

MHS eLearning Update

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The University of Manchester

Is your Blackboard course ready for start of year?

Course lifecycle

Your Blackboard course should by now have been activated. If you still need to activate your course, please see the instructions on the TLSO eLearning web pages: www.tlso.manchester.ac.uk/e-learning/soy2015/

Useful knowledge base articles:

- Preparing Blackboard courses for start of year and semester 2
- How to activate Blackboard Courses
- Post-activation checklist for Blackboard
- How to set up a Turnitin (Tii) assignment

Blackboard and SOY 2015

- All Bb courses are visible to students on Monday 14 September 2015.
- You can access Blackboard via [My Manchester](#) for staff—click on the link to Blackboard in the Teaching category of links.
- The course academic lead is responsible for making sure Bb courses are activated. Some schools/programmes have local arrangements for activation. Bb courses may be activated by the course academic lead or anyone listed as Primary Instructor in Campus Solutions.
- You can find instructions on activating your course in the Knowledge Base article, '[How to activate Blackboard courses \(STAFF\)](#)'

Are you planning to use the Blackboard wiki tool?

There is currently an issue with the Blackboard wiki tool. The problem has been observed when a participant submits a new contribution to a wiki page in Blackboard which results in the wiki page exceeding 100,000 characters (approximately 90-100Kb in size). When saved, the newly edited page appears to be blank. Any newly edited content in the submission that caused the wiki page to exceed 100,000 characters will not be saved.

Blackboard are aware of the issue, and tests are underway to verify the cause. In the meantime, advice on a workaround is available.

If you plan to use a Blackboard wiki in your course unit please review the information on page 2, or consult with the eLearning team for further advice or to discuss alternative ways of delivering the activity.

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Key things to note

- Blackboard courses available to students on Monday 14 September 2015
- Are you planning to use the Blackboard wiki tool?
- eLearning and the new IT support system



Are you using the Blackboard wiki tool?

There is currently an issue with the Blackboard wiki tool. If you plan to use the tool in your teaching, please review the information below and contact the eLearning team if you have any queries.

What is happening?

A problem has been observed when a participant submits to a Blackboard wiki page a new contribution which results in the wiki page exceeding 100,000 characters (approximately 90-100Kb in size).

When saved, the newly edited page appears to be blank. Any newly edited content in the submission that caused the wiki page to exceed 100,000 characters will not be saved.

In the wiki page history (visible to instructors not students) the size of the affected wiki page is reduced to 0Kb. However, previous versions of the page still exist.

Blackboard are aware of the issue and tests are underway to verify the cause.

What do you need to do?

Until the cause has been verified, as a precaution it is best to ensure that individual wiki pages do not exceed 100,000 characters or 100Kb (including images). File sizes can be checked by referring to the page history.

If you intend to use a wiki in your Blackboard course, we recommend that you take the following precautions.

Advise users of the wiki (students and staff):

- not to post new wiki pages that exceed 100,000 characters in length—this equates to:
 - approximately 13k-14k words for text only;
 - fewer words if images, long URLs, or special characters (scientific notation) are used;
- to start a new page with their contributions if the wiki pages are likely to become lengthy;
- before submitting any edits to an existing wiki page, to copy and paste the revised text into a text editor (eg notepad/textpad or Microsoft Word) and save it as a back-up.

Are your 2015/16 course units based on 2014/15 content?

- When you activate your 2015-16 course unit, if you rollover your content from the current course, the wiki will be reset to 0 characters so the existing risk will not be carried forward.
- If you are using wikis which are likely to have high content entries for individual pages, and you expect them to be heavily used, we recommend you advise staff and students as detailed above.
- Alternatively, you might want to review the use of wikis in your course(s) and consider if another option would be suitable. If you are unsure, please contact the eLearning team.

Once the wiki exercise in your course has finished:

- As a precaution, you could make the wiki(s) no longer available to students.
- If you wish to keep the wiki content visible, for example for re-sit students, you could change the settings on your wiki to prevent students from making further edits. This can be done by going to **Control Panel > Course Tools > Wikis**, selecting the wiki by checking the box to the left of it, and choosing **Student Access > Close to editing** from the drop-down box above the list of wikis.

Using wikis in organisation (programme or community) spaces

If you use wikis in an organisation space we recommend that you consider the following options.

- Review the use of wikis in your organisation space to see whether another option would be more suitable. If you are unsure please contact your eLearning team.
- Consider setting up new wikis regularly and keeping the previous wikis as uneditable archives.
- If you wish to keep the current wiki content visible, but are happy to create new wikis, for example each academic year, we recommend you change the settings on your current wiki(s) to prevent students from making further edits (see above).
- If you wish to keep the current wiki(s), please advise users of the wiki (students and staff):
 - not to post new wiki pages that exceed 100,000 characters in length (approximately 13k-14k words for text only; fewer words if images, long URLs, or special characters (scientific notation) are used);
 - to start a new page with their contributions if the wiki pages are likely to become lengthy;
 - before submitting any edits to an existing wiki page, to copy and paste the revised text into a text editor (eg notepad/textpad or Microsoft Word) and save it as a back-up.

Further queries?

If you are uncertain about what to do or require further support please contact elearning@manchester.ac.uk or submit a query via the IT Support Centre.

eLearning support - new IT system

A new IT Support Centre has been introduced. This is underpinned by a new software system to log and track queries.

Faculty eLearning teams are adopting the same software system. You can use the new support centre to submit queries:

<https://supportcentre.manchester.ac.uk/>

You can also continue to use elearning@manchester.ac.uk.

The hope is that the new system (LANDesk) will enable better reporting and analysis, and so inform better resource planning and capacity deployment.

For further details about the Help and Support available see:

<http://www.itservices.manchester.ac.uk/help/>



Need help with eLearning?

Conferences and events

26 Oct 2015 Warsaw	Turning Technologies User Conference (call for papers by 30 April 2015)	http://www.turningtechnologies.com/warsaw-cfp
12-13 Oct 2015 Paris, France	6th International Conference on Distance Learning and Education (ICDLE2015)	http://www.icdle.org/
19-11 Oct 2015 Kona, Hawaii	World Conference on E-Learning (E-LEARN2015) organised by the Association for the Advancement of	http://www.aace.org/conf/elearn/
29-30 Oct 2015 Hatfield, UK	14th European Conference on e-Learning (ECEL-2015)	http://academic-conferences.org/ecel/ecel2015/ecel15-home.htm
29-30 Oct 2015 University of Hagen, Germany	The Online, Open and Flexible Higher Education Conference (EADTU2015) Transforming Higher Education in the 21st Century; "Innovating pathways to learning	http://conference.eadtu.eu/ http://conference.eadtu.eu/scope-themes
1-4 Nov 2015 San Antonio,	Quality Matters 7th Annual Conference on Quality Assurance in Online Learning	https://www.qualitymatters.org/events
9-11 May 2016 Lancaster	Networked Learning Conference (NLC2016)	http://www.networkedlearningconference.org.uk/

Team news

In September 2015, we welcome **Fran Hooley** to the team as Learning Technologist. Fran worked previously as eLearning Support Officer in the EPS eLearning Team. Fran will be supporting the development of the new MSc Genomic Medicine programme.

We look forward to two more people joining the team later in the autumn :

- **Dominic Rimmer**, who will be supporting the new MSc Genomic Medicine (Peking) programme;

- **Ryan Metcalfe**, as Learning Technologist working across the Faculty—Ryan is currently spending one day a week with the team.

Ryan's post will enable us to backfill the gap left by Stuart Cochrane who will be supporting development of the new undergraduate programme in Speech and Language Therapy.

Current work for the team includes:

- preparing for Start of Year and supporting Start of Year activities;
- supporting the development of a number of blended or online distance learning programmes;
- contributing to updates of Knowledge Base articles;
- participating in periodic review activities;
- development projects, including Smallvoice (MPS), iPad projects, and portfolio pilot projects (MPS and Inflammation & Repair).

