



ensuring that students graduating from courses in health and social care are fully equipped to perform confidently and competently at the start of their professional careers so improving the standards of care

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## Update of ALPS Work

“Feedback on health and social care student communication skills”

Assessors of health and social care students are to take part in a consultation to provide feedback on assessing generic competencies common to these students.

ALPS is to take a phased approach, consulting with academic staff first, and then with practice assessors, service users, carers and students, on the usefulness of a communication skills “map”. The map has been developed by ALPS partners and its aim is to ensure that the student communication skills, required by each of the sixteen health and social care professions involved in ALPS, are met. Feedback is also being sought on the performance criteria against which the students may be assessed and must meet as laid down by academic and professional registration bodies.

Feedback is invited across all disciplines to ensure that the content of the map meets the following criteria:

- appropriate across the ALPS disciplines
- usability by all stakeholders
- fitness-for-purpose

To date progress on the map has involved “communication” being dissolved into four broad areas (clusters):

- gathering and processing information
- providing information
- influencing and negotiating
- relationships and networks

Each cluster has a “dimension statement” associated with it, and has been broken down even further into “elements”. Each element then has a range of “performance criteria” against which a student may be assessed. It is this map on which ALPS is now seeking feedback.

The work in mapping communication has now provided a template for work on further competences such as team working skills and

*For the benefit of new readers and as a reminder to everyone else, ALPS is a collaborative programme between five Higher Education Institutions with proven reputations for excellence in learning and teaching in health and social care: the Universities of Bradford, Huddersfield, Leeds (lead); Leeds Metropolitan and York St John. There are 16 professions across the partnership from Audiology to Social Work and a wide range of partners including NHS Yorkshire and the Humber and practice networks. We are also working in consultation with the professional, statutory and regulatory bodies.*

ethical practice. Work will start on these competency maps in 2007.

Developing mobile technologies to support students in practice is one of the workstreams within ALPS. As part of one of these work streams lecturers will be able to develop an assessment using the skill and competency map described above. This assessment can be delivered to a mobile device such as a smartphone or PDA which can then be used by tutors, students and professional assessors/mentors in practice.

These assessments can then be used as part of a formative assessment and learning process where the student can access their university’s virtual learning environment and other e-learning material such as digital repositories, learning and assessment tools and personal information systems such as mail and calendars. Blogging and other collaboration tools are available so that students can record their reflective thoughts on practice.

Additionally, the assessment tools can be used summatively and the technology provides the means to collect immediate and secure data on the students’ performance and experience in practice. It also increases the potential for the university’s VLE facilities to be extended to the mobile environment.

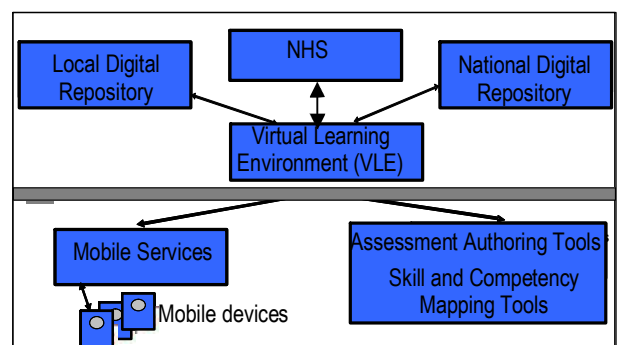


Figure 1. ALPS proposed IT architecture

ALPS is currently working with partners to build the infrastructure which will support the use of these mobile technologies. As the use of a mobile phone in the assessment process, for example, becomes more widespread, the student's host institution needs to have a supporting IT infrastructure. ALPS is using its capital funding to develop the IT architecture, both shared and institution-specific, of the five ALPS partners. Figure 1 shows how the proposed ALPS architecture builds on partner IT infrastructure whilst at the same time enhancing what already exists. To ensure sustainability beyond the lifetime of ALPS, enhancements are integrated into partners' own IT infrastructures. Partners will then have access to the following ALPS services: common competency mappings and tools, assessment authoring tools, access to local and national repositories and the mobile presentation service which delivers the above to the individual mobile device.

## Call for Research Proposals

The ALPS Core Team is pleased to announce the availability of £50,000 to support research projects that advance the goals of the ALPS programme. The primary focus of these funds is to build research capacity within and across the ALPS partnership, and to further the cross institutional goals of ALPS. Funding is not intended to support existing ALPS work currently being undertaken by partners and the Core Team.

Applications that involve practice partners and demonstrate good value for money will be given priority. You are required to have at least 1 active project partner from either a different profession or different institution, in order to qualify for consideration of funding and 1 of these partners must be a current ALPS partner (Universities of Leeds, Bradford, Huddersfield, Leeds Metropolitan University or York St John University). Depending on the quality of proposals, funding will be available over two rounds, offering funds for 2-4 projects of between £3,000 & £25,000 in the following areas:

- Student learning and assessment in practice placement
- Service user involvement in student practice placement learning and assessment
- Institutional change and inter-professional learning and teaching
- Measuring competency and evaluating those measurements
- Networks and collaborative working between professions and institutions

Visit [www.alps-cetl.ac.uk](http://www.alps-cetl.ac.uk) for further details and an application form. For enquiries contact the ALPS

office via [alps@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:alps@leeds.ac.uk). The closing date for applications is **31 March 2007**. Projects must be completed by 1 January 2009.

Please circulate this call for research proposals amongst colleagues and via your institutions website.

## ALPS Partner report

### York St John University

#### M-Learn 2006: a trip from the ALPS to the Rockies – Canada.

In October 2006, Mark Dransfield and Maria Parks from the ALPS partner site of York St John University attended the 5<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Mobile Learning in Banff, Alberta, Canada hosted by Athabasca University.

M-learn annual conference markets itself as the key research and networking event for mobile learning researchers, strategists, educators, trainers, practitioners, and high level decision-makers from education, business, and government from across the world. Five years ago m-Learn was a small event in the UK. Now m-Learn is the world's leading symposium for sharing research findings, engaging in projects, learning from successes and failures, and sharing ideas and vision for mobile learning and emerging ambient technologies.

Mark and Maria gave a 20 minute technical showcase, demonstrating the ALPS IT pilot project 'MoBlogging'. The project was completed during the summer of 2006, engaging occupational therapy and physiotherapy students from York St John University. Whilst out on their professional practice placements, smart phones and blue tooth keyboards were used by the students to keep a reflective blog of their placement. The presentation was warmly received by a mixed audience of teachers, health care educators, librarians, academics and technologists.

Mark and Maria found the conference highly relevant to the current IT project work of ALPS and many of the presentations, shared evaluations of the use of mobile technologies in education. For further information, downloadable copies of the presentations will shortly become available on the conference website [www.mlearn2006.org](http://www.mlearn2006.org). Next year, the m-learn conference will be held in Melbourne, Australia and the conference organisers are seeking future contributors and the call for papers will appear on [www.mlearn2007.org](http://www.mlearn2007.org)

**Mark Dransfield/Maria Parks - York St John**

## Announcements

### ALPS Research Officer – job opportunity

This full time post will co-ordinate and support the ALPS programme of research. The postholder will work with the Chair and members of the Research Group who lead ALPS research and will initiate and progress activities where required. The post is available until September 2010 but could be available as a part time appointment at a minimum of 60% fte. Full details are available at [www.leeds.ac.uk](http://www.leeds.ac.uk) and click on 'jobs'.

**Closing date 10 January 2007**

ALPS would like to bid farewell to our Research Officer Robin Waxman who leaves the ALPS Core Team at the end of December. Thank you for your work and good luck for future roles.

Welcome back to Jo Mallows who is to rejoin the ALPS Core Team to co-ordinate ALPS research activity on a temporary basis.

We are also pleased to announce that the University of Huddersfield is advertising two internal secondments for members of staff to take the ALPS work forward. One will have an emphasis on service user and carer involvement in the assessment of students. It is hoped that the postholders will commence work in early 2007.

## Forthcoming Events Listing

***Universities Medical Assessment Partnership (UMAP) Question Writing Workshop, Medical Teaching Centre, University of Leeds, Room N, Medical Teaching Centre, Worsley Building, 14 March 2007***

This workshop will take participants through the best practice principles of question writing. To confirm attendance contact the UMAP office in Manchester on 0161 291 5805 or email [umap@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:umap@manchester.ac.uk)

***The fifth Festival of Learning, The Higher Education Academy for Health Sciences and Practice, The Royal College of Physicians, London, 27-29 March 2007***

The focus of the Festival is 'Health Professions Education in the 21st Century'  
[http: www.health.heacademy.ac.uk](http://www.health.heacademy.ac.uk)

***Professional Lifelong Learning: Critical debates about professionalism, Hilton Leeds City Hotel, Leeds, 9 July 2007***

This conference is intended for those working with professional lifelong learning broadly defined (e.g. healthcare, medicine, social work, education, legal education). To contribute a paper visit the website [www.leeds.ac.uk/medicine/meu/lifelong07](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/medicine/meu/lifelong07) or contact Clair Robinson on [medcrob@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:medcrob@leeds.ac.uk)

For details of more events that you may find useful visit [www.alps-cetl.ac.uk/events.htm](http://www.alps-cetl.ac.uk/events.htm)

## Future Bulletins

The Bulletin is distributed electronically and via the ALPS website three times a year to keep colleagues up to date and involved with the work of the ALPS Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. For further information on the articles featured visit our website at [www.alps-cetl.ac.uk](http://www.alps-cetl.ac.uk).

We are looking for keen readers **and** contributors to the Bulletin, in order to make it a valuable, relevant, collective resource.

In the April Bulletin the ALPS Core Team will provide an update on the progress of the current IT work and report on the Common Competency consultation.

### ***Future Bulletin deadlines for contributions:***

11 April 2007

3 July 2007

You can contribute by emailing the ALPS Core Team at [alps@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:alps@leeds.ac.uk) with brief details of events, links to articles and other information.

We'd be delighted if you would forward this Bulletin to your colleagues. Equally, if you've received this in error, or if you don't wish to remain on our circulation list please let us know [alps@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:alps@leeds.ac.uk).

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