

From fear to fairness; making sense of academic integrity in the learning community

Executive summary

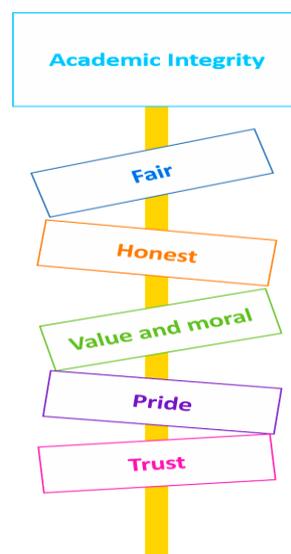
From fear to fairness; - making sense of academic integrity in the learning community

We were awarded £1000 pounds by IATL in July 2021 to co-design and develop a comprehensive training resource initially for use by Warwick Medical School staff who have student facing roles in academic integrity procedures at the medical school. As WMS lead and deputy lead for academic integrity, we were aware that staff had identified a training need in undertaking these roles. We proposed to co-create a flexible, interactive training resource, featuring role played videos of simulated investigation meetings with students. It was intended that this staff training resource would complement existing student academic integrity training resources in the department. We hoped that by supporting staff preparedness and confidence in these roles, this would ultimately diminish students' stress associated with academic integrity and enhance student experience.

Working with and supported by WMS students and staff from a variety of roles along the way, we produced the WMS Academic Integrity Interactive Staff Training Resource. Next steps in the project will include a student led evaluation and enhancement of current student training resource is ensuring not only fitness for purpose from the student user perspective, but also inclusivity in design.

Background

Academic integrity (AI) is the commitment to honest and moral behaviour in the academic community. This is a fundamental concept of what it means to be 'an academic' and is intrinsic to our roles as learners and educators. Anxiety regarding expectations and requirements here can occasionally overwhelm students, inhibiting good academic practice and performance. Staff also find the process of investigating suspected cheating to be challenging. Arising from recent changes to University regulations, departments have increased responsibility for investigation of cases of suspected cheating in assessments.



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Defining the problem

As Lead and Deputy Lead of the WMS Academic Integrity Committee, we recognise the importance of AI in protecting academic standards and ensuring fairness for all students. We are acutely aware of the difficulties students experience in upholding standards of academic integrity when preparing assignments. Students often experience anxiety and confusion regarding expectations and requirements for appropriate academic practice. Other students may fail to recognise the importance or relevance of AI and do not engage with guidance. Here students risk falling short of expected standards in their academic work, leading to their work being investigated if cheating is suspected. While investigations occur relatively infrequently, this procedure has implications for student progression and can substantially impact on student wellbeing and sense of belonging in the community.

Similarly, we know from experience that investigating cases of suspected cheating is challenging for staff. Undertaking rigorous investigations can feel at odds with educators' usual and preferred approach of supporting and trusting students. They strive to make the experience as transparent and fair as possible for students but do not always find this straightforward. We received direct feedback from WMS Academic Conduct Panel members that they occasionally feel under prepared and lacking in confidence regarding the best approach is to take in facilitating investigation meetings with students. On further discussion, it was clear that staff want to undertake a rigorous approach but one that is fair and minimise stress for the student concerned. It can be difficult to pursue particular lines of questions and unpredicted issues can arise. Based on this feedback we proposed to create a comprehensive training resource which would include simulated meetings between staff and students as a key feature. We had experience in this approach from previously creating examiner training resources. Colleagues were positive regarding this suggestion. At that time, no such training resources existed in our department or the wider university.

Working with IATL

We were keen to work with IATL on this project for a variety of reasons. By engaging with IATL in developing and delivering this project, this allowed us to better position AI as a shared value in the Warwick community. Through co-creation and sharing of complementary training resources for staff and students alike, we aimed to transform perspectives on academic integrity procedures from being complex and punitive, to being mechanisms that engender trust, pride, and value in academic work. Academic integrity can then become more broadly recognised as a shared value and collective responsibility in the wider Warwick learning community. By enhancing transparency and rationale for approaches to AI, we can support IATL's commitment to enhancing student experience.

IATL supports innovative approaches in teaching and learning. The focus of this training and the use of simulated, authentic scenarios is novel at the University of Warwick. This training also highlights and supports management of important and emerging sector wide issues in higher education e.g. contract cheating etc.

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Aim; co-create comprehensive training resources to;

1) support students in understanding the importance of AI, the ways in which AI can be compromised, what to expect if they are investigated for potential breaches of AI and, crucially, how to avoid this scenario.

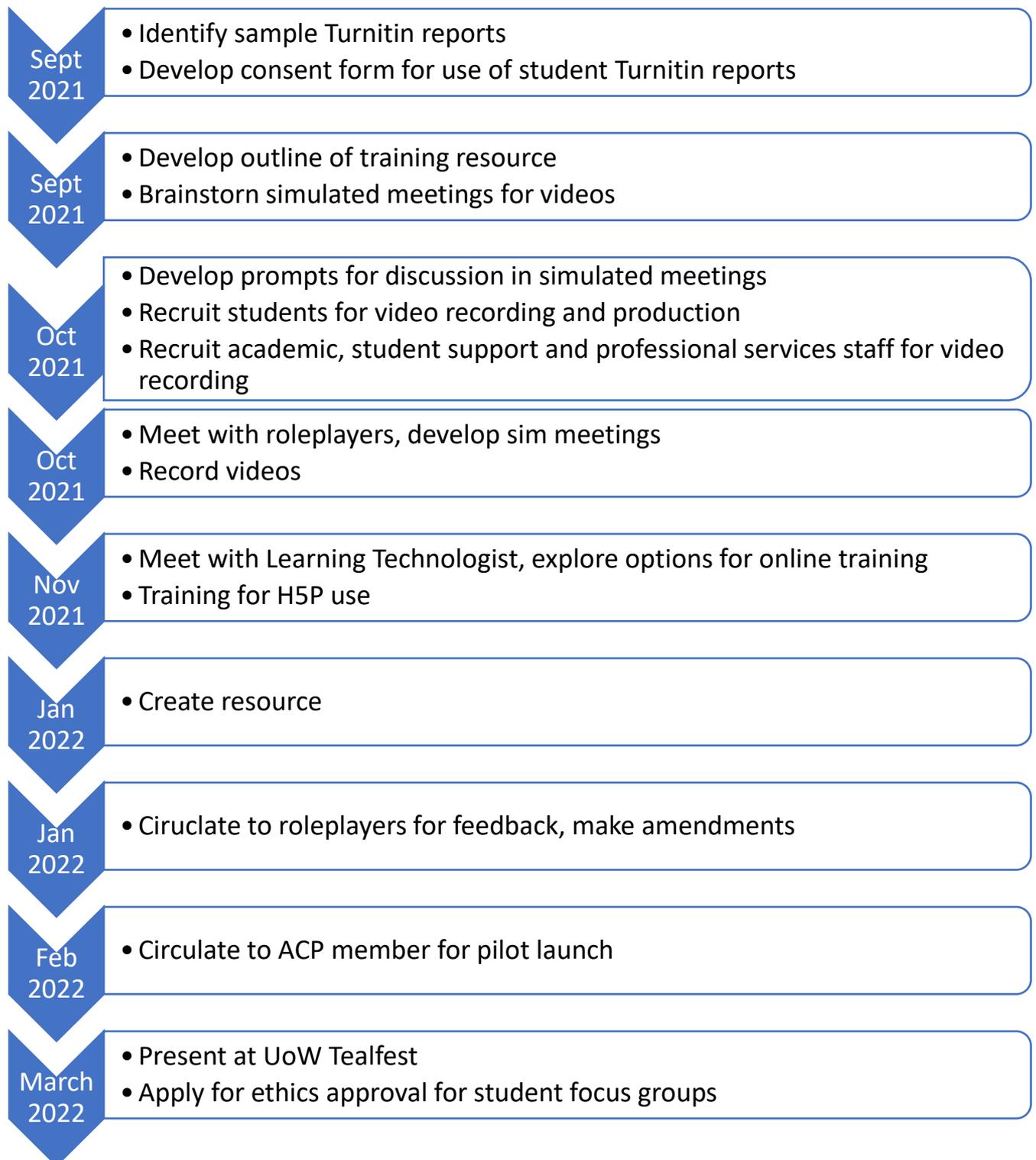
2) support staff members currently involved in reviewing cases of possible academic misconduct and for new reviewers.

3) position AI as a shared value and collective responsibility of learners and educators in our learning community.

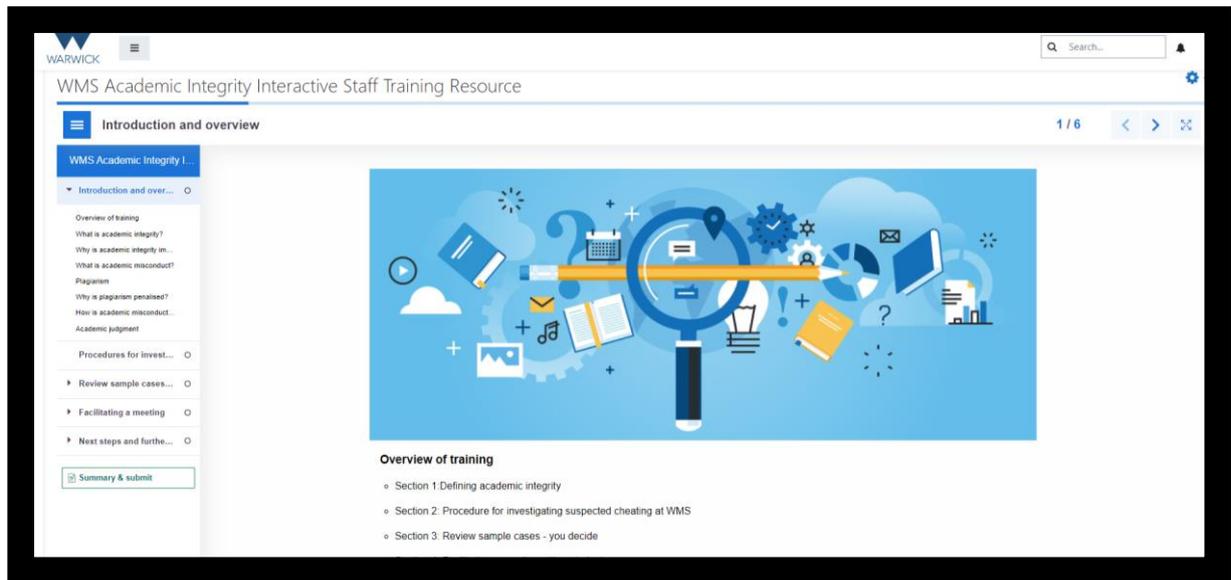
By co-creating and sharing complementary training resources for staff and students alike, we hoped to transform perspectives on academic integrity procedures from being complex, punitive, and threatening, to being mechanisms that engender trust, pride, and value in academic work. AI may then become more broadly recognised as a shared value and collective responsibility in our learning community.

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Developing the resource – timeline



Moodle H5P training resource



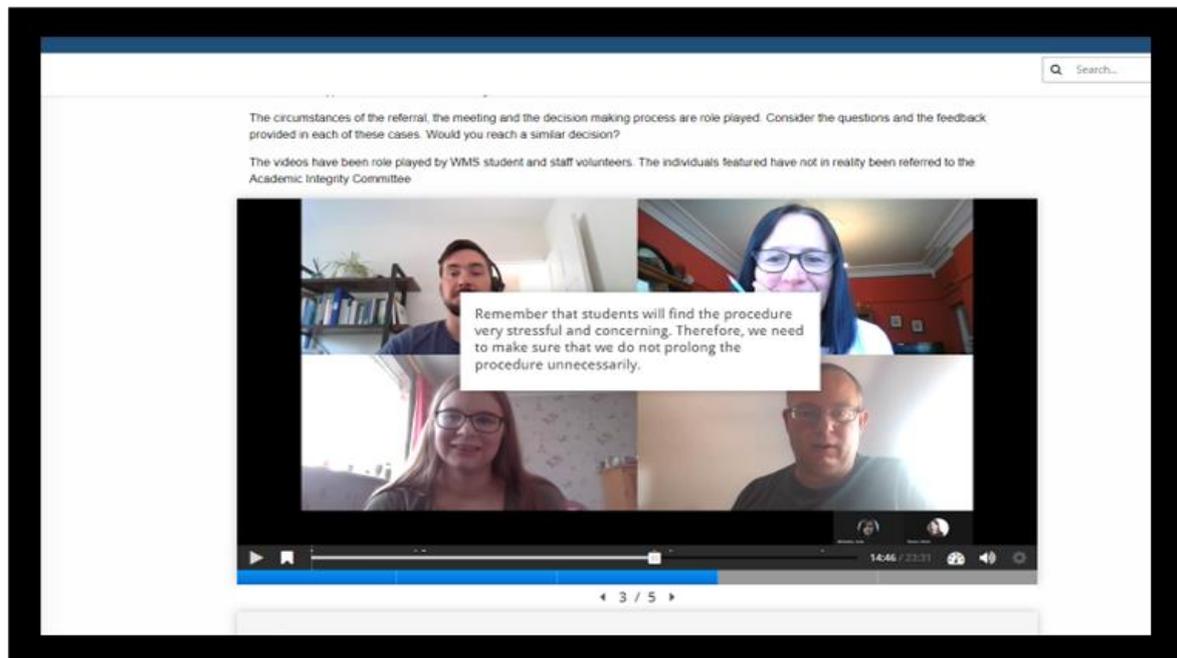
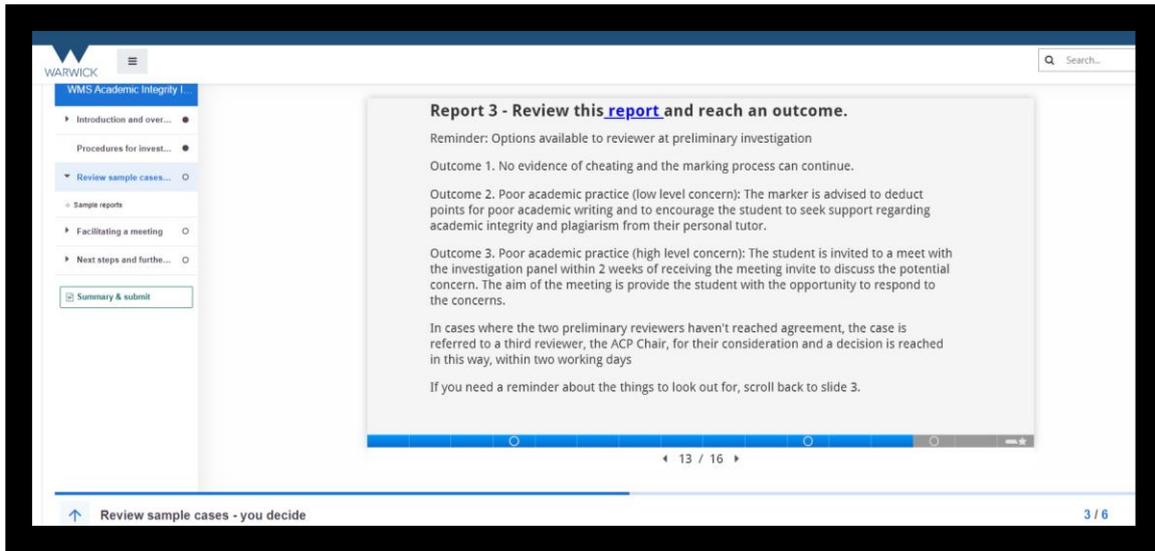
The screenshot shows a Moodle course page titled "WMS Academic Integrity Interactive Staff Training Resource". The page is currently on slide 1 of 6, titled "Introduction and overview". A left-hand navigation menu lists various topics, including "Overview of training", "What is academic integrity?", "Plagiarism", and "Procedures for investigation at WMS". The main content area features a large blue graphic with icons representing academic integrity, such as a magnifying glass, a pencil, a book, and a gear. Below the graphic, the text reads "Overview of training" followed by a bulleted list of sections: "Section 1: Defining academic integrity", "Section 2: Procedure for investigating suspected cheating at WMS", and "Section 3: Review sample cases - you decide".

Contents of the Moodle H5P training resource

- **Introduction and Overview;** background information on academic integrity and good academic practice, plagiarism and how it may present, University of Warwick and WMS academic integrity procedures and regulations
- **Procedures for investigation at WMS**
- **Review sample cases;** guidance on analysing Turnitin reports, interactive quiz on analysing Turnitin reports
- **Facilitating a meeting;** interactive videos depicting a selection of scenarios and how these would be managed and quiz with feedback
- **Next steps and further information**

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Sample images from Moodle H5P training resource



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We were also delighted to have had the opportunity to present and disseminate this resource more widely when we presented it at University of Warwick TEALfest in March 2022. Delegates at our session were enthusiastic and curious about this resource and whether it might be available for wider use

Evaluation and impact

Staff feedback comments

This is a brilliant resource! By the end I understood plagiarism and the process of investigating academic integrity much better, and this was helped with the interactive elements and the videos. It was easy to navigate and there was a good balance of text, images, and

I thought this was really great and I particularly liked watching the videos to get a sense of how the meetings should go. It might be useful to provide a checklist of the things that need to be done in the meetings as a takeaway, so that AIC members can refer back to it easily each time they conduct a meeting.

Is it possible to add a link to Regulation 11?

I found slide 8 and 9 confusing as I already knew the correct answer by then. It was useful to review the report again though (as I got the first question wrong!).

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Thanks to you and the team for putting the resource together, I thought it was very well done. It was also good to know the meeting I did with a student last week followed a similar pattern to the 'good' example given! New recruits are likely to dip into them the first time they actually need to do an interview.

It was really useful that the video pauses when there are tips and guidance added as the panel are covering each area.

On the whole this was really helpful, and I think this will be very beneficial to anyone new to the AI panels

I liked the writing popping up on the screen expanding on what the panellists were doing, that was really helpful. More information before each video about what they are about (e.g., student's level of study and the reason for the meeting) and why they have been chosen as part of the training (what are the learning objectives for the viewer) would be really helpful. I often wasn't sure until a couple of minutes in what the video was about, particularly with the 3rd video. I really liked that I had the opportunity to choose the outcome.

Less direct but also greatly valued feedback has been received from external examiners who have commented regarding rigorous and fair approaches to issues in relation to students' academic integrity at board of examiners meetings.

We have already been asked to share this resource with other academic departments who have identified that similar training would be beneficial in their department.

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Reflections

In developing the scenarios depicted in the simulated investigation meetings, we as a project team brainstormed ideas based on themes and issues that we have previously experienced in academic integrity cases and that we felt were worth exploring in the videos. We provided discussion prompts for student and staff role players. We undertook what was intended to be a briefing session with role players in advance of recording the videos. However, in reality, the briefing session was much more of a creative dialogue than we might have anticipated. In addition to our own experiences in academic integrity both student and staff role players brought their perspectives and experiences and applied these to how they approached the scenarios. This enabled us to include a wider variety of perspectives, including those from students at different levels, academic and professional services staff, and student support colleagues. In the planning discussions, students also asked authentic questions relating to issues pertaining to their experiences of academic integrity. By participating in these discussions within a community of practice, student members of the project team developed a greater understanding of procedures and regulations in this area. This also allowed us to consider and depict issues that staff alone wouldn't otherwise have thought to include.

In outlining the proposed scenarios to the role players, we provided prompts discussion points for a student and staff role players. However, we did not provide detailed or rigid scripts for how the meetings should progress. We wanted to capture authentic discussions, questions and reactions as would occur during the meetings. Based on our own reflections and feedback that we have received this approach appears to have been effective as the scenarios and conversations that we recorded appear natural, thus enhancing the credibility and fidelity of the simulated discussions.

While the immediate project team was a relatively compact, the project benefited from the enthusiasm, support and contributions from various other members of the academic community. A key player here included our colleague in WMS academic integrity who provided guidance and shared expertise in relation to how we could take a technology enhanced approach to designing the training resource. One of the senior academic technologists at WMS was generous and sharing their time with us to not only provide an overview of possible options but also to support us in developing and refining our own skills in use of H5P. By scaffolding us to take these approaches we now have developed much greater familiarity and confidence with this software which we can use across a range of teaching and learning settings.

Another key aspect of participation in this project has been the chance to identify some gaps in our approaches and think about how we can better address these. For example, in developing these training materials we had an opportunity to reflect and consider module leads understanding of current academic integrity procedures and how the information provided could be enhanced. As an offshoot in this area, we developed additional updated guidance for module leads to support them in engaging with academic integrity procedures.

Next steps

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The training resource continues to be used by WMS colleagues as part of their training and induction to academic integrity roles and we will continue to collect user feedback through online evaluation and discussions. This feedback will be considered and used to inform future developments and enhancements of the resource.

Other future project activities now include a detailed student-led evaluation of existing student materials. This will be undertaken by a student co-creator who has been involved in developing the staff training resource and therefore has excellent insight and understanding into academic integrity requirements as well as the information that staff receive in this area. This student-led evaluation of student training materials will consider fitness for purpose, any potential gaps or areas where clarity might be improved, impact on knowledge, skills and whether this training impacts on their practice. The training resource will also be evaluated against recommended good practice guidance in design to ensure this training is inclusive and accessible to all students.

Student cocreators will also be encouraged to comment on other areas of priority from the student perspective. They will then report their findings to the project academic leads, and these will also be used to inform future developments of student training.

These preliminary evaluation findings will help to establish areas for exploration in student and (separate) staff focus groups with a larger participant sample. (Study has received full approval from University of Warwick Biomedical & Scientific Research Ethics Committee (BSREC)).

Acknowledgments

As mentioned, this project benefited from support and participation by a range of students and staff, including colleagues from academic technology professional services and academic colleagues. We wish to thank these individuals for their time and interest in supporting design creation and review of this resource.

We are also very grateful to IATL for providing funding afford this project and a constructive comments and guidance on best approaches to co-creation and dissemination of our results.