BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES
FOR ONLINE LEARNING DELIVERY AT
THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND

Interim Report of the TELSC Working Party
for The University of Queensland Teaching and Learning Committee

April 2017
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Executive Summary Report

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In response to student comments, the competitive tertiary education environment in Australia, and the UQ Student Strategy the UQ TELSC established a Working Party in February 2016 to examine best practice for online learning delivery at UQ. The aim of this examination was to improve the use of Blackboard and other online learning tools at UQ by establishing a guideline set of recommended and aspirational online learning delivery practices. The TELSC Working Party members reviewed multiple sources of information to develop a set of potential recommended and aspirational practices, after which they consulted with current students and staff about the desirability and feasibility of these practices.

The consultation revealed a disconnect between the practices that academics felt were most feasible and the practices most desired by students. For example, students wish to submit all their assignment items and see their feedback online, while academics see real limitations in the technology around fully online submissions and marking. As a second example, students expressed a strong preference for Blackboard practices that made course navigation simple, quick, and reproducible from one course to the next while academics valued the ability to organise their Blackboard interfaces in a way that they felt was most pedagogically appropriate for their course.

The results of the consultation were used to propose a set of recommended and aspirational online teaching and learning practices for UQ; many of these suggestions relate to the use of Blackboard and its embedded tools. The proposed recommendations were presented to the TELSC for comment, where they were positively received. The Chairs of Teaching and Learning Committees were also consulted about the recommendations. For the most part, the Chairs also received the recommendations positively, although they expressed reservations about the proposal for a standardised Blackboard structure. These reservations became less pronounced when they saw the outcomes of a pilot standardised Blackboard layout project that is being run by the UQ Business School.

The proposed practices are presented here in this interim report. They are accompanied by a proposed plan, budget, and timeline for implementation. The UQ TLC is asked to consider the recommendations and the implementation plan, which are summarised in the first two pages of this report.

2 SUMMARY OF THE DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

We propose that the below practices for technology-enhanced learning be considered as Recommended at UQ.

Recommendation 1: UQ should provide clear guidelines for, and exemplars of, expected practice for Blackboard site layouts

Recommendation 2: All Learn.UQ sites should use consistent navigation structures

Recommendation 3: UQ should provide site-embedded and external support for academics to help them prepare their Learn.UQ site

Recommendation 4: Learn.UQ sites should have improved potential for site customisation in ways that do not impede navigation

Recommendation 5: All Learn.UQ sites should include a clear explanation of the communication
modes, channels, and practices for the course; core course-related communication to students should be done using official UQ email accounts and Learn.UQ announcements.

**Recommendation 6:** Learn.UQ sites should be available to students at least 1 week before their first class

**Recommendation 7:** Academics should provide catch-up resources to students within a week of learning activities; these resources should not close before the end of semester

We propose that the below practices for technology-enhanced learning be considered as Aspirational at UQ.

**Recommendation 8 (Aspirational):** Where possible, assessment for courses should be submitted online

**Recommendation 9 (Aspirational):** Where possible, assessment for courses should be marked online and feedback should be provided online

**Recommendation 10 (Aspirational):** The discussion board function of Blackboard may be supplemented with an additional alternative

**Recommendation 11 (Aspirational):** Students be provided with a mechanism to check their academic progress in a course by the census date

**Recommendation 12 (Aspirational – this will happen once Blackboard is upgraded by the provider):** Blackboard should not show legacy grade centre columns

### 3 PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE SUMMARY

A trial implementation by the UQ Business School using the current Recommended Best Practices is presented in Appendix 16. A proposed workflow for site migration is shown in Appendix 17.

### 4 PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION BUDGET SUMMARY

The proposed budget for this project lies in the range of ~$95,000 to ~$205,000. At the lower end of the budget 300 courses (ten per school) could be migrated to the new Learn.UQ template. At the upper end of the range over 950 courses (28% of UQ offerings) and 66% of UQ students could be served by the course migration. There will be an ongoing annual cost associated with monitoring site design compliance and helping academics maintain their sites in the standard format.

A proposed indicative budget is shown in Appendix 18.
5 Membership of the TELSC Working Party

Associate Professor Susan Rowland (Chair from 20 June 2016*)
Deputy Director, Institute for Teaching and Learning Innovation and School of Chemistry and Molecular Biosciences

Associate Professor Peter Newcombe (Chair until 20 June 2016*)
School of Psychology

Dr Simon Collyer
Manager, Teaching and Learning Support, Information Technology Services

Mr Christopher Frost
eLearning Coordinator, Humanities and Social Sciences Faculty

Ms Ailsa Dickie
eLearning Training Coordinator, Teaching and Learning Support, Information Technology Services

Mr Dominic McGrath
Learning Designer Team Leader, Institute for Teaching and Learning Innovation

Due to leave taken by Associate Professor Newcombe, Associate Professor Susan Rowland assumed the role of Chair from 20 June 2016.
6 Preamble To The Full Report

The University of Queensland is committed to creating an outstanding learning experience for students and blended learning is an accepted and core part of the UQ student experience.

UQ students have raised issues with online course design in surveys, forums, and social media; indeed, since 2007, surveys have consistently shown student demand for more intense use of our online systems to support learning. The green paper ‘Working Towards the UQ Student Strategy’ identified a key strategy as “incorporating best-practice blended learning pedagogies across every program”. In order to achieve this goal, UQ must define recommended and aspirational practice. This is a challenge for the institution as a whole and for individual teachers working with students.

We recognise that technology underpins many significant shifts in teaching and learning. We also recognise that individual academics use technology in different ways and that they have different needs for their teaching. We therefore believe that non-compulsory guidelines for the delivery of courses though Blackboard will be useful for both course coordinators and eLearning support providers. The guidelines will also help the University move evenly towards its blended learning aspirations. In February 2016 the Technology Enhanced Learning Strategy Committee (TELSC) formed a Working Party to identify guidelines for online learning practice to be endorsed by the Teaching and Learning Committee.

In working to develop guidelines that describe best practice for the University as a whole, the members of the TELSC Working Party recognised that:

• some practices may not suit all courses
• some practices can be improved without technology
• some systems and support services may need to improve to support best practice
• recommended practices should not stifle innovative teaching
• changing practice can result in improved experience for both academics and students, including savings of time and effort
• changing practice can require a significant investment of resources (including time) at the beginning of the change process
• academics may require additional support to consistently and rapidly implement the best practice guidelines
• our guidelines must support an enhanced experience for our teachers and our students

We propose guidelines for non-compulsory but strongly encouraged Recommended and Aspirational Practices for Blackboard-based course delivery at UQ. These Recommended and Aspirational Practice suggestions will help both teaching-related staff and eLearning service providers (Faculties, ITS, ITaLI, Library) focus UQ’s work in enhancing blended learning for all of our students. Schools and faculties will be free to set appropriate Recommended and Aspirational Practices as standard practice for their specific context.

Adoption of the Recommended Practices will help achieve a more consistent and effective online learning environment where both students and staff have clear expectations of the online learning

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1 TEDI Survey (2007), Deloitte student lifecycle experience survey (2010), Student Experience Strategy Survey to Students 2015, Facebook comments include:

• “Today is the first day of Semester 2 2015. Only two of the four courses that I am doing this semester had anything available for viewing on Blackboard. This is really unacceptable and is not what academics are paid to do.” (27 July 2015)
• Q: “Is anyone else unable to see blackboard? Or is it working for you all?” A: “It’s working but I am wishing my subjects would open up” (21 Feb 2016)
• Q: “does someone know when exactly courses and course profiles become accessible on blackboard?” A: “depends on how lazy the coordinator is” (55 likes) (13 July 2015)

2 The University of Queensland (2015) Towards The UQ Student Strategy, Queensland, Australia: The University of Queensland.
experience within the curriculum. The provision of documentation that helps staff correctly implement the practices will also provide clarity around the expectations of the University. The Recommended Practices and associated documentation can also be used for academic self-review, for planning and informing future staff training, and for IT development and support.

7 **PRINCIPLES FOR ONLINE LEARNING DELIVERY BEST PRACTICES**

Members of the TELSC Working Party agreed that a series of principles should govern the development of Recommended and Aspirational Best Practices for Online Learning Delivery at UQ. The principles for Recommended Best Practices are shown in Box 1 while the principles for Aspirational Best Practices are shown in Box 2. The overarching principles for both Recommended and Aspirational Best Practices are shown in Box 3.

The process to identify practices for UQ was inclusive of teachers and students and informed by research.

**Box 1: Principles for Recommended Best Practices**

**Recommended Practices** for online learning delivery at UQ should be:

- easy to implement now
- able to meet basic student expectations
- pedagogically sound
- established practice at UQ
- technically plausible
- those that support (rather than stifle) innovative teaching

**Box 2: Principles for Aspirational Practices**

**Aspirational Best Practices** for online learning delivery at UQ:

- may require more time, training and support to achieve than the Recommended Best Practices
- may require the UQ systems and technologies to improve
- must provide an enhanced experience for our teachers and our students
- should articulate UQ’s desired student experience
- should be evidence-based and should represent current successful trends in online learning
- are candidates for future recommended Best Practices

**Box 3: Principles for Both Recommended and Aspirational Practice**

**Both Recommended and Aspirational Practices** for online learning at UQ:

- should provide voluntary targets as guidance to teachers – UQ should encourage, support, and reward academics as they achieve these targets;
- should represent an enhanced experience for our staff and students;
- should be complemented by examples, workshops, and enhanced support services;
- should be endorsed and encouraged by the UQ Teaching and Learning Committee;
- can be taken up by schools and faculties as standard practice if they see fit;
- should be reviewed every two years;
- should respect students’ rights to a basic level and consistent delivery of online learning across courses.
8 **Process for Developing the Best Practices**

The process for developing the best practices is shown below. Now that this report has been submitted to the UQ Teaching and Learning Committee, the process has reached the orange arrow:

The initial proposal to develop Blended Learning Course Design Guidelines was endorsed by the Technology Enhanced Learning Strategy Committee (TELSC) in February 2016, and a TELSC Working Party was established to identify the practices to recommend to the Teaching and Learning Committee.

Draft elements for the guidelines were derived using input from a wide range of sources including: the 2007 TEDI Blackboard student survey (n=6,724); the 2010 Deloitte student lifecycle experience survey (n=3,972); the 2011 TEQSA Threshold Standards; the 2015 Student Experience Strategy Survey to Students (n=6,179); the Australasian Council of Open, Distance, and E-learning Survey of standards at other universities; UQ social media feedback from students; student comments in SECaTs; various UQ support forums and UQ support units; the existing UQ PPL; and data collected by QUT. These sources are shown in Appendices 1–10.

Members of the TELSC Working Party refined these draft elements into a set of ten potential Recommended and Aspirational Best Practices for UQ Blackboard use. A shown in Appendix 11 Table A11.1, the advantages, disadvantages, challenges, implications, and current users of each practice were considered as part of the development process. Table A11.1 was presented to the TELSC committee and members were asked to indicate whether they thought these items should be recommended or aspirational practices for everyone at UQ, whether they were applicable only to some courses at UQ, or whether they should not ever be recommended practice at UQ. Committee members were also able to choose an “unsure” option. This initial consultation produced the results shown in Table A11.2 and the TELSC endorsed the members of the TELSC Working Party to proceed with broader consultation.

Members of the TELSC Working Party attended each of the UQ Faculty-level Teaching and Learning Committee (TLC) meetings and asked members to comment on the ten proposed practices using Table A11.1 as the basis for discussion. As for the TELSC consultation, the Faculty TLC members were asked whether each practice should be recommended, aspirational, suitable for only some courses at UQ, or not suitable for any UQ courses. These presentations generated some robust discussions that reflected the expertise, experiences, and concerns of TLC members. TLC members were particularly keen to emphasise that the Best Practices should not be mandatory, and that instead they should be presented to the University community as guidelines only. Notes and the individual results from each of these meetings are shown in Appendix 11.

Overall, 397 votes were collected from the TELSC and TLC members. The majority of votes (n=262) were cast to make one of the proposed items a recommended guideline, while another quarter of the votes (n=102) were cast to make one of the items an aspirational guideline. Some members considered that the proposed practices were not suitable for their own course (20 votes), or should not be introduced at UQ (6 votes), or should be cast in the “unsure” category. It should be noted that in some Committee meetings a significant proportion of the attendees chose not to vote
at all; they felt they could not predict all the potential ramifications of the proposed practices. It should also be noted that academics from different disciplines expressed different opinions about the proposed practices. In particular, academics from disciplines in which students produce physical, tangible assessment items (e.g., engineering, architecture, art) expressed concern about the idea of totally online submission for assessments. Academics who need to provide feedback by drawing on students’ assessment submissions (e.g., science, engineering) expressed concern about mandatory online marking. The pooled results of this consultation process are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Opinions about proposed Blackboard design features of the TELSC and attendees at the UQ Faculty-based TLCs. Participants were provided with the ten proposed designed features for Blackboard and were asked to vote on whether each item should be “Recommended Practice” (green), “Aspirational practice” (light green), “Not appropriate for my course” (orange), “Not appropriate for UQ” (red), or “Undecided” (black).

Of the options considered, TELSC and TLC members were most likely to recommend the practice of placing the course staff contact information on the Blackboard site (36/38 votes for “Recommended”). Several other options for Blackboard practice were commonly ranked as “Recommended” by staff – these included the posting of a welcome message, the explanation of communication expectations, the clear organisation of learning resources on Blackboard, and site activation before Week 1 of semester. Staff frequently expressed surprise that these things did not always happen and the term “no brainer” was used around some of these best practice suggestions. Staff acknowledged that not everyone organised their Blackboard sites in the same way and they felt that this was not necessarily a “problem”. They suggested that the course structure and pedagogy may drive a particular layout that maximises students’ abilities to access and productively use...
resources. They also indicated that they enjoyed building a personalised Blackboard site for their course and lamented the loss of the banner tool.

Online marking was the least popular choice, with only 12/38 votes for “Recommended”, 18/38 for “Aspirational”, 7/38 for “Not in my course” and 1/38 for “Not at UQ”. Although online marking is becoming more and more common at UQ (Appendix 12), it is still not a practice that all academics are willing to use. A number of participants indicated that they could not yet recommend online marking and feedback provision because the current marking technology was a limiting factor (e.g., they could not easily annotate diagrams or equations using the pre-populated, text-based systems available through Blackboard). Some also indicated that online marking interfered with group moderation and marking of assignments unless all markers had the same access to portable technology. Respondents explained they wished to mark physical papers by hand in order to get away from their computer screen, keyboard, and mouse and some recounted previous bad experiences (e.g., academics have set up an online system, used it for marking, then distributed the results to students who cannot see the material through their browsers). Some of these problems could be obviated by the provision of large, good-quality touch screens, tablet pens that are capable of drawing with fine detail, and careful checking of browser compatibility with the systems that deliver marks to students. None of the staff members indicated that their school was able to provide these technology “fixes” on demand.

We collected feedback from students (n=7) using a series of small workshops. Although this is a small number of students they gave us detailed comments on the online learning space at UQ. These comments add to the large amount of student feedback obtained in prior studies at UQ (Appendices 2, 4, 5, 6, and 7) and at QUT (Appendix 8). The methods for student recruiting and the delivery protocol for these recent workshops are shown in Appendices 13 and 14. Briefly, students were given a set of papers that had the proposed practices written on them; they were asked to rank these proposed practices from 1 through 10 with “1” being the most important practice. They were also asked to describe positive and negative things about Blackboard and to make a “blue sky” request for how they would like Blackboard to serve them.

The student rankings of the options are shown in Figure 2. Although the students’ rankings frequently differed for the items (as shown by the error bars), it is clear that they consider the organisation of material on Blackboard to be most important while the provision of a welcome message is of the least importance to them. Students also showed a preference for online submission and marking of assignments through Blackboard. In contrast, they did not feel that getting feedback by the census date or having contact information on Blackboard was very important. They indicated that contact information was already available on the Electronic Course Profile, so also having it on Blackboard was not a high priority.

To examine the agreement between the academic and the student rankings of each practice we plotted the ranks on the same graph (Figure 3). This figure shows the marked disagreement between the rankings of the two groups. Only one practice had the same level of importance for the two groups – this was the (relatively unimportant) issue of student feedback at an early stage in semester.

The number of students was small in this consultation process, and clearly we cannot assume that all students will have the same opinions. We have also, however, reviewed the feedback of students from prior surveys, from social media, and from SECaTs (Appendices 2, 4, 5, 6, and 7). In addition we have viewed feedback from QUT students around online learning delivery (Appendix 8) and consulted with the online learning manager from IES, the UQ preparatory college located in Spring Hill (Appendix 15). The comments from students in these data sources are very similar to the most recent ones that we collected. We are satisfied that recommendations reflect the needs and opinions of a substantial number of staff and students. It is clear that there is significant misalignment between the practices valued by students at UQ (and beyond) and those that staff feel are universally possible and desirable.
Figure 2: Student ranking of the proposed online learning practices. Rank positions are shown on the Y-axis. The standard deviations of the rankings are given for each practice. See Appendices 13 and 14 for details of data collection.

Figure 3: A comparison of the proposed online practices as ranked by academic and students. Number 1 in the rank order is “most important”.
9 **Recommended and Aspirational Best Practices with Rationales for Each Practice**

Based on the consultations, surveys and focus groups, members of the TELSC Working Party propose the following Recommended and Aspirational Best Practices for the online aspects of course design and delivery at UQ. Note that as part of formulating these recommendations we have consulted the UQ Library’s Information and Digital Literacy Strategic Framework, 2016-2020 and the UQ Information Technology Strategy, 2017-2020. The practices also support the UQ Student Strategy, particularly Goal 2: Student-centred flexibility and Goal 4: An integrated learning environment.

We propose that the following practices for online learning delivery be considered as Recommended Best Practice at UQ. In Appendix 16 we also present a case study from the UQ Business School that highlights their successful, school-wide implementation of the recommended standardised Blackboard layout in Semester 1 2017.

9.1 **Recommendation 1: UQ should provide clear guidelines for, and exemplars of, expected practice for Blackboard site layouts**

This recommendation is designed to smooth the transition of UQ to a more consistent minimum threshold of practice for online course support and administration. Multiple other universities around Australia have already adopted guidelines and practice documents for their online course support (see Appendix 9). Consultation with the T&L Chairs at UQ indicated that they would find documents about standard and minimum practice useful, as long as these documents respected the rights of academics to exercise professional discretion around the finer points of their online delivery practice. The Chairs indicated that standard minimum practice documents would provide helpful guidance for new Course Coordinators and for experienced Course Coordinators who were struggling to understand what minimum good practice “looked like”. They suggested that a checklist document, with accompanying exemplars of expected practice, would be useful.

9.2 **Recommendation 2: All Learn.UQ sites should use consistent navigation structures**

Students who can quickly and easily find needed resources and activities are enabled to spend more time working productively on course material. Students consistently request that UQ course sites have a reproducible structure (or small suite of structures) so they can simply navigate the material. The UQ PPL already makes recommendations about the layout of Learn.UQ sites, however the student feedback suggests this guidance is insufficient to produce sites that are routinely easy to navigate.

We suggest that Learning Resources section be organised:

- by weeks (this was the students’ overwhelming recommendation) OR
- by modules (students indicated this is also suitable where it is more appropriate for the course structure)

We also suggest that some additional folders be provided so that some components can be placed outside the week/module template by activities. For example, students recommended that assessment requirements and items be placed in a separate folder with each assessment item having its own subfolder inside the larger Assessment folder.

Students said they were confused by reading lists that lay outside the weekly/module Blackboard folders; they requested that this practice be discontinued and that the readings be placed in the folder with the appropriate lecture, module, or assessment item. At the moment this is not a practice

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4 Online at https://its.uq.edu.au/information-technology-strategy
5 Online at https://student-strategy.uq.edu.au
6 See PPL 6.40.01 Part 4.1 online at https://ppl.app.uq.edu.au/content/6.40.01-minimum-presence-blackboard
that we can address with the current Blackboard/TALIS interface, however academics can manually provide a list of the relevant readings for each lecture or topic within the appropriate folders. This would help students navigate the Library-generated reading list.

We recommend that UQ provides one recommended layout that academics can use to organise their courses. This layout should have one folder for Learning Resources. A separate Assessment folder should be provided in the Content Area so that students can easily find their assessment items. Within the Learning Resources folder, weekly (or module) folders should contain course links to the relevant assessment tasks for that module or week. A separate Welcome folder would also provide a key port of call for students.

In order to simplify student navigation on Blackboard it is essential that this rationalisation of site layout occur on all courses over a short period of time outside of regular semester. We make suggestions for how to achieve this at the end of the Recommendations.

9.3 Recommendation 3: UQ should provide site-embedded and external support for academics to help them prepare their Learn.UQ site

Academics build their Learn.UQ sites without immediate guidance around what content should be placed in what areas of the site. We recommend that embedded support and guidance be included in the new templates so that it is easy for academics to tell what they should place in each part of the site. The Chairs of Teaching and Learning Committees also endorsed the idea of a set of stand-alone Learn.UQ-site production guidelines and exemplars similar to the detailed guidelines available at other universities.

It should be noted that two other Queensland universities (University of the Sunshine Coast and Bond University) that have recently migrated their student-facing eLearning sites to a standard layout. In both cases they paid a workforce of Learning Designers to migrate all of the institution’s courses to this standard layout over a short period of time. The UQ Business School also paid a team of three PhD students to migrate all of the School’s large courses to the platform in the period between Semester 2 2016 and Semester 1 2017 (Appendix 16).

9.4 Recommendation 4: Learn.UQ sites should have improved potential for site customisation in ways that do not impede navigation

Both students and academics expressed a wish to use sites that were customised with banners, colours, and pictures. Academics gained a sense of ownership over their course sites by making them look the way they liked. Students said they enjoyed individualised sites because it allowed them to tell which course site they were on. These customisations do not need to (and should not) override the templated navigation structure for each site. We recommend that the banner tool be reinstated for Blackboard. The ITS staff indicate they are able to add a link to this functionality on all Blackboard sites. The UQ Business School provided a customised banner to all courses in their standardised implementation – this allowed staff to personalise their site and it also helped students easily see which Learn.UQ course site they were using (Appendix 16).

9.5 Recommendation 5: All Learn.UQ sites should include a clear explanation of the communication modes, channels, and practices for the course; core course-related communication to students should be done using official UQ email accounts and Learn.UQ announcements

Course sites are often a student’s first point of contact with a course (after the ECP). As such, a short orientation to the site that introduces staff, the course, and the site layout is recommended. This should be accomplished using a welcome announcement posted to the Blackboard site by the coordinator.

Students should know whom to contact about their courses and issues that arise in their study. It is also our academic responsibility to set and maintain standards for communications (e.g., giving students details of when and how often they can expect responses to emails). These details could
also be included in the Welcome section on Blackboard. During our consultations academics expressed some concerns that the contact information was already on the ECP, and provision of additional contact information for students on the Blackboard site would be confusing. We suggest that there is no need to directly repeat the ECP contact information on Blackboard, however the inclusion of an “if/then” contacts decision tree on Blackboard would help students better understand who to contact when they have a question or problem.

We also recommend that ITS collaborate with ITaLi to investigate whether an automated and customisable welcome message could be generated and whether this would be beneficial (with appropriate warning for the course coordinator that an automated message will be released unless they customise it). Much of the course information provided on the ECP could be added to the official welcome message. For example, details of key course contacts are already available on the ECP; if these were included it would save the course coordinator administrative time and effort.

Students obtain messages about their courses through Blackboard announcements, but some are unaware that Blackboard Announcements is the source of truth for their courses. When course coordinators use non-Blackboard avenues for communication with their students, the student confusion becomes justified.

Students should be regularly reminded by the University to use their UQ student email address. Early-year students are routinely confused about the use of their student email account, and many seem unaware that they are getting messages from the University at their student address. All students should be expected to check their student email, or they should forward their student email to another email address that they do check regularly. UQ should advertise this expectation more widely to students than it does at present.

9.6 Recommendation 6: Learn.UQ sites should be available to students at least 1 week before their first class

Students are often excited and nervous when they begin studying – having the course site available early reassures students that they are appropriately enrolled and enables students to begin their preparation for class. Note that not all areas of a course site need to be available early and that it is appropriate to hide sections that are under development until they are ready for students.

We request that the UQ Teaching and Learning Committee consider an amendment to the minimum presence policy 6.40.01 to require course sites be made available a week before the first class; activation could be achieved by coordinators or auto-activation could occur with a preceding courtesy warning message to course coordinators. A populated Course Contacts area and a welcome message in Announcements should be considered sufficient minimum content at the point of activation.

9.7 Recommendation 7: Academics should provide catch-up resources to students within a week of learning activities; these resources should not close before the end of semester

Students benefit from access to resources from classes to revise and catch up missed classes. While UQ has mandated the use and release of lecture recordings, teaching practices at UQ are diverse and there are many forms of classes beyond lectures. Providing students with suitable resources soon after class enables more of our students to succeed in their studies. We also recommend that learning activities and course materials remain active and available on Blackboard sites once they are posted.

We propose that the below practices for technology-enhanced learning be considered as Aspirational at UQ.

9.8 Recommendation 8 (Aspirational): Where possible, assessment for courses should be submitted online

While not all assessment can be submitted online (e.g., 3D objects and large audio-visual files) having online submitted copies enables:
• Logged copies of student submissions (supporting integrity processes, assessment review and any matters arising from student appeals)
• Enhanced environmental sustainability
• More efficient and cost effective administration

Note that if marking is done by hand (with pen and paper) online submission means that the academic or their school must pay for printing costs. Large classes or long assignments make this very expensive and time consuming – this cost is a driver for paper submissions from students.

9.9 Recommendation 9 (Aspirational): Where possible, assessment for courses should be marked online and feedback should be provided online

Online marking provides a range of benefits to UQ, teachers and students.

• Online marking provides students with access anywhere and anytime (after marks are released) to their feedback
• UQ benefits by having a record of assessment processes to mitigate the risk of errors and lost work
• Online marking can support the use of comment banks, audio feedback, anonymous marking, distribution of student submissions, and peer marking

Online marking at UQ is becoming more and more common (see Appendix 12), however there are still academics who do not feel able to use it easily for their students. Academics indicated that hand annotation of an electronic assessment item (e.g., for chemical structures, graphs, or detailed correction of diagrams) is not easy to achieve with a keyboard and standard computer set up. This means that some academics are finding it difficult to move to online marking.

There are solutions to this problem – for example, a touch screen and a screen pen capable of writing with fine detail would enable annotations of diagrams online marking. There are questions about the availability of these items for academics and other staff who are marking assignments online – in addition it is unclear whether the responsibility for purchasing these items lies with the University, with the school, or with the academics themselves. If large marking teams are involved with marking such an assignment the cost of buying these marking-enabling items can become prohibitive.

We recommend that ITS should (i) investigate option for online marking of items that need annotation, (ii) provide a recommendation of the most functional option for annotations, (iii) provide training on a PDF annotation software and (iv) build a tool to allow bulk upload of marked pdfs out of Blackboard.

9.10 Recommendation 10 (Aspirational): The discussion board function of Blackboard may be supplemented with an additional alternative

The Blackboard discussion board currently lacks some functionality that both students and academics desire for the facilitation of large group discussions. These include: (i) the ability to “like” or vote on answers; (ii) the ability to vote posts up and down so most topical posts / best answers “rise” to the top; and (iii) the ability to endorse posts, i.e. teaching staff endorsing answers. ITS staff members are unable to improve the functionality of the facility at present, but should lobby Blackboard for this functionality in future releases. eLearning support should build awareness of alternate options with additional functionality where it is required. We recommend that alternative options with extra functionality are explored and encouraged at UQ. Students suggested other options (e.g., Reddit, Piazza, Facebook), each of which had its own pros and cons.

Some student frustrations about the discussion board could be addressed through improving the academics’ use of currently-available features. We suggest that additional training should be offered to academics; the training should cover both technical and pedagogical areas including use of threads and navigation features (some of which have been recently added to the Blackboard interface).
9.11 **Recommendation 11 (Aspirational): Students be provided with an online mechanism to get feedback on their academic progress in a course by the census date**

Students should have enough understanding of the expectations of a course and their abilities with regards to learning outcomes to make an informed decision about their enrolment by HECS census date. Students in the focus groups did not rank the proposed feedback recommendation highly (Figure 3), however previous comments from students (see Appendix 2) show that students are keen to see how they are progressing in a course (72% wanted regular, online information that showed them how their learning was tracking with respect to the course objectives).

Although students want bottom-up learning analytics that helps them track their progress, this is unlikely to be available (in any meaningful way) before the course census date, as so little of a course is completed by this time and most courses do not have examinations or assignments due by census date. The ITaLi Learning Analytics team in conjunction with UQ ITS is developing a student-facing dashboard that presents some bottom-up learning analytics. Of course, the utility of this dashboard is limited by the availability of course assessment data before the census date. This kind of information is rarely available by census date, and it is probably unrealistic to expect that all courses will be able to offer early-semester marked assessment that truly reflects a student’s ability to complete the course.

In our consultations, academics did not place the proposed feedback recommendation high in their rankings either. They were unsure of meaning of the proposed recommendation as written and they asked for clarification of the term “feedback”. They wanted to know if a class-wide examination or a significant assignment was the only option for feedback provision. This is a reasonable question, so we offer some options.

The simplest proposal for giving students feedback by the census date is to give students access to some level of self-test online, and to provide the answers for that test. Since past examination papers are provided in the UQ libraries, an argument could be made that (i) drawing students’ attention to these and (ii) working model answers to some relevant questions, is sufficient feedback to allow students to self-evaluate. A more complex feedback mechanism could be a content-tailored online question set with answers, a formative online quiz, or an assignment that is marked and given back to students before the census date.

In either case students could have the opportunity to develop a sense of the quality of work and the depth of knowledge required in course assessment. The University could request that such an opportunity is offered and publicised before the census date so students can make an informed decision about continuing in a course beyond the payment deadline. The University could also automate a reminder message about Library-held examinations that goes to all students through Blackboard announcements.

9.12 **Recommendation 12 (Aspirational): Blackboard should not show legacy grade centre columns**

Students and Learning Designers identified confusion caused by assessment entries from previous iterations of a course on their Blackboard grade centre. Many staff members are unaware that this can happen as a result of Blackboard course site migration. The risk cannot be automatically managed in the current version of Blackboard, however the upcoming version of the software will have this capacity. Until Blackboard is updated we recommend that ITS provide training and communication to emphasise the need to set grade centre columns as **not visible** to students after course migrations. While it would be technically possible for ITS to manually perform this task it would require significantly more resources than ITS currently has available.
10 Supporting the Recommended and Aspirational Practices

Change is frequently complex; it is crucial that UQ support academics if we are to achieve significant and sustainable improvements in practice around Blackboard use. We propose that, in order to support these recommended and aspirational practices, the University should:

- develop a new blackboard template (or templates) to use as the default for Learn.UQ site navigation while improving the ability of academics to customise their sites around these templates
- appoint a team on a short-term basis to provide course coordinators with a version of their course site in the new template; this would likely include the provision of a short-term workforce to migrate extant Blackboard courses to one of the new templates during a non-semester period.
- provide a mechanism to automatically migrate relevant ECP data into Learn.UQ sites for each course
- charge the Library and ITS teams with the responsibility of investigating ways to better integrate Library readings and support coordinators to make their course reading lists available on time
- investigate options to remove visibility of all legacy grade centre columns on Learn.UQ sites
- acknowledge that marking online can be challenging for particular disciplines (e.g. mathematics or chemistry) and investigate the supply of technologies that support academics and large teaching teams as they hand-annotate online documents
- charge the TELSC and ITS with the responsibility of reviewing the recommended and aspirational practices on a regular basis.

The delivery and implications of these support activities are significant in some cases. They are examined below.

10.1 A new template for Blackboard navigation and improved customisation capacity

UQ Blackboard sites currently use the five year old default template which includes: Announcements, Course Profile (ECP), Learning Resources, Assessment, Discussion Board, Library Link, My Grades, and Tools (hidden). ITS should now design and propose two new standard course layouts to enhance consistent navigation to enable students to quickly locate resources, while also allowing some level of customisation (e.g. banners) to help students identify their course. We propose that these two layouts would give the same main menu and the Learning Resources section will allow the option of arranging a course by week or by module. Staff may also wish to use the Learning Pathway – which is supported by EIAT and may be supported by ITS if a business case to re-write the tool as a sustainable building block is endorsed.

The new template Main Menu will contain the following items:

a) Course Contacts - This content area will contain key contact details and procedures for the course, including a “What to do if” decision chart or table. We recommend that ITS investigates the plausibility and benefits of creating a modifiable chart template for Blackboard sites, with contact details migrated from the ECP into this folder.

b) Announcements – This content area will feed the announcements board for the course.

c) Learning Resources - This content area will contain a folder for each week (or module) with all the learning resources for that week or module (lecture slides, tutorial questions, prac information, readings). Naming convention: Week X – Topic or Module X – Topic. The order of items within folder should be consistent week to week or module to module. Items should be labelled with a brief summary of their purpose and expected use. Note: a Lecture Recordings folder will be automatically added to this Content Area. This folder should be placed as the first item in the content area.
d) **Assessment** - This content area will contain a separate folder for each assessment item. Each item folder should contain an online assessment link as the first item. Naming convention: [Assessment item title] submission link (i.e. Assignment 1 - Macbeth essay submission link). Each folder will contain all of the resources for each assignment. Information in the ECP should not be repeated in this folder. Folders should contain a statement directing students to the ECP for relevant information. Exemplars, solution sets, and other forms of pre and post feedback should be placed in this content area (not in Learning Resources). ITS may be able to generate such folders automatically and we recommend they investigate the feasibility and benefits of this process.

e) **Other** - In some course additional Content Areas/Links by be required in the Main Menu (e.g., placement information, laboratory manuals and timetable). They should be placed in the side bar so they follow the Learning Resources folders and the Assessment folder. In some courses links to external resources may be required (e.g., Knowledge making site). These links should be split from the main menu on the left using a divider and subheading. The Main Menu will not contain individual folders for each lecture, module, assessment item, week, etc.

### 10.2 Implementation of the Standard Template

There are multiple considerations for the design and delivery of the new template. We propose that ITS, Library and ITaLI staff collaborate to develop two new Blackboard templates with guides to support implementation of the practices in consultation with UQ schools and faculties. Support should be made available to staff to have the content of the Blackboard sites reorganised (see Appendix 16 for an example template that fits the recommendations, Appendix 17 and the Executive Summary for a proposed workflow, and Appendix 18 for an indicative budget).

### 11 Additional Ideas and Recommendations that Arose from the Discussions

Several additional suggestions arose from the discussions with students. We have not made these recommended or aspirational practices because they are dependent on technologies or functionalities that may not yet exist at UQ. They are, however, important to students, so we mention them here.

#### 11.1 Library readings

The UQ Library and ITS should explore options for integrating readings into Learn.UQ sites to match the structure of the site. Currently, Library resources are separated from the lecture and tutorial material on Learn.UQ; this is not consistent with the recommendation of having a weekly/module and assessment item folder structure with all the appropriate resources in each folder. It is also confusing for students, who indicate that the reading list is not organised in a way they find logical or useful.

We suggest that reading lists should be organised by week or by module. Reading lists can be manually organised by week or module if the Library staff receive all the relevant and required information in time (which means one to two months in advance of the semester start). The Library staff is currently investigating new functionality in TALIS than may mean weekly reading list can be inserted into weekly folders in Blackboard.

Currently fewer than 50% of the reading lists are ready for the start of Semester due to Library staff receiving them too late. By default, Library staff members receive the reading list when the ECP is published. This is usually too late to have the reading list ready for the start of semester. Although the Library has tried to encourage staff to send reading lists earlier and directly to them to ensure students have reading list for the start of semester, this has not worked well. Recently the UQ TLC approved Library staff access to submitted (rather than published) ECPs so that the staff can prepare reading lists earlier. The Library will now trial this approach in the hope that this will give them the
ability to complete the reading lists in advance of the semester starting.

The current process of working from the ECP has limitations, as the Library staff are not specifically advised when the reading lists on the ECP are altered by the course coordinator. Instead, any change in the ECP triggers a notification to the Library, which creates an email load of generic messages that cannot be easily scanned for ECP changes. The Library is actively examining ways in which academics can more easily submit reading list materials through an ECP-embedded website.

### 11.2 Additional functionality for large courses should be added

ITS and ITaLI should systematically identify, evaluate and incorporate additional eLearning functionality that suits large classes that can be connected into the LMS using the Learning Tools Interoperability (LTI) standard. Examples include highly personalised learning tools like Cerego or publisher content that uses intelligent adaptive feedback and presentation of learning content.

### 12 Defining and Evaluating Success

There are several frameworks and KPIs by which we could define “success” as a result of implementing these recommendations (Table 12.1).

#### Table 12.1: Potential frameworks and KPIs for measuring the success of the recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Framework</th>
<th>KPIs for this framework</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Production and UQ acceptance of guidelines for Learn.UQ implementation and academic behaviour around online learning delivery | • A full set of guidelines is produced for Learn.UQ site design and academic online learning delivery behaviour  
• The guidelines are workshopped with and endorsed by UQ Information Technology Service, the UQ Library, the UQ Learning Designers, the ITaLI staff, and the UQ Chairs of Teaching and Learning  
• The finalised guidelines are endorsed by the UQ Teaching and Learning Committee |
| Successful implementation of standard Learn.UQ layout in course sites | • Production of template for Learn.UQ implementation with in-template help for academic users  
• Number of courses in which the standardised Learn.UQ framework has been implemented  
• Number of requests for implementation rollout support made by academics to the centralised team  
• Number of support hours given to academics from centralised support team  
• Numbers of students served by the standardised Learn.UQ introduction (aggregate numbers of students for all of the courses involved) |
| Compliance with new guidelines | • Numbers of Learn.UQ course sites opened one week before semester starts  
• Proportion of Learn.UQ courses in each school that use the new template |
| Improvements in student feedback around Learn.UQ site design and use | • Changed numbers and nature of student comments around Learn.UQ and Blackboard site design and use in the courses where the new site has been implemented  
• Comparison of student comments around Learn.UQ and Blackboard site design and use in courses where the new site has and has not been implemented |
| Online submission and marking of assignments and assessment items | • Number and proportion of assignments and other assessment items submitted online.  
• Number and proportion of assignments and other assessment items marked online. |
Appendices to the Report

APPENDIX 1 – SOURCES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROPOSED RECOMMENDED AND ASPIRATIONAL PRACTICES FOR UQ BLACKBOARD USE

The proposed Recommended and Aspirational Practices for UQ Blackboard use were assembled using a range of sources. Members of the TELSC Working Party used the draft practices during consultations with staff and student stakeholders.

Draft Target Sources are:

- results of the 2015 Student Experience Strategy Survey with 6179 responses (Appendix 2);
- the TEQSA Threshold Standards 2015 (Appendix 3);
- results of the 2010 Deliotte student lifecycle experience survey with 3,972 responses (Appendix 4);
- results of the 2007 TEDI Survey on Blackboard and eLearning with 6,724 responses (Appendix 5);
- social media feedback from students on around Blackboard practice during 2015 (Appendix 6);
- SECaT evaluations and comments from students (Appendix 7);
- the current UQ policy 6.40.01 Minimum Presence in Blackboard (Appendix 8);
- online presence practices and plans of other universities collected in 2015 at ACODE68 and from their websites (Appendix 9);
- feedback from the eLearning Operational Forum members (July 2015 meeting);
- feedback from the ITS report on threshold standards to TELSC (August 2015 meeting);
- discussions between ITaLi (Associate Professor Susan Rowland and Mr Dominic McGrath), ITS (Dr Simon Collyer, Ms Ailsa Dickie, Mr Richard Rerrie, Ms Lyndal Ross) and the Library (Mr Tom Ruthven, Ms Karen Seymour, Mr Bob Gerrity).
APPENDIX 2 – RESULTS FROM THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE STRATEGY SURVEY (2015) (6179 RESPONSES)

The Student Experience Strategy Survey (2015) garnered 6179 responses that reflected both the staff and the student perspectives around online learning and online content provision. The responses were analysed thematically and the following themes emerged.

The staff perspective of blended and online learning

Theme 1: Blended Learning is an essential characteristic of modern universities - UQ Staff (across Organisational Units) indicate that UQ has existing strengths in this area, and that Blended Learning better engages students and accommodates their diverse and evolving needs and expectations in the digital age.

Theme 2: Broader implementation of Blended Learning requires new skills and increased capacity - Consistent with New Staff Capabilities as a strategy, extending blended learning at UQ will require that University teaching staff have relevant skills and capacity. Respondents say staff need time and professional development support to familiarise themselves with new blended learning techniques, and to introduce them into their own courses.

Theme 3: Engaging and employing expert staff to develop resources from local ideas and provide expert knowledge - UQ should appoint additional Faculty-based professional staff to support teaching staff in the incorporation of blended learning pedagogies and encourage uptake across UQ. UQ should also appoint additional teaching assistants to help with additional workload for planning, design and implementation.

Theme 4: Blended learning reflects best practice, but it may be different across disciplines - UQ Staff (Organisational Units) also suggest investing in a University-wide effort to determine the best practice pedagogies in each program in UQ. Best practice varies across disciplines but there are opportunities to learn from other areas of the University, through collaborative projects and shared ideas.

The student perspective of blended and online learning

Theme 1: Timeliness of assessment return and level of detail in feedback are areas for improvement - The lowest levels of satisfaction in relation to assessment were in the following two areas:

(i) The level of detail that assessments provided to help them improve; 53% of students (n=3,275) did not agree that they were receiving enough detail in their assessments.

(ii) The speed with which assessments were returned; 62% fo students (n=3,794) did not agree assessments were being returned quickly, and 35% of student respondents (n=2,135) indicated they were dissatisfied with the timeliness of assessment return.

Theme 2: There is a strong student appetite for bottom-up learning analytics - The majority of UQ Students would like to receive regular, online information on how their learning is tracking with course objectives (72%, n=4,376).
APPENDIX 3 – TERTIARY EDUCATION QUALITY AND STANDARDS AGENCY ACT (2011)

The Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards 2015) is a legislative instrument that lays out the requirements for Higher Education providers in Australia.

Relevant sections of the act include Sections 3.3 and 7.2, both of which detail the types of information students should have available, and the ways in which this information should be available. Relevant excerpts from these sections are provided below.

Section 3.3 Learning Resources and Educational Support
1. The learning resources, such as library collections and services, creative works, notes, laboratory facilities, studio sessions, simulations and software, that are specified or recommended for a course of study, relate directly to the learning outcomes, are up to date and, where supplied as part of a course of study, are accessible when needed by students.
2. Where learning resources are part of an electronic learning management system, all users have timely access to the system and training is available in use of the system.
3. Access to learning resources does not present unexpected barriers, costs or technology requirements for students, including for students with special needs and those who study off campus.
4. Students have access to learning support services that are consistent with the requirements of their course of study, their mode of study and the learning needs of student cohorts, including arrangements for supporting and maintaining contact with students who are off campus.

Section 7.2 Information for Prospective and Current Students
1. Accurate, relevant and timely information for students is publicly available and accessible, including access for students with special needs, to enable informed decision making about educational offerings and experiences.
2. Information for students is available prior to acceptance of an offer, written in plain English where practicable, accompanied by an explanation of any technical or specialised terms, and includes:
   a. information to assist in decisions about courses or units of study, including the course design, prerequisites, assumed knowledge, when and where courses/units are offered, application dates, arrangements for recognition of prior learning, standing credit transfer arrangements, pathways to employment and eligibility for registration to practise where applicable
   b. information to assist in planning for and participation in educational and other activities, including contact points, advice about orientation and induction, delivery arrangements, technical requirements for access to IT systems for online activities, timetables, access to learning resources, avenues to participate in decision making and opportunities to participate in student representative bodies
APPENDIX 4 – DELIOTTE STUDENT LIFECYCLE EXPERIENCE SURVEY (2010) (3,972 RESPONSES)

In the section ‘Please, list the 3 things you would change to improve the student experience?’ greater use of Blackboard is a very common theme. In the section ‘Please, list the 3 things that UQ does best to support the student experience?’ eLearning is commonly cited.

Example comments from UQ students include:

- offer more flexible delivery courses via Blackboard - I think Blackboard is under-utilised.
- better layout on website i.e. blackboard
- Online study tools such as BlackBoard and have more ONLINE resources of lectures
- All lecturers should be required to know how to use blackboard/teach staff how to use blackboard!
- better use of blackboard by lecturers. ie all grades available etc
- improved communication through blackboard with external student
- I would love it if ALL classes had to have a blackboard page and utilize the “my grades” tool.
- Make every subjects blackboard site the same
- make it compulsory for lecturers to put lecture information on blackboard.
- Greater online resources provided through the Blackboard
- more lecture recordings (make it mandatory!! its good for study)
- make blackboard for all courses a uniform format (its annoying and confusing to have information all in different places for each course
- ALL subjects should use blackboard/Mandate the use of a blackboard
- I have seen blackboard and their equivalent si-net at QUT and it seems a lot easier to follow.
- More info on blackboard
- The organisation of Blackboard
- BlackBoard and TurnItIn are really great learning utilities.
- user-friendly Blackboard site
- The learning resources online (i.e blackboard) are most helpful to my academic studies.
APPENDIX 5 – TEDI SURVEYS ON BLACKBOARD AND ELEARNING (2007) (6,724 RESPONSES)

The results of the TEDI Survey on Blackboard and eLearning were presented at the eLearning Sub-Committee – on 3rd September 2007. Caroline Steel undertook Leximancer analysis on the student data from the survey relating to the question of Blackboard likes and dislikes. The key themes were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Theme</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wider use required</td>
<td>Many students suggested that the LMS should be more widely used at the University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More effective use required</td>
<td>A dominant message was that students felt that lecturers were not using the LMS as effectively as they could be</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction with staff &amp; students</td>
<td>Many students commented positively on the student to student and student to staff interaction that occurred on the websites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good communication potential</td>
<td>Many students were very positive about the communication potential of the system for sharing knowledge and information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to lecture notes and PowerPoints</td>
<td>Students were generally happy to have access to lecture notes and PowerPoints but also felt that communication and other tools were very important for their learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>Many students were happy to have the flexibility of web-enhancements to their courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navigation</td>
<td>Many students believed that navigation problems were due to the way the course was set up by the lecturer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More consistent use of menus</td>
<td>Quite a number of students asked for a more consistent use of menus so that they could find things more easily in different web-enhanced courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of consistency across courses</td>
<td>Many students noted a lack of consistency in how the system was being used across courses within their program and requested a consistently high standard of use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff knowledge problematic</td>
<td>A dominant message was that students felt that lecturers did not have the knowledge to use the system to its potential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More staff training</td>
<td>A dominant message was that students felt that lecturers required more training in how to use the system effectively</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 6 – SOCIAL MEDIA FEEDBACK FROM STUDENTS

Feedback on Course Activation and lecture Recordings was collected from the following sites:

- Facebook https://www.facebook.com/groups/uqstalkerspace/ 27,000 members
- Facebook https://www.facebook.com/groups/uqcoursespace/ 3,500 members
- https://www.facebook.com/uniofqld
- http://www.reddit.com/r/uqreddit

The complaints below were made on day 1 of Semester 2, 2015:

![Comment](image)
The complaints below were made on the Facebook page UQ Stalkerspace (38,587 members) during 2015:
APPENDIX 7 – SECAT FEEDBACK FROM STUDENTS AROUND ONLINE DELIVERY OF COURSE MATERIALS

To extract evidence of student opinions about Learn.UQ delivery at UQ, the iTaLI Evaluations team searched all SECaT course comments data from 2015 and 2016 using the search words “Blackboard”, “black board”, “BB”, “online”, “discussion board”, “Piazza”, “Facebook”.

There were:
1,599/65,242 (2.5%) of comments in Q9 “What were the best aspects of this course?” and
3,318/62,999 (5.3%) of comments in Q10 “What improvements would you suggest?”.

These data show that, for these search terms, the there was a 2:1 ratio of student comments suggesting improvements vs those indicating satisfaction. Representative comments are shown below; the spelling and grammar is the students’ own.

Comments from students about good academic use of blackboard sites
Very well organised blackboard page that made it easier to study for this course and learn more.

This is probably the most well-organised, well-structured course I have ever had the privilege to participate in. Even down to details of uploading slides to Blackboard with both the week, date and lecture number made things so much easier. I really appreciated the numbered slides, the *references* for information presented, the 'important information' and 'helpful tips' notations as well as the general clear presentation of information. I almost feel like I could frame these slides - I know I will definitely refer back to these in my professional practice, and you have made it so easy for me to be able to do so. Thank you!

Comments that indicate students were confused by Blackboard site layouts
Also the blackboard pages for this course were very messy and unorganised, the use of folders and clear labels could fix this issue.

The sources on blackboard are always very hard to find. Although there is a assment file on BB, some lecturers never put the assessments under that file but put them under the learning activities. I was confused during the first few weeks of this course

It was also a bit confusing finding information about the assignment on blackboard - it felt hidden in the group page.

Also the blackboard layout was really confusing when it came to finding lecture slides etc. Maybe a course syllabus could be given at the beginning of semester with due dates and what reading should be done which week etc. which we could refer to, instead of blackboard. A typical blackboard layout would be easier to navigate.

Comments from students about good communication from academics
The course coordinator goes to allot of effort in ensuring the smooth running of the course and always maintains active communication via Blackboard, Email and in Class.

Another best aspect is that <NAME REMOVED> takes full advantage of the discussion board on the Blackboard. Anything that was not made clear in these documents could almost always clarified the active discussion board and my questions were always answered promptly.

The Discussion Board assessment actually made me engage with the discussion board for once. I found it engaging, and it helped not only with me learning but also with my assessment.

Comments from students about confusing communication from academics
The course coordinator needs more communication with the students during the semester. Emails were not replied and there wasn't even blackboard posts.

The blackboard discussion board was not replied by any of the lecturers and shows a poor use of technology.
There seems to be a lot of miscommunication with the tutors and the lecturers. E.g. the lecturer constantly enforces the point that all the topics are linked etc, when talking to the tutor, he seems to think the topics are not at all that linked and it was quite confusing.

Unfortunately, the communication of blackboard lacked, there were a few students who posted general comments and didn’t receive answers.

The majority of posts to the blackboard discussion board go unanswered by any staff, so all that occurs is students guessing about unclear specifications with other students. Emails go completely ignored. There’s no way to actually bring up any issues at all during the semester unless you physically corner someone and refuse to leave until you’re given a clear answer.

The information on the lecture slides did not match the information on the assessment guide from the ECP which caused confusion but a lot of other students in my tutorial.

Comments from students about access to teaching material online
Teachers do not upload their class recording on the BlackBoard.
Blackboard was not utilised to it’s full capacity, and course information was not equally shared during seminars and on blackboard giving students that missed seminars a severe disadvantage.

I work full time so I can’t attend lectures: listening back to the recordings was sometimes difficult as I couldn’t hear what the students were saying during the discussions. Having a higher gain on the mic or a second mic nearer the students so it picks this up would have helped.

RECORD THE LECTURES and release the recordings each week. I work full time and can’t attend the lecture in person but I always keep up with the recordings. Without them I really fell behind which is such a shame. Reading the slides and textbook was not the same.

Comments from students about online assessment submissions
Tedious to submit assignments every week in person- would be much easier for all to submit online.

Need a more engaging tutorial, and being able to submit the work sheets online or in the tutorial
I think the only thing that could be improved is to have the opportunity to electronically submit the weekly worksheet. It would be much easier that way, for the student.

Please make assessment submission online only. Submitting paper copies is a hassle for students who live over an hour away.

Comments from students about online marks and feedback
Maybe to use the online marking system a bit more, as I, personally, live far away from the uni and would prefer feedback online.

Course staff chose not to use blackboard for feedback and grading, instead asking all students to print a copy of their assessment and bring it to tutorial. <NAME REMOVED> stated that this was because reading essays online hurt her eyes, which is unfortunate. <NAME REMOVED> did not give a reason for grades not being released through blackboard. Providing feedback and grades online is faster and more convenient for practically all students, and is also better for the environment. In future years please consider having tutors who are not adverse to marking essays and releasing grades online during semester. When this issue was raised in class I felt that <NAME REMOVED> was dismissive of the student’s question. <NAME REMOVED> said that grades would be released online at the end of semester. If course staff do not know how to use blackboard or have other reasons for being adverse to using it, I suggest that they learn or find an alternative. This issue is especially pertinent for students who miss tutorials due to illness or any number of reasons. One student in the course was a father who worked part time and had two young children. Course staff must understand that for students like this, access to grades and feedback online throughout the course is invaluable. Tutors did not receive essays that were handed in through the assignment box at the School of Education office with completed coversheets. The Electronic Course Profile did not specify a minimum tutorial attendance
requirement.

Comments from students about discussion board use (note mixed opinions about communication tools)

They should have a forum, I know that we already have one on blackboard but there's this site called piazza (I used it in my <DISCIPLINE REMOVED> courses) and it was very good and helpful. So having a forum where you can ask questions and tutors, lecturers, students can answer would be good and it would be good if the questions were emailed to us.

Please, please, please stop using piazza and edx. Such an annoyance. learn.uq is sufficient for quizzes.

Piazza is a useless addition as blackboard already has a discussion board on.

Piazza would also be a very useful tool, as questions about portfolios are often answered only to individuals.

Piazza: Having a piazza discussion board for <COURSE REMOVED> would be very helpful, in order to clear confusion regarding assessment requirements and aid in understanding concepts.

I recommend using a discussion platform (Piazza is a good tool) so that everyone doesn't have to email tutors when they have questions.

Use Piazza! This was probably the third year course that could benefit the most from using Piazza. Would reduce a lot of repeat questions to the tutors/coordinates.

the news group is REALLY difficult to Use -blackboard has a discussion section that is much Easier to Use - another alternative is piazza.

I didn’t particularly find Reddit great. It would be good to also have any documentation put on to Blackboard since that is what everyone is familiar with and has to use for every other course. The assignment and video was a bit of a struggle.

The whole Reddit platform was a little much and probably not necessary.

Less nannying with the group assignment get rid of the blackboard group discussion, everyone uses facebook or google docs, was annoying because you don't get notified with blackboard if someone makes a post.

As an external course, interaction is obviously limited. However, with the Facebook group, it made it easy to be connected to others. Perhaps starting a weekly discussion would encourage others to get involved, learn from each other, share ideas, etc.

Comments about early assessment and feedback opportunities

Weekly quizzes gave me opportunities to check my understand on the content.

The weekly presentations and peer reviews, which let me improve my oral expression and know how to reflect myself.

That assessment was broken down to weekly tasks and helped solidify what was learnt.

The course was very well paced, I never felt overwhelmed by the amount of new content each week. More subjects in the <DISCIPLINE REMOVED> school need to provide such thoroughly worked answers for tutorials and past exams. I didn’t once finish reviewing and think, 'how did they get to that answer?' which is something that occurs often in other classes because they skip so many steps. The 'main points' sections in the tutorial notes were also great.

Receiving personal feedback/viewing our midsemester exams and getting cohort feedback on what needed improvement. Getting a practice for the oral exam as well as practice in the mock pharmacy.

Feedback/progress was provided regularly through quizzes, a mid-semester exam and scheduled viewing so you were easily able to track how you were going throughout the semester.
APPENDIX 8 – DATA COLLECTED BY QUT IN THEIR 2013 REVIEW OF THE QUT VIRTUAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

In 2013 QUT conducted a review of their virtual learning environment. Some of the data in this review were drawn from student focus groups. Excerpts from the report are shown below:

Excerpt 1: “Students in particular raised the need for consistency in unit site structure and navigation.”

Excerpt 2: “All focus groups indicated there is a need for larger teams of learning designers both centrally and at Faculty level, to support academic staff.”

Excerpt 3: “Despite many comments about the lack of certain functionality and the less than perfect nature of Blackboard, the key message resulting from the consultation with staff and students did not indicate that change to a different LMS was needed. Rather, there was a call to extend and integrate beyond Blackboard so as to accommodate the emerging needs of new generations of learners, and to better support innovative pedagogies, authentic and connected learning, and deliver on QUT’s ‘real world’ promise.”

Excerpt 4: “Responses indicate ‘have one brand’. There were no calls from students to replace Blackboard, rather to make it integrate and provide a seamless experience. Student responses highlight the need for a consistent approach by academics in using Blackboard, so that students know what to expect from Blackboard, across all units. Several responses indicated ‘customisation’ of particular unit sites is frustrating:

‘It is just ridiculous trying to navigate through them’.

‘Give staff guidelines to group all information and documents that they want to give students [so it is the same across units]’ and ‘... have universal structures to Blackboard pages’

Students emphasised the need for staff to fully understand the technologies being implemented: ‘it’s a joke sometimes... lecturers should be technology literate’; ‘Students have to learn to be multifaceted... so lecturers should learn to use technology’.

‘Some lecturers are hopeless with using the technology... which greatly impacts on learning’.

This has ramifications for the institution in terms of staff training and support.”

Details of this report are not available online to readers without a QUT username and login.
APPENDIX 9 – ONLINE PRESENCE STANDARDS AND PLANS AT OTHER UNIVERSITIES

At the 2015 Australasian Council of Open, Distance and E-learning (ACODE) meeting many universities reported having some kind of minimum presence policies around their online presence. Some examples are shown below. It is not yet common for Go8 universities to have a policy around course availability dates, but many report this is under consideration.

**University of Adelaide** - currently academics make the course “available” when they wish, but a due date is under consideration.

**Queensland University of Technology** - all courses/units are automatically made available on Monday of orientation week. This policy is advertised to everyone and the coordinator can then make the unit/course unavailable, if not yet ready.

**Griffith University** - policy that courses are made automatically available to Students via Blackboard two weeks prior to Semester start. Coordinators can then make them available / unavailable if they wish. Griffith University in 2008 released minimum presence guidelines to accompany a strategic blended learning strategy.

**Victoria University of Wellington** - No minimum standards. They are trying to encourage all academics to have a course on the LMS

**University of Melbourne** – have produced a booklet with academic rationale suggesting good practice and built a framework with consultation which was well received.

**Flinders University** - has had a minimum presence for about 10 years and gradually added to that. Their strategy is to test processes in one school prior to a University-wide roll-out.

**Southern Cross** – their policy is to make all learning sites available one week prior to session commencement. This policy has been in place for about five years.

**Charles Darwin University** - coordinates the release of units to be made available the Friday before the commencement of teaching. The academic community does not release the units to students this is done centrally. All units are assessed for readiness by a team before they are released to students and each unit needs to comply to minimum requirements before they are released.

**Charles Sturt University** - Subject outlines are due published 14 days prior to commencement (or earlier). Practice on subject sites is to open them to students 28 days before the start of session with subject sites are automatically provisioned with the dates already calculated. This timeframe is generally aimed at distance students who are trying to balance work & study, and was confirmed again last year as part of our move to Blackboard. The subject sites can be opened early by the academic if required. The subject site comes with a default Welcome message which includes availability about the Subject Outline & Minimum Requirements on student communication.

**Auckland University of Technology** - introduced a minimum threshold about seven years ago in response to increasing use of Blackboard as the course delivery system. There is an automated creation of course shell, then a course descriptor, assessment schedule and documents that are managed internally within the faculties

**University of Wollongong** - introduced Digital Learning Thresholds (DLT) before June 2015 and set out minimum standards to be implemented over a two-year period.


The DLTs themselves can be viewed here: [https://tinyurl.com/lrjgmdp](https://tinyurl.com/lrjgmdp)

All course outlines have to be on a Moodle site and they are moving to having online assessment submission and feedback. They also have a series of advanced standards (good practice) – not mandated, but encouraged.

**University of Southern Queensland** - has four levels – policy, procedure, good practice guidelines using Blackboard Collaborate etc. and they are backed up by good practice examples.

**Macquarie University** - has no minimum online standards. Each of the faculties has moved forward in different ways.

**Western Sydney University** - has had minimum online standards for some time and in the last couple of years has developed advanced standards. These are embedded in some of the training. They have a booklet and occasionally do an audit of a sample of courses.
APPENDIX 10 – EXISTING UQ POLICIES

UQ’s current Minimum Presence in Blackboard Procedure (6.40.01), has not been changed since it was established in 2011, while student expectations, available technologies, and TEL practices have evolved consistently. The PPL currently shows Procedures 6.40.01-6.40.06 as under review with a due date of April 8, 2018. The relevance of current procedures to this TELSC Working Party report are discussed below. In most cases the exact wording of the procedure is not repeated here, but our notes are provided on each procedure.

Procedure 1: Minimum Presence in Blackboard - 6.40.01

Relevant procedures

Procedure 4.1 Minimum components required and Procedure 4.2 Availability of courses

Notes and implications - Instructors are required to maintain a minimum level of online presence in Blackboard. All year 1-5 courses must meet minimum presence requirements that include a Blackboard site for each course consisting of the Announcements tool, an ECP course profile link, a Learning Resources folder, a Discussion Board, and a UQ Library link. The policy indicates that the site must be available throughout the teaching semester (which is not always the case when courses are opened late). The required Blackboard navigation framework does not include an Assessment folder and there are currently courses at UQ that do not use the structure laid out in the minimum presence requirements (or a separate Assessment folder).

The minimum presence requirement describes the way in which the Blackboard site should be used at the most basic level. A template is automatically applied to all Blackboard sites incorporating the menu items that course instructors are required to use for specific purposes. Any school and faculty templates used must contain the minimum components listed in the requirements and with permission from the Associate Dean (Academic), individual staff can add menu items to their course sites, customise the site, or use alternative mechanisms which provide similar functionality. In most of the site exemplars the students showed to TELSC Working Party members during consultations, academics had added menu items to the left hand side of the Learn.UQ site. In some cases there were very large numbers of additional items in the menu bar.

Blackboard course sites are, by default, unavailable to enrolled students when initially created. Students are enrolled automatically into course sites, but the course site must still be made available by the course instructor prior to students being able to access it. Once the course instructor has completed the minimum preparations for the course site, the site should be made available to enrolled students as close to start of teaching as possible.

Blackboard course sites must remain available to students for 12 months following the completion of the course teaching period.

Procedure 2: Availability and Archiving of Concluded Course Site Materials in Blackboard - 6.40.06

Notes and implications - Coordinators are required to keep courses and content available to students inside Blackboard for a minimum of 12 months after the course completion date.

Policy 4: Recording of Teaching at - UQ 3.20.06

Notes and implications- In April 2016 UQ released a policy requiring coordinators make full lecture recordings available to students within about 48 hours of the lecture, and keep them available for the duration of the semester and exam period, unless the Dean has given explicit permission for exemption from recording. The Dean’s approval for recording exemption must be visible to the student in the Electronic Course Profile.
**APPENDIX 11 – FEEDBACK FROM FACULTY T&L COMMITTEE CONSULTATIONS**

Members of Faculty-level Teaching and Learning Committees (TLCs) (including ADAs, Teaching and Learning Chairs, and student members of the committees) were provided with a series of proposed practices for Blackboard delivery of courses; each practice was accompanied by notes on the advantages and disadvantages of the item. TLC members were asked to rate the proposed practices as Recommended, Aspirational, Not suitable for my course, Not suitable for UQ, or Undecided. The discussion items are shown in Table A11.1, while the responses from individual T&L Committee meetings are shown in Tables A11.2—A11.6.

**Table A11.1: Potential practice items tabled in T&L Committee meetings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>Advantages to Teachers</th>
<th>Advantages to Students</th>
<th>Support Needs</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>UQ Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcome message available in Learn.UQ course</td>
<td>Academics appear professional &amp; prepared</td>
<td>Students assured of what they are doing in the course &amp; how the online component works</td>
<td>Templates Exemplars</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chris Campbell Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication expectations clearly explained in Learn.UQ</td>
<td>Communication with students better managed; fewer emails; better student-to-student collaboration</td>
<td>Students understand how to communicate with academics</td>
<td>Institutional endorsement Templates Exemplars</td>
<td>Differing expectations between courses can cause frustrations</td>
<td>Jacqui Bond Pharmacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact information available in Learn.UQ (with who to contact when)</td>
<td>Fewer emails from students; set-aside time means students do not “drop in”</td>
<td>Students can easily find the appropriate support</td>
<td>Templates Exemplars</td>
<td>Some repetition of ECP contacts</td>
<td>Lydia Kavanagh Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning resources are organised for students to find materials</td>
<td>Students spend more time working than looking for resources; fewer emails re “where is”</td>
<td>Students find resources when needed</td>
<td>Templates Exemplars</td>
<td>Can be more time-consuming to add resources</td>
<td>Carl Reidsema Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class catch-up resources available within a week</td>
<td>Fewer personal requests for support to catch-up classes</td>
<td>Students can keep up with a course if they miss a class through illness or other responsibilities</td>
<td>Exemplars Lecture recording</td>
<td>Not all classes have suitable resources or recordings that are suitable</td>
<td>All staff (recording policy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly course updates</td>
<td>Single announcement to class per week reduces student email load</td>
<td>Single point of reference – more manageable email</td>
<td>Exemplars</td>
<td>Incidental emails may still be required to address urgent issues</td>
<td>Gwen Lawrie Chemistry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online submission of assignments</td>
<td>Easier administration; time-stamped submissions; verifiable original document submitted</td>
<td>Submit anywhere, anytime Lower production costs</td>
<td>Submission systems Exemplars</td>
<td>Not all assignments can be submitted digitally</td>
<td>Business Psychology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online marking of assignments</td>
<td>Less paper to manage; reuse of comments; easier for your students to access feedback</td>
<td>Receive results anywhere; feedback available without picking up from campus</td>
<td>Training Exemplars Support staff</td>
<td>Online marking can take significant time to initiate; not possible for all assignment types; some issues with platforms when students view feedback</td>
<td>HaPI, POLSIS Commun &amp; Arts SHRS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students receive collective or individual feedback by the census date</td>
<td>Retention improved; set expectations of workload &amp; course standards</td>
<td>Realistic expectations of the course Raise standard of work or un-enroll without financial penalty</td>
<td>Exemplars Training Systems Support staff</td>
<td>Possible over-assessment in first 4 weeks; nature &amp; purpose of “feedback” is unclear</td>
<td>Michael Drinkwater Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course activation 1 week before first teaching activity</td>
<td>Fewer worried student emails</td>
<td>Clarity about course requirements &amp; activities; assurance of proper enrolment</td>
<td>Exemplars Systems</td>
<td>May require changes to visible navigation if course site not finalized before release</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table A11.2: TELSC Member Rankings of Online Course Design Elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>NMC</th>
<th>NUQ</th>
<th>U</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcome message available in Learn.UQ course</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication expectations clearly explained in Learn.UQ course</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact information available in Learn.UQ course (with who to contact when)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning resources are organised for students to find materials</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class catch-up resources available within a week</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly course updates</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online submission of assignments</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online marking of assignments</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students receive collective or individual feedback by the census date</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course activation 1 week before first teaching activity</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Code Classifications for practices:** (R) Recommended; (A) Aspirational; (C) Not appropriate for my course, school or faculty; (N) Not appropriate for UQ; (U) Undecided

**HASS Faculty T&L Feedback**

Dom McGrath attended the HaSS TLC on March 3rd 2016; he described the meeting as “rather positive” with respect to the proposals. This was the first ADAs and Chairs meeting that members of the TELSC Working Party team attended, and the HASS Faculty T&L Committee members had some useful suggestions:

- The Committee members suggested some clarification of the wording in the polling questions; these clarifications are reflected in the text of Table A11.1 as shown above.
- They also made suggestions: (i) that Blackboard should be implemented in a standard format (to simplify student navigation of the sites); (ii) that there should be better integration of the ECP and Blackboard so that data did not need to be entered twice; (iii) that the banner tool be reinstated on Blackboard so that people could make their site more recognisable without altering the fundamental formatting.
- The committee members were keen to have the term “where feasible” included in most of the recommendations, particularly those around online submissions and marking.

Table A11.3: HASS T&L Committee Rankings of Online Course Design Elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>NMC</th>
<th>NUQ</th>
<th>U</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcome message available in Learn.UQ course</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication expectations clearly explained in Learn.UQ course</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact information available in Learn.UQ course (with who to contact when)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning resources are organised for students to find materials</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class catch-up resources available within a week</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly course updates</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online submission of assignments</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online marking of assignments</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students receive collective or individual feedback by the census date</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course activation 1 week before first teaching activity</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestion: STANDARD FORMAT</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestion: ECP INTEGRATION</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestion: BANNER TOOL</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BEL Comments

- All should be recommended, but UQ is far behind the 8-ball in this space
- Regarding organisation of learning resources: Library needs 8 weeks notice to ensure resources in place week 1
- Depending on course
- One member reported they need time to work through online marking first
- Contact information is already in ECP

Table A11.4: BEL T&L Committee Rankings of Online Course Design Elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>NMC</th>
<th>NUQ</th>
<th>U</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcome message available in Learn.UQ course</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication expectations clearly explained in Learn.UQ course</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact information available in Learn.UQ course (with who to contact when)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning resources are organised for students to find materials</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class catch-up resources available within a week</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly course updates</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online submission of assignments</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online marking of assignments</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students receive collective or individual feedback by the census date</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course activation 1 week before first teaching activity</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EAIT Comments

Susan Rowland and Dom McGrath attended the EAIT TLC. The Committee members made the following observations:

- Online submission not possible when students submit physical objects
- Course activation a week before first teaching depends on nature of the course
- Flexibility needs to be maintained to allow any of these practices to be dropped if appropriate for the course
- Blackboard needs a sketching tool
- We want an ECP that is 4 pages long and integrated into Blackboard
- All of this has an impact on workloads
- This is controversial and difficult with the T&L chairs who are champions and keen - the actual difficult audience are academics who aren’t as interested in T&L
- Mandating was controversial with some endorsement and more concerns - particularly raised was the ability for academics to not comply with the spirit while complying with the rule - e.g. turning off microphones while lecture recording.
- There will always be exemptions to any practice and we need to recognise this
- Changes to technologies can make these practices much easier and should be considered through this process - the time consuming nature of using our technologies to these things is a huge impediment with workload implications (comments made reference to the ECP and blackboard systems specifically)
- We need to be very aware of making this a supportive change
- They liked the idea that an agreed-upon set of practices could be a good tool for their use when dealing with difficult colleagues who refuse to do things that are basic minimum practice (they were shocked, for example, that people go in and turn off the recordings on the BB site and they wanted to see the data)
Table A11.5: EAIT T&L Committee Rankings of Online Course Design Elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>NMC</th>
<th>NUQ</th>
<th>U</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcome message available in Learn.UQ course</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication expectations clearly explained in Learn.UQ course</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact information available in Learn.UQ course (with who to contact when)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning resources are organised for students to find materials</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class catch-up resources available within a week</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly course updates</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online submission of assignments</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online marking of assignments</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students receive collective or individual feedback by the census date</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course activation 1 week before first teaching activity</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

M+BS Comments

Susan Rowland and Dom McGrath attended the M+BS Teaching and Learning Committee.

- This group very curious and engaged about the process; they had lots of questions but were generally interested and they saw the sense in the idea of a few minimum recommended practices around BB use.
- The group had a unanimous opinion that mandates were not desirable, but they all thought welcome message and opening of BB before the first lecture was sensible and should be recommended practice.
- The group appreciated the plan for discussion with TLC, then with students, then with T&L Chairs.
- Not all members of the group voted, so the rankings may not reflect the opinions of all members of the committee.
- Academics wanted a copy of the suggestions to take to their academics – we will provide them with an e-copy.

Table A11.6: MBS T&L Committee Rankings of Online Course Design Elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>NMC</th>
<th>NUQ</th>
<th>U</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcome message available in Learn.UQ course</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication expectations clearly explained in Learn.UQ course</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact information available in Learn.UQ course (with who to contact when)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning resources are organised for students to find materials</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class catch-up resources available within a week</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly course updates</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online submission of assignments</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online marking of assignments</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students receive collective or individual feedback by the census date</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course activation 1 week before first teaching activity</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Science

This faculty committee declined the opportunity to complete the feedback table.

HABS Faculty T&L Feedback

Peter Newcombe and Susan Rowland attended the HaBS TLC. It is quite a representative group with 3 student reps (2 undergrads), 2 Library (for today), 6 faculty admin, 1 ITaLI, 6 school TLC chairs, and ADA. This group did
not complete the table, but they engaged in positive, engaging collegial discussions – with significant input from students. Some highlights:

- Some members were disbelieving that staff are not making Blackboard available until into semester (there was an assumption that it just happens)
- Consensus that there is a need for resourcing (not only training but ongoing support, factoring time into skill development)
- Responsibility belongs to academic staff (not admin)
- Blackboard should be more than a mere repository for course content. Use is as a T&L tool
- Despite the “digital age”, there was feeling that students do not know how to use (make best use of) Blackboard. They can use social media!
- Some of the negative past student comments may be attributable to students being unaware that staff have other responsibilities (research, service)
- At least one school has an IT person who is on hand to assist staff with Blackboard
- Lack of consistency between ECP and Blackboard (esp. for class scheduling – evident in those programs where prac are held each other week). Undergrad students spoke to this.
- ECP discussion initiated by students – variability in how academics use Section 4 (Learning Activities), release of ECPs (some within 1st week and do not allow for preparation nor time to schedule other life events – e.g. work)
- Contacts on Blackboard – need to make it clear who to contact and for what reasons. Flow chart?
- Broader issue of having My Si-Net, Blackboard, ECPs integrated
APPENDIX 12 – DATA AROUND UQ ONLINE SUBMISSIONS AND MARKING

In 2015 Semester 1, 67% of UQ courses had at least one instance of a Turnitin assignment with an average of 2.8 Turnitin assignments per course. About 60% of the assignments submitted to Turnitin at UQ were also marked online. This means that around 40% of assignments in this semester were marked online.

In 2015 Semester 1, 28% of courses had at least one instance of a Blackboard-submitted assignment (with an average of 2.6 Blackboard assignments per course). Note, Blackboard-submitted assignments will generate submission receipts in the 2017 upgrade of Blackboard, so this submission format may become more popular with students and academics.

Over 2015 there were around 300,000 assignments submitted to Turnitin.

In 2016 Semester 1, 64% of assignments submitted to Turnitin at UQ were also marked online. In that semester alone nearly 160,000 assignments were submitted electronically via Turnitin with 102,080 marked online. This was an increase in numbers over the same period in 2015.

Online submission and assessment is growing each year at UQ; this indicates the practice is becoming more normalised for both academics and students.
The TELSC Working Party ran a number of student focus groups to gather feedback on the draft elements. Students from the following populations were invited to provide feedback about the use of Blackboard at UQ through a series of consultations:

- EDUC1049 students
- HASS Knowledge Making site mentors
- School of Medicine
- ACCT2400 students
- BIQC2000 cohorts past and present
- SCIE326X students

Students were contacted through group emails and Facebook – no financial incentive was offered but students were given lunch for participating in a one-hour meeting; they indicated their willingness to engage using a Survey Monkey link. Students who responded were contacted using the emails that they provided for the survey. Ten students indicated they were interested in participating and seven were able to attend one of the three sessions we arranged. The demographics of the students who responded are shown in Table A13.1

### Table A13.1: Demographics of students who responded to the request for input

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student ID</th>
<th>Program of Study</th>
<th>Number of semesters completed at UQ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>B Health Science</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>LLB / B Arts</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Religion Studies extended major, International Relations minor</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>B Health Science</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>B Health Science</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>B Health Science</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>BENS</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>BSc</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>B Advanced Science</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>B Science, Biomed Science major</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students were asked to contribute their suggestions for good and bad Blackboard site organisation and administration. They were also asked to rank the suggestions from Table A13.1 in order of their perceived importance. The slides for the focus group are shown in Appendix 14.
APPENDIX 14 – STIMULUS SLIDES AND FEEDBACK FROM STUDENT FOCUS GROUPS

Part 1: Your ideas about BB site design

- Set up the following table:
  - Negative stuff – what don’t you like?
  - Example bad course (sensitive Q)
  - Things you can consider about the design of course sites:
    - What frustrates you?
    - What do you like?
    - Blue sky section: If you could have anything on your BB site, what would it be?
    - Why is it bad?
    - Why is it good?

- Things you can consider about the design of course sites:
  - What do you consider best practice for BB site design?
  - How do different sites compare / variability?

Table A14.1: Student focus group – feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UQ site design suggestions that the students ranked from 1-10 (smaller numbers indicate the item received a higher rank from students)</th>
<th>Average rank</th>
<th>Student A</th>
<th>Student B</th>
<th>Student C</th>
<th>Student D</th>
<th>Student E</th>
<th>Student F</th>
<th>Student G</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning resources are organised for students to find materials</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly course updates</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online submission of assignments</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online marking of assignments</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class catch-up resources available within a week</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course activation 1 week before first teaching activity</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication expectations clearly explained in Learn.UQ course</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students receive collective or individual feedback by the census date</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact information available in Learn.UQ course (with who to contact when)</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcome message available in Learn.UQ course</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary of requested standard template from the students

How should content be presented on the Learn.UQ course layout?

- Summary information on course (Standardised)
- Week-by-week folders all in a standard content area (i.e. Learning Resources)
- All content need for each week in the one folder
- All readings /content available at the start of Semester
- Library readings organised by week
- Timetable available

How should assessment be presented on the Learn.UQ course layout?

- All under the menu items under Assessment
- Folder per assessment item – with item details and submission link
- ECP details available in relevant BB area (information “pulled” from ECP)
- Results available in my Grades – (not including items from previous years)
- Rubrics (i) match ECP, (ii) contain detailed clear descriptors of each standard and (iii) give clear expectations
- Online marking and submission improves speed of feedback so feedback can then be used for next assessment item. This helps with planning on what to focus on
- Online marking allows access to feedback after hours and means not having to go to reception to collect feedback - we may not be able to go in the allocated times

Student focus groups responses about Blackboard use at UQ (collated)

Positives about Blackboard

- Everything in one site - great, Lectures / ECP / assessment
- Each course is unique – use of header images
- Info is all there
- Announcements that keep you up-to-date - sometimes annoying when same announcement is emailed multiple times (Most likely from edits)
- Extra learning resources are handy
- Three like the week-by-week structure (one said they prefer an ordered to-do list)
- One said she really liked the Learning Pathway (handy when working part-time and parenting)
- Courses with a folder per assessment item, containing the submission link and assignment details
- Lecture slides up before the lecture appreciated

Negatives about Blackboard (note some of these are not complaints about Blackboard per-se, but instead are complaints about communication and organisation)

- Lack of standardisation (this is the primary issue mentioned by almost all students). Academics use different menus in each course – and some components are not used in some courses.
- One student voiced frustration at two courses identified as “sister” courses which had no consistency. Students frequently had to search for supporting information and readings for lectures and/or tutorials that were not in that lecture’s folder. Readings are also presented in one folder that is not clearly marked and it is difficult to establish what should be read in which order. Time is being wasted relearning the structures of varying sites (a student who is doing a full Summer semester might encounter 12 different site layouts in one year).
- Problems downloading lecture recordings in 2015
- Academics announce a resource or assignment without saying where to find it
- Video locations were not always the same as the lecture slides - identified as a major inconsistency
- Discussion boards useful but a poor interface in Bb – Piazza mentioned as a preference
- Items from previous years still appear in MyGrades – students found this very confusing
- Rubric descriptors are missing or in shorthand compared to the ECP. Unclear descriptors also a source of frustration
- Sometimes material shown on the visualiser during the lectures is not scanned and uploaded
- Lecture slides posted online before the lecture are appreciated, but students find it frustrating when changes...
to the slides done for the lecture are not reflected in the uploaded slides

- Lack of organisation to readings. Often they are presented as a long list that is decontextualised and not ordered according to the weeks and sessions of use.

**Blue Sky requests for Blackboard**

- Standard navigation i.e. Weekly structure, folder per assessment item that includes assignment submission link
- Discussion board used more. One student suggested Reddit be used for discussion board because “you can like posts and vote them up and down” and because the discussions fed to them
- “Ask a Tutor” button to get help for the course
- Standardised course summary info
- Progress bar/dashboard
- Tabbing between courses would save a lot of time instead of the current round-trip of this course > welcome page > other course
- Semester timetable in BB
- Facebook class groups – there was some disagreement here about whether this was a good idea; some students preferred the Blackboard discussion board
- Assessment ECP details in Assessment area
- Lectures categorised by week or lecture stream. Summary/info on each lecture recording

**Other comments**

- One student didn’t know they could go to Si-Net for their GPA.

An example white board from one of the sessions is shown.
Individual student comments on particular site designs and requests for site design

**Student 1: Site design comments and requests**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative stuff</th>
<th>Good practice – what do you like?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Blackboard layout is not standard across courses</td>
<td>• RELN211S – Great example of excellent format!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Some courses have limited resources uploaded</td>
<td>• Other links &amp; resources can be linked to course BB pages e.g. POLS twitter feed, essay guides etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It can be confusing to find resources</td>
<td>• Great for everything to be in an easily accessible spot – readings, assessment, slides ECP etc</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Blue sky section: if you could have anything on your BB site, what would it be?**

• Reddit-style discussion forum
• Standard structure with option for coordinators to add extra

**Student 2: Site design comments and requests**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative stuff</th>
<th>Good practice – what do you like?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Some course sites have eternal sites/links (re-login, grades)</td>
<td>• Every course site is unique (I like colours and pictures so I can tell them apart)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Recordings – unable to access offline</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Updates – disappear on Saturday</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Blue sky section: if you could have anything on your BB site, what would it be?**

• Colour coded course i.e. different colour for each course
• Updates for each individual course i.e. individual tabs

**Student 3: Site design comments and requests**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative stuff</th>
<th>Good practice – what do you like?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Hard to switch between enrolled courses once already in site</td>
<td>• Home screen shows current courses nicely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Quizzes are slow</td>
<td>• Learning tabs on left hand side of each course (i.e. folder headings)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• In learning resources: varies subject by subject – should have uniform headings</td>
<td>• I like a layout that is the same from one course to the next</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Blue sky section: if you could have anything on your BB site, what would it be?**

• Personalised iCal download for assessment

**Student 4: Site design comments and requests**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative stuff</th>
<th>Good practice – what do you like?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Layout defies between courses</td>
<td>• All info central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Doesn’t interact well with all browsers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Blog functionality needs improvements (i.e. Word functions)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Often too complicated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Blue sky section: if you could have anything on your BB site, what would it be?**

• Incorporating timetables on welcome screen and SI-net sites
• Name assessment
• Course tabs on welcome screen rather than constant loading times
• Central uploading of BB content to streamline layout
• All materials available at the start of semester

**Student 5: Site design comments and requests**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative stuff</th>
<th>Good practice – what do you like?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Each subject has different places for items</td>
<td>• Central info</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• My grades often problematic (wrong items shown)</td>
<td>• Welcome message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Discussion board clunky, doesn’t flow</td>
<td>• Coordinators updating where the course is at</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hard to find some items – unusual folders</td>
<td>• Extra learning resources available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Readings link don’t work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Spending too much time working out where to go!!!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Blue sky section: if you could have anything on your BB site, what would it be?**
Student 6 & 7: Site design comments and requests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative stuff</th>
<th>Good practice – what do you like?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of course outline (reading schedule)</td>
<td>• Calendar with deadlines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Discussion board layout</td>
<td>• Piazza discussion board (BIOL1020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of consistency across courses</td>
<td>• Standardised template</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lecture recording naming / categorising scheme</td>
<td>• Colour-coded folders, visualizer (BIOL2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Lecture recordings categorised by week / lecture stream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Standardised assessment format</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Grade calculator / status bar showing % progression</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Blue sky section: if you could have anything on your BB site, what would it be?
- Online quizzes with immediate feedback & guidance on materials to revisit (formative & summative) sampling
- GUI like Windows 8 / 10 with panels for each course content

Summary of Student Focus Group Feedback:

Key messages from students in the TELSC Working Party focus groups (note small sample size):
- Students want to be able to locate things easily and minimise time wasted trying to find resources and activities. Key practice guidelines to reflect this are week-by-week folders, assessment folder per assessment task and consistency of courses where reasonable.
- Most students see consistency of navigation as a key to this but would like to see some styling unique to sites to make it easy to identify quickly which course site they are in. Students liked the individuality of the sites (colour, banners, logos etc.), but they wanted to be able to find things the same way on each site.
- A consistent aside was a frustration with the BB discussion board, there was a desire for this functionality but that the current tool is a barrier to use. Reddit as a discussion board platform was promoted and interviewees shown how it functions. The system has some excellent features that outstrip both Facebook and the BB discussion board.
- One student in particular reinforced that advice that we give to staff on site design. i.e. Content organised by week and a separate area with resources and a submission link for each assessment item.
- The same student also expressed a wish for all assessment to be submitted and marked online, commenting that submitting to a box was “scary” as there is no proof of submission like the email confirmation received from Turnitin. The other student backed this up by commenting that many of her friends live a distance from campus and had difficulty submitting hard copy assignments.

Other comments (grammar, punctuation, and spelling are the students’ own):
- From a student perspective it can be difficult to use as there is vast differences between the quality and availability of content on black board sites. The layouts also varies between subjects which makes navigating a challenge. To improve the overall experience it would be good to increase the content on BB whilst also making the layout more standard. As an example of the standardisation lecture slides on some sites are found learning activities and some are found learning resources whilst this is just a minor thing it can prove challenging especially for first year students.

- What I like - Most of what you need is there somewhere, and once you know your way around it is fairly easy to navigate the website. What I want to happen - I want to log onto BB and see my timetable and calendar on the welcome screen, with a comprehensive countdown to all assessment item due dates included. My courses should appear on tabs up the top of the welcome screen and require no loading to change between courses, with each course screen staying where I left it as I switch around during each session. Each course screen should have a formulaic layout with an absolute minimum deviation for course specifics, so I intuitively know where to find information for every course for the rest of my time studying at UQ.

- I would say that I hope to have an improvised [sic] version of BB that is easily accessible and a comfortable and conducive one-stop portal to support our learning in UQ. On a side note, I hope that the suggestions that we have provided will not remove what certain students like and/or cause any negative issues with the upcoming new version which I am looking forward to use it in future.
APPENDIX 15 – CORRESPONDENCE WITH IES AROUND MOODLE PLATFORM USE BY STUDENTS

International Education Services (IES) provides the foundation year for international students who are coming to UQ. IES uses Moodle to deliver online content and learning services to its students. IES recently sought advice from UQ about the platform the University is using. IES was able to give advice on the ways in which their students use the online learning platform.

From: Alan Muston <muston@fdn.uq.edu.au> Date: Wednesday, August 17, 2016 at 12:00 PM
To: Susan Rowland <s.rowland1@uq.edu.au> Subject: Moodle at IES

Hello Professor

My name is Alan Muston and I work at International Education Services (IES). Some months ago you spoke to the staff at IES. After the meeting we had a brief chat about our on-line learning management system, Moodle and you told me that you were conducting a survey of the UQ student’s experience of your LMS.

We are now in the process of reviewing and revising our own system and I wonder if I might have its major findings? It might greatly assist me in designing a better experience for our own students.

Also I wonder if I might be given temporary guest access to the LMS at UQ so I can see firsthand what you are offering there? Thank you for considering this request

Alan Muston, Teacher (Mathematics, Behavioural Science)

From: Susan Rowland [mailto:s.rowland1@uq.edu.au] Sent: Monday, 22 August 2016 7:38 PM
To: Alan Muston Subject: Re: Moodle at IES

Dear Alan,

Thanks for your email. We are still completing our work for the Blackboard study, but I can tell you the most important results.

The students were given a series of options from which to choose – the thing they MOST wanted was a consistent structure to Blackboard sites. They wanted them to be arranged in a week by week format if possible, with a separate folder for the assessment items. They really disliked having to search through sites to find things – they saw it as a waste of time – and they really wanted things to be simple and quick. Their primary recommendation was that all the sites be arranged the same way.

The other things they most frequently wanted were weekly updates from the course coordinator (i.e., what they need to do this week), online submission of assignments, and online marking of assignments so they can get their marks and their feedback without having to come in to the campus.

Kind regards, Susan

From: Alan Muston <muston@fdn.uq.edu.au> Date: Tuesday, August 23, 2016 at 8:17 AM
To: Susan Rowland <s.rowland1@uq.edu.au> Subject: RE: Moodle at IES

Hello Susan, This fits exactly with what I found when I surveyed my own students about our LMN. Thank you for the information and I think now I have enough to proceed to develop our LMN in a better direction.

Alan Muston, Teacher (Mathematics, Behavioural Science)

From: Susan Rowland <s.rowland1@uq.edu.au> Date: Tuesday, August 23, 2016 at 8:18 AM
To: Alan Muston <muston@fdn.uq.edu.au> Subject: RE: Moodle at IES

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7 Online at http://international-education-services.com
So your students gave these same responses? Can I quote you on that in our report? It would be nice to have some external input and more student voice in our report.

Kind regards, Susan

From: Alan Muston <muston@fdn.uq.edu.au>  Date: Tuesday, August 23, 2016 at 5:14 PM
To: Susan Rowland <s.rowland1@uq.edu.au>  Subject: RE: Moodle at IES
Hello Susan, You certainly can quote me

Alan Muston, Teacher (Mathematics, Behavioural Science)

From: Alan Muston <muston@fdn.uq.edu.au>  Date: Wednesday, August 24, 2016 at 8:39 AM
To: Susan Rowland <s.rowland1@uq.edu.au>  Subject: RE: Moodle at IES
Hello Susan

I found the results of the survey I did. The survey, the follow-up discussions and our day to day experience with the students confirm the following conclusions. In applying these conclusions to any other context it must be remembered that our students do not have English as their first language and often come to us with IELTS scores of 5 or 5.5. Their experience of education and the expectations of the role of a teacher differ vastly to what may be expected of Australian students. They are a long way from their normal support networks and are under a lot of economic and cultural pressure to succeed.

With this in mind we have found that

1. Students primarily want our LMS to answer the question “What do I have to do to pass this course?” Anything else will either be ignored or seen as irrelevant. In the design of our sites we have to make very clear links between anything we place on the site and satisfactory progression through the course.

2. In addition to point one the students want clear guidance about how they should progress through the course. A LMS arranged in a time sequence so that students know what they are doing and should be doing this week or even this class works best. They do not have the organisational skills to sort this out for themselves. One of our tasks is to help them to get to a point where they can.

3. For these students too much information is as good as no information at all. They do not have the language skills to search through a complex page to find what they need. Also, many of the students have come from systems where it was expected that the teacher would tell them exactly what they needed to know and then ensure that they knew it. The idea of proactively seeking out information is not familiar to many of the students.

4. The interface needs to be as simple as possible, with very clear links to the important and relevant information.

5. A consistent interface and a consistent set of expectations across all subject areas is vital. It is hard for the students to become familiar with one set of expectations and to negotiate one way of presenting course information. If they are faced with 5 divergent platforms they get very confused.

One of the issues I face is that the teaching staff and the students have different perspectives on the use of our LMS. The staff see it as a teaching tool and the students as a guide to navigating the course safely and these two views do not always coincide.

Lastly, though our class sizes are trivial compared to the classes at UQ and students should find it easier to access teaching staff for assistance there are cultural barriers which complicate matters greatly. Many our students come from high power distance countries and are very hesitant to approach teachers. They do not readily ask questions or seek guidance, even when they are in great need of it. We are experimenting with ways to provide assistance to students in ways they will use. Not easy.

I hope that helps, Alan
The Head of School and the Director of Teaching and Learning in the UQ Business School led the localised implementation of the Recommended Best Practices for Online Learning Delivery in preparation for Semester 1, 2017. A team of three RHD students were recruited to work with the Business School Learning Designer and central eLearning team to support course coordinators through this process.

Each course was provided with a new site aligned with the Recommended Best Practices. The Business School reports that each course took approximately 4 hours of team time to transfer to the new delivery template. Academics in the school reported that, in the courses where the Recommended Best Practices were implemented, their email burden from students asking about the location of items on Learn.UQ went down.

This case outlines how each practice was implemented in the Business school context.

Recommendation 1: UQ should provide clear guidelines for, and exemplars of, expected practice for Blackboard site layouts

The project team worked with iTaLI staff, ITS Staff, and UQ Library staff to translate the draft Recommended Best Practices into a set of guidelines for site design. The project implementation team populated the new sites; where they encountered material that did not appear to “fit” the Recommended model they used a heuristic model of problem solving and consultation with the teaching team to develop refinements to the proposed model. These refinements were incorporated into the guidelines for site production.

Recommendation 2: All Learn.UQ sites should use consistent navigation structures

A common top-level structure was developed, providing a consistent path for all courses but not restricting extra course specific resources:

Each course provided a weekly index of resources either through a learning pathway or ‘learning resources’ folder. Titles of each folder and activity were matched to the ECP learning activities where possible.

Recommendation 3: UQ should provide site-embedded and external support for academics to help them prepare their Learn.UQ site

The project team of three PhD students supported academics through:

- Initially reviewing the site and drafting a plan to move resources to the new structure
- Consulting with academics about the process and benefits
- Implementing changes as approved

The Business School was able to complete the migration of its large first year courses in time for first semester.
Recommendation 4: Learn.UQ sites should have improved potential for site customisation in ways that do not impede navigation

Customised banners were developed for each site providing a course identity while keeping a consistent UQ Business School branding.

TOUR1001 & ACCT1101 menu items Semester 1, 2017

Recommendation 5: All Learn.UQ sites should include a clear explanation of the communication modes, channels, and practices for the course; communication to students should be done in a manner that is consistent from one course to another using official UQ email accounts and Learn.UQ announcements.

All course-coordinators provided a statement about how they intended to communicate with students; they were all provided with a common communication policy template that they adapted to suit their course.

Welcome videos were developed based on a common script which was adapted or re-written by course staff before being recorded with and edited by professional staff provided by the school.

TOUR1001 & ACCT1101 Welcome videos Semester 1, 2017

The Course Staff folder was used to provide contact information for all teaching staff; inclusion of details of research and other professional activities was optional.

TOUR1001 Staff Contact details Semester 1, 2017

Recommendation 6: Learn.UQ sites should be available to students at least 1 week before their first class

The “Site availability” date was set to the beginning of O-week 2017 for all sites.
Recommendation 7: Academics should provide catch-up resources to students within a week of learning activities; these resources should not close before the end of semester

Lecture recordings are provided for all lectures in the Learning resources folder.

**TOUR1001 Assessment Folder Semester 1, 2017**

Recommendation 8 (Aspirational): Where possible, assessment for courses should be submitted online

Where appropriate, assessment in the Business School is submitted online, in accordance with BEL faculty policy. The template was established so that each assessment item had all relevant details provided in its own single, dedicated folder. In addition, a screen shot of the ECP Assessment Overview was pasted into the Assessment folder so that students did not have to click out of the Learn.UQ site to see it.

Recommendations 9 and 11 were not addressed as part of the implementation.

Recommendation 10 (Aspirational): The discussion board function of Blackboard may be supplemented with an additional alternative

This Recommendation was not addressed as part of the implementation.

Recommendation 12 (Aspirational): Blackboard should not show legacy grade centre columns

Assessment submission links and grade centre columns were checked by project staff for compliance.
APPENDIX 17 – PROPOSED WORKFLOW FOR MIGRATION OF UQ BLACKBOARD SITES TO THE NEW TEMPLATES

Significant amounts of additional support should be provided to course coordinators for a limited time from late 2017 through all of 2018 to reorganise their Blackboard sites. Beyond 2018, a smaller workforce will be available year-round to monitor compliance and assist coordinators to refine their site design. This support would be best targeted as follows:

- Summer semester course reorganisation and refinement – October/November
- Semester 1 course reorganisation and refinement – November/December/January
- Semester 2 course reorganisation and refinement – May/June/July

Casual staff can be employed and supervised by ITS to complete the migration and revision work. These support staff would be required to complete a confidentiality agreement; if they are students they would not be allowed to work on courses from their own faculty. The UQ Business School indicated that PhD students were ably suited to this work, and those with “excellent people skills” were the best candidates.

The suggested workflow is as follows:

1. Particular courses are targeted for change, based on position in program, enrolment numbers, student feedback, or other metrics specified by their administering school. Other courses may be provided with support on an EOI basis.
2. New courses will be created with the new template. In this case, migration and revision staff will help the course coordinator place the correct items in the folder structure.
3. In the case of existing courses, the migration and revision staff check the set-up of the Blackboard site for the most recent offering and develop a plan for renewal.
4. Staff will meet with the course coordinator and refine the plan, then implement it.
5. When work is complete the course coordinator receives an email with notification of completion with a completed checklist of the work that has been done.
6. Information on the importance of reading lists and instructions on how to request a reading list organised by week would be given to course coordinators.
7. Staff will only help with the standard set up, course coordinators would still be responsible for non-standard set up organisation of items.
8. No help will be provided on setting up assignment submission links (the support staff will only move them). Set-up support is available through the TLS eLearning Solution Service.

Schools or Faculties may choose to set up this program in-house, however seamless conversion to a standard template and ongoing monitoring of Learn.UQ site quality is far more likely to be achieved through a central, eLearning-supervised team.
### APPENDIX 18 – PROPOSED BUDGET FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS AROUND STANDARD SITE DESIGN

#### Best Practice for Online learning at UQ – Site Design team OPTION 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course (&gt;50 students)</th>
<th>30% updated</th>
<th>Hours/course</th>
<th>Total hours</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1190 (35% of courses &amp; 82.4% of students at UQ covered by cutoff &gt;50)</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1785</td>
<td>48 wks. 10.5% of courses &amp; 25% of UQ students served.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Personnel**

- Site Redesign admin officer HEW701 - coordination
  - Hours: 217.5
  - Cost: $12,409.50
  - 1 d/wk for 30 wks. In kind from eLearning team
- Supporting material production officer HEW701 - writing
  - Hours: 217.5
  - Cost: $12,409.50
  - 1 d/wk for 30 wks. In kind from ITaLI
- Site Redesign officers HEW301 - site redesign
  - Hours: 1785
  - Cost: $63,367.50
  - @$35.50/hour (including on-costs)

**Total**

- Cost: $88,186.50

**Actual Cost**

- Cost: $63,367.50

#### Best Practice for Online learning at UQ – Site Design team OPTION 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course (&gt;50 students)</th>
<th>80% updated</th>
<th>Hours/course</th>
<th>Total hours</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1190</td>
<td>952</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4760</td>
<td>127 wks. 28% of courses &amp; 66% of students served.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Personnel (HEW 7 officers unchanged)**

- Site Redesign admin officer HEW3 - site redesign
  - Hours: 4760
  - Cost: $168,980.00
  - @$35.50/hour (including on-costs)

**Total**

- Cost: $193,799.00

**Actual Cost**

- Cost: $168,980.00

#### Best Practice for Online learning at UQ – Site Design team OPTION 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course (each School nominates 10 courses)</th>
<th>All updated</th>
<th>Hours/course</th>
<th>Total hours</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>40 wks.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Personnel *HEW 7 officers unchanged**

- Site Redesign officers HEW301 - site redesign
  - Hours: 1500
  - Cost: $53,250.00
  - @$35.50/hour (including on-costs)

**Total**

- Cost: $76,069.00

**Actual Cost**

- Cost: $53,250.00