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| U:\HSS\College\General\UniversityLogo.jpg | College of Humanities and Social Sciences |
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| **Towards full electronic submission of assessment and feedback** |

**Amendment & Authorisation History**

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| **Ver** | **Date** | **Changes** | **Name** | **Author** |
| A | 05/01/15 | Initial version | FM | FM |
| B | 11/02/15 | Amendments following initial consultation | FM | FM |
| C | 20/02/15 | Final version for committees | FM | FM |

**Introduction**

The College is evaluating how it might utilise technology in support of electronic management of assessment and feedback to improve the student experience.

Use of technology enhanced education tools can facilitate the electronic submission or assessments, marking and then feedback to students. The University as a whole and College in particular is seeing greater demand for students to submit their assessments online and in particular to provide more timely feedback. The latter is often evidenced in annual NSS results[[1]](#footnote-1).

Use of technology to support the assessment and feedback process has variable uptake in the College. From individual courses and programmes within Schools, to entire Schools moving entirely online.

 Electronic assessment lifecycle courtesy of Jisc and MMU

**Proposal**

The College proposes setting the following high-level objectives for Schools:

* 1. As close to 100% electronic submission of assessment as possible and where pedagogy allows
	2. As close to 100% electronic delivery of feedback to students as possible and where pedagogy allows
	3. Provide comprehensive management information on feedback turnaround times in response to concerns with NSS results in this area

Whilst not a specific target in this instance, where appropriate, electronic marking is also encouraged. It is recognised however that this is an area that will require additional work to develop further including potential investment in equipment and technology.

*Why?*

Research by Jisc has reported the following benefits that would be applicable in our environment*[[2]](#footnote-2)* accepting that the level of benefit will vary across our disciplines.

For students:

* Students expect to be able to submit online; convenience, avoiding unnecessary travel, time savings, submission timings that are realistic (e.g. midnight), improved feedback turnaround
* Improved student confidence; automatic proof of receipts, work stored up on University systems, reminders of submission deadlines, electronic feedback is easier to use, clarity of feedback is improved
* Costs; students do not like the expense of unnecessary printing
* Reduces potential mis-interpretation of hand-writing
* Rapid turnaround of student feedback

For staff:

* Increased efficiency in the medium to long-term through re-use of commonly used comments
* Convenience of managing the assessment process in one place, including plagiarism and originality checking

For the institution:

* College and School ability to objectively measure feedback response rates and provide data in response to NSS scores
* Reset student expectations that are realistic and demonstrably achievable
* Using student analytics to improve student understanding
* Reduce support and academic staff administration allowing more time to focus on student support and learning

*How?*

Support for academic staff is crucial to the success in implementing these changes. To this effect, a series of workshops on tools, technologies and processes will be run in the lead up to 2015/16 academic year. These workshops will be both technical as well as examples of existing good practice from academics already undertaking electronic submission and feedback.

Local learning technologists will be on-hand in Schools to support the implementation of tools and processes in aid of academic colleagues.

Central Information Services will be supporting local learning technologists as well as facilitating access to tools, best practice, learning design and sharing experience across the University. IS will provide a suite of tools to meet most common use-cases plus examples of their use elsewhere in the University.

The College will provide resource where needed in order to support this initiative. It will also provide to Schools support, advice and guidance on College and University policies should this be necessary to facilitate adoption. Finally College will facilitate information sharing and awareness between Schools and a repository for collating that information.

*What are other Universities doing?*

The available information would indicate that this is an area challenging all Universities in the UK, with a number of initiatives and case studies available indicating a similar picture to our own present situation. The following examples draw heavily on information gathered by UCISA[[3]](#footnote-3) and Jisc[[4]](#footnote-4)

* In 2012, Coventry University introduced the policy of a 10 day turnaround for marking and feedback of summative assessments to final year undergraduate and postgraduate students and a 15 day turnaround for everyone else. This quick turnaround, compared to a lot of other institutions, has had a big impact on the student learning experience as reflected through NSS results. The University is moving toward full implementation of electronic assessment management, requiring electronic submission and electronic return of marks
* The University of Winchester and Bath Spa University have implemented a pioneering student fellow scheme in which learners work alongside academic staff as researchers and evaluators of innovations such as e-submission and e-feedback
* About a third of Sheffield Hallam University staff use the VLE for the submission of assessments and returning feedback. An institutional project is underway to make this standard practice
* Southampton Solent University has had a policy in place requiring all text-based submissions for undergraduate and taught Masters courses (except for Masters dissertations) to be submitted online
* Reading University has identified e-assessment as a key area, focusing on e-submission in the first instance. An e-assessment working group has been set up to look at online submission for summative assessment and to consider policy, process and support issue prior to widespread implementation
* The University of Hertfordshire designed assessment timelines to help curriculum staff shift the balance from summative to formative assessment, in the process reducing the risk of assignment bunching
* A postgraduate medical education team at the University of Dundee used simple technologies to develop a collaborative, interactive system which encourages self-regulation throughout.

*Risks and issues*

Our tools will not always match the pedagogy or business processes in Schools. We need to be prepared to compromise on the processes but not the pedagogy. Separating the two is therefore critical and it may be necessary to review some current business processes as part of the implementation.

School offices and academic staff are already burdened by large administrative loads. It is essential that the introduction of this proposal improves, or at least does not add to this load. However, we must be cognisant of some of the findings set out above. Resources to support this proposal must be made available where they are needed.

**Communication plan**

This paper is being presented to all four relevant College committees;

* CUGLAT; College Undergraduate Learning and Teaching and lead committee for this imitative
* CLACC; College Library and Academic Computing
* CQAC; College Quality Assurance
* CPGSC; College Postgraduate Studies

and to College P&R as appropriate. Feedback will also be sought through the School Directors of Professional Services and College Computing Professionals group which include School learning technologists. College senior management including the Head of College endorse this proposal.

**Recommendations**

CUGLAT, CLACC, CQAC and CPGSC are asked to endorse the three proposals set out earlier in this paper. In addition, committee members are asked to seek feedback and input from their Schools on the proposal. Finally, members are requested to highlight to the committee convenors or the College CIO any resources needed in order to support this initiative.

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| Fraser MuirCollege CIO20 February 2015 | John LowreyDean of Undergraduate Studies  |

**Resources**

ALT comparison of electronic submission and marking tools; <https://newsletter.alt.ac.uk/2014/12/comparing-esubmission-and-marking-tools/>

UCISA TEL Survey 2014; <http://www.ucisa.ac.uk/~/media/groups/dsdg/TEL%20Survey%202014_29Sep2014.ashx>

Jisc Effective Assessment in a Digital Age; [http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140702233839/http://www.jisc.ac.uk/media/documents/programmes/elearning/digiassass\_eada.pdf](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140702233839/http%3A//www.jisc.ac.uk/media/documents/programmes/elearning/digiassass_eada.pdf)

Jisc Involve blog on EMA; <http://ema.jiscinvolve.org/wp/>

UoE TAP project:

<http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/institute-academic-development/learning-teaching/staff/advice/assessment>

**Further considerations**

* How could peer assessment and other assessment types be adopted more widely?
* Can we identify and elucidate best practice for formative assessment – for example: good multiple choice questions (MCQ) in the humanities. Could we create MCQ question banks for formative feedback or feed forward?
* Could we learn from flipped classroom ideas used in Physics but with modification for the humanities and social sciences?
* Can we drive additional value from the feedback that the student has been given by requiring the student to formally reflect on that feedback – as used in ECA for example?
* Can we utilise technology to embed the University’s principles of effective feedback identified through the TAP project?
* Could we develop a system which would allow us to test or survey the student on the feedback they receive (electronic or paper) to make sure they’ve reflected on or digested it?
1. <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/whatwedo/lt/publicinfo/nss/data/2014/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/guides/improving-student-assessment> and <http://repository.jisc.ac.uk/5450/4/Jisc_AF_Final_Synthesis_Report_Oct_2013_v2.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. http://www.ucisa.ac.uk/tel [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. http://jiscdesignstudio.pbworks.com/w/page/61526443/Assessment%20and%20Feedback%20Programme [↑](#footnote-ref-4)