
DEFENCE ACADEMY
OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

Cranfield
UNIVERSITY

Defence College of Management and Technology

Flexible Learning Support Centre
FLSC Guide Series

Moodle: Student's Guide

How to Use this Guide

This guide will introduce you to using Moodle, the DCMT Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) to access online learning materials and activities.

We recommend that you have this guide to hand when you use Moodle for the first time. You can either access specific tasks or work through the whole document. To become proficient, we recommend you practice the procedures for all tasks. An online version of this guide is available on the Moodle homepage.

Purpose of this Document

The Flexible Learning Support Centre (FLSC) has designed this guide to provide support to students in the use of Moodle. The aim of this document is to give an overview of how Moodle can be used to access online learning materials and activities.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the workshop you should be able to:

- Log into Moodle
- Change your password and edit your profile
- Navigate around the Moodle site and course areas
- Access and download resources
- Access the Moodle activities
- Contribute to a discussion forum

What is Moodle?

Moodle is an acronym for Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment. Moodle is one of the most widely used and rapidly growing VLEs. Moodle runs as an interactive website with features and activities designed to engage learners and promote collaborative learning.

Training Course Conventions

Computer input that you type is shown in <i>Verdana 10 Italic</i> font	<i>http://www.netskills.ac.uk/</i>
Hypertext links to be followed are shown in <u>Verdana 10 blue underlined</u> font	DCMT external web site: DCMT
Computer output, menu names and options, buttons, URLs are shown in Verdana 10 Bold	Save, Go to, Refresh
⇒ indicates a action in a task	⇒ click DA VLE on the navigation bar
Tasks are for you to complete during your training session	TASK:
Notes contain further important information for you to read	NOTE:

Getting Help

If you need more help, you can:

- Access the Moodle guide for students on the Welcome page.
- Contact the **helpdesk**:

For technical help and queries about using Moodle email: flhelp.cu@defac.ac.uk

For general assistance and advice with flexible learning, or to give feedback or general comments email: fl@cranfield.ac.uk

Helpdesk phone: +44 (0)179331 4444

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Task 1. Logging in

Learning outcomes

After completing this task you should be able to:

- log into the Moodle system

Method

You will log into Moodle.

Note

Moodle is a web site like any other and is therefore available wherever there is an internet connection.

1.1 TASK: Logging in

- ⇒ Browse to: <http://vle.defac.ac.uk>
- ⇒ Enter the login details provided by your instructor.
- ⇒ Click the **Login** button.



This will bring you to the Welcome page.

Task 2. Changing your password and editing your profile

Learning outcomes

After completing this task you should be able to:

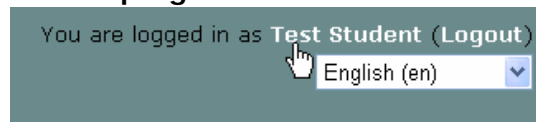
- change your password
- edit your personal information

Method

You will access your own profile, change your password and add your email address.

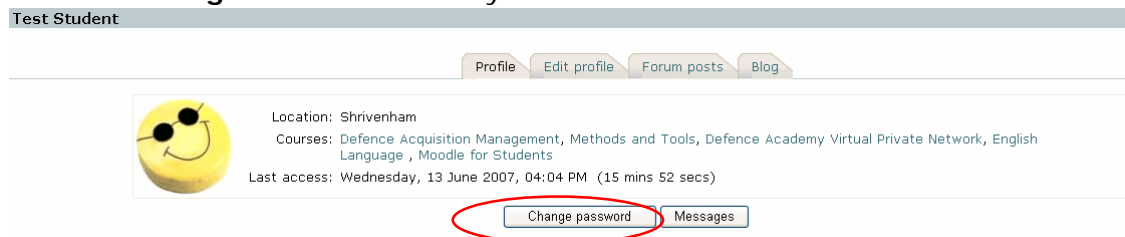
2.1 TASK: Changing your password

⇒ Click **your name** in the **top right corner** of the screen.



Your profile will appear.

⇒ Click **Change Password** below your details



⇒ Fill in all the fields in the new window and click **Change Password**.

All fields are required

Username: teststudent

Current Password:

New password:

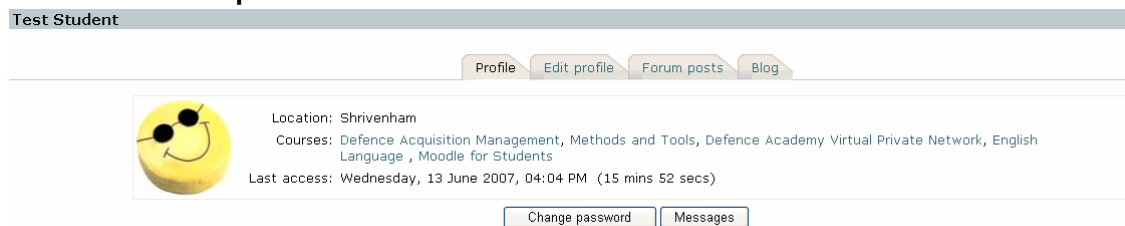
New password (again):

Change password

Your password has now been updated – make sure you remember your new password!

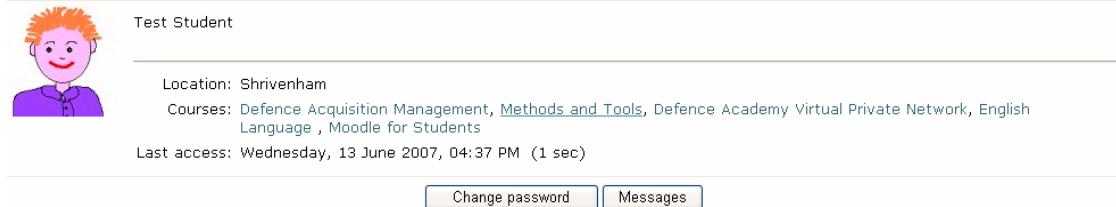
2.2 TASK: Updating your details

⇒ Click the **Edit profile** tab.



- ⇒ Edit your details.
- ⇒ Add your email address.
- ⇒ Enter your name or a description in the **description** field.
- ⇒ Scroll down and click **Update Profile** to save your changes.

When have completed this task, you should see your profile displayed as below:



The screenshot shows a user profile for 'Test Student'. On the left is a cartoon avatar of a person with orange hair. To the right of the avatar, the name 'Test Student' is displayed. Below the name, the location is 'Shrivenham'. The courses listed are 'Defence Acquisition Management', 'Methods and Tools', 'Defence Academy Virtual Private Network', 'English Language', and 'Moodle for Students'. The last access is noted as 'Wednesday, 13 June 2007, 04:37 PM (1 sec)'. At the bottom of the profile section are two buttons: 'Change password' and 'Messages'.

Notes

Here are some details on the different fields of your profile:

Email address: This field is mandatory. You can use any real email address but it should be the one that you check frequently to ensure you keep up with course developments.

Email display: It is best to let your teacher and other course members see your email.

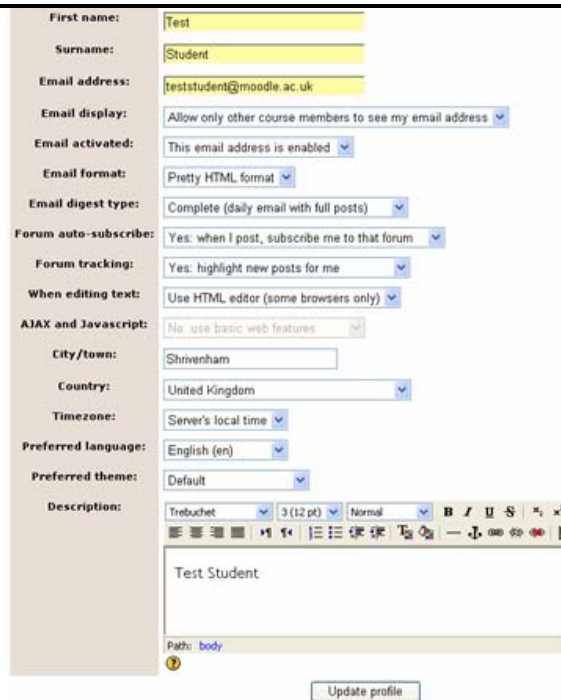
Email digest type: You should change this to *complete* to ensure that you receive your course emails.

City/town: This field is mandatory.

Country: This field is mandatory.

Description: This field is mandatory.

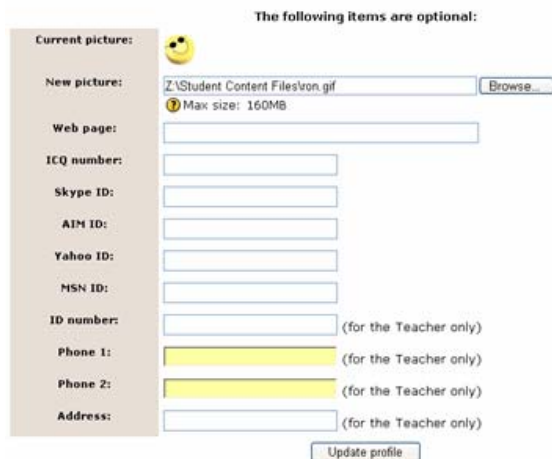
New picture: When inserting a picture it is your responsibility to ensure that you have the appropriate copyright clearance. To insert a picture of yourself click the browse button and search your computer for a picture. Make sure that the file is not larger than the maximum size listed. The image file will be cropped to a square and resized to 100 x 100 pixels.



The screenshot shows the 'Update profile' form. It contains various fields and options:

- First name:** Test
- Surname:** Student
- Email address:** teststudent@moodle.ac.uk
- Email display:** Allow only other course members to see my email address
- Email activated:** This email address is enabled
- Email format:** Pretty HTML format
- Email digest type:** Complete (daily email with full posts)
- Forum auto-subscribe:** Yes: when I post, subscribe me to that forum
- Forum tracking:** Yes: highlight new posts for me
- When editing text:** Use HTML editor (some browsers only)
- AJAX and Javascript:** No: use basic web features
- City/town:** Shrivenham
- Country:** United Kingdom
- Timezone:** Server's local time
- Preferred language:** English (en)
- Preferred theme:** Default
- Description:** A rich text editor with 'Test Student' entered.

 At the bottom right of the form is an 'Update profile' button.



The screenshot shows the optional fields section of the 'Update profile' form. It includes:

- Current picture:** A placeholder image of a smiley face.
- New picture:** A file selection field with a 'Browse...' button and a note 'Max size: 160MB'.
- Web page:** A text input field.
- ICQ number:** A text input field.
- Skype ID:** A text input field.
- AIM ID:** A text input field.
- Yahoo ID:** A text input field.
- MSN ID:** A text input field.
- ID number:** A text input field with '(for the Teacher only)' next to it.
- Phone 1:** A text input field with '(for the Teacher only)' next to it.
- Phone 2:** A text input field with '(for the Teacher only)' next to it.
- Address:** A text input field with '(for the Teacher only)' next to it.

 At the bottom right of this section is an 'Update profile' button.

Task 3. Understanding page layout and blocks

Learning outcomes

After completing this task you should be able to:

- log out
- access your courses

Method

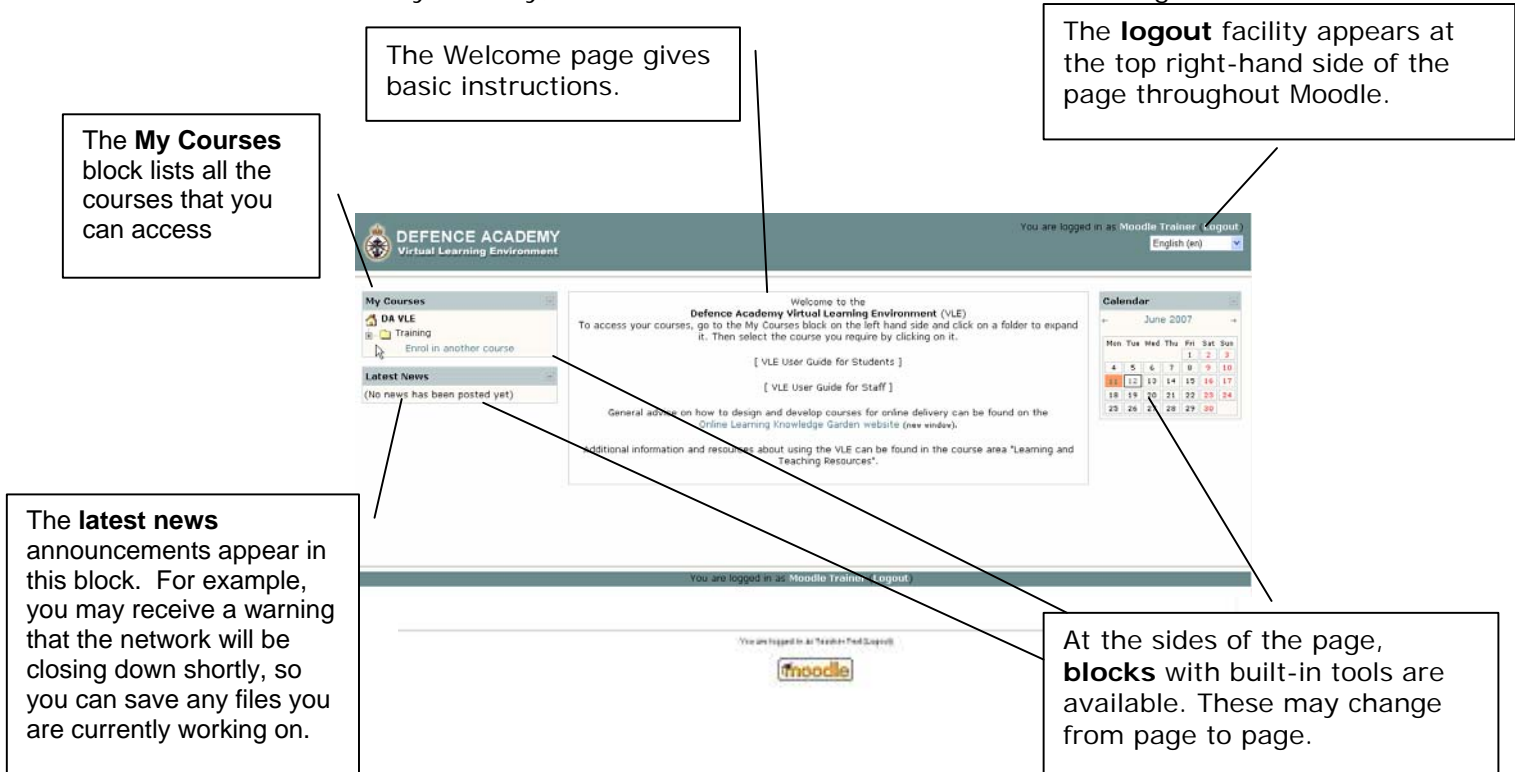
You will access Moodle and explore the features of the interface.

Moodle provides a single entry point to all your courses.

3.1 TASK: Orientation

⇒ Click **DA VLE** to come back to the Welcome page. 

⇒ Find each of the following items in the interface. Make sure you know where to find the courses you study, how to access the built-in tools and how to log out.



The Welcome page gives basic instructions.

The **logout** facility appears at the top right-hand side of the page throughout Moodle.

The **My Courses** block lists all the courses that you can access

The **latest news** announcements appear in this block. For example, you may receive a warning that the network will be closing down shortly, so you can save any files you are currently working on.

At the sides of the page, **blocks** with built-in tools are available. These may change from page to page.

3.2 TASK: Accessing a course

⇒ In the **My Courses** block, click the + button to expand the folders in order to see your various courses.

⇒ To select a particular course, click on it.

Note

Clicking the icon alongside the course name will have no effect. You must place the cursor directly over the text, which underlines and highlights it, and displays the full title.

Task 4. Navigating within Moodle

Learning outcomes

After completing this task you should be able to:

- navigate between topics
- access different blocks
- view announcements
- access help within an activity

Method

You will access your course and navigate between topics and blocks.

⇒ From the Welcome page click **Getting Started** in **My Courses**.



This opens the **Topic Outline** page of your course.

The central panel shows all the topics in the selected module, and the contents within each topic.

Blocks can be found on the left-hand side.

4.1 TASK: Focusing on a topic

⇒ In Topic 1, click the square on the right-hand side

1 Unit 1 - Course resources
Moodle: Student's Guide
Studying at DCMT - Computing Requirements

This hides all the other topics and lets you focus on the one you selected.

4.2 TASK: Navigating between topics

⇒ Click the arrow on the **Jump...** menu.

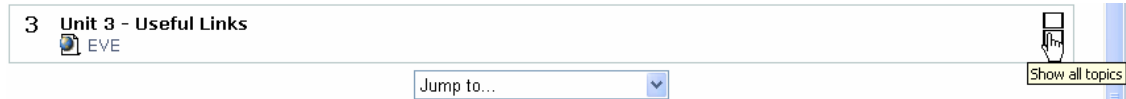
⇒ Select Topic 3 (*Unit 3 - Useful links*)

Jump to...
Jump to...
2 - Unit 2 - Using a Forum
3 - Unit 3 - Useful Links

The **Jump...** menu allows you to switch between topics and activities

4.3 TASK: Expanding all topics

⇒ Click the 'two squares' icon to show all the topics again.

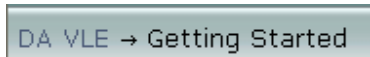


4.4 Blocks

There are various blocks found at the sides of the screen. These could appear in your course:

Block	Function
Latest news	Display/view announcements
Upcoming Events	Display upcoming events with links to the calendar
Recent Activity	Display the recent activities added to the course with links to the activities
My Courses	Display the courses in which you are enrolled
Administration	Access to your grades
People	The Participants function lists all the other people enrolled on your course
Activities	Contains all the activities including the forums, which gives you access to all the forums available to you.

4.5 TASK: Navigation



The navigation bar contains the 'breadcrumb' trail that shows you what page you are on and the path taken to get to that page. The breadcrumb trail is extremely useful for navigating around the site.

⇒ Click **News Forum**. 

Now you will navigate back to your course and to the Welcome page.

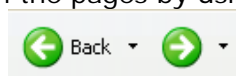
⇒ Click **Getting Started** to get back to your course.



Notes

If you click **DA VLE**, you would get back to the Welcome page.

You can also step through the pages by using the 'Back' and 'Forward' arrows in your browser.



4.6 TASK: Viewing announcements

⇒ Select **News Forum** to display general news and announcements.



Click **News forum** to access all announcements from your course

If you have opted for **Forum Tracking** when editing your profile, **unread posts** will be displayed. Click the link to read the post.


⇒ Alternatively, click **more...** in the **Latest News** block next to the item you wish to see.



Note

The block **Latest News** may not appear in every course.

4.7 TASK: Accessing help in an activity

Whenever you see this 'Help' icon , you can click it to display a help window for the related topic. When you've read it close the window.

⇒ Click **News Forum** to access the announcements

⇒ Click the help button  next to the **Search forums** item



This will display the help information in a new window.

⇒ Close the window. 

⇒ Navigate back to your course homepage.



Task 5. Accessing and downloading resources

Learning outcomes

After completing this task you should be able to:

- access and read resources online
- download and save resources on your computer

Method

You will access your course and download resources from a specific topic.


5.1 Resources

A course can contain various resources which you will need to assist you in your study. These can take various forms e.g. text, images, video, web pages, Microsoft Office documents, Acrobat PDF files.



5.2 TASK: Accessing and viewing a resource

➡ Go to **Unit 1 - Course resources**.

➡ Click the text link to the right of the 'WORD resource'  icon to open the electronic version of this guide.

 [Moodle: Student's Guide](#)

The content will open in a new window.

➡ When you have seen the content, close the window.

➡ Click the text link to the right of the 'PDF resource'  icon to open the guide for Computing Requirements.

 [Studying at DCMT - Computing Requirements](#)

The content will open within Moodle.

➡ When you have seen the content, navigate back to the course homepage.

DA VLE → [Getting Started](#) → [Resources](#) → [Studying at DCMT - Computing Requirements](#)

5.3 Downloading a resource

To download a resource, right click the resource link. Choose **Save Target As...**. Choose where you want to save it on your computer. Then click **Save**.



Task 6. Accessing the Moodle activities

Learning outcomes

After completing this task you should be able to:

- describe what each activity does

Method

You will access your course, observe the **Activities** block and icons and read the descriptions below.

Moodle offers a large variety of activities that are designed to help your learning. Each type of activity has an icon associated with in order to help you to determine which type of activity you are about to use.

Here is the **Activities** block with a brief description of the most popular activities:



Activity	Description
Assignments	Feature used to submit assignments and Turnitin Assignments. Instructors will set, grade and return your work using this feature.
Chats	Synchronous discussion. You can use this feature when others are online.
Choices	A one-question questionnaire
Forums	Asynchronous discussion. Postings can be automatically sent as emails.
Journals	Feature used to reflect on a topic. It can only be accessed by your instructor and you.
Quizzes	Various activities to help assess your progress.
Resources	Material to consult for your studies. These can be any form of media.
Surveys	Feature used to ask about your opinions or experience of learning.
Wikis	Web page that can be edited by any of its users.

Note

The block **Activities** may not appear in every course.

Task 7. Contributing to a discussion forum

Learning outcomes

After completing this task you should be able to:

- take part in a forum
- use the text editor and insert pictures
- insert attachments in a discussion

Method

You will access your course and participate to a forum.

7.1 Vocabulary

Forum: activity where an exchange of views takes place.

Discussion topics: discussion topics grouped in threads that contain a main post and all related replies.

Post: message post to the forum.

7.2 TASK: Accessing the forum activities

There are two ways of accessing a forum.

1. Access within a Topic

⇒ Click the forum link **Let's have a debate** in Topic 2: **Unit2 - Using a forum and the text editor**.



2. Access with the Activities block


⇒ Click **Forums** in the **Activities** block to access the forums activities.

General forums

Forum	Description	Discussions	Subscribed
News forum	General news and announcements	1	Yes

Learning forums

Forum	Description	Discussions	Subscribed
2 Let's have a debate	In order to generate some discussion, select the TV discussion topic and enter some of your own opinions on the question using the HTML editor.	1	Yes

A screenshot of the HTML editor for the 'Let's have a debate' forum. The editor shows a toolbar with various icons for text formatting (bold, italic, underline, strikethrough, text color, background color), list creation, link insertion, and other functions. The text area contains the forum's description.

⇒ Click the forum link **Let's have a debate**.

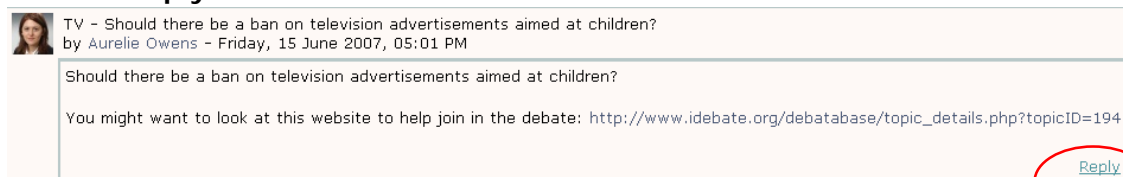
7.3 TASK: Taking part in a forum

⇒ Read the forum instructions or presentation

⇒ Click the discussion link: *TV - Should there be a ban on television advertisements aimed at children?*

This will open the posts to the discussion.

⇒ Click **Reply** to contribute to the discussion.



TV - Should there be a ban on television advertisements aimed at children?
by Aurelie Owens - Friday, 15 June 2007, 05:01 PM

Should there be a ban on television advertisements aimed at children?

You might want to look at this website to help join in the debate: http://www.idebate.org/debatatabase/topic_details.php?topicID=194

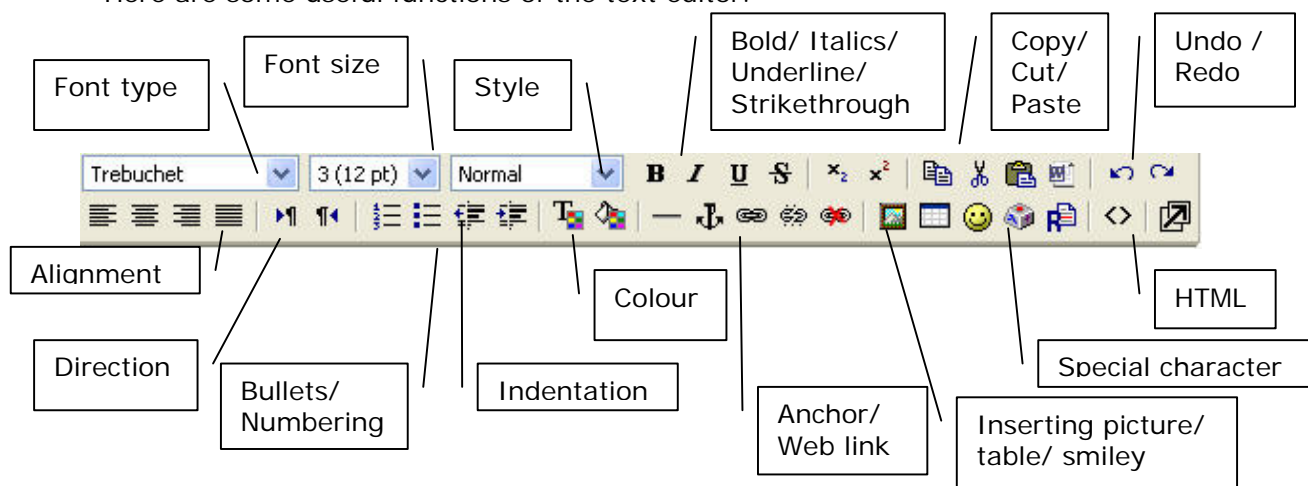
[Reply](#)

This will open a **Your reply** screen where you can enter your contribution.

7.4 TASK: Using the text editor

⇒ Enter your text and format as you would in a word processor.

Here are some useful functions of the text editor.



7.5 Inserting pictures

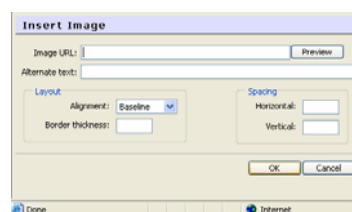
Do NOT copy and paste pictures within your reply. These will not be displayed to other users.

To insert a picture within the message, you need to:

⇒ Click the Insert picture icon .

⇒ Type the URL of the image.

⇒ Type a description in the **alternative text** field.



If your picture is not available online, you will need to attach it (see 7.6).

7.6 Adding attachments

Attachment:  Max size: 500KB
(optional)

⇒ In the **Attachment** field click on **Browse**.

⇒ Find the file you wish to attach. This can be any type of file (e.g. text, images, video, web pages, Microsoft Office documents, Acrobat PDF files)

⇒ Select the file and click on **Open**.

The file location should automatically appear in the **Attachment** field.

⇒ Click **Post to forum**. 

7.7 Viewing your forum contributions

To view a message, click on the message name under "Discussion".

Summary

You should now be able to:

- Log into Moodle
- Change your password and edit your profile
- Navigate around the Moodle site and course areas
- Access and download resources
- Access the Moodle activities
- Contribute to a discussion forum

Don't forget, if you need any help or have any suggestions regarding the use of the DCMT VLE contact the helpdesk.

Glossary

Activities: Interactive learning tasks for students in a course. For example: discussing a topic in a forum, writing a journal entry, submitting an assignment, or completing a quiz.

Blocks: Areas on the right and left sides of the course homepage. Blocks can be added, moved and removed easily. They link to various Moodle features of your course.

CMS: A content management system allows authors to prepare and publish information online. Resources are stored in a database for reuse, automatic indexing and searching, and for workflow management (authorisation, publication, retirement, archiving).

Collaborative tools: Features such as email, calendar, chat, wiki are collaborative tools. They are designed to help people involved in common tasks work together.

Course: A module or programme website where all learning materials, exercises, study support and work-based activities are held.

Filter: An add-in that allows the transformation of text into different, more complex forms.

FLSC: The Flexible Learning Support Centre supports DCMT staff and students.

Learning platform: It gathers hardware, software and supporting services to enable distance and flexible learning.

MLE: A Managed Learning Environment is an institution-wide system that integrates separate systems such as the Student Record Systems, Library Systems, Management Information Systems, VLEs and timetabling systems.

Module: A component of Moodle that enables course features such as assignments, forums, glossaries, lessons, quizzes, surveys.

Moodle: the DCMT open source e-learning platform.

Resources: The content of your course. A resource can be any file you have uploaded or can point to using a URL.

Turnitin: Plagiarism prevention software integrated into Moodle. It is used to check text-based assignments submitted electronically for similarities with online resources and the work of other students.

VLE: A Virtual Learning Environment is a set of teaching and learning tools online designed to enhance a student's learning experience.