Blended Learning @ JCU
Standards for Blended and Online Subject Design

The James Cook University Plan 2013-2017 sets out an institution wide curriculum vision aligned to a blended learning approach. Blended learning refers to the purposeful combination of face-to-face and online activities designed to optimise student engagement and the achievement of learning outcomes.

The design of the blend will vary according to intended outcomes, student needs, context, discipline, mode of delivery and whole-of-course considerations. Blended subjects may be offered in internal, limited, block, or placement/work experience modes. Subjects may also be offered fully online in external mode. The Standards for Blended and Online Subject Design apply regardless of the mode of delivery.

The Standards for Blended and Online Subject Design are intended to guide subject design, and can be used as a reflection tool to assure the quality of the design. They set the Threshold level at which all students must be provided in terms of a purposefully designed curriculum, opportunities to interact with peers and staff, and appropriate and explicit support. A Glossary is provided to clarify terms. Other key documents that inform the Standards for Blended and Online Subject Design include the JCU Learning, Teaching and Assessment Policy and the JCU Blended Learning Policy.

Please check that you have the latest version of this document, with active weblinks, via **www.jcu.edu.au/learning-and-teaching/**

1 Curriculum and learning materials are aligned, available and engaging

2 Assessment tasks are aligned, available and engaging, including formative assessment

3 Students are provided with opportunities to interact with peers

4 Students are provided with opportunities to interact with staff

5 Students are provided with appropriate learning support

6 Students are supported in their use of educational technology

7 Students are supported to navigate and achieve career success as lifelong learners

8 Students are directed to support services

SOE STANDARDS ONLINE EDUCATION

1

Curriculum and learning materials are aligned, available and engaging.

Threshold

- Select content that is aligned to learning outcomes
- Ensure subject design includes guidance for learners to work with content in meaningful ways
- Provide key readings with rationale for inclusion and introduction to each (presented in compliance with copyright legislation and/or license conditions)
- Select content to support different learning styles
- Use a variety of LearnJCU tools to engage students with course content
- Use adaptive release feature of LearnJCU to support students' access and engagement
- Sequence content so it flows in a logical progression that students can navigate
- Ensure content is made available or 'chunked' in manageable segments (ie weekly topics/modules)
- Provide preliminary content prior to block teaching periods to promote engagement
- Use JCU Library licensed content and/or open source content or to support relevant key concepts (high value discipline websites/ resources/videos/streaming material)
- Ensure any online content supplements and reinforces face-to-face delivery for internal subjects
- Include teacher-created video to identify key points/focus areas or highlight threshold concepts (maximum 10 minutes)
- Use internally recorded lectures for internal mode subjects only (revision purposes)

Desirable

- Present materials in a clear sequence based on the disciplines preferred learning design e.g. inquiry frameworks such as 5Es; project/problem based learning; or scenario based learning
- Use the Six Principles of JCU model to support distinctive JCU experience
- Use Learning Analytics to review and improve use of content and learning activities
- Provide options for students to generate and share own content
- Support students' independent learning by providing carefully selected content that encourages them to investigate subject content beyond threshold concepts especially into research orientations where appropriate
- Provide mixed face-to-face and online delivery of threshold concepts in middle/final year of courses
- Schedule regular LearnJCU Collaborate sessions to provide students with support around content and provide opportunity for collaboration

Key first year indicators

- Provide explicit instructions about time required for study:
  - Ensure provision for face to face contact in all internal subjects (equivalent 2-3 hours per week across a regular study period)
  - Independent study (6 – 8 hours per week for each subject)
- Provide explicit guidance on to how to use learning resources within LearnJCU (site map, location of assessment, learning activities, collaboration tools)
- Use consistent layout for LearnJCU sites across all subjects in course

Enabling Learning Technologies @ JCU

- Teaching with technology @ JCU
- Subject materials and media (Teaching with LearnJCU)
- Integrated Learning Analytics Reports

More Information / Examples

- Examples of JCU licensed content and libguides with embedded licensed content
- Blended Learning Toolkit
- Bloom's Taxonomy
- 9 key steps for online design
- Gilly Salmon online learning design
- Learning Designs (UOW)
- Producing online content to support different learning styles
- Consider iBook Beetham & Sharpe (2013) Rethinking pedagogy for a digital age
- Problem and inquiry learning (University College Dublin, Ireland)
- Six principles of JCU model
- Students Generate and share content (Cardiff University, Wales)
- First year learning experience (Kift, 2009)
- Threshold concepts (UCL)

2

Assessment tasks are aligned, available and engaging, including formative assessment

Threshold

- Ensure clear alignment of assessment tasks to learning outcomes and make this alignment explicit for students
- Use a variety of assessment types that ensure academic integrity according to JCU Learning, Teaching and Assessment Policy core principle 5
- Provide explicit assessment criteria and exemplars when assessing Communication Skills and Numeracy (http://www.jcu.edu.au/policy/allatoh/JCU_114776.html)
- Use Grade Centre to promote self-tracking of progress and staff monitoring of submission and progress
- Provide assessment for learning opportunities in all subjects including the use of diagnostic tools, peer assessment, multiple attempt quizzes etc.
- For external subjects, schedule timely online workshops to explicitly discuss assessment expectations task and requirements (eg: 'dialogue' about the way in which criteria and standards will be applied; what feedback is and how to make the best use of it)
- For block or limited mode subjects, schedule assessment to be submitted close to the face to face component and in a time that reflects availability of students

Desirable

- Develop eAssessment options
- Use online tools such as audio or video feedback options available on LearnJCU to provide high quality and timely feedback

Key first year indicators

- Provide clear statements of how assessment activities align with learning and teaching activities
- Provide exemplars of completed assessment tasks at varying achievement standards
- Include compulsory completion of an academic integrity module as part of assessment tasks
- Schedule formative quizzes to promote confidence
- Provide opportunities to complete assessment tasks in stages with explicit feedback at each stage that supports completion of subsequent stage(s)
- Include advice and model how to submit assessment using SafeAssign
- Include advice on support that is available to assist students complete tasks

Enabling Learning Technologies @ JCU

- Assessment and Feedback (Teaching with LearnJCU)
- Epigeum
- SafeAssign

More Information / Examples

- eAssessment (JISC)
- Teacher's Handbook on eAssessment (Crisp)
- Assessment 'dialogue' (ASKe Oxford Brookes UK)
- How to use feedback (ASKe Oxford Brookes UK)
- 12 principles about good assessment and feedback (Strathclyde Uni UK)
- Online assessment design (Canberra Uni)
- Virtual practicals (Uni of Reading UK)
- Example of online posters
- Simulations as assessment (Deakin Uni)
- First year learning experience (Kift, 2009)

3

Students are provided with opportunities to interact with peers

Threshold

- Ensure face-to-face teaching provides opportunities for students to collaborate and develop a sense of belonging through active learning and group activities
- Provide clear expectations and/or exemplars of what constitutes a 'good' response or posting
- Support online collaboration using tools such as wikis, especially where group work is part of assessment requirements
- Use online discussion tools in a purposeful manner

Desirable

- Model the use of online collaboration tools
- Model the use of professional language for collaboration
- Integrate scenario/problem-based/case based group work using authentic examples inherent to discipline
- Provide opportunities to discuss content and professional orientations using online discussion tools
- Support the adoption of professional networking approaches by using online tools such as LinkedIn, ResearchGate and similar applications

Key first year indicators

- Provide collaboration opportunities and develop a sense of belonging through active learning and group activities
- Provide clear expectations and/or exemplars of what constitutes a 'good' response or posting
- Model the use of online collaboration tools
- Model the use of professional language for collaboration

Enabling Learning Technologies @ JCU

- Communication and Collaboration (Teaching with LearnJCU)

More Information / Examples

- Online group work
- Group work resources (University of Technology Sydney)
- Group work (Uni of Sydney)
- Teamwork protocol (QUT)
- Generate and Share content
- scenario/problem-based/ case based group work
- First year learning experience (Kift, 2009)

4

Students are provided with opportunities to interact with staff

Threshold

- Provide explicit guidance about the purpose and nature of various face-to-face learning experiences
- Ensure provision for face-to-face contact in all internal subjects (equivalent 2-3 hours per week across a regular study period)
- Clearly indicate staff support options (both academic and professional) throughout the subject, and action using just in time approaches
- Provide synchronous support options of up to 2 hours per week for external students
- Ensure staff contact information is easy to find and includes more than one form of communication in accordance with the JCU Learning, Teaching and Assessment Policy Policy 8.5

Desirable

- Provide a minimum two hours face-to-face content for 6 weeks for internal subjects (may be aggregated across the semester to support capstone experiences)
- Engage and support online interaction using Salmon's 5 stage model (http://www.gillysalmon.com/five-stage-model.html) for external and block mode subjects

Key first year indicators

- Maintain regular contact online using just-in-time strategies
- Profile key staff contacts in short videos
- Utilise Learning Analytics to proactively identify students in need of support to enable resources to be provided as appropriate

Enabling Learning Technologies @ JCU

- Communication and Collaboration (Teaching with LearnJCU)
- Tracking student activity (Teaching with LearnJCU)
- Integrated Learning Analytics Reports

More Information / Examples

- Online group work
- Group work resources (University of Technology Sydney)
- Group work (Uni of Sydney)
- Teamwork protocol (QUT)
- scenario/problem-based/ case based group work
- First year learning experience (Kift, 2009)

5

Students are provided with appropriate learning support

Threshold

- Explicitly include academic skill development and assurance in core subjects
- Ensure students have access to academic integrity modules in core subjects
- Provide annotated exemplars and explicit feedback when assessing Communication Skills and Numeracy (http://www.jcu.edu.au/policy/allatoh/JCU_114776.html)
- Direct students to self-help options for assessment
- Explicitly promote student support services as identified in Section 4.4 of the Subject Outline
- Provide links in LearnJCU to information literacy guides relevant to the subject
- Provide real-time support using synchronous sessions e.g: LearnJCU Collaborate for external and block mode subjects

Desirable

- Continue to develop and assure core academic skills introduced in first year
- Direct students to online learning skills options
- Direct students to LibChat real-time online assistance from librarians

Key first year indicators

- Explicitly teach assessment types specific to the discipline
- Provide annotated exemplars of completed assessment tasks
- Include detailed advice on information literacy resources relevant to the subject
- For external subjects, ensure synchronous support is provided for up to 2 hours per week at key times (e.g: LearnJCU Collaborate for Learning Advisors, Library staff)

Enabling Learning Technologies @ JCU

- Communication and Collaboration (Teaching with LearnJCU)
- Tracking student activity (Teaching with LearnJCU)

More Information / Examples

- JCU Online Learning Skills
- Assessment 'dialogue' (ASKe Oxford Brookes UK)
- How to use feedback (ASKe Oxford Brookes UK)
- 12 principles about good assessment and feedback (Strathclyde Uni UK)
- JCU library Information literacy resources

6

Students are supported in their use of educational technology

Threshold

- Describe hardware, software, connectivity requirements to support full engagement with external subjects
- Recognise disparities in students' access to internet services
- Communicate clear expectations for interactions in the online learning environment
- Model learning technology use in face-to-face delivery in internal subjects
- Introduce varied technologies gradually
- Provide links to key web-based discipline resources including learning applications (apps)
- Provide explicit advice on how to navigate the subject LearnJCU site and access relevant policy and support materials
- Explicitly teach use of core learning technologies
- Use LearnJCU Retention Centre and Analytics to monitor student engagement
- Actively refer to self – help resources eg: Lynda.com
- Direct to appropriate online, up-to-date and reliable technological guides and resources
- Ensure appropriate, timely and reliable asynchronous technological support if available for external subjects

Desirable

- Provide opportunities to demonstrate digital literacies in assessment pieces
- Direct students to self-service supports
- Provide links to institutional policies and contacts for supporting learners with disabilities
- Include design factors such as colour, text size manipulations, audio and video controls to reflect accessibility considerations

Key first year indicators

- Use survey or readiness tools to diagnose learning technology access and familiarity with use of core technologies

Enabling Learning Technologies @ JCU

- Tracking student activity (Teaching with LearnJCU)
- Integrated Learning Analytics Reports
- LearnJCU Retention Centre
- Lynda.com
- LearnJCU **Help** tab (Staff and student guides)

More Information / Examples

- Developing Digital literacies (JISC)
- Building digital capability framework (JISC)
- First year learning experience (Kift, 2009)

7

Students are supported to navigate and achieve career success as lifelong learners

Threshold

- Embed appropriate year-level items from the relevant interactive Career Development, Employability and Entrepreneurship Academic Action Plan in curriculum
- Ensure that generic, employment and lifelong learning outcomes are incorporated into Subject [and Course] Learning Outcomes (as per Standard 1.4.2 of the Higher Education Standards Framework)
- Provide opportunities for students to reflect upon and gather evidence of achievement of learning outcomes (e.g. by embedding the use of ePortfolio across the whole-of-course)
- Embed authentic assessment experiences that support career development (e.g. career opportunity research; writing a resume, cover letter and response to criteria for a specific job advertisement)
- Expose students to a range of career possibilities using web-based material (e.g. You-tube videos; industry/government/employer websites; job search websites; LinkedIn, Twitter, with links provided on LearnJCU)
- Provide links to specific modules of the JCU Career Development Program within core subjects across the whole-of-course
- Link to JCU Careers and Employment for Students webpage from LearnJCU subject pages
- Encourage students to maximise their use of LinkedIn to connect and engage with industry groups, employers and sector leaders/entrepreneurs
- Model effective and responsible use of information communication technologies (e.g. Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, and other social media sites relevant to the subject and/or industry)

Desirable

- Structure ePortfolio use to capture evidence of achievement of learning outcomes and professional standards
- Establish a Discussion Board thread in LearnJCU dedicated to sharing subject-specific career-related resources, blogs, websites, job advertisements, and stimulating peer-led discussions
- Invite employers or graduates as guest speakers and record the session, or host a Bb Collaborate web conference, or record an interview, and provide links to videos on LearnJCU (e.g. discuss: career journey; relevance of subject to role and workforce; career advice or tips for success; workforce expectations)
- Ask students to critique your LinkedIn profile and/or the profiles of peers, professionals, sector leaders/entrepreneurs, alumni
- Use Big Interview to support students to develop and refine interviewing skills, and build confidence to attend and excel in interviews

Key first year indicators

- Ensure that students access and establish a Career Action Plan for First Year
- Support students to develop a resume, and a LinkedIn profile to establish their professional online identity and presence
- Link to relevant professional associations and regulatory bodies; volunteer organisations; employer/industry websites and forums in LearnJCU subject pages
- Link to JCU Careers and Employment for Students in LearnJCU subject pages
- Advertise the JCU Careers Fair and JCU Careers Fair App; Careers Drop-In; and Career Hub, and link to each webpage on LearnJCU.

Enabling Learning Technologies @ JCU

- PebblePad v5 (ePortfolio)
- LearnJCU
- Collaborate Ultra (Blackboard)
- Mobile apps (e.g. PebblePocket)

More Information / Examples

- JCU Careers and Employment for Learning and Teaching
- JCU Curriculum Framework
- Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015
- JCU Career Development Program
- JCU Careers and Employment Resources
- JCU Careers and Employment for Students
- JCU PebblePad workshop resources
- JCU Information Communication Technology Acceptable Use Policy
- First year learning experience (Kift, 2009)
- Tomorrow's Digitally Enabled Workforce (CSIRO, 2016)
- Employability in higher education – what it is – what it is not (Yorke, 2006)
- Embedding employability into the curriculum (Yorke & Knight, 2006)
- Employability: a good practice guide (Edith Cowan University)
- Future Work Skills 2020 (Institute for the Future)

- Authentic Learning for the 21st Century: An Overview (Lombardi, 2007)
- Authentic e-learning in higher education (Herrington, 2009)
- Employability: A Review of the Literature 2012-2016 (Artess et al., 2017)

8

Students are directed to support services

Threshold

- Explicitly engage students with key transition support services in face-to-face environment and provide links to information/services online
- Actively refer students to available student support services
- Implement reasonable adjustments for students with a disability
- Provide links to support services that are available e.g. counseling, finance, AccessAbility (all modes)
- Ensure up-to-date links to self-help options are available e.g.: The Desk
- Provide links and integrate key library resources such as Info Skills Road Trip and LibGuides on LearnJCU
- Integrate student support officers services into subjects
- Use Learning Analytics to monitor student engagement
- Provide dedicated links to off-campus library services for external subjects
- Actively promote online student mentoring in external subjects

Key first year indicators

- Actively engage with key transition support services and provide links to information/ services
- Ensure connection to student mentors for each cohort
- Provide opportunities for students to engage with Orientation week (O-week) activities online if students do not attend in person

Enabling Learning Technologies @ JCU

- Integrated Learning Analytics Reports

More Information / Examples

- Developing Digital literacies (JISC)
- Building digital capability framework (JISC)
- Disability Standards for Education
- First year learning experience (Kift, 2009)
- JCU Student Support Centre
- Self-help options
- Info Skills Road Trip
- JCU LibGuides
- JCU Student Mentor Program
- JCU short courses for new students
- Off Campus and Remote Access Library Services

Glossary

Active learning
Prince (2004, p223) defines active learning `as any instructional method that engages students in the learning process'. Examples include; carrying out a project, in-class activities/exercises, engagement in wiki development, presentations, etc. In order to motivate students we also need to make the activity relevant to what they believe could be the potential pathway for learning, i.e. their discipline / subject / career. The assessment methods should also parallel this using a variety of authentic real-life assessments, where possible.
Prince, M. (2004). 'Does Active Learning Work? A Review of the Research.' *Journal of Engineering Education* 93(3): 223-231.
http://www.ucd.ie/teaching/resources/enhancingfirstyear/moduledesignprinciple5activelearning/accessed 29 June, 2015)

Assessment types
The assessment methods (types) should be aligned to ensure that the skills and abilities developed by the students are assessed in a manner consistent with the design and delivery of the course as a whole. The choice of assessment method should therefore be influenced by the learning outcomes and the type of skills you are seeking to engender in the learners.

Authentic assessment
Authentic assessment focuses on students using and applying knowledge and skills in real-life settings. For example, you might have students take part in:

- simulation or role play of a scenario
- completion of a real-world task
- assessment in a workplace setting.

(https://teaching.unsw.edu.au/authentic-assessment accessed 29 June, 2015)

Blended learning
Learning design that strategically, systematically and effectively integrates a range of face-to-face, online, mobile, distance, open, social and other technology enhanced learning across physical and virtual environments, as informed and driven by student needs and support for desired learning activities and learning outcomes (JCU Blended Learning Policy).

Constructive alignment
Constructive alignment is a theory of learning that begins with the premise that the learner constructs his or her own learning through relevant learning activities (Biggs, 1999). The key to achieving this goal is that all components in the teaching system (i.e., each aspect from inception to completion) are aligned to each other to facilitate the achievement of the intended learning outcomes. Thus, the curriculum, the intended aims, learning outcomes, teaching methods and resources and the assessment tasks and criteria for evaluating it, are all aligned. (http://www.ucd.ie/t4cms/UCDTLT0028.pdf)

Diagnostic tools
Diagnostic assessments allow students to benchmark their current level of skill development and capabilities against what is required for the current course (Crisp, G. (2011) Transforming%20Assessment.pdf, p. 7)

Digital Literacies
JISC has identified elements to develop the capabilities which fit someone for living, learning and working in a digital society.

eAssessment
E-assessment involves the use of digital devices to assist in the construction, delivery, storage or reporting of student assessment tasks, responses, grades or feedback. Crisp, G. (2011) http://transformingassessment.com/sites/default/files/files/Handbook_for_teachers.pdf

Exemplars
The use of exemplars is cited in the literature as a valuable method to support students' understanding of assessment criteria and standards (Evans, 2013; Orsmond et al., 2002; Sadler, 1987, 1989). Exemplars can be annotated to highlight to students requisite elements of the task type, specific aspects of achievement, and what distinguishes high quality from low quality responses.

Formative quizzes
A short test, comprising questions of a varied nature (e.g. multiple choice, short answer etc) to provide feedback that can be used by students to improve their learning and by instructors to improve their teaching.

Glossary

Just-in-time strategies

This term originated in the manufacturing industry as "noting or pertaining to a method of inventory control that keeps inventories low by scheduling needed goods and equipment to arrive a short time before a production run begins." (http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/just-in-time accessed 29 June, 2015). This has been applied to the education sector as a means of reminding students of upcoming tasks to be completed.

Learning outcomes (objectives)

A learning outcome is a statement of what the learner should know and, more importantly, be able to do to demonstrate their knowledge, understanding, skills and/or competences at the end of a module [subject] or programme [course].

Moderation

The fundamental purpose of consensus moderation is to ensure appropriate and consistent quality of assessment and its outcomes (Foundations of Learning and teaching @ JCU).

Open source content
(also known as open educational resources)

Open Educational Resources (OERs) are educational materials which are licensed [and formatted] in ways that allow individuals and institutions to reuse, adapt and modify the materials for their own use. OERs can, and do include full courses, textbooks, streaming videos, exams, software, and any other materials or techniques supporting learning.

Reasonable adjustments

Reasonable education adjustments refer to a "measure or action taken to assist a student with disability to participate in education and training on the same basis as other students"[1]. An adjustment is considered reasonable if it achieves this purpose while taking into account student's learning needs and balancing the interests of all parties affected including those of the student with disability, the education provider, staff and other students. http://www.adcet.edu.au/inclusive-teaching/working-with-students/making-reasonable-adjustments/#References

Synchronous/asynchronous

Synchronous communication/collaboration occurs at the same time, for example in a LearnJCU Collaborate session where learners and the academic are online together. Asynchronous communication/collaboration occurs when the learners and academic are not online at the same time and can occur through Discussion Boards, wiki's, blogs and email.

Threshold concepts

Meyer and Land (2003) explained a threshold concept as ''akin to a portal, opening up a new and previously inaccessible way of thinking about something. It represents a transformed way of understanding, or interpreting, or viewing something without which the learner cannot progress.'' Meyer, J., & Land, R. (2003). Threshold concepts and troublesome knowledge: Linkages to ways of thinking and practising within the disciplines. ETL Project Occasional Report 4. Edinburgh.

5E's design framework

The 5E's model is an inquiry approach derived from the concept that students learn and retain knowledge when they have had the opportunity for discovery through a variety of experiences that are designed by the person who is facilitating the learning. Students are supported to bring their prior knowledge and facilitators structure the subsequent learning experiences into the following five phases: Engage; Explore; Explain; Elaborate and Evaluate. (See: https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/practice/Pages/expired/e5about.aspx)

5 stage model

Conceptualised by Gilly Salmon, the five-stage model describes e-moderating and technical support phases that should be undertaken by academics, associated staff and students during an online subject. http://www.gillysalmon.com/five-stage-model.html

Also consider the following links:

University College Dublin T & L resources
http://www.ucd.ie/teaching/resources/a-zindex/