

Policy Name: MIE Virtual Learning Environment Policy

Policy Title:	MIE Virtual Learning Environment Policy
Description:	Policy to support the development of technology-enhanced learning across both online and face-to-face teaching environments.
Author (Position):	Director of IT & eLearning
Version:	2.1
Approved By:	MIE Governing Body
Policy Approval Date:	December 2023
Date of Next Policy Review:	June 2027 (or as necessary)

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1 Context

Marino Institute of Education, herein referred to as MIE, is committed to providing students and staff with a 24/7 online platform to support their teaching and learning. This commitment is demonstrated within MIE's [Strategic Plan](#), ongoing technology-enabled learning initiatives and engagement with the [National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education](#), and in MIE's recent [Digital Strategy 2022](#).

Use of MIE's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) should facilitate enhancement of the MIE student learning experience by providing each student with 24/7 access to module information, activities and learning resources outside of formal timetables and class time. MIE supports the further development of innovative teaching practices and digital development, through engagement with the VLE and expects that this will be done in a manner which will preserve the integrity of student learning and assessment.

2 Purpose

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to support the digital development of staff and students across both online and face-to-face teaching environments that will assist in:

- i. Enhancing the student experience;
- ii. Supporting innovative teaching strategies;
- iii. Building digital competency for staff and students.

2.2 In doing so, the policy supports MIE's [Strategic Plan](#), the associated [Digital Strategy](#), and related strategies with respect to the educational experience of MIE students and academic staff.

3 Benefits

3.1 The policy is designed to ensure that every registered student has online access to a minimum standard of programme information and learning resources associated with their course and module content.

3.2 This policy seeks to support academics in enhancing their academic and digital practice.

3.3 By promoting broad adoption of the VLE, this policy supports self-directed student learning and independent learning activity.

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- 3.4 An optimised VLE facilitates participation and engagement of a diverse student population, such as mature students, part-time learners, online and international students.

4 Scope

- 4.1 This policy applies to modules and programmes delivered to registered MIE undergraduate, postgraduate, further education and CPD students.
- 4.2 This policy applies to the institutional VLE with regard to teaching and learning activities. This includes students' usage of Mahara to create ePortfolios remotely. Students are apprised of this policy during their orientation/introduction sessions to the usage of Mahara.
- 4.3 This policy does not apply to the technical service level to support the institutional VLE which is the responsibility of the IT & eLearning Department and is covered by a service level agreement with the VLE supplier. The policy is underpinned by a [General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\)](#) compliant service level agreement with our third-party supplier, namely Enovation Solutions Ltd. It is noted that no login data (other than username) is held in the institutional VLE, as login access is controlled through Lightweight Directory Access Protocol (LDAP) integration only.
- 4.4 The VLE third party supplier ensures 24/7 business continuity of the institutional VLE and maintains all aspects of the platform, under the terms and conditions of their service level agreement.

5 Principles

- 5.1 A single institutional VLE platform for all undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes is established across MIE.
- 5.2 The VLE is key to MIE's ongoing commitment to enhance the undergraduate and postgraduate educational experience through the promotion of appropriate technology enhanced learning and the meaningful use of technology. This is noted in the [MIE Strategic Plan](#) and the [Digital Strategy](#).
- 5.3 Digital capacity and innovation in the use of digital technologies will be promoted and supported by the IT & eLearning team.

6 Definitions

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- 6.1 A VLE is a web-based platform for digital resources and information on programmes of study, usually within educational institutions.
- 6.2 Modules are the building blocks of programmes. They are self-contained units of teaching, learning and assessment on particular topics with defined academic credit values, learning outcomes, modes of delivery and assessment schemes. Students are required to pass a defined number of module credits in order to progress and to attain an award.
- 6.3 A Programme is a set of modules, courses or course options that lead to an award (e.g. a degree).
- 6.4 All content accessible by students must adhere to MIE's [Accessible Information Policy](#) which implement both the [MIE Equality Policy](#) and disability legislation including the [Disability Act, 2005](#).

7 Policy

7.1 Single institutional VLE:

- i. MIE requires the use of a single institutional VLE across all accredited programmes.
- ii. A consistent student experience is facilitated by the use of in-built learning tools (LTIs) within the institutional VLE, which are preferred to externally available third-party tools, where features and services are broadly similar.

7.2 Minimum content specifications

The minimum defined standard content within the institutional VLE for all modules will include:

- i. Course and module information, including course and module handbooks, module specifications, outline, key calendar dates and information regarding assessment. This information will be made available at the commencement of the module;
 - ii. Lists of information resources/reading lists, such as books, journals, databases, websites;
 - iii. Lecture materials, provided before or after a lecture, as determined by the lecturer;
 - iv. Information on staff availability and communication.
- 7.3 A default module template is applied to each module in line with VLE use as stated above when a new module is created by the IT & eLearning team.

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- 7.4 Each module home page will contain information which is standardised and formatted for every module, and the VLE interface will be structured to provide access to resources based on simple login and the minimum of navigation.
- 7.5 All digital materials used in the teaching and learning on the programme will, where possible, be made available to the students within the VLE.
- 7.6 All users of the institutional VLE must comply with [MIE's IT Acceptable Use Policy](#) and relevant copyright legislation as outlined on the IT [Guidelines for Staff](#) & General [Data Protection](#) Sections of MIE's VLE and [website](#).
- 7.7 In accordance with MIE's responsibilities under Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin's [General Data Protection Policy](#), personal data must not be stored and/or maintained in third party hosted services where it may be at risk of being compromised as noted in the May 2019 service level agreement with Enovation Solutions Ltd.

8 Responsibility

- 8.1 The Director of IT & eLearning has responsibility for this policy.
- 8.2 The Director of IT & eLearning, with support from Heads of Department, is responsible for the implementation of the VLE Policy with respect to MIE Teaching and Learning.
- 8.3 The Director of IT & eLearning is responsible for technical service standards and management of the contract with the VLE supplier.

9 Related Documents

- 9.1 [MIE Policy "Bring your Own Device"](#)
- 9.2 [MIE Policy on Social Media and Social Networking](#)
- 9.3 [MIE Website\(s\) Terms of Use](#)
- 9.4 [MIE IT Acceptable Use Policy](#)
- 9.5 [MIE Staff & Students Code of Conduct for Use of IT Systems](#)
- 9.6 [MIE Privacy Statement](#)
- 9.7 [MIE IT Security Policy](#)
- 9.8 [MIE Policy on IT Facilities for Licensed Offices](#)
- 9.9 [Accessible Information Policy](#)
- 9.10 [MIE IT Services General Terms and Conditions](#)
- 9.11 [MIE Equality Policy](#)