
Getting started with the VLE

GUIDE
v5.0

User Services
IT Services



**L-Università
ta' Malta**

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A. Introduction

The University of Malta (UM) adopted Moodle as its Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). Occasionally, the terms 'Learning Management System (LMS)' and 'Course Management System CMS' are also used to refer to VLE. However, we prefer to use the acronym VLE.

A Virtual Learning Environment provides an online environment to support learning and teaching. The VLE includes tools for content delivery, communication, assessment and student management.

The VLE provides an easy way to:

- upload and share materials such as study-unit descriptions, lecture notes, presentations, reading assignments, links to useful resources, etc.
- organise online discussion forums and Zoom meetings as a means of communication outside of a classroom setting. You can send messages to students through the VLE.
- collect and review electronic assignments.

Why should you use the VLE?

Undoubtedly face-to-face lectures have been and will remain effective. However, the VLE features mentioned above open up new possibilities for learning that were not possible before. Currently there is a lot of research into how to effectively combine online learning and face-to-face meetings, often referred to as 'hybrid' study-units or 'blended learning'.

Hybrid study-units combine the best of both worlds. Content delivery can be moved from an in-class lecture to an online document in the VLE. The time used to deliver such content in a face-to-face lecture could be used for discussions, questions and problem solving. This approach increases student learning. Online discussions also give students the opportunity to express themselves in ways they could not in a regular class. Some students are reluctant to speak in class because of shyness, uncertainty or simply because there is no time for them due to large classes. Online discussions in a VLE enable students to compose questions and answers and therefore increase their participation.

Apart from enhancing student learning, tutors should also keep in mind that there is a demand from students to provide them with online experiences. Students are becoming more technically savvy, and they want to get many of their course materials off the web. Once online, they can access the latest information at any time. Having grown up with instant messaging and other Internet communication tools, many students find that online communication is second nature.

The VLE is a programme installed on the University web servers. University staff and students can access the VLE from any computer connected to the Internet using an Internet browser (e.g. Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, Safari, Edge, etc.).

Staff and students use their UM IT Account username and password to access the VLE.

Note:

- Your students use the same procedure to access the VLE. If students experience VLE access problems, ask them to contact us via the [IT Service Desk](#). You may consider the possibility of identifying a volunteer student to assist his/her classmates with technical issues they may encounter.
- Before entering your UM IT username and password in any screen, you should routinely check that the web address of the page displayed in the browser begins with <https://accounts.um.edu.mt/>.
- When you sign in, your name and surname will be displayed at the top-right of the screen.



- It is of utmost importance that you sign out and close all browser windows when you are done using UM services, particularly if you are using a shared computer which is not set up with different computer accounts for different users. If you don't sign out or lock your user account on that computer, subsequent users of the computer will have total access to the UM services that you have permission to use. The safest way to ensure that you have signed out from all UM services is by closing all the browser windows.

B. Accessing VLE areas

When you access the VLE, your VLE areas (study-unit areas in case of the UM VLE, and class areas in case of the JC VLE) will be displayed and you can immediately start uploading study material etc.

To access one of your VLE areas:

- Select **VLE** from the *Staff* drop-down menu at the upper left-hand corner of the University of Malta homepage.



2. If you are already signed in, you will immediately be directed to the VLE. Your VLE Dashboard will be displayed, showing all the areas that you have access to.

The screenshot shows the UM VLE dashboard. At the top left is the University of Malta logo and 'L-Università ta' Malta'. The main navigation bar includes 'UM VLE', 'HELP', and 'OTHER VLES'. On the right, there are notification icons and a user profile icon. The main content area is titled 'Welcome back, Dummy!' and contains three sections: 'My VLE areas', 'Recently accessed items', and 'Useful links'. The 'My VLE areas' section shows a list of courses for the 2023/24 and 2022/23 academic years, with some marked as 'Hidden from students'. The 'Recently accessed items' section shows three items: 'Updating the Due Dat...', 'Zoom meetings', and 'Quiz testing - True / F...'. The 'Useful links' section includes 'VLE FAQs', 'Missing / Extra study-units?' (with links to 'Tutor info' and 'Student info'), and 'Tutors:' (with links to 'VLE Copy Tool', 'Minimum standard for VLE areas', 'Start of semester checklist', and 'Copyright guidelines'). A disclaimer at the bottom of the 'Useful links' section states: 'Any marks or grades displayed in the UM VLE are not official. The official study-unit grades are available on eSIMS.'

If you are not signed in, the UM IT Account authentication screen will be displayed.

Type in your **Email address or Username** and **Password** in the respective fields, and click the **Sign in** button.

Sign in to UM IT Account

Email address or Username

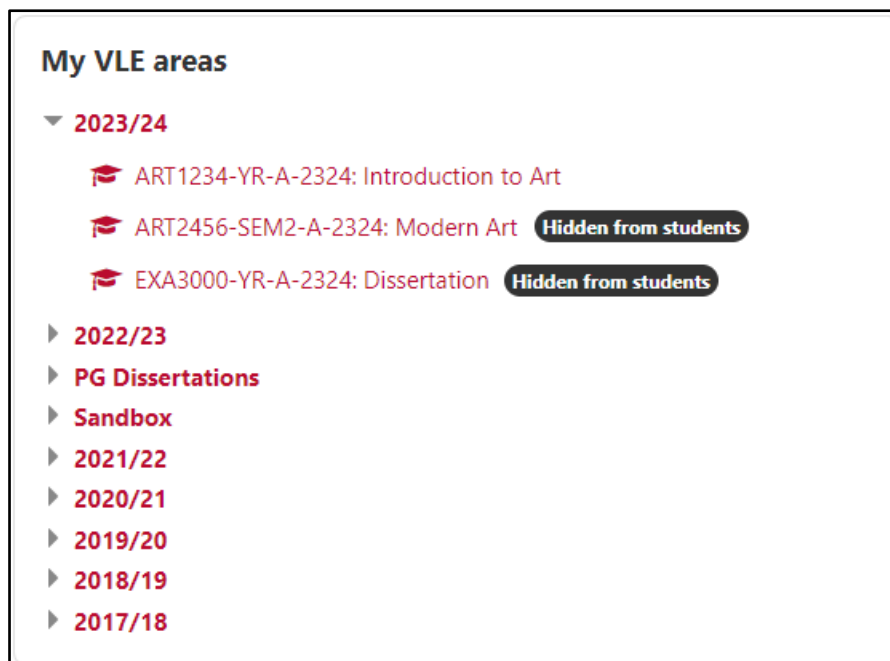
Password

Sign in

[Sign in Problems?](#)

UM IT Account password is only requested at <https://accounts.um.edu.mt/>
Make sure to sign out (top right) when done.

3. Consider the **My VLE areas** block. The **My VLE areas** block displays all the VLE areas you are registered for by listing the latest academic year/s at the top, then the PG Dissertations (if you are serving as a UM dissertation supervisor or examiner) and Sandbox, and finally the archived academic years.



4. Click to access the required VLE area.

Note:

- Early in September, the VLE areas for the upcoming academic year will be added to the VLE. If you cannot find any of your study-units in the VLE, check that you are registered on SIMS as a tutor for the missing study-unit/s:
 1. Access [eSIMS](#) / [eSIMS JC](#).
 2. Click:
 - **View / Print Study-Unit Reports** under **Study-Unit Reports and Email Facility** in eSIMS, or
 - **View / Print Class Reports** under **Subject Reports** in eSIMS JC.
 3. Select the academic /scholastic year.
 4. Click the **Retrieve Study-Units / Subjects** button.

If the study-unit/s do not appear on eSIMS / eSIMS JC, contact your faculty or departmental office / Office of the Principal so that they can register you as a tutor for the missing study-unit/s. Once data is entered in SIMS, the study-unit/s will appear in the VLE within 24 hours.

C. Overview of a VLE area

By default, the homepage of each VLE area has the layout shown below:

The screenshot shows the VLE interface for 'VLE0001-YR-A-2324: VLE Minimum Standards Template'. The layout is divided into several sections:

- 1**: Top-right corner of the navigation bar, featuring a 'Start editing' toggle button.
- 2**: A tabular navigation menu at the top of the main content area, including 'Study-unit', 'Settings', 'Participants', 'Grades', 'Reports', and 'More'.
- 3**: The main content area, which is currently displaying 'Course information and communication'. It includes an 'Announcements' forum, a 'Q&A' forum, and links to 'VLE0001 study-unit description' and 'Reading list'.
- 4**: A left-hand navigation menu with categories like 'Course information and co...', 'Topic 1 - Introduction', 'Topic 2 - [Name of Topic 2]', 'Topic 3 - [Name of Topic 3]', 'Topic 4 - [Name of Topic 4]', 'Assessment', and 'End of study-unit evaluation'.
- 5**: A right-hand sidebar with sections for 'Show study-unit to students' (Visible), 'Latest announcements', 'Recent activity', 'My VLE areas' (2023/24, PG Dissertations, Sandbox, Other), and 'Activities' (Assignments, External tools, Feedback, Forums, Resources).

1

Within any VLE area, the **Start editing / Stop editing** toggle button is accessible to tutors in the top-right corner of the navigation bar. Click **Start editing** to add or modify study material.

2

A **tabular navigation menu** at the top of each VLE area, as well as activity pages, allows users to easily navigate between key pages. As a tutor, you can access the **Settings** page if you would like to edit the VLE area's settings. The **Participants** and **Reports** pages are also accessible from this menu. The **More** tab lists several other functionalities, such as *Question bank*, *Recycle bin* and *Import*.

3

This is the **main content area** where you will put your study material and activities. This area is typically divided into sections: Topics or Weeks. Each topic or week may contain lecture notes, links to readings, forums, quizzes, assignments, etc.

By default, the first section is referred to as the *General* section. This contains the *Announcements* forum (used for class announcements) and may also contain other introductory study-unit level information such as a link to the study-unit description.

In the above example, the material and activities are organised by topics, but they can also be organised by weeks (refer to [Section F](#)).

4

This is the **Course index** drawer, which acts as a table of contents for activities and resources available within a VLE area. Students can click on an activity and navigate directly to it. For more screen space, this drawer can be opened and closed as required.

5

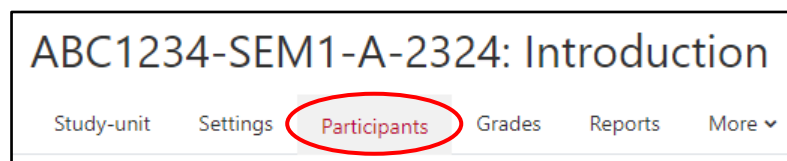
On the right-hand side of your screen, you will find the following **blocks**:

- **Show study-unit to students** – indicates whether the VLE area is *Visible* to students or not, *Hidden*. Easily make the VLE area visible to students by clicking the toggle button.
- **Latest announcements** – lists the latest items added to the *Announcements* forum.
- **Recent activity** – shows recent changes to the VLE area since the user's last login, such as, creation of new resources and activities, forum postings and assignment submissions.
- **My VLE areas** – enables easier navigation between VLE areas.
- **Activities** – lists the variety of activities you have created in your VLE area. For example, if you would like to view all the forums in an area, click on the *Forums* link.
- **Calendar** – displays a small version of the current month's calendar. Events and due dates are colour-coded to distinguish study-unit events from personal (User) events.
- **Lecture Capture (Panopto)** – lists Panopto captured videos and Zoom meeting recordings, if any.

D. Viewing the Participants list of a VLE area

To view the students and any other tutors enrolled in a VLE area:

1. Click **Participants** from the tabular menu at the top of the page.



This will display the participants enrolled on the VLE area (shown below). If the participants enrolled on the VLE area amount to more than 20, they will be listed in sets of 20 participants per page. You can click the *Show all xx* link available at the bottom of the page.

 A screenshot of the 'Enrolled users' page. At the top, the course title 'ABC1234-SEM1-A-2324: Introduction' is displayed. Below it is a navigation menu with 'Participants' selected. A search bar contains 'Enrolled users'. The main section is titled 'Enrolled users' and features a filter interface with a 'Match' dropdown set to 'Any' and a 'Select' dropdown set to 'Roles'. There are 'Add condition', 'Clear filters', and 'Apply filters' buttons. Below the filter interface, it says '11 participants found'. There are two alphabetical filters for 'First name' and 'Last name', both set to 'All'. A table lists the participants with columns for 'First name / Last name', 'ID number', 'Email address', 'Roles', 'Groups', 'Last access to course', and 'Status'. The table contains 10 rows of 'Dummy Student' and 1 row of 'Dummy Tutor'. At the bottom, there is a 'With selected users...' dropdown menu.

First name / Last name	ID number	Email address	Roles	Groups	Last access to course	Status
Dummy Student	dstu0001	dstu0001@um.edu.mt	Student	No groups	3 hours 31 mins	Active
Dummy Student 10	dstu0010	dstu0001+10@um.edu.mt	Student	No groups	Never	Active
Dummy Student 2	dstu0002	dstu0001+2@um.edu.mt	Student	No groups	Never	Active
Dummy Student 3	dstu0003	dstu0001+3@um.edu.mt	Student	No groups	Never	Active
Dummy Student 4	dstu0004	dstu0001+4@um.edu.mt	Student	No groups	Never	Active
Dummy Student 5	dstu0005	dstu0001+5@um.edu.mt	Student	No groups	Never	Active
Dummy Student 6	dstu0006	dstu0001+6@um.edu.mt	Student	No groups	Never	Active
Dummy Student 7	dstu0007	dstu0001+7@um.edu.mt	Student	No groups	Never	Active
Dummy Student 8	dstu0008	dstu0001+8@um.edu.mt	Student	No groups	Never	Active
Dummy Student 9	dstu0009	dstu0001+9@um.edu.mt	Student	No groups	Never	Active
Dummy Tutor	dtut1	dummy.tutor@um.edu.mt	Tutor	No groups	now	Active

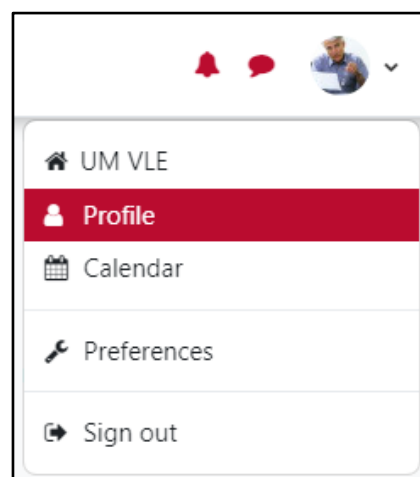
2. Within the *Match* setting, leave the first drop-down menu as **Any**.
3. From the **Select** drop-down menu, choose **Roles**. A third drop-down menu is displayed.
 - a. Select **Student** from the drop-down menu to view a list of students.
 - b. Select **Tutor** from the drop-down menu to view a list of tutor/s.
4. Click the **Apply filters** button.
5. Click the **Clear filters** button to remove any applied filters and view all participants again.

E. Editing your Profile

You are encouraged to set your profile as soon as you start using the VLE. You should upload a picture of yourself and type some information such as your office contact hours, your research interests, etc.

To edit your profile:

1. Click on your **User** menu (upper right corner).
2. Click **Profile**.
3. Click the **Edit profile** link within the *User details* section.
4. Set your **City/town**.
5. Select your country from **Select a country**.
6. In the **Description** field type some information such as office contact hours etc.



Dummy Tutor Expand all

General

First name:

Last name:

First name - phonetic:

Email address:

Email visibility:

City/town:

Select a country:

Timezone:

Description:

Office location: Room 125, Level 1, IT Services Building

Student contact hours: 09:00 - 11:00 (Mon, Wed, Fri)

43 words

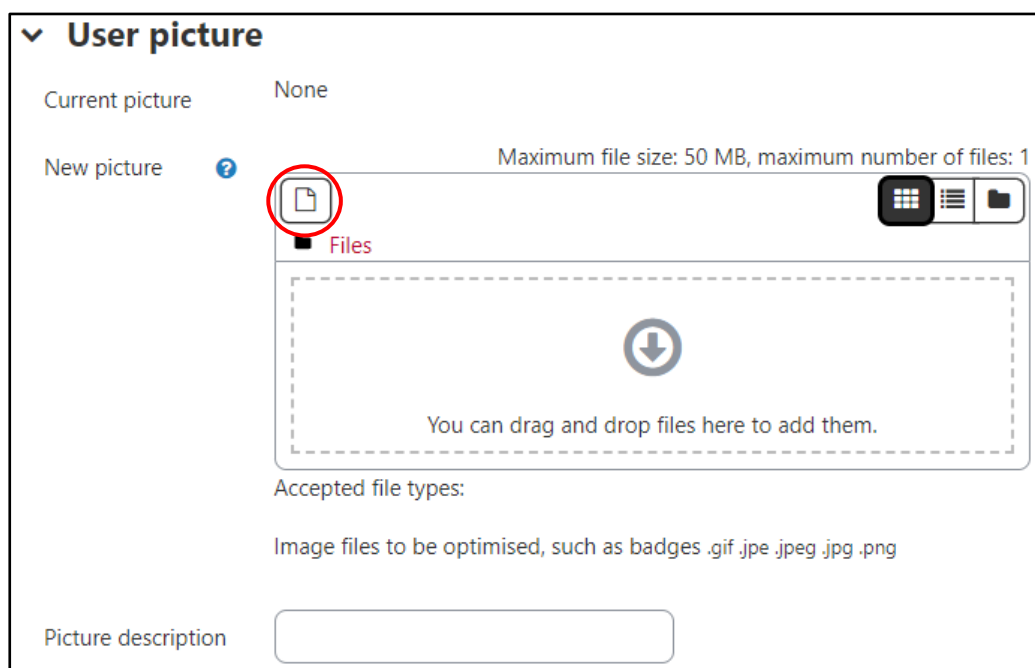
7. Click the **Update profile** button.

Note:

- If there are errors in your name and surname, please contact the Office for Human Resources Management & Development.
- Some fields have a *Help* button . Click this button to view context sensitive help.

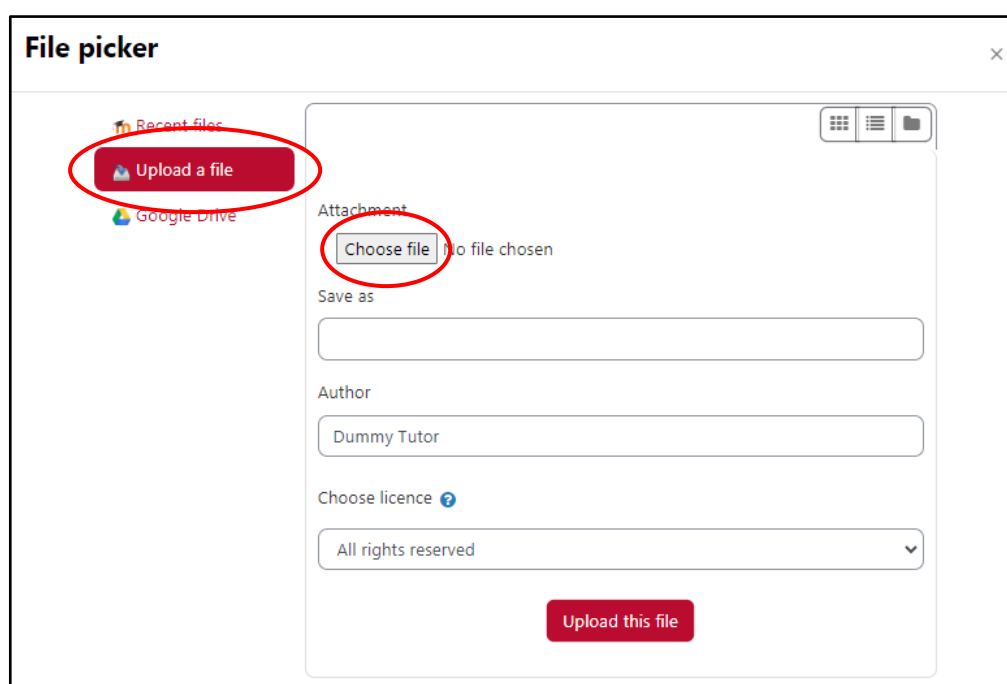
By default, a profile's display picture is the user's initials. To upload your picture:

1. Click on your **User** menu (upper right corner).
2. Click **Profile**.
3. Click the **Edit profile** link within the *User details* section.
4. Scroll down to the *User picture* section.
5. Click the **Add...** button.



This will display the *File picker* dialog box.

6. Select **Upload a file** from the menu on the left-hand side.



7. Click the **Choose file** button.

8. Browse to the location where your picture file is stored.
9. Double-click the picture file to upload.
10. Click the **Upload this file** button.
11. Type a description in the **Picture description** field for the benefit of visually impaired users who make use of a screen reader. You can type your name and surname.
12. Click the **Update profile** button.

Note:

- Instead of steps 5-10, you can locate your picture file and drag it to the designated drag-and-drop area marked with a grey arrow.
- Use a JPG or PNG file format for your picture. The VLE will crop your picture and shrink it to 100 by 100 pixels.
- Once uploaded, your picture will appear in your profile, in the *Participants* page and next to all your forum postings. The same picture will appear for all your VLE areas in the VLE.

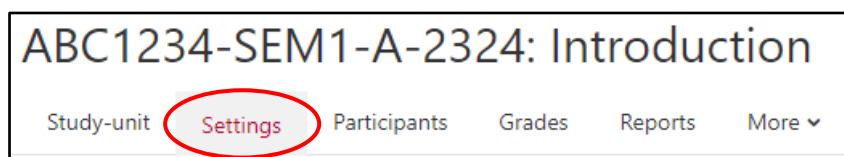
To delete your profile picture:

1. Click on your **User** menu (upper right corner).
2. Click **Profile**.
3. Click the **Edit profile** link within the *User details* section.
4. Scroll down to the *User picture* section, and tick the **Delete picture** checkbox below your picture.
5. Click the **Update profile** button.

F. Adjusting the VLE area settings

You can adjust some basic settings of your VLE area, for example decide if you want to organise the learning resources by topic or week, the start date of the study-unit, etc.

1. Click **Settings** from the tabular menu at the top of the page.



The *Edit course settings* page is displayed.

2. Adjust the settings of the VLE area (refer to the underlying table for a description of the settings). Some of the settings, such as *Course full name*, *Course short name* and *Course ID number* cannot be edited.

You do not need to adjust every single setting in this screen. As a minimum adjust the following settings, accessible by clicking on the respective settings section titles:

- *General*
 - **Course visibility** (make your VLE area available if you are ready to allow your students to access it)
 - **Course start date**
- *Course format*
 - **Format**

Edit course settings Expand all

▼ **General**

Course full name ⓘ ABC1234-SEM1-A-2324: Introduction

Course short name ⓘ ABC1234-SEM1-A-2324

Course visibility ⓘ Show ▾

Course start date ⓘ 25 ▾ September ▾ 2023 ▾ 00 ▾ 00 ▾ 📅

Course end date ⓘ 21 ▾ June ▾ 2023 ▾ 13 ▾ 18 ▾ 📅 Enable

Course ID number ⓘ ABC1234-SEM1

▼ **Course format**

Format ⓘ Topics format ▾

Hidden sections ⓘ Hidden sections are completely invisible ▾

Course layout ⓘ Show all sections on one page ▾

> **Appearance**

> **Files and uploads**

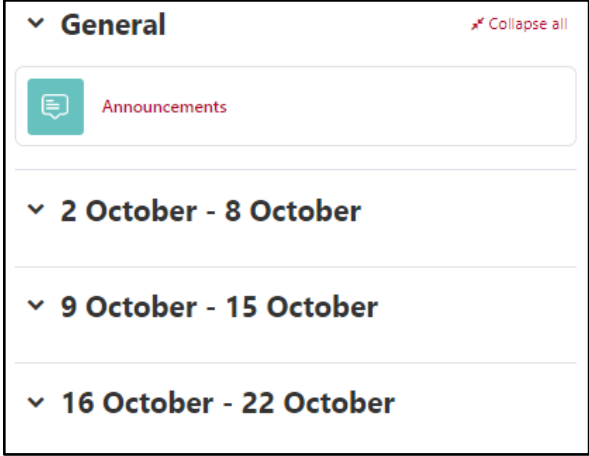
> **Completion tracking**

> **Groups**

Save and display Cancel

Option	Description
General	
Course visibility	<p>Use this setting to control access to your VLE area. You can make a VLE area available (visible) or unavailable (hidden) to students without affecting your own access. This is a good way to hide VLE areas that are not ready to be viewed by students.</p> <p>Alternatively, you can also control course visibility via the Show study-unit to students block available on your VLE area homepage.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <p>Show study-unit to students</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Hidden</p> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <p>Show study-unit to students</p> <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> Visible</p> </div> </div>
Course start date	If you are using a weekly course format, the first week will start on the date you set here. It is important to set the correct start date even if you adopt a topic format for your VLE area.
Course end date	You may assign an end date if you wish to. Note that, enrolled tutors and students can still access the VLE area after the end date, as the end date does not restrict access.

Course format	
Format	<p>The VLE provides you with several formats that you can adopt for your VLE area. The most common formats are:</p> <p>Topics format - The area is organised into topic sections. Each topic section consists of activities you set up. This is a good option if your VLE area design is concept-oriented, with students working through a range of topics but not necessarily according to a fixed schedule.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; margin: 10px auto; width: fit-content;"> <p>▼ General Collapse all</p> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 5px;"> <p> Announcements</p> </div> <p>▼ Topic 1</p> <p>▼ Topic 2</p> <p>▼ Topic 3</p> </div>

	<p>Weekly format - The VLE area is organised week by week, with a clear start date and finish date. The VLE will create a section for each week of your VLE area. Each week consists of activities you set up. The current week is highlighted.</p> 
Hidden sections	<p>This option allows you to decide how the hidden sections in your VLE area are displayed to students.</p> <p>By default, hidden sections are completely invisible to students, that is, your students will not know that sections within the VLE area are hidden.</p> <p>You may choose to list hidden sections as unavailable to students. In this case, the heading of the topic / week is shown in collapsed form and a 'Not available' label is displayed to indicate where the hidden section is. Students can see the heading but they cannot actually see the hidden study material within.</p>
Course layout	<p>This setting determines whether the whole VLE area is displayed on one page or split over several pages.</p>

Appearance	
Number of announcements	Use this setting to determine the number of announcements displayed in the Latest announcements block of the VLE area.
Show gradebook to students	This setting is used to allow students to see the link to grades in the navigation menu. Note: Any marks or grades displayed in the UM VLE are not official. The official study-unit grades are available on eSIMS. It is suggested that you do not change this setting from <i>No</i> to <i>Yes</i> .
Show activity reports	This setting allows students to view their activity history in your VLE area. This is useful if you want students to reflect on their level of participation.
Show activity dates	This setting allows students to view the dates by when they need to complete a particular activity on the VLE area homepage. Note: Only Moodle activities will have the activity dates displayed. Third party tools such as <i>Turnitin</i> and <i>Panopto</i> will not feature the activity dates on the VLE area homepage.

Files and uploads	
Maximum upload size	This setting limits the size of files you or your students upload to the VLE area. The maximum upload size is set by IT Services, but you can choose to make the limit smaller than this.

Completion tracking	
Enable completion tracking	<p>The completion tracking settings allows tutors and students to track progress through the content of a VLE area. Each item (resource or activity) can be set to track completion based on established criteria. Although this is referred to as <i>Activity completion</i>, it can also be applied to VLE area resources. When enabled (default), the <i>Activity completion</i> section can be found at the bottom of the page that is used to create or update a resource or activity.</p> <p><i>Refer to a separate user guide for more information on the use of Activity Completion.</i></p>
Show activity completion conditions	If a resource or activity has <i>Activity completion</i> applied, the criteria that students need to meet will be displayed on the VLE area homepage.

Groups	
Group mode	<p>The VLE allows you to split your class into groups. The default setting is <i>No groups</i>. You can set the group mode to <i>Separate groups</i> or <i>Visible groups</i>.</p> <p><i>Separate groups</i> prohibits students in one group to see / interact with the students in another group.</p> <p><i>Visible groups</i> allows students in one group to view the other group's activities but not participate.</p> <p><i>Refer to a separate user guide for more information on the use of Groups and Groupings in the VLE.</i></p>
Force group mode	You can set the group mode separately for many activities or force group mode to be set at VLE area level. If everything in the VLE area is done in group work, you will probably want to force group mode to make management easier. Forcing the VLE area group mode overrides the individual activity group settings. If you have forced group mode, every activity in the VLE area will have that group mode set.

G. Adding sections to your VLE area

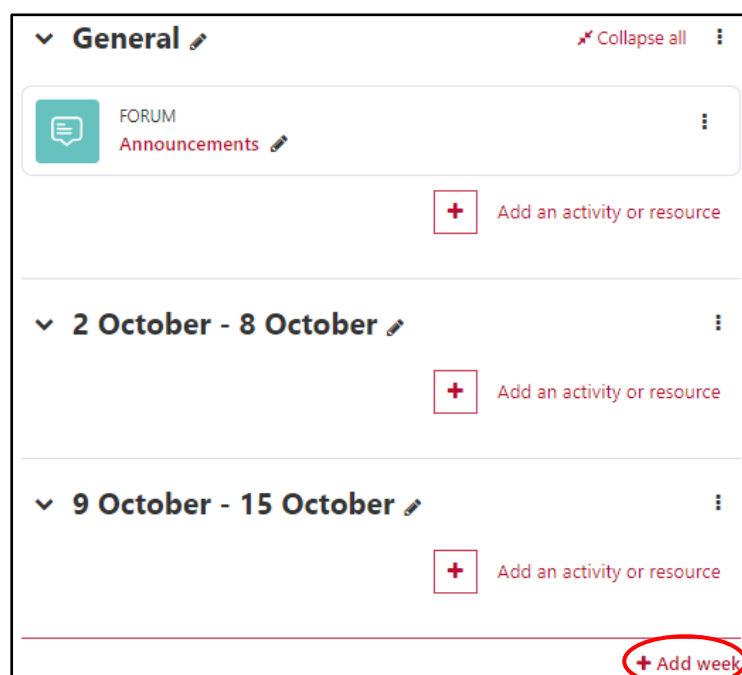
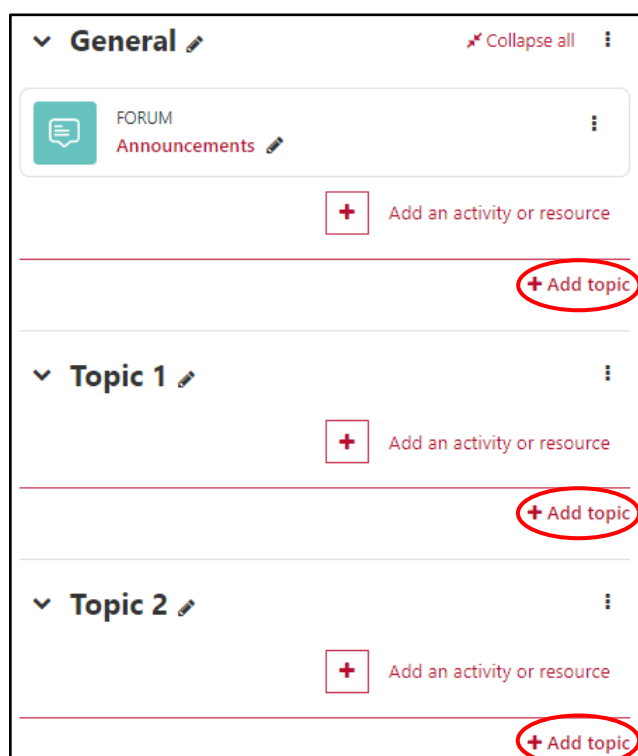
By default, every VLE area homepage has one (1) section available, namely the *General* section.

To add more sections:

1. Click the **Start editing** button located at the top-right corner.

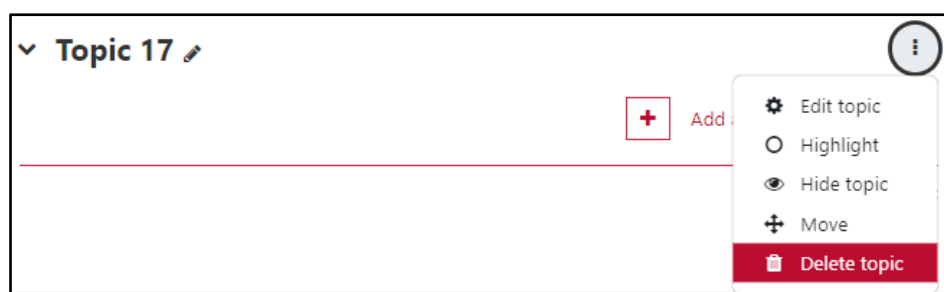
If you have applied the *Topics* format, an **Add topic** button is available beneath every section. On the other hand, if you opted for a *Weekly* format, an **Add week** button is available beneath the last week.

2. Click the **Add topic / Add week** button to add a section in the required location.



To delete a section:

1. Click the **Start editing** button located at the top-right corner.
2. Click the **Edit** (3-dot) icon available to the right of the section you wish to delete.



3. Click **Delete topic / week**.

Note:

- If the section contains any resources or activities, you will be prompted to confirm the deletion of the section and its contents. If you proceed, all activities and resources within the section will be deleted.

H. Adding summaries / titles

By default, when you choose a *Topic* format, the sections in the middle section of the VLE area homepage will display the titles: Topic 1, Topic 2, Topic 3 etc. You may wish to use a descriptive title rather than Topic 1, Topic 2, etc.

To edit content in the VLE area homepage:

- Click the **Start editing** button located at the top-right corner of the page. This will display numerous icons in each section within the content area of your VLE area homepage.



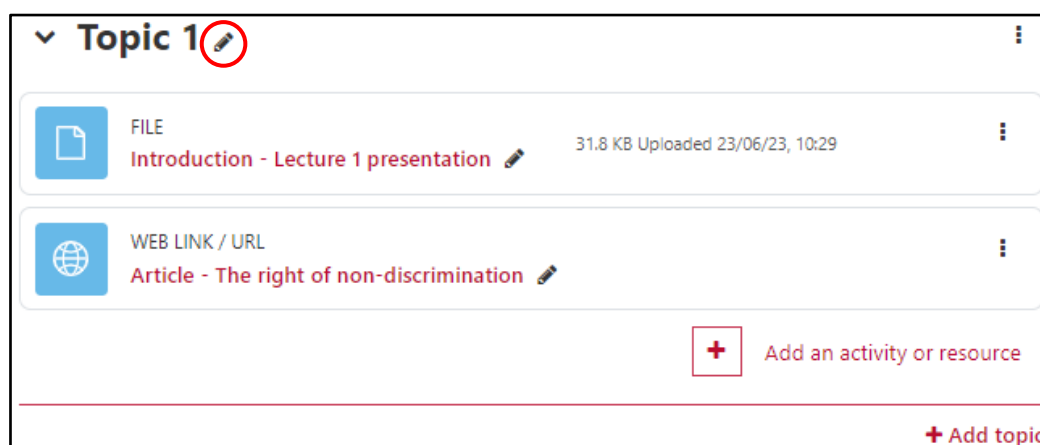
Note:

- The **Start editing** button changes to the **Stop editing** button when clicked.

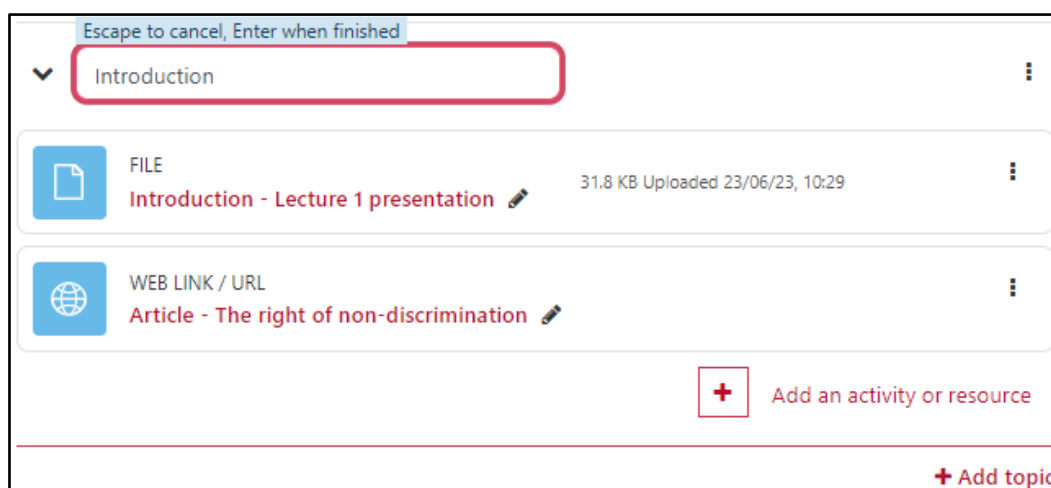


To edit the title of a section:

- Click the **Edit topic name** icon  adjacent to the section heading.




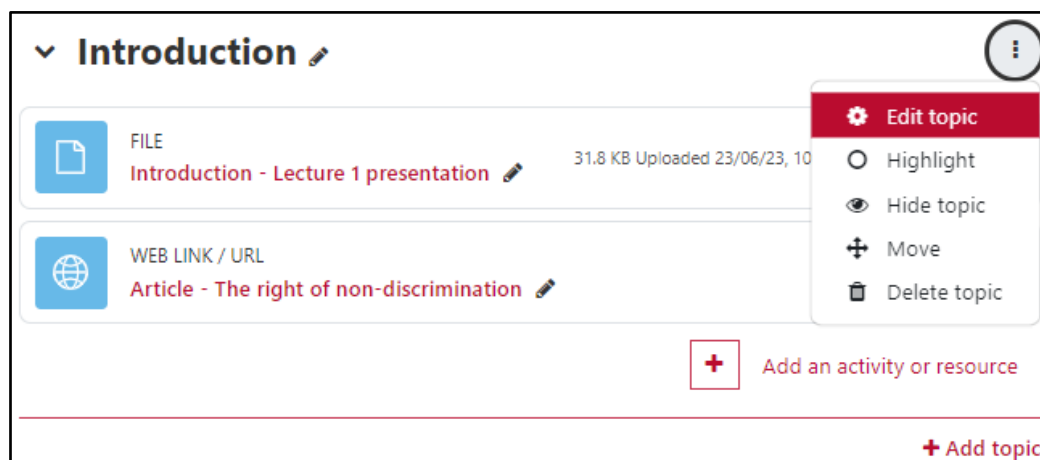
This will allow you to edit the section heading. In the following example, the text *Topic 1* is replaced with the text *Introduction*.



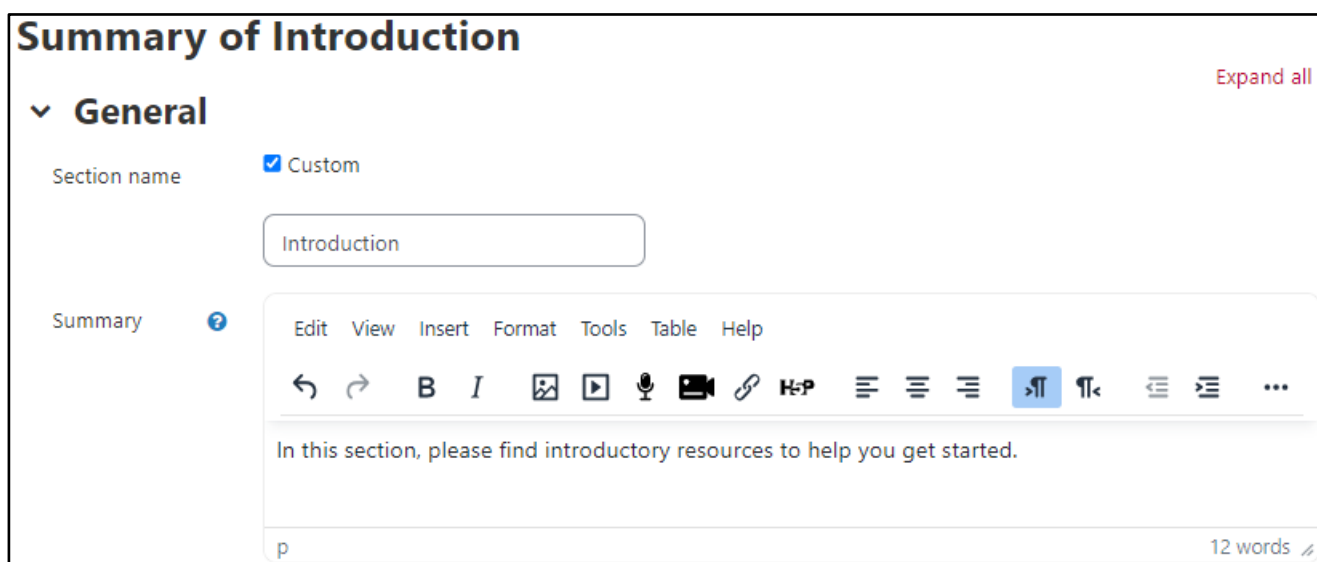
- Press **Enter** to confirm the inputted title.

To add or edit a section's summary:

1. Click the **Edit** (3-dot)  icon, located at the top-right corner of every section, and choose **Edit topic**.



This will display the *Summary* screen (shown below).



2. In the **Summary** editor, type a description of what the section contains.
3. Click the **Save changes** button at the bottom of the screen. You will be returned to the VLE area homepage.
4. Click the **Stop editing** button.

I. Adding study material

The content in a VLE area falls under two categories:

- *Static study material* refers to resources that students read but do not interact with, such as documents (e.g. study-unit description and notes), presentations, web pages (e.g. links to useful websites, journal readings and videos) etc.
- *Interactive activities* enable students to interact with the tutor, each other and the exercises assigned by the tutor e.g. essays, multiple choice quizzes, forums etc.

In this section you will learn how to add static content to the VLE area. **Only users with tutor rights can upload and edit static content.**

a. Adding files

You can add files (e.g. notes and presentations) to your VLE area using one of the following methods:

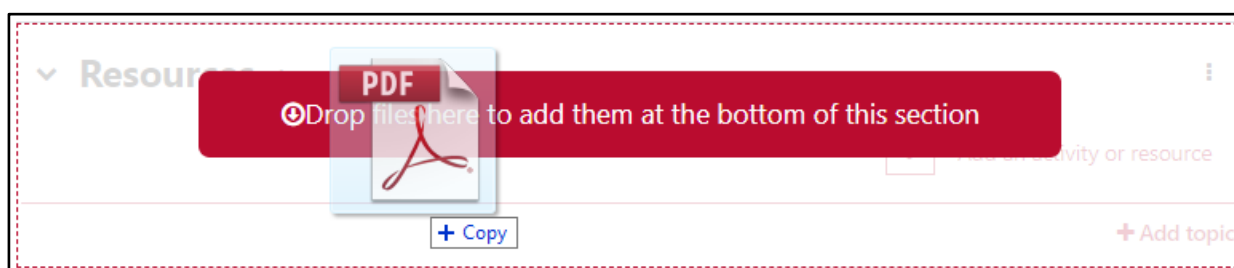
Method A – Using the drag-and-drop functionality

You can drag-and-drop your files directly onto your VLE area homepage in the required section (instead of having to upload files through a separate screen).

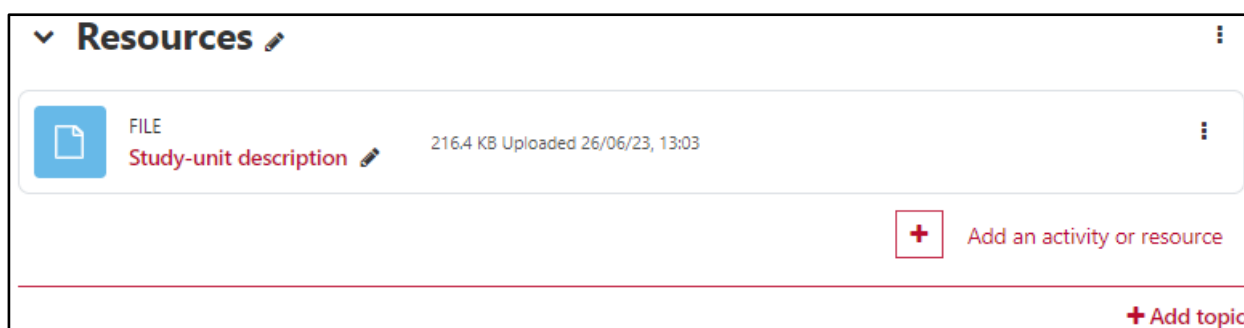
To add a file to a VLE area using this method:

1. Click the **Start editing** button (top-right corner).
2. Locate the file/s to upload from your computer or USB stick.
3. Click the file to upload. Drag the file directly to the appropriate section in the VLE area.

An indicator stating **Drop file(s) here to add them at the bottom of this section** will be displayed during the dragging process.



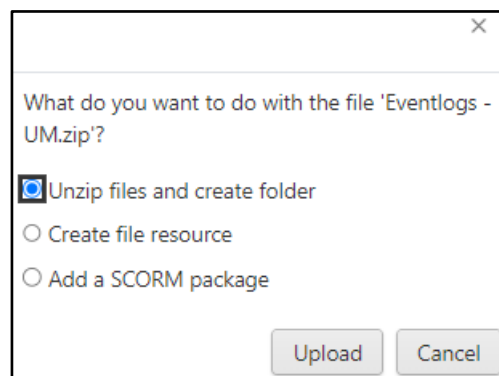
4. Release the mouse button to upload the file.



Note that:

- You may need to resize your window to be able to see the source folder (where your file is stored on your computer) and the VLE area simultaneously.
- To upload multiple files at once, hold down the CTRL key and click the files on your computer (for Macintosh use COMMAND+click), then drag them into the section in the VLE area.

- You can upload files of any format: .doc, .xls, .ppt, .pdf, .jpg, .png, .mp3, .mov, etc. Unless you have a specific requirement for uploading MS Word documents or MS PowerPoint presentations, it is good practice to save these as PDF files and then upload the latter.
- You cannot drag and drop a folder of files from your computer.
- When you upload a zip file, a pop-up window will prompt you to choose one of the following options:
 - **Unzip files and create folder:** This will create a *Folder* resource containing the unzipped files
 - **Create file resource:** This will display the zip file as a single *File* resource, which your students can download and unzip
 - **Add a SCORM package:** If you have been provided with a zip file containing a SCORM package (e.g. from a textbook publisher), the archived files will be posted as a SCORM package.



Method B – Using the Add a Resource

If you prefer traditional uploading for files, you can still do so through the *activity chooser*.

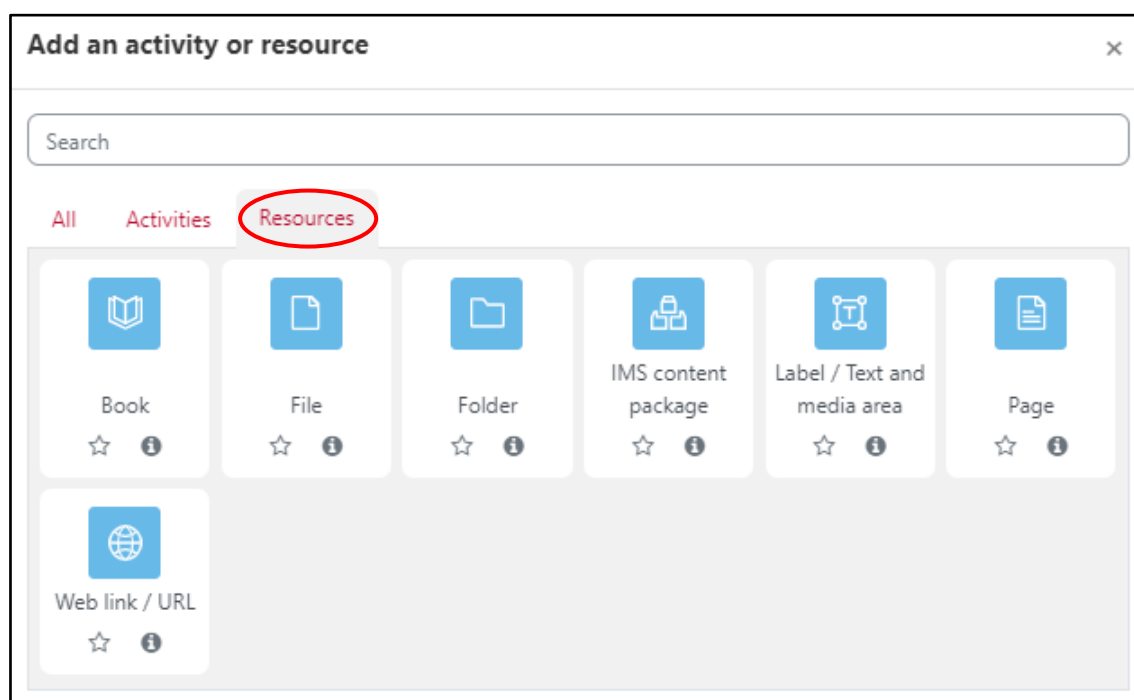
1. Click the **Start editing** button (top-right corner).

Each section in the content area displays the link **Add an activity or resource**.

2. Scroll down to the section where you want to add the file.
3. Click the **Add an activity or resource** link.

The *activity chooser* is displayed.

4. Click the **Resources** tab.



5. Click **File**.

Adding a new File Expand all

General

Name !

Description

Edit View Insert Format Tools Table Help

← → **B** *I* H&P ...

p 0 words

Display description on course page ?

Select files Maximum size for new files: 100 MB

Files

You can drag and drop files here to add them.

6. In the *General* section, type a name for the file e.g. *Study-unit description* in the **Name** field.

7. In the **Description** box, you may add a description for your file.

8. Through the **Select files** setting, upload your files using one of two options:

Method i – Traditional upload

a. Click the **Add...** button. The *File picker* dialog box is displayed.

File picker ×

My study-units

Recent files

Upload a file

Google Drive

HSP content bank

Attachment

No file chosen

Save as

Author

Choose licence ?

- b. Select the **Upload a file** option from the menu on the left.
- c. Click the **Choose file** button.
- d. Browse to the location where your file is stored.
- e. Double-click the file to upload.
- f. Click the **Upload this file** button.

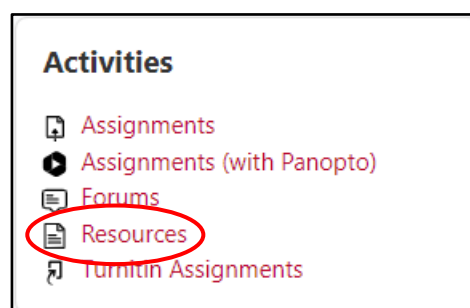
Method ii – Drag-and-drop

Within the *Select files* section of the 'Adding a new file' screen is an area with a grey arrow that allows drag-and-drop uploading.

- a. Locate the file to upload.
 - b. Drag the file to the drag-and-drop area.
9. Click the **Save and return to course** button.

Note:

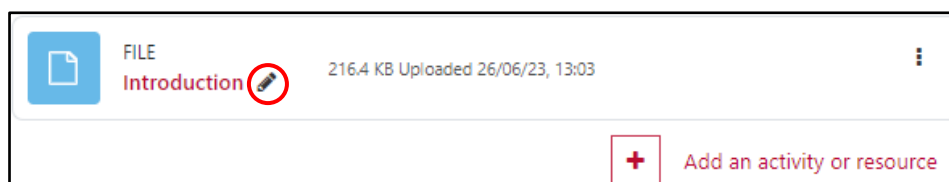
- When you add a file, folder, label, URL, etc., the *Activities* block will display a **Resources** link. Clicking **Resources** in the *Activities* block will display a table containing the resources present in the VLE area.




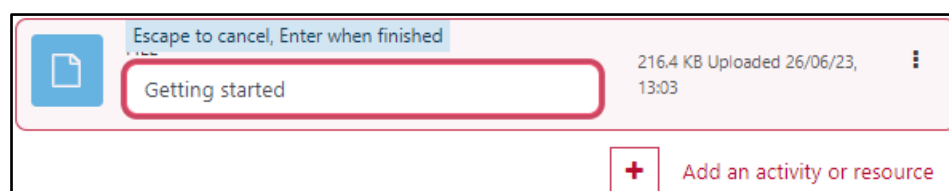
b. Editing titles of uploaded files

To edit the titles of uploaded files (or activities):

1. In the VLE area homepage, click the **Start editing** button. The **Edit title** icon  will appear next to all files (and activities) in the VLE area.



2. Click the **Edit title** icon . This will allow you to edit the text that links to a resource. In the following example, the text *Introduction* is replaced with the text *Getting started*.




3. Press **Enter** key to confirm the inputted title.

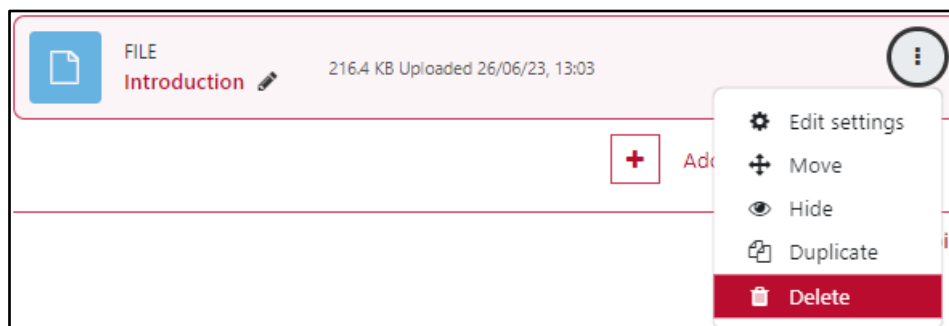
Note:


- If you do not press the **Enter** key, the text will not be edited.
- The text used to link to a file need not be identical to the filename. For example, you can use the text *Getting started* to link to a file saved as *intro.pdf*.

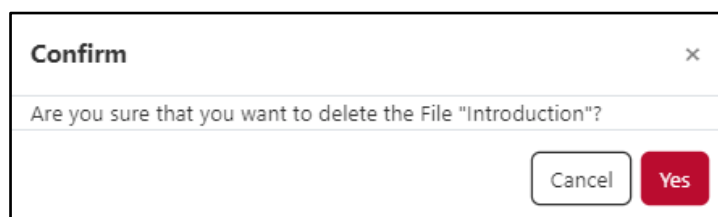
c. Deleting uploaded files

If you have uploaded a file/s by mistake or you need to delete certain files from the VLE:

1. In the VLE area homepage, click the **Start editing** button. The **Edit** (3-dots)  icon will appear next to all resources and activities in the VLE area.
2. Click the **Edit** icon adjacent to the file you wish to delete.



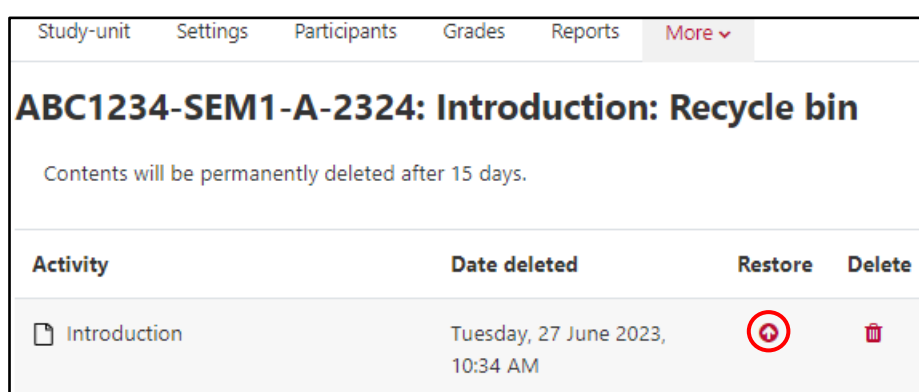
3. Click the **Delete** button .
4. You will be prompted to confirm your action.



5. If you are sure you want to delete the file, click **Yes**.

To restore an item from the recycle bin:

1. Click on **More** within the tabular navigation menu and choose **Recycle bin**.
2. Locate the file which you would like to retrieve, and click the **Restore** icon adjacent to it. The file will immediately be restored to your VLE area.



Note:

- Any resources / activities you delete from a VLE area will first be sent to the recycle bin for fifteen (15) days, allowing time to restore anything that may have been deleted in error. Deleted content will be permanently deleted after fifteen (15) days.
- If you delete a folder or zip file, any files within the folder will also be deleted.

d. Adding folders

Study material can be displayed on the VLE area homepage either as individual items or bundled together inside folders. The VLE allows you to post multiple files at once in a folder.

Folders can only contain files such as PDFs, MS Word documents or image files. Folders cannot contain activities such as quizzes, assignments, forums or resources such as URLs or pages.

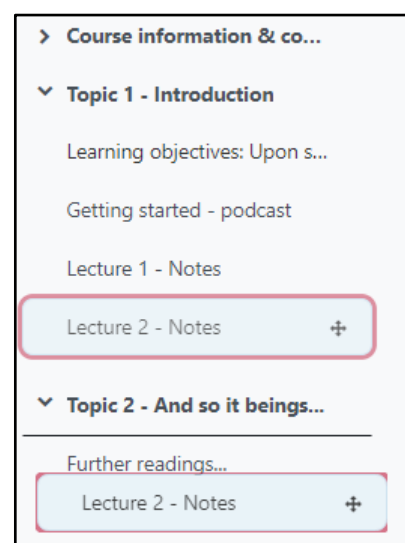
To create a folder:

1. Click the **Start editing** button (top-right corner).
Each section in the content area displays the link **Add an activity or resource**.
2. Scroll down to the section where you want to add the folder.
3. Click the **Add an activity or resource** link.
The *activity chooser* is displayed.
4. Click the **Resources** tab.
5. Click **Folder**.
6. In the *General* section, type a **Name** for the folder e.g. *Past Papers*.
7. In the **Description** box, you may add a description for your folder.
8. Scroll to the *Content* section. Upload your files through one of two options ([Method i – Traditional upload](#) or [Method ii – Drag-and-drop](#)) explained in [Section I-a](#).
9. Click the **Save and return to course** button.

e. Moving resources


Study material can be moved around on the VLE area main page. After you click the **Start editing** button, you can choose to move resources / activities (vertically) within the content area itself via the drag-and-drop functionality. Simply click on the content you would like to move and drag it to the required location. You can move content further up / down within a section, or move it to a different section.

You may also move material via the *course index* drawer available on the left side of the screen.

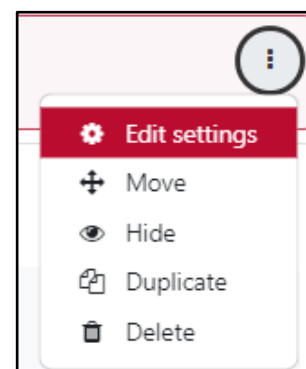


f. Editing resources

To edit the settings of a resource:





1. In the VLE area main page, click the **Start editing** button.
2. Click the **Edit** (3-dot)  icon adjacent to the resource and choose **Edit settings**.
3. Make the necessary changes.
4. Click the **Save and return to course** button.

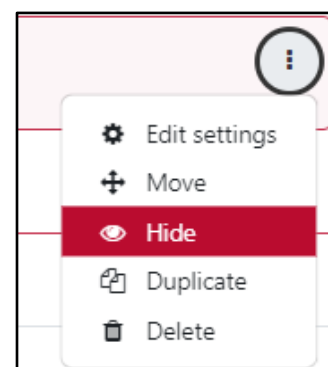
Alternatively, if the resource opens within the VLE (i.e. embedded within the VLE interface, e.g. a *Page* resource), you can click the **Settings** tab within the tabular menu available just beneath the heading of the resource.



g. Hiding / Showing resources

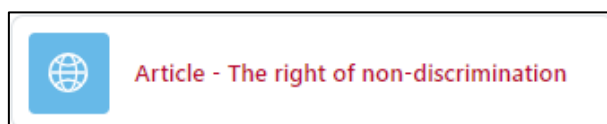
By default, when adding learning resources to your VLE area these will be visible by your students. You can hide resources from being viewed by students as follows:

1. In the VLE area homepage, click the **Start editing** button.
2. Click the **Edit** (3-dot)  icon adjacent to the resource and click  **Hide**. The resource will be greyed out and a message *Hidden from students* is also displayed. 
3. To show a hidden resource, click the **Edit** icon adjacent to the resource and click  **Show**.



h. Adding web links (URLs) to websites

You can add web links (URLs) from your VLE area to websites. This method may be used to add links to journal readings in the Library database. Resources linking to websites carry the following icon:



To add a link to a website:

1. In the VLE area homepage, click the **Start editing** button.
2. Scroll down to the section where you want to add the link.
3. Click the **Add an activity or resource** link. The *activity chooser* is displayed.
4. Click the **Resources** tab.
5. Select **Web link / URL**. The *Adding a new Web link / URL* page is displayed.

 A screenshot of a web form titled "Adding a new Web link / URL". The form has a sidebar on the left with expandable sections: General (expanded), Appearance, Web link / URL variables, Common module settings, Restrict access, and Activity completion. The main content area includes:

- Name**: A text input field with a red error icon.
- External Web link / URL**: A text input field with a red error icon and a "Choose a link..." button.
- Description**: A rich text editor with a toolbar (Edit, View, Insert, Format, Tools, Table, Help) and a text area containing the letter 'p'. A word count shows "0 words".
- Display description on course page
- Send content change notification

 At the bottom, there are three buttons: "Save and return to course" (red), "Save and display" (red), and "Cancel" (white).

6. In the **Name** field type the text that will link to the website.
7. Optionally, you may include a brief description of the link in the **Description** text field.
8. Tick **Display description on course page** if you want the description to be displayed in the VLE area homepage just below the Web link / URL.
9. In the **External Web link / URL** field, type or paste the address of the webpage you want to link to.
10. Click the **Save and return to course** button.

Note:

- You may also link to video clips streamed on popular video sharing sites (such as YouTube).

i. Adding labels / text and media areas


Labels enable you to insert additional text, graphics, as well as audio and video to your VLE area homepage. Labels / Text and media areas are typically used to make your VLE area more user-friendly.

To add a text label:

1. In the VLE area homepage, click the **Start editing** button.
2. Scroll down to the section where you want to add the label / text area.
3. Click the **Add an activity or resource** link. The *activity chooser* is displayed.
4. Click the **Resources** tab.
5. Select **Label / Text and media area**. The *Adding a new Label / Text and media area* page is displayed.

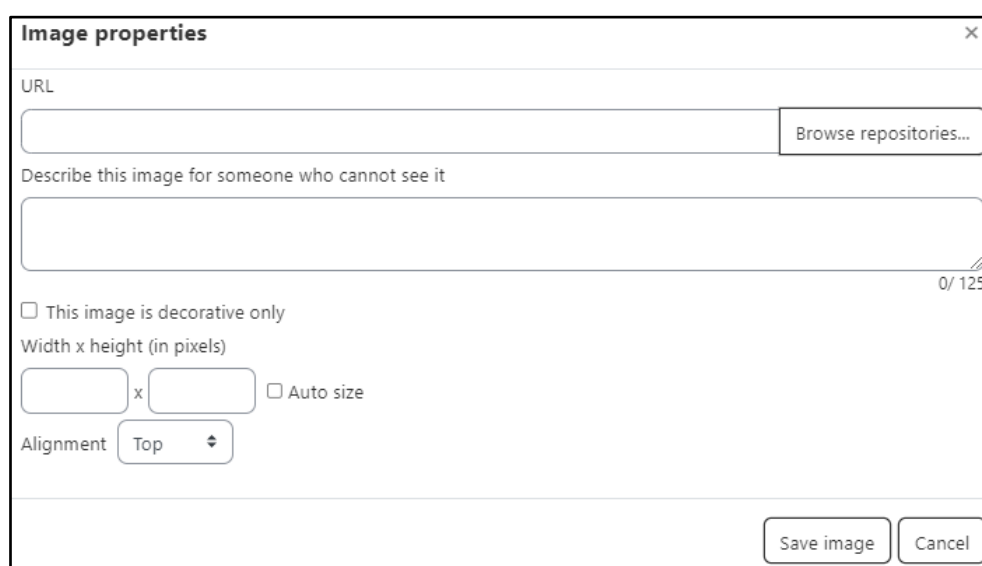
6. Type the text, e.g. *Useful Resources*, in the **Text** HTML editor.
7. Apply any formatting to the text as appropriate.
8. Click the **Save and return to course** button.

To add a graphic label:

1. In the VLE area homepage, click the **Start editing** button.
2. Scroll down to the section where you want to add the graphic label.
3. Click the **Add an activity or resource** link. The *activity chooser* is displayed.
4. Click the **Resources** tab.
5. Select **Label / Text and media area**. The *Adding a new Label / Text and media area* page is displayed.
6. Click the **Image** button  within the editor toolbar.

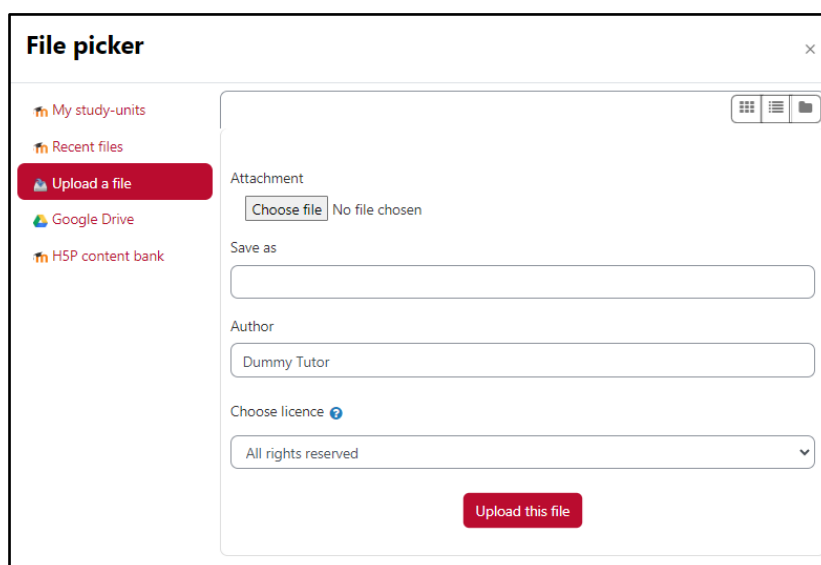


The *Image properties* dialog box is displayed.


 A screenshot of the 'Image properties' dialog box. It has a title bar with 'Image properties' and a close button. The main area contains:

- A 'URL' field with a 'Browse repositories...' button to its right.
- A text area for 'Describe this image for someone who cannot see it' with a character count '0/125' at the bottom right.
- A checkbox labeled 'This image is decorative only'.
- Fields for 'Width x height (in pixels)' with an 'x' separator and an 'Auto size' checkbox.
- An 'Alignment' dropdown menu set to 'Top'.
- 'Save image' and 'Cancel' buttons at the bottom right.

7. The image you wish to use needs to be uploaded to the VLE.
 - a. If the image file is on your computer:
 - i. Click **Browse repositories....** The *File picker* dialog box will open.


 A screenshot of the 'File picker' dialog box. It has a title bar with 'File picker' and a close button. The main area is divided into two sections:



- On the left, a sidebar with navigation options: 'My study-units', 'Recent files', 'Upload a file' (highlighted in red), 'Google Drive', and 'HSP content bank'.
- On the right, a form for file selection:
 - 'Attachment' section with a 'Choose file' button and the text 'No file chosen'.
 - 'Save as' section with an empty text field.
 - 'Author' section with a text field containing 'Dummy Tutor'.
 - 'Choose licence' section with a dropdown menu set to 'All rights reserved'.
 - An 'Upload this file' button at the bottom.

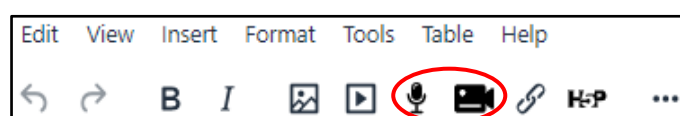
- ii. Click **Upload a file** (left side menu).
 - iii. Click the **Choose file** button.
 - iv. Locate and select the image file on your computer.
 - v. Click the **Open** button.
 - vi. Click the **Upload this file** button.
- b. If the image file is on some webpage on the Internet:
- i. Copy the image address.
 - ii. Paste it in the **URL** field.
- c. If the image has already been uploaded to the VLE:
- i. Click **Browse repositories....** The *File picker* dialog box will open.
 - ii. Click **My Study-units** repository (left side menu).
 - iii. Navigate to the desired file location or search the required file.
 - iv. Click the file.
 - v. Select **Create an alias/shortcut to the file**.
 - vi. Click the **Select this file** button.
8. In the **Describe this image for someone who cannot see it** field, type some descriptive text for the benefit of visually impaired students making use of screen readers.
9. Click the **Save image** button.
10. Click the **Save and return to course** button.

Note:

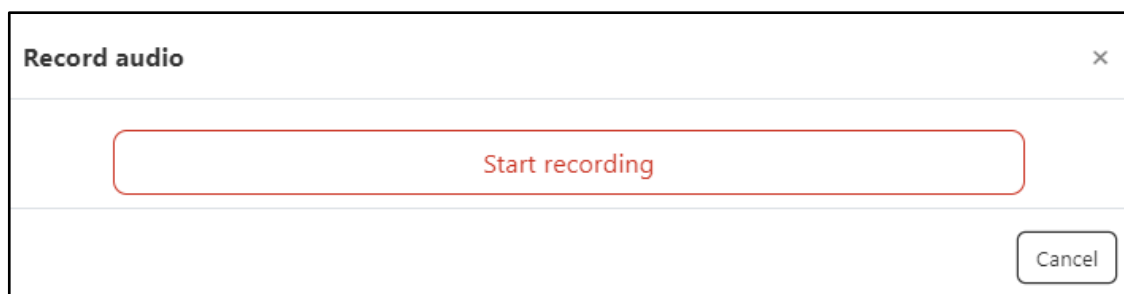
- Graphic labels improve the aesthetics of the VLE area homepage. Keep in mind that excessively large or too many, images will increase the length of time it takes for students to load the page.

To add an audio / video label:

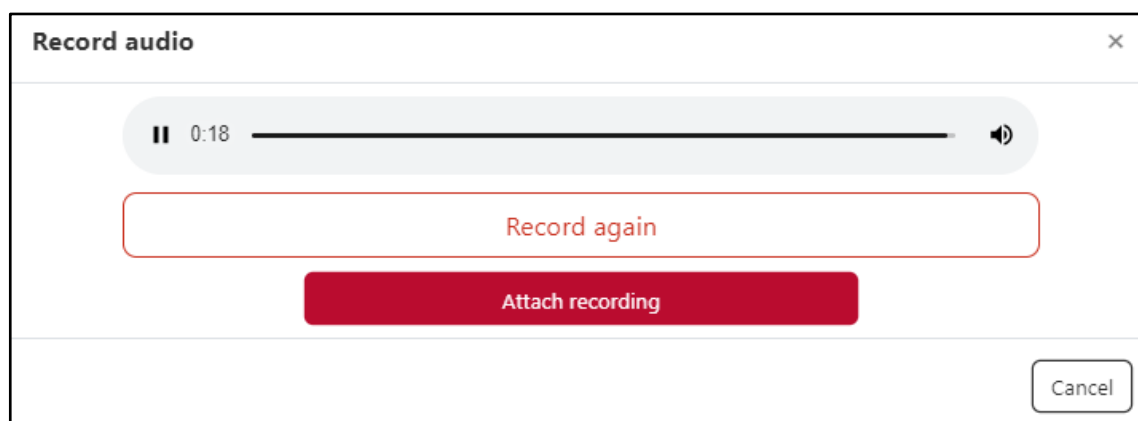
1. In the VLE area homepage, click the **Start editing** button.
2. Scroll down to the section where you want to add the audio or video label.
3. Click the **Add an activity or resource** link.
4. Click the **Resources** tab.
5. Select **Label / Text and media area**. The *Adding a new Label / Text and media area* page is displayed.
6. Click on the respective **Record audio**  / **Record video**  button.



The **Record audio / Record video** dialog box will be displayed.



7. Click the **Start recording** button.
8. Once ready, click the **Stop recording** button. The recording will be made available for you to review. After reviewing your recording, you will also be able to download it by clicking the 3-dots icon and selecting **Download**.



9. If satisfied with your recording, click the **Attach recording** button. Otherwise, click the **Record again** button.

Note:

- You can also use the audio and video recording tools on your mobile phone.
- Audio and video recordings via the text editor cannot exceed two (2) minutes.
- Video recording only captures the webcam image. Desktop recording is not available.
- Use [Panopto Personal Capture](#) to include PowerPoint presentations or desktop sharing in your video, or if your video is longer than two (2) minutes.

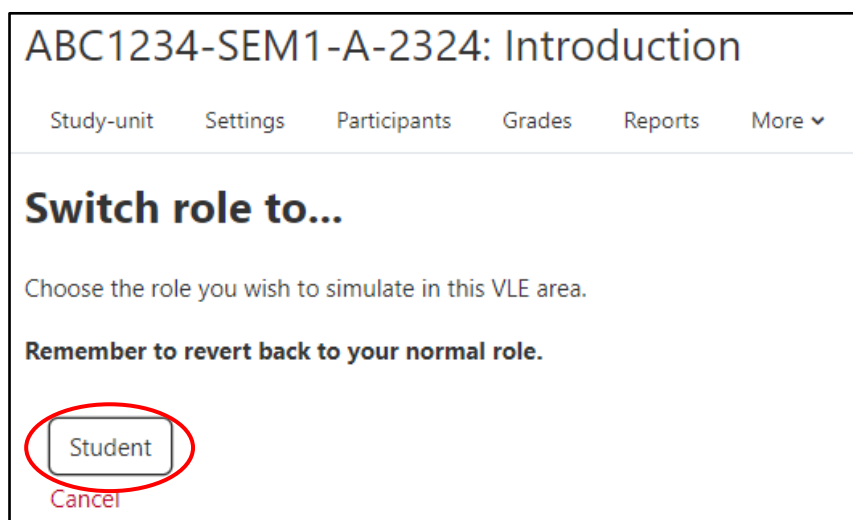
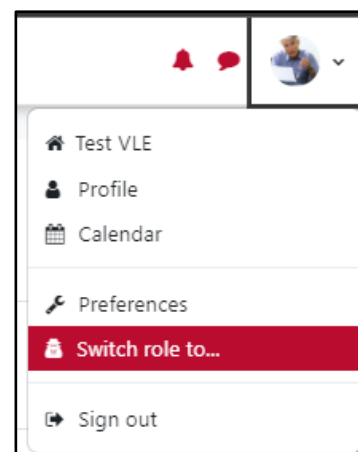
J. Switching role to student

The VLE provides a feature that allows tutors to temporarily view their VLE area content from a student perspective.

To switch role to a student:

1. Access the required VLE area.
2. Click the *User* menu in the upper right-hand corner and click **Switch role to....**

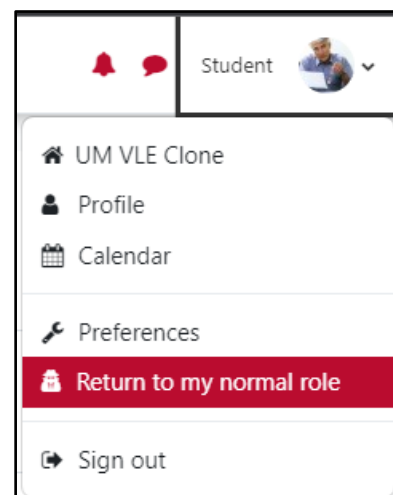
The *Switch role to...* page is displayed.



3. Click the **Student** button to simulate a student view of your VLE area.

The simulated role will be displayed adjacent to your avatar in the upper right-hand corner.

Remember to revert back to your normal role by clicking the *User* menu again and clicking the **Return to my normal role** link.



Known issue:

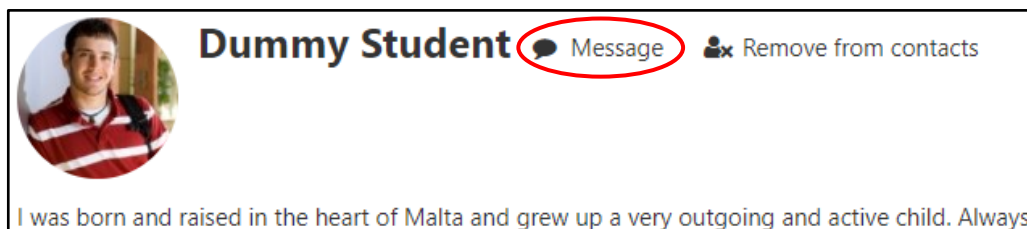
If you 'Switch role to... Student' while editing a hidden VLE area and navigate outside the area before switching back to your Tutor role, the hidden VLE area will not be listed in your VLE Dashboard because you will still be recognised as a student. You must return to the VLE area (using the browser's 'Back' button) and subsequently, switch back to your Tutor role.

K. Messages

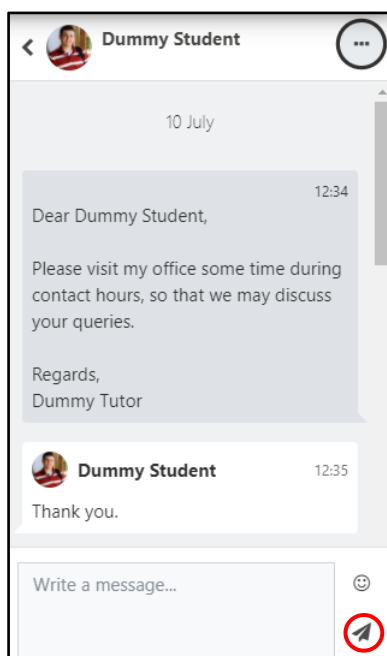
Sending a message to a participant

To send a message to a VLE area participant:

1. Click the name of the participant you want to contact, either from the *Participants* list (refer to [Section D](#)) or from within an activity (i.e. forum, wiki, etc.). This will display the participant's profile page.
2. Click the **Message** button.

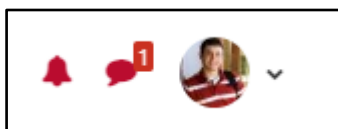


This will open the messaging drawer.



3. Type the message you want to send in the *Write a message...* text field.
4. Click the **Send** button.

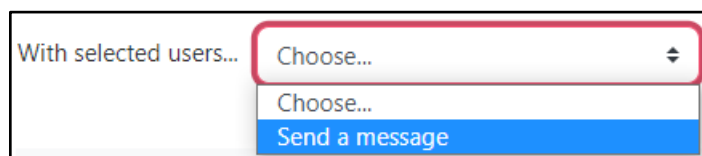
A new message notification will be displayed top-right corner of the VLE, adjacent to the *User* menu. The participant will also receive your message in their UM email.



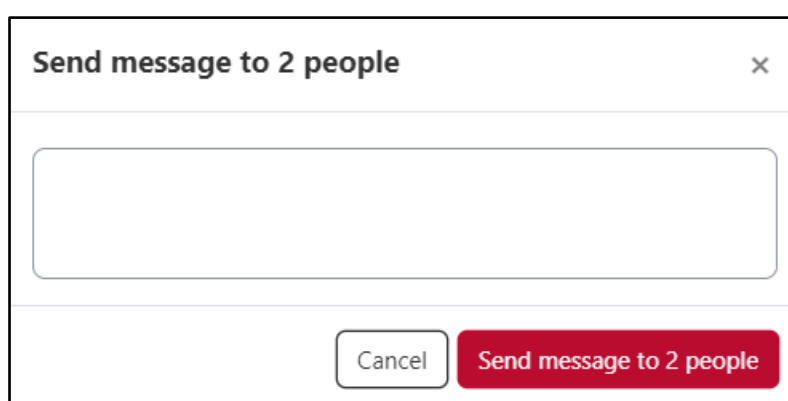
Sending messages to multiple participants

Tutors can send messages to multiple people at the same time. To send a message to multiple participants in your VLE area:

1. Access the *Participants* page from the tabular menu (refer to [Section D](#)).
2. Tick the checkbox adjacent to each participant you want to contact.
3. After selecting the required participants, click the **With selected users...** drop-down menu and select **Send a message**.

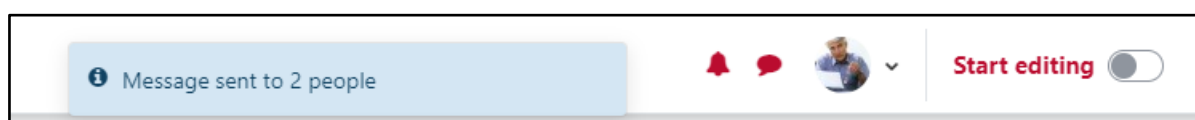


The **Send message to xx people** dialog box is displayed.



4. Type the message you want to send to the participants in the text box.
5. Click the **Send message to xx people** button to send the message.

A notification to show that your message was sent will be displayed.



Note:

- If you need to send a message to all students enrolled on a VLE area, use the **Announcements** forum ([Section L](#)).

L. Using Forums

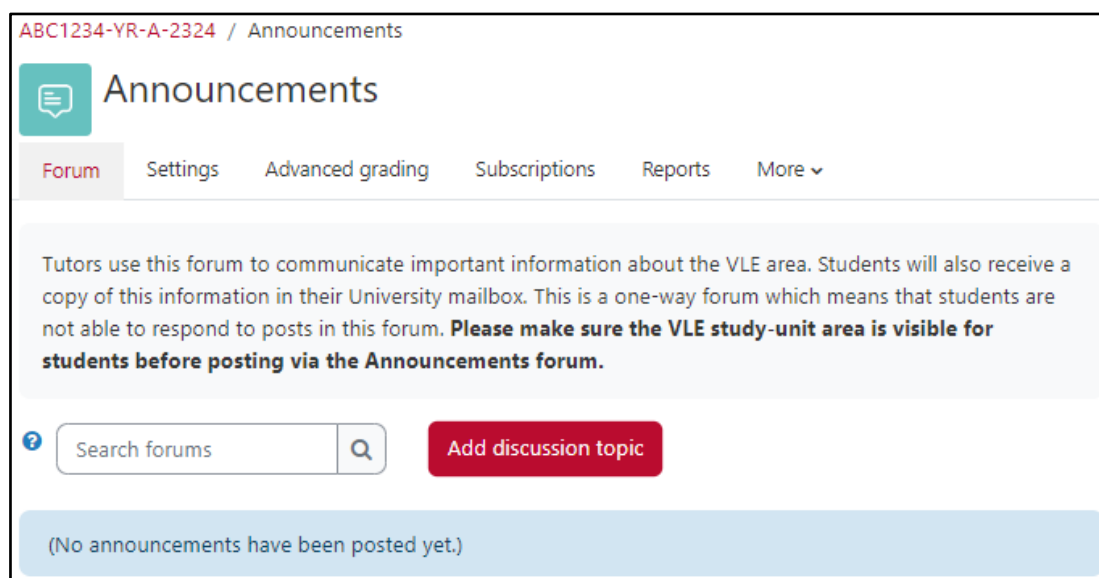
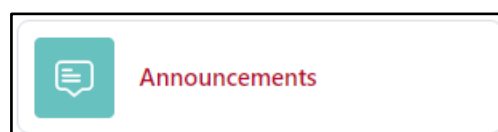
The Forum activity is a powerful communication and discussion tool. Tutors and students are provided with an area where they can post messages and reply to each other at any time. Since this process does not require tutors and students to be signed in at the same time (synchronously), this method of communication is referred to as asynchronous communication.

Adding a post in the Announcements forum

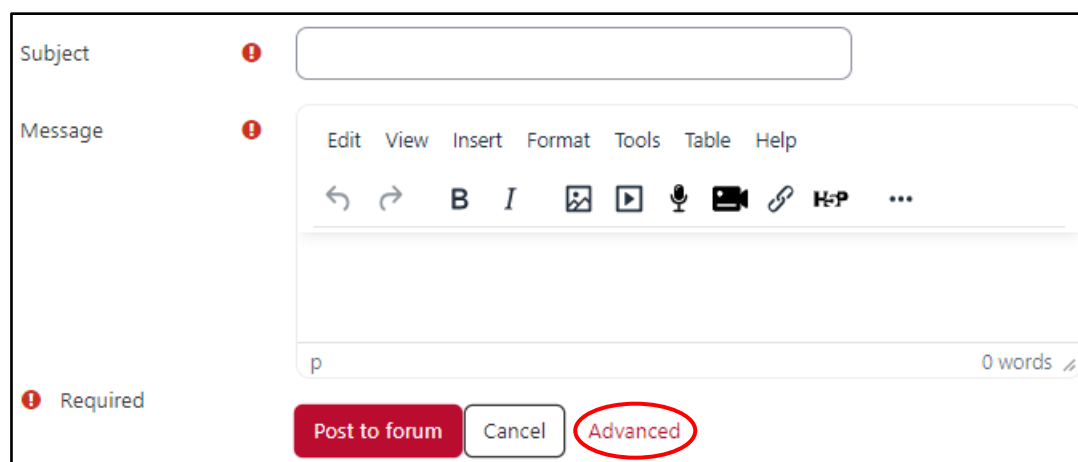
The **Announcements** forum is automatically created in every VLE area, to which all participants (students and tutors) are automatically subscribed (refer to [Section M](#) for information about subscriptions). The *Announcements* forum is a simple one-way communication tool used by tutors to make any type of announcement relevant to the VLE area. The *Announcements* forum **does not allow students to post messages or reply to announcements** made by their tutors.

To make a new post in the Announcements forum:

1. In the VLE area homepage, click the **Announcements** forum.



2. Click the **Add discussion topic** button. The screen below will be displayed.



3. Type a short descriptive title for your topic in the **Subject** field.
4. Type in the content of your post in the **Message** editor.

5. If you would like to add files as attachments, follow steps a - b below, otherwise proceed to the next step (6).
 - a. Click the **Advanced** link.
 - b. In the **Attachment** section you can upload files through one of two options ([Method i – Traditional upload](#) or [Method ii – Drag-and-drop](#)) explained in [Section I-a](#).

Note:

- Files will be added as attachments and can also be accessed within the email notification sent to students.

6. By default, every post within the *Announcements* forum will generate an email notification that is sent to all VLE area participants, typically some 30 - 45 minutes after it is made. Tick the **Send forum post notifications with no editing-time delay** check box (available within the **Advanced** link), if you want users to receive the email notification immediately.

Attachment Maximum file size: 100 MB, maximum number of files: 1

Files

You can drag and drop files here to add them.

Pinned

Send forum post notifications with no editing-time delay

Alternatively, you may schedule a forum post to be made visible and/or sent to students at a later time.

- a. Click the **Advanced** link.
- b. 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 November 2023 09 00 Enable

Display end 28 June 2023 08 39 Enable

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

7. Click the **Post to forum** button.

Note:

- If you want to amend or delete your post, click the discussion title (under **Discussion**), and use the **Edit** and **Delete** links adjacent to the post which requires amending.
- If the email notification has already been sent to students, it is strongly recommended that you do *not* amend the initial post but use the **Reply** link to make additional remarks to your earlier post. This will generate a new notification to ensure that students do not miss important messages.

The screenshot shows a forum interface with a header 'Announcements' and a sub-header 'Forum'. Below the header are navigation tabs: 'Settings', 'Advanced grading', 'Subscriptions', 'Reports', and 'More'. The main content area displays a post titled 'Lecture cancelled' by 'Dummy Tutor' on Monday, 23 October 2023, at 8:43 AM. The post text reads: 'Dear Students, Kindly note that today's lecture has been cancelled. Regards, Dummy Tutor'. At the bottom right of the post, there are three links: 'Permalink', 'Edit', and 'Reply'. The 'Edit', 'Delete', and 'Reply' links are circled in red.

M. Creating a Forum

Tutors may opt to create various forums within a VLE area, each of which is used for different purposes. Apart from the *Announcements* forum (refer to the previous section), a tutor might consider providing students with a forum to be specifically used to discuss VLE area related matter.

To create a forum:

1. Click the **Start editing** button (top-right corner).
Each section in the content area displays the **Add an activity or resource** link.
2. Scroll down to the section where you want to add the forum.
3. Click the **Add an activity or resource** link.
4. Click the **Activities** tab.
5. Click **Forum**. The *Adding a new Forum* page shown below is displayed.

Adding a new Forum
Expand all

General

Forum name !

Description

Edit View Insert Format Tools Table Help

↶ ↷ **B** *I* ...

p 0 words

Display description on course page ?

Forum type ? Standard forum for general use

> **Availability**

> **Attachments and word count**

> **Subscription and tracking**

> **Discussion locking**

> **Post threshold for blocking**

> **Whole forum grading**

> **Ratings**

> **Common module settings**

> **Restrict access**

> **Activity completion**

! Required
 Send content change notification ?

Save and return to course
Save and display
Cancel

6. In the **Forum name** field, type a short name for the forum e.g. *FAQ Forum*. This will be displayed in the VLE area homepage.
7. In the **Description** editor, type in a description or introductory text for the discussion. It is good practice to include precise instructions for students regarding the subject of the forum and any possible assessment criteria that might be used in this forum.
8. From the **Forum type** drop-down menu, choose the preferred forum type. Typically, select **Standard forum for general use**.
9. In the *Availability* section, you may set a **Due date** as well as a **Cut-off date** for discussion-based forums. A forum activity with a set due date is added to the VLE area's *Calendar* and *Scheduled activities* block (available on the user's VLE Dashboard). This allows students to manage their work effectively.

10. Set the **Subscription mode** as desired, by clicking on the *Subscription and tracking* section. When a participant is subscribed to a forum it means they will receive email copies of forum posts.

There are 4 subscription mode options:

- **Optional subscription** - Participants can choose whether to be subscribed
- **Forced subscription** - Everyone is subscribed and cannot unsubscribe
- **Auto subscription** - Everyone is initially subscribed but can choose to unsubscribe at any time
- **Subscription disabled** - Subscriptions are not allowed.

11. Set **Read tracking for this forum** if you want students to easily identify read and unread messages in the forum and in discussions. This is also enabled from the *Subscription and tracking* section.

12. Click the **Save and return to course** button.

Note:

- If a forum, including the **Announcements** forum, is set as hidden (i.e. not visible to students), the email containing the post is only sent to participants who can access the hidden forum, namely Tutors and Guest Tutors.
- Similarly, the above-mentioned behaviour applies if a forum is visible but within a hidden VLE area. Again, in this case, the email notification is only sent to participants who can access the hidden VLE area, namely Tutors and Guest Tutors.
- Thus, a forum post is sent via email to those participants who are subscribed to the forum, **and** have access to the particular forum activity.
- Further information about forums is available in a separate guide, [Using Forums in the VLE](#).

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