



## **Biostatistics Collaboration of Australia**

### **INTRODUCTION TO ONLINE LEARNING – getting started in eLearning**

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## Introduction to eLearning

eLearning (online learning) facilities will be the main communication tools used by unit coordinators. eLearning unit sites are likely to provide access to materials, assessment submission facilities, solutions to exercises, and importantly, student/student and student/coordinator interaction via communication tools.

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. (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.

### 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. In order for your online access to work properly, your browser will need to be 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**

Prior to 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 along with a Student Resources site.

## 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) (which is delivered by distance via the University of Queensland 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.

**Please contact the BCA coordinating office or the WebCT (eLearning) Helpdesk if, at the start of semester:**

- you experience difficulty logging in;
- or, once you have logged in 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 and SVA do not use BCA eLearning facilities)

**NOTE – changing enrolments: If you change your unit choices at your home university, it is 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]. (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. Pages may contain sub-pages or a selection of documents. The path of screens that you have accessed (called “breadcrumbs”) is displayed in a bar at the top of the page. 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 on the left-hand-side of the page.

**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.

Unit materials may be located in Learning Modules within the Course Tools menu, or within folders on the Home page, or both (via links).

Your unit coordinator will explain how they expect the site to be used for their unit.

## 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. posted solutions). 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/currentstudentsinfo.htm](http://www.bca.edu.au/currentstudentsinfo.htm)

### 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 <http://www.bca.edu.au/unitunicontacts.htm>

### Student Resources

All students have access to the "Student Resources" eLearning site.

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

The site is updated regularly. If you notice any outdated information or have suggestions for improving the site, please contact BCA admin at [bca@ctc.usyd.edu.au](mailto: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 [USyd]

For general troubleshooting assistance you can contact the Helpdesk at [webct.helpdesk@usyd.edu.au](mailto:webct.helpdesk@usyd.edu.au) Ph: 02-9351 8728

### BCA help

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

[bca@ctc.usyd.edu.au](mailto:bca@ctc.usyd.edu.au) Sarah: 02-9562 5324 Erica: 02-9562 5076

### eLearning Guides

#### Student Express (USyd eLearning site)

[www.usyd.edu.au/webct/student/index.shtml](http://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.  
**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 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.
- 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 all 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.

After logging in to the learning System, you will be prompted to accept a Java Security Certificate. You must click **Yes** or **Always** to ensure that learning system 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](http://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'.)

## Saving files to your computer

**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 Acrobat Reader. This is available free from the Adobe website: [www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html](http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html)

PDF files will open 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 [Jan 08] 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. Apparently this browser doesn't have the same "issues" with the files.
- Ask the unit coordinator to repost the document/s in a zipped format.

## Firewalls

If you are unable to log in (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 talk to your IT team or ISP (internet service provider).

## 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! [webct.helpdesk@usyd.edu.au](mailto:webct.helpdesk@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. The most common ones are Internet Explorer and Netscape.

**Cache:** This is a memory space on your computer that keeps data relating to pages, which you have accessed. When you 'open' a page, your computer reads a lot of data that it then converts into images and words for you to view. These pages of information are kept in your computer's memory for a time. By doing this, you can easily return to a page you have accessed. Your computer will not actually send a request out onto the Web to re-view this page – it will instead look in your cache to find the record of the page you have viewed.

**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:** BCA term: unit (of study). Referred to at different universities as a course, unit or subject.

**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)

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

**Login:** 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 or course. 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.