

# Getting Started: Ways to use My eLearning Vista within your course

For Vista 3.x

When planning and designing the online component of your course, there are three main models of My eLearning Vista engagement that you can consider:

- web-supplemented (or web supported) model
- web-dependent (or complementary) model
- web-based/fully online model

The first two models are the predominant ones within the University of New South Wales. They are commonly referred to as 'blended learning'. The current usage of the term blended in the teaching and learning context centres on the enrichment of the 'traditional' face to face approach through the use of online learning activities to encourage student engagement which will enable face-to-face activities to be more focused on critical learning tasks rather than information transfer. It is important to realise however, that a blended approach to teaching and learning can and does involve more than the addition of an online component.

## Ways in which My eLearning Vista can supplement face-to-face teaching and learning

The following is a non-exhaustive list of possibilities to enrich, augment, or otherwise streamline your teaching and the learning environment through My eLearning Vista.

- Providing a Course Outline - improved student access to important course information such as syllabus, staff contact details, assessment details, overall learning outcomes, key dates etc.
- Posting of administrative information - notices, announcements, agendas, amendments etc – in effect a speedy class noticeboard provided via the 'Announcements', 'Calendar' and/or 'email' Tools.
- Posting of 'frequently asked questions' (administrative and/or academic)
- Provision of access to lecture material such as lecture summaries and related handouts,, references/further reading and other additional resources
- Providing links to useful web sites and other electronic resources (such as the University's My Course, or publisher e-packs)
- Providing access to assignments - for both submission and return following marking via the Assignment Tool
- Providing access to an electronic forum (Discussion Tool) for students' preparation/follow-up on tutorial/seminar topics or lab sessions, and for general topic-related class discussion
- Providing an internal email system for private communications (between students, and between staff and students)

- Providing non-assessable Evaluations to give students feedback on their progress. For example, Self Tests and Surveys)
- Providing a glossary of terms/concepts

One advantage of this model is that online teaching and learning can be implemented gradually, allowing both you and your students to 'grow into' this new form of interaction.

## Ways in which My eLearning Vista can integrate with face-to-face teaching and learning

The following is a non-exhaustive list of possibilities to articulate and integrate your My eLearning teaching with face-to-face teaching.

- Change the focus on face-to-face lectures by placing straight-forward course content (lectures, handouts, PowerPoint slides) on the web and /or links to suitable content material (eg e-packs, web sites). This can free you to have more interaction with your students in a lecture - e.g. in discussion, problem solving, applications of theory. Your lectures then take on the form of a 'tutorial' in which you can spend time enriching and enhancing the students' understanding of the content provided online. You might even reduce the number of lectures across the semester, providing you with the time to further develop and refine this approach to your classes.
- Have students prepare and submit assignments and projects electronically (through the Assignment drop box). Assignments/projects can therefore incorporate elements other than just standard text (e.g. multi-media elements, hyperlinks to web sites etc.), and be centred on web-based research. You can mark and return the assignments, with feedback, electronically through the Assignment drop box feature.
- Restructure face-to-face tutorials/seminars/workshops by increasing the web component of discussion
- Use the Discussion Tool to post tutorial/seminar topics, introduce/initiate discussion, and otherwise have students prepare for the face-to-face sessions. The web can be used to follow up on any issues arising from the face-to-face sessions and you can draw together ideas following those sessions.
- Use the Chat facility for real time (synchronous) discussion without the need for students to attend face-to-face.
- Use the Survey facility to run an on-line debate/poll.

(The quality of student participation in online discussion could be assessable.) Note that this is often difficult to manage in large groups. It is also difficult to make decisions on levels and quality of participation. One successful way of minimising the workload and gauging the level of contribution in a fair manner is the ask students to select their 3 best or most useful contributions to a particular activity and mark them.

- Have students present their work to the rest of the class through the Discussion tool for review and comment.

- Use the communications tools (e.g. Discussion, Email, Chat) to foster and facilitate group collaborative work on projects/assignments (e.g. Internet research activities, joint production of a piece of work).
- Reduce the need for face-to-face exams by shifting part of the assessment to the web. Using the Assignment, Discussion and Evaluation Tools, you can set a range of assessment tasks. One of the most popular is the quiz. You can create a range of question types (e.g. multiple choice, fill-in-the-correct answer, short answer, extended response). All but the extended response type questions can be marked automatically and results recorded in the course management system. Quizzes can be randomly generated (for security purposes) and released at set times or at a particular point in the student's progress through the course materials.
- Make available multi media-based learning materials (either through a CD ROM or directly through Vista). Such materials could be the basis of class discussion through the Discussion board, or for assignment/project work. One of the key ways to ensure that the learning needs and outcomes of all students are met effectively is to recognise the differences in students, particularly in terms of their preferred learning styles and provide them with multidimensional resources and approaches.
- Increase your efficiency in dealing with student queries by utilising the Discussion tool or Content file (single page) facility to answer frequently asked questions (e.g. as in a 'Frequently asked questions' page). This can reduce the hours you formally set aside for individual student consultations outside class time.

Model	Description	Appropriateness
<b>Web-supported (or supplemented)</b>	<p>The Web is used to supplement/support face-to-face or distance (print-based) education delivery.</p> <p>Teaching staff may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>∅ upload information such as course outlines, lecture notes/summaries, assessment information, and other learning resources</li> <li>∅ use the communications tools (either email, discussion board and/or chat/whiteboard room) for posting of 'just-in-time' messages, or for facilitating student-teacher or student-student interaction.</li> <li>∅ Provide self-assessment tasks for students</li> </ul> <p><i>Access to the Web on the part of the student is not a requirement for successful completion of the course – all assessable requirements are available through other teaching arrangements.</i></p>	<p>For courses taught entirely on campus in the traditional manner (by lectures, seminars, tutorials etc.)</p>
<b>Web-dependent ('blended')</b>	<p>Use of the Web is an integral part of the course program and complements face-to-face or print-based distance delivery. It may be essential for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> communications between staff and/or students</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> access to learning resources</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> assessment work (e.g. completion of online tests, submission of assignments)</li> </ul> <p><i>Both the Web component and the face-to-face component are compulsory for successful completion of the course.</i></p>	<p>For cross campus teaching purposes, where some degree of face-to-face teaching is to be retained (as lectures, tutorials etc.)</p>
<b>Fully online</b>	<p>The Web is required for access to, and interaction with educational content, communications between teaching staff and students, and for aspects of assessment (e.g. assignment posting).</p> <p><i>The web is the only formal requisite teaching and learning medium.</i></p>	<p>For distance education programs</p>

## References:

Designer and Instructor Reference Manual for Blackboard Vista 3 (Blackboard Inc.)

Vista 3 Online Help (Blackboard Inc.)

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