

School of Divinity E-learning Strategy

Timeframe

This strategy should be reviewed annually and updated as appropriate. It should be seen as a local version of the University and College of Humanities and Social Science e-learning strategies.

Background

The School of Divinity has adopted an innovative approach to teaching and learning and sees the e-learning strategy as a further endorsement of the School's commitment to this. However, the adoption of e-learning within any course should aim to:-

- Be based on sound pedagogy, with a strong emphasis in enhancing the learning experience of students.
- Suit the teaching style of individual lecturers and their course content.
- Be teaching-led and not technology focussed.

Aims

- Encourage and adopt support mechanisms for all staff within the School to engage with e-learning activities.
- Provide student support to ensure all students are equipped to engage with the e-learning activities of the School.
- Develop and encourage research activities into e-learning; including the dissemination of good practice within the School and beyond.

Specifics

Academic staff

Our aim is to encourage all academic staff to explore ways in which various e-learning developments can be deployed at individual course level. Although the use of the centrally-provided VLE is encouraged, staff can develop materials out-with the VLE but this where ever possible be linked from the appropriate VLE instance. Content hosted on non-University sites may be applicable but any staff member following this route must be aware of the issues involved (see <http://www.vp.is.ed.ac.uk/content/1/c4/12/45/GuidelinesForUsingExternalWeb2.0Services-20070823.pdf>). Staff should ensure that all copyright and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) are adhered to and advice sought in cases of uncertainty. Course materials should be provided in accessible formats – pdf or rtf formats is recommended.

All staff are encouraged to use local support in the first instance for assistance – this will aim to cover the technical use of the VLE and the translation of teaching ideas to appropriate tools. Centrally provided courses may be applicable but locally provision of courses may be available if demand is high.

The e-learning committee will organise a number of dissemination activities – all staff are encouraged to attend and share good practice (and highlight difficulties/problems). Staff are also encouraged to attend University e-learning events.

Students

The Academic Skills course aims to equip all students with the required skills to engage with the School's e-learning activities (the course content of this will be modified in the light of future developments). In addition, introduction sessions (either demonstrations or hands-on sessions) can be organised as part of the "normal" teaching activity. Support will also be available via the normal School Support channels. Ad-hoc workshops and training sessions will be organised as required.

Assessment

The School will aim to actively engage with the investigation into the use of e-assessment but adoption will only take place when the methodology has been proven to meet the assessment needs of the School. All essays will include one electronic version submitted via the VLE. When tools like blogs are included as part of the course-work assessment a statement on the level of participation expected from the students will be provided.

Distance learning

The School does not see distance learning at this point as a core component of its business. However, as opportunities arise it may be appropriate to explore the development of distance learning initiatives (including eCPD).

Student Personal Development Plans (PDP)

As part of the College of Humanities and Social Science's learning and teaching strategy the adoption of PDP will be investigated within the School. As an initial step the School will consider the adoption of e-portfolios as a possible method.

Research

The School has been in the past highly successful in achieving funding for a number of projects. All staff are encouraged to seek funding for e-learning initiatives/studies where ever appropriate.