
Blackboard Guidelines for Staff

Academic Policy Group

1 Purpose

Blackboard is a VUW online Learning Management System, which is used for the delivery of face-to-face, blended and distance courses.

These Guidelines are developed for VUW staff to clarify the level of support that is currently provided for Blackboard by the University, and to outline important matters to consider when making a decision to offer courses online.

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 VUW to deliver and support online teaching and learning. Blackboard is used by face-to-face, blended and distance courses.
Blended Learning:	Describes a form of learning and teaching where a teacher and students share the same physical space in the course of the tuition, but where a substantial component of the tuition occurs off-campus or online (for example, one of the core projects requires students to work online).
CSA:	Central Student Administration.
Distance Learning:	Describes a form of learning and teaching which occurs predominantly or entirely off-campus, and a teacher 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 a teacher 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]).
UTDC	University Teaching Development Centre

4 Guidelines

4.1 Making a decision to use Blackboard for course delivery

- (a) Blackboard can be used for online learning in the context of a face-to-face course or as a delivery mechanism for blended and distance courses. When making a decision to use Blackboard, schools are advised to consider the costs of any additional resources required for course development, implementation and/or delivery. Course coordinators and lecturers are strongly encouraged to make an appointment to see a UTDC staff member for an initial consultation. Appointments can be made through the UTDC administrator.
- (b) When making a decision to rely on Blackboard as the main medium of course delivery, it is important that course coordinators understand that:
 - (i) Currently IT support for VUW students does not cover the use of non-VUW computers, such as home or work computers. Information and advice regarding the configuration of student computers used to access Blackboard off-campus is offered on a 'best effort' basis only.
 - (ii) While UTDC will discuss various aspects of online course delivery with course coordinators and provide advice on technical recommendations for using Blackboard, it does not provide individual student support for Blackboard. All student enquiries related to Blackboard must be logged through the ITS Service Desk.
 - (iii) Lecturers who choose to teach distance courses using Blackboard need to consider carefully strategies to mitigate issues arising from technical problems, such as the set up of home or work computers used by students to access Blackboard and other online resources. Academic staff are encouraged to discuss these matters with UTDC staff.
 - (iv) Technology requirements should be clearly identified in the course outline, course materials 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.
 - (v) Lecturers who use Blackboard are required to abide by the following University policies and regulations: [Information Systems Statute](#), [Assessment Handbook](#), and [Changing Mode of Delivery of Existing Courses Policy](#).
 - (vi) All use of Blackboard must comply with VUW Copyright Licences and the [Copyright Act 1994](#).

4.2 Provision of service

- (a) VUW will meet costs associated with the University-wide annual software licence for Blackboard.
- (b) All University Schools and Units are able to use Blackboard free of charge.

- (c) Blackboard is currently the only centrally-supported VUW Learning Management System. Other online delivery tools and systems, which are used by individual schools, are supported and resourced by these Schools and Units.
- (d) The Blackboard service is supported by ITS and CSA:
 - (i) Blackboard servers are hosted by ITS
 - (ii) Blackboard application support is provided by CSA

4.3 Blackboard support for staff

4.3.1 Provision of technical support

- (a) Staff Blackboard support is currently provided during standard business hours only.
- (b) All staff enquiries related to Blackboard service or availability, such as outages, and all technical enquiries should be directed to the [ITS Service Desk](#)

Note: Levels of technical support for Blackboard are currently under review.

4.3.2 Provision of help and advice

- (a) CSA provides Help Desk support to VUW staff in resolving technical issues and dealing with day-to-day Blackboard service requests.
- (b) Assistance and advice related to the use of Blackboard for teaching and learning by academic and general staff is provided by UTDC.
- (c) UTDC provides staff training for Blackboard in the form of staff workshops. Short one-to-one training sessions for staff are also available on request. Further information about Blackboard training is available on the [UTDC website](#).
- (d) UTDC provides advice to all VUW staff on issues related to designing, planning and delivering face-to-face and distance courses, including those delivered fully or partially online.

4.4 Blackboard support for students

- (a) VUW student computing facilities are configured to support the use of Blackboard. Student computing facilities are located on all University campuses and can be used by all enrolled students. These facilities are supported by ITS (see <http://www.vuw.ac.nz/scs/facilities/facilities.aspx>).
- (b) Student problems related to the use of Blackboard should be logged through the ITS Service Desk or ITS Help Desks during the opening hours (see http://www.vuw.ac.nz/scs/support/help_desk_hours.aspx).
- (c) Technical issues related to using non-VUW computers, including the setup and configuration of personal non-VUW computers are currently outside the scope of Blackboard support for students. Information about recommended software and hardware configurations is published in the VUW Blackboard Online Learning brochure (see section (d) below), and is also available from the Blackboard section of the UTDC website (see <http://www.utdc.vuw.ac.nz/blackboard/>) and from the Blackboard Login Page (<http://blackboard.vuw.ac.nz>).
- (d) The VUW Blackboard Online Learning brochure is distributed to students as part of their confirmation of enrolment pack. The brochure contains basic information about Blackboard, login procedures and technical information and requirements. Additional copies of this brochure can be requested from the VUW Marketing Group or UTDC.

- (e) Lecturers who use Blackboard are strongly encouraged to provide an introduction to their Blackboard course web site for students. 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.

Note: Levels of support for students using Blackboard are currently under review.

5 Legislative Compliance

The University is required to manage its policy documentation within a legislative framework. The legislation directing these guidelines is the:

[Copyright Act, 1994](#)

6 References

[Assessment Handbook](#)

[Changing Mode of Delivery of Existing Courses Policy](#)

[Digital Horizons: Learning through ICT. 2003. Wellington: Ministry of Education.](#)

[Information Systems Statute](#)

Previous version: [archived Blackboard Guidelines for Staff 20080224](#)

7 Appendices

None

8 Approval Agency

University Teaching Development Centre

9 Approval Dates

These guidelines were originally approved on: 28 February 2006

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10 Contact Person

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

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