Guidelines for Students

Using the Virtual Classroom

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1.   Introduction

These guidelines set out the expectations of the University in relation to supporting student learning in the virtual classroom and to provide clarity for students with reference to those expectations.

These guidelines reflect the principles as articulated in the UCD Student Code of Conduct, the UCD Dignity and Respect Policies, the Acceptable Usage Policy and the terms and conditions outlined in the Data Protection Policy.

These guidelines will act as basis from which to develop a University policy in this area. If any student feels that these guidelines are not being implemented, then they can discuss this with the module coordinator initially and follow the normal routes that exist within the University with reference to issues around modules and learning.

2.   Definition of Virtual Classroom

In the context of these guidelines the virtual classroom refers to teaching and learning events delivered through the virtual classroom. In UCD the following virtual classroom tools are used;

- Zoom
- Google Meets

3.   Preparing to participate in a Virtual Classroom

Netiquette is the etiquette for interacting online and should be used for all communications within virtual learning environment including the virtual classroom. All virtual class participants must abide by the UCD Dignity and Respect as well as Data Protection Policies.   This is in the interests of maintaining a safe learning space, supporting academic community and student engagement, and of the effective running of the session.

In order to facilitate the smooth running of the virtual classroom:

- Your module coordinator/lecturer will inform you how to access your virtual classroom sessions, how they will run, what tool they will use and where you can find the session links, what you might be expected to do to prepare for your virtual class, or how you might contribute to the virtual class.
- Identify a room or location which you feel offers the most suitable backdrop to your online participation in terms of audio and video. Keep in mind the option to use blurred
- backgrounds (google meets) and school backdrops (zoom), which will work on most computers.
- If you are asked to input a screen name when joining a virtual classroom session, you should always enter your first name and surname.
- Prior to the session, check your technical setup and internet connection to avoid any technical issues during the session. Make sure you are using an up-to-date browser, Google Chrome is top recommended browser for connecting to virtual classroom sessions.
- Make sure you arrive to the virtual classroom on time.

- As directed by your lecturer use your mic, camera, chat box and the hand raise functionality to ask questions or make comments
- Your lecturer may request you to turn on your camera and audio to aid you in achieving the learning outcomes for the module. This is particularly important where laboratory and clinical practice work is being replicated.
- Use your video when talking, it is likely to be more effective when interactions include video, you may nonetheless choose whether your video and/or still image is displayed to others within a virtual class.
- Ask questions and interact as much as possible. Engage and participate as directed by the lecturer by using the interactive features i.e. polling, questions in chat box, whiteboard, breakout rooms etc.
- Be mindful of how you communicate online, all communications should be well-articulated and aimed at fostering a positive learning environment. Be aware of how humour could be misinterpreted online.
- The purpose of group work and the use of breakout rooms during online learning is to support peer dialogue and communication, and collaborative activities. It is also a key part of your digital skills involving the use of camera, audio and text chat. It is important that when asked during a lecture/class and particularly in small group breakout work, that you can put your camera on.
- If there are technical, personal or occasional reasons why you cannot have a camera on for small group work this should be talked through and alternatives (text, audio, phone) agreed with the team. However, in general, full participation is expected in the same manner as in person group work. Students who are found to be lurking in a group and not contributing can be removed by the module coordinator or the lecturer.
- Sometimes you or your lecturer may experience technical issues, you will be advised what to do in this case.

4.   Recording of Virtual Classroom Sessions

Your module coordinator/lecturer will inform you about what to expect, and why, in terms of recorded virtual classroom sessions at the start of your module. They will provide access to recorded elements of the virtual classroom session (e.g. video, audio, slides, file uploads, text chat) that will be most beneficial to aid in your learning.

If there are sensitive materials that your lecturer wishes to share with you to aid your learning, but which they do not wish to have recorded, then the reasons why that element is not being recorded will be explained to you. You should be clear as to what to expect in terms of recorded virtual classroom material.

There will be situations where part of a lecture cannot be recorded, these include:
- when using a teaching approach that may not be suitable for recording, such as those with a high degree of student interactivity.
- when there may be a legal, ethical or privacy reason for not recording part or all of a class.
- group work or activity occurring within breakout rooms will never be recorded

If a lecture recording is paused or edited, you will be provided with an explanation where it is reasonable and proportionate to do so.

5.   Use of recordings

Please note the following regarding the use of virtual classroom recordings and their re-use:
- Virtual classroom recordings which contain student contributions can only be re-used within that module with the enrolled student cohort for the trimester in which the recording was made.
- Students may not make an independent recording of a virtual classroom session unless they have the explicit consent of the lecturer. The student must destroy any copy of the recording they hold once this purpose has been met. This will be on completion of the final assessment or when the student leaves the University, whichever is sooner. The student must destroy any copy of the recording they hold once this purpose has been met. This will be on completion of the final assessment or when the student leaves the University, whichever is sooner.
- It shall be a disciplinary offence for students to use, modify or distribute recordings without the permission of the module coordinator / lecturer including but not limited to:
    - copying the recording,
    - issuing copies of it to the public,
    - renting or lending copies of it to the public, playing it in public or broadcasting it.
    - a student using, modifying, or distributing a recording without permission may be investigated under the UCD Student Code of Conduct.

If you do not wish your video or voice to be recorded you should, let your lecturer know immediately.

6. Privacy

You are to be clearly informed on Brightspace of the relevant information concerning your privacy rights.

These guidelines cover the current Virtual Classroom Tools which have been approved by the University, with the appropriate legal protections in place to protect privacy.