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eLearning @ UOW

**STRATEGIC
PLAN
2008-10**

Blending teaching and technology to create global learning communities



Introduction

The 2008-10 eLearning and eTeaching Plan supports the achievement of UOW's core Goal of "Excellence and Innovation in Learning and Teaching". It seeks to ensure that the University maintains its outstanding reputation as it operates within the diverse and innovative environment of emerging educational technologies.

eLearning is already a well-established part of the student and staff experience at the University of Wollongong. The 2008-10 plan addresses both the opportunities and the challenges arising from the growth and diversification of eLearning, as well as from the University's areas of strategic focus.

The plan's objectives and strategies are specifically designed to facilitate the use of eLearning to support:

- ⊗ the implementation of the new UOW Graduate Qualities in the curriculum, and to enable each student to build a reflective graduate ePortfolio demonstrating their attainment of these Qualities
- ⊗ new modes of student engagement with university learning, particularly those involving collaborative teaching and learning, in both single and multi location teaching
- ⊗ the internationalisation of the UOW student experience.

Performance against the plan will depend on the University's capacity to ensure:

- ⊗ continued support for new teaching and learning skills development for students and all staff including sessional teachers
- ⊗ effective and timely technical assistance provided to academic and general staff using eLearning technologies
- ⊗ regular monitoring of the articulation of eLearning practices to core UOW plans and policies
- ⊗ development and implementation of a robust and comprehensive performance review framework which will maintain UOW eLearning environments at a high standard.

Background and context

The growth in eLearning at UOW has been driven by three key factors:

- ⊗ student demand for flexible access to content, including lecture notes and slides;
- ⊗ academic staff interested in developing innovative ways of teaching, particularly those involving collaborative learning; and
- ⊗ the growth in multi location teaching, via regional and offshore campuses and centres.

In 2005, 40% of subjects offered by UOW blended face-to-face teaching with eLearning technologies and techniques. In 2007, the number of subjects grew to almost 60% and it is anticipated that, by 2010, this percentage will reach 80%. In about 5% of subjects, students can participate in a wholly online mode. Nearly 20% of UOW subjects are taught at multiple locations: 375 subjects involving over 100 teachers.

The approaches commonly used at UOW currently include the following range:

- ⊗ learning management systems for online content delivery, teacher-student communication and student-student communication
- ⊗ online access to library services and materials including e-readings
- ⊗ videoconferencing, lecture recording and audio streaming
- ⊗ student access to electronic Portfolio systems.

Emerging technologies to which UOW has committed developmental support include:

- ⊗ webcasting and podcasting
- ⊗ content management systems for developing and sharing reusable teaching resources
- ⊗ quiz management software
- ⊗ wikis, e-whiteboards, blogs and other collaborative project tools
- ⊗ audience response systems
- ⊗ plagiarism detection software.

eLearning and Teaching Objectives 2008-2010

The five objectives of the Strategic Plan for eLearning & Teaching directly support and are mapped against the University's objectives for Excellence and Innovation in Learning and Teaching in the University Strategic Plan 2008-2010. They also articulate closely with the other UOW core and enabling goals, especially those relating to students, staff, community engagement and internationalisation.

In particular, the plan recognises the strong potential of eLearning to contribute to the achievement of the UOW Student Goal and its strategic priority to "differentiate the UOW Student Experience as engaging, motivating, personalised and internationally-oriented."

eLearning & eTeaching Objectives and Strategies (in italics)	Relevant UOW Learning & Teaching Objectives and Strategies
Graduates who can use eLearning appropriately to contribute to society and the workplace	Graduates equipped to contribute to society and the workplace
<i>Support development of eLearning outreach programs to high schools and key community organizations</i> <i>Support eLearning linkages between university learning, work-integrated learning and professional learning communities</i>	<i>Work with employers to integrate workplace and community experiences for students into the curriculum in all discipline areas</i>
<i>Promote enquiry-based eLearning to support students in developing capacity for independent learning</i>	<i>Continue to give priority to developing the capacity of students for independent research and enquiry</i>
<i>Implement ePortfolio systems to enable students to demonstrate the attainment of Graduate Qualities and professional skills</i>	<i>Develop and implement institutional approaches to evaluating the attainment of Graduate Qualities</i>
<i>Develop institutional guidelines for designing and implementing professionally-focused Global Learning Projects</i>	<i>Prepare graduates for employment in a global labour market</i>

UOW eLearning & Teaching Objectives and Strategies (in italics)	Relevant UOW Learning & Teaching Objectives and Strategies
Active, collaborative and flexible eLearning experiences, including within subjects offered at multiple locations	An active, collaborative and flexible learning experience for students
<i>Provide and promote appropriate support for students to develop the technical and interpersonal skills to become effective eLearners</i>	<i>Provide and promote appropriate learning support for student groups and individuals</i>
<i>Support staff in developing collaborative eLearning experiences, including for subjects taught at multiple locations</i> <i>Consolidate and promote sustainable courseware development that encourages reusability and sharing of teaching resources across multiple locations</i>	<i>Optimise the mix of delivery methods to enhance the learning experience of students across all teaching locations</i>
<i>Design teaching spaces that complement technical facilities to provide a learning environment that is engaging, collaborative and flexible</i>	<i>Optimise the use of teaching spaces and technical facilities to provide a physical environment that is engaging, collaborative and flexible</i>
<i>Support academics in designing eLearning content and learning environments appropriate to their field of research expertise</i>	<i>Engage students with leading-edge knowledge through teaching by academics who are prominent scholars & researchers in their fields</i>
<i>Develop assessable eLearning modules to support the integration of the Graduate Quality – independent learner</i>	<i>Further enhance Library services to provide integrated, timely and convenient access to academic information resources</i>
Quality eLearning experiences appropriately integrated into UOW programs	Quality programs relevant to the evolving needs of students and the community
<i>Develop a performance review framework for eLearning at UOW underpinned by current educational research</i> <i>Benchmark UOW eLearning against national and international standards for e-maturity</i> <i>Develop and implement an integrated QA framework for learning design and technical maintenance of eLearning systems</i>	<i>Employ external benchmarking to monitor academic standards</i> <i>Monitor and improve practices to ensure the quality of course delivery and outcomes across teaching locations, including UOW Dubai and other offshore sites</i>
<i>Use course approval process for earlier identification of eLearning implications including for subjects taught at multiple locations</i>	<i>Enhance course development and management to ensure that the range of programs is strategic, current and of the highest standard</i>
<i>Use eLearning to enhance student and community exposure to UOW research cultures</i>	<i>Take appropriate opportunities to match undergraduate programs with areas of research focus</i>
<i>Support academic staff in developing assessment practices using eLearning, including for multi location collaborative student work</i>	<i>Further enhance assessment practice</i>

UOW eLearning & Teaching Objectives and Strategies (in italics)	Relevant UOW Learning & Teaching Objectives and Strategies
eLearning used to support UOW's international focus in learning & teaching	An international focus in learning & teaching
<i>Use eLearning with targeted international partners to complement participation in Study Abroad programs</i>	<i>Promote international learning experiences for students including through Study Abroad and electronic communication</i>
<i>Use eLearning to increase collaboration between students from all demographic groups across all Wollongong campuses and locations, onshore and offshore</i>	<i>Develop academic collaboration between domestic and international students</i>
<i>Support staff in identifying and developing resources for on-line delivery that assist the acquisition of foreign language skills and cultural awareness</i>	<i>Promote opportunities, within degree courses and through on-line delivery, for the acquisition of foreign language skills and cultural awareness</i>
High quality eTeaching supported by a culture of research and innovation in eTeaching practice	High quality teaching
<i>Conduct needs analysis with UOW eTeachers about support and resourcing issues currently affecting quality teaching</i>	<i>Develop the professional capability of permanent, sessional and casual staff involved in learning and teaching</i>
<i>Embed eTeaching into UOW's framework for professional development, evaluation of teaching (including peer evaluation), recruitment and promotion, reward and recognition</i>	<i>Recognise achievement that results from innovation, inspiration and commitment in learning and teaching practice</i>
<i>Promote the development and dissemination of best practices in eLearning and eTeaching</i>	<i>Promote the development and dissemination of best practices in learning and teaching</i>
<i>Improve dissemination of UOW educational research focused on innovation in eTeaching</i>	<i>Promote innovation in teaching and learning which is based on sound educational research</i>
<i>Create opportunities for research-active academic staff to participate in eTeaching research and writing teams</i>	

Implementation and review

This plan has been developed by a working party of the eLearning and Teaching Subcommittee of the University Education Committee in consultation with Faculty Education Committees, other UEC sub-committees, as well as with units involved in the technical and administrative support of staff and students working within the UOW eLearning environment.

Phased implementation of the plan will involve an ongoing process of scoping, project initiation and performance monitoring. Reporting on progress against the plan's objectives will be undertaken by eLTS, the eLearning & Teaching Subcommittee of University Education Committee, with the support of CEDIR.

The key indicators of performance which will be used to monitor progress towards the strategic objectives are listed below, together with their underpinning measures:

Key Performance Indicator	Measure
Learning & Teaching Performance	The number and percentage of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• blended eLearning subjects• subjects integrating ePortfolio use• students using ePortfolios• multi location subjects• subjects using active and collaborative eLearning• Global Learning Projects benchmarked against similar universities
	Internal and external recognition of quality eTeaching and eLearning: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• UOW teaching awards• UOW teaching grants• Australian grants, citations and awards
Student Perception	Student scores on selected subject evaluation, student experience and course experience questions Qualitative data via student focus groups and interview
Staff Perception	Staff eLearning survey data Staff use of technical support Staff participation feedback on training programs and workshops Qualitative data via staff focus groups and case studies

Definitions and explanations

Word/Term	Definition
Blended Learning	Blended Learning combines eLearning with face to face learning.
Collaborative Learning	Collaborative learning refers to an instruction method in which students work together in small groups toward a common goal.
Content Management System	A software system for cataloguing and storing learning content. A CMS has settings for who can access material, reporting and tracking who is using the materials, and facilities for peer review.
eLearning	eLearning is a term used to describe learning enhanced by the use of communication and computer-based technologies, including but not restricted to online learning (in web environments), mLearning (using mobile technologies), the streaming of content (EduStream, webcasting, podcasting), and the collaborative production of content (wikis, blogs).
eLearning Space	The name of the web-based Learning Management System used at UOW. Currently the eLearning Space is underpinned by Blackboard Vista.
eMaturity	eMaturity is one current framework for benchmarking exercises. It emphasizes progress along a continuum in contrast to attainment of absolute quality targets.
ePortfolio	Electronic portfolios (known as ePortfolios) allow students to collect, store, tag and sort work samples, as well as build CVs and prepare for graduate employment applications. ePortfolios facilitate reflection, recording and articulation of the university experience within the context of other career-relevant experiences. Some accrediting bodies such as the NSW Institute of Teachers and the Australian Medical Association have made it compulsory for graduating students to show evidence of learning outcomes against Professional Skills criteria.
eTeaching	eTeaching describes a mode of teaching enhanced by the use of communication and computer-based technologies (see above definition of eLearning). eTeaching incorporates the practices of content development, sometimes in different media, content delivery, the creation of collaborative learning environments for groups of students, synchronous and asynchronous communication with students, student tracking, and the management of assessment processes including feedback, grading and return of student work.
Global Learning Project	Students collaborating online with students located outside Australia, whether at another UOW campus or at a separate institution.
Graduate Qualities	UOW is committed to developing graduates who are informed, independent learners, problem solvers, effective communicators and responsible. For more information on UOW graduate qualities: http://www.uow.edu.au/about/teaching/qualities/
Multi Location Teaching	Multi Location Teaching involves teaching the same subject to cohorts of students at different locations, often concurrently. Usually the Subject Coordinator covers all locations and sometimes the lecturer is the same, but students at each location may be co-taught by teachers or tutors.
Learning Management System	Web-based software that enables student and staff access to learning content by subject and provides authoring tools for teachers designing subject sites.