Portal Management Group

Notes of the meeting of 17th March 2005, 5D19, Bolland Library

Present: Barry Cawthorne (Chair), Rich Egan, Karen West, Sid Baldwin, Jenny Wills, Helen Cole, Kevin Foreman, Margaret Needles, Emma Taylor (Notes).

1. **Apologies:** Mike Garnier.

2. **Welcome to Jenny Wills and Mike Garnier**
Barry welcomed Jenny to the meeting, and noted that Mike Garnier would be replacing Katie Huthnance at future meetings. Barry also welcomed Karen West, who is attending in place of Leon Smith.

3. **Minutes of the meeting of 7th February 2005**
Approved with a correction to Item 5: the CAS authentication server is not yet ready.

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

   Item 7. Access to coursework marks
   Jenny Wills will now attend PMG meetings.

   Item 10. Final recommendation to Project Board regarding timing and nature of pilot
   Jenny to check that the Portal Pilot has been placed as a standing item on the agenda of meetings of the School of Allied Health Professions.

5. **Project Initiation Document**
   Rich reported that the revised PID has been approved by the Portal Project Board.

6. **The pilot**

   6.1. Progress report and demonstration of the current status of the pilot student portal
   Sid informed the group that the demonstration would take place in the development environment as the set-up of the production server had been delayed due to competing demands on staff resources within IT Services. It was noted that this issue had been identified in the risk register of the Portal Initiation Document.

   The intention is for the Portal to be accessed via an icon on the UWE desktop, and via the URL http://my.uwe.ac.uk/. The myUWE landing page contains a header and a single tab with two channels: the right hand channel containing legal information and the left channel containing information about the Portal pilot. Rich noted that, as the Portal would allow access to UWEonline it was necessary to provide the same legal information as was provided on the UWEonline login page. Access to the full range of Portal services will be restricted to students participating in the pilot.

   Sid explained that, to allow single sign-on, Portal users log in initially via a separate server. Because of this, they are required to re-enter their LDAP password to activate their Portal account and authenticate their access to ISIS via the myAddresses tab. Once entered, passwords are encrypted, stored, and

checked against LDAP each time a user logs in. A user will not be prompted for their LDAP password again unless they have changed it.

In order to ensure synchronisation with LDAP, students are currently prompted to enter their passwords when accessing the myEmail channel. Sid noted that it is hoped to incorporate the Webmail channel of the new student e-mail system into the portal. The myAddresses channel gives access to ISIS data and allows a live update of ISIS. The Feedback tab contains a short multiple choice feedback form to allow evaluation.

Sid reported that availability of the module marks tab will be subject to the completion of the module marks application. In order to accommodate this, Helen has requested that the necessary changes to ISIS be brought forward before the planned software release. The module marks tab will show marks for coursework elements only. Text has been placed on the module marks checking page advising students that the marks shown are provisional, and may be adjusted up or down at Field Boards. Margaret noted that advice was also needed for students who wish to query their marks.

Barry thanked Sid for his demonstration.

6.2. Functionality of the timetable channel
Sid reported that, in order to reduce the potential for the portal view of the timetable to become out of sync with Syllabus Plus, it is hoped to restrict timetables to grid view. In order to do this, timetabling information is required from HSC. Margaret reported that Mike Garnier has contacted Lynn Shopland and Caroline Armstrong-James to request a list of student timetable ID numbers. Sid suggested that an analysis of the timetable needs of all faculties is required.

Karen enquired whether the portal would recognise which faculty a student belongs to, as the timetabling service has a different URL for each faculty. Sid confirmed that it would, but noted that HSC had two URLs for its timetables; one for Glenside, and one for Hartpury. This does not currently represent a problem, as only Glenside students are participating in the pilot. Karen confirmed that it would be possible to include Hartpury data with Glenside data if necessary.

Barry noted that there were two issues arising in the development of the timetable channel: the information needed for the pilot, and the broader issue of timetables within the Portal. It was agreed that analysis by Mike Garnier was needed to determine which timetabling information would be provided via the Portal, as some faculties (eg. BBS and CEMS) timetable at student level, while others timetable by set. Sid noted that advice was needed from Mike to determine whether timetable functionality should be integrated in the Portal, or provided via a link to the Syllabus Plus site.

6.3. Agreement of the functionality to be delivered at launch
Rich circulated a document detailing the Portal status as of 16th March and indicating the proposed development after going live. Rich sought the group's approval of the following proposed functionality to be delivered in the pilot:
- ISIS: student address maintenance
- ISIS: Module Marks Online
- E-mail access
- Blackboard access
- Syllabus Plus
- Simple evaluation

This functionality was approved by the group. Margaret requested that a specific reference to online re-enrolment be included in the post go-live development list. **ACTION: Rich to amend 'student details' to 'online re-enrolment' in the Portal Status document.**

6.4. Single-sign-on to Blackboard
Rich noted that the Blackboard channel is currently displayed using temporary code created by the University of Bristol. In order to provide a more robust long-term solution, a Blackboard building block is required. Sid noted that the development of a full Building Block would need to be addressed as a sub-project.

6.5. Launch planning and liaison with the Faculty of Health and Social Care
Barry reported that there had been improvements in liaison with the faculty. In considering the launch, Barry noted the need to take into account an element of uncertainty, as this is the first time a system of this type has been developed within UWE. A meeting is being arranged with HSC teaching and administrative staff on Thursday 14th April to develop a strategy for the promotion of the portal to students. Rich noted that a visit to the Glenside One-Stop-Shop had also been arranged for 12th April.

Margaret reported that she had been asked to publicise the portal pilot and online re-enrolment projects in the May edition of the Bulletin. It was agreed that, as the deadline for the May Bulletin was before the portal pilot launch, the announcements should be delayed until the June Bulletin.

Rich noted the work of the ATG team on the Portal Support Site, which will go live on 5th April. The support site is located on a separate server to the Portal.

ACTIONS:
- **Jenny to confirm that Anita Fleming has set up a meeting with faculty staff.**
- **Margaret to ask Julie Lydon to wait for the June Bulletin to announce the Portal Pilot and Online Re-enrolment Project.**

7. Updates

7.1. To receive an update about the pilot staff facing portal (the student photosets channel)
Rich reported that Helen has liaised with Chris Abbot to secure student photographs, and module run enrolments can now be fed into the Portal. Work is ongoing to get Syllabus Plus grouping information into the Portal from MIIS, and Alistair Sandford has consulted Scientia on this.

Barry advised that the staff facing portal would not be launched until September/October 2005 at the earliest, and would be piloted within a faculty which timetables at student level. It was suggested that the staff facing portal may be piloted in FAS alongside the pilot of online re-enrolment, but Karen cautioned that, as this would be the first year in which FAS timetabled at student level, it maybe advisable to run the pilot within a faculty more established in this practice.

Kevin enquired whether the staff facing portal may be used to alert personal tutors to students who were 'at risk', with low marks and work not submitted.

Barry stated that this was well outside the scope of the pilot and although it was achievable in principle a very significant amount of preliminary analysis would have to be done. Barry noted that access to student photographs raised issues of data protection. Margaret advised that access to student photographs was by module tutor, rather than personal tutor, and Sid confirmed that access to this type of information by personal tutors was not necessarily a function which tied in well with the staff-facing portal, as the additional look-up of students' ISIS records which would be required would represent a significant overhead.

7.2. To receive an update about the online re-enrolment project
Margaret reported that, at the Re-enrolment Project Board meeting of 14th March, she had proposed a change to the scope of the project to include direct debit payment. The Board had advised that resources and time would probably not allow extension to the existing scope, but had asked Margaret to conduct a feasibility study.

8. Dates of next meetings
25th April 2005, 11:00 – 12:15, Room 4D24, Bolland Library, Frenchay Campus.

9. Any other business
None.