

Minimum expectations of online/blended teaching delivery

We recognise that the transition to online teaching can be a challenge for some staff and want to emphasise that no one is expecting television level presentation and professional multi-media interfaces. All teaching teams must ensure the material delivered complies with any Programme team guidance and approval. In meeting minimum expectations it should:

- comprise of core material delivered through self-paced resources and activities
- support dual teaching delivery and be accessible to students both on and off campus
- require regular student engagement in blocks of study which can be monitored
- provide regular opportunities to support student learning and engagement e.g. through discussion boards, virtual 'office hours' or 'drop in' sessions

Importantly, as with any teaching you have delivered in previous years, the focus of your teaching sessions will still be on clear and achievable Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO), linked to programme ILO and aligned with teaching and assessment design. ILO should also be stated for each segment of your teaching. The University/Faculty supports a range of tools to create and deliver online learning. Training will be provided in the form of workshops, videos, online support sessions and 'How to...' and 'Guidance' templates. As with all teaching delivery, you should use the approaches that you are most comfortable with. Additional support is available through our mentoring/buddying scheme alongside opportunities to experiment through available support sessions.

The repackaging of content to smaller packages than are often used in typical face-to-face courses make material more accessible in an online/blended environment. It can also make delivery and student learning more effective. It is recognised that it may not always be feasible to completely redesign the content of a lecture course/teaching session within the time constraints for semester 1 delivery. However, when repurposing more traditionally delivered content the following should always be considered in terms of identifying:

- What content from a specific teaching session can/should only be delivered by a lecture format?
- What content is foundational/background knowledge or revision that might be better shifted to self-paced pre-reading or other activities?
- What content might be better consolidated as post-session readings or extension materials, self-paced formative activities, low stakes (less than 10%) summative assessments, peer to peer small group discussions or facilitated seminars and Q&A sessions?
- Where content can and should only be presented in lecture form, how best this should be delivered and what supporting interactive activities might accompany it.
- Approaches to ensure the content is fully accessible and inclusive (refer to ['Ensuring your online webinars are inclusive'](#))
- Whether the methods of assessment for your course should be changed to ensure that formative assessment opportunities build towards subsequent summative assessments and allow individualised feedback?

In recognition that dual teaching delivery will be necessary to support students both on and off campus (and to allow learner flexibility), lecture content should be available asynchronously (pre-recorded or recorded 'live' session). However the availability of synchronous (live) contact is an essential requirement to provide students with:

- Open/scaffolded opportunities to seek support/clarification in regards to course materials and assessments
- Consolidation of course content via peer- or tutor-mediated discussions
- Social and academic networking opportunities
- Development of collaborative skills during small group activities

To support colleagues and ensure consistency in quality of offering a series of guiding principles for online teaching delivery are provided (see course checklist [Appendix 1](#)).

Guiding Principles for Online Teaching Delivery

A Standard Course Structure (SCS) Template for Blackboard courses will be available and will include an expectations section at the start of each unit and guidance on how students should engage and work through the unit, when academics will be available to interact and who students should approach if they have any issues.

1. **Learning Outcomes:** Every session/unit component should clearly state its Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO) at the beginning. You may also want to emphasise to students other learning outcomes, such as transferrable, digital and employability skills that they will gain. Learning outcomes should also inform the selection of mode of delivery of the content. For example, presentation of knowledge (eg. handout, resource to read or watch) versus development of understanding (eg. include an activity in a handout or pause a video to allow students to reflect or post something on a discussion board or undertake a quiz).

A useful tool for checking the ILO are appropriate:

<https://web.cs.manchester.ac.uk/iloadvisor>

2. **Lectures:** Blending, for example, a previous years lecture session with other activities to engage student learning would be an option. But teaching delivery must be designed with an awareness for **dual delivery** to ensure that material will be accessible to **students both on and off campus**. Online teaching has the potential to be more flexible, and we encourage colleagues to exploit this [flexibility](#). Alternatives you could employ include:
 - a. An asynchronous mixture of short lecture clips with online resources and activities, equalling no more than the previous year's total time for all learning activities, which could be undertaken over the week, is the preferred option.
 - b. An asynchronous (i.e. pre-recorded) lecture (ideally broken up into 15-20 minute blocks), plus a series of online resources and activities, equalling no more than the previous year's total time for all learning activities, which could be undertaken over the week.
 - c. Synchronous (live) lectures in a timetabled slot remain a possibility and in recent weeks webinars with students have proved to be very effective learning activities (but see [Appendix 3](#) FAQ 1 below). Delivering a synchronous live session which incorporates group work using breakout rooms, or other activities, can work very effectively. If colleagues do employ synchronous lectures they must still be combined with a series of online resources and activities equalling no more than the previous year's total time for all learning activities, which could be undertaken over the week.

However there are three main issues with synchronous session: (i) synchronous lectures are not inclusive (see below), (ii) on-campus lecture theatres will not be available for delivering lectures during Semester 1, and (iii) running a live feed may become complicated due to time zone differences, student connection difficulties and streaming/bandwidth limitations. Colleagues are therefore strongly encouraged to consider asynchronous methods for delivering their lectures.

Please note that all synchronous lectures must also be recorded, adhere to DASS standards and templates (see DASS students below) and made available to students who may not be able to attend synchronously.

You could use a mixture of these formats. Training and further suggestions are available in the form of workshops, videos, online support sessions. 'How to...' and 'Guidance' templates and exemplars will be available on the [Institute for Teaching and Learning](#); and the [FBMH eLearning support pages](#):

3. **Seminars/Small group teaching:** These can continue to work effectively in an online format. You can decide the right format for these sessions. We advise that students are given guidance on "Netiquette" (see [Appendix 2](#) below) to ensure best practice in online communication. The format of these session could include:
 - a. A synchronous session in the timetabled slot, following the usual format of a face to face session.
 - b. An asynchronous, teacher-facilitated discussion board activity on an appropriate topic supported by additional resources e.g. research paper, film or recording.
 - c. An asynchronous, facilitated [VoiceThread](#) activity on an appropriate topic supported by additional resources e.g. research paper, film or recording.

You could use a mixture of the above or other methods of engagement appropriate to your subject. Training and further suggestions are available in the form of workshops, videos, online support sessions and 'How to...' and 'Guidance' templates and exemplars.

Synchronous small group sessions must also be recorded and made available to students who may not be able to attend synchronously. Exceptions to this are where recording the session might discourage student engagement or in the case of [students being present who are under the age of 18](#). In this latter case an alternative format for group discussion must be provided to include students who were unable to attend the 'live' session.

4. **Clinics/Practicals/Lab based teaching:** Delivery of these sessions is more challenging and an operational group identifying available options will provide further guidance in due course.
5. **Assessment:** It is not necessary to assess the same learning outcomes repeatedly or more than once. The appropriateness of assessments should be reviewed including consideration of how they are:
 - a. delivered within the online environment
 - b. designed to ensure academic standards
 - c. developed to avoid the need to be taken in an exam room
 - d. provided so that students have a clear understanding as to what they involve and what the marking criteria are

The use of continuous assessment with deadlines at intervals throughout a unit should be considered as this can be designed to provide formative feedback before the next assessment is due. It also can enable students to interact positively with each other during the course and ensure student engagement. But care should be taken to not overburden the students with excessive low stakes assessment.

A BMH operational group identifying available options will provide further guidance in due course (if you are interested in being part of this group please complete the attached expression of interest form refer to [volunteering opportunities](#)).

In the limited cases where clear justification is provided and exam room assessments are deemed necessary, these will need to be specially approved and you should check with your programme director if you are unsure. Further details on this will be circulated by Schools/Programmes in the coming weeks.

6. **Contact time and assessment load versus credit:** There are many examples of effective use of contact time, even with large groups, where students have an opportunity to interact with teachers and peers and engage in active learning. Engagement is high when the teaching and learning activities challenge students as learners to critically evaluate and apply their knowledge and develop their research and professional skills. Consideration should be given to how available teaching time across a series of sessions consists of different resources/activities/assessment without overburdening (remember 10 credits represents 100 h of student time including self-directed learning and assessment work).
7. **Engagement and Inclusivity:** To maximise the potential of all students and ensure student retention this is a crucial area to work on. We suggest that a series of measures are taken to make the online space as inclusive and welcoming as possible. These include:
- a. Staff introducing themselves at the start of the course (eg introductory statement on Blackboard, short video etc). (Refer to (refer to [‘Creating online materials for blended learning’](#))
 - b. Ensuring you include a facility for students to introduce themselves to one another – for example, an additional discussion board which remains live throughout the course for general or informal discussion.
 - c. Encouraging students to develop their own communities of practice through Slack, Whatsapp etc (as they might not always want us to have a presence?).
 - d. Unit/module teams providing regular opportunities to support student learning and engagement e.g. through discussion boards, virtual ‘office hours’ or ‘drop in’ sessions.
 - e. Strategies such as using asynchronous teaching to allow for greater inclusivity. Remember students may be in different time zones, they may have care responsibilities, or they may have to share space and computing facilities with others.
 - f. Emphasising to students the benefits they will be gaining, beyond the academic ILO of your course, such as transferrable, employability skills and digital capabilities. Working collaboratively online is one way students are enhancing their digital capabilities and it is worth signposting this. For more information/support please review this document from [Jisc](#) and/or contact Jane Mooney (jane.mooney@manchester.ac.uk).

Feel free to take any other measures to ensure students do not feel cut off or isolated, and that they feel valued (but NEVER give out individual Zoom or private phone numbers).

8. **Attendance:** It is essential that we monitor our student wellbeing, and importantly this can lead to early detection of any personal/medical circumstances. Discussions are ongoing about how student attendance in Semester 1 will be monitored. Some ways this might be measured include:
- Student engagement with Blackboard being monitored by PS colleagues.
 - Student engagement with seminar and small group teaching activities (including engagement with asynchronous methods such as discussion boards) being monitored by the seminar/small group teaching activity leader and will be the record of their attendance akin to signing a register.

Details about attendance monitoring measures will be circulated over the coming months. These should be clearly articulated to students at the start of the course.

9. **Content release:** We suggest that you employ a pattern of rolling release which ensures that students will have to engage with the material in pace with the course, rather than leaving it to the last minute. Rolling release will also allow PS staff to monitor engagement with Blackboard/VLE at multiple time points. This could be either:
- a. A 2-week rolling pattern of content release – release content for the current week, plus leave content from the previous week open for active engagement for one week. Previous material can then be left available for the remainder of the course, but closed to contributions.

- b. A 3-week rolling pattern of content release – release content for the current week and the week ahead, plus leave content from the previous week open for active engagement for one week. Previous material can then be left available for the rest of the duration of the course, but closed to contributions.
10. **Communication to students:** All students will need to have confidence about BMH teaching plans for 2020/21. Incoming and returning students will receive an enhanced induction/welcome back experience with information about online learning. A University-level working group is currently considering the format of induction/welcome back and further information will be provided about this in due course.

A good way of engaging with students on the unit is for the teaching team to provide regular teaching updates (what students should have done in the last session(s), what is being done in the current session(s) and what will be coming up) sent using Blackboard email or announcements.

Student Accessibility

If you have students who you are concerned, they cannot get online, or have bandwidth issues, the University has introduced a single email address that they can contact for advice and support with engaging and accessing online learning and assessment: helpmegetonline@manchester.ac.uk. Alternatively, students can also call +44 (0)161 306 6199 (Monday to Friday during UK Office hours). You could also make all of your online learning content available as PDFs so that students can download it and look at it offline.

DASS Students

It is, of course, important that all teaching materials are accessible to all students. [OpenWashington \(2017\)](#) suggests six key questions to consider when creating learning materials:

- Is all written content presented as text, so students using assistive technologies can read it?
- If the materials include images, is the important information from the images adequately communicated with accompanying alt text? Refer to: <http://subjects.library.manchester.ac.uk/copyright/teaching>
- If the materials include audio or video content, is it captioned or transcribed?
- If the materials have a clear visual structure including headings, sub-headings, lists, and tables, is this structure properly coded so it's accessible to blind students using screen readers?
- If the materials include buttons, controls, drag-and-drop, or other interactive features that are operable with a mouse, can they also be operated with keyboard alone for students who are physically unable to use a mouse?
- Do the materials avoid communicating information using colour alone (e.g., the red line means X, the green line means Y)?

For more information about accessibility of teaching materials see the [University Guidance on Accessibility](#)

Further guidance on this from DASS will be forthcoming, however making teaching asynchronous and applying for subtitles to be added where possible (to videos and Voicethreads, for example) are two key features that staff can employ to help DASS registered students.

Useful resources

- <https://elearning.bmh.manchester.ac.uk/staff/> – this will be updated over time to include links to most of the above, training and best practice exemplars
- Institute of Teaching and Learning
https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/tlso/teaching_and_learning_remotely
- [TALON](#) (Teaching and Learning Online Network)

- You may also find useful a series of one-page help sheets produced by the Open University, free to download here <http://www.open.ac.uk/blogs/innovating/> on the following topics; Flipped learning, Teachback, Seamless learning, Learning to learn, Evaluating information, Making thinking visible, Personal inquiry learning, Science in remote labs, Maker culture.
- [Fifty tips for replacements for time constrained, invigilated on-site exams](#)
- [The changing landscape of assessment: some possible replacements for unseen, time-constrained, face-to-face invigilated exams.](#)
- Some useful links of learning design/expectations settings:
 - https://www.arts.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/211545/Core-Practice-for-Inclusive-Online-Teaching.pdf
 - <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/learning-designer/viewer.php?uri=/personal/PARSISSON/designs/fid/7197dfff34a0f53416706206f507f3454d49536db9637d2a209d0dbfb65f0f96> and guide - <https://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/ltu/projects/learning-designer-%20help/>
 - <https://www.gillysalmon.com/five-stage-model.html>
 - [Personal enquiry learning at a distance; https://iet.open.ac.uk/file/iet-teaching-at-a-distance-07-personal-inquiry-learning.pdf](https://iet.open.ac.uk/file/iet-teaching-at-a-distance-07-personal-inquiry-learning.pdf)

Appendix 1: Course Checklist

In order to ensure quality and consistency of experience for our students and to meet the minimum expectations the following checklist will prove useful:

Have you...

Spelled-out key intended learning outcomes (ILO) for each of your sessions?

Provided opportunities for students to actively engage during your lectures (either synchronously or asynchronously)?

Planned how you will make your presence felt *online* e.g. participating in discussion boards, sending regular announcements, providing visual presence or other?

Planned how you intend to nurture student peer to peer interaction formally and informally e.g. providing group ice-breaking activities, sharing activities, or other?

Planned and provided activities where students can get formative feedback on their performance and can engage in self-assessment?

Used the Blackboard Standard Course Structure (SCS) supplied by the eLearning team?

Offered opportunities to support student learning and engagement e.g. through discussion boards, virtual 'office hours' or 'drop in' sessions

Checked all your files uploaded to Bb meet accessibility requirements using [Bb Ally?](#)

[Academic Advisers](#), have you...

Offered your advisee(s) a choice for either online or face to face academic advising meetings?

Other

Have you reviewed available [eLearning team resources](#) to gain best practice in the design of online learning?

Have you ensured that a suitable [e-Reading list](#) is available

Appendix 2 "Netiquette"

Netiquette means appropriate behavior while using Internet facilities such as individual websites, emails, newsgroups, message boards, chat rooms or Web communities. Some examples of netiquette are listed below:

- Being aware of the process of communicating online
<http://www.open.ac.uk/libraryservices/beingdigital/objects/54/index.htm>
- Not posting or distributing material that is illegal (this includes photocopying and distributing copyright work).
- Not posting or distributing material that may be disturbing to others.
- Not using abusive or threatening language.
- Not posting offensive remarks regarding sex, race, gender, age, sexuality, disability or any other [protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010](#).
- Not trying to obtain or use someone else's password.
- Not trying to obtain inappropriate personal information about someone.

We want all our students to feel safe online, so any posting that is considered offensive or inappropriate will be deleted by the course tutor. Those students on professional programmes making offensive postings should be referred to the relevant Concern Review Panel.

Appendix 3 FAQs

Students like synchronous learning and removing this from our courses will cause dissatisfaction, do we have to?

We are not asking that you remove synchronous teaching, but rather that you consider how you use it and use synchronous engagement for shorter times and alongside other methods including greater pre-recorded asynchronous content, discussion boards, Voicethread and other flipped classroom methods. If you do use synchronous learning it must be recorded to ensure student accessibility.

Students don't like discussion boards – do I have to use them?

You don't have to use them but consider that many students have only been introduced to them under the emergency measures of the last few months. Using facilitated discussion boards when integrated into a course properly designed for online learning enables students to see and benefit from their pedagogic value. They can also be used for monitoring engagement with seminar activities and can be used more informally as a space where students can catch up and chat. These are important for encouraging student engagement, inclusion and retention. Online inductions will emphasise the value of tools like discussion boards too so both new and returning students will begin Semester 1 2020/2021 with a potentially different view of discussion boards.

What can we do/advise for students who do not have access to the internet at home? (and only patchy or no phone signal): New students in 2020/2021 will be supported on entry to ensure they have the right equipment for online learning. Meanwhile if you have current students who you are concerned, cannot get online, or have bandwidth issues, the University has introduced a single email address that they can contact for advice and support with engaging and accessing online learning and assessment: helpmegetonline@manchester.ac.uk. Alternatively, students can also call +44 (0)161 306 6199 (Monday to Friday during UK Office hours). You could also make all of your online learning content available as PDFs so that students can download it and look at it offline.

My home bandwidth is not enough to use synchronous remote learning methods. What should I do?

We appreciate that this may be the case for some colleagues. If this is the case please do let students know that your teaching will be asynchronous so that their expectations are managed from the outset. In this case, the best option is to make a recording of your lecture (e.g. using Powerpoint record) and then only go online to upload it to the video portal. It may take some time with low bandwidth but should still be possible. Alternative asynchronous methods will be suggested via the supporting resources and in the training we are providing. Alternative synchronous methods for meetings or seminars with low bandwidth could be to conduct these on your mobile phone if you have better phone signal than bandwidth. However, we do appreciate that data costs or simply the size of your phone may not make this option possible.

Where should we point students who are having technical difficulties connecting to Collaborate Ultra and other services to? Is there eLearning support for them in the same way that there is for staff? Yes! They can contact eLearning via email elearning@manchester.ac.uk or point them to this [link](#) from Blackboard.

My students are struggling to download large powerpoint or other lecture recording files.

These should be uploaded to the [University video portal](#) instead, or alternative video sites such as YouTube or Vimeo. Students will then be able to stream them and not have to download them.