# Distance Learning

## Greenwich Connect

Image: NASA

At the University of Greenwich we're proud of our rich, varied and innovative teaching and learning portfolio. Our research-driven programmes, informed by professional practice, contribute to our growing reputation for excellence in cultivating critical employability attributes among our graduates.

The students who are fortunate enough to live within reach of our university can enjoy the advantage of a Greenwich education, with all of its benefits, in the heart of one of the world's most culturally vibrant cities.

But what of the potentially thousands of learners further afield, in different parts the world, who would also value an opportunity to become part of our learning community and engage with our educational offerings?

The agenda of Greenwich Connect for Distance Learning is about exploring ways to invite these learners into our world. Networked communication technologies are both sufficiently developed and embedded in our culture and environment to make the highest quality educational experiences possible, without the restrictions imposed by time or place.

And we're not just talking about flashy ways of delivering digital course content. Glossy videos and automated quizzes may have their place, but we are more excited about facilitating meaningful interaction grounded in peer-to-peer collaboration, and in nurturing the social construction of knowledge through dialogue and creative, reflective activities.

As we collaborate with colleagues to develop a university-wide strategy and a consistent framework for offering distance learning at Greenwich, we challenge you to think about what this type of distance learning might look like in your own department.

Think of the world-class expertise in your building, innovators who could spark inquiry, dialogue and debate with learners around the world.

**Take inspiration from these examples of innovative pedagogical approaches to online distance learning:**

**1. The Open Learning Design Studio MOOC (Open University)**

This nine week programme was facilitated by the OU in 2013, in partnership with six other institutions, including the University of Greenwich.

As well as being a good example of institutional collaboration, the course design encouraged social learning through projects and study groups.

Find out more at www.olds.ac.uk.

**2. Open Course in Technology Enhanced Learning (ocTEL) (ALT)**

Currently in its second iteration, the ocTEL course employs a connectivist pedagogy. It is based on content produced and shared by learners through a wide range of Web 2.0 platforms.

Dialogue, debate and collaboration are at the heart of the learning experience, and while content and suggested activities are offered on the central course space, learners choose their own learning pathways and strategies.

For details of ocTEL see www.octel.alt.ac.uk/2014.

Keep an eye on the Greenwich Connect blog for more distance learning case studies that effectively embrace the principles of social interaction and collaboration within their learning, teaching and assessment strategies.

**www.blogs.gre.ac.uk/greenwichconnect**

Could your department become a university leader in distance learning, generating shining examples of curriculum design that incorporate a rich blend of networked learning technologies?

Our goal is to get you as excited about sustainable distance learning innovation as we are, and to work with you to make Greenwich the vanguard of high quality online distance learning in the UK and worldwide.

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Greenwich Connect — a vision for learning innovation