

**LTC16D090**

Title: The HEAR –re-implementation with an in-house solution  
Authors: Ant Griffiths, Manager Systems and Processes Team (FPG)  
Andrew Watson, Student Records Manager (FPG)  
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### **Issue**

UEA had committed to producing a Higher Education Achievement Record for undergraduate students but has run into technical issues with the hosting partner, GradIntelligence. With the ongoing issues, and the perceived limited advantages of using a 3<sup>rd</sup> party to publish the HEAR, this paper sets out a recommendation to stop the development with GradIntelligence and proposes an in-house solution.

### **Recommendation**

- a) UEA to stop the implementation of the HEAR through GradIntelligence services.
- b) LTS/FPG Office to explore enhancing the existing paper-based European Diploma Supplement transcript to include information currently unique to the HEAR, for undergraduate students graduating in 2017/8 onwards.
- c) In due course, UEA to consider further developments including an online version accessible to students and alumni and extending the transcript to PGT graduates. In addition, the new transcript could be developed to include a formative version available online throughout the period of study.

### **Resource Implications**

There will be a resource requirement for the development, testing and rollout of any proposed replacement document format. Such resources will come from within existing teams in the FPG office, the CIS Development Team and from LTS. There will be a resource saving in not continuing to try to get the development through GradIntelligence to work and the subsequent recurring annual charge to host the service.

### **Risk Implications**

Interest in the HEAR is still occasionally expressed so some reputational risk may apply to not producing an appropriate document immediately, however this risk is thought to be low as the existing document meets most requirements.

### **Equality and Diversity**

No adverse impact from an equality and diversity perspective is anticipated as the proposal is an enhancement of existing provision.

### **Timing of decisions**

LTC's approval of the recommendations would enable the in-house developments to continue, with a view to the first enhanced transcripts being available to graduates in 2017/8.

### **Further Information**

Andrew Watson, Student Records Manager [a.m.watson@uea.ac.uk](mailto:a.m.watson@uea.ac.uk)

## Background

The University of East Anglia (UEA) produces one free copy of a Transcript document to all completing students each year, in addition to copies requested by University alumni for a small charge. The EU Diploma Supplement (EDS) is the current transcript used at the UEA and is generated from SITS. This document includes a breakdown of all academic results obtained whilst studying at the UEA including module and award information. The process used to create and print an EDS is resource-heavy, with thousands of documents being printed and posted to students each year. The creation of EDS documents on SITS is not straightforward and each one needs to be checked carefully, often with additional manual input, before they are sent out. The information displayed on the EDS is purely academic and, it has been argued, does not provide a complete picture of a student's achievements.

The Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) was launched by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) in 2008 following the recommendations of the Burgess Report that universities needed to be able to provide a more comprehensive record of student achievement. According to the HEAR website, ninety institutions 'are implementing or planning to implement the HEAR'. The HEAR is a new transcript that includes the academic information currently on the EDS, with the addition of extra-curricular achievements such as prizes, employability awards, voluntary work, Student Union participation and other extra-curricular activities, resulting in a single comprehensive record of a student's achievements during their period of study verified by the Higher Education Institute (HEI) the student attended.

Since 2012 UEA has made attempts to implement the HEAR, and has delivered much of the groundwork required. This work includes the data mapping and presentation of the HEAR. Although much of the work is complete it appears that delivery is the main issue halting the release of the HEAR at UEA. An external company, GradIntelligence (A partner company to Tribal, the supplier of the UEA Student Information System (SITS)) was chosen to host the HEAR. This company would allow students to log on to their service to view, print and share the HEAR when needed, with an optional service for graduates to share their profiles with interested potential employers. A demo HEAR was successfully set up with the UEA being able to produce a HEAR on the GradIntelligence service. The project was affected by ongoing technical issues, with the robustness of the GradIntelligence connection to the UEA servers brought into question. The project was postponed on various occasions due to multiple varied technical issues, which in the end resulted in the project being halted and reviewed.

The range of features offered by the GradIntelligence service is extensive but the service involves recurrent cost and some uncertainty exists over how interested students actually are in these recruitment services. The major factor militating against the GradIntelligence solution is we have yet to establish a stable link between the University and GradIntelligence's servers, casting significant doubt over the robustness of the service which, if faulty, could significantly impact the University's reputation and inconvenience students and alumni.

This has led to the suggestion that an in-house solution that provides the benefits of an online HEAR, can act as a formative document and which will contain all the information required by the HEA specification may be preferable.

We recommend that:

- a) UEA to stop the implementation of the HEAR through GradIntelligence services.
- b) LTS/FPG Office to explore enhancing the existing paper-based European Diploma Supplement transcript to include information currently unique to the HEAR, for undergraduate students graduating in 2017/8 onwards.
- c) In due course, UEA to consider further developments including an online version accessible to students and alumni and extending the transcript to PGT graduates. In addition, the new transcript could be developed to include a formative version available online throughout the period of study.