

**Learning Edge:
Policy & Practice in
Managing the
Course Lifecycle**

Overview

This document sets out the policy, standardised practices when using the Learning Edge virtual environment. Learning Edge is a suite of systems with Blackboard Learn (9.1) at its centre which can be accessed online to support the students' learning experience.

This policy is required to ensure a disciplined and consistent approach to housekeeping, management and ongoing development of the Learning Edge Systems in order to ensure a consistent staff and student experience. Exceptions can in some instances be accommodated and these are covered in the policy.

The area of learning technology systems is undergoing major changes not only at Edge Hill but across the sector therefore it will be reviewed and updated periodically to reflect product developments and as other systems interact with the core system, Blackboard 9.1.

The policy is set out as a series of frequently asked questions.

Learning Edge Administration	
Why do I no longer need to let my Learning Technologist know in advance what courses I need creating in Learning Edge next year?	3
How can I make sure students enrolled on different instances of a module are taught and/or supported in a single area in Learning Edge?	3
Will I automatically get access to my Learning Edge areas?	4
What are the naming conventions for merged courses?	5
We have some compulsory activities that are needed across many programmes / modules yet are not credit bearing. How might we create a Blackboard course with those students enrolled?	5
I need to create a course that is not linked to SID and I can't achieve it by merging. Can I do this?	6
Build and Teach	
Can I upload large files directly into Learning Edge?	6
Will my students automatically be given access to my Learning Edge courses?	7
How can I enrol a student who is resubmitting coursework or resitting an exam onto a more recent version of the course in Learning Edge?	8
How can I give access to someone who is not an enrolled student or a member of staff at Edge Hill?	9
Archiving and Housekeeping	
How long will my Learning Edge course be available to my students?	9

FAQs	Why this is important	Impact on policy and practice
Administration		
<p>Why do I no longer need to let my Learning Technologist know in advance what courses I need creating in Learning Edge next year?</p>	<p>The Student Information Database (SID) is the parent system to Learning Edge's child.</p> <p>Course and student data is pulled into Learning Edge from SID.</p> <p>Data in Learning Edge is current and is as accurate as the data in SID.</p> <p>The process is automated with no scope for manual creation of Learning Edge Programme or Module courses with associated automated student enrolment.</p> <p>Changes in student or course records in SID are reflected in Blackboard within the hour except 2 weeks either side of Welcome Sunday when the update is done overnight.</p>	<p>If course or student information is incorrect in SID, it will be incorrect in Learning Edge and will impact on staff/student access and experience.</p> <p>All changes to course and student data must be made in SID.</p> <p>Students should not be manually added to Learning Edge courses where there is no corresponding record in SID. Any 'orphan' student records like these will be removed from the system. Exceptions can be accommodated by the allocation of a role that indicates their presence in the module, e.g. student mentor role.</p> <p>Changes to student status in SID can take place over the life of a course depending on individual student circumstances and may impact on what they can access in Learning Edge.</p>

<p>How can I make sure students enrolled on different instances of a module are taught and/or supported in a single area in Learning Edge?</p>	<p>There is 1-1 mapping between SID/Learning Edge courses controlled by Learning Edge's Snapshot tool</p> <p>Data from SID is accurate.</p> <p>No manual data entry is required for Learning Edge.</p> <p>SID course records do not, however, reflect the taught curriculum at Edge Hill e.g. a full-time module and its part-time equivalent will have separate records in SID but may be taught as a single unit in the face-to-face classroom and/or in Learning Edge.</p>	<p>Each Learning Edge course begins life as an empty 'shell' with a default course menu structure but without tools or teaching and learning content.</p> <p>To create the taught curriculum in Learning Edge it may be necessary to create a new 'parent' course that merges together a series of 'child' courses using the Course Relationship Tool.</p> <p>The term 'merge' is misleading as the shell courses continue to exist individually as a new course is created into which all student enrolments associated with the contributing courses are added.</p> <p>Faculty Administrative staff are responsible for creating parent courses and the child relationships [but working first with academic colleagues to determine the Learning Edge course structure for each taught Programme]. The term used for this type of area in Blackboard is 'merge'.</p> <p>The new courses created by a merge must be given a file name that is consistent with course naming conventions already in use in Learning Edge (see section below). This will ensure the</p>
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		<p>integrity of data records within Learning Edge and will make future searching/ retrieval of these merged courses possible.</p>
<p>Will I automatically get access to my Learning Edge areas?</p>	<p>There is no automatic enrolment of administrative, academic or support staff into Learning Edge courses.</p> <p>There is currently no way of automating this process.</p>	<p>Staff enrolments into Learning Edge will be managed within faculties. Faculty course administrators will, on request, grant access to primary course contacts e.g. Programme/Course/Year/Module leads who will then be able to give their teams the required levels of access.</p> <p>Learning Technology Development Division (LTD) will assign Faculty Administrators with Course Administration rights to Learning Edge.</p> <p>LTD will need accurate records of all Faculty Administrative staff requiring course admin rights to Learning Edge.</p> <p>Faculty Administrative staff will assign Learning Edge Instructor rights to Programme/Year/Module leads depending on the local arrangement</p>

		<p>Enrolment of additional Instructor and other Learning Edge roles will be cascaded by Instructors in accordance with local arrangements.</p> <p>Learning Edge Qualification, Programme or module course areas will have been generated automatically but will remain invisible to academic staff until they have been enrolled into the relevant course.</p>
<p>What are the naming conventions for merged courses?</p>	<p>Merged courses are generated manually (see section above) to bring a number of courses into a single space. As such, they require naming by the administrator working with their academic colleagues. A consistent approach is required for naming merged courses to enable them to be easily identified and retrieved from among the many thousands of courses in Learning Edge.</p>	<p>Parent courses should follow the conventions described below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin with an academic year or STAT reference as this will determine when the course area is archived • End with MRG so all merged (parent) courses can be easily identified • Contain course ID references which provide adequate information about the area <p>The syntax for a merged course ID is:</p> <p><ACADEMIC YEAR¹ OR STAT²>_<COURSE ID>_<MRG></p> <p>¹ACADEMIC YEAR This is the academic year they are registered in, therefore, all merged courses running in the Sept 2016 to Aug</p>

		<p>2017 academic year will have a prefix of 2016 regardless of their intake or start date.</p> <p>²STAT is used in place of academic year to indicate that the area is static i.e. it is not associated with any specific year and will continue until the course it supports is no longer taught.</p>
<p>We have some compulsory activities that are needed across many programmes / modules yet are not credit bearing. How might we create a Blackboard course with those students enrolled?</p>	<p>Examples include the Training Needs Analysis from the teacher training teams, or Clinical Skills across several nursing programmes.</p>	<p>Academic Registry have agreed to construct zero credit bearing modules for this circumstance. You need to let Academic Registry know BEFORE students enrol or re-enrol – because the automated enrolment system cannot be setup once student have begun to enrol.</p>
<p>I need to create a course that is not linked to SID and I can't achieve it by merging. Can I do this?</p>	<p>LTD can create an Organisation these are like courses, but with different enrolment options, from manual entry, through to 'self-enrolment'.</p> <p>Maybe you are...</p>	<p>A Learning Edge Organisation is an area modelled on an empty Blackboard Course that can be used by staff and students from all faculties and departments for activities that are in support of the educational, research, administrative and social mission of the University.</p> <p>An Organisation shares the same layout, tools, and features as a Blackboard course, allowing authorised participants who have</p>

	<p>A Researcher and want somewhere to store documents, promote events, record surveys and centralise collaboration.</p> <p>A Society may want to share their passion with other likeminded participants.</p> <p>A member of a team and want to organise your (online) meetings, information, communication and collaboration in a single location.</p> <p>A tutor who wants to develop an area of excellence which goes beyond the scope of the taught-curriculum</p>	<p>Blackboard accounts to access documents and collaborate with other organisation participants in a secure environment. However, unlike a Blackboard course an organisation;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will remain active for at least one academic year (August to August). • Can remain active for multiple years (if continually approved). • Offers far greater participation to all externals • Associated to Edge Hill (PEFs, ATs, Partner Colleges, etc.) • Ex-students (specialist topic support e.g. Nurses, NQTs etc.) • Subject Experts (Industry Leaders, Careers Advisors, Practitioners etc.) • Research Partners (individuals, NHS, Schools etc.) • Offer communities of support and practice for staff, students and externals. • Alumni? • Must be requested and approved. • Must meet its request criteria each year (to remain available). • Cannot be used for course credit-earning activities.
Build and Teach		
Can I upload large files directly into Learning Edge?	EHU’s Learning Edge is externally hosted by Blackboard under a licensing agreement.	EHU has purchased a T&L content repository (eShare) to store reusable Learning Edge materials (including multimedia). This will

	<p>We need to exercise effective system management to ensure we stay well within the data storage limits contained within our Learning Edge license but still allow for an expansion in Learning Edge use across the University. This also contributes to the Learning Edge system being highly available.</p> <p>Large files uploaded directly into Learning Edge courses can cause problems when uploading/downloading and offer a poor staff and student experience.</p> <p>Large courses can present problems with some system features (e.g. course copy functions) and should be avoided to secure a successful user experience.</p>	<p>enable Learning Edge to store all student-generated content such as discussion, blogs, wikis, assignments and feedback.</p> <p>Learning Edge enables 'mashups' for embedding YouTube videos, Flickr images and Slideshare documents in courses. The University is also exploring creating content with the iSpring package.</p> <p>PowerPoint and Word can produce very large file sizes, usually the result of incorporating large format or high resolution images into the presentation. This may be of value when presenting the in class but presents problems when delivered online via a Learning Edge course. Large files can be easily compressed for use in Learning Edge.</p> <p>LTD will monitor Learning Edge data usage to ensure that it stays within license.</p> <p>Exceptions can be managed and each request will be supported wherever possible.</p>
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		LTD will work with colleagues who need support and guidance in how to keep their Learning Edge courses within the 1GB allowance.
Will my students automatically be given access to my Learning Edge courses?	<p>As explained earlier, all student enrolments into Blackboard courses are now automated as a result of the integration with SID.</p> <p>There may be exceptions, however, if the area is a generic resource or a bespoke area and does not mirror a SID course – probably dealt with via Organisations.</p> <p>Students will not automatically see their courses in Learning Edge at the start of the semester – academic colleagues need to make them available to students.</p> <p>This allows for the courses to be built out of public view.</p>	<p>If your course is generic or bespoke check with your Administrator in the first instance or your Learning Technologist.</p> <p>The Learning Edge Instructor or Builder makes the course available to students.</p> <p>It is recommended that course teams agree release dates for Programme/Module courses to ensure the access provided to students is coherent (i.e. across modules on the same Programme).</p>

<p>How can I enrol a student who is resubmitting coursework or resitting an exam onto a more recent version of the course in Learning Edge?</p>	<p>As explained earlier, all student enrolments into Learning Edge are now automated as a result of the integration with SID.</p> <p>Students resitting should submit work into the original course. If there is a need to enrol students from previous years into the current year academic registry will need to create a cohort for those students and that cohort's Blackboard course made a child of the current cohorts' course.</p> <p>Note it is NOT possible to make a course a child course of more than one parent course.</p> <p>While it is possible for students to be added manually to Learning Edge sections other than those they are enrolled on, the frequent data exchange between SID and Learning Edge will normally remove any student records from Learning Edge that do not have a corresponding SID record – hence challenging the student experience – and thus students should not be added in this manner.</p>	<p>In some circumstances it is possible to manually add a student record to a Learning Edge area that does not get removed with the SID/Learning Edge updates.</p> <p>However, manual enrolment to Learning Edge is not supported as there is no automatic means of removing those records. Student enrolments entered manually will be regularly removed from the system.</p> <p>Students who are required to resubmit/resit will not be disadvantaged as academic colleagues will be able to leave their original Learning Edge course available for as long as they need it (see section on Archiving courses below).</p>
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<p>How can I give access to someone who is not an enrolled student or a member of staff at Edge Hill?</p>	<p>There may be circumstances where non-enrolled users, (including users without Blackboard accounts), such as external examiners, prospective students, students awaiting registration, partners etc. are invited to view areas of content and selected tools within your course.</p>	<p>A Module Assessor/External Examiner role is available for external examiners providing access to course files and content, course tools and the Grade Centre.</p> <p>Guest* access allows areas of your course to be shared for a range of purposes. Courses must be enabled to allow guest access.</p> <p><i>* Guests are defined as users in a Course who do not directly participate in its activities.</i></p>
<p>Archiving and Housekeeping</p>		
<p>How long will my Learning Edge course be available to my students?</p>	<p>EHU's policy is that the retention of courses in Learning Edge before archival and deletion from the system is no longer than 36 months or where the course continues to be flagged as 'live' in SID.</p> <p>A robust cycle of Learning Edge 'housekeeping' is necessary to ensure EHU's system is managed effectively and stays well within the data storage limits contained within our Learning Edge license.</p>	<p><i>A more detailed Archival Policy is currently under construction. It will deal with issues such as retention of student data, where and for how long data will be stored and how it will be destroyed at the end of the period.</i></p> <p>The 36 month life of a course in Learning Edge will cover setup, planning, building, delivery and a resubmission period.</p> <p>The normal process for the management of Learning Edge courses which follow a standard semester pattern (i.e.</p>

	<p>Content duplications should be kept to a minimum - please refer to earlier details regarding the eShare repository for reusable content.</p>	<p>September to January, January to May) is for courses to be hidden from students until the first day of the semester in which the course runs.</p> <p>Exceptions to the 36 month rule can be accommodated but it is expected that the majority of Learning Edge courses will be archived after 36 months.</p> <p>Students should be advised to save and store discussions, other collaboration outputs, work and other materials that are important to them before their access ends.</p> <p>It is also recommended as good practice that staff make their own backups of their courses, teaching content and student generated content. LTD are not responsible for providing storage for backups.</p> <p>Learning Edge Managed Hosting also backs up EHU's entire Learning Edge system. This runs on a 30 day cycle – this means that we can request restoration of course data within any 30 day window (this backup cycle works on the basis that day 31 of any period of time from day 1 is overwritten and becomes day 1 of the next 30 day backup set).</p>
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