

Scholaris V4.0

The first phase of the new Scholaris V4 is planned to be delivered in Q1 09.

The V4.0 release will now incorporate the following new functionality and changes

Class Manager

This class centric module replaces the following modules

- Class Profiler
- Course Builder
- Assignment Manager
- Assessment Manager

Class Manager provides the following capability

- Creation and management of target groups for the class
- Creation and management of ILP for the class
- Association of learning objectives to the target groups and ILPs
- Creation and management of student alerts
- Creation and management of learning sequences and units through the use of the existing Course Builder now within Class Manager
- Assignment management
- New Assessment Console with support for marks, grades and comments
- New Assessment History (displayed in a Marks book type layout)
- Student comparison reports for individual assignments

The ability to pick a staff member will be incorporated into Class Manager in the interim.

Curriculum Frameworks

A new rich and flexible curriculum framework structure will be introduced.

Existing curriculum frameworks will be rebuilt using the new structure and be deployed to replace existing frameworks in schools. Due to the different structure of the old and new frameworks, it will not be possible to automatically migrate objects linked with the old frameworks to the new frameworks, and this will have to be done manually by the school

The basic building blocks of the curriculum frameworks will be

- Headings
- Sub Headings
- Result Sets
- Text Node

The Learning Goals from a curriculum framework can be leveraged by the Learning Program Builder as a template for building Learning programs.

Learning Program Builder

The LP Builder is designed to build out the school curriculum plan, year level curriculum plans and learning area plans.

The LP Builder can import parts of one or several curriculum frameworks as the start point for building any Learning Program

The LP Builder uses the same building blocks for constructing the learning program as the Curriculum Framework tool does.

The Learning Goals from a learning program can be leveraged by Class Manager – Target Groups, Course Builder, Activity Builder and Assignment Manager

Wizards

An assignment wizard will be introduced to step users through the process of assigning an activity to a group of students by

- Selecting an existing object or activity, or uploading and publishing a new object in the LOR
- Selecting the class, target group or students
- Selecting if this assignment should be assessed or not (could be used as a quick review / test)
- Selecting the assessment method (mark, grade, comment)
- Selecting what result set to use for assessment
- Deciding if the assignment should be auto assessed and returned to the student
- Associating one or more learning goals to the assignment
- Setting the release and due dates

An assessment wizard will be introduced to step user though the process of creating an assessment item for a non electronic assignment, such as an oral report, by

- Entering the assessment name and description
- Selecting the class, target group or students
- Selecting the assessment method (mark, grade, comment)
- Selecting what result set to use for assessment
- Associating one or more learning goals to the assessment

Activity Builder

The Activity Builder now includes a wizard to create a new activity. The wizard will step the user through the process by

- Collecting Title, description, educational level and other metadata
- Teaching notes
- Assessment Method (mark, grade, comment)
- Selecting the Learning Goals from all available frameworks and learning programs

The Activity Builder also accesses the assignment wizard allowing a user to assign an activity to a group of students.

LOR

The LOR will be extended to support the storage of Learning Programs, which can be stored in a hidden folder structure under the Learning Object root folder

The Convert to Activity icon has been removed from the toolbar as this function has been incorporated into the assignment wizard.

The assignment wizard can be launched from the LOR, after selecting a resource. This will convert the resource to an activity, publish the activity, and follow the remaining steps in the wizard.

Achievement by Curriculum

The achievement by curriculum module will replace the old leveling screens, and is designed to work with the new data model and include the staff and class selection (in lieu of existing staff picker control that is removed).

The Achievement by Curriculum module allows the teacher to make a judgment of a student's achievement in their class, based on the formative assessment information for that student.

The summative assessment result can be a mark, grade or level, and the achievement results can be exported to an Excel spreadsheet for manipulation or importing to an external system.

Virtual Classrooms

The virtual classroom environment will be enhanced to provide a transitional path to the LMS functionality. The enhancements will include

- Wizard to create a new Virtual Classroom that will step the user through the process of
 - Select if VC is for a class group or an adhoc group
 - Selecting from the available templates
 - Allocating staff members
 - Specify if students should have contributor or visitors rights
 - Allocating users to the VC including AD users, classes or groups (for non class VCs)
 - Inclusion of blogs, wikis and/or discussion boards for teachers and/or students
 - Permissions for blogs, wikis and discussion boards
- The Virtual Classroom templates will include the following web parts / areas
 - Front page
 - Blogs page and separate blogs for each student
 - Wikis page
 - Announcements
 - Events
 - Roll up web parts for blog changes etc
 - Document Library
 - Discussion board for teacher – student – teacher interaction
 - Assignment Summary web parts for staff and students
 - Links to the new assignment and assessment wizard

- A Site Settings page which includes
 - Maintain VC wizard
 - Resynchronise VC members
 - Add library, list, web page etc
- Summary Web parts including
 - Staff assignments filtered for staff member
 - Student assignments filtered for student

The new Available Workspaces web part V2 will replace the original V1 web part, and will support workspaces created by the V1 web part and allow for the creation of the new workspaces.

A number of Virtual Classroom templates will be supplied for use. These templates can be customised by schools.

My Child

The My Child web parts have been updated to include the MyChild picker in the web part and additional changes to individual web parts as follows

- Student Timetable – now shows the teacher for the class
- Academic Performance – similar view to Achievement by Curriculum screens
- Work Portfolio – now grouped by Academic Year instead of Year Level
- Assignments – similar view to Class Manager – Assignments tab

Learning – Now My Curriculum (Student)

The web parts for the student under Learning have now moved to My Curriculum. These web parts have been updated to include as follows

- Timetable – now shows the teacher for the class
- Academic Performance – similar view to Achievement by Curriculum screens
- ePortfolio – now grouped by Academic Year instead of Year Level
- Assignments – similar view to Class Manager – Assignments tab

Academic Year

The concept of an academic year will be introduced which will set the foundation for viewing and analyzing student performance of the lifetime of the student in the school community.

This will require changes to the Data Integration process to support this.

An academic year rollover wizard in the administrations screens will be introduced to support this process.

Attendance

A number of minor changes have been made to attendance including

- Ability to Pre-mark attendance for a group event notification, and only manage exceptions through the normal attendance marking process
- Individual follow up now allows movement through the list from the follow up details screen
- The Group Event Names are now in a drop down list in the search criteria
- Customizable limit on the number of attendance record that can be marked at the same time (default 60)
- Support for custom attendance reports

Enhanced Security

Granular security for access to various module and information will NOT be introduced till a future phase (planned for V4.1 currently)

Menus

The “Out of the Box” menu structure will be changed as follows

For Me - removed

Collaboration – renamed to My Workspaces

Student Info - removed

Teaching – renamed to My Curriculum

- Teaching Today – removed - replaced by staff timetable web part and alerts managed through Class Manager
- Class Today – removed - Opportunities with class (not used), today's activities viewable through Class Manager
- Student List – removed – Accessible through staff timetable and Class Manager
- Class Profiler – removed – replaced by Class Manager
- Course Builder – removed – integrated into Class Manager
- Assignment Manager – removed – replaced by Class Manager
- Assessment – removed – replaced by Class Manager
- Class Manager – new
- Learning Program Builder – new
- Achievement by Curriculum - new
- Leveling by Curriculum – replaced by Achievement by Curriculum
- Leveling by Student – removed
- Assignments (student only) – moved – was in Learning
- ePortfolio (student only) – moved – was in Learning

Resources – renamed to My Resources

- LOR – unchanged
- Activity Builder – unchanged

- New Booking – moved – was in Resource Bookings
- Existing Bookings – moved – was in Resource Bookings
- Planner – moved – was in For Me
- Email – moved – was in For Me
- My Files – moved – was in For Me

Attendance – unchanged

My Child – unchanged

Student Info - unchanged

Administration – unchanged

Help – unchanged

- Addition of a link to the Scholaris Community Forums

Staff / Class Picker

The staff picker user control will be removed as the new Class Manager and staff timetable web part not require this separate control. Access to the LOR and Activity Builder is available from the My Resources menu.

Class Manager and the Achievement by Curriculum module will be modified to include a staff and/or class picker.

Help system

The V3.2 help system will be replaced by a new Help website. This website is fully searchable and follows the same structure as the new Help Manual

All Scholaris modules will have an associated Help icon which when clicked will open the Help system at the correct location to display the relevant information on the current module.

The Help system will be broken up into 4 web sites so that each of the following user roles will have access to the information about the modules they actually can access

- Student
- Teacher
- External User
- Administrator

Administrators will also have access to the Administration Manual

Scholaris Branding Framework

V4.0 will introduce a Scholaris Branding Framework which will allow schools to create or engage 3rd party providers to create a customised branding for their portal, and be able to deploy the theme pack, and have the branding flow through the Scholaris sites.

The branding framework divides the site structure into 3 zones

- District (for multi school deployments)
- School
- Virtual Classrooms

Branding can be controlled in each area, so a school branding does not need to flow into each Virtual Classroom, so these can be individualised if required.

Supported Microsoft technology stack

The following technology stack is supported

- Windows Server
 - SharePoint - 2003R2
 - SQL server – 2003R2 or 2008
- SQL Server
 - 2005 (not Express except for the DI interim database)
 - 2008
 - plus SQL Report Server 2005 or 2008
- SharePoint – 2007 SP1
- Browsers
 - IE6
 - IE 7
 - IE 8 (running in IE7 compatibility mode)
 - Firefox 2 or 3

V4.0 Pre-requisites

The upgrade to V4.0 will only be available from V3.2.0.3. Schools and districts will need to ensure that the V3.2.0.3 upgrade has been installed before commencing the upgrade to V4.0. The upgrade installer will check the current software level and will not proceed if this is not V3.2.0.3

Schools running SQL Server 2000 will need to upgrade to SQL Server 2005 or 2008, as SQL server 2000 is no longer a supported platform for Scholaris.

Schools using SQL Express for the SLK should consider moving this to an existing or the new SQL 2005 / 2008 server, to facilitate a more integrated data backup solution.

Schools using SQL Express 2005 for the interim database in the DI process do not need to change that.

V3.2 to V4.0 Upgrade process

The upgrade to V4.0 will follow a similar process to previous upgrades. The upgrade installer will step the user through the process and complete most of the work automatically.

A number of schools have now moved down the path of customizing their portal installation including branding, changing master pages, changing the site structure and associated navigation. The upgrade installer does support local customizations by only upgrading the web parts, assemblies and migrating the data to the new format. The changes required / suggested to the site structure and navigation will then need to be done by the school IT technician or Scholaris Support Partner. It is expected that this work will take less than 1 hour.

For schools that have maintained the out of the box site structure and navigation, the update installer will upgrade the site structure and alter the navigation menus to meet the new V4.0 structure.

Data Migration

The second part of the upgrade process will involve the migration of data from the old format to the new V4.0 format.

The data migration will impact schools as follows

- All Existing Curriculum Frameworks will be unloaded
- Any class target group, assignment or activity linked to existing curriculum will be unlinked as the curriculum will be deleted
- The Education Level metadata attribute will be removed for all LOR objects and replaced by Education level From and Education Level To attributes.
- All LOR objects will need to be up versioned to update the metadata schema. This means that any draft version will stay at draft but will go up from say V0.2 to V0.3. Any published objects will go up one version, so say from V1.0 to V2.0. The owners of these objects will remain the same, as will the sharing scope for the published objects.

Post Upgrade Tasks

Following the upgrade schools will need to setup and configure a number of areas including

- Loading and association of new curriculum frameworks
- Configuration of master subjects, curriculum node types, result sets
- SharePoint groups for VC administrators and curriculum content writers