



Connecting DAAD-supported African-German Centres of Excellence and their alumni through teaching, learning, research, and communication opportunities.

USER GUIDE

DIGI-FACE **'LEARN'**
MOODLE PLATFORM





DIGI-FACE 'LEARN' MOODLE PLATFORM

DIGI-FACE is an **online platform** that connects DAAD-supported African-German Centres of Excellence to their alumni through **teaching, learning, research, and communication opportunities.**

WHO BENEFITS FROM THE DIGI-FACE PLATFORM?

Our User Guide provides useful information to:

Prospective
Students

Potential
Teachers

Centre
Managers

Anyone interested
in the Learn site

If you require further details, you will be directed to other sources containing relevant information you might need. For example, if you need more information on our teaching and learning offerings you will be redirected to the 'Learn' prospectus. In the prospectus you will find valuable information related to both the generic and discipline-specific modules.

WHAT IS THE DIGI-FACE LEARN SITE?

The 'Learn' site focuses on teaching and learning using Moodle as its Learning Management System (LMS). DIGI-FACE Academy users have access to, among others, generic and centre-specific modules. The generic modules are 'generic' as they cover general content that is appropriate for, and can be used by, all Centres of Excellence.

There are both long and short generic modules. The long modules cover aspects of teaching and learning aimed at postgraduate students, their lecturers and their research supervisors. The short 'specific skill mini modules' aim particularly at assisting Centre of Excellence staff facilitate activities on Moodle. Generic modules are found under DIGI-FACE on the Learn landing page.

Centre-specific modules are created by academics affiliated to the various centres. These modules focus on a particular discipline, namely those relevant to the centre's area of specialisation, and can be found under the centre sites on the Learn landing page or by clicking on the applicable centre's host country on the map of Africa.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE USER GUIDE

The User Guide provides a wide range of information. It is useful in a variety of contexts and will benefit different users.

Examples of how the User Guide can help various users:

- » **Students can find out more about the types of modules on offer, and how to apply to register.**
- » **Prospective online teachers can discover how to create your own modules. You can also learn what is required of you before you are able to offer these modules online.**
- » **You can also learn how to become the designated online teaching and learning site manager for your centre.**

In this User Guide there is something for everyone who is interested in teaching and learning online. If you cannot find what you are looking for, help will be provided if you liaise with us using the contact details provided.

TERMINOLOGY

An online platform is a digital service that facilitates interactions between two or more interdependent sets of users who interact via the Internet.

Learning Management System (LMS) is a software application specifically designed to create, administer, document, track, report, automate, distribute, and deliver educational content. Moodle is an example of a Learning Management System.

A Module is the term used to describe online lessons or units. Online course modules typically contain content and activities organised in such a way that it creates a clear learning path for students.

Generic modules are not specific to any particular discipline but can be used across disciplines for teaching, learning and research activities. The DIGI-FACE generic modules are found on the DIGI-FACE category on the Learn platform.

Modules of general interest are modules developed by a Centre of Excellence, which concern specific disciplines and which are intended to be generally accessible for all the Centres of Excellence.

Centre-specific modules are based on the disciplines offered by the DAAD-supported African German Centres of Excellence. They are developed and offered by the Centres of Excellence.

Specific skills support is provided to DAAD-supported African German Centres of Excellence through access to resources or via mini-modules.

A prospectus is a document containing information about an institution as well as the courses available at said institution, it includes advice on how to apply.



MODULE OR COURSE?

We use the term module for the teaching and learning activities on the DIGI-FACE Academy Learn site rather than 'course'. We based this decision on the definition from the Coggnio Knowledge Base: For Content Creators and LMS Administrators site which states that "A module is a single component, it can be a document, PDF, PowerPoint, SCORM presentation, Video, or Assessment you create and it can be distributed alone or as part of a course. A course is made of one or more modules packed together". There may be different interpretations to the above, but this is the one we will use until there is a need to change the nomenclature.

THE LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM



A learning management system (LMS) is a software application specifically designed to create, administer, document, track, report, automate, distribute, and deliver educational content.

As per the above definition we know that a learning management system (LMS) is a software application specifically designed to create, administer, document, track, report, automate, distribute, and deliver educational content. An LMS can be hosted on a cloud-based platform or a stand-alone product (on a server). DIGI-FACE has elected to use Moodle as our software application of choice.

All DAAD African Centres of Excellence make use of Moodle to enable their teaching and learning work. By registering on www.digiface.org, members are directed via the 'Learn' category to the Moodle site (learn.digiface.org). The LMS is hosted on a dedicated server based at the Nelson Mandela University in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. All material is safeguarded on a backup server off site.

Our LMS has been operating with various modules since early 2020. Generic modules have been developed by experts for use by facilitators at the centres after they have undergone training. Centre-specific modules are also readily available.

For more information on available modules, please refer to our prospectus on www.digiface.org/prospectus or [click here](#).



MODULES

One of the pillars of the DIGI-FACE project is the creation and dissemination of digital modules offered via our LMS or through online teaching and learning. These are known as modules and are available on Moodle. Modules are mostly asynchronous online offerings led by a facilitator via synchronous Zoom sessions. In other words, participants complete the module mostly during their own time, but within a specified time frame, and with the guidance of a facilitator.

There are several types of modules on offer through DIGI-FACE. Generic and specific skills mini-modules as well as discipline-specific modules and modules of general interest are all offered by our Centres of Excellence.

Generic modules and specific skills mini-modules are modules developed by experts. These modules have been specifically created for academics, postgraduate students, and administrative personnel. They are applicable to any discipline and are available to all centres, conditional on presenters having successfully completed a 'Trainer-of-Trainers' module.

Modules developed by Centres of Excellence are discipline specific and mostly directed at students at the home university. Nevertheless, other interested parties can access discipline-specific modules as well as modules of general interest with permission from the Centre of Excellence that developed the content.

“ONE OF THE PILLARS OF THE DIGI-FACE PROJECT IS THE CREATION AND DISSEMINATION OF DIGITAL MODULES OFFERED VIA OUR LMS OR ONLINE TEACHING AND LEARNING.”



MODULES

GENERIC MODULES

These modules are created & offered by DIGI-FACE designated experts. However, these modules can also be offered by Centres of African Excellence once staff have successfully completed a 'Trainer-of-Trainers' module. Each generic module has its own underpinning pedagogical and online teaching and learning approach. It also has its own target market.

To date there are several generic modules that have been created, tested and taught online. **These are:**

» Academic Written and Graphic Presentation

Mainly aimed at students and supervisors this module aims at improving the professional look and feel of their academic outputs. Upon completion of this module participants should be able to produce professional texts, PowerPoint presentations or posters. Important subject matter is covered.

For example, participants will gain valuable knowledge related to the American Psychological Association (APA) referencing style and layout. The module is very hands-on and enables students to present their academic endeavours professionally, and with confidence.

The underpinning pedagogy is mastery learning using techniques like repetition, retrieval, interleaving, elaborating, reflecting and practicing. The digital focus is on providing a module that requires the consumption of relatively little data. That is to say that this module has been designed in such a way that it is mindful of the particular technological challenges faced by students within the African context. The main aim is to create a module that is accessible to students in regions where bandwidth is low, and where the cost of data is a limiting factor.

» Exploring the Online Learning Environment

This module targets future online lecturers. It introduces them to the LMS Moodle platform and explores how they can create their own modules. It also equips them to make their modules interactive, suitable for presentation and more successful overall through boosting elements like engagement, retrieval, reflecting and practicing. The underpinning pedagogy is again mastery learning, but the digital focus is on utilising more sophisticated techniques and tools that require the consumption of more data as well as reasonable bandwidth. With greater sophistication comes the need for greater skills and resources.

» Academic Writing for Publishing your Research

In this module, students learn how to clarify a claim as well as how to argue its position successfully through opportunities for authentic online discussion and peer review activities. The module provides insights into creating a specific research problem within relevant literature using Toulmin's Argumentation Pattern based on warrants, backings, rebuttals, qualifiers and data. The module also touches on issues of authorship and journal selection as well as covering how to navigate revisions and rejection.

The pedagogy involves argumentation techniques for reviewing papers and encourages participants to reflect on their own efforts as they develop through ever-increasing layers of difficulty. Participants are led to consider their own supervisor-student relationships in light of several factors. These include their institution's postgraduate policies, their personal experiences, and their own expectations related to article writing. In terms of digital tools, the module introduces the use of the 'Workshop' tool.

» Strengthening Postgraduate Supervision

This module targets current postgraduate supervisors in order to help them better understand and improve their own supervision practice. Among other topics, participants learn to frame supervision as pedagogy and reflect on power dynamics inherent in the supervision relationship.

The pedagogical approach of this online module draws on participant interaction with the online interface, participant reflexivity to enable learning from one's own, and each other's, supervision experiences as well as reading of relevant postgraduate supervision related research.

» Research Coherence in Postgraduate Research Projects

This module helps students identify the expected goals of components of a formal research proposal. This is instrumental in demonstrating an intended coherent study towards a critical declaration of their positionality as a researcher. It considers how the choice of focus and phenomenon permeates the critical research questions as well as guiding the design of a targeted literature review and selected theoretical framework. Additionally, it assists with identifying the gaps in the academic knowledge which motivates the need for your new study.

The module allows students to compare a range of methodological approaches and methods, and to identify the most appropriate for the elaboration of their study phenomenon and critical questions. It also enables them to select options for the representation of their engagement with the original lens of the research design, noting its strengths and limitations, and helps them generate the expected endpoint of a theoretical/philosophical contribution of their study.

» Technology Enhanced Teaching and Learning

This module on technology-enhanced teaching and learning has been created to equip lecturers who want to know more about the design and creation of online learning material. Once participants have downloaded the module they work offline, except where there are activities that require them to be online. For example, they will have to go back online to submit their assignments and access their feedback. Participants can work offline by using the Moodle app on their phone, laptop or desktop. The module considers learning principles, scaffolding and sequencing, chunking and lesson duration, active learning, rehearsing and long-term retention, as well as the use of multiple modalities. Examples of simple and more advanced lesson sequencing are available.

» Quantitative Research Methodologies

This module aims at introducing students to the quantitative research paradigm and the basics of descriptive statistics. It presents a hands-on approach to quantitative research that enables students to conduct their own quantitative surveys and to present their initial results in a reflective manner. The module enhances critical thinking with regards to quantitative research. In so doing it empowers participants to distinguish between studies that are sound, and those that are superficial, both in academic and everyday contexts.

» Raison d'être for Generic Modules

These generic modules not only provide access to multidisciplinary knowledge and skills that, while not claiming to be 'Rolls Royce' versions of online teaching and learning, provide an array of exemplars of best practice depending on the context and pedagogical underpinnings of the module. These exemplars can then be used as benchmarks by others when developing their own modules.



PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING GENERIC MODULES

Each generic module is developed by an expert within that field. The whole process is supported by one or two members of the DIGI-FACE staff as managers and coaches with regards to the chosen LMS Moodle. We take this approach in order to ensure that the module is of high quality, both content-wise and in its didactic approach to online teaching and learning. Additionally, we ensure that it complies with the needs of the centre members.

After the creation of each module in Moodle a test run is conducted. During the test run a handful of participants test the module in conjunction with the expert developer and a support person from DIGI-FACE. Necessary adjustments are then made before the module is fully taught for the first time.

Once the first successful run of a module is completed, and participants have had an opportunity to provide one another with feedback on the module as a whole, the module undergoes a final review. At this stage it is ready for translation into either French or English ensuring that all the various centres will be able to use the module.

Additionally, a number of the first cohorts who have passed the module successfully will become facilitators. They will be trained in this role, ensuring that the module can be taught at different centres independently of the experts who initially developed it. Once facilitators have gained the necessary knowledge and experience to teach it on their own and are accredited, they can teach generic module according to their needs at their centres and across various centres.

ENROLLING FOR A GENERIC MODULE

For more information on how to apply and enrol for a generic module, please consult the prospectus. Here you will find details on when modules are offered and by whom, and how to apply to be enrolled.

CENTRE MODULES

Besides the generic modules, each centre offers and administers their own modules. If you are interested to learn more about them, please refer to the overview of modules by specific centres by clicking on them on the maps here. Each centre has their own rules on how to enrol and who can enrol.



MODULES OF GENERAL INTEREST

Modules of general interest are modules produced by the Centres of Excellence in their specific discipline. These modules are generalisable enough to be of interest to those in another discipline.

Should a centre consider a module to be of general interest they must contact the DIGI-FACE Quality Assurance Body for assessment. This is a prerequisite for a module to be offered as a module of general interest under the DIGI-FACE banner.

SPECIFIC SKILLS SUPPORT MINI-MODULES

Besides the generic modules, DIGI-FACE offers the smaller mini-modules that are usually shorter and deal with one clearly contained specific topic at a time. Often, the mini-modules are fully online asynchronously and work as a 'stand-alone' module without accompanying Zoom sessions or guidance by a facilitator.

One example of a highly practical mini-module is the PadCaster mini-module. PadCaster teaches participants everything they need to know to create their own videos, using the equipment and software provided by the DIGI-FACE project. This mini-module, and any others that are available, will appear in the regularly updated DIGI-FACE prospectus.

ROLES ON OUR MOODLE SITE



What is a Role?

Within the context of an LMS the term role refers to a collection of permissions that are determined for the entire system. Roles can be assigned to specific users within particular contexts. In Moodle, a role is assigned to a user in a context - that context could be an activity, a module, a centre, or the entire site. The combination of roles and context define a specific user's access and therefore directly impact on their ability to perform tasks. The most common examples are the roles of student and teacher in the context of a module.

All staff should receive training on how to use their role effectively before it is assigned to them. In this capacity they are responsible for protecting personal student information at all times.

The table lists the primary/default roles currently defined on our Moodle site and provides a summary of which actions various roles are permitted to take. The permissions are hierarchical. This means that a teacher is granted all the permissions that would also be afforded to the roles of non-editing teacher and student. In turn a manager is granted all the permissions that apply to a teacher, a non-editing teacher, and a student.

Who assigns a role?

Firstly, as noted earlier, only a select few of the DIGI-FACE core team hold the role of 'Administrator'. The highest-level role at a DAAD German-African Centre of Excellence is that of 'Centre IT Manager'. It is important to note that DIGI-FACE management only assigns Centre IT Manager roles after consultation with a specific centre's management team. Each DAAD African Centre of Excellence may only have one person fulfilling the role of Centre IT Manager. The Centre IT Manager assigns roles to the Teachers. In turn, Teachers can assign the roles of Non-editing Teachers and enrol Students.

Training for a Role

Training for roles is offered via mini-modules that are role specific. A general introduction to creating a module on the Moodle site entitled Exploring the Online Learning Environment is available. Check the DIGI-FACE prospectus for information on training opportunities. While in-house training and the assignment of roles are possible at the centres, this does not extend to assigning the role of 'Manager'.

Role	Context	Description
Site Administrator	Site level	<p>The Site Administrator role is the most powerful role defined in Moodle. The Site Administrator is responsible for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing the Moodle site • Performing upgrades • Installing plugins • Generating reports • Conducting integrations etc. <p>A user that has been assigned the site administrator role can reach each part of the Moodle site including all modules, reports, user data etc.</p> <p>Good practice dictates that this role is assigned to only one or two participants. Users that require elevated permissions can be assigned the role of Manager.</p> <p>Only a minimum of directly employed DIGI-FACE staff are allowed access as Site Administrators.</p>
Centre IT Manager	Centre level	<p>A Centre IT Manager is able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create modules. • Facilitate the initial adding (registering) of teachers, non-editing teachers and students to the site. <p>It is necessary to add (register) individuals to the site before participants can be enrolled in any module.</p>
Teacher	Module level	<p>Teachers have full access to build and facilitate a module in Moodle. Teachers can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edit (add, change, or delete) resources and activities in modules they are enrolled in. • Change settings. • Configure gradebooks. • Enter grades. • Provide feedback on assignments. • Communicate with students via tools such as News Forums and messaging. • Enrol students into modules and enrol staff as Teaching Assistants (Non-Editing Teachers).
Non-Editing Teacher (Teaching Assistant)	Module level	<p>Non-Editing Teachers (Teaching assistants) can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View and grade student submissions. • Provide feedback on assignments. • Participate in activities like forums, databases, glossaries, and wikis. <p>They cannot edit (add, change, or delete) activities or resources in modules.</p>
Student	Module level	<p>This is a module role for students. Students can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upload assignments. • Post messages on forums. • Participate in other activities. • Access resources on the modules they are enrolled in. <p>They cannot edit (add, change, or delete) the contents of modules.</p>

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

The DIGI-FACE online learning team have developed several resources to assist in the effective creation of innovative and creative modules. Various resources geared towards enhancing learning are also available to students. The team have relied on published research providing insight with regard to Learning and Teaching technologies and software.

This information has assisted the team when it comes to identifying what best assists the creation of learning interventions. These materials and resources are available here. Most are for self-use, but some of the mini-modules are facilitated via Zoom sessions for extra benefit (see prospectus).

Rise is an example of a resource for Teachers. Articulate Rise is a modern, dynamic eLearning authoring tool that allows designers to create responsive modules suitable for use on any device. Using a web-based module builder, Rise allows for the creation of beautiful online modules with the few clicks of a button.

The team has developed several support resources in Rise. Notable examples include information on: building a module in Moodle, assignments; quiz activity; using Teams for teaching; using Zoom for teaching; using a module shell; feedback activity; and PowerPoint recording.

Student Resources cover subjects like: how to log in and enrol, finding my module, navigation, uploading files, quizzes, etc.

Templates are available for module design and outlines; activity design; and feedback surveys.

Other Resources include, among others, a Moodle Tool Guide for teachers and an Online Quality Review checklist. The 'Exploring the Online Learning Environment' and 'Technology Enhanced Teaching and Learning' modules are also available when they are open for self-study (in other words, when not being offered via blended learning).

Other Software One can use Freepik (free stock images and illustrations) and Pexels (free stock images and videos) when creating a Moodle module (module). These sources are free. Canva and Doodly are notable examples of useful software packages. Doodly is a whiteboard animation tool and Canva can be used for the creation of artwork and learning objects. While Canva offers a Free account as well as a Pro account (paid for), Doodly does not offer a free option.

CONTACT DETAILS: karlien.potgieter@mandela.ac.za