



TOP ONLINE STUDY TOOLS THAT EVERY UNIVERSITY STUDENT SHOULD KNOW ABOUT



A quick reference guide for students at Queen's

The Queen's University Belfast suggested list of Online Study Tools

University is a place of learning, development, and growth, but equally, it can be a place of competing deadlines and time commitments which can be both frustrating and stress-inducing. Queen's conducted a Digital Experience Survey in 2019, with over 1000 students stating that they use a range of apps and tools to help them study and learn (over 170 were mentioned)! With the help of some handy online tools, you can get more organised, improve your time management and produce comprehensive revision materials as you go along.

Please email ced@qub.ac.uk with any suggestions.

Assistive Tools and Support

Diversity and Ability - Assistive technology training, study skills, support, free resources, and mentoring. Diversity and Ability is a disabled-led social enterprise working to empower disabled/neurodiverse learners to reach their potential in education.

Cost: Free



Kurzweil 3000 - An alternative to Texthelp Read and Write. Kurzweil 3000 is a comprehensive reading, writing, and learning software solution for students with reading difficulties and learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, attention deficit disorder, or those who are English Language Learners.

Cost: Subscription



Read & Write - A Chrome extension tool that supports and assists users of all ages who require extra assistance when reading or composing text. Functions include text-to-speech, phonetic spell checker, word prediction, speaking dictionary, and a scanning facility.

Cost: Free



Disability Services at Queen's provide a range of supports for students with a wide range of needs. If you think you may be eligible or require further guidance on the supports available, they should be your first point of contact.

Communication

Canvas - Canvas is the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) for students at Queen's which is used to support learning and teaching activities. You are able to communicate with other students and collaborate through conferences and break-out groups.

Cost: Free



Microsoft Teams - This is supported by the university, as part of the Office365 subscription for all staff and students. You can set up a 'team', add the members of your group and use this for organising files, hosting meetings and instant messaging.

Cost: Free



Slack - This is another communication app that works a bit like Teams. The terms used are a bit different, instead of teams you create 'channels'. Slack has a great interface and is simple to use.

Cost: Free



Twitter - Twitter can be used to receive news, follow people in education, or stay in-touch with old high school friends. The short tweets can be used to inform and update and to collaboratively work as a great team.

Cost: Free



Digital Research

Mendeley - A reference manager that can help you collect references, organize your citations, and create bibliographies. You can collaborate online in public or private groups, and search for papers in the Mendeley group database of over 30 million papers.

Cost: Free



QUB Virtual Library - Current students can access most e-resources off campus (from home). You will need your University login, this is the same username and password you use to access your Queen's University Belfast email and Queen's Online. You can search for articles, e-journals, online databases and more.

Cost: Free



Zetoc - Zetoc Alert is a current awareness service that sends you email alerts matching the search criteria that you have provided whenever new data is loaded into the database. The alerts may be for particular journals, for authors or for keywords from the titles of articles and papers.

Cost: Free



Zotero - This online tool is designed to store, manage, and cite bibliographic references, such as books and articles. In Zotero, each of these references constitutes an item. More broadly, Zotero is a powerful tool for collecting and organizing research information and sources.

Cost: Free



Digital Wellbeing

Catch It - This app uses the methods of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy to help you to manage your mental wellbeing. The app helps you to look at negative emotions and turn them into positive experiences.

Cost: Free



Digital Wellbeing by Google - This resource by Google includes a vast number of tips and tools that will help you reflect on your current tech habits and fine-tune them to achieve your personal digital wellbeing goals.

Cost: Free



Pzizz - Based off clinical research, this app combines music, voiceovers and sounds effects that are designed to help you sleep better.

Cost: Yearly subscription



Wellbeing at Queen's - There is a wide range of support available to you from the Student Wellbeing Service within Queen's. Our services are free and available to registered students at the University. Services include Drop-In, consultations and coaching, safe and healthy relationships advice, self-care, and emergency support.

Cost: Free



You can use apps to look after your wellbeing while studying. These are particularly useful if you find you are under stress or if your screen time has increased. We have a full infographic on tools for this on the CED Student Hub.

Editing

Adobe Spark - Adobe Spark enables you to tell stories and share ideas quickly and beautifully. Spark lets you create responsive web pages, posts that are optimised for social media, and create videos which you can overlay text, audio and effects.

Cost: Free



OpenShot Video Editor - A video editor that has a simple to use, drag and drop interface that is suitable for beginners that has lots of options for video effects, animation and more.

Cost: Free



Snipping Tool - This allows you to take a snippet from your current screen and save it as an image. With simple image manipulation, it is possible to highlight and label areas on the image

Cost: Free



TechSmith Capture (Jing) - Allows you to create screencast videos and capture screen images. You can record with your webcam while recording screencast videos and are able to export videos as MP4 files if needed.

Cost: Free



Organisation and Project Management

Evernote - An invaluable organisational tool, with Evernote all of your research, notes, and information can be together in one place. The site can sync your information across computers, phones, share with other users, gather web clips, and create all from one central platform.



Cost: Free with basic features

Microsoft Calendar - The good thing about making the use of your Office 365 apps is having a synchronised calendar across them. You can get a notification in your email about when your next Teams meeting is. Sometimes going between different apps can be overwhelming, so it is helpful to have this connection across all of them.



Cost: Free

myHomework Student Planner - Whilst the use of the term homework may mislead you into thinking this tool is for students still at school, it is suitable for learners at all levels. This planner has a calendar in which you can track upcoming assignments, projects, exams, and other deadlines. You can track all your classes and receive due date reminders to avoid the dreaded last-minute panic around deadlines.



Cost: Free with basic features

Trello - A collaboration tool that organises your projects into boards that can be customised either for a solo or group project. Trello makes collaboration and the delegation of tasks easy. At a glance, Trello can tell you what's being worked on, who is working on what, what has been completed and what is yet to be started.



Cost: Free with limited boards

Presentation

Bubbl.us - Bubbl.us is an easy-to-use, online brainstorming software. With Bubbl.us you can create colorful mind maps and share them with others.

Cost: Free for 3 boards



Canva - We recommend Canva for all sorts of creations like infographics and posters but they do presentations too. There are lots of templates to choose from and you can use the Present feature on the website or download your slides as a Microsoft PowerPoint.

Cost: Free with basic features



Microsoft PowerPoint - A computer program that allows you to create and show slides to support a presentation. You can combine text, graphics and multi-media content to create professional presentations.

Cost: Free with Queen's



Microsoft Sway - This app is part of the Microsoft Office 365 subscription that you have access to as a Queen's student and it allows you to create stylish-looking presentations that go beyond the features of the traditional Microsoft PowerPoint.

Cost: Free with Queen's



Prezi - This online presentation tool enables you to make engaging videos and presentations. With the free package you get access to the basic features that you'd need.

Cost: Free with basic features



Productivity and Team Management

Forest - A productivity app that helps you stay off your phone and focus on the task at hand. It's gamified- whenever you want to stay focused, plant a tree; your tree will grow while you focus on your work but leaving the app halfway will cause your tree to die.

Cost: Free



Marinara Timer - A custom timer dedicated to productivity. Inspired by the Pomodoro method of productivity – working for 25 minutes and then taking a 5-minute break.

Cost: Free



Microsoft To Do - A task management app to help you stay organized and manage your day-to-day routine. You can make task lists, take notes, record collections, plan an event, or set reminders to increase your productivity and focus on what matters to you.

Cost: Free



Stay Focused - This is a chrome extension that lets you restrict the amount of time you spend on 'time-wasting' social media or other websites when you need to focus. Similarly, you can download the **AntiSocial app** for your smartphone, which allows you to track how much time you spend in each app, compares your usage with others, and allows you to block the apps which you overuse.

Cost: Free



Revision

Explain Everything - An easy-to-use design, screencasting, and interactive whiteboard tool which allows you to annotate, narrate, animate, import, and export almost anything to and from almost anywhere.

Cost: Free for up to 3 projects



GoConqr - Particularly good for visual learners. You can make mind maps, flashcards, it has a note-taking platform, self-created quizzes to test your own revision, a study planner, a collaboration tool, and you can also track how much you're learning. It can be used across devices.

Cost: Free with option to upgrade



HowtoStudy.org - Helps students by collecting a wide variety of studying resources from across the internet. From revision guides, stress management, test anxiety, and working to deadlines – they have it covered.

Cost: Free



Kahoot! - Kahoot! is a game-based learning platform that makes it easy to create, share and play learning games or multiple-choice trivia quizzes in minutes.

Cost: Free



Padlet - An application where you can create an online bulletin board that you can use to display information for any topic. It is a great place for gathering ideas, sharing them, and modifying them later.

Cost: Free



Revision

Quizlet - With this site, you provide the information, and Quizlet provides the study tools. Users can create “sets” in any subject. Based on this set, the website will generate flashcards, quizzes, practice tests, matching games, and auditory tools. They have an app for learning on the go and studying offline.

Cost: Free with option to upgrade



Study Stack - Ideal for memorisation, this tool allows users to create flashcard sets and use what others have already made. When a card is flipped, you can choose whether you were right or wrong. Wrong cards are repeated until you’ve answered correctly. Once created, the site can generate games and quizzes based on the information you have inputted.

Cost: Free



StudyBlue - Connects students through similar learning goals and subjects. Students can share and access flashcards, study guides, and more.

Cost: Free with option to upgrade



Storage

Dropbox - A cloud storage service, which means you can copy your files to the cloud and access them later, even if you're using a different device.

Cost: Free



Dropoff - Dropoff is a service for Queen's students which makes it easy for you to move files, including large files up to 10.0 GB, in and out of the University.

Cost: Free



Google Drive - Similar to OneDrive, Google has its own storage platform. You may prefer the interface and functionality of Google Drive, especially if you already use Gmail, for example.

Cost: Free



OneDrive - It's a good idea to organise how and where you are going to store the documents you are working on. Queen's students get OneDrive as part of the Office365 subscription. This is a useful way to store documents so you can access them on the go or share them with others.

Cost: Free



Writing

Grammarly - This free tool can assist you in ensuring your spelling and grammar are correct. The add on for browsers will help correct your writing and fine-tune your writing style.

Cost: Free with basic features



Hemingway - Analyses the readability of something you have written. Particularly useful for essays and blogs, you can paste your text directly into the site and it will provide a breakdown of stronger and weaker sentences/structures.

Cost: Free



Microsoft Word - A word-processing program used primarily for creating documents such as letters, brochures, and homework assignments. It allows you to check your document for spelling and grammar errors and add formatting.

Cost: Free with Queen's



Readable - Readable is an online platform that will quickly test the readability, spelling and grammar of your text and show you how and where to make improvements.

Cost: Free





This Digital Study Tool Guide was compiled and produced by the Queen's Digital Insights Team, Centre for Educational Development