TOWARDS FLEXIBILITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Title and Presenter:

Crossing eBridge: Conversion and implementation of an online free elective module

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Abstract:

Following the University's decision last year to adopt the eBridge VLE in place of its other VLE's, work started on converting the Career Management Skills (CMS) modules. The free elective module commenced running using the new VLE in September 2008 and the research student module will commence in January 2009.

The CMS module has been running as a 20 credit, long thin, free elective for the past 7 years, delivered using the Merlin Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). A similar module for research students has been running for the past 4 years, accredited under the Postgraduate Training Scheme. The modules were developed to use fully the facilities of Merlin and some Merlin modifications were made based on the requirements of these modules. The flexibility resulting from this learning space has proved very popular with students on both campuses, with the free elective being much oversubscribed each year and with a diverse range of students taking the modules, e.g. both modules have proved very attractive to mature students and distance-learning students. The research student module has also included students who were based entirely overseas.

This presentation will discuss the various challenges involved in converting the modules to eBridge and provide advice for those involved in future conversions from Merlin or Blackboard. The presentation will then report on the implementation of the free elective module and the various issues that have arisen in the day-to-day use of the eBridge VLE.

Building on our experience, recommendations will be made as to how to approach conversion of courses for eBridge and for their implementation.