

Good Practice Design Guidelines

Outline:

The purpose of this guide is to provide guidance on good practice design and a checklist to aid in benchmarking the design of your subject in the LMS. A requirement of the University is that all subjects on the LMS comply with the [Subject Minimum Online Presence Policy](#). Additionally there are many design considerations that will improve the student experience of your subject. The Good Practice Design Guide outlines design approaches and includes a handy checklist to improve your design.

How long will this take?

The subject checklist will take 1-2 hours to complete, depending on the complexity of your subject.

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Orientation & Subject Minimum Online Presence

To assist you in meeting La Trobe University [Subject Minimum Online Presence Policy](#), use the checklist below and ensure you refer to the policy for further details. Provide a welcome message for your students and a news forum for communication of subject updates. Ensure contact details and protocols are outlined.

Checklist

- *Subject Includes subject offer details including Subject Coordinator and Subject Instance Coordinator contact information.
- *Subject includes subject description
- *Subject includes a contextualised response to feedback received through the SFS survey on the previous instance of subject
- *Subject includes Intended learning activities and assessment aligned to Learning Outcomes
- *Subject includes required and recommended learning resources and technologies
- *Subject Includes assessment and feedback summary
- *Subject Includes links to student support services and library
- Welcome message is included
- A News Forum for communication of subject updates is Included
- Expectations for communications timelines and protocols are clearly outlined

*Meets standards for [Subject Minimum Online Presence Policy](#)

Structure and Sequence

Ensure your students can locate information in your subject easily and understand the context and actions they need to take. Provide clear and consistent content structure and make use of section headings. Number or clearly sequence activities for students and provide clear, unambiguous guidance. Provide an estimate of the time required for students to complete learning activities.

Checklist

- Subject is organised into appropriate topic, weekly or other logical sequence
- There is a clear, consistent and meaningful sequence or reading order within sections
- Required and supplementary learning materials are clearly indicated
- Instructions are provided, well written and free of grammatical errors
- Estimated time on task is provided

Design and Navigation

Minimise cognitive load on students by using topic structure, lessons, pages and books for content items. Use navigational aids such as icons or numbering. Be consistent when naming files and links. Divide large section of information into manageable sections using white space for visual relief.

Checklist

- Design elements such as colour, font and icons are consistent
- Downloadable files are clearly named and use a consistent naming convention
- All buttons and links function as expected
- Link descriptions clearly describe content
- There is a clear heading and sub heading hierarchy with consistent titles

Interactions

Set clear expectation on communication timelines (eg. your response time to emails, students expected response time in forums). Ensure students are aware of appropriate standards and expectations for communication e.g.: Netiquette, models and examples, timing and frequency of communication. Provide opportunities for students to get to know each other and interact with teaching staff.

Checklist

- Students are advised of appropriate standards and expectations for online communications
- Students have opportunities to get to know and interact with teaching staff
- The subject contains resources or activities designed to build a sense of community
- The subject offers opportunity for learner to learner interaction and collaboration

Assessment and Feedback

Use the LMS Gradebook to communicate marks and feedback to students throughout the teaching period. Provide a clear summary of assessments, clear instructions and criteria for assessment. Provide students the opportunity to review their performance and assess their own learning e.g.: through pre-tests, self-tests and reflective assignments. Ensure students are aware of subject grading policies, assessment weighting and late submission policy. Indicate clearly when feedback will be provided to students and provide multiple opportunities for students to provide their feedback on the subject. Include a feedback summary and response to prior student feedback (SFS).

Checklist

- Assessment and Intended Learning Outcomes are clearly aligned
- Subject grading policies are clearly stated
- Subject includes frequent and appropriate methods to assess students' mastery of content
- Criteria for assessment is clearly articulated (rubrics, examples)
- Students have the opportunity to review their own performance through self-assessment with constructive feedback
- Students have access to an up-to-date gradebook
- Students have multiple opportunities to provide descriptive feedback on the subject
- Feedback summary and response to prior student feedback is included
- How and when feedback on assessment will be given to students is clearly indicated
- Submission and logistics for assessment is clearly indicated

Learning Resources and Activities

Ensure you provide a variety of engaging resources that facilitate a mix of modes, interactions, communication, collaboration and support student learning and engagement. Provide opportunities for students to develop higher order thinking and problem-solving skills. Include real world examples such as experiential learning, case students and problem-based activities. Where available consider incorporating open education and free learning materials. The purpose of the activity should be clear to students and where possible provide guidance to students on expected time on task.

Checklist

- Subject offers access to a variety of modes of content, interaction communication and collaboration
- Subject provide opportunities for students to develop higher order thinking
- Subject provides authentic learning experiences
- Subject uses open and free learning materials
- Content is up to date
- Reading lists used where applicable
- Time on task is indicated to students
- Subject materials and resources include appropriate citation and /or copyright license status or permission where applicable

Audio Visual

Keep your presentation bite sized to aid engagement and keep file sizes manageable for uploading and downloading. Consider which video or audio style supports your learning outcomes and ensure your video is in a universal format and hosted through a supported environment.

Checklist

- Multimedia resources are clearly labelled
- Multimedia resources are downloadable
- Videos are scalable, controllable and do not autoplay
- Video is audible and comprehensible
- Video is in a universal format e.g.: MP3, MP4
- Large files are identified for learners to consider download times

Subject Tools and Technologies

Clearly state when requisite skills are required for technology tools and provide support for their use through scaffolded activities (orientation, practice, application) and resources. Ensure the choice of tool supports the learning outcomes of the activity and frequently used tools can be easily accessed. Make sure students are aware of any policies governing the use of technologies, particularly where third party technologies are being used (e.g. copyright, conduct, privacy).

Checklist

- Skills development for use of technology tools is supported
- Skills required for participation in subject activities scaffold in a timely manner
- Technology tools are easily accessed
- Subject provides guidance to students on use of third party technologies (see [Good Practice for Incorporating Web applications in your Teaching](#)).
- The choice of tool supports learning outcomes
- Tools support student-centred and active learning opportunities

Accessibility Standards

Enhance the accessibility of your subject with some easy to implement steps such as minimizing the use of tables especially for layout and ensuring they are correctly formatted if required. Provide text alternatives for non-text elements such as alt tags for images, transcripts and/or captioning for video. Where possible provide text in HTML format or ensure you use appropriate headings in other documents and provide native formats where PDFs are provided.

Checklist

- Where tables are used the title, summary description, table header rows and columns are clearly labelled
- Contrast between text and background allows for content to be easily read/viewed
- Screen text is resizable
- Alt text is provided for images and content used as navigational aids
- Text content is available in an easily accessed and readable. Preferably in HTML format or, where possible, provide original PowerPoint or Word file formats in addition to PDF
- There is no flashing of rapidly moving content
- Links and URLs open in new windows
- Text alternatives such as transcripts and captioning (where applicable) are provided

Mobile Standards

Many of the good practice tips in the guide so far are also applicable for mobile devices and similarly many mobile standards will enhance the overall design and accessibility of your subject. The most important tip for enhancing your subject for mobile accessibility is to test the subject on a mobile device.

Checklist

- Hyperlinks are provided for embedded content or limit use of embedded content
- Subject avoids use of tables and multiple level of indents
- Text is not placed to right or left of images
- Width (i.e. of tables and images) is specified in percentage rather than pixels
- Subject is tested on mobile devices
- Apps required for mobile use are available on Android and iOS mobile platforms
- Use of content that doesn't work on mobile devices (e.g.: Java, Flash) has been minimised
- Where file attachments are necessary accessible PDF format has been used, as much as possible
- Content is divided into small manageable segments

End of guide

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