

Digital Education Service

Digital Education Systems Update

September 2021

As we look to the new academic year, this newsletter introduces the new tools that have been implemented and summarises changes to tools and systems since March 21. You can find out more about any of the news items by contacting the team at digitaleducationsystems@leeds.ac.uk.

A [Digital Education Systems usage report](#) has now been published and provides an overview of the usage of Digital Education Systems in use during the 2020/21 academic year. It seeks to provide readers with a school or departmental breakdown of use where possible. Readers can filter the interactive dashboard to see statistics for a particular month, system or school/department.

Staff can now request new digital education systems and tools using a dedicated form on the Digital Education Systems help site. [Digital Education Systems - Request Form](#).

Click on a link below to jump to the relevant part of this document:

New tools

[Buddycheck](#)

[Labster](#)

Existing systems and tools

[Ally](#)

[China Connect](#)

[Collaborate Ultra](#)

[Gradescope](#)

[LinkedIn Learning](#)

[Mediasite](#)

[Microsoft Class Teams and Office 365](#)

[Minerva](#)

[Padlet](#)

[Top Hat](#)

[Turnitin](#)

[Zoom](#)

Key project work

[Athena - Replacement for Blackboard's Open Edu platform\)](#)

[Digital Assessment](#)

[EPortfolio](#)

[Learning Analytics](#)

[Minerva Migration Project](#)

Further information and where to find out more

New Tools

Buddycheck

Buddycheck is a peer review system which can be integrated with Minerva modules. Staff add a link to Buddycheck in their Minerva modules. Staff then visit the link to create a corresponding Buddycheck course which will sync staff/student enrolments from your Minerva module. Staff can then create peer evaluations in the Buddycheck interface.

The University will pilot Buddycheck for **one year** as part of the Digital Assessment project. The integration will be in place for the start of the 21/22 academic year.

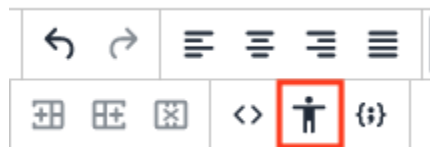
Labster

Labster is a growing science education platform focused on high-quality virtual simulations to help students visualize scientific concepts and practice laboratory skills. Labster is a 3D lab training software delivers interactive virtual training across STEM and other subject areas, and it will be available soon via Minerva. It delivers interactive, virtualised laboratory simulations across STEM and other subject areas to offer an immersive learning experience with over 200 virtual labs covering General Biology, Introduction to Chemistry, Microbiology, Genetics, Cellular and Molecular Biology, Organic Chemistry, Engineering and more.

Existing systems and tools

Ally

The Minerva content editor now features an accessibility checker. For text directly entered into Minerva, staff can now click the accessibility checker icon in the content editor toolbar to get quick feedback on any accessibility issues with the content they have entered.



More information on the content editor accessibility checker can be found on the [content editor \(tiny\) support website](#).

[Ally support guidance for staff](#)

China Connect

The China Connect service is available for all taught students (UG and PGT) studying in China. The service helps boost performance of key University systems. Using China Connect, students will notice an increase in speed and reliability when accessing key University systems including Minerva and Mediasite.

State firewalls, plus an increased number of students accessing our systems from China as a result of COVID-19, resulted in reduced connectivity, particularly as students are accessing learning at peak times. China Connect offers better connectivity, and initial feedback from students is that performance of Minerva and Mediasite is improved when using it.

For more information visit [IT Knowledge Base article, China Connect](#). This also includes a list of the University of Leeds systems that work with China Connect (called a 'whitelist'). Staff who have identified a system currently inaccessible or which suffers from slow performance by staff/students based in China, and is needed for Learning and Teaching activities can make a request for it to be added to the whitelist by completing the request form available on the [Leeds IT Self Service website](#).

Collaborate Ultra

Collaborate Ultra has seen recent improvements to functionality including gallery view (where up to 25 videos can be seen at once) and a new Whiteboard tool.

[Collaborate support guidance for staff](#)

Gradescope

Gradescope has continued to be used – particularly for STEM based subjects – for both formative and summative assessment in 20/21. There have been some recent improvements to functionality, including the ability to set custom release and due dates for individual students.

Please submit any requests for training or support to the IT Service Desk, or see our help guides for more information.

[Digital Practice website: Gradescope](#)

[Gradescope Getting Started Guide](#)

[Digital Education Systems Team: Gradescope Channel](#)

LinkedIn Learning

All our staff and students have free access to LinkedIn Learning and you'll find a growing selection of University of Leeds content created by staff. You can [become a curator on LinkedIn Learning](#) allowing you to easily create, share, and understand the impact of your learning programme. This is available to all staff and access can be requested at LinkedInlearn@leeds.ac.uk.

LinkedIn Learning also offers a free content mapping service for the University of Leeds staff. LinkedIn Learning content can be mapped directly to a syllabus, a framework or list of topics. Requests can be sent directly to LinkedInLearn@leeds.ac.uk.

Alumni access is available by request contact Tom Davies for further information t.p.davies@leeds.ac.uk.

[LinkedIn Learning pages](#)

[IT Knowledge Base: LinkedIn Learning](#)

[Digital Practice website: Learning Technologies](#)

Mediasite

Mediasite has recently been updated to version 8.0 which introduces a range of backend improvements, such as reduced upload size and more accessible themes. Some key takeaways are Mediasite Channels which now replace the Media area in Minerva with a new, modern look and more mobile-friendly interface. Furthermore, Mediasite Mosaic is now the default recording application for Mediasite recording and is available to install from the Microsoft Store on Windows and MacOS.

A change to the Lecture Capture Deletion and Retention Policy was implemented from 1 September 2019. The policy now states that scheduled lecture recordings are only retained for a period of two years. This applies to recordings created prior to, and after, 1st September 2019. [Staff news article – changes to Mediasite.](#)

[Digital Education Systems Team: Mediasite Channel](#)

[Mediasite IT Knowledge Base Articles](#)

Microsoft Class Teams and Microsoft 365

Usage of Microsoft Teams has continued to be extremely high given the current working situation. Microsoft Bookings was successfully used for COVID-19 testing for students. Webinars in Teams was rolled out in May 2021. It allows webinars for up to 1,000 attendees and includes custom registration pages and attendee emails. See the IT knowledge base article for [full information about the feature.](#)

Microsoft have announced that MS Stream will be discontinued in the near future. They have allowed UoL to continue to use Stream for the 21/22 academic year but we will need to make arrangements in the coming year for the discontinuation of MS Stream.

[IT knowledgebase article on Class Teams](#)

[Digital Practice website: Virtual Classrooms](#)

[Digital Education Systems Team: Microsoft 365 Channel](#)

Minerva

(See Key Projects update below)

[Minerva Help Guide](#)

Padlet

Padlet has been used extensively in 2020/21, as a result, the licence has been renewed for 2021/22. Usage of Padlet peaks during weeks when there is teaching which illustrates that it is being used for Teaching and Learning activities. To help support staff and student users, several new self-help guides have been published on the DE Systems Help website. It also has a growing user base amongst colleagues involved in process mapping and the team have been supporting the Continuous Improvement Team to provide technical assistance during process mapping training sessions.

[DE Systems Help Website: Padlet Staff Guides](#)

[DE Systems Help Website: Padlet Student Guides](#)

[Digital Education Systems Team: Padlet Channel](#)

Top Hat

Dates for the Level 1 Foundations of Active Learning Certification training have been advertised, there are currently two dates available in September (7th and 14th). Allocated on a 'first come, first served' basis, sessions explore how incorporating Top Hat into teaching delivery will enhance students' learning experience. The training has received excellent feedback from colleagues attending previous sessions. [Book your place.](#)

The team are also offering 20 minute bookable 1-2-1 regular support sessions. Colleagues who have specific questions or want guidance on how to incorporate the tool into their teaching or assessment activities may find a 1-2-1 session helpful. [Book a 1-2-1 support session.](#)

All staff can request help to create content in Top Hat by using the unique concierge service. The form users need to complete to make requests for help has recently been updated to make it easier to complete, you can find a link to the new form on the desystemshelp.leeds.ac.uk website.

Throughout May-August, the team have supported schools who opted to use Top Hat for summative online assessments. The team has also attended a number of faculty specific meetings to advise on how Top Hat can be used to support teaching delivery.

Refreshed and new self-help guides for staff and students have been published on the DE Systems Help website.

[DE Systems Help Website: Top Hat Staff Guides](#)

[DE Systems Help Website: Top Hat Student Guides](#)

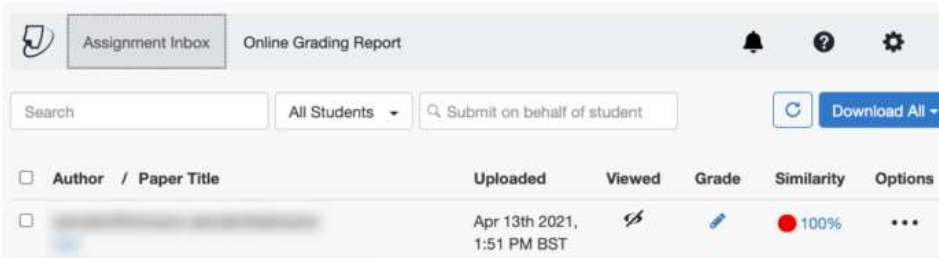
[Digital Education Systems Team: Top Hat Channel](#)

Turnitin

Turnitin is an assignment submission, text matching, grading and feedback tool integrated into Minerva and Pebblepad.

As part of the move to SAAS delivery of Minerva, A new LTI based integration method has been deployed for all new 2021/22 Turnitin assignments.

The new integration is very similar to the existing functionality with some interface changes:



<https://www.leeds.ac.uk/vle/staff/assess/turnitinLTI/>

Where there is a sound pedagogical reason for doing so (e.g. for examinations for the 20/21 academic year, taking place in August/September), it will still be possible to add Turnitin assignments using the old method until Monday 27th September, the beginning of the 21/22 academic year. After this point all new Turnitin assignments must utilise Turnitin LTI.

Any assignments which use the historic Turnitin integration can still be used by staff and students to mark/access submissions if required.

Key changes information can be accessed here:

<https://desystemshelp.leeds.ac.uk/staff-guides/turnitin/turnitinkeychanges/>

Zoom

A direct integration with Zoom and Mediasite was setup which means that scheduled meetings recorded to the Zoom cloud can be automatically imported into Mediasite. This allows Mediasite to be a central hub for your learning and teaching content and link content to modules in Minerva. More information and guidance [can be found here](#). Zoom are continually improving their security and we have put in processes to monitor any 'At Risk' meetings and alert users. However, we'd also like to take this opportunity to remind you how to [secure your Zoom meetings](#) to prevent uninvited users from accessing the meeting.

[IT Knowledge Base: Zoom - General Guidance, Access and Conditions of Use](#)

[Digital Practice website: Virtual Classrooms](#)

[Digital Education Systems Team: Zoom for Educational Use Channel](#)

Key project work

Athena

Athena is Leeds' new course delivery platform for external learners. Based on the same Blackboard technology as Minerva, Athena is currently delivering a small number of courses across a range of disciplines and user groups (e.g. CPD for dentistry professionals, pre-sessional studies for Lifelong Learning students). Still in advanced beta, work continues to understand resourcing and licensing implications ahead of more widespread adoption of Athena.

Digital Assessment

The DAaL (Digital Assessment at Leeds) project has completed a review of the functionality of the institution's current assessment tool functionality along with a staff survey about their use of tools. The project has identified two areas of assessment to focus on: i) the capability of assessment tools to work "off-line" should a student have connectivity issues during an assessment and ii) exploring opportunities to improve the academic integrity of "on screen" assessment such as ID checks, monitoring the keyboard or browser behaviour of students during an assessment (remote proctoring) and remote invigilation. The project has confirmed that the term "digital assessment" applies to any summative assessment taken using a web enabled device rather than if the assessment is on or off campus.

A pilot of an end to end system – [Inspira](#) – is currently being scoped. Activity with students will begin in semester 1.

ePortfolio

LeedsforLife Refresh: Support for the LeedsforLife Academic Personal Tutoring has now transitioned to PebblePad. The LeedsforLife Strategy Group have led a [LeedsforLife Refresh](#) which including working with a panel of subject matter experts to develop a LeedsforLife workbook for all taught students. The workbook introduces reflective practice to the APT experience and enables students to track, review and reflect on their progress throughout their academic career. This was deployed in August to coincide with admissions confirmation. Staff in OD&PL have delivered introductory training to c650 staff on the new APT model of delivery including MS Personal Bookings, the LfL Workbook, Learning Analytics and sense of belonging. Support materials for tutors have been collated into a PebblePad portfolio.

Leeds and You Guide: co-launched with the LeedsforLife Workbook a guide for new and returning students was deployed via PebblePad to c34k students in August 2021.

In the School of Medicine, all medics and physicians associates will now use PebblePad to record and evidence their learning. This is required to ensure robust verification to the medical governing bodies.

Learning Analytics

StREAM@Leeds will be launched to all students ahead of the start of teaching in September 2021. Students will be able to access a dashboard which will illustrate their engagement with a range of digital education systems including virtual classrooms, library resources and Minerva. The system will provide an engagement score. Students can choose to compare their data with the “cohort average” of peers.

Each student’s Academic Personal Tutor will have access to their data. Students are invited to discuss any concerns about their data with their tutor. Student Success Officers (SSOs) in each Faculty will be able to review the engagement of students and provide timely interventions and support where required. The SSOs will be supporting the project to plan and implement the roll out of no or low engagement notification during the semester.

Minerva Migration Project

Minerva was successfully upgraded to the latest version of Blackboard in summer 2021. The upgrade delivers several user benefits, with the new version of Minerva being more mobile friendly; providing a cleaner and more intuitive interface with significant accessibility improvements; implementing user engagement functionality (such as Activity Stream, which provides students with alerts regarding upcoming assessment deadlines alongside an at-a-glance view of recent changes made to their modules); and, crucially, no further requirement for downtime and a decrease in the risk of unplanned downtime.

Following migration, teaching areas, such as modules and organisations, retain the classic Blackboard look and feel, however, further changes will be delivered to Minerva during summer 2022 with the move to Ultra course view.

[For Staff: News item](#)

[VLE Service blog: Minerva upgrade posts](#)

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- Regarding new and current systems and services, email us at digitaleducationsystems@leeds.ac.uk. For information on DE System Projects email desystemprojects@leeds.ac.uk.
- The new (still being developed) Digital Education Systems Help Site has information and guidance on the use of digital education systems tools and systems. <https://desystemshelp.leeds.ac.uk/>
- The Digital Practice website provides staff with guidance in delivering online teaching, and introduces the core tools and systems. <https://digitalpractice.leeds.ac.uk/>
- Join the MS Team for Digital Education Systems (instructions below). This is open to any/all University staff; there are channels for each of the digital education systems – you can post queries or get updates on what's happening with existing systems and in-progress projects. [Link to the Digital Education Systems MS Team](#)
- Come along to a meeting of the Digital Education Systems Group (DESG) – a monthly run-down of what's been happening and what's coming up. Meetings last for 1 hour – you can find the calendar appointments for these meetings in the 'DESG' channel of the Digital Education Systems MS Team.
- Each month we create a highlight report for each digital education system and each active project – these contain information about key issues, usage statistics for the system, and upcoming work. You can access these highlight reports by joining the MS Team for Digital Education Systems.
- Join the Digital Education Systems User Group (DESUG). The DESUG is open to all University staff and students and enables systems end users to propose enhancements to our teaching and learning systems, directly shaping the future product roadmaps of our digital education systems. Meetings are held 3-4 times a year; attendees receive updates and can feedback on recent and future systems' enhancements and digital education system projects. If you would like to be added to the Digital Education Systems User Group, please [request to join the DESUG Team](#).