

# Mainstreaming e-Assessment @ Aberdeen College



## **Background**

Aberdeen College is Scotland's largest college of further/higher education and vocational training. In 2009, the college had over 34,000 enrolments and provided over 4,735 education and training programmes to individuals, local communities, and employers.

In June 2007, a college e-Assessment implementation plan was drafted. The college had experience of online assessment, but wanted to expand on usage, so set out to identify potential elements of formative and summative e-Assessment. It was important to ensure the appropriate tools and staff development would be available to support this.

The factors which would influence progress mainly related to:

- availability of authoring software
- whether the tests would be approved by awarding bodies
- ensuring support for staff
- adequate facilities (rooms, hardware, software) and IT back-up
- evaluating subsequent usage
- spreading the word

Each of these factors was addressed as the e-Assessment plan was implemented.



## **Approval to Offer Online Assessment**

The college worked with awarding bodies, such as SQA and CGLI, to become accredited to offer external online exams. This involved:

- application
- inspection of facilities
- dealing with contracts
- installation of exam software/web links
- invigilator training
- ensuring policies and procedures were in place

## **New Facilities**

As the e-Assessment plan was rolled out and the use of online exams increased, there was a need for more dedicated facilities:

Academic Year 07-08

- existing 8-year-old Assessment Centre was moved to increase capacity from 10 to 20 users
- new e-Assessment facility created with capacity for 27 users

Academic Year 08-09

- additional facility created with capacity for 38 users

Academic Year 10-11

- facility for 38 users will open in the Altens Centre (replacing temporary provision)

All e-Assessment rooms have:

- desks spaced to meet exam body requirements
- up-to-date PCs
- facilities to cater for accessibility
- privacy filters
- Questionmark™ Secure for closed book exams.



## **Outcomes**

Over the period of the case study ('07-'09), members of staff have willingly adopted online summative assessment. The general rule being, if online exams are available they are used. There has been a lot of formative online assessment activity. Work is ongoing to encourage the "in-house" conversion of assessments for online marking.

Additionally,

- where assessments cannot be computer marked, students are encouraged to submit work electronically - via the Blackboard digital drop box or via the plagiarism detection software
- students submit work via e-Portfolios in some areas
- electronic voting systems have been introduced

