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| To | Ako Ahimura | From | James Oldfield, Digital Learning Lead |
| Title | Online Examinations | Date | 2019 / 08 / 21 |

Recommendation/s

That the Committee discuss and provide a recommendation to Academic Board on the need, or not, to pilot the use of Online Examinations.

Option 1 Monitor the progress of online exams through NZQA and seek feedback from students who have experienced these exams.

Option 2 Pilot the use of an online exam tool such as digiexam.

Purpose

Academic Board has requested an investigation of how we may manage student expectations after the introduction of online exams for NCEA.

Students will be transitioning to the use of online exams over the coming years. They may prefer this experience and expect it when they come to Unitec. The introduction of online exams also has the potential to improve efficiencies around the exam process. Any move toward the use of online exams will incur additional cost and risk.

Background**NZQA's shift to online assessment**

NZQA is moving NCEA exams online, starting with 14 subjects in 2019 and expanding further in 2020. Not all schools are making use of digital exams, some that are less well prepared for a shift to digital will still be using paper based exams as they build capability and experience.

Other forms of digital assessment beyond NCEA are already present in many schools across a range of subjects. Where schools have requirements for the use of chromebooks, iPads or laptops there are many examples of innovative assessment making use of the affordances of these devices. The NZQA push to digital exams is initially focused on text based exams, however there is a stated intention to expand this to more dynamic forms of assessment in future.

Our competitors

Auckland University has introduced online exams in certain areas. These are currently only available for certain subjects and are typically conducted in computer labs. Students can bring their own device if they choose, or use a University computer. They use software that supports the exam and places restrictions on the device to prevent students from accessing internet resources or sharing answers with each other. The software that Auckland University currently uses is Digiexam (<https://www.digiexam.com/>). At

this stage there does not appear to be a concerted effort by any of our other major competitors in Auckland to move to online exams.

Current Unitec Practice

Unitec has supported various forms of online assessment for many years. Online assessment practices are varied and at this stage we do not have a comprehensive record of where such approaches are occurring. The most common of these approaches are discussed below:

Computer lab exams

Computer based exams and tests are conducted using controlled test logins on Unitec computer lab machines in a secured fashion (under supervised conditions). These tests have the advantage that access to the Internet can be controlled, and the files are centrally managed. The downside is that they require Unitec machines and we have a limited number of computer labs that could be utilised during exam time.

Online Moodle assessment

Tests are also designed and implemented on Moodle using a mix of multichoice and other quiz question types. These Moodle based assessments can be conducted on student owned devices or Unitec computers. The quizzes can include auto marking elements, which are particularly useful at lower levels. The upside is that this approach could be used in any space with adequate wireless, or potentially offsite if the tests are not intended to be under controlled conditions. The downside is that this approach doesn't have any inbuilt control for the Internet or sharing of content. If these assessments are intended to be controlled individual assessments, then close supervision is required.

Online unsecured assessment

Many assessments at Unitec are unsecured (not actively supervised), often taking place over a period of time. These could be individual or group assignments, or portfolios of work, among other things. Unitec supports several online tools that can support these assessments, such as Moodle assignments, Turnitin, MyPortfolio, Echo360 and Zoom. Other tools are also used for this purpose, such as Google Classroom, Wordpress, and Office 365. These types of assessment are not directly comparable to online exams, however they do provide the learners with more modern assessment experiences.

Products that could be considered for a pilot

If we wanted to move further into the online exam space, there are a number of products in that could be considered, such as:

- Digiexam <https://www.digiexam.com/>
- Examsoft <https://examsoft.com/>
- Online exam builder <https://www.onlineexambuilder.com>
- Janison insights <https://janisoninsights.com>

Next Steps

Ako Ahimura consider the merit of recommending to Academic Board to either monitor the developments with online exams, or pilot the use of Digiexam (or alternative).