



A succinct overview for the more technically minded!

The WebLearn Service

WebLearn is based on the Sakai Collaborative Learning Environment (sakaiproject.org) and replaces the former Bodington-based service. Sakai is used by Lancaster, Cambridge, Newcastle and Hull Universities in the UK and Yale, Harvard, MIT, NYU, Princeton, Stanford and UC Berkeley (plus many others). Commercial backers include Sun, Oracle and IBM.

The weblearn.ox.ac.uk URL goes to a Welcome page; we expect students to have been given a specific URL to find their material, but if not, guidance is offered on the Welcome page under 'Getting Started'.

Functionality

WebLearn is arranged hierarchically, supports devolved administration, can be made open to the general public or can be locked down to one or more course groups or named individuals (via webauth primary accounts).

It includes the following tools / facilities (plus others):

- Resources – nested folders containing searchable files / documents; default quota is 1GB
- Discussion forum – topics, threads etc
- Wiki – searchable and with support for LaTeX mathematical notation
- Electronic Assignments - with Turnitin integration, supporting deadlines and release of marks
- Quiz and polls - for opinions and formative assessment
- Surveys – for electronic survey design and delivery, for course evaluation, research or general data gathering
- Announcements – message on departmental site with optional email (RSS by Michaelmas)
- Email lists with archive - searchable
- Schedule (calendar) – can export and subscribe to other calendars
- Chat room – real-time with multiple rooms
- RSS display – newsfeeds, twitter etc
- Oxford Podcasts – browse and add audio or video media files from the Oxford podcasts collection
- Search – indexes wiki, email archive, .DOC, .HTML, .PDF, .PPT, .TXT, .XLS
- Sign-up tool – allow users to sign up for tutorials, meetings etc.
- Tracking (site stats) – student activity, nice histograms and pie charts, must be added in advance
- Reading lists – import End Note files or search OLIS and Google Scholar, integrated with ExLibris OpenURL resolver
- Web links – links to other sites
- WebDAV – available via webauth SSO credentials, enables uploading via drag and drop
- Devolved administration – give 'create rights' to departmental members, or do it all yourself!
- My Workspace – a personal dashboard collating announcements and calendar entries; also contains a resources area in which items (files) can be made public
- External accounts – can create an account within WebLearn for non-Oxford users
- Institutional / course groups – collated from OSS, Registration and Card databases via Oak LDAP

Tools come with default 'permissions' which can be altered for each role on a tool-by-tool basis. A site member has one of three roles:

- maintain – site manager, can add participants and tools and can modify permissions.
- contribute – content author, can add tools but not participants, cannot alter permissions.
- access – site visitor, can read and post to forums etc., suitable for students.

Getting Space in the New WebLearn

A department's WebLearn presence is managed by a Local WebLearn Coordinator; to do this visit the WebLearn Guidance site weblearn.ox.ac.uk/info, fill in the request form (after reading the attached guidelines) and send back to IT Services. You will then be allocated an 'Administration site'.

Training

The following **staff** training is available (mostly via ITLP – book a place at <http://courses.ox.ac.uk/itlp>):

- Fundamentals - orientation; navigation; roles; tools; basic site management
- For ITSS - demonstration for technically astute ITSS
- Surveys – create and deliver online surveys to WebLearn site participants, ad-hoc groups or the public
- Design and content – site management and access; design and structure; tools to provide content
- Assessment and feedback – tools for formative assessment: assignments, markbook, tests, forums
- Tools to support teaching and learning – tutorial sign-up; tracking; reading lists; timed release
- Plagiarism: Turnitin Fundamentals – plagiarism detection and prevention for examiners, tutors and supervisors
- Plagiarism: WebLearn and Turnitin – comparison between using Turnitin directly or via WebLearn Assignments
- Plagiarism: Interpreting the Originality Report – similarity score that is returned by Turnitin (for staff)
- Plagiarism: How to avoid it (for students) – understanding plagiarism, academic citation and reference skills
- Computer 8 – Friday mornings drop-in for previous course attendees (booking is required)

Support

User guides available on the WebLearn Guidance site (<http://weblearn.ox.ac.uk/info>):

- Step-by-step – detailed, lots of screenshots, guide to good practice
- The Least You Need To Know – brief and to the point, no more than two sides
- How to – short overviews of how to complete various activities and use various technologies

Video tutorials (<http://weblearn.ox.ac.uk/info> > Guides & Tutorials > Video tutorials):

- Tour of WebLearn – three short videos
- Basic tools: Announcements, Assignments, Email Archive, Forums, Home Page, HTML Editor, Resources, Site Info, Web Content Link

There are also collections of case studies, latest information about courses, and other useful resources, including service announcements and the WebLearn blog.

The Future

Future plans:

- Site 'visit' for large groups (e.g. all staff, all students) – in place now
- Course Feedback tool ('Surveys') – beta version available now
- Integrate with Oak (read-write) groups store – read is in place, but no write back to Oak yet
- Smart phone interface – now available for WebLearn tools Announcements, Polls, Sign-up
- SES tool – student enrolment system used by MPLS and Social Sciences divisions for graduate course signup
- Further integration with OSS – depends on the new student administration system

Useful Links

To find out more:

- www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/weblearn - all about the WebLearn service includes useful resources
- weblearn@it.ox.ac.uk - for queries that cannot be satisfied by reading the documentation!
- weblearn.ox.ac.uk/info – guidance and information
- www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/services/oak/ - about Oak
- sakaiproject.org – about the open source Sakai project