
Getting started with the VLE

STUDENT GUIDE

v5.0

User Services
IT Services



L-Università
ta' Malta

**User Services
IT Services
University of Malta
Msida MSD 2080
Malta**

Web: www.um.edu.mt/itservices/vle
Help: www.um.edu.mt/itservices/help
Tel: +356 2340 4113

Last updated: 09 October 2023



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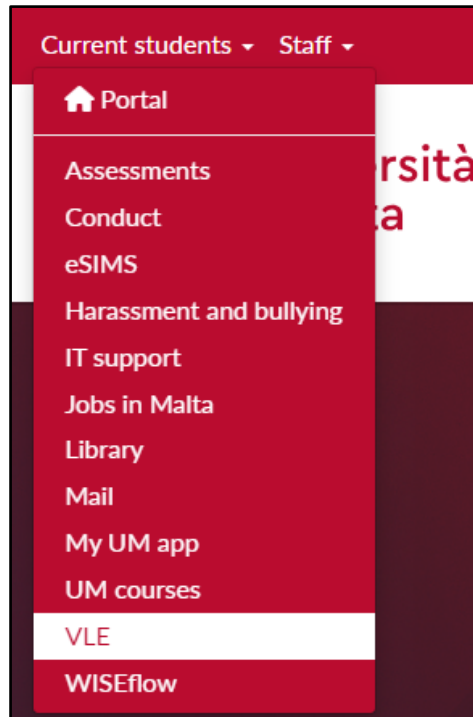
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A. Accessing the VLE

The VLE is available at,

- UM VLE: <https://www.um.edu.mt/vle/my>
- JC VLE: <https://www.um.edu.mt/jc/vle/my>

or by selecting **VLE** from the *Current students* drop-down menu at the upper left-hand corner of the University of Malta homepage.



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.

If you are not signed in, the UM IT Account authentication screen is 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.

Note that:

- 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/>

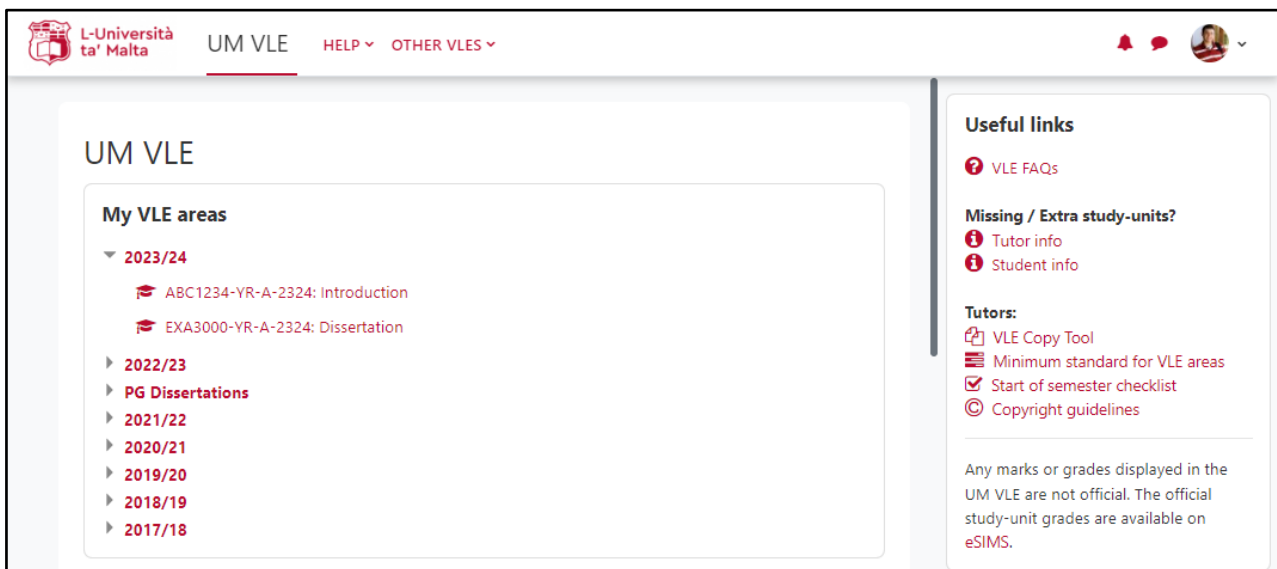
- When you sign in, your name and surname will be displayed at the top-right of the screen.



- 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 will be displayed in the **My VLE areas** block. By default, **My VLE areas** 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 a UM postgraduate student), and finally the archived academic years.



If you cannot find a particular VLE area in the list, make sure that your tutor is using the VLE. Not all tutors will make use of the VLE. Your tutors should inform you if they are expecting you to use the VLE for their study-unit / class areas.

If your tutor is using the VLE but you cannot find the study-unit / class area, there could be two possible reasons:

- You are not registered to your study-unit / class on eSIMS / eSIMS JC. Refer to [VLE FAQ 4](#) for more information.
- Your tutor/s have not made the VLE area available to students. It is best to inform your tutor/s that you cannot access the VLE area so that they make it available to students. Your tutors can contact us if they require assistance.

C. Overview of the VLE area

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

The screenshot shows a VLE interface for 'VLE0001-YR-A-2324: VLE Minimum Standards'. It features a top navigation bar with 'L-University of Malta' and 'UM VLE' logos, and a 'HELP' dropdown. A left-hand 'Course information & co...' drawer (1) lists various resources. A top navigation menu (2) includes 'Study-unit' and 'Participants'. The main content area (3) is divided into sections: 'Announcements' (with a message from tutors), 'Q&A forum' (for asking questions), 'Study-unit description', and 'Reading list'. A right-hand sidebar (4) contains 'Latest announcements', 'Recent activity', 'My VLE areas' (with filters for 2023/24 and 2022/23), 'Activities' (listing external tools, forums, resources, and Turnitin assignments), and a 'Calendar'.

1

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.

2

A **tabular navigation menu** at the top of each VLE area.

3

This is the **main content area** where tutors upload study material and set up 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 often referred to as the *General* section. This contains the *Announcements* forum (used for class announcements) and may also contain other introductory study-unit / subject level information such as a link to the study-unit / syllabus description.

4

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

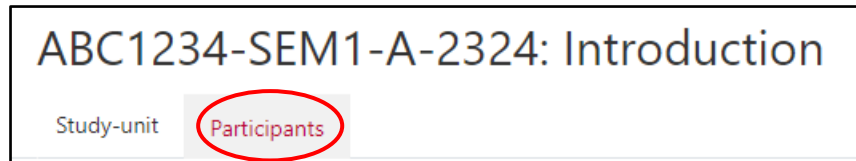
- **Latest announcements** – lists the latest items added to the *Announcements* forum.
- **Recent activity** – shows recent changes to the VLE area since the user's last login, such as, creation of new resources and activities, forum postings and your assignment submissions.
- **My VLE areas** – enables easier access between VLE areas.

- **Activities** – lists the variety of activities created in the 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 VLE area 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 tutor/s and any other students 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.

ABC1234-SEM1-A-2324: Introduction

Study-unit Participants

Enrolled users

Match Any Select

+ Add condition Clear filters Apply filters

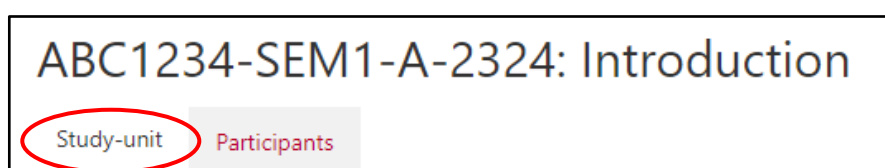
11 participants found

First name All A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Last name All A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

<input type="checkbox"/>	First name / First name - phonetic / Last name ^	Roles	Groups
<input type="checkbox"/>	-	-	-
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dummy Student	Student	No groups
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dummy Student 10	Student	No groups
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dummy Student 2	Student	No groups
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dummy Student 3	Student	No groups

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.
6. Return to the VLE area homepage by clicking the *Study-unit / Class* tab in the navigation menu.

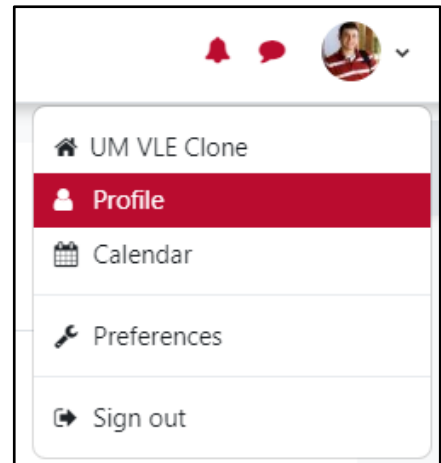


E. Editing your Profile

You are encouraged to set your profile as soon as you start using the VLE. You may upload a picture of yourself and type some information such as a short description of yourself, course interests, etc.

To edit your profile:

1. Click on your **User** menu (upper right corner).
2. Click **Profile**.
3. Consider 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 descriptive information.



Dummy Student Expand all

General

First name:

Last name:

First name - phonetic:

Email address:

Email visibility:

City/town:

Select a country:

Timezone:

Description:

55 words

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

Note:

- If there are typo errors in your name and surname, please contact your Faculty or Departmental Office to have these corrected.
- Some fields have a *Help* button . Click this button to view context sensitive help.

By default, a profile's display picture is a white silhouette on a grey background. 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. Drag a picture of yourself from your computer to the designated 'drag-and-drop' upload area.

▼ User picture

Current picture: None


New picture ? Maximum file size: 50 MB, maximum number of files: 1

📄 Files

You can drag and drop files here to add them.

Accepted file types:
Image files to be optimised, such as badges .gif .jpe .jpeg .jpg .png

Picture description

Alternatively, click the **Add...**  button. This will display the *File picker* dialog box.

File picker ×

Recent files

📄 Upload a file

📁 Google Drive

Attachment

📄 Choose file No file chosen

Save as

Author

Dummy Tutor

Choose licence ?

All rights reserved ▼

Upload this file

- a. Select **Upload a file** from the menu on the left-hand side.
- b. Click the **Choose file** button.

- c. Browse to the location where your picture file is stored.
 - d. Double-click the picture file to upload.
 - e. Click the **Upload this file** button.
 - f. 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.
6. Click the **Update profile** button.

Note:








- 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. VLE area resources and activities

As outlined in [Section C](#), the middle section of the VLE area homepage is where your tutor will put the main study material and activities. Different resources and activities may be identified by their unique icon:

Icon	Resource
	Book
	File
	Folder
	Page
	Reading list
	Web link / URL
	Other resource

Icon	Activity
	Assignment
	Assignment (Turnitin)
	Assignment (with Panopto)
	Choice
	Feedback
	Forum
	Glossary
	Lecture Capture (Panopto)
	Lesson
	Quiz
	Wiki
	Workshop
	Zoom meetings manager

Submitting assignments

Your tutor may require you to submit your assignments (such as essays, spreadsheets, presentations, web pages, photographs, video / audio-clips) for grading through the VLE.

There are three types of assignment activities which your tutor might make available in a VLE area:



Assignment – used to collect students work. Refer to the [guidelines](#) below if you need to submit via an *Assignment* activity.



Assignment (Turnitin) – used to detect and prevent possible plagiarism in students' uploaded assignments (*available in UM VLE only*). Guidelines are available in the [Submitting through Turnitin](#) user guide.



Assignment (with Panopto) – used to upload media files such as videos or audio podcasts. Guidelines are available in the [Submitting via an Assignment \(with Panopto\)](#) activity guide.

Information about [plagiarism detection and the use of Turnitin](#) is available.

To submit to an **Assignment** activity:

1. Click the assignment title in the home page of the VLE area. You will be directed to the submission area.

The screenshot shows the 'Assignment description and sample assignments' section. It includes 'Assignment instructions' and 'Sample assignments' (Sample Assignment 1.pdf and Sample Assignment 2.pdf). Below this is the 'Submission activities' section, where the 'Assignment A' button is circled in red, and a 'Make a submission' button is visible to the right.

Information such as the assignment question and due date will be displayed.


The screenshot shows the 'Assignment A' submission page. It features a 'To do: Make a submission' button, the assignment title 'Assignment A', and the following details:

- Opened:** Friday, 1 September 2023, 12:00 AM
- Due:** Friday, 16 February 2024, 11:59 PM

 A note below states: 'Please refer to the PDF file - Assignment instructions for full detailed instructions re: Assignment A'. At the bottom, there is a red 'Add submission' button.

- Click the **Add submission** button. The *File submissions* tool will be displayed.

- Drag your assignment file from your computer to the designated 'drag-and-drop' upload area, and proceed to step 9.

Alternatively, click **Add...**  button. This will display the *File picker* dialog box.

- Click the **Choose file** button.
- Browse to the location where your assignment file is stored.
- Double-click the file to upload.
- Click the **Upload this file** button.
- Click the **Save changes** button.

G. Participating in forum discussions

You can access a forum from the link within the contents section of the VLE area. Forums are denoted by the icon displayed on the right.



A list of all the forums in the VLE area (underlying image) can also be accessed by clicking the **Forums** link in the *Activities* block (typically located on right side of the VLE area homepage).

General forums						
Forum	Description	Discussions	Unread posts	Track	Subscribed	Email digest type ?
Announcements	Tutors use this forum to communicate important information about the VLE area. Students will also receive a copy of this information in their University mailbox. This is a one-way forum which means that students are not able to respond to posts in this forum. Please make sure the VLE study-unit ...	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	Yes	Default (No digest) ▼
Study-unit Q&A	This is the place where we can post questions about the course. If you see a question that you can answer, please go ahead and reply. We need to ensure that no question or request for help goes unanswered.	2	0	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	Yes	Default (No digest) ▼

Learning forums							
Topic	Forum	Description	Discussions	Unread posts	Track	Subscribed	Email digest type ?
Participating in forum discussions	Discussion: What do you understand by 'evidence'?	Before proceeding to the readings, please explain, in not more than two short paragraphs, what you understand by the term 'evidence'. Please click on the question below and then click 'Reply' to give your answer.	1	0	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	Yes	Default (No digest) ▼

The *Forums* page displays information about each forum, including title, description and number of discussions.

Reading forum discussions

To read a forum discussion:

1. Access the forum, as indicated above.

A listing of the forum's discussion topics (also known as threads) is displayed, with the most recent updated topic at the top. For each topic, information is displayed, such as the participant who started the topic, the amount of messages (replies) within that topic, along with the information on the most recent message (the participant's name and post date).

2. To view a topic, click its title under **Discussion**. You will now see all the postings made in that discussion topic.

Study-unit Q&A

Forum
Don't track unread posts

This is the place where we can post questions about the course. If you see a question that you can answer, please go ahead and reply. We need to ensure that no question or request for help goes unanswered.

Q
Add discussion topic

Discussion	Started by	Last post ↓	Replies ✓
Unable to view Panopto recording	Dummy Stud... 5 Oct 2023	Dummy Stud... 5 Oct 2023	2
Timetable query	Dummy Stud... 11 Oct 2022	Dummy Stud... 11 Oct 2022	1

3. A discussion topic may be displayed in four different ways. Click the drop-down menu at the top of the discussion thread to select a display type. By default, a thread displays replies in nested form.

- **Display replies flat, with oldest first** - The discussion will be displayed in one line and in chronological order from the oldest to the newest
- **Display replies flat, with newest first** - The discussion is displayed in one line and in chronological order from the newest to the oldest
- **Display replies in threaded form** - Only one post is displayed (normally being the one starting the discussion). Replies are reduced to the headlines (including author and date of submission) and indented to the right. Any replies to the same post are indented in-line with each other.
- **Display replies in nested form** - All posts are displayed in full format. Replies are shifted towards the right so that only replies to the same post are in-line with each other.

Display replies in nested form
▾

Display replies flat, with oldest first

Display replies flat, with newest first

Display replies in threaded form

Display replies in nested form

Note:

- With replies displayed flat, the thread's starting post is always displayed at the top. Oldest / newest sorting is only relevant for the replies.

Posting & replying

Posting or replying to a message is similar to composing an email. You can start a new topic by clicking the **Add discussion topic** button (if available) on the forum's main page.

Add discussion topic


In most cases you will be replying to an existing post.

1. Click the **Reply** link (allocated at the bottom right of each post) to reply to a message.
2. Edit the **Subject** field if required.
3. Type in the content of your reply in the **Message** text box.
4. Optionally, you may attach a file (e.g. MS Word document, PDF, etc.) to your reply by dragging it from your computer to the designated 'drag-and-drop' upload area. Note that to attach a file you must first click the **Advanced** link.

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

After posting your message, you are given a 30-minute time window to edit or delete your post. This is very helpful if you hit the **Post to forum** button too soon or spot a mistake after posting. Links to **Edit** or **Delete** your post are available at the bottom of your submitted post for the 30-minute period.

Note:

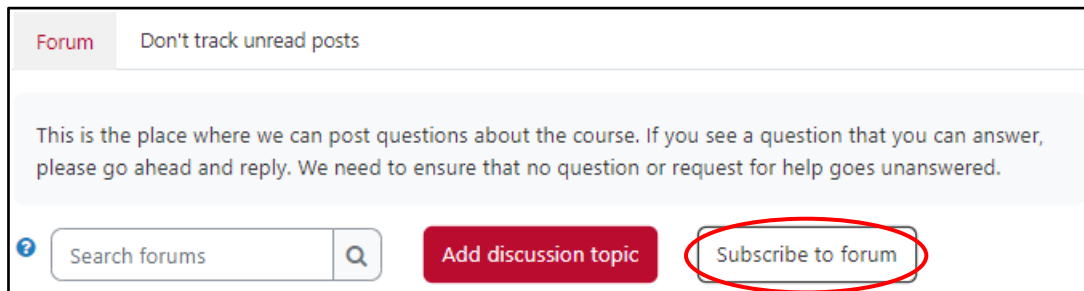
- When you copy text from MS Word and paste this to the editor, it is suggested that you then press the **Clear formatting**  button (available within the *Format* menu) to remove unnecessary HTML tags.

Forum subscriptions

You are also given the option to manage forum subscriptions.

When subscribed to a forum, you will receive an email message in your University / JC mailbox each time somebody posts a message or a reply. This makes it easy to keep track of what's happening in the forums without constantly logging in. By default, such email messages are sent 30-45 minutes after the post is made in a forum.

To subscribe to a forum you are currently viewing, click the **Subscribe to forum** button.



Subscribe to individual discussions

In a forum which is set with *Optional* or *Auto subscription*, you can also choose which discussions to subscribe to. It is not necessary to receive emails for all distinct threads within a particular forum. To subscribe to a particular discussion, click the toggle icon available under the **Subscribe** heading. When the toggle icon is red , it indicates that you are subscribed. To unsubscribe from a particular discussion, click the toggle button.

Discussion	Started by	Last post ↓	Replies ✓	Subscribe
Unable to view Panopto recording	Dummy Stud... 5 Oct 2023	Dummy Stud... 5 Oct 2023	2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Timetable query	Dummy Stud... 11 Oct 2022	Dummy Stud... 11 Oct 2022	1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Enabling email digests

By default, the VLE will send an email message for every forum post. Although preferred by some users, others might get overwhelmed by all the messages cluttering their mailbox, especially if subscribed to multiple forums.

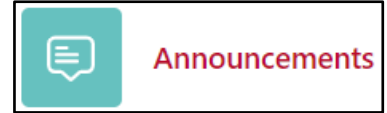
For this reason, you may enable email digests for your profile, so that the VLE only sends one email a day. This email, which is typically received after 1700hrs (Central European Time), will include all the new posts made throughout the past 24hrs in forums you are subscribed to in all your VLE areas.

To enable/change the email digests:

1. Click your **User** menu (top-right corner).
2. Select **Preferences**. The *Preferences* page will be displayed.
3. Click the **Forum preferences** link.
4. From the **Email digest type**, select your preferred option.
5. Click the **Save changes** button.

Announcements forum

The *Announcements* forum is a special forum for general announcements. This forum is automatically created for each VLE area and, by default, it is placed in the top of the contents section.



Only your tutors may add posts or reply to posts in the *Announcements* forum. By default, all participants in a VLE area are subscribed to the *Announcements* forum, thus all will receive an email message in their University / JC mailbox.

**User Services
IT Services
University of Malta
Msida MSD 2080
MALTA**

Web: www.um.edu.mt/itservices/vle
Help: www.um.edu.mt/itservices/help
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