

University of Glasgow

Academic Standards Committee - Friday 20 November 2009

Proposed Policy on Web Catalogue Publication: 2010-11

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Introduction

A new on-line course catalogue for academic session 2010-11 will be published in summer 2010. This will replace both the existing hard-copy catalogue which has been in use for some years and the existing static web catalogue. The information to be published will come from the course specification documents which are managed via the PIP system. Only changes made and approved via PIP will appear in the catalogue.

The PIP Project Board considered the following issues in relation to publication of the catalogue:

1. It needs to be clear whether all departments are required to publish the information in the catalogue or can opt out on a departmental or individual course basis.
2. It needs to be clear where responsibility lies for approving and possibly proof-reading the content of the catalogue, to ensure that the quality of material published is acceptable. This has previously been a Senate Office responsibility in respect of the hard-copy catalogue but this will not be viable if all departments participate in the new on-line version because the volume of material will increase hugely.
3. We need a timetable for initial publication of the following session's information each year and a decision on whether changes approved during a session should immediately update the published information.

The PIP Project Board have asked that ASC agree a policy to provide clarity on these issues.

Issue 1: Comprehensiveness

Having a single comprehensive central catalogue will make it easier for potential applicants, current students and staff to find information. In addition, presenting all our courses together in a standard way will improve the University's corporate image. It is intended that departments will link from their web sites to their sections of the new catalogue rather than maintain their own course web pages. **It is therefore proposed that all departments be required to publish their course information in the catalogue.**

It will be possible to remove individual courses from the catalogue. This is necessary because some courses are created for administrative reasons and are not appropriate for publication. However, it is not intended that this will be used to exclude the main body of courses.

Issue 2: Responsibility for Data Quality

Clear lines of responsibility are needed in order to ensure that the published data is of an appropriate quality. While the Senate Office will be responsible for managing the overall process, it is not practical or appropriate for them to be responsible for the content of the web pages.

It is proposed that principal responsibility for the content should be assigned to the departments themselves since they are the direct source of the information. Named people within each department will be registered in the PIP system with a 'Catalogue Checker' role. The system will then assist in management of the proofing process (e.g. by issuing reminder emails, providing reports of deadlines missed, etc).

The catalogue web pages will be available for checking on a staging server before publication to the live University web site. Notice will be given from Senate Office/PIP of the deadlines for checking and publication. The departmental checkers must check the information and ensure amendments are made and approved via PIP in time for publication. They will then indicate via PIP that they have checked the catalogue and are happy for publication to go ahead. The system will escalate alerts to Faculty staff and Senate Office if deadlines are not met by the departments. Senate Office staff will monitor the process and be responsible for final approval of publication of the full catalogue to the live web site. However, departments who have not checked their data by this date will still have their information published.

Issue 3: Timing

The catalogue should be published in good time in advance of a new session in order to allow advance decisions on what courses students will take. Departments can make amendments to the data throughout the session preceding publication but a final period of checking will always be required after the end of the approval rounds. The hard copy catalogue is currently published in August but, without the associated print deadlines, an earlier deadline of mid July could be achieved.

Within PIP, corrections to data can be made mid-session which are approved at departmental level and reported to Faculty. This facility will be retained and will allow immediate auto-publication of corrections when they occur.

ASC is asked to approve the proposed policies on web catalogue production.