

Digital Learning: Content creation and required standards

Brief

This document outlines the content creation requirements and standards for the creation of staff training.

The primary audience for this document is Organisational Development (OD) but it is equally as applicable for all departments who commission the creation of Digital Learning for the purposes of staff development or Compliance and Risk.

Types of build

There are three build scenarios in which content can be created. In all scenarios, the Training Catalogue will be required as this is the system used to display completions back to staff users in their Training Record's (TR).

When you consider speed and ease of updating TR's with completion data; and considering the staff User Experience (UX) of keeping training contained within The University of Manchester (UoM) ecosystem thus not having to create different login details and use unfamiliar systems, the preference is for UoM to host Digital Learning content, regardless of whether it is built internally or externally.

It is recognised that it is sometimes required that content created and is hosted externally. Under these circumstances, commissioning departments and business areas need to be aware of the administrative work they will be required to undertake to support these courses and ensure that an individual's TR is updated appropriately.

Type		Description	System Requirements & journey
1	Internal build, UoM host	The content is created by L&OD or another team within UoM, in partnership with SME's. Content is hosted on Blackboard. Completion data is automatically fed back to the TC. Examples include: Recruitment Selection Toolkit and Managing at Manchester.	1. Training Catalogue 2. Blackboard 3. SCORM/Bb Assignment 4. Training Catalogue
2	External build, UoM host	The content is created by an external organisation. Content is hosted on Blackboard. Completion data is automatically fed back to the TC.	1. Training Catalogue 2. Blackboard 3. SCORM 4. Training Catalogue

		Examples include: Data Protection & Cyber Security and Coaching for Non-Coaches	
3	External build, External host	<p>The content is created by external organisation. The content is hosted externally on their Learning Management System (LMS). UoM staff users are uploaded onto the external system. Completion data is fed manually back to the TC.</p> <p>Examples include: IOSH Managing Safely and DSE Assessor Training.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Training Catalogue 2. External system 3. Training Catalogue
Table 1: Build types, descriptions, systems requirements and the completion data journey			

This document is written in June 2023. It should be noted that Blackboard, the universities LMS, will be replaced by the Central Learning Environment (CLE) in September 2025. Training Catalogue will be replaced by ResourceLink Training (RLT) in June 2024. The process above remains the same though and new systems can be suitable substituted in above.

All courses: Course creation within Training Catalogue

Regardless of the build type, to provide training content a course needs to be created in the Training Catalogue, an appropriate Training Provider assigned, and an event associated with that course.

For UoM hosted Digital Learning, we also need to enable Blackboard integration and assign at least one Course Leader to create the Blackboard space. Details will need to be added to the Robotic Process Automation (RPA) to feed passed/attended completions back to the Training Catalogue.

For externally hosted content, passed/attended completions will need to be manually retrieved from the external provider and entered on the Training Catalogue course page.

Details of the processes involved are available on Knowledge Base.

1. Internal build, UoM host

To create a consistent approach for delivery to staff, all content should be developed in Articulate Rise unless there is a specific reason for doing otherwise. Content from other sources can be imported into Rise, such as Storyline content for more complex interactions or other external content via an iFrame.

When building content, the following guidelines should be adhered to:

- Author needs to be hidden unless strategic reason why it should be visible, for example an external organisation whose attribution adds significance to the training.
- Content must be respective of [UoM Brand Guidelines](#). There is no requirement to publish the logo on each course/page of content as users are within the UoM ecosystem.
- Content should align with the UoM brand colour of #660099 / R:102, G:0, B:153, appropriately, to create identity. The colour can be used appropriately and tactfully; it does not need to be overbearing.

As an inclusive organisation, attention needs to be paid to the following:

- Language needs to ensure that it is inclusive throughout.
- When using images of people, the UoM workforce is a diverse – in terms of age, gender, disability and race; but also, of profession. Image selection needs to be considered and representative.

It is imperative that any Digital Learning content which is hosted within UoM is accessible to all users. The following are required features for all Digital Learning content.

- Is built using HTML5 based technology, including all iFrame content which is brought into the learning content.
- Screen reader friendly.
- Able to navigate using tab.
- The Courses features an “Exit Course” button.
- Ideally, does not use drag & drops – uses drop down lists or equivalent instead. If a drag and drop is required, an alternative format must be provided.
- Does not use Hover states on content. Instead uses a click to display information.
- When creating content in Rise, Body text should be at least 16px.
- All videos will have closed captions
- Transcripts of videos must be provided with the video, either through button or link selection.

Publish settings for SCORM & Blackboard reporting

When adding SCORM content to a Blackboard course for reporting on staff completions, it is advised that the SCORM content is exported with the following settings:

- It is exported using SCORM 2004, 4th Edition.
- Is built using Track using Course Completion. If you are using a quiz to test knowledge, there is a screen which is only accessible after a quiz. Upon reaching this screen, a user is marked as complete.

If building Articulate Rise, also use the following publish settings:

- Reporting = Complete / Incomplete
- Reset learner progress = Off

Removing reset learner progress ensures users can stop and return to the course content if required.

2. External build, UoM host

In instances where course content is commissioned and built by an external developer, the above requirements for Internal build, UoM host should apply. External developers must be provided all the necessary information above to ensure their build meets our specifications.

Where course content is not built using Rise, developers must ensure that developed content adheres to the accessibility requirements listed above.

Commissioning content builds

When requesting content to be built by an external organisation, it is imperative that the content has been fully developed within the organisation first to ensure we keep costs low and reduce development time. Content should be clearly organised in a Word document, with content broken down into sections. Requests for interactions should be documented. Any quiz questions should be documented with correct answer clearly identified.

It is recognised that departments may not know exactly what they want to use to bring content to life. However, initially this is less important than getting the information down on paper. It is expected that as part of the external build process, 5 days is spent reviewing existing content and making recommendations on developing the content to bring it alive.

A rough guide for developing between up to 60 mins of content will be around 20 days at £250 a day / 4 wks at £1250 per wk. You can expect a work breakdown of:

- 5 days for planning.
- 12 days for content development.
- 3 days for testing and publishing.

Requested amendments to be made after publishing will likely be charged at the day rate unless a half day rate or hr rate can be negotiated.

Purchasing existing courses

Training courses are available online through numerous suppliers and can be purchased for use within the organisation. Where a course is purchased, the preference is always to upload this course into the UoM ecosystem to reduce administration and improve user experience.

It is the responsibility of the purchaser to ensure that the content adheres to the UoM accessibility guidelines.

Publish settings for SCORM & Blackboard reporting

The publish settings of all SCORM content to track learner progress must be, whether built by an external developer or purchased, are:

- SCORM 2004, 4th Edition
- Is built using Track using Course Completion. If you are using a quiz to test knowledge, there is a screen which is only accessible after a quiz. Upon reaching this screen, a user is marked as complete.

3. External build, External host considerations

When looking for existing online courses, it is common for providers to only provide access via their own LMS rather than provide content we can upload onto Blackboard. In these circumstances, manual administration is required to ensure users are added to the external providers platform and then completion records are added onto the Training Catalogue. These tasks are achieved either through obtaining administration rights to log onto the platform or by liaising with a contact at the organisation.

It is the responsibility of the course commissioners to arrange for these administration tasks to be completed.

When considering this option, course commissioners should consider how much administrative work will be involved to update records. Some important questions to consider include:

- How will staff records on the external platform be updated as individuals who need to complete the course either join or leave the university?
- How will users be initially contacted with login information and passwords, and will these be automatically generated via the platform or the course commissioner?
- How often will records be updated: daily, weekly, monthly, yearly?
- If there is a requirement for completion, how will management and chasing of non-completers be managed and by whom?
- Will arrangements need to be made for communicating platform information to the users? For example, if there are outages on the platform, or if the platform was hacked and user data had been compromised?

An important consideration is that although the external platform can host individuals UoM email address, it **must not** contain SPOT IDs. Therefore, as you download information, an administrative task in Excel or PowerBI will be required in to compare the completers email address against workforce information to retrieve their SPOT ID. The SPOT ID is then used to perform bulk uploads into the Training Catalogue.

The administrative workload should be considered before commissioning an external build, external host course. For example, if there is a compliance course that all staff must undertake when joining the University, the administrative workload will be considerable, whereas a course which only has 10 completers a year will be minimal and manageable.

Before commissioning an external build, external host course, the Information Governance Office (IGO) should be consulted, and all requirements adhered to before purchasing courses.