

# DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE

## CODE OF PRACTICE ON E-LEARNING

### 1 Definition of E-Learning

In line with the University of Liverpool E-Learning Policy 2007-2010 we define e-learning as follows:

*E-learning* is learning which is enhanced, supported or assessed by the use of electronic media. E-learning may involve the use of new or established technology and/or the creation of new learning material; it may be deployed both locally and at a distance.

On-campus programmes typically involve *blended learning*, where a combination of e-learning and conventional teaching techniques are used to facilitate student understanding and learning.

### 2 Guiding Principles and Aims

The Department of Computer Science Code of Practice on E-Learning is guided by the principle that the e-learning resources used in the delivery of its on-campus programmes should supplement the primary delivery of teaching and learning via lectures, practicals, tutorials, and personal interaction between staff and students. In addition, e-learning resources should seamlessly integrate with the departmental website and should be open and accessible.

By integrating our e-learning resources with the departmental website and making them available as widely as possible we intend to open a window to our teaching activities in the same way as we publicise our research activities and aim to ensure that both are promoted on an equal footing.

In doing so we aim to

- (i) provide students with an on-line learning environment that meets their expectations regarding the use of electronic media for on-campus programmes and to make more effective use of learning resources;
- (ii) enable students to learn effectively with the support of appropriate e-learning resources that meet their diverse learning needs in order to develop their self-motivation, self-direction, and lifelong learning skills;
- (iii) improve access and the retention of students, support widening participation, and enhance student achievement;
- (iv) provide students with the opportunity to develop skills enabling them to work and participate in a technology-rich and connected society.

### 3 Guidelines

1. The *central departmental access point for e-learning resources* is

<http://www.csc.liv.ac.uk/teaching.html>

From there students can access a separate departmental web page for each of the modules offered by the Department.

2. The departmental web page for a module will contain (i) a brief description of the module, (ii) a link to its module specification, (iii) a link to a web page with e-learning resource for the module, called the *module's e-learning resource page* in the following, where such material exists, and (iv) a link to the departmental electronic coursework submission system, where appropriate.

It is the responsibility of the module co-ordinator to supply technical support staff (Phil Jimmieson and Dave Shield) with (i) and (iii), and to check the correctness of (ii) prior to the start of the semester in which the module is taught. Regarding (iv) see item 10.

3. All web pages (personal and departmental) and all the material made accessible need to comply with the *University of Liverpool Guidelines for all Web Pages*, available at

<http://www.liv.ac.uk/csd/regulations/codes/codewebpages.htm>

and the *University of Liverpool Guidelines on Electronic Publishing*, available at

<http://www.liv.ac.uk/csd/regulations/codes/codepublishing.htm>

4. A *module's e-learning resource page* should be placed on the external or internal departmental web server.

If a *module's e-learning resource page* is placed on VITAL instead, then a *course link* to the module's "Sessions/Resources" item for the current academic year should be provided under item 2(iii). A simple link to VITAL is not acceptable as it prevents the user experience from being seamless.

5. Examples of electronic support material that may be provided via a *module's e-learning resource page* include module notes, presentation material, assignments, general information, feedback on assessments, and links to other on-line resources (see also item 8). The preferred formats for electronic support material are HTML and PDF, as these formats have the widest cross-platform support. The use of other formats should be avoided wherever possible.

It is up to the module co-ordinator to decide what electronic support material is appropriate for a particular module and when such material is placed on a *module's e-learning resource page*, based on the pedagogic approach taken in the delivery of the module and the needs of students, in particular, re-sitting and externally repeating students.

The module co-ordinator may also decide to provide electronic support material in different formats and/or at different times to students with special educational needs compared to the general student cohort on a module.

6. Electronic support material should be placed on the external departmental web server, unless this prevented by copyright and data protection considerations. Alternatively, the internal departmental web server should be used.

VITAL should only be used where VITAL specific functionality is required that is currently not available via the departmental web servers, e.g. on-line quizzes. Again, in analogy to item 4, a *course link* to the specific item for the current academic year should be provided

7. Where a module is discontinued, is not on offer in a particular academic year, has been subject to substantial changes, or there is a change of the module co-ordinator, the Department will create and store a copy of the most recent version of the departmental web page for the module, the module's e-learning resource page (where available), and essential electronic support material (where available) for a duration of at least four years.

Such copies will be created by technical support staff with the help of the module co-ordinator.

Where the Board of Studies in Computer Science considers it beneficial for students to have continued access to such a copy of a module's e-learning resources, the copy will

be made accessible to student via the central departmental access point for e-learning resources.

8. As pointed out in item 5, electronic support material may include links to other on-line resources not directly associated with the University of Liverpool. These may include, for example, research papers, extracts from textbooks, presentation material for related modules, and audio and video files. Links to such resources will typically point to web pages hosted by publishers, other universities, and commercial web hosts, including social networking and social media sites.

Links to such resources are permissible provided these resources and access to them appears to be legal and professionally acceptable, but without legal responsibility, and with the exclusion of legal liability, on the part of, and in respect of, the University of Liverpool.

9. The use of e-mail by all users of the University's e-mail system has to comply with the *Code of Practice for the use of email at the University of Liverpool*, available at

<http://www.liv.ac.uk/csd/regulations/codeemail.pdf>

In addition, e-mails exchanged between members of staff and students should comply with the following guidelines:

- a. E-mails should only be sent for legitimate reasons and should have a subject line that clearly states the purpose of the e-mail. Both students and members of staff should use their University e-mail accounts to sent e-mails in order to minimise the risk that e-mails are caught in a spam filter or otherwise prevented from being delivered.
  - b. Students should check their University e-mail account at least every other working day.
  - c. Any e-mail send by a student to a member of staff should receive a confirmation of receipt within two working days of the e-mail being delivered if a response is at all required. This may consist of an automatic reply and may not necessarily include a response to the content of the e-mail in cases where such a response requires more time (see also item 9d).
  - d. A module co-ordinator need not answer an e-mail which (i) lacks a subject line that clearly states the purpose of the e-mail, (ii) raises an inappropriate subject, or (iii) has not been sent from a University account.
10. Any continuously assessed task, whether it requires (electronic) submission of work or not, should be registered by the module co-ordinator on the Department's *Coursework Administration System* at

<https://cgi.csc.liv.ac.uk/cgi-bin/submit.pl>

The systems allows the module co-ordinator to specify either submission via the departmental electronic coursework submission system or via the Student Office. The system will ensure that Student Office deadlines fall within the times that the office is open, and will also discourage the setting of "clashing" deadlines by making an overview of all other deadlines available.

11. The electronic submission of assessed work should comply with the following guidelines:
  - a. Students must submit their work using the submission mechanism(s) described in the corresponding assignment or as permitted by the module co-ordinator in special circumstances (see also item 11b). If the work is not submitted in the way described, then this may be regarded as a non-submission and recorded / marked accordingly.  
On successful submission, the submission system used will produce a confirmation of the coursework submission. It is the obligation of the student to keep either an electronic or printed copy of that confirmation in order to prove that work has been

submitted. Note that this confirmation only proves that a submission has taken place but not necessarily that all work required has been submitted.

Module co-ordinators must only use such means of coursework submissions that allow students to obtain such a confirmation of the successful submission of their work. In addition, it must be ensured that students barred from the use of their University accounts are not prevented from submitting their work electronically, i.e. the sole use of VITAL for submission of coursework is not permitted.

- b. If there are technical problems with the coursework submission system, then the student should immediately contact the module co-ordinator via e-mail with an explanation of the problem. In such a case the student should not include the work they intended to submit with that e-mail as there is no guarantee that the e-mail will be received or regarded as correct submission of work (see also item 11a). Instead the module co-ordinator will advise the student on the appropriate course of action.
- c. Work submitted electronically is subject to the University's policy for dealing with plagiarism, collusion and the fabrication of data. Students should be aware that plagiarism detection software may be used on any work submitted, in particular work submitted electronically, in order to detect violations of that policy.

12. The use of electronic discussion forums should comply with the following guidelines:

- a. Students are expected to focus on the specific topic of the discussion as assigned. The introduction of irrelevant subjects is not permitted.
- b. Students have a right to express their own opinions in discussions, within the limits of the topic discussed, and every other student must respect this right. The posting of abusive or insulting messages is not permitted. Controlling behaviour—that is, attempts to dominate a discussion by posting excessively, intentionally changing the discussion topic, or exhibiting an inappropriate or unnecessarily argumentative attitude—is not permitted.

Any student violating these principles may face disciplinary action.

13. Students should be aware that the Department keeps electronic records of their attendance and coursework submissions as well as electronic records of their academic performance and certain interactions between staff and students and may use these records together with information about e-mail exchanges with staff, participation in on-line discussion forums, and formal and informal interactions between students and staff when determining the progress of students.

Staff should be aware that any such records about a student constitute private data and should only be processed in line with the *University of Liverpool Staff Guidelines for Data Protection*, available at

[http://www.liv.ac.uk/legal/data\\_protection/guidance\\_notes.htm](http://www.liv.ac.uk/legal/data_protection/guidance_notes.htm)

14. The Department currently does not use social networking sites or social media sites in support of its teaching.

However, students should still be aware that postings made on such sites can be traced back to them in the future and that to protect themselves, respectful on-line behaviour is advisable.

Where members of staff use social media sites and identify themselves as employees of the University of Liverpool, it should be understood that they do so in a private capacity and that any comments and posting made on such sites are their own and not associated with the University or associated with their position within the University. Likewise, any interaction that staff may have with current or former students on such sites are in a private capacity. Again, in order to protect their own reputation, and that of the University, respectful on-line behaviour is advisable.