
Changes and new features in the VLE

(Sep 2021)

GUIDE

v1.1

User Services
IT Services



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Overview

The upgraded VLE for academic year 2021/22 is based on Moodle 3.9. This upgrade is relatively modest in scope and there are no major changes to the current layout and functionality of the VLE. It features bug fixes, enhancements and new features that improve the VLE user experience.

The aim of this guide is to inform tutors and students about the new features and enhancements in the VLE. Features that are only applicable to **Tutors** are marked accordingly, while the other features are applicable to both tutors and students.

Dashboard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The VLE Dashboard now includes two new blocks that facilitate access to recently accessed activities and upcoming scheduled activities. • The <i>My VLE areas</i> block will now display the latest academic year/s at the top, then the PG Dissertations and Sandbox (tutors only), and finally the archived academic years. • Tutors: In the <i>My VLE areas</i> block, VLE areas that are not visible to students are now clearly labelled as Hidden from students.
User interface	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutors: The Turn editing on/off button has been renamed to Start editing / Stop editing to be more intuitive. • Tutors: The Show study-unit to students block now includes a toggle to set the study-unit as Visible or Hidden more easily. • The messaging interface is now available via a drawer on the right side of the screen. Conversations may now easily be starred, muted or deleted.
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Zoom activity now only needs to be added once to the study-unit area, since tutors can create all the Zoom meetings from the same activity. • The forum activity has several new enhancements in addition to an improved user interface. New features include activity due dates, private replies, schedule send, summary reports, and a new nested discussion interface. • Tutors: The new Activity chooser is available to try out when editing your VLE areas. • Tutors: H5P content is now managed via the H5P content bank. Hence, you may now easily re-use any H5P content file and choose to either add it as an activity or embed it within other activities / resources.
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An alert will now warn you that your inactive VLE session is about to time out, allowing you to extend the session so that work is not lost.

Dashboard

The *Dashboard* is your homepage in the VLE. It provides you with a link to all the VLE areas that you are registered for, as well as important current notifications about the VLE.

The *Dashboard* now includes two new blocks that facilitate access to **recently accessed items** and **upcoming scheduled activities**.

Recently accessed items

The *Recently accessed items* block displays the last activities and resources that you have recently accessed (up to nine), allowing you to quickly find where you previously were on the VLE. The corresponding VLE area is also displayed beneath the name of the activity or resource.

The screenshot shows a grid of nine items under the heading "Recently accessed items". Each item includes an icon, a title, and a course code: "ART1234-YR-A-2122: Introduction to Art".

- Pre-lecture quiz - What do you know...
- Intro presentation
- Data interpretation
- The Café
- Q&A Forum
- Concepts & Techniques
- 3 types of art
- Discussion forum
- Announcements

Scheduled activities

The *Scheduled activities* block is most useful for students as it displays all the upcoming activities with a set deadline or activity completion date.

The screenshot shows the "Scheduled activities" block. It features a refresh icon, a list view icon, and a date filter set to "Monday, 15 November 2021". A single activity is listed: "Assignment 1 - Art Techniques" with a deadline of "23:59" and a link to "Add submission". At the bottom, there is a "Show" dropdown menu set to "10".

My VLE areas

The screenshot shows the "My VLE areas" block. It has a dropdown menu for the academic year, currently set to "2021/22". Below this, a list of VLE areas is shown:

- ART1234-YR-A-2122: Introduction to Art
- ART2456-SEM2-A-2122: Modern Art (Hidden from students)
- 2020/21
- PG Dissertations
- Sandbox
- 2019/20
- 2018/19
- 2017/18
- 2016/17

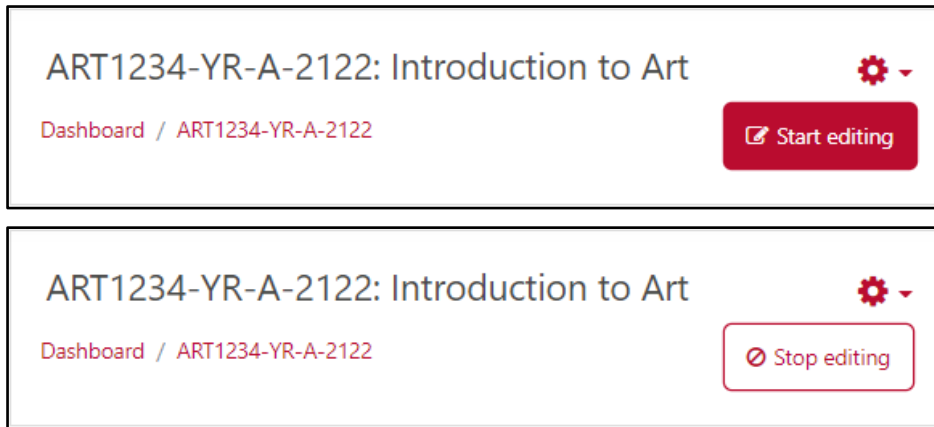
The *My VLE areas* block lists all the VLE areas you are registered for, which will now display the latest academic year/s at the top, then the PG Dissertations and Sandbox (tutors only), and finally the archived academic years.

Tutors can also now clearly see which VLE areas are not visible to students, since they will be labelled as **Hidden from students**.

User interface

Start editing / Stop editing button

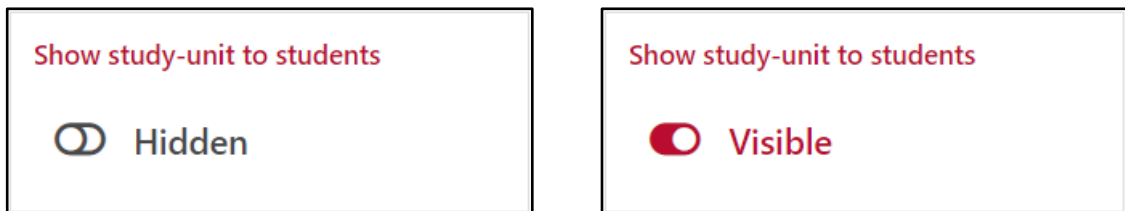
The **Turn editing on/off** button within a VLE area, has been renamed to **Start editing / Stop editing** to be more intuitive.



Show study-unit to students block

The **Show study-unit to students** block now includes a toggle to set the study-unit as **Visible** or **Hidden** more easily.

Note that, by default, taught study-unit areas are not immediately available to students, to provide tutors with a private space to develop the VLE areas. Once a VLE area is populated, it is essential that the VLE area is set as visible to students, as otherwise students would not be able to access it.



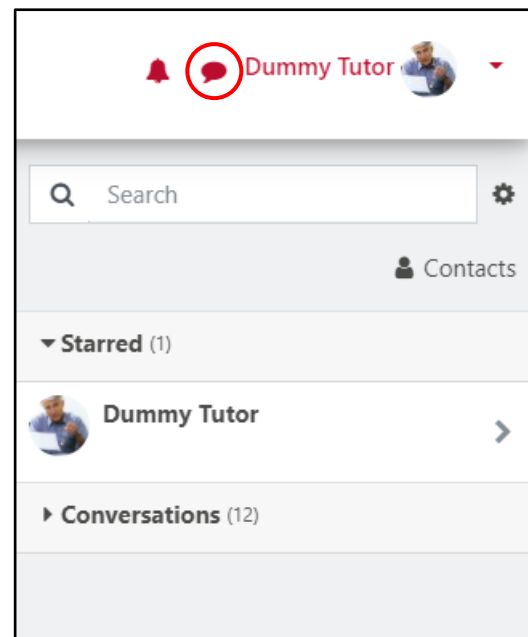
Messaging interface

The messaging interface is now available via a drawer on the right side of the screen. This allows you to access messages from any VLE page, so that you can keep working on your tasks while also accessing your messages.

To open or close the messaging drawer, simply click the **Toggle messaging drawer** icon available at the top right of your screen.

By default, all received messages will be displayed under the *Conversations* section. However, you may now **star** any important conversations that you have. These will be displayed under the *Starred* section.

All users now have a **Personal messaging space**, which is available under the *Starred* section under their name. You may use this space to add draft messages, links and notes for later use. Note that anything added to your personal messaging space will not generate an email notification.

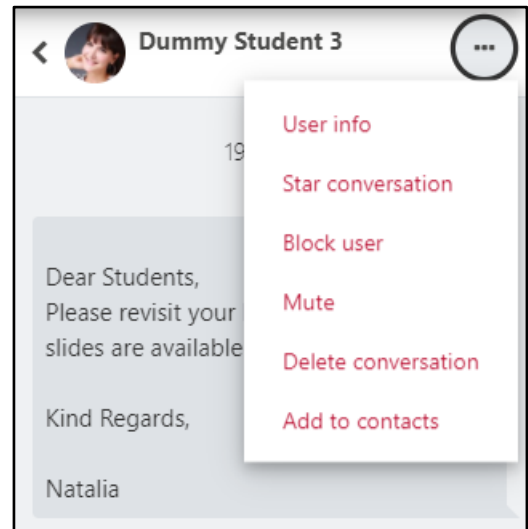


You may now **star**, **mute** or **delete** whole conversations as follows:

1. Click on a conversation to open the messaging thread.
2. Click the *3 dots* next to the user's name and choose the desired option.

Note:

- Muting a conversation means that email notifications of new messages are no longer generated.



A **search** facility has also been added to allow you to search for people as well as messages.

Activities

Zoom meeting activity

The *Zoom meeting* activity has been updated. Previously, tutors had to add a Zoom meeting activity every time they needed to schedule Zoom meetings for their online lectures or tutorials in the VLE. With the updated *Zoom meeting* activity, tutors will only need to create a Zoom meeting activity in the VLE once. Whenever they need to schedule a new Zoom meeting in the VLE, they can simply access the Zoom meeting activity and **Schedule a New Meeting** from it.

ART1234 Zoom meetings

zoom

Your current Time Zone and Language are (GMT-07:00) Pacific Time (US and Canada), English

All My Zoom Meetings/Recordings [Schedule a New Meeting](#)

Upcoming Meetings Previous Meetings Personal Meeting Room [Get Training](#)

Show my course meetings only

Start Time	Topic	Meeting ID	
Mon, Oct 4 (Recurring) 9:00 AM	ART1234 - Mondays lectures at 09:00	948 9121 1383	Start Delete
Mon, Oct 11 (Recurring) 9:00 AM	ART1234 - Mondays lectures at 09:00	948 9121 1383	Delete
Mon, Oct 18 (Recurring) 9:00 AM	ART1234 - Mondays lectures at 09:00	948 9121 1383	Delete
Mon, Oct 25 (Recurring) 9:00 AM	ART1234 - Mondays lectures at 09:00	948 9121 1383	Delete

Forum activity

The *Forum* activity is a great way to encourage communication, collaboration and debate amongst students. Below we highlight the *Forum* activity's major enhancements.

Forum due dates

Tutors may now set up discussion forum activities to include a due date as well as a cut-off date, if necessary. A forum activity with a set due date is added to the VLE area's *Calendar* and *Upcoming events* block, as well as the *Scheduled activities* block in the VLE Dashboard. This allows students to effectively manage their work.

Availability

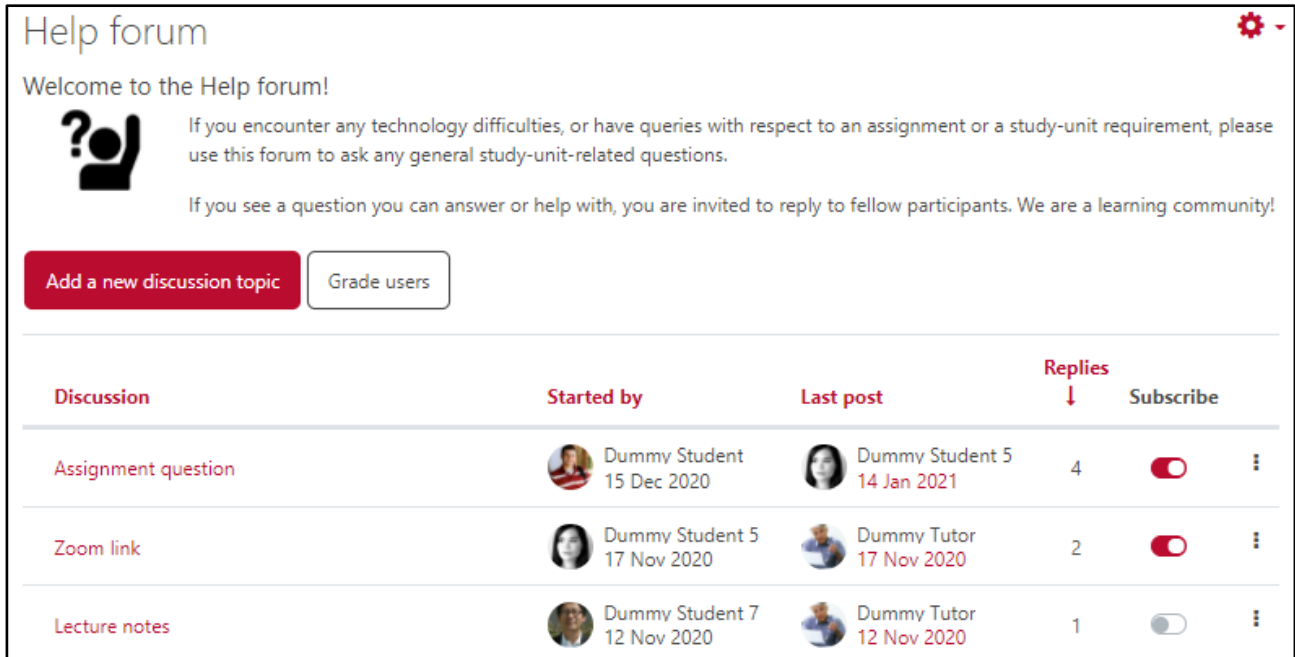
Due date [?](#) 14 May 2021 23:59 [📅](#) Enable

Cut-off date [?](#) 21 May 2021 23:59 [📅](#) Enable

Forum user interface

The forum user interface now allows you to easily recognise whether you are subscribed to a particular thread or not, and to easily un/subscribe to a particular thread by clicking the toggle button available beneath the **Subscribe** heading. When you are subscribed to a forum thread, you will receive email copies of every post for that thread.

You may also sort the discussion threads by either one of these headings: **Discussion**, **Started by**, **Last post** or **Replies**. In the example below, the discussion threads are sorted in descending order by the number of replies.



Help forum

Welcome to the Help forum!

If you encounter any technology difficulties, or have queries with respect to an assignment or a study-unit requirement, please use this forum to ask any general study-unit-related questions.

If you see a question you can answer or help with, you are invited to reply to fellow participants. We are a learning community!

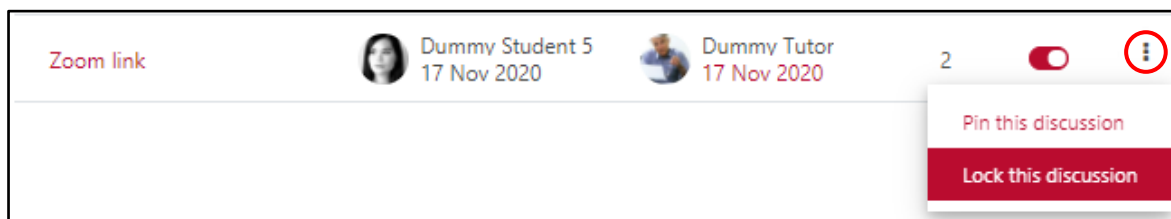
Add a new discussion topic Grade users

Discussion	Started by	Last post	Replies ↓	Subscribe
Assignment question	Dummy Student 15 Dec 2020	Dummy Student 5 14 Jan 2021	4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Zoom link	Dummy Student 5 17 Nov 2020	Dummy Tutor 17 Nov 2020	2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Lecture notes	Dummy Student 7 12 Nov 2020	Dummy Tutor 12 Nov 2020	1	<input type="checkbox"/>

Lock discussions manually

Tutors may now lock old discussion threads manually so that students can no longer reply to a particular thread.

1. Access the respective *Forum* activity.
2. Click the 3 dots on the left of the required discussion thread.
3. Choose **Lock this discussion**.



Zoom link

Dummy Student 5
17 Nov 2020

Dummy Tutor
17 Nov 2020

2

⋮

Pin this discussion

Lock this discussion

Private reply

Tutors can contact individual students to provide additional information or feedback by marking a reply as **Private**.

Assignment question
by Dummy Student - Thursday, 17 December 2020, 4:38 PM

I'm sorry, I'm still not sure I understand what we need to include in our assignment.

Permalink Edit Delete Reply

Perhaps it's best if we schedule a one-to-one session and we can go over the assignment question.

Post to forum Cancel Reply privately Advanced

A note will be added to indicate that the reply was sent privately and that it is not visible to other participants.

Re: Assignment question
by Dummy Tutor - Thursday, 17 December 2020, 8:50 PM

This is a private reply. It is not visible to other participants.

Perhaps it's best if we schedule a one-to-one session and we can go over the assignment question.

Permalink Show parent Edit Delete

Schedule send

Tutors may now schedule a new forum post to be made visible and/or sent to students at a later time.

1. Access the required forum activity.
2. Click the **Add a new discussion topic** button.
3. Enter your subject and message in the respective fields.
4. Click the **Advanced** link, beneath the *Message* text field.
5. Within the *Display period* section, tick to enable the **Display start** date. Subsequently, set the date and time, as needed.

Display period

Display start 15 February 2021 09:00 Enable

Display end 14 July 2021 09:22 Enable

The forum post will be made visible on the date and time set for the **Display start** setting. Moreover, if the particular forum activity has subscription enabled, an email notification will also be sent to all participants on the set date and time.

Summary report





Tutors can easily see an overview of each student's contribution to a forum activity. The summary report provides information on the number of discussions started and replies posted by each student. To view the summary report:

1. Access the required forum.
2. Click the **Actions menu** (gear icon) and choose **Forum summary report**.

Forum summary report - Help forum

Forum selected: Help forum

Dates

	First name Surname	Number of discussions posted	Number of replies posted	Number of attachments	Number of views	Word count	Character count	Earliest post	Most recent post	Export posts
<input type="checkbox"/>	 Dummy Tutor	4	4	0	134	104	132	Thursday, 12 November 2020, 4:44 PM	Wednesday, 21 January 2021, 8:50 AM	Export
<input type="checkbox"/>	 Dummy Student	1	2	0	32	2	8	Tuesday, 15 December 2020, 9:12 AM	Thursday, 17 December 2020, 9:37 PM	Export
<input type="checkbox"/>	 Dummy Student 7	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	
<input type="checkbox"/>	 Dummy Student 5	1	1	0	15	1	14	Tuesday, 17 November 2020, 4:38 PM	Thursday, 14 January 2021, 12:38 PM	Export


Experimental nested discussion view

All users may now change their forum activities interface by switching to the *experimental nested discussion view* which provides a minimalistic interface, as shown below.

ART1234-YR-A-2021: Introduction to Art ⚙️

Dashboard / ART1234-YR-A-2021 / General / Help forum / Zoom link


Display replies in experimental nested form

 **Dummy Student 5** Tue, 17 Nov 2020, 10:44 AM ⋮

Zoom link

Hi all, have any of you received the Zoom link for tomorrow's online lecture? Thanks - DS5

[Reply](#)

 **Dummy Tutor** replying to Dummy Student 5 Tue, 17 Nov 2020, 12:28 PM ⋮

Kindly note that a link will not be sent via email. Simply access the *Zoom meeting* activity via our VLE study-unit area. All our online sessions' links are available via the Zoom activity.

[Reply](#)

If you prefer this interface, you may enable it via your user preferences:

1. Click on your **User menu** (upper right corner) and choose **Preferences**.
2. Click on **Forum preferences**.
3. Change the **Use experimental nested discussion view** setting to **Yes**.
4. Click the **Save changes** button.

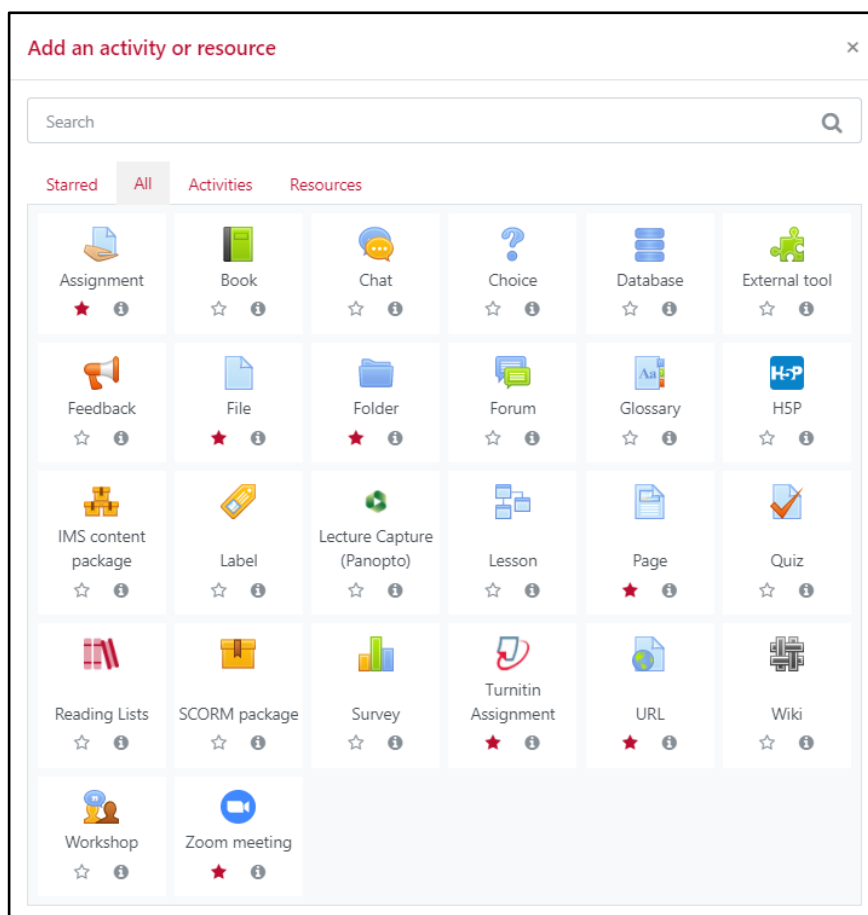
Note:

- If at any point you would like to switch back to the common interface, repeat the steps above and in step 3 switch the setting back to **No**.
- If a tutor enables the experimental interface via their preferences settings, they will not affect their students' view. Each user can set their own preferences.

Activity chooser

Tutors may choose to enable the **Activity chooser** as opposed to the individual *Add a resource...* and *Add an activity...* drop-down menus that are displayed when a VLE area is in editing mode.

The *Activity chooser* provides a grid design. The full range of activities are available via the **Activities** and **Resources** tabs. They are listed in alphabetical order and a full description of each is available by clicking the information icon next to it. You can also configure the **Starred** tab to show your favourite activities. Just click the star icon next to any item on the *Activity* or *Resource* tabs to add them to your personal *Starred* tab. All starred activities and resources appear on your tab in the order you added them.



To enable the *Activity chooser* for all your VLE areas:

1. Click on your **User** menu (upper right corner) and choose **Preferences**.
2. Click on **Course preferences**.
3. Tick the check box for the **Enable activity chooser** setting.
4. Click the **Save changes** button.

Note:

- If at any point you would like to disable the *Activity chooser* again, repeat the steps above and in step 3 untick the *Enable activity chooser* setting.

H5P activity

Tutors can use *H5P* content, short for HTML5 Package, to create interactive content within their VLE areas, such as interactive videos, presentations, branching scenarios, image hotspots and more.


H5P content must now be created in the VLE area's *H5P content bank*. Subsequently, tutors can then add the content as an H5P activity or embed their content into any other activity or resource.

Note:

- If your students need to interact with the H5P content and you would like to track the students' attempts, then it is important that the H5P content is added as an H5P activity and *not* embedded within another activity or resource.

Creating content in the H5P content bank

To create H5P content:

1. Access the required VLE area.
2. From the navigation drawer (left side of the screen), click the **H5P content bank** link. Note that the navigation drawer can be toggled open / closed by clicking the burger icon  in the top-left corner.
3. Click the **Add** button and select the desired content type you would like to create.

Adding an H5P activity

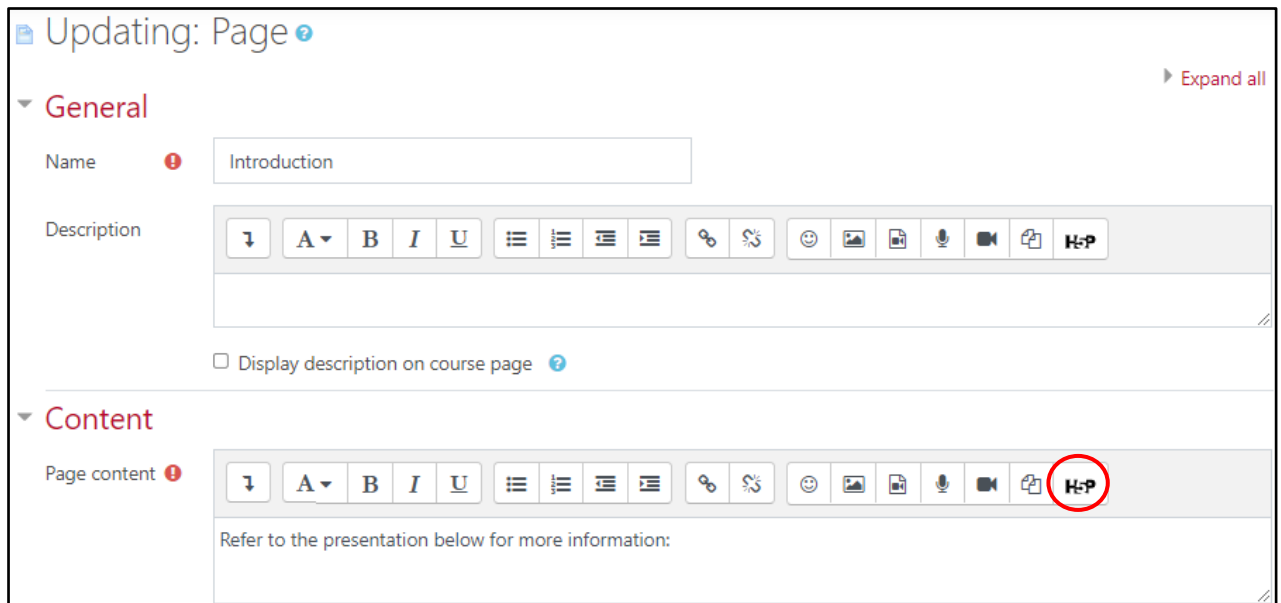
Once you have created your H5P content within the content bank of your VLE area, you can add an H5P activity as follows:

1. In your VLE area, click the **Start editing** button.
2. From the *Add an activity...* drop-down menu, choose **H5P**.
3. Enter a name and a description, if needed, in the respective fields.
4. In the *Package file* setting, click the **Add...** button and within the **File picker** click on **H5P content bank** from the left menu.
5. Click on the required H5P file to add it to your H5P activity.
6. Click **Select this file**.
7. Expand the *H5P options*, *Grade* and *Attempt options* sections and update any of the settings as required.
8. Click the **Save and return to course** button.

Embedding H5P into other activities / resources

You can embed H5P content into other activities and resources such as a *Lesson* or a *Page*, by simply clicking the H5P button in the editor, as follows:

1. Within the setup page of your activity / resource, click the **H5P** button in the editor.



2. Click the **Browse repositories...** button.
3. In the *File picker* click on **H5P content bank** from the left menu.
4. Click on the required H5P file to embed it with your current activity / resource.
5. Click **Select this file**.
6. Expand the *H5P options* section and update any of the settings as required.
7. Click the **Insert H5P button**.

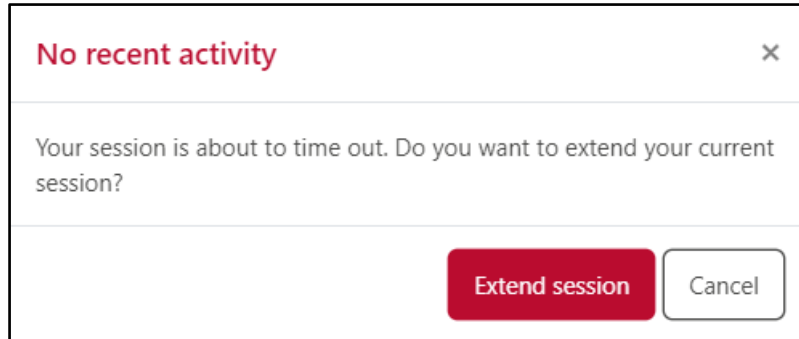
Note:

- H5P content files can only be modified from the content bank within the respective VLE area, not from the H5P activity / other activities / resources.
- H5P content files are copied over when using the VLE Copy Tool.
- If you would like to use the same H5P files in different VLE areas, you can easily make a copy of just the H5P files via the [Import \[PDF\]](#) feature.

Other

Session timeout

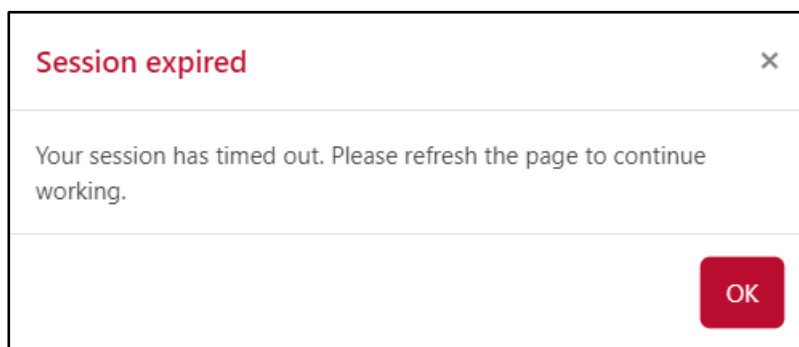
A session timeout alert helps ensure work is not lost due to inactive VLE sessions. If you are signed in to the VLE but you have been idle for at least two hours, the **No recent activity** dialog box will be displayed asking you whether you would like to extend your session.



If you would like to extend your current session, click the **Extend session** button.

Note:

- If by the time you click the **Extend session** button, the current session has already timed out, the **Session expired** dialog box is displayed.



- If the session has expired, click **OK** and then refresh the page to continue with your work. Before refreshing the page, ensure that you do not have any work in progress that you would like to copy.

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