



ONLINE LEARNING

This year classes may be taking place online, either via recordings or 'live' online sessions. In this section you will find some tips for online learning, focusing particularly on preparation for classes, engaging with sessions and taking effective notes, and reviewing notes and consolidating your learning afterwards.

1. Preparing for Online Classes (Up to 1 week before)

Effective preparation is key to getting the most out of your online classes

Planning (and choosing) your Time

- Use a diary/calendar to keep track of important dates/events
- Make a timetable with your 'live' classes
- Allocate slots in your timetable to watch pre-recorded classes – choose times of the day when you work best
- Build in time before classes to make notes and do the readings



Preparing your Workspace

- Set yourself up in a dedicated work space with all your materials
- Eliminate distractions (e.g. phone notifications!) and ask your housemates/family to avoid interruptions during class times

Preparing Technology for your online class

- Check which platform you will be using (e.g. MS Teams, Canvas)
- Add the class and joining link to your calendar
- Download necessary software
- Check sound settings (speakers enabled and headphones)
- If possible, access the session using a laptop or a tablet to optimise functionality. If you can't, don't worry: at least you can follow along

Checklist: Preparing Class Content

1. Have I completed the required reading for this lecture?
2. Am I aware of the learning outcomes for this lecture?
3. How does this lecture interact with the other elements of the module, e.g. this week's tutorial?
4. Can I identify three key words or concepts that might guide my reading around this lecture?
5. Have I completed any group work or individual tasks that were required for this online class?



2. Engagement with Online Classes (During)

Practical Tips during Classes

- Use time stamps in videos to refer to important sections
- Note down any questions or points for clarification
- Try to participate fully in classes: it is a chance to learn from tutors and peers, and to ask any questions



Note Taking in Online Classes

- Listen actively: minimise distractions and don't be tempted to multi-task!
- Make notes to help maintain concentration
- Consider taking notes by hand, to avoid toggling between windows online
- Focus on recording key points and concepts. Flag anything you need to revisit later
- Make diagrams or pictures to capture concepts/points in an accessible and memorable way
- Use note-taking software: these programmes allow users to make, store, share and retrieve notes from any place at any time (Evernote, OneNote, Google Keep, Simplenote)
- Try out new techniques! e.g. Cornell Note-Taking System
- Most importantly, take regular breaks from your laptop and screens. It can be hard to listen actively when tired

3. After class (1-2 days after)

Review and Consolidate your Notes

- Review and supplement your notes soon after class, incorporating extra reading and research
- Fill in any gaps and follow up on questions or points you have flagged
- Do something active with your notes. Try making summaries, glossaries or lists of key concepts after classes, to check understanding and help with recall
- Make pictures or diagrams to represent your notes in an accessible and memorable way. Use mind maps to make connections between topics/concepts



3. After class (1-2 days after)



Checklist for consolidating learning:

- Reflect: how effective were my preparation and note-taking strategies?
- Have I clarified any questions I had during class? Have I contacted the lecturer/tutor to clarify these, or am I aware of resources I can use to consolidate my knowledge?
- Have I finalised my notes while the material is still fresh in my head?
- Can I relate these notes to material covered in other tutorials/lectures/seminars? Are there any key points, words, or phrases that might be useful for further reading, or for future essay questions or exams?



Links for further support:

- [Cornell Note Taking Technique](#)
- [Mind mapping software](#)
- [Note-Taking Techniques](#)
- [Note-Taking Toolkit](#)
- [Engaging in online discussions: top 10 tips for students](#)

Check out the Digital Skills Discovery Hub for more useful resources in online learning