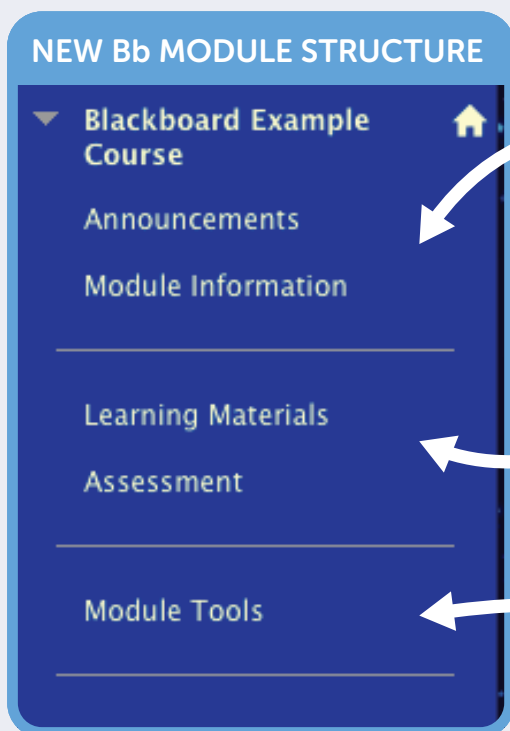


Feedback from academic staff and students has shown that there is significant variability across Schools in the structure and organisation of content in Blackboard (Bb) and that both staff and students can sometimes find it hard to place/find teaching resources and materials in the current Bb module layout. In order to assist Schools in the easiest and most effective use of Bb, UCD Teaching and Learning, collaborating with IT Services, has devised a new, simplified Bb module structure (see Figure 1). By providing a level of consistency of navigation across modules and some simple strategies for enhancing student learning via the Bb environment, this new structure should be easier to use for both staff and students. Associated guidelines on good design and organisation of your learning materials have also been prepared to accompany the simplification.

From Summer 2013, new Bb modules will default to this new, simplified structure. Module co-ordinators will need to ensure that the content of their modules aligns with the content organisation guidelines (Figure 2).

Existing Bb modules will need to be updated by the module co-ordinator to be consistent with both the new structure (Figure 1) and the associated content guidelines (Figure 2). For more detailed instructions on how to update your Bb structure, follow the next few pages of step-by-step instructions (This document is available to download at <http://www.ucd.ie/t4cms/stepstostructurebb.pdf>)

FIG. 1: THE NEW STRUCTURE AND THE DISTINCT SECTIONS



The new Bb structure has three distinct sections in the left hand menu.

The first section has two functions (i) it draws students attention to any new 'Announcements', tasks to do and any other updates and ii) it provides an overview of the module information (static information)

The second section is focused on the teaching, learning and assessment of the module (dynamic information). The 'Learning Materials' button is the most commonly used button and it should include all the content, teaching activities and related resources. The 'Assessment' button now should include all assignments, examinations and other advice, information and procedures around the module's assessment. If you regularly use a particular teaching approach, you may wish to create a separate button here, i.e. labs (see examples in Figure 3).

The third section contains the Tools button functionality. This is now changed to 'Module Tools'. Any additional buttons that you have or want to create, not related to the above two sections, are best placed here, i.e. 'Student Queries', 'E-mail'.

FIG. 2: CONTENT ORGANISATION GUIDELINES

SUGGESTED CONTENT PER BUTTON

'ANNOUNCEMENTS' BUTTON:

- Welcome to module; New 'announcements'; Tasks to do; Alerts; What's new....

'MODULE INFORMATION':

- Module Descriptor: Add direct link to current module descriptor by adding in a web-link. To do this: Go to 'Build Content', click web-link, name it, copy in url below but replace the 'MODULECODE' with your real module code, e.g.
https://sisweb.ucd.ie/usis/w_sm_web_inf_simple_viewer.show_module?p_code=MODULECODE
- Module handbook; Timetable;
- Links to Library Catalogue <http://library.ucd.ie>; Supporting your learning http://www.ucd.ie/library/supporting_you/support_learning/
- School/programme policies; Overview of assessment details (type, weighting, timing);
- Reading-list for module; Contacts for staff & tutors/teaching assistants; Visual overview of module's concepts (if available).

'LEARNING MATERIALS' BUTTON:

- Activities; Notes; Images; Resources; Power-point slides; Case-studies; Videos; Discussion Groups; Blogs; Podcasts; Screencasts; Web-links; Link to articles, etc. (Note: For hyper-links to the articles' or e-books' pdf, see <http://www.ucd.ie/t4cms/Guide76.pdf> for instructions. For more on copyright see <http://www.ucd.ie/t4cms/UCDTLE0051.pdf>)
- In this button the module's content is grouped by, either topics, concepts, activities and/or timescale. Set tasks/activities/assessments for students to do in these groupings. Position related learning materials close to each other.
- Ensure that your learning materials are readily accessible to all students (See <http://www.ucd.ie/teaching/documents/AccessibleBlackboard.pdf>)

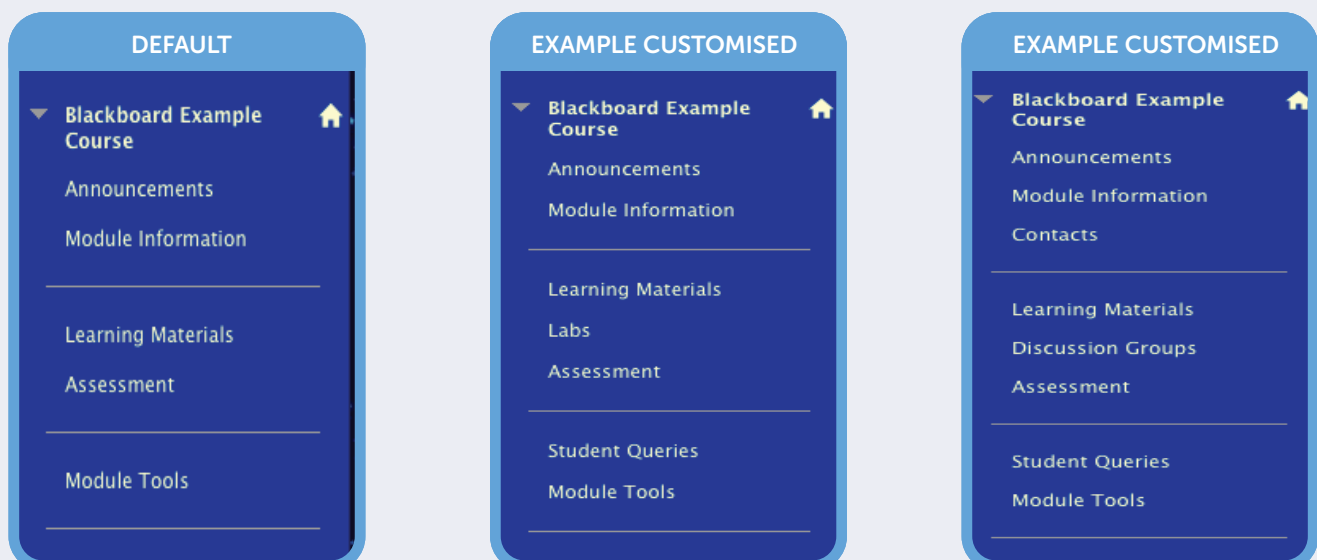
'ASSESSMENT' BUTTON:

- Synthesis of all assessment tasks for this module; 'My Grades' function (if used); Past papers (if used);
- Individual Safe-Assign and/or Assignment Submission Function (if used); Additional assessment information, such as assessment criteria, assessment rubrics; plagiarism policy; UCD assessment submission cover-page template (or link); UCD policy on late submission (link); School referencing style (if used).

'MODULE TOOLS' BUTTON:

- You may have more specifically titled this 'communication' or 'e-mail'. If this is the only functionality of this button then you may wish to retain this title.
- NB: Within this button, hide any Tool Links that you are not using and/or do not want the students to see or use, e.g. students e-mailing each other.

FIG. 3: DEFAULT AND EXAMPLES OF CUSTOMISATION



The figure displays three vertical panels representing Blackboard course navigation menus. Each panel starts with a 'Blackboard Example Course' header and a home icon. The 'DEFAULT' panel lists: Announcements, Module Information, Learning Materials, Assessment, and Module Tools. The first 'EXAMPLE CUSTOMISED' panel lists: Announcements, Module Information, Learning Materials, Labs, Assessment, Student Queries, and Module Tools. The second 'EXAMPLE CUSTOMISED' panel lists: Announcements, Module Information, Contacts, Learning Materials, Discussion Groups, Assessment, Student Queries, and Module Tools.



BEFORE STARTING, PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOUR EDIT MODE IS SWITCHED ON (TOP RIGHT OF PAGE) AND THAT YOU DO NOT DELETE ANY FOLDERS THAT CONTAIN VALUABLE INFORMATION

STEP 1

THE 'ANNOUNCEMENTS' AND 'MODULE INFORMATION' BUTTONS IN THIS SECTION: NAME AND MOVE

The first button in this section is the **Announcements** button which is usually the entry page. The second button in this section has been re-named **Module Information**, previously titled 'Information' or 'Course Information'. This is in keeping with UCD's use of the term 'module'.

A

If you have an 'Announcements' button already Go to 1

If you have a 'Home Page' Button, go to 2

If you don't appear to have either go to 3

1

If you have an 'Announcements' button that appears to list only Announcements, leave it labelled 'Announcements' and Move onto **B**)

However, if you wish to gain the additional functionality in later upgrades of Blackboard in this button ('What's New', 'Alerts'...), go to **1.1** below to create new and replace the older 'Announcements' page.

2

We recommend you rename 'Home Page' to 'Announcements' and turn off the channels you are not using, e.g 'My Tasks'.

3



If for some reason you have deleted or cannot find this button, create a new 'Announcement' button as instructed in **1.1** (ignoring the deleting the old button instructions)

1.1 HOW TO CREATE NEW AND REPLACE OLDER 'ANNOUNCEMENTS' PAGE

TO CREATE A NEW 'ANNOUNCEMENTS' PAGE:

- Click on the + **symbol** at top left of the main button area and from list chose 'Widget Page'
- Type in name 'Announcements'
- Click 'Available to users', then click **submit**
- Click on new 'Announcements' button at bottom of page
- On the main part of the page, Click on 'Add module widget'
- Click on add under 'My Announcements' and 'What's new'. If you use other functionalities also add these, i.e. 'Alerts'
- Click on **OK** at bottom right hand side.

TO DELETE AN OLD 'ANNOUNCEMENTS' PAGE

- Delete old 'Announcements' button (any old announcements will be preserved in the new button). To do this, click  to the right of the button and chose 'Delete'.
- Now drag the new 'Announcements' button to the top of the button menu, using the  arrow on the left.

STEP 1
(continued)

THE 'ANNOUNCEMENTS' AND 'MODULE INFORMATION' BUTTONS IN THIS SECTION: NAME AND MOVE

B

Rename 'Information' or 'Course Information' button to 'Module Information' button.


HOW TO RENAME A BUTTON

- Click the down arrow to the right of the button to be renamed
- Select "Rename Link"
- Type the new name and click on the green "tick" button to save or press enter

C

If you have and would like to keep your original 'Contacts' button, move this button below the 'Module Information' button in this section.

HOW TO MOVE A BUTTON

- Click on the  symbol to the left of the button you wish to move
- Drag the button to the desired area

D

You can insert an image or photo for use as a banner by:

Downloading one from the bank of pre-formatted photos located at <http://pfpublisher2.ucd.ie/res/sites/Bb-banners>

OR

Adding one of your own images. For assistance, contact **Media Services** (ex 7091). The recommended size is 730 pixels wide and approx 200 pixels high. It is recommended to use Google Picasa to resize images. This can be downloaded free of charge from <http://picasa.google.ie>. If you are also willing to share your photos with others, please also contact Media Services

HOW TO CHANGE THE BANNER PHOTO

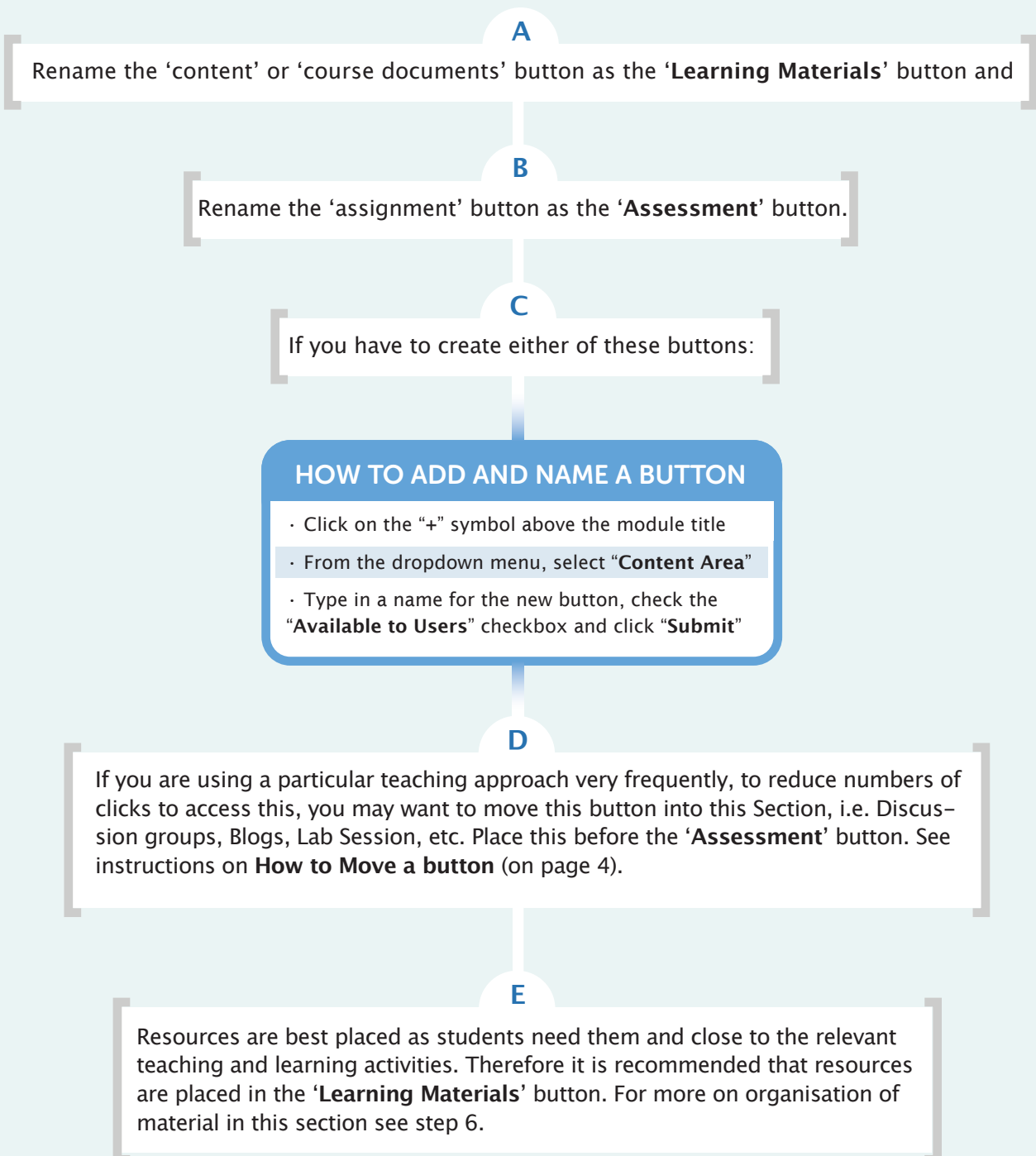
- Under 'Control Panel', select 'Customisation | Teaching Style'
- Scroll down to the 'Select Banner' section
- Click the 'Browse my Computer' button and select the downloaded image to use
- Click on 'Submit'

STEP 2

THE 'LEARNING MATERIALS' AND 'ASSESSMENT' BUTTONS IN THIS SECTION: NAME AND MOVE

The third button ('*Learning Materials*') is the most commonly used button and it includes all the content, teaching and learning activities and related resources. In different versions of Blackboard this has been called '*Content*', or '*Course Documents*', etc. To move away from a suggestion of a passive repository, this has been renamed '**Learning Materials**'.

Instead of the more narrowly defined '*Assignment*' button, this button is now titled '**Assessment**', to include assignments, examinations and other advice, information and procedures around the module's assessment.



STEP 3 NAME THE 'MODULE TOOLS' BUTTON AND WORK ON THE FINAL SECTION

The fifth button is the '*Tools button*' functionality. This is now changed to '*Module Tools.*'

A

Rename the 'Tools' button as '**Module Tools**'. Some of you may have more specifically titled this 'communication' or 'e-mail', if this is the main functionality for this button then you may wish to retain this title.

B

Within this button, hide any Tool Links that you do not want the students to either see, do, or that you are not using, e.g. students e-mail to each other.

HOW TO HIDE A LINK

In 'Tools' click '**hide link**'

Any additional buttons that you have or want to create, not related in the above two sections, are best placed in this Section, i.e. '*Help*', '*Student Queries*', '*E-Mail*'


STEP 4 ADD DIVIDERS (I.E. LINES TO DIVIDE THE SECTIONS)

The purpose of the dividers is to create different sections, by grouping different Blackboard functionalities. The use of section dividers allows staff to add module-specific buttons into these sections yet retaining a level of consistency for students across UCD modules.

A

Add in three dividers to create sections and organise your current *module buttons* into these Sections as per the new default structure in Figure 1 on page 1.

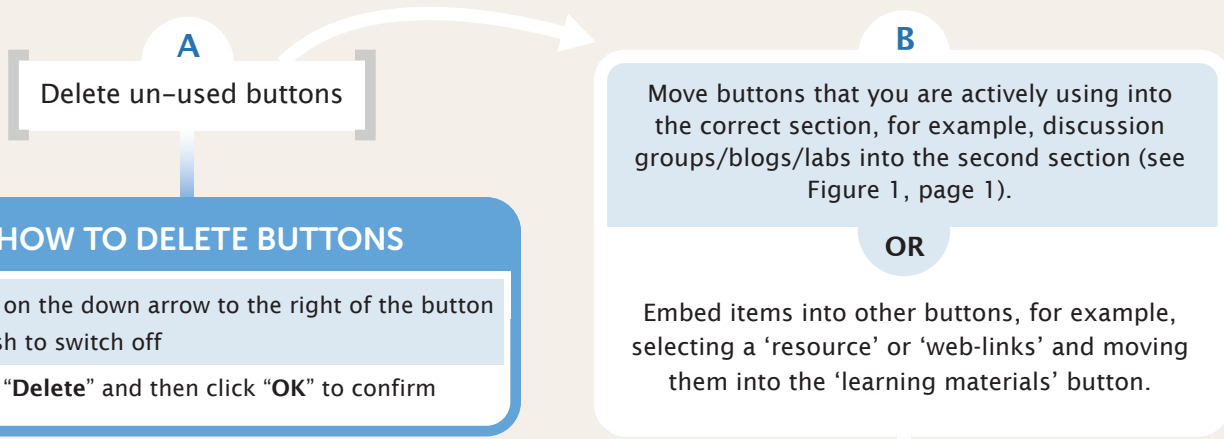
HOW TO ADD A DIVIDER

- To add a menu item, click on the "+" symbol above on the top left hand aspect of the page (*above the buttons*)
- From the dropdown menu, select "**Divider**"
- The divider will automatically appear beneath all buttons. To move it upwards to the required position, click on the  symbol immediately to the left of the divider and drag it upward (*note you cannot name a divider*)

STEP 5

TIDYING UP AND MOVING BUTTONS OR MATERIAL

To reduce information overload and improve clarity of navigation, it is useful to tidy up un-used or confusing additional buttons, in particular switch off what is not being used. Step 6 also suggests some best practice on where to place materials. (Note: For details on Archiving your whole module (NB for archiving on-line student assignments every semester) see <http://www.ucd.ie/itservices/teachinglearningit/virtualllearning/blackboard/archivingcourses/>)



HOW TO DELETE BUTTONS

- Click on the down arrow to the right of the button you wish to switch off
- Click **"Delete"** and then click **"OK"** to confirm


HOW TO COPY/MOVE CONTENT

- Go into the content area that the content is to be copied/moved **from**
- Click on the down arrow immediately to the right of the name of the content item
- Select **"Copy"** or **"Move"**
- In the **"Destination"** section, click **"Browse"**
- Click on the content area (in *'this module'* or *'another module'*) that the content is to copied/moved **to**
- Click **"Submit"**
- Click on **"OK"** at bottom right hand side

C

Dated material that is no longer useful should be deleted. Material that is not relevant for current students but may be useful at another time should be either hidden to current students or alternatively moved into in a 'archive-type' button at the bottom and made 'not available' to current students.

HOW TO HIDE AN ITEM

- Click on  to the right of the item
- Select Edit, scroll down
- Under Options, click 'No' to 'permit users to view this content'
- Click **"Submit"**.

HOW TO CREATE AN 'ARCHIVE/OLD MATERIAL FOLDER' SO THE FOLDER IS UNAVAILABLE TO STUDENTS

- Create a new button by Clicking on the + symbol at top left of the main button area and select **'content area'**
- Name the button, i.e. **'old material, archive'**
- **Do not** click **'available to users'**, so students cannot see this material

D

Place all of your resources and links into the relevant sections as in Fig. 2 on page 2

STEP 6

CONSIDER THE BEST SEQUENCE AND PRESENTATION OF THE LEARNING MATERIALS FOR YOUR STUDENTS (GOOD DESIGN PRACTICES)

Using some good design practices, organise your key materials, resources and activities in a coherent approach. For more on this see the UCD Teaching & Learning website: <http://www.ucd.ie/t4cms/UCDTLE0061.pdf>

A

Having organised the buttons, you may wish to give some attention to the positioning and presentation of your materials and activities in the 'Learning Materials' button.

GOOD DESIGN PRACTICES IN BLACKBOARD

- Make sure that you present students with a coherent and efficient sequence of your face-to-face, out-of-class and on-line module activities and learning materials/resources so that they can see what you have made available for them to help them complete your module
- To help reduce information overload, create a thematic structure to the module by grouping the learning materials by either topic, concept, activity and/or time-scale, i.e. Topic A weeks 1-3; Topic B weeks 4-6
- Within these groupings, try and position all of the related learning materials close to each other in Bb
- Where appropriate, consider the opportunities for students to collaborate and monitor their progress within Blackboard, e.g. *group discussion*, *formative MCQs*
- Write a simple explanation in Bb for your students, setting out your expectations of what they have to do in the module, why they are doing it and how it links with their learning and assessment
- When setting activities/tasks for student to complete, set out the expected amount of time students should spend on this task, i.e. time-on-task
- Ensure that your learning materials are readily accessible to all students (See <http://www.ucd.ie/teaching/documents/AccessibleBlackboard.pdf>)

B

For an example of these principles in a 'mock' module, see 'Blackboard Example Module 1' on the Blackboard training platform (elearn2.ucd.ie). Contact ithelpdesk@ucd.ie for access to the Blackboard training platform or if you already have an account go to <http://elearn2.ucd.ie>.

HOW TO ACCESS THE EXAMPLE MODULE

- Click on the **MODULES** link near the top right of the main page
- In **MODULES SEARCH** box type "*blackboard example*" and click on **GO**
- There should only be 1 course listed "*Blackboard Example Module 1*"
- Point mouse at right hand side of course code "*tandlbbexample1*", click on the **down arrow**
- Click on **'ENROL'**
- Click on **'SUBMIT'** at right hand side of screen
- User is now enrolled



STEP 7

CHANGE THE THEME (COLOUR AND TEXT)

The visual look and presentation of the new default aims to provide a more modern interface. The buttons will be presented as hyper-linked text, and not as the traditional button presentation.

A

In order to be as close as possible to the new default theme (i.e. colour and text of buttons), we are suggesting the following for you existing modules:

HOW TO CHANGE THE THEME

- In Control panel, select '**Customisation**'
- Select '**Teaching Style**'
- Select '**Menu Style**'
- Click '**Text background colour**'
- Select a strong blue i.e. Medium Azure-Blue by typing 3366CC into the colour box and click '**Apply**'.
- Select '**white**' as text colour.
- Click '**Submit**'

Contact details for any further queries & assistance: Technical advice on Blackboard: ithelpdesk@ucd.ie (716-2008) in IT services; Good practices in module design and teaching/learning activities: [UCD Teaching & Learning at teachingandlearning@ucd.ie](mailto:teachingandlearning@ucd.ie) (716-2034); see <http://www.ucd.ie/teaching/resources/e-learning/>; Making on-line material accessible for all students: Julie.tonge@ucd.ie (716-7179); Formatting a photo: Vincent.hoban@ucd.ie at Media Services (716-7091).