

Online Learning Guidance

# Introduction

The University of Salford will provide you with an enhanced learning experience, through a combination of face to face and online delivery. This guidance supplements the [Student Charter](https://www.salford.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2019-04/StudentCharter.pdf) and the [Teaching Session Behaviour Expectations](https://testlivesalfordac.sharepoint.com/sites/Uos_Students/SitePages/Teaching-Session-Behaviours-Expectations.aspx). University of Salford policies, procedures and regulations continue to apply to all aspects of your studies including classes and other work or study interactions.

# Set up

Use a headset rather than speakers for better sound quality. You can also use devices such as AirPods, Bluetooth headphones, or even the earphones that came with your smart phone if they have a microphone built in.

Remember to mute your microphone unless you are speaking, to reduce the background noise for other students. For video calls, try not to sit with your back to the window or you’ll become a silhouette.

As you join a Microsoft Teams meeting you will see the options for switching on your microphone and camera. As you switch on the camera, you will see a preview of you and your background.

Think about what is behind you when you are using your camera, make sure nothing is visible that you do not want other students and lecturers to see. Microsoft Teams has an options to ‘blur’ or apply background effects via its ‘More’ button.

Dress appropriately: casual is fine, but no pyjamas please. Please maintain the same standards you would if you were attending campus and engage professionally and appropriately at all times.

Close doors (if you can) to avoid unexpected visitors; however, we do understand that interruptions will happen. We understand that learning in your home is very different from being at University, and we do take this into account.

Remember you can access Blackboard via the internet, or use the App. If you are using a mobile device, try using the Blackboard App.

# Communication, participation, and interaction

As with all learning you are expected to give online learning your full attention and to actively participate. Try to avoid distractions or other conversations while you are in online classes: turn off phone notifications and the television, don’t try to multi-task. Listening actively and engaging with the class will make it a better experience for you, your fellow students, and your lecturer.

We recognise that you may be working in an environment that is challenging (caring responsibilities, home schooling, pets at home etc) and the lecturer may also have similar responsibilities. It is important to recognise this and for us all to be professional and recognise that we need to be patient.

We appreciate that online learning can be challenging. The lecturer will offer frequent breaks to give you a rest and allow for getting refreshments.

Please feel free to enter your classroom earlier than the start time to chat with the group. It is important that you have some time to share experiences—remember, you can meet other students using Microsoft Teams outside of scheduled classes. Where classes are recorded, you will be warned before the recording starts.

All lectures are timetabled as LIVE or pre-recorded. You are expected to attend all live lectures. If for some reason you are unable to attend a live lecture, please inform the lecturer leading the session or the Programme/year lead.

You will be expected to participate in lectures and if you do not participate this will be followed up by the School. If your group has problems with engagement, please talk to the lecturer.

Lecturers will ask that you participate in individual or group tasks and expect you to turn on your camera and microphone. If this is problematic, please contact the lecturer before the session to let them know or send them a private message via the chat button.

**During the session**, try to avoid talking over or interrupting others. The lecturer may explain at the beginning of the class what you should do if you have questions or want to speak. If you are unsure, raise your hand and wait for the lecturer to invite you to speak.

Speak a little slower than usual and try to be as clear and concise as possible.

Leave a reasonable pause for people to ask questions, people will need a moment to unmute their microphone

During the class, the lecturer may invite questions or initiate discussion and then direct you to use the raise hand function, use the chat function, the whiteboard, the on-screen question slide, or a poll. You can send a private message to the lecturer if needed or join in a group discussion as initiated.

# Technical issues

Your home broadband probably isn't as fast as a work or university connection. If you find the connection sluggish, you can turn off incoming video using the menu button.

It is also recommended that you use a laptop or PC and Wi-Fi/ethernet rather than your data allowance for a more stable connection.

If you are having issues with Microsoft Teams – freezing, losing connection, etc please report to [Digital IT Services](https://testlivesalfordac.sharepoint.com/sites/Uos_Students/SitePages/Digital-IT.aspx) (DIT). If this is preventing you from listening to the lecture or joining in group work, please report to the lecturer as your group work is monitored and counts as engagement for attendance.

You can also use the Microsoft Teams App (download for free from your App Store) to access Microsoft Teams sessions. If you are struggling using your computer/laptop, the App might give you a better experience.

## What we expect from you

* To be kind, professional and on time.
* To be visible when speaking.
* To engage and pay attention.
* To set a respectful tone when speaking and in the chat. Think carefully before posting.
* To choose a good location.
* To mute your microphone when not speaking to avoid lots of background noise.
* To take notes.
* To review your notes and recording later if you need to (remind the facilitator to record).

## What you can expect from the lecturer

* That they will be kind, professional and on time.
* That they will allow for a variety of teaching strategies and interactivity.
* That they will offer short breaks throughout the session.
* That presentations will also be placed on the module site for you to download for note taking.
* That they will try to pause to consider the chat, but this cannot always be monitored so please be aware of any delays.

# Useful links

* [Blackboard tour](https://www.salford.ac.uk/library/know-how/blackboard)
* [IT skills](https://www.salford.ac.uk/skills/it-and-digital)

# Frequently Asked Questions

### Q - How do I ask questions during an online session?

**A** – You can raise questions via the raised hand function or the chat function. Each lecturer should clearly define their preference for use in the session.

### ****Q – The guidance notes encourage me to use the camera, but I don’t want to/cannot, what should I do?****

**A** - Using the camera is encouraged for lecturers and students as engagement is easier when participants are visible. There may be good reasons why a student is reluctant to use their camera and they shouldn’t be challenged in front of their peers about having their camera on. Sometimes cameras slow down the connection and need to be switched off to allow full engagement. Generally, the camera should be on for lecturer, where possible, in lectures and it is beneficial to use cameras particularly in group sessions and seminars.

### ****Q - What happens if someone leaves the session?****

**A** - The online class is still a class and engagement with the whole class is expected. Students should inform their lecturer beforehand if they need to leave. If a lecturer wanted to keep a check on whether students were still there and engaged, they could request that students use the ‘thumbs up’ reaction or comment in the chat box. There may be technical reasons why a student ‘leaves’ which will be treated sympathetically.

### ****Q - What if I encounter issues around bullying online?****

**A** – The University will not tolerate bullying, harassment, or victimisation. You can find further information on our [Bullying & Harassment](https://testlivesalfordac.sharepoint.com/sites/Uos_Students/SitePages/Bullying-%26-Harassment.aspx) web page, and can speak to any member of staff who will signpost you to the right support.