University of Greenwich Moodle Baseline

Academic & Learning Enhancement Team

Information and Library Services

University of Greenwich

This document establishes baseline expectations for a consistent and high-quality digital learning environment, serving as a guide for designing Moodle Pages. It outlines 7 key areas, allowing for prioritisation with the help of a content table. Each section includes Essential and Recommended practices; while incorporating Essential practices is expected, Recommended practices are for reference and not mandatory. This ensures Moodle course content is well-organised and interaction within our Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) is enhanced, providing a predictable and intuitive experience for all users.

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Created by Academic and Learning Enhancement (ALE)
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1. Navigation and Course Orientation

This is crucial for guiding students seamlessly through their course. It organises the course and content in clear structure. This clarity boosts engagement, reduces confusion, and supports effective learning, ensuring students can easily navigate their studies.

1.1 Course Organisation

Essential:

- In the section/area that serves the "**Get Started**"[1] purpose, include a brief introduction to explain **participation requirements** and the **layout** of the page.
- Set up a **course image** for easy recognition.
- Include **Moodle sidebar blocks**, such as Panopto, Digital Student Centre, Upcoming events, and Support Information and Links. These essential blocks have been added to the Moodle template, please double-check before releasing.
- Organise topics, sections, activities, tasks in a **clear structure**.

Recommended:

- Consider using the "Grid" or an alternative course format if your course content follows a non-linear progression. This can create more logical and engaging layouts, thereby improving the user experience for mobile users.
- Consider adding more Moodle sidebar blocks to enhance engagement based on your course design, *e.g. Level Up XP, latest badges* for gamification design.
- Consider placing the content in an activity, *e.g. "Page"*, if you have long texts on the homepage. This can reduce the overall length and amount of scrolling required.

Useful Link:

- Moodle | IT and Library Services | University of Greenwich

1.2 Content Organisation

Essential:

- Add **meaningful headings/titles**, sub-headings/sub-titles, and introductory descriptions, to each topic/section/sub-section. If it's weekly format course, add week numbers and dates for easy navigation.
- **Number and label** all resources and activities clearly.
- Add **word counts and time estimates** to resources, *e.g. "Task 1.1 - Active Learning (10 min)"*.
- Add **navigation texts** to guide students from one task/section to the next.

Recommended:

- Consider enabling **completion settings** (*e.g. Completion tracking, Activity Completion*) for the course resources and activities to enable students and Moodle to footprint tracking.

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[1] For details of the "Get Started" section, please refer to the Moodle Template, where the structure and guidance are explained.

- Consider using H5P and HTML editor to add more interactive content to help the structure, *e.g. Accordion* for Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) design.

Useful Links:

- <u>Activity completion - MoodleDocs</u>
- <u>Examples and Downloads | H5P</u>
- <u>Documentation | H5P</u>

2. Introduction

This is the gateway for students, outlining the course objectives, structure, and expectations. A clear and concise Introduction sets the stage for the learning journey, enhancing student engagement and providing the necessary context for them to navigate the course effectively and align their efforts with the learning outcomes.

2.1 Course Overview

Essential:

- In the section/area that serves the **"Get Started"** purpose, provide a short, **welcoming introduction** to orient students to the module. This may include a brief overview, key learning objectives, and an outline of what to expect from the course.
- In the section/area that serves the **"Get Started"** purpose, include a clear link to the most recent version of the **Module Handbook**. You may also highlight or signpost **key information** within the handbook to support student success.[2]

Recommended:

- Consider adding external and internal hyperlinks to department website and other frequently used website/resources in this course.
- In the section/area that serves the "Get Started" purpose, consider include the outline of learning activities, clearly stating the learning objectives, assessment methods, and instructional materials.
- Consider providing a brief weekly plan that details required readings, online activities, and preparation time to assist students in effectively managing their workload.
- Consider adding brief "ice-breaker" activities at the beginning of the course.

Useful Link:

- <u>Module Handbook | Documents | University of Greenwich</u>

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[2] While detailed information sits in the handbook, summarising key points on Moodle improves accessibility and helps students engage with the course from the outset.

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2.2 Team Introduction

Essential:

- In the section/area that serves the "**Communicate and Support Information**"[3] purpose, include staff contact details, an introduction to the teaching team, and office hours. Adding profile images is optional.

Recommended:

- Consider adding an introductory video filmed with Panopto, particularly if the module Is delivered via distance or HyFlex.
- Consider Upload staff Moodle profile pictures and encourage students to upload their profile pictures.

2.3 Support Services Information

Essential:

- Ensure students are aware of all **available support services**, including academic skills, digital skills, and wellbeing resources. These essential links have been added to the sidebar of the Moodle template—please double-check they are visible before releasing your course.

Recommended:

- In the section/area that serves the "Communicate and Support Information" purpose, you may consider adding any module- or programme-specific support details to further tailor the support for your students.
- Consider adding a FAQs section to provide self-help guides and resources, reducing the need for direct contact. This can be designed by H5P's Accordion or Moodle's Book activity.

Useful Links:

- Academic skills | University of Greenwich
- Support | University of Greenwich
- Advice (greenwichsu.co.uk)

3. Communication and Interaction

This is key to building a vibrant learning community. It establishes clear communication channels and interactive forums, enhancing student engagement and collaboration. This section supports a connected and active learning environment, where students can easily interact, exchange ideas, and seek feedback, enriching their overall learning experience.

3.1 Welcome Message

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[3] For details of the "Communicate and Support Information" section, please refer to the Moodle Template, where the structure and guidance are explained.

Essential:

- Include a **personal message** to students on the homepage, establishing a welcoming atmosphere.

Recommended:

- Consider making a short welcome video by Panopto and Adobe Premiere Rush to establish connection with students.

3.2 Microsoft Teams

Essential:

- Activate the **Microsoft Teams group** linked to your Moodle course if available to ongoing communication. Please note Moodle is still the main platform to upload learning notes and materials. Please put file materials and resources in Moodle instead of Microsoft Teams.

Recommended:

- Consider using the Teams group to post topics to encourage students' communication and collaboration, as this aligns with their social media usage habits. The Teams group can easily access the Moodle course site. Please note announcements should be mainly put through Moodle's Announcement, as announcements will be sent directly to students' inboxes.

Useful Link:

- Moodle and Teams integration guidance | IT and Library Services | University of Greenwich

3.3 Engagement

Essential:

- Use **Forum** activities to support questions and discussions. The **Announcements and Module News forum** is already available on the homepage for key updates, and students can use the **Post Questions to the Module Teaching Team forum** for queries.
- Use **clear and consistent titles** to help students recognise importance updates in the Forum.
- **Clearly outline the purpose** of each communication channel. **Monitor forums regularly** and provide timely responses and feedback to support engagement.

Recommended:

- Considering using and organising Teams Group's Posts and Channels as forums to share feedback, files, and posts to engage students.

Useful Link:

- Forum activity - MoodleDocs

4. Learning Resources and Activities

This enriches student engagement through diverse materials and interactive tasks. It caters to various learning preferences, fosters active participation, and deepens understanding, thereby enhancing the overall learning experience.

4.1 Lecture Materials

Essential:

- In the section/area that serves the "**Get Started**" purpose, compile **reading lists** (Reading List template is attached in the Moodle template) into a single document version. Before uploading, please check University of Greenwich's online library to ensure we have access to resources and email your **Academic Librarian** to request ordering new resources. Avoid uploading PDFs or papers directly as this is in breach of copyright law.
- Provide **clear links** to online teaching events.
- Put **Lecture Capture recordings** in the Panopto **module folder** instead of My Folder.
- Add **Lecture Capture recordings** by Panopto links.
- Ensure all the **resources** are set to be **visible** and **accessible**.
- Use **meaningful** file names and provide **clear** descriptions for lecture materials.
- Be mindful of file and **video sizes**, opting for internal or external links *(e.g., YouTube, Panopto)* and considering different file formats for accessibility.

Recommended:

- Consider using Panopto Interactive Video Quizzing or H5P Interactive Video/Presentation to design the lecturer capture recordings to improve the interactivity and engagement.

Useful Links:
- Welcome to your Library Service - General Library Guide - LibGuides at University of Greenwich
- Please read the full Panopto and Lecture Capture Policy | Documents | University of Greenwich
- Panopto - Remote working | IT and Library Services | University of Greenwich
- Panopto Tutorial Videos
- Course: Panopto Training Essentials (gre.ac.uk)

4.2 Learning Activities

Essential:

- Choose **appropriate Moodle activities**, *e.g., Forum for discussion, Quiz for knowledge checks, and Glossary for vocabulary building.*
- Use **meaningful** file names and provide **clear** descriptions for learning activities.
- Plan your **online session links** in Moodle in advance and provide guidance for students to participate.

Recommended:

- Consider enabling activity completion for students to track their own learning.

- Consider add tags to activities.
- Consider using H5P to design interactive and engaging learning activities, *e.g. Branching Scenario, Course Presentation, Game Map etc.*

Useful Link:

- Activities - MoodleDocs

4.3 External Resources

Essential:

- **Embed link** to external resources like case studies and multimedia.
- Use **embedded HTML or URL link** to embed videos in Moodle.

Recommended:

- Consider using HTML editor in Moodle to customise the settings of the multimedia resources.

Useful Link:

- Media embedding - MoodleDocs

5. Assessment and Feedback

This outlines clear criteria and methods for assignments, coursework, exam, and feedback, guiding students through their learning achievements. This section ensures assessments are fair, transparent, and aligned with learning objectives, providing students with valuable insights into their development and areas for improvement.

5.1 Assessment and Feedback Outline

Essential:

- In the section/area that serves the **"Submission Guidance and Grading Criteria for Assessments"**[4] purpose, please offer a clear, accessible **overview** of module assessments, including points, types, weightings, and due dates.
- Provide clear **assessment criteria**, descriptions, and instructions with **detailed deadlines**.
- Include **submission guidelines**, **grading rubric or marking guide** to clearly detail exactly what is required of students, *e.g. file types, feedback mechanism etc.*
- Include a generic **feedback** section after marking has been completed.
- Use **assignment settings** for clarity, *e.g. due date, submission types, group submission settings, restrict access.*

Recommended:

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[4] For details of the "Submission Guidance and Grading Criteria for Assessments" section, please refer to the Moodle Template, where the structure and guidance are explained.

- Consider providing students with examples or templates for assignment.
- Consider creating a topic in Teams group, FAQs or forum in Moodle regarding assessment for students.

Useful Links:

- Assessment and Feedback Policy | Documents | University of Greenwich
- Assignment activity - MoodleDocs
- Restrict access settings - MoodleDocs

5.2 Plagiarism Prevention

Essential:

- Provide **resources** for avoiding plagiarism, along with links to relevant policies and support services.
- Include clear **guidelines** and expectations to encourage student's academic honesty.
- Using **Turnitin** integration to ensure the integrity of student's submission.

Recommended:

- Consider offering case studies or examples to enhance students' awareness and understanding of plagiarism.

Useful Links:

- Turnitin | IT and Library Services | University of Greenwich
- Writing with authority and avoiding plagiarism | Articles | University of Greenwich

5.3 Formative Assessments

Essential:

- Provide students with opportunities to engage in formative assessments using **appropriate activities**, such as Moodle quizzes, forums, or assignments. Ensure **submission points** are clearly structured and consistent across the programme.

Recommended:

- Consider using various H5P quizzes, Mentimeter or other tools to enhance engagement in formative assessment.

Useful Links:

- Quiz activity - MoodleDocs
- Course: Moodle Quiz
- Mentimeter | Learning and teaching | University of Greenwich

6. Accessibility and Copyright

This ensures content and materials in Moodle are accessible to all and comply with copyright. This focus promotes an inclusive learning environment and respects intellectual property, essential for a fair and respectful learning experience.

6.1 Accessibility Fundamentals

Essential:

- Ensure **fonts** are consistent and large enough with appropriate spacing.
- Ensure clear **heading/title** and content structure.
- Use **plain and clear** language.
- Ensure coloured text has appropriate **contrast**.
- Ensure **links** are **descriptive**.
- Ensure **multimedia** content has accurate **captions/transcripts** and **descriptive texts**.
- **Avoid looping animations**, slide transitions or other persistent movement effects.
- Always add **alt text** descriptions for **images**.
- Provide **accessible file formats,** *e.g. PDF, PowerPoint, Word***.**
- Use the **library scanning service** to ensure the accessibility of scanned documents.
- Ensure that learning materials are **uploaded in advance** to give all students, especially neurodivergent learners, sufficient time to process and prepare before scheduled classes.
- Please use Moodle's **Ally** (Accessibility Checker and Report) to review the accessibility of all documents uploaded to Moodle.

Recommended:

- Include a course-level statement, reaffirming the commitment to accessible learning for all students. This contains introduction, accessibility features, technical requirements, feedback and contact information, guidance for students, additional resource, policy, and compliance information.

Useful Links:

- Accessibility Statement Guidance | About the university | University of Greenwich
- Scanning Service for Academics - Copyright - LibGuides at University of Greenwich
- We've improved our Scanning Service for Academic Staff | Articles | University of Greenwich
- Moodle Blackboard Ally Guidance | Documents | University of Greenwich

6.2 Accessibility Tools

Essential:

- Employ Moodle's **Ally** (Accessibility Checker and Report) to ensure your course design are accessible.
- Employ **Accessibility Checkers** to ensure your documents are accessible**,** *e.g. Microsoft PowerPoint, Word, and Adobe Acrobat.*

Recommended:

- Consider using external Contrast Checker for colour contrast, *e.g. WebAIM*.
- Consider testing your Moodle Course with Screen readers, e.*g. Read aloud in Microsoft Edge.*
- An Ally accessibility score above 70% is recommended to enhance the accessibility and inclusiveness of the Moodle site.

Useful Links:

- Ally Quick Start for Instructors (blackboard.com)
- Improve accessibility with the Accessibility Checker - Microsoft Support
- WebAIM: Contrast Checker

6.3 Copyright

Essential:

- Address **copyright** issues and ensure all content is legally compliant and usable within your course.

Useful Link:

- Copyright and Moodle - Copyright - LibGuides at University of Greenwich

7. Implementation Tips Before Releasing

Before releasing a Moodle course, it's crucial to follow key implementation tips to ensure a smooth and effective learning experience. Pre-release checks and adjustments based on these insights can significantly enhance course quality and student satisfaction.

- Ensure that all tutors and colleagues who require access to Moodle are **enrolled** with the appropriate Moodle role.
- Ensure everything is **updated**.
- Ensure all headings/titles, files, and links have **meaningful** names and descriptions.
- Test all learning activities are **working as expected**, *e.g., quizzes, multimedia files*.
- Switch to **Student Role** to check the Moodle course.
- Ensure the Moodle course is **visible** for students.