Organisation and consistent use of Blackboard

Principles

Logically and consistently organised and labelled

Accessible

Your digital tools are explained to students

Logically and consistently organised and labelled

Trying to find inconsistent and illogically labelled and located content on Course Resources is like having to find a new route to work every day without a map, or trying to find a book in the library which has all books heaped in a pile.

Unnecessary effort is spent trying to find the content, rather than engaging with the content.

Course Resources has a standard template applied to all modules. This means that there is a pre-set layout with some structure into which you can add your content in a consistent and logical way.

There is some freedom in how you organise your content, as long as it is consistently applied. For example, in the Study Materials folder, you can label your folders Week 1, 2 etc, or according to themes which makes sense in the context of the module.

Within each folder, you could label your filename in a way that provides information about the contents of each file so that students can easily understand what it is after being downloaded onto their devices. Ideally, the filename could reference the week or theme it's a part of, and a brief description of the content.

Explanation of Course Resources Template

Each module has a standard template with several areas that are designed to help you structure your content.

External Examiners area

From 2019, the External Examiner's area has been removed from the module navigation. Content for Externals must now be put in the External Examiners folder in the module's Content Collection. This is to prevent any unintended access by students to content.

You must not recreate the External Examiner's area on the navigation menu. Use only the folder in Content Collection.

[Read the how to guides about External Examiners here.](#)

Every new module has the following standard layout:

News

This is the landing page for the module. Your module announcements are created and published on this page.

Module Information

This is where you must put your module information like the module handbook, contact information, external examiner details and the assessment schedule.

Study Materials

Add your materials for students to reference in this folder such as PowerPoints, word documents etc. You should organise it in a logical and consistent manner e.g. according to a weekly schedule or module themes.

Collaborate (virtual classroom)

Collaborate is similar to Skype with group audio/video calls and text chat, but has some extra interactive functionality to allow participants to draw on a collaborative whiteboard or go into breakout groups for small group chat. You can stream your lecture to students who are unable to attend, and allow them some participation in the session.

Lecture Recording

Some form of recording for each appropriate session you run is now University policy. You could choose to record the entire session, editing where appropriate, or make a short five minute summary about the session.

Online Reading List

The library can create an electronic reading list and add it to your module. Ask your subject librarian for more information.

Assessment

This area is where all your assessment points should go. This includes Turnitin, Online tests, Blackboard Assignments, and Pebblepad. You should also include any documentation about the assessment in this area.

Provisional Grades and Feedback

From 2019 this link is available by default. It shows students their gradebook for assessments. If you do not want to show students their results before the release date, then you must hide the column in Grade Centre. How to guide on Managing Grade Visibility.

OneDrive

Quick link to OneDrive cloud storage.

Office 365

Quick link to office 365 login.

Student help

Link to the student Course Resources help module.

IT Support

Link to IT Services website.

Staff help for Course Resources

Link to academic staff help site for Course Resources.

Accessible

In addition to providing services for students with additional needs, such as note takers, we have to make our content as accessible as possible. With digital content this may mean you have to revisit your documents and modify them to achieve a green rating on the Course Resources Ally tool.

The Ally tool checks your digital documents to see how they work when processed with screen readers or other accessibility tools. Ally also produces alternative formats automatically, like MP3 text to speech audio files, or PDF versions of your documents.

The Ally tool will provide you with tips about how to make your documents accessible.

How to find and use the Ally tool help guide.

Your digital tools are explained to students

You should ensure that your students are introduced to the digital platforms you are using and provide guidance and examples of use where appropriate. This may take the form of a formal induction on your Course Resources module, or introduced gradually through the teaching period as you utilise different tools for work.

References

Digital Practice baselines https://digitalhandbook.wp.derby.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2019/08/digital_practice_programme_baseline_form_2019.pdf

Appendix 1

Digital Practice Baselines

1. Digital Course Material: Tutors create an online presence for all modules on Course Resources (Blackboard) prior to the start of teaching, with signposting to an alternative platform in exceptional cases.

- There is a logical and consistent structure to organise online learning and teaching materials. Where appropriate, 'adaptive release' rules are used to personalise the online student experience

2. Inclusivity and Accessibility: Course material is stored online and organised to aid navigation, facilitate independent study and prevent digital exclusion. The University is legally obliged to produce accessible course content.

- The VLE is used to provide timely access to learning and teaching resources. There is a consistent approach to reviewing the accessibility of course materials by using tools such as Blackboard Ally. Transcripts are provided for any media based resources.

4. Communication and Key Information: Guidance must be available to help students orientate themselves with the online areas of their module or programme. There should be a particular focus on making sure students receive regular announcements and are familiar with their 'Course Materials' and 'Assessment' content areas.

NSS Learning Resources

The library resources (e.g. books, online services and learning spaces) have supported my learning well.

Expectations, Activity and Outcomes

1 What are you expecting from this session?

2 So What - what are the implications for your work?

3 Now What will you do after this session to apply this to your work?

Notes

Organisation of content

Consistency throughout modules