



The Blackboard VLE

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Virtual learning environments (VLE's) are web-based systems that support learning and teaching online. The University of Dundee uses 'Blackboard' as its main VLE¹. Blackboard offers many online tools and resources that allow students and lecturers to share learning materials, communicate, collaborate, provide assessments and monitor progress.

Logging into the VLE

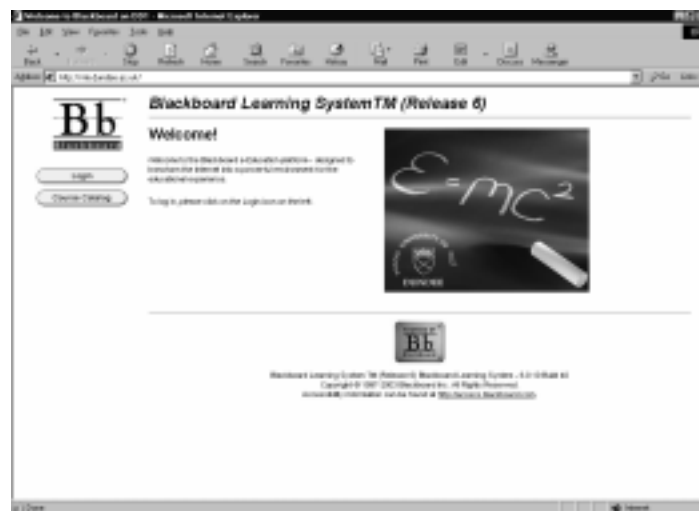
All students have a user account on Blackboard and you will be enrolled on at least one VLE module (the ITi Resource Centre) and probably several others. Many University modules (but not all) are supported with the VLE.

The Blackboard VLE is located at <http://vle.dundee.ac.uk> and you can access it online anywhere and any time by putting this URL into a web browser. Alternatively, follow links to the VLE from the University of Dundee Homepage, via Current Students > Dundee Online Learning

The Blackboard login requires the same username and password as your login to the University computer system. Your computer username is normally your initials and your family name as a single word, e.g. Josie M. Smith = jmsmith). If you change your password on either the VLE or the computer network, your password will change for both systems.

If any of your modules are supported by the VLE, it is VITAL you log on frequently (possibly daily) to read announcements and messages about your module and its assignments.

You should make this as much a part of your normal routine as looking at emails and reading text messages.



Have an Account? Login Here.

If you already have an account, enter your login information here and click the "Login" button below. If you do not have an account, please click on one of the buttons to the left.

USERNAME:

PASSWORD:

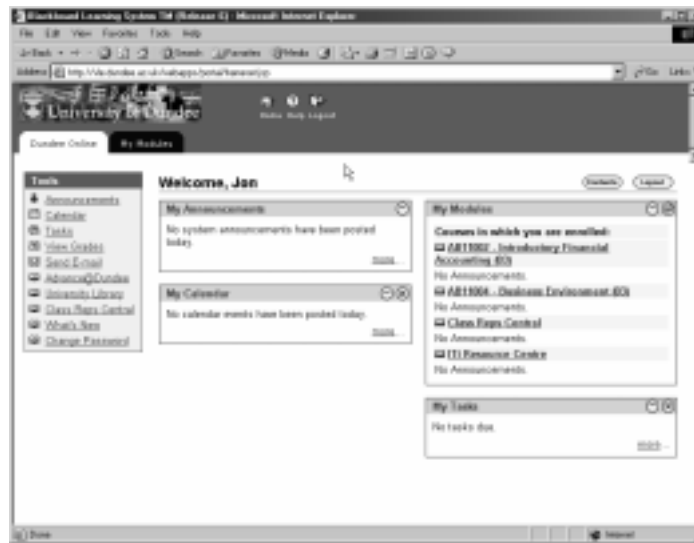
Login

Your use of the VLE is subject to *University Regulations for the Use of Computer Facilities*. As with all aspects of your learning, the University respects your privacy within all areas of online learning environments. Having said that, you should note that your VLE participation is monitored and this information is available to Module Lecturers and the Blackboard System Administrators.

¹ The Medical School has adopted software called MESMIS.

Dundee Online Learning

The initial screen that appears once you logon is Dundee Online. This provides access to your modules, announcements, calendar, tasks and additional areas.



From the links provided under Tools on the left of this screen, you can change your password and set your CD drive location (within Personal Information); access the University Library web pages; link to Advance@Dundee (our transferable skills support site); and access a range of other services.

My Modules - Course Links



Modules on the Blackboard VLE at Dundee have been built by instructors (normally your lecturers) to support an existing module, or to offer the whole of a module online. Links to any modules you are enrolled in are available from the Course List under the My Modules tab, or from My Modules on the right hand side of the Dundee Online screen.





Types of VLE Resources

Upon entering a VLE module, the navigation menu provides access to different components of the learning environment. The main content is provided in the centre and lower right hand side of the screen. The organisation and type of material made available within Blackboard will depend upon your lecturers' construction of the VLE module. The Blackboard VLE is highly flexible, and instructors may choose to activate only a few, or many of the wide range of tools that exist. Hence, the navigation menu, its style and precise terminology may differ among modules. Typical content might include:

Announcements

Lecturers may use the VLE to post important information, such as the due dates for assignments, changes to teaching rooms, your timetable or news about seminars and other events.

Course information

The VLE may host the online version of your module handbook, your timetable, past exam papers and other valuable information

Lecture notes and other learning resources

Staff may provide PowerPoint lecture files on the VLE, and may also use it to allow you access to multimedia displays and documents such as diagrams and handouts. Your VLE modules may also include links to online resources, such as library information systems and useful websites.

Assessments, quizzes and feedback

From time to time electronic assessments may be provided from within the VLE and some of these may use the powerful *Questionmark* Perception online assessment software. You may be able to setup your own Homepage and access your marks online using the Check Grades function. The VLE may also be used to allow you to provide feedback to module organisers



Discussions and Group work

Online discussions are an important feature of Blackboard and these can be carried out in two ways:

- Via the Discussion board, where participants may contribute in sequence ('asynchronously') as and when they log on to the VLE. The lecturer can suggest topics and lead and moderate the discussions and/or students may be allowed to create their own discussion threads.
- Through live discussion using Virtual Classroom, where module participants logon at the same time and discuss a topic, a diagram or a website in real time ('synchronously').

Certain VLE modules include discussion boards where Group pages allow a large class to be subdivided and discussions of work completed separately within each group. These may be used to facilitate your group's completion of an assessment task. Note that interactivity and participation are key aspects of the VLE, so you should logon frequently to read what is going on. Details of how to access and use these resources will be provided by your lecturers.

Other tools

Additional tools such as a Digital Dropbox permit work to be submitted to the lecturer online. A Calendar and Task List allows key events to be highlighted. Electric Blackboard let you to save notes about your particular module.

PC Requirements

You can access the VLE using PCs in the University's IT suites. However, if you wish to logon from outside the University or if you are a distance learner, the following is a conservative list of recommendations for accessing Blackboard:

Platform: Windows 95, 98, 2000, NT, ME or XP; MacOS 9 or MacOS X

Hardware: 128MB of RAM, 1G of free disk space

Software: Microsoft Word, Adobe Acrobat Reader, Microsoft PowerPoint

Browser: Internet Explorer 5.5 or 6.0 (recommended) or Netscape 4.78 - JavaScript & Cookies must be enabled.

Network: 56K modem (OK), Broadband (better) or Local Area Network (best)



More Information

Further guidance is available on a range of features of Blackboard by reading the Blackboard Student User Guide. You can access this by selecting Tools: Manual from within a Bb Module. This document is also available from the VLE support website at: www.dundee.ac.uk/learning/vle/ where you should select List of Resources available to support the VLE: Student Guide.

Further help

If you have any problems using facilities described in this document, first consult the built-in Help (there's a help icon on the initial screen).

Next, try contacting the IT Helpdesk by:

- *visiting* it in the Tower Basement IT Suite,
Semester (9am–9pm, Mon-Fri; 10am-4.30pm Sat; 12.30pm-4.30pm Sun)
Vacation (9am-5pm Mon-Fri);
- *e-mailing* a description of your problem to its-helpdesk@dundee.ac.uk;
- *phoning* – use the 'Helpdesk' button on a phone in an IT Suite or on other phones dial extension **8000** (or 01382 348000 externally).

Other sources of information include:

- The wide range of texts held in the University libraries;
- The University's skills website www.dundee.ac.uk/advancedundee/
- The ITi Resource Centre on the University's Virtual Learning Environment at <http://vle.dundee.ac.uk/>

