

myUWE Management Group
Notes of the meeting of 19 January 2010
Room 4D24

Present: Steve Grive (Chair), Nadine Fry, Gail Wilson, Rich Egan, Polly Smith, Kath Holden, Karen West, George Coulsting, Margaret Needles, Sid Baldwin, Jon Hallett, Kevin Foreman, Simon Ramsden, Richard Dewfall, Emma Taylor (Notes).

1. Apologies

None.

2. Minutes of last meeting 6 October 2009

Approved.

Item 10. Elicitation process to be taken under AOB.

Item 15.2. Finance information in myUWE. Richard advised that this was still outstanding.

3. Matters arising not elsewhere on the agenda

3.1. Online Registration 2010 planning

Rich noted that online registration had been developed as far as possible at the time in 2009 and that ISCG had been advised that any further developments would be predicated on changes to the fees structure. Andy Riggs has forwarded a request from the Fees sub-committee of the Board of Governors asking that the fees structure be reviewed in order to accommodate more students in online registration and for work to be undertaken in parallel to improve the application for ID cards. Rich and Margaret will be taking a paper to the ISCG meeting of 29 January advising of the implications and the need to work with the Academic Registry. In answer to a query by Steve, Margaret advised that all students except research students and those with multiple registrations were eligible to use online registration but not all could use the system end-to-end to complete their registration.

Richard enquired whether the changes to online registration would include overseas students. Rich advised that Margaret had written two papers for Andy Riggs which included advice on this and would be looking to the ISCG to mandate a project and acknowledge the resource impacts. Margaret confirmed that her first paper had been on International deposits and that the full commitment of Finance, the Academic Registry and IT Services was needed.

3.2. Finance information in myUWE

Richard reported that this was going well. The only complaint received about data had been from a student with a very complicated debt arrangement. Usage of the system is highest on Mondays with over 500 users, and approximately 200 payments have been made through the Portal, totalling £150 K.

4. Online submission, including F12 implications

Rich advised that, despite previous recommendations to LTE that no changes be made to OCS pending a decision on the use of the Assignment Handler in Blackboard, it had been necessary to make some changes to online submission to accommodate F12. Sid reported that changes had been made to the presentation of OCS and to the logic behind the system to remove the late work allowance.

5. Coursework Cover Sheets Pilot

Margaret reported that the pilot had been successful. SOLS staff have advised that there was approximately 75% usage by the end of the pilot and the scanning process had been relatively straightforward. There had been a few ISIS data issues but overall there had been a positive response from academic and administrative staff and other faculties were keen to use the system. Margaret advised that she hoped to roll this out across the university in March 2010 but stressed that progress would depend on the resources available. For the student experience, it would be valuable to have all coursework submissions and cover sheets in the same place but again this would be dependent on resources in Simon's team to develop the web service and in the Portal team to develop the myUWE front-end. Sid circulated a screen shot as of 23rd November 2009 which indicates whether a cover sheet and/or online submission are available for a piece of coursework. Sid noted that he was working to a March deadline, but was dependent on the completion of the web service. Margaret confirmed that she was driving the administrative side and was working to get the ISIS data into schools. Once the system was live, it would be in the hands of schools and faculties to drive it. In answer to a query by Kevin about the possible impact on HSC's own online submission system, Margaret advised that there would be no compulsion to use the Portal system and she had spoken to Patrick Nolan, Emma Cooke and Kate Curtis, who had expressed an interest in cover sheets. Rich noted that if the Blackboard Assignment Handler was used, linking with the Portal coursework summary would be explored.

6. Registrations

Once a student registers, the registration tab is no longer available and they have no information on their award registrations. Margaret advised that this development had been a low priority to date, but as functionality in myUWE such as personalised documents is registration-dependent, investigation has now begun into a way of showing a student all their past and current registrations. Getting student registrations into myUWE in some form will then allow eligibility to access documents to be attached to a particular registration.

7. System Administration Report

Sid reported that the system had been stable over the Christmas closure period with no outages of myUWE or its services. One of the two failover systems had been affected, but this had not compromised delivery of the myUWE service. Sid circulated access statistics for Christmas 2009 and 2008 and noted that there had been a 5-10% growth overall but a similar year-on-year level of accesses on Christmas day. Rich noted that year-on-year staff use had increased by 40%.

Rich advised that there was a maintenance weekend on 29th January to 1st February and down-time was expected due to network changes. Sid advised that an established procedure was in place whereby the Portal would be taken down for the duration of the shutdown and this would be announced to users.

8. Dates of meetings for 2010

16 March, 27 April, 22 June. All 11:30-12:30 in Room 4D24.

9. Any other business

9.1. Upgrade to uPortal 3

Sid reported that development was progressing well and, although this was a massive amount of work requiring re-working of the interface and existing functionality, he would like to set a provisional deadline for delivery of October

half-term 2010. This would offer a clear target for Portal developers and Sid confirmed that he would bring updates to the group as work progressed. In answer to a query from Richard about how this would affect new work, Sid advised that development would continue on functionality for implementation in the current Portal, but consideration would be given to any changes which may need to be made for the new version. Rich noted that the October half-term had been selected as there was a need to keep the system stable during the summer for online registration. Past experience had indicated that changes made immediately at the start of the academic year were counter-productive and the date selected would facilitate the communication of the changes to staff and students.

9.2. Elicitation process

Steve noted that there already appeared to be enough work going forward for approval. Rich reviewed the items requested to date and confirmed that work was underway with BNE to encourage use of Blackboard and myUWE. Timetable changes were being worked on with CETTS, a calendar was in place and ready to receive data, and the only remaining requirement was the degree classification calendar, which was predicated on other departments. In answer to a query by Richard about the potential to pilot the management of the UWE smart card through the Portal, Rich noted that there had been no approach from the project and asked Richard to stress the need for the involvement of the myUWE team in the earliest stages possible if this was to be offered through the Portal. Steve clarified that there were currently two card projects. The first project involved Margaret and Simon working with Steve Gardiner (Academic Registry) and Annette Blackburn (Facilities) to improve the process of generation of the current user ID card for students in 2010, and was very focussed and limited in scope. The second was a parallel project in Facilities with a much longer timescale, to explore the use of a Smart Card which offered access control and a 'purse' for payments.