# Align your course with the Connected Learning Baseline (CLB)

Adapted from a checklist by Matt S. Smith and Anna Trostnikova, Faculty of Engineering Sciences.

This Checklist is supported by a self-instructional, step-by-step, practical guide in Moodle: [Pathway to Connected Learning Baseline alignment](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=20175). If you don’t know how to, (or why you should), enact any of the recommendations below, please self-enrol on it for more information and help. The links below takes you to the relevant page in the Pathway. The Pathway also explains how to import/add content from one course into a new “blank templated” course and align it with the Baseline.

To help you align with the [**Connected Learning Baseline**](https://www.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/publications/2020/may/ucl-connected-learning-baseline) **(CLB)**,a series of single specific tasks has been devised. The tasks are ordered logically with ‘quick wins’ first, but we recommend completing the Checklist to fully align with CLB.

Use one copy of this form per course/module. Actions roughly fall into two broad categories, namely **Design** – tasks that enhance the usability and ‘look and feel’ of your course, and **Delivery** – actions to take while your module is underway using tools on your course to improve online students’ learning experience.

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| **Module code:** | **Module title:** |

## DESIGN

1. **Navigation**   
   *This is how students find and interact with information and resources on your course.*

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| [**A1. Set your course format as ‘Collapsed Topics’**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1884899) **(CLB 1.2)** – This format is more accessible on mobile devices and for those using screen readers. This can be done in the Settings for your course. |  |
| [**A2. Add meaningful section headings to each topic/section**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1884901) **(CLB 1.1)** **–** if teaching by week follow format ‘Before Week 1’, Week 1 - [Topic]’. If teaching by topic, follow format ‘Topic 1: [Title]’, ‘Topic 2: [Title]’, etc. |  |
| [**A3. Write ‘section’ introductory text**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1884967) **(CLB 1.1)** – include a short introductory paragraph giving an overview of the week’s/topic’s learning. |  |
| [**A4. Use sub-headings within sections/topics**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1884903) **(CLB 1.1)** – ensure you keep to a consistent heading hierarchy. Main titles – H3, sub-titles – H4, H5, H6. |  |
| [**A5. Use default text colours**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1885039) **(CLB 7.1)** – do not change text colours. |  |
| [**A6. Organise tasks in a meaningful and clearly structured way**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1885071) **(CLB 1.5)** – This may be chronologically (the order in which to complete tasks), which is highly recommended for wholly online module delivery. By topic (e.g. ’*Semiconductors’*) is an alternative. Headings should be used to group learning resources and activities. |  |
| [**A7. Minimise cognitive overload and use Pages to reduce the length of sections**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1885119) **(CLB 1.2)** – if you have over 250 words of text, put it on a Moodle Page so that there’s a link to it (rather than having all the text displayed on the main page. Too much text on the home page, is sometimes called the ’scroll of death’!. Also, name the Moodle Page to indicate its content. |  |
| [**A8. Add narrative text to guide students from one task to the next**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1885127) **(CLB 1.5)** – This may include appropriate use of conditional release, so tasks are hidden until prerequisite tasks are completed, or until a certain date. |  |
| [**A9. Clearly NUMBER all resources and activities**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1885187) **(CLB 1.5)** – e.g. ‘*Task 1.1 - Your first blog* *post*’. |  |
| [**A10. Meaningfully LABEL all resources and activities with descriptive titles**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1910045) **(CLB 1.1 / 5.1)** – e.g. ‘*Task 1.1. - Your first blog post*’. Titles should at a glance make sense to students providing them with the information needed to know what the resource or activity is without opening it. Titles such as ‘Assignment 1’ are not adequate. The description should provide further details about the resource/activity and how it related to the intended learning outcomes. |  |
| [**A11. Add word counts and time lengths to resources**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1885191)**\* (CLB 2.2 / 2.8)** – e.g. ‘*Task 2.3 - Nature article: Semiconductors (2000 words)*’ or ‘*Task 3.3 - The Real Iron Man (6m)*’. Timings should be included for videos and word counts for readings. This allows students to decide whether they have time to undertake a piece of learning before opening it. Each resource / activity should also have an accompanying description. |  |
| [**A12.Clearly label optional activities/resources**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1885193) **(CLB 2.2)** – e.g ‘*Task 3.2 - The life of Thomas Edison (optional)*’. If you have multiple optional resources/tasks, perhaps put them into their own section or introduce them with a sub-heading e.g. ‘*Further reading*’. |  |
| [**A13. Include Moodle sidebar blocks**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1885195) **(CLB 1.3)** **–** Recent Activity, Common Timetable, Library Resources, Upcoming Events, Search Forums, Online Users, Quickmail (for use by staff only). |  |
| [**A14. Check and fix or remove broken hyperlinks (URLs)**](file:///C:\Users\Clive%20P%20L%20Young\Downloads\Check%20that%20all%20resources%20are%20up-to-date%20before%20releasing%20them%20to%20students) **(CLB 5.4)** |  |
| [**A15. Check that all resources are up-to-date before releasing them to students**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1914779)**. (CLB 5.4)** |  |

1. **Introduction**   
   *These are the things that will help students orientate themselves at the beginning of the course.*

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| [**B1. Make a short ‘Welcome’ video**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1885207) **(CLB 2.7)** – available to students at the beginning of the module. This helps to create a connection with the students. |  |
| [**B2. Add Tutor and Administrator contact details**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1885211) **(CLB 2.3)** – provide tutor and teaching and learning administrator details on the homepage e.g. ‘*Module Leader: Prof. John Mitchell; Teaching and Learning Administrator: Joe Brown*’. Preferably, use a Free Text (HTML) block to display this information. |  |
| [**B3. Include the Module Syllabus/Fact Sheet**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1885213) **(CLB 2.1)** –Include these directly in Moodle, or via a link to the module handbook or departmental website. |  |
| [**B4. Include measurable module level learning outcomes**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1885217) **(CLB 2.1)** – In order to ensure they are measurable, use of a [Bloom’s Taxonomy verb table](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1LyiYeecFZXu5xLAwSIbIolZbvI3iSTA4etg3NCo2tyI/edit?usp=sharing) is recommended. |  |
| [**B5. Include Course Summary**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1885223) **(CLB 2.6)** – ensure you have included a short course summary (which students see when searching for the module via Moodle Search). In this, include how students can gain access if they cannot access – e.g. provide the email address of the teaching and learning administrator to contact. |  |
| [**B6. Upload staff Moodle profile pictures**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1885225) **(CLB 3.4)** – to help personalise the online environment and allow online discussions between collaborators to be more easily followed. If you are not comfortable using a photograph, please choose an avatar or perhaps a bitmoji. |  |
| [**B7. Include icebreaker activities**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1885227) **(CLB 3.5) –** this ensures learners are active at the beginning of the course. This should only be short and could take the form of a short question, poll, mini-quiz or mini-survey. The student responses can potentially then be used by tutors when engaging with students. |  |

1. **Communication**   
   *These are ways to promote effective communication between tutors and students, and students with their peers.*

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| [**C1. Provide a communication statement**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1885229) **(CLB 3.1)** – describe how students and staff will communicate for different purposes (e.g. using Moodle forums for coursework-related questions and email for personal matters). Include expected staff response times. |  |
| [**C2. Add a Communications section**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1885231) **(CLB 3.1) –** create a section in your course |  |
| [**C3. Set up Help Forum**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1903471) **(CLB 3.6)** – include a forum that students can post in to receive help and support from tutors and their peers. Students should post queries here rather than sending by email (as others can then see the responses). It is recommended that an agreed tutor response time is published to students for tutors responding to this forum e.g. two working days. |  |
| [**C4. Film weekly video updates**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1903473) **(CLB 3.5)** – Tutor presence on an online course is very important. Record a weekly update video giving students an intro to the week’s learning and what they will be working on. This can be done before the module starts but can be beneficial to film during delivery – as you can then reference things that have come up during the week. |  |
| [**C5. Set up student forum**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1903475) **(CLB 3.6)** – It is recommended that a general discussion forum is set up for students, in which they are asked to introduce themselves when enrolling on the course. They can then continue to use these forums to interact with their peers e.g. sharing resources etc. |  |
| [**C6. Module evaluation**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1903477) **(CLB 10.1 / 10.4)** – include an online module evaluation form so students can evaluate the module. Use Moodle Questionnaire to do this. |  |
| [**C7. Adopt a welcoming and approachable tone**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1903497) **(CLB 2.7)** |  |
| [**C8. Provide regular or continuous opportunities for students to feedback**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1914775) **(CLB 10.3)** |  |

1. **Accessibility**   
   *This is how to make your course accessible to different learners. This may include those accessing your course using different devices e.g. mobile, as well as those with additional educational needs e.g. dyslexia.*

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| [**D1. Provide a course level accessibility statement**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1900719) **(CLB 7.2)** – Provide a brief, course-level accessibility statement containing any additional guidance and indicating who to contact (e.g., module leader, administrator) to request an alternative format for any resource. |  |
| [**D2. Accessibility Fundamentals**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1900673) **(CLB 7.1)** – Covers: fonts (size and style), text (colours and contrast), spacing, links, images, etc. |  |
| **D2.1. Ensure fonts are large enough and sans serif** – they should be at least pt11. |  |
| **D2.2. Ensure coloured text has high contrast** – against backgrounds. Avoid red, green and pink text. |  |
| **D2.3. Ensure links are descriptive** – (avoiding 'click here') and open in the same window. |  |
| **D2.4. Use alt text descriptions for images** – mention the key learning points, for screen-reader users (e.g., alongside the image, as a caption, or as ‘alternative text). |  |
| [**D3. Provide resources (e.g., slides) to be referenced in a**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1900697) **live lecture at least 48 hours in advance –**UCL policy since 2017. |  |
| [**D4. Audio and video accessibility** **pointers**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1900677) |  |

1. **Assessment**   
   *As with other parts of an online course, it is essential that there is clarity when it comes to your assessment materials and submission points.*

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| [**E1. Ensure your assessment is appropriate for online delivery.**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1903483) |  |
| [**E2. Include assessment brief**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1903485) **(CLB 4.1)** – detailing exactly what students are required to do. This must align with the data stored in Portico and published on the Module Catalogue. Moodle should be used to amplify and support that information, perhaps to include sources of advice, etc. |  |
| [**E3. Include assessment criteria**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1903487) **(CLB 4.1)** – include details as to how the assessment will be marked. If you are using rubrics or grading forms, make these available. |  |
| [**E4. Create online submission points**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1903489) **(CLB 4.3)** – make sure you include any important instructions in the activity description e.g. if students must use a certain filetype. Include the deadline (time and date) in the activity description. Ensure deadlines fall within UCL core hours (10.00 to 16.00), that way if there are any technical issues, support staff will be available to assist. |  |
| [**E5. Detail deadlines for all assessments**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1903491) **(CLB 4.3) –** ensure deadlines fall within UCL core hours (10.00 to 16.00), that way if there are any technical issues, support staff will be available to assist. |  |
| [**E6. Provide tools and information for avoiding plagiarism**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1903493) **(CLB 4.2)** – Link to the Plagiarism and Academic Writing course, where students can check their work for plagiarism independent of assessment submission points. |  |

## DELIVERY

1. **Communication**  
   *Regular communication while the course is running is vital. These can help ensure students do not feel isolated or alienated.*

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| [**F1. Send a welcome message to students**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1908041) **(CLB 2.7)** – via the Announcements forum a week before the course starts - A short overview of the course; A summary of expectations for online engagement; How they can gain access to their course; Explain the introductory activities to be completed and by when (e.g. posting to an introductions forum); Link to the '[Connected Learning at UCL](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=9119)' Moodle course (for wholly online courses). |  |
| [**F2. Send regular messages via the Announcements forum**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1908041) **(CLB 3.2)** – aim to send at least one message a week. One of the most important things for distance learners is that they feel they are part of the cohort. Although this can be difficult to achieve, some small actions can be taken to ensure distance learners feel connected to the module and other students. |  |
| [**F3. Film weekly video updates**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1908045) **(CLB 3.5)** – Tutor presence on an online course is very important. Record a weekly update video giving students an intro to the week’s learning and what they will be working on. This can be done before the course but can be beneficial to film during delivery – as you can then reference things that have come up during the week. |  |
| [**F4. Check help and support forum**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1908047) **(CLB 3.2)** – regularly check help forum and respond to messages. |  |
| [**F5. Nominate and publish office hours**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1908049) **(CLB 2.3)** – which you can make yourself available at each week to students. Use Moodle Scheduler to allow students to book an appointment and use a BBCU room to manage this. If students dial in early for their slot, you can use a breakout room as a waiting room. |  |
| [**F6. Encourage students to upload Moodle profile pictures**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1908051) **(CLB 3.4)** – to help personalise the online environment and allow online discussions between collaborators to be more easily followed. If students are uncomfortable using a photograph, they could choose an avatar or perhaps a bitmoji. |  |

### **Facilitate active learning and engagement Encourage and maintain student engagement.**

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| [**G1. Redesign courses quickly with 'learning types'**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1900831) **-** see Pathway or blog post ‘[Moving activities online – as easy as ABC?’](https://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/abc-ld/moving-activities-online-as-easy-as-abc/). |  |
| [**G2. Learning types and online learning**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/book/view.php?id=1900851)- see Pathway or blog post ‘[Moving activities online with ABC – take it further](https://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/abc-ld/moving-activities-online-with-abc-take-it-further/)’ |  |
| [**G3. Ask poll question**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1908053) – at beginning of module ask students to fill out a poll indicating what time (GMT) they would be able to attend live sessions. |  |
| [**G4. Conduct synchronous (live) virtual face-to-face sessions**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1908055) **(CLB 9.1)** – use Blackboard Collaborate Ultra – this is specifically designed for education and meets Data Protection (GDPR) requirements. If running live sessions such as these consider time zone of people on course – this may mean running the same session twice. Plan active learning tasks e.g. debates etc. (not just lecturing) and utilise break out rooms for smaller group work. |  |
| [**G5. Schedule PGTA support**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1908057) – ensure you have support to monitor and reply to questions in the chat. |  |
| [**G6. Record live sessions**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1908059) – make available immediately after delivery. Ensure students are aware the session(s) is/are being recorded. |  |
| [**G7. Maintain an up-to-date UCL Library reading list**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1908061) **(CLB 5.3)** – ensure your reading list for the module is up-to-date with the library. |  |
| [**G8. Use interactive tools and activities**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1908063) **(CLB 9.1)** – use interactive tools during and outside of face-to-face sessions. During synchronous online sessions use Blackboard Collaborate Ultra tools e.g. polls and whiteboard and possibly Mentimeter/ALP tools. Outside of synchronous sessions, use simple Moodle tools such as Choice (polls), hot questions (student questions which can be upvoted), and quizzes (variety of question types). Mentimeter/ALP tools are also options. |  |
| [**G9. Monitor student engagement**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1908065) **(CLB 3.8)** – use ‘course participation’, ‘activity completion’ ‘my feedback’ etc. to monitor student engagement. Moodle provides a number of reports for tracking student participation. They are quick and simple to run and give a snapshot of how learners are engaging with learning materials on the course. The insight gained from running reports will then allow Tutors to initiate appropriate interventions. If you intend to act based on these reports as suggested, it is important that students are made aware of this in any introductory materials, and that this is done so in a transparent way. |  |

### **Legal issues**

*Good copyright practices, data protection issues and ensuring students have a private (password protected) environment to work in.*

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| [**H1. Observe intellectual property and copyright legislation**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1900771) **(CLB 8.1 / 8.2)** |  |
| [**H2. Communicate potential data protection issues if students are asked to use non-UCL systems**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1900785) **(CLB 8.3)** |  |
| [**H3. Ensure student-generated content is stored on a password protected system**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1900787) **(CLB 8.4)** |  |
| [**H4. Students learn about relevant copyright and data protection issues**](https://moodle.ucl.ac.uk/mod/page/view.php?id=1914783) **(CLB 8.5)** |  |