# VLE (Blackboard) - Departmental Policy Statement

Psychology has been an early adopter in the comprehensive provision of a Virtual Learning Environment., since the provision of Blackboard we have aimed to provide a complete coverage of all our teaching activities and encourage the use of all the facilities and tools available. We envisage the VLE as key to supporting the teaching and the student experience within the department. All items relating to teaching are expected to provided via the VLE in an integrated manner, eg lecture recordings (Replay) and Reading Lists. The VLE will provide an archive for students to access during their whole course (for example 3rd years students can access their first year resources).

## Coverage

On the undergraduate programme (BSc and MSci) each of our 5 core strands and each Advanced Module has a VLE 'site'. We have templates which outline the provision and approximate structure, but encourage the staff to customise their module to suit their delivery whilst not affecting clarity, expectations and consistency.

In addition to the core and advanced modules we provide a number of extra VLE 'sites', some for housekeeping (such as submission points for essays) some for materials that are general and used in many courses (Academic Skills, IT Extras, Dept Seminars, Programming and others).

## Expected Module Provision

Each module's 'site' will provide

- an overview
- staff information
- detailed session (lectures, workshops, practicals, seminars, tutorials) information (see below)
- Assessment and feedback information
- Integrated access to the reading list
- Replay (lecture recording) links
- Discussion forum
- A link to the departments module on Academic Skills, providing a quick access to advice and guidance

Each teaching session will have a 'page' which will include a

- description of the content, aims and objectives
- powerpoint slides or equivalent from the session
- reading lists information
- extra resources, papers, pdf etc
- links to extra materials where appropriate, pdfs, external links, screencasts, multimedia (Youtube)

## Optional Module tools

Staff are encouraged to use the range of tool available from the VLE such as formative quizes in support of their teaching. The E-learning team are always willing and available to discuss potential uses and benefits and offer guidance on best practice when engaging with these facilities.

## Module Access and Enrolment

Students are automatically enrolled on their modules via the central systems (SITS) and managed by the VLE support team. They should all be available in the first week of term and often beforehand.

Staff are added to modules that they teach on and can be added to any other module by a request to the module leader.  Guest students (from other depts or not doing an elective module) can contact the module organiser to seek enrolment.

## Engagement and Usage

The department expect the students and staff to engage with the VLE via their modules.

- Staff are expected to provide learning materials (for example ppt, pdf, videos) in advance of their sessions and be engaged with and responsive to the discussion forums.
- Students re expected to use consult the VLE before each session to obtain an overview of the material, aims and objectives and any learning resources pertinent to the session (eg handouts). After the session the students can explore supplementary resources such as extra articles, screencasts, links to external resources such as  papers, slides, websites, TV /media.  Students will also be expected to access the session recordings where available for revision and clarification. We encourage our students to engage with the discussion forum to ask and answer questions and discuss any topics of interest.

# Accessibility

We aim to make sure all our materials are accessible by all students.  We have adopted a number of good practices to aid this (and general provision) as listed below (see https://elearningyork.wordpress.com/learning-design-and-development/technology-enhanced-learning-handbook/1-baseline-use-of-the-vle/1-2-key-accessibility-guidelines/ for extra guidance)

- Advance provision of lecture and seminar materials via the VLE
- All our undergraduate assessed coursework is via online submission.
- Where available we encourage staff to provide links or references to digitised versions (pdfs) of texts and textbooks
- All our teaching sessions are recorded and provided with the teaching materials.
- Each module has an online forum, monitored by the teaching staff
- Our sites are based around the same template and should provide a clear and consistent navigational structure.
- Clear and unambiguous text on pages
- Clear and meaningful names for hyper inks to resources and uploaded files
- Addition descriptive information (either textual or soundtrack) for visual resources (images, graphs, videos etc)

**Contact**:

The department takes accessibility issues seriously and we are always keen to improve and solve any outstanding problems that maybe encountered.  If students do have specific requests and or issues accessing materials or require further support they should contact *###############  ## (PAUL - DO WE we want this to be a central person - like Louise or Academic staff member/role or the INFORMATION PROVIDER ?)* to discuss what can be provided to aid learning.