

Plain English Development Strategy

– agreed by SAS Steering group 17 Jan 2005 and replaces the draft strategy – SAS/SG/22

A. Learning Services

We aim to make Plain English part of normal life in Learning Services. This will take time. For the first year, 2005, we will concentrate on services for students' written materials. This includes web pages, leaflets, notices and emails. It is important that we make real progress in one area first. In 2006, the scope could be Learning Services as a whole.

1. Materials for students

Plain English is a SAS quality expectation. Any new web pages and leaflets should be in Plain English. Staff should work towards Plain English standards for notices, emails and other formats.

Most services will need to edit their leaflets and websites before we move to the Learning Centre. We should make sure that any standard text about the Learning Centre, opening hours, how to book appointments and so on, is in Plain English.

Services who are revising websites or leaflets should follow Plain English guidelines for at least one leaflet or web section for September 2005. They should then include the Plain English logo on printed material.

2. Crystal Mark

The Steering Group agreed we should aim to gain a Crystal Mark for our GCU joining pack. The Programme manager will talk to relevant people and look at timescales for September 2005.

We should also make sure that Learning Services staff are aware of Crystal Mark and what it means.

3. Learning Services standard templates

To show we are serious about Plain English, we should aim to apply Plain English standards to:

- SAS minutes and other SAS materials over the next six months, then look at other areas.

4. Advocacy, encouragement and mutual support

The Plain English Advocate's (Eileen McKee) main role is to encourage and support staff as they apply Plain English principles. She is available one day per week on average over the year. This includes a half day per week on the diploma course. The course begins in June 2005 and ends in June 2006. She will do some online courses in the meantime.

All staff who have done the one-day course are due to send in one piece of work by mid February 2005. We could publish some sample documents on the SAS section of my.Caledonian as examples of good practice. From this group of staff the Advocate could also draw up list of volunteers to support and encourage others in specific projects.

5. Training and SDPR

From now until summer 2006 we have 50 places on the online Plain English course. (50 places per year from then on). There are some names on the interested list already. The Plain English Advocate will publicise this to Learning Services and the Finance Office. We could look at encouraging line managers to promote Plain English courses as part of SDPR. They should also check on progress if someone has done a course.

Publicity

Email to all Learning Services and Finance Office January 2005. The email should be in Plain English and cover:

- Corporate membership and what it means
 - Logo – committed to clearer communication
 - Crystal mark
- What is Plain English and what are the benefits
- Plain English Advocate and what her role is
- SAS quality expectation
- Next steps
 - Online courses – what to do if you want a place
 - Working on web, hardcopy, emails, procedures
 - SDPR promotion
- Link to the Plain English site

Follow up email around May to promote the online courses again

B Promoting Plain English beyond Learning Services

The ideal:

- a Plain English strategy which the Executive approves and adopts
- a full time Plain English Advocate who also runs in house training courses

In the meantime, the first steps should be:

1. Email to GCU all
 - Corporate membership
 - What is Plain English and what are the benefits
 - Summary of SAS/Learning Services activity
 - Use of logo – committed to clearer communication
 - Crystal Mark – details from JR
 - Other areas of the GCU may want to use both
 - Link to the Plain English site
2. Informal linking with ‘advocates’ in other areas, for example Purchasing. Online courses – if there are places left.
3. Promotion at Executive level – Les Watson