Getting Started with Online Learning

Online learning at South Metropolitan TAFE is delivered through Blackboard Learn 9.1.

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](http://blackboard.southmetrotafe.wa.edu.au)

2. Your Username will be is your Student ID number – example: P111111 or M111111. 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).

   Type these in and then click Login to continue.

3. You will now see the My Blackboard page. Here you can access help, read announcements and access the courses you are enrolled in.
To access a course, click on its title in the Current Training list.

4. You should now see the Welcome Page 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 the majority of your time in Blackboard.

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 keep that information handy at all times.

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.