MEI

Introduction to the MEI Online resources for 2009/10

The new MEI Online Resources website uses the Moodle Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), which is an open-source software package designed for producing Internet-based courses. It is used by schools, colleges and universities worldwide.

The website is managed centrally by MEI. All resources and documents on the website are the property of MEI. It is not possible for individual establishments to add any resources to the website. More information about Moodle can be found at http://moodle.org/support/, but please note that not all Moodle features are used on the MEI Online resources website.

Contents

1. Getting started

After the accounts you require are set up and configured in the User Management Interface each user will be able to login immediately using the username and password you have provided them with. Once logged on, they will see a list of the courses in which they are enrolled. Clicking the link to an individual course will reveal its resources.
Users cannot enrol themselves on a course, so if a course is missing from a user's list you will need to go back to the User Management Interface to include it.

2. Passwords

- Passwords are initially set to changeme, which forces users to change the password on login.
- Users can change their own password by selecting *Profile* on the left-hand panel, selecting *Edit Profile*, and typing the new password into the New Password box. Tick the Unmask box to ensure that it has been typed correctly.
- If users forget their password, they should use the "Help me login" button on the login page.

3. Groups

- All students and tutors are assigned to a "group", for administration purposes, for each course in which they are enrolled. This will usually be their teaching group within their school or college.
- Although there may be many groups, from different establishments, using the same course, students within a group will only "see" members of their own group on the *Participants* list and in the *Online Users* block. In the forum, they will see only threads started by members of their own group.
- Tutors will see only their own groups of students in the Gradebook.

4. Course structure

Each course corresponds to one AS/A2 unit. A course is split into sections which are grouped by topic area. For example, EdExcel C3 has topics Algebra and functions, Numerical methods, Trigonometry, and Differentiation. Each of these has up to 4 sections.

There are one/two blue squares on the right-hand blue column, which corresponds to either just one section being shown at a time, or all sections. If just one section is shown at a time, the *Go to section* drop-down menu or *Next/Previous* (at the top and the bottom of each page) can be used to move between sections.

5. Resources

Resources which may be included in each section are:

5.1 pdf resources

- Section overview (for AQA, EdExcel and OCR C1-4) – includes the specification content for the section, key points and formulae, and a description of the additional resources available
- Study plan (for all other AS / A2 units) – gives textbook references and suggests how to use the additional resources available
- Notes and Examples – supplements the textbook by providing additional examples and sometimes alternative methods
- Crucial points – lists a number of points that often need to be emphasised to students. Often these are based on comments from Examiner's reports.
- Additional exercise – extra questions that can be used to supplement the textbook or as revision
- Solutions to additional exercise – worked solutions, in a handwriting font.

5.2 Interactive resources

These may include:

- Interactive questions – short, automatically generated questions on a particular technique. Students enter their answer and it is immediately marked. A worked solution can be seen.
- Flash resources – some of these are automatically generated worked examples on particular techniques, others give the opportunity to explore a particular idea using diagrams or graphs.
- Geogebra resources – these usually give the opportunity to explore a particular idea using diagrams or graphs.
- Interactive spreadsheets – these give the opportunity to explore a topic.

5.3 Active learning resources
- These are activities which are intended for use with a class, perhaps working in small groups (although many can be done individually as well). Most of these are Tarsia-style jigsaw or domino activities, or matching activities.

5.4 Other resources
- PowerPoints – show worked examples for some of the more complicated techniques. There are a lot of these in Decision Maths modules, but also a few in other modules.
- Videos – these are external links to the Mathscentre website.

5.5 Section test
- This is a multiple-choice test of 10 questions covering the work in each section. There is a pdf file containing the test questions. Students should print out the questions from the pdf, work through them (most tests are likely to take at least an hour to complete) and then go into the "quiz" to enter their answers. These will be automatically marked and marks appear in the gradebook (see below). There are 3 points for a correct answer and 1 for "I don't know" (this is to discourage guessing!). Students who obtain 23 or more out of 30 are given a link to the worked solutions. Two attempts are allowed on each test.
- Worked solutions to the test are "hidden" – they are visible to tutors but not to students.
- Tutors may view a complete breakdown of the results for their group by clicking on the test and selecting the *Results* tab.
- There is more information about viewing student results in the document ***Tests, assessments and the gradebook***.

5.6 Topic assessment
This appears on the final section of each "topic".
- This consists of questions which test an entire topic (e.g. Differentiation). These may include exam-style questions.
- There is a pdf file containing the test questions. There is also an "assignment" which is hidden from students. To enter students' marks for the topic assessment, tutors should click on the assignment and then click on the text "No attempts have been made on this assignment" (when marks have been entered, this will state the number of students who have marks given to them). Tutors can then enter marks and comments if required. These will appear in the gradebook.
- Worked solutions to the assessment are "hidden" – visible only to tutors.
- There are more detailed instructions about entering marks in the document ***Tests, assessments and the gradebook***.

5.7 Glossary
- In the top section of each course, there is an auto-linked glossary which covers the whole course. The glossary can be browsed by category or alphabetically. Highlighted words on each section page are linked to a glossary entry, which in their turn may have links to other glossary terms.

6. Other features

6.1 Forums
- Forums can be used in many ways. Students and tutors will only see threads relating to their own group. Tutors can edit or delete posts, split discussions, etc.

- Students are by default subscribed to the forum, which means that they will receive emails with the content of any new posts to the forum. They can unsubscribe from the forum if they don't want to get the emails, or they can opt for a "daily digest" (either giving all the day's posts in full, or a daily summary of post topics) by editing their profile, pressing *Show advanced* and choosing from the *Email digest type* drop-down box.
- There is more information about forums in the document ***Forums***.

6.2 Messaging
- Students can use the *Participants list* on the left to see a list of everyone in their group, and they can message any of these people (including the tutor). The *Online Users* block shows all group members who are currently online in that course.
- Tutors can bulk message all or some members of their group, e.g. to remind everyone about an assignment that is due, or to inform a subset of students that they have missed a deadline.
- If pop-ups are enabled in the browser, incoming messages will appear in a pop-up window. Otherwise, you can open them from the *Messages* block.
- To be able to re-read old messages easily, you should save the other person as a contact. Click on Messages in the *Messages* block and you will get a list of contacts; click on one and you can select *History* to see messages to and from that contact.
- If a message arrives when you are offline, you will receive an email containing the message (this can be changed in the *Settings* in the *Messages* block).
- There is more information about messaging in the document ***Messaging***.

6.3 Gradebook
- The gradebook can be found by selecting *Grades* on the left-hand panel. This lists results of the multiple-choice tests for each student. It also contains columns for the topic assessments – tutors may add marks to these by clicking on the column title or by clicking on the appropriate Assignment within the resources.
- Students can also go into the gradebook, but they will see only their own grades.
- There is more information about the gradebook in the document ***Tests, assignments and the gradebook***.

6.4 Calendar
- Tutors can add items to the calendar at group level, e.g. assignment deadlines, exam dates.
- Students may, if they wish, add their own events to the calendar – these will be visible only to the individual student.
- There are further instructions on using the calendar in the document ***The calendar***.

6.5 Student activity
- Tutors can see what resources students have viewed by selecting the *Activity reports* tab on the student's profile (accessed from *Participants*).
- There are further instructions on this in the document ***Student activity***.