



E-Learning Steering Group

DRAFT Minutes of the Twenty-ninth meeting held on 13th May 2021 at 11:00, Teams meeting

- Present: Heidrun Bien (HB), Alysa Bramble (AB), Brad Coales (BC), Stella Ekebuisi (SE) (**Chair**), Elizabeth Gillow (EG), Jon Hays (JH), Agnieszka Jankowska (AJ), Aphrodite Liddington (AL), Alistair Morey (AM), Chris Sparks (CS), Cameron Nicholas Reece Storey (CNRS), Richard Young (RY)
- Shelley Reeder (SR) (Secretary)
- Apologies: Janet De Wilde (JdW), Kate Price (KP), Mat Robathan (MB), Gideon Shimshon (GS)
- In Attendance: Emma Caseley (EC)

Part 1: Preliminary Items

Welcome new and thank outgoing members

- 2020.68 Leigh Rooney was thanked for her contributions to the E-Learning Steering Group.
- 2020.69 BC (Secretary & Governance Advisor, Students' Union) was welcomed to the group.
- 2020.70 AM (Head of Library Teaching and Learning Support) was welcomed to the group.

ACTION: SE to confirm if both KP and AM will be attending the meetings on behalf of Professional Services

To CONFIRM the minutes and DISCUSS matters arising from the previous meeting (ESG_2901)

- 2020.71 The minutes of the previous meeting were CONFIRMED.

It was NOTED that:

- 2020.72 The Baseline Standards work has been fed into the Programme Approval Project by SE – the project is led by Stefan Krummaker.
- 2020.73 Minute 2020.08 iv, was investigated by AB. Evaluations and surveys are not available in Blackboard Collaborate. An option of polling was provided, and recommendations on when to add a survey in a session. AM confirmed this action can now be closed. Suggestions provided will be looked at more generally.
- 2020.74 Minute 2020.08 v, was investigated by AB following a racial comment made on Mentimeter. There is currently no option to trace Mentimeter responses, however Mentimeter has published information on creating and managing a positive learning environment. The report can be found [here](#).
- 2020.75 SE followed up the items raised in the February Students' Union report:
- i. Staff training: The E-Learning Unit workshop programme is currently being developed. Attendance between January and April 2021 has been low. Self-directed courses are now available and ELU are working on increasing attendance at online workshops.
 - ii. Captioning and Blackboard Collaborate Accessibility issues are being discussed as part of the agenda.
- 2020.76 It has been confirmed that ITS will not be contributing towards costs of staff home broadband. Some schools are contributing to some, however, this is dependent on the school and individual cases.
- 2020.77 Faculty reps have not yet discussed disaster mitigation plans within their schools, though it was SUGGESTED that plans should be added to each school's continuity planning. It would be ideal for executive VPs to encourage this in upcoming faculty meetings.
- ACTION:** SE to feedback to Rachel Bence (Chief Information Officer) suggestions on disaster mitigation plans
- 2020.78 Following the recent outages, SE has fed into incident reports and circulated information to the Learning Technologist Group (LTG), and Heads of Schools.
- ACTION:** SE to circulate incident reports relating to recent outages to the Group
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Part 2: Faculty Updates

To RECEIVE updates from E-Learning User Groups

2020.79 Update from S&E:

- i. No update available as the group has not met recently.

2020.80 Update from PS (library services):

- i. The group has not met recently. It is hoped that the PS user group will meet before the next steering group meeting in July. AM has been in contact with previous attendees and will now include Student Wellbeing and DDS on the group, who were not previously included.

2020.81 Update from HSS:

- i. The HSS user group has not met for a long period. It was NOTED that the group will look at reconvening – it is hoped attendance at the group will be positive now things are settling down.
 - a. It was NOTED that the group had become very technical, with EG being the only academic attending.

2020.82 Update from SMD:

- i. The SMD user group met recently. GS joined the last 30 minutes of the meeting to discuss the direction of the SMD and to meet the group.
- ii. The group raised various questions for GS, including: CPD, technical support for business cases, and what is scalable in education.
- iii. The group saw good representation across the schools and roles.

2020.83 It was SUGGESTED that another discussion on user groups should take place at the next meeting in July. Due to the changes and developments in the institution, it is useful to look at the groups and how they're working and how they can best fit in with the university's strategy.

2020.84 SE will meet with user group Chairs to understand any differences in how each group works, which will feed into the discussion at the next meeting.

ACTION: SE to meet with user groups reps to discuss their groups

ACTION: SR to add User Group Discussion to the July agenda

To RECEIVE an oral update from the Students' Union

2020.85 Update from QMSU:

2020.86 The paper "QMSU Update May 2021" was RECEIVED (ESG_2903).

i. Update from Humanities and Social Sciences:

- a. The new ITS Student Focus Groups were mentioned in all student updates. The groups will seek direct input from students, in collaboration with the Students' Union, ITS and ELU.
 - i. Students are currently engaging less as the academic year is ending.
 - ii. The focus group will be a useful platform for discussing any issues.
 - iii. The group will help humanise the staff in ITS.
- b. The paper includes all relevant information for the new Student Union Executive Officers and course representatives for staff.

ii. Update from Barts and the London:

- a. MR was not at the meeting to update.
- b. A question was raised from the paper: what is the driver for students meeting to watch pre-recorded content?

It was NOTED that:

- i. There are multiple benefits for students watching pre-recorded content together. Students want to meet one another and share ideas, creating a community feeling.
- ii. In HSS, there is less requirement for face-to-face teaching as there are no labs. Enabling students to watch pre-recorded content together will provide the face-to-face experience.
- iii. As well as access to space, students would also require the room to have the capability to plug in laptops. It is uncertain whether SMD would require the same or if they would want rooms to be timetabled.

- iv. The library has seen requests from students for space for collaborative and group work. More rooms are required as there is limited space with 1m social distancing.
- iii. Update from Science and Engineering:
 - a. Accessibility is being considered in S&E, looking at how to make QM extras more accessible. This ties into a small campaign launching in collaboration with the SU and QMUL communications team, to promote the HEAR transcript.
- iv. It was NOTED that:
 - a. All student representatives will be included in any review of QMplus module templates.

To RECEIVE an oral update on QMUL Strategy Steering Groups related to e-learning

- 2020.87 Scaling up Blended Learning
 - i. This is being discussed as part of the item Optimising Concurrent Education (OCE).
- 2020.88 Digital Learning and Innovation
 - i. This item was not updated on at the meeting due to no available representative.

Part 3: E-Learning Updates

To RECEIVE an update from the E-Learning Unit (ESG_2904)

- 2020.89 The paper “E-Learning Unit Update May 2021” was RECEIVED (ESG_2904).
- 2020.90 Funding has been approved for Blackboard Ally – work is currently in the contract negotiation stage. Funding has also been approved for a digital accessibility specialist to assist schools.
- 2020.91 The ELU are currently working on QMplus templates and baseline standards. Communications are taking place with every school, to

identify those that need help with removing old content, accessibility, and consistency of QMplus pages. Gill Ritchie, ELU, is working on this.

- i. Rollover will be taking place this year, rather than creating blank module areas from templates again.

2020.92 The summer upgrade will be taking place outside of working hours. However, the migration will require at least a one day outage and is more difficult to schedule. Work is taking place to enable read-only access – especially for undergraduate medicine. Changing the date is not an option, however, ELU are working to mitigate any issues.

- i. Key dates:
 - a. 3 July 2021: Upgrade (downtime 21:00 – 23:00)
 - b. 17 August 2021: Migration (approximately one day downtime)

2020.93 The ELU are working with Solution Development and SEMS, to develop QM's e-portfolio to enable students to map assessed work in QMplus to a framework and reflect on their performance.

- i. Discussions are taking place in HSS to build on this work within the faculty. This is currently in the early stages.
- ii. The development will be available for anyone, but it requires schools to embed graduate attributes. Julia Shelton in SEMS has been working on graduate attributes in the school for a number of years.

To RECEIVE an update on Optimising Concurrent Education (OCE)

2020.94 **Note added after the meeting:** The term OCE has now been updated to “Mixed Mode Education” or MME.

2020.95 RY had to leave the meeting early so was not available to update.

2020.96 The OCE and Educational Planning for 2021/22 presentation was shared by SE.

2020.97 The Scaling Up Blended Learning Project will develop a flexible, blended teaching and learning approach across the university. The first activity for the project is to deliver Optimising Concurrent Education.

- i. OCE: Teaching to a group of students, some of whom are in the room with the lecturer and some of whom are online.

2020.98 RY is leading on Workstream 2: Enabling Infrastructure.

2020.99 Certain rooms are kitted out with different levels of technology. There are 4 levels available.

- i. The lowest level is in every Q-Review enabled room.
- ii. Level 2 has a pan-tilt-zoom camera installed. The camera is connected to the PC to enable use of Blackboard Collaborate/Teams/Zoom.
- iii. Level 3 has additional screens and a dual monitor to view Blackboard Collaborate/Teams/Zoom on a separate monitor.
- iv. Level 4 can pick up voices of the speaker based on where they are located in the room. A tracking camera will be fitted to some rooms during 21/22.

It was NOTED that:

2020.100 Stefan Krummaker will run a live demo during the next Programme Directors Forum .

- i. 5 rooms are currently equipped with level 2, and more will become available throughout May.
- ii. Schools that have Semester C teaching, will have the opportunity to pilot OCE with live students.

2020.101 It was NOTED that there are teething problems in some rooms, e.g. Bancroft 115 does not match the specification provided – a static camera is installed rather than a pan-tilt-zoom camera.

2020.102 Any feedback should be fed into faculty reps, which should then be passed on to Steven Buckingham.

- i. Steven Buckingham is leading on Workstream 1: Enabling Teaching & Learning.

ACTION: SE to confirm who Professional Services colleagues can feedback to (for OCE)

2020.103 A number of processes are yet to be worked out, i.e. whether students are expected to attend or if they are able to choose how they'd like to attend. Decisions sit between implementation and policy.

2020.104 Any questions should be directed to SE or directly to Steven Buckingham.

To RECEIVE an oral update on ITS Student Focus Groups

2020.105 AJ thanked AL, CNRS, and MR for all their support with this initiative.

2020.106 The pilot initiative has been set-up to improve the service ITS provides.

- i. Student participation exceeded expectations; 12 students from HSS actively participated.

- ii. It is hoped that the initiative will continue in the next academic year with the incoming student reps.
- 2020.107 The library and ELU will be involved in future forums.
- 2020.108 It is important to humanise ITS, making the staff visible when students engage with colleagues.
- 2020.109 Feedback from the forums:
 - i. Students praised QMplus – it’s a great service when up and running.
 - ii. Students raised library resources as an issue.
- iii. Little is known about the positive work ITS are doing – students only hear about ITS if a service or platform is not working.
 - a. AM NOTED that a new group is being set-up to address specific cases. Specific issues were not addressed by students at the forum.
 - b. AM and AJ will discuss library comments offline.
- 2020.110 There are a number of departments in the institution that provide services to students that are not visible, e.g. ELU. It was SUGGESTED that during Welcome Week, ITS or ELU should have a stall, which would help to humanise colleagues behind the screens.
- 2020.111 The forums will be taking place bi-monthly.
- 2020.112 It was NOTED that the forums may be a good way of feeding into faculty level user groups and the E-Learning Steering Group.

To RECEIVE an update on the QMplus Theme Review (ESG_2905)

- 2020.113 The paper “QMplus Theme Review Update” was RECEIVED (ESG_2905).
- 2020.114 A business case is currently being developed, which will be submitted to ITSB in June for a major update of the QMplus theme.
- 2020.115 The paper contains a summarised version of the business case, outlining issues with the current theme and what is proposed.
- 2020.116 Current students from the School of Business and Management led an eight-week project evaluating the QMplus landing page, dashboard and login journey. The project consisted of surveys and focus groups.
- 2020.117 The plan is to design and launch a new theme in BETA version by January 2022, enabling end users to switch between the new and old theme.
 - i. Faculty variants from the current theme will be removed.

To ENDORSE the E-Learning Unit's recommendation on Captioning (ESG_2906)

- 2020.118 The paper "Captioning" was RECEIVED (ESG_2906).
- 2020.119 The Captioning work is taking longer than anticipated.
- 2020.120 The ELU will be trialling Caption.Ed and Chrome Live to enable captions for Blackboard Collaborate and other systems without an embedded API for captioning.
- 2020.121 The ELU would like approval of the captioning plan from the group, before funding is sought.
- 2020.122 It was QUESTIONED whether students in receipt of disability allowance could provide funding for this, or whether students could provide the service.
- i. It was NOTED that this goes against accessibility principles – students should not have to disclose accessibility issues.
- 2020.123 It was QUESTIONED whether the group could see a demonstration, and how much human interaction will be needed.
- i. It was NOTED that automated captions are provided to a transcriber, which are then corrected live. A demo would be possible, however, it won't be able across the institution due to the cost.
- 2020.124 The group APPROVED the E-Learning Unit's recommendation on Captioning.
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Part 4: Any other Business

- 2020.125 The group did not have any other business to discuss.
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Summary of Actions:

Action	Who	Action	Status
27-01	ED SE	To discuss including baseline standards within the programme approval with Stefan Krummaker	Complete
28-01	AB	To follow up on KP's Blackboard Collaborate issue with the ELU (2020.08 iv)	Complete
28-02	SE	To invite the SU faculty rep for Barts and the London to the group	Complete
28-03	SR	To circulate the updated terms of reference to the group	Complete
28-04	SE	To follow up with 3 items raised in the SU report	Complete
28-05	RY	To update on broadband support for lecturers at the next meeting	Complete
28-06	SR	To add Scaling Up Blended Learning project update as a standing item	Complete
28-08	SE	To take forward comments on outages	Complete
28-07	User group reps	User group reps to feedback disaster mitigation plan suggestion to their faculties	Carry Forward
29-01	SE	To confirm if both KP and AM will be attending the meetings on behalf of Professional Services	New
29-02	SE	SE to feedback to Rachel Bence (Chief Information Officer) suggestions on disaster mitigation plans	New
29-03	SE	To circulate incident reports relating to recent outages to the Group	New
29-04	SE	To meet with user groups reps to discuss their groups	New
29-05	SR	To add User Group Discussion to the July agenda	New
29-06	SE	To confirm who Professional Services colleagues can feedback to (for OCE)	New

Next Meeting: 29th July 2021

Shelley Reeder
May 2021