

Providing students with flexible access

Keywords - flexible, access, model

Historically Murdoch University has delivered units in three different modes – internal, external and online. Often a Unit Coordinator maintained three different versions of a unit and students studying in different modes received different materials and content. External students often received tapes of lectures from a previous teaching period.

A Working Party was established in 2001 to review the future of the External Studies section and Online study and recommend how a flexible learning/delivery environment could be implemented. The key recommendation was that Murdoch should continue to be a flexible provider of education, but that it should “do flexibility differently”. The Flexible Learning Implementation Committee and several other working parties were established to develop a new unit model and review unit enrolment options/modes and the methods of providing student services.

A major feature of the flexible learning initiative is a change in emphasis from delivering to accessing unit materials. A flexible unit contains the following elements:

- Unit Information and Learning Guide (stripped of generic information)
- Unit Welcome Page (Online)
- Unit Reader available in print form and may also be available through eReserve
- iLecture
- Online capabilities used as appropriate

Templates have been developed for the Unit Information and Learning Guide and for a WebCT unit as WebCT is the centrally supported online learning management system.

During 2003 forty-six units were converted to the flexible model and the University trialled the iLecture system as a method of providing near real time online recordings of lectures. From 2004 all new units are to be developed to the flexible unit model and the goal is to have 90% of units converted by 2007. Details of the implementation process and feedback received will be presented in this session.

Presenters:

Rhondda Tilbrook
Education Development Officer
Murdoch University
9360 6269
r.tilbrook@murdoch.edu.au

Dr Rick Cummings
Director, Teaching and Learning Centre
Murdoch University
9360 2354
r.cummings@murdoch.edu.au