



## Title: **University funding initiatives**

**Transition(s) the practice supports:** This theme will be of benefit to students at all levels who undertake blended or fully-online distance learning. In terms of the transitions map, it is indirectly relevant to students transitioning through their studies but perhaps is more relevant in relation to how the university and its staff are transitioning towards blended learning.

**Abstract:** The university recognises the opportunity to enhance its profile and reputation through the development of blended and fully online learning opportunities, at the same time as making learning more accessible to a more diverse, international market. With this in mind, the university has a number of strategic funding opportunities, including:

- strategic investment in the development of online courses, referred to within the institution as the BOLD project (Blended and Online Learning Development)<sup>1</sup>
- funding opportunities to develop Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)<sup>2</sup>
- the Learning and Teaching Development Fund (LTDF) – which has seen an increasing focus on blended learning since its inception in 2000<sup>3</sup>

The Transitions project provides an ideal opportunity to evaluate the impact of this strategic funding.

**Description:** There are a number of strategic funding opportunities currently available to educators in the institution, to enhance the university's profile in delivering blended and fully online learning opportunities. Three of these funding mechanisms are particularly relevant to enabling the university's transition into blended learning:

- strategic investment in the development of online courses, referred to within the institution as the BOLD project (Blended and Online Learning Development)
- funding opportunities to develop Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)
- the Learning and Teaching Development Fund (LTDF) – which has seen an increasing focus on blended learning since its inception in 2000

### *Strategic investment in the development of online courses*

In 2014, the university committed £2.34 million over five years to expand the institution's portfolio of online learning courses. The funding is organised into two strands:

- Strand A: Development of new online distance Masters courses
- Strand B: Conversion of existing traditional courses into a blended or fully online format

Four projects were funded in 2014, with an expected delivery date of September 2015; these are resulting in the development of fully online courses in sports medicine, veterinary medicine, health professions education, intellectual property and the creative economy, as well as blended courses in research methods for management and finance, and classical

<sup>1</sup> [www.gla.ac.uk/services/learningteaching/resourcesforstaff/awardsandfunds/strategicinvestmentinonlinecourse/delivery/](http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/learningteaching/resourcesforstaff/awardsandfunds/strategicinvestmentinonlinecourse/delivery/)

<sup>2</sup> [www.gla.ac.uk/courses/mooc/moocsatglasgow/](http://www.gla.ac.uk/courses/mooc/moocsatglasgow/)

<sup>3</sup> [www.gla.ac.uk/services/learningteaching/resourcesforstaff/awardsandfunds/developmentfund/](http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/learningteaching/resourcesforstaff/awardsandfunds/developmentfund/)

civilisation. Any of these would constitute an individual case study; however, we envisage the funding initiative as a whole as a case study which draws together the experiences and lessons learned from all projects, as well as their likely impact on students, staff and the institution.

#### *Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)*

Alongside this, the university is committed to developing MOOCs and have an arrangement with FutureLearn, which currently hosts three MOOCs for the university. There are plans to expand this provision and an ongoing commitment of project funding to ensure the university's place in providing lifelong learning opportunities online.

#### *Learning and Teaching Development Fund*

Thirdly, the university's Learning and Teaching Centre has coordinated a Learning and Teaching Development Fund, which has seen an increasing focus on blended learning since its inception 15 years ago.

This Transitions theme will enable us to assess the impact of these funding initiatives, on students, staff and the institution. In addition, it will help us to strategically align our funding opportunities with the other proposed themes, in order to take a bird's eye, holistic perspective on how we best enable and encourage blended learning opportunities.

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