

**Portal Project Board**  
**Notes of the meeting of 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2007, 4D24**

**Present:** John Rushforth (Chair), Rich Egan, Margaret Needles, Barry Cawthorne, Tessa Harrison, Emma Taylor (Notes).

**1. Apologies**

Steve Grive, Warwick Jones.

**2. Minutes of the meeting of 28<sup>th</sup> March**

Approved.

**3. Matters arising not elsewhere on the agenda**

**3.1. Faculty systems and the portal**

Barry noted that this issue had been raised at ISCG, where it had been agreed that faculties should use university systems but could put forward business cases for scaling up faculty systems for university-wide use, which the ISCG would then consider. Barry confirmed that Steve Grive had spoken to Alison Hoddell and that Liz Falconer would also be speaking to Alison about UWEonline issues.

**3.2. Hartpury**

Hartpury are currently inhibited in the portal feed as they do not have the necessary processes in place to allow access. Barry confirmed that he, Rich and Margaret had met with Liz Smith and her colleagues at Hartpury to discuss access to the portal. John requested an indication of when Hartpury would be ready for portal access. Barry advised that everything possible would be done, but stressed that work on online registration was currently a priority. Margaret confirmed that Hartpury wanted to be ready to allow access to students in the new academic year but noted that she was awaiting a response to her offer of a range of dates for a portal briefing for administrative staff.

**4. High Level Plan**

Rich confirmed that stabilisation and the portal upgrade in Section 3 of the plan had been completed with no down-time. The ISIS hardware upgrade was undertaken with minimal disruption and work on the portal layer was underway. Items 32 to 34 have been deferred and mainly concern the presentation of the portal. In Section 4, New Development, Rich confirmed that work on Personal Details for the Welcome Week had been signed off and a prototype was now in place. The emphasis now is on Item 36, the portal component of online registration, and work on single sign-on is ongoing. Action on the re-constitution of the Portal Management Group will be undertaken in July. Rich corrected the duplication of Items 38 and 39 and confirmed that Items 40 and 41 had been deferred and were outstanding. In Section 6 of the plan, extension of the Academic Record to include credits and results is outstanding.

**5. Online registration**

**5.1. Progress report**

Margaret confirmed that the personal details channel had been signed off and that work was underway to make the prototype live. The intention is to do this on either 5<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> June, following the major ISIS release on 4<sup>th</sup> June. Margaret has met Tessa to specify the development required beyond the original pilot. Data issues with the way in which income status is collected in the current admissions system are being addressed. Margaret also stressed the need to ensure that changes on the student administration side were synchronised with technical changes. Margaret confirmed that specification had stopped in all but two areas:

- Confirmation was needed of whether new federation students should be included in online registration. This would require a change to the feed and could only be accommodated if UWE registered the students and took on their finance administration. Tessa raised the need to determine the responsibilities for federation students and to standardise practices to treat them in the same way as other students. Tessa advised that she needed to speak to AIR to determine who should be responsible. John suggested that this should be the responsibility of the Academic Registry.
- Due to the way in which they are funded, a change of practice would be required to accommodate HSC students. A caveat is needed for contract students advising that they could register, but would be withdrawn if they failed. Barry noted that this reflected existing HSC practice. Margaret reported that she was awaiting confirmation from Tessa of the content of the caveat for contract students and confirmation that different information could be given to contract students.

Margaret noted that a query also remained over the inclusion of PGCE students in online registration. Postgraduate feeds cannot be calculated for online registration until the fees structure is simplified, but the calculation of PGCE fees is relatively straightforward. Margaret advised that a means of identifying PGCE students was being sought but that EDU would need to be informed as soon as possible if this could not be found and PGCE students could not be included in online registration this year. Margaret noted that it may be possible to include PGCE students from a list of all PGCE awards, but stressed that this was not a very elegant solution and was risky. John advised that this should be done only if it could be done simply and that a high-risk solution should not be attempted.

## **5.2. Risk register**

- 0100 Personnel. Margaret noted that there were problems with business analysis.
- 0300 Requirements and analysis. The specification has changed and more communication is required with the administrative side.
- 0400 Political. Tessa confirmed that, in mitigation of risk 0401, she had approved additional temporary support to free Chris Griffiths' time. Margaret stressed that, as noted in risk 0403, a quicker response was required from faculties. Barry confirmed this and noted that there was a need for work to be prioritised. John asked Barry to inform him if an approach to Executive Deans was needed. Tessa confirmed that Faculty Academic Registrars would be appointed shortly and could take an urgent lead in this area and give strong leadership to faculty teams. Margaret observed that problems arose chiefly when the individual representing a faculty lacked influence when taking issues back to their faculty. John re-stated his offer of support if needed. Tessa raised the need for a wash-up meeting to review online registration once it has been completed and suggested that Sue Fox and Faculty Academic Registrars should also attend. Rich proposed that this meeting should be held after Welcome Week as this would allow the success of online registration to be determined.
- 0700, Other. In response to risk 0701, Margaret confirmed that, following consultation with the Academic Registry, it had been agreed not to allow students to give enter their SSN number. To prevent the entry of incorrect information, the download of this information from the Student Loan Company to ISIS has been automated. Margaret reported that an algorithm had been developed to match student data from SRC with students in ISIS and that 99.3% accuracy had been achieved in a sample of one thousand students. The majority of students will be in the SSRC file by 1<sup>st</sup> September and

exceptions will be reported. Although development and practice have mitigated this risk, Margaret advised that she would not reduce the level from 9 until it had been fully tested.

In reference to risk 0702, Rich noted that the issue of usernames and passwords had been flagged as an inherent risk and that IT Services were working to develop a secure method of doing this. One possible method may be to send this information in a letter if no personal e-mail exists in the student's UCAS record. Rich advised that the use of personal e-mail data in UCAS carried a risk as this was relatively old data. Tessa noted that the university would already be in communication with new students via e-mail, allowing addresses to be checked.

In reference to risk 0704, Rich confirmed that a paper had been taken to ISCG raising the need for faculties to consider the possible implications of access to faculty systems by applicants.

Risk 0705, Income status data. Margaret reported that, to address the risk of overseas students being rolled in with Home status, Esther Williams (AIR) had set up test data in a test database, which John Breslin and Margaret had rolled in. Review of this data against the expected outcome had identified some anomalies and Margaret emphasised that faculties should not assume that the income status of returning students would not change. Margaret stressed that, if income status could not be accurately determined, this would be a show-stopper.

**ACTION: The PPB meeting of 4<sup>th</sup> July to plan a wash-up meeting to review Online Registration in early October 2007.**

#### **6. Invitation to Executive Deans and Heads of Library, Academic Registry and CSA to nominate their representative on the new myUWE Management Group**

Barry confirmed that he had requested nominations by 1<sup>st</sup> June and had copied this e-mail to John and Tessa. The next meeting of the Project Board on 4<sup>th</sup> July will be the last and the new myUWE Management Group will take over in the new academic year.

#### **7. Usage statistics**

Rich reported that student accesses remained consistent between nine and ten thousand users but staff accesses were low. Rich noted that, from November, access to Blackboard via the portal would have a significant impact on staff usage levels, but there remained a need to make the system more attractive to staff. Barry anticipated that there would also be a significant increase in staff access in October 2007 to access photosets. Rich circulated a graph illustrating accesses to each area of myUWE and noted that timetables and my marks were accessed regularly. John enquired whether it would be possible to perform a demographic analysis of the students using and not using the portal and suggested that this may form part of a student project. Rich confirmed that he would consider this but that a means of allowing access to this data would have to be identified.

#### **8. Date of final meeting of the PPB**

4 July 2007; 10:00-11:00, in Room 4D24. Apologies from Tessa and Margaret.

#### **9. Any other business**

##### **9.1. Thanks**

John passed on the thanks, recognition and appreciation of the Board for the hard work by everyone on the portal team.