Executive Summary

“A Knowledge Management and Information Service appropriate for supporting and enabling learners, researchers and teachers in a world-class University.”

This Annual Plan has been developed following consultations with EUSA, the Colleges and other Support Groups who were asked to comment on the Objectives and Targets 2008-13. During those consultations, Colleges re-iterated their concern that the major University projects already on stream, required significant input from their Schools; IS was encouraged to focus on completing these projects and incorporating the lessons learned into the project management process.

Recognising the constraint of a low financial settlement IS will continue to leverage as much value as possible from existing budgets. The unpredictability of currency fluctuations has had a major impact on the cost of library materials and we are beginning to see increases in the cost of IT hardware. The full effect of the drop in sterling is not yet understood, but it is anticipated that the trend will continue during 2009/10 with a significant impact on IS budgets.

Strategic investment during 2009/10 will be limited as we focus primarily on the delivery of those projects already underway, namely:

- support for research computing and research administration
- completion of the e-diary project
- support for the EUCLID Project
- support for the University Website Project

In addition to these primary areas, IS will support the University’s Strategic Objectives through the execution of a wide range of activities and services.

Excellence in Learning & Teaching

The Next Generation VLE Project is currently on hold, but some capacity will be retained for VLE and related e-learning developments in 2009/10.

We will expand our capacity for the use of computers in formative and summative assessment through the creation of wireless, laptop-enabled venues for exams; invigilated locations for on-demand assessments; better software for designing tests and self-tests that are appropriate to a wide range of disciplines, and a flexible e-portfolio/PDP system.

Excellence in Research

Support for Research Computing

Information Services will support the University's research community, ensuring that there is a robust research infrastructure in place that supports high end research computing as well as individual researchers.

Research Administration

We are working with colleagues in Schools and Corporate Services Group to improve the tools that support staff in preparing bids for research funding and subsequent management of the successful bids.

Library Materials Budget

IS continues to work to provide greater value for money in materials purchasing, for example through the Scottish Higher Education Digital Library, which currently has 1,500 journals from 3 publishers and is set to grow next year, providing more content for the same cost. We are acutely aware of the recent currency fluctuations and the impact this has had on the materials spend. We are working closely with Colleges to identify a sustainable solution to this problem.
Excellence in Commercialisation and Knowledge Exchange

*Museums and Galleries*

The Museums and Galleries services and collections will continue to support learning and research. The Museum and Galleries collections will be a hub for public engagement and knowledge exchange activities in the University, such as the ‘Darwin and Edinburgh’ and ‘Darwin: An Entangled Bank’ exhibitions to be held October-December 2009.

Quality Infrastructure

*Learning, Teaching & Research Spaces*

The redeveloped Ground and 1st Floor of the Main Library will be completed during the 2009/10 session providing high quality learning and research spaces. We will raise the range and quality of AV equipment in centrally-managed teaching rooms to a consistently high level, keeping pace with new technology developments such as personal response systems, audio and video capture.

*IT infrastructure & applications*

Information Services will continue to work on removing single points of failure, enhancing the IT infrastructure and applications to improve their fitness for purpose to support the University’s varied and evolving needs more closely. IS will pay particular attention to improving availability, capacity, provision for business continuity, usability and integration.

National and International Engagement

IS will review its strategic partnerships and collaborations at national and international level in order to maximize synergy and added value, including both leadership and funding opportunities.

Quality Services

*Help services*

IS will deliver an integrated help service for all staff and students, accessible through a single (but not exclusive) point of entry, to resolve enquiries immediately where possible, referring only the most complex problems to expert advice and consultancy teams. The new User Services Division will include three multi-professional College teams with expertise in the areas of library, elearning and IT, and will enable Information Services to address better the requests for support from Colleges.

Active Collection Management

IS will continue to manage carefully all of the University’s physical collections, whether they are print, manuscripts, archive, paintings, or museums objects. In particular we will continue the transfer to digital format and, with regard to journals and where academic need permits, transfer, relegate or dispose of print items from the open shelves.

Supported Desktop Services

IS delivers a supported desktop service on each of the three platforms - PC Windows, Apple Macintosh and Linux. Staff adopting these services can be assured of automated system updates and upgrades and that other University applications will be tested and documented for each of the configurations.

Project Management and Execution

IS will play a leading role in the provision of project management services and training for staff, across the University. We will leverage our existing project management and training expertise to deliver effective project managing tools, methodologies and training.