



**Guidelines for Faculty
Using the Virtual Classroom**

Approved by University Management Team Education Group
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Guidelines for Faculty - Using the Virtual Classroom

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 faculty with reference to those expectations. Use of the virtual classroom for the purpose of conducting online summative assessment is not within scope of these guidelines.

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.

2. Virtual Classroom Solutions in UCD

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 platforms are available for online teaching and learning.

- Zoom - accessed via Brightspace
- Google Meets - accessed via Calendar / Google Suite

3. Preparing for a Virtual Classroom Session

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

- You should take some time at the very start of each module to discuss with your students how virtual classes for that module will be conducted. Establish protocols with your students i.e. how they will participate and interact in your virtual classroom sessions. Communicate these protocols to students in advance of, or at the start of the virtual class.
- Provide, in advance of the trimester, privacy notices for your students.
- Communicate clearly the tool you will use for virtual classes and whether international data transfers are involved in the use of this tool.
- Communicate clearly the tool you will use for virtual classes.
- Clearly identify where virtual classroom links and recordings will reside.
- Advise students if you are recording the virtual class and explain why.
- All participants should normally be identifiable by their name during a virtual classroom, this can help develop a sense of community and to keep the learning environment secure. It can be helpful for students to turn on their video feed when talking, but it is not required.
- Prior to the session, check your technical setup and internet connection, including the security of any wi-fi used to minimize and reduce the occurrences of technical issues during delivery.
- Lecturers should be mindful that students have other classes to go to or other commitments and conclude on time.

- Advise students on use of mic, camera, chat box and using the hand raise functionality to ask questions/make comments.
- Leverage the interactive features available i.e. polling, questions in chat box, whiteboard, breakout rooms etc. to encourage different forms of student participation.
- 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.
- Sometimes there will be glitches in the technology. Advise your students, in advance, of the contingency plan were this to occur.
- During break out/group work sessions if students have an inactive group member (i.e no camera/no audio and no chat) ask them to inform you, then you can remove this person from the group.

4. Netiquette in the Virtual Classrooms

Netiquette is the etiquette for interacting online and should be used for all communications within virtual learning environment including the virtual classroom. [UCD Dignity and Respect as well as Data Protection Policies](#) apply to all members of the university community and should be abided by in the virtual classroom. 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. While the building of online academic communities of learning can sometimes be more effective when interactions include video, each student may nonetheless choose whether or not their video and/or still image is displayed to others within a virtual class. While module coordinators / faculty cannot mandate a student to turn on their video during class they can encourage/request them to do so by explaining the learning intentions of the class and the importance of having everyone on camera to support the learning of the group. This is particularly important where laboratory and clinical practice work is being replicated.

For further information see the UCD Teaching and Learning guide to [Netiquette for Online Learning](#).

5. Considerations for Recording a Virtual Classroom

As module coordinator/lecturer you should inform students about what to expect, and why, in terms of recorded virtual classroom sessions. You may consider which elements of the virtual classroom (e.g. video, audio, slides, file uploads, text chat) will be most useful to record in order to aid student learning and revision.

If there are sensitive materials that you as a teacher wish to discuss with students to aid their learning, but do not wish to have these recorded then explain to the students the reasons why you are not recording during that time. This lets the student know what they should expect with reference to recorded material.

Generally, when recording a virtual classroom, participants must be made aware of the following:

- when the recording is about to commence, and when the recording is stopped.
- which elements of the virtual classroom will be recorded, e.g. text chat including private messages, the participant list etc.

There will be situations where part of a class cannot be recorded, these include:

- teaching situations which involve 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.
- student activity / discussions, within breakout rooms should never be recorded.

If a lecture recording is paused or edited, provide students with an explanation where it is reasonable and proportionate to do so.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, if you are not going to pre-record learning materials or do not plan on recording any of your classes then you should inform your head of school and your students of your reasons for not doing so.

6. Use of Recordings

Please note the following with regard to 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.
- Virtual classroom recordings of content that contain no student interaction or participation can be re-used by the creator in subsequent module deliveries. If you intend to use recordings for future teaching material, you will need to download them from the Virtual Classroom in your modules in Brightspace and upload them to a media hosting site¹.
- External visiting lecturers (or their employer as appropriate) retain copyright in work and any other intellectual property rights they generate as part of the virtual classroom

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<https://www.ucd.ie/itservices/ourservices/educationaltechnologies/multimediacontentdevelopment/multimediahostingheanet/>

to which they contributed. These materials cannot be re-used by the University in subsequent trimesters or academic years without the explicit permission of said guest lecturer. The module coordinator must contact the guest lecturer and obtain explicit permission in relation to the re-use of any materials.

- If there is a desire to record a portion of a virtual classroom session for later use in a virtual classroom where student participation is intended, this can be managed by recording only the segment where the delivery is happening, the recording should be stopped before engaging with the students, the students must be informed about the starting and stopping of the recording. Alternatively, video editing software may be employed afterwards to remove sensitive components of the recording, prior to making it available for later viewing.
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- If a student makes an independent recording of a virtual classroom session, they must seek the permission of the lecturer in advance and may only use the recording for the purposes of their own personal study. However, for students with reasonable accommodation they retain their right to record material. They will be in a position to show their permission from UCD ALL concerning their reasonable accommodation. 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,
- making copies available to third parties, or the public, by any means,
- 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](#).

It is the responsibility of the module coordinator to ensure the deletion of materials or parts of materials when a student requests same under GDPR.

It is the responsibility of the staff member who created the virtual classroom session to delete the recording once it is no longer required for the purpose for which it was stored. Recordings of virtual classroom sessions will be deleted in line with the service's data retention schedule (usually 13 months after the original date of recording).

7. Privacy

Privacy Notice

A Privacy Notice is required for each Virtual Classroom Platform. This should set out what personal data is being collected and why, based on what legal basis under the GDPR, and for how long it will be retained. The Privacy Notice will also outline what organisations the data will be shared with, the rights of the students in relation to the data processing and provide contact details in UCD for further information. The Privacy Notice will be available for students to review on Brightspace and should be linked through the Module Descriptor and Module Outline Document, where possible. The Privacy Notice will be developed by the Unit in the University which manages the Virtual Classroom Platform and approves the vendor of the solution or tool.

Students will be clearly informed by UCD through Brightspace about their privacy rights across the platforms used.

- The retention period for sharing the recorded material amongst the students registered to the module, will be in line with Brightspace provision.
- Module coordinators are permitted to use webinar style virtual lectures where student video and image is not recorded for purposes outside the particular module cohort for the trimester and academic year. However, any lectures or tutorials where student video and image are recorded as content may only be used by the module coordinator, for the purpose of delivering the specific module, in the particular trimester in the academic year, and cannot be used in another trimester.
- Where the recorded lecture material will be securely stored by the school and if the video and audio file will be stored:
 - On servers within UCD or,
 - In the cloud on servers within the European Economic Area (EEA), or
 - In the cloud on servers outside of the EEA and the privacy right implication of the latter scenario.

*Once developed the various privacy notices for the services listed will also be included.

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.

If a school or unit in UCD wishes to use a new Tool, please contact the Office of the DPO, for guidance on privacy and data protection due diligence requirements for vendor selection on privacy at gdpr@ucd.ie. Please also contact the [Educational Technology Services](#) team in IT Services to check if the solution is compatible with the current approved IT tools.