Blackboard Guidelines for Staff

Academic Policy Group

1   Purpose

Blackboard is an online Learning Management System used at Victoria University of Wellington to support learning and teaching in face-to-face, blended and distance courses. Blackboard provides an online platform for course websites that hold or link to course information and resources, and tools that support learning activities, course assessment, communication and collaboration.

These Guidelines for University staff outline matters that need to be considered when making a decision to offer or support courses online, using Blackboard, and clarify the level of support that is currently provided for staff and student in their use of Blackboard.

2   Organisational Scope

These are University-wide guidelines.

3   Definitions

For purposes of these guidelines, unless otherwise stated, the following definitions shall apply:

Blackboard:	Blackboard is the main Learning Management System used at Victoria University of Wellington to deliver and support online teaching and learning.
Blended Learning:	Describes a form of learning and teaching where instructors and students share the same physical space in the course of the tuition, but where a substantial component of the tuition or learning occurs off-campus or online (for example, a core course project requires students to work online).
CAD:	Centre for Academic Development.
Distance Learning:	Describes a form of learning and teaching which occurs predominantly or entirely off-campus, and instructors and students do not share the same physical space on a regular basis as part of the tuition.
Face-to-face Learning:	Describes a form of learning and teaching where instructors and students share the same physical space on a regular basis as part of the tuition.
ITS	Information Technology Services.
Online:	Connected to the Internet.

Online learning: Using the Internet and associated web-based applications as the delivery medium for the learning experience (Digital Horizons, p.5 [see References and Related Documents, section 5 of these guidelines]).

SaAS: Student Academic Systems.

4   Guidelines

4.1   *Making a decision to use Blackboard for course delivery*

(a) Course coordinators, lecturers and administrators are encouraged to use Blackboard to enhance student learning experiences. When making a decision to use Blackboard, Schools are advised to consider additional resources (such as time and costs) associated with developing course materials for online delivery, designing and implementing course websites, online teaching and professional development for teaching and administrative staff. Course coordinators and programme administrators are strongly encouraged to make an appointment to see a CAD staff member for an initial consultation. Appointments can be made through the CAD administrator.

(b) In making a decision about whether to use Blackboard as the *main* medium of course delivery (such as with distance courses), it is important to be aware that:

  (i) ITS provide Phone, Email, Video Kiosk, and Self Service support during the core student support hours (NZ time) of:
8am – 9pm Monday to Thursday
8am – 5:30pm Friday
1pm – 5:30pm Saturday and Sunday.
Support hours exclude public and University holidays where the Library is closed.

  (ii) Student support for Blackboard related issues and information about software configurations for using Blackboard off-campus are provided via the ITS Service Desk. ITS perform entry level support for personal laptops. ITS also provide a Laptop Clinic for in-depth support and diagnosis. More information is available at http://www.victoria.ac.nz/its/student-services/documents/LaptopsVic.htm.

  (iii) While CAD offers consultation and advice to staff on online learning, teaching and course delivery using Blackboard, it does not provide student support. All student enquiries related to Blackboard must be logged through the ITS Service Desk. Students can also seek learning help and advice through Student Learning Support Services (SSLS).

  (iv) Lecturers whose distance courses are delivered using Blackboard need to carefully consider strategies to mitigate issues that may arise as a result of technical problems, such as the setup of home or work computers used by students to access Blackboard. Academic staff are encouraged to discuss these matters with CAD staff.

  (v) Technology requirements (including, but not limited to, the use of Blackboard) should be clearly identified in the course outline, course information pages and in the prospectus. Schools must make every reasonable effort to ensure that students are advised of these prior to their enrolment in a given course.

  (vi) Course coordinators and lecturers are required to familiarise themselves with the following University policies and regulations: Acceptable Use for Information

Systems Statute, Assessment Handbook, and Changing Mode of Delivery of Existing Courses Policy.

(vii)   All use of Blackboard must comply with the University Copyright Licences and the Copyright Act 1994.

4.2   Provision of service

(a)   Victoria University of Wellington will meet costs associated with the University-wide annual software licence for Blackboard.

(b)   All University Schools, Centres and Units are able to use Blackboard free of charge.

(c)   Blackboard is currently the only centrally-supported Learning Management System at Victoria University of Wellington.

(d)   The Blackboard service is supported by ITS:

(i)   Blackboard servers are hosted by ITS

(ii)   Blackboard application support is provided by the SaAS group within ITS

4.3   Blackboard incident reports, technical support and course creation requests are handled by the ITS Client Services group and the SaAS.

4.4   Teaching and learning support for staff

(a)   Assistance and advice related to the use of Blackboard for teaching and learning by academic and general staff is provided by CAD.

(b)   CAD provides staff training for Blackboard in the form of generic and tailor-made workshops and courses. Short one-to-one training sessions for staff are also available on request. CAD provides advice to all Victoria staff on issues related to using Blackboard for course design, planning and course delivery.

(c)   Programme and course teams are encouraged to contact CAD for advice, training and teaching and learning support. Further information about Blackboard training is available on the CAD website.

4.5   Blackboard support for students

(a)   Victoria University of Wellington student computing labs are configured to support the use of Blackboard. Student computing labs are located on all University campuses and can be used by all enrolled students. These facilities are supported by ITS (for information on opening hours see http://www.victoria.ac.nz/its/student-services/Student-Lab-Hours.aspx).

(b)   Student problems related to the use of Blackboard should be logged through the ITS Service Desk, using Email (its-service@vuw.ac.nz), an online Self Service form (http://www.victoria.ac.nz/its/), Video Kiosks or by phone (463-5050).

(c)   Information about recommended software and hardware configurations is also available from the Blackboard Login Page (http://blackboard.vuw.ac.nz) and from the Blackboard landing page (once logged on to Blackboard) under *End User Configuration Guidelines.*

(d)   Basic information about Blackboard is provided in the Blackboard section of the *ITS, myVictoria and Blackboard* student brochure, distributed to students as part of their confirmation of enrolment pack. Additional copies of this brochure can be requested from the University Marketing Group.

(e) Lecturers are strongly encouraged to provide an introduction to their Blackboard course website for students, at the start of a course either in a lecture or by other means. This introduction should include an overview of the course site, an explanation of what activities and resources are being made available in Blackboard and how students are expected to use Blackboard in the course.

5   References

Assessment Handbook

Changing Mode of Delivery of Existing Courses Policy

Copyright Act, 1994

Digital Horizons: Learning through ICT. 2003. Wellington: Ministry of Education.

Acceptable Use for Information Systems Statute

Previous version: archived Blackboard Guidelines for Staff

6   Appendices

None

7   Approval Agency

Centre for Academic Development (previously University Teaching Development Centre)

8   Contact Person

The following person may be approached on a routine basis in relation to these guidelines:

Dr Irina Elgort
Centre for Academic Development
Ext: 5970