



Virtual Learning Environment

Policy & Procedure

Policy no:	4.7
Version:	23.3
Author:	Head of Compliance
Last review date:	March 23
Next review due:	September 2024
Responsible Committee:	AcB
Approved by & date:	AcB 26 Jun 2020
Linked policies:	Teaching Learning and Assessment Strategy Employee Handbook Student Handbook Programme Handbook Student Code of Conduct
Audience:	Staff & Students

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1 Introduction

As technology continues to transform the education sector, virtual learning environments (VLEs) have become an essential tool for universities and higher education providers to facilitate remote learning and improve student engagement. A VLE is a web-based platform that allows for the delivery of course materials, communication between students and staff, online assessments, and other interactive activities. As such, this policy outlines the standards and guidelines that the Oxford Business College will follow to ensure that the VLE is accessible, secure, and effective in supporting student learning.

2 Purpose

The purpose of this VLE policy is to provide guidance and best practices for the use of VLEs in teaching and learning activities at Oxford Business College (OBC). The policy aims to ensure that VLEs are used effectively and efficiently to enhance the student learning experience, and that they are in compliance with relevant legislation and institutional policies. This policy also provides guidelines for the development, implementation, and maintenance of VLEs in a way that ensures their availability, accessibility, security, and privacy for all users. Ultimately, this policy seeks to establish a consistent and high-quality approach to the use of VLEs across the institution, with the goal of improving student outcomes and promoting innovation in teaching and learning.

3 Scope

This policy applies to all staff, students, and any other users of the VLE provided by OBC. The policy outlines the acceptable use of the VLE, the responsibilities of users, and the measures in place to ensure the security and integrity of the VLE. This policy covers all aspects of the VLE, including but not limited to access, content creation and sharing, communication, assessment, and use of third-party tools or software. The policy applies to all modes of study and delivery, and will be reviewed and updated annually to ensure it remains relevant and effective.

The college has its own VLE platform Moodle and also uses the platforms of its University partners to best in relation to the validation arrangement with each individual programme (summarised below)

Currently the OBC VLE is used for delivering the following programs:

- BTEC HNC and HND delivered by OBC or in partnership with USP College
- Students on Ravensbourne University London (RUL) programs

Student studying with Bucks New University (BNU) and University of West London (UWL):

- Students studying on BNU courses use the BNU Blackboard.
- Students studying on UWL courses use the UWL Blackboard.

4 Aims & Objectives

Aims:

- To provide a consistent and reliable VLE for all students and staff, regardless of their location or mode of study.
- To enhance the quality of teaching and learning by providing access to a range of interactive and engaging online resources, tools, and activities that complement face-to-face teaching and support independent study.
- To ensure that the VLE is accessible to all students, including those with disabilities or specific learning needs, by providing appropriate support and resources.
- To promote academic integrity by ensuring that all materials provided on the VLE are appropriately sourced and attributed, and that all online assessments are conducted securely and in accordance with relevant policies and procedures.
- To support staff in the design, development, and delivery of high-quality online teaching and learning materials through appropriate training, resources, and support.

Objectives:

- Ensure that all relevant staff can interact with the correct pages on the VLE, access and upload appropriate materials and activities to support their teaching and assessment of students.
- Ensure that all relevant students interact with the correct pages on the VLE and access appropriate materials and activities to support their learning and assessments.
- Ensure that the VLEs are, reliable, accessible, and secure.
- Ensure that staff and students are provided with appropriate information and training to support their use of the VLE.

5 VLE Responsibilities

5.1 Registration of Student Users

The registration of student users is varied by programme. For RUL students are registered by the VLE administrator overseen by Head of Programme after induction and before classes begin. Normally registration onto the VLE is carried out during induction week. Ad hoc registrations of student users, for example, for a student who has joined the course late, must also be carried out by Academic Support Officers overseen by Head of Programme no longer than 24 hours after a student enrolls.

For BNU and UWL programmes, students are automatically enrolled on to the respective VLE platforms by the partner Universities

5.2 Registration of Staff users

On confirmation of Staff onboarding from HR, Head of Programme will request access to the respective VLE platforms either through delegation to the VLE administrator or to respective partner university as part of the lecturer approval process. The Head of Programme or their delegate is responsible for the registration of staff users. To protect personal data, only staff with a direct learning, teaching or support role in the programme/module should be given access to the associated VLE instance.

5.3 Academic Staff Responsibilities

Academic staff are responsible for:

- To ensure that all students have access to the VLE and are provided with appropriate training and support in its use.
- To provide a range of high-quality, interactive, and engaging online resources, tools, and activities that support the learning outcomes of each module and programme.
- To ensure that the VLE is accessible to all students, including those with disabilities or specific learning needs, by providing appropriate support and resources.
- To ensure that all materials provided on the VLE are appropriately sourced and attributed, and that all online assessments are conducted securely and in accordance with relevant policies and procedures.
- To provide appropriate training, resources, and support to staff in the design, development, and delivery of high-quality online teaching and learning materials.
- To regularly review and evaluate the effectiveness of the VLE in supporting student learning and staff teaching, and to make improvements as necessary
- To ensure that the VLE is regularly updated and maintained to ensure its reliability, security, and functionality.

5.4 Student Responsibilities

- Regularly checking the VLE platform for any updates, announcements or changes related to their course.
- Follow the Student code of conduct when posting on discussion forums or interacting with other students on the VLE platform.
- Ensuring the confidentiality and security of their login credentials and any other personal information stored on the VLE platform.
- Reporting any technical issues or concerns related to the VLE platform to the College's IT support team in a timely manner.

5.5 Guest Registration

Sections of the college and partners VLE platforms can be opened to “guests”. Any person, worldwide, is then able to connect to that instance as a guest and gain access to any materials or data within it. Opening VLE

instances in this way should therefore normally be avoided and, in particular, instances must not be opened to guests where this could compromise the security of any personal data held within, or open copyrighted materials (such as library resources) without having consented to adhere to the terms of the college Data Protection policy.

There may be special “guest access” VLE instances which can be used for marketing or open access purposes these would normally contain no personal or restricted-access material.

Guest access can be arranged through the prerequisite Head of Programme. Guests accessing the OBC Moodle will have to complete the Guest VLE authorisation request outlined in appendix 1. On completion, this is passed through to the Head of academics for approval. Guest who wishes to access OBC VLEs host by our partner University will have to complete the Partner University Process.

5.6 Oversight

Overall responsibility for use of the VLEs and this policy relating to the use of the VLE rests with the Academic Board which reports to the Board of Governors (BoG). Programme leaders, who sit on Academic Board, monitor detailed input on the VLE. As a quality assurance measure The Head of Academics and Quality will also conduct audits of the requirement outlined in Section 8, table 1 on a semester basis, reporting findings and actions to Heads of Programme for attention and enhancement where required. Additionally, students complete end of module/course evaluation questionnaires should explicitly address the quality of experience relating to the use of the VLE. The College Annual Monitoring Review should also explicitly address the use of the VLE and associated issues relating to its design and contribution to the overall learning experience.

5.7 Platform Maintenance

Maintenance of the VLE is conducted by either the OBC IT department, in the case of the OBC Moodle, or by the Partner Institutions IT teams in the case of University Partners. The aim of this approach is to allow a smooth, functioning, and efficiency of the platform.

For the OBC Moodle the IT department is responsible for monitoring, maintaining and updating the VLE, including software updates, system backups, and technical support on a termly basis. The IT team also needs to ensure that the VLE is accessible to all users, and that any technical issues are resolved in a timely and efficient manner. This is crucial to support the delivery of quality online teaching and learning experiences for students and staff.

6 Staff Roles

There may be variations in how staff responsibilities in relation to use of the VLE is shared in practice. The following staff roles are defined for targeting training in the use of the VLE:

- **Head of Programmes** is normally has overall responsibility for the content and quality of the programme/module and copyright compliance. The Head of Programmes also has overall responsibility for the registration of student and staff users and controlling access to materials.
- **Module Leaders** have responsibility for the VLE pages for their specific modules. They will add or amends material within an allocated VLE instance, with devolved responsibility for the quality and copyright compliance of that material. Module Leader is responsible for checking, moderating or supporting student contributions to the VLE instance they Are allocated to including giving feedback on student work.
- **Internal Verifier/Second markers** may also be given limited access to VLE instances in order to carry our second marking or internal verification of assessments.

7 Design and Navigation Standards

To ensure a uniform standard of practice and quality in design and navigation of the VLE (Moodle), the following guidance has been designed to outline the minimum requirement that aligns with the colleges learning Teaching & Assessment Policy (table 1), whilst also suggesting a desirable content that would further enhance the student experience (Table 2):

Table 1 OBC Minimum Requirements for a VLE page.

Feature	Description
Induction	All induction material should be ealsiy accessible for student at the top of a VLE page.
Programme Handbook	The current academic year programme handbook must be available to students on the VLE page.
Module contact information	Module leaders should update their contact details and preferred communication method on the VLE page.

Course materials	All required course materials must be available on the VLE, including lecture notes, reading lists, and any other relevant resources.
Assignment brief	Detailed information on all assignment, including deadlines and instructions for submission, must be posted on the VLE.
Turn it in link	A section where student can upload there summative and formative assignment work to turn it in, that corresponds with in information given in the assignment brief.
Links to Current Policy	Policies and Procedures regarding Learning, Teaching And Assessment including Induction Slides, Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary policy, Academic Malpractice, , Academic Appeals, Assessments, Attendance and Formal Complaints.
Communication tools	The VLE must have communication tools, such as discussion forums or messaging, to facilitate student-teacher and student-student interaction.
File Naming	Downloadable files and other materials should be named in a way that is consistent and descriptive of their content and provided in a form which affords access by all students registered on the VLE instance.
Accessibility	The VLE must be accessible to all students, including those with disabilities or special requirements.

Table 2 Desirable VLE Features.

Feature	Description
Multimedia content	The VLE should include multimedia content, such as videos or audio recordings, to enhance the learning experience.
Personalisation	Students should be able to personalise their VLE experience, for example by choosing their own background or font size.
Mobile compatibility	The VLE should be compatible with mobile devices, to allow students to access course materials and resources on-the-go.
Collaboration tools	The VLE should have collaboration tools, such as group workspaces or wikis, to facilitate student collaboration on assignments and projects.
Analytics	The VLE should include analytics tools to track student engagement and monitor course performance.

8 Use of Third-Party Learning Resources (including Reading Lists)

'Third party' learning resources is used here to mean learning resources which are not created by the University and are obtained or linked to from elsewhere such as eBooks, eJournals, external Websites etc.

To avoid copyright infringement, the **Module Leaders** should ensure that when re-using third party materials as part of their course content, open-source materials are used where possible. Some non- open source third party materials (this includes materials embedded within hand-outs/slideshows) can be made available under the College license (e.g., CLA) or by obtaining permission from the copyright owner. Extracts from most printed books and journals can be scanned to include in the VLE under the terms of a license with the Copyright Licensing Agency. Due to licensing restrictions *links* to third party resources should be used wherever possible, as opposed to embedding actual materials (e.g., PDFs, word documents).

Where students are provided with a reading list, use of the College's available resources is strongly encouraged.

9 Staff VLE Training

To ensure that the college staff is up to date with the latest developments in the VLE and can take advantage of its new features and technologies, the college will plan annual training and development. This training will ensure staff have the necessary skills and knowledge to use the VLE effectively in their teaching, learning, and assessment practices. The program will be delivered through a range of methods, including face-to-face training sessions, online resources, webinars, and workshops. In addition, the college will provide ongoing support to staff through Module Leaders and regular communication channels, ensuring that staff can continue to develop their skills and knowledge throughout the year. By providing staff with regular training and development opportunities, the college aims to improve the quality of teaching and learning and ensure that the VLE is used effectively to enhance the student experience.

10 Review

This policy will be reviewed on a annually to ensure that it remains up-to-date and relevant to the needs of the institution and its students, though could be subject to update before the renewal date if deemed necessary.

Appendix 1 Guest VLE Access request form
Applicant Details
Name:
Student/Staff ID:
Programme of Study/Department:
Reason for Guest Access Request:
Section 2: College Data Protection Policy
Please read and consent to the College Data Protection Policy [insert link]:
Signature:
Date:
Section 3: Approval from Head of Programme
I approve this Guest Access Request.
Head of Programme's Signature:
Date:
Section 4: Final Sign-Off by Head of Academics

I approve this Guest Access Request.
Head of Academics' Signature:
Date