

Distance Learning at Scale: Sol Strategy

- Distance Learning at Scale (DLAS) is a university initiative led from Information Services to use online learning platforms (e.g. coursera, udacity, ...) to deliver distance courses originated by the University of Edinburgh “at scale”.
- “At scale” means thousands of students.
- The inspiration for this is the Georgia Tech online Masters in Computer Science that has around 10000 enrolled students at the moment.
- This is linked to the University Distance Learning Strategy and the City Deal KPIs on digitally trained people in the City Deal region.
- The University has a strong desire to provide a “micro masters” involving AI somewhere in the title.
- Business School are developing a full online masters at the moment.
- A “micro masters” is a course that would have a credit value of 40-60 points.
- The structure of a micro masters programme is as follows:
 - Students would undertake 20-40 points of credit registered as learners on the online platform.
 - Students then transfer to EUCLID to become university students and complete a “capstone” course that results in the award of a UoE micro-masters.
- At the moment such programmes do not exist in the University regulations but this will change in the next year.

We have partnered with School of Mathematics in proposing a micro masters to satisfy the University desire for an AI/Data Science micro masters. Our proposal was to use existing courses in statistics together with an online version of “AI Present and Future” and IAML as the capstone. The aim was to produce something that would take a small-ish effort to create and would allow us and the University more widely to understand the potential pool of students wanting to join such a programme. In addition, we would see the creation of more online materials that could be used to support other programmes. Once this programme had run we could evaluate it and decide on future strategy.

The current status is:

- The EdEx platform do not like our proposal because it is too generic and is too similar to other programmes they already offer.
- We have suggested offering a programme either in “AI for Policy” or “AI for the Public Sector” working with SPSS, School of Mathematics and possibly the Business School. This is underdevelopment at the moment and an outline will go to EdEx shortly.
- Our contribution will be unchanged involving “AI Present and Future” and IAML as the capstone with examples drawn from public service or policy.

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October 2018