EDI

Background

EDI is an accredited Awarding Organisation and leading international education company with a wide range of products and services including vocational and professional qualifications both within the UK and internationally through LCCI.

EDI has a strong vocational offer with centres across private training providers and colleges of further education. Increasingly they are becoming involved with schools and 14-19 provision.

EDI and e-assessment
EDI has its roots in innovative in GOAL on-line assessments designed to provide learners with immediate feedback. These products, much refined, are still a feature of the EDI product range. EDI uses technology to improve service levels, benefiting the centres directly in all cases, and in some cases, the learners.

EDI provides a number of technology based solutions which operate on an administrative and full assessment level.

GOAL online assessment solution is used in schools to provide interactive and multiple choice online assessments designed to monitor both individual and class progress. The tests, whilst not purely adaptive, contain an adaptive element in that some early questions are designed to pitch the remainder of the questions at the right (national curriculum) level. These allow diagnostic and formative feedback that supports effective teaching, learning and target setting.

eNVQ is EDI's web-based electronic portfolio system which allows employers, candidates, assessors and verifiers to load evidence into a multimedia portfolio which can be accessed and managed remotely at any time.

Campus is a highly developed administrative tool designed to facilitate all aspects of registration, scheduling assessments, awarding and reporting.

Some applications, like the *ICT Portal*, serve specific purposes such as allowing direct uploading of electronic evidence from candidates for subsequent on-line moderation.

Always looking to improve its services, EDI is currently embarking on am ambitious development project to unify and improve the IT backbone to all its digital services. Centres will begin to experience the benefits of this development in the latter part of 2010.

Introducing e-assessment

When introducing e-assessment into the qualification offer, EDI recognises that training, help and personal support are crucial for both centres and internal staff.   This includes running training sessions to introduce new systems and products and to provide updates.

The qualifications and assessments market is extremely competitive therefore EDI strives to offer value for money whilst staying ahead of emerging technologies. A lot of emphasis is put into the look and feel of its e-assessment products as well as their functionality.

Key focus for e-assessment

The key focus for EDI is improving the service to customers without disrupting what they already do. For iterative improvements to existing systems there are established communication processes which customers are familiar with. The introduction of new systems such as the

assessment model for Functional Skills presents additional challenges which will be addressed with carefully designed customer support and training.

Accessibility is also an area of focus especially with the introduction of the new equality act in 2010. EDI has to meet the legislative requirements so that accessibility does not become an issue for e-assessment activities.

Developing an offer for the 14-19 sector presents interesting opportunities. As more schools consider the wider opportunities presented by Foundation Learning, Functional Skills and the specialised Diplomas, they are becoming more aware of the range of possibilities for personalising the curriculum. As an awarding body, EDI needs to respond by ensuring that e-assessment is built into its qualifications. This includes an ambition to offer Functional Skills on screen, on demand, with the fastest possible turnaround of results. Within the Diploma, the assessment of the practical elements of principal learning present the very real challenge of how to ensure real world, applied assessment contexts for learners, while meeting regulatory requirements for controlled assessments. EDI is exploring ways in which technology can support this and aims to provide practical guidance to centres during 2010.

Are there constraints on e-assessment?

EDI feels that whilst there is flexibility within the regulatory principles on e-assessment, its use is not particularly encouraged, particularly in the 14-19 sector where qualifications are considered to be of a more 'high risk' nature. Consequently the traditional pen and paper method is still used and there is little impetus on centres and schools to move away from this. This is an issue as much for centres as it is for awarding bodies; schools have yet to develop the same level of expertise with e-assessment that colleges have.

EDI feels that security is not going to present a big a barrier as anticipated. Clearly EDI has secure IT systems with built in disaster and recovery management. However the more popular area of concern is with candidate authenticity and notions of learners somehow using the Internet to get their answers.

EDI believes that in reality, solutions here will be based on the same principles that currently underpin the awarding body-centre relationship. Centres are best placed to verify a candidate's identity and supervise assessments, and that remains the case with e-assessment. No one is being complacent, and all new approaches will be subject to rigorous scrutiny, but the fundamental professionalism of centre staff is and continues to be a crucial element of assuring the integrity of assessment.