

Alison Halstead
Pro Vice Chancellor: Learning and Teaching
Aston University

Biography

With degrees in Physics and Materials Engineering from Imperial College, Alison has worked in industry, at Brunel, Coventry and the Open University before joining Wolverhampton in 2002. As the Dean of Learning and Teaching she is responsible for the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy. Successful income generation through JISC, HEFCE and other national sources culminated in the award of a £5million Centre of Teaching Excellence in 2005, which she currently leads. This focus on income generation has allowed the Centre to support many University wide projects from the development and implementation of technology such as the ePortfolio: PebblePad, SMS texting for learning and computer marked assignment, to the development of student to student mentoring, volunteering and work based learning professional qualifications for staff within and external to the University.

She is an experienced external examiner at both undergraduate and postgraduate level, a quality assessor and has been involved in several national learning and teaching projects and consultancies. In 2005 she received a National Teaching Fellowship for her innovative curriculum development and academic leadership. Passionate about enhancing the learning experience of both staff and students her current research interest is in thinking styles for personal and professional development.

Alison has conducted work on thinking styles across the secondary/FE/HE and SME sectors and as a partner of a national teaching and learning project on retention with Hull University as well as examining thinking styles differences between female arts and science student in schools.

An advocate of widening participation: particularly encouraging mature women and part-time students into science and engineering at both undergraduate and postgraduate level she is currently supervising research in this area.

In September 2007 she is to take up the post of Pro-Vice-Chancellor: Learning and Teaching at Aston University where she will lead the development of a Centre for Innovation and Research in Learning and Teaching.