ITG assessment – based on the JISC framework

Governance – Vision

Has the institution defined its strategy for information systems and IT?

1. Does the institution have a documented information strategy (or equivalent)?
2. Does the institution have a documented IT strategy (or equivalent)?
3. Have these strategies been approved by the *senior executive group* and (in the case of the information strategy) the *institutional governing body*?
4. Are these strategies updated periodically?
5. Are these strategies linked to each other and to other relevant strategies (e.g. the institutional strategy, the teaching and learning strategy, the library strategy, etc.)?
6. Are all the institution's information systems (as defined in scoping exercise in Section1) covered by the information and IT strategies?

Governance – Alignment

Are the institution's information systems and IT aligned to its strategy?

1. Has responsibility for overseeing the implementation of the Information Strategy been assigned to an *Information Strategy Steering Committee*?
2. Does the *Information Strategy Steering Committee* represent all relevant stakeholders in IT and information systems?
3. Does the *Information Strategy Steering Committee* approve all significant institutional investments in IT and information systems (whether centrally supported or devolved)?
4. Is the Information Strategy actively used by the *Information Strategy Steering Committee* to inform their decisions?
5. Is the *Information Strategy Steering Committee* provided with periodic reports on the services and projects under its remit?

Governance - Assurance

Does the institution provide assurance to its governors that its information systems are aligned to strategy?

1. Does the *senior executive group* receive periodic progress reports on the implementation of the *Information Strategy*?
2. Does the *institutional governing body* receive periodic progress reports (either directly or through a member) on the implementation of the *Information Strategy*?
3. Does the institution conduct a systematic review of the risks associated with information systems and IT (including the risk of underinvestment)?
4. Are the information systems/IT departments subject to periodic internal review (e.g. internal audit, peer review by other staff, management review, etc.)?
5. Are the information systems/IT departments subject to periodic external review (e.g. external audit, review by staff from other institutions, etc.)?

Resources – People

Does the institution have the right people and skills to make effective use of its information systems?

1. Has the institution reviewed the number of staff that will be required to progress its Information Strategy (or equivalent) in the proposed timescale?
2. Has the institution identified where its Information Strategy is reliant on key individuals and taken appropriate risk management measures?
3. Are staff, throughout the institution, appropriately skilled and trained to make effective use of the information systems as required?
4. Are students throughout the institution appropriately skilled and trained to make effective use of the information systems as required?

Resources – Technology

Is the institution's Information Technology aligned to its Information Strategy?

1. Is the capacity of the institution's IT infrastructure adequate to meet the current requirements of the institution?

2. Is the capacity of the institution's IT infrastructure adequate to meet the future requirements of the institution?
3. Is the institution's IT and information secure?
4. Does the institution have a long-term IT replacement plan which reflects its institutional and information strategies?
5. Is the IT replacement plan updated regularly (e.g. annually) to reflect advances in technology?
6. Does the institution have processes in place which allow it to evaluate emergent technologies and plan for their deployment if appropriate?

Resources - Finance

Is the institution achieving value for money from its investments in IT and information systems?

1. Can the institution identify how much it spends on its information systems?
2. Are budget allocations aligned with the implementing the Information Strategy?
3. Is performance against budget (both for central and devolved information systems spend) reported back to the *senior executive group*?
4. Does the institution optimise its purchasing through best practice (e.g. tendering, purchasing consortia, negotiated discounts, etc)?
5. Are investments subject to retrospective review by the *Information Strategy Steering Committee*?

Organisation – Structure

Is the information systems support structure aligned with the Information Strategy and IT Strategy?

1. Does the institution periodically review which information systems and elements of IT should be under centralised or devolved control?
2. Does this review consider the costs, benefits and risks associated with each option?
3. Does the institution have a documented policy explaining the rights and responsibilities associated with devolved IT and information systems?
4. Does the institution periodically review and redefine the roles and responsibilities of the various departments and units involved in the support of information systems (e.g. libraries, IT departments, MIS departments, learning support units, etc.)?

Organisation - Policies

Does the institution have in place appropriate policies and procedures to manage its information systems?

1. Does the institution have an acceptable use policy that all users are expected to sign and comply with?
2. Does the institution have an information security policy?
3. Are staff aware of their legal responsibilities in relation to information systems (e.g. Data Protection Act, Freedom of Information Act, Disability legislation, etc.)?
4. Does the institution monitor compliance with relevant legislation and policies across the institution?
5. Does the institution have a robust business continuity /disaster recover plan in place covering all its business critical information systems?
6. Is the disaster recovery/business continuity plan regularly tested?

Organisation – Decision-Making

Does the Institution make informed and effective decisions in relation to information systems and IT?

1. Does the *Information Strategy Steering Committee* contain sufficient expertise to guide the development and implementation of the Information and IT Strategies?
2. Are business cases/project proposals developed for each significant investment?
3. Does the institution evaluate proposals/options in relation to their potential benefits, costs and risks?
4. Does the institution routinely identify obsolete services and systems to be discontinued?

Services - Systems

Does systems architecture support the institutional strategy?

1. Does the institution take a structured approach to planning its systems?
2. Are key corporate systems integrated?
3. Is there cohesive access (e.g. single point of authentication) to key corporate systems?
4. Is the infrastructure and systems architecture adequately documented?
5. Is the systems infrastructure sufficiently flexible to adapt to future requirements?
6. Does the institution consider all potentially appropriate solutions (e.g. proprietary, in-house development, open-source, outsourcing, collaboration, etc.) prior to investing in an information system?

Systems – Projects

Do projects achieved their planned objectives?

1. Does the *Information Strategy Steering Committee* receive reports on the outcomes of all significant *development projects* and *pilot projects*?
2. Are significant *implementation projects* managed using structured project management methodologies?
3. Does the Information Strategy Steering Committee receive periodic reports on all significant *implementation projects*?

Systems – Service Delivery

Do services meet users' requirements and/or expectations?

1. Does the institution routinely canvas the requirements of *users (e.g. staff and students)*?
2. Does the institution actively manage expectations (e.g. through *service definition statements*, *service level agreements*, etc.)?
3. Are service levels monitored?
4. Does the institution obtain feedback on user satisfaction for all its services?

PLANNING IMPROVEMENTS

Governance: Vision

Indicators of Good Practice The following could be considered indicators of good practice in the area of information and IT strategies:

- Existence of an Information Strategy and an IT Strategy.
- History of regular review and update to strategies.
- Specific cross references to other strategies within the Information/IT remit.
- Scope of information and IT strategies covering all significant information systems.

Governance: Alignment

Indicators of Good Practice The following indicate that the institution follows good practice in relation to aligning activity to strategy:
 Establishment of an Information Strategy Steering Committee tasked with implementing the Information and IT strategies.
 Representation of all significant stakeholders on the Information Strategy Steering Committee.
 All significant IT and information systems investment approved by the Information Strategy Steering Committee.

Governance: Assurance
Indicators of Good Practice The following could be considered indicators of good practice in the area of assurance to governors
 Periodic reports on implementation of the strategy from the Information Strategy Steering Committee to the Senior Executive Group and the Institutional Governing Body.
 Inclusion, within these reports, of an assessment of value for money achieved from investments.
 Feedback from Governors regarding their views of the alignment of the work of the Information Systems Steering Committee with the Information Strategy.

Resources: People
Indicators of Good Practice From a governance perspective the following documents and policies would point to an effective approach to people management within the area of information systems and IT:
 Regular 'Training Needs Analysis' exercises are conducted for staff and students.
 Regular skills training programmes are run to address the requirements raised in the training needs analysis.
 The institution provides formal validation/certification of student IT skills
 The institution adopts good practice for people management, as described in the HEFCE toolkit (URL: http://www.hefce.ac.uk/lgm/hr/selfassess/). This provides guidance on a range of HR issues including strategies for effective funding, recruitment and retention of staff.
 The institution has 'Investors In People' accreditation. (URL: http://www.investorsinpeople.co.uk/IIP/Web/default.htm)

Resources: Technology
Key Indicators of Good Practice The following documents and policies would provide evidence of good practice in the area of information technology:
 A comprehensive IT Strategy that is aligned to the information strategy and updated regularly.
 Translation of the plan into an approved, long-term budget for the acquisition and replacement of major elements of the IT infrastructure.

 A Capacity Plan (either as a separate document or as part of the IT Strategy) showing estimated/planned usage and how the infrastructure will deal with this.
 A current Disaster Recovery/Business Continuity Plan and evidence that this is tested regularly in whole or in part (e.g. failover testing)
 A Security Policy and evidence that it is tested regularly perhaps by an independent body.
 An Acceptable Use Policy which all system users (staff, students and others) have signed
 Reports on security breaches to the *Information Strategy Steering Committee*.
 Reports on unplanned disruptions to the *Information Strategy Steering Committee*.

Resources: Finance

Indicators of Good Practice The following indicators would point to good practice in relation to the financing of information systems:
 Guidelines on purchasing IT and software which are applied consistently across the institution.
 Use of tendering for significant purchases.
 Membership of purchasing consortia
 Summary annual reports on expenditure on all information systems and IT systems across the institution.
 Translation of the information strategy into costed implementation plans.
 Use of Cost/Benefit Analysis and Option Appraisal techniques to inform decisions on major investments.

Organisation: Structure

Indicators of Good Practice The following documents and processes would indicate that an institution has taken a considered approach to defining the structures that support IT and information systems:
 Documented policy detailing the rights and responsibilities relating to devolved IT and information systems (e.g. purchasing guidelines, guidelines related to attaching equipment to the network, regulations on physical and digital security, etc.)
 Periodic reviews of services and systems which consider the mix of centralised and devolved responsibilities.
 Periodic reviews of the support structures of information systems and technologies to ensure their continued appropriateness.

Organisation: Policies and Procedures

Indicators of Good Practice The following would serve as indicators of good practice in relation to policies and procedures
 Agreed policies in relation to IT use and relevant legislation
 Effective dissemination of policies
 Monitoring and reporting breaches of compliance with policies
 Robust testing of the Disaster Recovery Plan with results reported to the *Information Strategy Steering Committee*.

Organisation: Decision-Making

Indicators of Good Practice From a governance perspective, the existence of the following types of document would provide some assurance that effective decision-making was in place:

 A standard template being used for investment proposals presented to the *Information Strategy Steering Committee.*

 A standard methodology for costing applied consistently across all proposals

 A consideration of the risk associated with proposals (e.g. the risks of not investing, risks that might affect planned outcomes, etc.)

 A standard approach to evaluating the benefits of proposals in relation to their cost.

 Periodic reviews of on-going services.

Services: Systems

Indicators of Good Practice Systems architecture is a complex and technical area, however the following can be viewed as significant indicators of good practice by senior management and governors:

 Inclusion of information about the approach to systems architecture within the IT Strategy

 Documentation of the systems architecture using design tools such as business process models, technology architecture models, data models, etc.

 Consideration of a range of software and service solutions (e.g. proprietary products, in-house developments, open-source solutions, out-sourcing) within the funding proposals/business cases submitted to the *Information Strategy Steering Committee.*

 Inclusion of 'exit strategies' as part of any significant investment proposal submitted to the *Information Strategy Steering Committee* for approval.

Services: Projects

Indicators of Good Practice The following represent some indicators of good practice in relation to project management:

 A documented policy defining project types and how each should be controlled (e.g. for projects over a certain value formal project management techniques should be deployed, etc.).

 The use of formal project management techniques where the size of the project warrants it.

 Reporting and dissemination of the results of *pilot and development projects*.

Services: Service Delivery

Indicators of Good Practice An institution may decide to adopt a formal framework (such as ITIL) to manage its information systems and IT service delivery. Each formal framework specifies a number of outputs and performance indicators. Even if an institution does not adopt one of these frameworks a number of documents would provide assurance of good management of on-going services:

 Periodic analysis of the requirements of users (both in general terms and in relation to specific services).
 Service Definition Statements indicating when services are available, when they are supported, etc. Institutions may decide to govern some of their services through more formal Service Level Agreements.
 The appropriate committee (e.g. *Information Strategy Steering Committee)* should receive periodic comparisons between stated service levels and actual service delivery, including reports on significant unplanned disruptions.
 Periodic user satisfaction surveys should also be conducted, with the results reported back to the relevant committee.