

Introducing the ACEA online community

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Introduction

The Australasian Corrections Education Association Inc.(ACEA), with support from the University of Southern Queensland(USQ), has established an interactive community website for use by ACEA members. The website provides a variety of ways in which ACEA members can communicate and share information, either in real time or by stored messages. Management control of the website is shared between nominated members of the ACEA and nominated USQ staff by mutual agreement.

Overview of the community website

The website is set up through the use of Moodle software, available free as OpenSoftware. Moodle determines the basic features and ‘look’ of the site. As USQ uses Moodle for online teaching purposes, the site is set up at USQ as a teaching environment. Terms such as ‘teacher’ and ‘student’ and ‘course’ are used. This may seem a bit odd to users at first.

Access to the website

The website is only available to ACEA members. The link to the website is via <http://tinyurl/aceacommunity> . Members need a logon username and password to access and use the site. Registration will be available during the conference.

Management of the content of the website

The content of the site will be managed by two members of ACEA (identified as ‘teachers’), who will determine what is to be uploaded. Files and links to other sites for uploading to the site can be sent to the ‘teachers’ for their consideration.

Some possible uses of the site for ACEA purposes

A range of information and information sources, such as announcements, news items and documents, could be posted by the site managers. Various files such as policy and procedures documents, Powerpoint and Adobe Presenter presentations, and Excel files, could be uploaded for professional development activities. Members could discuss the contents of these files amongst themselves, post their own topics for discussion, and communicate one-to-one or one-to many with other members.

Possible future developments of the site

Special interest groups could be set up, so that members who work in a particular area of corrections education , such as Juvenile Justice, could communicate with each other and share information without sharing their communications with other members. This feature could also be used for confidential discussions between members of the executive or office bearers.

A live online real time ‘drop in room’ could be placed within the site. This would use Wimba software. It would enable online conferencing between members, either all members or particular groups, which could be recorded for replay by members. At present, the firewalls in the computer systems of most (perhaps all) jurisdictions do not allow access to Wimba for purely technical reasons. However, the software does not constitute a security risk so there is a possibility that firewalls in at least some jurisdictions could be changed to allow the software to be used from members’ workplace computers. Currently, it could be used from most home computers without encountering any firewall problems