Students say it's good to be back, even if University looks a bit different this year

Our new and returning students are telling us its they are enjoying being back in education as we get underway with a very different kind of academic year.

Prof Jane Owen-Lynch, PVC for Teaching and Learning, said that early feedback indicated students were enjoying their studies, even though much had moved into the online environment.

"This is down to the hard work put in by colleagues across the University in rethinking their teaching to make it engaging and enjoyable, whether face to face or through Brightspace and Teams delivery," she said.

The aim was to deliver about 30% of classes face to face, and early feedback from first year students indicates that they have welcomed this approach as it has given them chance to get to know members of staff, find their way around campus and their School's study rooms and facilities, and meet other students.

"Feedback on our synchronous online delivery is also positive, and I want to send a big thank you to you all for the way you have innovated to develop excellent sessions in our virtual environment," Jane added.

"Our new students are telling us that after a six month gap in their education, and the cancellation of this summer's examinations, they are ready for the challenges of higher education, and welcome the opportunity to start learning something new."

There have been some teething problems with IT and timetabling in the first few weeks of term, which have now been ironed out, and there is still uncertainty about how this academic year will unfold, as Government advice changes to take account of Covid.

"I am grateful for your patience and stoicism as we navigate through the challenges and the rules which govern the HE sector at the moment. Your fantastic work to get the year off to a good start is appreciated," Jane said. "We all pulled together as a team throughout summer to ensure that our campus was safe for staff and students, that we had new technology in place for the start of term to a very tightly condensed time-line, and that we were comfortable with the new technologies for teaching and learning, my thanks to everyone involved in what has been a mammoth effort."

Supporting students while maintaining a covid-safe campus

Find your way in the Digital Dojo

Colleagues across the University are all adapting to a wide range of new technologies launched over summer, and as we become more comfortable with the basics, our IT Training team has launched a series of Top Tips sessions to help take us to the next level in our Digital Dojo.

The sessions run on Fridays from 12 noon for just 30 minutes, and include tips on using Teams, an introduction to polling and quizzes using Microsoft Forms, how to get the most out of your, Outlook mailbox and calendar, collaborating in OneDrive, and on using assistive technologies in Office 365.

Each session is run as a synchronous learning activity in the Training area of Teams, and are recorded for asynchronous access. If you miss a session, just take a look at the recording. There is no need to book onto these sessions, just turn up. For more information follow the link here.

If you have any questions about these sessions, contact our IT trainers on i.t.training@hud.ac.uk

694
JOINED A GROUP

1029 unique logins

791 checked as complete

Discussions
91 threads
486 posts

594 completed stage 1

Moving Your Module Online in numbers

Personal Academic Tutors now linked to students in Brightspace module

A new tool to help Personal Academic Tutors monitor and support their students has now gone live.

All academic staff who have PAT responsibilities will now find a new module available to them on Brightspace which is populated with their allocated students.

The module contains guidance for staff and also for students on what we hope to achieve through our PAT system, and how to get the most out of the module.

Cheryl Reynolds, a University Teaching Fellow based in the School of Education and Professional Development, is the module's architect.

"At Huddersfield, we use our tutorial system to support our students in achieving their best, and use it as an opportunity to discuss with each student how to improve grades, who to go to for extra help, and to start them thinking about their professional journey beyond University," Cheryl said.

"It is useful in those discussions to be able to see how they are using Brightspace and what their grades are, and also to have somewhere secure to make notes on your meeting, and we have designed the PAT module to do that."

PATs can monitor students' engagement across all their modules through the Audit Users button, which is at bottom right on the homepage of Brightspace, which is a useful link to the Audit tools.

Cheryl added: "The individual support through the PAT system is a big part of our strategy to narrow the attainment gap for those students from disadvantaged backgrounds."

The module has a built in meeting booking system which allows students to select the best time for them to meet with their Tutor, and theGradebook has been adapted to serve as an attendance tracker and notes field.

Cheryl is currently arranging to visit School Teaching and Learning Committees to talk about the PAT module, but if you have any immediate questions, please email her on c.reynolds@hud.ac.uk
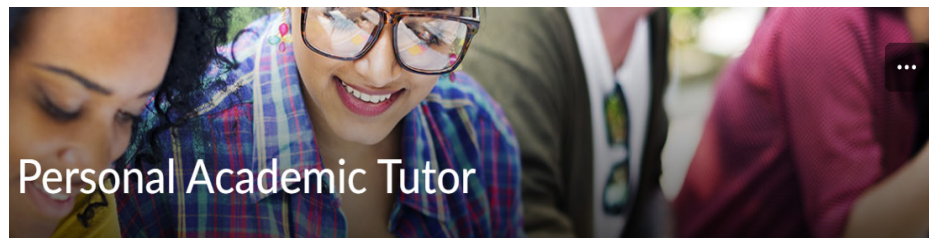
Monitoring student engagement using Brightspace

With the shift to blended learning, we lose some of the opportunities to monitor how our students are doing during the first few weeks of the new academic year, as direct contact is limited and students can hide more easily in Teams environments.

We do have some ways of auditing engagement in Brightspace though.

1. The Class List - this gives you the date of the last module access for each student, and it is easy to spot who hasn't logged in for a while.

2. The Class Progress tool - this is your main tool for getting an overview of each student's progress across a range of tools within Brightspace. Here you can see at a glance how students are progressing by looking at module access data, content completed, or discussion post activity for example.

3. The Table of Contents report - gives you an overview of which content items have been visited the most, and which students have visited each one.

4. The Module Overview Widget - you can find this under the announcements box on the home page of each module. It gives you an idea of how many students have been accessing your module each day and you can drill down into this data. It also lists the grades for your students.

5. Intelligent Agents: these are normally used for sending out automated emails to student based on the criteria you set. However, you don't have to send emails out, but use it to generate a list of students by filtering criteria, such as those

who haven't logged in for three weeks.

6. Individual Tool Stats - many of the built in tools collect data or example about who has engaged with a quiz or discussion, so you can spot students who might be disengaging.

Academic Development Advisor Sue Folley cautioned about relying too heavily on Brightspace stats though.

"It is worth remembering that engagement does not always equal learning, and Brightspace is only part of the picture, it won't measure how much students are using external sources such as YouTube videos, journal articles and books, for example," she said,

"That said, Brightspace can offer some indication of engagement in terms of visits to the module, how far through content students are progressing, quiz results, grade and assignment results. A quick look at the data might enable you to spot students who are struggling a bit, particularly first year students who are having to make a lot of adjustments to the way they learn this year."

For further information on these tools and guides on how to use them, please visit: Section 2.7 of the MYMO course, the how-to guides on the ipark, and/or Sections 5, 8 and 10 of the Brightspace Bytes module.

Module Overview ˅

We | Th | Fr

3 people visited this course today.

No quizzes have been submitted today

Class Engagement