

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

e-Learning Steering Group

Minutes of the meeting of the e-Learning Steering Group of the Information Policy and Strategy Committee and the Academic Quality and Standards Committee held on Thursday 5 May 2011

Present: Professor A Caesar (Chair), Mr J Dale, Dr D Davies, Dr M Joy, Mr S Ruston, Professor S Shapiro, Professor D Singer, Professor J Smith, Dr D Wood,

Apologies: Mr A Brewerton, Dr J Robinson, Professor D Wray,

In attendance: Dr C Edgar, Mr R McIntyre, Mr M Roberts, Ms M Stott

7/10-11 Constitution, Membership, Terms of Reference (minute EL 1/10-11 referred)

RECEIVED:

Updated terms of reference, constitution and membership of the Group for 2010-11 (paper EL 1/10-11 (revised)).

8/10-11 Minutes of the last meeting

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 October 2010 be approved, noting that the Spring term meeting of the Group scheduled on 25 January 2011 had been cancelled.

9/10-11 Online submission of assessed work (minutes 4/10-11 and 19/09-10 referred)

REPORTED:

(a) That, at its meeting on 13 May 2010, the Group considered a report from the Director of IT Services, the Head of Service Delivery (Academic & Enterprise Services), IT Services, and the Assistant Secretary (paper EL 6/09-10) and resolved (*inter alia*):

That IT Services establish a project group, reporting to the e-Learning Steering Group, to consider and make recommendations for guidelines on the online submission of assessed work, and options for developing a University system for online submission; that the project group be Chaired by Professor Donald Singer; and that possible members of the group include an e-Learning Advisor; the eAssessment Service Owner; other IT personnel as required; a representative from the Academic Office; a small number of additional members of

academic/departmental administrative staff; and student representation.

- (b) That, at its meeting on 25 October 2010, the Group considered a presentation by the Director of IT Services including:
- (i) The current capabilities of departments against the spectrum of e-learning activities;
 - (ii) Options on methods to develop institutional and/or departmental capability;
 - (iii) Consideration of how our objective might inform approaches for introducing new/enhanced capability and what our objective should be;

and resolved:

- (iv) That the Director of IT Services begin to formulate a proposal for the implementation of an incremental IT solution with discrete phases of activity, noting that this was the preferred option of members of the Group present, and that, within this broad framework, online submission was felt to be an area of highest priority, it being noted that further consideration may need to be given as to whether a minimum level of capability at departmental level be set;
- (v) That the presentation be circulated to members of the Group not present in order to seek additional input;
- (vi) That, in considering how existing and new IT solutions might be interfaced to implement a joined-up solution encompassing all aspects of the online submission of assessed work, careful consideration should be given to the means by which the accuracy of existing data can be assured by all stakeholders.

RECEIVED:

An oral update from the Director of IT Services on progress toward a University system for online submission, noting that:

- (c) Whilst IT services could likely absorb the ongoing costs associated with maintaining the proposed system, additional resource would be required to undertake the initial development work;
- (d) A bid had been submitted to the Strategic Investment Group, Chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, for the additional resource needed to develop the proposed solution, and that this bid would be considered at the upcoming meeting of this Group on 16 May 2011;

- (e) Members of the Group could, if they felt strongly about the proposal, lend their support to the bid by contacting their Faculty Chair in advance of the meeting;
- (f) The overwhelming view of the Group was that the proposed solution had the potential to deliver considerable service enhancements in a diverse set of operations, including both academic and administrative processes, external examining, student experience and employability;
- (g) The project was envisaged to be taken forward in phases with the most urgent requirements met first and a 'toolkit' built up over time.

RESOLVED:

- (h) That paperwork associated with the proposal be circulated to members of the Group for information after the meeting;
- (i) That Professor Singer, Chair of the initial project group, also attend the meeting on 16 May if at all possible (along with the Chair and representatives from IT Services);
- (j) That the Group be notified of the outcome of the meeting as soon as possible after it is known.

10/10-11 Encryption (minute 5/10-11 referred)

REPORTED:

That, at its meeting on 25 October 2010, it was reported to the Group that IT services have completed the evaluation phase of a straightforward, user friendly system for the encrypted transmission of e-mails, and would be seeking approval and resources, via IPSC, to move on to implementation.

RECEIVED:

An oral update from the Director of IT Services, noting that:

- (a) The proposed encryption service would be available to departments who wished to make use of it on an "opt in" basis;
- (b) That a preferred solution had been identified, but that details of the associated costs were still emerging;
- (c) That the provision of best practice guidance to staff or a University-wide policy might be necessary in order to ensure that any encryption system is used effectively and to minimise the risk of possible security breaches.

11/10-11 UCISA "Top Concerns" Survey 2010/11

RECEIVED:

The results of the Universities and Colleges Information Systems Association (UCISA) 2010/11 survey of IT Directors and Professionals' Top Concerns (paper EL 2/10-11).

12/10-11

E-learning and the University Strategy

REPORTED:

That the refreshed University strategy had now been published (available online at <http://go.warwick.ac.uk/strategy>) and incorporated objectives relevant to the work of the Group, in particular in identifying opportunities to be in the technological vanguard in the use of advanced technology;

CONSIDERED:

Whether, and how, the refreshed Strategy should affect the priorities of the Group in the future, considering in particular how the Group can best ensure that it sufficiently meets its primary functions as set out in the revised terms of reference, noting that:

- (a) Since the closure of the TQEF Challenge fund for e-learning/technology enhanced learning projects, no specific central funding for projects in this area had been available, but that IATL now allocates a proportion of its funding to projects with a technology theme;
- (b) In contrast to research proposals, which are strongly supported by RSS, there is currently no central resource to assist in the submission of bids for teaching enhancement funding, and that this might be an area in which IATL are able to provide some expertise;
- (c) AQSC was currently working on the revised University Learning and Teaching Strategy, and that elements of this might highlight further priorities for the Group to consider in the coming academic year;

RESOLVED:

- (d) That previous TQEF funded technology projects should be revisited to undertake an analysis of the benefits of each, identify best practice and examine the long term sustainability;
- (e) That possible funding opportunities for e-learning and development projects through IAS be explored;
- (f) That a focus for the work of the group should be the innovative application of technology, rather than simply purchasing the most advanced technology for its own sake.

13/10-11 School of Life Sciences

REPORTED:

That the School of Life Sciences was considering a substantial investment in technology to benefit its students, but that discussions were in the early stages at present;

RESOLVED:

- (a) That, on the assumption that the proposal will ultimately proceed in some form, the Group invite a report from the School of Life Sciences on the rationale underpinning the proposal at a future meeting with a view to understanding and sharing best practice;
- (b) That the proposal highlighted a need to be more proactive in facilitating regular sessions on best practice in e-learning, noting that many such sessions already take place within other discussion fora, such as IATL, LDC and Teaching Grid events, and that it might therefore be beneficial to centrally aggregate the information available from each of these sources.

14/10-11 Group Membership

RESOLVED:

That Mr J Dale be thanked for his contributions as a member of the Group, and that Ms M Stott be welcomed in his place following a rearrangement of responsibilities within IT Services.

15/10-11 Next meeting

REPORTED:

That the next meeting of the Group would be held in the Autumn term 2011/12 on a date to be confirmed.

CE/rm, 10.05.11

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