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## Student Support for Online Learning and ICT Infrastructure Procedure

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### 1.0 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 in Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Professional Certificate of Competency courses and activities.

### 2.0 Scope

EIT Academic and IT staff, students any external support companies involved in EIT VET and Professional Certificate of Competency courses and activities. This is specifically relating to the Moodle Learning Management System (LMS); web conferencing software packages (Blackboard Collaborate Ultra); remote invigilation / proctoring; remote labs and simulation software packages that are used for the various course units/modules and the EIT web site ([www.eit.edu.au](http://www.eit.edu.au)).

### 3.0 Introduction

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

- Being a provider of online learning, EIT recognises the importance of Information Communication Technology (ICT) to ensure 24x7 access to all users for 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.

#### **4.0 Preliminary Comments on Provision of Student Support**

- When students commence at EIT, full ICT access (including username and passwords) are provided to the student by the relevant Learning Support Officer (LSO).
- 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 LSO immediately.
- Each course or unit/module details is stored on the EIT Learning Management System as well as on the EIT server in Perth, Western Australia.
- It is unacceptable if a user is unable to connect to a presentation owing to a fault in the learning management infrastructure. Hence the integrity and support of the learning management infrastructure is a critical process within EIT. High priority processes are in place to respond to any fault in the system.
- 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.

#### **5.0 Provision of Student Support Procedures**

The following procedure is used for immediate student support.

- The student enrolls in a course and all registration details are forwarded to the LSO as per the standard EIT Application form.  

The Application is assessed by the relevant LSO. The enrolment form contains specific questions to enable the LSO to ascertain the students' suitability for the course they are enrolling in. The application enables the LSO to assess the student's suitability for the course and to also provide valuable information to enable the LSO to provide high level support to the student throughout the course.
- An LSO is allocated to an intake of a course by the VET College Manager. The LSO is then the first point of contact for the student and assists students with any query they may have throughout the course. The LSO makes regular contact with the students to guide them through the course.
- Relevant student details are updated on the Learning Management System (Moodle). Moodle contains the information the students need during a course, this includes readings, slides, assessments, videos, webinar recordings, simulation and remote lab software, links to websites, quizzes and other materials that will enhance the students understanding of a subject area. Moodle is constantly updated to ensure course materials are current and relevant.

- Lecturers go through training to ensure that the webinar sessions are delivered at a very high quality. Lecturers are also given regular feedback after sessions, highlighting positive comments and opportunities for improvement. Lecturers are required to be interactive in sessions and to respond to student queries. In addition students can contact lecturers outside of webinar sessions with any questions they may have on the information presented. Lecturers are required to respond to students in a timely manner and provide students with a suitable answer. This process is managed by the LSO.
- The student is provided with the EIT Student Handbook and the FAQs via Moodle to familiarise themselves 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, the operation of Moodle and the web conferencing system along with details of how to remedy simple problems. Information is provided to students via Moodle so that the students have a full understanding of their rights and responsibilities. This also includes a link to EIT's policies and procedures. The LSOs encourage all students to read through the documents provided on Moodle.
- For VET Qualifications, after the course commences a preliminary introductory webinar is conducted by the LSO and, when available and/or appropriate, a guest speaker. The LSO will outline the operation of the learning infrastructure, welcome the students to the course and respond to any questions the students may have. The LSO also encourages the students to contact them directly with any questions they have throughout the course.
- A recording is made of all presentations and made available to all students via Moodle. Thus in the event of a presentation failing due to an ICT fault students can still access the presentation.
- Upon request, and when available, recordings from previous courses with the same content are also made available to students. There are also multiple webinars scheduled to cater for students in different time zones to ensure students are able to attend webinars at times suitable for them.
- Immediate problems with access are advised by the student to the LSO in the first instance by email or phone. Confirmation that action has been taken will be provided to the student and detailed feedback on a solution will be implemented within 24 hours during weekdays. If necessary, the webinar will be rescheduled to suit the student(s). During weekends, there will not be immediate feedback but an appropriate response will be provided to a student on the next working day.
- EIT can only take responsibility for software supported by EIT as noted in the Student Handbook. Any other software or operating systems that are not listed cannot be supported.
- EIT cannot take responsibility for providing support in relation to student's personal devices.

- A 24/7 online helpdesk support form is available for reporting any remote labs related issues.

## **6.0 Processes for Planning of Student Support**

- Regular meetings, as well as informal meetings on a needs basis, are held between the LSOs and the VET College Manager. Problems with the operation of the Learning Management System, web conferencing software and remote labs and associated simulation software shall be identified and passed onto the IT Manager for immediate rectification (such as viruses, broadband or web site problems).
- Progress questionnaires are reviewed by the LSOs for any complaints or comments on the operation of the software.
- Any longer-term technical issues (for example slowness in access due to increased loadings) are identified by the VET College Manager and then discussed with the IT Manager. If potential issues are identified a recommendation shall be made to the Dean of Engineering.

## **7.0 Changes in Technology (including software)**

- The VET College 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 and the benefits and costs assessed.
- If a change is considered; this will generally only be done for a new cohort of student unless there is a minor change. The disruption to the existing cohorts can be extensive – not only for technological changes but a disruption to the existing culture.
- Computer technology and software systems are continuously evolving. Any ramifications of updates shall be minimised and patches identified by the IT Manager and distributed through the VET College Manager and LSOs as quickly as they are identified.

## **8.0 ICT privacy and security measures**

Privacy and security of online student personal and private data is paramount. The following steps shall be implemented to ensure this:

- Data is backed up automatically at the relevant hosting provider's storage on a regular basis.
- Any lecturer and student online interfaces are password protected.
- All data transfers are made over TLS/SSL.
- Access restricted via firewall and native hosting provider security/firewall.
- In case of breach, the following will be attempted:
  - Put system on lockdown,
  - Scan for vulnerabilities,
  - Assess and patch vulnerabilities,
  - Ensure all applications are up to date,
  - Once cleared put system back online.



- System failure oversight mechanisms are implemented by means of backup recovery and alternative server switchover.

## 9.0 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.

**Learning Support Officer (LSO):** A professionally trained administrative staff member (generally with at least a TAE40116 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment) who manages a specific course, group of students and associated lecturers engaged in an EIT online course.

**VET College Manager:** The individual who manages the day-to-day activities of EIT VET operations and supervises the activities of the LSOs.

**IT Manager:** The Manager who is technically skilled in managing the ICT systems at EIT 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).