Edge Hill University

Baseline Use of the VLE

Course templates, consistency and the student experience

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Introduction

Student satisfaction with Learning Edge (Edge Hill's VLE) is extremely positive, with 91.7% of students responding to the *2014-15 Students eLearning Survey*[1] agreeing/strongly agreeing that it enables them to learn at a time and place of their own choosing, and 83.9% agreeing/strongly agreeing that it enhances the knowledge and understanding that they get from lectures, tutorials and practical sessions.

However feedback tells us that many still find it disorganised and difficult to navigate at times.

Thus, to improve the consistency of student experience across programmes of study staff are encouraged to:

1. Standardise the Blackboard course delivery structure, providing all students with separate 'Programme' and 'Module' course spaces.

2. Work with universal Blackboard 'Programme' and 'Module' course templates, providing all students with consistent terminology and organisation of baseline content.

This document provides information about the baseline and the course templates to help administrative and teaching staff to make effective use of the VLE and meet student expectations.

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[1] 6th EHU Student eLearning Survey http://www.eshare.edgehill.ac.uk/9894/1/2014-15_student_elearning_survey.pdf

Baseline use of Learning Edge

All programmes and modules have a virtual learning environment (VLE) presence within Learning Edge and the [Baseline Framework](#) establishes the minimum standards required to meet student expectations, ensuring:

- Consistent course structure and navigation;
- Consistent content location and format, and suitable for a range of devices;
- Announcements are used for urgent course communications;
- Materials are made available in a timely manner;
- Clear guidance for electronic submission, assessment and feedback.

The baseline framework is underpinned by the following principles:

- The Baseline is mandatory – Baseline+ and ++ are purely indicative, drawing upon existing good practice within the University and the wider HE sector;
- Course development in the VLE should be based upon sustainable academic practices – courses and teaching content in Blackboard should be developed and 'owned' by academic colleagues and not routinely delegated to others.
- By making no reference to pedagogy, the Baseline framework recognises that the pedagogic expert is the individual practitioner – but it is hoped that the document will spark conversations, innovations and multi-professional approaches with learning technologists, media developers and information specialists.
- The Baseline will continue to evolve in response to feedback from staff and students, to strategic initiatives, and improvements or developments in software and systems.

Course Templates

University course templates for Programme and Module areas have been developed to help ensure equity of provision and consistency for all students. The templates are aligned with the baseline and offer a starting point for organising learning, teaching and assessment materials. They are not intended to replace or limit existing good practice, or creative and innovative use of Learning Edge.

Menu Structures

The templates contain pre-populated menus to ensure key folders and tools are available and organised consistently.