Introduction of mandated electronic assignment submission, marking and returns in the School of Nursing & Midwifery

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Process

2009
- Student survey – identification of need

Semester 1, 2009
- Issues identified – for resolving
- School commitment to implement trial of 4 topics (pilot)

July 2010
- Steering group appointed – all stakeholders
- Design & develop system, staff training and support resources

Semester 1, 2011
- All topics use EAS

Evaluation & ongoing retirement – FLO upgrade
EAS principle

Assignments generated in a digital format should be submitted, marked and returned in a digital format.
System evolution
**Electronic Assignment System (EAS)**

**PRINCIPLE:**
Assignments generated in a digital format should be submitted, marked and returned in a digital format.

**LEGEND** — For each system part, the # step is the responsibility of:
- Topic coordinators
- Teaching/marking staff
- School Office staff
- Flexible Education Unit
- Student

For information & resources visit the SoNM website / staff information pages.
Training & resources

• All staff orientation session
• 16 skills development workshops were conducted for staff in managing various EAS-related tasks
• 36 ‘how-to’ sheets and guidance resources were developed for staff and students
• Staff website pages received an average of 280 hits per month
• The student web page received an average of 3934 hits per month (February – July 2011)
EAS activity

- across 62 topics
- ...61% of the assessments were suitable for EAS...
- ...of these, there was 100% compliance with the EAS principle
- 9,381 assignments were submitted through EAS, plus 354 resubmissions
- = total of 9,735 assignments
Exemptions

- e-marking exemptions were granted to 5 staff
- ...for a combined 202 assignments

School office staff provided an average of 1.25 hours support on each assignment
- Sitting with marker to download
- Printing
- Collecting marked assignments
- Scanning & uploading back to marker

No increased paper usage in the school
Staff & students user experience surveys

Staff

• 54 respondents took the survey and 50 completed it, from a possible 159 teaching staff (including 123 casual staff) in the School – most would have been marking staff. This equates to an overall staff response rate of 34%.

Student

• 116 eligible students (students enrolled in semester 1, 2011) responded to the survey, out of an approximate possible 2,500 enrolled across the School at this time (5% response rate). All respondents used EAS in their course of study.

I live an hour away from the university so it was a much easier way to submit my assignments (student)
Assumed benefits - agreement
Other benefits identified...

Students
• 88% of students - saved time
• 78% - saved paper / printing expenses

Staff
• the ability to refer to previous student work on resubmission
• checking the word count
• checking any assignment (TC response)

Comments are easy to understand in a typed format than written words. (student)
Overall satisfaction with EAS

Staff
51% combined overall satisfaction

Students
76% combined overall satisfaction

The marker doesn’t have to find the assignments. They are there online. You don’t have to carry them all around, with the risk of losing some. They can’t be lost because they are on the system all the time.

(Lesley Siegloff, lecturer)
Staff opinion

• 68% of respondents agreed that the EAS principle was sound
• 50% thought that EAS should be across the whole university
• 72% disagreed or had no opinion on whether the EAS steering group represented staff interests

...It’s a good idea, everyone should do it, BUT we want to be more involved...
e-marking

Staff

• 58% used laptops for marking
• 100% used Microsoft Word
  – 21% also marked in pdf (Adobe Acrobat)
• 57% used comment banks

Students

Most useful forms of feedback:

• comments provided to the side (90%)
• comments provided at the end (88%)
• the marking guide or rubric (81%)

I love the EAS! I've found it really contributes to student learning. I'm able to provide direct feedback, highlight to show appropriate links in the information and add hyperlinks so that they can easily access learning resources and articles.

(Sharon Rance, tutor and e-marker)
Markers reported that they:

• felt **confident** e-marking (87%)
• enjoyed e-marking (53%)
• thought they would get **better/faster** over time (66%)
Avoiding eye strain and muscle fatigue

Check your workspace and working habits against the following criteria.

✓ Use proper lighting and minimise glare
The visual display unit (VDU) should be positioned at right angles to windows to minimise reflections and glare. The screen should be positioned so that artificial lighting does not reflect from the screen.

Lighting in an office environment where ‘ordinary’ visual tasks are performed should be in range 300 to 400 lux. For more demanding visual tasks 600 lux is required.

Localised lighting sources such as flexible lamps may be used for other desk work. These should be shielded to avoid glare in the work surface or VDU screen and to prevent sharp contrast.

✓ Upgrade your display
Flat-panel liquid crystal display (LCD), like those on laptop computers, are easier on the eyes and avoid on-screen flicker.

✓ Adjust brightness, contrast and text size

There should be a high degree of contrast between the characters on the screen and the background. If the white background of an assignment in Word or Adobe looks too bright or dull:

1. Adjust the screen settings so there is high contrast between the characters and background, and make sure the text size and colour are optimised for comfort.
2. Adjust how your monitor displays text – text size should be three times the smallest text size you can read from your normal viewing position. Web browsers (e.g. Internet Explorer, Firefox) allow you to set your preferred text size. Refer to the View or Help tabs.
3. Black text on a white background or other high-contrast, dark-on-light combinations are best for your eyes (see the Control Panel in the Windows operating system).

✓ Blink more often
When working on a computer, people tend to blink less frequently. Blinking rewets your eyes to prevent dryness and irritation.

✓ Exercise your eyes

Constantly focusing on a computer screen can tire your eyes. Glancing away from the screen for a second or two every few minutes will make work more comfortable.

Try looking away from your computer every 20 minutes by gazing at a distant object (at least 6 metres away) for at least 20 seconds.

✓ Take frequent breaks
Rest breaks are important because VDU operation often requires intense concentration. Stand up, move about and stretch your arms, legs, back, neck and shoulders to reduce tension and muscle fatigue.

✓ Modify your workstation
The diagram below shows the preferred posture for sitting at a computer. (Occupational Health & Safety and Injury Management Systems website)
New conversations...

- Marking guides
- Standard file types
- Standard late assignments penalty
Steering group’s tips

- “Just do it!”
- Need a school-wide approach for consistency
- Need to have a change management process
- Some re-orientation of roles and resources is needed
- Provide training for staff
- Use e-marking as part of the system to avoid transferring the printing burden to the school
- Put resources and support around e-marking – invest in good screens, attention to behaviour change
- Need an exemption process for e-marking – but maintain the submission and returns through FLO
- Support the use of marking guides
- Documentation is important – staff ‘home’ for resources, plus a communication strategy

SoNM EAS steering group, May 2011
Plus... Nicci’s tips

Keep it simple
use what you know
(eg mark with comments in Word)

Balance

Focus on tasks not technology
workflow and roles

strong leadership
systemisation
shared ownership
Ailsa n’ha Winifreyda

- Used EAS for student’s drafts and own classes for 5 years
- Was in the pilot with 2 Topics
  - One with 15 students – entirely external
  - One with 400 students – entirely internal
- Currently have 5 topics using it
  - Sem 1
    - NURS9709 – 20 students - external
    - NURS2101 – 400 students – internal
    - NURS3102 – 400 students
  - Sem 2
    - NURS9709 – 24 students – external
    - NURS 1105 – 400 students – external

- Brickbats
- Bouquets