Blackboard Unit Preparation Guide

This document aims to support the Unit Coordinator and Teaching Support Officer throughout the whole unit cycle.

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* References below (unless it is a web link) will be resources located in the Humanities Staff Orientation and Support Blackboard site which is available to all Humanities staff. If you are having trouble accessing this site, please email Hum-LTS@curtin.edu.au.

Pre- Study Period

Unit Outline

The unit outline is a contractual obligation with students containing important information such as unit learning outcomes, types of learning activity, assessment due dates and program calendar. Due date for publishing of ALL unit outline to student is ONE week prior to the start of a study period.

References

• ‘Important Considerations for writing your Unit Outline’ – a tip sheet offering ideas on how to write to improve on the usefulness of your unit outline
• ‘UOB Training Guide’ – the support resource on how to use the Unit Outline Builder to copy and edit on a previous unit outline or create a new unit outline.
Tutor access to Blackboard unit and Update their contact details on Blackboard

Ensure that your teaching team is granted the correct access to the unit for building the content, marking and Blackboard Analytic. If you need help, do contact your teaching support team.

References

- Video on how to add/remove staff users [Duration 0:50]

Update Learning resources

Check through the content that has been copied into this current Blackboard unit to ensure that dates are updated to reflect new study period and resources are still relevant. It is good practice to

- avoid putting dates in content
- abstain from mentioning the delivery mode or locality of students like “Bentley student”, “fully online” and other offshore location
- check all adaptive release setup attached to the resources and try to avoid using date restriction
- check that all web links are still working
- ensure assessment deadlines if repeated in Blackboard should be the same as stated in the unit outline
- if in use to setup discussion forum(s) in Discussion Board and to clear out old postings that are copied over, c.

References

- Understanding and Building Your Course (a Curtin wiki page created and maintain by the Learning Technologies Services Support Team, requires connection to Curtin’s VPN if accessing from outside of Curtin network)
- Creating content in Blackboard
- Podcast as a form of learning resource

Update Reading List

The Leganto Reading List is a service offered by the Library which helps you manage copyright obligations when you create and curate learning resources. With the use of the Reading list, students will then be able to access digitized resources anytime and anywhere. So, refrain from uploading journal articles, book chapter, videos and other resources not from yourself directly onto Blackboard.

References

Reading List instructional guide

Create Assessment Submission Links

The Assessment and Student Progression Policy states (on page 6 of 83) that “Submission of student work and decisions relating to assessment will be appropriately evidenced”. As such, most assessments are submitted electronically into Blackboard Learning Management System, one of the University approved secure electronic repository. It is considered good learning and teaching practice to allow first year students to submit a draft version of their assignment through Turnitin to help them develop referencing skills while the rest of the students to submit just a final version of their work.

To achieve all this, Blackboard or Turnitin assignment submission points need to be created.

References

- Creating and Editing Blackboard assignments
- Creating Turnitin draft and final assignments (page 4 of 41)

Setup Grade Centre

According to the Assessment and Student Progression Policy (page 14 of 41):

“2.14 Marks for each summative assessment task will be entered into a University approved secure electronic repository for assessment task results as soon as is reasonably practicable.”
2.15 Changes to student marks after the initial entry of the mark for an assessment task will be confirmed by the relevant
Unit Coordinator. A reason for the change will be recorded in a University approved secure electronic repository.”

As such, it is important that the Grade Centre is setup correctly with each summative assessment having its own
grade column and the Final Marks column is linked to all the assessment columns to calculate the accumulated
total. UC is responsible to communicate and monitor that the any changes to the initial marks will have a rationale
for the change recorded in the Grade Centre as well.

References

- How to setup the Grade Centre

Update iLecture Links

If you are recording your lecture or class, go into the iLecture Management Tool to check that the schedules for lecture
recording are aligned to your lesson schedule and that the iLectures link on the Blackboard left menu is linked to the
correct iLecture section (the default is the iLecture section with the same name and Course ID).

References (these links below belongs a Curtin wiki page created and maintain by the Learning Technologies Services
Support Team, requires connection to Curtin’s VPN if accessing from outside of Curtin network)

- Change the iLectures link on the Blackboard left menu – specifically for linking the iLectures link on the Bb left
  menu to a different iLecture section as the default (e.g. for a semester 2 unit, instead of linking to a new semester
  2 section for that unit, to link it to an existing ongoing section)

- Add another iLecture section into a Blackboard unit – it is only possible to link to one iLecture section via the
  Blackboard left menu, so if you already have the current lecture recordings in the iLecture section linked to the
  left menu and would like your guest lectures which are loaded on an Ongoing section to be added as resources in
  your content areas (e.g. Topic 6 folder), add them as direct ‘iLecture – Content’ links.

- Staff ALP info quick links — other iLecture ALP resource links

Update Announcements and post Welcome announcement

Announcement is a great way to inform all the students enrolled into your unit about important unit information. It is
also the communication channel to use to post reminders, encouragements and offer links to useful resources more
appropriately loaded into the other content sections in your Blackboard unit. Depending on how the content is being
copied, there might be a need to delete/hide old announcement postings. UC and/or tutor(s) to post welcome
announcement and/or welcome video by the first day of the orientation week (the day students start to get access to
their enrolled units) to introduce themselves and/or orient the new students.

References

- About using Announcements

Create Tutorial Groups

If your Blackboard unit comprises of more than one tutorial group, you might want to consider setting up groups within
the unit to allow for different marker to view a specific group at any one time (for marking and moderation purposes),
for customizing resources and organizing interaction with students at a group level.

References

- Create and manage groups
During Study Period

Monitor Discussion Board, Send Emails and use other Communication platforms

When choosing and adopting an appropriate communication tool that you and your students would be comfortable using, it is beyond catering only to fully online students in need of support and timely response but also to stay engaged with your internal students after class. But how much time do you need to set aside to make sure that your presence is still felt in that online space? If the subscription feature is available, you can receive notification whenever there is a posting. Use such platforms to offer encouragement and create learning communities to develop lifelong learning skills.

References

- ‘Some Practical Tips for e-Learning’ – a write-up on ideas you can adopt to engage with your students outside of class

Provide Feedback (Text-based and Audio)

Feedback does not restrict only to the comments and tracked changes we offer to students on their assessments. Ideas that are triggered from a conversation we had with the students or between students are also useful feedback that will help to develop their skills and behavior that lead to better understanding and deeper learning. In order to provide sustainable feedback like this, we have to be conscious to give feedforward type of guidance. Also, there has been evidence that audio feedback complements text-based feedback as the “tone of voice helped understanding; that it had more depth and that it seemed more genuine” [1]

References

- ‘Assessment and Feedback Strategies’ workshop presentation slides in the Humanities Staff Orientation and Support Blackboard site > Humanities Training Workshops > Workshop resources folder > Assessment and Feedback Strategies subfolder

  Feedback versus Feedforward

  ![Feedback Diagram]

  **Feedback**

  - Formative task(s)
  - Assessment 1
  - Assessment 2
  - Assessment 3

  Knowledge and skills required to be demonstrated in each assessment are scaffolded via formative task(s)

  Feedback provided for the formative task(s) target more at meeting the learning outcomes for the aligned assessment.

  **Feedforward**

  - Assessment 1
  - Assessment 2
  - Assessment 3

  Building up of knowledge as 'complexity' and 'scope' of assessment get expanded progressively throughout the study period.

  Requires feedforward type of feedback to ensure students use the feedback received to improve on the next assessment.


‘Tweak’ Resources to suit students’ needs

All resources are developed prior to ‘meeting’ with your new students. As such, there might be a need to add in new instructions or offer extra resources to help them understand the content and engage with them better. Using videos and podcast are some of the emerging mediums you can use to teach in your Blackboard unit to cater for different learning styles and learning disabilities. The combination of images and sound to communicate a topic is believed to inspire and engage student more than text-based resources.

References (in the Humanities Staff Orientation and Support Blackboard site > Humanities Training Workshops > Blackboard-related and Educational Tools folder)

- Create your own video and podcast
- Using social media for learning and teaching
- How to embed YouTube clip into your Blackboard unit.

Record and Validate Assessment Marks in Grade Centre; Setup Smart Views

As you mark the assessments and record the marks into the Grade Centre, keep in mind to employ the moderation processes.

As stated in the Assessment and Student Progression Manual (page 14 of 83 under the ‘Recording Mark’ section), there is the need to record a reason for the change of mark after the initial entry.

For merged Blackboard site or unit with more than one tutorial class, you might find it easier to setup smart view for different availabilities in a merged site or for students according to their tutorial groups.

References

- Assessment moderation
- Entering marks
- Changing marks
- Setup smart view

Download Recorded Grades

For easy access to marks for any administrative matters, it is good practice to download a copy of the Grade Centre at important timeline (e.g. after marking each assessment and after finalizing the final marks). It is also recommended that UC do this in case of accidentally deleting any marking by staff with access to the Grade Centre.

References

- Archiving Blackboard Grade Centre

Request for Teaching Evaluation

The eVALUate Teaching Survey allows students to provide feedback to individual tutors on different aspects of their teaching performance. The purpose of feedback from students is more to improve the quality of teaching and learning from both the students’ and teachers’ points. So, do rope in the other teaching staff to discuss ideas for improvement after receiving the feedback.

References

- Teaching evaluation request dates
- Teaching evaluation request
- Guidelines for interpreting eVALUate teaching evaluation reports
After Study Period

Analyse Blackboard Analytics data

Blackboard Analytics can provide some insights into how students have been engaging with the content and learning tasks in your unit. Take some time to analyse some of these data and make sense out of them to guide you through editing your learning resources for the next study period.

References

- Blackboard Analytics (in the Humanities Staff Orientation and Support Blackboard site > Humanities Training Workshops > Workshop Resources > Blackboard Analytics folder)

Plan for improvements for unit

Based on feedback and observation made from engaging with the students over the study period, you will likely pick up some ideas on how to improve on your unit.

References (in the Humanities Staff Orientation and Support Blackboard site > Humanities Training Workshops > Workshop Resources folder)

- Improving Learning Engagement and Support
- Learning Engagement Matrix (in the Improve your unit with a Blackboard makeover folder)
- Colloquial for Sharing of Best L&T Practices