



# EC Students' Association

## Lead Rep Report

### May 2025

### Introduction

Our Lead Rep Programme was launched in November 2024 and intends to facilitate conversations and feedback gathering from students who represent a range of departments, campuses, academic disciplines and levels.

### Meeting 3: Online learning environment

For our third round of meetings, we worked with colleague Neil Nodzak (Learning Technologist) to ask students to contribute their feedback on the online learning environment. From a student perspective, this includes Moodle, Teams, Outlook, OneDrive and MyEC.

Across meetings held at Granton, Milton Road and Sighthill campuses, we had a total of nine Lead Reps in attendance.

- Sighthill: Lauryn, Naia, Easter, Teagan
- Granton: Adam, Thai, Oskar and Ruben.
- Milton Road: Nicholas

To begin the discussions, Neil outlined the general usage of the different platforms as suggested to lecturers:

- Moodle – where everything to do with students' courses should be including links, presentations, resources, testing, grading assessments etc.
- Teams – For communication

### Using online platforms

There was a consensus that while initially all the different online platforms take some getting used to, once students were in the habit of using them, they worked well. However, there were some inconsistencies with how staff are using the online platforms. One example was that when staff have been absent, the Curriculum Lead or CTM has used Moodle messages to notify students. However, not all students are getting Moodle messaging notifications, so in that instance, it would be better for staff to use Teams. Neil explained that by default, lecturers are only added into Teams channels if they are timetabled on to that course. This could be an area to look at in future.

Moodle – Students aren't always clear on where assignments are, and asked for a clear list to be provided by the course. Much of the learning process with Moodle is about navigating the platform, which one student referred to as "learning how to scour Moodle for information". Neil explained that there is a global calendar for holidays, bank holidays etc., but lecturers can add more events in if they want – there are perhaps more customising options than curriculum staff are aware of.

Teams – One student (Art Foundation) flagged that some students are not using Teams and not getting notifications, which means they end up missing out on key bits of information.

Students highlighted that it is sometimes tricky to search for someone using Teams and suggested adding a campus filter to people's names. Profile pictures for all staff were acknowledged as extremely useful, if they are up to date.

Students flagged that reaching lecturers on teams sometimes takes a while. Something that might facilitate easy communication between students and staff is if staff use their 'status' button and set that to 'teaching' and/or specify their working hours on there.

MyEC – mainly used for SAM forms, college have been focusing on the browser version – Students alerted Alan Meechan (who joined for the Granton meeting) SAM forms are not working in portrait form – squishing the content. There was a request for a hardwired student ID card, because the electronic one in MyEC takes a long time to load, Alan confirmed the college is hoping to add the EC student card to the phone wallet in future.

#### Guidance received

The provision of introductory guidance varied in terms of its extensiveness, usefulness and delivery:

- Introduction info was delivered by a mix of teachers and LDTs
- The main challenge at the start of the year is logging in
- Guidance varies between courses, some students felt not much guidance was provided, others felt it was provided in LDT sessions (but one student flagged that few people were showing up to those LDT classes)
- Sometimes students found out what is available on Moodle halfway through the year – patchy info provided at induction
- Most students used Teams in high school, so needed minimal guidance on that

#### Moodle file size limits

A number of the Reps who joined us (especially from Music, Media, Sound Production) raised the issue of the 2GB file limit on Moodle. While this is a built-in restriction, OneDrive has plenty of storage and should be able to rectify this issue. Currently different departments are using different workarounds for this, e.g. external hard drives; YouTube unlisted videos, saving work on PCs in the Logic Suite. Neil will chat to the Music, Media and Sound Production teams about this to remind them about the protocol and available resources in OneDrive.

#### Sense of community online

One student said they were slightly surprised by it being hard to foster a communitive online space. Fellow students are sharing ideas on Instagram, WhatsApp but it is not shared on Teams, which means some students from class are excluded. Students perhaps put on a 'corporate mode' when using Teams – because written records online feel quite permanent. Students suggested:

- Info session (perhaps directed at Class Reps) about creating a channel within your class Teams page
- Making use of the Apps on teams – Neil suggested a drawing one good for the art department (blackboard?)
- Adding a channel without tutors

#### Using specialist software and getting online

One student flagged that Thoni, a computing software used for their course, is not accessible via the library PCs – could be a licensing issue.

Editing suites on the first floor at Sighthill don't currently have Wi-Fi.

### Digital Map and the Moodle Homepage

Neil talked through the Digital Map poster he created at the start of the year. While students thought it looked useful, they were unsure if they had used it or seen it before. This is a useful resource that could benefit lots more students if promoted widely.

Students want to see more advertisements/ promotion of what is available – there are good resources, but they aren't always aware of them.

There was also a discussion of the Moodle front page resource – students only really check this at the start of the year when they are still unsure where to go on Moodle.

We asked students, what one thing could the college do to significantly improve the online learning experience for students?

| Suggestion                                                                                                                                                                        | Suggested Response                                                                                                                                           |
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| Make sure that all lecturers use the online platforms in the same way – consistency is key                                                                                        | Reissue guidance to lecturers and curriculum staff                                                                                                           |
| Bringing everything together in a compact format e.g. events, student blogging, getting community feeling going, for there to be a reason to socialise through college platforms. | The Students' Association are looking at incorporating MS Teams into their communications with students in future, e.g. channels for different societies etc |
| Ensure map of the campuses are available on Teams or in my EC                                                                                                                     | Discussion with marketing, comms and estates about wayfinding on campus. Next step in the discussion is how we make that available digitally                 |
| Training for curriculum staff on how to use Moodle & Teams to incorporate new tools such as the assessments calendar                                                              | Training workshops for staff on key Moodle features?<br>Promote digital map/guide to staff as well as to students?                                           |
| Improve the Wi-Fi                                                                                                                                                                 | Wi-Fi is being upgraded over the summer (speed and coverage)                                                                                                 |
| Incorporate learning about online platforms into first week of term                                                                                                               | Students' Association to pass on to induction planning group                                                                                                 |
| Make a list of all assignments and how far through them students are available for to access                                                                                      | Training staff on how to incorporate elements such as the 'completion progress block' on to their Moodle homepages.                                          |

### Action points

- Learning Technology team to create a 'best practice' guide or reminder to send to lecturers and staff
- Follow up conversation to take place with Music, Media & Sound Production staff about protocols around OneDrive to prevent needing to circumvent the Moodle 2GB limit
- Follow up with IT Team to check if Thoni software can be uploaded to library PCs
- Explore the induction process and how different departments are ensuring students are set up for success from the start with online learning platforms

- Refreshed 'Student Digital Guide' which can signpost to different support and resources about using Moodle, Teams, Outlook, OneDrive and MyEC, make sure this resource is promoted far and wide at the start of the new academic year
- Key skills classes for students who might struggle with technology – to be incorporated at the start of term
- Encourage staff to upload profile pictures to Teams, and to use the 'status' option on Teams if they are unavailable/teaching/showing their working hours