



## Checks and Tips for Using a Learning Management System

A Learning Management System (LMS) allows you to manage online courses - give students access to study materials and assessments and administer course activity. A student can log in to a dedicated student area and enroll into courses, view course materials and take assessments. Assigned tutors can log into the system to mark assessments, communicate with their students and view reports on their progress.

Note: "Certain learning tasks are well suited for an LMS (centralized functions like learner administration and content management). *Learning itself is different - it is not a process to be managed. Learning is by nature multi-faceted and chaotic.* ([George Siemens, 2004](#))

### ENSURE THE LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM ADDS VALUE

Good use of a LMS means doing more than simply presenting content - Word documents, PowerPoint files - through the LMS. Remember, content you provide is not the only valuable contribution to learning!

If you want your students to interact with each other and share knowledge, experience and resources, you will have to think carefully about how you use a discussion board provided by the LMS – simply making one available will not necessarily result in 'engaged' discussion.

You may well have to also give students access to other social tools such as blogs, wikis and social networking sites.

An LMS is not itself a 'learning environment' – learners create those! But you can help them, with good planning

#### TIP

Use [CourseBuilder](#) to create rich online resources, then provide a link to those in the 'Knowledge Map' area in Cecil. (CourseBuilder is a tool that enables you to create web based, educational resources without knowing anything about web authoring)

### DECIDE WHAT YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE

#### Remember Constructive Alignment

The basis of this concept is that learners construct their own learning through appropriate activities. Success is dependent on the alignment of:

- the curriculum;
- intended learning outcomes;
- teaching methods used;
- assessment tasks.

Use of a Learning Management System must also be aligned with intended learning outcomes, the teaching methods, activities and assessment tasks.





In this instance, the question to ask yourself is: “How does the use of the Learning Management System support the activities that will assist your learners in meeting the desired learning outcomes?”

## **DECIDE IF THE TIME IS RIGHT FOR YOU**

Making use of a Learning Management System to enhance teaching / learning will require a time commitment.

In the first place you will need to take the time to become familiar with the functions of the LMS. For example, you will need to learn how to upload files, set up discussion forums, set assessments and provide students with feedback online.

You will also need to take the time to become familiar with some of the ‘best practices’ associated with teaching and learning online – so that your use of the LMS really does enhance your teaching and assist student learning.

## **POTENTIAL ISSUES**

The potential issues with using a Learning Management System can be broadly categorized as either technical issues or as teaching / learning issues. Some of the issues that you may face are as follows:

- Robustness of the system;
- Lack of student internet access / slow connection speeds for students;
- Lack of student IT skills;
- Lack of student involvement;
- Coping with the demands of online students;
- Student difficulties with a new way of learning;
- Lack of immediacy / lack of spontaneity.

You can get help with these issues.

## **CONTACT**

### **Technical support**

CECIL team (ext 85100)

### **Teaching and learning issues**

Learning Technology Unit (<http://www.fmhs.auckland.ac.nz/faculty/ltu/default.aspx>)

