Institutions should develop comprehensive strategic and business plans for successful e-learning initiatives. Political factors often have significant impact upon the success of e-learning (Berge, 2001). Institutional funding and resources for delivering and maintaining e-learning are critical. Therefore, e-learning strategies must be aligned with and fully supported by the institutions’ missions and strategic plans. E-learning initiatives require orchestration of personnel with diverse skills sets (Belanger & Jordan, 2000).

Institutions offering e-learning should consider online students as the consumers of education and training in a competitive market. Since more and more institutions offer e-learning programs, learners have more options to compare quality, services, price, and convenience of education providers. It should not be surprising that distance learners demand far more services than traditional campus-based students. Therefore, institutions should be ready to provide high quality education and training with the best learning resources and support services.

Some institutional issues (e.g., admissions, financial aid) may not be relevant to e-learning projects in other settings such as corporate training. However, many of the issues discussed in the institutional dimension can provide valuable insights into e-learning initiatives in K12 and corporate education arena.
The institutional dimension of e-learning is concerned with issues of administrative affairs, academic affairs, and student services related to e-learning. The following is an outline of this chapter:

- Administrative affairs
- Academic affairs
- Student services

**Administrative Affairs**

E-learning administrative affairs encompass issues related to needs assessment, readiness assessment, organization and change (diffusion, adoption, and implementation of innovation), budgeting and return on investment, partnerships with other institutions, program and course information catalog, marketing and recruitment, admissions, financial aid, academic calendar and course schedule, tuition and fees, registration and payment, information technology services, instructional design and media services, graduation, transcripts, and grades.

**Needs Assessment**

Needs analysis can help institutions to match the needs of their target audience with the e-learning courses and programs they plan to market. Any institution venturing into e-learning should conduct a needs assessment survey to find out its expected customers’ (i.e., learners’) willingness to enroll in its e-learning courses. Needs analysis will help institutions analyze the short-term and long-term needs for their e-learning initiatives, and in turn will be instrumental in developing their e-learning strategies. Needs analysis can also provide information about the technological and other support services needed for their e-learning initiatives. Through a comprehensive needs assessment process, an institution can establish its e-learning goals (discussed in goals analysis section of Chapter 3).

**Readiness Assessment**

Readiness assessment helps to review the comprehensive readiness status of an institution’s e-learning initiative and it also points to critical factors that should be considered in order to get ready for e-learning. Open, flexible and distributed nature of e-learning environment requires that we review the status of readiness
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