

HudXCRI: eXchanging Course Related Information Briefing Paper

1. Background

The JISC (Joint Information Systems Committee) has accepted a proposal for the University of Huddersfield to run an XCRI implementation project. The object of HudXCRI is to implement and test the XCRI schema against the full University course catalogue containing undergraduate, postgraduate, FE, CPD and short courses and their sub-components. The course catalogue will be driven primarily from the ASIS student records system and will be created as an XML course repository which can be freely accessed using web services, through aggregators. Additional information will be gathered from the University's schools, so that a comprehensive course catalogue can be created.

This is an exciting opportunity for the University to be at the forefront of a national initiative to make best use of courses information. It is the intention to broaden its coverage to include regional partners of the University via the West Yorkshire Lifelong Learning Network.

2. What is XCRI-CAP?

XCRI stands for 'eXchanging Course Related Information' and is an emerging interoperability standard used to enable course information to be standardised and reused in different contexts. The XCRI-CAP (Course Advertising Profile) specification is an open information model for producing and aggregating catalogues of courses information that providers publish to market their offerings to learners.

3. What is the project trying to achieve?

The HudXCRI project will create a fully XCRI enabled and comprehensive University Course Catalogue integrated with ASIS. We will fully engage with and disseminate our experiences from applying XCRI within the community including WYLLN Partner Institutions, the SITS user groups and JISC – CETIS forums. The project will influence the adoption of XCRI among partner institutions through the WYLLN.

We intend to use the experience of working with the course advertising part of XCRI to contribute to the continued development and presentation of course information in line with a multiple of local, sub-regional and national agendas and initiatives such as Employer Engagement.

4. Benefits

The University will be able to output all its course advertising data in an efficient manner compatible with the emerging national standard. This will enable internal and external collectors of this information to make more effective use of it, including publication in websites and in paper documents, as well as developing value-added services, such as displaying progression pathways and the articulation of provision throughout the University and the wider region.

Benefits for providers... XCRI-CAP generates **internal efficiency gains** through process improvements and quality enhancements for publishing course advertising information. It also generates **cost savings on data input** by providing standardised data to data collection agencies.

Benefits for data collection agencies... XCRI-CAP provides **higher quality, consistent and timely data** in a standard format for streamlined processing. It also provides opportunities for **new added-value usage of the data**, for **revenue-sharing partnerships** and for extension of local arrangements to **regional, national and international aggregation**, bringing the information to larger numbers of learners.

5. What does this involve for the University's schools?

The project has been designed to minimise workload for schools by obtaining your courses data from existing stores and not interfering with your live systems. There are no requirements to change existing systems, data structures or the way you are currently working. The project does however, offer you the opportunity to review current processes and provide standardised high quality data sets. The project will brief schools in more detail in the coming weeks, including a review of the extent of CPD and short courses information that is not held in central university systems.

6. Post Project and long term implications

This project is well placed to inform national strategy for joining up Higher Education courses information. The work offers strategically important opportunities for regional recognition and demonstrating potential for further work to enhance efficiency and streamlining of data collection. It implements the 'collect once, use many times' ethos promoted by experts in the field, as well as by national and government bodies. Furthermore, it supports the wider objectives for development of the knowledge based economy.

Longer term, a full local and regional adoption of the XCRI-CAP standard and methods of data collection and aggregation could provide a solution to the issue of streamlining data collection amongst partners, providing aggregation and search facilities to learners and advisors across boundaries, as well as supporting the national agenda in joining up these systems.

For more information on the HudXCRI project please contact:
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