

# Consistency Project – Moodle

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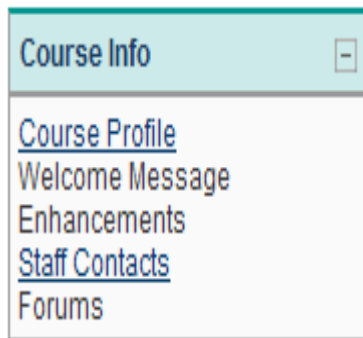
Office of Learning and Teaching

CQUniversity Australia

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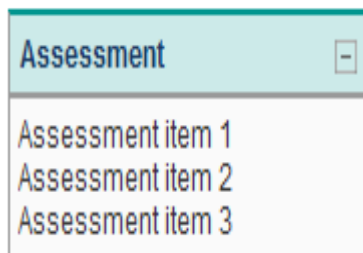
### 3 Consistency Blocks



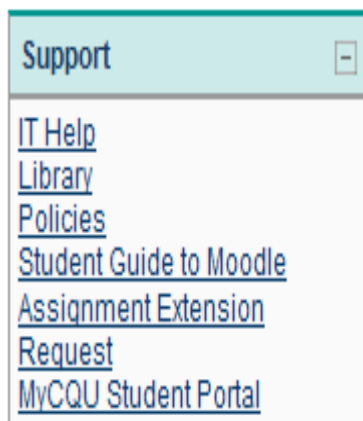
Combination of automated and manual production

Course Profile, Staff Contacts = Automated (hyperlinked and finished for you)

Welcome Message, Enhancements and Forums = Manual – You need to create these pages/documents and hyperlink to the words in the block. Instructions below.



Manual = you need to create the assessment page and then hyperlink to the words. Instructions below.



Automated = this entire block is done for you

### Consistency Project:

The Consistency Project was developed in response to both staff and student feedback to bring about more consistency in approach to core common content elements in Moodle.

There are 3 main implementations as a result of the working party's deliberations.

- 1) Insertion of 3 consistent blocks (above) to be located on the left of screen in every Moodle course. To go live in T 1 2011. This has a 2 phase approach.
- 2) Colour palette in Moodle to be changed to the CQUniversity corporate colours to reduce colour divergence and bring some corporate consistency to colour choice. Expected rollout late December 2010. **Impact:** Minimal, will not overwrite existing colour choices in Moodle but will present the corporate colours as the only choice in future colour selection in the Moodle WYSIWYG.

- 3) Collapsed Topics Format: This format will be rolled out approx late December 2010. Its purpose is to mitigate long scrolling screens into a tidier collapsed view. **Impact:** will not be automatically inserted – will need to be manually selected. Most suitable to those using weekly or topics format. This is completely optional but is offered as a functional enhancement inside Moodle.

### Phase 1: Term 1 2011

Phase 1 release involves an intermediate solution in terms of programming support from the Moodle programming support personnel. Phase 1 will involve the support team inserting the blocks with the automated components ready-to-go as live links from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2010. You will need to complete the set-up with some manual linkage. The diagram above is the same as the blocks you will see inserted into your T1 2011 Moodle course shell (site).

### Phase 2: term 2 2011

Phase 2 will relate to Consistency Project enhancements being implemented in T2 2011. Phase 2 will simply be an extension of phase 1 with some additional coding done by the Moodle support team, as well as any other enhancements identified by staff and students in the Phase 1 roll-out. Phase 2 instructions will be communicated to you with sufficient lead time for Term 2 2011.

When designing your Moodle course remember “more” is not necessarily better. Challenge yourself to go for simplicity and remove as much “noise” or extraneous cognitive load as you can from the blocks and other navigational elements you place in your course. If you missed the cognitive load overview in relation to consistent web site construction please visit this video archive link from the Consistency Project rollout seminar on 25/11/10

[http://onlinemedia.cqu.edu.au/media\\_request.htm?file=cqu/staff/olt/lt\\_consistency\\_project\\_251110&start=00:02:11&end=00:53:02&formats=16](http://onlinemedia.cqu.edu.au/media_request.htm?file=cqu/staff/olt/lt_consistency_project_251110&start=00:02:11&end=00:53:02&formats=16)

There have been many “fancier” button style course templates doing the rounds at CQUni, often because people don’t “like the look of Moodle”. “Fancier” is not necessarily better for learning or staff use. What really matters are your **primary content goals** – the Moodle site is simply the segway to your content, it is not the focal point – the content is the focal point. Moodle is a tool – not an event in itself (per se).

The benefits to using Moodle in its more native (or “Vanilla” functional form) for you are (to name a few)

- 1) Less code fiddling for you, easier for you to hand the course off to a co-worker should you be on leave (or when you have to take a course for a colleague on leave).
- 2) It is easier for support staff to help you trouble shoot your site.
- 3) Enhancements made to Moodle itself are less likely to create issues with your template.

## Recommendation:

Students commented (complained) via the Vice-Chancellors forum, about the lack of consistency between Moodle sites generally. Their complaints will not wholly be solved by the 3 blocks introduced in this “Consistency Project”. This is largely because almost every lecturer has a different Moodle site design – many away from the “native” Moodle functionality. In order to create greater consistency between courses and mitigate student complaints, it is recommended that each school meet to adopt an agreed consistent “template” to courses within the school. This may be weekly format, topic format, social format, parent and child courses, tables and buttons (etc). The template style should be adopted by the entire school. The school is free to have a collegial debate regarding preferred “template” approach and choose that which they prefer. There is not one “magic” approach for Moodle in terms of whether you adopt a e.g. topics format or program in buttons and tables. However it matters that your approach is consistent, reduces extraneous cognitive load in its fundamental design and actively uses the “7 Principles”.

The benefits of school-wide consistency are two-fold

- 1) Students (generally speaking) study the majority of their courses inside their program and school. The same template used across a school would ensure that students encounter the same format in each of their (between 30 – 40) courses in their program. We want to have students learn the course content not Moodle; therefore after an initial exposure, the use of Moodle as an interface should become irrelevant to the student. We want them to achieve our primary content goals, not re-learn Moodle every term.
- 2) Staff – if all the staff in your school use the same template, collegial support, peer review, and navigation for support staff becomes easier. If you replace a staff member on leave (or vice-versa) you (or they) will already be familiar with how to edit and deliver via different courses.

Moodle is not the learning objective for either staff or students; it is merely the **tool** to support either learning or administrative functions as the case may be.

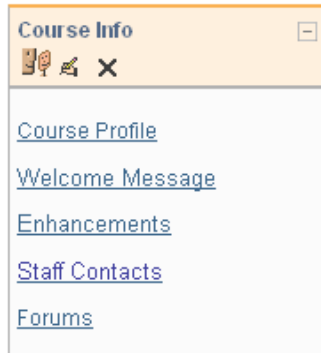
## Instructions:

Your Moodle course site should now use the left hand side of the screen for “consistent” – whole of university blocks. The right side is for you to place ad-hoc blocks you have identified as being beneficial to the delivery support for your course. The centre of screen is obviously (as always) for your course content.

Components identified in the diagram above as “**manual**” will have the words populated within the block, but the lecturer will need to create documents or assessment activities and then hyper link. It was deemed that this is a reasonable requirement as creating these types of documents and assessment activities are core Moodle skills academics should already have and not necessarily require additional training support.

One easy suggestion for using the Consistent blocks is to create a hidden block in the centre of your Moodle course. You may need to go into settings and add one more block in the centre of your screen to do this. Remember to hide this block, but make sure the individual documents you store in this block are not hidden.

## Course Info block



The “Course Info” block correlates to the items you are asked to include in your Moodle site as part of the CQUni minimum standards requirements as outlined in the TDR checklist.

You need to create pages and links for

- Welcome Message
- Enhancements
- Forums

The “Course Profile” and “Staff Contacts” links are pre-coded for you. However if any of your details in “staff Contact” need updating and you can’t remember how to do that, visit this link - <http://moodle.cqu.edu.au/mod/resource/view.php?id=724>

### Welcome Message:

Create a html page in your hidden block and call it “Welcome Message”.

If you do not remember how to create a .html block, go to this link - [http://moodle.cqu.edu.au/file.php/241/Compose\\_a\\_web\\_page\\_demo.swf](http://moodle.cqu.edu.au/file.php/241/Compose_a_web_page_demo.swf)

Place your welcome message content in this document then hyperlink it to the “Welcome Message” word in the “Course Info” block.

That’s it – first one done.

It doesn’t get any harder than this.....hyper linking.....! ☺

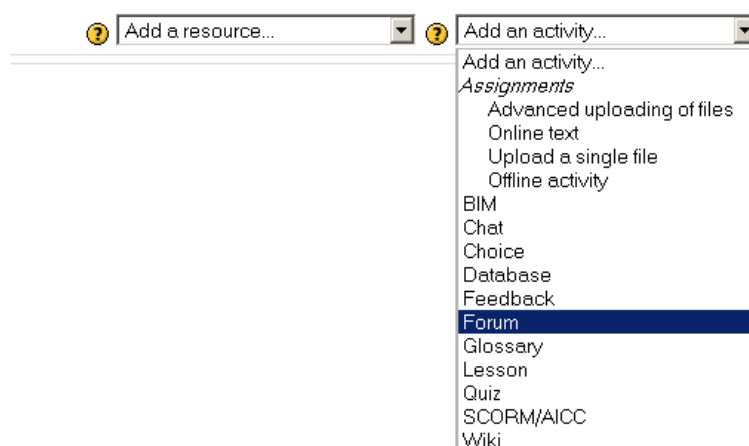
## Enhancements:

Repeat the same process for “Enhancements” as you did for “Welcome Message”. A suggested approach to “enhancements” is to use a 3 column table as per example below.

Feedback Comment	Lecturer Response	Action
The Conceptual framework pdf file in the week 11 materials will not open and there is not enough details to try and find it some other way.	Agreed – Link out of date.  Also found some other broken links in course.	All links fixed for Term 1 2011 offering
Next feedback comment - Etc.		

## Forums:

From within your hidden centre block first you need to create the forum. Do this by selecting “Add an activity” drop down menu and select “Forum”. Then fill in the page that opens up to name your forum. I personally like to select “**Force everyone to be subscribed?**” and then “**Yes, forever**”.



You of course will have your own opinion regarding what you think is optimal in terms of forum subscription settings. One of the single biggest complaints from students however, in the 5000 comments on file from course feedback in Term 2 2010 at CQUni, is that their lecturer never answers anything on the forum. By forcing the subscription to “Yes, forever” in

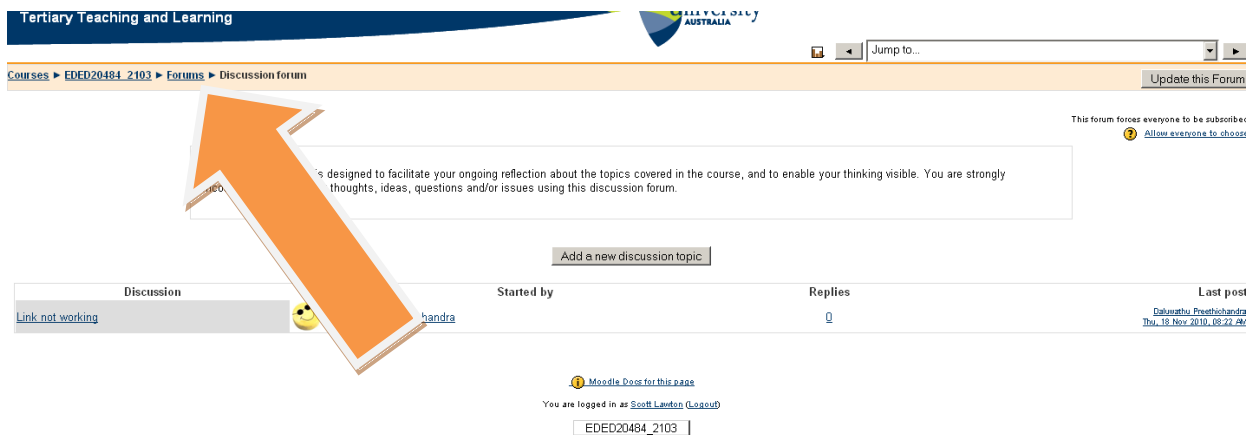
my own courses, both the students and myself get an email sent to us when there is a post. I can then screen posts from my email client and decide if I need to respond, as much as I have many other emails (and don't "want" any more of them!), teaching is core business. If I get an email it reminds me to visit the forum. I may not remember to check the forum if I don't get an email as perhaps I am not in the Moodle site every day to check the forum. This way it puts it both in my face and the response in the student's face!

Once you've saved all your forum set-up details you need to link to the "Forums Index Page" – be careful here this is a bit messy!

First – Locate the forum you just created in your hidden centre block and click on it.



Second – The page leading to your forum will open – in the "breadcrumbs" click on the word "forums"



Third – Now the forum index page will open and look something like this.

**General forums**

Forum	Description	Discussions	Subscribed
<a href="#">News and announcements</a>	General news and announcements	0	Yes

**Learning forums**

Section	Forum	Description	Discussions	Subscribed
2	<a href="#">Discussion forum</a>	This discussion space is designed to facilitate your ongoing reflection about the topics covered in the course, and to enable your thinking visible. You are strongly encouraged to share your thoughts, ideas, questions and/or issues using this discussion forum.	1	Yes

Moodle Does for this page  
 You are logged in as [Scott Lawton \(Guest\)](#)  
 EDED20484\_2103

Copy the URL from your browser – while that link is saved as a “copy” now navigate back to “Course home page” and hyper link that copied url link to the word “Forums” in your consistency block. The reason for using this index page link is in case you create any more forums (many courses use more than one) This index page will then be the consistent jump-off point for students to see ALL of your forums.

That’s your “Course Info Block” finished..... 😊

## Assessment Block

The assessment block is for **formal assessment items** only. If you have practice quizzes etc in your course that do not contribute to grades please put them somewhere else in your course.



You will notice that you have been provided three assessment items. Many courses have 2 assignments and an exam; however you may have more or less than this. If you have less, delete the items you don't require, if you have more, simply add as many items as you need by editing the block. It is critical that you keep the wording as is for consistency's sake.

These instructions will cover creating and linking

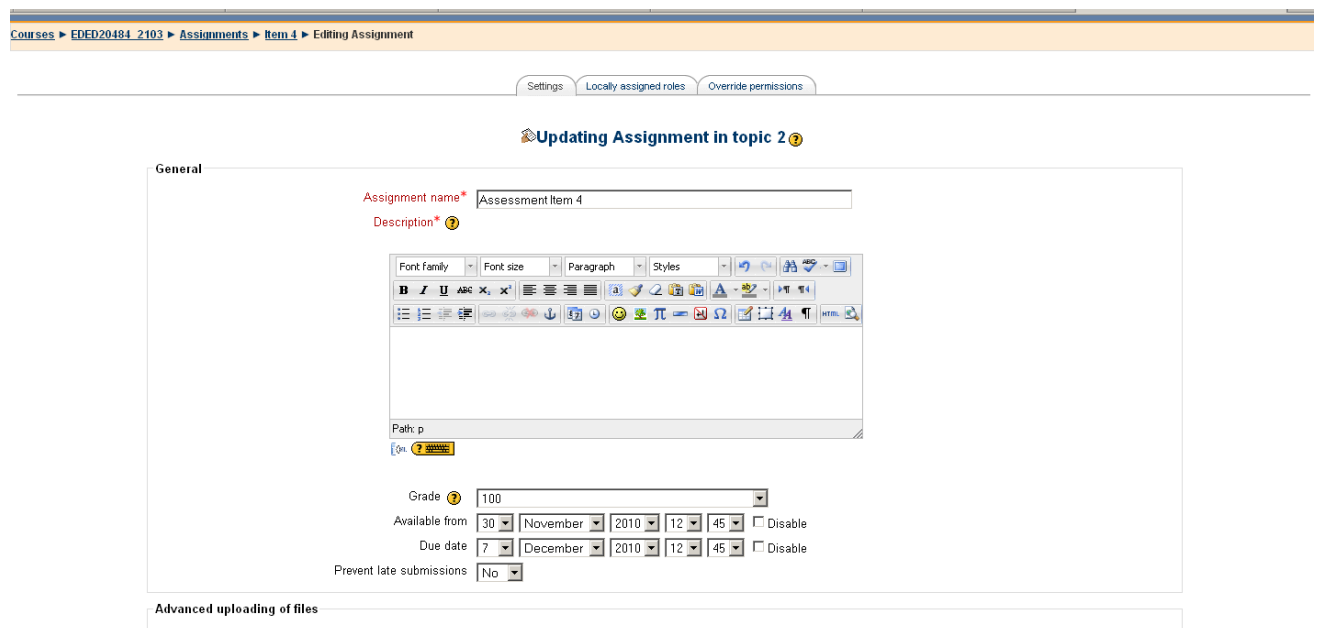
- electronic submission items
- non-electronic submission items
- exams

Student feedback is becoming more vocal about the technology being present to submit electronic assignments and that mode **not** being offered – students increasingly don't understand why hardcopy is still required. They are also complaining about the “grades” functionality in Moodle being inconsistently used across different courses.

## Electronic submission items

First create your assignment in the hidden centre block via “**Add an activity**” and “**Advanced uploading of files**”.

This page will open up –



Name the assignment **EXACTLY** the same as your link “Assessment Item XX”.

In the WYSIWYG create 3 headings –

- Topic
- Assignment Resources
- Submission

Under “Topic” heading - cut and paste the assignment question/task either from the course profile or (preferably) from the Word document you uploaded to the TDR to create your course profile.

At “Assignment Resources” heading - this where you include any supporting links, document links (such as templates) , embedded videos, MP3's and so on. Students should not have to go anywhere else on your course web site for any resource directly related to the successful completion of the assessment item – this entire page is to be a “one stop shop” for assignments.

Under “Submission” heading – clearly state how the assignment is to be handed in. For example “**Submit your assignment electronically using the link below in .doc format**”

Be specific about file types and sizes here if you have special requirements.

Your page should look like the one pictured here.

### Assessment Item 1

**Topic:**

Assessment Item 1 — Annotated bibliography  
Due date: Spm, Friday, Week 5 ASSESSMENT  
Weighting: 30%  
Length: 2,000 Words 1

**Objectives**  
This assessment item relates to the course learning outcomes 1 & 3 as stated on page 1 of the Course Profile.

More specifically, the objectives of the assignment are for students to:

- demonstrate contemporary reading around course content;
- become familiar with literature relevant to the course content;
- become familiar with the course terminology;
- develop skills/demonstrate ability to critically analyse literature;
- produce an annotated bibliography.

**Detail of Assessment Criteria**  
Your annotated bibliography should contain between 10 and 15 annotations. It will also have an Introduction like a pre-ambles, synopsis or overview explaining the reason, methodology and/or purpose of the selections you have made. Literature chosen must be those that you would find useful as a resource, you are not analysing and stating why resources are not useful to the course context. Annotations are typically 100 – 150 words, and your Introduction should be approx 250 – 500 words. Assignment length is approx 2,000 words but must not exceed 2,500 words.

The annotations should demonstrate your ability to perform contemporary reading around the content themes, theories or ideas related university teaching and learning. They should demonstrate relevance and contain a balance in time stability of the literature selected. Many educational theories and writings are not contemporary (e.g. 1950's, 1930's even the 1800's) yet remain highly relevant; however your annotations should focus on the more recent literature (less than 15 years – the more recent and relevant the better), yet some older literature is certainly acceptable. The key here is balance if older literature is used. If using older literature a 70/30 split of new to old would be a guide for the purposes of this bibliography. 100% of newer sources is also acceptable.

Annotations must not simply be a book review of just content, but need to demonstrate your ability to critically evaluate and analyse the literature and relate its relevance to the course content. It would reasonably be expected that the literature discovered in this assignment would be of relevant influence to your further assignments in this course, though will not be just resubmitted as such. The wording of the requirements of this assignment is designed to allow you some flexibility in your choice of literature and presentation format. Please read the supplied "helpful links" below for annotated bibliography instructions.

Referencing and academic form is important you may choose your preferred referencing format e.g. Harvard, APA etc. The requirement is that you are consistent and accurate in your chosen format. If you don't have a preference, use Harvard.  
Referencing Link <http://cic.csu.edu.au/FC/WWW/newer/newinfoTopic=919>

**Submission:**  
Submit an electronic version of the assignment in .doc or .docx version via the below submission link.

**Assignment Resources:**

The below links provide information on how to prepare and write an annotated bibliography:

<http://www.writing.uconn.edu/academic/academic-how-to-write-an-annotated-bibliography/>  
<http://www.library.cornell.edu/dl/units/research/bib128.htm#what>  
[http://www.cuny.edu/cunylib/annotated\\_bib.html](http://www.cuny.edu/cunylib/annotated_bib.html)

**Submission:**

Submit your assignment electronically below in .doc format.

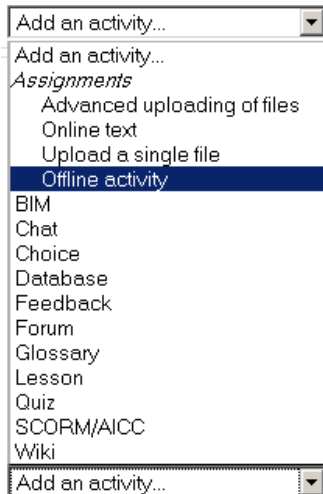
After saving your edits then hyperlink the assignment item activity URL to the appropriate item number in the “Assessments” block.

To ensure you have set your page up correctly switch to “student view” then click on the (now working) assessment item number link in the assessments block to display the assessment item. It should look like the screen capture above with the text you just edited and saved (at arrow A) AND the submission link at the bottom of the page (at arrow B).

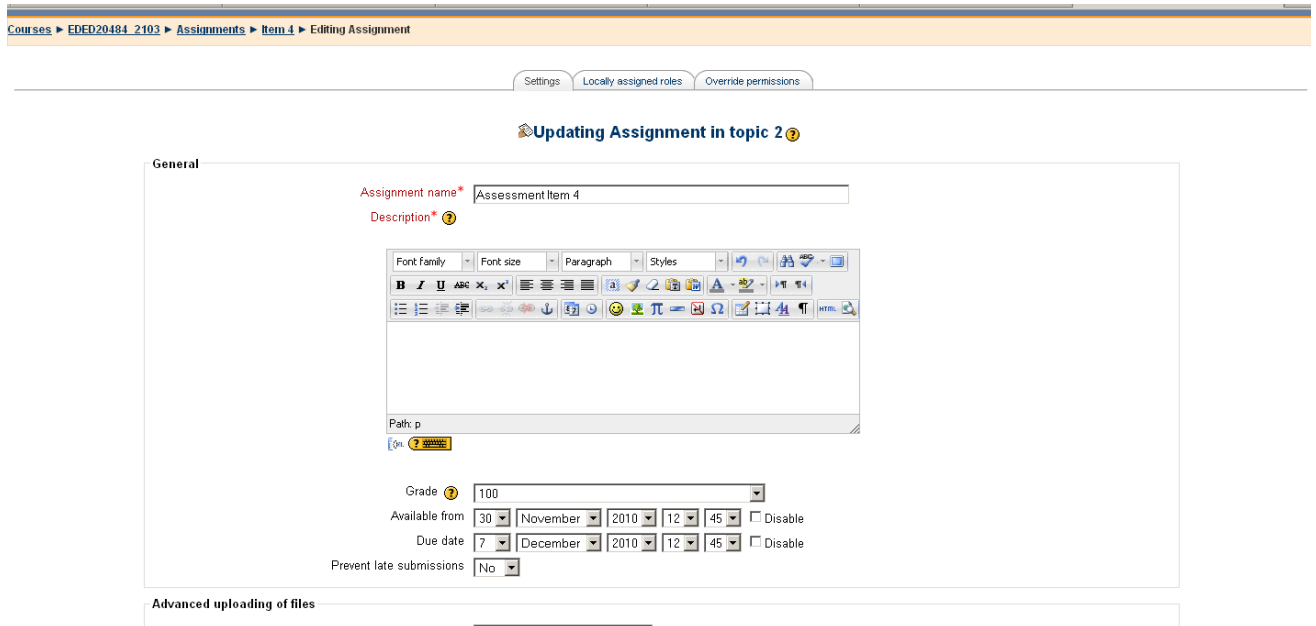
Repeat for any additional electronic submission items.

## Non-electronic submission items (Hardcopy)

First create your assignment in the hidden centre block via “Add an activity” and “Offline Activity”.



This page will open up –



Name the assignment **EXACTLY** the same as your link “Assessment Item XX”.

In the WYSIWYG create 3 headings –

- Topic
- Assignment Resources
- Submission

Repeat the steps for listed on page 10 above to populate under each heading. The only visible difference when you have completed this section is there will NOT be the assignment

submission at the bottom of the page. If you require clarification – call Marie Foreman on Ext 2824.

## Exams

If one of your assessment items is an exam you can simply create an .html document with the following headings and suggested text.

- **Details** – E.g (copy over details from course profile) This course will have a 2 hour closed book exam during the standard end of term exam period. The exam will be worth 50% and you must pass both the exam and the assignments to achieve a pass mark in this course.
- **Exam Advice** – This section is for specific details about which chapters/ case studies to study and information about the types of questions to expect (Eg multiple choice, essay etc). Often the exam advice is not posted until later in the term as stipulated by your faculty therefore until you are ready to post details of the exam advice use the following words

- **“Check back here in Week X for specific details about the exam”**

At the agreed week of posting the exam advice simply go and edit this page and include the full details under this heading and resources if you need to add any at that stage.

- **Exam Resources** – Here you should place any case studies, samples, URL links, document links, templates etc directly relevant to the exam.
- **Past Exams** – use the following words.....

If you have past exams available – [“Link to past exams web site”](#) (then make that phrase a hyperlink to this URL

<https://signon.cqu.edu.au/amserver/UI/Login?org=cqu.edu.au&goto=http%3A%2F%2Fpastexams.cqu.edu.au%3A80%2F> ) OR if you don't have any past exams write -

**“There are no past exams available for this course”**

Your page should have the following headings once complete.

### **Assessment Item X – Exam**

#### **Details**

#### **Exam Advice**

#### **Exam Resources**

#### **Past Exams**

## Course Banners

Many staff use a course banner – and have become quite emotionally attached to them! This is fine. However the banners currently being used by staff are extremely large and create both a “real-estate” management issue as well as redundancy issue in terms of re-stating the course name and code already stated in both the branded top section and generally also your Welcome Message. Redundancy is an extraneous cognitive load item that can be managed.

In the coming months the branded top sections real-estate demands are being re-considered as well as the redundancy of course name information more generally.

What you can contribute to this real-estate management is to reduce your banner size to a recommended 660 x 65 pixels. Contact Rolley Tickner at [r.tickner@cqu.edu.au](mailto:r.tickner@cqu.edu.au) if you need help in redesigning your current large banner to the new slim-line banner. The picture below shows a Moodle site with the slim-line banner.

Of course if you currently don't use a banner there is no need to do so.

BE WHAT YOU WANT TO BE

EDED20484 - Term 3, 2010  
Tertiary Teaching and Learning

CQUniversity AUSTRALIA

You are logged in as [Scott Lawton](#): Student (Return to my normal role)

Courses ► EDED20484\_2103 [Return to my normal role](#)

**Course Info**

- [Course Profile](#)
- [Welcome Message](#)
- [Enhancements](#)
- [Staff Contacts](#)
- [Forums](#)

**Assessment**

- [Assessment Item 1](#)
- [Assessment Item 2](#)
- [Assessment Item 3](#)

**Topic outline**

**EDED20484**  
Tertiary Teaching and Learning

**3 Lessons**

**Introduction and Learning Theories**  
Weeks 1, 2, 3

The materials covered in Weeks 1-3 relate to Learning Outcomes 1 & 5, and in a lesser way 2 & 3 (see Course Profile, p. 1). This will help to jump start your ideas on areas to investigate further for sources of references for your Assignment 1 - Annotated Bibliography. Your task is to watch the videos on this page, as well as to explore the weblinks. Remember there is 3 weeks worth of material here!

**Latest News**  
(No news has been posted yet)

**Info**

Graduate Certificate in Tertiary Education - Click on logo to go to web site for more info.  
Make sure you use the **Joint Procedures Manual** for information on how to enrol in partner institutions

**GCTE**  
Graduate Certificate in Tertiary Education

## Guidelines

In order to create an uncluttered Moodle page the following points are offered as good practice.

- Use a sans serif font for on-screen text reading (e.g Arial or Moodle default Trebuchet)
- Use the “native” font size in the Moodle WYSIWYG – don’t resize fonts (generally speaking) as this makes it more difficult when system upgrades are implemented. Use “Heading 1”, “Heading 2”, “Normal” etc when requiring different fonts sizes
- Limit the use of various fonts one any one page. Where possible use one font.
- Limit the use of coloured text. Don’t use more than 3 colours on any one page. Colour code only for meaning – Not decor.
- Use a different coloured and sized heading from reading text.
- Leave plenty of white space surrounding text, paragraph breaks, pictures and perimeters. The more text on a page the more difficult it is read and the extraneous cognitive load level increases. Break up text if getting too busy or “blocky”.
- Use pictures where relevant, but sparingly and with direct relevance – they will distract otherwise and increase extraneous cognitive load.
- Group related items together and hyperlink within pages or documents when referring to other elements necessary. Students should not have to hunt all over a course page in a disjointed fashion to find related content.
- Short sentences are important - keep it to one instruction per sentence.
- Be succinct, use plain English where possible.
- Consider the efficient use of hyper media and its distracting capacity if over used (May cause split attention and/or a build up extraneous cognitive load if not used discretely) More for “the sake of it” is not better value for the student.
- Align your curriculum to your assessment – relevance and pragmatism maintains simplicity for both students and yourself as site manager.
- **Staff engagement** is more important than a pretty site (as per 7 principles) – this is a main complaint from students via feedback in 2010.
- Minimal clicks to enter a resource (resources should be accessible, quickly and easily) on the course-page. Locate all related in a “one stop shop” as much as is possible.
- Use the 3 click rule – **nothing!** (No page, no resource, no download, no action!) should be more than 3 clicks deep from your home page.

- Consider ways to maintain simplicity in your forum structure – particularly if using multiple forums.