via the VLE (Table Appendix 2.9). As with staff support, this shows that student support is provided from a wide range of sources and units, and similarities in provision may be masked by different names and interpretations.

As another means of comparison (similar to the table above on staff support), Table 29 below has conflated responses by type of unit. The groups are IT support units (central and distributed IT support), Learning Technology Units (LTSUs) (Learning Technology Support Units and Dedicated VLE and E-learning coordinator), Staff Development Units (EDU); Library and Learning Resource Centres and local (local and academic staff). Given the potential for different interpretations it is recognised that while this is not precise, it does help to clarify how different forms of support are provided.

**Table 29: Units providing student support by grouping**

	Face to face training on use of VLE as part of course delivery (Table Appendix 2.5)			Face to face training on use of VLE as part of an IT skills induction (Table Appendix 2.6)			Printed guides on use of VLE (Table Appendix 2.7)			Information on Intranet/ Internet on use of VLE (Table Appendix 2.8)			Online training on use of VLE via VLE (Table Appendix 2.9)		
	N=	81	88	38	81	88	-	81	88	36	81	88	34	81	88
	2005	2003	2001	2005	2003	2001	2005	2003	2001	2005	2003	2001	2005	2003	2001
IT Support Units	14%	18%	39%	40%	42%	-	44%	42%	61%	56%	52%	53%	23%	25%	64%
LTUs <sup>2</sup>	22%	22%	32%	21%	11%	-	43%	34%	44%	46%	32%	35%	33%	26%	43%
SDUs	6%	5%	18%	10%	2%	-	11%	5%	17%	9%	7%	15%	10%	5%	18%
Library/learning resources (2005 only)	1%	-	-	9%	-	-	7%	-	-	5%	-	-	5%	-	-
Local	90%	77%	45%	41%	43%	-	27%	20%	14%	21%	27%	21%	22%	23%	11%
Not answered	12%	17%	39%	21%	28%	-	12%	22%	42%	14%	18%	45%	36%	39%	55%

Table 29 indicates that there has been an increase in institutions providing student support. The three most common forms of VLE support are provided through the course, printed guides and through online information. The providers of these forms of support are different with in-course support provided locally by academics (with an increase from 2001 through to 2005); printed guides and online information by IT Support Units and Learning Technology Units. Generally the data suggests that Learning Technology Units are less involved in direct student support and more involved in providing support information. When considered against Table 27 this suggests that their role tends to be more staff focused, with direct student training picked up locally or through IT support units.

Tables Appendix 2.5–2.9 indicate subtle variations between types of institution. For example, Table Appendix 2.6 shows that Pre-92 institutions are less likely to have VLE support as part of an IT induction and for Post-92 institutions academic staff are more likely to be involved in the delivery of such support. The 2005 survey asked for the first time about the role of library and learning resource centres in VLE student support. The responses indicate that they are more involved in delivering support within HE colleges, as compared to Pre-92 and Post-92 institutions.

### 5.3 Specialised support

In 2001 and 2003 the survey sought to identify whether any specialist support was provided for distance learners and students with special needs. With the increase in flexible delivery this question was expanded for 2005 to include off-campus learners and part-time learners. While providing more detail this does mean that direct comparisons with 2001 and 2003 survey results become more difficult. The responses, shown in Table 30, do though indicate that there has been no significant growth in specialist provision. Yet Table 21 indicates that *improving access to learning for students off campus* and *improving access to learning for part-time students* are important driving factors in e-learning developments. This would suggest that such factors are not yet influencing resourcing issues.

<sup>2</sup> The LTSU (Learning and Teaching Support Unit) option from 2003 is included in this category (see Footnote 1)

**Table 30: Groups of students receiving specialised training and support**

	HE - Pre-92		HE - Post-92		HE college		HE all		
	2005	2003	2005	2003	2005	2003	2005	2003	2001
N=	40	38	25	38	16	12	81	88	49
<b>Students with special needs</b>							35%	25%	25%
Ticked, and details provided	9%	13%	10%	24%	17%	8%	11%	17%	
Ticked, no details provided	13%	16%	15%	0%	17%	8%	15%	8%	
Staff training/ dedicated staff (2005 only)	6%		5%		0%		3%		
One -to-one support (2005 only)	6%		10%		8%		6%		
Not ticked	66%	71%	60%	76%	58%	83%	65%	75%	75%
<b>Distance learners:</b> 2001 and 2003 Distance and off-campus considered together							34%	38%	45%
Ticked, and details provided	6%		10%		8%		6%		
Ticked, no details provided	13%		30%		8%		17%		
Special induction / pre-course support (2005 only)	16%		0%		0%		8%		
Specialist support staff (2005 only)	0%		0%		15%		3%		
Not ticked	66%		60%		69%		66%	62%	55%
<b>Off-campus learners.</b>							23%		--
Ticked, and details provided	6%		0%		0%		3%		
Ticked, no details provided	13%		10%		8%		11%		
Special induction / pre-course support (2005 only)	3%		5%		0%		3%		
Specialist support staff (2005 only)	3%		5%		17%		6%		
Not ticked	75%		80%		75%		77%		
<b>Part-time learners.</b>							11%		
Ticked, and details provided	3%		0%		8%		3%		
Ticked, no details provided	6%		10%		0%		5%		
Special induction / pre-course support (2005 only)	0%		0%		0%		0%		
Specialist support staff (2005 only)	3%		0%		8%		3%		
Not ticked	88%		90%		85%		89%		
<b>Other group.</b>							2%		
Ticked, and details provided	3%	3%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	1%	
Ticked, no details provided	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
Not ticked	97%	97%	100%	100%	100%	100%	98%	99%	



#### 5.4 Support using new technologies

With the increasing use of mobile technologies, the 2005 survey sought to gather information for the first time on the use of these technologies with VLEs and their use to provide support to VLE users; overall this data shows that the use of mobile technologies is very limited. Table 31 shows the responses for institutions using mobile technologies to connect with VLEs. Overall the figures show that most institutions are not using these technologies at present. But the breakdown by type of institution indicates that Post-92 universities are most active in using both wireless technologies and mobile phones.

**Table 31: Mobile technologies to connect to VLE (2005 only)**

	HE - Pre-92	HE - Post-92	HE college	HE all
N=	40	25	16	81
Not using	53%	40%	81%	54%
Using - details list	3%	12%	0%	5%
Wireless network / access	15%	24%	0%	15%
Laptop PCs	5%	8%	0%	5%
Mobile phones/SMS technology	5%	20%	0%	9%
PDA's	5%	4%	6%	5%
Not answered	18%	12%	13%	15%

Table 32 shows responses for how mobile technologies are being used to support VLE users. This shows a higher level of non-use across the board, with very low levels of use of mobile phones and PDA's.

**Table 32: Mobile technologies to support VLE users (2005 only)**

	HE - Pre-92	HE - Post-92	HE college	HE all
N=	40	25	16	81
Not using	68%	76%	75%	72%
Using - details list	5%	0%	0%	2%
Wireless network / access	0%	0%	0%	0%
Laptop PCs	0%	0%	0%	0%
Mobile phones/SMS technology	3%	4%	0%	2%
PDA's	2%	4%	6%	4%
Not answered	25%	20%	19%	22%

## 5.5 Portfolio/PDP systems used

With the policy change to implement Progress Files (QAA, 2001), also known as Personal Development Planning (PDP), in UK higher education it was considered timely for the survey to ask institutions to identify what Portfolio or PDP system they were using. Table 33 indicates that of those institutions that answered (which was relatively low) this question, usage is developing.

**Table 33: Portfolio/PDP systems used**

	HE - Pre-92	HE - Post-92	HE college	HE all
	2005	2005	2005	2005
N=	40	25	16	81
None	3%	8%	6%	8%
Other commercial - listed	8%	20%	6%	11%
Other in-house - listed	25%	24%	25%	24%
Other in-house - not listed	15%	8%	19%	13%
Not answered	50%	40%	44%	44%

## 6 Overall Conclusions

A summary of [conclusions](#) has already been provided earlier in this report. What is provided here is a longitudinal update to a comparison table first provided in the 2003 report. For 2003 a selection of statistics were identified which highlighted some marked contrasts between Pre- and Post-92 universities, and they illustrated that there was a markedly greater use of VLEs, with central direction, discernible in Post-92 universities compared to Pre-92 universities. The statistics for these same questions are provided, together with those for the 2003 survey, in Table 34. Comparing some of these same measures and additional figures the indication is that Post-92 institutions are building on this greater use of VLEs. The evidence indicates that they continue to increase use and possibly integrate the VLE more into the delivery of programmes. There are also suggestions that the use of VLEs is encouraged more in Post-92 institutions through career enhancement.

In the table below, the numbers in brackets (e.g. 4.5/4.4) indicate the question number for the 2005 and 2003 surveys respectively.

**Table 34: Selected differences between pre-91 and post-91 HE**

Summary of question	HE - Pre-92		HE - Post-92	
	2005	2003	2005	2003
No students using a VLE is > 10,000 (4.5/4.4)	23%	5%	56%	37%
No staff using a VLE is >200 (4.6/4.5)	40%	32%	76%	45%
No modules using a VLE between 500-999 (4.7/4.6)	20%	11%	4%	24%
No modules using a VLE is >1000 (4.7/4.6)	15%		60%	13%
Automatic linkage between VLE and student-records (4.14/4.11) <i>NB 2005=for input of student records</i>	61%	16%	63%	45%
Stated targets for VLE use (3.3/4.13) <i>2005 question not exact match for 2003</i>	56%	13%	67%	53%
Project funding to support and encourage VLE use (4.15/4.15)	55%	79%	47%	58%
Career enhancement to support and encourage VLE use (4.15/**)	6%	-	26%	-
Institution uses one VLE (4.2/4.2)	37%	27%	70%	49%
Institution uses more than one VLE (4.2/4.2)	65%	58%	22%	50%
Supplementary Usage of VLE (4.9/4.7)	61%	55%	41%	55%
Complementary Usage of VLE (4.9/4.7)	32%	36%	51%	39%
Allow academic staff development time (4.15/4.15)	48%	42%	58%	63%
Contractual obligation to support and encourage VLE use (4.15/**)	32%	-	11%	-

## 7 References

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QAA (2001) *Guidelines for HE Progress Files*  
<http://www.qaa.ac.uk/academicinfrastructure/progressFiles/guidelines/progfile2001.asp>

## Appendix 1: Specification of the questions from the 2001, 2003 and 2005 surveys used in this report

### Table 1: whether virtual learning environments are used

2005: Q4.1 Does your institution currently use a virtual learning environment (VLE)?

Please tick one only

2003: Q4.1 Does your institution currently use any virtual learning environments

(VLEs)? Please tick one only

2001: Q5 Does your institution currently use any VLEs?

### Table 2: Number of VLEs per institution

*Question not asked directly, but statistics derived*

### Table 3: What VLE(s) are used

2005: Q4.2 What VLE(s) are used in your institution? Please tick all that apply

2003: Q4.2 What VLEs, commercial or in-house, are used in your institution? Please tick all that apply

2001: Q6 What virtual learning environments (VLEs) are used at your institution? Please tick all that apply and indicate how long they have been used.

### Fig1: Number of students using VLEs

2005: Q4.5, 2003: Q4.4, 2001: Q7 How many students currently use VLEs at your institution?

### Fig2: Number of academic staff using VLEs

2005: 4.6, 2003: 4.5, 2001: Q8 How many teaching staff currently use VLEs at your institution?

### Fig3: Number of courses/modules using VLEs

2005: Q4.7: How many modules or units of study currently actively use VLE(s) in your institution?

2003: Q4.6: How many courses or modules currently actively use VLEs in your institution?

2001: Q9: How many courses/modules currently use VLEs at your institution?

### Table 4: Cross tabulation of numbers of staff using a VLE versus HE type (2005)

*Question not asked directly, but statistics derived*

### Table 5: Cross tabulation of numbers of students using a VLE versus HE type

*Question not asked directly, but statistics derived*

### Table 6: Modules/units of study in VLE(s) characteristics (mean scores of % entered by respondents)

2005: Q4.9 How do all modules or units of study in the VLE(s) in use in your institution divide between the following categories? Please enter a percentage figure in each of the categories below, using an estimate if needed

2003: Q4.7 How do all the VLE courses or modules in use in your institution divide between the following categories? Please enter a percentage figure in each of the categories below, using an estimate if needed.

### Fig4: How VLEs are being used to support learning and teaching (2005)

*Same question as for Table 6 for 2005*

### Table 7: Subject areas/departments using VLE(s)

2005: Q4.4, 2003: Q4.3 What subject areas or departments are using VLE(s) in your institution? Please tick all that apply

**Table 8: Uses made of VLE(s)**

2005: Q4.10 For which of the following do you use your VLE(s)? Please tick all that apply.

**Table 9: Units that install and maintain VLE(s)**

2005: Q4.11, 2003: Q4.8, 2001 Q21 What units are responsible for installing and maintaining the VLE(s) in your institution? Please tick all that apply or write in the name of the unit responsible.

**Table 10: Units providing technical support**

2005: Q4.12, 2003: Q4.9, 2001: Q22 What units provide VLE technical support in your institution? Please tick all that apply in the first column below or write in the name of the unit responsible

**Table 11: Units providing system administration support**

2005: Q4.13, 2003: Q4.10 And, what units provide VLE system administration support in your institution? Please tick all that apply in the second column below or write in the name of the unit responsible.

2001: Q22 What units provide VLE technical support in your institution? (Tick all that apply) [NB Two columns provided, Technical Support and Systems Administration]

**Table 12: How are links provided between the VLEs and student records?**

2003 Q4.11 Are links provided between the VLEs and student records (Tick all that apply)

2001 Q23 Are links provided between the VLEs and MIS for (Tick all that apply):

**Table 13: Systems linked to VLE(s) and nature of link**

2005: Q4.14 What systems are linked to your VLE(s)? Please tick all that apply, indicating if it is an automated link or manual process. Add detail as necessary.

**Table 14: Level at which decisions are made**

2005: Q3.2 At what level are principal decisions made about the future development of processes to support *e*-learning in your institution? Please tick one only

2003: Q4.12 At what level in your institution are decisions made about VLE implementation?

**Table 15: Staff consulted**

2005: Q1.5 Which, if any, of the following groups of staff are consulted as your organisation develops its processes to support *e*-learning? Please tick all that apply

2003: Q1.5 Which, if any, of the following groups have been consulted as part of the development of your MLE? Staff – which groups?

**Table 16: Does your institution have a stated target for the use of VLEs?**

2003: Q4.13 Does your institution have a stated target for the use of VLEs?

2001: Q14 Does your institution have a stated target for the use of VLEs (e.g. 10% of courses)

**Table 17: Nature of plans for future development of processes to support e-learning**

2005: Q3.1 Which one of the following best describes the future development of processes to support *e*-learning in your institution? Please tick one only

2003: 3.5 Which one of the following best describes the future development of your MLE? Please tick one only

**Table 18: Institutional strategies informing e-learning development**

2005: Q3.3 Which institutional strategies inform the development of processes to support e-learning in your institution? Please tick all that apply

2003: Q3.6 Which institutional strategy documents consider development of your MLE? Please tick all that apply

**Table 19: External strategies informing e-learning development**

2005: Q3.4 Which external strategy documents inform the development of processes to support e-learning in your institution? Please tick all that apply

**Table 20: Reasons for considering the use of VLEs**

2003: Q4.14 Reasons for considering the use of VLEs

2001: 15 What are the main reasons for moving to, or considering, the use of VLEs at your institution?

**Table 21: Driving factors for environments and processes that support e-learning**

2005: Q1.3 Listed below are possible driving factors for MLE development and the environments and processes that support e-learning. Which of those have been important in your institution to date? Please indicate the importance of each of these.

2003: Q1.4 Listed below are possible drivers that can encourage MLE development. Which have driven development of your MLE to date? Please indicate the importance of each of these in your institution.

**Table 22: Supporting factors for environments and processes that support e-learning**

2005: Q1.4 Listed below are possible supporting factors for MLE development and the environments and processes that support e-learning. Which of those have been important in your institution to date? Please indicate the importance of each of these in your institution.

2003: Q 1.4 Listed below are possible drivers that can encourage MLE development. Which have driven development of your MLE to date? Please indicate the importance of each of these in your institution.

**Table 23: Barriers to development of processes to support e-learning**

2005: Q3.5 What, in your opinion, are the barriers to any (further) development of processes to support e-learning in your institution over the coming years?

2003: Q3.7 What, in your opinion, are the barriers to any (further) development of your (or any potential) MLE over the coming years?

**Table 24: How VLE development is supported or encouraged**

2005 and 2003: 4.15 How is VLE development supported or encouraged within your institution? Please tick all that apply

**Table 25: Dedicated staff employed to support VLEs (2001 and 2003)**

2003: Q4.16 Are dedicated staff employed to support your VLE(s)?

2001: Q25 Does your institution provide dedicated staff to support your VLEs?

**Table 26: Dedicated staff employed to support VLEs (2005)**

2005: Q4.16 Are dedicated staff employed to support your VLE(s)? Please tick one only for each area of support.

**Table 27: Comparison of staff support by type of unit**

2005 and 2003: Q4.17 Which units across the institution provide staff development and support for use of VLE(s)? Please tick all that apply in each column or write in the name of the unit responsible.

2001: Q27 Which units across the institution provide staff development and support for use of VLEs? Please tick all that apply.

**Table 28: Support staff training and development activities**

2005: Q4.18 What training and development activities are offered to support staff who help other staff in the use of VLE(s)? Please tick all that apply.

**Table 29: Units providing student support by grouping**

2005 and 2003: Q4.19 Which units across the institution provide student support and training in the use of VLE(s)? Please tick all that apply in each column or write in the name of the unit responsible.

2001: Q28 What units provide student training for the use of VLEs? Tick all that apply.

**Table 30: Groups of students receiving specialised training and support**

2005 and 2003: Q 4.20 Do any of the following groups of students receive more focussed or specialised support and training in the use of VLEs? Please tick any that apply and write in details of how the support or training offered is adapted for the group.

2001: Q30 Is any special provision made for students with special needs? If yes, please specify.

**Table 31: Mobile technologies to connect to VLE**

2005: Q 4.21 Are you using any mobile technologies to connect with your VLE(s)? Please write in.

**Table 32: Mobile technologies to support VLE users**

2005: Q4.22 And are you using any mobile technologies to provide support for those using your VLE(s)? Please write in.

**Table 33: Portfolio/PDP systems used**

2005: Q4.23 What portfolio/PDP systems, commercial or in-house, are used in your institution? Please tick all that apply.

**Table 34: Selected differences between pre-91 and post-91 HE (2003)**

*Statistics derived from previous tables and figs.*

**Table Appendix 2.1: Units responsible for support: Staff development of learning and teaching use**

2005 and 2003: Q4.17a Which units across the institution provide staff development and support for use of VLE(s)? Please tick all that apply in each column or write in the name of the unit responsible.

2001 Q27a Which units across the institution provide staff development for pedagogical use of VLEs?

**Table Appendix 2.2: Units responsible for support: Staff support in creating new courses**

2005 and 2003: Q4.17b, 2001: Q27b Which units across the institution provide staff support in creating new courses? Please tick all that apply in each column or write in the name of the unit responsible.

**Table Appendix 2.3: Units responsible for support: Staff support in adding content and maintaining courses**

2005 and 2003: Q4.17c, 2001: Q27c Which units across the institution provide staff support in adding content and maintaining courses? Please tick all that apply in each column or write in the name of the unit responsible.

**Table Appendix 2.4: Units responsible for support: Staff support in creating web pages**

2005 and 2003: Q4.17d, 2001: 27d Which units across the institution provide staff support in creating web pages? Please tick all that apply in each column or write in the name of the unit responsible.

**Table Appendix 2.5: Units responsible for support: face-to-face training on use of VLE as part of course delivery**

2005 and 2003: Q4.19a Which units across the institution provide student support in face to face training as part of course delivery?  
2001: Q28a Which units across the institution provide student support in face to face training?

**Table Appendix 2.6: Units responsible for support: face to face training on use of VLE as part of an IT skills induction (not asked 2001)**

2005 and 2003: Q4.19b Which units across the institution provide student support in face to face training as part of an IT skills induction?

**Table Appendix 2.7: Units responsible for support: printed guides on use of VLE**

2005 and 2003: Q4.19c, 2001: Q28b Which units across the institution provide student support in printed guides?

**Table Appendix 2.8: Units responsible for support: information on Intranet/ Internet on use of VLE**

2005 and 2003: Q4.19d Which units across the institution provide student support in information on Intranet/Internet?  
2001: Q28d Which units across the institution provide student support in Web pages?

**Table Appendix 2.9: Units responsible for support: online training on use of VLE via VLE**

2005 and 2003: Q4.19e Which units across the institution provide student support in online training and support through the VLE?  
2001: Q28c Which units provide student training for the use of VLEs ? Online support and training



## Appendix 2: Data from which Tables 27 and 29 are derived

### Staff Support: Table 27

**Table Appendix 2.1: Units responsible for support: Staff development of learning and teaching use**

	HE - Pre-92			HE - Post-92			HE college			HE all		
	2005	2003	2001	2005	2003	2001	2005	2003	2001	2005	2003	2001
N=	40	38	20	25	38	16	16	12	12	81	88	48
Central Information Technology support	35%	42%	35%	11%	29%	38%	33%	25%	25%	22%	34%	33%
Distributed Information Technology support	13%	13%		0%	3%		8%	0%		7%	7%	0%
Learning Technology Support Unit (LTSU)	39%	-	40%	37%	-	63%	42%	-	50%	37%	-	50%
Learning and Teaching Support Unit (2003 only)	-	37%	-	-	34%	-	-	25%	-	-	34%	-
Educational Development Unit (EDU)	29%	26%	70%	63%	18%	50%	17%	8%	42%	22%	21%	56%
Staff Development Unit	13%	24%	-	21%	24%	-	25%	42%	-	10%	26%	-
Dedicated VLE support	23%	18%	10%	26%	45%	0%	8%	33%	0%	22%	32%	4%
Local	13%	16%	15%	21%	16%	6%	8%	17%	0%	26%	16%	8%
External (2005 only)	0%	-	-	5%	-	-	0%	-	-	1%	-	-
Library/learning resources (2005 only)	0%	-	-	0%	-	-	8%	-	-	3%	-	-
ILT Champions (2005 only)	0%	-	-	5%	-	-	0%	-	-	2%	-	-
E-learning coordinator (2005 only)	3%	-	-	5%	-	-	17%	-	-	7%	-	-
Other – listed	3%	5%	-	0%	8%	-	8%	8%	-	1%	7%	-
Not answered	6%	13%	-	5%	8%	-	8%	17%	-	5%	11%	-

**Table Appendix 2.2: Units responsible for support: Staff support in creating new courses**

	HE - Pre-92			HE - Post-92			HE college			HE all		
	2005	2003	2001	2005	2003	2001	2005	2003	2001	2005	2003	2001
N=	40	38	20	25	38	15	16	12	12	81	88	47
Central Information Technology support	23%	37%	55%	16%	29%	33%	42%	50%	42%	24%	35%	45%
Distributed Information Technology support	6%	11%	15%	0%	5%	7%	8%	8%		5%	8%	9%
Learning Technology Support Unit (LTSU)	39%		40%	32%		60%	50%		58%	40%		51%
Learning and Teaching Support Unit (2003 only)		37%			39%			17%			35%	
Educational Development Unit (EDU)	29%	18%	50%	42%	13%	53%	8%	8%	25%	27%	15%	45%
Staff Development Unit	6%	8%		11%	11%		17%	17%		10%	10%	-
Dedicated VLE support	26%	18%	10%	26%	26%	13%	0%	50%		21%	26%	9%
Local	26%	16%	25%	16%	16%	13%	17%	25%	17%	20%	17%	19%
External (2005 only)	0%	-	-	5%			0%			2%		
Library/learning resources (2005 only)	0%			0%			8%			1%		
ILT Champions (2005 only)	0%			0%			0%			0%		
E-learning coordinator (2005 only)	3%			11%			17%			1%		
Other – listed	3%	5%		0%	8%		0%	0%		1%	6%	
Not answered	6%	16%		5%	18%		8%	17%		6%	17%	

**Table Appendix 2.3: Units responsible for support: Staff support in adding content and maintaining courses**

	HE - Pre-92			HE - Post-92			HE college			HE all		
	2005	2003	2001	2005	2003	2001	2005	2003	2001	2005	2003	2001
N=	40	38	17	25	38	17	16	12	11	81	88	45
Central Information Technology support	29%	34%	65%	11%	29%	53%	17%	67%	36%	22%	36%	53%
Distributed Information Technology support	13%	13%	24%	0%	0%	12%	8%	25%		7%	9%	13%
Learning Technology Support Unit (LTSU)	39%	-	35%	26%	-	35%	50%	-	55%	37%	-	40%
Learning and Teaching Support Unit (2003 only)	-	32%	-	-	32%	-	-	17%	-	-	30%	-
Educational Development Unit (EDU)	23%	13%	41%	32%	11%	41%	8%	0%	27%	22%	10%	39%
Staff Development Unit	6%	8%	-	11%	8%	-	17%	8%	-	10%	8%	-
Dedicated VLE support	23%	16%	6%	32%	34%	12%	8%	50%	0%	22%	28%	7%
Local	32%	18%	29%	26%	21%	23%	17%	25%	18%	26%	21%	24%
External (2005 only)	0%	-	-	5%	-	-	0%	-	-	2%	-	-
Library/learning resources (2005 only)	0%	-	-	5%	-	-	8%	-	-	3%	-	-
ILT Champions (2005 only)	0%	-	-	0%	-	-	0%	-	-	0%	-	-
E-learning coordinator (2005 only)	3%	-	-	11%	-	-	17%	-	-	7%	-	-
Other – listed	3%	5%	-	0%	8%	-	0%	0%	-	1%	6%	-
Not answered	6%	21%	-	5%	18%	-	8%	0%	-	5%	17%	-

**Table Appendix 2.4: Units responsible for support: Staff support in creating web pages**

	HE - Pre-92			HE - Post-92			HE college			HE all		
	2005	2003	2001	2005	2003	2001	2005	2003	2001	2005	2003	2001
N=	40	38	19	25	38	15	16	12	13	81	88	47
Central Information Technology support	39%	63%	84%	26%	45%	67%	33%	83%	62%	35%	58%	72%
Distributed Information Technology support	16%	18%	26%	5%	8%	13%	8%	33%	8%	11%	16%	17%
Learning Technology Support Unit (LTSU)	29%	-	26%	26%	-	40%	42%	-	31%	28%	-	32%
Learning and Teaching Support Unit (2003 only)	-	21%	-	-	24%	-	-	25%	-	-	23%	-
Educational Development Unit (EDU)	6%	8%	37%	16%	11%	20%	8%	0%	15%	10%	8%	26%
Staff Development Unit	6%	11%	-	5%	8%	-	17%	8%	-	6%	9%	-
Dedicated VLE support	13%	3%	5%	21%	13%	7%	0%	25%		12%	10%	4%
Local	23%	18%	11%	26%	16%	13%	17%	8%	8%	22%	16%	11%
External (2005 only)	0%	-	-	0%	-	-	0%	-	-	0%	-	-
Library/learning resources (2005 only)	0%	-	-	5%	-	-	8%	-	-	3%	-	-
ILT Champions (2005 only)	0%	-	-	0%	-	-	0%	-	-	0%	-	-
E-learning coordinator (2005 only)	0%	-	-	5%	-	-	17%	-	-	4%	-	-
Other – listed	3%	5%	-	0%	3%	-	8%	0%	-	3%	3%	-
Not answered	16%	13%	-	21%	21%	-	17%	0%	-	19%	15%	-

Student Support: Table 29

**Table Appendix 2.5: Units responsible for support: face-to-face training on use of VLE as part of course delivery**

	HE - Pre-92			HE - Post-92			HE college			HE all		
	2005	2003	2001	2005	2003	2001	2005	2003	2001	2005	2003	2001
N =	40	38	15	25	38	14	16	12	9	81	88	38
Central Information Technology support	10%	8%	60%	11%	5%	14%	17%	0%	22%	11%	16%	34%
Distributed Information Technology support	6%	3%	13%	0%	0%		0%	8%		3%	2%	5%
Learning Technology Support Unit (LTSU)	13%		33%	5%		14%	25%		33%	12%		26%
Learning and Teaching Support Unit (2003 only)		18%			8%			8%			13%	
Educational Development Unit (EDU)	10%	5%	27%	5%	5%	14%	0%	0%	11%	6%	5%	18%
Dedicated VLE support	6%	8%	7%	11%	8%	7%	8%	17%		7%	9%	5%
Local	26%	18%	33%	26%	11%	64%	17%	17%	33%	24%	15%	45%
Academic Staff	68%	53%		79%	68%		50%	75%		67%	63%	
External (2005 only)	0%			0%			0%			0%		
Library/learning resources (2005 only)	0%			5%			0%			1%		
ILT Champions (2005 only)	0%			0%			0%			0%		
E-learning coordinator (2005 only)	0%			0%			17%			3%		
Other – listed	0%	8%		5%	5%		0%	0%		1%	7%	
Not answered	16%	21%		5%	16%		17%	8%		12%	17%	39%

**Table Appendix 2.6: Units responsible for support: face-to-face training on use of VLE as part of an IT skills induction (not asked 2001)**

	HE - Pre-92		HE - Post-92		HE college		HE all	
	2005	2003	2005	2003	2005	2003	2005	2003
N =	40	38	25	38	16	12	81	88
Central Information Technology support	39%	32%	32%	37%	42%	42%	36%	35%
Distributed Information Technology support	6%	8%	0%	8%	0%	0%	4%	7%
Learning Technology Support Unit (LTSU)	16%		11%		8%		12%	
Learning and Teaching Support Unit (2003 only)		8%		11%		8%		9%
Educational Development Unit (EDU)	10%	3%	11%	3%	8%	0%	10%	2%
Dedicated VLE support	3%	8%	11%	5%	17%	8%	6%	7%
Local	13%	11%	16%	16%	17%	17%	14%	14%
Academic Staff	23%	16%	42%	37%	17%	50%	27%	30%
External (2005 only)	0%		0%		0%		0%	
Library/learning resources (2005 only)	3%		11%		17%		9%	
ILT Champions (2005 only)	0%		0%		0%		0%	
E-learning coordinator (2005 only)	0%		5%		8%		3%	
Other – listed	0%	5%	5%	3%	0%	0%	1%	3%
Not answered	32%	39%	11%	24%	17%	8%	21%	28%

**Table Appendix 2.7: Units responsible for support: printed guides on use of VLE**

	HE - Pre-92			HE - Post-92			HE college			HE all		
	2005	2003	2001	2005	2003		2005	2003		2005	2003	2001
N =	40	38	12	25	38	14	16	12	10	81	88	36
Central Information Technology support	42%	37%	67%	37%	32%	57%	42%	58%	30%	41%	38%	53%
Distributed Information Technology support	6%	3%	17%	0%	3%	7%	0%	17%	-	4%	5%	8%
Learning Technology Support Unit (LTSU)	29%		50%	21%		36%	17%		40%	25%		42%
Learning and Teaching Support Unit (2003 only)		21%			24%			8%			21%	
Educational Development Unit (EDU)	13%	5%	33%	16%	5%	7%	0%	0%	10%	11%	5%	17%
Dedicated VLE support	13%	11%	-	16%	16%	7%	17%	17%	-	14%	14%	3%
Local	13%	5%	8%	11%	5%	7%	8%	0%	30%	10%	5%	14%
Academic Staff	23%	18%		11%	16%		17%	8%		17%	16%	
External (2005 only)	0%			0%			0%			0%		
Library/learning resources (2005 only)	6%			11%			17%			7%		
ILT Champions (2005 only)	0%			0%			0%			0%		
E-learning coordinator (2005 only)	0%			11%			17%			5%		
Other – listed	0%	8%		5%	13%		0%	8%		1%	10%	
Not answered	16%	24%		5%	24%		17%	8%		12%	22%	42%

**Table Appendix 2.8: Units responsible for support: information on intranet/internet on use of VLE**

	HE - Pre-92			HE - Post-92			HE college			HE all		
	2005	2003	2001	2005	2003	2001	2005	2003	2001	2005	2003	2001
N =	40	38	15	25	38	12	16	12	10	81	88	34
Central Information Technology support	52%	53%	67%	63%	37%	33%	42%	50%	40%	51%	46%	47%
Distributed Information Technology support	10%	13%	17%	0%	0%	-	0%	8%	-	5%	7%	6%
Learning Technology Support Unit (LTSU)	29%		25%	21%		33%	17%		30%	25%		30%
Learning and Teaching Support Unit (2003 only)		26%			21%			0%			21%	
Educational Development Unit (EDU)	13%	8%	17%	11%	8%	17%	0%	0%	10%	9%	7%	15%
Dedicated VLE support	23%	13%	-	16%	18%	17%	17%	33%	-	19%	18%	6%
Local	16%	11%	25%	5%	5%	17%	0%	8%	20%	9%	8%	21%
Academic Staff	19%	26%		5%	13%		8%	17%		12%	19%	
External (2005 only)	0%			0%			0%			0%		
Library/learning resources (2005 only)	6%			0%			17%			5%		
E-learning coordinator (2005 only)	0%			5%			8%			3%		
Other - listed	0%	5%		0%	11%		0%	0%		0%	7%	
Not answered	10%	18%		11%	18%		25%	17%		14%	18%	45%

**Table Appendix 2.9: Units responsible for support: online training on use of VLE via VLE**

	HE - Pre-92			HE - Post-92			HE college			HE all		
	2005	2003	2001	2005	2003	2001	2005	2003	2001	2005	2003	2001
N =	40	38	13	25	38	5	16	12	10	81	88	28
Central Information Technology support	26%	24%	77%	21%	16%	40%	8%	42%	40%	20%	23%	57%
Distributed Information Technology support	6%	3%	15%	0%	0%		0%	8%		4%	2%	7%
Learning Technology Support Unit (LTSU)	16%		39%	11%		20%	25%		40%	16%		36%
Learning and Teaching Support Unit (2003 only)		18%			11%			0%			13%	
Educational Development Unit (EDU)	6%	3%	23%	21%	8%	20%	0%	0%	10%	10%	5%	18%
Dedicated VLE support	10%	8%	-	21%	18%	40%	17%	17%	-	14%	14%	7%
Local	10%	5%	8%	11%	11%	-	0%	0%	20%	9%	7%	11%
Academic Staff	10%	8%		21%	26%		17%	8%		14%	16%	
External (2005 only)	0%			0%			0%			0%		
Library/learning resources (2005 only)	6%			5%			8%			5%		
ILT Champions (2005 only)	0%			0%			0%			0%		
E-learning coordinator (2005 only)	0%			5%			17%			4%		
Other – listed	0%	5%		0%	13%		0%	0%		0%	8%	
Not answered	42%	45%		21%	34%		42%	33%		36%	39%	55%