

# PROWE

Personal Repositories Online Wiki Environment

## 'How To/Questions to Ask' Guides



*Guide Four:*

**The Users' Perspective**

*Part One – relations with the institution*

## Overview

Part time distance tutors have mixed, if not divided, employee loyalties since in many cases they do not work for a single institution. Equally, they are likely to have less time available to invest in making new working systems function unless these meet already identified needs or contribute directly to simplifying life and work processes and practices.

## Critical issues

Critical issues for tutors centre around their perceptions of their relationship with the institution e.g. contract terms, and their status within the institution e.g. how much access they have to technology and technology based systems – like wikis and blogs. This will determine the control they have over their work, what happens to it and how ownership of it is managed. Also implicated are questions of inter and cross - disciplinary working, and relations with other staff.

## Ownership and Intellectual Property Rights

- Who owns what you create?
- What systems/practices are in place to inform and guide yourself and other authors' over ownership issues?
- Who can use "your" material? For what purposes? For how long?
- What residual rights do you have?
- What rights do you have if you retire? Resign?
- What rights do you have in relation to material you originate but which is worked on, or re-worked, by others?
- What mechanisms work to alert you to downloading, use or re-use of materials you originated?

## Inter and cross-disciplinarity

Developing a critical mass of material is unlikely to be possible within a single discipline or faculty – at least in the short to medium term – simply because of the relatively small numbers of participants who are likely, actively, to want to deposit materials. Cross and inter – disciplinary working and collaboration not only boosts the volume of materials available but also brings additional benefits from the possibility of sharing materials related to generic professional matters as much as relating to subject content.

- What do you create?
- Who else in your institution might be interested in your work?

- Are there any extra motivations or incentives for cross-faculty collaboration e.g. funding for some research endeavours may require this kind of working
- Are there any particular barriers to implementing cross-faculty initiatives? e.g. non-shared or incompatible software programmes or systems
- How does the institution/wider community view and value cross-faculty collaboration?

## Attitude to technology

- What is the institution's attitude to use of technology, especially social software applications?
- Is much technology already in use? Is the institution committed to its further development?
- Does the institution accord part time staff full IT systems access rights? If not, how does this impact on the technology you can use?
- Is the (PROWE) software compatible with other institutional systems?
- Is it compatible with systems you use in your other place(s) of work or at home?



## Contractual rights and responsibilities

- What does your contract say about ownership of materials you produce?
- Is writing for/participating in the system part of your contracted work?
- Is contract time allocated for this?
- Is participation linked in any way to formal performance management systems? What are the implications of this for the materials you produce?

## Transferability and continued access

- Can you retain access to the system after retirement or resignation from the institution?
- Is the system able to produce transferable files that will allow you to carry your work between institutions or with you when you leave?

## PROWE

Personal Repositories Online Wiki Environment

Contact

[info@prowe.ac.uk](mailto:info@prowe.ac.uk)

[www.prowe.ac.uk](http://www.prowe.ac.uk)