



# Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Policy

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**Version:** 6.0

Category: Policies - Registry and Student Administration

Owner(s): VLE Officer

Approved by: The Board of Governors

Access: **Public** – Anyone can view this document

Scope: This policy applies to all taught provision at Fairfield School of Business (FSB)

## 1. What is a Virtual Learning Environment?

- 1.1. FSB's virtual learning environment ("VLE" or "FSB Connect") is an online platform for uploading teaching and assessment materials, timetables, policies and procedures, and other information about FSB's taught programmes. It has additional networking and interactive features such as feedback surveys and user comment posting. Students must (usually) access and submit their formative assessments using the VLE's submission portal and it is therefore crucial that both students and staff involved in programme administration understand how to properly navigate and interact with the VLE.
- 1.2. This policy sets out how FSB will manage its VLE, promote its use, and ensure that users are fully oriented with the layout of the platform. It is accompanied by a practical user guide which is available on the VLE homepage when users log into the platform.
- 1.3. Use of the VLE is subject to FSB's *Acceptable Use Policy*, *Social Media Policy* and the school's Codes of Conduct. Anything considered to be a breach of conduct in a physical environment would also be so in a virtual environment.
- 1.4. Further 1.3, and pursuant to Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015; the school will be vigilant to any staff, students and visitors using FSB's VLE in such a way that would create a risk of a person being radicalised or drawn into terrorism, and will act with appropriate discretion.

## 2. Applicability

- 2.1. This policy is for those enrolled on programmes that are administered using FSB Connect, and the school's staff who are involved in delivering those programme.
- 2.2. 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 remote access via the Internet.

## 3. Operation of the VLE

- 3.1. FSB ensures the following when developing and maintaining its VLE:
  - i. The platform is designed so that it is easy to navigate and accessible for all users,
  - ii. User experience will be personalised (i.e. students will only see information which is relevant to them and the course(s) they are enrolled on,

- iii. The platform is continuously accessible online with minimal maintenance downtime,
- iv. Routine maintenance will be coordinated with programme administrators to ensure this does not coincide with assignment submissions,
- v. Technical support will be provided to users during normal office hours and prioritised when assignment submissions are due,
- vi. All users receive an induction to the platform specific to how they will be using it; for students this will emphasise the importance of correctly submitting assignments on the submission portal,
- vii. The school will use students' feedback about the VLE to continually improve it,
- viii. The school will actively promote features of the VLE intended to support learning and development through research and collaboration,
- ix. The platform will be kept secure from unauthorised or malicious interference; editing access roles will be assigned appropriately,
- x. Public comment sections will be moderated by a member of staff and subject to FSB's *Social Media Policy*.
- xi. The VLE build will conform to the requirements of the school's data protection policy for data processing systems; the school will ensure that no personal data will be at risk either on the VLE itself, or any other platform that it connects to (such as the school's registry database 'SMS').

**Responsibility for the above is as follows:**

3.2. For keeping the platform operational:

- The VLE is considered to be critical infrastructure for the continuity of taught programmes. The management of FSB will commit any resources necessary to prioritise its uninterrupted operation.
- The management will also ensure that contingencies are in place for when the platform is unexpectedly taken offline.
- A member of the IT Services shall be designated as the VLE Officer; they shall be delegated responsibility for routine maintenance of the VLE and for responding to technical support requests relating to it.

3.3. For keeping the content of the VLE up to date:

- Programme leaders and academic administrators will liaise with the VLE Officer to ensure that all programme materials are uploaded to the portal in good time.

- All other designated content owners shall be responsible for updating the content in their respective sections, and for the quality and timeliness of those updates.
- The Quality Assurance team will periodically audit the content of the VLE to ensure content owners are assigned and are keeping their respective sections of the VLE updated with the latest information.

## 4. Using the VLE

- 4.1. FSB Connect is intended as a knowledge hub for 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.
- 4.2. It is expected 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.
- 4.3. 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.
- 4.4. 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
- 4.5. 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.
- 4.6. FSB Connect provides a portal for accessing learning content used in the classroom and for virtual delivery. FSB Connect is structured according to the programmes of study and the module content included in FSB programmes.
- 4.7. The use of FSB Connect for assessment purposes, self-assessment and developing work associated with the assessment brief crucial for students developing their academic work. Students are expected to use FSB Connect in preparation for their assessment brief through the Streamline Learning process. Academic staff are expected to use FSB to support students through the Streamline Teaching process.
- 4.8. 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 in the event that they:

- unlawfully reproduce materials that are copyrighted without written permission; and/or
- unlawfully distribute copyrighted materials without necessary clearance.

4.9. 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, and the assignment upload portal
- Student Module Evaluation Survey
- Formative Feedback
- Module content areas structured according to learning outcomes and topics

## 5. Monitoring the VLE

5.1. The use of FSB Connect will be subjected to regular monitoring, in order to:

- provide data and statistics in the relation to the use of FSB Connect features,
- analyse the impact of FSB Connect on the learning experience,
- identify and report on issues associated with the use of FSB Connect in specific modules,
- ensure that the copyright policy is adhered to throughout FSB Connect.
- enable the development and introduction of innovative methods that can be used in FSB Connect for learning,
- provide evidence to be used to investigate issues relating to FSB Connect operation and security.

## 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. Legal Framework

- 7.1. FSB acts in accordance with all legal and regulatory requirements. This policy is intended to ensure FSB satisfies the following:
  - i. 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>
  - ii. 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>.
  - iii. 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>

## 8. Review and Update

- 8.1. This policy will be reviewed annually or as required by the document owners. Amendments will be approved by the Board of Governors.

## Appendix 1: Copyright Agreement (Staff)

### 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.

**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.

## 9. Appendix 2: Copyright Agreement (Students)

### 1.1. 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.



### 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
6.0	Quality Manager Academic Administrator IT and Network Manager VLE Officer	Substantial revision to introduction, principles of policy and assignment of responsibility.	Board of Governors	

**Date of next review:** September 2025