

Graduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching for Higher Education

Graduate Diploma of Learning and Teaching in Higher Education

Master of Learning and Teaching in Higher Education



*Curriculum and Quality: Together, achieving excellence in learning and teaching*



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
NOTRE DAME  
AUSTRALIA

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# Navigating Your Study





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# Navigating Your Study

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## 1. Introduction

Welcome to the Graduate Certificate, Graduate Diploma or Masters program. This nested suite of programs has been designed by educators for educators. We define educators in a broad sense to include those who are teaching, supervising or supporting students, as well as people who have responsibilities for enhancing the learning of colleagues.

## 2. How do you access and use the learning materials?

On your offer letter, you were provided with your unique University ID Number. This number will stay with you throughout your time at Notre Dame.

As a student at Notre Dame, you will receive access to a number of systems, all of which have the same default login details:

- **Username:** your University ID Number
- **Password:** 'Nd' followed by your date of birth in the format 'ddmmyyyy'
  - *For example, if your birthday is 1 June 1980, your password will be Nd01061980*

This page explains [how to access Information Technology \(IT\) support](#) should you have any issue.

The learning materials for Graduate Certificate, Diploma and/ or Masters Programs are in the form of interactive eBooks located in the University's Learning Management System (LMS), Blackboard Learn (Bb). New to Bb? This video, [Blackboard for Students](#), will help.

In order to access Bb you will require:

- Enrolment into your Blackboard course (contact the Program Coordinator, [Associate Professor Kathie Ardzejewska](#), if you have any enrolment concerns);
- A device with video and audio capacity that allows you to participate online, this could be: a smart phone, a tablet, or a computer;
- Emails pertaining to your enrolment, program, courses and graduation applications are sent to your **student email address**. If you don't plan to keep abreast of your student email inbox, then we recommend that you setup a forwarding function for your student emails – so that everything is also sent to your preferred email address. This Quick Guide on [how to forward your student email](#) will help;
- Familiarity with the [Notre Dame Portal, 'MyND'](#) (you will need your user name and password). This is where you can manage your enrolment, change your personal details and access final grades;
- Modules are released one-by-one on a pre-determined timeframe. This gives you the flexibility to work through each module at your own pace, but also ensures that you connect with your fellow students to create a community of learners; and
- Make sure you are logged into Bb while working to access password-protected learning activities, library resources such as readings, and assessment information.

### 3. Expected workload

The standard student engagement time for a course at this level is approximately 150 hours per semester. This equates to about 7–10 hours per week inclusive of engagement in course learning activities, readings and watching online material, actively participating in online sessions (where possible), and research and preparation for assessments. It is up to you to choose your effort according to your own goals, but you will need to keep pace with the rest of the students to make sure you get the most out of being part of a learning community.

## 4. Where do I find important information related to the course?

The Course Outline contains the course overview, delivery schedule, assessment due dates, assessment task information, marking criteria, and rubrics.

Contact details for key staff members are also located there.

While there are places where information may be repeated, e.g. Bb announcements, **there is no substitute for referring to your Course Outline as the 'source of truth' throughout your studies.**

Your Course Outline can be found in the Bb course site. Look for 'Course Outline' in the left-hand menu in your coursesite.

## 5. The way the program is designed

This course is developed using [Garrison's \(2016\)](#) Community of Inquiry. The goal is to create a learning community where you construct your own knowledge through independent inquiry and then extend and validate it by collaborating with your peers and Course Coordinator. For this to work, three (3) things need to happen and we have purposely built the three into the design of the course. The table below outlines the design and how your contribution assists your learning.

Table 1. Adapted from Garrison's (2016) Community of Inquiry.

1. Teaching presence	2. Cognitive presence	3. Social presence
<p>The goal is for the teacher to make the learning engaging and achievable.</p> <p>We do this by the way we clearly explain and support learning in steps; facilitating discussions (whether via video or in writing); providing feedback you can use to improve your learning; and being clear about when we are available and the support we provide.</p>	<p>The goal is for the teacher to make the content engaging and the learning meaningful.</p> <p>We do this by setting activities that ask you to critique and reflect (e.g. asking you to respond to readings, videos, discussion forums), and through the assessment tasks</p>	<p>The goal is for the teacher to provide opportunities for you to engage with your peers.</p> <p>Sometimes the teacher facilitates this, and sometimes it's about working as a group in the absence of the teacher. The more you interact with your peers in a learning community the better the learning journey, both intellectually and socially.</p>

Quite simply, the benefits of the Community of Inquiry approach for you are:

- It is welcoming and provides insight into the higher education learning and teaching culture;
- Helps to reduce the feeling of isolation that can sometimes occur in online learning;
- Promotes a sense of collaboration and collegiality;
- If you have difficulties or a question, help is on hand;
- It makes the environment feel 'safe' for all learners; and
- It encourages co-construction of knowledge.

You can expect your teacher to have a strong presence throughout the course by:

- Responding quickly to the 'ask your questions here' forum;
- Posting weekly announcements which help you keep up-to-date;
- Posting videos providing useful up-to-date information, e.g. more information about assessment tasks; and
- Sharing up-to-date information from the sector.

## 6. How to get the best out of your online courses?

### 6.1 Participation

While online learning is flexible and promotes self-directed learning, the Modules (and your downloadable eBooks) include numerous interactive opportunities in order to promote one of the ongoing strengths of the program – cross-disciplinary conversations and collegiality. So you are prepared to make the most of these opportunities, there are certain expectations you will need to meet. As an online participant we ask that you agree to:

- Regularly check your student email and course announcements;
- Regularly interact with your peers and teachers on the Discussion Board and make your journal entries (where relevant);
- Find regular study time, and make an effort to keep up with the course work;
- Both ask and answer questions in 'Post your questions here' forum in the Discussion Board in each of your courses and be generous in sharing your observations, thoughts, and resources with your learning community; and

- Participate in synchronous sessions where possible. Different courses use different platforms: like Zoom or Microsoft Teams. The Course Coordinator will let you know which platform is preferred in each of your courses. These synchronous sessions are not just about the content – they are places of mutual support. Student feedback indicates that these sessions will help you reduce anxiety and to feel a part of the learning community. You will also discover that many of your peers are grappling with the same issues that worry you – and a problem shared is a problem halved.

## 6.2 Reflective learning - why and how?

The program expects you to be involved in reflective dialogues which are extended and enhanced through conversations ([Brookfield, 2017](#)). We use the following definition for 'reflective learning':



"Reflective learning is the process of internally examining and exploring an issue of concern, triggered by an experience, which creates and clarifies meaning in terms of self, and which results in a changed conceptual perspective."

([Boyd & Fales, 1983](#); p. 100)



"[t]here are also many different terms for reflection. Depending on your discipline you might be more familiar with terms such as analysis, review, evaluation, critical thinking, investigation, making sense, making meaning, contemplation, contemplative practice, meditation, introspection, or felt knowing."

([Harvey et al., 2020](#); p. 16)



The programs offer reflective dialogues where learners come together to collaborate, and where reflection is extended and enhanced through conversations ([Brookfield, 2017](#)). Learners are invited to turn their reflections into experiential learning by extending reflections into practice ([Boud, Keogh & Walker, 2013](#)).

### **Why engage in reflective learning?**

- Reflective conversations and collaborations enhance practice;
- Reflective observation often results in a positive change in practice; and
- Reflection improves experiential learning.

### **How to get the most from reflective learning?**

- Value it as a worthy practice;
- Seek to practice it by writing, storytelling, conversing, collaborating, participating in action research, disseminating ideas, tips, and outcomes; and
- Reflective learning is a skill that takes practice, so don't be afraid to approach your teachers for tips and feedback along the way.

As you reflect, you will develop an approach and style that suits your specific environment and unique way of working. Reflections, however, have a particular theoretical basis, structure and purpose that will in turn form the foundation for how marks are allocated for reflective tasks. This is explained further in the next section in relation to the assessment expectations of the programs.

## 7. Keeping a Reflective Journal

Harvey et al. (2020) suggest that the learning activity can challenge assumptions, stir up feelings, or present questions that you need time to consider. There are many tools to assist you, e.g. blogging, journaling, making music, creating a photo essay. Because of the sensitivities and the processes they suggest that reflections are not marked. There is also the challenge to ensure that the learning is assured and that it is not completed by generative artificial intelligence. In the GLCT suite of programs we use a combination of marked and non-marked reflection activities to:

- Make sense of your own experience;
- Help you to explore the perspective of others;
- Improve your work.

## 8. Assessments

### 8.1 The design of assessment tasks

Assessment tasks are intended to:

- ‘Value add’ – assessments are designed to enhance your practice as an educator;
- Provide ‘take away’ examples of improved materials you can incorporate into your teaching;
- Promote reflective practice to support and assist you to build skills in this area; and
- Enable you to link knowledge and apply skills that build on one another from one assessment task to the next.

You may find assessments in the program different to what you have experienced before, and it is important that you understand why your assessment tasks are designed as they are.

There are broadly three (3) types of problems that we can set for our learners:

1

*Well-defined* problem – all the elements necessary for a solution are easy to access. There is a choice of a small number of straightforward procedures for solving it. Thought of as mental exercises, they are often deployed to novice learners ([Kitchener, 1983](#)). However, such problems are rarely encountered in real world situations;

2

*Ill-defined* problem – the information given to students is purposefully poorly defined or incomplete. There is no single guaranteed solution. Solutions are not true or false, they are good or bad. Likely to be found in the real world (i.e. authentic assessment), where evidence, expert opinion and critical analysis are brought to bear on the problem to find a reasonable solution; and

3

*Wicked* problem – shares many of the same characteristics as the ill-defined but are more complex. They tend to exist in sociological settings, such as town planning, governance, and education. They often contain contradictions in the problem description and there's no 'stop rule', i.e. it is impossible to tell when a solution has been reached.

Both ill-defined and wicked problems can only be solved by using higher order metacognitive skills ([Schraw, Dunkle & Bendixen, 1995](#)). Learners must be able to:

- Interpret the problem;
- Monitor their own progress;
- Choose strategies;
- Select and judge data sources; and
- Assess their solutions as they progress.

In postgraduate programs, such as this, teachers make the assumption that students are experienced learners and are ready to employ higher order thinking skills to tackle ill-defined and wicked problems.

To get the most value out of each course, the assessments are also purposely designed to reflect real life situations and problems. Just as in the workplace, students are required to unpack and interpret the problem and come up with the solution. This gives students the opportunity to refine their evaluative judgement skills with an experienced guide (the facilitator), and engage in peer feedback to use creativity to solve problems.

If you as a student have only ever been exposed to well-defined problems in learning situations, then this style of assessment may be a bit of a cognitive leap for you.

Be assured that you will be provided with as many resources as deemed appropriate and you can contact your facilitator at any time during the course to refine the skills you'll need for tackling the assessment.

## 8.2 Accessing assessment information

The 'Assessment' menu item in each of your course sites provides an additional area dedicated to assessment, where you can check more information about the task and find links to upload your completed assessment tasks.

Here are some resources to help you navigate submitting your assignments to TurnItIn:

- Information on [how to submit a TurnItIn assessment](#);
- Information on [interpreting a TurnItIn similarity report](#); and
- Information on [viewing feedback on a marked TurnItIn assignment](#).

## 8.3 Rubrics

Rubrics provide a guide to the standards and criteria applied to each assessment task, and these can be found in the Course Outline.

## 8.4 Grades

All marking and grading is completed online within Bb. You will find your grades and feedback within the 'My Grades' section of Bb, in the Turnitin feedback area, or in the comments section of your Bb journal for journaling tasks. Graded quizzes will automatically release your score or reveal a 'best answer' for comparison.

It is the School's Policy that the students are provided with grades (e.g., Distinction) instead of marks (e.g., 73). As a result, Turnitin assessments may appear unmarked on the system. The Course Coordinator will advise you once an assessment task is marked, after which you will be able to access your feedback and grade via 'My Grades' even though its appearance remains unchanged.

## 8.5 Moderation

A whole of course approach to moderation is where academics come together to peer review assessment types and forms to ensure that the tasks meet the intended learning outcomes, that criteria assessed in each task are limited to maintain clarity, and that there is constructive alignment between learning activities and assessment tasks ([Smith, 2012](#)). It may also mean giving students the opportunity to discuss marking criteria beforehand. Finally, it involves assessors discussing marking and performance standards by using actual student work and double-marking.

## 9. Using Blackboard

The most commonly used Bb activities are: discussion forums and journals. You will find detailed, step-by-step technical instruction guides via the 'Blackboard User Guides' menu item in your course site.

For further tips on navigating Bb, visit the this [Technology-Enhanced Learning \(TEL\) resources site](#).

### 9.1 'Netiquette' for students in the learning space

Consult this guide for [rules of virtual class etiquette](#).

## 10. Using eBooks and course materials

Here are some tips for using eBooks:

- You can download the learning materials in each module as a PDF and work on using your preferred device, or you can use the 'live' eBooks in your web-browser;
- You may wish to save a copy of the eBooks to your computer (USB or preferred device) so that you can annotate the files and refer to them offline;
- Make sure you are logged into Bb while working to access password-protected learning activities, resources, and assessment information;
- The Bb preferred browser is **Firefox or Chrome**. When it comes to viewing videos, you may need to swap browsers. We try to overcome browser 'hiccups' by giving students the direct link in addition to the embedded video for ease of access. Simply cut and paste the link to your browser; and
- One of the aims of the program is to expose you to TEL and as many Bb tools as possible. This approach allows you to step outside your comfort zone and in turn to try new experiences with your students. Don't be afraid to stretch yourself! Being vulnerable is appreciated by your peers and helps build a sense of community.

## 11. Accessing reading and library resources

The Course Readings are made available via Leganto (which you can access via Bb). Look for the 'Course Readings' item in the menu on the left-hand side of the Bb page.

Direct links to readings in the live eBooks will look like this:

**Garrison et al. (2016)**

*E-learning in the 21st century: A framework for research and practice* (3rd ed.). Taylor & Francis Group.

[BOOK](#)

## 12. Enjoy the program

Our goal is to provide you with opportunities to challenge your current learning and teaching practices. To do this, we encourage you to take on new perspectives on learning and teaching, to try things you haven't tried before, and to search for evidence to support your teaching practice as a scholarly activity. We look forward to being part of your journey.

## 13. Glossary

**Academic standards** mean an agreed specification (such as a defined benchmark or indicator) that is used to define levels of academic performance or achievement. Academic standards may apply to academic outcomes, such as student or graduate achievement or required learning outcomes, or to academic processes such as student selection, teaching, research supervision, and assessment.

**Assessment criteria** describe the required components and features of students' assessable work and are derived from explicit learning outcomes.

**Benchmark** means a process used to compare student performances in assessment, as well as assessment and grading practices for similar programs and courses offered by other universities and on different campuses of the University.

**Blueprint** means a tool that Program Coordinators can use to assist them in designing assessment s that align with intended learning outcomes both at the program level, as well as at the program level.

**Course Outline** is the official University course information document available to students enrolled in the unit.

**Diagnostic assessment** refers to assessment tasks designed to identify student knowledge and capacities in order to provide teaching and learning experiences targeted at improvement.

**Formative assessment** assists in monitoring student progress against standards, and provides feedback comparing their progress to the standards, with a view to helping students achieving the standards (University of Melbourne).

**Graduate Attributes** refers to generic learning outcomes that refer to transferrable, non-discipline-specific skills that a graduate may achieve through learning and that have application in study, work and life contexts (TEQSA Glossary).

**Learning outcomes** are statements of the knowledge and skills a student has acquired and is able to demonstrate as a result of learning.

**Moderation of assessment** refers to quality assurance processes and activities such as peer review that aim to assure: consistency or comparability, appropriateness and fairness of assessment judgments; and the validity and reliability of assessment tasks, criteria, and standards. Moderation of assessment processes establish comparability of standards of student performance across, for example, different markers, locations, subjects, providers and/ or programs of study (TEQSA Glossary).

**Program** refers to a discrete component of study that is credited upon completing part of a program.

**Standards and criteria-based assessment** refers to the evaluation of students' work or performance using pre-defined assessment criteria or standards.

**Summative assessment** means assessment used to assign marks that contribute to the final course grade. Summative assessment tasks may include both invigilated examinations and other types of tasks, such as essays, presentations or projects, completed during the teaching of the course.



## 14. Acronyms

<b>AQF</b>	Australian Qualifications Framework
<b>AT</b>	Assessment Task
<b>CLO</b>	Course Learning Outcome
<b>HE</b>	Higher Education
<b>ILO</b>	Intended Learning Outcome
<b>MLO</b>	Module Learning Outcome
<b>OBE</b>	Outcomes–Based Education
<b>OBLT</b>	Outcomes–Based Learning and Teaching
<b>PLO</b>	Program Learning Outcome
<b>SOLO</b>	Structure of the Observed Learning Outcome (as in SOLO Taxonomy)
<b>TLA</b>	Teaching and Learning Activity
<b>UbD</b>	Understanding by Design

## 15. References

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