Equella: Introduction

Participant Guide

Course Duration: Approx 1 hr

Course Objective:

By the end of this module you will be able to contribute and reuse content from Equella

Contents:

- What is Equella?
- Contributing Resources through Moodle
- Contributing Video
- Retrieving Resources

This course has been prepared by the Centre for Learning Innovation and Professional Practice (CLIPP) to train Federation University in the use of the Moodle online learning systems.

This material was prepared using version 2.8 of Moodle and Equella 6.3 and may be subject to minor changes with upgrades.

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What is Equella

Equella is a Learning Content Repository (LCM). Its primary purpose is to create a shared resource for Learning Content at FedUni. Equella can store resources in the form of documents, presentations, video, animations, and URLs to name a few. These resources are tagged with metadata, including author and course codes, to allow for quick and easy searching. Equella resources are sharable within Moodle by placing a link to the resource and without placing any load on the Moodle server. Equella resources behave like native Moodle resources and access to them is seamless from the student perspective.

Benefits

Moodle's primary function is to deliver learning content, activities and assessment to Federation University students. However Moodle's structure dictates that content and resources are contained with individual courses, creating virtual silos that are not conducive to sharing. Staff are unable to easily share resources, which leads to time and money being spent duplicating effort. Equella works differently. All teaching staff have the ability to browse through contributed material created and made available by colleagues. They can then effortlessly add this content to their own course(s). Sharing of resources allows for a better online experience for students and reduces effort for staff by reusing or repurposing learning materials.

Additional Benefits

With the increasing demands on courses to be delivered flexibly, Moodle has seen a dramatic increase in the amount of learning content uploaded to the server. Predominant amongst this has been a rapid rise in the amount of storage dedicated to video content. However, Moodle was developed in the pre-video era, and the streaming of video is not a feature that Moodle natively supports. Equella on the other hand has a dedicated HTML5 video player that allows for immediate playback and supports instantaneous skipping. FedUni's Equella has also been modified to support re-encoding of raw video files into a more web friendly format, reducing the amount of bandwidth required for playback. With the demands of file serving and video delivery moved to Equella, Moodle will be more responsive and robust.

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How does it work?

When files are added to Moodle through drag and drop, the user is presented with the option have these files stored and shared on Equella. When doing so, a link is placed in the Moodle course in a similar manner to a directly hosted file. The difference is, instead of the file remaining siloed in a Moodle course, the file is tagged with metadata and made sharable within the Equella Teaching and Learning collection. This allows the resource to be shared by the entire Federation teaching community.

Metadata collection

During the initial scoping of the Equella implementation it was agreed that the ideal scenario was for Equella to become a silent partner to Moodle. However, for Equella to recognise its potential it needs all resources contributed to it to be tagged with meaningful metadata. Without this metadata, the resources become more difficult to search and therefore less likely to be reused. Conversely should the process become too involved this would place an unnecessary load on academic staff and likely result in lack of use. The result has been to automate as much as possible without changing the fundamental ease of use of "dragging and dropping" resources into Moodle.

The integration between Moodle and Equella has automated metadata collection when content is uploaded. When resources are added to Equella via Moodle, the following pieces of information are gathered and are then used to populate metadata tags on the new resource in Equella.

- Author – This is the name of the user contributing the resource (You!)

- File name – The filename is stored in its original form. We suggest that files are name appropriately before upload.

- Course Code – Equella will break the course code down into its parts and assign this to the resource. The bold items will be collected

  - Higher ED – **ITECH 1001 SEM1 2015**

  - Vet - **AHC31010** 2015 Certificate III in Parks & Gardens

  - Other – Any item not identified will be tagged as other

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Flexibility

Not all content stored in Moodle currently is suitable for sharing with the wider University community. There are situations where access to certain content wouldn't be considered appropriate, and therefore staff must make the decision as to whether their resource should be added directly to Moodle, or shared on Equella. However, if all content is simply added to Moodle, then none of the above benefits will be realised. It is therefore important that each upload is considered on its own merits.

What to Share

- Instructional video
- Lecture slides and notes
- PowerPoint presentations
- Learning related documents eg. Word, PDF, Spreadsheets etc.
- Materials supporting learning activites eg. Lab packs, source files etc.

What not to Share

- Assessment tasks, marking guides and rubrics
- Confidential information that should only be accessed by your Moodle course members
- Community of practice or project related materials

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Contributing to Equella Through Moodle

The majority of content will be added to Equella using the Moodle interface. This simplifies the upload process, automatically collects relevant meta data and places the access link directly into your Moodle course. There are two methods for adding content, Drag and Drop as well as through the Equella contribution wizard that is accessed via the Moodle 'Add an activity or resource' tool. To be able to contribute to Equella via Moodle you must have editing capabilities for the course you are adding from.

Drag and Drop

The simplest way to add resources to Equella.

1. From **within your Moodle course, click the Turn editing on** button.

2. Drag the file from your computer to the required topic area in Moodle and release.

Tip: Shrink your Moodle window so that it only occupies part of the screen. This will give you space to view your files that can then be dragged to the Moodle window.

3. Select storage destination for the resource, Moodle will select **Contribute to Equella** by default.
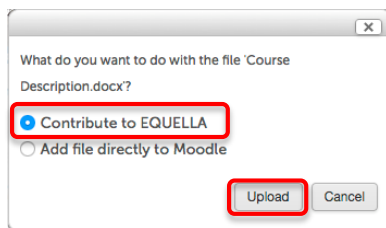
4. Click **Upload** and the file will commence uploading to Equella.

5. The resource link will now appear in Moodle (even though the actual file is located on Equella).

Note: When dragging and dropping resources you are bound by the 100MB Moodle file size limit.

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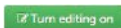
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Add an Activty or Resource

Contributing to Equella via Drag and Drop provides minimal meta data and binds the user to the Moodle file size limitations. By using the inbuilt Equella contribution Wizard staff can :

Name and describe the resource

Add additonal keywords

Associate more than the originating course to the metadata

Add large file types. Eg. Video

Add more than one file to a resource

Some of this process is automated to assist staff with completing the task with minimal input, such as preselecting the contributing course and adding the contributing user as the author.
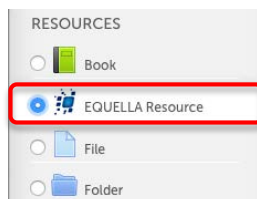
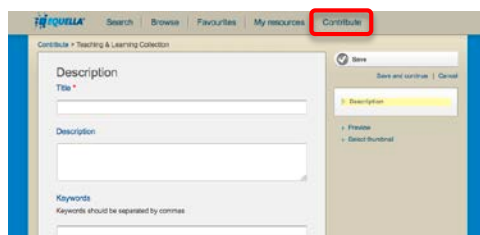1. From within your Moodle course, click the **Turn editing on** button.

2. Click **Add an activity or resource.**

3. Select **Equella Resource** from the list.

4. Click **Add.**

5. Click the **Contribute** Tab.

6. Within the window provided complete the **Title** field marked with a red asterisk. You may also add a **Description** if you like.

7. Enter **Keywords** to improve searching (optional).

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8. Select **Yes** for publishable to Moodle, (you can select no, but obviously the item will not be available in Moodle, only in Equella).

9. The delivery sector should already be completed for you. However, you can choose to add more than one area. In this example, the course description is shared by two Higher Education courses. Commence typing the course code in the box, Equella will auto complete. Click the required course.

10. Once you have chosen the required course, click **Select**.

11. If you have inadvertantly added the wrong course, you may remove it by clicking the small (X) icon next to the unwanted reference.

12. Click the **Add a resource** button.

13. Choose the resource type, in this case, **Upload a file**, then click **Next**.

14. Drag the file to the upload box. When the progress bar is completely green, click **Next**.

Note: The **Next** button will not appear until the upload is complete.

Tip: It is also possible to navigate to your file by clicking the **Browse** button.

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15. If you would like to change the Displayed name of the file, you may do so now. The Restrict checkbox is not recognised in FedUni Equella, you may ignore it. Click **Save**.
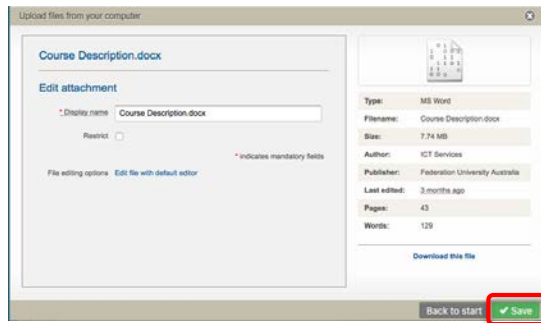
Note: The display name only changes the link name, not the file's actual name.

16. You will now return to the contribution page. If you wish to add more than one file to this resource, complete steps **9 – 12**. You may add as many items as you like.

17. Click **Save** in top right corner.

18. At this point you may choose to publish this resource, which will make it searchable and allow you to add this content to Moodle, or keep it in draft form so you can edit it further. Click **Publish**.
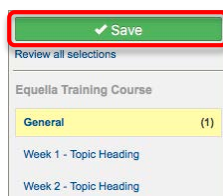

Note: Should you select Save draft, you will need to return to Equella to publish this resource before it can be used in Moodle.

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19. You will now be presented with the resource summary page on the left, and your 'Shopping basket' on the right. Scroll to locate the blue ➕ icon and click it to add the file to your Shopping basket.
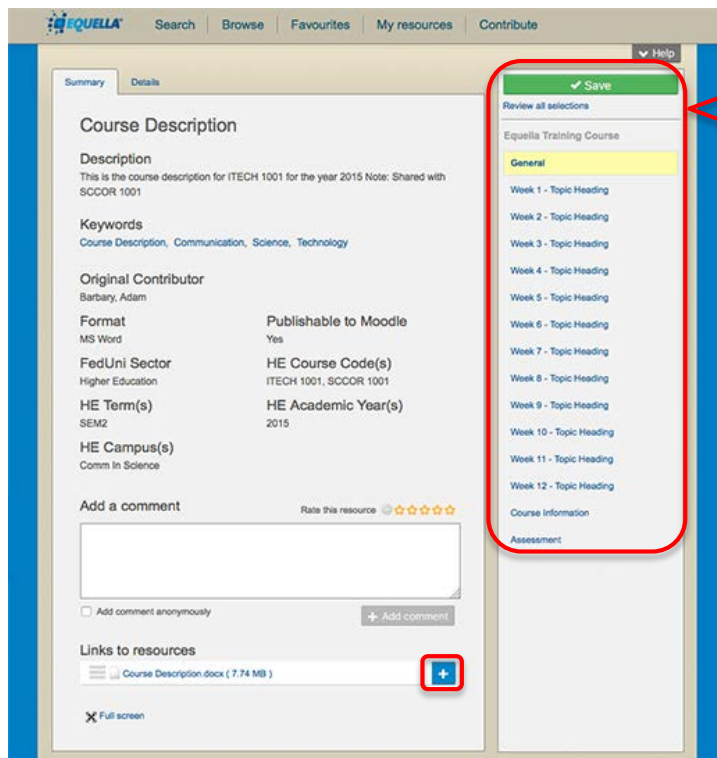
This portion of the screen represents your course layout in Moodle. The highlighted topic shows where the Equella link will be displayed. You may choose any of your topic areas before adding to this 'Shopping Basket'.

20. When you have added all the resources you require, click the green **Save** button.

21. The resource will now appear in Moodle (even though the actual file is located on Equella)

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Uploading Video

Unlike Moodle, Equella provides built in capabilities to deal with video files. Whilst not a true streaming server, it supports staged loading similar to YouTube. Video stored in Equella is quick to launch, displayed in a handy player, can be skipped forwards and backwards, or downloaded for later use. As part of the implementation, Federation University has customised Equella to perform post processing on video to reduce file size and enhance web playback.

> **WARNING:** Equella cannot transcode Windows Media. (.wmv). Please save your file in another format, preferably mp4.

Drag and Drop Video (≤100MB)

Drag and drop is only available to video files that fall below Moodle's 100MB upload limit. To utilise this method, simply drag the file to Moodle. For assistance with this, please see the Drag and Drop explanation above.

> **Note:** Drag and drop does NOT transcode video. Use this option for short videos already encoded into an acceptable size and format.

Adding Video using Add activity or resource (>100MB)

For video content over 100MB you will need to utilise this method. This process is similar to adding a file, however before the resource becomes available, Equella will re-encode all video files to Standard High Definition (720p)

> **Tip:** You can also use this method for smaller files, especially if you would like Equella to transcode your video into a more web friendly format.
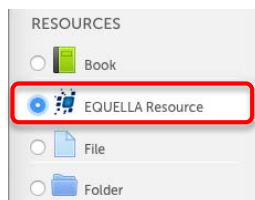
1. From within your Moodle course, click the **Turn editing on button**.

   Turn editing on

2. Click **Add an activity or resource**.

   + Add an activity or resource

3. Select **Equella Resource** from the list.

   RESOURCES
   ○ Book
   ● EQUELLA Resource
   ○ File
   ○ Folder

4. Click **Add.**

5. Within the window provided complete the **Title** field marked with a red asterisk. You may also add a **Description** if you like.

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Description
Title *
Object Oriented Programming

Description
Lecture one of the object oriented programming unit

6. Enter Keywords to improve searching (optional).

Keywords
Keywords should be separated by commas

OOP, Programming

7. Select publishable to Moodle (you can select no, but obviously the item will not be available in Moodle, only in Equella).

Should this content be publishable to Moodle? *
● Yes   ○ No

8. The delivery sector should already be completed for you.

Delivery Sector *
☑ Higher Education ☐ Vocational Education ☐ Other ☐ Unclassified

Please classify this resource against all applicable Course Code/Term/Academic Year/Campus/Course Description terms *

Select

ITECH 1001\SEM2\2015

9. Click the **Add a resource** button.

Attachment(s)

No attached resources

⊕ Add a resource

10. Choose the resource type, in this case **Upload a file**, then click Next.

Select type

Pick resource type

Upload a file
File from file system

URL
Attach a URL to a resource on the web

11. Drag the file to the upload box. When the progress bar is completely green, click **Next**.

Upload files from your computer

Upload files from your computer
Browse for and select the file you wish to upload

No file selected...   Browse

▬ Object Oriented Programming.MP4

Click to select files or drag and drop files here

⊕ Import files from scrapbook

Back to start

Note: The **Next** button will not appear until the upload is complete.

Tip: It is also possible to navigate to your file by clicking the **Browse** button.

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12. Leave the default **Display name**. The **Restrict** checkbox is not recognised in FedUni Equella, you may ignore it. Click **Save**.
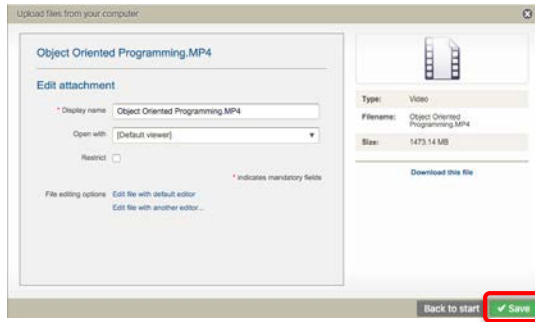
13. You will now return to the contribution page.

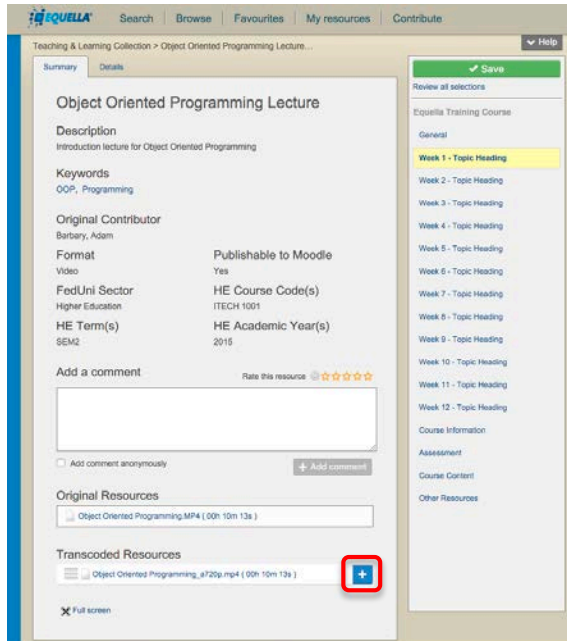14. Click Save in top right hand corner.

15. At this point you may choose to publish this resource, which will make it searchable and allow you to add this content to Moodle, or keep it in draft form so you can edit it further. Click **Publish**.


Note: Should you select Save draft, you will need to return to Equella to publish this resource before it can be used in Moodle.

16. You will now be presented with the resource summary page on the left, and your 'Shopping basket' on the right. Scroll to locate the blue + icon and click it to add the file to your Shopping basket.

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Note: If the original video exceeded 100MB it will not be available for linking in Moodle. Only the transcoded resource is selectable.
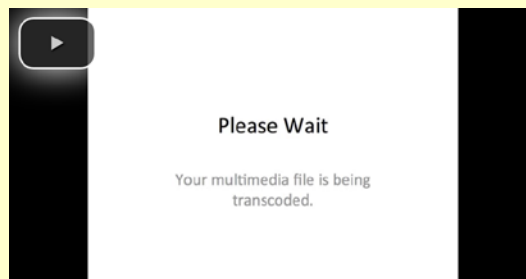
17. When you have added all the resources you require, click the green save button.
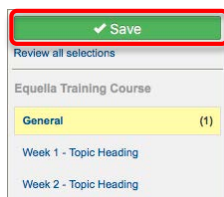
18. In your course you will now see a link to the video, which includes the name of the video, the encoding tag '*a720p'* (if above 100MB) and the runtime in hours, minutes and seconds.

Note: If the video exceeded 100MB in size it will be transcoded to a more compact, web friendly size. Transcoding takes time, depending on the size and quality of the original video. Clicking the link to the video before encoding has been completed will result in the following message.

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Searching Content

The major benefit of using a system like Equella is the ability to quickly identify and reuse content. Rather than searching the Web, identifying copright restrictions, or purchasing content, it may just happen that the resources required have already been created or shared on Equella. The Equella repository can be launched from within Moodle and you can then search the Equella library using key words to identify suitable content. Using course codes, the name of the file, the author or the filename are some suggested methods of searching. It is also possible to browse content based on file type, such as video, Word document or PDF. Once located, content can be easily added to your course.

Add an Existing Activty or Resource

To search Equella, you'll need to log into Moodle. Only staff at Federation University can access the Equella Learning and Teaching repository.
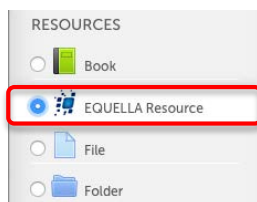
1. From within your Moodle course, click the Turn editing on button.
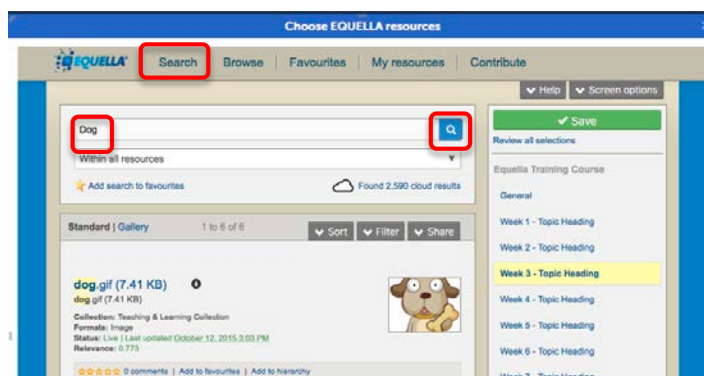

2. Click Add an activity or resource.

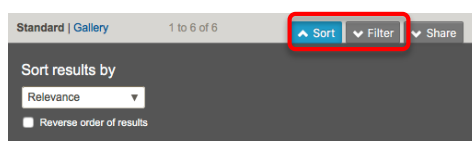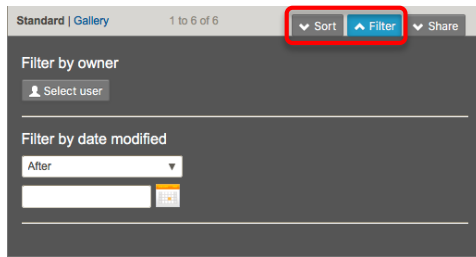3. Select Equella Resource from the list.

4. Click **Add.**

5. Ensure Search tab is selected. Enter your search item(s) in the search box. Should a filename exist, Equella will attempt to auto complete the search. Click the blue magnifying glass to conduct the search.
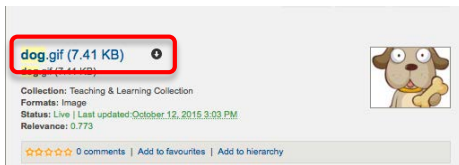

6. You can further sort or filter by clicking the required tab, and selecting how you would like to sort or filter.
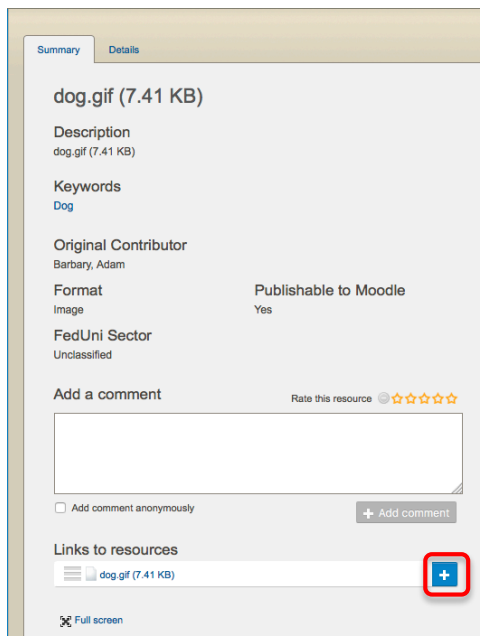

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7. To select an item, click on its title.

8. Whilst resources may contain multiple attachments, only those with the blue + can be added to your Moodle course. Click the + to add to your 'shopping cart'
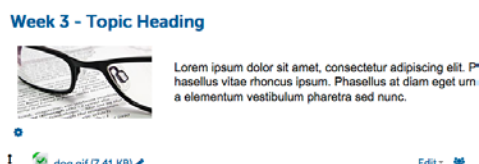

9. To add additional resources, repeat steps **5 – 8**.

10. When you have added all the resources you require, click the green **Save** button.

11. The item will now appear in your Moodle course.

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Identifying Equella Content

Because of the near seemless integration, Equella resource links in Moodle are very similar to Moodle native Moodle resources. However there are some key identifying attributes that will assist you with identifying Moodle content vs Equella links.

Moodle Content

Native Moodle resources generally have the following attributes.

- File size is absent – These files have been part of a Moodle for a significant time, essentially before Moodle was capable of displaying file size automatically. It's possible to edit this resource's settings and turn the file size on.

- File size is in a smaller font, is black in colour – These are new Moodle files, and will be stored on the Moodle server.

Equella Content

Equella content links contain all their information within the item description. It's important when editing these items to not remove this information. Generally Equella links have the following attributes.

- File size is appended to the file name in the same font and colour

- Video files which have a run time in the format (0h 0m 0s) which represent hours, minutes and seconds.

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