



New College Durham

Policy on VLE Management

New College Durham is committed to safeguarding & promoting the welfare of children and young people, as well as vulnerable adults, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

New College Durham

VLE Management Policy

(Equality and Diversity Assessment)

We will consider any request for this procedure to be made available in an alternative format.

We review our policies and procedures regularly to update them and to ensure that they are accessible and fair to all. All policies and procedures are subject to equality impact assessments. Equality Impact Assessments are carried out to see whether the policy has, or is likely to have, a different impact on grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation or human rights.

We are always keen to hear from anyone who wants to contribute to these impact assessments and we welcome suggestions for improving the accessibility or fairness of the policy.

To make suggestions, seek further information or if any employee has difficulty understanding this policy please contact ictservices.helpdesk@newdur.ac.uk

Equality Impact Assessed: January 2018
Accessibility Checked June 2019

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| Procedure Title | VLE Management Policy |
| Document Owner | Head of ICT / VP Quality & Improving Learning |
| Owning Directorate | Corporate Services |
| Owning Department | ICT |

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| Directorates and Departments affected by this Procedure | All staff |
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New College Durham

VLE Management Policy

1. Scope

A Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) enables the delivery of online learning and supports both learners within an institution and also distance learners, who remotely access course and assessment materials hosted on the institution's VLE. The College's VLE is Schoology.

This Policy describes the requirements that must be met by relevant parties in order to maintain good management of the College's VLE and provides direction and support for the management of the VLE.

2. Responsibilities

Responsibility for ensuring compliance with this Policy lies with the Senior Executive Group (SEG).

The ICT Department has responsibility for ensuring this policy is in place; ensuring the system is accessible; administrating user permissions; highlighting any requirements for upgrades to the VLE and for implementing any planned changes.

It is the responsibility of the Head of Improving Learning to assess current use of the VLE; ensure that the VLE satisfies the educational goals of the College and to make relevant guidelines and support available to users. The Head of Improving Learning is the VLE System and Data Owner.

It is the responsibility of the Curriculum Information Services (CIS) department to ensure that all students, staff and course information in the timetabling system is accurate. It is the responsibility of the ICT Department to ensure that this information is successfully transferred to the VLE on a regular basis.

Compliance with this Policy is compulsory for all staff employed by the College. It is the responsibility of Heads of School/Department and their VPs/Directors to ensure that their staff are made aware of the existence of this policy and its content.

3. Policy Statements

a. Infrastructure and Software

The VLE platform will provide:

- i. Controlled access to curriculum that has been mapped to elements that can be separately assessed and recorded;

- ii. the ability to track student activity and achievement against these elements;
- iii. support of online learning, including access to learning resources, assessment and guidance (the learning resources may be developed in house or professionally produced); and
- iv. communication between the learner and the tutor to provide direct support and feedback for learners, as well as peer-group communications

b. Accessibility

Where possible, all relevant VLE material will be accessible to staff and learners, both on and off site, at all times and will be compliant with level 2 of the W3C accessibility guidelines. Any scheduled interruption to the service will be announced in advance and all possible steps taken to ensure minimum disruption to users.

Guidelines, training and accessibility templates will be developed and promoted by the Head of Improving Learning (or staff delegated on their behalf) to assist teaching staff in developing accessible course material.

In line with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act of 2001 (SENDA) and the Disability Discrimination Act of 2005 (DDA), consideration will be given to the requirements of learners with disabilities and the College will seek to achieve compliance with The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (NO.2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.

Users who need to have temporary access to areas of the VLE covering courses on which they are not timetabled must make a request on the ICT HelpDesk available on the College Intranet.

The College is committed to providing a website that is accessible to the widest possible audience, regardless of technology or ability. The College will actively work to increase the accessibility and usability of our website and in doing so adhere to many of the available standards and guidelines, in particular The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No.2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.

The College will adhere to the accepted guidelines and standards for accessibility and usability, although it is recognised that it is not always possible to do so in all areas of the website. The College will continually investigate solutions that will bring all areas of the site up to the same level of overall web accessibility.

c. Resourcing

The Head of Improving Learning or delegated staff on their behalf will act in an advisory capacity to:

- i. provide support and advice to academic staff;
- ii. provide guidance and support to schools and departments on issues deriving from the principles of this Policy;
- iii. provide development and research in the pedagogical issues around e-Learning and the use of the VLE;
- iv. help develop tools and methodologies to assist the process of e-Learning and the correct use of the VLE; and
- v. actively promote staff development in the area of e-Learning and the use of the VLE.

d. Content / Quality

Teaching staff will be responsible for the content and quality of materials posted on the VLE by having the ability to access and review all published content. However, the Head of Improving Learning or staff delegated on their behalf will provide development guidelines to ensure:

- i. the maintenance and upkeep of course material is straightforward to implement;
- ii. consistency and ease-of-use for the learners is a high priority; and
- iii. best practice in the use of the VLE is encouraged.

e. Copyright / Intellectual Property

It is the responsibility of all staff members who create and post material on the VLE to have a clear understanding of who owns the work. In addition, all staff should be aware of the College's [Copyright Policy](#) and associated guidelines.

f. Data Protection

The VLE contains personal information regarding the engagement of learners within the context of their programmes, their assessments and records of their project work. Learners are made aware of this in our Privacy Notice. Staff should not store ILP, or pastoral/learning support data on the VLE as these are held in other College systems.

Student personal data held on the VLE is expunged 2 years after the

student's course is completed. Copies of student work submitted to anti-plagiarism software will be retained for 5 years.

It is the responsibility of all VLE users to adhere to the College's [Data Protection Policy](#) with regard to information stored on the VLE.

g. Provision of Support and Training

Current online user support will be maintained and developed by the Head of Improving Learning and staff delegated on their behalf. This will include online manuals, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) lists and a knowledge base. This approach will enhance information sharing as well as increasing user familiarity with using online resources.

User support will be accessed by contacting the Head of Improving Learning.

ICT Support will only be directly requested by users if the VLE is unable to log in. In other cases ICT Support will be second line support accessed by the Head of Improving Learning and they will co-ordinate the support call to the VLE supplier. See appendix 1 for support workflow.

Training on the correct use of the VLE is offered to teaching staff on an ongoing basis (either as one-to-one or group sessions), for staff inductions and for staff development events by the Head of Improving Learning.

For further information on the VLE and e-Learning from a teaching perspective, please consult the ILT Strategy, formulated by the Curriculum Directorate.

4. Relationship with Existing Policies

This Policy has been formulated within the context of the following College documents:

- Copyright Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Equal Opportunity and Learning Support Policies
- Information Security Policy
- Records Management Policy

5. Evaluation and review

This policy will be reviewed every five years by SEG.

In addition, the effectiveness of this Policy will be monitored as necessary on an on-going basis to ensure it is compliant with relevant legislation and reflects current practice.

Appendix 1: Support Flow

