

Amathuba Tools Detailed Overview

for UCT Staff

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Vula and Amathuba Tools Comparison

This table outlines the closest Amathuba or alternative tool to Vula tools. Click the hyperlink in the Amathuba tool column to learn more about the Amathuba tool.

Vula Tool	Amathuba Tool	Description/Function
Announcements	Announcements	For posting current, time-critical information
Assignments	Assignments	Post, distribute, collect, and grade online assignments
Blogs	Discussions	For student blogs
Calendar	Calendar	Display class or meeting dates, deadlines, web assignment dates, special events, and more
Chat Room	Discussions / MS Teams	For synchronous (real-time) online discussion between site participants
Course outline	Content	Post, upload, or link the course outline and requirements for the course
Email/Messages	Email via Classlist tool	Send emails to individuals, groups, or all site participants
Email archive	Announcements	Send emails to the class
External Tool	External Learning Tools	Add tools which support external tools, including Padlet , Gradescope , Hypothes.is , Wooclap , Lecture Videos and more
Discussions	Discussions	Tool for online discussion
Gradebook	Grades	To store, calculate, record and distribute grade information to students online
Lecture Videos	Lecture Videos	Record/upload videos and manage lecture recording
Lessons	Content	Structure course content in weeks, units, or modules, and require the completion of prerequisites
Checklists in Lessons	Checklist	For students to monitor their progress
Polls	Surveys	For anonymous and non-anonymous polls or voting
Resources	Content / Manage Files	Upload and organise documents, electronic files, or URLs for download or display. Note: 'Manage files' is staff facing
Participants	Classlist	Allows lecturers to view a site participant's name, username and email address
Q&A	Content or Discussions	A tool to list common student queries. This can be replicated through a page on the content tool
Group Manager / Section Info	Groups	Site administrator tool for managing multiple groups within a site
Rubrics	Rubrics	Criteria used to grade assessments
Sign-up	Groups	Site participants sign up for the topics, presentations or events. Similar functionality may be achieved through groups
Site Setup	Course Admin	Administrative site management -- change site information and site access
Site Stats	Content report/ Class Progress	Track student use of the site by user, event, or resource
Tests & Quizzes	Quizzes	Create and administer online quizzes, exams, and surveys
Web Content	Content	Create a link an external website
Wiki/ Student Lessons pages	Google Drive/ OneDrive	Allows for collaborative editing of pages and content
	Intelligent Agents * New	Send customised emails based on student behaviour
	Quick Eval * New	View and grade student submissions – assignments, quizzes, discussions

Amathuba Announcements



Equivalent tool:
Announcements



Announcements tool description

The Announcements tool can be used to send out course communication to all (or selected) students in a course.

[Announcements & Emails](#) quick guide.



Features

- Can link directly to course Content pages using a Quicklink.
- Record audio and video clips directly from the Announcements tool editor.
- Built-in accessibility checker.
- Release conditions allows you to send announcements to select groups based on specified criteria e.g., students who did not hand in Assignment 1; or students who received a grade <50% for Tutorial 5.
- Personalise message by using replace strings {firstname} for the student's name.



Good to know

- Students by default receive all announcements by email, however, students have the option to turn off email notifications for announcements through their personal notification settings.
- Students will receive announcement notifications via the Pulse app, however it is only a limited preview. Students should click 'view announcement' to view the full email.



Good practices

- To avoid "announcement fatigue", think about the frequency and pertinence of the information being sent out to students.
- Use release conditions to send information that is only relevant to a portion of the class.
- Use the audio/video recording tools to add a personal touch.



Resources

- [Release Conditions](#) quick guide.

Amathuba Assignments



Equivalent tool:
Assignments



Assignments tool description

The Assignments tool enables the creation, submission, evaluation, and feedback of submissions in text, file upload, video or audio format.

[Assignments](#) quick guide.



Features

- Manage assignments with categories.
- Create ungraded, or graded assignments with marks sent to Gradebook.
- Create individual or group assignments.
- Add links to existing activities, weblinks, files, audio, and video.
- Add release conditions.
- Manage special access (exceptions and accommodations).
- Receive email notifications when assignments are submitted (optional).
- Supports rubrics, anonymous marking and Turnitin integration.
- Make use of annotation tool for detailed feedback.
- Can download all assignments, mark offline and then reupload all feedback – see this guide on [adding feedback for student evaluations](#).
- End dates are optional to ensure students cannot submit after the closing date.



Good to know

- The assignments tool does not allow for peer assessment, instead you must use [PeerMark](#), a Turnitin-based tool that can be accessed via the Content tool.



Good practices

- Gather submissions from students in a variety of formats.
- Use the annotation tool to provide text, audio or video feedback.
- Create Groups in advance if you want to use the group submission feature.
- Add student submissions for assignments outside of normal due dates via the special access tool.

Amathuba Calendar



Equivalent tool:
Calendar



Calendar tool description

The **Calendar** tool in Amathuba allows staff to schedule events for and with students. The calendar offers great functionality to manage a course schedule.

[Calendar](#) quick guide.



Features

- The calendar widget on the course homepage notifies students of upcoming events.
- Gives an overview of events, and includes functionality to search, sort and filter events.
- Most tools can be linked to the Calendar – Content, Assignments, Discussions, Quizzes and Surveys.
- Can view all course calendars or filter to an individual course calendar.
- Students can use the task pane to create, track and maintain personal tasks.
- Import iCal calendar notifications via Import events.
- Subscribe to a course calendar via Google Calendar or Outlook.
- When copying a course to a new year, staff can use [Manage Dates](#) to offset dates to the new semester.



Good to know

- The PeerMark and other external tools do not add dates to the Calendar tool – these dates will have to be added manually to the calendar.



Good practices

- Keep track of everything via the Calendar tool to keep students on track.



Resources

- [Best practices: using start dates, due dates and end dates.](#)

Amathuba Checklist



Equivalent tool:
Lessons checklist



Checklist tool description

Use Checklist as a tool for students to keep track of their own progress.

[Checklist](#) quick guide.



Features

- Create categories and align checklist items to categories.
- Add an additional description to the checklist, categories, and checklist items (optional).
- Descriptions support rich text formatting and multi-media.
- Add a due date and time to checklist items (optional).
- Display the due dates to the calendar (optional).
- Student view provides percentage complete indicator based on number of items checked off on the checklist.
- Staff can view students' checklist progress on [Class Progress](#).



Good to know

- Students can retroactively untick checklist items, but the system still records it as ticked – possible implications for using a checklist for an Honour Pledge. You are able to create a release condition that requires a student to complete the checklist before proceeding with the assignment.



Good practices

- Use checklists as a task summary to guide students on work that needs to be completed.
- Add due dates and times to items which are time sensitive.
- Use in combination with [Intelligent Agents](#) to automate feedback on incomplete checklist and items.

Amathuba Classlist



Equivalent tool:
Participants




Classlist tool description

The Classlist tool shows a list of participants that are enrolled in the course. Staff can add participants, send emails, and view progress via this tool.

[Classlist](#) quick guide.



Features

- Send enrolment email to participants to enrol into the course.
- Assign roles (student, lecturer, support staff, tutor).
- Search by role, flagged, online status or last accessed.
- Can send email to the entire class or selected students.
- Can be exported as a PDF, but not as an Excel file.
- Staff can view progress, view group enrolments, and edit accommodations for each learner.
- Filter or search for a specific participant.
- View enrolment statistics, including participants who have been unenrolled from the course.
- Flag students by clicking the flag icon next to the student's profile image.
- Edit student accommodations for a quiz. Students with accommodations for assessments will have an  icon next to their name.



Good to know

- If you would like to export classlist as an Excel file, use the [Grades](#) tool on Amathuba.
- Tutors must be manually enrolled in the course.

Amathuba Content



Equivalent tool:
Lessons



Content tool description

Using the Content tool, staff can add and organise learning activities, media, and resources to create learning pathways.

[Content](#) quick guide.



Features

- One can add a Unit page and 2 levels of Lesson pages and in each level one can add HTML documents. Overall, one can create up to 3 levels in the Content tool.
- Can add text, images, video links, emojis, tables, etc.
- Has familiar text formatting features.
- HTML pages have templates that can be used to structure different common lesson page layouts.
- Built in accessibility checker in the rich text editor.



Good to know

- To remove text formatting when pasting content use the Ctrl + Shift + V.
- For a similar tool to student questions, use [Wooclap](#) or [Quizzes](#).
- For a similar tool to Comments, use the [Discussions](#) tool or a [Padlet](#).
- Polls and checklists: Surveys, Quizzes and Checklists can be added as links.



Good practices

- For the greatest flexibility, always make use of HTML documents – these contain more functionality features than Unit and Lesson pages that are intended for very basic pages.
- Unit and Lesson pages do not support HTML document templates. Only use these pages for headings, an image and brief instructional text and not content.
- Unit and Lesson pages are also not tracked in Content Reports or Class Progress. There need to be HTML documents and/or activities. These Unit and Lesson pages should only be used for cover or title pages.



Resources

- [Guide to creating your own HTML templates.](#)

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- [Set up and deliver a course.](#)
- [Semester Start for Instructors \(video tutorial\).](#)
- [Getting Started Comprehensive Guide.](#)

Amathuba Discussions



Equivalent tool:
Tests & Quizzes



Discussions tool description

The Discussions tool can be used to encourage students to engage in conversation with their peers or respond to questions.

[Discussions](#) quick guide.



Features

- Discussion forums hierarchy is made up of three parts: Forums > Topics > Threads. Forums serve as 'holding spaces' for multiple topics, of which each can have multiple threads for different conversations.
- Topics and threads can be limited to specific groups if those groups have already been set up in the [Groups](#) tool.
- Forums and/or topics can have the following optional settings enabled:
 - Anonymous posting: Allows for anonymous posts.
 - Moderation can be enabled for individual posts, requiring a moderator (usually a lecturer or tutor) to approve the posts before it becomes public.
 - Post-before-reading: Students must start a thread before responding to other posts.
- Restrictions available:
 - **Visible with access restricted before/after end** - Students can see a forum exists, but not the topic within. Only forum title, start/end dates and restrictions will be visible.
 - **Visible with submission restricted before start/after end** - Students can view the forum's topic but cannot respond outside of the dates set.
 - **Hidden before start/after end** - Students will not see the forum and it will not appear in the calendar.
- [Optional] Choose a rating scheme for posts. No ratings (default), five-star rating, up-vote/down-vote or up-vote only.
- Grading may be enabled for Discussion posts.



Good to know

- Settings applied at forum level will cascade down to the topic. If you need different settings, apply it at topic level.



Good practices

- Setup your forums and topics at the beginning of the course. If there are no topics created for a forum, students will not be able to make posts.



Resources

- [Best practices for using discussions.](#)

Amathuba Grades



Equivalent tool:
Tests & Quizzes



Grades tool description

This tool offers a single location to view, enter and update the Grades of the students in a course.

[Grades](#) quick guide.



Features

- Collect and display Grades from assessments within and outside of Amathuba.
- May apply Weighted Categories or Points-only grades depending on course needs.
- Display grades (and optionally feedback) to students.
- Hide individual graded activities if required.
- Display final course grade to students (optional).
- Upload marks via file upload.
- Export Grades as CSV files.
- Mark assessments directly within the Grades tool or mark assessments in Assignments, Quizzes or Discussions and reflect those marks in the Grades tool.
- Display formative or feedback-only assessments alongside marked assessments.
- [Advanced] Create categories that drop lowest-scored items for more complicated grading schemes.



Good to know

- If required, hide all Grade Items until marks have been checked and cross-referenced.



Good practices

- Set up Grades before creating any marked Assignments, Quizzes, or Discussions.
- Consult the Course Outline or similar document to determine the different Grade Categories and their respective weighting.
- Set up the Grade Categories first, then add relevant Grade Items underneath the appropriate Category.
E.g.:
 - Tests (40%) <--- Grade Category
 - Test 1: 15% <--- Grade Item
 - Test 2: 25%
 - Project (20%)
 - Draft: 5%

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- Final submission: 15%
- Exam (40%)
 - Final exam: 40%
- Once all Grade Categories and Items have been set up, then build Assignments/Quizzes/graded Discussions and associate them with the appropriate Grade Items.

Amathuba Groups



Equivalent tool:
Section info, ad-hoc groups and group manager



Groups tool description

Groups is a means of organising learners within a course and is similar to the group functionality on Vula. Groups functionality interacts with Discussions, Assignments and Release Conditions.

[Groups](#) quick guide.



Features

- Use self-enrolment or auto-enrolment for groups.
- Group categories allow you to create a category for an assignment or activity and place groups within the category.
- Options to create groups by # of students or # of groups.
- Use a group prefix to determine group names i.e., Team 1, Team 2.
- Function to create sub-groups.
- Auto-create discussions when setting up a group. The discussion topic will be auto restricted to the group.
- Students can belong to multiple groups.
- Students can email their group.
- Grade members of a group individually or as a team.



Good to know

- There is no equivalent for the Vula Sign-Up tool and to set meeting times. It is possible to set up a group category with meeting times as the group name.
- The auto-enrolment function can be set up to auto-enrol new students added to the course. It will create a new group if all groups are full.



Good practices

- Groups can be created before the course starts but it is recommended to create them once all learners have enrolled and you have final class numbers.
- If self-enrolment is used, students can switch groups until the expiry date. Once the expiry date is reached, you have the option to auto-allocate unenrolled students.
- Students cannot self-enrol in more than one group within a group category.

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- Moving users to a new group: discussion posts and assignments remain with the old group. Students have to resubmit assignments in their new groups.



Resources

- [Enrol tutors into groups.](#)

Amathuba Intelligent Agents



No equivalent tool

Intelligent Agents description



Intelligent Agents are customisable messages that can be automatically sent to students when they fulfil a condition in Amathuba. The tool allows you to engage with students and helps students stay on track.

[Intelligent Agents](#) quick guide.



Features

- Works together with release conditions to define criteria for agents.
- Automatically or manually trigger an agent. Send automatic emails based on:
 - Course Activity (Note: Do not send emails based on Login Activity since that is Amathuba wide).
 - Release Conditions: missed deadlines, completed checklists, performance-based check-ins and more.
- Set frequency on how often to send emails.
- Run reports with set release conditions with no scheduled emails for custom reports.
- Set a reply email for student responses under settings.
- Select specific roles for agents.
- Send emails to yourself or course staff when a student has submitted an assignment and/or met other conditions. E.g. Send email to tutor Thula when students from group 6 have submitted.

Create a Release Condition

Release this item when the following condition is met:

Condition Type

-- Select Condition Type --

- Assignments
 - Submission to folder
 - Receive feedback on submission
 - Score on associated rubric
 - No submission to folder
- Checklist
 - Completed checklist
 - Completed checklist item
 - Incomplete checklist
 - Incomplete checklist item
- Classlist
 - Group Enrolment
 - Org Unit Enrolment
 - Section Enrolment
 - Role in current org unit
 - Date of Enrolment in Current Org Unit



Good to know

- Students will not have access to the Intelligent Agents tool.



Good practices

- Do a practice run of your intelligent agent without sending an email to students.
- Fill in the description so you remember what the agent is doing e.g. "Send an email to students who have not logged-in to the platform in the last 5 days".
- Automatic emails should be used sparingly across the course so as not to overload students.

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- Be sure you or a colleague can manage the student queries for the reply email.
- Determine if the agent is once-off or needs repetition.
- Use [replace strings](#) to personalise emails.
- Emails should be encouraging. If you are using performance-based conditions, provide course materials and feedback for students who receive low grades.



Resources

- [Intelligent uses of Intelligent Agents – TUDelft.](#)
- [Setting up Intelligent Agents – Carleton.](#)
- [Learning Analytics and Reporting](#) quick guide.

Amathuba Manage Files



Equivalent tool:
Resources



Manage Files tool description

The Manage Files tool is where all your course documents and files are stored, similar to Vula resources. You can upload and organise files or folders from your computer which you can then add to the Content pages for students to access. The Manage Files tool is a staff-facing tool and cannot be accessed directly by students.

[Manage Files](#) quick guide.



Features

- You can create, upload, copy, delete, download and rename folders.
- Files can be uploaded from a device and renamed, copied and moved to Amathuba.
- Folders and files can be zipped and unzipped.
- Amathuba allows for a variety of common media files and formats to be uploaded.



Good to know

- When a file is moved or renamed any links to it will break. It would be necessary to relink the file if any changes are made. Moving and renaming files are not recommended.
- Amathuba Manage Files does not have the URL/Web content tool link like Vula does, where you can copy a link to a file or folder. Resources can be linked in the Content pages by clicking on link > add content file in HTML documents and Lessons.
- Manage Files does not have file sharing permissions. Any direct link shared outside of Manage Files will be accessible to all participants in the Classlist, including students.



Good practices

- We recommend using the [Content](#) tool to drag and drop files for sharing course materials with students. However, you can organise your files into folders, creating a folder for each module of content first, and then placing them into the Content tool. This method is more time-consuming but offers better file organisation.

Amathuba Quick Eval



No equivalent tool



Quick Eval tool description

A single location to view and assess all unmarked student submissions.

[Quick Eval](#) quick guide.



Features

- Available at a course level from the course homepage and the navbar link.
- Multi-course Quick Eval is available on the organisational homepage.
- Submissions made to Assignments, Quizzes, and Discussions are displayed in a sortable list.
- View by Submission or Activity.
- Filter by Activity name/Course/Date/User.
- Assess by rubric (if enabled).
- Provide an overall grade and overall feedback (rich text with optional audio/video).
- Attach optional feedback file, link to existing activity or weblink with feedback.



Good to know

- Review the submissions in the designated tool (Assignments, Quizzes, and Discussions) to ensure all latest submissions have been graded.



Good practices

- This tool can be used to quickly review all gradable submissions which have not yet been graded.
- Use the views and filters to quickly find and focus on submissions.

Amathuba Quizzes



Equivalent tool:
Tests & Quizzes



Quizzes tool description

Evaluate students using quizzes with various question types.

[Quizzes](#) quick guide.



Features

- Types of questions: T/F, multiple choice questions, multi-select, written response, short-answer, multi-short answer, matching, ordering, arithmetic questions, significant features and Likert questions.
- Allow hints, disable right-click (prevents students from printing a quiz), disable alerts.
- View statistics about your completed quizzes.
- Time limits and grace periods before the quiz is flagged as exceeded time limit.
- Set up multiple attempts.



Good to know

- Hotspot and Extended Matching Items (EMIs) are not available in Amathuba.
- Questions added to the question library can be used in the self-assessment and survey tools.
- The accommodations tool can be used to give students extra time on quizzes.



Good practices

- Provide extra time to students through the special access and accommodations.
- You can preview the quiz using the dropdown menu.
- Add quizzes to the course calendar.



Resources

- [Creating and managing quizzes.](#)
- [Managing questions in Question Library.](#)



Amathuba Rubrics



Equivalent tool:
Rubrics



Rubrics tool description

Rubrics can be used to assess students' overall achievement on an activity or item based on predefined achievement levels and criteria.

[Rubrics](#) quick guide.



Features

- Create holistic or analytical rubrics.
- Create scores using percentage, points, custom points, or text only scoring method.
- Provide initial feedback per level in each category.
- Provide feedback per overall score.
- Include rich text and images in level descriptions and feedback.
- Use category groups for categories containing varying number of levels.
- Hide, show, or archive rubrics.
- Rubrics can be shown to students.
- Rubrics can be printed.
- Share rubrics between courses.



Good to know

- To add the overall score to Grades of multiple rubrics per assessed item, add these manually.
- Rubrics visibility needs to be set at the rubric-level.



Good practices

- Rubrics can be used with Assignments and Discussions.
- More than one rubric can be added to an assessed item, but only the overall score of the first rubric will be automatically added to the Grades tool.
- Create the required rubric in advance and then associate it with the item to be assessed.



Resources

- [Rubrics Basics](#).
- [Instructor FAQ: Rubrics](#).
- [Transfer overall score to gradebook](#).

Amathuba Surveys



Equivalent tool:
Polls / Course evaluation



Surveys tool description

The Surveys tool allows staff to create a survey in their site that participants can engage with using various question types.

[Surveys](#) quick guide.



Features

- Question types:
 - Multiple choice, true/false.
 - Matching, fill in the blanks.
 - Multi select, ordering.
 - Written response, short answer.
 - Likert, arithmetic, significant figures, multi-short answer.
- Release conditions (start and end date).
- Public access option.
- Embedded in Content pages as link.
- Invite participants to complete survey via email.



Good practices

- You can use a combination of different question types.
- You can choose to make the answers anonymous, or to share them so that students can see their classmates' responses.



Resources

- [Survey examples.](#)
- [Deciding between using quizzes, surveys or self-assessments.](#)