

SYDNEY
ELEARNING



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

2009
ANNUAL REPORT

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Sydney eLearning Overview of 2009

2009 involved a focus on a number of key areas;

- Quality assurance and support of the student experience
- Quality assurance and management of enterprise virtual learning space
- Quality assurance and support of the faculties' curriculum development
- The new structures in the Education Portfolio with the creation of the new executive position DVC(Education)
- Strategic management of shared physical learning and teaching space
- Governance and communication strategies
- Maintenance of our international alliances for eLearning to support developmental improvement

Students are increasing their use of eLearning in their study programs. Their patterns of usage tend to align with the shape of teaching periods with the majority of use occurring between 6am and midnight most days. Notably, students generated more than four million eLearning sessions this year, between their formal classes and their informal collaborations and self-study outside of class.

The demand from faculties and students for learning technologies is widening the scope of enterprise technologies being provided to students. This year, after a long consultative process with faculties, an enterprise ePortfolio system was chosen. This will be used largely for reflective purposes and evidence-based portfolio presentations by students and lecturers who choose to use it. In addition, demand multiplied exponentially for the streaming system and its integration into the University Learning Management System. The gradual accretion of enterprise eLearning systems has required significantly more sophisticated and nuanced strategic planning with University ICT to make the systems as flexible and integrated as possible for students and staff.

In 2009, Faculties continued to integrate learning technologies into the design of their curricula. While communication is a common purpose for integrating technology by lecturers, an increasing number of programs are including enquiry-based activities within their curriculum structures.

The organisational context of the eLearning unit matured with a reorganisation of the University Executive. Within the Education portfolio, eLearning works closely with ITL and the Learning Centres, as well as meeting growing needs in research training and broader student services. With other portfolios in the University, eLearning led a successful infrastructure grant (Learning Networks) of over forty million dollars, made up of Government and University funding, with colleagues in the Library, Information and Communication Technology, Campus Infrastructure Services and the University Finance Office. The 'Learning Networks' project is strengthening informal learning space networks for students across libraries, learning hubs and access centres, and includes the roll out of a virtual desktop model for discipline-specific software provision to faculties as well as collaborative formal learning space.

This year the DVC(Education) nominated Sydney eLearning to become responsible for the strategic management of shared physical learning and teaching space. This category of space refers to the 'General Teaching Space' (GTS) inventory which is used by all faculties, some 40 000 square metres. A key aspect of this category of space is the integration of standards-based learning technologies in the lecture theatres and seminar rooms in order to enable learning environments which reflect the design of the curricula that are shaping the student experience. To do this, Sydney eLearning works

closely with University ICT on the strategic planning for technologies in lecture theatres and seminar rooms, and with the Student Services area which manages the scheduling of the rooms.

To reflect changes in the scope of the activities of Sydney eLearning, the Governance structures were modified. A new workslate group was established, called the ‘Student and Teacher e-experience’. The objective of this workslate is to improve the coherence of the student and teacher in virtual learning space. In addition, on behalf of the DVC (Education), Sydney eLearning heads the governance structure for the Learning Networks infrastructure grant from the Teaching and Learning Capital Fund of DEWR.

Finally, to inform the work and understanding of the responsibilities of Sydney eLearning, International alliances with University College London, Imperial College London and the United Nations University were pursued. These alliances are formed through Memoranda of Understanding signed by the Vice-Chancellor at Sydney and his counterpart in the partnering institution. These help to inform the planning, management and quality assurance for the new learning space project, as well as the growing complexity of the enterprise eLearning systems framework. They provide a context in which to assess developing institutional standards for eLearning systems and learning space in universities in several countries.

Outline: Strategic Plan Sydney eLearning: Key Objectives and Strategies, 2008-2010.

OBJECTIVE 1: THE SYDNEY STUDENT EXPERIENCE	OBJECTIVE 2: PROFILING OF UG AND GRAD. AWARD DEGREE PROGRAMS	OBJECTIVE 3: INTEGRATED LEARNING AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT	OBJECTIVE 4: MAINTAINING ALLIANCES WITH INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITIES
Strategy: Contributing to defining and improving “The Sydney Experience” through quality assurance	Strategy: Support the profiling of undergraduate and postgraduate award degree programs	Strategy: Integrated eLearning services appropriate for a campus-based, research intensive university	Strategy: Use alliances with international universities as a way to inform the provision of world-class eLearning services appropriate for campus-based, research intensive universities
<i>Key initiatives:</i>	<i>Key initiatives:</i>	<i>Key initiatives:</i>	<i>Key initiatives:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Life cycle QA and maintenance of unit of study websites each teaching period ▪ Publishing and maintaining unit of study websites demanded by faculties ▪ Running eLearning Helpdesk for staff and students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strategic eLearning projects ▪ Annual eLearning statistics projects with university planning office ▪ Academic development program for eLearning staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Partnership with Office of CIO to ensure appropriate enterprise eLearning technologies ▪ Partnership with ITL to ensure integration of eLearning into strategic planning for learning and teaching across the university ▪ Collaboration with Office of University Librarian to ensure integrated approach to information management and learning suites across the University ▪ Collaboration with Office of PVC Infrastructure to integrate eLearning into Campus 2020 planning ▪ Working with Academic Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ International alliances (MOUs endorsed by the Vice-Chancellor; eg UCL,UNU) ▪ Integrating international best practice in eLearning into campus 2010 (see objective 3)

Objective 1 – The Sydney Student Experience

Strategy: Contributing to defining and improving “The Sydney Experience” through quality assurance

Quality assurance and support of the student experience

- *Life-cycle quality assurance and maintenance of unit of study websites involving checks every teaching period;*
- *Running eLearning Helpdesk for staff and students, 5 days a week, 8am – 6pm;*
- *Closing the loop project (new strategy)*

Quality assurance and management of Virtual Learning Space

- *Publishing and maintaining all unit of study websites demanded by faculties throughout the year;*

1.1 Quality assurance and support of the student experience

The growth of eLearning across programs in all faculties has meant that eLearning is a core part of students’ learning experience. It generally is not used as a replacement, or though some programs replace small portions of the experience where effective for the students. Rather it occurs mostly amongst formal experiences of learning in lectures, laboratories, clinics, studios, seminars and informal experiences in libraries, at home and at work. In 2009;

- There were over 4.2 million eLearning sessions on the University enterprise eLearning systems that went through our life-cycle quality assurance processes
- On average, each student had 5 unit of study websites in their degree, amounting to over 200 000 seats which were supported
- The eLearning helpdesk resolved over 2500 queries from both staff and students

Table 1: eLearning helpdesk metrics 2009

Help desk support No of incidents reported from 2/02/2009 - 1/02/201 * 1173 email 1611 phone calls Total number of incidents logged: 2784	4257 Hours
Quality Assurance (A2A) including 8 weeks in Semester 1 and 6 weeks Semester 2	2105 Hours
<i>Total</i>	<i>Approx 6362 Hours</i>

1.2 Quality assurance and management of Virtual Learning Space

Virtual learning space at the University extends, elaborates and enhances students’ experiences around campus and at home and work. Students pursue the key ideas of their studies through their formal experiences in scheduled classes, in groups or individually in informal spaces around campus and across a growing number of enterprise systems which make up their virtual learning space. The concept of ‘Virtual learning space’ is a key one, as it embodies the idea of a seamless, integrated experience across a number of enterprise systems – a goal that is a weekly, if not daily, challenge to manage.

Enterprise eLearning systems are no longer just the learning management system. ePortfolios, eCommunities, streaming systems (Lectopia), as well as third party plug-ins, including Web 2.0 technologies, are made available to all students in all faculties. Through this approach, the learning management system becomes a gateway to a variety of eLearning tools, resources and services, and allows line of sight into the growing eLearning profile of the University by all faculties.

The scale of student and lecturer activity in virtual learning space requires significant ongoing planning and management to integrate the services, support and systems as seamlessly as possible for students and staff. Planned upgrades of enterprise systems is a key strategic exercise.

1.2.1 Planning for migration from WebCT to Blackboard

Quality assurance of virtual learning space includes upgrades to the enterprise software. Faculties have spent considerable time developing their eLearning profile across their programs. This effort is supported through a migration process which reduce the workload to unit of study coordinators by recontextualising as many of the learning resources as possible in the new systems.

The planning in 2009 involved developing the basic infrastructure with University ICT for readiness to pilot both WebCT and Blackboard concurrently during the 2010 academic year so as to enable a staged migration. It also involved rethinking the academic development and training program to support lecturers in their use of the new system. The planning has identified a need for both faculty-specific and more broadly designed workshops to meet a wide variety of demand.

1.3 Closing the Loop

In 2009 Closing the Loop projects were used by Sydney eLearning as part of continuing the quality assurance of the Student experience of Learning at Sydney. Important objectives and issues targeted during the course of this year included:

- A more contextualised understanding and integration eLearning strategies within each faculty;
- Working with academics in charge to review size and shape of eLearning across programs
- The alignment of workshop outcomes to staff needs in the programs; incorporating suggestions for strategies and content requested by staff into the academic development program;
- Initiating formal dialogue between the Associate Dean L&T, the eLearning Faculty Representative, eLearning Cluster Director and Project Manager within faculties.

Outcomes for closing the loop projects in 2009 have led to an enhanced understanding of faculty culture and demonstrated the importance of aligning eLearning design at the level of programs. Closing the loop projects continue to be informed by key sources of data from eLearning operations to assist in improving both the student and lecturer/tutor experience at Sydney.

2 Objective 2 – Profiling of undergraduate and graduate award degree programs

Strategy: Support the profiling of undergraduate and postgraduate award degree programs

Support of faculties' curriculum development

- Strategic eLearning projects
- Academic development program for eLearning.

Management statistics – eLearning coverage

- Annual eLearning coverage statistics projects with the University Planning Office

2.1 Support of faculties' curriculum development

Demand for eLearning support for the faculties' curricula (some 790 degree programs) continued to grow in 2009.

- Demand for unit of study websites increased approximately 20%
- Over 45 Strategic eLearning projects, each with an academic sponsor and signed off by the appropriate Dean or nominee, were completed (Table 1)
- Joint planning with faculties for a new ePortfolio was completed with a new enterprise system chosen
- The Department of Government and International Relations came onto the University eLearning systems as a result of their relocation to the Faculty of Arts

In the last few years, eLearning at Sydney has typically been used as a learning and teaching strategy in most faculties, elaborating approaches to teaching in a number of ways. In 2009, a growing number of programs use it to scaffold most of the standards-based approaches to curriculum design and management: holistic communication strategies with students, a framework to use for planning curriculum alignment and developing graduate attributes at a program level. This type of approach is being reinforced by some faculties who are planning to use ePortfolios to develop a picture of students' learning outcomes across the different years of their degree.

Table 1: Unit of Study Websites on University LMS at University Of Sydney 2009

Unit of Study Websites	UoS Websites
<i>Health Sciences Cluster</i>	
Dentistry	15
Health Sciences	480
Medicine (PG)*	124
Nursing & Midwifery	303
Pharmacy	75
sub-total	997
<i>Humanities & Social Sciences Cluster</i>	
Arts	946
Economics & Business	195‡
Education and Social Work	491
Law	219
Sydney College of the Arts	17
SCM	150
sub-total	1823
<i>Science and Technology Cluster</i>	
Architecture, Design and Planning	86
Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources	203

Science	806
Engineering & IT*	514
Veterinary Science	109
sub-total	1718
Special Programs	707
Total*	5245

* Enterprise LMS only – unique registration by faculty

‡ E&B LMS

2.1.1 Strategic eLearning Projects

Sydney eLearning provides project management and educational design support to faculties who are integrating eLearning into their curriculum profile. In this process, Sydney eLearning works closely with staff from the Learning Centre and Library on projects which require combined specialist knowledge. Deans nominate an academic-in-charge for projects which have been signed off through a selection process involving faculty eLearning representatives, eLearning cluster directors and the DVC(Education). In 2009 over forty five projects were completed. Details of these projects can be found at the following URLs.

<http://sydney.edu.au/elearning/college/chasscomp.shtml>

<http://sydney.edu.au/elearning/college/chscomp.shtml>

<http://sydney.edu.au/elearning/college/cstcomp.shtml>

Table 2: End Project Teacher Evaluations ; End of Project Period 1 and 2, 2009

Cluster Project Allocation Yearly	A1	A2	B1	B2	B3	C1	Other	total
Humanities & Social Sciences	1	4	7	1	0	0	3	16
Health Sciences	3	0	4	0	1	3	3	14
Science & Technology	2	4	1	6	3	0	2	18
Total	6	8	12	7	4	3	8	48
<i>% agree or strongly agree overall satisfaction with outcome*</i>	100%		90%			100%		95.2%

*Returns a score of projects for a sample evaluated that indicate overall satisfaction with project at completion after evaluation.

2.1.2 Academic development program for eLearning

This program is articulated with the academic development program in the Institute for Teaching and Learning. It complements the both the principals and practice program and the Graduate Certificate run from ITL. Staff from Sydney eLearning provide orientation sessions to eLearning at Sydney through those programs.

The growth in integrated use of eLearning across faculty programs has maintained a high level of demanded for development and training support for new and mature users of eLearning. The eLearning development program involves introductory and extension workshops, as well as lunchtime gatherings to share best practice. There were over 700 registrations by staff for eLearning workshops in 2009 (see Table 4).

Table 4: Registrations by Faculty for Workshops & Lunchtime Gatherings 200

<i>Faculty Registrations for Sydney eLearning Workshops /Training</i>	Category			Total
	Introductory	Extension	Lunchtime sessions	
<i>Health Science Cluster</i>				
Health Sciences	48	68	10	126
Nursing & Midwifery	2	6	4	12
Dentistry	21	17	2	40
Pharmacy	6	0	6	12
Medicine	28	7	8	43
sub-total	105	98	30	233
<i>Science & Technology Cluster</i>				
Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources	0	6	0	6
Science	19	32	7	58
Veterinary Science	26	16	6	48
Architecture	5	0	0	5
Engineering	19	3	5	27
sub-total	69	57	18	144
<i>Humanities & Social Sciences Cluster</i>				
Arts	33	29	13	75
Education & Social Work	3	5	4	12
Economics	0	9	2	11
Law	12	7	0	19
Conservatorium of Music	0	1	0	1
College of Arts	0	0	0	0
sub-total	48	51	19	118
<i>Other Workshop Registrations</i>				
Sydney eLearning	1	2	37	40
Library	3	8	7	18
Learning Centres / Research Units	40	6	2	48
Centre for English Teaching	6	15	3	24
Administration / Support	8	10	7	25
n/a	44	18	5	67
sub-total	102	59	61	222
<i>Total(s)</i>	<i>324</i>	<i>265</i>	<i>128</i>	<i>717</i>
<i>% agree or strongly agree with overall workshop usefulness</i>	<i>94.1%</i>	<i>93.2%</i>	<i>N/A</i>	

2.2 Management statistics – eLearning Coverage

To support faculty strategic planning, Sydney eLearning works with the University Planning office to provide eLearning Management Statistics to each faculty. This allows senior managers in the faculties to drill down across all programs to see the size and shape of eLearning across the faculty curricula at a program level. In 2009, the average coverage of unit of study websites across all programs at the University was approximately 60%. For details of these statistics, please contact the relevant Faculty eLearning representative.

Name	Faculty	Email	Phone
Dr Tom Bishop	Agriculture	thomas.bishop@sydney.edu.au	x71056
Ms Christine Crowe	Arts	christine.crowe@sydney.edu.au	x13774
Dr Sarah Benton	Architecture	sarah.benton@sydney.edu.au	x67149
Dr Jennifer Rowley	Conservatorium of Music	jennifer.rowley@sydney.edu.au	x11328
Dr Catherine Groenlund	Dentistry	catherine.groenlund@sydney.edu.au	x18323
Ms Michele Scoufis	Economics and Business	michele.scoufis@sydney.edu.au	x67090
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Mrs Melinda Lewis	Nursing	melinda.lewis@sydney.edu.au	x10630
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Ms Sally Pope	Veterinary Science	sally.pope@sydney.edu.au	x17427

3 Objective 3 – Integrated learning and quality improvement

Strategy: Integrated eLearning services appropriate for a campus-based, research intensive university

Governance and communication strategies

- *Partnership with ITL to ensure integration of eLearning into strategic planning for learning and teaching across the university;*
- *Partnership with Office of CIO to ensure appropriate enterprise eLearning technologies;*
- *Collaboration with Office of University Librarian to ensure integrated approach to information management and learning suites across the University;*
- *Collaboration with Campus Infrastructure services*
- *Working with Academic Board*

New structures in the Education Portfolio

- *Across university portfolios*
- *Within the portfolio*

3.1 Governance and communication strategies

The rapid growth of eLearning across the University's activities has linked a structured governance and communication process to the management and integration of its business. Governance for eLearning in 2009 rested with the eLearning Governance Group, reporting to SEG(Education). The role of the group is to have oversight of all enterprise eLearning developments occurring across the University. It includes faculty representatives, the CIO, the Chair of Academic Board, the University Librarian and other senior managers. The work of the group dovetailed with a new Workslate group, the Student and Teacher e-experience Workslate committee, which is part of the Vice-Chancellor's

new system of quality assurance. The Workslate focuses on bringing coherence to the students' and lecturers' virtual learning space and also includes members from ITL and the learning centres. At the request of the DVC (Education), Sydney eLearning established a Governance Structure for the 'Learning Networks' infrastructure grant. The management group report to SEG through the DVC (Education) and oversee the planning, development and integration of all aspects of the program.

The majority of the communication processes with faculties about their eLearning activities occurs in a University-wide eLearning Working Group. Faculty representatives, listed in section 2.2 above, meet six times a year to engage in strategic planning for key activities such as the migration process and other strategic projects. Key to the successful management of this communication network is the role of the eLearning cluster directors, who coordinate and encourage a dissemination of best practice amongst faculties through regular meetings.

3.2 New Structures in the Education Portfolio

At the end of 2008, the University created a new leadership position in the executive. The creation of the position, DVC (Education), formalised a new set of relationships for Sydney eLearning in 2009.

3.2.1 Across portfolios within the University

Sydney eLearning led a successful infrastructure grant application for learning space to the Teaching and Learning Capital Fund in DEWR. Colleagues from Campus Infrastructure Services, Information and Communication Technology, the University Library and the Finance Office all worked extremely hard over a three-week period to submit the application in July. The University received notice of the success of the grant in November, totalling \$42M from both Government and University contributions. The purpose of the grant is to refurbish levels 2-4 in Fisher Library podium, to develop two learning hubs – one in Carslaw Plaza and one in the Peter Nicol Russell building, to develop the rear of the Wallace building for shared postgraduate desks, and to support the roll out of a virtual desktop across key areas of the University.

3.2.2 Within the Education portfolio

Planning commenced for a more integrated set of processes and systems for learning and teaching support arising from the portfolio restructure. Sydney eLearning works closely with ITL, the Learning Centre and the Maths Learning Centre, supporting faculties to reach their learning and teaching goals. In 2009, ITL and Sydney eLearning reviewed the academic development program to improve alignment across the academic development programs and the eLearning workshop series. Members from ITL were also involved in the planning for the pilot of the ePortfolio program which commenced towards the end of 2009. The Learning Centre continued to be involved in the eLearning cluster groups which work with faculties towards the realisation of their eLearning strategic projects.

3.3 Strategic management of shared physical learning and teaching space

This year, the DVC(Education) nominated Sydney eLearning to be responsible for the strategic planning of the General Teaching Space (GTS) inventory. This category of formal teaching space is divided into lecture theatres of over seventy seats, seminar rooms of less than seventy seats. In 2009, there were over 26,000 individual bookings in some 240 rooms. Key directions for the strategic management of this category of formal teaching space are the incremental improvement and maintenance to the standards for learning technology installations, aligning the design of unit of study websites to the functionalities of the technologies in the rooms, and establishing a baseline of metrics to increase the efficiency of the use of these rooms.

4 Objective 4 – Maintaining alliances with international universities

Strategy: Use alliances with international universities as a way to inform the provision of world-class eLearning services appropriate for campus-based, research intensive universities

- *International alliances (MOUs endorsed by the Vice-Chancellor)*
- *Integrating international best practice in eLearning into campus 2010 (see objective 3)*

4.1 Maintaining international alliances

The University pursues a number of strategic alliances with international Universities. Key partners for Education include University College London, Imperial College London and the United Nations University. The purpose of the alliances is the exchange of ideas, documents and visits for the purposes of developmental improvement.

For physical learning space, discussions about capital builds at Imperial and whole of campus planning for learning space at UCL provided a context in which to develop ideas for a strategic use of learning space at Sydney.

For virtual learning space, an upgrade to the student administration at UCL involving SITS and a renewal of its learning management system provided a context in which to assess systems integration at Sydney.

Ideas from the alliances also fed into the Governance structure for the TLC project, planning for AV/ICT systems in learning spaces and high level principles for the integration of systems including ideas for a lecturer/designer portal and additional social technologies.

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