E-learning at the University of Edinburgh

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About the University of Edinburgh…

- a 420 year old, traditional research-rich university – annual budget over €450m

- offering a wide range of subjects, especially professional, in a campus setting

- strong focus on research-oriented education & training

- very international, with staff & students from all over the world

- high entry and exit qualifications for students

- much postgraduate & continuing professional development education

- importance of historically successful teaching approaches – hence blended learning dominant

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Brief overview of the organisation of the university

- Court
- Senatus Academicus
- Senior management team (Principal, Heads of Colleges, Heads of Support Groups)
- Central Management Group (SMT + Heads of Services + Vice-Principals)
- 3 Colleges (Humanities & Social Sciences, Medicine & Veterinary Medicine, Science & Engineering) containing….
- 21 Schools
- 3 Support Groups (Academic Affairs+Planning, Corporate Services, Information Services) containing…
- MALTS, Library, Computing Services

E-learning strategy in the University system

- **Senior Management Team responsible for**
  - University Strategy – 3 objectives = excellence in education, excellence in research, excellence in knowledge transfer/commercialisation

- **Information Services responsible for**
  - Knowledge Management Strategy
  - E-learning strategy
  - Implementation plan – milestones for development
  - Learning Technology Committee – oversight of implementation of strategy, budget setting, performance, review of services, new developments

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E-learning systems in use

- Main VLE = WebCT; 30,000 user accounts; nightly download student record; access for students thru portal, ~1500 active courses; assessment submission & return; integrated blog;
- Online assessment = QuestionMark Perception; secure exam server; exams up to 300 students; most use formative assessment;
- E-portfolio (OSP)
- Streamed video and audio server
- Re-usable learning object repository (LORE)

- MVM = use own VLE= EEMeC; is integrated for whole medical curriculum of ~1500 students; use QMark Perception for exams; assessment submission & return;

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Range and Integration of systems

- staff & student portal UPortal
- nightly data from Registry and Staff (HR) system feed portal
- single-sign on (EASE)
- student microlabs – 1000 PCs
- student & staff email 80Mb filespace – webserver space
- virtual private network (VPN)
- wireless network on campus / 100Mbps wired
- laptop loans in Library for students
- data-projectors + PCs in all larger teaching rooms – delivered to smaller rooms
- digital library - >50% recurrent materials spend on e-materials
- >3000 e-journals accessible via Library
- bibliographic databases in all subjects
- >500 specific digitised texts, journal articles for courses

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Central e-learning support provided by

Media & Learning Technology Service

WebCT, design of online courses, online tutoring training, online assessment & exams, e-portfolio development, graphic design, optical mark reader exams & questionnaires, web-based questionnaires, digitisation, video & audio capture & digitisation, use of AV equipment, videoconferencing….

Library

Information search & retrieval, IPR, digitisation, repositories…

Computing Services

Basic ICT skills training (generic & specialist software), security, laptop services, streamed media, website design, accessibility of materials, off-campus access…

E-learning innovation & development

- E-learning fund (€8M over 3 years – 40 projects so far)

- External funding – JISC, EC, Scottish HE Funding Council, ESRC

- Distance education - MSc Pain Management, LLM Law & Internet, MSc e-learning

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Research into e-learning

Research centres active in e-learning & internet research:

- Scottish Centre for Research into On-Line Learning & Assessment (SCROLLA)
- Research Centre for Social Sciences
- Institute for Advanced Research in the Humanities
- Centre for Studies in Intellectual Property and Technology Law
- Human Communication Research Centre
- Learning Technology Section, CMVM

Some active areas of research:

- Digital games
- Student views of e-learning
- Language learning & ICT
- IPR & internet
- Social impacts of technology
- Educational effectiveness of e-learning methods
- Intelligent tutoring systems