

Portal Project Board
Notes of the meeting of 17th December 2004, 4D24

Present: Steve West (Chair), Steph Keeble, Rich Egan, Barry Cawthorne, Steve Grive, Warwick Jones, Emma Taylor (Notes).

1. Apologies

None.

2. Minutes of meeting 20th October

Approved with two corrections:

Item 3.1. The evaluation report will be submitted by the Board at the end of the 2004/05 academic year.

Item 3.2. Para.3. Amended to read:

‘A capital expenditure allocation has been made for hardware, and two new posts supporting the Portal Pilot have been funded from the Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund.’

3. Matters arising not elsewhere on the agenda

Item 3.1. Portal Project Board.

Steve West has consulted the Directorate, and has been informed that a group co-ordinating projects is already in existence. He is awaiting further information on the composition of this group. It was agreed that the co-ordination of projects should be an ongoing item on the Project Board agenda.

Item 4.3. Development of pilot student facing portal in the Faculty of Health and Social Care.

Steve West has contacted faculty staff to discuss their availability.

4. Project Initiation Document

The Project Initiation Document (PID) was circulated to the Board, and was taken to the Portal Management Group meeting of 13th December. A FIN10 has been submitted for a full roll-out of the Portal in the 2005/06 academic year. It was agreed that the management of risk is a key issue. Rich drew the Board's attention to the following areas of the PID:

Section 1.2.c. This document.

Due to the current environment of change, there will be an emphasis on scope management throughout the development of the Portal. It was proposed that a guiding principle of portal development should be the guidance of students through complex information, rather than the re-creation of complexity.

Final paragraph, section 1.2, p. 5. Further user priorities have now been identified. It was agreed that the portal should also be benchmarked with the CSA.

ACTION: Rich to modify section 1.2 of the PID.

Section 3.3.f. Objectives.

The need for the engagement of participating faculties cannot be over emphasised.

Section 3.4. Critical success factors.

The second and fourth Critical Success Factors are effectively the same.

ACTION: Rich to consolidate in PID.

Section 7.2. Exclusions from scope.
The PID addresses the launch of the pilot only.

Section 8.3. Core Development Team.
Representation of faculties is needed beyond the Management Group and Project Board.

Section 9. Risk Management.
Issues 0102 and 0103 identify competing demands on staff time as the principal issues of concern, with risk scores of 9. Significant risks with scores of 6 were also noted. It was agreed that the Project Board should act as the mitigating factor for issue 0701, and noted that responsibility for ensuring the Directorate's commitment to and awareness of the project lay with the Board.

Section 12.2. Development Plan.
Following benchmarking, task 1900 has been incorporated. This will provide a library channel, giving access to passwords of electronic resources and users' library accounts.

Warwick raised the potential for the Portal to act as a driver in the development of the University's work with pre-entry students. Steph confirmed that a FIN10 had been raised for the development of a pre-entry web site. Barry stressed that, while a pre-entry portal element may developed in the long term, care should be taken to avoid raising expectations in the short term. It was agreed that pre-entry and arrival were critical times and that early familiarisation would be important if the use of various online systems was to become a requirement.

It was agreed that:

- A high-level time-line should be incorporated into the next draft of the PID (this should include a point by which a decision on HSC's participation in the pilot can be made);
- A mechanism for recognising additional faculty resource needs in projects would be advantageous: the portal project may provide an opportunity to better understand the impact of large projects on faculties.
- A change-tracked version of the PID should be circulated to the Board for approval; and
- Risks rated 6 and 9 should be reviewed at each meeting of the Board, plus any risks where a change upwards was perceived.

ACTION: Rich to bring a copy of the risk register to the next Project Board.

5. Update on resources [recruitment and hardware]

As noted at the Project Board meeting of 20th October, recruitment has been completed and the second Portal Java programmer is now in post. All development hardware is now in place, with some production items outstanding.

6. Current status of project

6.1. Requirements emerging from HSC and benchmarking of them in BBS

Rich reported that the work of Katie Huthnance (IT Services Business Analyst) with HSC and BBS underpinned the development section of the PID. An initial set of Portal priorities was identified from discussion with two members of staff from HSC. Reference was also made to priorities identified by JISC. For benchmarking purposes, the priorities identified by HSC were discussed with two members of academic staff and two members of administrative staff in BBS. Katie will be meeting student ambassadors identified by Marketing in early

January. Further students will be identified by UWESU after the January assessment period.

The requirements identified by HSC and BBS have been accommodated in section 12 of the PID. Rich noted that strong similarities were found between the HSC and BBS priorities. Each meeting identified the following priorities:

- the ability to amend student contact details and personal information;
- access to academic history and provisional marks; and
- group communication and deadline alerts.

Within HSC, placement information was a significant additional requirement. Steve West reported that HSC have submitted a FIN10 for the purchase and licence costs of Arcsoft placement management software. Benchmarking also identified the ability to review and confirm module choices as a high priority within BBS.

Barry stressed the need to consider the degree of engagement by BBS and HSC, and noted that the benchmarking undertaken in BBS had revealed fast engagement and enthusiasm. However, it was agreed that the lack of discrete modules and the size of modules may cause difficulties in running the pilot within BBS. It was noted that the timetabling channel would be piloted in a faculty which timetables at student level, as HSC does not timetable at this level.

Steve West proposed that he should convene a meeting early in 2005 to brief staff in the school of Occupational Therapy, Radiography and Physiotherapy, as the Head and Associate Head are now in post.

ACTION: Steve West to identify an appropriate date for a meeting with HSC staff.

6.2. Pilot staff facing portal to allow access to lists of students and their photographs

Barry reported that student photographs are now being placed in ISIS. The mechanism by which this is done requires review as photographs are currently transferred on disc. In order to generate photo sets of seminar groups, a connection to MIIS by Syllabus Plus and ISIS is required. In Leon Smith's absence, Alistair Sandford (ITS) is discussing the integration of MIIS and Syllabus Plus with Karen Kersley (CETS).

Rich noted that, to accommodate Data Protection advice from John Elliott, there had been two additions to Item 2300 of the project development plan. Student photographs will be watermarked if a technical solution can be identified, and access to them will be limited to the UWE network.

6.3. The on-line enrolment project

The on-line enrolment project will deliver on-line enrolment through the portal, and is managed by Margaret Needles. The Project Board of Julie Lydon (Chair), Margaret Needles, Bill Marshall, Steve Grive, and Barry Cawthorne will hold its first meeting in early January. Barry reported that Julie was keen for the enrolment project to be run separately to ensure that it was not affected by any delay to the portal project. Margaret has reported to Barry that she considers the original launch date of September 2005 to be unrealistic.

6.4. Proof-of-concept of delivery through the portal to groups

In the initial Portal proof-of-concept, channels were built for individual students to UWEonline, e-mail, ISIS and Syllabus Plus. Rich noted that a proof of concept

had not yet been built for grouping users in the portal, and that this would represent a significant challenge. Rich reported the intention to use MIIS to accommodate delivery to a sample group (module run enrolments), and referred the Board to section 1800 of the development plan.

7. Dates of next meetings

Friday 25th February 2005, 11.30am.

Wednesday 27th April 2005, 10.00am.

Both in Room 4D24, Bolland Library, Frenchay Campus.

It was agreed that meetings should take place once a term, and that a meeting should take place to sign off the Portal pilot before release. It was noted that a meeting may also be necessary in January 2005 if any questions arise over HSC's involvement in the pilot.

8. Any other business

None.