Student Experience Committee

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NILE design standards, expectations and guidance for an excellent student experience.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to set out and clarify the minimum standards expected of NILE module and programme sites for the 19/20 academic year. The standards are intended to support and guide staff in their use of NILE, and to help make best use of the NILE templates that are created for all modules and programmes each year. In addition to the guidance provided in this document, support to meet the minimum standards is provided by the Learning Technology Team in the form of quarterly scheduled training sessions, 1:1 meetings, and bespoke training sessions.

While the basic structure of the 19/20 NILE templates has not changed significantly, colleagues are asked to comment on the inclusion of a direct link to the Collaborate virtual classroom tool which is proposed in all site templates for modules taught on-campus. It is suggested that this link sit between items 4 and 5 in NILE sites. (see section 2.1 below).

2. NILE design standards

The design standards have been split into 'required' and 'advised'. Required standards should be present in all NILE sites; advised standards are additions that may add extra value to the student experience and further enhance the site. These standards have been developed and refined over the years in response to student feedback and in consultation with students and staff. In addition, the standards are in accordance with the principles and practices of active, blended learning, and adherence to them will help to ensure a consistent student user experience in NILE. Where site content currently exists outside of these menu items, we ask tutors to consider rationalising them into these areas.

2.1) Minimum standards and guidance in all NILE module sites

	NILE menu item	Information provided within each item (right hand-side frame of NILE)
1	About this module [Entry Point]	**Required** This area will be used to welcome students to the module and outline the key content. Important information relating to the module, not covered elsewhere in the site, should be in this area (e.g. learning outcomes, timetables and deadlines). **Advised** Information on induction may also be provided within this area along with an introductory video from the tutor or the team. If there is a downloadable module guide, then it should be in this area and kept consistent with the rest of the site.
2	Announcements	**Required** Clear details about any information, changes and updates that students need to be aware of.
3	Contacts	**Required** Full contact information for the key people who may need to be contacted by students enrolled onto the module, along with how to make an appointment

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		and guidance on how soon students can expect a reply - it doesn't have to be straight away, as long as they know not to expect that! Some questions may be easily answered by peers, so encourage students to post general or frequently asked questions to a discussion forum, to which staff should also contribute. Avoid the use of email to answer general questions multiple times. Other useful contacts are available via the Support for Students link (see item 9 below). **Advised** Ideally, there should be a photo along with the key contacts to assist with identification.
4	Module activities	**Required** This is an area for material and activities relating directly to the module. Digital resources – (such as presentations, lecture recordings, hand-outs, etc.): tasks for sense-making (e-tivities etc.): - linked to blogs, discussion forums, and other appropriate tools, a place for online discussion, analysis and reflection are essential in an ABL context. Learning activities, including those that students are expected to complete outside the classroom (e-tivities, etc.), provide a structure or scaffold for learners to make meaningful use of the content. Remember it is what students do with content that is important to support the achievement the learning outcomes. Sensible use of folders (e.g. week by week or topic by topic) is necessary to create a logical layout for students to be able to find materials, as this will be the area where students will spend most of their time. Most recent resources should be clearly labelled or near the top to avoid scrolling. **Advised** Adaptive release may be used to display content selectively as needed. Consider using 'bite sized' chunks of material (video, audio or text) rather than overly long content.
NEW	Virtual classroom [Optional tool]	**Required** This link is unavailable to students by default, but can easily be made available by staff. While use of this tool is optional, if it is used then it is important to provide students with clear instructions about how to access and use the virtual classroom in advance of their first session. **Advised** Staff using a virtual classroom for the first time are advised to attend a training session on how to use and get the best from virtual classrooms.
5	Reading and resources	**Required** The key reading material for the module with links to the source location. The Aspire online reading list software will be used as the University's standard tool for creating and accessing reading lists. **Advised**

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		This area may include video guides, subject specific resource sites, and other useful links.
6	Assessment information	**Required** Assessment briefs and assessment-specific materials will be uploaded here. This area should note the assignment deadlines for the module (submission and feedback dates) including re-sit dates. Where there is more than one assessment, then a folder should be created for each assessment, with the assessment code at the start of the title e.g. ES1. Details on the procedure for feedback on assessment should be clearly displayed. Assessment arrangements for students with identified additional needs should be included here. The following prompts will be included in this area where appropriate: a guide on word count, weighting, deadline and return date. It should be made clear which learning outcomes the assessments refer to. There should be a link to the University grade criteria. If you are using rubrics then it should be clear where students may access these prior to submission. Assignment submission points **should not** be included in this section.
7	Submit your work	**Required** A clear location for students to go to in order to submit assignments. Only submission points should be included here.
8	Feedback and grades	**Required** This is a NILE tool area into which tutors **do not** have to put customised content. Grades from the Grade Centre will be displayed to students here.
9	Support for students	**Required** This link points students to non-module specific support available to them at the University and includes links to other relevant resources.
10	Support for tutors	**Required** This link is unavailable to students but provides tutors with additional support and links in developing the site.
11	Response to feedback	**Required** Module Leaders will use this section to inform students taking this module how the module has been enhanced in response to feedback from students in last year's cohort (to close the feedback loop).
12	External examiner	**Required** This link is unavailable to students. It provides material for External Examiners and a quick link to the content areas containing information regarding lists of students who require review.

2.2) Minimum standards and guidance in all NILE programme sites

	NILE menu item	Information provided within each item (right hand-side frame of NILE)
1	Your Programme [entry point]	**Required** This area is used to welcome students to the programme and to outline the key features of the programme, including a link to the programme specification and award map, description and guidance on module choices, explanation of accreditations, work-based learning opportunities, how Changemaker is embedded and the assessment schedule. A statement on ABL is included in the template *Throughout this programme you will encounter student-centred activities that support the development of subject knowledge and understanding, independent learning and digital fluency. Face-to-face teaching on your modules is clearly linked to your learning activity outside the classroom. You will also find opportunities to develop learner autonomy, Changemaker attributes and employability skills.* **Advised** An introductory video from the programme leader or the team is also encouraged.
2	Announcements	**Required** Welcome (back) and clear details about any information, changes and updates that students need to be aware of, such as messages about placement, graduate posts, further study, transition to next year of study, NSS, and upcoming special events.
3	Contacts	**Required** Full contact information for the key people who may need to be contacted by students enrolled onto the programme (programme leader, personal tutors and module tutors), along with how to make an appointment and guidance on how soon students can expect a reply - it doesn't have to be straight away, as long as they know not to expect that! Some questions may be easily answered by peers, so encourage students to post general or frequently asked questions to a discussion forum, to which staff should also contribute. Avoid the use of email to answer general questions multiple times. **Advised** Ideally, there should be a photo along with the key contacts to assist with identification.
4	Discussion Areas	**Advised** A communication area that contains three discussion areas which may be used within the programme: • Introductions (unavailable by default - an area for students to introduce themselves)

		• Student Advocates (available by default – allows students to interact with their course advocate) • FAQs (unavailable by default - an area for students to post questions regarding the programme)
5	Your Learning	**Required** Contains information about academic and study support services and resources available to students, including Learning Development, Academic Librarians, Skills Hub, UNPAC, and Top Tips for Good Academic Practice.
6	Your Voice	**Required** Contains information about Student Advocates, the Students' Union. STaR Awards, module evaluations, the NSS, etc.
7	Your Wellbeing	**Required** Contains information about the services available to support student wellbeing, including links to Support and Services, Your Health & Wellbeing, Academic Advice Managers, Financial Guidance Support, and International Student Support.
8	Your Career	**Required** Contains information about the Changemaker Hub and the Alumni Association.
9	Your Personal Tutor	**Required** Programme Leaders will upload lists of Personal Tutors for students on this programme (Staff name mapped to student number). Student names should not be listed.
10	External Examiner Report	**Required** Link to the relevant External Examiner report for that programme and the teams' response and actions

3) Minimum standards for *layout and format* in <u>all</u> NILE sites

	Standards	What it means to you
1	Consistent colour scheme and layout	**Required** Readability of the site and the overall design and accessibility (see below) must be considered.
2	Content accessible to a range of devices	**Required** Standard accessible formats must be used, such as PDF or Word for text-based documents, PowerPoint for presentations, JPG for photos, PNG for graphics, and Kaltura for audio and video clips. Avoid formats that require specialist software or plug-ins, unless they are required for the subject of study.

3	Content accessible for all students	**Required** Materials must be created with accessibility in mind. For example, Word documents must be formatted using styles and headers to ensure compatibility with screen readers and easy conversion to PDF. Tutors must ensure that all content being used is accessible in all countries where students are based.

4) ABL expectations for <u>all</u> NILE sites

	Expectations	What it means to you
1	ABL	**Required** Students should be provided with a range of active learning opportunities not only in class, but on all module NILE sites. Active learning opportunities require that students are expected to do **more than accessing information**: activities or e-tivities, for use in and outside the classroom, should provide learners with a suitable scaffold, i.e. an opportunity to make sense of the content they engage with. The tasks can be either individual or group based. NILE should not be used as a content repository. Critically, each module should be taught as a **single, blended unit**, and **not** as two separate tiers (face-to-face on the one hand and online on the other).
2	Staff visibility	**Required** Within ABL, some of the contact time* will take place outside the regular teaching slots, typically on an asynchronous basis (i.e. not in real time). Academic staff must be **active, visible and engaged** throughout. This means participating actively in discussion forums, commenting on blog posts, making regular announcements about how the class is progressing, and in general, taking an active role in the formation of a community of learning. * https://www.northampton.ac.uk/ilt/current-projects/defining-contact-time/
3	Synchronous and asynchronous technologies	**Required** While a proportion of the teaching and some of the NILE-based learning activities will take place asynchronously (through e-tivities that make use of tools such as discussion forums, wikis and blogs to allow learner flexibility), consideration as to the use of synchronous (real-time) sessions is recommended. Blackboard Collaborate is the UoN-supported tool to enable staff and students to engage remotely in real-time sessions.