Wider Themes in Digital Education

Course Guide for the Academic Year 2017/18

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About the Wider Themes in Digital Education course

Welcome to the Wider Themes in Digital Education course (WTDE). This section of the Course Guide provides an overview of the course while more detail on the processes and procedures of the course are provided in the 'My Learning Journey' section. We would strongly recommend that you familiarise yourself with the complete framework of this course before commencing your first learning activities.

Your individual project tutors will be drawn from across the programme teaching team. The Course Organiser and first point of contact is Pete Evans:

For further details about the course, please contact Pete at
email: peter.evans@ed.ac.uk
Twitter: @eksploratore
Skype: peter.evans961

Prerequisites

This course is open to students on the PGDip/ MSc in Digital Education who have completed the Introduction to Digital Environments for Learning (IDEL) course and at least one other course. This is to ensure that you have a firm grounding in the content and approaches of the programme as a whole.

It is strongly recommended that you aim to complete this course before starting the Research Methods course. You cannot progress on to your dissertation until you have the required 120 credits and it is helpful for you to be able to go from completing the Research Methods course on to the dissertation.

As with all courses, you will need to have regular access to a computer with a good broadband connection, and will be responsible for providing your own computing equipment, consumables and other materials required for your learning activities.

What is this course and why is it different?

The field of digital education is in a stimulating period including the development of new and contested theoretical perspectives as well as fast moving changes in technologies and practices that are often not subject to critical theorising. This course reflects the dynamic nature of the field of digital education by providing a flexible 'building block' structure supporting you to undertake small-scale learning activities and projects that accumulate to total 20 Credits at Level 11.

Taking this course will give you the opportunity to develop your own learning journey. You will be able to develop your own learning projects and assessed tasks or to participate in learning activities proposed by a member of the programme teaching team. Individual learning activities within this course will be designed to approximate 5 Credits at Level 11 that accumulate to total 20 Credits at Level 11. This should equate to about 50 hours of total study time. It will also be possible for you to engage in single learning activities that are identified as equivalent to 10 or even 20 Credits at Level 11. You will, therefore, be able to participate in up to four learning activities over the duration of this course.

Your activities
Your project proposals, including the assessment tasks and products, will be agreed with a course tutor before the start of each of your learning projects. Once the proposal has been approved you will be expected to take responsibility for your progress in the activities. The tutor will be available for additional support if required but the onus is on you to take responsibility for your own learning: where you will work out what knowledge you need, where you can find it and how you'll apply it. You'll have been increasingly independent in your learning on this programme and this course takes that a step further.

Assessment
As part of the project proposal, you will be required to write an interpretive statement detailing how you will demonstrate that you have met the specified learning outcomes in this activity. An individual learning activity does not have to meet all three learning outcomes of the course but you must be able to demonstrate how all three outcomes have been met by you by the end of the course.

For your final portfolio, you will write a short reflective statement and structured self-assessment on how you have met all three learning outcomes (see Appendix B). This reflective account and self-assessment will be used to inform the formal staff assessment of your learning portfolio. The self and staff assessment will use the same common course assessment rubric that is available on the Moodle site for the course.

Badges
To assist you (and us) in keeping track of your progress and to mark the completion of significant milestones on the course, we will be issuing open badges. These will be issued when, for example, you have submitted a learning activity proposal and when you have submitted your learning activity evidence for feedback. The badges relate to the course processes and have no bearing on your course feedback or final grades.

There are also optional badges for the provision of peer feedback you may submit on the work of your fellow students (see page 11 of this Guide).

The badges are issued through Moodle but are compliant with open badge standards and can be exported and used like any other open badge.

More details on the badge system used in this course will be available on the course Moodle site.

What are the benefits to me in taking this course?

Beyond the immediate programme community and formal structures, many of you are already engaged with emerging technologies and practices and/ or could benefit from being encouraged to put your growing knowledge and critical perspectives to work in the wider digital education sphere. This may be through initiating or participating in events and projects, writing or editing for audiences beyond the programme, or developing and sharing diverse educational approaches. This course provides you with opportunities to gain academic credit through your engagement with emerging technologies and practices in the digital education arena.

My Learning Journey

This diagram sets out the key stages of your learning journey to complete this course. The journey includes defining and scoping the various activities you will undertake, how you will evidence your learning and the requirements for the final portfolio submission.

The first grouping of stages in this course may well be repeated up to four times to accumulate a series of learning activities approximately equivalent to 20 Credits at SCQF level 11:
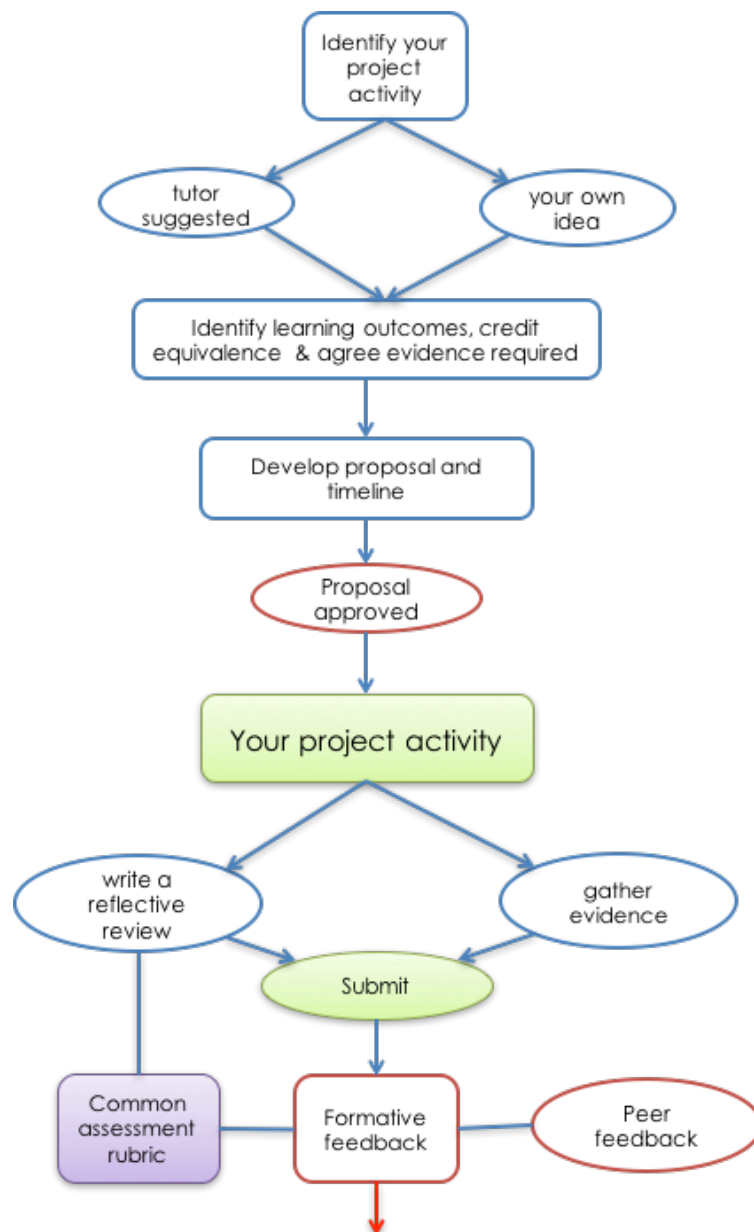
Once you have completed your learning activities to the equivalence of 20 Credits, you will then generate a synoptic portfolio of your learning evidence, feedback and reflections for a final summative assessment.

A synoptic final assessment means that your portfolio will be assessed in its totality. This means that failing to attain the intended learning outcomes in one activity can be 'compensated' for in other learning activities. No single learning activity can 'make or break' your overall performance in this course.
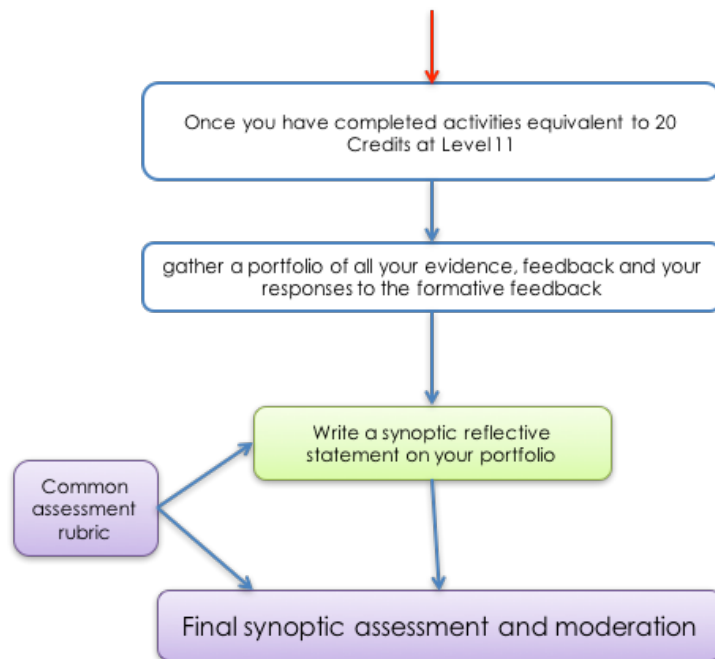
The following sections of this handbook will discuss the different steps of your learning journey in more detail.

Getting started

Taking this course means that you are prepared to take responsibility for directing your own learning: presenting how a proposed project or learning activity will meet your learning goals and the intended learning outcomes for this course, undertaking the learning activities and capturing and critically evaluating your learning journey.

You may be attracted to some of the projects that are offered during each year by the course team – for example, a lecturer may form a limited-duration reading group to discuss an influential or ground-breaking text in detail over 3-4 weeks; or invite students to take part in a short course to explore an emerging trend or technological phenomenon; or share new research in the form of a lecture series.

However, some or all of your projects will be identified, developed and implemented by you. The project ideas you develop may be based on your current strengths, areas of interest or curiosity or to help you in developing your career.

Many of you are already engaged with emerging technologies and practices in the field of digital education. You may facilitate an online community or communities and can use that as a basis for a small learning activity, or you might have recently developed a new short online learning course and want to submit that as part of this course. You might have been particularly interested in a topic introduced in one of the other courses in the programme and want to have an opportunity to study this concept further.

In developing a project proposal for this course you should consider:

- How does the project fit with your personal, scholarly and/ or professional development goals?
- Is this something you can do as part of your day job? Is it feasible to complete in your non-work time?
- What support is available to you?

Furthermore, while many of your projects will be practical and experiential, this course is part of a Masters level programme and so your proposals should have a conceptual or theoretical basis.

These sorts of learning activities can be undertaken on your own or it may be helpful to undertake some learning activities in a group. As examples, a group of you might form an editorial board and publish a student journal; develop or test and appraise a new technology for use within one or more of the programme's mainstream courses or in another learning or educational context.

This course provides you with opportunities to put your growing knowledge and critical perspectives to work in the wider digital education sphere, whether through initiating or participating in events and projects, writing or editing for audiences beyond the programme, or developing and sharing diverse educational approaches.

So identifying your learning activities involves reflecting on your own aspirations for your learning as well as looking externally for opportunities and ideas to realise those aspirations. This course provides the opportunity for you to pursue your own very specific interests, needs and curiosities.

Identifying your learning projects

Each of your projects will have their own specific objectives but should also aim to meet at least one of the three Learning Outcomes for this course:
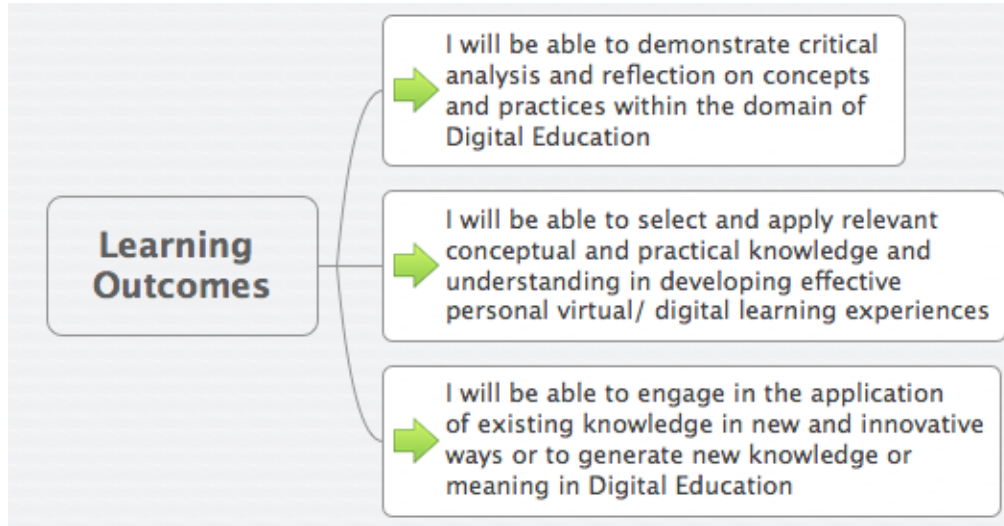
You will need to be able to demonstrate attainment of all three of these learning outcomes by the time you submit your portfolio for the final, summative, assessment. So a single project may address only one or two of the Learning Outcomes.

To ensure that each project activity is as valuable to you as possible, you will need to contextualise these Learning Outcomes to the specific situation of your learning activity. Don't think of these Learning Outcomes as abstract concepts – immediately start to think about how you are going to interpret, develop and apply them in your own project and experience.

You will be asked to show which of these three Learning Outcomes you will address in your project at the time of writing the proposal. It is at this point in the process that you will also need to consider what evidence you intend to collect to demonstrate attainment of the Learning Outcome(s). Evidence could include literature reviews, mind maps, photos and recordings of events, posters, websites, blog posts and so on.

Writing your proposal

Once you have identified and scoped your learning activity, you should start to write your proposal. The template for your Learning Project Proposal can be found as Appendix A of this Guide. The template is also available on the course Moodle site.

Developing a plan and timeline

While not an exact science, you should anticipate that each learning activity that is approximately equivalent to 5 Credits at SCQF Level 11 would require about 50 hours of your time. So the total course should take you about 200 hours (20 Credits).

Your timeline for your final learning activity should include time for collating your portfolio and writing your critically self-reflective paper and to undertake your self-assessment using the common marking rubric.

You are required to complete the course prior to progressing to the dissertation stage of the MSc programme. We would recommend that you look to complete this course before you start the Research Methods course but you can discuss this with your Personal Tutor. Also, as with any other course on this programme, please discuss with your Personal Tutor or course tutor any circumstances that may be affecting your studies.

Evidence for your learning

An important part of your proposal will be the specification of the evidence that you will collect to evidence your learning. This may include: written documents such as a short research paper or reflection on an event or experience as well as multimodal artefacts such as a website, video, audio, an e-learning resource and so on.

Approval of the proposal

When it is completed, your proposal should be submitted to your allocated tutor for an assessment of the feasibility and appropriateness of your intended learning activity.

Your tutor may require you to modify your proposal in some way to ensure that your intended activities are academically viable and acceptable against the intentions of this particular course.

Your Learning Experience

Once your proposal has been approved you can start on the project activities. While this course is structured to support self-directed learning, your specific tutor for each learning activity will be available to guide you with any particular challenges.

Your proposal will also assist in guiding you in focusing on what you need to learn, what knowledge you require, where you may locate or develop that knowledge and how you might apply it. However, as you implement your learning activity, your plans and intentions may well change and such changes provide rich points of learning for your critical reflections.

You should also ensure that any changes to your proposed activities are discussed with your tutor.

Tracking progress

One of the advantages of this course is its flexible timeframe. However, this also creates challenges in terms of keeping track of your progress on the course. The digital badges issued through the course Moodle site will assist you in this. Also, the course organiser and programme secretary will be periodically reviewing the progress of all participants on the course.

It will remain a requirement that this course, like the other taught courses is completed and passed before you can progress on to the dissertation.

Assessment

The WTDE course is formally assessed and graded once you have completed all your learning activities to an equivalence of 20 Credits at SCQF Level 11. Therefore, the assessment is both synoptic and holistic in nature and will require you to demonstrate attainment of all three of the course Learning Outcomes.

However, each learning activity will receive feed-forward from your tutor for that activity. This will be feedback on the evidence demonstrating that you have met the Learning Outcomes identified in your learning activity proposal. You also have the option of opening your learning activity evidence for peer feedback as well.

Common course assessment rubric

The common assessment rubric is available on the course Moodle site. The rubric is used in all the feed forward, peer feedback and final assessment of your synoptic portfolio. The common assessment rubric is also used as the basis for your synoptic self-assessment submitted along with your final portfolio.

Synoptic reflection

At the summative assessment stage, you will write a synoptic statement providing a self-assessment of their outputs from the course against the Learning Outcomes. This self-assessment will inform the formal staff assessment and grading. Both your self-assessment and the staff assessment will use a common course assessment rubric. A template for your synoptic self-reflection is available as Appendix B in this guidebook and on the course Moodle site.

Peer feedback

Once you have presented your evidence at the end of each learning activity to your tutor, you can also present the evidence for feedback from your fellow students. This is an entirely optional opportunity to gain additional insights and suggestions from your fellow students. The peer feedback process will make use of the same marking rubric as the tutor uses.

This opportunity will help you in your reflections on the evidence from your completed learning activities and potentially in improving your next learning activity proposal.

The opportunity to provide peer feedback will also assist you in understanding and interpreting the learning outcomes and common assessment rubric. Additionally, you will be awarded open badges through Moodle to show how many times you have submitted peer feedback.

Tutor assessment and moderation

The course assessment will result in tutor feedback in the usual way and a grade mark using the Common Marking Scheme as specified below.

The assessment of your portfolio will also be subject to internal moderation by another member of the programme teaching team. As with other courses, a sample of the assessed work will be available for moderation by the External Examiner.

Submission dates

The learning activity evidence and the final portfolio will be submitted on a timescale set out in your learning activity proposal.

You should expect to receive tutor feedback on your submitted work within 15 working days. However, given the flexibility of the course, this may not always be possible and the tutor will inform you if this is the case.

The postgraduate common marking scheme

Grades will be awarded in line with the University's postgraduate common marking scheme:

Mark	Grade	Description
70% - 100%	A	An excellent performance, satisfactory for a distinction
60% - 69%	B	A very good performance
50% - 59%	C	A good performance, satisfactory for a masters degree
40% - 49%	D	A satisfactory performance for the diploma and certificate, but inadequate for a masters degree
0% - 39%	E	Fail

Further details on the University's common marking scheme can be found in the Examination Regulations on the Web at: http://www.ed.ac.uk/student-administration/exams/regulations/common-marking-scheme

For more detail on the regulations that govern the course and the programme you should consult the University's *Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study* (DRPS) which are to be found on the Web at: http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/

Follow the links from there to the general regulations, or to those regulations that apply particularly to taught postgraduate programme.

Credit and continuation of study
Successful completion of this course will give you 20 Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) points at postgraduate level 11. More details of the SCQF can be found on the Web at: http://www.scqf.org.uk/

The regulations governing satisfactory progress for continuation to Masters level by work on, and submission of, a dissertation are given in your Programme Handbook.

Computer skills and equipment / software that you will need.

There is no assumption that participants on this course, or the programme, will be advanced computer users, although you will be expected to be a regular user of the computer for communication, information search and retrieval, and for writing.

To participate you will need regular access to a computer capable of connecting to the Internet and to the courses' Moodle site and related resources. You should consult the Programme's Technologies Handbook for further, more specific advice and guidance.

You will be responsible for access and ensuring appropriate technical support for any specialist software, hardware or other equipment required for your specific proposed learning activity.

You may wish to print copies of the recommended reading materials – unless you are comfortable reading from the screen – in which case access to a printer will be necessary. Although it is perfectly possible to participate in the course through a dial-up connection to the Internet, a broadband connection is likely to provide a more satisfying experience of access.

The basic software applications that you will require will be:

– a Web browser to access the Moodle resources and other recommended sites;
– Acrobat Reader to access course readings
– a word processing application for your writing.

Contact information

For help or advice on any aspect of the course, please contact Peter Evans in the first instance. The normal academic business of the course can be conducted through the Moodle Discussion Forums, and the Moodle mail system within the course. To attract attention more urgently it will be better to use regular email to the address below.

Peter Evans
+44(0)131 651 6345

peter.evans@ed.ac.uk
Twitter: @eksploratore
Skype: peter.evans961

For help and advice about the wider MSc in Digital Education programme you should contact the Programme Director, Christine Sinclair.

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The Moray House School of Education
The University of Edinburgh
St John's Land
Holyrood Road
Edinburgh EH8 8AQ

christine.sinclair@ed.ac.uk
Tel: +44 (0)131 651 4192

Appendices

Appendix A: Project Proposal Template

Wider Themes in Digital Education
Project Proposal

Your name		Student number	sXXXX

Title:
Please keep your title succinct and descriptive of your proposed learning activity.

What is your driving question/ concern/ issues of interest?
Briefly describe the issue or problem that <u>you</u> intend to explore or address in this learning activity.

How do you intend to pursue answers to or address your driving question/ concern/ issues of interest?
Describe your learning activity <u>and</u> how you think the learning activity will address your driving question/ concern/ issue of interest.

How will you demonstrate achievement of the relevant learning outcomes?
Select the learning outcomes you intend to address in this learning activity and specify how you will show you have met that learning outcome:

✓	*Copy & paste the tick*	
	Learning Outcome 1	I will be able to select and apply relevant conceptual and practical knowledge and understanding in developing effective personal virtual/ digital learning experiences. [*showing why have you chosen to make use of that theory, model and or practice (or group of theories, models and practices) in your learning activity?*]
	Learning Outcome 2	I will be able to demonstrate critical analysis and reflection on concepts and practices within the domain of Digital Education. [*showing how you have used those theories, models and/ or practices to analyse and reflect on your learning activities?*]
	Learning Outcome 3	I will be able to engage in the application of existing knowledge in new and innovative ways or to generate new knowledge or meaning in Digital Education. [*showing how your learning activities have involved something new or innovative? Innovation may include <u>process</u> innovations, eg, improving methods; <u>goal</u> innovations, eg, attempting something that you haven't achieved before or delivering a new 'product'; or <u>context</u> innovations, eg, implementing something from another sector, organisation, country and*

		replicating that in your particular sector, organisation or country]

What documentation, artefacts, or products do you intend to produce during your learning activity?
Describe the artefacts you intend to generate in the course of your learning activity.

What is the timeline for your learning activity?
Specify the anticipated schedule and the significant milestones for your learning activity.

Milestones	Week									

Add additional rows as required.

Total hours expected to complete the learning activity	

What resources and/ or support do you think you will need to complete the learning activity?
Outline the resources you think you'll need for this learning activity and where you will get these resources. Also indicate any other specific support you think you will need for this activity.

To be completed by tutor on approval of the proposal

Tutor name:

Agreed Credit equivalence at SCQF Level 11 for this learning activity

✓	*Copy & paste the tick*

5 Credits		10 Credits		15 Credits		20 Credits	

On completion of this learning activity the total equivalent Credits undertaken by this student will be:

✓	*Copy & paste the tick*

5 Credits		10 Credits		15 Credits		20 Credits	

Appendix B: Final Portfolio Reflection Template

Wider Themes in Digital Education
Final Portfolio Reflection

This is the opportunity for you to reflect on how you think you have achieved the Learning outcomes of the Course. You should cross reference to your activity evidence as clearly as possible to show how you have met each learning outcome. You may also want to directly address aspects of tutor feedback. As an example extract:

> *As can be seen in my first activity, the conceptual framework was under-developed in terms of how I aimed to apply it (see Reflective account, pp. 8-9). In particular, I had not fully considered how I might identify the emergence of a Community of Inquiry in an informal and open digital space. However, I learned from this experience and explicitly stated how I applied those concepts in my analysis of my second activity (hyperlink).*

Your reflections here should not be extensive as your final mark will be mainly derived from your evidence from each learning activity. You should aim for this reflective report to be no longer than 1,000 words.

Your name:

Date:

Assessment criteria
All criteria should be addressed in your reflections.
Please refer to the Assessment Rubric when writing up your reflections.

Learning Outcome 1: demonstrates the ability to select and apply relevant conceptual and practical knowledge and understanding in developing effective personal virtual/ digital learning experiences.

Learning Outcome 2: demonstrates critical analysis and reflection on concepts and practices within the domain of Digital Education.

Learning Outcome 3: demonstrates application of existing knowledge in new and innovative ways or to generate new knowledge or meaning in Digital Education.