

Proposal to enhance the use of eLearning in the Faculty of Humanities

The Faculty of Humanities is progressing well in meeting the minimum requirements for content within Blackboard for undergraduate and postgraduate taught units:

About 70% of the course units meet the support part of the minimum requirements and contain course aims and objectives, course materials and recommended reading. There is relatively low usage of Link2Lists (the library reading list service, links to exam papers/previous assessments or the use of the calendar for communication).

Two thirds of units do use one of the enhancements recommended in the minimum specification (i.e. Discussion, Assessment or Assignment submission) with one third using two of these.

However, the target of 100% of units meeting the minimum requirements both in terms of content and enhancements, as set out in the University's eLearning Operational Plan¹, is not yet met. To ensure that both staff and students are reaping the benefits of using eLearning, it is important that consideration is given to the way in which eLearning can be embedded within the teaching and learning processes, and, where appropriate, to ensure that eLearning is not simply annexed to the course unit upon completion of unit development.

The Faculty has already agreed that an eLearning Technologist will be appointed as an adviser to new programme proposals, with a view to giving consideration to the role of eLearning within the programme. However, enhancement-led quality assurance processes should give recognition to the fact that eLearning is currently mainly embedded at unit level rather than programme level. The approval of units is the remit of the School Teaching and Learning Committees² and therefore Schools have a responsibility to be assured that appropriate consideration has been given to this element of each unit.

In order that Schools benefit from the support of the Faculty eLearning Team (and for Manchester Business School, the MBS eLearning Team) in getting the most out of the eLearning technology available, the Faculty would like to propose that the following procedure should be undertaken within Schools:

1. When considering the approval of course units, Schools should require that Course Convenors demonstrate they have given due consideration to the use of eLearning within the unit, and discussed this with an eLearning Adviser.
2. An eLearning Schools Liaison contact is currently an invited member of all School UG, PGT and T&L Committee and will be able to advise the Committee when they are considering approval of units.

This recommendation extends the previous guidance from the Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee that Schools include a section on the unit outline describing how eLearning will be used on each unit³.

¹ University eLearning Strategy 2007 - 2009

² Including Undergraduate Committees and Postgraduate Taught Committees.

³ Minutes of Teaching and Learning Committee held 8th October 2008, item 9.3.