Evaluation of the Impact of Flexible Teaching and Learning on Academic Staff at the University of Tasmania

Final Report

John Bottomley and Jocelyn Calvert

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# Table of contents

Executive summary

Section 1 Introduction ...........................................................................................................1
  Background and terms of reference ....................................................................................1
  Definition and role of flexible teaching and learning .........................................................1
  Research method ................................................................................................................2

Section 2 Participants in the evaluation ...............................................................................5
  Questionnaire ......................................................................................................................5
  Interviews ...........................................................................................................................6
  Focus groups .......................................................................................................................7
  Representativeness of the sample .......................................................................................7

Section 3 Experience with flexible approaches ...................................................................9
  Experience with flexible approaches and cross-campus teaching ...................................9
  Use of various modes of flexible teaching and learning ..................................................10
  Summary of academic staff experience with flexible approaches ...................................13

Section 4 Climate and encouragement ..............................................................................14
  Facilitators and impediments .........................................................................................14
  Encouragement ...............................................................................................................14
  Justification and value ......................................................................................................15
  Impact on relationship with colleagues ..........................................................................18
  The impact of teaching development grants ...................................................................19
  Staff perceptions of student reactions .............................................................................20
  Summary of impact of climate and encouragement .......................................................22

Section 5 Impact on teaching strategies and methods .......................................................23
  Thinking about teaching ....................................................................................................23
  Quality and richness of learning experiences ..................................................................26
  Student responsibility and choice ....................................................................................28
  Interaction with students ...................................................................................................29
  Interaction among students ..............................................................................................30
  Team approaches, sharing and collaboration ...................................................................31
  Progressive impact and evolution ....................................................................................32
  Summary of impact on teaching strategies and methods ..................................................33

Section 6 Impact on academic work and careers ..............................................................34
  The amount of work and time required for teaching flexibly ............................................34
  Changes in the pattern and distribution of work ...............................................................37
Executive summary

This evaluation report contains a considerable number of data tables and illustrative quotations from academic staff participants. Those looking for a more concise account of the findings are advised to read this executive summary, the summaries at the end of Sections 4 to 9 and possibly Section 10.

1. The University of Tasmania places a priority on the development of flexible approaches to teaching and learning and has devised and implemented strategies to promote this development. In September 2004, the University commissioned this evaluation to provide guidance for future planning. The brief specified that impact be 'evaluated broadly in terms of implementation, human resources, infrastructure, satisfaction, support and pedagogy.'

2. All academic staff were given an opportunity to participate and to express their viewpoints and experiences through the completion of a questionnaire. Additionally, staff randomly selected from each school were invited to participate in focus groups conducted to clarify questions arising from the initial data collection. Interviews were conducted with nominated staff from all faculties. These ensured an in-depth exposure to a range of views from across the university.

3. One hundred and thirty staff completed the questionnaire. Twenty-one interviews were successfully completed. Two focus groups were held at Hobart and one at Launceston. Although no claim can be made that the sample is representative, the three methods of soliciting participation have very likely ensured a comprehensive range of input.

4. Academic staff report having significant experience with flexible teaching and learning. The majority of staff have been involved in cross-campus teaching and three-quarters have made use of the web to support their teaching. Substantial minorities make use of video-conferencing and resource-supported teaching.

5. Most staff use more than one flexible mode in their teaching, with the number of modes used being positively related to their amount of experience with flexible teaching. The University has possibly created, by encouraging the use of WebCT, a group of academic staff who support their traditional teaching with web-based resources but otherwise engage minimally with flexible approaches.

6. The great majority of staff indicate the University has created an environment that encourages the use of flexible approaches to teaching, although many believe that heads of school are ill informed as to what is involved in doing so. A minority of staff, about one-third, are sceptical of the value of flexible teaching and learning.

7. Teaching development grants have played a significant role in advancing the flexible learning agenda. Staff use them for three main purposes: skills development; the investigation and development of teaching approaches and learning resources; and trials, evaluations and research.

8. The flexible teaching and learning agenda has generated a great deal of thought and discussion about teaching. This has centred around questions of how different groups of students learn, the design of course curricula, the revised role of lectures, tutorials and other classroom activities, and the appropriate assessment of student achievement. Staff in a number of schools have adopted cooperative, team-based approaches to the planning and development of new curricula, teaching approaches and learning resources.
9. Staff use of flexible approaches to teaching appears to be evolutionary, with impact progressive as they explore, and sometimes adopt, a variety of increasingly more sophisticated possibilities.

10. Teaching flexibly requires an increased expenditure of time as staff: acquire knowledge and learn skills; prepare and maintain learning resources and facilities; administer their courses; and, for those using web-based approaches, communicate with students. Flexible teaching also changes the pattern and distribution of work through the year and week. Few staff anticipate these increased demands on their time will disappear as they become more expert at teaching flexibly.

11. Staff are split as to whether becoming skilled flexible teachers will enhance or hinder their career prospects. Those with concerns typically believe that the time demands of teaching flexibly will lower their research productivity and hence their prospects for promotion.

12. The FEU is the single most important source of support for staff followed by specialist faculty and school staff, colleagues and champions, and central technical support staff. Support received from the FEU and from specialist faculty and school staff is rated as more adequate and timely than is support received from central technical support staff.

13. Three-quarters of staff report being aware of the types of support that are available, although a significant minority of inexperienced staff indicate they are not well informed.

14. The majority of staff have received training in the use of technologies and help with technical problems. Only a minority report receiving advice on teaching strategies or assistance with the administrative aspects of flexible teaching. Experienced staff make greater use of available help and rate it more highly than do the inexperienced.

15. Staff suggest that workshops are not the most effective way to help them develop the skills and understandings needed for teaching flexibly. They suggest one-on-one training, on-line resources and exposure to models of good practice as more effective approaches. They characterise current support as largely being the provision of advice and training rather than the provision of ongoing assistance with the use of technology, the solving of technical problems or the completion of administrative tasks. They report the need for this latter kind of support. There is strong support for the provision of help by faculties and schools.

16. Staff identify several infrastructure issues as impeding the adoption of flexible approaches. These include several aspects of staff and student access to, and the inadequacy of, equipment and networks for flexible teaching and learning, the inappropriateness and inadequacy of teaching facilities including video conferencing spaces and student computer labs, and timetabling constraints. There is nearly universal staff agreement that the current infrastructure is problematic as it relates to flexible teaching and learning.

17. Respondents are positive that flexible teaching and learning should remain a priority of the University. They believe it can lead to improved teaching practices, it potentially improves access for individuals and groups not able to attend the University full-time and improves equity of provision across the University’s three campuses. Support is, however, subject to a number of caveats. The University needs to clarify its goals and expectations for flexible teaching and learning; the flexible teaching and learning agenda should be explicitly concerned with the promotion of good teaching practice; developments should take into account the diversity of approaches made necessary by disciplinary considerations; the University needs to provide appropriate levels of resourcing and support; and a strategy should be adopted to develop realistic expectations in students concerning the practice of flexible teaching and learning.
SECTION 1

Introduction

Background and terms of reference
The University of Tasmania places a priority on the development of flexible approaches to teaching and learning and has devised and implemented strategies to promote this development (Johnston, 2001). In 2003, the University commissioned an evaluation of the impact of flexible teaching and learning on students (Enterprise Marketing and Research Services, 2003a, 2003b). This was followed in 2004 with this evaluation of the impact on academic staff.

The University commissioned the evaluation in September 2004 to provide guidance for future planning. The brief specified that impact be ‘evaluated broadly in terms of implementation, human resources, infrastructure, satisfaction, support and pedagogy’. It was acknowledged that ‘perceptions will vary dependent upon level of involvement in flexible [teaching and learning]’ and that ‘there will also be Faculty and School specific issues and discipline differences.’

The evaluators were assisted with administrative matters by the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) and guided by a broadly based Project Steering Committee (see Appendix A) whose role was to ‘provide feedback on and input to all aspects of the study, including the research approach, design of evaluation instruments and drafts of the report/s.’

Definition and role of flexible teaching and learning
A working definition of flexible teaching and learning is set out in a strategy paper presented to the University Senate:

Flexible approaches to teaching and learning refer both to an educational philosophy and a set of techniques for teaching and learning. Flexible approaches increase the degree of student control over when, what, where, how and at what pace they learn. These include approaches to teaching and learning which are less time and place dependent than more traditional forms of teaching. The term is associated with an approach to education that is more learner-centred and that increases the learner’s responsibility for his or her own learning. (Johnston, 2001, p 1)

The main imperatives given for using flexible approaches are the need to cater equitably and cost-effectively for students on all three campuses and to attract Tasmanians to the University who currently study externally at mainland universities. Flexible approaches are seen as crucial to growth in student numbers and this theme is repeated in the Teaching and Learning Development Plan 2004–2006.

In addition to espousing equity for students in different life circumstances and growth in student numbers, the paper links flexibility to ‘up-to-date teaching approaches’. There are references to catering for different learning styles and approaches, learning experiences that model professional and workplace environments and developing independent learners.
The paper is not prescriptive about how flexibility is to be achieved. A broad range of examples illustrate the scope of possibilities and the point is emphasised that flexibility does not necessarily involve the use of technology:

Flexibility does not have to rely on ICT and a number of approaches to flexible teaching and learning have nothing to do with ICT. However, various technologies do offer new opportunities for flexibility within the teaching and learning context. (pp 1–2)

The current evaluation referred to the following modes (see Appendix B for definitions used): video conferencing, resource-supported, resource-dependent, flexible scheduling, workplace learning, web-supported, web-dependent and fully online.

Finally, the paper lists four benefits for staff of flexible teaching and learning:

- Flexible approaches to teaching and learning provide potential for academic workloads to be organised more flexibly.
- Teaching across campuses can be accommodated without the necessity to travel on a regular basis.
- There are opportunities to use resource materials that are developed elsewhere (for example, by others within the University of Tasmania, by commercial providers or by other universities).
- There is potential to establish collaborative or commercial arrangements in which resource materials developed within the University of Tasmania are used in other universities or other teaching situations (for example, continuing and professional education).

Research method

All academic staff were given an opportunity to participate and to express their viewpoints and experiences through the completion of a questionnaire. Additionally, staff randomly selected from each school were invited to participate in focus groups conducted to clarify questions arising from the initial data collection. Interviews were conducted with nominated staff from all faculties. These ensured an in-depth exposure to a range of views from across the university.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire (see Appendix C) used a combination of 5-point Likert scales and open-ended questions to address the issues enumerated in the project brief. Participation was anonymous.

The questionnaire was constructed so as to be applicable to staff with no experience of flexible teaching and learning as well as those with limited or extensive experience. The broad topic areas were:

- faculty and teaching experience;
- understanding of and experience with flexible teaching and learning;
- perceptions of encouragement;
- perceived adequacy of training and support;
- perceived impact on approaches to teaching;
- perceived impact on workload and career;
- infrastructure issues; and
• satisfaction with flexible teaching and learning.

A list of definitions of the eight approaches to flexible teaching and learning was appended to the questionnaire (see Appendix B).

The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning), via global email, issued an invitation to all academic staff to complete the questionnaire. Staff were encouraged to participate regardless of their level of involvement with flexible teaching and learning. The initial period for completing the questionnaire was two weeks, beginning on 4 October. As the deadline approached, a reminder was issued and the final date for completion was extended to 29 October.

A questionnaire website was established by the Flexible Education Unit (FEU) and respondents were invited to complete the questionnaire online. Alternatively, respondents had the option to request a hard copy and return their completed questionnaires to the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor. Nineteen percent of respondents submitted hard copies.

Respondents were invited at the end of the questionnaire to notify the evaluators by email if they wished to be contacted or to participate in a focus group.

**Interviews**

The evaluators aimed to interview 20 academic staff. Associate deans (teaching and learning), school catalysts and members of the Project Steering Committee were invited to suggest names of people who might be approached for an interview. It was stipulated that those invited to be interviewed should reflect:

• the range of flexible teaching and learning methods used with particular emphasis on web-based and cross-campus teaching methods;
• different levels of involvement in flexible teaching and learning to provide realistic insight into the range of perceptions and impacts;
• the three campuses; and
• the six faculties.

The evaluators received a list of 40 academic staff whom they contacted by email, inviting them to participate in a taped interview during the week of 18 October. The invitation was accompanied by a description of the evaluation project which stated how the interviews would be conducted and how the information so obtained would be handled (see Appendix D). The evaluators undertook to maintain confidentiality and to provide participants an opportunity to review and edit transcripts of interview tapes. The right of withdrawal was also assured.

Twenty-two interviews were conducted on the Hobart and Launceston campuses during the week of 18 October and one additional interview was conducted during the week of 22 November.

Eighteen questions covering the same topics as those addressed in the questionnaire guided the interviews (see Appendix E).

**Focus groups**

The purpose of the focus groups was to give staff who had not been nominated for interviews an opportunity to speak to the evaluators and to provide the evaluators an opportunity to clarify issues arising from preliminary analysis of questionnaires and interviews.
Five staff who completed the questionnaire contacted the evaluators and expressed interest in participating in focus groups. In addition, the evaluators randomly selected 141 staff from lists on faculty websites. In total, 146 staff were invited to participate in focus groups on the Hobart and Launceston campuses during the week of 22 November. Thirteen agreed to participate and three groups were scheduled.

In the group discussions, the evaluators sought clarification on four broad topics:

• the facilities for flexible teaching and learning, with reference to flexible physical spaces with appropriate equipment, timetabling, video conferencing and staff computing equipment and software;
• the work involved in flexible teaching and learning, with reference to workload, the effect of experience and the different forms of work involved;
• the future directions of flexible teaching and learning at UTAS; and
• the relation of flexible teaching and learning to new approaches to curriculum and pedagogy.
SECTION 2

Participants in the evaluation

The evaluation aimed to give all academic staff an opportunity to contribute. All academic staff were invited to anonymously complete a questionnaire. In addition, interviews were conducted with nominated staff and focus groups were conducted to clarify questions arising from the initial data collection. The characteristics of respondents are detailed below. Comparisons of the distribution by faculty and campus with university-wide data follow a discussion of the characteristics of questionnaire respondents, interviewees and participants in focus groups.

Questionnaire

All academic staff were invited to anonymously complete the questionnaire. Of 130 questionnaires submitted, 26 were submitted in hard copy and 114 online. Not all respondents answered all questions so there are small variations in the number of responses to individual items.

Tables 2.1 and 2.2 show the distribution of respondents by faculty and campus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arts</th>
<th>Commerce</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Hlth Sci</th>
<th>Law</th>
<th>SE&amp;T</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.1 Distribution of questionnaire respondents by faculty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Hobart</th>
<th>Launceston</th>
<th>Burnie</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Science</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE&amp;T</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All faculties</td>
<td>85 (66%)</td>
<td>43 (33%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.2 Distribution of questionnaire respondents by campus

Respondents’ length of service at the University of Tasmania is given in Table 2.3. More than half have been at the University for more than five years while only 10 percent have been resident for less than one year. Their reports, therefore, are based on familiarity with the University.
Table 2.3 Length of service by faculty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>&lt; 1 Year</th>
<th>1 – 5 Years</th>
<th>&gt; 5 Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Science</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE&amp;T</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All faculties</td>
<td>13 (10%)</td>
<td>43 (33%)</td>
<td>73 (57%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The breakdown of Semester 1 teaching of undergraduates and postgraduates by respondents is given in Table 2.4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Undergraduate</th>
<th>Postgraduate</th>
<th>Both</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Science</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE&amp;T</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All faculties</td>
<td>77 (61%)</td>
<td>8 (6%)</td>
<td>41 (33%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.4 Teaching level by faculty

Interviews

Interviews were conducted with twenty-three staff. Two of these interviews could not be transcribed because of poor recording quality and the interviewees declined an invitation to be re-interviewed.

The distribution of interviewees by faculty is given in Table 2.5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Arts</th>
<th>Commerce</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Hlth Sci</th>
<th>Law</th>
<th>SE&amp;T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.5 Distribution of interviewees by campus

Two-thirds of the interviewees are based in Hobart and one-third in Launceston; no interviewees are based in Burnie. Similarly, two-thirds have been teaching at the University of Tasmania for more than five years and one-third from one to five years; none have been at the University for less than one year.

Ten respondents reported teaching only undergraduates and a further ten reported teaching both undergraduates and postgraduates. One reported teaching only postgraduates.
Supervision of postgraduate research students was not regarded as teaching for the purposes of this question.

Focus groups
Three focus groups were conducted. One was conducted in Launceston with four participants. Two were conducted in Hobart with three participants in one and only one in the other. In all cases staff who had indicated they intended to take part failed to attend. Launceston participants were drawn from the Faculties of Arts, Science, Engineering and Technology and Health Science. Hobart participants were drawn from Arts, Science, Engineering and Technology and Commerce.

Representativeness of the sample
Because of the manner in which questionnaire respondents, interviewees and focus group participants were selected, no claim of their representativeness can be made. As noted previously, all academic staff were invited to answer the questionnaire and those who did, did so voluntarily. Focus group participants were individuals who responded to a request sent to a random selection of staff in each school; only a small proportion of those sent a request accepted the invitation. Participants in the evaluation may or may not be representative of staff in their schools or faculties but the three methods of soliciting participation have very likely ensured a comprehensive range of input.

Interviewees were nominated by a range of individuals involved in flexible teaching. Some nominees were unable or unwilling to be interviewed. There was no intent that interviewees be representative of overall staff views. Rather interviewees were selected to ensure the collection of in-depth opinions and views from across the university. This objective was achieved.

The tables below indicate the degree to which the distribution of the characteristics of questionnaire respondents and interviewees are similar, or not, to the characteristics of all academic staff at the university.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Questionnaire sample</th>
<th>Interview sample</th>
<th>All full-time and part-time academic staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Science</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE&amp;T</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.6 Percentage of questionnaire and interview samples and all full-time and part-time academic staff by faculty

It is clear from Table 2.6 above that the Faculty of Commerce is well over-represented by questionnaire respondents, while the Faculties of Health Science and of Science, Engineering and Technology are under-represented. The process of selection of
The home campuses of respondents, interviewees and all academic staff are given in Table 2.7. The proportions of both questionnaire respondents and interviewees were similar to the campus distribution of all academic staff.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campus</th>
<th>Questionnaire sample</th>
<th>Interview sample</th>
<th>All full-time and part-time academic staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hobart</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Launceston</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnie</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.7 Percentage of questionnaire and interview samples and all full-time and part-time academic staff by campus

The gender of questionnaire respondents is unknown. Eleven interviewees (52 percent) are female and ten (48 percent) male. This compares with 38 percent female and 62 percent male for faculty-based academic staff. Females are thus over-represented in interviews.
Experience with flexible approaches

One major impact of the University’s flexible teaching and learning agenda on academic staff is the high level of use of flexible approaches to teaching and learning. Staff across the University report having significant experience with flexible approaches to teaching for on-campus students as well as with cross-campus teaching and distance teaching.

Experience with flexible approaches and cross-campus teaching

Questionnaire respondents report having significant experience of flexible teaching and learning (Table 3.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Sci</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE&amp;T</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1 Amount of experience by faculty (N=130)

In all faculties except Law, notably more staff report having significant or a great deal of experience with flexible teaching and learning than report having little or no experience (Table 3.2). Conversely, fewer than 30 percent of respondents in all faculties except Law report little or no experience.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>% with little or no experience with FT&amp;L</th>
<th>% with significant or a great deal of experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Science</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE&amp;T</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All faculties</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2 Experience with flexible teaching and learning by faculty

Close to 60 percent of respondents report experience with cross-campus teaching although the proportion varies considerably by faculty. Very high proportions of respondents in Arts and Commerce, but few in Health Science, report experience. Details are in Table 3.3 below.
Table 3.3 Experience with cross-campus teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>% Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Science</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE&amp;T</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All faculties</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use of various modes of flexible teaching and learning

A wide variety of approaches to flexible teaching and learning are encouraged and supported by the University. The questionnaire sought information on the use made over the last three years of eight modes. Respondents were provided with the definitions below.

Patterns of use

Table 3.4 shows the percentage of questionnaire respondents in each faculty who had used each of the eight flexible teaching and learning modes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Arts</th>
<th>Commerce</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Hlth Sci</th>
<th>Law</th>
<th>SE&amp;T</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Video conferencing</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource-supported</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource-dependent</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible scheduling</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace learning</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web-supported</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web-dependent</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fully online</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.4 Percentage of respondents in each faculty using each mode.

Video conferencing is live 2-way interaction by video link between teaching staff and students at a remote location (e.g. another campus). Overall just under half of respondents reported using video conferencing in the last three years. Fifty percent or more of respondents in the Faculties of Arts, Commerce and Education reported its use.

Resource-supported teaching and learning occurs when learning resources are provided to supplement other teaching arrangements (such as face-to-face). For example, recorded audiotapes, audio CDs, videotapes of lectures, seminars etc. are provided for study or review purposes. This approach was used by over 40 percent of respondents. Significant use is made of resource-supported teaching in units and courses available through distance education. Fifty percent or more of respondents in the Faculties of Education, Health Science and Science, Engineering and Technology report its use within the past three years.
**Resource-dependent** teaching occurs when learning resources are an integral, and compulsory, part of the teaching program, complementing other teaching arrangements and replacing some or all face-to-face teaching. It is a mode of flexible teaching much less practiced than either video conferencing or resource-supported teaching. A significant minority of respondents in the Faculties of Commerce, Education and Health Science use this approach.

**Flexible scheduling** refers to teaching in which either face-to-face classes are held outside normal University teaching times (e.g. in the evening, in weekend blocks or in summer or winter schools), or a course or unit is taken outside standard semester dates. Approximately one in four respondents use flexible scheduling although its use is concentrated in the Faculties of Education, Science, Engineering and Technology, and Commerce. Much of its use in Science, Engineering and Technology is for the scheduling of laboratories and fieldwork outside normal teaching times.

**Workplace learning** refers to the situation in which a formal, assessable or compulsory workplace learning component (e.g. workplace project, practicum, placement) is in place. It is little used outside Health Science.

**Web-supported** teaching occurs when the Web is used to supplement or support other teaching arrangements such as face-to-face or distance. Access to the Web is not compulsory for students as all assessable requirements are available through other teaching arrangements. It is the mode of flexible teaching and learning most commonly reported to have been used during the past three years. Fully three-quarters of all respondents have experience with this mode of flexible teaching. Faculty percentages range from a low of 64 percent in Science, Engineering and Technology to a high of 90 percent in Arts.

**Web-dependent** teaching uses the Web as an integral, and compulsory, part of the mix of teaching and learning for the unit. It is used (a) for the presentation of or access to course content and/or (b) for communication with staff and/or other students and/or (c) for formal assessment purposes. Other complementary teaching arrangements (e.g. face-to-face classes) are in place. One-third of all respondents have made use of this mode. Fifty percent or more of respondents in the faculties of Commerce and Health Science have done so.

**Fully on-line** uses the Web as the only formal and compulsory teaching and learning medium for: (a) the presentation of and access to content; (b) communications between students and staff; and (c) continuous assessment. Any other teaching or orientation arrangements are non-compulsory, or not on offer. End of semester examinations may be held and supervised in the normal way. It is not much used at the University. Only ten respondents (eight percent) indicated its use in the last three years. There was no use at all by respondents in the Faculties of Education and Law.

**Few staff use only one mode of flexible teaching**  
Table 3.4 indicated that questionnaire respondents have a significant and complex pattern of experience with a wide variety of approaches to flexible teaching and learning. Table 3.5 shows that only a minority, one-quarter, have made use of only a single mode. Rather, respondents mix and match modes in an attempt to meet the needs of their students. Sixty-one percent of respondents make use of two, three or four flexible teaching modes.
Table 3.5 Number of modes used by respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of modes used</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of respondents</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of respondents</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.5 shows the most common number of additional modes employed by those who reported using each of the eight modes. Users of web-supported approaches, for example, most commonly have used one other mode, whereas users of resource-dependent approaches most commonly have used four other modes as well.

The data do not provide an explanation for this. One possibility is that, by encouraging the use of WebCT and providing access to individual academics, the University has created a group of academic staff who support their traditional teaching with web-based resources but otherwise engage minimally with flexible approaches. Use of the other modes, in contrast, reflects a more general commitment to flexible approaches at course, school or faculty level and may entail more comprehensive consideration of course design options.

Table 3.6 The most commonly reported number of additional modes used by those reporting use of each mode

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Most common number of additional modes employed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Video conferencing</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource-supported</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource-dependent</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible scheduling</td>
<td>3 or 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace learning</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web-supported</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web-dependent</td>
<td>2 or 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fully online</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exploring this further, there is a significant minority of staff who appear to use web-supported approaches as an add-on to classroom, cross-campus and distance education. Twenty of the 32 respondents who have used one mode, and 26 of the 33 who have used two modes (see Table 3.5), had used web-supported approaches; thus, 71 percent of those who have used one or two modes have used the web-supported mode. These 46 respondents constitute 47 percent of the 98 who reported using the web-supported mode (see Table 3.4). Of those who use web-supported and one other mode, for 77 percent the other mode is video conferencing, resource-supported or resource-dependent.

Relationship between level of experience and number of approaches used
As we saw in Table 3.1, questionnaire respondents reported having significant experience of flexible teaching and learning. It is clear from Table 3.7 below that there is a relationship between the reported levels of experience and the number of modes of flexible teaching in
which respondents have engaged. Staff reporting little experience most commonly reported
the use of only one approach. Staff reporting a great deal of experience most commonly
reported experience with four approaches. It is not clear how to interpret this but it seems
likely that new users of flexible approaches typically engage in one or at most two modes of
flexible teaching. Two-thirds of respondents reporting little experience with flexible teaching
and learning make use of web-supported approaches. Approximately 20 percent make use
of video conferencing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reported level of experience with FT&amp;L</th>
<th>Most common number of approaches to FT&amp;L used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 None</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 A great deal</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.7 Number of modes used by level of experience

Summary of academic staff experience with flexible approaches
Academic staff report considerable experience with flexible approaches to teaching and
learning. The pattern of usage of various modes of flexible teaching is complex.

- Academic staff report having significant experience with flexible teaching and learning.
- Almost 60 percent of respondents report experience of cross-campus teaching.
- Three-quarters of respondents report the use of web-supported approaches to teaching.
- Over 40 percent of respondents report the use of video conferencing and of resource-
supported approaches to teaching.
- Over 20 percent of respondents report the use of resource-dependent approaches to
teaching and of flexible scheduling.
- Almost three-quarters of respondents report using more than one mode of flexible
teaching with approximately 60 percent using two, three or four modes.
- Users of web-supported teaching use, on average, fewer approaches than do users of
other modes.
- The number of approaches is positively related to the reported level of experience with
flexible teaching and learning.
Climate and encouragement

The University’s formal promotion of flexible approaches to teaching and learning dates from 2001. This section provides a summary of the factors staff see as facilitating and impeding flexible approaches. These factors are considered in greater detail in appropriate sections of the report. This is followed by a review of academic staff perceptions of encouragement and justification to use flexible approaches and of the impact on relationships among staff.

Facilitators and impediments

Respondents were asked in open-ended questions about factors that facilitate and impede flexible teaching and learning. Two questions concerned factors that enable staff to get started (Question 18) and facilitate the use of flexible approaches (Question 38), while two concerned barriers to getting started (Question 19) and major impediments to use (Question 39). Since many respondents gave similar answers to the pairs of questions, the responses for each pair are combined.

A summary of the categories of response is in Table 4.1. Factors are discussed in more detail below and in appropriate sections of the report.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Facilitator</th>
<th>Impediment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Climate, attitudes and knowledge</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition and incentives</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogy</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time and workload</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1. Number of respondents naming each factor.

Encouragement

In responses to the questionnaire and in the interviews, it was clear that staff were well aware of the priority the University places on flexible approaches to teaching and learning. This extends to encouragement in the faculties and schools.

Question 11 of the questionnaire asked respondents to rate the extent to which their faculty and school encourage them to use flexible approaches to teaching and learning (Table 4.2). Seventy-six percent agreed or strongly agreed with this statement whereas only four percent disagreed. Agreement was strongest in Commerce and Education (above 90 percent), moderately high in Arts and Health Science (77 and 76 percent) and weakest in Law and Science, Engineering and Technology (50 and 56 percent).
In answers to open-ended questions about factors that facilitate and impede the use of flexible approaches, seven mentioned recognition and incentives as facilitators and four mentioned their lack as impediments. In addition, five mentioned the existence of school policies and strategies as facilitators and four mentioned their lack as impediments.

Only 45 percent, however, agreed or strongly agreed that their head of school understands what is involved in flexible teaching and learning (Question 37; Table 4.3). Twenty-two percent disagreed and 10 percent either said they didn’t know or did not answer the question.

Interviewees gave examples of positive forms of encouragement in faculties and schools:

I can’t speak with much authority about the university-wide implementation but certainly within [my faculty] it is very much encouraged. It’s becoming more and more a focus of the way the Faculty operates and conducts its business and delivers its courses and programmes. There is a lot more in terms of resources … The Faculty are certainly making it more of a priority in the way they set up their programs to get enrolments in, to get numbers in, that sort of stuff and in making more professional development available to staff members such as myself. (interviewee)

Our current Head of School is very keen to assist us in any way [possible] and is very good at that. [The Head of School] makes time available for people to develop their teaching and learning skills. (interviewee)

Grants to assist flexible learning developments are one tangible form of encouragement. Twenty-six of the questionnaire respondents indicated that they had received such a grant, sometimes as part of a group, and two more were hoping to get one.

**Justification and value**

Question 12 asked respondents to indicate the extent to which the University had provided good justification for encouraging the widespread use of flexible teaching and learning (Table 4.5). Forty-two percent agreed or strongly agreed and 36 percent disagreed, indicating that there is no consensus about the adequacy of justification.
Table 4.5. The University has provided good justification for encouraging the widespread use of flexible teaching and learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Those who commented on the University's promotion of flexible teaching and learning tended to express confusion about what it means or to cite academic justification as an issue.

We need a discussion about what 'flexible' actually means and why it is important.
(.questionnaire respondent)

[We need] evidence that it's at least as good educationally as traditional methods.
(.questionnaire respondent)

Convincing staff of the pedagogical usefulness of flexible teaching strategies to their specific discipline. (questionnaire respondent)

[There is] no clear vision of why it should be done in specific units. (questionnaire respondent)

An understanding of why you need to work flexibly - how this looks and how working flexibly will contribute to the aims of a unit. (questionnaire respondent)

If we understood the benefits, and the students gave us feedback that supported these supposed benefits, perhaps attitudes will change. (questionnaire respondent)

Staff need to discover why they want to do it rather than be told. (questionnaire respondent)

Questionnaire respondents were also asked whether they were sceptical of the value of flexible teaching and learning in the subjects that they teach (Question 17; Table 4.6). Forty-nine percent disagreed or strongly disagreed, indicating that they were not sceptical, and 34 percent agreed. Respondents in the Faculty of Arts were most sceptical, with only 30 percent disagreeing and 50 percent agreeing. Respondents in faculties other than Arts do not differ greatly from one another with between 50 and 58 percent disagreeing with the statement and between 26 and 33 percent agreeing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.6. I am sceptical of the value of flexible teaching and learning in the subjects that I teach.

Respondents were asked the reasons for their scepticism. Their answers fell mainly into six categories:

- Flexible approaches are acceptable if they are used appropriately with adequate resourcing and good learning design (12 respondents).

   Having taught units flexibly I believe they can add value to students, but they have to be designed very carefully. (questionnaire respondent)

   Certain material is readily adaptable to flexible approaches. However there is other often practical material that I believe suffers from the approach. (questionnaire respondent)

   When not appropriately resourced or support[ed] it becomes a poor cousin. (questionnaire respondent)

   I am not sceptical about their value overall, just how we (at UTAS) are using them. (questionnaire respondent)
• Flexible approaches are inferior to traditional face-to-face teaching (12 respondents).
  Discipline specific issues indicate face-to-face and traditional teaching activities remain the most effective. (questionnaire respondent)
  I do not believe that flexible delivery achieves the same or better quality and quantity of knowledge and understanding, as traditional face-to-face methods. (questionnaire respondent)
  Important issues require a meeting, face-to-face. That’s why people have them. It’s the best way to communicate. (questionnaire respondent)
  It is not liked by either staff or students. Students gain more from a face-to-face experience and interaction with the other students. (questionnaire respondent)
  Inappropriate for laboratory units. Second best for tutorials and lectures. (questionnaire respondent)

• Flexible approaches are of dubious benefit to students or encourage inappropriate learning behaviour (10 respondents).
  While students like to have lecture notes, it seems to encourage a climate of non-attendance at lectures. (questionnaire respondent)
  … giving lecture notes on the web encourages a passive form of learning (spoon-feeding) and non-attendance at lectures and tutorials. (questionnaire respondent)
  … the use of WebCT to provide materials and communication with students seems to have resulted in an increase in demands from students who seem to be taking less and less responsibility for developing and managing their own learning. (questionnaire respondent)
  I am finding students’ level of understanding to be less than in the past as they are relying on the non face-to-face approach (skipping classes) & using the notes I provide to gain all the information (as an example) rather than using them as support material. (questionnaire respondent)
  Flexibility allows students to give university a lower priority than it deserves. (questionnaire respondent)

• The costs of flexible approaches are not worth the benefits (7 respondents).
  In many cases, particularly in relation to WebCT, I find that the amount of time I spend preparing and updating materials vastly outweighs the benefits. (questionnaire respondent)
  The cost to benefit ratio of flexible teaching options seems very low compared to just retaining traditional teaching styles. (questionnaire respondent)
  My impression is that the number of my students who benefit from things that might be considered “flexible” is close to outweighed by those for whom the reduction in imposed structure is a disadvantage, to the extent that the cost is unlikely to be justified. (questionnaire respondent)

• Using video for cross-campus teaching compromises the teaching or disadvantages students (6 respondents).
  I feel my teaching is compromised by these methods and that the learning experience of all students (at both ends of a videolink) is similarly compromised. (questionnaire respondent)
  So, in system terms, you have an enthusiastic and competent staff member unable to perform to capacity due to technical limitations. (questionnaire respondent)

• Flexible approaches are not suitable for all students and courses (5 respondents).
Most flexible strategies require a significant amount of self-directed learning, time management and motivation. This would suit the more able/motivated students, yet the bulk of undergraduates with which I have experience (1st and 2nd year) appear to have poor time management skills and motivation. (questionnaire respondent)

… the flexibility is a major problem for students with poor time-management, computer literacy or academic skills. (questionnaire respondent)

It is an important supplement, but is not a replacement for face-to-face teaching for early undergraduates. For later years and postgraduate, where self-directed learning skills have been developed, flexible delivery is very good for information-based teaching and learning. (questionnaire respondent)

**Impact on relationships with colleagues**

One matter of interest was the impact flexible teaching and learning might have on relationships among colleagues. Two questionnaire items and one interview question addressed this issue.

Questionnaire respondents were asked to rate the impact of flexible teaching and learning on relationships with colleagues not involved in these forms of teaching (Question 56; Table 4.7). Only a small percentage felt that there had been either positive or negative impacts. Fifty-five percent gave a neutral rating and 22 percent said they didn’t know.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
<th>Negative</th>
<th></th>
<th>Positive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4.7. Impact on relationship with colleagues not involved in flexible teaching and learning.**

A second item asked them to rate the impact on collegiality in their school (Question 57; Table 4.8). The pattern of responses was similar to the previous item and again the positive and negative responses were almost equally distributed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
<th>Negative</th>
<th></th>
<th>Positive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4.8. Impact on collegiality in your school.**

Some reported that flexible teaching and learning increased interaction within their school.

We have great conversations now about teaching and learning. We didn’t form a teaching and learning committee until all this happened in the university. It’s really helped our relationships because we can be innovative and we can have those conversations and even if it’s about assessment practices … it’s good. (interviewee)

It has increased communication in the school as we try to work out how to deal with it. It has facilitated shared teaching and there is much less preciousness about who ‘owns’ teaching material as it is now so public. The entire notion of ‘ownership’ of teaching materials is breaking down. (interviewee)

Collegiality in the school may have improved due to flexible teaching and learning as we often have a moan together about how much time it is taking and the indirect damage it is causing to our students. (questionnaire respondent)

Others, in contrast, felt that there was less interaction.

They have less time than before, less time to interact with each other. (interviewee)
There’s a definite move, and I think it’s probably across all universities and across all disciplines, a move for people to work off campus, particularly if a lot of their content is on line and their contact with their students is electronic contact rather than face-to-face contact. But a lot of my colleagues do have at home days now and that definitely affects the collegiality of the school. (interviewee)

It’s hard to isolate it from other things but I think it has contributed to a greater isolation of staff because I think just physically staff who take this up are spending more time sitting in front of their computer trying to get WebCT or flexibility working. It’s more closed door activity; it’s more teaching in private. (interviewee)

People don’t talk to each other like they used to. They talk to one another from their desks. … So people don’t get off their backsides and go and say, ‘hey, how are you going, I’ve got a bit of a problem here, can we talk about it.’ It’s all done by email in an impersonal, very business-like, minimalist way. The person has been taken out of relationships. (interviewee)

There was also some speculation about a divide between those who are involved in flexible teaching and learning and those who are not.

I think there is, yes, you can end up with a little bit of an in, this group and a that group. The group that I’m in can often feel pressured when other people are using it. That sort of feeling that they’re sort of being manipulated into having to do it; somehow they’re luddites if they don’t. (interviewee)

But I think those people who are doing graduate certificates in flexible delivery, and learning new terminology, and using it with each other are having to be cautious about how they phrase their views with their colleagues. I don’t think there are people isolated from engagement in teaching but there are people isolated from a discussion that one group might have just because of the language they are using. Where I have seen a discussion stop being productive, it is usually because of a trigger like that. So there are still good discussions about teaching but there is not so much a digital divide as a language or cultural divide. (interviewee)

Finally, some concern was expressed about attitudes. In answers to open-ended questions about factors that facilitate and impede the use of flexible approaches, five mentioned positive attitudes as facilitators and 19 mentioned negative attitudes as impediments. Seven mentioned the importance of teamwork.

The impact of teaching development grants

Twenty-six questionnaire respondents indicated that they have received a grant or other funding to become involved in flexible teaching and learning. Six interviewees did likewise. Both groups were asked to describe the use they made of the grant. Responses fell into three groups.

Six respondents used their grant in a variety of ways to enhance their skills for teaching flexibly.

(I used my grant) to buy out teaching resulting in time to explore this approach. (questionnaire respondent)

I was involved in a pilot project to develop the online component of a new unit, and used the small (but appreciated!) amount of funding involved to buy some time to spend on training and developments. (questionnaire respondent)

Sixteen respondents and three interviewees reported using their grant for the development of teaching approaches or learning resources.
Development of online and CD based resources. Grant paid for educational and technical support, and provided some teaching relief. Very beneficial. (questionnaire respondent)

We got a grant from Flexible Education, from Pro Vice-Chancellor to employ the services of web designers and course designers to put this bachelor’s degree together. And they’ve been excellent, and it just takes so much pressure off you because they can do with these web pages things that would take me two days, they can do them in half a day. (interviewee)

I have received [a number] of teaching development grants specifically related to various different forms/aspects of flexible teaching and learning … grants were used to enhance and expand opportunities for student-directed learning through a variety of different learning experiences. (questionnaire respondent)

One respondent and three interviewees report using their grant to trial the use of a technology for teaching, for research into assessment practices and for evaluation of various aspects of flexible teaching and learning.

A few years ago some colleagues and I did a survey, we had a teaching and development grant, and we did a survey of our students at the time, interviewed them, and they came back strongly saying, yes we like the flexible approach, yes we like things online, but we also want face-to-face teaching as well. (interviewee)

I've got a grant at the moment that's looking at … small group evaluation and peer group evaluation … with some people at Launceston. That’s because we feel that, even though quite a few universities have gone to that kind of small group, not necessarily problem-based, but small group learning model, there isn’t that much evidence [for] evidence-based assessment tools … We’ve found that, even though it’s worked very well for the students, if you try and use traditional assessment tools to evaluate performance in that type of environment, then they’re lacking, so we’re trying to address that as an issue. (interviewee)

Used [the grant] for training of self and staff, employment of additional expertise to help prepare material and write lectures; to monitor the effects of WebCT delivery; and to undertake research and prepare a series of field cases which could be adapted across several units. (questionnaire respondent)

I was involved in a sort of teaching and learning small grant where we looked at, we actually offered a WebCT, a course on WebCT. This was before the university had actually adopted WebCT. So I was involved in that and we tried all sorts of things with that to see how it would go. (interviewee)

**Staff perceptions of student reactions**

Questionnaire respondents were asked how students react to the use of flexible teaching and learning. Almost fifty percent believe students react positively with a further 24 percent choosing the neutral option. Only 14 percent of respondents believe students react negatively to flexible teaching.

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<tr>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
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<th>Positive</th>
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<td>12%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>24%</td>
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Table 4.9. Staff perceptions of student reactions to flexible teaching and learning

Interviewees likewise believe students have positive responses to flexible teaching and learning. Of the 18 interviewees expressing an opinion, 12 believe students react positively, four think students have ambivalent responses and two say they don’t know how students react. Many of these comments are long and complex. Some express a concern that students may have embraced flexible learning for the wrong reasons and that it may impact negatively on the depth and quality of their learning.
Questionnaire respondents made 28 comments concerning their perceptions of student reactions to flexible teaching and learning. Of these, seven suggest students have positive reactions, two that students are ambivalent and nineteen that students have negative attitudes. Staff expressing the view that students have negative responses cite problems with technology and its use, problems with slow line speeds and a desire for face-to-face teaching as the chief causes of student negativity. The balance of these comments is clearly at odds with the views of respondents in general.

Typical of responses suggesting students react positively are the following:

They seem positive and comfortable with it. I guess initially when I came here putting things on the web rather than handing out hard copies or making hard copies available for them to photocopy was new, and there was a bit of grumbling about it, but I haven’t heard any of that in the last two or three years. Whatever the problems were seem to have been ironed out or the students have just got used to it and found ways to manage. The ones who do the other flexible things like summer schools or distance, they are really positive about the opportunity to study that they wouldn’t have had otherwise. (interviewee)

I have noticed an expectation from students that Web-CT will be provided particularly from first year undergraduates. It is soon going to be unacceptable to say a unit is not available on Web-CT. (questionnaire respondent)

Responses suggesting students are ambivalent include the following.

It varies. I think it suits people who firstly understand computers and have good equipment at home, and who have commitments that keep them at home. I’ve got a number of students, pregnant women and fathers and mothers who need the flexibility of working from home. I thought there’d be differences between older and younger students in terms of liking or not liking computer learning, but it varies. There’s a mixture … it varies individually rather than an age group, or males and females. I’ve tried to elicit all of this so I get a feeling for what the cohort’s doing, but it’s so variable. It’s very much a personal preference one way or the other. People who I thought would like this kind of learning don’t. So I can’t find the common denominator that links people who like it with people who don’t. (interviewee)

When you ask the students the same questions at the end of year 2 and you evaluate what they’ve done, quite a few students don’t like it. They feel it’s very confronting. It’s very different, It’s a lot more uncertain to the other units. But that swings and changes a bit when you ask the same cohort similar questions in third year. When you hit them in fourth year with the same questions, they say it’s the most wonderful thing, it’s actually prepared us for what we’re doing now. Without it we’d be all at sea, thank you, keep doing it. So again that kind of mirrors their change in maturity in terms of their approach to learning. Most of our mature-age students think it’s great. (interviewee)

Summary of impact of climate and encouragement

Staff indicate qualified support for the value of flexible approaches to teaching and learning and for the continuation of the University’s agenda in this area. A variety of factors are identified by staff as either encouraging or discouraging their adoption of flexible approaches to teaching and learning.

- Respondents specify a variety of facilitators and impediments concerning their use of flexible approaches to teaching. The provision of appropriate support is the greatest facilitator with impacts on time and workload the greatest impediment.
- Seventy-six percent of respondents agree that their faculty and school encourage them to use flexible approaches to teaching and learning. Only four percent disagree.
• A significant minority of respondents, 45 percent, believe their head of school understands what is involved in teaching flexibly. Twenty-two percent do not believe this is so.

• Significant minorities, 42 percent and 36 percent respectively, believe the University has, or has not, provided a good justification for flexible teaching.

• Approximately one third of respondents indicate they are sceptical of the value of flexible approaches to teaching. Two-thirds are either neutral or are not sceptical.

• Only a small percentage of respondents feel that relationships with colleagues or levels of collegiality in their school have been affected by the adoption of flexible approaches to teaching.

• Respondents report using teaching development grants for three main purposes: skills development; the investigation and development of teaching approaches and learning resources; and trials, evaluations and research.

• Almost fifty-percent of respondents believe students react positively to flexible teaching. Fewer than 14 percent of respondents believe students react negatively.
SECTION 5

Impact on teaching strategies and methods

Section 3 documented that participants in this evaluation generally had significant experience of flexible teaching and learning and used a range of approaches. The diversity of experiences is reflected in the diversity of their perceptions of the impact on their teaching strategies and methods. Fifty-four percent of questionnaire respondents identified specific impacts on their teaching.

Thinking about teaching

Responses to open-ended questions on the questionnaire and the comments of those who participated in interviews and focus groups indicate that the flexible teaching and learning agenda has generated a great deal of thought and discussion about teaching. This is the case both for those who support the agenda and those who are ambivalent or critical.

Coming into a university initially we were very much enculturated into thinking you had a tutorial and you had a lecture and it was all face-to-face and it fitted into the timetable. I think it's gone way beyond that for us in thinking about assessment, and learning outcomes etc., and so the whole interest in flexible delivery has created a new dimension in teaching and learning that has been welcomed by academics because there's a lot more conversation. It's always on the agenda to look at different ways we might teach students and that's to improve our teaching practices, to make the best use of our time. (interviewee)

A lot of staff and students see it as code for shallow learning - ‘Despite what the terminology is it allows me to get my teaching out of the way just a little bit more easily, I don't need to go into depth as you can find it on WebCT and do it yourself’. ‘It's code for pushing it onto us and getting rid of your responsibility from the learning process.’ (interviewee)

One interviewee summed up how flexibility and pedagogy are intertwined:

I think that over the past five years or so the introduction of flexible delivery has been bundled up with greater discussion and debate and encouragement of good pedagogy. So it's very hard to unbundle the two. It's been to some extent a sort of Trojan horse. Coming in on the back of flexible delivery has been ‘well if we are going to do that we had better start talking about what learning objectives we are setting. And how we can assess against those and how we are going to design content’. So I don’t know I could unbundle the two and say flexible delivery resulted in better teaching or better learning outcomes but I think the way it's been introduced means that there's been a whole learning experience for the staff, an awareness raising for the staff, to do with fundamentals of teaching. So I wouldn’t attribute what has happened to flexible delivery as much as it's been, and that's on reflection, a good platform to address a whole range of issues. Personally I am teaching better because of my involvement in flexible delivery. (interviewee)

The reaction to this is not always positive as one focus group expressed:

- The pedagogy agenda has underpinned everything. In flexible teaching and learning, pedagogy is the Trojan horse (we will make you better teachers). The effect is to undermine confidence.

- Judging by SETL scores, academics broadly do a reasonable job of teaching. They are not in need of a total makeover. They can improve but is all the energy worth it?

How students learn

Some have been stimulated to reflect on the nature of student learning:
I suppose the ideal definition for me for my own teaching is to, it's driven by an understanding that different students learn in different ways. So therefore if you only give one set pattern of information delivery and reception, then you're not optimising the learning experience for your students. So, in an ideal world, what I'd like to do with my teaching is to enable students to access the same material in different ways. And also to do a bit of self-education for the students so that they're aware that there are different ways to actually learn, and I think that one of the things in [our] course that they do miss out on is that upfront discussion about different types of learning styles and strategies and personalities. (interviewee)

But also some insight into how students learn, I think, whether or not I’m correct in my assumptions. Just looking at how they interact on a weekly basis and trying to analyse and establish whether this is a good thing or not. It's given me some new insights, I think, into flexible education and particularly the online component. (interviewee)

Must take constructivist approach and take time to consider the multiple ways students learn (brain research). (questionnaire respondent)

Strategies need to take into account inter-student differences more than standard teaching. (questionnaire respondent)

The biggest effect is that in planning content and programme you suddenly focus on what each student actually learns and walks away with rather than focussing on the body of knowledge. (questionnaire respondent)

One mentioned that monitoring students' learning activities in the online environment provides information for reflection:

The other ability it has given me is the ability to track students and to monitor them on an individual access basis so for this year in my … course I have been keeping an eye on how students have been responding to the course. Have they been accessing the reading materials when I expect them to, why haven’t they, or when have they? (interviewee)

Planning course design

Some commented on how they had been stimulated to think of their teaching strategies in relation to learning outcomes:

Focus on achieving learning outcomes. (questionnaire respondent)

Consideration of methods in relation to teaching outcomes. (questionnaire respondent)

Potentially, can enhance the clarity of teaching purpose. One often becomes clearer re needs of students, the objectives of teaching and the outcomes desired. (questionnaire respondent)

Careful planning to ensure the outcomes will be consistent with the objectives. (questionnaire respondent)

Others referred to the enhanced role of planning, particularly in relation to using WebCT:

I think when you are putting it on the web for the first time it does makes you think very carefully about the way you structure lectures and things and that’s good. (interviewee)

More focussed course design. (questionnaire respondent)

Each step or task has to be broken down, the process and outcomes need to be clearly documented. (questionnaire respondent)

And also understanding how to write well so that the information you present in a written sense on screen goes in at the level you want it to go in. (interviewee)

One was concerned about having to focus on presentation:

More of the teaching time spent on the superficial presentational aspects, less on thinking about the subject and the learning of it. (questionnaire respondent)
Working with new options
The new options presented by flexible approaches also led to reflection:

I think the need to consider alternative ways of doing things, and to reassess why we use particular strategies in teaching in the first place. (questionnaire respondent)

Encourages more innovative thinking and course development. (questionnaire respondent)

… a lot of the teaching I was doing … was classroom based, face-to-face, and since I have been here I have had to re-think a lot of that. A lot of the teaching I do now is done by email where a student emails me and says ‘I have just re-read the requirements for assignment number three but I am not sure what you mean by this phrase so can you explain it?’ and so I’ll spend half an hour typing up an email and flesh it out and give them examples and do all that which is what I would normally do if they were in a classroom. It’s still a two-way communication process but over time rather than an immediate exchange of information. That has been very interesting to think about. (interviewee)

There was considerable evidence of people looking for an appropriate mix of strategies based on their exploration of new approaches:

I do, with the honours students, multimedia and multi-dimensional presentations where we have hypotheticals and do all sorts of fun things and I thought maybe I should translate that to these undergrads as well and do more interesting things with them. Bring more face-to-face in. Still have it completely online but with a participation component that’s compulsory, so that they do actually meet more often and they do get to know each other and they do put a face to the name on the screen and get them more involved. (interviewee)

Lectures and other classroom activities
Question 26 of the questionnaire asked whether flexible teaching and learning experience has a positive impact on face-to-face teaching (Table 5.1). Slightly more than one-third of respondents agreed that this was the case.

| Don’t Know | Strongly disagree | | | Strongly agree |
|---|---|---|---|
| 9% | 13% | 16% | 26% | 24% | 13% |

Table 5.1. Experience with flexible teaching and learning has a positive impact on face-to-face teaching.

Staff frequently commented in different contexts that the use of WebCT had meant reduced attendance at lectures and some felt that this should be counteracted:

Students have the lecture material available on the Web, and many don't attend lectures. (questionnaire respondent)

It means an end to the formal lecture, too, which has its place but is not always the most effective method of communicating information. (questionnaire respondent)

So I’m losing attendance in lectures, not so much in workshops because those questions are in the right sort of style to what’s on the exam and I suppose, I tell them that, and attendance is about 80-90% but in the lectures I get about 60% in first hour and 40% in second hour. So I’m looking at ways of reversing that because that has another effect. Because they are not coming to lectures, they end up emailing me a lot more and saying can you explain this concept to me, I don’t quite understand it from the notes or the book. It does make it quite annoying as I get thirty students individually asking me about this concept as opposed to them coming to the lecture when they could get it in one go. (interviewee)

Adopt a standard objective for as many units as is possible to become web-supported such that online materials alone contain sufficient material to barely PASS the assessment requirements. (questionnaire respondent)
Assessment
Some concern was expressed about online assessment, although only six questionnaire respondents mentioned that they used online assessment:

I believe that online assessment is a farce and undermines the standards of the University. Some of my colleagues are conducting online "exams" that are open book and can be taken as many times as the student likes. (questionnaire respondent)

Assessment presents a challenge, as there is no such thing as a closed book exam online. (questionnaire respondent)

It makes it easier for lecturers to use multiple-choice forms of assessment (in my view also damaging educationally since they encourage shallow learning). (questionnaire respondent)

Others commented that online tools are useful for some aspects of assessment:

Speeds up some assessment processes. (questionnaire respondent)

Giving feedback on assessment is easier. (questionnaire respondent)

Other flexible approaches provide new assessment options:

Workplace learning … enabling for example, students to complete key assessments in the clinical/practice domain. (questionnaire respondent)

So next year I will have some games I will put into the curriculum and actually assess them. And they are being developed in consultation with the students. (interviewee)

Quality and richness of learning experiences
The majority of questionnaire respondents agreed that flexible teaching and learning can enrich students' learning experiences (Question 25; Table 5.2).

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Table 5.2. Flexible teaching and learning can enrich students' learning experiences.

Some made general comments about the variety of options available with flexible approaches:

There are many innovative teaching and learning practices available to the informed lecturer. (questionnaire respondent)

More use of case studies and real world examples once we were freed of classroom limitations. (questionnaire respondent)

It’s enriched my pedagogy. It’s given me different ways of doing things. It’s given me the means to explore different facets of communication, which means I can cater to a wider range of students depending on their situation and that’s invaluable. (interviewee)

The most frequent comments relating to this question concerned making learning resources available online:

Allows me to provide more information and more resources such as multi-media experiences. (questionnaire respondent)

Provides students with resources to gain greater understanding and deeper learning. Enables me to provide [students] with a range of complementary resources. (questionnaire respondent)
WebCT and Vista have provided essential resources for students. Eg. Lecture notes and readings, data-sets. Experimental manipulation and information resources accessed via this medium have also been advantageous. (questionnaire respondent)

The availability of different modes of presentation was also noted:

I have been able to put into place ideas about meeting the variety and variation in the student body. So in terms of educational theory etc. we have different kinds of learners and WebCT has given me a very good basic mechanism to be able to respond in some ways to that. It has also given us the ability to offer a little more pastoral care without bogging me down. (interviewee)

Students able to access material in a different mode. (questionnaire respondent)

Some felt that classroom time can be used more productively in combination with WebCT:

There is a danger that flexible delivery tools such as online lecture notes will encourage students to adopt a passive approach to learning where they need not interact with the lecturer or other students. A live lecture, while it has certain limitations, asks students to actively gauge what information is important, and to process the information to some degree as they takes notes on it. On the other hand, I have found dot-pointed WebCT notes provided in advance very useful, as students can download basic, concrete information, and can then annotate this with their own interpretations and assessments of the lecture material. This approach prevents the kind of incident I have experienced, where a student memorized and reproduced online lecture notes verbatim in an exam. (questionnaire respondent)

The use of narrated (theoretically-focused) lecture notes being placed online (via Vista) to allow students to review theory before coming to a two-hour workshop where we undertake in-depth analysis of the material and practical exercises. … The online delivery of theory material allows much richer interactions in workshops. (questionnaire respondent)

… my lecturing style is very active, is very much oriented to deep learning and I put forward to the students the proposition that they do the reading before they turn up to the lecture because WebCT allows me to deliver the readings to them way in advance. They can read the lecture, I put up the notes of last year’s or this year’s lecture, and the students talk, in the main, about how different that learning experience is to most of their other learning experiences where they get delivered packages either physically as readers or on WebCT as a static process and that’s the self contained learning universe that they have. And while WebCT is very good as a bulk teaching method delivering a set of static teaching materials, it is seen by many as no more than a way of putting up lecture notes and reading lists or something else in addition to the course that allows students to access it rather than handing out handouts or photocopies. So its kind of an alternative to a photocopier. (interviewee)

I spend more time out of the classroom preparing. Once I’m in the classroom I guess it frees me up, the way I use it, it frees me up to go into more depth than I otherwise might have to if I’m doing everything in the old fashioned chalk and talk way. … So I like to work through examples live in my lectures and having a computer in there and being able to do things in a different way that’s not just static has really improved the students’ understanding. (interviewee)

Some commented that flexible approaches that do not have a face-to-face component prevent them from adjusting their presentation to current circumstances:

I find it more constraining. I tend to like to innovate on the run a little bit and I find the necessity to have fixed themes and things put up takes a lot of the spontaneity out of teaching, your ability to react in tutorials and to build that into things, so I feel constrained a bit on that. (interviewee)

Cannot ad lib, examples and other material 'in the mind' and able to be pulled out for face-to-face lecturing are not available. Also, cannot adapt to changing global circumstances or
weekly events - without significant re-writing or add-ons as current events unfold.
(questionnaire respondent)

Some commented that video conferencing has a negative impact on their teaching style:

I find tele-conference lectures constrain me a great deal. I like to use the stage a lot for dramatic effect as I have had dramatic training. I cannot do this when using tele-conference technology and I feel it takes away from my lectures. My teaching evaluation scores may drop and this worries me somewhat. There is particularly a drop in the drama of the presentation of visuals. In [my field] I show a lot of ... slides. Many of these have a dramatic impact when shown on a large screen in a lecture theatre. In a tele-conference they come up on the small screen and are nowhere near as dramatic. This takes away from their value as illustrations of points I am making in the lecture. (interviewee)

I think, particularly if you are teaching face-to-face simultaneously, your interactivity with an audience is limited. If you’re used to bouncing around all over the place and being a fairly energetic person in front of a class which I traditionally enjoyed doing then it's not so easy. You are limited by your microphones and your data projector and your data show and being there to put things on it so it screens up and all the rest of it, so the communication is different. Some people may think it is better. (interviewee)

**Student responsibility and choice**

Question 20 asked respondents to rate whether teaching flexibly requires more individual student responsibility for mastering course content (Table 5.3). Seventy percent of respondents agreed with this statement.

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Table 5.3. Flexible teaching and learning requires more student responsibility for mastering course content.

Slightly more than half also agreed that teaching flexibly requires introducing more individual student choice when designing learning experiences (Question 21; Table 5.4).

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<td>40%</td>
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Table 5.4. Flexible teaching and learning requires introducing more student choice.

Some made reference to the positive benefits of student choice:

Student ownership of learning. (questionnaire respondent)

Gives more control to students, and creates more freedom re time and place, which means it’s easier to deal with students restricted by time and place. Can also be more equitable for a range of reasons. (questionnaire respondent)

One felt that, though student choice is desirable, it isn’t necessarily offered:

Re [increasing student choice] - I think it should but i don’t believe this is the approach that we have taken [to date!]. (questionnaire respondent)
The comments about student responsibility for learning implied mixed views about whether this is desirable or achieved:

- Used to develop [and] support student independence. (questionnaire respondent)
- Even though the teacher may be passionate about FT it requires a motivation from the students to ensure contact and interaction. It provides flexibility to students and choice of how they want or need to learn. (questionnaire respondent)
- Of necessity, teaching becomes more student-focused; they learn at their own pace and therefore the onus is on them to seek help and so on. (questionnaire respondent)
- It is one good way to get the content across and for students to take greater responsibility in this area but still allow the teacher to develop conceptual understandings and competencies. Those areas are the ones that need the face-to-face interaction. (questionnaire respondent)
- In my view of what my colleagues are doing I believe that the effects are largely about shifting the responsibility of learning to the student. (questionnaire respondent)

Some reported that student failure to take responsibility caused extra work for them:

- The most significant effect is a negative one - any task where students work independently simply means that teachers devote time to preparing the task, then must devote more time to providing back up and support and reassurance that the students have completed it correctly, and chasing up those who haven’t done it because they thought it would be ok to leave it to the last minute. It actually takes up more time than a face-to-face session to provide this flexible opportunity to students. (questionnaire respondent)
- It means that the students can, in theory, do some of their work in their own time and this can cut down on class time (for them and me). I tried it this year, unfortunately they just didn't do the work, and because it was course work and not assessable, I couldn't do anything about it. Relying on students to use IT alternatives to class means running after them and chasing them up all the time. (questionnaire respondent)

One respondent noted increased expectations of responsibility for students in units not taught flexibly:

- Expect more of students in other units. i.e. more reading and self-directed learning. (questionnaire respondent)

**Interaction with students**

Almost half of respondents disagreed that teaching flexibly increases the amount of interaction with students (Question 23; Table 5.5) and half disagreed that it increases the quality of interaction (Question 24; Table 5.6).

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*Table 5.5. Flexible teaching and learning increases the amount of interaction with students.*

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*Table 5.6. Flexible teaching and learning improves the quality of interaction with students.*
Some positive comments referred to communication in circumstances that otherwise are difficult:

- It's easier to deal with students restricted by time and place. (questionnaire respondent)
- On the up side, individualised contact with students, particularly in large classes; creation of better rapport than is possible in large lectures. (questionnaire respondent)

Others referred to the efficiency of online communication:

- Use of communication tools make it easy to answer requests for more information. ... Able to assess and give more regular feedback. (questionnaire respondent)
- Use of communication tools make it easy to answer requests for more information. (questionnaire respondent)

In contrast, others felt it reduced the efficiency of communication:

- I have less time to engage in academic teaching pursuits being reduced to answering students messages and comments requiring my attention. (questionnaire respondent)

Concern was expressed about losing rapport with students:

- Can act to reduce rapport with students, that makes teaching less rewarding. Students often choose to "opt out" of the face-to-face" sessions, even though I see these as essential. This decreases the quality of the learning and teaching experience. (questionnaire respondent)
- It disembodies and disempowers the lecturer, to the point where the lecturer is just a faceless email address, and the students are just email addresses too. The whole process is cold, clinical, and frustrating for lecturers and students alike. Ultimately, it suggests that 'teaching strategies and methods' are what they sound like - catchy phrases learnt from some website designed by faceless bureaucrats, with no heart and soul, and little meaning or relevance to what makes a unit or lecture or lecturer memorable and enjoyable. (questionnaire respondent)
- In my limited experience it has resulted in reduced exposure to students, which, strangely, is one of the more rewarding aspects of the job. But I can understand that it could be a more efficient way of teaching in the long run. It's just not always compatible with my personal teaching aims. (questionnaire respondent)
- Considering video conferencing, unable to build strong relationship with students. (questionnaire respondent)

One effect of lack of face-to-face contact with students for some is the inability to gauge how they are responding to their learning experiences:

- Frustration! Less knowing where students are at. (questionnaire respondent)
- You know when you’re talking to people and you’ve lost them or they’re totally engaged, and you can ramp up and ramp down and change your style, and people are different on different days. With this sort of virtual classroom, you don’t know how they’re reacting to what you’re writing, to what they’re reading, so pedagogically there are concerns that you may not be getting through. But then, the discussion postings and their essays are very passionate, so I guess at some level they get through and they achieve. They achieve really well. (interviewee)

**Interaction among students**

There were mixed views in response to a question about whether teaching flexibly requires structured student group interaction (Question 22; Table 5.7), with three-quarters choosing 2, 3 or 4 on the five-point scale. This presumably reflects the fact that flexible teaching and learning makes no particular prescriptions about learning groups.
Table 5.7. Flexible teaching and learning requires structured student group interaction.

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<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>24%</td>
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<td></td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>13%</td>
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</table>

Comments on student-student interaction most often focussed on the challenge of fostering such communication in online and video conferencing environments:

In reference to fully on line units the greatest challenge is to facilitate student interaction and involvement. (questionnaire respondent)

One colleague has a massive number of students online in a … programme. He has the knack of being able to stimulate students in an online environment, a kind of personalised caring approach that gives students a feeling of being part of a learning community. That’s not easy to do and is very time consuming as you well know. We try in this university, because we are small, to maintain a commitment to negotiated, student-centred learning, rather than the mass-production stuff. (interviewee)

If done correctly, students actually feel part of the class - even though they are at one campus and the lecturer is at another. (questionnaire respondent)

Improved student networking across State. (questionnaire respondent)

Others see fostering interaction as part of their flexible teaching and learning approach:

Less time is taken up with administration matters in the face-to-face sessions, freeing up some time for interactive activities in lecture sessions. Student/student assistance has increased. Study groups are the norm rather than the exception, with groups arranging ad hoc tutorials in the allocated hour each week - but only if they have specific areas of misunderstanding, not just to ask for the answer to last year’s exam questions. (questionnaire respondent)

(I am) always looking first for interactive possibilities rather than delivering content. (questionnaire respondent)

Less delivery. More student centred learning and interaction. (questionnaire respondent)

One referred to normally quiet students becoming more vocal in an online environment:

You tend to get more feedback from the less vocal students, but given that I get a lot of feedback anyway as I actively encourage it this does not seem a significant advantage, at least for my courses. (questionnaire respondent)

Team approaches, sharing and collaboration

For a number of staff, teaching flexibly and rethinking approaches to teaching and curriculum has involved increased cooperation in planning teaching. In some cases this has meant a degree of standardisation in order to manage student expectations:

The head of school at that time, we like a standardised approach to a certain number of things we use delivering units, so all undergraduate units had to be recorded, so that’s not to say you can’t be flexible in the way you deliver your units or whatever else, the head of school wasn’t saying that, but we didn’t want students having this option in first year and then getting to second year and finding the option wasn’t available. It was like, no, this is a hassle-free system, we will record all undergraduate units and then when we went to WebCT it was simply publishing them on WebCT. I suppose that’s where the majority of the School still is and exploring WebCT to do some different sort of stuff using discussion boards, setting them tasks … (interviewee)
Another example is the use of a team approach to teaching previously discrete units or coordinating what is taught in different units of a course:

I think, with the widest definition of flexible delivery, I think it’s just changed the whole way that we teach. We’ve shifted from an individual type of delivery in isolation to a very much more integrated teaching team approach where …. You know we’ve got all our evaluations (we do SETL and internal student evaluations and we do focus groups with the students) and then we’ll get, all that material will be collated together, and we’ll sit down on an afternoon and say, well, what went well, what didn’t go well … So it’s a lot more difficult to coordinate and to timetable, but it’s been good that all of the staff we’ve got are now, they see it as a collective responsibility type of delivering, so rather than one person who’s a unit coordinator who’s responsible for everything and they say what goes, it’s more, well, we’re just a team of colleagues. (interviewee)

Our first year students are taught by three different schools in two faculties and they all want to reference in a different way, for instance, so what we are doing now is working with these teams of academics and planning their year and their assessment all together so that you can see a coherent course rather [than] individuals merrily loading up students without any consideration for what else someone is asking them to do and whether or not you are repeating a skill. (interviewee)

A third type is collaboration and sharing between individual academics:

A colleague has developed a resources suite for first year students which I hope to use to bring starting students up to speed in areas in which they are weak. Many starting students have glaring weaknesses in preparation for university study and need such remedial work if they are to succeed. I do not anticipate that students will take up the suite en masse. Rather students will be referred to specific resources to address identified weaknesses. (interviewee)

And this last semester, an academic in Launceston and I have been offering, we’ve offered a brand new unit, and we developed it up together. And by using WebCT together, we were able to make sure that our Launceston students, which were 200 students all up, all had the same materials as everyone else and could to it cross-campus. And rather than two of us completely reinventing the same unit, we could do it together. (interviewee)

Progressive impact and evolution

One general conclusion is that the use of flexible approaches is evolutionary, with impact progressive as people explore possibilities. Some are at the beginning of the journey, considering what might be useful to them:

I’m still stuck with just lectures as I understand them. I think I haven’t explored it fully. It hasn’t made a lot of difference so far to me. I read the stuff about how it can make all these differences. I might get onto that in the future but I’m not sure. (interviewee)

People are looking at their individual units and saying ‘what is going to work for me, what suits this unit’. (interviewee)

Other cases involve collective exploration:

Another thing that was done in the school, the standard model used was a two hour lecture and a one hour tutorial, and we looked at that and do a lot more case study work and group work as they get into third year and really challenge their analytical skills and you can’t do that in a fifty-minute tutorial, so we started to change the model. (interviewee)

Others are continually thinking of new possibilities:

I think it’s actually facilitated a radical change in delivery of material. I mean, what we’d really like to do is, and we haven’t done it for a variety of reasons at the moment, is within this small group tutorial setting that we’re trying to facilitate the interaction of students and notes, is to
be able to do that in an online forum. At the moment the students meet four or five times a week in their tutorial groups and they’ve got quite prescriptive objectives they have to meet and they divvy up learning tasks. And then what’s good now is they’re into their swot vac and they’ve kept in those groups and they’re doing study work together and passing notes through and testing each other on the type of material they’re going to be examined on. But to be able to get something that was an online type of chat room where we could disseminate and exchange material within their tutorial groups, but then make it more open to the whole of the group would be something that would be very valuable. (interviewee)

**Summary of impact on teaching strategies and methods**

Participants in this evaluation generally have significant experience of flexible teaching and have used a range of approaches. This diversity of experience is reflected in diverse perceptions of the impact on their teaching strategies and methods. Fifty-four percent of questionnaire respondents identified specific impacts on their teaching.

- The flexible teaching and learning agenda has generated a great deal of thought and discussion about teaching.
- Specific aspects about which respondents indicate they have been thinking include the following:
  - how different groups of students best learn;
  - the planning and design of course curricula;
  - how to make use of new options made available through the adoption of flexible teaching methods;
  - the revised role to be played by lectures, tutorials and other classroom activities in flexible teaching and learning;
  - how to appropriately assess students’ achievement.
- The majority of questionnaire respondents, 58 percent, agree that flexible teaching and learning can enrich students’ learning experiences.
- Seventy percent of respondents agree that teaching flexibly requires more individual student responsibility for mastering course content.
- Almost half of respondents, 45 percent, disagreed that teaching flexibly increases the amount of interaction with students. Twenty-eight percent agree.
- Half of the respondents disagreed that teaching flexibly increases the quality of interaction. Twenty-three percent agree.
- Respondents are split on whether teaching flexibly requires structured student group interaction.
- For staff in a number of schools, teaching flexibly and rethinking approaches to teaching and curriculum has involved increased, team-based cooperation in planning teaching.
- The use of flexible approaches to teaching appears to be evolutionary, with impact progressive as people explore possibilities.
SECTION 6

Impact on academic work and careers

The introduction of flexible approaches is perceived to have had significant impacts on the nature, volume and distribution of the work involved in teaching and on academic work in general. It is also seen as potentially affecting the careers of staff.

The impact on academic work of the adoption of flexible teaching and learning is complex. A strong majority of staff believe that more work is involved when they teach flexibly. There are, however, a variety of views on what are the components of this increase and how these increases are distributed through the working week and year.

It is important to note that many of the comments that elaborated and illustrated responses to questionnaire items made specific reference to aspects of online teaching and learning. For example,

Teaching online is labour-intensive and can take more time than conventional teaching.
(QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONDENT)

This is not surprising as 87 percent of questionnaire respondents made some use of web-based approaches.

The amount of work and time required for teaching flexibly

In their answers to open-ended questions on the questionnaire, two-thirds of respondents referred to the time or work involved in flexible teaching and learning. Only two indicated that it involved less work than conventional teaching.

Questions 28 to 31 of the questionnaire asked respondents to indicate the extent to which four aspects of teaching flexibly increased teaching time and workload (Table 6.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire Item</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
<th>A great deal</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional development.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning technical skills.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing materials.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining materials.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.1 Whether aspects of teaching flexibly require time or increase workload (percent choosing each option).

In their comments, both questionnaire respondents and interviewees also drew attention to how their workload is affected by other factors attendant on flexible teaching. These include administrative and technical tasks and teaching processes during the semester.

Professional development and learning new skills

Approximately eighty percent of questionnaire respondents indicated that professional development and mastering necessary technical skills increase workload (Table 6.1). Several made specific reference to this in their comments, with 13 saying that having time to learn would facilitate their use of flexible approaches and 16 that lack of time to learn was an impediment.
Lack of time is a barrier - to set up anything on the internet you have to master a whole new set of IT skills (which is hard enough) plus master a whole new pedagogical approach plus create and maintain the site, once you've got it. It's a tremendous amount of work and cuts into after hours, weekends and research time. (questionnaire respondent)

[An enabling factor would be] definitely time out to build up one's skills, especially with web-based interactive programs which I feel would be an invaluable adjunct to the … postgraduate course that I coordinate and teach in. Currently, this course is under-resourced in terms of teaching staff and there is absolutely no time really to attend staff education. (questionnaire respondent)

[An enabling factor would be] time to explore different pedagogical approaches necessary. (questionnaire respondent)

**Preparing and maintaining learning resources**

Eighty-one percent of questionnaire respondents said that developing materials and 64 percent that maintaining materials for flexible teaching and learning increased workload (Table 6.1). In their comments, 16 identified preparation time as a facilitator and 28 identified lack of preparation time as an impediment. The majority of interviewees, 13 of 22, also indicated that the preparation of learning resources takes considerable time and increases workloads.

The preparation time understandably varies according to the scale and scope of learning resources that are prepared.

Well, it is more [work] … if you’re teaching internally, you have to do all the same things that you always did plus you have to do the other. So, you can make that a fairly small amount. It doesn’t need to be a huge amount, but it is certainly more, so it is extra … It’s extra at the start. You’ve got to set up your online thing … there’s a whole lot of bureaucratic procedures you have to go through to get it all up and ready to go. Yes, so certainly it adds another probably two days’ preparation at the start of semester. During semester it’s not too bad. (interviewee)

Preparation is much higher. Much, much higher. The volume’s much greater. (interviewee)

It took a long time to establish [the unit], to write all the lectures and to work out how to present that information. The first week’s work has got 100 files attached to it, so that was quite incredible to realise that. You know, there’s picture files and all sorts of documents and so on. (interviewee)

There was a suggestion that the time required is not so great once the initial work on a unit has been completed.

But now, once [the unit] was established, in terms of maintenance there’s very little requirement … I update the information … each year … That doesn’t take a lot of time now, so the establishment time was enormous, and the learning time because I didn’t know how to use various software and so on, but now maintenance is quite low. (interviewee)

**Managing teaching processes**

For some staff, online components have been added without alteration to their customary teaching activities, and this clearly increases their work.

I would say it’s definitely increased the teaching load … to stick with the face-to-face contact and provision of materials online and trying to integrate all this clearly increases your teaching load. (interviewee)

Although only 28 percent of questionnaire respondents believed that flexible approaches increase the amount of interaction with students (see Table 5.5), for some the use of WebCT has meant an explosion of communication with students.
Flexible teaching does not mean you spend less time on a unit. In my experience significant time is spent on e-communication. (interviewee)

Earlier this year I worked with 180 students in lectures and WebCT. I think I was averaging about 2-3 hours responding to WebCT every day! (questionnaire respondent)

Huge, largely unrecognised increases in workloads. If flexible learning is accompanied with chat rooms, discussion boards and email listings it provides students with access to staff 24 hours per day seven days per week … Monitoring these communications and responding can take many hours which are NOT part of most face-to-face lecturing and tutoring where perhaps 2 -3 hours per week max. of follow up by students results. … I have once logged 18 hours in one week monitoring communications. This amount of interaction is of course one measure of the success of WebCT and flexible delivery: BUT it MUST be matched with additional resources. (questionnaire respondent)

Others have found ways of using the electronic environment to improve efficiency of some aspects of teaching.

Giving feedback on assessment is easier. Less time is taken up with administration matters in the face-to-face sessions, freeing up some time for interactive activities in lecture sessions. Student/student assistance has increased. Study groups are the norm rather than the exception, with groups arranging ad hoc tutorials in the allocated hour each week - but only if they have specific areas of misunderstanding, not just to ask for the answer to last year’s exam questions. … More time is available for teaching and preparation of teaching materials, when unit administrative matters are dealt with electronically. I can organise my time more efficiently. (questionnaire respondent)

One questionnaire respondent commented that the focus of teaching activity had shifted to non-academic concerns.

More of the teaching time spent on the superficial presentational aspects, less on thinking about the subject and the learning of it. (questionnaire respondent)

**Administrative and technical tasks**

Several interviewees and respondents express concern that some of the extra time involved in flexible teaching is taken up with tasks of a non-academic nature at which they are often inexpert and inefficient. These are described as tasks of a technical, routine or administrative nature not requiring the expertise of an academic. Several staff suggest it is unrealistic to expect them to become efficient users of the ‘build’ mode of WebCT or Vista as at most they use it two or three times a year. They suggest they waste large amounts of time inexpertly doing tasks that can be done in a fraction of the time by an expert. Expert assistance, they suggest, would make unit development more efficient and free up their own time to engage in their key roles, namely teaching and conducting research. We return to this topic in the section on support later in the report.

It’s really just the preparation time and converting it to format so it can be put up on the web … I don’t have the expertise … it’s pointless to spend my time making up a WebCT quiz when my expertise is teaching and researching. I’m not an expert in flexible teaching or sitting around on computers … it’s not my area of expertise and will take me ten times as long a someone who knows what they are doing. (interviewee)

I find having lecturers doing this kind of stuff is a waste of their valuable skills and it’s a waste of the secretaries’ time. They have better skills than converting files and uploading things to computers, etc. (interviewee)

I think that academics using technological approaches to teaching on an intensive basis need more practical support and real assistance in developing materials. We should be the providers of the academic content, with technology experts assigned to design/upload/ prepare quizzes, etc., etc. (questionnaire respondent)
I think getting lecturers to be trained to a level where they are doing some of the more practical stuff like scanning things, putting things onto Vista proficiently is probably not using resources very well... We could have a web delivery and maintenance person who did that. I think that would really take a lot of pressure off me and I'd have to spend less time juggling with the computer program and spend more time using my true training which is doing research and writing. (interviewee)

Some also pointed out that web-dependent units can involve time consuming coordination tasks.

If you are involved in administering or coordinating a very heavily web-dependent unit, yes, workload has increased. It depends also on the size of the unit ... (Some units have) 40 – 45 students. So administering or coordinating those units, although no easy job, is much easier than coordinating a service unit with 150 – 250 students. (interviewee)

For example, last week ... I sent [the person who runs the first year unit] some PowerPoint slides down and said, look, here we go, this is what I need you to put up on the web for me, 'cause he's kind of the gatekeeper for WebCT. ... I don’t do that in second year, actually, for each of the individual staff members. I don’t have time to do that 'cause I'm doing so much else, but these are the rules, it’s your responsibility to format stuff in this way and upload it. I can’t be looking at everything that goes through, whereas [the person who runs the first year unit is] slightly different. He does that unit and doesn’t do anything else, so everything that comes through, he looks at. (interviewee)

Other administrative tasks required for online units are seen as taking academics away from core tasks.

The bureaucracy required to get permission to have control over a unit website or to set up WebCT for a unit is ridiculous. (questionnaire respondent)

Things are always cropping up that you realise you have got to supply, that people haven’t understood or can’t have access to. I mean one of the difficulties is coordinating with the Library, for example, in making sure that things are on e-reserve and that’s obviously got its limitations because of copyright and things, not to mention staff resources. (interviewee)

I think one of the problems, one of the issues that’s been raised was an understanding of how long it actually takes to properly administer and deliver a unit online. ... when we had the problem with intellectual property, and the university came and said, look, we’re being audited and you need to, every image you’ve got you need to go back, you need to find the source, you need to enter it. You know, we actually catalogued how long that would take and we reckon it was probably four months non-stop work for one person to enter every single image that we’d got into the database. Now when I went further up to the managers and said, well, look, is there any money to actually employ somebody to do it? No, you’re just going to have to do it. We don’t see it as being a priority. It’s your responsibility if it’s not done. ... So, what did we do to fix the problem? We now give out, instead of putting images online, we just put them on a CD-ROM. Students can come in and collect the CD-ROM, download the images to their computer, and we’ve been given advice that that circumvents the mass distribution and intellectual property issues. (interviewee)

Changes in the pattern and distribution of work

The questionnaire did not contain items addressing the pattern and distribution of work over the semester and the year but several respondents suggest flexible teaching has changed their pattern of work.

[There is a] total change in work patterns. (questionnaire respondent)
Interviewees discussed this issue in some detail and largely agreed that flexible teaching changes work patterns. The data noted above regarding increases in work and time required to develop skills and unit resources support this position.

The nature of the changes in the pattern and distribution of work throughout the working week and year is seen as being closely related to the forms of flexible teaching in which staff are engaged. Resource-supported and -dependent, web-supported and -dependent and fully online approaches require intense periods of work prior to unit delivery. A common theme is that inter-semester breaks no longer provide periods of relative calm for reflection, research or writing. Rather they are periods of intense activity in which staff prepare materials and unit sites for the upcoming semester’s teaching. Others, while agreeing that teaching activity is now spread throughout the year, are sceptical that the total time involved has increased significantly.

It’s hard to say [what is the impact of flexible teaching] because I’ve been doing bits of flexible stuff since I got here, web-supported, so I don’t know what it’s like without that … but it certainly has the effect of spreading the workload through the year more evenly … It’s more interrupted and strung out. Preparation is not that much different when getting up a new unit provided the technical support is there … You just have to think about it slightly differently. (interviewee)

One thing I find is that there’s no break between semesters, it’s just flat out all the way. … I’d say it has intensified throughout the semesters the amount of work and outside the semester times, well, it’s much the same. It’s intensified summer school compared with what it used to be … it’s intensified overall. (interviewee)

It’s pretty constant throughout the year. I don’t find there’s much let-up from it. (interviewee)

Distribution is probably not very much different. (interviewee)

A strongly held view of questionnaire respondents, and one supported by some interviewees, is that the teaching process is now more demanding of time. One contributing factor is their accessibility to students. Some staff report feeling they are on call all day, seven days a week. Just as there are now no periods of respite between semesters there are now no periods of respite during the week.

To my way of thinking the whole internet era, mobile learning era, has made us all accessible all the time … Now there is an expectation of immediacy, intimacy, and whatever, whatever, whatever. We are in real time all the time … Sometimes when I read emails, I might have been away from the office for a day and I might get home and check my email and there will be a raft of emails from students there at eleven o’clock at night. So do you respond to a student’s query at eleven o’clock at night or do you say, no, I will wait until office hours to respond to that. Where is it my time and where is it their time? (interviewee)

Not all interviewees, however, agree that this aspect of workload has increased and some indeed see flexible teaching as allowing a more efficient use of their time.

Like the students, you don’t need to be at the uni to attend to students needs, even when away on holidays or at conferences, you can keep in touch with their requirements. (questionnaire respondent)

We … need after each lecture to put things onto particular file servers within and without the school. There are small time impacts, scanning transparencies that I write on and putting those on web sites but that time really is, I won’t say negligible, because then no one would count it, but it’s really quite small. (interviewee)

More time is available for teaching and preparation of teaching materials, when unit administrative matters are dealt with electronically. I can organise my time more efficiently. (questionnaire respondent)
Staff involved in flexible scheduling, in contrast, report periods of intense activity followed by periods of relatively low demand on teaching time.

There are bursts of activity throughout the year where teaching seems to be concentrated ... It depends to whom you talk, just what their arrangements are, but I don’t think it makes that much of a difference ... It evens itself out I guess. There are slacker periods where you can take a bit of a breather. There’s always something to do but as far as the actual teaching goes there are bursts of intense activity and periods of relative calm. (interviewee)

**Few anticipate future time-savings**

Few academic staff anticipate increased workloads as being a temporary situation caused by their unfamiliarity with flexible teaching. Questionnaire respondents regard flexible approaches as being at best as demanding of teaching time as are conventional approaches. Only eight respondents (six percent) anticipate flexible learning will reduce teaching time when they are fully experienced (Question 33; Table 6.2).

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<th>40%</th>
<th>18%</th>
<th>5%</th>
<th>1%</th>
</tr>
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Table 6.2 When you have experience in flexible approaches, teaching flexibly requires less time overall than teaching the same students in traditional ways.

No interviewees supported the idea that flexible approaches can save teaching time once staff have become experienced in the approaches they have adopted. One suggested that this might be the case with fully online teaching but had no personal experience with this approach. Four interviewees suggested that flexible teaching requires no more teaching time than conventional teaching provided appropriate pedagogical approaches are adopted. One interviewee disagreed with this position, arguing that flexible teaching inevitably takes more time.

**Faculty workload allocation procedures**

The introduction of flexible approaches is perceived to have had significant impacts on the nature, volume and distribution of the work involved in teaching and on academic work in general. Interviewees and questionnaire respondents were asked whether workload allocation procedures in their school take into account the time taken to teach flexibly. Sixty percent of respondents reported that they do not (Question 32; Table 6.3). Only ten percent reported that they do.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>30%</th>
<th>25%</th>
<th>7%</th>
<th>3%</th>
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</thead>
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Table 6.3 Workload allocation procedures in my school take adequate account of the impact on workload of flexible teaching and learning.

Nineteen of the interviewees made comments about workload allocation procedures as did five questionnaire respondents. These fall into five groups.

The first group of comments suggest that workload allocation procedures are an issue generally and not just in relation to flexible teaching and learning.
Workload allocation processes here are a joke anyway. I think this is not even taken into consideration. It’s way down the list of divvying up who actually does what. And then, it’s so hard unless you’re there on the ground actually seeing who does what, and even if you count number of lectures, contact time, number of practicals, you know as well as I do, some practicals are really quite easy, don’t require much preparation, other practicals take a lot … . But no, look, the way workload is allocated is very historical and on the basis of who knows who. (interviewee)

No, not in my school, and it’s something that I think we will move towards … I think it is part of a bigger, a broader recognition by the school of people who are investing time in terms of the development of courses. We have, like most schools, a workload matrix and at the moment that does not properly reflect people who are putting time into teaching and learning. (interviewee)

Most allocation methods are not well understood or are seen as being opaque.

This year we’ve been trialling a workload allocation system that’s meant to be transparent which we’ve got from another school and I don’t know on what basis they’ve computed the preparation of a distance WebCT unit. For distance there may be an allocation but I don’t know if they’ve made any allocation just for the provision of WebCT. (interviewee)

I don’t think there has been any sort of quantified analysis of what [I am] doing in relation to somebody else but, having said that, I don’t think anyone understands the workload allocation system that’s just been put in place. It’s a new one which, are you left handed or right handed, you get a mark for that and it’s a difficult thing to actually make sense of, and it generates a number of which we still don’t know what the number means. (interviewee)

Most models are reported to be based on EFTSUs taught, with some consideration being given to how teaching is conducted.

Until now the teaching part of our workload has been calculated on EFTSUs. It’s purely based on student numbers and the weighting of the units. That doesn’t take into account a lot of things including whether it’s flexible or not. There is a move next year to move towards a slightly more complicated, more nuanced approach to it which may or may not take into account flexible teaching in a helpful way. I’m not sure. Bringing contact hours into the equation may impact negatively for teaching flexibly. (interviewee)

No, we have a teaching formula which involves the number of students they have in a given course or courses and the number of courses they teach and the number of hours they have to do and the like. To my recollection the formula does not factor in any flexible aspect although I suppose de facto it kind of does for if you are teaching a unit … which has Launceston students presumably you are credited with those students as well as the Hobart students even though you may not have a direct relationship with them on a regular basis as you would with the local students. (interviewee)

If people have to travel across campus, that’s taken into account. But whether you’re offering, and I think with distance they do take that into account. But with online, I don’t think they recognise the extra time. (interviewee)

Current models are seen by some respondents and interviewees as being inconsistent or inequitable.

I teach across three programmes and the number of EFTSUs I get in one program is significantly less than in the other two even though I do as much if not more work. In each area there is a separate way of working out the workload for each one. The Faculty needs to address this issue as there seems to be some inequity in the way workload is divvied up between different programmes but I don’t think it has anything to do with flexible delivery. (interviewee)

For the benefit of the tape the interviewee is shaking his head!! No, not at all. We’ve got a very crude workload model and it is assumed that all of our lecturers will make use of WebCT
and we will teach to some extent flexibly but as I have mentioned the general pattern of the school is three plus one and we don’t deviate too widely. Because we are all assumed to be doing it there is no account of that in our workload model. (interviewee)

No. I brought this up at a staff meeting because the previous Head of School, who isn’t like this at all, when I recorded the lectures and cancelled the lecture, he deleted twelve hours from my workload allocation model. As I said he’s not like that so I hate to think how some staff in the university were being treated. It’s a complex one because the workload allocation model is supposed to represent the work that we are doing so out pops a magic number at the end. The model that the faculty’s got is flawed if you aren’t involved in all the criteria it covers … I don’t know if we’ve got our teaching model correct at the moment without bringing in things like flexible delivery. (interviewee)

In a previous faculty flexible teaching was not considered ‘real’ teaching and was considered at a fraction of the imposed workload. (questionnaire respondent)

… I don’t think the academics think it’s particularly fair … Should academics be employed around so many students or [should] one look at contact and if you look at contact how are you going to take into account the fact of coordination, travel, etc. The ones that teach postgraduates are always arguing that postgraduates need more time than undergraduates whereas I would have thought it was the opposite. (interviewee)

A few respondents saw a lack of recognition in allocation models of the time demands of flexible teaching as being an impediment to its adoption.

A major increase in workload which is not recognised by workload models [is an impediment] (questionnaire respondent)

Explicit recognition of different forms of flexible teaching, including more recognition of distance education, in workload accounting [would facilitate flexible teaching]. (questionnaire respondent)

Little recognition of different structure of workload in flexible teaching [is an impediment]. (questionnaire respondent)

[The] lack of recognition in [the] school workload model about what is involved in setting up a unit online, or even web supported, [is a major barrier]. It's seen as something we embrace but for which get no recognition. (questionnaire respondent)

**Impact on careers**

Both interviewees and questionnaire respondents indicate that they anticipate the adoption of flexible teaching will impact on their careers both formally in terms of promotion and informally in terms of the achievement of career goals. Some see flexible teaching as having positive impacts. Others see negative impacts, especially in the way increased time spent on teaching affects their ability to conduct research and write for publication.

**Impact on time for research**

Four interviewees expressed concern that they were falling behind in their research and others, although not mentioning research as such, implied that extra time spent teaching had to come from somewhere. Twenty-three questionnaire respondents also saw flexible teaching as detracting from their ability to conduct research. Several staff expressed concern that promotion was still judged primarily on the basis of research output and that as dedicated teachers they risked losing out in their career.

The time it takes to prepare material takes away from the time available to do research as much of this takes place between semesters. This is a problem as one’s performance is mostly judged on the basis of research and publications. If one wants to be seen as an excellent teacher, as I do, then one has a dilemma. (interviewee)
[It gives me] less time for other core pursuits including lecture material development and research, which could hinder promotion. (questionnaire respondent)

Well, I have missed out on time to do research. To some extent I’ve missed out, I know this is going to sound horrible but, on some aspects of reputation. (interviewee)

If I develop an out of semester or flexible-learning course, all I do is increase my teaching load (as semester based teaching would still be expected) and limit my already squeezed time for research activity, graduate student supervision and annual leave. (questionnaire respondent)

[There is] lots more teaching and administration work at the expense of conducting research. (questionnaire respondent)

Two respondents expressed the view that flexible teaching had the potential to increase the time available for research.

Hopefully once established (i.e. once training, experience and set-up is accomplished) it will decrease face-to-face workloads enabling more time to be spent on other aspects of academic life such as research. (questionnaire respondent)

Involvement in flexible teaching will help achieve professional goals
Forty-five percent of respondents regard involvement in flexible teaching and learning as contributing to the achievement of their professional goals (Question 54; Table 6.4).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.4 Flexible teaching and learning contributes to the achievement of my professional goals.

For some staff, flexible teaching and learning increases their enjoyment of teaching.

I’ve been teaching for fifteen years so … I can say there has been a transformation in the recognition within the University of good teaching and support for people who want to do things that are new or innovative or excellent. There has been a cultural shift and personally it has been good for me because I enjoy it and it’s provided avenues for me to get recognition for good teaching. It’s created an atmosphere, an environment, where I have been able to learn a lot more about teaching in the past six years than I did in the first ten years and that’s made teaching much more enjoyable. When you do things well it’s more rewarding. (interviewee)

[Flexible teaching] enriches teaching experience. (questionnaire respondent)

[Significant impacts are] increasing the joy of the task; learning new things as a teacher. (questionnaire respondent)

[Flexible learning] creates a lively and enjoyable teaching environment and increases career satisfaction in teaching. (questionnaire respondent)

Others consider that developing skills and knowledge to teach flexibly will improve their career prospects.

Where someone is becoming involved initially, it’s a sort of tactical involvement so that you are involved in current developments in teaching and learning and that is being driven by career interests. At a secondary level, the hope is that you are actually going to improve your teaching, it’s ‘I’ll get onto this interesting new vanguard of teaching and hopefully that will generate some really good results’, but the original motivation is to get involved because of career aspirations. (interviewee)
Adoption of flexible methods puts me 'in favour' with the powers that be. (questionnaire respondent)

… I could use these skills to help me find another job. Maybe I could get out of lecturing and get into an aid to flexible teaching and learning. (interviewee)

It is easy to forecast that a real market for flexible delivery will open up in the future and those who are well versed in its philosophies and practices now are preparing themselves to participate in that environment. (questionnaire respondent)

Many other institutions have this on their essential or desirable criteria for appointments. I truly believe that for academic institutions to continue to cater for the variety of students with busy lives, those academics who can provide this type of teaching will go ahead. (questionnaire respondent)

Impact on prospects for promotion

Whether effort expended on flexible approaches will improve prospects for promotion is important to many staff. Only 22 percent expressed a positive view of promotion prospects resulting from engagement with flexible teaching and learning (Question 34; Table 6.5), while twenty-six percent disagreed. More than half, however, either didn’t know or chose the neutral point on the scale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>16%</th>
<th>32%</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.5 Involvement with flexible teaching and learning increases prospects for promotion.

Some respondents referred to this in an open-ended question (Question 35) that asked about the main impacts of flexible teaching and learning on academic work and careers. Among the varied responses to this question, eleven said that they thought their efforts were recognised by others or would be recognised for promotion or if they applied for other jobs and six more said that they hoped this would be the case; five said that they thought their efforts were not or would not be recognised.

[Flexible teaching] provides opportunities for recognition (promotion etc). (questionnaire respondent)

I would like to think it helps in promotion applications, but am not sure that it actually does so. (questionnaire respondent)

I’m not sure about the impact on careers. I hope that my experience will be advantageous for progression from short term contract employment. (questionnaire respondent)

As for careers - if you mean promotion then flexible teaching and learning should be considered as part of the whole teaching and learning (here, in practice - I don’t know). (questionnaire respondent)

It takes time, effort and energy that is not appreciated or valued within the system. It negatively impacts time for research and therefore careers as the focus of Universities is still towards research not teaching. (questionnaire respondent)

Because of the way in which ‘flexible etc’ has been promoted and idolised, the impression is that just by jumping on this bandwagon our careers will be improved (ie: greater chance of promotion). There is no evidence to disprove this theory, and in fact flexibility in teaching is an easy and eye-catching way to ensure that one has a better chance of promotion, with little relationship with whether this actually improves our teaching performance, let alone research skills. (questionnaire respondent)
Summary of impacts on workload and careers

Questionnaire respondents and interviewees identify the following impacts on academic work and careers.

- Flexible teaching and learning requires increased time and work to: acquire knowledge and learn skills; prepare and maintain learning resources and facilities; and, for some staff using web-based approaches, to communicate with students.
- Flexible teaching and learning changes the pattern and distribution of work through the year and week.
- For staff making significant use of online technologies, inter-semester breaks are no longer periods of calm but periods of intense activity used to prepare for teaching in the upcoming semester.
- For staff making significant use of online technologies for interactions with students, there are no periods of calm during the working week or even the weekend.
- Staff using flexible scheduling face periods of intense activity followed by periods of relative calm.
- Few staff anticipate that increased demands on their time will disappear as they become more expert at teaching flexibly.
- Web-based approaches increase the volume of non-academic (i.e. technical, administrative or clerical) work associated with teaching.
- A majority of respondents reported that workload allocation models do not take into account the work involved in teaching flexibly and only ten percent reported that they do.
- For some respondents, this lack of recognition in allocation models of the time demands of flexible teaching is an impediment to its adoption.
- Some staff anticipate negative impacts on career prospects as a result of decreased research output.
- Some staff anticipate enhanced career prospects.
- Some staff are experiencing enhanced satisfaction with teaching and achievement of career goals.
Support for flexible teaching

Support is the issue about which both interviewees and questionnaire respondents made the greatest number of comments. Sixteen of 22 interviewees (72 percent) discussed the vital role of both central and faculty- or school-based support. Seven (32 percent) suggested that some forms of needed support are not available. Forty-seven questionnaire respondents (36 percent) identified the availability, or lack, of suitable support as a major facilitator of, or impediment to, the adoption of flexible teaching. Collectively, respondents made in excess of 150 comments on aspects of support for flexible teaching (Questions 18, 19, 38, 39 and 47).

Respondents were asked whether preparing to undertake flexible teaching and learning requires expenditure of time in professional development or extra work learning technical skills (see Table 6.1). Eighty-two percent of respondents indicated they need some or a great deal of time for professional development while 78 percent agreed that increased workload is involved in learning new technical skills.

Both interviewees and respondents expressed a wide range of views concerning the current reality and desired state of support for flexible teaching and learning. There are few clear-cut findings. Rather, the ways in which staff understand these issues are complex and sometimes apparently contradictory.

Overall responses to the provision of support

Questions 44 to 46 asked questionnaire respondents to rate whether support from different sources was timely and adequate to their needs (Table 7.1). A significant minority reported support as being both timely and adequate. A smaller but still significant minority expressed dissatisfaction with the timeliness or adequacy of support. There are differences in the patterns of response of staff which are related to whether they have more or less experience in teaching flexibly. These are discussed below.

Support received from the FEU is rated as timely and adequate by 42 percent and as not timely or inadequate by 20 percent. The equivalent percentages for the support received from faculties and schools are 41 percent indicating timely and adequate and 23 percent indicating not timely or inadequate. The figures for central technical support are 28 percent and 18 percent respectively. Support from each of the three sources received a neutral or positive rating from between 59 and 64 percent of respondents. The number who said they didn’t know is relatively high, given the fact that only three respondents had no experience of flexible teaching and learning.

Differences exist in the perceptions of staff reporting they have significant or a great deal of experience with flexible teaching as opposed to little or no experience. Sixty-one percent of experienced staff rated FEU support as timely and adequate while only 40 percent of inexperienced staff did so. Twenty-five percent of inexperienced staff thought FEU support inadequate or not timely as opposed to 18 percent of experienced staff. A similar pattern of perceptions exists for the adequacy and timeliness of help provided by specialist faculty and school staff. Fifty-five percent of experienced staff thought such support adequate and timely compared to 27 percent of inexperienced staff. Perceptions of the adequacy and timeliness of support provided by central technical staff were very similar for both experienced and inexperienced staff.
The above suggests that experienced flexible teachers may have developed a network of support that is not available to the inexperienced.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of support</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FEU</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty or school</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central technical support</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.1 Timeliness and adequacy of support.

Respondents made a significant number of comments concerning the provision of support and how to improve on its delivery. Fourteen indicated the need for a greater number of staff available to provide support. Six expressed the need for support staff to be more responsive to their needs. Four indicated that general levels of help are adequate and five specifically mentioned the FEU as being supportive. Forty-eight respondents were silent. This presumably indicates a sufficient level of satisfaction to prevent them offering criticisms or advice. It does not mean, however, that staff have no concerns or suggestions for improvement of support mechanisms as is clear from the following comments.

I don’t see how flexible teaching hasn’t been supported. We’ve got the FEU, so you’ve got that point of contact, we’ve got a dedicated team working on WebCT and now Vista, and ITR, and now those three are starting to come together more and reviewing the impacts on each other. (interviewee)

There’s an increasing amount of resources on the University website, but to my mind there’s no strong sense that there’s a support structure. There are individuals who are providing good support but there is not a strong sense that if I phone this line I will go immediately to someone who will be able pull up the page and do things for me. (interviewee)

I find the support of FEU staff very, very useful. (interviewee)

I go to the FEU for help with web delivery or for video conferencing. They are very good. (interviewee)

The FEU is an excellent and supportive group of people and is the key factor. (questionnaire respondent)

I think the FEU is still seen as a web office: that all it is is WebCT, that all it does is WebCT training, all it does is advertise and facilitate the use of WebCT. There’s not much historically, there’s not much in terms of banner waving, that’s related to pedagogy. There certainly is not very much that links pedagogy to the use of technology. (interviewee)

[Support is available] in a whole variety of ways but mostly for online. The general feeling that a lot of staff have, and certainly in terms of on the ground delivery, it’s the online, WebCT, component. If you can come up with a proposal or an effort involving WebCT, then there will be some support given to you, there will be some funding made available. (interviewee)

Patterns of support received by academic staff

Three-quarters of questionnaire respondents reported being aware of the types of support that are available, with only 13 percent indicating a lack of awareness (Question 41; Table 7.2). Differences exist in the levels of awareness of staff reporting they have significant or a great deal of experience with flexible teaching as opposed to little or no experience. Eighty-eight percent of experienced staff, but only 54 percent of inexperienced staff, were aware of the types of support that are available. Furthermore, 36 percent of inexperienced staff
indicated they were not aware of available support as opposed to 7 percent of experienced staff. These results support the notion expressed above that experienced flexible teachers may have developed a network of support that is not available to the inexperienced.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.2 Awareness of types of support available.

Where do staff obtain support? Respondents indicate a wide range of sources of help and support (Question 40). Eighty-one respondents, 63 percent, reported receiving help from the FEU. This makes the FEU the single most important source of support for staff. Experienced and inexperienced staff however reported different experiences. Seventy-three percent of experienced staff, but only 45 percent of inexperienced staff, had received help from the FEU.

Next in importance were specialist faculty- or school-based staff. Details of staff in each faculty receiving support from such staff are given in Table 7.3. In three faculties, Arts, Commerce and Education, a majority of respondents have received such help. Overall 52 percent of respondents have been so supported although again a higher proportion of experienced staff, 65 percent, report receiving such help than do inexperienced staff at 38 percent. Substantial support is also received from colleagues or champions. Overall 49 percent of respondents have received help from colleagues or champions with 54 percent of experienced and 35 percent of inexperienced staff reporting such support.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Arts</th>
<th>Commerce</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Hlth Sci</th>
<th>Law</th>
<th>SE&amp;T</th>
<th>All faculties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specialist staff</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleagues etc.</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7.3 Percentage who had received help from specialist faculty or school staff and from colleagues and champions by faculty.

Central technical support staff are less used, with 32 respondents (25 percent) reporting having received such help. Twenty-eight percent of experienced staff and four percent of inexperienced staff had received such support.

Ten respondents reported receiving help from other sources. Their comments suggest that in most cases the source of help is faculty or school administrative or clerical staff.

These results and those reported above suggest that staff reporting little experience with flexible teaching and learning are not only less aware of available support and rate the support they do receive less favourably, but also have received less support than experienced staff.

For what purpose is support received? Respondents were asked to indicate for what purpose they received support (Question 42; Table 7.4). A majority reported receiving training in the use of technologies and help with technical problems. A minority reported receiving advice on teaching strategies or administrative support for flexible teaching.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of support received</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advice on teaching strategies</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training in the use of technologies</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help with technical problems</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative support for FT&amp;L</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 7.4 Purpose of support received.**

These responses may help explain the last two quotes of the previous section which are in essence that support is more readily available for technical and technology matters than it is for the educational issues raised by flexible teaching and learning. The perception that this is so is discussed in the following section.

Respondents were asked to assess whether adequate technical support (Question 13) and advice regarding pedagogical strategies is available (Question 14). Overall 36 percent indicate adequate technical support is available and 35 percent that adequate advice on pedagogical strategies is available (Table 7.5). As might be expected staff experienced with flexible teaching and learning were more positive than inexperienced staff. Forty-two percent of experienced staff as opposed to 25 percent of inexperienced staff rated technical support as adequate. The equivalent figures for adequacy of pedagogical advice are 44 percent and 18 percent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technical support</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogical strategy</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 7.5 Adequacy of technical and pedagogical support.**

Overall it is hard to resist the conclusion that staff who are inexperienced in flexible teaching and learning find it difficult to get access to the help and support they feel they need.

**How can support for flexible teaching and learning be improved?**

Questionnaire respondents were asked how the quality and scope of support for flexible teaching and learning could be improved (Question 47). As already noted they responded with some 155 comments. These range from short phrases to long paragraphs and are very varied. Table 7.6 below provides a summary of the topics to which they are addressed.
## Table 7.6 Ways of improving support for flexible teaching.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic of comments</th>
<th>Number of comments</th>
<th>% of comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase the number of people providing support.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make time available to develop materials and understanding.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use appropriate ways to develop skills and understanding.</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide help in ways not currently available.</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locate support staff appropriately.</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve technology systems.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve quality of support.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Numbers of support staff and time available

Four respondents suggested support would be improved if more staff were available. One respondent specifically noted the need for more technical staff. Typical of these comments are the following.

- Providing more staff who could provide that support i.e. being more proactive to encourage staff to view online as being part of a necessary change in the way education is delivered [would improve things]. I do get the feeling many of the FEU staff are overworked. That is not to say they are not helpful. (questionnaire respondent)

- The people in the FEU who give teaching advice (e.g. teach the graduate certificate) are run off their feet. What are their numbers compared to the number of technical staff? (focus group)

A greater number (11) suggested that the greatest support for the development of flexible teaching would be the provision of more time.

- Definitely time out to build up one’s skills (would be supportive), especially with web-based interactive programs. (questionnaire respondent)

### How should the development of skills and understandings be supported?

Respondents made 23 comments regarding appropriate ways in which to deliver professional and technology skills development. Five, 22 percent of these, suggested that more one-on-one training is needed as this is particularly effective.

- Despite well-run courses, the best help is individual. (questionnaire respondent)

- I think that there needs to be more preparation for, instead of organising courses, I think there needs to be more one on one, so that somebody can go and sit with an academic, it would only take half an hour to an hour to run through what they need to know, rather than expecting people to come and sit in a formal course. Most people don’t have their time
structured so that they can ….. And I think that that would help break down a lot of the barriers, if they were prepared to do a little bit of a travelling training and just get people to help set up their particular unit online. (interviewee)

Nine, 39 percent, referred to the efficacy or desirability of workshops and training sessions. Respondents are best described as ambivalent regarding their value.

I’ve done a couple of the workshops which are sometimes helpful. I’ve been to some that were very badly thought out and I’ve been to some that were quite useful except that the equipment was down on the day so there wasn’t much we could do and the person running it had to look up the files herself to answer questions. So there could be a little work in improving some of the workshops. (interviewee)

A training course in Web CT that is not time intensive (i.e. 2 hours max.) that includes an overview of the teaching and learning options available and the basic unit design processes [would be useful]. (questionnaire respondent)

As noted above by an interviewee, some staff find it difficult to attend scheduled workshops and training sessions. Two respondents suggested that learning resources be developed that can be used flexibly by staff!

I’d love to see some overall, maybe even packaging, of the information about how to get started and how to use things rather than having to navigate your way round a whole series of sections and sub-sections and things that take you a long time. ‘A beginner’s guide to WebCT’ or something that really does start you off with the very basic things rather than telling you how to run a chat room before you’ve even learnt how to put something on the home page. The logic of their presentation doesn’t seem to be oriented to our point of view, of what our priorities are and where we start as teachers. (interviewee)

[The] availability of software on office computers for self-learning [would be supportive]. (questionnaire respondent)

Three respondents (13 percent) suggested a need to be exposed to models of effective practice, a position supported by focus group participants.

Much more definite models for use and the limits of the technology. Much of the process has been our own trial and error over the years, which is not very practical given workloads. (questionnaire respondent)

[Provide] clear guidance [on] what is required for flexible teaching and learning. [We] need some good examples. (questionnaire respondent)

Two strategies for support are: (1) at school level, present 1–2 hour case studies; (2) include a unit on flexible teaching in the new graduate certificate. (focus group)

Try an open garden scheme approach to presenting inventive teaching and learning strategies. Invite people to drop in to classes and see how it works. Talking about things is less effective than seeing it in action. (focus group)

Four respondents, 17 percent, indicate a need for more discussion and debate on the concept and practice of flexible learning.

Frank discussion and acknowledgement of some of the dilemmas of using FT&L, eg quality vs innovation, impact on SETLs etc. (questionnaire respondent)

Detailed discussion of real pedagogical issues relevant to my discipline and specific units. (questionnaire respondent)

Training and advice or hands-on assistance?
Respondents made more comments on this topic than on any other. Seventy-four respondents did so. Their comments fall into two groups of almost equal size.
The first group of comments address aspects of the provision of training and advice on the design of flexible teaching and learning resources, the use of technology for teaching and like topics. They concern the provision of up-front expert advice and training in areas which academic staff see as being their responsibility.

The second group of comments address the need for hands-on support with technical tasks, with administration and with solving technical problems and glitches. They concern the need for staff who can relieve academics of some of the repetitive technical and administrative aspects of flexible teaching that academic staff regard as taking away from the time they can devote to core activities.

Some respondents express the view that it is easy to get support of the first sort but difficult to get the hands-on help of the second sort.

They (the FEU) will give you a list of guidelines, policies, procedures, examples, but next to no assistance with the actual implementation. (questionnaire respondent)

Advice and training
Thirty-six respondents made comments in the first group concerning the provision of expert advice and training and the ways in which it can be improved. Twenty-five concern the need for advice and training to be more focussed on teaching strategies and other issues of curriculum and lesson design than is now the case. Nine respondents expressed the need for support staff to have an understanding of discipline-specific teaching approaches and needs. These comments are consistent with the general comments about support referred to earlier that ‘the FEU is still seen as a web office … that all it does is WebCT training, all it does is advertise and facilitate the use of WebCT’ and ‘[Support is available] in a whole variety of ways but mostly for online’. The following comments are illustrative.

I don’t feel as though there is anyone I can go to for educational help. For help in learning how best I could teach particular concepts. I am sure once again the FEU would say ‘hey, what about us’ and they are probably right but I don’t feel as though, if I wanted to sit down with someone to say ‘OK, this is my curriculum, these are the concepts that I want to get across, these are the typical misconceptions that the students get, these are the weak areas, these are the strengths, re-design my delivery methodology so that I can maximise flexibility and convey these concepts in a better way’, I don’t know where I’d go. (interviewee)

I’d like quite a bit more on pedagogy and I’d like to be trained in how [to do] particular things. I know there are no answers, there are no simple answers, there are so many learning styles, that you can’t say ‘you should teach this way and it will be successful’, but I’d like some educational oversight or hints rather than simply application level support. (interviewee)

More assistance on teaching strategies, at the time when courses are being devised [would be supportive]. (questionnaire respondent)

Training courses: discipline specific strategies rather than generic educationalist training which is often unrelated to (and not particularly interested in) the kinds of teaching my discipline requires. (questionnaire respondent)

More staff for supporting flexible teaching who have a science background. (questionnaire respondent)

Detailed discussion of real pedagogical issues relevant to my discipline and specific units. (questionnaire respondent)

Nine indicated the need for increased levels of support concerning the design of learning resources as distinct from the design of overall teaching approaches.

[Support would] possibly [be improved through] more specialist support for unit/course development. (questionnaire respondent)
Somebody to actually help develop content including quizzes based on lecture material [would be useful]. (questionnaire respondent)

[A lack of] specific suggestions provided by development experts - remember instructional designers? - [is an impediment]. (questionnaire respondent)

Smaller numbers of respondents, four and two respectively, indicated a need for improving technical training and for greater support in evaluating teaching and learning outcomes.

Specific and individual (if necessary) technological support: for instance, I needed to learn how to digitally record lectures, convert the files to appropriate formats, and post them on the web. My faculty officers, though helpful, had neither the time nor the specific training to teach me how to do this immediately. (questionnaire respondent)

Introducing a serious critical review process (optional of course) to help staff continue to improve their teaching and unit structure ... [including] measures of the educational success of units rather than a reliance on SETL which measures student happiness. (questionnaire respondent)

Hands-on support
Thirty-eight respondents made comments on the need for support from individuals providing hands-on, on-going assistance with technical tasks, with administration and with solving technical problems and glitches. Twelve made comments on the need for ‘doers’ to assist with the performance of ongoing technical tasks such as creating unit home pages, uploading files, creating online quizzes and the like. Eighteen indicated a desire to have accessible and quickly responsive assistance in solving technical problems and glitches. These are seen as individuals who will come running when an academic shouts ‘help!’ Eight indicated a desire for help with some of the administrative aspects of teaching and learning such as the form-filling associated with setting up web sites or obtaining copyright clearances.

The workload model that expects staff to develop technical skills and do all the work is wrong. Tedious little things take a long time. Skills learned in training, if they are not used regularly, have to be relearned. (focus group)

Having a faculty-based or school-based support team, with academics providing the content, is a better solution. Some schools provide such support with people on call to help. A significant amount of the technical work is better done by someone else. (focus group)

Building staff capacity so that everyone does everything needs review. The university should back off loading it all onto academic staff. (focus group)

Academics are running around being trained all the time. A more specialised approach is needed. (focus group)

The real help I want is more time, so someone to take some of the time it takes to do it for me so I have time to do other things, that’s the main thing. I have asked our Head of School if it is possible to hire a student to be a dogsbody to photocopy or load up quizzes and lectures, convert documents to pdf, that kind of thing. I find having lecturers doing this kind of stuff is a waste of their valuable skills and it’s a waste of the secretaries’ time. They have better skills than converting files and uploading things to computers, etc. (interviewee)

I guess having someone who is dedicated to doing some of the more practical stuff like scanning things, putting things onto Vista. I think getting lecturers to be trained to a level where they are doing it proficiently is probably not using resources very well. If there were a number of people who did that all the time for a number of lecturers, then that would be better than training lecturers to do it. One person could serve several schools maybe, like we have science librarians each serving several schools. We could have a web delivery and maintenance person who did that. I think that would really take a lot of pressure off me and I’d have to spend less time juggling with the computer program and spend more time using my true training which is doing research and writing. (interviewee)
We got a grant … to employ the services of web designers and course designers to put this bachelor’s degree together. And they’ve been excellent, and it just takes so much pressure off you because they can do with these web pages things that would take me two days, they can do them in half a day. So they’re experts … and it’s not until these people came on board that I realised how valuable they are because they’re so good at what they do and we’re just amateurs and we look amateurish as well. We’ve got the teaching skills, they’ve got the design skills. And they know enough about teaching to understand what we need and how to do it. So that kind of support, whether it’s actual dollars to purchase this or whether the service is granted to us, would make all the difference. (interviewee)

[Support would be improved] if the FEU provided service rather than advice. (questionnaire respondent)

Where should support staff be located?

Eighteen respondents (12 percent) commented on the desirability of support staff being located in schools. Such staff are seen as likely to be better informed about school needs and to be more immediately accessible and responsive. There is some evidence that school and faculty-based support is being provided although in some cases there appears to be confusion concerning the range and nature of their responsibilities. The last two comments come from academics in the same school!

Faculty-based support teams work well. (focus group)

More support available on a faculty level, rather than a university level - would allow support to be provided in the particular context needed. (questionnaire respondent)

In school support staff are needed - centralised support is great, but not immediate or accessible enough. (questionnaire respondent)

FT&L teams within schools to provide ongoing local pedagogical and technical support (questionnaire respondent)

I have moved away from thinking, gee, wouldn’t it be nice to have a high level of centralised support and I’d actually prefer this distributed model. I think what we are seeing in schools now is the schools putting on a support person who’s an educational developer and I think that’s a model that will emerge in schools, or two schools will share a person who will be out among the troops and I think that model which seems to be emerging is a good one. (interviewee)

Well broadly speaking we [have] appointed a person, [a senior academic] to support staff, to explore flexible teaching and learning opportunities and to also, I guess, to help staff at that interface between what’s offered centrally and within the school. (interviewee)

We have a team of three support staff in [the faculty]. They are on contract for one more year and then who knows. Staff who have a significant web component feel that support is inadequate … We need technical support at the school level to provide training, some maintenance and development assistance. (interviewee)

We do have IT people in the faculty who help us with our computers when they go wrong and don’t print and stuff but I’m not aware, and I’ve certainly never asked them for help with WebCT and I’m not aware anyone else has, but that is not to say that they don’t and can’t do it. It wouldn’t occur to me to ask them frankly. (interviewee)

More supportive systems for flexible teaching

A small number of respondents felt that the University needs better technology systems to support flexible teaching than are currently in place. Three commented specifically on WebCT/Vista, two on video conferencing systems and on teaching spaces and one on the need to develop digital teaching resources that can be drawn on by all academic staff.

[We need] better support from IT services to ensure that equipment actually works when you want it to. (questionnaire respondent)
Stop VISTA going down all the time, speed it up. (questionnaire respondent)
WebCT is too limiting - a clunker. (questionnaire respondent)
[We need] improved facilities in teaching spaces. (questionnaire respondent)
[We need] MUCH better technology for video conferencing [is] required, especially for larger classes. (questionnaire respondent)
[We need] whole school resource development for image databases, icon sets, etc. (questionnaire respondent)

Summary of support issues and their impact on staff involvement
A number of support issues are reported by academic staff as impacting on their involvement with flexible teaching and learning. Support is the issue about which interviewees and questionnaire respondents have most to say. Appropriate support is a vital facilitator of involvement in flexible teaching and learning. Although academic staff are reasonably satisfied with the support they receive they indicate the need for forms of support not currently available and make many suggestions for improvements to those that are available.

- Almost half of questionnaire respondents report support as being both timely and adequate.
- Support received from the FEU and from specialist faculty and school staff is rated as more adequate and timely than is support received from central technical support staff.
- Three-quarters of questionnaire respondents report being aware of the types of support that are available.
- The FEU is the single most important source of support for staff followed by specialist faculty and school staff, colleagues and champions, and central technical support staff.
- A significant majority of respondents report having received training in the use of technologies and help with technical problems.
- Fewer than 40 percent of respondents report having received advice on teaching strategies and fewer than 30 percent report receiving assistance with the administrative aspects of flexible teaching.
- There are differences in the use of support services and in perceptions of their adequacy between staff experienced in flexible teaching and learning and inexperienced staff.
- Respondents suggest that workshops are not the most effective way to help staff develop the skills and understandings needed for teaching flexibly. They suggest one-on-one training, on-line resources and exposure to models of good practice as more effective approaches.
- Staff report current support as largely being the provision of advice and training rather than the provision of ongoing assistance with the use of technology, the solving of technical problems or the completion of administrative tasks. They report the need for this latter kind of support.
- There is strong support for faculties and schools to provide support.
Infrastructure issues and their impact

As noted earlier in the discussion of facilitators and impediments (see Table 4.1), several aspects of the University’s infrastructure are seen as impacting negatively on the ability of academic staff to achieve their goals for flexible teaching and learning. Indeed some issues are seen as affecting the University’s ability to do so. In all cases, it is a minority of respondents who raise these issues directly.

Infrastructure issues identified as impeding the adoption of flexible approaches, and hence impacting negatively on academic staff, are as follows:

- staff and student access to, and the adequacy of, equipment for flexible teaching and learning, including,
  - the adequacy and compatibility of staff computers and software;
  - student access to appropriate computers, software and networks;
  - the ease of use and functionality of WebCT or Vista and constraints on teaching resulting from these;
  - the ease of use, functionality and reliability of video conferencing facilities and equipment and constraints on teaching resulting from these;
- the appropriateness and adequacy of teaching facilities including video conferencing spaces and student computer labs;
- timetabling constraints.

The following sections analyse the responses of interviewees, questionnaire respondents and focus group participants in order to unpack or elucidate the meaning of the quantitative questionnaire data.

Access to and adequacy of equipment and software

A majority of questionnaire respondents (54 percent) report having easy access to the equipment needed for flexible teaching and learning (Question 49; Table 8.1). Twenty-nine respondents (24 percent) disagree, of which the great majority strongly disagree. There is clearly a significant minority of respondents who regard difficulties with access to needed equipment as impeding their efforts in flexible teaching. Ten interviewees identified infrastructure issues as impediments to the adoption and further development of flexible teaching at the University. The concerns of this minority are discussed in the following section.

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Table 8.1 Easy access to the equipment needed for flexible teaching.

An analysis of interviewee and respondent comments and of the conclusions reached in focus groups helps identify some of the difficulties faced by staff.

One issue is that of the adequacy and compatibility of staff computers and software. The provision of computing equipment for academic staff is the responsibility of faculties and
schools and there appears to be variability in the adequacy of provision. This is seen as causing problems as the University increasingly makes use of online technologies to support teaching and learning. Staff are seen as needing compatible machines and access to a compatible and up-to-date suite of software. Ten questionnaire respondents made comments that the provision of appropriate computers and software was a facilitator but that the lack of these had negative impacts on their ability to teach flexibly. Four interviewees raised this as an issue and a specific aspect of this, the reliability and functionality of Vista on the Macintosh, was discussed in one of the focus groups.

And there’s the issue about download times and getting everything in the right format and then getting access for the actual programs, and that’s the other thing, there is no, and that’s one of my biggest gripes is that there’s no standardisation of software and machines. It’s absolutely crazy. Everybody’s got a different machine, everybody’s got different software, they’ve got different versions of the software. Some people aren’t allowed it because the faculty don’t feel they should have it. Other people have got it, it’s their own, it’s on there, it’s pirated, it’s put on there, if anybody comes, they take it off … you just need a standard suite of stuff that everybody gets and it’s maintained centrally and it makes everybody’s life a lot easier. (interviewee)

Inadequate computers [are an impediment] … also students don’t have the computers or sophisticated software to take full advantage of on-line teaching. They get frustrated too. (questionnaire respondent)

An adequate computer is an issue for some of my colleagues, and this is essential. (questionnaire respondent)

Poor computer networks [are an impediment]. (questionnaire respondent)

Software can be a problem for people who use Macs. There is a sense that software is designed for and works better on PCs and there can be a delay in providing solutions for Macs. (focus group)

I mean one of the problems there was that we didn’t have the programs to convert things into something that was able to be put up on the web. Now a lot of us have programs that allow us to put it into pdf but at that stage only two people in the school did. (interviewee)

Difficulties of providing adequate student access to learning resources resident on university networks is an issue with some staff. This is a separate issue from that of the adequacy of student computing labs which is discussed under problems associated with the adequacy of teaching spaces. Several respondents suggested students, both on-campus and off-campus, face difficulties in getting access to online learning resources. Problems include slow line transmission speeds making downloads slow or impractical, activities requiring the use of specific software such as MSWord, operating systems common on home computers being incompatible with WebCT or Vista and so on. Staff regarded the situation as an impediment to adopting flexible approaches as they were concerned about disadvantaging students or negatively impacting on their learning in any way. One interviewee expressed frustration that the University is unwilling to specify minimum computer access requirements for all off-campus students.

The negative aspect of [the increasing use of WebCT] is that it has marginalised students who don’t have easy access to computers or it forces them to go off campus because our campus infrastructure is not large enough to support the number of students. And we don’t have the offset of easy to purchase computers or loan systems or whatever else or borrowing from the Library or remote, infrared access to allow students to take advantage of it on campus. (interviewee)

So there is a tendency or temptation to up your expectation of students because you are delivering them all this material online but they are not doing the work on their side because
of frustrations with download times, large pdf files, etc. You are [seen as] the problem
because you are the person who told them to read the material. (interviewee)

A lack of computing resources for students [is an impediment]. (questionnaire respondent)

A particular issue that bugs me … are people who can enrol in distance who don’t have
computers and access to the internet. That bugs me. I think distance in itself is wonderful but I
think there should be some pre-requisites for that because it’s very, very onerous to have to
remember to send things … so they can mail it out … it’s very, very, difficult to cope with
people who are located a long way away and can’t access the Library, the lectures, anything,
email. I mean it’s just extraordinarily restrictive and time consuming and I am sure they feel
the consequences because you tend to forget them. (interviewee)

The ease of use and functionality of WebCT and of Vista and the constraints on teaching
resulting from these are significant issues. Most of the responses are assumed to refer to
WebCT rather than Vista for the latter was only being used by a limited number of staff on a
trial basis at the time of the study. It is thought that there is a certain looseness in the way
staff refer to WebCT Campus Edition as opposed to Vista and that problems attributed to
WebCT may in fact be properly attributed to Vista and vice versa. Five interviewees
discussed the difficulties of use and lack of functionality of WebCT or of Vista in terms that
suggest they regard its use as a constraint on, rather than a facilitator of, flexible teaching.
Fifteen questionnaire respondents suggested the use of WebCT or of Vista is problematic as
did five interviewees. Some issues are narrowly focussed on technical issues or on specific
functionality, or lack of it, in WebCT or Vista. Others are of a more general nature concerning
the overall suitability of the systems for teaching. Some other comments, in contrast, discuss
the benefits and flexibility of using WebCT or Vista for aspects of flexible teaching.

Vista, there were lots of problems because it doesn’t work on XP and most of the students
had XP computers at home and someone put XP over the top of 2000 in the labs.
(interviewee)

One problem with WebCT is that it is not indexed or abstracted so it is not possible to give a
forewarning like in a book. It’s just download another bit of material and then you have to
search your way through it, so that’s a limitation of this sort of delivery mechanism.
(interviewee)

I know another colleague had a lot of problems with [WebCT]. He had a Mac and there were
all sorts of interaction problems between the WebCT software, platform and Macs. It didn’t
work … Of course, up until recently the university’s been almost completely a Mac
environment. (interviewee)

The Vista server is often going off line for repairs or something. It hasn’t really affected me but
students have mentioned it. If they get put off once they tend not to try much more.
(questionnaire respondent)

It’s made compulsory that you provide email access via the web and it’s never clear to me
why that’s a requirement when it’s much easier for me and I think the students just to use
email. Actually going into WebCT to see if you’ve got any mail is quite unnecessary.
(interviewee)

I think certainly that some students will need flexible approaches to learning because not
everybody is able to sit in a lecture for fifty minutes, think about the big concepts, understand
them when they are being espoused by some expert and walk out with their head as
full as the lecturers. It’s just not going to work. Different people are different people. But WebCT is
not the answer there. And I’d like to see the university back off a little on WebCT and start to
develop alternative ways of supporting flexible teaching. (interviewee)

I was one of the early adopters of Vista and that’s fantastic because you can actually
personalise the whole thing … you have that control. I think perhaps it’s a problem in the
future because … when everyone uses it … then of course you’re going to have a million
different interfaces. So at some point there is going to have to be some sort of rationalisation and standardisation occur. (interviewee)

We are encouraged to use the management tool in Vista for large classes, and some of us use it just because that's what we like to use. It's got a mail tool, there's a tracking device, the whole tool if you like has a lot of good management practices, so from that point of view it's good. It's good for the students in the sense that everything is compacted for that unit into the one environment so it's the one space if you like. Now how good it is as a learning space per se I guess depends on how well we use it. (interviewee)

As was noted in Section 3, 59 percent of all questionnaire respondents have experience with cross-campus teaching. Some 45 percent of respondents indicated they have used video conferencing for teaching within the last three years. The ease of use, functionality and reliability of video conferencing facilities and equipment is unsurprisingly a significant issue for some respondents. Overall, respondents are positive regarding the value of flexible approaches, presumably largely video conferencing, for cross-campus teaching (Table 8.2). Of the 97 who responded, 68 percent expressed support with only 12 percent expressing negative opinions regarding its value. A significant minority, 25 percent of all respondents, offered no opinion. Some respondents who agreed that flexible approaches assist cross-campus teaching also made comments regarding its limitations.

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<td>1%</td>
<td>11%</td>
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<td>41%</td>
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Table 8.2 Flexible approaches assist cross-campus teaching.

Interviewees, questionnaire respondents and focus group participants all expressed views on the use of video-conferencing for teaching. Three interviewees expressed concern with the reliability of the system, five commented on its lack of needed functionality and five on the manner in which it constrains their teaching. Eleven questionnaire respondents commented on how various aspects of the system are an impediment to teaching. The constraints imposed on teaching are seen as particularly severe if large classes are involved. A common theme is that students at remote sites find it difficult to participate in discussions. Another concern is that, when a live lecture is delivered to a remote site, students at the host site lose out because the lecturers cannot employ their full repertoire of teaching roles. There is a concern that video conferencing can all too easily reduce teaching to the transfer of knowledge with little active participation from students. None expressed the view that they like its use. Several recognised that it meets a real need and will make use of it on the basis that there is no practical alternative. All agreed that the system has been problematic and needs improvement. These views were generally supported by participants in focus groups, although here there was more recognition that the system has been significantly upgraded in recent years and that new improvements are underway.

We would hope that in future the technology will be a little better than what we are used to. I'm always getting complaints from remote students or staff on the quality of the video conferencing facilities … We are going try and see if we can communicate internally in a much more efficient way and that will include students as well just using a small camera on a computer. (interviewee)

Video linked units are unattractive and thus are also an impediment. (questionnaire respondent)

[We need] video-link rooms equipped with more cameras and microphones, fax machines, electronic white boards. (questionnaire respondent)
The bridges were renewed this year and more upgrading is being done during this summer break. The links are more reliable now. (focus group)

Video is being constantly upgraded though there continue to be periodic glitches (e.g. transmission breaks, sound problems, snapshot function doesn’t work). (focus group)

With upgrading, the quality improves marginally but the result is not dramatically different at the far end. The level of technical sophistication, and the budget that would be required for a significantly better system, is the issue. Ideally there would be dual streaming servers, dedicated phone lines, large monitors, etc. The present system is a compromise. (focus group)

Video, compared to travel, is flexible for the academic but not flexible from the learner’s end. (focus group)

I find tele-conference lectures constrain me a great deal. I like to use the stage a lot for dramatic effect … I cannot do this when using tele-conference technology and I feel it takes away from my lectures … There is particularly a drop in the drama of the presentation of visuals … In a tele-conference they come up on the small screen and are nowhere near as dramatic. This takes away from their value as illustrations of points I am making in the lecture. (interviewee)

I think, particularly if you are teaching face-to-face simultaneously, your interactivity with an audience is limited [if you are using video conferencing]. If you’re used to bouncing around all over the place and being a fairly energetic person in front of a class, which I traditionally enjoyed doing, then it’s not so easy. (interviewee)

Despite all of the concerns expressed, one story suggests that the use of video conferencing for student-centred learning is not impossible!

In one memorable case, in a lecturer to small class video link, the students took control and ran the discussion without much reference to the lecturer. (focus group)

The appropriateness and adequacy of teaching facilities

Questionnaire respondents delivered an almost unanimous verdict that an inadequate number of teaching spaces are equipped for flexible teaching and learning at the University (Question 50; Table 8.3).

| Strongly disagree | | Strongly agree |
|-------------------|----------------|
| 6%                | 4%             |

Table 8.3 The number of teaching spaces for flexible teaching is adequate.

Fully 94 percent of all respondents expressed a negative position, with 88 percent strongly negative. Respondents were clearly of the view that teaching spaces need improvement. Comments from respondents, interviewees and focus group participants indicate a range of concerns. One focus group commented as follows:

People who said there are not enough teaching spaces equipped for flexible teaching and learning were probably thinking of a variety of different issues when they answered the question. (focus group)

Our analysis supports this position suggesting a number of broad groups of issues:

- concerns with the configuration and mix of teaching spaces and with the manner in which they are appointed;
- concern regarding a lack of equipment in small teaching spaces;
• a lack of functionality for flexible teaching in lecture theatres;
• poorly equipped student computer labs;
• an inadequate number of student computer labs; and
• concerns regarding the number and size of rooms equipped for video conferencing.

One focus group suggested that many 'lecture theatres and seminar rooms are old, dark and depressing' and that respondents may be expressing more general concerns about facilities than those particular to flexible teaching and learning.

Three interviewees expressed the view that the configuration of teaching spaces is problematic. There is a lack of medium sized rooms with flat floors and moveable furniture that can be used for break-out groups and similar activities. All three focus groups confirmed that there is a shortage of teaching spaces other than small seminar rooms and tiered lecture theatres.

All the academics are very worried about space, just thinking about scheduling. That's a huge problem … the learning hubs project [is] a very good project because students need to be able to have more flexible space so they can be encouraged to go online or use the library, and other hubs around the university that students would feel were conducive to them having small groups. So space is a huge issue. (interviewee)

[The] lack of teaching spaces for non-lecture teaching [is an impediment]. (questionnaire respondent)

[We need] more computers and small study rooms on which and in which to hold sessions. (questionnaire respondent)

I think some of the approaches to flexible teaching don't work with classes of 130. They need to be broken down in to groups of 30 or so and run more workshop type things. We can't do that because we don't have the rooms available. (interviewee)

More and better workshop areas, not just lecture theatres, [are needed]. (questionnaire respondent)

Spaces with fixed furniture are a problem. (focus group)

Focus groups suggested that the situation is compounded by the manner in which the University operates. Decisions regarding the nature of teaching space are often made without reference to academic staff.

Teaching staff are not normally consulted when changes are made to teaching spaces. Decisions are made at an administrative level. For example, the faculty equipped an annex for postgraduate courses but the furniture chosen was not flexible enough and they couldn't use the space. (focus group)

Timetabling procedures appear to discourage faculties and schools from investing in teaching facilities. Once upgraded, they lose any priority for their use.

Schools may equip rooms but then they are centrally allocated and everyone wants the best equipped. (focus group)

Small teaching spaces are seen as lacking needed equipment. The need for equipped small spaces is seen to have increased as technologies such as PowerPoint are increasingly used in small group situations.

All but one large lecture theatre has computer equipment but smaller teaching spaces are generally not equipped at all. When the room is not equipped, you have to bring a computer and data projector to the classroom. It would be preferable if you could upload resources in your office and then log on in the classroom. (focus group)
[We need a] central policy to equip all teaching rooms with up-to-date teaching equipment (quality of equipment varies dramatically). Central policy to increase number of video-link rooms. (questionnaire respondent)

[We need] teaching rooms properly equipped with 21st century equipment. (questionnaire respondent)

Some lecture theatres are seen as lacking needed equipment. The need for well-equipped theatres is seen to have increased as the use of technologies, such as PowerPoint and video and audio recording for later use on the web, are increasingly used in lecture situations.

[We need a] a PC and data projector in every lecture theatre. (questionnaire respondent)

Last year I tried a trial thing of video-taping my lectures too with a view to making them, to video-streaming … it didn’t actually come to that in the end because the … School didn’t have all the technology to do that ... It was more technology issues than anything else like the computer that ran the camera wasn’t networked to my PowerPoint slides so I had to have a student there to click through the PowerPoint slides when I was clicking through them so there were various glitches with it. (interviewee)

We have been videoing lectures for seven or eight years. That stopped this year because they shut down the Social Sciences Research Laboratory (SSRL) which is where the people who had all the equipment were located and, although we are talking video and audio streaming now, they haven’t replaced the people who were actually doing it ...The sooner we can get video streaming of lectures and tapes of lectures the better. It will be great. (interviewee)

In the early days we used to do video-streaming and that was a pain in the backside as it meant you were videoed at the same time as talking in the lecture and, unless you went back and dubbed the video yourself, the IT people went back and streamed the lecture into a stilted presentation of what were PowerPoint slides. There was not very much marrying. Unless you were prepared to go back and record a whole lecture, there was no other way of doing it. We’ve moved on a bit since then, I think. (interviewee)

Two interviewees expressed concern that there is an inadequate number of student computer labs, which staff regard as teaching spaces in a flexible learning environment, and those that do exist are inadequately equipped. Respondents made many comments.

[We need a] Central policy to provide more computer access to students. (questionnaire respondent)

[We] need a “Teaching Lab” with computers and a projector for teaching students how to use software. (questionnaire respondent)

There simply aren’t enough computers or computer rooms to do all the flexible as well as timetabled teaching that now exists. (questionnaire respondent)

[We] need a lot more computer facilities for the students. (questionnaire respondent)

As the University moves into more flexible delivery, there is a need for MANY more computers in the student computer labs. This has proved especially a problem for the students on the NW campus. (questionnaire respondent)

Issues with video-conferencing technology have already been discussed. There is also an issue regarding the size and configuration of rooms equipped for this activity that has not been mentioned.

Growing class sizes means that bigger rooms and larger groups of students are being linked. Rooms used may be too small for the groups. Smallish classes at each end work better. With a three-way hook-up, you can only see one group at a time, making it difficult to monitor the groups. (focus group)
Video-linked rooms are often not set up in a way that is conducive to group discussion or interaction, apart from some very small rooms with desks around a table and a videolink at the end of the table, which are OK for group discussion with a small number of participants. Larger rooms are set up for the teacher-as-lecturer behind a desk and a sea of faces in lecture theatre mode out in front. This makes getting any kind of interaction between students—difficult enough across the technological divide and the tendency of distant students to use technology as an excuse not to participate—almost impossible. (questionnaire respondent)

Upgrade to lecture theatres across campus would help with video conferencing rather than having to use a centrally administered facility. (questionnaire respondent)

An example of the difficulties of teaching flexibly that result when the above problems interact with the timetabling constraints discussed below follows the next section.

**Timetable constraints**

The University’s timetable and the procedures accompanying its production are seen by a significant minority of respondents as an impediment to the adoption of various modes of flexible teaching (Question 52; Table 8.4). Forty-four respondents (34 percent) reported timetabling as a problem in teaching flexibly. Forty-three (33 percent), on the other hand, reported no problem and a further third were either neutral or offered no opinion.

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*Table 8.4 Timetabling is not a problem.*

Comments from two interviewees, from eight questionnaire respondents and from focus group participants indicate that several aspects of the University’s approach to timetabling are seen as impeding the adoption of certain modes of flexible learning. One concerns the rigidity of the timetable. Annual timetables are rolled over, making it difficult for schools to schedule teaching for groups of students who can only be on campus at particular times. In most cases, needed time slots will already be allocated to units that have been traditionally scheduled at this time, although students in these units may in fact have no pressing need for it to be so scheduled.

TIMETABLE - it is disgusting and a barrier to introducing block teaching. We have been rolling over the same timetable since I don’t know when. I can not get lecture theatre slots because I don’t want them every week. (questionnaire respondent)

One of the big things that faces us is that because of the central timetabling approach, no matter how hard we try, with hundreds of students we sometimes have students coming on campus for an hour because that’s the only time we can get. With undergraduates we are as concerned but we simply won’t do it with postgraduates. They simply won’t turn up. (interviewee)

This problem is compounded by two further factors. It is very difficult to schedule teaching in blocks, particularly so if students are not scheduled to meet on a weekly basis. Even if a time is found, it will likely clash with other units in which students are enrolled, thus discouraging them from taking the flexibly scheduled unit. Schedules that differ from the standard weekly lecture and tutorial or lecture and practical model are difficult to accommodate.
Timetabling stops flexible scheduling and stops students from enrolling in units with, for example, intensive blocks because they conflict with traditionally scheduled units. (focus group)

I would like to teach in 'blocks' to students, so that they are then prepared to undertake a range of activities outside of class time, but this is difficult to timetable. (questionnaire respondent)

Block teaching clashes with what everyone else does so that the individual unit is out of step. (focus group)

The second compounding factor is the University’s practice of requiring staff relinquishing a room and time slot to go into a queue and draft for a new slot. This makes schools and staff reluctant to adopt flexible scheduling and block teaching as it requires them to relinquish long-held time slots. The practice acts to increase the rigidity of an already inflexible system.

Timetabling and the scheduling of units constrain flexible approaches. If you give up a room and time slot, you have to take your place in a queue and go into a draft for space. (focus group)

Other issues, as much a space as a timetabling issue, have to do with the short-term scheduling of 'as needed' meetings and the scheduling of laboratory work. Teaching laboratory space is at a premium throughout the University, making it almost impossible to flexibly schedule laboratory work.

More flexible teaching spaces available [would facilitate matters]. Ability to book small rooms for one-off rather than regular meetings. We have had to hold student meetings off-campus as a result of an inflexible time-tabling system. (questionnaire respondent)

We are very much laboratory based. So it is difficult to flexibly schedule practicals … we have about 800 students a week going through our laboratories. The maximum is 25 so I think the term inflexible is the only way to describe that. (interviewee)

One member of staff solved this latter problem by scheduling an entire semester’s laboratories, 35 hours worth, in the week following the end of regular laboratory teaching. This allowed students to engage in a range of laboratory activities that could not successfully be completed in a series of three-hour laboratories.

An illustrative situation
The manner in which a limited number of teleconference theatres and timetabling constraints interact to impact on the flexible delivery of units is clearly illustrated in the following example furnished by a participant in a focus group. The problem this person faced was as follows:

I think I underestimated the videoconferencing timetabling problems. This has become an issue for me as I plan for next year. What appears to have happened is that the slots I had for the unit (which was last taught in 2003) have disappeared because it was not taught last year. We are now trying to identify a time for a suitable alternative slot. However, there are difficulties identifying an available videoconference room at the Launceston end. As it currently stands, I have been booked into a room of reasonable size for the first hour, but the second hour would see us shift rooms holding about 12 students to one that holds 350... You can imagine the absurdity of me teaching a group of 12 students at the Launceston end in a 350-seat lecture theatre with a group of about 30 students attending a 40 seat room in Hobart. I've asked them to change this ridiculous arrangement, but it is unclear whether other slots are available for a two-hour session. If not, I will have to split the lectures into two one-hour slots on different days to get more appropriate rooms, arguably reducing the "flexibility" of delivery for students who will then have to come to campus on two separate days per week, rather than a single day.
The solution arrived at was as follows.

It proved impossible to obtain a reasonable size room in Launceston for a two-hour block, so I have had to split the lecture into two individual hours, but at least on the same day (i.e. first lecture at 9.00 a.m. and second at noon or something). However, there is likely to be some confusion in this arrangement, as the 9.00 a.m. lecture will be in one (smallish) room in Launceston while the noon lecture will in another one. Clearly, this is not a fatal flaw, just something that has to be managed and the student clearly informed as to which room to be in at which time. In Hobart, the lectures will both be in the same videoconference room, so there will be less opportunity for confusion there.

How much the problem results from schools ‘playing the timetable game’ remains to be seen.

I have agreed with the School Administrator that we may alter this arrangement up until February 1 if some slots are freed up. The suspicion appears to be that some Schools have booked slots that they will not end up using because the system encourages that kind of slot-turf warfare.

Summary of infrastructure issues and their impact on staff involvement

A number of infrastructure issues are reported by academic staff as impacting on their involvement with flexible teaching and learning. Many constrain their involvement. A removal of the constraints would be regarded by staff as facilitating their involvement. It is worth remembering that issues were raised by a minority, albeit a substantial minority in some cases, of respondents.

- A majority of respondents, 54 percent, report having easy access to the equipment needed for flexible teaching and learning, while 24 percent disagree.
- A lack of universal staff access to compatible machines and an up-to-date suite of software is seen as an impediment to teaching flexibly.
- Some students, both on campus and off campus, face difficulties in getting access to online learning resources, discouraging the use of flexible approaches.
- The ease of use and functionality of WebCT and Vista and the constraints on teaching resulting from these are significant issues.
- Overall respondents are positive regarding the value of video conferencing for cross-campus teaching, with 68 percent expressing support for its value for this purpose.
- The reliability and functionality of the video conferencing system and the constraints these place on video-teaching are impediments to its use by some staff.
- Questionnaire respondents delivered an almost unanimous verdict that an inadequate number of teaching spaces are equipped for flexible teaching and learning at the University.
- There is an inadequate number of medium-sized, flat-floored teaching spaces of the sort needed for student-centred teaching.
- Many small teaching spaces are not equipped, making the use of computer-assisted teaching difficult.
- There is a lack of functionality, both in terms of inflexible seating and equipment shortcomings, for flexible teaching in lecture theatres.
- There is an insufficient number of appropriately equipped student computer laboratories.
• The number and size of rooms equipped for video conferencing does not match the demand.
• Approximately one-third of respondents report timetabling as a problem in teaching flexibly, one-third report no problem and a further one-third are either neutral or offer no opinion.
• The timetable is seen as being rigid and making flexible scheduling difficult.
• The rigidity of the timetable is seen as being compounded by a number of procedures governing the allocation of rooms and timeslots.
SECTION 9

Satisfaction and future directions

As was discussed in Section 4, questionnaire respondents were asked whether they were sceptical of the value of flexible teaching and learning in the subjects that they teach. Table 4.6 showed that forty-nine percent of respondents are not sceptical, with 34 percent indicating a degree of scepticism (Question 17). Respondents in the Faculty of Arts displayed the highest degree of scepticism at 50 percent.

In Section 6, we saw that forty-five percent of respondents regard involvement in flexible teaching and learning as contributing to the achievement of their professional goals (Question 54). Thirty-one percent disagreed that it enhances their career goals in any way. See Table 6.4 for details.

Given the above, it is perhaps not surprising that respondents respond positively to the question of whether flexible teaching and learning should remain a priority of the University. Over fifty percent answered positively. Over three-quarters of respondents were positive or neutral with only 19 percent answering in the negative. Details are in Table 9.1. The distribution of positive answers and negative answers from respondents in each faculty is illustrative of the higher degree of scepticism found in Arts than in other faculties.

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Table 9.1 Should flexible teaching and learning remain a priority (percentages by faculty).

Respondents made 26 comments concerning future directions for flexible teaching at the University (Question 59). Three respondents made positive comments. One of these was enthusiastically positive and looks forward to the day when students will be required to provide their own computer and internet access.

Yes. The nature of the student body has changed. Many students work thirty hours a week or more. It is unrealistic to expect them to spend forty hours a week at the Faculty. We can’t just turn our backs on our students. (interviewee)

Well, flexibility is the name of the game. We have to accommodate the needs of the new-age person, so we should continue to do it. (interviewee)

Three were negative.

FLEXIBLE TEACHING NEVER CAN REPLACE FACE-TO-FACE, CHALK AND TALK TEACHING. (questionnaire respondent; emphasis in original)
Flexible education is a bad second for most students. It robs them of the cultural and social intellectual interactions inherent in face-to-face encounters with the whole class. The UTAS approach seems to be besotted with the current technology that makes on-line experiences cheap but may not teach people to think. This approach can equally well be done anywhere and is a waste of time and money for UTAS to be investing in this development.

(questionnaire respondent)

The majority of respondents (14) were positive but with reservations. Six comments cannot be classified as either positive or negative.

Interviewees unanimously agreed that flexible teaching and learning needs to remain a priority, although several have serious reservations about current approaches. Seven indicated a need for the University to clarify and make explicit what are the purposes and goals of the flexible learning agenda. Four indicated a need for an explicit statement that the agenda has both educational and access goals and is not about the need to incorporate technology into the teaching function.

Respondents and interviewees broadly support a continuing priority for flexible teaching and learning for three reasons: (1) it has the potential to improve teaching practice at the University; (2) it provides access to university study for individuals and groups not able to attend full-time on-campus studies; and (3) it improves equity of provision across the University’s three campuses. These are the ‘yeses’, but they are ‘yeses’ with ‘buts’ attached. The ‘buts’ are discussed below.

**Aspects of flexible teaching and learning needing emphasis in the future**

The caveats of respondents and interviewees concerning their future support for flexible learning fall into five groups:

- the University needs to clarify its goals and expectations for flexible teaching and learning;
- the flexible teaching and learning agenda should be concerned with the promotion of good teaching practice;
- developments should take into account the diversity of approaches made necessary by disciplinary considerations and the differing situations of diverse student groups;
- appropriate levels of resourcing and support are required; and
- there is a need to develop realistic expectations in students concerning the practice of flexible teaching and learning.

Some interviewees and respondents see a need for the University to clarify and make explicit its goals and expectations for flexible teaching and learning.

It depends on the definition but yes. When you are talking about being flexible in the sense of being available for students through scheduling classes so they can come or even taping classes, all that may be beneficial. And there may be some disciplines where online or web-dependent stuff could work OK. I am not willing to say it can’t because I don’t have the experience. But they do need to adopt a graduated approach. My main question of the university is ‘what is the ultimate aim of flexible learning?’ (interviewee)

Likely I would say yes provided it knows what it is talking about. I think the university should continue to push flexible teaching and learning but it should do it once it knows what the aim is. It shouldn’t be pushing flexibility just for flexibility. One of the common justifications I see
for teaching flexibly is that forty percent or sixty percent of the university’s enrolled students have a part-time job. I am not sure that is a justification for teaching flexibly. I would rather see an educational justification for doing it than a financial or lifestyle one. (interviewee)

There is considerable support for the University’s flexible teaching and learning agenda provided it is seen as a mechanism for promoting good teaching practice. In the parlance of some, the agenda needs to be about teaching flexibly and not about flexible delivery.

I think they should but I think they should look at the whole gamut of flexible education and not just focus on the tools that are tending to be promoted at the moment. It’s more than that, it’s the learning processes and the techniques you use to develop learning in different sorts of people rather than just flexible delivery. (interviewee)

A distinction can be made between flexible access and flexible teaching and learning. In a first sweep one might use WebCT and put up unit outlines. This is compliance, not attention to learning outcomes. (focus group)

I am sceptical of the definitions of flexible approaches as they give little flexibility to the student, they are flexible options for lecturers for delivery of content. (questionnaire respondent)

I think if I could have an influence on the way the university goes about doing things I would be trying to structure the rewards and acknowledgements of teaching in the university to be geared towards people who are actually engaged, not just in adopting flexible education practices, but trying to work out how they can fit and how they can make it (educationally) sound. (interviewee)

Should the university continue to put a lot of effort into good teaching? I think … there is general recognition that it is being driven by a whole host of factors and some of them are pragmatic, about scale, efficiency of teaching across campuses and equivalence of courses and all those sorts of things and some are about good teaching. I think that balance is about right. (interviewee)

While I believe that flexible delivery can enhance student experience in certain instances, I am worried that too much of an emphasis on it can put the cart before the horse. That is, more emphasis is put on students accessing material in any time or place than on them gaining important generic skills, such as oral communication, ability to think and speak on the spot, ability to process aural information, and ability to organise time and prioritise activities. (questionnaire respondent)

A sceptical academic is more likely to tune in when you talk about creative teaching approaches rather than technologies. A focus on inventive strategies might lead him to adjust the firewall that protects him from the flexible teaching and learning publicity. (focus group)

Many interviewees and respondents were concerned that a one-size-fits-all approach based on the use of WebCT/Vista will emerge at the University. Their continued support for flexible teaching is contingent on the University recognising that multiple approaches are made necessary by disciplinary considerations and by the diversity of the student body.

Again it comes down to what is the definition of flexibility. If flexibility means diversity then that’s good. For some areas it should be acknowledged that traditional face-to-face type teaching is the right method. But in other areas total online might work exceptionally well. So I think a flexible approach is good. I think looking at the strengths of the university, I think it’s important to look at our strengths, to look at the fact that we can offer this sort of personal style of teaching that isn’t available elsewhere. (interviewee)

There is a tendency to assume that learning is a similar experience in all disciplines, and that all WebCT tools can be adapted for every discipline. I feel that generic training sessions on flexible delivery are of very limited use, and if the University wants staff support in implementing flexible teaching and learning it must address the pedagogical needs of individual disciplines. (questionnaire respondent)
A majority of my students would prefer face-to-face lecturing, partly because of the richness available from constant reinforcing of theory, principles and practices with personal experiences garnered over 30 years of international work and research in my area. However, the Burnie students enjoy the flexibility and, as a general rule, my mature age students appreciate the flexibility because they must often balance study with family and employment. (questionnaire respondent)

I think for those students who really need flexibility, and I think you've put your finger on it there, wouldn't it be wonderful to offer it to them. But whether or not that's a sound strategy, business-wise, I don't know. It certainly works at one level ... There needs to be some investigation into the learning aspect from the student's perspective, to see whether they really like it. I'm sure some subject material would lend itself better to online teaching than others. I guess that the figures of computer ownership and competencies are very high now (home ownership). People have got broadband and, you know, it's pervasive, the use of computers at home, so I guess that it suits enough people for it to be a good thing to do, but on a voluntary basis, not compulsory because people need to know that they won't be meeting lecturers and going to a physical space and meeting with other students. (interviewee)

The University of Tasmania is a distributed campus university and so must use flexible teaching and so it is good to encourage but people should understand that flexible teaching is not appropriate for all subjects and that time required to learn the techniques involved should be credited to staff correctly if you really want it to take off. (questionnaire respondent) It really suits some students and others hate it. (questionnaire respondent) For some students it's the bees knees, for others it's yet another imposition on their time and computers are hard enough to use anyway, etc., etc. (questionnaire respondent) Some students react positively, other unmotivated students appear to get lost. (questionnaire respondent) Some sub-groups of students (e.g. younger students) may be less suited to flexible teaching and learning than others. Alternatively, within any sub-group, there may be a mix of preferences. (focus group)

Staff views on flexible teaching and learning are no different to their views on any other academic activity in one regard. They saw a need for better support, more resources and the transfer of resources used for other purposes.

It can work for us but currently doesn't due to insufficient resources for us and students. (questionnaire respondent)

I like the idea of some of the new teaching techniques so we can break away from the lecture. But many of these can't be implemented because of our physical and financial resources. That side of flexible teaching and learning I'd like to see encouraged more but not this just whack everything on WebCT and Vista. (interviewee) It's really a constant battle to deliver quality flexible teaching - recognising that it is not only about web-based resources … for example, I would like to teach in 'blocks' to students, so that they are then prepared to undertake a range of activities outside of class time, but this is difficult to timetable … When you try to do something innovative, often you don't have the right computer program on your desk machine, so it's delayed or becomes more difficult - and of course, due to the pressures of our work, we are rarely doing this well in advance, so any delay is very frustrating! (questionnaire respondent)

The University needs to invest in support staff that have real skills in web technologies, to allow us to really harness multi-media in teaching, rather than produce tedious collections of notes on the web. (questionnaire respondent) Well, I think flexible approaches are here to stay. I think that they obviously have a place. The university does have to resource them adequately. (interviewee)
I think so … There is a lot of jargon used about flexible teaching and learning and I think the black and white of it is ‘making it easy for the students to learn’ … Flexible teaching and delivery is here to stay. Being a very practical person I think the money being spent on assessing the concept would be better off invested in people to actually do the job. (interviewee)

The last set of caveats has to do with the need to educate students in the practice of flexible learning. Staff expressed concern that student demands are becoming both unrealistic and unreasonable. Some were concerned that pressure from students for the provision of ever more materials is leading to bad practices from both staff and students.

Increasingly as this is my sixth year here, I have noticed an expectation from students that Web-CT will be provided particularly from first year undergraduates. It is soon going to be unacceptable to say a unit is not available on Web-CT. (questionnaire respondent)

Students expect full notes or PPT displays which entail an inordinate amount of work. There is [a] danger lecturers will use only publisher provided PPT displays which locks one in to publisher content rather than individualising material to best suit our students. (questionnaire respondent)

Students’ expectations limit the approaches one can take using WebCT. They demand PPT slides and this means a lot of work. The use of publishers slides is no solution as these simply follow the text rather than comment on it. Students tend to read the slides and not the text. They also ask questions already answered in sessions they did not bother to attend. (questionnaire respondent)

Summary of satisfaction and future directions

• Respondents are positive that flexible teaching and learning should remain a priority of the University. Over fifty percent answer positively. Over three-quarters of respondents are positive or neutral, with only 19 percent answering in the negative.

• Participants broadly support a continuing priority for flexible teaching and learning for three reasons:
  - it has potential to improve teaching practice at the University;
  - it is seen as providing access to university study for individuals and groups not able to attend full-time campus studies; and
  - it is seen as improving equity of provision across the University’s three campuses.

• Participants express caveats concerning their future support for flexible learning. These concern the following:
  - a need for the University to clarify its goals and expectations for flexible teaching and learning;
  - a requirement that the flexible teaching and learning agenda to be concerned with the promotion of good teaching practice;
  - a need for developments to take into account the diversity of approaches made necessary by disciplinary considerations and the differing situations of diverse student groups;
  - a need for the University to provide appropriate levels of resourcing and support; and
  - a need for a strategy to develop realistic expectations in students concerning the practice of flexible teaching and learning.
Conclusions and issues to consider

As has been noted at several points in the report, the impacts of flexible learning on academic staff are complex. So collectively are their reactions and opinions. This section attempts to bring some order to the reported complexity.

Rogers’ (1995) examination of the diffusion of innovation has provided a popular model for discussion of the adoption of new approaches and technologies in higher education, in particular with respect to online and distance education. An S-shaped curve describes the proportion of a population that adopt, over time, an innovation. Innovators pick up and experiment with a new approach and early adopters put it into practice and refine it. They are followed by the early and late majority and, finally, the diehard resisters. Our questionnaire respondents and interviewees included, we believe, individuals who could fit these types.

At UTAS, however, a range of flexible teaching and learning modes is espoused, not a single technology. But in fact, as Zemsky and Massy (2004) have pointed out, even within one technological approach such as e-learning, four separate innovations are involved. In their 15-month study, they found that only two, web-based enhancements to traditional courses and course management systems (e.g. WebCT) were increasing in use and had reached the early majority stage. Lagging far behind were imported learning objects and courses redesigned to make optimal use of technology. This is consistent with our observations on the use of web-based approaches at UTAS: we found extensive use of the web-supported mode (with PowerPoint a popular tool) and of WebCT; and a few examples of shared learning resources and course redesign.

Other writers have provided a different perspective on change and innovation in higher education. Trowler (1998, pp 97–98), for example, in a study of new policy implementation, drew attention to academics as active contributors to, rather than passive victims of, change, ‘albeit in ways unforeseen and perhaps unwanted by senior managers.’ At UTAS, the formal encouragement of flexible teaching and learning has led to an extensive variety of developments that now make demands on the system and its infrastructure.

Hannan and Silver (2000, pp 114–115) identified four conditions that foster teaching and learning innovation: innovators feel secure, are encouraged and recognise the need for change; teaching and learning has high status that is reflected in policy and practice; ‘colleagues and people in authority show an interest in disseminating the outcomes of innovation’; and resources and educational development support are available. Innovation is obstructed by: policies and plans that ‘preclude individual initiative’; ‘excessively bureaucratic procedures’; and ‘quality assessment procedures or other procedures that inhibit risk-taking.’ Most, if not all of these points were made by participants in this evaluation. Finally, it is worth noting Wolcott’s (2004) observation, based on her extensive research on academic motivation to become involved in distance education, that ‘faculty motivation is predominantly intrinsic’ (p 562).

In the next section, we describe four types of individual in terms of their attitudes to and engagement with flexible teaching and learning. In the final section, we state the general conclusions we think can be drawn from the findings and identify a number of issues related to these that the University may wish to consider.
Four broad responses to the flexible teaching and learning agenda

The following descriptions of four types of individual are based on the manner in which they have become engaged with flexible teaching and learning. Each is a collective portrait based on the profile of data discussed in the report and on our subjective impressions. We do not suggest that they constitute an exhaustive typology. They do, we believe, provide a useful framework for thinking about the complexity of responses detailed in the report.

The first type of individual is one who has made limited use of flexible approaches. He has experience with one or at most two modes of flexible teaching, most likely web-supported, resource-supported, resource-dependent or video conference modes. He first engaged in flexible teaching because of a faculty or school policy requiring or encouraging its use or because he perceived pressure or felt a moral suasion to become involved. He may be more sceptical of the value of flexible teaching for his subjects than are staff in general but may see its value in other disciplines or for certain groups of students. He is less aware of the types of support that are available than are other staff and makes little use of support from any source, including that of colleagues or specialist staff in his school and faculty. He is dissatisfied with the adequacy or timeliness of both technical and pedagogical support for flexible teaching, no matter what its source. He has used web support to supplement his continued commitment to traditional face-to-face teaching on campus. He may have been involved with cross-campus teaching or distance teaching. He uses WebCT to communicate course management matters to students and to provide them access to PowerPoint lecture notes and supplementary learning resources. He may be resentful of increasing student expectations of what will be made available online and believes that some expectations are not consistent with good educational practice. He is concerned that some aspects of flexible teaching are impacting negatively on the quality of his face-to-face teaching as students choose not to attend lectures. He does not make use of learning resources developed by others, neither has he reconfigured his teaching to take full advantage of available tools and approaches.

The second type of individual is one who has embraced flexible teaching approaches as a mechanism to enhance her interest in and the quality of her teaching. She is a self-starter who has independently developed her own approaches and strategies for flexible teaching, making use of a wide range of the tools available at the University. She has become more significantly involved in flexible teaching than have many of her colleagues or than is required to meet the expectations of her school or faculty. She is more motivated by an intrinsic desire to teach well than through a commitment to flexible teaching per se. She may have a commitment to the equitable provision of programs across and off campus. She regards flexible approaches as a means to an end and not an end in itself. She may see her commitment to quality teaching through the use of flexible approaches as a focus of, and means to enhance, her career. She may equally be concerned that her commitment to teaching will detract from her research output and hence harm her career prospects. Her approaches to teaching are not typically theoretically driven but derive from reflecting on her own teaching experience. She uses a variety of flexible approaches to address particular aspects of her teaching. She has arrived at her approach through a process of trial and error, retaining what has proved beneficial and rejecting what has not. She makes use of a considerable number of the capabilities of the tools she uses and requires students to actively engage in a range of flexible and other activities. She has significantly reconfigured her face-to-face teaching but retains a commitment to classroom contact. She has a good working relationship with staff in the FEU, with support staff in her faculty and school and with her colleagues. She has a network of supportive colleagues across the University who
have a similar commitment to teaching flexibly. She may be enrolled in the certificate program offered through the FEU. She has received one or more teaching development grants and is regarded by her school as a source of advice and expertise for less experienced colleagues.

The third type of individual is a member of a school or faculty that has developed or is developing a broad coherent strategy for the transformation of teaching through the use of flexible approaches. He is a member of a team charged with achieving some aspect of the desired transformation. He accepts that flexible approaches to teaching are a necessary aspect of life in the contemporary university. The challenge as he sees it is not to decide whether flexible approaches are to be used or not but to decide on how best to make use of them. As a team member, he is involved in decisions concerning the structure of curricula, the teaching approaches to be used and the use of technology that are beyond the scope of an individual academic. He investigates with the team the full range of possible approaches and of the capabilities of the tools available. He likewise evaluates their suitability to attain the team’s objectives. He receives considerable support from other members of the team which includes specialist support staff from the FEU and his faculty or school. The manner in which he and his colleagues teach is transformed through the sophisticated use of the capabilities of the flexible approaches adopted. He may have concerns about some aspects of the approaches adopted and may initially feel threatened as he becomes involved in radically new ways of teaching with which he has no experience. His teaching may embrace only a limited number of aspects of the full teaching role as teaching becomes a team activity with significant division of labour between team members.

The fourth type of individual is a self-identified sceptic. She has been employed at the University of Tasmania for a shorter period than have her colleagues. She is as likely to be involved in cross-campus teaching as are her colleagues but she makes less use of video conferencing. She makes as much use of web support as her colleagues but somewhat less use of resource-supported, resource-dependent and web-dependent approaches. She makes virtually no use of flexible scheduling, workplace learning or fully online approaches. Her experience with flexible approaches has not increased her satisfaction with teaching nor, she believes, has it led to improvements in her face-to-face teaching. She believes that flexible methods are a poor second best to face-to-face teaching, particularly so in her discipline. She is not satisfied that adequate technical support is available for flexible teaching but is satisfied with support with teaching strategies. She does not believe her experience with flexible teaching and learning has helped her achieve her professional goals or that it enhances her prospects for promotion. She does not believe flexible teaching and learning should remain a priority at the University.

Flexible teaching and learning as a mainstream activity
Our first conclusion is that flexible teaching and learning at the University is now a mainstream activity. To the extent that the Rogers (1995) model is useful to apply in a situation where adoption of new approaches has been encouraged and supported through policy and resources, then adoption is at the late majority stage. The issue for academic staff is not whether or not to make use of flexible approaches, but how and in what contexts to do so. The mainstream nature of the activity raises a number of issues for consideration.

Balancing continued innovation with staff and student expectations
Most academic staff are now involved in some form of flexible teaching. Most have strongly held opinions concerning how and in what contexts it should be employed. For some staff,
flexible teaching has provided a focus for their professional activities. A wide range of flexible approaches are currently employed and at least some staff are regularly using new strategies or technologies in an attempt to add value to their teaching. Continued trialling and refinement should be expected, as the literature on flexible teaching, online teaching and distance education makes it clear that there is no received wisdom in this area. It is not realistic to expect that a small number of teaching approaches will meet the needs of all programs. Rather, there are general principles that need interpretation and appropriate implementation in any particular situation. There is evidence from the University and elsewhere that innovative teaching approaches almost exclusively originate with teachers seeking solutions to specific teaching problems. The climate needs to encourage this.

Given the above the University needs to continue finding ways to encourage and reward staff looking for innovative ways to overcome teaching problems. Consideration should be given to continuing or enhancing the current teaching grants program. This has clearly enabled many individuals or groups to develop new approaches. Consideration should also be given to finding ways of ensuring that staff in general are made aware of successful approaches. The Teaching Matters forums are seen as playing an important role in this but there needs to be further consideration of other ways of disseminating knowledge of successful innovations. One focus group advocated establishing an open classroom scheme that would allow staff to observe innovative teaching in action. Another advocated including a unit on flexible teaching in the certificate offered by the FEU. Could this include examples of successful approaches developed at the University?

Fostering continuing innovation needs to be balanced with the need of both staff and students for a coherence in the way in which flexible teaching and learning is pursued at the University. If flexible teaching and learning is to be conducted effectively and efficiently, there needs to be a framework of common understandings and expectations held by staff and students alike. This is not to advocate a uniform approach across the University. Rather it suggests that curriculum bodies at the program, school and faculty level recognise the mainstream nature of flexible teaching and learning and incorporate consideration of how it should be used in discussions about program curricula, the development of generic skills and like considerations. Over time this will ensure at a minimum a certain coherence in, and common expectations for, the use of flexible approaches in any given program. This is already the case in some schools. The University might consider how to ensure that such considerations become universal.

**Emphasise teaching over technology**

It is clear that the adoption of new technologies that support flexible teaching and learning requires the expenditure of a great deal of staff time. Staff require time for initial and continuing professional and skills development. They are also likely to need extra time to perform core tasks until they become skilled in the use of the new systems. Some continuing expenditure of time on skills development is also inevitable as technologies change. It is not surprising, therefore, that there has been considerable emphasis over the last few years on ensuring staff gain needed skills in the use of WebCT, as this is the most commonly used technology to support flexible teaching at the University. This emphasis may account for the conflation, in the minds of some staff, of flexible teaching and learning with the use of WebCT. This is an unfortunate perception, for in some cases it has led staff to reject the usefulness or even validity of flexible approaches. A greater number of staff, many making use of flexible approaches, still regard the term flexible teaching as no more than code for using WebCT. This is in spite of the University’s formal espousal of a broad and multi-faceted approach to teaching flexibly (Johnston, 2001).
The University needs, therefore, to consider ways of ensuring, not only that staff understand that the University’s agenda for flexible teaching and learning is indeed about teaching and learning, and not about the use of technology, but that this is reflected in the reality of the support provided both centrally and through faculties and schools. Staff want help with developing teaching strategies, with assessment models and the like more than they want training in the use of tools.

**Let academic staff focus on core activities**
The mainstream use of flexible approaches to teaching has changed the nature and practice of academic work. We are inclined to believe that the extent to which flexible teaching increases the amount of work involved is overestimated in the report as a result of the phrasing of Question 33. Be that as it may, the University clearly needs to ensure that the workloads of experienced and skilled flexible teachers are reasonable on an ongoing basis.

The University might consider ways of providing academic staff with help for routine technical matters associated with flexible teaching. Of particular value would be assistance with tasks that are performed only once or twice a year, such as establishing unit web sites. It is arguably a waste of resources to require academic staff to inefficiently perform tasks that could be done in significantly less time by specialist staff whose strength is their technical skills.

**Supportive infrastructure**
The University faces several significant issues concerning the ability of its infrastructure to support flexible teaching and learning. These concern the current configuration of physical space, the provision of all staff with compatible computing equipment and software, enhanced and better supported student access to university networks, the equipping of all teaching spaces to support flexible teaching and finding ways to overcome the constraints on flexible teaching resulting from current approaches to timetabling. These are major challenges. The University of Tasmania is not alone in facing them. Most universities in western countries are faced with the challenge of converting physical spaces developed to support lecture, seminar and laboratory teaching into spaces that support student-centred flexible teaching. Most timetabling systems likewise reflect practices that are no longer the norm. The University needs to recognise that it will face this challenge for many years to come. It needs to consider ways of ensuring that those responsible for infrastructure development are developing spaces and systems that support current and future, not past, realities.
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APPENDIX A

Members of the Steering Committee

- Professor Sue Johnston, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) (Launceston)
- Ms Christine Goodacre, Director Flexible Education Unit (Hobart)
- Dr Joanna Ellison, Lecturer, School of Geography and Environmental Studies (Launceston)
- Ms Leonie Ellis, Honours Coordinator, School of Information Systems. (Hobart)
- Dr Jon Osborn, Degree Coordinator, Centre for Spatial Information Science, School of Geography and Environmental Studies (Hobart)
- Ms. Janine Tarr, Lecturer, School of Human Life Sciences (Launceston)
- Ms Samantha Hardy, Lecturer, School of Law (Hobart)
- Dr Max Travers, Lecturer, School of Sociology and Social Work (Hobart)
- Dr Anthony Koutoulis, Senior Lecturer and Head of School, School of Plant Science (Hobart)
APPENDIX B

Definitions of flexible approaches to teaching and learning.

**Video conferencing.** Live 2-way interaction by video link between teaching staff and students at a remote location (e.g. another campus) is an integral part of the teaching program.

**Resource-supported.** Learning resources are provided to supplement other teaching arrangements (such as face-to-face). For example, recorded audiotapes, audio CDs, videotapes of lectures, seminars etc. are provided for study or review purposes.

**Resource-dependent.** Learning resources are an integral, and compulsory, part of the teaching program, complementing other teaching arrangements and replacing some or all face-to-face teaching.

**Flexible scheduling.** Either face-to-face classes are held outside normal University teaching times; e.g. in the evening, in weekend blocs or in summer or winter schools, or a course or unit is taken outside standard semester dates.

**Workplace learning.** A formal, assessable or compulsory, workplace learning component (e.g. workplace project, practicum, placement) is in place.

**Web-supported.** The Web is used to supplement or support other teaching arrangements such as face-to-face or distance. Access to the Web is not compulsory for students as all assessable requirements are available through other teaching arrangements.

**Web-dependent.** The Web is an integral, and compulsory, part of the mix of teaching and learning for the unit. It is used (a) for the presentation of or access to course content and/or (b) for communication with staff and/or other students and/or (c) for formal assessment purposes. Other complementary teaching arrangements (e.g. face-to-face classes) are in place.

**Fully on-line.** The Web is the only formal and compulsory teaching and learning medium for (a) the presentation of and access to content, (b) communications between students and staff; and (c) continuous assessment. Any other teaching or orientation arrangements are non-compulsory, or not on offer. End of semester examination may be held and supervised in the normal way.
Appendix C

Impact of Flexible Teaching and Learning

1. What is your faculty?
   - Arts
   - Commerce
   - Education
   - Health Science
   - Law
   - SE&T

2. What is your campus?
   - Cradle Coast
   - Hobart
   - Launceston

3. How long have you worked at UTAS?
   - < 1 year
   - 1–5 years
   - > 5 years

4. At what levels were the units you taught in Semester 1?
   - Undergraduate
   - Postgraduate
   - Both undergraduate and postgraduate

5. Have you taught cross-campus units in the last three years?
   - Yes
   - No

6. Have you taught offshore in the last three years?
   - Yes
   - No

7. What class sizes do you normally teach?
   (Please select all that apply.)
   - <50
   - 50 – 100
   - 100 – 150
   - >150

8. What forms of flexible teaching and learning have you used in the last three years?
   (Please select all that apply. Please refer to the definitions of flexible approaches on the sheet at the end of the survey)
   - video conferencing.

79
resource-supported.
resource-dependent.
flexible scheduling.
workplace learning.
web-supported.
web-dependent.
fully on-line.
none

9. Briefly describe the approach to flexible teaching and learning with which you are most familiar, either through experience or observation (e.g. web-supported resource-based teaching and learning, cross-campus classes using video conferencing)

10. How would you rate the amount of experience you have had using flexible teaching and learning?

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Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with the following questions, to the extent that you can, whether or not you use flexible approaches to teaching and learning. If you are not teaching flexibly at the moment, consider the model with which you are most familiar.

11. My faculty and school encourage me to use flexible approaches to teaching and learning.

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12. The University has provided good justification for encouraging the widespread use of flexible teaching and learning.

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13. Adequate technical support for flexible teaching and learning is available.

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14. Adequate assistance with pedagogical strategies for flexible teaching and learning is available.

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15. Constraints imposed by accrediting authorities (e.g. for professionally accredited courses) prevent or limit my ability to use flexible approaches in the units I teach.

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16. Constraints imposed by schools to which I service teach prevent or limit my ability to use flexible approaches.

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17. I am sceptical of the value of flexible teaching and learning in the subjects that I teach.

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Please elaborate.

18. What factors are important in enabling staff to get started with flexible teaching and learning?

19. What are the major barriers to getting started with flexible teaching and learning?

20. Teaching flexibly requires more individual student responsibility for mastering course content than is the case for face-to-face teaching.

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21. Teaching flexibly requires introducing more individual student choice when designing learning experiences.

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22. Teaching flexibly requires structured student group interaction.

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23. Teaching flexibly increases the amount of interaction with students.

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24. Teaching flexibly improves the quality of interaction with students.

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25. Flexible teaching and learning can enrich students' learning experiences.

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26. Experience with flexible teaching and learning has a positive impact on face-to-face teaching.

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27. What are the most significant effects of flexible teaching and learning on teaching strategies and methods?
28. Preparing to undertake flexible teaching and learning requires expenditure of time in professional development.

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29. Learning the technical skills necessary for flexible teaching and learning increases workload.

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32. Workload allocation procedures in my school take adequate account of the impact on workload of flexible teaching and learning.

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33. When you have experience in flexible approaches, teaching flexibly requires less time overall than teaching the same students in traditional ways.

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34. Involvement with flexible teaching and learning increases prospects for promotion.

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35. What are the main impacts of flexible teaching and learning on academic work and careers?

36. Flexible teaching and learning should remain a priority of the University.

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37. My head of school understands what is involved in flexible teaching and learning.

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38. What changes would facilitate the use of flexible teaching and learning at UTAS?

39. What are the major impediments to the use of flexible teaching and learning at UTAS?

**Please complete the following section if you have tried to use flexible teaching and learning approaches.**

40. From whom have you received support and assistance for flexible teaching and learning? (Please select all that apply.)

- the FEU
- specialist staff in my faculty or school
- colleagues or champions
- central technical support staff
- other

Please specify
41. I am aware of the types of support that are available to me.

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42. What types of support and assistance have you received?

- advice on teaching strategies
- training in the use of technologies
- help with technical problems
- administrative support for flexible teaching and learning

43. What types of support and assistance would you have liked to receive but did not?

44. Support I received from the FEU was timely and adequate to my needs.

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45. Support I received within my faculty or school was timely and adequate to my needs.

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46. Central technical support was timely and adequate to my needs.

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47. How could the quality and scope of support for flexible teaching and learning be improved?

48. If you have received a grant or other funding to become involved in flexible teaching and learning, how did you use it and what were the benefits?
49. I have easy access to the equipment I need for flexible teaching and learning.

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50. An adequate number of teaching spaces are equipped for flexible teaching and learning.

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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

51. Flexible approaches help me teach across campuses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

52. Timetabling has not been a problem for me in teaching flexibly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

53. How could physical facilities and their use be improved to support flexible teaching and learning?

54. Flexible teaching and learning contributes to the achievement of my professional goals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

55. Flexible teaching has increased my level of satisfaction with my teaching.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
56. What impact has teaching flexibly had on your relationship with colleagues not involved in flexible teaching and learning?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Positive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

57. What has been the impact of flexible teaching and learning on collegiality in your school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Positive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

58. How have students reacted to your use of flexible teaching and learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Positive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

59. Please make any further comments you wish in the space below.
We, Professor Jocelyn Calvert and Dr. John Bottomley, are undertaking an evaluation of the impact of flexible teaching and learning on academic staff at the University of Tasmania. We are conducting the evaluation on a consultancy basis for the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning), Professor Sue Johnson. We are working closely with a Steering Committee drawn from the academic community at the University.

In recent years, the University of Tasmania has placed a priority on developing flexible approaches to teaching and learning. Several initiatives in the 2004 Teaching and Learning Development Plan relate to flexible learning. This evaluation is one of these initiatives.

The desired outcome is a report that is readable, interesting and provides some guidance to the University for future planning. It will probably show that flexible teaching and learning impacts on staff in both positive and negative ways. It is hoped that the report will identify ways that better support may be provided for staff in the future. The report will be widely disseminated within the University and will be considered in detail by the University Teaching and Learning Committee. To respond to the findings, an implementation plan will be developed and monitored.

We are adopting a multi-faceted approach to the evaluation task involving the collection of survey data from across the University and the conduct of interviews, case studies and focus groups.

Interviews with academic staff will address known issues in a format that allows staff to express their views in their own words. Issues to be addressed include:

- Resourcing and infrastructure,
- Impacts on workload and nature of work,
- Impacts on approaches to teaching,
- Support received and needed, and
- Satisfaction and concerns.

We anticipate the emergence of issues not identified above. We are seeking your participation in the review through an interview that will last for approximately forty-five minutes to one hour. Our aim is to interview 20 members of academic staff. This will include staff from each faculty. We have taken your name from a list of names generated to ensure that we have reasonable gender balance and representation from each faculty and campus.

The purpose of the survey is to collect responses from academic staff across the university to a the range of issues noted above. All academic staff are invited to respond. Short case studies or vignettes will provide illumination and illustration of contrasting impacts of flexible learning. Cases will be determined following the conduct of the survey and interviews. Focus groups will also be held on each campus to clarify issues raised earlier in the study. All academic staff are invited to participate.

If you agree to participate in an interview, we will treat what you tell us as confidential. With your permission, we will tape the interview and make written transcripts. We will send you the transcripts which you may edit. We will remove your name from your approved transcript, replace it with a code.
and, after that, work only from the transcript. In any reports we will take appropriate measures to conceal your identity. If for any reason we feel that it would benefit the report to identify the source of comments we will seek your permission to do so. If you do not grant permission your comments will remain un-attributed. Information you provide will in no way impact upon your position or employment in the University. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you may choose to withdraw from the evaluation at any time. If you choose to withdraw, records of your participation will be destroyed and we will not report any information you have given us.

We are happy to answer your questions about this project and to provide further information. Our contact details are as follows:

Professor Jocelyn Calvert                    Dr. John Bottomley
(03) 5229 3901                                (03) 5229 3901
jocelyn@ncable.net.au                          johnbo@ncable.net.au
Evaluation Interview Questions
1. How long have you been at the University of Tasmania?
2. Do you teach undergraduate or postgraduate units or both?
3. What are your usual class sizes?
4. Have you taught cross-campus or been involved in offshore programs?
5. What sort of experience have you had with flexible teaching and learning?
6. What forms or approaches have you used?
7. In what ways is flexible teaching and learning encouraged and supported?
8. Are there any factors that make the use of flexible teaching and learning difficult or that otherwise discourage its use?
9. What impact does it (or do you think it might) have on the way you teach?
10. What is the impact of teaching flexibly on the volume and distribution of your work, compared with teaching the same units without the use of flexible approaches?
11. How do workload processes in your school take account of any differences resulting from a move to adopt flexible approaches?
12. Where do you go to get help, and with what? What sort of help do you need?
13. Are you satisfied with the help available? How could it be improved?
14. What sort of help that is not available now would you like to see?
15. What have you personally got out of teaching flexibly (or what do you think those involved get out of it)? Have there been any costs?
16. How has teaching flexible impacted on (your) relationships with/among (other) members of staff in your school?
17. How have (your) students reacted to (your use of) flexible teaching and learning?
18. Should the University continue to promote flexible approaches to teaching and learning? Why?