

Transferring Progressive Results from SMS to Astra

Astra is being used to finalise all results in CSE from T2 2019. SMS remains the primary collector of student assessments, though Moodle can be used as well. Eccles is deprecated. While SMS used to finalise results, this won't be possible any longer: only component results are transferred, not the final grade. After the transfer (and it can be repeated any number of times), exceptions such as Special Consideration are applied in Astra and the result determined by Astra, not SMS. The same process applies to revisions. All transferred data is retained permanently.

The integration is being rolled out in two phases. The first uses the Astra upload function to transfer data via a file exported from SMS. The second,

hopefully available in T3, transfers results for relevant fields overnight without manual steps.

Both types of integration depend on an accurate mapping between SMS fields and Astra assessment items: they must have compatible characteristics. The convenor is responsible for specifying corresponding fields via a file **astra_map** in \$SMSDB. A give command **sms2astra.sh** manages the creation of a stub file and the CSV data generation once it has been edited. Class account profiles are set up to be able to use it on the command line.

Usage is shown below

Command	Response
<code>sms2astra.sh --info</code>	Displays all Astra items for the courses that sms manages
<code>sms2astra.sh --config</code>	Creates <code>astra_map</code> in the sms database directory, <i>must then be edited</i>
<code>sms2astra.sh --check</code>	Validates the map and compares the sms relation with associated Astra items
<code>sms2astra.sh</code>	Extracts current results for matched items and creates a CSV file for each Astra course offering for upload

Each line of \$SMSDB/astra_map is either empty, a comment (# notation) or defines the relationship between an Astra name and an SMS field, white-space separated. Hyphens are placeholders for SMS fields yet to be specified. Only items with CSEsystems as a source are listed.

```
# Default config created on Sat Jul  6 16:10:30 2019
ASST1 ass1
ASST2 lab04
TEST automark_lab01_dictionary
OTHER -
EXAM notyet
```

Examples

```
en1811@marimba[-] sms2astra.sh --info
Astra item details as at Mon Jul 22 22:30:25 AEST 2019:
Name Description Short Desc Item Type Source Maximum Abs Max Precision Rounding Scale ID
ENGG1811 (UGRD) T2:
FINAL Final Result Final Mark Calculated 100 100 1 Up to
LAB Laboratory exercises Lab Mark sms 100 100 1 Nearest
ASST Programming assignments Assigns Mark sms 100 100 1 Nearest
MIDTRM Midterm test MidTm test Mark sms 100 100 1 Nearest
EXAM Final exam Final exam Mark sms 100 100 1 Nearest
```

```
cs2041: ../sms2astra.sh --check
(Empty) No SMS item corresponds to Astra's OTHER
(Conf) SMS item automark_lab01_dictionary has more precision (0.1) than Astra's TEST (1)
(Conf) SMS item ass1 has more precision (0.1) than Astra's ASST1 (1)
(Conf) lab04 max is 1.2 but ASST2 max is 100.00
(Dodgy) No such SMS item as notyet (associated with Astra item EXAM)
```

```
cs2041: ../sms2astra.sh
19T2COMP2041.csv, students: 446
.=289 ?=169 TEST: Programming Tests
.=289 ?=169 ASST1: Assignment 1
19T2COMP9044.csv, students: 121
.=117 ?=12 TEST: Programming Tests
.=117 ?=12 ASST1: Assignment 1
```

Two files are created in this case. The numbers of NoResult and Pending results are listed.

Q&A

Q: The Astra structure is wrong, how do I fix it?

A: Significant changes need to be actioned via the service desk, as the top-level structure is supposed to be consistent with AIMS2 rather than up to the convenor's whim. Maximum or precision changes can be done in the Structure pages in Astra.

Q: I've always kept component marks on a spreadsheet and just sent through final grades. Can't I keep doing this?

A: The ability to explain exactly how each student obtained their final result is an important goal of changing assessment recording procedures. Component marks are needed to ensure this.

Q: Do I have to use SMS?

A: No, but the data capture sources need to be able to transfer results to Astra, and SMS is relatively convenient for this. Moodle is an alternative, it has a different way of defining the item mapping but the transfers occur overnight (expected for SMS in T3).

Q: What do I do with the CSV files?

A: Astra has an upload/download page. You need to provide a reason, but it's not validated. It is kept for posterity, though.

Q: How can I pass special flags to Astra?

A: At the moment special flags aren't passed to Astra. Its equivalent mechanism, exceptions, is richer but can only be set interactively.

Q: So how can I flag students for a Supp Exam?

A: Someone will need to record an exception of that type in Astra. Maybe down the track there will be an automated way of doing this.

Q: Does Astra have the equivalent of Prodamark?

A: Yes and No. Using Prodamark to adjust the final result distribution is not consistent with UNSW policy, where each student must be assessed against standards. However nobody can set the standard of an individual assessment item with perfect accuracy, so Astra allows a similar adjustment to input items for the purpose of recalibrating the minimum standard so it's 50%. Calibration isn't as convenient as Prodamark. If you want to use Prodamark to send through only recalibrated results to Astra you could do that. The difference is that if it's done in Astra a record of how the raw marks were adjusted is retained.

Q: How do I finalise results?

A: See the convenor training module. It's essentially a matter of making sure everything's up to date and a button press. John or Andrew will approve them on behalf of the School (or complain about them).

Q: Can I allow students to see their provisional result in SMS?

A: No, this is not permitted by the UNSW Assessment Policy, except to advise students of a WC result so they can be ready for supplementary assessment. SMS should not be used for determining a final result unless as an extra check.

Q: How do supp exam results get through to Astra?

A: Assuming the exam structures are compatible, just enter the revised marks in SMS and do another export. New results for an item with a Spec Con: Supp Assess exception cancels the exception so the student gets a proper result. The finalisation process in this case send the results

GW T2 2019

