The University of Edinburgh  
Information Services Group

Learn VLE Retention Policy

# Purpose and overview

The University must comply with data protection legislation by regularly deleting **personal data** it no longer requires.[[1]](#footnote-1) In the Learn Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), this mainly relates to personal data held about users and user activity. The VLE Service will use an automated process to delete that data.

There are often **multiple instances of the same course** in Learn with very similar content. To keep storage requirements practical, the VLE Service will regularly use an automated process to delete course sites that are no longer required.

This policy has been developed in line with the University’s [account expiry policy](https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/about/policies-and-regulations/operational-policies/account-expiry) and [student records retention schedule](https://www.ed.ac.uk/records-management/guidance/records/retention/student-records).

# User account retention

The Learn user account archival and deletion policy will be based on the [account expiry policy](https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/about/policies-and-regulations/operational-policies/account-expiry), which gives the following periods before account deletion:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Account Type | Expiry Period (Days) | Suspension Period (Days) | Total (days) | Total (months) |
| Taught student | 150 | 30 | 180 | 6 |
| Research student | 240 | 30 | 270 | 8 |
| Staff | 30 | 90 | 120 | 4 |
| Visitors | N/A | 30 | 30 | 1 |

Typically, access to services is maintained during the account expiry period. Users lose access to services during the account suspension period and deletion of the user account is completed at the end of the suspension period.

The [student records retention schedule](https://www.ed.ac.uk/records-management/guidance/records/retention/student-records) states that mark sheets from course assessment should be retained for “one year after graduation, withdrawal or other permanent departure from University”. For electronic submissions, it is only possible to do this if the submission (along with the mark sheet) is also kept for this period, so both the submission and mark sheet will be deleted at the same time.

Please note that we do not have access to data that gives us information about instructors on different courses. Hence this policy only caters to users when they leave the University and not when they stop teaching on a course.

As part of the IDM feed into Learn, a daily process will be run which will:

* Set any users with a ‘Suspended’ staff, visitor or student affiliation (in the IDM) to ‘unavailable’ on courses in Learn. The user won’t be able to log in. Their activity on courses, however, will still be visible. The user’s Learn account will remain in this ‘unavailable’ state until the user’s affiliation is set to ‘deleted’ or is re-activated. Should the affiliation be re-activated from suspension during this period, the user will be able to access their courses/activity again, just as before the suspension.

As part of the IDM feed into Learn, monthly process will be run which will:

* Delete user accounts on Learn completely, one year after end date of the user’s affiliation is passed.

## Non-EUCLID user accounts

A process will soon be put in place to manage accounts which are not created by the EUCLID feed, going forward, which includes the recording of these accounts as requested, purpose, individual responsible and when they are required. The password of manual accounts will be changed on an annual basis to keep them secure.

The manual accounts list will be reviewed by the Learn Service team once per annum during the course rollover period and those which it is believed are no longer required and have not been logged into for 1 year or more will be set to ‘unavailable’ , and then deleted one year later.,

# Course retention

## EUCLID generated courses and manually created courses which are not playground courses

These course sites in Learn will be kept for a minimum of 4 years, from the start date of the course (with or without active student enrolments). Beyond this, courses will be kept until a year after there are no active student enrolments on the course. The instructors enrolled on the course will be warned by email 6 months and then 1 month before course site deletion takes place.

If the course materials/content are required beyond 4 years, course staff can take a back-up of the course and download it as a zip file and store it for later use. The Virtual Learning Environments Service team can provide an empty course space to restore the zip file into the course so that any required materials can be accessed.

Courses will be backed up (content only) before deletion and this back-up will be kept for 6 months, after which they will be deleted permanently

If assessments require to be kept beyond four years, they must be downloaded from which ever system they are being stored in by teaching office staff or other course staff and held for the period as described in your School’s retention schedule.

## Courses created manually

### Playground courses

Any courses located in the playground node in Learn will be deleted when all users have been removed from the course (that is, all users have left the University). This will happen once per year, during the summer months.

# Course storage size

Videos must be stored in Media Hopper Create rather than Learn. The Virtual Learning Environment Service team will run Learn course storage size reports over the summer months each year and will notify and work with staff on courses which are very large to reduce the size of these courses.

Blackboard’s Backup Policy Blackboard take regular backups of Learn database and retention of these backups will be as per Blackboard’s backup policy which states:

‘All customer and unique system data is backed up at least once a day to at least two discrete physical locations using highly durable storage. Backups are maintained for at least 30 days.’

This policy was approved on August 2019 by The Learn to the Cloud Project Board and is effective from November 2019.

The Learning, Teaching and Web Services section is responsible for maintenance and review of this policy. The contact officer for the policy is Karen Howie, Technology Enhanced Learning Team Manager ([Karen.Howie@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Karen.Howie@ed.ac.uk)).

Amendments: (none)

Next review due: [Summer 2022]

If you require this document in an alternative format, please email [[Karen.Howie@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Viki.Galt@ed.ac.uk)] or telephone [0131 650 3139]

[Equality Impact Assessment](http://www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/EqualityDiversity/EIA/IS-Blackboard_Learn_Virtual_Learning_Environment.pdf)

Related policies, procedures, guidelines and regulations: This policy has been developed in line with the [University’s Account Expiry Policy](https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/about/policies-and-regulations/operational-policies/account-expiry) and [Student records retention schedule](https://www.ed.ac.uk/records-management/guidance/records/retention/student-records).

1. <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/individual-rights/right-to-erasure/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)