Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Policy

1.   Introduction

1.1.   This Policy is designed for all members of the Fairfield School of Business (FSB) community – staff and students – who use or intend to use the Schools, supported Virtual Learning Environment, FSB Connect. The Policy is intended to:

- Ensure that all FSB students can access and interact with appropriate materials and activities to support their studies,

- Encourage and support FSB staff to take an active role in student learning,

- Ensure that the tools which support student learning are appropriate, reliable, accessible, and secure,

- Ensure that staff and students are provided with appropriate information and training to support their use of FSB Connect,

1.2.   Students to use FSB Connect for enhancing their learning experience and advancing their assessment performance.

1.3.   Staff to use FSB Connect for further improving their support to students and increasing the effectiveness in delivering excellent teaching through innovative practices.

1.4.   This Policy determines the code of conduct and explains any issues associated with the use of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), FSB Connect. The FSB vision is for FSB Connect to become a knowledge hub for its students and staff supporting all users in retrieving information, achieving learning outcomes, improving their assessment performance as well as communicating their learning ideas and views.

1.5.   There is an expectation that staff will use the VLE as an active learning environment rather than just a content repository and develop material and introduce elements of best practice on an on-going basis as appropriate to their student body.

1.6.   It is therefore, the objective of FSB to adhere to the terms and conditions of the Computer Misuse Act 1990. The full content of the Act is available http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1990/18/contents

1.7.   It is therefore, the objective of FSB to adhere to the terms and conditions of the Data Protection Act 1998. The full content of the Act is available at http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/29/contents.

1.8.   It is therefore, the objective of FSB to adhere to the terms and conditions of the Communications Act 2003. The full content of the Act is available at http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/21/contents

1.9.   It is therefore, the objective of FSB to adhere to the terms and conditions of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994. The full content of the Act is available at http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1994/33/contents

1.10.   In compliance with Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, staff, students and visitors using University IT systems should not create, transmit, receive, view or store material with the intent to radicalise themselves or others.

1.11.   The VLE policy should be read in conjunction with the School's

- Social Media Policy, which outlines expected conduct in online forums; and
- The IT Regulations, which covers the acceptable use of the School's IT facilities.

2.   Scope

2.1.   The VLE policy covers the use of FSB Connect and addresses any issues that may rise due to the way it is used by both students and staff. The VLE policy applies to the use of any FSB Connect features, and covers the use of FSB Connect both in campus through FSB computers and networks as well as access to FSB Connect remotely via the Internet. The VLE policy is in line with the FSB Copyright Policy and the FSB IT Regulations. It is expected that both students and staff will ensure that the policy is followed as required and that any requests for clarification with respect to fair and lawful use of works should be directed immediately to the FSB Connect Officer.

2.2.   The Staff and students must follow the set procedure for registration to FSB Connect that is clearly defined in the induction pack provided to students and staff. User accounts are created with access rights and user privileges depending on the role of each individual.

2.3.   All users are members of the learning community supported by FSB.

2.4.   Depending on the role of individuals an account allows certain functions and has specific access rights. The duration of the FSB Connect account depends on:

- The programme and mode of study for students
- The employment arrangements for staff

2.5.   Each student and staff member will be allocated a unique username and an initial password. All users are then responsible for ensuring that the initial password is changed to provide security against unauthorised access. Each individual account requires the user to maintain a personal profile that should use the use of their unique FSB email account and the provision of up to date personal details.

2.6.   FSB Connect provides a portal for accessing learning content used in the classroom and for virtual delivery. The FSB Connect is structured according to the Programmes of study and the module content included in FSB programmes. The FSB Connect environment encourages communication between students as well as interaction between staff and students. There are a range discussion forums used in association with learning activities and learning outcomes.

2.7.   The use of FSB Connect for assessment purposes, self-assessment and developing work associated with the assessment brief is identified as crucial for students developing their academic work. Students are expected to be using FSB Connect in preparation for their assessment brief through the Streamline Learning process. Academic staff is expected to be using FSB to support students through the Streamline Teaching process.

2.8.   FSB Connect should used be in line with the code of conduct for using FSB IT resources as explained in the FSB IT policy Users of FSB connect are expected to demonstrate appropriate behaviour and follow the code of conduct identified in the relative section of the VLE policy.

2.9.   The misuse of FSB Connect will be dealt with through the with FSB's IT Regulations and Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Regulations.

2.10.   FSB Connect users should ensure they are aware of the School's Copyright Policy, of which individuals may be in breach in the event of:

- Inclusion of materials that are copyrighted without written permission
- Inclusion of materials without copyright clearance
- Inclusion of materials that are not covered by the FSB copyright clearance agreement without written permission

2.11.   The FSB Connect Officer is responsible for ensuring that the use of FSB Connect falls within the acceptable criteria as determined by the VLE policy. The FSB Connect Officer provides support in the form of advice, mentoring, training, and awareness for students and staff.

2.12.   During induction all staff and students will receive an explanation of the procedure for obtaining registration for FSB Connect, the process is also available the Student Handbook and the Employee Handbook. The account holder must use the FSB email account for setting up the FSB Connect profile.

2.13.   Registration to FSB Connect provides access to a range of resources, including:

- Learning content covering learning outcomes of each module
- Learning material distributed in classrooms and seminars
- Communication with academic staff and students through interaction and activities
- Assessment briefs
- Streamline learning / teaching interaction activities
- Self-assessment quizzes

2.14.   The structure of FSB Connect is based on the structure of the FSB programmes of study, this includes:

- Programme module areas
- Generic module communication in the form of discussion forums
- Assignments to do
- Upload my Assignment
- Student Module Evaluation Survey
- Formative Feedback
- Module content areas structured according to learning outcomes and topics

3.   Code of Conduct Staff – Copyright Agreement (Staff)

3.1.   All staff are expected to:

i.   Demonstrate self-disciplined behaviour and an ethical manner in the way they use the various functions of FSB Connect, which incorporates the way they communicate through FSB Connect.

ii.   Respect the views, ideas, interpretations and contributions of other users, expressed via FSB Connect.

iii.   Ensure that usernames and passwords remain secure, private and strictly for their own personal use.

iv.   Maintain individual FSB Connect profiles that are accurate reflection of their own details and are not causing any offense to other users.

v.   Understand that users are accountable and liable for their own actions; misuse of FSB Connect can result in an investigation and possible disciplinary action.

vi.   Use FSB Connect materials in a fair and lawful manner, including materials that have been uploaded by them.

vii.   Staff must use FSB Connect with the intention to enhance the learning experience and engage in communication associated with learning. Staff must not engage in activities associated with financial, political, or commercial purpose.

viii.   Avoid actions or activities in FSB Connect which may be considered defamatory, inflammatory discriminatory, obscene or offensive.

ix.   Ensure that none of the materials uploaded to FSB Connect or exchanged with other users is affected by viruses, malware, spyware, malicious code, worms or any other form of software related risk.

x.   Inform the FSB Connect Officer and system administrators of FSB Connect issues relating to:

- Any technical problems experienced using specific features and functions.
- Issues accessing own accounts and editing own profile.
- Any behaviour that is in contravention of the VLE policy.
- Raise concerns about the way FSB Connect is being used.

3.2.   VLE Administrators, alongside their other duties, are expected to:

i.   Maintain FSB Connect in excellent operational order.

ii.   Adhere to the FSB Connect copyright policy.

iii.   Be responsible for updating their knowledge in relation to the latest technologies and practices necessary for the optimum performance of FSB Connect.

iv.   Ensure the confidentiality of any FSB Connect information that is accessible to them as part of their role.

v.   Maintain uninterrupted FSB Connect logs and back-ups, including individual profiles of all users.

vi.   Maintain FSB Connect accounts and any assigned access rights and user privileges.

vii.   Check all points of entry to FSB Connect to ensure against security vulnerabilities including viruses, malware, spyware, malicious code, worms or any other form of software related risk.

viii.   Perform any necessary maintenance tasks to server computers, networks and any other part of FSB network infrastructure that is needed for the operation of FSB Connect.

ix.   Manage outsourced services affecting the use of FSB Connect to ensure they are provided to an acceptable standard and specified by a detailed Service Level Agreement.

x.   Carry out periodic audits of FSB Connect in relation to:

- Security
- Privacy

- Monitoring
- Back-ups and logs
- Code of conduct

xi. Report on any issues associated with FSB Connect operation and describe in detail any interruption of its service.

xii. Ensure that support is in place to provide uninterrupted availability and acceptable performance of FSB Connect, its features and functions.

xiii. Keep a log of any FSB Connect changes and archive any actions, including:

- Management of user accounts
- Management of content
- Management of interface
- Management of dynamic content
- Management of user profiles
- Management of user interactions
- Management of communications
- Management of user generated content

xiv. Programme coordinators, alongside their general responsibilities will also have specific ones relating to FSB Connect, these responsibilities are:

- Produce reports in relation to the use of FSB Connect for the specific programme.
- Be Aware of issues relating to the use of FSB Connect in specific modules.
- Carryout any investigations required into issues relating to staff involvement in the use of FSB Connect.
- Support and offer training for FSB Connect to academic and student users in engaging with its features.
- Liaise and provide feedback to administrators for FSB Connect management issues.
- Liaise with and report to the FSB Connect Officer for any cases of FSB Connect misuse.

xv. Academics, alongside their general responsibilities also have specific ones relating to their role, these responsibilities are:

- Ensure the FSB Connect environment is fully utilised for enhancing the learning experience.
- Follow the Streamline Teaching procedure in using FSB Connect features.
- Produce FSB Connect content that is of high quality and that positively enhances the learning experience.

- Ensure they are actively involved in the FSB Connect areas relevant to their modules.
- Ensure students are made aware of the requirement to use FSB Connect in their studies and how this can impact positively on their studies
- Align FSB Connect features with the delivery of their modules.
- Facilitate positive interaction with students through FSB Connect discussion forums.

4. Code of Conduct Students– Copyright Agreement (Students)

4.1. All students are expected to:

i. Demonstrate self-disciplined behaviour and an ethical manner in the way they use the various functions of FSB Connect, which incorporates the way they communicate through FSB Connect.

ii. Respect the views, ideas, interpretations and contributions of other users, expressed via FSB Connect.

iii. Ensure that usernames and passwords remain secure, private and strictly for their own personal use.

iv. Maintain individual FSB Connect profiles that are accurate reflection of their own details and are not causing any offense to other users.

v. Understand that users are accountable and liable for their own actions; misuse of FSB Connect can result in an investigation and possible disciplinary action.

vi. Use FSB Connect materials in a fair and lawful manner, including materials that have been uploaded by them.

vii. Students must use FSB Connect with the intention to enhance the learning experience and engage in communication associated with learning. Students must not engage in activities associated with financial, political, or commercial purpose.

viii. Avoid actions or activities in FSB Connect which may be considered defamatory, inflammatory discriminatory, obscene or offensive.

ix. Ensure that none of the materials uploaded to FSB Connect or exchanged with other users is affected by viruses, malware, spyware, malicious code, worms or any other form of software related risk.

x. Inform the FSB Connect Officer and system administrators of FSB Connect issues relating to:

- Any technical problems experienced using specific features and functions.
- Issues accessing own accounts and editing own profile.
- Any behaviour that is in contravention of the VLE policy.
- Raise concerns about the way FSB Connect is being used.

xi. Students, on top of the general responsibilities that are common with the ones of staff, also have specific ones relating to their role, therefore they are expected to:

xii. Follow the Streamline Learning procedure in using FSB Connect features:

- Participate fully in the use of FSB Connect features towards the assignment briefs.
- Ensure that they do not inflict any problems in the operation of FSB Connect.
- Ensure that they are enrolled all modules of their programme and year.
- Use FSB Connect features and its contents solely for their learning activities.
- Guarantee that FSB Connect contents are not disseminated further.

5. Monitoring the VLE

5.1. The use of FSB Connect will be subjected to regular monitoring, for the following reasons:

i. Provide data and statistics in the relation to the use of FSB Connect features.

ii. Analysis of the impact of FSB Connect on the learning experience.

iii. Identify and report on issues associated with the use of FSB Connect in specific modules.

iv. Ensuring that the copyright policy is adhered to throughout FSB Connect.

v. Enable the development and introduction of innovative methods that can be used in FSB Connect for learning.

vi. Provide evidence to be used to investigate issues relating to FSB Connect operation and security.

5.2. At all times FSB Connect monitoring will be in line with the relevant laws as discussed at the beginning of the VLE policy.

6.   Security and Recovery

6.1.   All users must ensure that the user names and accounts provided remain private.

6.2.   All users must ensure they use computer systems and networks that are not perceived as high risk ones when accessing FSB Connect

6.3.   Users may be required to change passwords periodically and ensuring that password strength is maintained to the required standards.

6.4.   Account privileges will be reviewed periodically to ensure that no accounts exist for previous users who should no longer have authorisation to access FSB Connect.

6.5.   Users who suspect that evidence of misuse exists should contact the FSB Connect Officer at the first instance.

6.6.   Users who have been involved with or suspected of involvement with any incident of misuse may be suspended during an investigation following the incident.

6.7.   Regular back-ups of FSB Connect will be held by administrator users.

6.8.   The Network Manager will maintain a record of the following:

- Exact date and time of each back-up.
- The specific storage details of the back-up.
- The archive records of previous back-ups.
- The number of back-up copies held in different locations.
- The traceable incremental back-ups available.
- The retention period for each back-up is determined by the Network Manager.

7.   VLE Policy Implementation

7.1.   Fairfield School of Business takes any cases of misuse in relation to FSB Connect seriously as they can:

- Affect the overall learning experience of all students.
- Disrupt the support provided by staff throughout the learning experience.
- Create an unacceptable environment for all users.
- Leaving FSB vulnerable to risks.

7.2.   Students who have been involved with any incident of misuse will be subject to student disciplinary procedure as specified under Student Conduct & Disciplinary Regulations (available from Student Portal).

7.3.   Any cases of misuse will be treated according to the seriousness of user actions, focusing on:

- Use of inappropriate language and derogatory remarks.
- Offences that hurt, disgrace or negatively impact on the reputation of others.
- Offensive, false and defaming remarks made against the School.
- Dissemination of racists, sexist, exploitative materials.
- Storage and sharing of inappropriate content.
- Cyber bullying.
- Attempting to use Connect for profit making and commercial activities.
- Communication over topics irrelevant to programme specification and learning environment that may cause harm or offense to others.

8.   Web 2.0

8.1.   Students commonly engage in extra curriculum activities by using Web 2.0 technologies and applications such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter and Toktok. Users are expected not reproduce any FSB Connect content or share any interactions taking place by using Web 2.0 tools. The School strongly discourages this as it may cause harm to others. Any FSB Connect users should be aware that:

- Other users of Web 2.0 technologies may be using false identities.
- Personal details are not private if posted on Web 2.0 profiles.
- Perceptions of your on line presence may be negative and affect one's future.
- Malicious software is a common vulnerability of file exchange.
- Web 2.0 activities may have certain legal implications.
- Own contributions may harm others if not considerate.

Version Tracking:

Version	Author / revisions by	Changes summary	Approved by	Date
1.0 - 4.0	VLE Manager Principal	Original version and annual updated	Executive Committee	Sep 2017 Sep 2018 Mar 2019 Sep 2019
4.1	Quality Audit Manager Head of IT	Annual review and update, reformatted and	Board of Governors	October 2020
5.0	Quality Audit Manager Associate Dean	Substantial revision to all sections and links to related policies applied	Board of Governors	Jan 2022
5.1	Quality Audit Manager Associate Dean	Annual review; no changes to content; minor formatting changes applied.	Board of Governors	Sep 2022

Date of next review: September 2023