
Student Support for Online Learning and ICT Infrastructure Procedure

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Purpose:	The purpose of this Procedure is to define the processes to be used to plan, maintain, update and provide student support for educational, electronic and mobile technologies and infrastructure for teaching and learning.
Scope:	EIT Academic staff, students and staff from IT support as well as any external support companies. This is specifically relating to the Moodle Learning Management System (LMS); web conferencing software packages (Elluminate (known as Blackboard Collaborate) or Electromeeet); Remote labs (Electromeeet), EIT web site (www.eit.edu.au) and software packages that are used for the various course modules (e.g. Process Control or TCP/IP Troubleshooting).

Definitions:

ICT Information Communication Technology: This relates to any technology such as voice, data, video, audio and associated resources which relate to the capture, storage, retrieval, transfer, communication or distribution of data through the use of electronic and associated media.

ICT resources: This includes ICT infrastructure, equipment, hardware and software.

User: All EIT staff, students, external parties, alumni and visitors who legally access EIT's systems.

E-learning Course Coordinator: A professionally trained manager (generally with at least a Certificate IV in Training) who manages a specific



course, group of students and associated instructors engaged in an EIT online course.

E-Learning Manager: The individual who manages the day-to-day activities of the EIT college and supervises the activities of the E-Learning Course Co-ordinators.

IT Manager: The Manager who is technically skilled in managing the ICT systems and rectifying problems that arise from time to time. This individual will provide expert advice on any operational problems (such as viruses, slowness in access and overload of the system).

Essential Supporting Documents:

Related Documents:

1.0 Introduction

A few introductory points are necessary to set the context for this procedure.

- Being a distance learning institution, EIT recognises the importance of ICT and wants to ensure access 24x7 to all users for all authorised purposes.
- While EIT respects the need for privacy for all users of ICT resources, EIT reserves the right to monitor user transactions and activity and take appropriate action if misuse of resources (or illegal activity such as downloading copyrighted or pornographic materials) is identified. However, all extensive monitoring (more than for 30 minutes in total) would need to be authorised by the Chair of the Governing Board.

2.0 Preliminary Comments on Provision of Student Support

- When students commence at EIT, full ICT access (including user name and passwords) and associated email addresses are provided by the E-Learning Manager or the relevant E-Learning Course Coordinator.
- Users must protect the security and integrity of their access at all times and if they believe their security has been compromised; they are to advise their designated learning co-ordinator immediately.
- Each course or unit details will be stored on the EIT Learning Management System as well as on the EIT server in Perth, Western Australia.
- EIT staff are well aware of the extraordinary importance of support for the learning management infrastructure (compared with other teaching and learning institutions) as failure of a user to connect to a presentation could signal the imminent failure of their ability to meet course requirements. Hence, speed in response is critical.

- The web conferencing facility can be particularly affected by poor bandwidth issues and all students are warned of potential intermittent problems in this respect – operations depend on their local internet (or 3G or 4G connections). The critical components (audio and the whiteboard), are key to the quality of a presentation but fortunately (as compared to streaming video) do not require a large bandwidth allocation.

3.0 Provision of Student Support Procedures

The following procedure is used for immediate student support.

- The student enrolls in a course and forward all registration details to the E-Learning Course Coordinator as per the standard EIT Enrolment form.
- The Application is assessed by the relevant E-Learning Course Coordinator and Part 2 of the Enrolment form is reviewed. The Part 2 of the enrolment form contains specific questions to enable the E-Learning Course Coordinator to ascertain the students' suitability for the course they are enrolling in. Examples of the questions contained in the Part 2 of the enrolment form includes personal details such as (name, address, date of birth, English language proficiency, disabilities and whether the student is of Aboriginal or Torres Straight Islander origin), Professional memberships (such as IEEE, ISA and ECSA), education levels, employment history and reasons for study. In addition the Part 2 asks for information on a workplace mentor. These questions enable the E-Learning Course Coordinator to assess the student's suitability for the course and to also provide the E-learning Course Coordinator with valuable information to enable them to provide high level support to the student throughout the course.
- An E-learning Course Coordinator is allocated by the E-Learning Manager to this course and to the student; who then exchange optimum contact details with each other. The course coordinator then becomes the first point of contact for the student and is there to assist the student with any query they may have throughout the course. The course coordinator makes regular contact with the students on the courses they are coordinating to guide the students through the course.
- All student details are updated on the Learning Management System (Moodle). The learning management system contains the information the students need in a course. This includes readings, slides, assessments, videos, webinar recordings, simulation software, remote lab software, links to websites, quizzes and other materials that will enhance the students understanding of a subject area. The learning management system is constantly updated as are the materials uploaded to ensure they are current and relevant.
- The instructors are provided with miscellaneous student details by the E-learning Course Coordinator. Instructors go through training to ensure that the webinar sessions are delivered at a very high quality. Instructors are also



given regular feedback after sessions, both positive and opportunities for improvement. Instructors are required to be interactive in sessions and to respond to queries. In addition students can contact instructors outside of webinar sessions with any questions they may have on the information presented. Instructors are required to provide students with a suitable answer and this is managed by the course coordinator.

- The student is provided with the Student Handbook and the FAQs to familiarise him/herself with their rights and responsibilities and operations of the ICT system as far as support is concerned. The student will be urged to read the detailed instructions relating to managing their connections and operation to the Learning Management System and web conferencing system and to remedy simple problems. Information is provided to students on the learning management system so that the students have a full understanding of their rights and responsibilities. This also includes a link to the policies and procedures. The course coordinators encourage all students to read through the documents provided on Moodle.
- Before the course proper commences, a preliminary introductory web conference is conducted by the course co-ordinator who then outlines the operation of the learning infrastructure. The course coordinator also welcomes the students to the course and responds to any questions the students may have. The course coordinator also encourages the students to contact them with any questions they have throughout the course.
- A recording is made of all presentations in case of failure of a presentation and made available to all students (for review in perpetuity).
- Upon request recordings from previous courses with the same content are also made available to students. There are also multiple web conferences scheduled to cater for students in different time zones to ensure students are able to attend web conferences at times suitable for them.
- Immediate problems with access are advised to the E-Learning Course Coordinator in the first instance by email or phone. Confirmation that action has been taken will be immediately provided to the student and detailed feedback on a solution will be provided within 12 hours. If necessary, the web conference will be rescheduled to suit the student(s). During weekends, there will not be immediate feedback but by Monday morning 11am Western Standard Time (Australia) an appropriate response will be provided to a student.
- EIT can only take responsibility for software supported by the EIT as noted in the Student Handbook. Any other software or operating systems that are not listed cannot be supported.

4.0 Processes for Planning of Student Support

- Regular Meetings as well as informal meetings on a needs basis are held between the E-Learning Course Coordinators and the E-Learning Manager and any problems with the operation of the Learning Management System, Web conferencing software and remote labs and associated simulation software are identified and passed onto the IT Manager for immediate rectification (such as viruses, broadband or web site problems). The EIT works on a process of continuous improvement and these meetings are a tool used to improve the EIT as a whole.
- There are four sets of progress questionnaires that are provided to the students – spread throughout the duration of the course These are reviewed by the learning co-ordinator for any complaints or comments on the operation of the software.
- Any longer term problems (slowness in access due to increased loadings) are identified by the college manager and then discussed with the IT Manager. If it is identified that there is a potential overload problem (due to increasing students or increasing size of course materials); a recommendation is made to the Dean of Engineering.
- If this is deemed to be an ongoing problem, the Dean of Engineering will then authorise an increase in the capacity of the hardware servers and advise the Academic and Governing Boards at their regular meetings.

5.0 Changes in Technology (Including software)

- The E-Learning Manager and Dean of Engineering will keep up-to-date with changes to technology (e.g. remote labs and video conferencing is growing significantly). If it is considered that a particular new technology should be adopted, this will be discussed at the next weekly meeting and the pedagogical benefits and costs assessed.
- If a change is considered; this will generally only be done for a new cohort of student unless there a minor changes. The disruption to the existing cohorts can be extensive – not only for technological changes but a disruption to the existing culture.
- There are always ongoing updates to computer technology and software systems (e.g. Windows Vista to Windows 7 and Java with often unpredictable impacts on normally reliable software such as Blackboard Collaborate). Any impacts will be minimised and patches identified by the IT Manager and distributed through the E-Learning Course Coordinators as quickly as they are identified.