

# Guide for providing support and induction for an external practitioner tutor

A case study in providing Educational Technologist  
support to a UL external practitioner tutor

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## 1 Context

### 1.1 The REAP Project

The REAP project (funded under the 2018 HEA Innovation and Transformation call), is a UL/MIC/TUS higher education strategic institutional partnership to develop a best practice framework in the engagement and governance of external/practitioner tutors delivering blended/online professional education programmes, and the development of targeted upskilling to improve the quality of teaching by external tutors in online delivery methods.

### 1.2 The practitioner/external tutor

In the REAP context, the “practitioner/external tutor” is the experienced industry, professional services or public sector subject-matter expert who is contracted part-time by the HEI, to develop and/or deliver modules for flexible/online professional education programmes.

## 2 Purpose

As part of the REAP project analysis of current practices within UL for engaging practitioner tutors, one of the recommendations was the support of an educational technologist during the module development and delivery, particularly for the new practitioner/external tutor.

This document is based on the experience of supporting an external tutor in the Autumn semester 2021/22 and gives an overview of the type of work an Educational Technologist will be required to do to support a new or inexperienced external practitioner tutor in preparing and delivering an online or blended module. It will serve as a guide for an educational technologist when inducting an external practitioner tutor.

The overall aim of this document is to both assist and speed up the induction process for an external practitioner tutor, and concludes with recommendations on the overall experience from both the Educational Technologist and the external tutor.

### 2.1 Audience

This document is intended as a guide for the course directors and the educational technologists on a programme where external practitioner tutors develop and/or deliver modules.

## 3 Scope

This document contains the following key information:

- Types of work the educational technologist will carry out with the external tutor
- Timeline for working with the external tutor on the module including:
  - Pre semester work
  - During semester work
  - Post semester work
- Checklist for the external tutor (online classes)
- Steps for the external tutor to take when a guest speaker is presenting

- F.A.Q on typical questions/issues encountered raised by external tutor
- Other recommendations for educational technologists performing this role

## 4 Support work overview

### 4.1 Background to module support

- The information and project plan relates to supporting an external tutor practitioner with a background in innovation and entrepreneurship with little knowledge of the VLE (Moodle) prior to this module beginning.
- The module is titled “Managing Innovation” (module code AU5081) and is part of the Innovation Management Professional Diploma out of the Faculty of Science and Engineering: <https://www.ul.ie/gps/innovation-management-%E2%80%93-professional-diploma>
- This is a 6-week, 6-credit module in Semester 1.
- It consisted of a weekly 2-hour online class that took place on Thursday evenings from 7-9pm.
- It consisted of 11 units, all of which were covered over the six 2-hour online classes.
- This module also consisted of one masterclass, where a guest speaker came in and talked for 30 minutes out of one of the online classes.
- This document covers time the educational technologist spent with the external tutor over pre-semester, 6 weeks semester and 2 weeks post-semester.

### 4.2 Summary of Educational Technologist support work

Types of work the Educational technologist will carry out with the external tutor

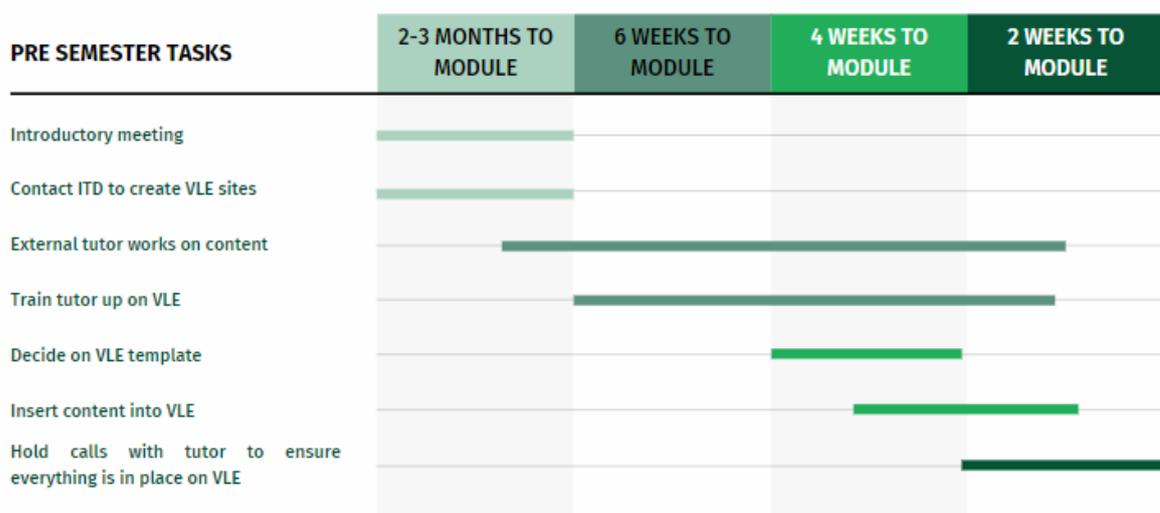
- VLE (Moodle) support and Tool support (e.g. BBB, recording tools, forums, inserting activities and files into VLE pages.)
- Content design work (graphics, learning design)
- Synchronous/webinar delivery support
- Support meetings, how often educational technologist meets with tutor
- External masterclass lecturer support (if required)
- Liaising with other educational supports within the university. (Library, other educational technologists and ITD)

## 5 Timeline for working with external practitioner on module

The following section summarises the support work given to the external tutor from 3 months before the beginning of the module through to the module delivery and post-delivery phase.

### 5.1 Pre semester timeline and work

## TIMELINE OF ED TECH WORK WITH EXTERNAL PRACTITIONER TUTOR



#### 5.1.1 2-3 months before beginning of module

What	Time Required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold first introductory meeting with external tutor.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Brief meeting to say hello and get to know a bit about the external and the module/course.</li> <li>○ Ask him/her their knowledge on the VLE and ask if they have any ideas on content.</li> <li>○ Ask external to come to the meeting prepared with a framework for their module (if they don't have one already) with some ideas (e.g. videos, reading list, quizzes, discussion forums)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Send list of useful links to VLE support sites. E.g. Useful link to moodle beginners page or Sulis for beginners site</li> </ul>	1 hour

Contact ITD and request to create the site on the VLE if not present	1 hour
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrange meeting to show the tutor how to use the VLE (e.g. upload a basic file, create a page.) and run through the features of the VLE. (e.g. Discussion forums, quizzes, announcements)</li> <li>• Give tutor a week to familiarise themselves with the VLE.</li> <li>• Tutors should begin their own work on the content itself. They should know layout (how many weeks/ units/ lessons it is going to contain).</li> </ul>	1-2 one hour meetings per week (from 5-6 weeks to beginning of module to week before module begins)

### 5.1.2 4-6 weeks before beginning of module

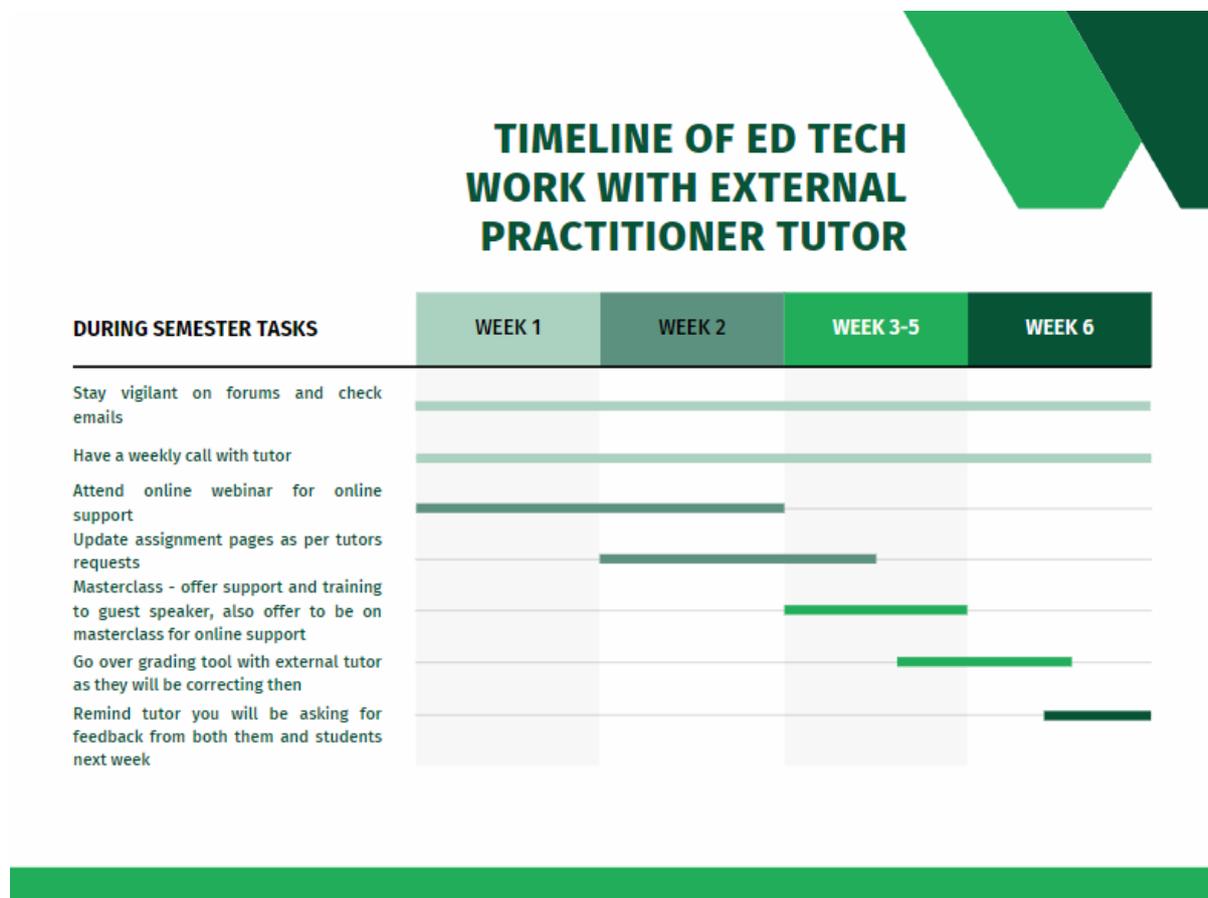
What	Time Required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decide on a VLE template. Show the tutor the different templates available on the VLE.</li> <li>• <b>Note:</b> It may often be the case that if this is the external tutor's first time doing this, they may opt for the more basic of the templates.</li> </ul>	Two 1 hour meetings (should take no longer than one week)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue training tutor on other features on the VLE, tools that may need an hour or so to run through each of them (e.g. Turnitin, Big Blue Button)</li> </ul>	1/2 hours x 3 weeks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold meeting with tutor to go over any questions they have around the VLE. Now that they have looked at their content and the VLE, they may have a number of questions for you.</li> </ul>	1-2 hours per week

### 5.1.3 2 weeks before beginning of module

What	Time Required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A number of calls may take place between you and the tutor.</li> <li>• Ensure the VLE is ready to go at this stage and that the tutor has at least the first few weeks of his content ready to go.</li> </ul>	3 hours 2 weeks for calls 2 hours x 2 a week on other work (potentially more)

## 5.2 During semester timeline and work

The following section summarises the support work given to the external tutor by the educational technologist throughout the module (the 6 weeks that the module went on for).

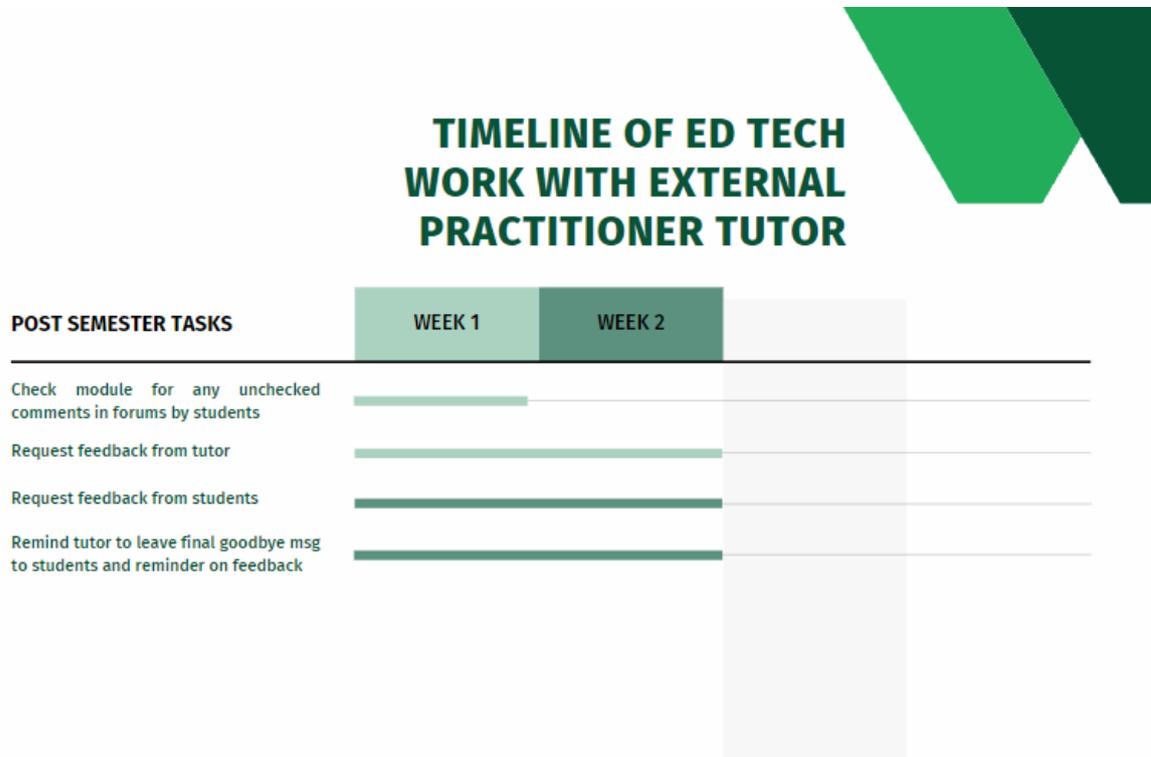


Week	What	Time Required
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All items should be in place for the module to run smoothly.</li> <li>Keep vigilant and look out for any problems that may occur.</li> <li>Attend on the online class with the tutor to offer support and be there in case there are any first day mishaps or problems with students getting access.</li> </ul>	1-2 hours  3 hours for first 2 weeks (Additional hours if asked to attend more online classes)
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Week 2 should run more smoothly than week 1 and any ongoing problems with students/access/or anything related to the VLE should be taken care of by now.</li> </ul>	1 hour

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A 1 hour call with the tutor should be enough in this week to catch up and see if there is anything that needs to be done</li> <li>• Log into the online class again this week, unless the tutor says he/she does not need you.</li> </ul>	3 hours for first 2 weeks (Additional hours if asked to attend more online classes)
<b>3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In week 3 the tutor should be experienced enough with the online classes and you should not need to attend these anymore.</li> <li>• Maintain contact with the tutor via email, calls should only be necessary if the tutor requests but they should have a good understanding of the VLE at this stage.</li> </ul>	1 hour
<b>4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain contact with the tutor via email, calls should only be necessary if the tutor requests but they should have a good understanding of the VLE at this stage.</li> </ul>	1 hour
<b>5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If tutor is having a masterclass, ask them if they want you to meet with the guest speaker to go over BBB or any other tool on which they will be speaking.</li> <li>• Explain just as you did to the tutor how the tool works. You should not need to be demonstrating any other tool to them, just the meetings tool.</li> </ul>	1-2 hours
<b>6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Similar to the last few weeks, maintain contact with the tutor via email or calls</li> <li>• The tutor may request you go over a tool such as the grading tool with them.</li> <li>• Book an hour with them and go over this.</li> </ul>	1 hour  1 hour

### 5.3 Post semester timeline and work

The following section summarises the support work given to the external tutor by the educational technologist upon the completion of the module by students (post 6 week module).



What	Hours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have a follow up feedback meeting with the tutor. Find out what they liked and did not like about how the module was presented, if there is anything they would change if they could go back.</li> </ul>	<b>1-2 hours</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include usability support question(s) on module in follow up feedback form sent to students by course director/module leader</li> </ul>	<b>.5 hours</b>

In summary, estimate over the period is the following: **Approximately 30 - 33 hours** support over the 3 month period.

## 6 Recommendations

### 6.1 Education Technologist view

Below are some recommendations for supporting the tutor:

#### **Pre semester**

- Have introductory meeting early as possible so you can get an idea of the module and start working on ideas
- Once the first meeting is over, send the tutor a list of useful links that they can look at. For example, how to use the VLE, Sulis for beginners site, Moodle support site.
- Contact ITD to set up VLE site for module as soon as possible as these can sometimes take weeks to be set up depending on the time of year
- When explaining to the tutor how a certain tool works, try to get them to share their screen and work on the tools themselves. This will give them a better understanding of the tool as opposed to watching someone else doing it.
- Try to get the tutor to finalize their reading list at least a week or two before the module begins while also making sure that each book is available to students. Previously a tutor was unable to find books for his reading list in the library. This meant the external practitioner had to choose other books and a few last minute calls were made to the library and others around UL.

#### **During semester**

- Find out if the tutor wants the external speaker wants/needs to be upskilled for the masterclass, if one is taking place. As an educational technologist, it is your job to train the guest speaker on the meeting tool, whether it is teams, Big Blue Button or something else. Just be sure that the speaker is not going into the meeting with no idea of how to use the tool as this will potentially cause long delays in the online class.
- When the external tutor is presenting the online classes without you, the educational technologist, send them the checklist for tutor for online classes (in the appendix). Previously a tutor only pressed record halfway through the class and did the same the following week.

#### **Post semester**

- Have a follow-up meeting with the tutor once the module has concluded to get as much feedback as possible. (Feedback from follow up session with Ronan here)
- Also, include question in feedback form on usability in feedback form to students to see what they thought of the module for items such as layout, contact.

## 6.2 External Tutor view

Recommendations from external practitioner regarding support

Below are some quotes from the external practitioner tutor on delivering this module. Support from the educational technologist is very important.

- *“Knowing the Ed Tech is there to provide the appropriate support is very important, for first time lecturing via this medium and especially during the classes.”*

The other is that the external practitioner should practice on the tools as much as possible, as early as possible:

- *“Do as much training as possible, as early as possible.”*

## **Appendix 1. VLE Training for external tutor**

The following contains a number of useful links for an external tutor when learning about Sulis. While it is not essential for tutors to know the VLE inside out, they may offer some answers when the tutors are looking at the VLE for themselves.

### **Sulis**

- Sulis module site for beginners (Essential training, all new external tutors must complete) : <https://sulis.ul.ie/portal/site/407e5c8b-e2d6-49cb-b74b-222b5e54c300>

### **Additional Resources**

- Site info: <https://www.ul.ie/ltf/supported-tools/sulis/site-info>
- Assignments : <https://www.ul.ie/ltf/supported-tools/sulis/assignments>
- Forums : <https://www.ul.ie/ltf/supported-tools/sulis/forums>
- Lessons: <https://www.ul.ie/ltf/supported-tools/sulis/lessons>
- Reading lists: <https://www.ul.ie/ltf/supported-tools/sulis/reading-lists>
- Statistics (useful for the tutor when trying to find out what students were on the site and for how long); <https://www.ul.ie/ltf/supported-tools/sulis/statistics-tool>
- Turnitin (for Sulis Assignments): <https://www.ul.ie/ltf/supported-tools/turnitin-sulis-assignments>

### **Moodle**

The Moodle support centre should be enough for the tutor as it covers all of the essential items and features of the VLE

- Moodle Support centre: <https://support.moodle.ul.ie/>
- Support site explained: [https://support.moodle.ul.ie/?epkb\\_post\\_type\\_1=support-site-explained](https://support.moodle.ul.ie/?epkb_post_type_1=support-site-explained)

### **Big Blue Button and virtual classroom options**

- Big blue button support: <https://www.ul.ie/ltf/supported-tools/big-blue-button-sulis-meetings>
- <https://www.ul.ie/ltf/supported-tools/virtual-classroom-options>

## **Appendix 2. Checklist for tutor for the online classes**

**This is a checklist of essential actions that tutors should complete as they are doing their online class. This should be given out when a day or two in advance of their first online class.**

1. Remember to upload your presentation in advance of the class. 10, 15 minutes beforehand.
2. Give it a few minutes before you begin for any late comers. 3 or 4 minutes should be plenty of time. Talk to any students on any topic related to the module if they ask a question.
3. When ready to start the class **DO NOT forget to hit "Record"** at the top of the screen.
4. Remind students that if your internet ever goes down that you will be back online in around 5 minutes.
5. Keep vigilant on the chat. Someone may ask a question there instead of asking via mic.
6. For your own benefit, **take a record of who is in the class** if you get the chance. Wait until 20 minutes in so you don't miss anyone who joins late.
7. When the class is finished, in the top right of the screen click the ellipses icon (3 dots) and **click "End Meeting"**. (If you click Leave meeting, the recording will continue and no recording will be uploaded)

### **Appendix 3. FAQs by tutors**

The following are a list of questions asked by the tutor in this case study:

1. How to record lectures? Answer: <https://web.microsoftstream.com/video/118c8aca-1f9f-4a98-a7cb-96152fac72bc>
2. How to show pointer during lecture? Answer: This shows automatically once you share your screen in BBB
3. How do I get the students to answer questions I might put to the room? Answer: use the polls feature in BBB  
<https://ul.topdesk.net/tas/public/ssp/content/detail/service?unid=92762309e056447eabf01841cf9968b2&from=4b098b1a-7bd1-45f5-a280-a352c4f51aa1>
4. How to interact with students
5. What is BigBlueButton? Answer: <https://www.ul.ie/ltf/supported-tools/big-blue-button-sulis-meetings>
6. How do students upload assignments: Answer:  
[https://support.moodle.ul.ie/?epkb\\_post\\_type\\_1=how-to-upload-an-assignment](https://support.moodle.ul.ie/?epkb_post_type_1=how-to-upload-an-assignment)
7. How to hide info from students? Answer: Show tutors how to do this in a quick demonstration.
8. Best way to circulate assignments/results. Answer: Done in Assignments tool
9. How to add a voice recording to PowerPoint: Answer:  
<https://web.microsoftstream.com/video/dda5a987-0a41-44b6-9ab3-346216019f9d?channelId=2c5efdba-6fef-4dfa-a0fa-46bdb8d0ed9e>
10. How to draw on screen or control what they see such as a slow reveal
11. How to invite an external to a BBB meeting and give them presenting rights? Video 3.3.5 on Sulis for Beginners site explains how to do this: <https://sulis.ul.ie/portal/site/407e5c8b-e2d6-49cb-b74b-222b5e54c300/tool/aa5b61c2-189f-474f-ae9f-ea45cf58c97a/ShowPage?sakai.tool.placement.id=aa5b61c2-189f-474f-ae9f-ea45cf58c97a>

#### **Appendix 4. Feedback from external tutor**

The following is a list of questions sent to the external tutor once the module was completed. The tutor's answers are after each question.

1. Overall, how would you rate the ed tech support on this module? Comments?  
*"Excellent. The Ed Tech assigned was very professional and extremely supportive, always available to answer questions."*
2. How would you rate the training? Big Blue Button/turnitin/moodle?  
*"Very clear and effective."*
3. Regarding the training is there anything the ed tech could have done differently to improve it?  
*"Nothing comes to mind. We spoke of maybe covering a set of specific scenarios?"*
4. Regarding the VLE Moodle itself, is there anything you would have liked to have seen on it?  
*"My module was level 9. What would be useful is possibly a specific means for more intuitive interaction, with the students and between the students themselves; group discussions and shared workspaces (maybe this is Teams?). This would be somewhere they could easily share their ideas, thoughts, research on a particular subject. BBB can allow for this but it is not particularly intuitive."*
5. Is there anything that stood out to you on this module that you liked regarding the training or ed tech support?  
*"Knowing the Ed Tech is there to provide the appropriate support is very important, for first time lecturing via this medium and especially during the classes."*
6. Is there anything you disliked or would no longer like to see going forward regarding the training or educational technologist support?  
*"No."*
7. If you could start this module again, what would you like to see done differently? (Recommendations?)  
*"Not from an Ed Tech perspective - as a lecturer I might change my approach a little (mainly regarding assignments so not so relevant here). Having the aforementioned platforms would possibly be an advantage."*
8. Is there any advice you would give to any external practitioners beginning their own module in future?  
*"Do as much training as possible, as early as possible."*