



Online Learning Platform Policy and Guidelines

Background

This policy outlines the recommended process for establishing online learning platforms for delivery of teaching and learning at RuTC. It includes guidelines for teachers and managers to support the implementation of consistent best practice for organising online learning environments, communicating with student groups, organising teaching and learning resources and delivering effective online and blended learning. This policy should be used in conjunction with the Learning Technology Framework document which outlines criteria for the effective delivery of online teaching and learning.

Use of College authorised learning platforms

The College has two authorised learning platforms available. These are Moodle and Microsoft Teams. The policy of RuTC is that all teaching staff should ONLY use these platforms to deliver their online learning environments to students.

- Teaching staff can use either of these platforms exclusively for their method of online delivery. However, where there is a justifiable case, teachers may use a combination of both platforms if it is agreed to benefit delivery to students.
- Restricting use of online learning platforms to these two authorised providers allows the Learning Technologies and IT Support teams to focus their support and provide more expertise.
- The College also benefits from support arrangements with 3rd party suppliers of both these platforms which afford the College further development and training opportunities for both support staff and teaching staff.

Use of other recognised 3rd party learning tools

Whilst the College does restrict the use of a primary learning platform to those provided by Moodle and Microsoft Teams, teachers are encouraged to use other 3rd party online learning tools to enrich learning where appropriate as follows:

- Examples of these 3rd party learning tools include Kahoot, Socrative, Flipgrid etc. All of which can provide real benefits to teaching and learning for students.
- When using such tools with students, teachers should ensure they provide access to the tool or resource via a link from the primary learning platform (i.e. Moodle/Teams) in order to ensure all online learning can be accessed from the single, central platform.

Guidelines for establishing your online learning environment for students

Agreeing a consistent of approach

Prior to teachers establishing their online learning environments for students, it is recommended there is agreement established between Heads of School and teachers on the standard approach to be taken.

The College recognises a blanket approach across all Schools may not be appropriate given the different nature of delivery on different programs. However, there should be an agreement across staff for each school accounting for any exceptions justified.

Heads of School may wish to consult their teachers, IT Support staff, Learning Technologies staff and their Line Manager to establish an agreed approach prior to instructing teachers of the approach to be taken.

Ensuring a consistent approach to establishing online learning environments will have the following benefits:

- Students will benefit from a consistent approach from all teachers delivering on their course and across different courses where relevant.
- Teaching staff will benefit from a single, central location for all teacher resources allowing for easier access, collaboration and sharing of resources between teachers within a department and cross-departmentally.
- IT Support and Learning Technologies staff will benefit from a single, central platform to support which should improve the efficiency of support provided to teachers and students
- Heads of School and Assistant Heads of School will be able to better monitor the number of online learning spaces created for students and more easily ensure they are consistently and effectively used.

Recommended approaches to establishing your online learning environment

The recommended approach to establishing online learning environments is as follows:

- Agree as a School which of the two authorised platforms will be your platform of choice for all students (noting exceptions where necessary).

Below you will find guidelines for each of the two platforms, Moodle and Microsoft Teams. Links to online support are included where relevant.

Microsoft Teams



Creating your Class Team - ([Online Support](#))

- Each teacher should create or be part of a Class Team for each of their groups of students. Each student in the class will need to be manually [added](#) to the Class Team by searching on the student name.
- Heads/Assistant Heads of School may wish to be added to each group in addition to teachers.

Sharing documents with your Class - ([Online Support](#))

- Any documents to be shared with students in the group should be added to the '**Files**' section of the Class Team.
- Any documents the teacher wishes to remain read only by students should be saved in the '**Class Materials**' folder under the Files tab which is automatically created by default in each Class Team.
- Any documents stored outside of the '**Class Materials**' folder will be editable online by students in your Class Team.

Setting up your Class Notebook - ([Online Support](#))

- For each Class Team created, the teacher should create a Class Notebook. This Class Notebook establishes an online collaboration space for the group, plus a private student notebook for each of the students in the group.
- Within the Content Library (read only for students) and the Collaboration Space (editable by students) it is recommended sections are created either by teaching week (e.g. Week 1, Week 2, Week 3 etc.) or by Module title. Heads of School may wish to agree this with teachers if they want to keep consistency across all Class Teams.
- Whiteboard notes, resources, information sheets and online activities such as quizzes can be made accessible via pages within these sections in either the Collaboration Space, Content Library or Students Notebooks as appropriate.

Communicating with your Class - ([Online Support](#))

- It is recommended you encourage your students to download the Microsoft Teams app to their phones via their app store. The app is free, with students able to sign in using their Student ID number and their college password.
- From within your Class Team, use the **'Posts'** tab to send messages to all students in your group.
- You can attach files to messages, add photos, videos or external links to your messages as you wish.
- When posting messages to your group, begin the message by typing **'@team'**. This will ensure all students in your group receive the message as a notification.
- If you wish to communicate with an individual student you will need to click on the **'Chat'** option on the left-hand menu bar within Teams, click the new chat icon and enter the student's name. When you have found their name, click on it and they will be added as a recipient. You can then begin typing your message.
- If you wish, you can add a second or third student into a chat to establish a group chat where necessary.

Online Meetings/Lessons – ([Online Support](#))

- When delivering lessons to students remotely you should **'Schedule a Meeting'** from within the relevant Class Team by clicking the dropdown arrow next to the **'Meet'** button in the Posts tab. You don't need to invite students individually just ensure that the Team Name is listed in the Meeting Details and every member of that Team will receive a notification.
- Once the meeting has been sent, it will appear in the messages under the Posts tab. You can then configure the meeting by clicking on the message and clicking **'Meeting Options'**. Here you can restrict who is able to present, whether you want new joiners to be held in a 'lobby' etc.
- During the meeting/lesson, you will be able to control who is muted, who can share their desktop and, if necessary, you will be able to end an individual student's access to the meeting.
- You also have the option to record your meeting/lesson. The recording will be made available in the Posts tab following the end of your session

Creating Assignments - ([Online Support](#))

- When setting assignments for your students you can use the **'Assignments'** tab within your Class Team.
- When creating a new assignment, you can add an assignment brief, a template document, links to other resources etc.
- You can select a **'Due Date'** and **'Time'** and when you want your students to be notified of the assignment.
- Following the due date, you can review, grade and provide feedback to students on their submitted work.



Creation of your Moodle Course

- The MIS System will automatically create a Moodle course for each program of study as well as adding the students enrolled to that course in the process.
- Teachers will also be enrolled on their relevant Moodle courses but any amendments that may be required should be reported to moodle-support@rutc.ac.uk where they will be updated manually by the Learning Technologies Dept.
- By default, all Moodle courses will display in the '**Grid Topics**' layout. Each of these topics should be used to represent one module of learning. The appropriate resources and activities should be created here to ensure consistency for students.

Creating resources

- Within each of the Topic sections of your Moodle course, you can create several different '[resources](#)', such as adding documents, creating weblinks, creating pages or books.
- Resources added should be given clear and meaningful titles so students can easily identify the them.

Use of Online Activities

- There are range of different default '[Activities](#)' you can add to your Moodle courses for completion by students including glossaries, forums and quizzes.
- There is a library of interactive Blended Learning Activities available for use within your Moodle courses. These can be viewed by searching "BLC" in '**Search Courses**' above the blue menu bar on Moodle.
- If you wish to use any of the BLC resources with your students, please contact moodle-support@rutc.ac.uk. The Learning Technologies Dept. will upload the required resources to your Moodle course and set up completion tracking so you will be able to view how far your students are progressing through the activities.
- '[Assignments](#)' can be created to which students can submit their work. You can adjust the settings to set the due date, allow for resubmissions, late hand in etc.

Using Turnitin to check for plagiarism

- When creating assignments, it is recommended you use '**Turnitin Assignment**' where appropriate to ensure any work submitted by your students is checked by Turnitin's software for evidence of plagiarism.

Safeguarding

Our safeguarding responsibilities and statutory duties to safeguard and protect children remain when utilising technology to support learning.

For many staff and students this may be a new experience, and we want to ensure that all staff are aware of how to keep themselves and their students safe while working in this way.

The full Government guidelines on Safeguarding and remote education during coronavirus (COVID-19) are available [here](#) and The London Grid for Learning has produced a very helpful [guide](#) to remote teaching. The South West Grid for Learning has also produced a [list](#) of considerations when using video conferencing.

Important points to note from this guidance are:

- A video call should never take place with only one staff member and one 16-19 yrs. student.
- All those taking part in an online video call should ensure no personal or inappropriate information is in shot (e.g. phone numbers, beds, adult material).
- If a teacher is beginning a remote lesson online, they should ensure that video remains turned off until more than one student is on the call.
- Teachers should never broadcast from a personal YouTube channel, but should use one linked to and controlled by their College. RuTC-approved remote teaching platforms include Microsoft Teams (and other Microsoft apps) and Moodle.
- Where possible the 'call' function in Teams should be used for voice calls. Where a telephone call is required, staff may use personal mobile phones but MUST dial 141 before the phone number – this will withhold the caller's number from the recipient. Student numbers must not be stored in personal phones and must be deleted after calling.

Any concerns that arise from using online teaching resources such as video chats must be reported to safeguarding@rutc.ac.uk immediately.

The [RuTC eSafety Policy](#) and [RuTC Acceptable Use Policy](#) apply to all staff and students, and the staff [Code of Conduct](#) remains applicable to staff.

Using Teams for voice calls

In the Chat tab, click the '**new**' icon (a box with a pencil in it) and search for a student. Click the **Telephone** icon in the top right-hand corner of the chat.

Turning off video in a chat

If you have accidentally turned on video during a chat you can turn it off again. If you move your cursor during the chat a bar will appear at the bottom of the screen with icons that allow you to switch off video and mute your microphone.

Further Support and Training

It is recommended that all staff join the '**Technology for Learning**' Team on Microsoft Teams to keep up to date with latest developments and to post enquiries in the '**Questions and Queries**' channel.

Additional support is available from IT Support and the Learning Technologies Dept.

Below is a list of online support and training materials for Moodle and Microsoft Teams for your reference.

[Moodle Support Guide](#)

[Microsoft Teams for Education Support](#)

[Microsoft Education Center Teacher Training Pack \(Requires sign in with Office 365\)](#)

['You Can' tips and tricks videos](#)