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# Progress report

March 2010

## For those who came in late

The eExam system has been designed to allow candidates to use their own computer instead of a pen. By starting each laptop from a USB stick, all communications are prevented and the local hard disk is made inaccessible during the examination. Working on PCs and Intel-based Macs, it has been trialed for three years in the UTAS Faculty of Education, making national headlines in late 2009. This progress report gives details of innovation dissemination to other parts of the University.

## Associate Deans on the ball

All Associate Deans (Teaching & Learning) at UTAS have been visited to introduce the eExaminations system. All have been very receptive to the idea, and are taking the concept forward within their areas.

The system will solve a worry that is becoming more pronounced: the disparity between the ways we teach at UTAS using computers and MyLO – and the way we assess using pen & paper in examinations.

Of course, a marvelous benefit will be the assessor's improved ability to read what candidates have written on their exam scripts when they use a computer to word-process the answers!

Here is a summary of where each Faculty or Institute is heading with eExams:

- **Law** – a unit has been identified for trial of eExams in second semester 2010. Students may be given the opportunity to choose between pen or keyboard for their exam.
- **Business** – eExams will be discussed at the Faculty Executive Committee, and will seek a small unit in Launceston for a trial in second semester 2010.
- **Arts** – looking to undertake a trial. eExams was presented to the Faculty Executive meeting on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> March. Sociology, English, History and Philosophy all expressed interest in running a trial in second semester, 2010. There is also some interest in support for languages other than English.
- **Health Science** - propose to trial in small unit in Launceston. A presentation will be made to Faculty Executive at 11am on Thursday 22nd April.
- **Science, Engineering and Technology** – provided a useful idea for securing the system to a greater extent. Key people in Architecture and Psychology are being approached to see if a trial is possible.
- **Education** – the Faculty Teaching and Learning committee will be asked to support a motion supportive of eExams and additional unit coordinators will be approached to contemplate additional trials.
- **Australian Maritime College** – eExams may be a component for an online Mariner certification scheme from the Australian Maritime Safety Authority. However, a possible trial in second semester is being considered for local use.

## IT support in examinations

As more Faculties wish to try out the eExam system, the question of IT support in examination venues operated by the UTAS Exams Office will become increasingly important. ITR is becoming adept at providing this kind of support, and is investing in a laptop trolley to facilitate the uptake of eExams. However, they normally operate a fee-for-service arrangement: will this be passed on to Faculties or absorbed by the Exams Office? Should the Exams Office charge a higher fee for eExams?

Support at this stage involves making a surge-suppressed mains power point available to candidates (Andrew Fluck has purchased a large number of multi-adapters and suppression plugs for this purpose). It also involves assisting candidates to boot up their computers if they have failed to practice using the eExam system.

In future, this support will extend to the preparation of papers (copying to USB stick instead of having papers printed) and collection of scripts (copying to CD-ROM instead of collecting physical papers).

## In the next issue

- Training days for unit coordinators
- The Norwegian experience
- Discussions with schools and the Tasmanian Qualifications Authority
- The USB duplicator – photocopier for digital assessment