

VIGNETTE 1. THE PODCAST DILEMMA

A few lecturers in the School of Psychology have been making podcasts of their lectures available to students. This occurs for three modules, with podcasts being available on the VLE soon after the lecture. Another lecturer offers podcasts at the end of the module, so they serve purely for end of module revision purposes. Students are equally enthusiastic about this.

Students are clear that podcasts help their learning in several ways: for example,

- they allow students to go over the information as many times as they like, which enables better understanding;
- they help students to understand their notes from lectures and to improve their notes;
- They allow the catching up of lectures when these have been missed;
- They support revision, especially when going through PowerPoint slides and especially for more difficult content and concepts;
- They help them to get higher marks in exams and assignments.

Some students are so sure that podcasts help their learning that they record the lectures themselves. In addition, the benefits of podcasts have been raised as good practice during Staff-student Liaison meetings many times, but this has not led to any decisions or actions being taken about their future use, and some students still don't know the podcasts exist.

Further, staff are concerned that students will not attend lectures any more if they can listen to them via podcasts. They are particularly concerned that if more staff provide podcasts than currently, this will have a serious impact on the student group as a community of learners.

The dilemma for the School is therefore:- whether podcasts should be made more widely available to students, or not.

TASK

If you were a student in this situation, how would you go about resolving this dilemma?
Think about...

- What information it would be useful to have
- What you can do as an individual
- What you can do as part of a representative group
- Whose responsibility decisions about podcasting should be
- What you might do to encourage your lecturers to provide podcasts
- What you might do to encourage students that face-to-face lectures are all-important
- Etc.

Draw up a plan of action

To see how Psychology students resolved this dilemma at Exeter, go to the [Psychology case study](#)