

Faculty of Humanities

Guidance for online office hours and academic advising

During this period, it is important that students are able to access support from a range of services, including their teaching staff and Academic Advisor. This guidance will help to ensure you can continue to support students away from campus.

You can access the University's central guidance for delivering academic advising while working remotely during the Coronavirus outbreak here:

https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/tlso/teaching_and_learning_remotely/academic-advising-remotely/

Programme spaces on Blackboard

We recommend that Programme Directors provide a student information area within the already existing Blackboard Programme/Community spaces. This should contain up to date guidance information, as well as programme-specific information. Please contact your [eLearning Team](#) if you need to set up a Blackboard programme or community.

Details of all staff office hours, student reps, and general programme/discipline level information, and also links to key sources of information and support (see links below) should be listed on these pages.

Online office hours

All teaching staff should hold online office hours throughout the rest of the semester.

Online office hours should be held weekly in a dedicated time slot. Information regarding the date, time and procedure for attending should be available on course unit Bb pages (if appropriate) and also on the Blackboard Programme/Community space.

It is recommended that you use Blackboard Collaborate for this - see guidance below.¹

Online academic advising

If you have not yet met your advisees during semester two, it is recommended that you arrange an online meeting between **before the start of the exam period**. We also recommend using Blackboard Collaborate for advising sessions.¹

Advising sessions can be held with groups of students, however advisees should also have the option to meet one-to-one.

For information, the below guidelines are taken from the [Humanities Continuity Plan during Covid-19](#). Please utilise the guidance in this document to enable you to effectively setup office hours and academic advising sessions.

- Contact your advisees to remind them how to contact you. Contact by email is the default, but you are also able to offer online meetings with tools such as Bb Collaborate (see guidance below) or GoToMeeting.

¹ Other tools are also available e.g. GoToMeeting, Zoom, Skype Online, but for consistency, it is recommended that you use Bb Collaborate.

- Advisees should also be reminded of using the departmental generic student support email addresses and general administrative queries email addresses
<https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/humanities/teaching-support/elearning/coronavirus/>
- You should aim to respond to emails from your advisees within 3 working days during the working week.
- Do not give out your personal telephone number.

Student support information

In your advising meetings and/or in your Bb Programme/Community spaces please refer students to the below information.

- The Student Support webpage is the single point of truth during this period. Students should visit this page for the latest information and advice, including wellbeing resources and details of how to contact support services: <http://www.studentsupport.manchester.ac.uk/>
- StaffNet page for academic and professional staff supporting students: <https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/supporting-students/>

These services have moved to remote working:

- Counselling and Mental Health Service: <http://www.counsellingservice.manchester.ac.uk/>
- Disability and Advisory Support Service/UMAC: <http://www.dso.manchester.ac.uk/>
- Occupational Health: <http://www.occhealth.manchester.ac.uk/>

Big White Wall (free online mental health and wellbeing support):

<http://www.studentsupport.manchester.ac.uk/taking-care/big-white-wall/>

Library support - The Library Chat facility can be accessed by clicking the yellow button on the right-hand side of the Library homepage: <https://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/help-and-support/>

My Learning Essentials: <https://www.library.manchester.ac.uk/using-the-library/students/training-and-skills-support/my-learning-essentials/>

Halls of Residence remain open, and colleagues are available to support students who are staying on campus. Their details can be found on the student support website (above):

<http://www.accommodation.manchester.ac.uk/reslife/>

The Student Services Centre is remotely delivering all non-School based administrative processes:

<http://www.studentsupport.manchester.ac.uk/student-services/>

The Careers Service has moved to online delivery, with services for students and graduates being delivered by email, Skype and phone: <http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/aboutus/news/>

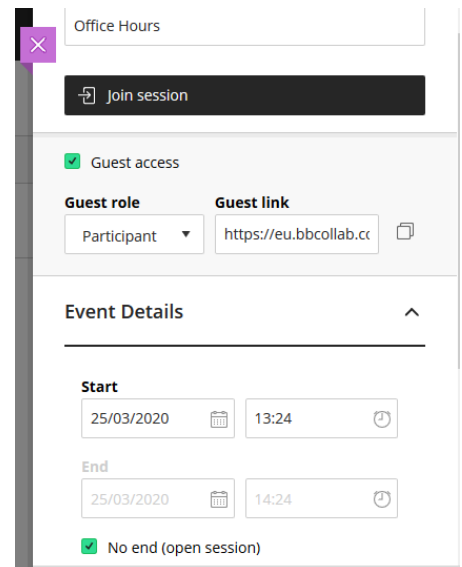
Campus Security services remain fully operational.

Using Blackboard Collaborate for office hours and academic advising sessions

Blackboard Collaborate provides online teaching as well as web conferencing facilities. As a web conferencing tool, you can use Collaborate to hold online office hours, group and one to one meetings - just let your students know when you will be online.

In order to use Collaborate for academic advising and office hours please follow these specific instructions:

1. You should firstly activate your Blackboard Playground as this will be the best place to create these sessions - see the 'Activating a Playground space' guide here: <https://manchester.saasiteu.com/Modules/SelfService/#knowledgeBase/view/CE30826681F0418686B9FCAC98B5213C>
2. Within your Playground, create one Collaborate session for Office Hours and one for Academic Advising meetings.² Set both Collaborate sessions using the settings as shown in the image - ensure that Guest Access field is ticked and select "No end (open session)". Creating these sessions within your Playground, as opposed to course unit areas, means they will not expire and only students with the link will be able to access the office hours/advising sessions.*
3. Copy the Guest link for each session and email these links to your students so that they can access the online room.
4. You should not record these types of session in Collaborate.
5. According to standard practice, you should ensure that the times of online office hours are communicated to students, and that you agree individual times to meet academic advisees in groups or one to one.



The screenshot shows the configuration for a Blackboard Collaborate session titled "Office Hours". At the top, there is a "Join session" button. Below it, the "Guest access" checkbox is checked. The "Guest role" is set to "Participant" and the "Guest link" is "https://eu.bbcollab.cc". The "Event Details" section shows the start time as 13:24 on 25/03/2020 and the end time as 14:24 on 25/03/2020. The "No end (open session)" checkbox is also checked.

* Guest Access - please note: Anyone with the link to your Collaborate event can access the session when you are online i.e. students may enter during a conversation with another student. Collaborate will deliver a brief on-screen or audio notification if anyone enters or leaves your Collaborate session, however we recommend you make this clear to students when informing them of the arrangements for your office hours/advising sessions. To prevent students entering an academic advising meeting you may prefer to set up as many academic advising sessions as there are advisees, and email the Guest link for each individual session to the individual students. You will be able to use the re-use each room every time you want to meet with the individual student.

Contact the [eLearning team](#) if you are experiencing any difficulties with setting up a Playground space or Collaborate sessions.

² Guidance on how to set up sessions in Collaborate and more can be found in Humanities Blackboard Collaborate Hub: https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/humanities/teaching-support/elearning/resources/collaborate_ultra/