

ISC14D004

ISD Strategy 2014 - 19

Vision

ISD will take pride in making an efficient and effective contribution to the delivery of the University's academic aims.

Key Principles

Getting the basics right

We will ensure that all ISD Services are fit for purpose, robust, and resilient, and we will be courteous in all our dealings with users. By working in partnership with our users and other services we will adopt a user centric approach to service development and delivery.

Continuous improvement

Services will be subject to monitoring and review so we know what we need to do to make them better, and we will put plans in place to do so. We will report on our performance.

Supporting diverse service needs

We will support diversity where doing so will make a positive difference, and we will ensure that the core service provision is flexible enough to support and allow for local augmentation. We will strive to ensure the accessibility of our services for all.

Flexible and agile enabler

We will support and facilitate fundamental changes required to transform the way the University approaches learning and teaching, research and enterprise.

Ensuring value for money

We will ensure that the total cost of each of our services is understood and clearly articulated, and we will aim to realise the full return on investments.

Aims

1. To support student learning and employability.

We are keen for all students to make the most of their time at UEA and benefit from use of the services we provide. Students will have a variety of devices to connect to our services and come with varying levels of competence in using IT and Library services. While with us, we will aim to help them get the most from our services, and develop skills in the use of information which they can apply in their future employment.

Physical learning spaces.

- We will find ways to improve the physical environments and ensure that these are clean, safe and provide a positive inducement to learning.
- We recognise that study can take many forms and will continue to develop spaces within the Library that support different modes of study.
- We will provide support for the development of study and teaching spaces across campus with a particular focus on the technology.

Diversity and support.

- We will make accessing our services as simple as possible.
- We will support students with additional needs when using our services.
- We will make connecting and using your own equipment as simple as possible.
- We will extend the availability of our services where possible making services available on personally-owned equipment.

Student information skills development.

- In partnership with other academic support services, we will provide a skills programme that will support students in developing information and digital literacies. In turn, these will help to inform core graduate and postgraduate attributes.

2. To support teaching.

Teaching is a core activity at the University, and the use of technology and information services is transforming pedagogy and supporting new ways of learning. The University's Learning and Teaching Strategy puts a greater emphasis on the use of technology to support teaching and this will inevitably be a key area of focus for ISD.

There are a number of dynamics that will need to be considered; systems that support the delivery of Learning and Teaching; systems that support the administration of Learning and Teaching; virtual learning environments; and physical learning environments such as the library. New approaches to support may need to be developed.

Information resources can be delivered at any time to any place, and data stored in supporting systems can be analysed to improve our understanding of how students learn.

Supporting Teaching.

- We will continue to push for investment in learning technology support and we see this as being the key area for ISD and UEA to innovate.
- We will investigate ways in which increased use can be made of existing resources to support teaching and try to embed this more closely within course development processes.
- We will provide specialist services to support student and staff teaching including face-to-face, online and one-to-one expert tuition in using library resources effectively.
- We will support mainstream academic teaching by consolidating our links with Faculties and other academic support providers, taking every opportunity to link our offering to the curriculum whenever possible.
- We will review whether our current structures and approaches are effective for providing support for the development of teaching and learning materials and content.
- We will investigate ways of providing support for all aspects of course content creation, including audio and video capture/editing, screencasting and animation.
- We will work with CSED on the development of courses to support academic staff in the innovative use of tools for teaching.
- We will continue to support the drive to improve assessment and feedback. This will require closer join up of administrative systems and teaching and learning systems.
- We will continue to support the drive to improve timetabling and investment in the wider development of the Student Records Systems.
- We see big data, learner analytics and improved management information as providing potentially useful tools that could support learning and teaching, student support activities, student experience and student recruitment. This will be an area in which we will be developing a business case to support further development.

3. To support research and enterprise.

Research by its nature pushes back boundaries in knowledge and understanding. To support this, we need to provide local services which can be dynamic and flexible, and accommodate the growth in use of high performance and specialist computing and the analysis of large datasets. Requirements from government and funders mean we will need to provide wider access to research data for extended periods and beyond the life of the project which will have an impact on our storage provision.

IT support for researchers.

- We will continue to develop and invest in support for high performance computing services.
- We will provide the opportunity for researchers to purchase support for software development as part of their research grant.
- We will continue to develop research computing induction courses for researchers and PGRs.

- We will provide support for the installation and management of bespoke scientific applications and provide support for specialist research IT systems.
- We will seek to develop tailored research computing support for researchers and research groups.

Research data management.

- We will provide a secure storage solution for research data at a competitive price point.
- We will work with Research and Enterprise Services (REN) on the development of a solution to support the emergent requirements for research data management, discovery, preservation, metadata and open access research data.

Library support for researchers.

- We will develop an information and digital literacy skills offering specifically for researchers to supplement our existing contributions to the University's formal PPD programmes.
- We will develop improved interlending services to source items we do not hold in stock, in order to supplement our existing research collections.
- In partnership with REN, we will provide guidance and support for the deposit of full text publications in the UEA Current Research Information System (PURE) and the UEA Digital Repository.
- We will advise researchers on open access and advocate for full compliance with funding and research council mandates whilst being sensitive to the differences between disciplines.
- We will outline the benefits of open access to PGR electronic theses and, in liaison with the PGR Office, provide support around IPR and copyright clearance in cases where students or supervisors have concerns.
- We will identify opportunities to support researchers visiting UEA from other institutions including doctoral studentships.
- We will work closely with faculty on the development of the Archive to maximise its relevance to current and future research interests.

Enterprise and spin-out companies.

- We will provide support for spin-out companies and other enterprise initiatives including student enterprise. Though restrictions due to our licensing arrangements will apply.

4. To facilitate organisational development and improvement through the provision of appropriate and/or innovative technologies.

Technological innovation continues apace, and some of these innovations will impact directly on the University's core activities. We need to be more open to embracing these changes and finding ways of making best use of the technology. Nonetheless, we need to ensure that we focus innovation into supporting core business aims while leveraging the maximum value from existing investments.

Innovation with emerging technologies.

- We will experiment with emergent technologies that have potential to improve the quality and cost of our service delivery and support the University's mission.
- We will support others in experimenting with new technologies where these support the University's core business aims.

5. To ensure Library resources meet the needs of our users.

The Library collections are key resources supporting teaching and research. These are made up of physical books and journals as well as extensive electronic resources. The Library building is under pressure to provide more space for study within its existing footprint, and we need to strike the right balance between these three areas.

Library collection development.

- We will refocus our approach to managing the physical collections to ensure that holdings support current teaching and research. This will include a greater use of demand-driven acquisition.
- Where digital content is available in perpetuity we will withdraw the physical holding. Similarly, subject areas that are no longer taught will be withdrawn from the collection. We need to do this to fit within the physical constraints of the building.
- We will provide access to a wider diversity of learning materials, including audio-visual content.

The Online Library.

- We will invest in and develop the online Library and find ways to demonstrate its increasing value and relevance to the core activities of the University.
- We will improve search and discovery tools and seek new technologies that will allow us to embed resources directly into learning environments.
- We will continue to improve the authentication processes to make access to licensed resources both on campus and off campus as seamless as possible.
- We will prepare for the potential step-change in e-book market penetration and open access journal publishing.
- When a required textbook is available as an e-book, we will look to buy an electronic version if it offers better access and value for money than the print.

6. To ensure our IT infrastructure meets the needs of our users.

The IT infrastructure and business systems underpin the delivery of our IT services. These are made up of connectivity and communication infrastructure, data centres and administrative systems. It is vital that these systems are robust and resilient and deliver value for money.

A fit for purpose IT Infrastructure.

- We will work to ensure investment and development of our IT infrastructure and business systems is appropriate for the services we run.
- We will support and develop the core IT infrastructure to ensure appropriate resilience, access and security is in place.
- We will support and develop appropriate business systems to meet the requirements of the University.
- We will aim to have a cohesive service architecture across our IT infrastructure and business systems.

7. To ensure our communications are effective.

We need to improve the way that we tell the community about the services we offer and seek to leverage appropriate utilisation of our services, reducing the need for the uptake of substitute services and enabling us to celebrate our successes.

Responsive helpdesks.

- The helpdesks will provide a comprehensive query and help service for all users with the intention of addressing as many requests as possible at first contact.
- The helpdesks will ensure that all requests are responded to in a timely and appropriate fashion.
- Communications from the helpdesks will be jargon free, timely, appropriate to the audience, direct and to the point.
- Common queries and issues will be proactively documented and published on the ISD website. These will be fed back into service review to inform potential service changes.
- We will develop self-service options.

Clear and informative web pages.

- We will ensure that the ISD website is easy to navigate, accurate, up to date, comprehensive and easily accessible and provides targeted relevant information. We will identify audience specific information for targeted delivery via the University Portal.
- We will use new approaches to delivering information and ensure that the right information is provided to the right user at the right time via the most appropriate means to achieve these aims. This will include embedding our information directly into the University Portal.
- We understand the ISD web site provides a 'shop window' into the department and will aim to ensure it accurately reflects the quality of the services we deliver. We will use a variety of media to deliver our message and use the ISD web pages as a means of demonstrating alternative approaches to delivering web content.

Articulating service.

- We will create an accessible service catalogue providing information on all services offered by ISD and where appropriate key performance indicators for the services will be developed and reported.

Introduction and induction for new staff and students.

- To raise awareness of the range of ISD services available, encourage best practice, and to anticipate and address the most common queries from those new to the institution, we shall provide short inductions to staff and students within a month of their joining the institution.

Specialist guidance and liaison from IT Account Managers, Research Computing, Learning Technologists, Information Policy and Compliance Managers, and Faculty Librarians.

- For more involved or complex queries, we will provide a bespoke specialist query and solution service covering IT, Learning Technology, Information Compliance and Library services.
- Rather than wait on requests, we will actively liaise with Faculties to ensure our services are meeting their needs and the University's obligations.

8. To ensure the security of our information assets.

Key assets for an organisation are not only physical but increasingly in the form of information. We expect this trend to increase. As with all assets, there is a need to identify them and protect them from damage, theft or loss. (Under the Data Protection Act, for personal data, this is a legal obligation.) We believe this is a shared responsibility and ISD will be active in encouraging best practice by all asset holders.

Information security and compliance.

- We see information security as a whole community responsibility, and so will provide advice, guidance and training to ensure that the community has an appropriate understanding of their role in ensuring the information / digital security of our environment.
- We will provide systems that will help to protect the security of information and networks.
- We will develop and disseminate policy that will meet the obligations placed upon the institution by regulations and legislation, while accommodating any flexibility inherent in them.

Security by design.

- We will design security and compliance into the services we deliver.
- Where we require users to contribute to system security, we will provide advice and guidance.
- We will actively test the security of our services (especially new or significantly developed services) to ensure we maintain a high level of security. Where we discover vulnerabilities, these will be fixed where possible, or processes changed to avoid the problem. Where necessary, we will request our community of users to change their behaviours to maintain security.

9. To invest in our staff and develop a service culture.

We recognise that the quality of the services we deliver will only be as good as the people who deliver them. As well as ensuring we have appropriately skilled staff employed in ISD roles, we need to develop a service culture among all our staff and gain a better understanding of the actual experience of using our services.

Staff development and service culture.

- In the rapidly changing world of information services, staff need opportunities to review trends and to reskill or learn more about the tools and services they manage. While keeping services running, we will seek ways to provide time for service development and innovation.

Staff recruitment.

- We will recruit the best staff available to meet our service delivery aspirations.
- We acknowledge that in some areas it can be difficult to find skilled staff. We will therefore provide structures to grow our own staff through the use of internships, secondments and training programmes.

10. To improve the long-term operational efficiency and effectiveness of ISD.

While there will always be demand for new information services and the need to review and consider what we provide, the key focus of this strategy is how we provide services.

Financial sustainability of ISD Services.

- Working with the Finance Division we will ensure that our procurement activities provide the best value for the University.
- Working with the Finance Division we will explore innovative ways of identifying sources of funding needed to progress developments and service enhancements. Combining shared interests also gives an opportunity to exploit economies of scale.
- We will explore opportunities for outsourcing and shared services where these are shown to deliver additional value for money and enable us to refocus on higher value activities.
- We will ensure that any request for investment is underpinned by a robust business case and we will support other areas of the University when making requests for information systems or services.

Efficiency in the way we manage service delivery.

- We will adopt best practice approaches for the management of our services. For the IT services, this will be supported by a phased adoption of ITIL which will be underpinned by the introduction of a new IT Service Management system.
- Where appropriate, services shall be described in service level definitions which will include key performance metrics.

Efficiency in the way we manage service development.

- We will actively manage the development of services by providing a feedback loop from service users to service owners and operators.
- We will monitor and report on service delivery and establish formal annual service reviews to seek decisions on developments to aid the understanding of service quality and to identify areas for improvement.
- We will use best practice project management processes to manage significant changes to existing (and the establishment of new) services.
- Changes to services will be coordinated across the department's Programme of Work (POW). We will ensure that changes introduced via the programme bring measurable improvements to service aligned to the department's strategic aims.

Continuous improvement.

- We will undertake process review work where appropriate and will support other areas of the University in process improvement as part of systems development activities.
- We will seek to free up staff time to focus on high value adding, user focused activities. This will be achieved through increased automation, leveraging self-service and cessation of non-value adding services.

Supplier Management.

- We will ensure that our staff have the appropriate skills and support to take a proactive approach to the management of our contracts and suppliers.
- We will hold regular contract review meetings with our key suppliers to ensure that we are receiving best value for money. For contracts with a value in excess of £20,000 per annum, these will be at least annually.

Business Continuity.

- We will ensure that we have appropriate plans in place to ensure the business continuity of ISD services.
- We will work with other departments on the establishment of their own business continuity plans where there is a critical dependency on a services provided by ISD.
- We will backup agreed information to ensure against systems failure. In the event of systems failure, we will restore service as soon as possible and within an agreed timeframe following established disaster recovery plans.
- We will ensure that all ISD key processes are fully documented and confirm that appropriate knowledge transfer and sharing has been undertaken in service delivery teams to ensure service continuity.