

New training launched to help staff move online

Senior teaching and learning staff from across the University have been building a new training programme to help colleagues prepare for the move towards blended learning from September.

Sue Folley, our senior learning technology advisor, has built a module in Brightspace - Moving Your Module Online - which all academic staff will have access to from 8 June. It is designed to help reshape our thinking about the way we teach.

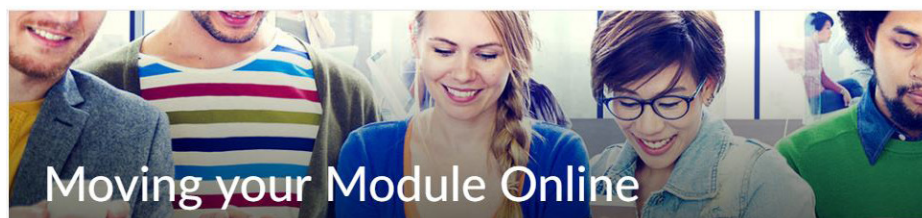
“We would like all academic staff to work their way through the module over the next month as it will help you in your planning for teaching and learning in an online environment,” Sue said.

“We have drawn on the expertise of staff who have considerable experience in blended learning, either through the delivery of distance learning programmes here at Huddersfield, or through work at a senior level for the Open University.

“The module signposts pedagogy behind teaching and learning in online



Content Communication Key Items Tools Feedback Module Admin



environments, but also offers lots of practical guidance on how to structure programmes to take account of the reality that face to face delivery will look a bit different for some time.”

The key to making blended learning in online teaching environments work well is in “chunking” our sessions into short sections and including a number of learning activities.

There are some useful templates within the module to help you think about the structure of your sessions which

will be useful in your planning for September delivery. There are also links to practical help in using discussion boards, making short videos, setting up quizzes, integrating voting forms, and other techniques useful in creating online sessions which are interesting and engaging.

“You will need to set a bit of time aside to work through this module, but we think you will find it useful in making blended delivery work well for our students over the coming academic year,” Sue said.



OK everyone, lets get into Teams...it's playtime!

As you will all have noticed, we have access to the Microsoft 365 meeting platform Teams which we will be using in teaching and learning from September.

Some of our academic staff have been playing with it for a couple of weeks already, working out how it functions and what it offers us as teachers, and have been impressed.

Dr Stephen White, Academic Lead for Technology Enhanced Learning and Research, is based in Human and Health Science and has been running distance learning masters programmes for a number of years. He has been evaluating Teams and said: “It will introduce a whole new range of ways in which we can encourage collaboration and shared working for both students and with colleagues, as well as streamlining communication channels, which will ultimately reduce reliance on email.” A good way to get started in Teams is to create a small Team with colleagues to use as a “sandpit” and explore its functionality. We are running lots of training sessions and there are guides in LinkedIn Learning too.

Brightspace tool for PATs approved for September

The University Teaching and Learning Committee last week approved the launch of a new tool to help Personal Academic Tutors better manage their meetings and discussions with students. From September, all PATs will find that they have their own PAT module in Brightspace, which their students are automatically enrolled to.

Cheryl Reynolds, who designed the module, said that it had been set up in such a way that it steered PATs towards useful tools within Brightspace for setting up meetings with their tutees, and also towards assignment grades and feedback to help inform the one to one discussions in tutorials.

The PAT Dashboard, which is driven

by ASIS, will continue to hold essential student information and link to Personal Learning Support Plans, but it is hoped that staff will migrate towards the PAT module as the main platform to support the tutorial process.

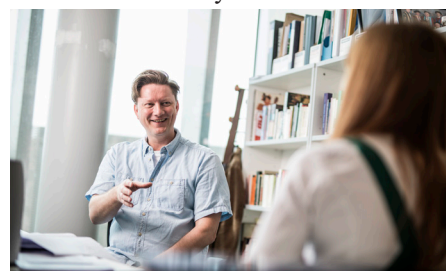
“The module offers lots of guidance to staff who are Personal Academic Tutors as well as being a gateway to their own tutees, and we hope that staff find it easy to access and easy to use,” Cheryl said.

“When in tutorial with individual students, you will be able to use the module to access your student’s grades and assessment feedback to help them understand how to use it to improve their work.

“The new meeting tool which we have

attached to this module will also help you arrange PAT meetings with your students, something which I know staff have said they would appreciate help with.”

Staff will have access to the new module when Brightspace is configured for the 2020/21 academic year.



Managing tutorials

Emergency computer loan scheme helps keep students connected

An emergency scheme to help students without access to a PC or laptop has targeted more than 150 members of our community since March.

As lock-down approached, many students who were dependent on the University for access to a computer made good use of the 24-hour laptop loan system operated through the library (the loan period has been extended until we are able to reopen campus).

Unfortunately some students were not able to secure a laptop from the library lockers, and had no access to computer facilities in the family home, so the University put in place an



emergency system to help them out.

We drew on contingency stock and also bought more than 100 additional laptops and configured them for student use in what was a massive logistics operation.

Students who had contacted their tutors to make them aware they had a problem with access to IT were invited to one of two special collection events - set up in such a way that risk to students and staff was minimised - and they were given laptops to use throughout the current assessment period. In total 156 students were invited to these events.

Ruth Stoker, scheme coordinator, said: “Some students got back to us to say they had managed to sort themselves out, some were simply unable to travel to campus or to send a proxy to pick up a laptop.

“We recognise that some of our students and their families are struggling in lots of ways at the moment, including digital poverty. School teams have been made aware of who those students are so they can offer alternative ways of supporting them.

“Colleagues in CLS did a fantastic job in securing and preparing laptops for distribution. Many thanks also to staff in our Schools for helping us manage the distribution list.

“While we are not able to plan another distribution event at the moment, we are currently looking at ways of supporting students in accessing technology for the next academic year.” If you have students who need help in accessing IT, please pass their information to your School ADTL/DTL.