

Introduction to the Online Classroom – Guidance for Learners

OCSW is here to help learners in adapting to online working to make it as easy as possible for you. Online learning works by giving you course material over the internet. During the online course, you might complete homework, watch videos or take quizzes. If you have ever used Google searches, you have already used the internet for learning!

Your tutor will give you the details you need to get started. They will also let you know what materials you need and how to find them. Most of our online courses will take place using Microsoft Teams Classrooms. It is easy to use and if you have any questions you can ask your tutor. There are several things you can do to make the most of your online learning experience.

Have a place to study

Where you study is important to your online learning so take time to prepare it. Make sure it is place is quiet, organised, distraction-free, and available for use when you need it. Consider turning your phone off and logging off all social networks when studying as they can be distracting.

Take part in online discussions

Online learning doesn't mean learning alone. Connecting with your classmates in an online classroom will help you to still feel part of a group. Please ensure that you are mindful of your online tone and be respectful if you disagree with other members of your online group. Don't be afraid to ask questions, your tutor is there to help and support your learning.

Ask for help when you need it

Please ask your tutor for help if you need it, we don't want you to fall behind. Falling behind might make you feel low and you may not be able to finish the online course - so just ask, we want to help you. By asking for help you may also help your classmates as they may be having the same problems. Keep in mind that if you don't ask for help when you need it, your tutor may never know that something is wrong.

Preparing for your first online lesson

Your tutor will provide instructions on what to do. Here are a few things to remember:

- The first lesson is always a challenge until everyone is comfortable so please be patient
- With lots of people talking it can be hard to teach so please follow help provided by your tutor
- Have a pen and paper handy so you can note down any questions you may have
- Internet speed can vary in households so try turning other devices off if you are having problems
- Be aware what others may see when your video is on, such as pictures in the background, other family members, the clothes you are wearing

Staying keen to learn

To make sure that you stay keen in your online learning experience consider following these tips:

- Make a study routine at your own comfortable pace
- Never forget the reason why you took this course
- Accept that you will have good and not so good days
- Have healthy snacks nearby to boost your energy
- Reward yourself every time you complete a task
- Stay positive - we are here to help you
- Take regular eye breaks
- Look after your mental health
- Have fun! You know there will be others on your course, so you won't be alone

Staying safe online

We would like to remind you to be vigilant when using the internet. It gathers lots of information about you which you might not want to be public. Microsoft Teams Classroom is being run through OCSW and is a secure platform, but it's important now, as much as ever while learning online, to remember a few important basics to keep yourselves safe:

Don't share passwords

Even for your online learning and not even with your Tutor! Our servers log all kinds of information about our learners, so please keep this secure as we don't want people gaining unexpected access to your information. Choose a password no-one will guess and don't reuse passwords.

Remember your Rights and Responsibilities

You are still a learner on our courses so please remember to follow the codes of conduct stated in your Learner Handbook. We want all our learners to feel safe, so please be respectful to each other and your tutor online.

Make sure your equipment is set up comfortably

Your back should be straight, and your eyes aligned with the top of your monitor.

Be careful with your emails

If you get unexpected messages telling you about that amazing £10,000 holiday you've won, it's probably too good to be true, so don't open it, delete it! Watch out for fraudulent emails or emails trying to trick you to give out personal information

Be mindful of things you have in the background

If you have your video camera on, other learners and staff can see you. It's never a good idea to have personal photos and belongings on show. Please dress as you would if you were attending the classroom.

If you receive anything unusual, including any unsolicited messages whilst you are learning online with us, **do not open it** - discard it and inform your tutor immediately.

It is not permitted to record or photograph staff or learners without the tutor and the subject's express permission.

Remember: Keep your personal information private, be mindful of what you share on social media, check your online account carefully, keep your virus software up to date and report any concerns immediately to your tutor.

We want you to enjoy your learning experience safely!