Getting Started with Online Learning

Online learning at South Metropolitan TAFE is delivered through **Blackboard Learn**

Using Blackboard and its Tools

Courses within Blackboard exist in a closed, secure environment. Blackboard courses are only accessible to registered students, the lecturer, and the Blackboard administrator.

When you log into Blackboard, you will see a list of the online courses you have enrolled in. Each unit will contain information including unit outlines, assessments, and learning tasks. In each learning task you will find readings and activities for you to work through. You will have access to communication tools, allowing you to contact your lecturer and other students.

Logging in

You will need a computer that meets the [minimum system requirements](#) for Blackboard and has an active internet connection.

1. Go to: http://blackboard.southmetrotafe.wa.edu.au
2. Click on "TAFE users login" button
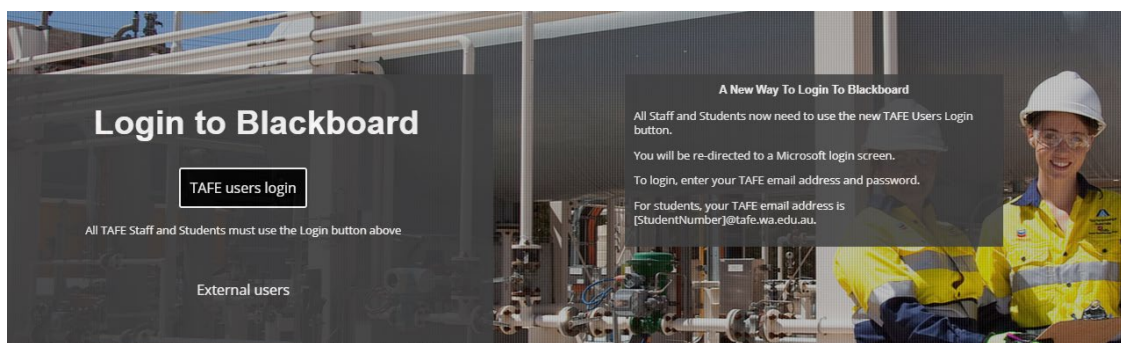
3. Enter your Office 365 credentials to log in; TAFE email address and password.

   o Your email address is: **[StudentNumber]@tafe.wa.edu.au**

   o Your password, until you change it via your Office 365 account, will be **Tafe + your Date of Birth** (ddmmyyyy) example: **Tafe16031989** (note capital T for Tafe).

   *Note: We strongly advise that you **change your default password** to something more secure. You can do this by accessing your **Office 365 email account**, then going to Settings -> Password and following the prompts. Once you have changed your password for Office 365, it will take approximately 10 minutes to transfer over to Blackboard.   You are required to change your password every 90 days.*

4. You will now see the **My Blackboard** dashboard page. Here you can access help, read announcements and access the courses you are enrolled in.

5. Blackboard now has **Single Sign on** enabled, so if you have already logged into Office 365 you will be automatically signed into Blackboard and taken to the **My Blackboard** dashboard page where you can access the courses you are enrolled in.

6. To access a course, click on its title in the Current Training list.
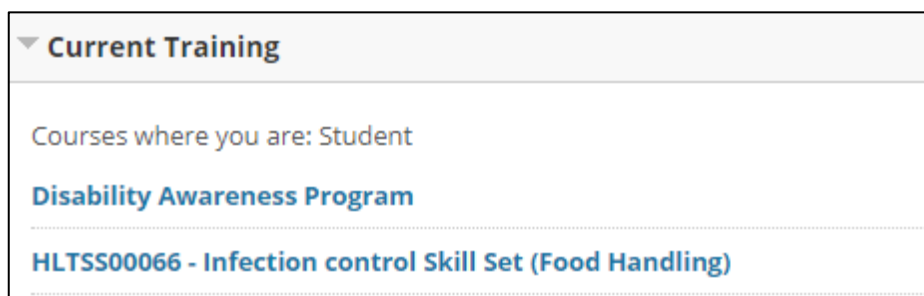
7. You should now see the **Welcome** content of the course you wish to work on.
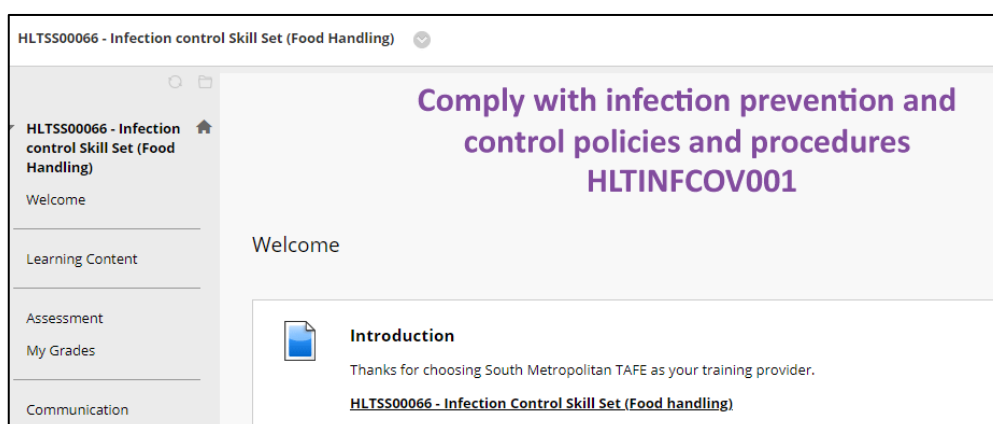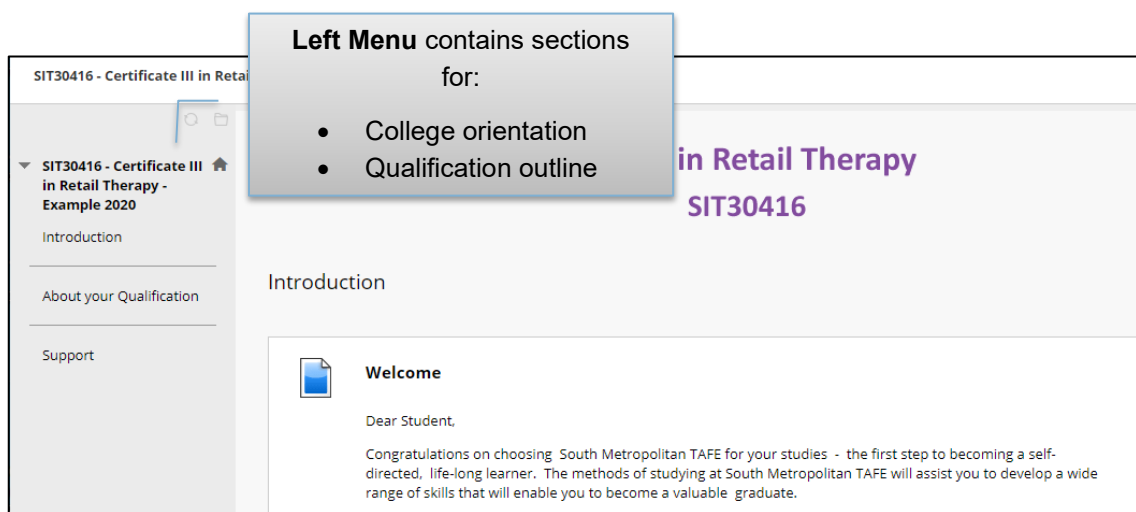
Whole Qualifications, Clusters and Units

You will find that there are two types of courses in Blackboard, one for the **whole qualification** you are studying, and one for the **individual units** or **clusters.**

Whole Qualification

This is where you will find general information relevant to your qualification, such as orientation and industry information.
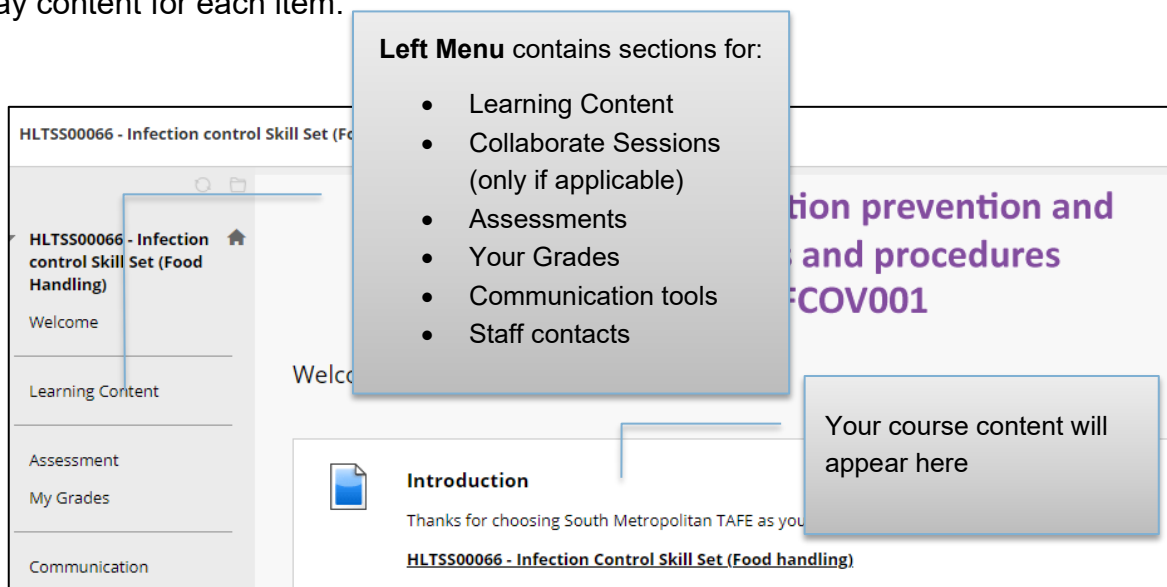
Units and Clusters

Here you will find your learning resources, assessments, grades and communication tools. This is where you will spend most of your time in Blackboard. Click on the **Left Menu** links to display content for each item.

When using the communication tools, remember to:

Be polite and respectful: even though you may feel more anonymous than when you are in a classroom, remember that you are still dealing with real people. Being polite and respectful is not only common sense, it is very important for a productive and supportive online environment.

Be clear and concise: when sending emails or postings, make sure to include informative headings or first sentences, so that people can quickly pick up the topic or purpose of your communication. Try to keep your communication clear and reasonably concise – people can be put off if they have to read through long, rambling or confused writing.

Take advantage of your anonymity: One of the biggest advantages of the online format is that you can pursue your studies without the judgments typical in a traditional classroom. You don't have to feel overwhelmed or even intimidated by other students who can speak faster or more confidently than you. You can take all of the time you need to think your ideas through and compose a response before posting your comments to your group, or asking your lecturer for clarification about the unit content.

Some hints for working in Blackboard

Have patience while pages are loading: sometimes it can take a little while for the contents of Blackboard pages to be displayed. Allow time for pages to load before resizing or moving forward or backwards through the contents.

Keep copies of assessments and any activities you submit to your lecturer: Whenever you submit work to your lecturer, make sure that you keep a separate copy at home in case your original work is lost. Sometimes, electronic information can be damaged (corrupted), and will be unreadable by your lecturer. Having a backup copy at home could save you a lot of extra work.

To exit Blackboard, click on *Logout* at the top of your Blackboard screen. This is especially important if you are using a shared, public computer in a public place.

Problems, questions or concerns

Study or course problems

We want you to succeed in your study as much as you do. Help and assistance is available. Your lecturer will let you know how and when you can contact them. Be sure you always keep that information handy.

Trouble logging in?

Your Student ID and default password for online systems have been sent to your student email address at enrolment.

We strongly advise that you change your default password to something more secure. You can do this by accessing your Office 365 email account, then going to Settings -> Password and following the prompts. Once you have changed your password for Office 365, it will take approximately 10 minutes to transfer over to Blackboard. **You are required to change your password every 90 days.**

Contact your lecturer if you are still having trouble logging in.

Need more instruction on using Blackboard?

The Blackboard On-Demand Help Centre (http://ondemand.blackboard.com/students.htm) is an excellent source of information, including a large library of how-to videos.