



Biostatistics Collaboration of Australia

INTRODUCTION TO ONLINE LEARNING – getting started in eLearning

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Introduction to eLearning

eLearning (online management system) facilities will be the main communication tools used by unit coordinators. eLearning unit sites are likely contain study materials, submission facilities for assessment, solutions to exercises, and student/student and student/coordinator interaction via communication tools (Discussions)

This document shows you how to access eLearning and contains directions for help and advice.

Getting started in eLearning and where to go for further help

The BCA eLearning facility

The BCA eLearning site is accessed through the University of Sydney (USyd) server, via the eLearning project team, called Sydney eLearning. (You will see a USyd logo on the initial log-in pages.) The BCA eLearning facility is, however, independent of the policies and procedures of this university. This facility applies equally to all BCA consortium universities.

Note: The current eLearning package (Learning Management System [LMS]) is called CE6. The suppliers are an amalgam of the LMS suppliers WebCT and Blackboard. Both these names will appear in various site functions from time to time but eLearning is the generic name used by the Sydney eLearning group.

Getting started

Following is a brief introduction to the main eLearning facilities. Further guidelines can be found on the USyd eLearning site for students, called **Student Express**, see page 5 for details.

Logging in to eLearning

Please follow the guidelines about logging in provided below.

1. **Open a browser**
2. **Go to the eLearning page, at:**

<https://learn-on-line.ce.usyd.edu.au>

(please note the 's' on https!!)

3. **Select the Non-Unikey link**

Two login options are available on this page, **it is important to choose the “Non-Unikey access” option.** (The “Unikey access to your eLearning sites” option is for students using University of Sydney intranet access. This option will NOT work with your login name and password for BCA units.)

***BCA students enrolled at the University of Sydney please note:** the Non-Unikey access applies when you are accessing BCA units. If you are doing any additional internal, non-BCA units, you will need to use your USyd Unikey login supplied by the university.

4. **Do a Browser Check**

Clicking on the Non-Unikey link will take you to a page containing entry fields for your username and password. This page also contains information about browser setup and a Browser Check link. Your online access will not work properly unless your browser is correctly configured. **We strongly advise that you do the Browser Check.** It only takes a minute and may save a lot of time later on. For example, if you have installed a pop-up blocker, you will need to turn it off while using the eLearning system.

Note: See “Troubleshooting” on page 6 for important information about Java, downloading files and firewalls.

5. **Enter you Username and Password**

Before the start of semester, newly enrolled students will receive a “welcome” email from the BCA coordinating office. This will include information about usernames and passwords.

6. **The log-in procedure will take you to the *My eLearning Sites* page** where you should find site links to your chosen units for the current semester.

Getting down to work

You **will not be able to access your sites until your 'student profile' has been loaded into eLearning unit sites**. Although this may be done before the start of each semester, unit sites will not be active (ie. contain any materials or messages) until the start of semester, at which time a unit Study Guide and the first study module/s should be available. Unit coordinators will send an initial welcome to students via email and you will receive hard-copy study notes in the mail, generally during the first week of semester.

Note – Students studying Epidemiology (EPI), Survival Analysis (SVA) or Bioinformatics (BIF): The BCA eLearning facilities are NOT used for Epidemiology (EPI) (whether delivered by distance via the University of Queensland OR by distance or on-campus at your home university), OR for SVA and BIF (which are delivered by Macquarie University). Unit coordinators for these units will advise about online facilities.

HELP: if, at the start of semester:

- you experience difficulty logging on;
OR, once you have logged on to the *My eLearning Sites* page,
- you do not find the units that you have enrolled in; or you find units that you have not enrolled in (note EPI, SVA and BIF do not use BCA eLearning facilities)

...please contact the **BCA coordinating office** (at bca@ctc.usyd.edu.au) or the **eLearning Helpdesk** (at sydney.elearning@usyd.edu.au)

Note – changing enrolments: If you change your unit choices at your home university, it's important to also notify the BCA coordinating office so that these changes can be updated in your eLearning profile.

Navigation

Once you have successfully logged on, the first pages you come to will be a *My eLearning Sites* page and a *Content Manager* page, each page being accessible by a tab on the top right-hand-corner.

The My eLearning Sites page: Your name will be listed under the tab. You will find links to the units (subjects, courses) in which you have enrolled in the central column of this page.

Various “desktop” functions are also available on this page, via links to pages where you can make notes and list personal bookmarks, along with a calendar and a results repository [My Grades]. (If visible, ignore the Campus Bookmarks and Campus Announcements links as these are University of Sydney specific.)

The Content Manager page: this page contains a file management facility where you can access unit files and upload or download files from/to your computer.

Navigating in unit sites

Clicking on the name of the unit in your *My eLearning Sites* page will take you to the Home page of that unit. You'll find icons for various documents, pages and tools within the unit site. A number of options for posting materials are available to unit coordinators. The Home Page may contain a selection of documents or sub-folders containing links to documents; alternatively, they may have been posted in Learning Modules in the **Course Tools** menu on the left-hand-side of the page.

The path of screens that you have accessed is displayed in a bar at the top of the page (this path is sometimes called “breadcrumbs”). You can navigate through pages that you have accessed, or back to the home page, via these links.

You can also navigate via the Course Content tool in the **Course Tools** menu.

TIP: Wherever you are located in the unit site, clicking on the **Course Content button** in the Course Tools menu (look for the **house icon**) will take you back to the unit Home page.

The **Course Tools** menu also contains tools such as Discussions and Assignments.

Commonly used tools for communication and assessment

Communication

Communication tools are an essential component in a distance education environment. The facility (tool) used by coordinators in eLearning is called **Discussions**, which enables students to interact with each other and with unit coordinators.

Guidelines for how to use Discussions can be found on the Student Express site (for directions to this site, see page 5 of this Guide). Coordinators and staff at the BCA coordinating office may also use email and phone for important messages.

You will find advice in Study Guides about how communication will be handled by coordinators of each unit.

Some unit coordinators will use **pop-up announcements** in the eLearning sites to announce current news items (eg. when assignments and solutions are posted). In order for these to be visible on your system, the Pop-up Blocker must be disabled. If you aren't sure whether this has been done, it's advisable to do a browser tune-up. A link to this is available on the eLearning login page.

Assessment

Most coordinators will post assessment items in the Assignment tool. Exercises, assignments and take-home exams (where applicable) can be downloaded by students, and completed assessment tasks can be posted to coordinators online. Coordinators can release marks to individual student eLearning sites.

Unit coordinators will explain how this facility will be used.

Assessment guidelines

A guide to assessment procedures, the **BCA Assessment Guide**, will be included in study materials sent to you by coordinators. Please read this guide as it contains important information about assessment requirements. It will help to ensure that your assessment items are correctly formatted and successfully submitted.

The guide is also available at www.bca.edu.au/currentstudents.html

Enquiries about units or courses

Enquiries about subject matter within units should be directed to unit coordinators. For general academic advice about your study, contact the program coordinator at your "home" university. A current list of unit and program coordinators is available at www.bca.edu.au/contact%20us.html

Student Resources

Student Resources are available at www.bca.edu.au/currentstudents.html

The site contains information for your coursework. It includes links to online guides, textbook and software requirements, assessment procedures, and contact details for unit and program coordinators, and consortium universities.

The site is updated regularly, however, if you notice any outdated information or have suggestions for improving the site, please contact BCA admin at bca@ctc.usyd.edu.au

HELP

Help within eLearning

If you are in an eLearning session and you need help with things like navigating in your unit site or how to use particular tools, the Help button at the top of each page will give you quick, simple answers to most straightforward problems.

eLearning (WebCT) Helpdesk [Sydney eLearning]

For general troubleshooting assistance you can contact the Helpdesk at sydney.elearning@usyd.edu.au

or go to www.usyd.edu.au/elearning/student/trouble/email_us.php

Ph: 02-9351 8728

BCA help

If you are unable to log on or you are unable to access the Helpdesk for other enquiries, please contact the BCA coordinating office:

bca@ctc.usyd.edu.au Erica: 02-9562 5076 Andrew: 02-9562 5324

eLearning Guides

Student Express (USyd eLearning site)

www.usyd.edu.au/webct/student/index.shtml

This site contains some good guidelines. It is divided into three main parts:

Getting started - technical information on what you need to study online

If you are having problems using some parts of the eLearning sites, it could be due to your browser settings. This page contains information about browser set-up requirements, along with links to various plug-ins and free downloads for things you may need, eg Acrobat Reader and Java.

Guides – information about the eLearning interface and tools

- Ignore the first link (called: Logging in to USyd eLearning). This contains information that is only relevant to University of Sydney Students, using Unikey access.

BCA students enrolled at USyd please note: you must use your BCA Non-Unikey log-in to access BCA sites.

- The following 2 links contain useful general guides (that are available to download in PDF format):
 - ***My eLearning Sites (Using the eLearning Environment)***
 - ***Inside My Site***

Most of the information in these guides is of a general 'how to' nature. Ignore occasional USyd or "campus information" references and any email instructions.

- Under **Important Tools** you will find two further useful guides for tools that are commonly found in BCA unit sites:
 - ***Assignments***
 - ***Discussions***

Note:

- The Assessment (as opposed to "Assignment") tool is not commonly used, though coordinators may use it on occasion for survey tasks.
- The email function is not currently available to BCA students

Help - solutions to some of the more common problems people have using eLearning

The **Common Problems** link contains useful troubleshooting information about a range of commonly encountered problems, and **Email us** is a way to register your enquiry with the Helpdesk.

Apart from these 2 links, ignore everything else on this page as it is mostly USyd specific.

Troubleshooting

JAVA: Not everyone's favourite facility, but a necessary one in eLearning in order to enable a number of essential functions.

At your initial log in, you will be prompted to accept a Java Security Certificate. You must click **Yes** or **Always** to ensure that functionality using Java will work properly in your browser.

A note about JAVA versions that are supported in CE6:

Any Java version that works with Windows XP should be okay.

Earlier systems may not be compatible with versions beyond 5.1. (If required, instructions for uninstalling later versions and installing 1.4.2 (JRE 1.4.2_09) can be found here:

www.webct.com/tuneup/viewpage?name=tuneup_browser_troubleshoot#jre_errors

At any time whilst using your computer, ignore, any Windows prompt messages that may pop up on your screen, asking whether you want to update Java, or better still disable the update notification in 'Internet Options'.)

Downloading files

Saving files to your computer (downloading)

Viewing PDF files and downloading them to your computer: Many of the documents posted by coordinators in unit sites are in PDF format (portable document format). If you have trouble viewing the files you may need to download the latest version of Acrobat Reader. This is available free from the Adobe website: www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html

If PDF files open directly within the site, they will do so within an Adobe window. **To save a copy to your computer in PDF format** (as opposed to html), click the "save" button (pictured below) in the top left hand side *within* the Adobe window.



Note: You will need to rename the file before you download it. (By default it will have the name of the online path! This is a current eLearning bug! A patch may be forthcoming.)

Downloading other files: To save files in their original format, eg Word, Excel or zip files (as opposed to html files), choose the "save" option from the dialogue box that appears when you double click on the file, and save to your computer.

If you experience difficulty downloading files in eLearning, here are a few suggestions:

- Cut-and-paste the contents into Notepad and save this to your computer
- Open up eLearning in Firefox. This browser doesn't have the same "issues" with file downloading.
- Ask the unit coordinator to repost the document/s in a zipped format.

Firewalls

If you can't log on, your IT setup may have a firewall installed. (You may be diverted to a non-working page or you may get a "User Authentication Failed" message.)

Try these solutions (in order of listing):

1. Make sure that you clicked the Non-Unikey access link
2. Check your login name and password with the BCA coordinating office
3. If 1 and 2 are in order and you still can't get in, you may be blocked by a **firewall**. Many institutions have these security systems in place.
 - The first thing to do is to check the address bar at the top of your browser window. If the URL (web address) has a colon and the numbers 8900 (":8900" without quotation marks) in the address, delete these and try again.
 - If you still can't get in, you may have to ask your IT team or ISP (internet service provider) to give you clearance to the eLearning site.

The best laid plans ☹...

If, after trying out the above options, things still refuse to cooperate, stop before it ends in tears and contact the Helpdesk! sydney.elearning@usyd.edu.au

Glossary

Breadcrumbs:

A path of screens that users have accessed, which displays beneath the global Menu bar.

Browser: The tool by which you can access addresses, site, or URLs on the Internet or Web, eg Internet Explorer and Firefox.

Cache: This is a memory space on your computer that keeps data relating to pages, which you have recently accessed. These pages are kept in your computer's memory for a time, allowing quicker access to the page. Your computer will not actually send a request to the Web to re-view this page – it will instead look in your cache to find the record of the page you have viewed. If you are concerned that the site information is not current, you may need to clear you cache. Instructions for this can generally be found in "Internet Options" in the Tools menu.

Computer mediated communication (CMC): This is any method of communication, which is carried or mediated through a computer. Examples of these are chat rooms, email and discussion/bulletin boards.

Course: This is the term used in eLearning (and some universities). It is equivalent to a BCA unit (of study).

Discussions: The tool which allows messages to be posted as well as files attached and other web addresses (URLs) to be posted and accessed.

Global ID: This is the term used to describe the username which you will be known as while you use the eLearning server.

Grades: marks (for exercises, assignments and take-home exams) as opposed to overall unit result.

Instructor: Referred to at different universities as a course, unit or subject coordinator or lecturer.
BCA term: unit coordinator.

Login/on: The method via which you gain access to a secure site within the Internet.

My eLearning: The unified interface from which you can gain access to any of the eLearning courses which are hosted on the BCA server.

Self-Registration: If you have previously used eLearning as a study tool at a specific university, you may have had access to a self-registration facility. (Courses which have a key icon beside them in the course listings available on the University's server allow you to register yourself as a student and therefore to access and use the site.)

The BCA eLearning does NOT offer this facility. All students are registered centrally

Server: a central computer which 'hosts' software and then enables it to be accessed by other computer-users.

Subject: In Discussions: found in the 'posting a message screen' in Discussions. This becomes a 'Title' when it is posted to a topic area in Discussions.

Thread: In Discussions: when you post a message by clicking on a subject/title, then you are posting to that "thread" of the Discussion. This means that when messages are threaded they follow a line of Discussion. By selecting threaded from the menu it is possible to follow a line of discussion even when postings are not entered in sequence.

Topic: In Discussions: an area within the Discussions, eg "Module 1". The unit coordinator creates these and can control access to topic areas. Topics can be public or private, if a topic is unlocked, it is noted in a column on the initial Discussion screen.

Unit: BCA term for unit of study. At different universities this may be called a subject, unit, course or paper - referred to as a 'course' in eLearning.

Username: This is the name you login with when you wish to gain access to the eLearning server. Within eLearning your username is also known as a global ID.