



GUIDANCE FOR FULLY DIGITAL DELIVERY OF YOUR COURSE

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Introduction:

This brief guide aims to support you if you are going to delivery your course or module/s in a fully digital (or “online”) manner.

I. Key principles for digital delivery

We highlight below the similarities and differences between blended and fully digital delivery.

I.1 What does not change from your blended delivery practice

- i. **Module outcomes and assessments:** your students still need to demonstrate that they have met the module learning outcomes by the end of the module. If the lack of access to campus or practice (e.g. labs, placements) makes the approved outcomes or assessments impossible to complete, please talk to your Course Director/Head of School
- ii. **General scaffolded approach to learning:** the structure you originally designed for the progression of students’ learning in the module (week by week, or block by block) is still fit for purpose, as are all the activities that you had already “flipped” for students to complete during their independent study time

I.2 What needs to change

- i. **Method of delivery:** learning elements which were done “on-site” need to be replaced by a mixture of synchronous (“live”) and asynchronous (done at a time of the students’ choosing) digital activities. Students will need more flexibility to manage their studies around existing work or caring commitments; fully digital learning requires even more independent learning than blended learning. Thus, clear scaffolding and tutor support of asynchronous independent learning are very important. Synchronous online sessions require new strategies to engage students effectively in the online classroom
- ii. **Students need a “Learning roadmap”:** to help them to navigate their independent studies. You need to update the schedule of learning activities for the module – synchronous and asynchronous - and spell out the methods of delivery to students. The “learning roadmap” should allow flexibility and may require you to reorganise your Blackboard site
- iii. **Communication to students:** let students know about the changes and keep in touch via the ‘Announcements’ function (with push email function selected). When you first communicate a shift to fully digital learning include a link to the learning roadmap, the dates and times of the synchronous sessions, and what activities they need to engage with (optional or mandatory) before you next meet online. Aim to strike a balance between not being visible to students but not “hyperpresent”. See our [Blended Learning video overview: 04 Communications \(choose ‘SSO’ login\)](#) for an overview
- iv. **Support for students and monitoring of engagement:** set realistic expectations with students about what support is available and encourage them to take ownership of their own learning in asynchronous tasks. Prompting, sustaining and monitoring students’ engagement in asynchronous independent learning activities between synchronous sessions are key here. See our [Blended Learning video overview: 01 – Student Needs \[Availability & Motivation\] \(choose ‘SSO’ login\)](#). Provide support for students in becoming successful online learners, including a focus on digital capabilities and time management. See our [Blended](#)

[Learning video overview: 02 – Students Needs \[Confidence\] \(choose ‘SSO’ login\)](#) for an overview, our [Digital Capabilities site](#) and the guidance for students on the [Off-campus engagement and learning Padlet](#) via the [Learning Skills Hub](#) and other supporting hub modules.

- v. Direct students to their Faculty Learning Developer or Learning & Research Librarian for guidance on study skills to succeed in independent learning. [Embedded workshops](#) are available for module groups, or students can book a tutorial via the Learning Skills Hub.

2 Engaging students in synchronous digital sessions

This section focusses on the key differences between teaching synchronously on-site and synchronously digitally – typically via Blackboard Collaborate Classrooms.

2.1 Familiarise yourself and your students with the Collaborate platform

- i. Be sure to communicate to your students how and when they need to access the Collaborate classroom
- ii. Make your first online synchronous session low stakes by building in time to check that all students can access Collaborate and contribute; spend some time explaining the various functions and set clear classroom expectations for students (and yourself); refer to and implement the University’s [Digital Code of Conduct](#)
- iii. Expect to provide more explicit directions and prompts, including visual imagery (i.e. screenshots of Blackboard controls to highlight activity tools) than you would in on-site face-to-face sessions to help students acclimatise and participate in sessions
- iv. Signpost technical guidance and support for students including the [Collaborate orientation video for students](#) (also available via the Blackboard Help area for Collaborate)
- v. It may be easier for you to bring in guest speakers and experts to review and support students’ work
- vi. Unconstrained by a physical room, you can set up truly private (and quiet) breakout group spaces where students themselves have control of the screen and can work collaboratively on projects etc. (note: breakout groups are not recorded, students can take screen shots before reporting back instead)
- vii. More can be recorded in Collaborate than in a physical room using ReCap i.e. text chat (in the main room only), flip charting and all voices, not just those near the podium microphone

2.2 Structure the online synchronous sessions

- i. Outline the structure of online sessions to students: a clear structure and directions helps students to focus on learning when working in a physical environment that may not be well suited to learning
- ii. Synchronous online sessions can be more demanding for students and staff: allow more frequent breaks than you might in an in-person session
- iii. Keep inputs (students’ as well as your own) short – 3 minutes is a good rule of thumb. Longer inputs should be flipped outside the session e.g. your own, pre-recorded via ReCap, or links to others’ input. Also, consider whether some student activities could better be made asynchronous e.g. students pre-record ‘show and tell’ videos and post online via Padlet or debate in ‘for’ and ‘against’ groups in discussion forums; See our [Blended Learning video overview: 05 – Activity Types \(choose ‘SSO’ login\)](#) for discussion of the pros and cons of synchronous and asynchronous activities
- iv. Break the sessions into smaller activities, and allow for some serendipitous moments to occur, which are slightly “off” your planned structure

- v. As you would normally, ensure you include activities which allow for various learning processes: prior knowledge checks, application, reflection, investigation, presentation of argument, collaboration, etc.
- vi. Allow more time than you would in equivalent on-site activities for breakout group discussions
- vii. Spell out to students how the activities fit within the broader context of the module (relate them to learning outcomes, to previous and forthcoming activities and to assessments)
- viii. When you set a task, check that students have understood it before sending them into breakout rooms or independent tasks (e.g. let students post questions in the chat bar or ask them to rephrase the task back to you)
- ix. Schedule time to gather feedback from students, and time for Q&A, especially in relation to navigating the asynchronous activities and module assessments
- x. In concluding synchronous sessions, summarise key points and signpost what they need to do next in terms of independent learning (“homework”)

2.3 Keep checking student engagement and prompting them to contribute

- i. Where you have no eye contact, you can check students can still hear/see by asking for quick ‘status’ updates (e.g. happy faces/thumbs up) or via the text chat
- ii. Frequently ask quick yes/no type questions – students can respond via status updates (e.g. agree/disagree), text chat or use the built-in poll system
- iii. For more in-depth questions, invite students to use the mic, text chat, respond to a MCQ poll with pre-prepared questions and responses on a slide for speed (responses anonymous between students, but not to facilitator) or enable the annotation tools for students to do a virtual ‘flip chart’ either via the whiteboard tool or over preprepared slides (fully anonymous)
- iv. Pool thoughts, resources and brainstorm via text chat (including posting links), virtual flip charts or other tools (e.g. Mentimeter, Padlet OneDrive shared documents) and show progress by sharing your screen
- v. Use breakout groups for group activities. Explain to students the purpose of small group activities and how their engagement with them is key. Be clear about what time you’ll bring students back into the main room – you can ‘tour’ the breakouts and observe – or ask groups to summarise key points in a plenary in the main room
- vi. Turn on your in-session notifications so that you know when students join, leave, post chat messages or raise their hand

2.4 Visual aids

- i. Pre-upload slides/files – please share slides and handouts in advance of the session in an accessible format that is readable by a computer or portable device. To aid smooth running of your synchronous sessions, open any tabs and upload any resources to the Blackboard ‘files’ for sharing section in advance (note here you will need to save and share Word documents as PDFs, and using PDFs versions of Powerpoint slides is also advised)
- ii. Where possible, flip out media and pre-record computer-based demonstrations for students to watch before attending the synchronous session instead of doing live via screen sharing
- iii. Where screen sharing is necessary (e.g. need to interactively view and discuss points in a video, show live contributions to shared OneDrive document), ask for questions via hands-up and listen for notifications where you can’t see the text chat Be mindful of extra steps needed so students can hear the audio of a video you play

2.5 Be inclusive in your approach

- i. Upload any material in advance of the synchronous session so that students can access it

- ii. Record full-group sections of live sessions so that those who cannot attend can review later and use ReCap to auto-caption recordings. Let students know when the captioned recordings will be available (e.g. 2 working days after a session) and aim to be consistent with recording releases
- iii. Moderate discussions to ensure relatively equal participation (especially if a few students dominate); allow students to post in the chat bar and check that students who remain more “passive” are still engaging in their own way by offering more anonymous contributions (e.g. polls, virtual flip charts)

2.6 Create a human presence and a sense of community

- i. Use your own microphone and video functions and encourage students to do likewise where possible to create a sense of human presence and community. Some students understandably don’t want to show their physical environment: discuss and agree with your students whether and when you’ll ask them to turn on their cameras
- ii. Limit use of cameras where students are on slower home internet connections; consider using at the start to say hello, the end to say goodbye and at fixed points during the session where most needed (e.g. for physical demonstration, groupwork, performances)
- iii. Maximise group collaboration and peer activities using Collaborate chat and breakout rooms, Bb Discussions Boards, Office365 applications (such as OneDrive, Word and OneNote) and other interactive tools such as Padlet and Mentimeter

3 Keeping students engaged during independent study time

3.1 Carry on using the flipped method of learning

- i. “Flip” activities which cover knowledge acquisition and transmission. Various activities can be used: additional reading with questions and guidance, supporting videos, links to other verified websites, quizzes, guided discussions using the Discussion Boards or Learning Skills Hub modules
- ii. If using ReCap recordings, ensure that your recordings are short (6-7 minutes), or, if longer, divide them into chapters so that students can navigate them when revising
- iii. Activities flipped should be presented clearly in the “learning roadmap” of the module, so that students know when and how to engage with them

3.2 Be inclusive in your approach

- i. Using [Blackboard Ally](#), make your written material as accessible as possible
- ii. Ensure all flipped recordings are [captioned using ReCap](#).
- iii. Allow as much flexibility as possible on formative deadlines: students should be able to engage with activities in their own time
- iv. Consider providing clearly signposted options for students to choose from so that students can engage with the methods of learning they prefer (watching recordings, reading text, learning by doing, etc.)

3.3 Encourage students to take ownership of their learning

- i. Provide more detailed task guidance than you might face-to-face and/or provide an exemplar; consider a variety of formats including quick videos (e.g. made using ReCap)
- ii. Consider releasing tasks in blocks, rather than all at once, to provide flexibility but not overwhelm students while helping to keep them on task (e.g. two weeks’ worth at a time)
- iii. Set a recommended timescale/wordcount to complete for each task to help students manage their workloads (e.g. ‘no more than 10 minutes’, ‘no more than 200 words’)
- iv. Prompt and support engagement in independent learning activity through the “learning roadmap”, structure of your Blackboard and verbal prompts at the end of each live session

- v. Post independent learning tasks in Blackboard with opportunities to post responses online. Examples might include posting answers to questions around lecture input/readings, critiques of sources, links to resources to support learning, assessment outlines/drafts, videos of practice, performance, reflections on additional learning opportunities, or other creative works in progress. Ask students to share their reflections – written, audio or video - on the independently learning tasks and/or progress with assessments in relation to individual goals (e.g. future employment ambitions)
- vi. Check the Blended Learning section of the [LTE pages](#) for in depth advice and support, including options for sharing posts with peers and/or just privately with yourself, as well as options for enabling students to post anonymously which may increase engagement
- vii. Provide assessment preparation activities for students to complete in their own time, e.g. sharing outlines or drafts for comment and contributing to assessment FAQs
- viii. Moderate the Discussion Boards, Padlets, etc. at set times, but do not become “over-present” on these platforms
- ix. Provide a mechanism for feedback on students’ posts. This doesn’t have to mean individual feedback from you – consider encouraging peer comments, providing generalised ‘group’ feedback; where you do provide individual feedback, consider using emoticons and/or ratings (e.g. thumbs up) to quickly acknowledge individual posts or setting a deadline point for posting to receive more detailed individual feedback
- x. Create opportunities for students to review their own understanding of concepts. For example: asynchronous digital quizzes with pre-programmed feedback and/or digital polls
- xi. Use students’ responses to independent learning tasks to prepare ahead for discussion and further exploration in synchronous sessions

4 Evaluating effectiveness of Learning and Teaching practices

You should regularly sense-check the effectiveness of the learning activities that you have put in place, monitor student engagement with them and provide support to those who appear to be disengaged or struggling. See our [Blended Learning video overview: 07 - Engagement, Review and Support](#) for an overview.

- i. **Seek regular feedback to check that students understand the activities** (e.g. via chat section of Collaborate, discussion board, discussion with reps, listen to students’ discussions during breakout sessions)
- ii. **Set students activities which will help you evaluate the quality of their learning:** you could use a quick quiz of a few questions on Bb Collaborate or Mentimeter or a more substantial formative assessment which covers part of the summative assessment task
- iii. **Evaluate your own practice and make changes where needed:** based on student feedback, and other forms of evaluation, determine whether you need to adapt your L&T practice before the end of the module
- iv. **Monitor student engagement with digital activities wherever possible:** keep an eye on who attends and participate in the synchronous sessions (including comments in chat), use the [CCCU Student Engagement Report](#) to check other forms of engagement. Email students who are disengaged promptly to see how you can help. If the disengagement persists, inform the Course Director and/or Personal Academic Tutor

- v. **Offer support to students:** for individual or very small group tutorials, you can use MS Teams as well as Collaborate. Set your availability using “virtual” office hours and publicise to students the time it will take you to respond to email/MS Teams queries (do set autoreplies when you are not working).
- vi. **Ensure students fill in the end of module evaluation questionnaire:** this [questionnaire](#) can easily be embedded into Blackboard. It will help you and the rest of the course team decide how you progress the delivery of the course into the next semester/trimester/academic year

5 Where to get help

5.1 Guidance

- i. Blended Learning section of the [LTE pages](#): detailed activity design and delivery advice, using various Learning Platform Suite systems for sharing posts with peers and/or just privately with yourself; case studies and links to training and learning technology support
- ii. [Digital Capabilities site](#)
- iii. Guides for students on [our blended learning approach](#), our [main learning technologies and IT systems](#), guidance on how to be an effective online learning on the [Off-campus engagement and learning Padlet](#) and the [Learning Skills Hub](#)

5.2 Staff development and training

- i. Contact your Digital Academic Developer for advice on staff development & training opportunities, including how to do the things suggested in this guide, and to request bespoke School/subject/course-level staff development
- ii. Contact your Learning Developer or Learning & Research Librarian to help you with [study skills development opportunities](#)
- iii. See StaffSpace and the [Blackboard](#) Help section for more in-depth staff development and guidance for designing and facilitating learning
- iv. [Learning Platform Suite technical training](#) – flipped with initial via session recordings and hands-on via surgeries to be available when you need it
- v. Weekday TEL surgery drop-in sessions 1-2pm in [Collaborate](#)

5.3 Support

- i. Digital Academic Developer: advice on designing online activities - efficiency as well as effectiveness, encouraging, sustaining and monitoring engagement; supporting development of students’ digital capabilities; facilitating sharing of practice, ‘support the supporter’ advice to enable colleagues to support students
- ii. Learning Technology Skills Developer/TEL Ops technical support team (via IT Service Desk)
- iii. [Learning Skills Team](#)
- iv. Faculty/School Directors of Learning & Teaching
- v. Your colleagues can help you too: share your practice with each other.

Quick Checklist:

Focus on learning outcomes and learning roadmap	As with blended delivery, your students still need to meet the module learning outcomes and demonstrate this by completing aligned summative assessments. Do still use your week-by-week or block structure and any flipped learning activities you've made
Structure the student learning journey and communicate effectively	You'll be replacing face-to-face "live" sessions with a mix of "live" or "synchronous" digital classroom sessions and asynchronous tasks that students complete in their own time. Students will need a 'learning roadmap' and regular communication from you to help them to stay engaged
Familiarise students to the digital environment and ensure live sessions are interactive and keep students engaged	Make your first synchronous online session a time for you and students to acclimatise to the online classroom's functions, resolve worries and set up an online classroom agreement. In all synchronous sessions, aim to keep monologues (from you or students) no longer than 3 minutes – longer presentations can be recorded and watched outside the "live" session
Prompt students and monitor engagement	Provide more prompts opportunities for questions and checks for engagement to support your students in their transition for fully digital learning. Follow up with students who aren't engaging promptly to offer more support
Have breaks during synchronous sessions, and evaluate your effectiveness by asking for feedback	Build in regular breaks and chunk synchronous sessions into engaging activities with regular plenaries and check-ins to sustain engagement. Seek and act on student feedback on what is and isn't working for students in the sessions throughout the semester to optimise students' experience of the module. Ask all students to fill in the module evaluation
Encourage the development of a learning community	Upload slides and any resources that you need to share on the Blackboard Module page and the Collaborate room in advance of the session. Where possible aim for everyone to have their cameras on at the start and end of sessions and to use regular breakout group activities to help to create peer-to-peer learning with a 'human' touch. Record full-group sessions and share captioned recordings via ReCap
Make material accessible and encourage independent learning	Provide captioned flipped recordings (ideally not longer than 7 mins each) and readings along with opportunities for students to review their own learning and get feedback from their peers or group feedback from you (e.g. in the form of self-marking quizzes or discussion boards). Use Ally to boost inclusivity and provide guides on time or wordcount to help students to manage their workload and stay engaged with their independent learning between synchronous sessions
Tell students when you are available and how they can reach you	Set up online office hours and communicate these to students along with how you wish them to book support and whether you want to meet using Microsoft Teams or Blackboard