



# DIGITAL CODE OF CONDUCT

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## 1. Purpose of the Digital Code of Conduct

The Digital Code of Conduct aims to ensure participants (students, staff, members of the public) in a digital communication activity benefit from the activity and enjoy the experience in line with the University's [Mission and Values](#). Digital communication activity includes a webinar, video conference, online chat, or discussion forum. As such, it includes Blackboard Collaborate, Blackboard Discussion Board, Microsoft Teams and Mentimeter.

Canterbury Christ Church University commits to providing a safe, harassment-free digital communication activity experience for everyone. This commitment is regardless of economic

background, age, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, race, ethnicity, religion, belief or any other protected characteristic. Whilst respecting freedom of speech and opinion within the law, we do not tolerate abuse of any form in the digital environment.

Organisers of events with external participants should forward, or provide a link to, this Code in advance or guide them through the Code at the beginning of the event.

## 2. Digital Code of Conduct

Participants can share their views and opinions, even if they are controversial. It follows the same rules that apply to the physical, on-site environment.

There is an expectation for all participants in the digital communication activity follow the codes of conduct (for staff, students and external speakers) and associated guidance. There are links to these in the [Appendix](#).

When working in shared, online spaces, you need to:

- treat others with courtesy and respect
- safeguard the confidentiality and personal security of yourself and others
- avoid committing or supporting plagiarism
- understand and respect copyright
- remember a peer or staff member can read any information you share
- think carefully before posting any deeply personal data such as your religious or philosophical beliefs, political views, sexual orientation, your mother's maiden name or your detailed location. Personal information relates to an identified or identifiable individual. You can find details of what constitutes personal data on the [General Data Protection Regulation](#) pages.
- stop any inappropriate behaviour immediately when asked to do so by any participant
- report any severe or persistent inappropriate behaviour

When working in shared, online spaces, you must **NOT** write or share anything that is:

- likely to cause, harm or distress to any individual or group of individuals based on actual or perceived personal characteristics
- defamatory, obscene, discriminatory, illegal, incites hatred or damaging to the University's reputation
- confidential or infringes another person's privacy; for example, do not post someone's contact details without their permission
- sent to you privately and not intended to be shared with others

- likely to make someone feel bullied or harassed
- malicious or potentially harmful to others.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour include: inappropriate use of verbal or written comments; producing or sharing indecent images, photographs or recordings; and any actions or behaviours another person could consider to be intimidation, bullying or harassment.

- You must not engage in commercial activity.

Participants acting inappropriately may be sanctioned or expelled from the digital activity at the discretion of the organiser(s).

### **3. General Rules for Participant Conduct in a Digital Communication Activity**

The following general rules and guidance ensure participants have a safe and secure experience during the digital communication activity:

#### **3.1 Prepare for the session**

- Ensure you set up your device or system. Guidance on supported digital communication platforms is on the [Blackboard Help](#) pages (for students and staff), [Microsoft Teams Help](#) pages (for staff), and [Computing Systems and Learning Technologies](#) pages (for students).
- Familiarise yourself with the digital communication activity platform used for the activity.
- Follow the session organiser(s)' instructions for the activity. The organiser may ask you to mute your microphone and only use the chat.
- Organisers should allow participants to inform them of their specific needs.
- If some recommendations make you uncomfortable or hinder your ability to engage with the activity because of your situation. For example
  - you might not have or do not want to use your webcam. You do not have to switch on the webcam.
  - you might be unable to use the chat and rely on the microphone or camera to communicate. Tell the organiser if you are limited in your use of the technology.

#### **3.2 Do not share links given to you.**

- Please do not share the link to the digital communication activity with anyone else unless it is an advertised public the event.
- Only people authorised by the organiser may attend. The organiser may remove any uninvited attendees from the digital communication activity.
- If you accidentally share the link with someone, tell the organiser as soon as possible.

### 3.3 Register for the session

- When entering the digital communication activity, please register with your first name and surname if asked to sign up. It is so the organiser can recognise you.
- If you sign up with an unrecognisable name, the organiser may remove you from the activity.

### 3.4 Think about your environment

- Ensure you are in an environment that is safe, comfortable and suitable for engaging with your display screen equipment, for the duration of the activity. If it is a long session, stand up periodically.
- Be aware your digital communication activity enables you to share your video or microphone. Ensure your backdrop and visible clothing are appropriate.
- If there are any unexpected noises, mute your microphone or stop the video as needed, until you are safely able to re-activate the session.

### 3.5 Engage with courtesy and confidentiality

- Treat others with courtesy and respect, as you would in a face-to-face conversation.
- We are an academic community. You should feel free to be controversial and outspoken with your ideas but never offensive or hurtful.
- Do not take or share photographs, images or recordings of the digital activity unless you have prior authorised consent of the individual(s).
- Ensure images or recordings do not show names or personal information. The activity may be part of a taught module covered by the [Digital Learning Capture Policy](#). In that case, there is a recording made to support the learning of students on the module/course.
- Although it seldom happens, organisers can and will remove content they deem unsuitable.

### 3.6 Post Messages Effectively

- Be brief in posting messages. Several short posts can have a more significant impact than a single long posting.
- Write in an informal style, but take a moment to check grammar and spelling.
- Be aware of possible misunderstandings. Another person may sometimes misunderstand an online message because the other person's facial expression is unseen. You can use emoticons to show you are smiling, surprised, sad, embarrassed and so on.

- Please do not write in capital letters because it can look as though you are SHOUTING and is harder to read.
- Avoid using too many abbreviations. It is OK to use standard abbreviations but do not write whole messages using abbreviations used in texting.
- When you reply to a message, think about setting the scene by quoting part of the original message. It makes it easier for readers to see what you have done if you put the quoted text between double angle brackets, << and >>.
- Be prepared to clarify your meaning if asked.

### 3.7 Think about Information Security

- Be aware of the danger of Malware or other IT Security threats shared using the chat functionality.
- Be particularly careful if the event is open to the public.

### 3.8 Act with Academic Integrity

- Always give credit the original author, as you would in other academic writing. If quoting someone else's work, use speech marks and the usual referencing system.
- Avoid committing or supporting plagiarism. Do not discuss answers to work counted for assessment. Remember, even if the cut-off date has passed, some people may have extensions. Of course, you can discuss freely work not contributing to an assessment.
- Be aware materials produced by others may be protected by copyright.

### 3.9 Do not act inappropriately

- If the behaviour is inappropriate, organisers will mute microphone/stop video/stop chat. Organisers may warn you if your behaviour continues, they will remove you from the session.
- If the behaviour is serious, the organiser will remove you immediately removed from the session. The organiser may withdraw your place on future sessions
- The organiser will report serious breaches of this Code, with appropriate action taken under the respective staff, student or visitor policies/procedures.

### 3.10 Report any Issues

- If you are concerned about the appropriateness of an activity or someone during the digital communication activity or event, contact the session's organiser immediately.
- If you are a student, you may also wish to discuss any issues with your Personal Academic Tutor.

## Appendix

### Policies, Codes and Guidance applying to Students and Staff

- [Core Regulations for the Use of IT and Guidance](#)
- [Prevent Duty](#)
- [Safeguarding Statement of Policy](#)
- [Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech and External Speakers](#)
- [Data Protection](#)
- [Data Protection and Off-Campus Learning](#)

### Student Policies, Codes and Guidance

- [Student Code of Conduct and Unacceptable Behaviour Policy](#)
- [Code of Student Professional Conduct](#) (for those students on programmes leading to a professional qualification)
- [Social Media Guidelines for Students](#)

### Staff Policies, Codes and Guidance

- [Staff Code](#)
- [Dignity at Work](#)
- [Copyright Guidance](#)
- [Social Media Policy for Staff](#)

### Version Control Statement

Version:	1
Document title:	Digital Code of Conduct
Author name:	Learning and Teaching Enhancement
Approved date:	14 December 2020