

Name of Policy	Policy and Procedures on Access to and Support for the Learning Management System
Description of Policy	This policy and procedural document describes the arrangements and conditions surrounding Access to, and Support for, the Learning Management System.
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Officer Responsible	Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs)
Contact Officer:	Director of Flexible Teaching and Learning

Table of Contents

Policy and Procedures on Access to, and Support for, the Learning Management System	3
1 Coverage	3
2 Definition of terms	3
3 Background	4
4 Access	4
5 Roles and Responsibilities	5
6 Confidentiality and privacy of information.....	7
7 Course creation	7
8 Confirmation of LICs of courses	7
9 Unit release dates	7
10 Online assessment and synchronous activities.....	8
11 Accessibility	8
12 Backups and restoration.....	8
13 Removal of courses.....	8
14 Planned outages	8
15 Upgrades to the LMS	9
16 Support audit trail	9
17 Access audit trail	9
18 Archival procedure	9
19 Communication of this policy.....	9
20 Policy review	9
21 Further assistance.....	9

Policy and Procedures on Access to, and Support for, the Learning Management System

Approved by: Academic Board on
Date of effect:

1 Coverage

This policy applies to all staff members, academic, general, continuing, contract or sessional, as well as approved external providers who have entered into contractual agreements with Australian Catholic University (ACU National). This policy covers access to the Learning Management System (LMS) for the purposes of developing, implementing, administering or supporting the online learning experiences of enrolled ACU National students and the related online teaching of staff. This policy covers all online courses offered by the University and materials stored on the D Library.

2 Definition of terms

Access: the ability to log on to specific courses and use the features of the LMS;
An access audit trail: a record of user activities within the LMS provided by the external service provider;
ACUonline: the management unit responsible for providing technical services associated with the LMS;
Archive: a backup copy of unit/s on storage media for long-term storage and possible future access;
Approved external provider: person/s or organisation/s which have entered into contractual agreements with the University;
Auditor: designated user role with conferred permissions within the LMS;
Backup: a copy of data in another medium so that if the active data are either lost or corrupt, they can be recovered;
Banner: the University Student Information System;
Course/s: within the LMS, a single operational site for references, materials, activities and interactions;
Designer: designated user role with conferred permissions within the LMS;
Director of Flexible Teaching and Learning: person appointed to coordinate University-wide the pedagogical, technical and developmental aspects of flexible teaching and learning;
External affiliate/s: person/s or organisation/s deemed by the Head of School/nominee to require auditor access for the purpose of course development and implementation;
Fully online unit: a unit operating totally with online teaching/learning elements and located on the LMS;
Guest account: an account established in extraordinary circumstances for a group, person or organisation associated with the University in order to resolve identified issues;
Help Desk: designated personnel employed by the nominated external provider;
Instructor: designated user role with conferred permissions within the LMS;
Learning Management System (LMS): software that allows educational institutions to create and host courses on the Internet;
Lecturer: the designated person/s who, under the guidance of the LIC, develops and facilitates online learning;
Lecturer-in-Charge (LIC): the designated person responsible for the overall development and management of the course;
Nominated external provider: External service provider which hosts and supports the University's LMS;
Non-Banner units: courses on the LMS not linked to the University Student Information System;
Online: material that is available from or linked to a network server or occurs on an electronic network;

Online Advisers: persons appointed by the University to provide pedagogical, leadership and evaluative support for online teaching and learning;

Online assessment: assessments that are accessed completed and submitted online;

Online Educational Designer: person/s appointed by the University to design, plan and manage the development of quality online courses and support staff in doing so;

Online Education Coordinator: person responsible for oversight of quality assurance of fully online units and related staff training;

Online support staff: University-designated staff who provide support for online teaching and learning such as library personnel, Online Advisers and Academic Skills Advisers;

Planned outages: periods of downtime for the purpose of upgrading or maintenance of the LMS;

Proxy login: a technical capability of the LMS whereby authorized users are able to effectively log into the LMS as another user without knowing that user's password;

Restoration: process of recovering data from a backup;

Server/Institution Administrator: designated user role with conferred permissions within the LMS;

Storage media: a physical device onto which data are recorded, for example tape, CDROM, DVD, hard drive;

Staff Portal: a password protected administrative website for creating units within the LMS and linking student enrolments from Banner;

Support audit trail: a record of support requests with the resulting outcomes;

Synchronous activities: use of online technologies for interactive teaching and learning activities that take place in real time and enable two-way communication;

Teaching assistant: designated user role with conferred permissions within the LMS;

Ticketing system: a tracking database for support requests;

Web-enhanced unit: a unit which combines face-to-face and online teaching and learning elements and has a course located on the LMS.

3 Background

Australian Catholic University's Academic Board adopted the *Strategic Plan for Online Teaching and Learning (2007-2009)* on 16 May 2007. Identified within the Plan was a requirement to develop quality assurance policies related to access to and support for the LMS. Responsibility for planning, sponsorship, oversight and evaluation of the University LMS rests with the Office of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs).

4 Access

- 4.1 In order to ensure privacy, protection of intellectual property and the integrity of materials, access to courses on the LMS is regulated. However, it is recognised that there are a number of officers, who in order to fulfill their role, require access to specific courses and that the level of access will vary according to the role and responsibility of each person.
 - 4.1.1 All Faculty Deans, Associate Deans (Teaching, Learning and International) and Heads of School (HOSs) have access to online courses within their portfolio.
 - 4.1.2 The nominated external provider and ACUonline staff have access to all courses offered on the LMS for development and support purposes.
 - 4.1.3 The Manager, ACUonline has access to all courses offered on the LMS.
 - 4.1.4 Individual ACU academic staff have access to designated courses in which they are involved, in line with designated LMS user roles of designer and/or instructor and/or teaching assistant and/or auditor.

- 4.1.5 Other academic staff may be given auditor access to courses for peer review purposes with permission of the relevant LIC/HOS or nominee/Manager, ACUonline.
- 4.1.6 Online support staff have auditor access to courses for support and advisory purposes.
- 4.1.7 The Online Education Coordinator has access to all courses offered on the LMS.
- 4.1.8 The Online Educational Designers have access to all courses offered on the LMS.
- 4.1.9 The Director of Flexible Teaching and Learning has access to all courses offered on the LMS.
- 4.1.10 External affiliates may be granted access to specified courses by the appropriate conferring authority (see Section 5.4).
- 4.1.11 The nominated external provider has access to all courses offered on the LMS (see Section 5.4).
- 4.1.12 Approved external providers, other than the nominated external provider, will be granted access by the appropriate conferring authority (see Section 5.4).

5 Roles and Responsibilities

- 5.1 The University provides identified levels of access to the LMS in recognition of the roles and responsibilities of users. These may be subject to change if the LMS is upgraded.
- 5.2 The University currently recognizes seven LMS user roles with the following permissions:

LMS user roles	Permissions conferred on roles
Designer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Access Build Tab ▪ Add or update content ▪ Add and remove tools ▪ Customise appearance of unit ▪ Add Co-Designers ▪ Add Instructor
Instructor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Access Teach Tab ▪ Access Grade book ▪ Access Group manager ▪ Access student report and tracking
Teaching Assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Access Student View Tab ▪ Mark assignments and tests ▪ Change student grades
Auditor (most restricted level of access)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Post discussions ▪ Participate in chat groups ▪ Submit assignments (Grade book is not able to be accessed)
Student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Post Discussions/emails ▪ Participate in chat groups ▪ Submit assignments
Server/Institution Administrator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Change settings ▪ Add, update or remove users ▪ Enrol/unenrol users ▪ Add, update or remove courses (NB These are called sections within the Blackboard LMS)
Help Desk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Add, update or remove users ▪ Enrol/unenrol users

Table 1: LMS user roles and permissions
Source: BlackBoard/NetSpot (July 31 2007)

5.3 Faculty Deans/Associate Deans (Teaching, Learning and International)/HOSs may request access to particular courses within their portfolio, as required, by contacting the Manager, ACUonline.

5.4 The University assigns access to the LMS for approved University business to the following groups/people/organisations. See Table 2 *University-assigned access and roles*. Notification of the access roles will be provided online through the staff and student portal (once approved).

Group/person/organisation	University role	LMS user role	Purpose	Conferring authority
ACUonline	Administrator	Designer across all courses in the LMS, Help Desk	Administration	Director of Libraries
Approved external provider	Primary Designer	Designer in specified courses in the LMS	Development and quality assurance	Dean/ HOSs/nominee/ Manager, ACUonline
Director of Flexible Teaching and Learning	Administrator	Designer across all courses in the LMS, Help Desk	Oversight of use of LMS	Director of the Institute for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning
External Affiliate	External user	Auditor in pre-delivery phase of courses only; once students have been added access must be removed	Viewing online courses, peer review	HOS/nominee/LIC /Manager, ACUonline
HOS/ Associate Dean/Dean	Auditor in courses within portfolio	Auditor in courses within portfolio	Academic supervision	Faculty Deans
Lecturer	Lecturer/ Co-Designer	Instructor, Designer	Teaching	HOS/LIC/nominee
LIC	Primary Designer	Designer for nominated course	Primary course developer	HOS/nominee
Manager, ACUonline	Administrator	Designer across all courses in the LMS, Help Desk	Managing and overseeing the use of the LMS	Director of Libraries
Nominated External Provider	Administrator	Designer at course level, Server/Institution Administrator, Help Desk	Help Desk, administration and support	Director of Libraries
Online Education Coordinator	Administrator	Designer across all courses in the LMS, Help Desk	Ensuring quality assurance processes	Director of Flexible Teaching and Learning
Online Educational Designer	Administrator	Designer across all courses in the LMS, Help Desk	Support teaching practices	Director of Flexible Teaching and Learning
Online Support Staff	Support	Auditor	Supporting students/staff	Responsible member of Executive Team
Sessional Academic Staff	Lecturer/ Co-Designer	Instructor, Designer	Teaching	HOS/LIC/nominee
Faculty eLearning Coordinator	Administrator	Designer across all courses in the LMS, Help Desk	Support teaching practices	Director of Flexible Teaching and Learning
Student	Student in nominated course/s	Student in nominated course/s	Access to LMS course/s for learning	University administration (Student Administration, Research Services, International Education)

Table 2: *University-assigned access and roles*

- 5.6 Extraordinary access
On occasions and after agreement with the Director of Flexible Teaching and Learning or the Manager, ACUonline, the nominated external provider may access the LMS as the user experiencing the issue (proxy login) in order to diagnose and resolve certain issues.

Upon rectifying such problems, an email outlining the action taken and procedures carried out will be forwarded to the Manager ACUonline, the Director of Flexible Teaching and Learning and the relevant person whose account was accessed via proxy login.

- 5.6.1 In certain circumstances a group, person or organisation not listed in the table above but associated with the University may request access to the LMS for approved University purposes. As appropriate a Guest Account with a defined LMS user role will be created and approved by the Manager, ACUonline with the Director of Flexible Teaching and Learning being informed.

6 Confidentiality and privacy of information

- 6.1 All users of the LMS are required to comply with ACU National's *Computer and Internet Acceptable Use Policy*.
- 6.2 ACU National employs strategies to maintain confidentiality of student data and regulate access levels. Confidentiality and privacy of information within the LMS are supported through the requirement for all users to log onto the system using their name and password.
- 6.3 All groups/organisations provided with access to the LMS for approved University business will abide by the *Acceptable Use Policy for the ACU National's Learning Management System*.

7 Course creation

- 7.1 Creation of fully online units within the LMS can only be requested by the LIC or nominee with the approval of the Faculty Deans Non-Banner and web-enhanced courses within the LMS can be requested by any staff member.
- 7.2 Requests can be processed either by ACUonline project officers, the Help Desk, or by staff members through the Staff Portal.

8 Confirmation of LICs of courses

- 8.1 It is the responsibility of the Faculty Executive Officers/HOS/nominee to forward to the nominated external provider, up-to-date information on the nominated LICs of fully online units to be offered in a given semester.
- 8.2 If any of fully online unit is to be withdrawn from the LMS, the Faculty Executive Officer/HOS/nominee will notify the Online Education Coordinator and the nominated external provider, prior to the commencement of each semester.
- 8.3 Any newly nominated LICs are allowed access to the previous version of the online course.

9 Unit release dates

- 9.1 Default release dates are set to one week prior to the commencement of the relevant semester in accordance with the approved DEEWR semester information.

- 9.2 Changes to release dates for Banner-related fully online courses must be authorized by Director of Flexible Teaching and Learning.
- 9.3 Changes to release dates for all other Banner-related online courses must be authorized by the appropriate HOS/nominee.
- 9.4 Student access to courses will continue by default for six (6) weeks after the completion of the relevant semester.

10 Online assessment and synchronous activities

- 10.1 The Help Desk supports staff and students in the creation of and participation in online assessments and synchronous activities.
- 10.2 LICs will normally avoid running online assessments in any permanently advertised regular maintenance window.
- 10.3 In the event of a technical problem LICs will contact the Help Desk.
- 10.4 The ability to access assignments, marks, comments, grading forms, and discussion contributions in courses within the LMS is limited to nominated University roles.

11 Accessibility

ACU National is committed to providing staff and students, regardless of any disability, with equality of access to courses online. ACU National follows the Web Accessibility guidelines as set out by the World Wide Web Consortium and which are designed to improve accessibility standards for users with disabilities.

12 Backups and restoration

- 12.1 All courses on the LMS will be centrally and automatically backed-up nightly and restored, if necessary, by the nominated external provider.
- 12.2 The nightly backup of courses will only apply to courses where there has been activity (the courses have been accessed by any user).
- 12.3 Nightly backups will be retained for one month and the first backup of each month retained for one year.

13 Removal of courses

Except in the case of archival material, courses cannot be removed from the LMS without approval of the relevant Faculty Dean/Associate Dean (Teaching, Learning and International)/HOS/nominee.

14 Planned outages

- 14.1 Planned outages are scheduled at times which provide minimal disruption to staff and students.
- 14.2 Outages are to be negotiated between the Manager, ACUonline and the nominated external provider.
- 14.3 The nominated external provider will advise of forthcoming outages on the front login screen of the LMS and ensure that outages occur at non-crucial periods as identified by the Manager, ACUonline and the Director of Flexible Teaching and Learning.

15 Upgrades to the LMS

- 15.1 ACU National implements a balanced approach between upgrading the functionality of the LMS and ensuring stability of the online teaching and learning environment.
- 15.2 The Online Teaching and Learning Committee, after consultation with appropriate stakeholders, will approve any major updates of the LMS.
- 15.3 Information about the current status of the LMS is routinely updated on the LMS login screen.

16 Support audit trail

- 16.1 A ticketing system is used by the nominated external provider to track and record support requests in order to provide an audit trail of requests and actions taken.
- 16.2 Monthly consolidated reports are circulated to the Manager, ACUonline and the Director of Flexible Teaching and Learning.

17 Access audit trail

- 17.1. An audit trail is recorded of all user access to courses on the LMS.
- 17.2 If a staff member wishes to request that an audit trail be provided, they should approach the Director of Flexible Teaching and Learning: who would approve the request and communicate this to the Manager, ACUonline.

18 Archival procedure

- 18.1 Courses within the LMS will be centrally archived by the nominated external provider on appropriate storage media.
- 18.2 Courses within the LMS that have been linked to Banner will be backed up, archived and removed from the LMS after a period of two years from the commencement of the relevant semester.
- 18.3 Courses within the LMS that have not been linked to Banner will be backed up and removed after two years of inactivity (i.e. a unit has not been accessed by any users) and archived within six months of removal.
- 18.4 Archives are kept for seven years from creation.

19 Communication of this policy

Information about the access to and support for the LMS will be incorporated into staff and student training, printed materials and related online resources.

20 Policy review

The University may make changes to this policy from time to time to improve the effectiveness of its operation. In this regard, any staff member who wishes to make any comments about this policy may forward their suggestions to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs).

21 Further assistance

Any staff member who requires assistance in understanding this policy should first consult his/her nominated supervisor who is responsible for the implementation and operation of these arrangements in the work area. Should further advice be needed, the staff member should contact the Director, Institute for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning.

This policy relates to the following policies:

- *Strategic Plan (Revised) 1999-2008*
- *Policy on Quality Teaching and Learning*
- *Policy on Quality Online Teaching and Learning*
- *Strategic Plan for Online Teaching and Learning (2007-2009)*
- *Online Learning System Technical Documentation and Guidelines*