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# TOP ONLINE STUDY TOOLS THAT EVERY UNIVERSITY STUDENT SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

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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](mailto:ced@qub.ac.uk) with any suggestions.

# Assistive Tools and Support

**MindView** - A comprehensive mind mapping and visual learning tool designed to help students organise their thoughts, brainstorm ideas, and structure academic content effectively. It provides a range of features that support both learning and productivity, making it suitable for students of all ages and academic levels.

*Cost: Free trial*



**Texthelp EquatIO** - A digital tool designed to help students create, edit, and understand mathematical equations and expressions more easily. It provides a range of features that make it accessible and user-friendly, especially for students who may have difficulties with traditional methods of writing or comprehending maths.

*Cost: Free trial*



**Texthelp Read&Write** - An assistive technology tool designed to support literacy and learning by assisting with reading, writing, and comprehension. Assistance includes reading text aloud, a phonetic spell checker, word prediction, a speaking dictionary and a scanning facility. It Supports students with dyslexia, ADHD, or other learning difficulties by providing reading and writing assistance.

*Cost: Free*

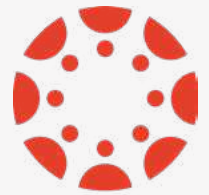


Students can attend workshops and access this assistive technology for free via the student computing centres and the Queens Student Desktop (QSD). More information can be found on our [Assistive Technology page](#). The [Accessible Learning Service](#) supports students with disabilities, medical conditions, mental health issues, and specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia. The service helps ensure equal access to education by providing tailored support and accommodations.

# 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*



**Mindview** - A versatile mind-mapping software that offers a range of tools designed to support research, planning, and organisation such as categorising research information, storing and integrating references, citations, articles and multimedia resources in one place.

*Cost: Free via the student computing centres and Queens Student Desktop (QSD)*



**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*



**Scholarcy** - A research tool for students that quickly summarises academic papers, extracts key points, and generates flashcards, helping to streamline the reading and comprehension process.

*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

**[Digital Wellbeing by Apple](#)** - a built-in feature on Apple devices (iPhones, iPads, and Macs) that helps users monitor and manage how they spend time on their devices. It promotes digital wellbeing by providing insights into device usage, setting limits for apps, and encouraging healthier habits.

*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*



**[Inspire Self Help Hub](#)** - Offers QUB students access to free mental health and wellbeing resources, including self-help tools, articles, and 24/7 support, promoting emotional resilience and personal development. The pin to access the hub is QUBHUB

*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](#)** - The Student Wellbeing Service offers various support options to help students maintain their mental health, emotional wellbeing, and overall resilience while studying. Services include one-to-one support, weekday drop-in sessions, counselling services, and online resources.

*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 **[Digital Skills Discovery Hub](#)**.

# Editing

**Adobe Creative Cloud Express** - This online tool enables you to tell stories and share ideas quickly and beautifully. Adobe Creative Cloud Express 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*



# Maths and STEM

**[Desmos](#)** - A powerful graphing calculator and math tool for students, offering interactive graphs, equations, and visualisations to aid in learning and solving complex mathematical problems.

*Cost: Free*



**[EquatIO for Google Chrome](#)** - A toolbar for students that allows easy creation of mathematical equations, formulas, and graphs using voice input, handwriting, or typing, enhancing accessibility and productivity in math-related tasks.

*Cost: Free (full version available through student computing centres and Queens Student Desktop (QSD))*



**[Mathtype for Google](#)** - A web-based tool for students that allows easy creation and editing of mathematical equations and formulas directly in Google Docs, Sheets, and Slides, with support for various symbols and formatting options.

*Cost: Free*



**[Mathway](#)** - A math problem solver for students that provides step-by-step solutions to a wide range of mathematical problems, from basic algebra to advanced calculus.

*Cost: Free*



**[Microsoft Math Solver](#)** - A free online tool that helps students solve math problems, providing step-by-step solutions, explanations, and practice for various topics, including algebra, calculus, and statistics.

*Cost: Free*





# Notetaking

**Evernote** - A powerful note-taking app for students, allowing text, images, web clipping, and audio notes, with easy organization using notebooks and tags, plus cross-device syncing for seamless access.

Cost: Free



**Google Keep** - A simple, intuitive note-taking app for students, offering color-coded notes, voice memos, checklists, reminders, and easy collaboration, with seamless syncing across devices using a Google account.

Cost: Free



**Microsoft OneNote** - A free, versatile note-taking tool ideal for students, offering features like text, handwritten notes, multimedia embedding, organization with notebooks and sections, and seamless syncing across devices for study and collaboration.

Cost: Free



**Notion** - An all-in-one workspace for students, combining note-taking, task management, databases, and collaboration in customizable pages, with seamless syncing across devices.

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 Time 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



**Goblin Tools** - A collection of small, simple, single-task tools, mostly designed to help neurodivergent people with tasks they find overwhelming or difficult.

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



# Reading and Writing

**Ginger Software** - An AI-powered writing assistant that can correct your texts, improve your style and boost your creativity. Ginger goes beyond spelling and grammar. It considers full sentences to suggest context-based corrections. This drastically speeds up your writing - especially for long emails or documents.

*Cost: Free*



**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*



**Immersive Readers** - Tools that enhance reading and writing for students by offering text-to-speech, adjustable fonts, line focus, translation, and language support, helping with comprehension, focus, and accessibility. Immersive readers are in-built accessibility features widely available on Microsoft, Apple and Android for free including **Canvas**.

*Cost: Free*



# Reading and Writing

**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*



**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*



**Read&Write for Google Chrome** - A free toolbar designed to support literacy and learning by assisting with reading, writing, and comprehension.

*Cost: Free (full version available through student computing centres and Queens Student Desktop (QSD))*



# 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*



**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*



**StudyLib** - Organise and share educational materials in powerful study collections. Students can share and access flashcards, study guides, and more.

*Cost: Free*





# 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.

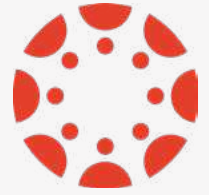
*Cost: Free*



# Text to Speech

**Canvas Accessibility** - for QUB students Provides a range of tools and features, such as screen reader compatibility, adjustable text sizes, colour contrast options, and keyboard navigation, ensuring an inclusive and accessible online learning experience.

*Cost: Free*



**NaturalReader** - A text-to-speech tool for students that converts written content into clear audio, supporting various file types and offering customisable voices and speeds to improve reading comprehension and accessibility.

*Cost: Free*



**Read&Write for Google Chrome** - Provides personalised support, making documents, web pages and Google Drive files (including PDFs & ePub) more accessible. For use anywhere, anytime and on any device, this discreet toolbar can help everyone engage with digital content in a way that suits their ability and learning style.

*Cost: Free (full version available through student computing centres and Queens Student Desktop (QSD))*



**Voice Dream** - A text-to-speech app for students, converting text from books, documents, and web pages into clear audio, with customizable voices, speed, and highlighting to enhance reading and comprehension.

*Cost: Free*



# Voice Transcription

**Google Speech to Text (Voice Recognition)** - A free, built-in tool for students that converts spoken words into text, ideal for dictating notes, transcribing lectures, and hands-free writing on Android devices and Google Docs.

*Cost: Free*



**Speechnotes** - A reliable and secure automatic speech-to-text service that enables you to quickly and accurately transcribe & translate your audio and video recordings, as well as dictate your notes instead of typing, saving you time and effort.

*Cost: Free*



**Transcribe** - A simple voice transcription tool for students, converting audio recordings into text, with features for easy editing and exporting, helping with lecture notes and research interviews.

*Cost: Free*



**Vox Sciences** - A voice transcription tool for students that converts spoken words into text, offering accurate transcriptions for lectures, meetings, and interviews, with a focus on ease of use and efficiency.

*Cost: Free*





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