

Canvas Central Newsletter

Issue 2
June 2025



elearning.bmh.manchester.ac.uk/canvas



FBMH eLearning Community (Viva Engage)

In this issue

- **Course Unit Standards & Canvas Template** Ali Nutter
- **Canvas Basics Training** Megan Broadbent
- **Canvas Accessibility** Rachel Hayes
- **Training Update** Katie Newton
- **Meet the Team** Katie & Chris
- **Meet the Student Advisors & Student Update** various
- **What Else Can the FBMH eLearning Team do For You?** Lisa Donlan
- **Quick Wins** Megan Broadbent

Preparing for the Canvas transition

We have a dedicated web page for the University's replacement for Blackboard, including the implementation timeline, training and support, access to self-led learning, and details of how to access your Canvas sandbox to familiarise yourself with our new CLE.

The FBMH eLearning Team has developed a training plan tailored to your role and/or tasks you currently carry out in Blackboard. We will be offering both scheduled training and "just-in-time" support (such as drop-ins and Live Chat support) to meet your needs.

You'll receive details on how to book on your courses at the right time, but if you have any questions about this process, please get in touch.

Contact FBMH eLearning

Course Unit Standards & Canvas Template 2025

What are the 2025 Pedagogical Standards and who devised them?

The Course Unit Standards will complement the high-quality in-person teaching and learning opportunities we provide in BMH and have been developed to support you when building and populating your courses in Canvas. Senior Academics, digital learning specialists, and students from across the University worked together to co-developed the Course Unit Canvas Standards to guide academics in achieving the best outcomes for students.

Key Principles

The University of Manchester Canvas content must demonstrate the following:

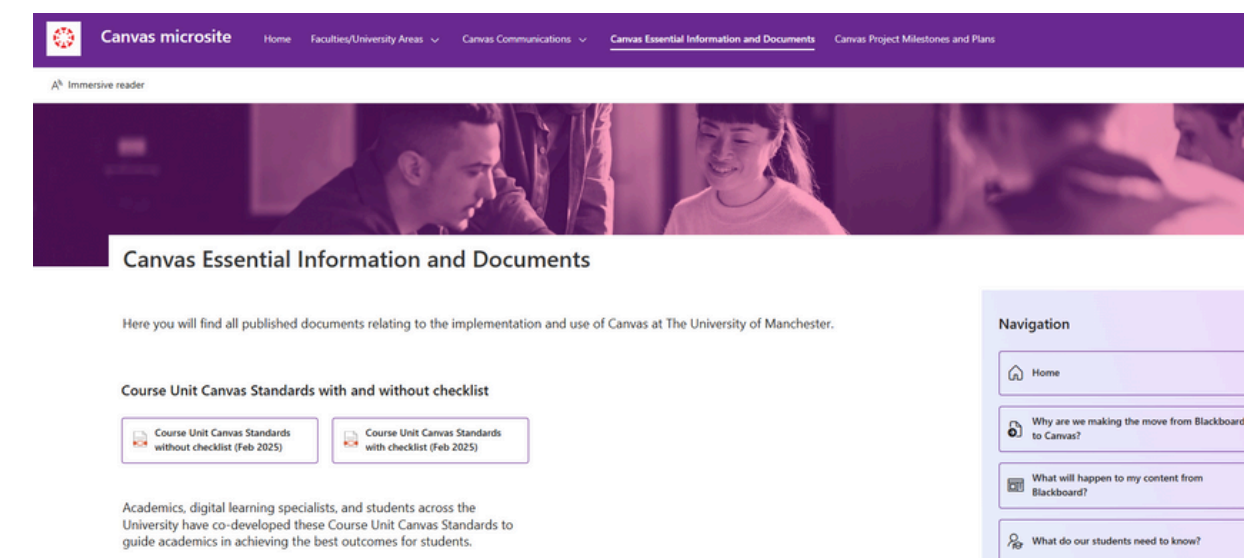
Consistency and Predictability: We must ensure a consistent presentation of information and navigation across course units as students have identified this as an issue. This consistency reduces extraneous cognitive demand required to navigate and interpret the central learning environment (CLE). By enabling our students to focus their energy on meaningful learning, we create a more equitable learning experience.

Explicit expectations: These standards ensure that we provide information to support a consistent student experience and are explicit about how they should engage with learning to be successful. Students with greater social and academic capital are often better equipped to interpret implicit expectation. Inclusive education involves making explicit our assumptions, implicit messages and values (Haggis, 2006).

There are both ‘required’ and ‘desirable’ standards; some of the ‘desirable’ standards will grow into ‘required’ as time goes by.

However, considering the transition to Canvas it was felt best to stagger the implementation of the standards and in doing this we prioritised the key standards first for 2025-26.

The Canvas Course Unit Standards can be found on the [Canvas Microsite](#).



Course Unit Standards & Canvas Template 2025

The course template in Canvas

The Canvas Template, created to meet University agreed Course Unit Standards, will be applied to all new course spaces to guide and support colleagues through the build. In BMH we have gone further by including in our Assessment & Feedback section (see image to the right) of the template to include actions from our NSS data. This is again to provide a Consistency and Predictability experience and to be Explicit with the unit expectations.

As the eLearning team train you in the process of constructing your courses in Canvas, you will actually be working within the template, as it was applied at the same time your Canvas course shell was created. All that is required for you to meet the standards is for you to populate the template sections. We would therefore, not recommend deleting elements of the template as you risk falling below the minimum standards.

We do recommend working with our team on the desirable standards now and over the next academic year, drop ins are a great place to do this.

1-3pm Monday to Friday
Stopford 1.060 (drop in), 1.061, 1.062, 1.063

Assessment & Feedback

View all pages

Assessment & Feedback

[Include (required):]

- details of summative assessments, including weightings;
- details of marking criteria;
- deadlines for submitting summative assessments;
- The date by when marked assessments will be returned and what will be available (e.g. provisional marks and/or feedback);
- details of any formative assessment and how feedback will be provided;
- information about how and where to submit assessments. This should be available from the beginning of the unit (this can be a holding message with date of when it will go live);
- a forum for asking questions in which answers are visible to all students and educators on a Unit.]

Consider including (desirable where appropriate):

- a video screencast narrating the assessment information;
- assessment exemplars, or an example of a similar assessment.]

Summative Assessment

| Assessment code | Type | Description | Weighting % of unit | Deadline | Feedback | Eligible for DAS coursework extension |
|-----------------|------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|--------------|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| [BMH10101.1] | [Essay based learning] | [Assessment description] | [20] | [Date @ 2pm] | [Online by Date] | [Yes/No] |

Formative Assessment

| Type | Description | Deadline | Feedback |
|------------|---|---------------|----------|
| [MCQ quiz] | [Formative quizzes at the end of each module] | [No deadline] | [Online] |

How will the assessments be marked?

[Details should be here at least.]

Who can I ask about the marking criteria?

[In this unit you can speak to...]

How & when will I receive my feedback?

Please look in the **Grades** section on the course navigation menu to access your grades, assessment feedback and progress.

[Calculate 15 working days from submission for on-time essay-based submissions. Usually, students can access feedback via the Grades link on the left sidebar, though some courses may use alternative routes, which can be detailed here.]

How can I work with my feedback to improve?

Understanding my feedback

Reflect:

- Does the feedback make sense to you?
- Cross reference your feedback with the assignment brief
- Cross reference your feedback with the marking criteria
- Consider your strengths and weaknesses highlighted
- How will you work differently next time?

Listen:

- Feedback in class
- Information about assignment preparation in class or on Blackboard
- Join in group work

Ask:

- Clarify your feedback with the Unit Team
- Ask your marker to clarify
- Speak to your Academic Adviser

Act:

- Make a plan as to how you will use your feedback effectively
- Check your deadlines - prepare your time appropriately
- Proof read your work

[Find out more.](#)

Are there any resources or exemplars that will help me to understand the task and its requirements?

[Brief details should be here at least or alternatively "No additional resources are offered"]

[Links to assessment related resources should generally be placed on the Assessments page in the relevant section.]

Who can I ask about assessments and feedback if I have questions?

[General assessment queries can be sent to ...]

[Specific assessment queries can be sent to ...]

Tap to enlarge this flowchart outlining the assessment journey

Expand flowchart details

This video explains more about the assessment process and how we assure quality.

Assessment usually goes through the processes outlined here in a cycle each time the assessment is delivered. These steps are required for design, enhancement, and quality assurance of Assessment in a University Education context.

Differences may occur when an Assessment has particular accreditation requirements

These processes are not unique to Manchester, but required by the Quality Assurance Agency. The QAA (2023) Quality code is the basis of this guidance.

Canvas Basics Training



This face-to-face workshop is designed specifically for FBMH staff who will be contributing to or managing content in Canvas. Whether you are new to the platform or just need a refresher, this session offers a supportive environment to explore Canvas tools, templates, and best practices. Before attending this training, it is ideal that your Unit Coordinator has already completed a Unit Construction Workshop, as this session builds on the scaffolded course structure they will have created.

What to Expect

The Canvas Basics session is a 3-hour, hands-on workshop that walks you through the essentials of course design in Canvas. You will learn how to:

- Navigate the Canvas interface
- Create, edit, and organise modules, pages, files, and multimedia
- Apply the university's Course Unit Standards using the official Canvas template
- Use quality control tools like the accessibility checker, student view, and link validator
- Understand the 'to-do' tool and be able to add things into the calendar
- Access further support and resources

The session also includes time to explore adaptive release, publishing settings, and embedding external content, all within the context of the university's structured and consistent approach to course design.

This course **will not** cover teaching, learning and assessment building tools, as training on these aspects of the system will be completed later in the summer, closer to when you will need to use these skills.

Why It Matters

Canvas Basics is more than just a technical walkthrough, it is a chance to align your course with the University of Manchester's pedagogical standards, ensuring a consistent and accessible experience for students across all programmes. You will also gain insight into the shift from Blackboard nested folder structure to modules, a key difference from Blackboard that supports clearer, more structured learning journeys for our students.

How to Book

To book your place on Canvas Basics, contact fbmhcontact@manchester.ac.uk or [book directly on the Training Catalogue](#).

You are welcome (and encouraged) to book onto the same session as your colleagues so you can collaborate and discuss your course content together.

Video here on folders to modules

Embed code if needed:

```
<iframe
src="https://video.manchester.
ac.uk/embedded/00000000-
164d-0fc9-0000-
01956baaa3a0" width="660"
height="380"
style="border:none; overflow:
hidden;" scrolling="no"
webkitallowfullscreen
mozallowfullscreen
allowfullscreen></iframe>
```

Canvas and Accessibility: Creating Inclusive Learning by Design

At the University of Manchester, over 19% of students are registered with the Disability Advisory and Support Service (DASS). Many others may be unaware of their disability, neurodivergence, or hearing loss, or may experience hidden, temporary, or situational barriers. Accessibility also matters for colleagues, and anyone involved in delivering content. It's about more than disability. It's about raising the standard for all.

Accessible teaching ensures all students can participate and succeed, regardless of ability. It fulfils legal duties like the Equality Act 2010 and benefits everyone. For example, captions support deaf learners while also improving focus and flexibility for all. By addressing diverse needs and aligning with Universal Design for Learning, accessibility boosts engagement, retention, and outcomes. It should run through our work “like lettering through a stick of rock”—embedded, not bolted on.

“Lecture slides aren't always made available ahead of time and this affects my ability to learn. The podcast with subtitles are very helpful to students like me with hearing impairments. However, the subtitles on lecture recordings and videos aren't always correct, which is frustrating.” – FBMH Student, 2024.

The move to Canvas is a great opportunity to review teaching and learning materials through the lens of accessibility. Canvas includes two built-in accessibility checkers: Blackboard Ally and the Canvas Accessibility Checker, which support staff in creating accessible content as they go.

ACCT now!

- Alt Text: Use meaningful alternative text for images; mark decorative ones appropriately.
- Descriptive Links: Ensure hyperlinks make sense out of context.
- Captions: Review and edit auto-generated captions for accuracy.
- Colour Contrast: Check readability of text against backgrounds.
- Document Accessibility: Check Word, Excel, PowerPoint, PDFs, and other documents before uploading.
- Timely Access: Share materials in advance of live sessions.
- Accessibility Tools: Use checkers and follow the instructions to rectify issues.

Explore practical ways to improve accessibility in online teaching: [Accessibility in Blended Teaching](#).

More information and training:

- [FBMH eLearning - Accessibility](#).
- [FBMH eLearning - Canvas Training](#).
- FSE eLearning: ['A guide to using Ally on Canvas'](#).
- [7 Pillars of Accessibility](#).

Keep an eye out for more training from the FBMH eLearning team!



Training Update

We are continuing our Unit Construction workshops throughout the summer for unit leads, though if you have a Semester 2 or Full Year course, we advise you to book on to July sessions as your content will not yet be migrated over.

Our new course, Canvas Basics, is for staff who may not lead on a course but will be using Canvas in some capacity. If you are involved in a Semester 2 or Full Year Course and are waiting on migrated content, you are very welcome to join a Canvas Basics session to learn the fundamentals and tools. Then upon your content being successfully migrated, you can attend one of our daily drop-in sessions to apply what you learned to your course with the support of a member of our team.

Our Assessment training will be split into two courses will be running towards the end of June or early July. Staff only need to attend sessions relevant to their work, and in some cases that may be both courses. The first course is on Assignments, which will cover how to create an assignment, the submission of different file types, marking and gradebook. The second will cover Quizzes, which work very similarly to Blackboard's 'Tests'.

For all of our training courses, we are inviting teams to get in touch via the fbmhcontact@manchester.ac.uk if you have a specific day in mind to book your entire team (10 or more) in for a specific course. All sessions are held in our bespoke Canvas Central training room in Stopford.

**Stopford 1.060 (drop in), 1.061, 1.062, 1.063.
Drop ins 1-3pm Monday to Friday**

Week ending 06/06/2025 Attendance

- Unit Construction Workshops (Unit Coordinators): 201
- Canvas Basics (including bespoke OneMed session): 20
- PS Orientation to Canvas (PS): 51
- Drop-ins: 16

Total: 288

Events

- Total training sessions: 27
 - Unit Construction Workshops (includes Pioneers): 20
 - Canvas Basics for (inc. OneMed): 2
 - PS Orientation: 5
- Total drop-in sessions: 20



**KATIE NEWTON:
ELEARNING SUPPORT
ASSISTANT**

MEET OUR TEAM



**CHRIS SUTTON:
LEARNING TECHNOLOGIST**

Hi! I'm Katie (she/her) and I'm a relatively new member of the FBMH eLearning team and Wellbeing Champion.

I joined the University in December after years of travelling, where I taught English as a foreign language and developed my passion for accessible and inclusive education. Before that, I studied English Literature and specialised in Intersectional Feminist Theory.

My work in eLearning stretches from media production and editing, to copywriting and training. For the latter, I support the Canvas Training Team in building digital resources, assisting live sessions and corresponding with our Academics and PS Staff. You may also find me on our Social Media and Comms channels, making a fool of myself for the sake of the content!

Away from work, I love to travel and be outdoors. I'm a keen photographer and can often be found with my nose in a book. I love most sports, rarely go a day without listening to Kendrick Lamar, and my cat is called Chutney.

Hello. I'm Chris (he/him). I joined the FBMH e-learning team in 2021. Before that, I was a historian of the Cold War and British Empire and taught in higher and secondary education on a wide range of modern history topics. Over ten years, many students have asked me the same question: 'Do you ever teach anything happy?'

I do now! As a learning technologist, my work focuses on staff training and consultation regarding digitally enhanced learning, teaching, and assessment. Okay, maybe 'happy' is a reach. Certainly, I aim for improvement and progress, including in student experience, staff digital capabilities, and equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI). On that last point, I endeavour to be a co-conspirator for social justice, and I'm proud of the teams and projects I have worked with to that end, including an ITL fellowship project on inclusive anatomical illustrations and the many amazing people I have met through it.

I'm a SFF nerd (shout out: Jemisin, Muir, Chambers!), love overly complicated boardgames and am a year into my first TTRPG. I'm an American immigrant and miss BBQ and Mexican food, straight and wide roads, and thunderstorms that rattle your insides. Our dog, Pippy Rae, is also American, and I think her accent bemuses some of the locals.



Meet a Student Partner

Hello, I'm Gabe and I am a second year undergraduate in Public Health. I applied to become a Student Partner because I wanted to be a part of improving the University, and I feel that this role will allow me to provide valuable student insight into new developments. I am keenly interested in helping make the eLearning platform more accessible, and I look forward to the progress our team is going to make!

Gabriel Hinchcliffe

Student Partner Update

We hope to update you with the range and breadth of the student partners work. It's part of our ethos shift towards co-creation; including Academics, Digital Specialists and Students.

Bethany Warwick: As Student Partners supporting the university's transition from Blackboard to Canvas, we've been exploring the Canvas Introduction Course and comparing it with existing Blackboard induction materials. Our goal is to help shape a smoother and more engaging experience for students. We've been sharing feedback on what works, what could be improved, and what features would enhance learning and navigation. Through Padlet, we've contributed user stories like "As a student, I would like to..." to suggest meaningful improvements from a student perspective. It's been exciting to be part of a project that puts student voice at the heart of change.

Ashneet Kaur: I attended a faculty meeting for the implementation of Canvas across FBMH. The meeting involved staff from the FBMH implementation group and discussed the issues faced by Canvas implementation across the faculty. My role was to provide a student perspective on aspects of Canvas use such as how potential issues with submitting assignments may affect students in comparison to staff. Also discussed were any potential concerns that students may have in using Canvas initially and training to support this becoming available for students. The e-learning team outlined the range of training they have available for staff to ensure their courses are moved over to Canvas in time for the full transition in September 2025. I will be attending these meetings every 3 to 4 weeks on an ongoing basis, representing the student voice on any issues that arise.

What the BMH eLearning Team Can Do for You (... Beyond Canvas)

Although Canvas is the headline act for FBMH this summer, we have a great line-up of support acts to help you improve the student experience ahead of the start of next academic year.

(Re)design your units with ABC Workshops

Our ABC Curriculum Design workshops offer a quick and practical way to either revamp your unit or creating a new one. The workshops last for around two hours, and you and your colleagues will leave with a storyboard mapping out the flow of your unit over the semester, which is clearly aligned with ILOs and assessment milestones.

[Find out more about ABC here](#)

Make Your Teaching More Active (Even in flat-lecture theatres!)

If you want to increase engagement, be it in lectures, workshops, or in online teaching, we offer support with a range of interactive tools and pedagogies

- [Mentimeter](#) – Great for live polls, word clouds, MCQs, and quizzes
- [Nearpod](#) – Allows you to create interactive quizzes, missing word tasks, drawing and labelling tasks, and collaboration boards
- Team-Based Learning (TBL) – TBL encourages students to prepare, participate, and problem-solve. Message lisa.donlan@manchester.ac.uk and we'll help you get started.

Launch of the FBMH TBL Education Hub

Staff from FBMH were recently invited to the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) Veterinary School to deliver training and share best practice in Team-Based Learning (TBL). The session was designed for both veterinary educators and eLearning staff, with a specific focus on designing effective implementation of TBL in preclinical education.

Lisa Donlan (FBMH eLearning Technologist), Elizabeth Sheader (MBChB Year 1 Lead), and Michael Smith (Faculty Lead for Technology Enhanced Active Learning) led the interactive training, which marked the first formal event of the TBL Education Hub, which is an FBMH initiative aimed at supporting and training educators using TBL.

The workshop was well received, with 100% of respondents to the post-session survey (n = 21) saying that the training was relevant to their teaching needs and that they would recommend it to colleagues.

With upcoming visits to Keele University and training planned for staff at Mansura University in Egypt, the Hub is already supporting TBL practice both nationally and internationally.

For more information about the TBL Education Hub, please contact Lisa Donlan (lisa.donlan@manchester.ac.uk).



Quick Win

As we develop our Canvas skills and knowledge we will be posting a quick win each Newsletter, in this edition it is how to create Buttons.

A Button is an image or a word that has been hyperlinked to another location, either within the course or to an external site. They can streamline navigation, draw attention to key resources, and act as a shortcut for pages or modules in courses that have a large amount of content.

While the University of Manchester Canvas course template includes three pre-configured buttons on the Home page, Course Information, Assessment and Feedback, and Modules, these should remain unchanged to maintain consistency across all courses.

However, in content-heavy courses, such as those with multiple weekly topics, extensive reading lists, or frequent use of external tools, you may want to add buttons within individual pages to help students navigate more efficiently. For example, a weekly overview page might include buttons linking directly to:

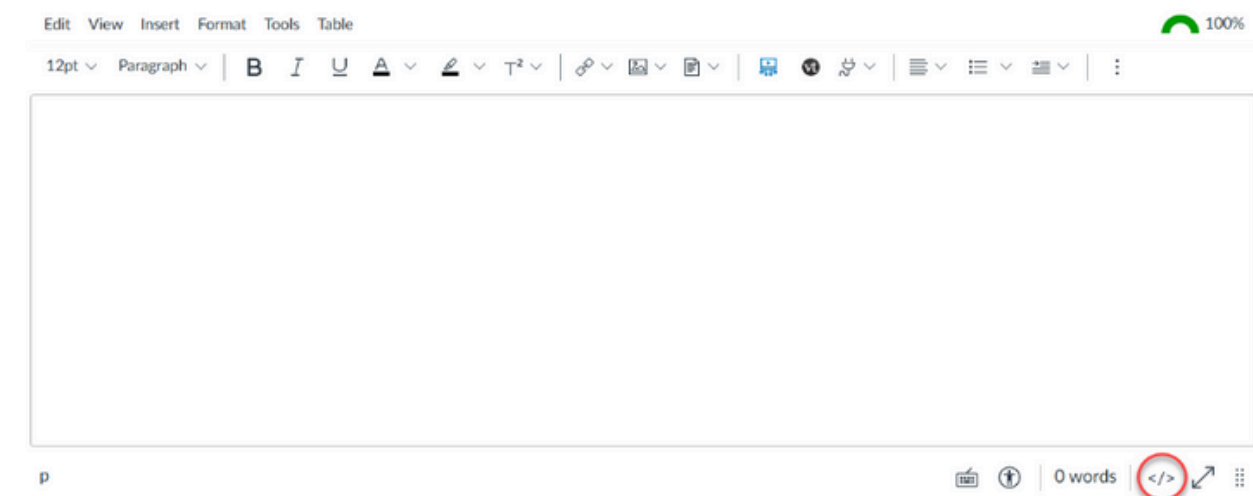
- lecture slides
- reading lists
- a discussion board
- external tools (e.g., Padlet, Cadmus, or LinkedIn Learning).

Creating a Button using HTML

Using HTML in Canvas allows you to create buttons that can link to any part of your course or to external resources. To create a button within a Canvas page:

- Navigate to the area in Canvas where you want to add the button.
- Select 'Edit' to open the Rich Content Editor.
- In the bottom-right corner of the Rich Content Editor, click the `</>` icon. This will switch the editor from the visual (Rich Text) view to the HTML code view.
- Paste the following HTML snippet where you want the button to appear: `<p>Button Text Goes Here</p>`
- You will then need to change the code to reflect what the button says and where it directs you to.
- `href="https://your-link-here.com"`: Replace this with the URL or internal Canvas link you want the button to lead to.
- Button Text: Replace this with the label you want to appear on the button (e.g., 'Start Week 1', 'Reading List').
- Click Save or Save & Publish to apply the changes and preview your button.

Check out our training
offerings [here!](#)



Canvas Microsite

Canvas Central

Canvas Training



Contact FBMH eLearning



elearning.bmh.manchester.ac.uk/canvas



FBMH eLearning Community (Viva Engage)



FBMH eLearning (LinkedIn)



FBMH eLearning (Bluesky)



FBMH eLearning (YouTube)