# ual: london college of communication

# Staff Guide to: Moodle Unit Sites 20/21

## Introduction

Moodle is UAL's virtual learning environment. It helps students manage their learning by providing structured information about their course and their assessments. Moodle is where students go to participate in online discussions, join synchronous online sessions, and find materials that support their learning and independent study time.

The **Staff Guide to: Moodle Unit Sites** covers Unit sites. Students have access to four types of Moodle sites:

1. A School site for school information and announcements, the online learning induction and links to other LCC and UAL resources and services.

2. A Course site for general information for all students on the course. It is used for communicating with all students and with year groups.

3. **Unit sites are the primary teaching spaces on Moodle.** They are used for learning material, discussions, online learning activities and assignment submissions.

4. Community sites are used for various services and activities including UAL Careers and LCC Technical Resources and for support for specific groups of students.

Moodle allows staff to customise the layout and style of Moodle sites. There is potential for tremendous variation across the platform. This can confuse students when they access different Unit sites and need to relearn the layout and placement of resources.

This guide is to help you make informed decisions about the design and layout of your Unit sites to ensure a basic level of consistency across Moodle and a better student experience.

We hope you find this guide useful and we encourage you to contact us for any support or if you have any follow-up questions you would like to ask.

**LCC Digital Learning**
**Matt Lingard, Lee Leewis & Puiyin Wong**

## Content

## Moodle Guide

This guide provides the 'building blocks' for creating functional, accessible, and mobile-friendly Moodle sites.

There are four sections:

1. Unit Site Example uses a model unit site to outline the main requirements for all 20/21 Moodle sites

2. Moodle 'Resources' explains how you can conserve space and organise information on your Moodle sites using tools like pages, books, and tab displays.

3. Moodle 'Activities' provides an overview of the active learning tools available within Moodle.

4. Moodle and Digital Accessibility offers some essential formatting tips to ensure your sites are accessible

## Why use this guide

A well-designed Moodle site can have a significant impact on student learning, engagement, and perceptions of their course. This is particularly true now as UAL prepares for blended teaching in the Autumn term.

By using this guide, you are helping transform Moodle into a space for participation, dialogue, and active learning. The information it contains will help you plan your units, develop activities, and create a smooth and engaging experience for your students.

## How to use this guide

This guide provides a basis for individuals and course teams to start preparing their 20/21 Moodle sites. It does not prescribe a specific approach, but instead offers an overview of the tools that are available and examples of how and when to use them.

The examples in this guide are simply that – examples; however, they are based on four principles, which should inform any decisions you make about structure, content, or style on your Moodle sites.

The four principles are that Moodle should be:

1. **Logically structured**: Topic areas should be organized weekly or thematically.
2. **Predictable:** Content should be easy to find and familiar to use
3. **Accessible:** Pages should adhere to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines
4. **Mobile friendly:** Activities and resources must adapt and display on a variety of devices

# Section 1:
# Unit Site Example

# Unit Discussions and Information

# Description

Media, Information, and Technoculture is a fictional unit designed as a model for other unit sites. It illustrates the four requirements for all 20/21 Moodle unit sites:

1. That they use a 'One section per page' layout, which displays a description for each topic area but shifts the content onto a separate page.
2. All unit sites should have a unique banner image
3. That Topic 0 and Topic 1 (Announcements and Assessments) are the same format on every unit site.
4. That learning materials are divided multiple topics arranged by week or theme (Topic 2 and onwards).

## Unit Discussions and Information (Topic 0)

The first Topic on any Unit site contains the announcements tool, an open forum for students to ask questions to their tutor, and the Unit Guide (PDF).

## Assessment (Topic 1)

**Assessment contains assignment briefs and submission tools. It is the exclusive responsibility of the Programme Administrators and should not be edited by other staff.**

## Learning Materials (Topic 2 onwards)

Learning materials should be divided into multiple topics arranged by week or theme. Each topic should have a short description with instructions or information about the week. This enables students to quickly assess that week's expectations and click the title view its contents.

When a student clicks Week 1 – Semiotics, for example, it opens up the topic on a new page, displaying the learning materials and activities within it.

# Preparing your 20/21 Unit Site

Before editing a site, first activate 'edit mode' by selecting 'edit content' in the action menu.

## Change your Course Layout

1. Open the action menu and select 'edit settings.'
2. Open course format options and change course layout to 'show one section' per page.

## Site Banner

1. Open the action menu and select 'edit settings.'
2. Scroll to 'course image' where you can drag-and-drop or click to upload your banner.

Banner images should have a 4:1 aspect ratio. Minimum resolution is 1200 x 300px (W x H) and the maximum resolution is 2560 x 640px (W x H).

## Topic 0

Topic 0 is the Unit Discussions and Information area. It should contain an announcements forum, an open discussion forum, and your unit guide.

## Rename Topic 0

1. Ensure edit mode is active.
2. Select 'edit' then 'edit topic.'
3. Tick the box next to 'custom,' write unit Discussions and Information, then select save and return to course.

## Add the Open Discussion Forum

1. Select 'add an activity or resource' then forum.
2. Name the Forum 'Open forum' and give it the description 'use this space to ask any questions about your unit.'
3. Select 'save and return to course.'

## Upload the Unit Guide

1. Drag-and-drop the unit guide under the Open forum.

## Topic 1 – Assessment

Skip this topic. The Programme Administrators will set up the Assessments area.

## Topic 2 onwards

Topics 2 and onwards are for learning materials. We recommend organising these topics by week or theme. The following is a guide to formatting your weeks.
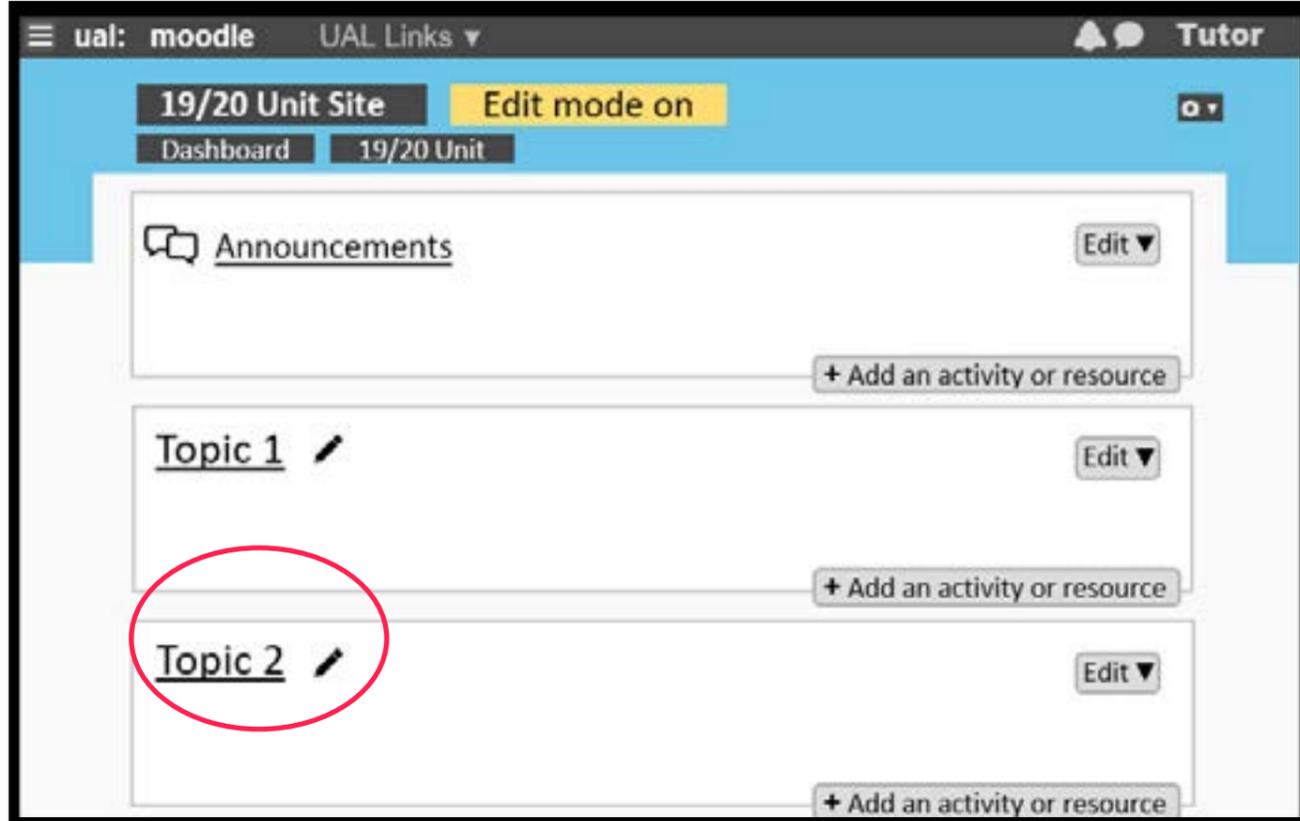


## Example of a Topic
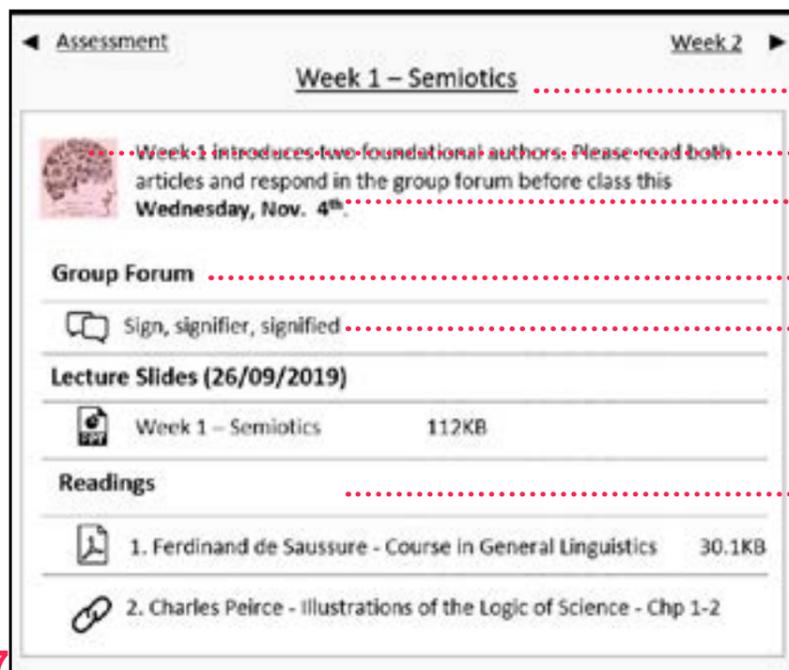


Title

Topic thumbnail

Topic description

Label

Forum activity

Learning resources

## Organising Topics

First, ensure 'edit mode' has been activated from the action menu.

### Adding a Title

1. Click the pencil icon next to Topic 2 to add a title.
2. Press enter key on your keyboard to save.

### Adding a Thumbnail

1. Select 'edit' and then edit topic.
2. Select the image icon in the text editor then 'find or upload image.'
3. Choose your thumbnail file then press 'upload this file.'
4. Click the appearance tab and change the alignment to 'left', width and height to 100 pixels or less, and add a horizontal space of 10 pixels.
5. Press insert.

### Adding a Description

1. Type your description next to the image. A strong description will set expectations for the week and reference any important dates or upcoming assignments.
2. Select 'save and return to course' when finished.

### Add Content

1. Drag-and-drop files into the topic area or select 'add an activity or resource' to add a folder.
2. Reorganise files using clicking on the compass icon next to their name and dragging them up or down the page.

### Adding labels

Separate learning materials and activities by adding labels.
1. Select 'add an activity or resource' and scroll to label.
2. Select bold and Heading 4 in the text editor options then write the title of the label.
3. Press save and return to course.

## Importing your Unit Sites

You can save time uploading content to new Moodle sites by transferring it from previous units. Contact the LCC Digital Learning team for support if you have already started design work in your site or would like assistance.
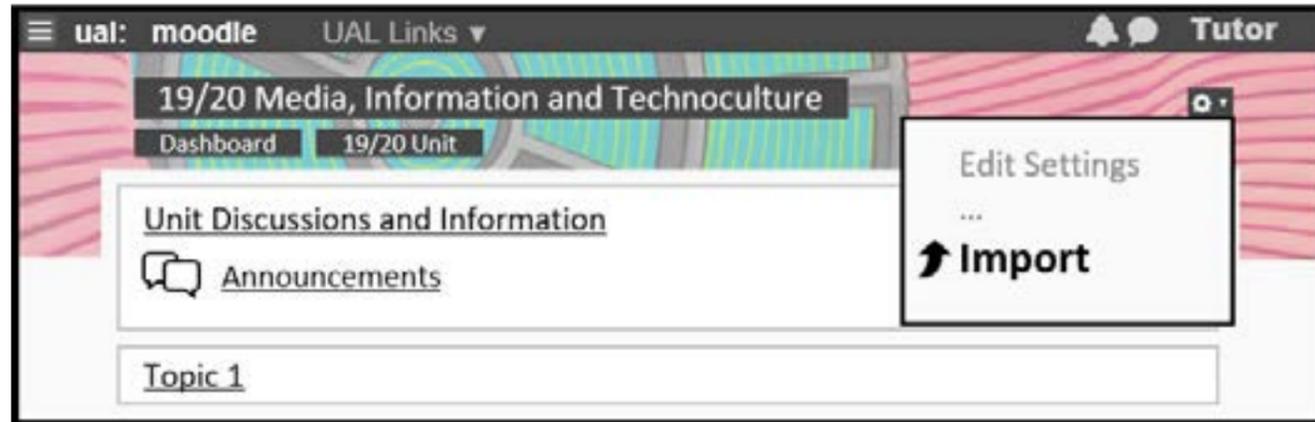


**Step1**  First, find and open the unit you will be importing content into, for example, 20/21 Global Media Cultures.

**Step 2**  Next, Open the action menu from within this site and select import. The action menu is the little gear icon in the site banner.

**Step 3**  Once you are on the import page use the search bar at the bottom to find the previous unit containing the content you wish to import. Search for the unit using its full and term, for example, 19/20 Global Media Cultures.

**Step 4**  On the Import Settings page, **untick** all boxes other than activities and resources and blocks and press next.

**Step 5**  On the next page, **untick** Announcements and any of the following: Turnitin Assignments, Moodle Assignments, Bb Collaborate, Database activities, Glossary activities. **This content must not be imported**. Press next.

**Step 6**  On the last page, carefully double-check that the items with green check marks are the same items you wish to import. Once you are confident, select Perform Import.

# Section 2 :
# Moodle Resources

# Moodle Resources

A Moodle site is a collection of Resources and Activities.

A resource is a tool for organizing and displaying information on Moodle. Unlike an activity, resources are typically 'static,' meaning that a student can view, read, or watch them, but not participate.
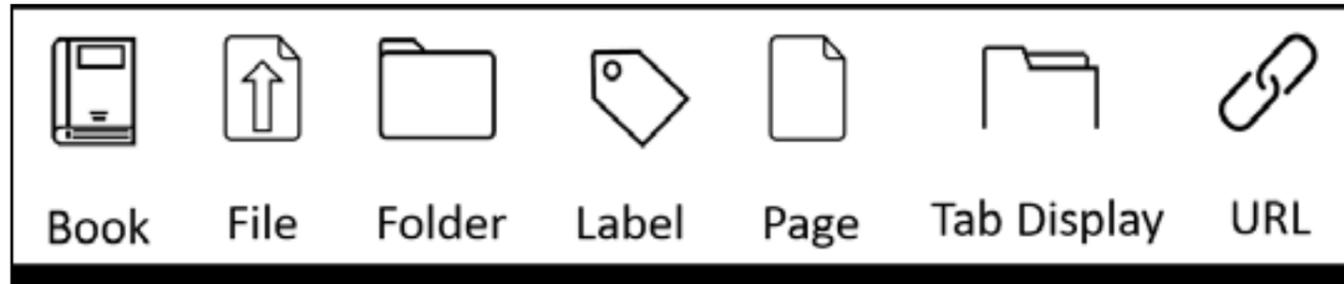


**Book:** a multi-page resource with chapters, sub-chapters, and a table of contents.

**File:** upload a picture, PDF, Word document, audio clip, or video file.

**Folder:** upload a collection of files in a single folder or in several nested folders.

**Label:** can be used as a subheading to partition content, to add an image or video, or to write brief description or set of instructions.

**Page:** a single, scrollable webpage with simple formatting options.

**Tab Display:** like a book, but instead of chapters pages are displayed in a series tabs.

**URL:** creates a link to any page on the web like a journal article, website, or video.

## Using Resources

For students, finding materials on Moodle should be quick and intuitive with minimal scrolling and guesswork. How you deploy these resources then should reduce any friction that may prevent a student from accomplishing their goals and getting things done.

# Page



Pages are like a blank document with very simple formatting. They can display text, images, audio, video, and embeddable links like Google maps, H5P, Padlet, or Youtube. They are also mobile-friendly and adapt well to smaller screens.
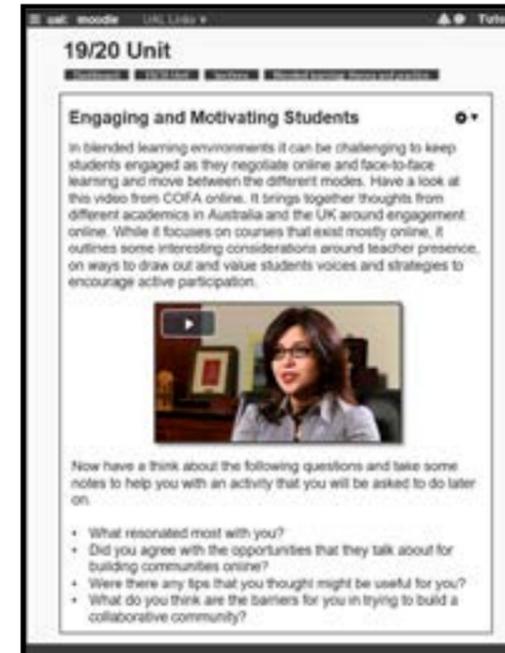


## How to use it

To create a page, first activate 'edit mode' from the action menu in the site banner. Next, navigate to your chosen topic area and select 'add an activity or resource' then scroll to resources and select page.

If you have simple text to add to your course, it is much quicker to use a page than write and upload a new document.

Take advantage of the multimedia options in the text editor to make your page dynamic.

## When to use it

**Pages are useful for**

- Placing text alongside videos or images.
- Adding external resources to your site, like a Padlet board.
- Sharing a group of URLs if your readings are web-links instead of PDFs.
- Writing an introduction or overview to a course, topic, or week.
- Explaining an upcoming assignment or activity.
- Sharing information about events including links and videos.

# Book

A book is a collection of pages with chapters, sub-chapters, and a table of contents. Students can use the table of contents to jump to a page or click through it sequentially using the arrow buttons. Everything you can do with a page resource you can also do with a book.

# Tab Display

Tab displays arrange multiple pages in a series of tabs. Unlike numbered chapters in a book, tabs are not ordered meaning they can be read in any sequence. This makes them ideal for nonlinear information or any information that shares a common theme.

## How to use it

To create a book, first activate 'edit mode' from the action menu in the site banner. Next, navigate to your chosen topic area and select 'add an activity or resource' then scroll to resources and select book.

A book can be more effective than a PDF or document especially when introducing a learning activity with multiple stages or organizing other linear information.

## When to use it

**Books are useful for**

- Presenting information in sequential order.
- Producing a single resource with multiple pages.
- Describing an activity or process with multiple phases, steps, or components.
- Creating a learning resource that students can reuse, like a style guide.

## How to use it

To create a Tab Display, first activate 'edit mode' from the action menu in the site banner, then navigate to the topic area where you will add this resource, select 'add an activity or resource' and select Tab Display.

A tab display can be effective way to consolidate related learning materials, videos, or pages in a single resource.

## When to use it

Tab displays are useful for

- Grouping related learning materials like readings, videos, websites, and slides.
- Sharing a glossary of terms.
- Creating a bank of references or an encyclopaedia of information.
- Cleaning up your course page by combining several resources into tabs.

**File**
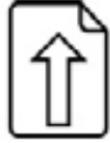
The simplest way to add a file to your Moodle site is by activating 'edit mode' and dragging-and-dropping it from your computer onto the page. Alternatively, if 'edit mode' is enabled you can select the file option in 'add an activity or resource.'

**Folder**

Folders combine multiple documents into a single file that students can download individually or all at once. This might include weekly readings or a collection of learning resources presented during a lecture.

**Label**

Labels are useful as subheadings. For example, you might create a label for readings, lecture slides, or activities in each weekly topic.

**URL**

A URL is a link to any website or online file. Activate edit mode then select 'add an activity or resource' and scroll to the very bottom to find URL.

# Section 3 : Moodle Activities

# Moodle Activities

A Moodle site is a collection of Resources and Activities.

The following learning activities available within Moodle are supported by the Digital Learning Team.

## Attendance

Attendance enables tutors to create multiple sign-up sheets where students mark themselves present at a specific time or date. Options like present, absent, late, or excused can be set to expire or happen automatically if a student does not mark their status by the required time.

## Chat

Chat is a tool for synchronous, text-based discussions. Discussions can be 1-2-1 or in large groups, and the text can be saved and made available to participants. Useful as a low-bandwidth substitute for Collaborate Ultra or for regular tutorial meetings.

## Choice

Choice enables a teacher to ask a single question and offer a selection of possible responses. Results can be published anonymously or with names attached. Useful for polling or allowing students to participate in the direction of the course, like selecting projects or future subjects.

## Collaborate Ultra

Collaborate Ultra is a synchronous, online webinar tool. It is useful as a classroom or for virtual office hours. Tutors can upload presentations or share their screen, specific software, or an editable whiteboard. Sessions can also be recorded and made available to participants.

## Forum

Forum tools allow students and tutors to exchange ideas by posting comments, files, videos, or images as part of a thread. It is a very simple and very effective tool for asynchronous, online discussions. Useful as a social space for dialogue and debate or for answering questions related to weekly readings.

## Glossary

Glossaries enable participants to create entries that can be browsed alphabetically or by category, date or author. It is useful as a collaborative bank of key terms, a reference resource, or a searchable space for commentary or ideas.

## Group Choice

The Group Choice module allows students to enrol themselves in a group within a course. The teacher can select which groups students can choose from and the maximum number of students allowed in each group. Once groups are finalized, they can be used to send private communications or restrict access to certain items on your Moodle site.

## H5P Interactive Content

H5P enables you to create interactive content such as presentations and videos with embedded questions, quizzes with multimedia, and other types of adaptive learning content. H5P activities are also easy to copy and reuse elsewhere on Moodle.

## Journal

Journals enable students to write multiple, private entries that only they and the tutor can view. Tutors can also provide feedback and grades. Journals are useful when formatively assessing multiple stages of a project or if students are doing a placement year.

## Questionnaire

Questionnaire allows you to construct surveys using a variety of question types.

## Quiz

Quiz allows you to create tests using multiple question types including multiple choice, matching, short-answer, and Likert.

## Scheduler

Scheduler allows to create a series of appointments that students can sign up to. Tutors can specify the time, date, and number of available slots. Group scheduling is also supported. Useful for scheduling tutorials.

## Wiki

Wiki enables participants to add and edit a collection of web pages. A wiki can be collaborative, with everyone able to edit it, or individual, where everyone has their own wiki that only they can edit. Useful for constructing study guides or writing collaborative or group based submissions.

## Workshop

Workshop activity allows students to submit work for peer evaluation and then receive several other student draft submissions for them to assess and provide feedback. The workshop tool enables continuous formative assessment up until students need to submit their work for a final evaluation from the tutor.

## Moodle and Digital Accessibility

UAL is committed to making all websites, digital platforms, videos and electronic documents accessible. Digital content is accessible if it can be accessed, navigated and understood by everyone.

Making Moodle and all learning materials fully accessible is challenging and a significant amount of work. You will need to make your digital learning materials more accessible over time. Prioritise new and heavily used learning material.

**Focus on:**

• Organising your learning material intuitively – follow the guidance in 'Unit Site Example'.
• Labelling sections, resources and activities concisely and clearly.
• Creating new material as Moodle Pages, Books & Tabbed displays where possible instead of uploading less accessible files.
• Formatting text in moderation – limit formatting to Bold, built-in Headings and one colour.
• Adding alternative descriptions to images.

## Additional Resources:
### UAL Teaching Online

UAL's main website for resources on digital learning, teaching and assessment including:

**Moodle for Teaching Guide** Companion to this guide, provides everything you need to know to provide an engaging and inclusive learning experience through Moodle.

**Moodle for Communication Guide** offers additional insight into using forums, Moodle announcements and Quickmail, and managing your email inbox.

**Moodle Simple Strategies Videos -** Bite-sized video tutorials that cover topics ranging from making your Moodle content more accessible and mobile-friendly to organising learning materials.

**Collaborate Ultra Guide** A very thorough guide to using Collaborate Ultra to teach and record sessions.

UAL Teaching Online

## Blend - it : Activating Blended Learning

A self-paced Moodle course covering the theory and practice of blended learning while tackling practical questions around inclusivity, accessibility, and community building online.

# Section 4 :
# Moodle and Digital Accessibility

## Contact Information

Please use LCCDigitalLearning@lcc.arts.ac.uk for general support, guidance and training requests relating to UAL's Digital Learning platforms.

**Matt Lingard**: Digital Learning Director

**Lee Leewis**: Technology Enhanced Learning Coordinator

**Puiyin Wong**: Technology Enhanced Learning Coordinator

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