UEA's Strategy for Online and MOOCs

1. Context

UEA has an excellent reputation as a provider of high quality higher education. To date, this has been mostly based on campus, but in 2013 we were amongst the first universities to join the FutureLearn MOOC provider and have enjoyed substantial success in that online. In addition, some Schools and Faculties are keen to develop new forms of provision online both to deliver taught HE programmes and also for CPD.

There are a number of internal and external drivers for the development of an online strategy for courses.

External drivers include:

- Increasing recognition of potential for online learning to play a greater role in higher education[1]

- Extensive interest internationally in the potentially disruptive role of MOOCs[2]

- Increasing connections between online presence and face to face courses [3]

Internal drivers include:

- The need to harness technology to meet the expectations of increasingly digitally engaged learners[4]

- Increasing evidence that a 'flipped' mode of teaching can enhance student engagement in their studies, and the important role of technology in facilitating this approach[5].

All this means that now there is a need for a more strategic approach to the development of online provision to ensure that initiatives at UEA develop in a planned and co-ordinated way,

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[1] Online Learning Task Force (2011) *Collaborate to Compete: Seizing the Opportunity of Online Learning for UK Higher Education*. Report to HEFCE.
http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/year/2011/201101/

[2] Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (2013) *The Maturing of the MOOC*. BIS Research Paper No 130.
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/240193/13-1173-maturing-of-the-mooc.pdf

[3] http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-29240959

[4] http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/research/media-literacy/october-2013/research07Oct2013.pdf
[5] http://www.flippedlearning.org/cms/lib07/VA01923112/Centricity/Domain/41/HigherEdWhitePaper%20FINAL.pdf

underpinning the University's overall corporate strategy, and with appropriate resourcing. This should mean we are well placed to maximise the benefits of technology enhanced learning both to grown online courses where appropriate and to make sure our campus based courses are competitive.

At the time of writing, the University tends to think of its online and campus based courses as two separate modes of teaching. However increasingly it may be that 'hybrid' mode of higher education will become best practice, where students on campus learning is guided and supplemented by technology enhanced learning.[6]

2. Strategic Principles

2.1. UEA is committed to continuing to develop online provision in a planned and coordinated way across Faculties.

2.2. New online initiatives should underpin the University's 2030 Vision and UEA Plan.

2.3. Online provision poses new questions in quality management, but also in the University's IT, finance and HR systems and the implications of increasingly online learning of all types are important for all the University's divisions and professional services.

3. Strategy

3.1. Part A – MOOCs

The University will continue to work with its partners at FutureLearn to ensure a viable business model for the development and running of future MOOCs is established as soon as possible. New MOOCs should achieve at least one of the following:

a) Help support UEAs recruitment and admissions to UG and PGT taught courses through either generically pitched or specialist subject-specific MOOCs built on our peaks of academic excellence

b) Generate new content that enhances and enriches provision for all UEA's community and beyond, and which takes advantage of the opportunities afforded by Creative Commons licensing;

c) Enhance links with other organisations such as subject associations, companies or other partners;

d) Have potential for generating income through the sales of certificates or enhanced assessment opportunities;

e) Help build capacity at UEA in the creation of digital learning materials and online courses. This is in terms of both staff expertise and the provision of necessary equipment.

3.2. Part B – Fully online courses

The University will use Blackboard as its on-line learning course platform. New online courses, both credit bearing and non-credit bearing, will exemplify the UEA's strong commitment to an excellent student experience and use the most appropriate technologies and approaches to teaching and learning. They will have at least one of the following:

a) A clearly identified business case, based either on large scale national/global educational needs or based in a more niche area in which UEA has an international reputation. In

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[6] http://mfeldstein.com/faculty-know-adaptive-learning/

both cases, course should form part of a complimentary online/on campus portfolio of courses

b)   The ability to work for the benefit of any campus based courses and share resource production and staffing where possible.