

ual:

How to Moodle

Moving toward a consistent and accessible student virtual learning experience



Introduction and Summary



How to Moodle introduction

- How to Moodle was identified as a priority by the Teaching and Learning Service Governance group
- Research has shown, students seek a consistent Moodle experience, where learning content is clearly organised and easy to find
- Digital learning staff and course teams invest a large amount of time creating, maintaining and supporting bespoke variations of Moodle course/unit pages
- **The first aim of How to Moodle is to develop and pilot a standard UAL Moodle page design that will better support the needs of both students and staff**
- This work builds on the research, student collaboration and template design activities conducted over the years by local college teams and central support teams
- The delivery approach to this work is in line with Digital & Technology's iterative and user centric principles



Why do we need a standard Moodle design?



- Student feedback demonstrated that they find navigating Moodle a difficult experience. They see Moodle as central to their learning experience at UAL, but they often struggle to find resources. Progression through units can require “relearning”, in terms of where to locate information or how to perform an action.
- Staff feedback highlighted the time and effort needed to learn Moodle, and maintain information and resources in a way that benefits students.
- Students want consistency but the Moodle user experience can differ greatly across units within a course. This would be further compounded if students are able to take units from other programmes or colleges
- Digital Learning teams at colleges invest significant time and resource in developing, maintaining and updating bespoke variations of Moodle pages. The plan is to centrally maintain a course format to help save staff time
- A standard template would allow college staff to focus on providing students with exceptional learning experiences, rather than spending time on the technical build of Moodle sites

Student and staff quotes

Students

“Finding specific documents or files can be time-consuming and frustrating.”

“The page design and visual hierarchy are not clear, making it hard to understand.”

“Every teacher has a different way of setting up ... For example one tutor adds lots of links to YouTube videos...Others add in different categories and sections”

Teaching Staff

“I spend a lot of time organising content for students.”

“It’s challenging to pick up pages which have been set up by somebody else, understanding their labels and links etc”

“I spend a lot of time trying to find things in Moodle, names aren’t helpful and there’s a lot of clunky language”



Working group and Moodle baseline



How to Moodle working group



- The How to Moodle work to date has been in partnership between the Teaching and Learning Service, external UX expertise and with college Digital Learning teams providing the Moodle expertise
- The Working group met bi weekly since November and the core activities are summarised;
 1. **User Research and Engagement:** Support and coordinate user research activities across UAL to understand user needs, facilitate student engagement in UX activities, and communicate findings and recommendations.
 2. **Moodle Improvement and Evaluation:** Research, prioritise, and implement improvements to Moodle's design and technical stability based on user research, evaluate usability of design changes, and ensure alignment with accessibility guidelines.
 3. **Continuous Improvement and Impact Monitoring:** Promote a culture of continuous improvement within the UAL Moodle community, explore contributions to UAL's social and climate objectives, and monitor the impact of changes through ongoing research activities

How to Moodle working group

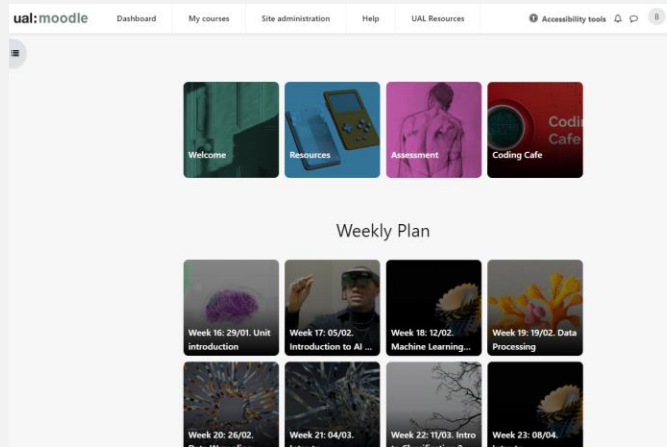


The current membership on the cross college working group & role;

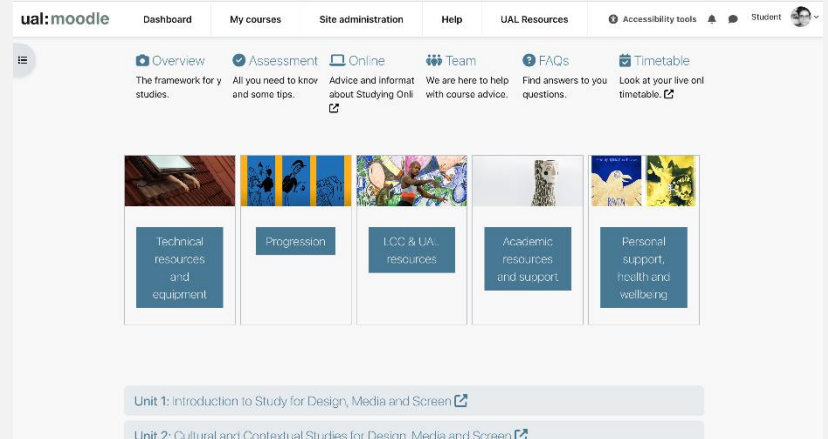
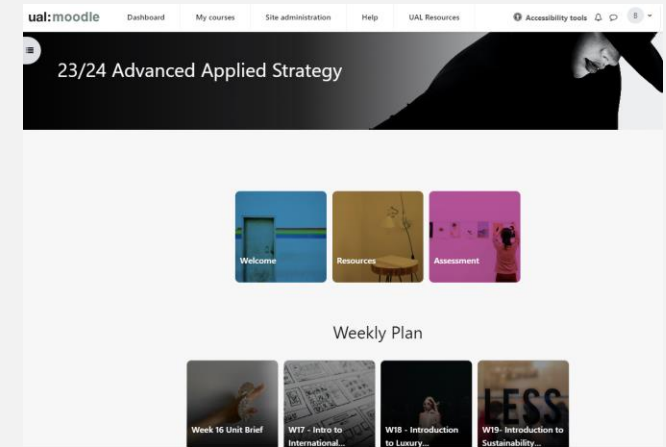
- **Teaching & Learning Service (D&T):** Ben Boyde (Chair, Delivery Manager), Ben Kammerling (Front End Dev), Aruni Perera (Development Manager), Rob Donnelly (Business Analyst), Wayne Henneker (Support), William Goodyear (DevOps)
- **CCI:** Kelsey Ross (college lead)
- **CCW:** Richard Ward/Lauren Johnston (college leads)
- **CSM:** Damien Borowik (college lead)
- **LCC:** Elena Hernandez-Martin (Moodle design consultant, college lead), Scott Simmonds
- **LCF:** Gwen Shen (college lead)
- **Academic Enterprise:** Maja Wilhelm, Richard Parry
- **Digital Learning Practice team:** Ruth Powell, Kei Ferguson (practice leads)

Learning Design – Moodle baseline

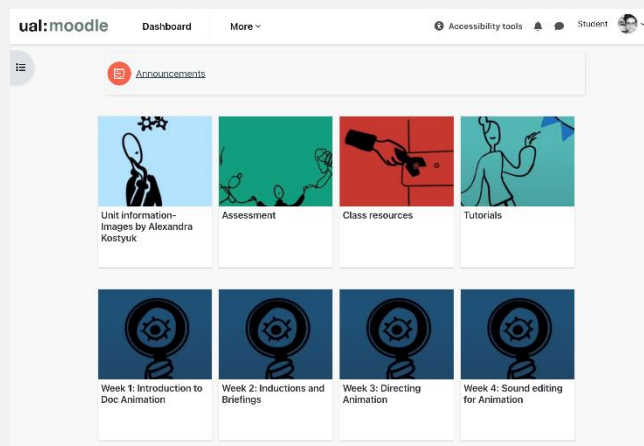
- The UX research work drew on Moodle expertise from colleges to inform the UX interviews reviewing existing Moodle sites
- Examples are shown that illustrate the baseline Moodle from LCF and LCC
- From our research, we know there are many things students like about the way Moodle has been designed, and this work aims to retain and build on these things.



Examples from LCF (Jhon Benavides)



[Onsite courses templates](#) [Online courses templates](#)



Examples from LCC (Elena Hernandez-Martin)

Design Principles for How to Moodle

The following principles are driven by user needs. They define what good Moodle UX looks like and provide a reference point and anchor for the work. These principles came from the UX work and How to Moodle working group

- 1. Prioritise student tasks**
- 2. Be consistent**
- 3. Streamline page content**
- 4. Make it accessible and inclusive**
- 5. Make it work on any device**
- 6. Use clear visual design**

See appendix for link to Design Principles detailed documentation

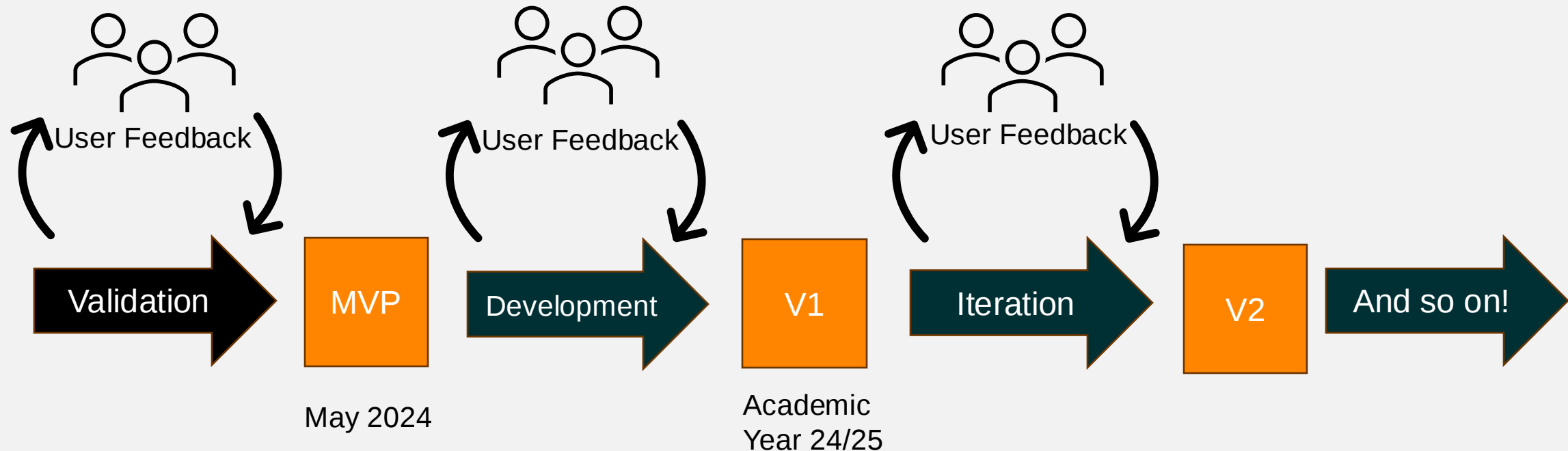


How to Moodle - Prototype

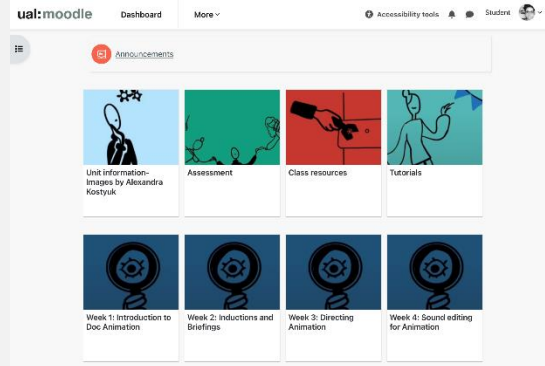


A product approach to the work

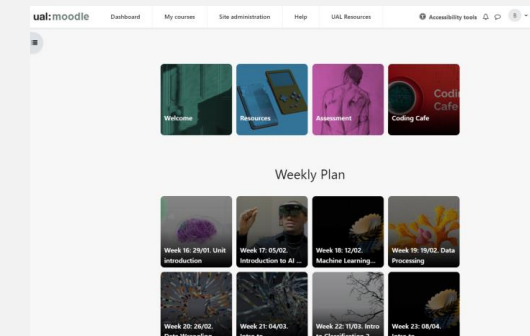
The approach to the design and development will follow standard product design methodologies, embedding user feedback at its core



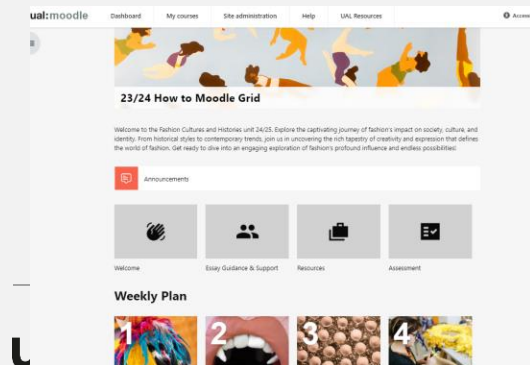
How to Moodle – course format prototype



LCC Template
by
Elena
Hernandez
Martin



LCF Template
by
John Benavides



Current north
star iteration
(May 2024) by
Ben Kammerling

- The outputs of the UX work created a ‘North Star’ design, this design was informed by existing Moodle pages and college work including code change improvements combined with the UX research findings
- The course format prototype was created using example courses from LCC and LCF, please see examples on the left.
- **LCF – Jhon Benavides**
- **LCC – Elena Hernández-Martín (Onsite courses templates)**
- The grid format template was chosen by students for its visual interface during our UX research. During the pilot stage, we will be looking at addressing some stability issues that were identified during the Moodle 4 upgrade.
- The T&L team will support the template on an ongoing basis. The prototype is not the final product – the current colours and images are examples. The prototype will be refined as part of the pilot work and will continue to evolve and improve
- Other course format plug in were researched by the T&L service development team

Assumptions and Constraints

- The template will be piloted with volunteer courses at each college, it is not mandatory. There will be flexibility to customise the template
- The student voice is driving the work and the approach is user experience focused
- The template work will be iterative and continuously improved (Build, measure, learn and iterate)
- There are concerns that focusing on one layout restricts flexibility and may challenge less technically able staff. These challenges are being discussed – we will focus on one template initially but keep an open mind about needing additional options to suit requirements
- Collaboration with colleges on this work is really important, the template should support ways of teaching and learning



Outcomes



Outcomes

Each outcome is associated with at least one of the Teaching & learning Service Goals (see [appendix](#))

	Problems that users encounter	Outcome (the change we want to enable through this work)	Measurable Outcome
1	<i>* As a student, I struggle to find the information I need on Moodle</i> <i>* As a student, I often find inconsistencies when I change units in my course</i>	I can intuitively navigate my course pages and I know where to find relevant information (<i>goal 2 & 4</i>)	• Increase in pulse survey satisfaction scores • Evidence based UX testing (in collaboration with CCI) • Reduction in support queries to staff • Decrease in negative Moodle mentions in NSS scores • Improved Institutional Reputation – Listening to students and designing a cohesive and consistent VLE will reflect positively on the University's reputation, contributing to enrolment rates
2	<i>As an editing user (eg teaching staff) I struggle with the ongoing time and effort needed to set up and maintain Moodle</i>	I know where to put resources and can easily edit my Moodle pages so that time preparing and maintaining content is reduced (<i>goal 2</i>)	• Measure uptake of template across colleges • Increase in staff satisfaction pulse survey score
3	<i>As a neurodivergent student, I am challenged by confusing information architecture and design</i>	Output - Guidelines will be developed to assist staff in creating an accessible Moodle page Enhanced Accessibility – the template will be designed accessibly (<i>goal 1 & 2</i>)	• Positive feedback from students with disabilities (measured through • WCAG 2.2AA guidelines compliance score



Objectives and Scope (Academic year 23/24)



Key How to Moodle Objectives 2023 / 24

- 1) Understand a diverse range of Moodle User needs and experiences and embed a UX practice
- 2) Develop a Moodle page template that prioritises best practice UI design and improved navigation
- 3) Pilot this template at each college in academic year 24/25, get feedback and make improvements
- 4) Create organised content sections within the template
- 5) Ensure accessibility and UAL brand guidelines are adhered to

Table of Deliverables

Type	Description	When?	
User Research	Define and implement a UX strategy to gain insight into user pain points	Nov 23	✓
User Research	Undertake Student and staff 1-to-1 interviews, analyse and play back results	Nov/Dec 23	✓
User Research	Establish regular user satisfaction benchmarking	Apr 24	✓
User Research	Explore collaboration with CCI on evidence based approach to measuring engagement	Jun 24	
Design	Create a set of design principles to underpin the work	Jan 24	✓
Design	Build on the good design that already exists and the elements that users currently like. Create a north star design for moodle pages with consistent navigation and structure	Jan/Feb 24	✓
Design	Prioritise an MVP (minimum viable product) backlog of user stories/design changes, to implement as a release 1	Mar 24	✓
Design	Create an accessible and visually appealing user interface in the new template, ensure consistent design elements, typography, colours, and icons which are brand aligned	May '24	✓
Design	Coordinate workshops and reviews to get college feedback on design	May '24	✓
Collaboration	Set up a Moodle UX Working group with College digital learning teams and teaching & knowledge exchange to share progress and discuss the work	Sep '23	✓

Table of Deliverables continued

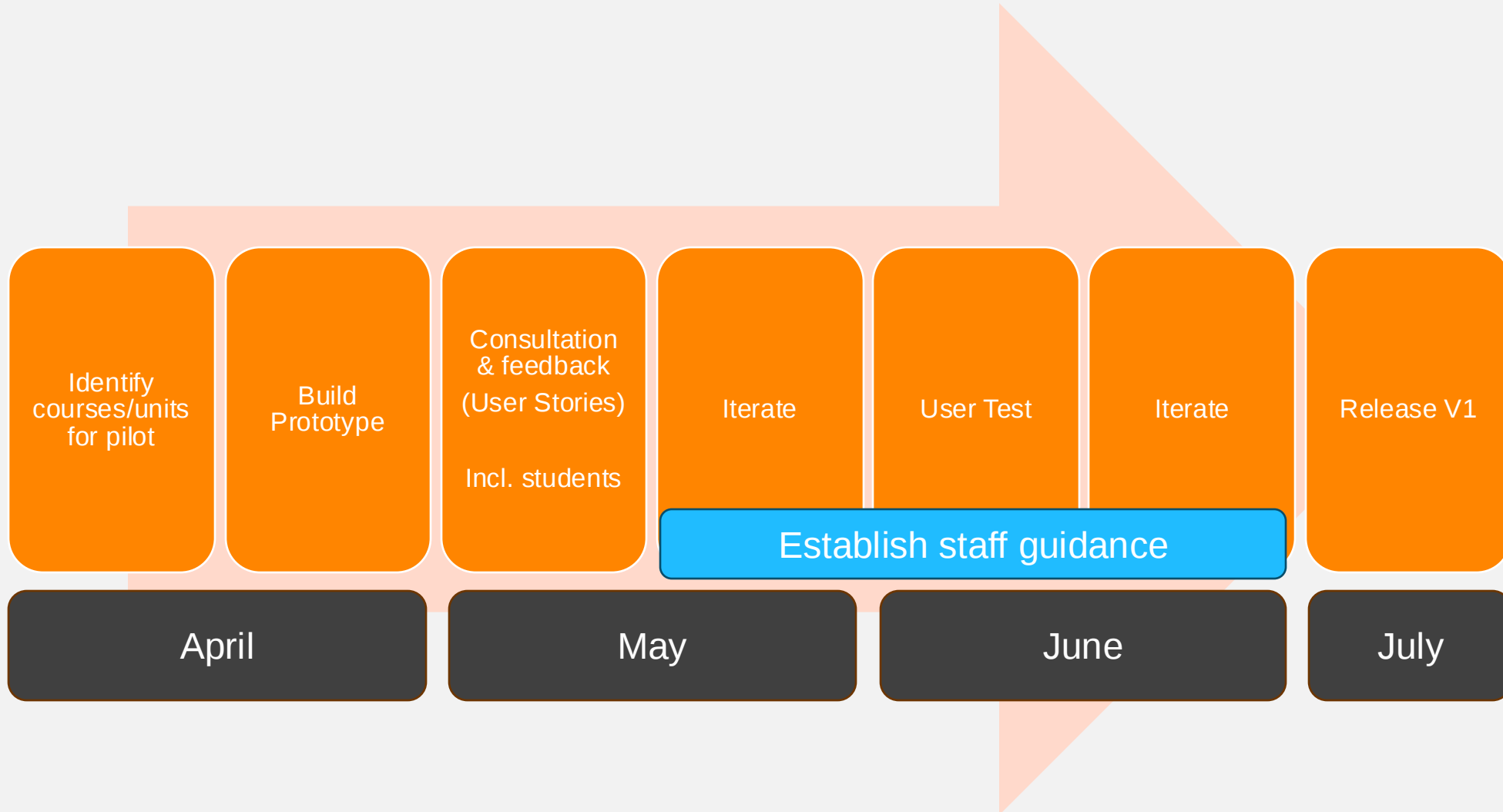
Type	Description	When?	
Collaboration	Agree with college teams where to pilot the template for academic year 24/25	Apr 24	
Collaboration	Establish connections with peers undertaking similar activities and share knowledge	Ongoing	✓
Development	Develop and iterate the course format plugin based on an MVP and in accordance with the Jira backlog	Apr – Jul 24	✓
Development	Regular playbacks of progress and improvements	Apr – Jul 24	✓
Development	Mapping of course content into the new template and testing	May – Aug 24	
Guidance	Develop training resources to supplement the use of the new template	May – Jul 24	
Data	Leverage analytics platforms already in use in D&T such as VWO and Clarity and define metrics to assess the effectiveness of the new template	Jul 24	✓
Technical	Agree a Moodle course format plug-in to build the prototype on (Moodle requires a course format plug-in as the basis for page design)	Apr 24	✓



Timeline

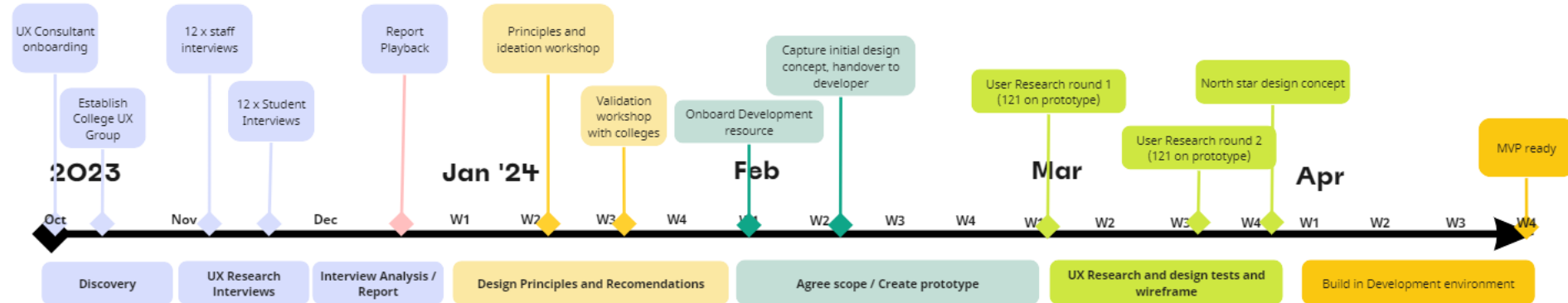


Key activities for How to Moodle (Apr-Jun)

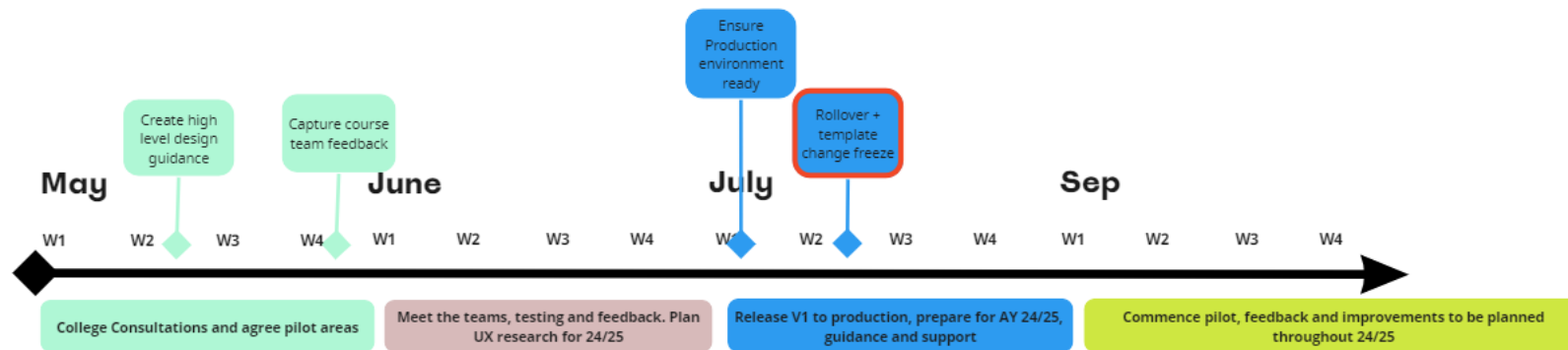


How to Moodle full timeline 23/24

How to Moodle - Timeline 1 of 2



How to Moodle - Timeline 2 of 2





Progress so far



Progress so far... (as of April 2024)

- From research conducted during the upgrade to Moodle version 4.1 in Summer 2023, we received a lot of feedback from students around frustration and challenges with using Moodle. We decided to investigate this further with the idea of introducing a more consistent user experience
- A cross college **Moodle user experience working group was established**, meeting bi-weekly with the primary purpose to champion and establish a user-centred design approach for Moodle
- To further understand user challenges, we hired a contract UX consultant, set research objectives, held college stakeholder 121's, and set up user interviews
- **Discovery and research** – Looked at past surveys (eg NSS), talked to peers (eg UCL), 121 UX interviews (12 x students, 12 x staff) to explore needs, behaviours, pain points
- **Analysis & Insights** – explored emerging themes, validated and challenged assumptions, communicated report to stakeholders
- **Created Design Principles** – a compass to guide our approach
- **Built a prototype and tested** – we tested initial design concepts with 11 students in 1-2-1 sessions
- **North star design and MVP** – based on testing we now have a north star design concept, with an MVP on how to build unit pages and week pages
- **Plug-in research** – looking at available plug-in's to build template on (this plug-in is a mandatory Moodle technical requirement)
- **Scope for pilot** - exploring participants at each college to pilot a new unit/course design



People



Stakeholders (1 of 2) (this slide will evolve!)

Team	Core	Involved	Informed
Digital and Technology (Student Experience)	Ben Boyde (Delivery Manager) Ben Kammerling (Front end Developer) Rob Donnelly (Business Analyst) Aruni Perera (Development Manager)	Paul McMullan (Head of Product) Digital Public Platforms User Experience Team	Sedef Gavez (Director of Student Experience)
Creative Computing Institute	Kelsey Ross (Digital Learning Coordinator)	Femi Isiaq (Programme Director Computer and Data Science)	Tom Lynch (Institute Technical Manager)
Chelsea, Camberwell & Wimbledon	Richard Ward (Digital Learning Producer) Lauren Johnston (Digital Learning Coordinator)	TBD	
London College of Communication	Elena Hernandez-Martin (Digital Learning Producer) Scott Simmonds (Digital Learning Coordinator)	TBD	Amin Neghavati (Digital Learning Director)
London College of Fashion	Gwen Shen (Senior Digital Learning Coordinator) Giacomo Occhipinti (Digital Learning Producer)	Natasha Bonnelame (Programme Director Digital Learning) Andy Lee (Learning and Teaching Innovation Lead, School of Media & Comms)	

Stakeholders (1 of 2)

Team	Core	Involved	Informed
Central St Martins	Damien Borowik (Learning Technologist)		Xavier Briche (Head of Digital Delivery)
Teaching & Knowledge Exchange	TBD	Chris Rowell (Digital Learning Producer Community)	Ruth Powell (Head of Digital Learning Practice)
Other		Isa Ciudad-Fontecha (Communications Executive Digital and Technology) Hannah Cardall (Senior UI Designer)	Teaching and Learning Governance Group



Appendix



Quick Links

- [Moodle UX working group Terms of Reference](#)
- [Moodle UX Research and Design Story](#)
- [Moodle UX Research Report](#)
- [Moodle Design Principles](#)

for access requests please contact b.boyde@arts.ac.uk

Teaching & Learning Service Goals

0 Governance is agreed to drive Vision, Strategy, Objectives and execution

1 Ensure all products that comprise the VLE are performant, accessible and continuously available

2 Implement a practice-oriented and student led service to better exploit supported capabilities and deliver excellence to students

3 Maximise the value of data for the teaching and learning service and enhance capability in user and learner analytics

4 Enable growth in student numbers and support the ambitions of Academic Enterprise 23/24 and UAL online 24/25

5 Establish a teaching and learning service that supports pedagogical technology research and development enabling future teaching ambitions

[Link to T&L Service Page](#)