

1. SPIDER - Basic Introduction

This session introduces users to the basic premise of the VLE and explains the main tools in the SPIDER VLE. The session covers the following:

- registration & logging in
- changing mySettings & password
- adding myClasses & myLinks
- filtering news postings with myNews
- accessing media in class resource pages
- viewing quiz and exam results
- reading and posting in discussion groups

Target audience: staff and students who have limited or no experience of SPIDER

Requirements: basic familiarity with the web, active @strath email address

1.1. What is a VLE and what is SPIDER?

A VLE is a *Virtual Learning Environment*, the current terminology used to describe a means of allowing access to on-line learning resources, assessments, course material and interactive tools (such as messaging and discussions) within a single web portal. It may also give access to other material such as on-line databases, exam returns and administrative systems.

SPIDER stands for the *Strathclyde Personal Interactive Development and Educational Resource*. It is a Strathclyde in-house system that has been developed since 1998 initially to cater for Pharmacy students. Now in its third iteration, SPIDER has been further developed and scaled to allow it to act as the VLE for the whole of the Faculty of Science.

1.2. Registration & logging in

Before you are able to make use of SPIDER you need to *register* with the system. To do this:

1. go to <http://spider.science.strath.ac.uk>
2. click on the `register` link
3. select either staff or student registration
(Staff users are initially only given student access, but an email is sent to the system administrator informing them of your request to gain staff access. They will grant you staff access once your status has been verified.)
4. fill in the forms, making sure you fill in each box correctly, particularly your email address
5. for the "cluster" option, select the cluster which matches the department you are in or the degree you will be undertaking
6. a password will be sent to your email address

You now need to access your email to get your password. Once you have your password, you can login.

1. click the `login` link if you are still on the last page of the registration, otherwise return to <http://spider.science.strath.ac.uk>
2. enter the username you entered during registration in the `registration` box and your password in the `password` box
3. click the `Login` button
4. you are now logged in to the SPIDER system

1.3. Changing mySettings and your password

When you login you arrive at the SPIDER home page. From here you can access nearly any other part of the site. The home page is customisable, so each user can view slightly different sets of information based on their choices, which we will look at later. As the password you were sent is not very memorable, we will now change this. On the far left of the screen are the buttons that link to the `standard tools` – logout, help, FAQ etc. The last of these gives access to the `mySettings` tool

1. click on the `mySettings` button, to the left of the screen
2. you will now see the `mySettings` page. At the top, under you name is the `change password` link. Click on this
3. Enter a new password in the first "new password" box
4. Type it in again in the "verify new password" box
5. click the `change` button
6. your password has been changed and you will be returned to the `mySettings` page

The `mySettings` page allows you to change:

1. your user details – name, email etc
2. your discussion settings – nickname, avatar
3. your screen preferences – colours, font size

Why not try adding or altering some of your details and try some different screen and text colours. When you have made changes, click the `save changes` button to store them. You can always come back and change them later if you wish.

1.4. myClasses and myLinks

Return to the home page, and you will see in the second column two sections entitle `myClasses` and `myLinks`. The `myClasses` section enables you to store links to any of the class resource pages on the system. The `myLinks` lets you create links to other web pages, so you can have your own bookmarks or favourites on the SPIDER home page.

Adding classes to your `myClasses` list.

1. click on the `myClasses` button
2. you will see a list of classes, which will initially only include classes that belong to your "cluster" (department/ group of departments)
3. if you want to see all the classes, or classes offered by a different department, change the "Limit list to classes from" option to "all" or the name of the cluster you want to view.
4. click the box next to any class you want to appear on your `myClasses` list
5. click the `save` button and you selection will be saved

Return to the home page and you will see the list of your chosen classes under the `myClasses` heading.

Adding links to your `myLinks` list.

1. click on the `myLinks` button
2. you will see a list of any links you already have under "Current links" and an "Add link" form
3. type in a website address e.g. `http://www.strath.ac.uk` in the "Link to" box in the "Add link" section
4. type in a label for the link. This is what you will click on to go to the webpage
5. click the "add link" button to save your link
6. your new link will appear under "Current links"

To edit a link, just change the details in the boxes and click "edit" to save the changes.

To delete a link, just click the "delete" button next to the link

1.5. Filtering news postings – myNews

Return to the home page. On the right of the screen you will see the myNews button, and underneath a number of news postings. Some of these may not be relevant to you, so you are able to limit the news you view on SPIDER.

1. click the myNews button
2. as with the myClasses tool, you will see a list of classes, filtered by your current cluster, but there are also "year" options
3. if you want to see all the classes, or classes offered by a different department, change the "Limit list to classes from" option to "all" or the name of the cluster you want to view.
4. click the box next to any class you want to see posted news items for. In addition you should select any of the "year" items that you want to see
5. when you have made your choices, click the any of the "save" buttons to store them

Now when you return to the home page you will only see news that has been targeted to the classes and year groups you selected.



You can view older news by clicking on the "other news" link under the news on the home page. The other news page lets you skip back and forth through the each months news, and you can turn your filter on and off to view news items that would usually be filtered out.

1.6. Accessing media in class resource pages

Return to the home page and click on one of the class links in your myClasses list. This takes you to the class resource page for that class. The class resource page has a number of links on the left of the page, and details relating to the class on the right.

The class details are:

Year, semester, credits, class co-ordinator(s) and staff teaching on the course. In addition:

Student users can see if they are on the class list for this class  or not 

Staff users can click on a link to view & download the class list for the current academic session

The links on the left are categories that are used to group together media and downloadable files. The categories will be one or more of:

- Lecture notes
- Class information
- Exercises
- Simulations & other media
- Workshop & Tutorials
- Lecture slides
- Exam library
- Lab notes
- Timetable
- Worked examples

1. Click on the link associated with the category you are interested in
2. you will see a list of materials for that category. Each item will be listed by name and next to it will be the date it was posted and the size of the file.
3. to view or download a file, just click on the name link. Depending on what the file is, your web browser will either display the file or ask you to download it.

These categories are typically used to give access to files such as Word documents, spreadsheets, acrobat pdf files or PowerPoint shows, but could also be links to simple web pages or to multimedia, video, graphics or animations.

As well as these basic categories, there may be

- Assessments & Quizzes
- Assignments
- Discussion group
- Web modules

These "advanced" categories are special cases and link to items that are presented in a slightly different way.

1.6.1. Assessments & Quizzes

This category will list any self assessment exercises or quizzes that are associated with the class. Below the quiz list will be a link to any quizzes that you have saved and a link to your quiz results list (see below). In order to do quizzes, you need to have the Macromedia Shockwave plugin installed.

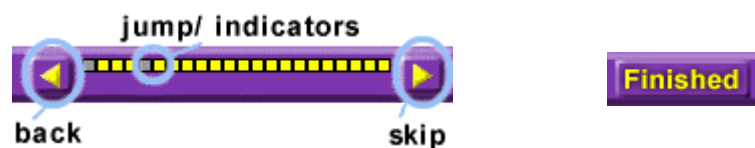
To do a quiz

1. click the link for the quiz
2. the SING quiz viewer will load

Quizzes can have any number of questions in them, of varying types, such as multiple choice (MCQ), drag and drop, labelling and numerical calculations.

Navigation, answering and marking

You can move back and forward through the quiz using the **back** and **skip** buttons, or by using clicking on the **jump** buttons (each button represents one question). Questions you have already marked will be greyed out (the jump indicator will be grey rather than yellow).



MCQ

To answer an MCQ style, click the box(es) next to the answers you think to be correct. If you want to change your answer, just click again. When you are happy with your answer, click the **Finished** button. Your response will be marked. If it is a multiple option MCQ, you need to then click the **skip** button to mark the remaining options.

Drag & Drop/ Labelling

To answer a dragging style question, drag the option you wish using the left mouse button and place it either below the match (drag & drop) or next to the matching letter (labelling), then release the mouse button. The dragged response should "stick" to the match you have chosen. To change your mind, drag the option away from the match/label and it will return to the option box on the left. When you are happy with your answers, click the **Finished** button to mark the question. Click the **skip** button to mark the remaining options.

Numerical

To answer this type of question, simply enter the value you have calculated in the answer box. You can include exponential values either by using "E" notation e.g. 3xE-4 or as "x10" notation e.g. 3x10-4.

Saving and restoring

You can save your quiz at any time by clicking on the disk icon. Your current score and position will be stored on the server. You can reload a quiz either by visiting the assessments and quizzes page or the myQuiz results page, where a list of any saved quizzes will appear at the bottom of the page. Clicking the **Load** button will restore the quiz to your last save point.



1.6.2. Assignments

Assignments are presented in the same way as the material in the standard categories (lecture notes, lab notes etc), but differ in that when you click on the file to download it, the time and date that you do this is stored.

Student users - assignments can be returned electronically via the myAssignments tool

Staff users – returned assignments can be viewed, downloaded and marked via the myAssignments tools.

This topic is covered in more detail in the **Advanced Tools** session

1.6.3. Discussion groups

The discussion group link takes you to the classes discussion area. This is covered in more detail later in this session.

1.6.4. Web modules

The web modules section presents a set of web page material, which may have its own navigation and links, and works in exactly the same as any other web page. In addition, web modules may have assessment/ quizzes (see above) which should be attempted once you have gone through the web material. Web modules are created by staff users using the pageLoader and pageBuilder tools (covered in session 4 **Content Creation**).

1.7. Viewing Quiz and Exam Results

Return to the home page. On the left below the standard tools you will see either `myStuff` if you are a student, or `staff tools` if you are a staff user.

Student users – myStuff

The first of the items is `myQuiz results`. Click on this link and you can view the results to any quizzes you have attempted and reload any saved quiz sessions. Quizzes will be divided by year and by class by default, but you can change this by changing the values in the "show results for" drop down.

To limit the results to a certain year/ session:

1. change the "All" in the session drop down to the session you want to view
2. click the "go" button

To limit the results to a certain class

1. change the "All" in the session drop down to the class you want to view
2. click the "go" button

You can also limit the results using combinations of session and class if you wish. Quizzes which you attempt if you are not on the class list for the current session will be listed under "revision". If you have results under revision which should be under the class code, get in touch with the SPIDER administrator and make sure you are on the class list for that class before attempting any more quizzes.

The `myExam results` page works in exactly the same way as the `myQuiz results`, except it shows your (class) exam and test results, so you can limit the results by session or by class. In addition to your % mark, you can also see the class mean, the standard deviation and your rank for each exam. If your mark is "pending" the marks are in the system but are being verified before they are released, which should normally be within the day. For degree exam marks you currently need to go to the SSIS web page.

Staff users – staff tools

The staff tools give access to a number of SPIDER features, many of which will be covered in other sessions. For now we wish to look at the `Assessment` and `Examinations` sections.

Assessment

1. click on the `view results` link under `Assessment`.
2. this link takes you to the Student Quiz Information Database (SQulD) home page. It gives access to all the student self assessment quiz results.

to get an idea of the information you can see using SQulD:

3. in the `Scores by quiz` section, select a quiz in the `Quiz name` drop down, and click `go`
4. in the `choose a class` option, select `All Classes` and click `go`
5. in the `choose a session`, select `2002-2003` and click `go`

6. you will be shown a listing of all the results for the chosen quiz with the students registration, name and score as well as the date they attempted the quiz

You can then download the results as a .csv file which can be viewed in a spreadsheet program, such as Excel, by clicking on the `download results` link. You can filter which users you see by clicking the letter links to only show users whose surname begins with that letter.

Click on the SQuID logo to return to the SQuID home page.

There are two other options on this page – `Scores by individual`, which allows you to see the quiz attempts of an individual student, and `Absentees` which allows you to see which students in a class haven't attempted a certain quiz.

Results can be filtered to view subsets of the users by quiz, class and/or session attempted, or an individual's results can be viewed. In addition, if a class list has been entered, those students in that class not having attempted the quiz can be listed.

Exam results

Return to the SPIDER home page. This time, click on the `view results` link under Examinations. This takes you to the Electronic Examination Listings (EEL) home page, which gives you access to all the exam data either on a class by class basis or for an individual student.

First of all we will look at a set of results for a whole class

1. in the `Class` section select a class code and "2002-2003" as the session
2. click the "OK" button
3. the page will change, and show you a drop down listing each exam name that is associated with the current class/ session
4. choose an examination from the drop down and click "view"
5. you will now see a listing of all the marks for the students in the your chosen class for the selected examination.

You can re-order the presentation of these marks by changing the options in the `order by` drop downs, and as with self assessment marks, you can download the results for viewing in a spreadsheet.

If you now click the back button, you can choose to view one of the other exams, or to see all the tests shown together, select the "All" option.

Now click on the EEL icon to return to the EEL home page. We will now look at an individuals exam marks

1. in the `Individual student` section, select one of the registration numbers and click "OK"
2. you will be shown a list of the marks for that particular student
3. using the drop downs you can limit the results by session and/ or class

1.8. Reading and posting in discussion groups

Discussion groups are an optional feature that can be added to any class resource page which allows asynchronous communication between staff and students. In addition to the class based discussions, there is a discussion group for each year, a "general chat" discussion and a discussion for the cluster (called SPIDER-clustername). Return to the home page and above the `myNews` at the top right of the screen, you will see a `discussion` section. This gives quick access to any of the discussions in your cluster. Class based discussion can also be accessed from the appropriate class resource page.

to try out the discussion tool

1. select "General Chat" from the discussion drop down
2. click "go"

you will now see the discussion page. At the very top is a search option that allows you to search through all the discussion topics on the system. There is also a filter to allow you to view messages that are "not

read" or from certain time points. Lastly there is a "mark all discussions read" button that will set all the current postings to the "read" state so you wont view them by default next time you view a discussion.

Below this are the actual discussion threads. Each thread has a topic, a posted date and a posted by username along the top, the actual message below this and then in the last section a number indicating the number of replies to the thread and the date the last reply was posted.

discussion [help](#)

Discussion for 00001

messages:

Lecture notes 08/07/02 Confused
Where are the lecture notes for this course? The [\[more\]](#)
2 last post: 08/07/2002 14:03

Email 13/06/02 admin
Email copy can be targetted to anyone teaching on [\[more\]](#)
1 last post: 13/06/2002 11:35

[00001 home](#) [add new thread](#)

To read a discussion

1. click on the thread topic link of the posting you want to read, or click the [more] link
2. the page will change to show you the full message and any replies to it

To reply to a discussion

1. click on the "reply" link
2. type in your reply to the original message options
3. if you have set up a nickname in the `mySettings` page you can choose to post using your nickname instead of your username
4. you can also choose to copy the email to one or more people listed in the Email section – these will typically be the teaching staff for a class discussion or the system administrator for other discussion types
5. click the "add" button and your message will be posted to the discussion.

To start a new topic of discussion (thread)

1. click the "add new thread" link at the bottom of the page
2. type in your choice of topic and your message. Again you have the option to post with your nickname and to email copies of the message
3. click add

You can edit your posting at any time. Certain staff users can edit other user's postings. Postings can also be deleted, but only if there hasn't been a reply by another user (in this case only Admins can remove the posting).

END OF SESSION 1