

Many of you may be starting to learn online and at a distance for the first time or increasing your use of this in the coming weeks due to the impact of Covid19 coronavirus. This might feel a bit daunting at first. Remember that, even though it might feel like you are just talking to a computer, you are engaging with a group of other people you may already know from your course or you will get to know in the coming weeks.

**Be kind to yourself and help one another.**

This is an unsettling time for students and staff. Give yourself time to adapt to a new learning environment. Be proactive, communicate with your classmates and college friends. Set up course WhatsApp groups (or another platform if preferred) for offline chat and support. Use shared documents and course discussion boards to share notes and ideas. Form small virtual study or reading groups and work through online materials together. Don't forget to ask questions if you're unsure of anything.

**Make sure you're 'online ready'.** If there is any reason why you will find it difficult to engage in online learning (e.g. poor WiFi connection, don't have a digital device, don't have the right software, need accessibility support) notify your lecturer in case alternative arrangements can be put in place.

**Familiarise yourself with the virtual learning environment (VLE).** Our VLE is called MyCity. You may also receive specific instructions from your course team on where to find course-related information.

**Find out what is expected of you as a learner.**

Find out what is expected of you in the online environment and familiarise yourself with any assessment requirements. If you're unclear on any of the requirements, check in with your lecturer as soon as you can.

**Build a routine.** Don't think of the time at home as time off; see it as a normal day at college. Create a timetable for yourself, including breakfast and study breaks, any lecture / seminar times. Remember to check any office hours or timetabled sessions on your course(s) and any deadlines. You may wish to use Google/Outlook calendar to keep track of your

activities. There are many time management techniques, so find one which works for you [here](#).

**Make use of online communication methods.**

Live chat and discussion boards are an excellent way to immerse yourself in the course and they will make the learning experience more active and engaging for you and for the lecturer. Ask questions, comment on what others are saying, and develop the conversations. You will communicate in different ways on various online formats (discussion boards, social media, online groups). Be professional and appropriate, but don't be afraid to project your personality and show that you are a real person.

**Look for online reading material in the library.**

Through the online library, you'll have access to e-books, e-journals and other materials to help you complete your course including assignments. You can also have online support from the team of Academic Support Librarians and will receive an induction to the Library at your Induction. If you don't know how to access library material online ask your lecturer or contact [library@cityofglasgowcollege.ac.uk](mailto:library@cityofglasgowcollege.ac.uk)

**Be patient.** Learning online is also new for many lecturers and is as much of a change for them as for you, so please be patient with them if things don't go right first time.

**Online learning does not mean learning**

**alone.** There is support here for you. Keep in touch with your course and ask for help when you need it. Staff are always happy to hear from you and will continue to support you to keep learning.

## Check Your Environment

- **Set up a workstation that you can use for studying.** This should be a comfortable, quiet space, free of distractions but with good internet connection. A desk or a table can be much more comfortable in the long term than a bed or a sofa. You may wish to have home comforts (water, tea, sweets, fruit, tissues) at arms length so you're able to settle in and stay motivated. Remember to take regular breaks away from your screen and your studies to rest, relax, eat, exercise and get outdoors if you can.
  - **Be aware of your surroundings** and background, how you sound and look.
  - **Speak** slowly and to camera.
  - If using video, **check** lighting and quality of audio from your microphone.
  - Be aware of and **limit noise** in your environment – e.g. pets, kettles, domestic appliances etc.
  - For **better audio quality**, use a headset rather than the microphone built-in to your device.
  - Check what is visible behind you posters, photos etc. or **'blur' background**.
  - If using a laptop, **consider raising it** so that you are looking directly into the screen.
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## Ground Rules for Online Behaviour

- **Respect other people's time.** Be early. Remember you will need to login, use a Zoom (or other) virtual 'room' password etc. Your Lecturer will let you into the room at the start of the class.
- **You're on camera.** Your Lecturer and classmates will be able to see you. Wear clothing that is appropriate and that does not distract or offend. Use a virtual background that is neutral. Make sure that the area behind you is not distracting or displaying personal items.
- **You may be recorded.** Your Lecturer will tell you if the lecture is being recorded.
- **Control noise.** Keep your microphone on mute. Your Lecturer will tell you when to unmute.
- **Be careful with what you share.** Don't share personal information such as your address, phone number or email. Do not share anything illegal or inappropriate.
- **Pay attention.** Unless you are using your mobile phone as part of the lesson, put it away. Pay attention. Concentrate on your learning.
- **Show respect.** Don't use language or signs that are rude or offensive. Don't write anything inappropriate in the group chat. Raise a virtual hand when you want to speak or follow the Lecturer's guidance on speaking.
- **Mind the rules.** Remember that college rules, policies and procedures still apply to online learning. If you don't follow the rules, you may face disciplinary action.