

Notes on Interview with Professor Andrew Ireland

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1 Organisation of Tasks

- Tasks should be organised by date; preferably in the academic year, as opposed to the calendar year.
- Ongoing tasks (IE those without any known end-date) should be supported by the system. Many tasks are of this type, with the notable exception of major roles within the department (eg head of school).
- Tasks with a fixed duration should be able to automatically repeat (e.g. Annually)
- Tasks which are not fully allocated (IE the total percentage contribution of staff allocated to the task is less than 100%) should be red-flagged, but permitted in the system.
- The following types of task were identified:
 - Teaching
 - Research
 - Administrative
 - External Activities
 - Authorised absence (this is potentially sensitive information, and its precise representation, name, and usage (if any) are as yet undecided).
- Task classification should be specific and simple, with a limited number of options to enforce unity and avoid user error/confusion.

- Interested in grouping tasks into a hierarchy, however seems a low-priority. (Database should be designed to support it in principle, even if not fully realised by the application)

2 Organisation of Staff

- Staff members should, if possible, be able to log in user their existing MACS department details.
- Staff should have different privilege levels
- For any member of staff the following should be recorded:
 - Name
 - Office Number
 - Email address
 - Telephone extension number
 - Campus
- Staff may be grouped (e.g. by department, school, etc)

3 Teaching Tasks

- A teaching task corresponds (in the general case at least) to a specific course within a degree programme (or programmes). For example, Language Processors (F29LP).
- For any teaching task, the following should be recorded in addition to standard task details:
 - Course Code
 - Course Co-ordinator (the single member of staff principally responsible for delivering the course).
 - Number of students participating in the course

4 Research Tasks

- For any teaching task, the following should be recorded in addition to standard task details:

- State of funding (Funded or unfunded)
- Principle Investigator

5 System Reporting

- Users should be made aware of tasks which are nearing completion. Clarification required on which specific task types this should be applied to.
- Admin-privileged users should be made aware of staff members whose current or future workload meets any of the following criteria:
 - Outwith the average departmental (or school?) workload and outwith acceptable variance
 - Outwith the predefined acceptable distribution of task-types
- Warnings should be able to be suppressed, or the underlying triggering condition modified on a per-staff-member basis. There are likely to be staff members who are the exception to the rule.

6 Planning View

Admin-privileged users should have access to a 'planning' view, whereby existing and future tasks can be assigned to staff members, but without appearing or modifying the main 'management' view. This is to allow allocations to be created, tested, and revised for the next academic year using the analysis and reporting functions of the system.

There should be functionality to automatically replicate the current allocations in the planning view.