

# ASET: Effectively Using IT to Manage Student Placements and Work-Based Learning

OPUS, and Questions Presented

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4th July 2013

# Outline

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# The Modern Context

## The Old Issues

- Efficiently managing all aspects of placement, including recruitment, monitoring, assessment, health and safety and more.
- Engaging and enabling stakeholders.

## Recent Changes

- Changes in how the **QAA** monitor process.  
Accuracy of information to students;
- The impact of the **KIS** (Key Information Set);
- The impact of the **HEAR** (Higher Education Achievement Record);

# The QAA

## Make all or nothing determinations on

- the institution's threshold academic standards

## Make graded\* determinations on

- the quality of students' learning opportunities (teaching, resources and academic support)
- the institution's enhancement of students' learning opportunities
- the quality of information, including that produced for students and applicants.

\* is commended, meets UK expectations, requires improvement to meet UK expectations, does not meet UK expectations.

# The QAA

Incidentally, the QAA have moved the position of their Placement Code of Practice and ASET is currently working on guidelines for the new code, this isn't specifically covered today.

# The KIS

Statutory requirement which, among other things, includes

## A Breakdown of Assessment Types

- Coursework;
- Examination;
- Practical Examination.

## A Breakdown of Learning Time Types

- Scheduled Teaching;
- Independent Directed Learning;
- Placement

http:

//www.hefce.ac.uk/whatwedo/lt/publicinfo/kis/

# The HEAR

**Not currently** a statutory requirement which, among other things, includes

## Curricular Learning

- Transcript of marks;
- Formal placements.

## Co-curricular and extra-curricular Learning

- Could include work based activities.

<http://www.hear.ac.uk>

## And so...

- it is vital to have excellent audit on who has done a placement;
- and where, and what type, and what nature of placement.
- Information must be of good quality, and obviously, accurate.
- There is greater emphasis on the need for learning support in general.



# Self and Group Audit

- 1 What have you got by way of systems?
- 2 How does it well support the process and users?
- 3 How is it deficient?
- 4 The analysis of the gap.

# The Options Going Forward

- 1 Off the shelf products, either proprietary or open-source;
- 2 Bespoke developments;
- 3 Enhancing existing systems.

# Your Concerns

## What are the main concerns you may have ...

- **Compatibility**  
Uses only free, multi platform software;
- **Transition period**  
Better to ramp on, ramp off;
- **Installation cost / time / procedure**  
Free, fast, easy - still in progress;
- **Training cost / time / procedure**  
Optional, consultancy will be offered;
- **How to integrate OPUS into current systems?**  
Free, Open Source, Modular nature will make this easy.

## Other Questions posed...

### Other Questions posed...

- **What is open source?**  
You get the source code, entirely, but OPUS is also free, so you have lots of rights with the code.
- **Does it [OPUS] track, manage and advertise placements?**  
Yes, all of the above.
- **How technical do you need to be to run/install OPUS?**  
Not at all to use and run. To install, and upgrade, basic admin knowledge.

## Other Questions posed...

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- **What is the cost?**

£0, but you can pay if you like, we won't stop you.

- **How will updates work?**

Go to

<http://foss.ulster.ac.uk/projects/opus/> and subscribe to the `opus-announce` mailing list and more, updates will be announced and cryptographically signed. Developers can run the “trunk” version, but production servers should use a stable version. Debian (GNU/Linux) will be automatically supported.

- **What employer feedback have you had?**

It has been good. See the website above for more details.

## Other Questions posed...

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- **Where do I get the software?**

See <http://foss.ulster.ac.uk/projects/opus> and go to “Browse Source”. **Warning!** Only download a “tagged” version for actual use. 4.2.0 is the last tagged version, but 5.0.0 is in development.

- **What flexibility is built in?**

The system is designed to support a variety of practice and this is improving, it is not designed to straight-jacket you.

## Other Questions posed...

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- **How is security handled?**

At several levels. Login accounts are categorised into user types, security policies allow fine control over what users can access, and as a point of principal, staff can only interact with students' data on a need basis. Logging of access is undertaken for all sorts of activity including possible intrusions. Cryptographic HTTP and database access is possible.

- **How do you get on-going support?**

At the development website, there are publically available bug trackers, support mechanisms, and mailing lists to foster a self-help community. You could also pay for consultancy if necessary.

## Other Questions posed...

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- **What can you adapt in an open source system?**

As it is free software, whatever you like. However, under the GPL (GNU Public License) so you cannot remove the liberties you were granted.

- **What needs to be customised?**

The basic configuration (passwords etc.), the text in some key areas (institution name), and perhaps authentication mechanisms, and the format of your CSV files. This is all designed to be easy, and survive upgrades where possible.



# What will be in OPUS 5?

- Complete localisation / translation support;
- Updating of key interface items to use more modern web technology.

## Other Practice Questions...

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- How easy is it to get placement providers on board?
- What about Small, Medium sized businesses?
- What about practice based placement (e.g. nursing)