

ISC11D019

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Report of the Meeting of the Student Administrative Systems Development Board (formerly SIS Project Board) on 15 September 2011

The SAS Development Board discussed a number of items as set out below. There are no recommendations for the ISSC to consider.

1. Nomenclature and Terms of Reference

At its July 2011 meeting, the SIS Project Board noted that a review of project management in ISD has suggested that the implementation of SITS was no longer a project and that the focus had shifted from implementation to development and service. (A change had been mooted in 2010/11, but business continuity concerns raised by the implementation of the new timetabling system had prompted the Board to continue to closely monitor operational as well as strategic matters.) In the light of the recommendations of the review of project management, the Board concluded that its role and the frequency of meetings should be reviewed and as a consequence the Chair (PVC Academic) approved revised terms of reference and membership with effect from September 2011.

The Board has been renamed the Student Administrative Systems Development Board, reflecting a broader based issues considered by the Board and reflecting the fact that SITS might provide only part of a solution to an issue or that solutions outside SITS should also be considered. The membership of the Board was refocused to ensure a more strategic overview of the development of SITS (whereas there had been a drift towards more operational detail), whilst recognising that Administrative Integration meant that the Management Groups which had previously fed in to the Project Board would be replaced by other structures, which would hopefully aid much clearer communication of Service needs and requests. The key purpose of the Board continued to be monitoring the development of SITS against a programme of work prioritised and agreed by the Board. The Board would, however, act (either in its entirety or via a sub-group) as an Incident Management Team to ensure business continuity if required (with the Chair or Director of ISD determining in which circumstances this might be required). The frequency of meetings will be reduced to a minimum of 3 and maximum of 6 per annum.

2. Progress Report

The Board received a report from the Head of Student Information Systems on developments completed since the previous meeting of the Board in July, these included

- Departmental (acronym changes)
- Amendments to the security model to support Administrative Integration
- A significant volume of account updates as a result of Administrative Integration
- Upgrade to SITS 8.4.0
- Amendments to Attendance Monitoring to support academic staff in completing registers as a result of Administrative Integration

The Board were also informed of the following

- Timetabling

Timetables for continuing students had been published to students via eVision, with the majority of timetables being available from 10 August, meaning that timetable information was available to students substantially earlier than in previous years. The process had identified operational and technical issues that needed to be resolved and further development and enhancement of timetabling functionality was required and included on the programme of work for 2011/12.

- Registration

The SIS Team had been part of broad based working group enhancing and updating the advanced registration process. Advanced registration had been made available to students 30 days in advance of the commencement of their courses and monitoring had indicated that a high proportion of students had responded promptly to an invitation to complete the process.

- Electronic Submission of Coursework

Good progress was being made on the development and build of a new process to support the electronic submission of coursework. The new process would be in place in the autumn semester and would support the printing of a cover sheet for hard copy submission (either where electronic submission was not available or where the student elected to submit in hard copy) as well as electronic submission. There would be two pilot phases of the implementation, one mid-way through the autumn semester on selected modules and again in weeks 11 and 12 covering the biggest modules. The development of electronic submission was an ISD project involving a number of teams.

Data within SITS was used to construct an eVision page detailing all assessment items for the modules on which a student was enrolled. Items of coursework could be enabled for electronic submission. Where electronic submission was enabled students were guided through the task via an eVision page, which enabled the upload of a file (using electronic document management) and recording of the submission against the student's assessment record. Following the recorded submission date, the batch of electronic files would be delivered to

Print Services for printing and delivery to LTS Hubs. The downloadable cover sheets for hard copy submission include a bar code that enables LTS staff to scan the document and record submission on the student record.

- Admissions

Tribal had been contracted to develop and implement a solution to UCAS paperless processing on the University's behalf.

3. Programme of Work for 2011/12

The Board considered an outline of the programme of work for the SIS Team this year, based on the prioritised list of developments considered at the July meeting. In particular, the attention of the Board was drawn to

- Disaster Recovery / Business Continuity

In order to comply with the recommendations of a Security Audit, the Team needed to conduct a test of the SITS Disaster Recovery plans. Recent scheduled work had provided the Team with an opportunity to test the DR plans for the reconstruction of a server (we followed the DR plan as a road map for undertaking this work). This had been successful and no issues had emerged. The Team were in the process of considering what other tests would be sensible and appropriate. A paper-based exercise, stepping through the DR plan, was planned for November, but a simulated exercise in the TEST version of SITS would be dependent upon synchronisation of TEST and LIVE (planned as part of the move to 11g storage).

The members of the Board were asked to give further consideration to the proposal that the new Service areas should undertake a business continuing exercise, based on the non-availability of SITS for 48 hours, during the course of the year.

- Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR)

The Board considered proposals for the in house development of a basis HEAR, developed as part of an alumni portal, but concluded that purchasing a bolt-on to SITS from Tribal was a preferable option. The University is required to provide a HEAR to all undergraduate students completing a degree course from summer 2012. The Board noted that the University (coordinated by LTC) will need to undertake a substantial amount of policy and procedural development in order to agree its approach to the HEAR.

- Key Information Set (KIS)

The Board noted that space on the programme of work had provisionally been allocated to support for the development and delivery of the KIS. Whilst HEFCE had not yet confirmed to universities the precise format and content of the KIS, recent information indicated that SITS development would not be required.