

University of Nottingham – Student/IS Consultative Group
Monday 22nd January 2007

Despite having been reassured that the age of IS service provision failing the student body during exam time is now far behind us, the validity of this claim has been called into question.

For at least several hours earlier (at LEAST between 16.00 and 20.00 and continuing), webpages were unreachable from ISCRA's, WebCT is down, the Student Portal inaccessible and the main University webpage unavailable.

Loss of service to some extent can be expected on any network, although 99% uptime guarantee would be the minimum acceptable to any company requiring a QoS ("Quality of Service") agreement.

However *any* loss of service during exam periods is 100% not okay, and Information Services needs to realise this.

The Information Services group is also *not* immune from responsibility solely because it is (currently) the sole provider of network support on campus. Press coverage of such failures of responsibility would not reflect favourably at all on this University.

For example, some student course notes are located on WebCT because the University's PVCs and Department Heads continue to place emphasis on the transition of the University to a more internet-friendly academic institution: but now, with potentially no fewer than four hours left in the day until an examination day, hundreds of students have been left ALL afternoon without access to their course.

Today's service failures are an absolute travesty, reflecting the continued mismanagement of a very fragile system.

Many, many promises were made to the student body last term about upcoming increases in reliability. It sounded good so that IS could be seen to be improving their service and thus taking responsibility for their position... but so far many of these have not been visibly met.

We hope this is taken incredibly seriously, alongside previous discussions tabled between IS and the student body. At the very least, we deserve a realistic explanation for the failures that occurred today. If this cannot be circulated by IS directly, this group will be happy to assist.

- SISCG