



# ELC ONLINE TEACHING & LEARNING POLICY FOR STUDENTS

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A guide to how you will use online and digital technologies and tools to assist your learning and assessment in the English Language Centre

Directorate of Student Experience & Enhancement

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## SECTION 1 – PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

### INTRODUCTION

Studying at the English Language Centre (ELC) has always included the use of some technology to support teaching and learning, such as AV equipment and computers in the classroom, the University's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) and a range of other apps. However, with the enormous changes to teaching and learning that have been made in response to the global pandemic this year, in particular the move to fully online classes, we want to be clear about our policies with regards to the various tools and technologies that are used in our online delivery and also to explain how you and your teachers will use them. We intend for these policies to continue to cover the use of digital tools for teaching and learning in the future, for hybrid and face-to-face classes as well.

### SCOPE

There are many digital tools, platforms and apps available currently, and these are constantly changing and expanding. We will not try to provide a list of specific examples, but instead we aim to set out our general policy towards the use of technology to enhance and enrich the learning experience for our students. We will refer to core platforms and technologies used by the ELC, but where specific tools are referenced, this will usually be to give an example of a particular usage, rather than describing or delineating.

## SECTION 2 – ELC POLICY IN RELATION TO TECHNOLOGY ENHANCED LEARNING (TEL) AND ONLINE LEARNING

At the ELC our first and main priority is always to support our students in achieving their learning goals. Whether in a classroom, working with pen and paper, or working with a keyboard over the internet, successful learning begins with a confident and independent learner who is ready to take responsibility for their learning and make the best use possible of the available tools. The other crucial aspect is the expert support and guidance our teachers provide, and the relationship between teachers and students that provides students with the encouragement and knowledge they need to succeed.

Technology in all its various forms can be a useful tool to aid in teaching and learning, but it does not, and should not, replace the human connection. Learning a language, especially, is a communicative and collaborative activity, requiring contact, practice and relationships with other people. Technology has huge potential to support and enhance language learning, but should not be used to substitute or replace genuine human communication and guidance. Technology is a tool, not a teacher.

We are guided in our online learning, hybrid learning and face-to-face learning by the principles of the [University of Liverpool's Curriculum Framework](#).

All our courses are based on:

- Research-connected teaching
- Active learning
- Authentic assessment

We aim to provide students with the opportunities to develop the graduate attributes of:

- Confidence
- Digital fluency
- Global citizenship

For online learning to be successful, students and teachers need to be engaged, prepared and committed. Online learning can be quite different from traditional face-to-face learning in a classroom, and so students should be aware that they might need to work and study in new ways, and to learn new skills. It will be even more important than ever

for you to take responsibility for your learning, make sure to speak English during classes and groupwork or pair work, complete preparation work for flipped classwork, participate actively, and ask for help when you need it.

### RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS

- Ensure that you have the right equipment (software, hardware & connectivity- see section 3 below) to study online **before** you start your course. This includes ensuring that you can be easily and clearly heard and seen by your teachers and classmates in online meetings and classes.
- Learn how to use any new tools or technologies by following the training and support provided.
- Check and set your notifications so that you receive communications at least daily.
- Manage your time effectively, attending classes on time and completing work by the deadlines set by your teachers.
- Inform your teacher of any circumstances that might affect your ability to participate or complete your work or assessments as soon as possible.
- Always communicate effectively and politely with your teachers and other students and staff. Be aware that people will be working on different schedules or time zones. If you send messages when you know others are not online, be patient and avoid sending multiple messages in a short time.
- Read all of the information given to you (e.g. handbooks and policies) and make sure you understand it. Ask your teachers for help if there is something you don't understand.
- Participate fully in online interactions – this includes making sure you take your turns to speak during class time, turning your camera on during classes, working together with your partner or group when asked to do so, responding fully and in good time to emails, announcements and messages, and being proactive in making contact.
- Behave at all times in an honest, respectful and professional manner, and be a part of our cooperative, supportive community.

### RESPONSIBILITIES OF TEACHERS

- Teachers will also ensure that they can be easily and clearly heard and seen by students.
- They will learn how to use any new tools or technologies by following the training and support provided.
- They will set notifications so that you receive communications in a timely fashion.
- They will provide regular contact hours to students during which they will respond quickly to communications.
- They will communicate regularly and clearly with students, and be aware that people will be working on different schedules or time zones.
- They will provide timely feedback to students on submitted assignments and assessments.
- They will provide clear expectations for students in terms of workload, deadlines, participation and behaviour.
- They will lead by example in creating and maintaining a cooperative, supportive community.

### RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ELC

- We will provide access to sufficient technical support.
- We will provide induction time for staff and students, including training for any new tools or technology.
- We will provide a clear list of contact details for students, ensuring they know what to do and who to contact in various situations, such as illness, emergency, technical difficulties, complaints etc.
- Ensure access to a reasonable range of digital technology for language learning.
- Follow GDPR and ensure that staff and student data is protected, stored securely and destroyed in a timely fashion.

## SECTION 3 – TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENTS

In order to be able to ensure effective online learning, there are certain minimum technical requirements. Please make sure your equipment meets these requirements:

- Stable internet connection is absolutely necessary, with a minimum net connection of 2Mbps up, 2Mbps down. You can check your connection speed at *speedtest.net*.
- To increase your connectivity, you can try using an Ethernet cable connection, an internet dongle, moving closer to your router, using a WiFi booster, or upgrading your internet package with your provider.

- You should have a laptop or desktop computer if at all possible, as many of the learning activities may be difficult to complete using a mobile device alone.
- You will need a working webcam, microphone and speakers (usually built into mobile devices and laptops, but may need to be added to a desktop computer). You will also need to add a headset (earphones or headphones + microphone) to prevent interference, and ensure that you can hear and be heard clearly. You can check that this is working correctly by running a sound check through the settings on your computer, or placing a test call in Teams.

### Hardware requirements for Microsoft Teams (currently our main teaching platform)

Requirements in the following sections apply to both the Microsoft Teams Desktop app and the Teams Web app.

| HARDWARE REQUIREMENTS FOR TEAMS ON A WINDOWS PC |   |
|---|---|
| Component                                       | Requirement   |
| <b>Computer and processor</b>                   | Minimum 1.6 GHz (or higher), 2 core   |
| <b>Memory</b>                                   | 4.0 GB RAM  |
| <b>Hard disk</b>                                | 3.0 GB of available disk space  |
| <b>Display</b>                                  | 1024 x 768 screen resolution  |
| <b>Graphics hardware</b>                        | Windows OS: Graphics hardware acceleration requires DirectX 9 or later, with WDDM 2.0 or higher for Windows 10 (or WDDM 1.3 or higher for Windows 10 Fall Creators Update)  |
| <b>Operating system</b>                         | Windows 10, Windows 10 on ARM, Windows 8.1, Windows Server 2019, Windows Server 2016  |
| <b>.NET version</b>                             | Requires .NET 4.5 CLR or later  |
| <b>Video</b>                                    | USB 2.0 video camera  |
| <b>Devices</b>                                  | Standard laptop camera, microphone, and speakers. Headset with microphone.  |
| <b>Video calls and meetings</b>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires 2-core processor. For higher video/screen share resolution and frame rate, a 4-core processor or better is recommended.</li> <li>• Background video effects require Windows 10 or a processor with AVX2 instruction set.</li> <li>• See <a href="#">Hardware decoder and encoder driver recommendations</a> for a list of unsupported decoders and encoders.</li> <li>• Joining a meeting using proximity detection in a Microsoft Teams Room requires Bluetooth LE, which requires Bluetooth to be enabled on the client device, and for Windows clients it also requires the 64-bit Teams client. This feature is not available on 32-bit Teams clients.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Teams live events</b>                        | If you are producing a Teams live event, we recommend using a computer that has a Core i5 Kaby Lake processor, 4.0-GB RAM (or higher), and hardware encoder.  |

## HARDWARE REQUIREMENTS FOR TEAMS ON A MAC

| Component                       | Requirement  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| <b>Computer and processor</b>   | Intel Core Duo processor   |
| <b>Memory</b>                   | 4.0 GB RAM   |
| <b>Hard disk</b>                | 1.5 GB of available disk space   |
| <b>Display</b>                  | 1280 x 800 or higher resolution  |
| <b>Operating system</b>         | One of the three most recent versions of macOS. You can find information about the latest macOS versions, and how to upgrade your version of macOS, <a href="#">here</a> . For example, when a new version of macOS is released, the new version and the two immediately preceding it become the supported versions. |
| <b>Video</b>                    | Compatible webcam  |
| <b>Voice</b>                    | Compatible microphone and speakers, headset with microphone, or equivalent device  |
| <b>Video calls and meetings</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Requires 2-core processor. For higher video/screen share resolution and frame rate, a 4-core processor or better is recommended.</li><li>• Joining a meeting using proximity detection in a Microsoft Teams Room is not available on macOS.</li></ul>                        |

## HARDWARE REQUIREMENTS FOR TEAMS ON LINUX

| Component                     | Requirement  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| <b>Computer and processor</b> | 1.6 GHz (or higher) (32-bit or 64-bit), 2 core       |
| <b>Memory</b>                 | 4.0 GB RAM   |
| <b>Hard disk</b>              | 3.0 GB of available disk space                       |
| <b>Display</b>                | 1024 x 768 screen resolution                         |
| <b>Graphics hardware</b>      | 128 MB graphics memory                               |
| <b>Operating system</b>       | Linux distribution capable of installing DEB or RPM. |
| <b>Video</b>                  | USB 2.0 video camera                                 |
| <b>Devices</b>                | Standard laptop camera, microphone, and speakers     |

|                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Voice</b>                         | Compatible microphone and speakers, headset with microphone, or equivalent device  |
| <b>Video calls and meetings</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires 2-core processor. For higher video/screen share resolution and frame rate, a 4-core processor or better is recommended.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Supported Linux distributions</b> | Ubuntu 16.04 LTS, 18.04 LTS, Fedora 30 Workstation, RHEL 8 Workstation, CentOS 8   |

## HARDWARE REQUIREMENTS FOR TEAMS ON MOBILE DEVICES

You can use Teams on these mobile platforms:

- Android: Compatible with Android phones and tablets.

Support is limited to the **last four** major versions of Android. For example, when a new, major version of Android is released, the Android requirement is the new version and the three most recent versions that precede it.

- iOS: Compatible with iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch.

Support is limited to the **two** most recent major versions of iOS. For example, when a new, major version of iOS is released, the iOS requirement is the new version and the most recent versions that preceded it. The optional **Blur my background** video effect on iOS requires an operating system of iOS 12 or later, compatible with the following devices: iPhone 7 or later, iPad 2018 (6th generation) or later, and the iPod touch 2019 (7th generation).

### *Note*

For the best experience with Teams, use the latest version of iOS and Android.

## SECTION 4 – ELC DATA PROTECTION AND RECORDING OF LESSONS AND ASSESSMENTS

We want all of our students and teachers to feel safe and secure, and to know that their data and privacy are protected. The core technologies we use, such as the University VLE Canvas, and Microsoft Teams, have been chosen carefully with security in mind, and are covered by the security policies of both these large corporations, and of The University of Liverpool. We encourage all students and staff to read The University of Liverpool’s policies on data protection and social media. Each individual is responsible for taking reasonable steps to protect their own data and privacy, and that of others. The ELC and The University of Liverpool will also follow GDPR requirements and take all reasonable steps to ensure the protection of students and staff and their data.

According to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018), the English Language Centre at the University of Liverpool is the data controller, and we process your personal data as a student according to the law. The following information covers how that personal data is used and protected by the ELC.

### *Why are lessons recorded?*

To improve the student experience of teaching sessions being delivered online, the majority of lessons delivered through Teams will be recorded, usually by the teacher. The recording is made available in Teams so that absent students can access the lesson content, students who attended to review the lesson and teachers to reflect on the lesson and plan future lessons accordingly. Occasionally, usually at least once a year, teachers will share a recording of a lesson with another teacher or manager for training and evaluation purposes. Lesson recordings can also be used for the training and standardisation of observers (usually managers and coordinators). Short excerpts of recordings may also be used within the University or at professional conferences to demonstrate good technological / pedagogical practice.

### *Why are assessments recorded?*

You will probably take a number of live assessments, such as presentations and seminar discussions. We need to record these assessments to allow for second/third marking and moderation of assessments to take place. We also use recordings of some assessments for the training and standardisation of assessors.

#### *How do I know if the lesson or assessment is being recorded?*

For online lessons taught on Teams (or similar platforms) you will receive an automated notice, built into the software, that the lesson/meeting is being recorded when you join the meeting, or when the teacher begins the recording. The standard practice is for all lessons and assessments taking place live online to be recorded, unless there is a specific reason not to.

#### *What is personal data in a recording?*

Some or all of that recording could count as personal data according to data protection laws. Personal data in recordings would include your name, images of you and any opinions you contribute and anything you say about yourself.

#### *What if I don't want my personal data recorded?*

The ELC expects that you will participate fully in your online classes because your tutors and your fellow students value your contribution to the sessions. This means that you should turn on your microphone when nominated by your teacher and when working with a partner or in a group. We also encourage you to turn on your camera whenever possible, as it helps to improve communication and establish a good relationship with your teachers and classmates. It is necessary for us to record your personal data as part of the assessment procedure, so it is not possible to opt out of this and still take the assessments. We take our students' privacy seriously and protect your data to the best of our ability.

#### *What is the lawful basis of processing personal data in the recorded lessons and assessments?*

The lawful basis for processing this personal data is legitimate interests. This means that the data clearly benefits the organisation or the individual; it is beneficial to the ELC to be able to share good teaching practice, and it is beneficial for students to be able to review the lessons. There is limited privacy impact on you as the individual (we do not ask you to share sensitive information such as medical details) and we think you would reasonably expect us to use the personal data in the way that we wish to, which is for educational purposes.

#### *How are the recordings stored and shared?*

Currently, ELC online lessons are all recorded through Microsoft Teams, and the recordings are stored on Microsoft Stream, where they are protected by Microsoft's security. The recordings will be kept for the rest of the academic year plus a maximum of one more academic year. The recording is then permanently deleted. The recordings will be accessible to relevant staff and relevant students. If the recordings are downloadable, students can download them if necessary, but may not share or edit them in any way. They will remain accessible until the end of your studies. If staff need to download any recordings, e.g. to work offline, they must permanently delete the recordings from their device as soon as they have finished working with them. Staff must not share the recordings outside of The University of Liverpool or professional conferences, and only share recordings for legitimate purposes related to learning and teaching.

**Please note: It is better to view any recordings online. If you have to download a recorded lesson, you should not share it with anyone else and you should delete it as soon as you have finished working with it.**

#### *Where can I get more information?*

[University of Liverpool Data Protection webpage.](#)

[University of Liverpool General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\) Policy](#)

## SECTION 5 – ELC ONLINE CONDUCT POLICY

The University of Liverpool has comprehensive social media and conduct policies, which apply to students and teachers of the ELC as well.

### [Student Conduct & Discipline Policy](#)

### [Social Media Policy](#)

In simple terms:

- It is as important to behave responsibly and professionally online as it is in face-to-face situations. The same laws and standards generally apply in both situations.
- At the ELC we encourage a supportive and professional community, and expect all of our students and teachers to behave accordingly, both online and offline.
- Students and teachers should only contact each other through official channels, not via personal social media. This means, for example, that contact should take place via university emails and through the official VLE platform(s), such as Canvas and Teams. Students and teachers should not contact each other on Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, WhatsApp or other personal social media accounts.
- Complaints or grievances should be addressed through the normal complaints procedure, not expressed publicly on social media.
- Treat each other (staff and students alike) respectfully and professionally. Think before posting a written message, and remember that tone (joking/ sarcastic / serious etc.) is difficult to convey and interpret online.
- Protect your own and others' personal information and data carefully.

## SECTION 6 – ELC ONLINE COMMUNICATION POLICY

The main channels of communication for teachers and students at the ELC are:

- Teams
- Emails
- Canvas VLE (e.g. messages, discussion boards)

Students, and occasionally teachers, may be in a variety of time zones across the world, which can mean that communication is not always immediate. The ELC operates within the UK time zone (GMT), and is most active between 08.00 – 18.00 GMT, with staff having some degree of flexibility in setting their working hours. Teachers will usually outline their specific working hours to their students (e.g. 09.00-13.00 and 14.00-17.00). There will usually be regular synchronous interaction between students and teachers; this is often in the form of scheduled online classes which will be timetabled. Outside of these times, students and teachers can arrange their work and study hours to suit themselves, but will need to be aware of the fact that others may have different schedules. This means that you should not expect instant replies to your messages.

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## TEAMS

The ELC expects that staff and students will be online and contactable on Teams regularly during the working day (as outlined above), and that they will cooperate to find times for meetings, chats, and calls which suit the majority. You should use your Teams status to indicate your availability, and regularly review and activate your notifications settings to ensure that you are receiving important Team and channel notifications in a timely manner. It is also recommended that you use a 'do not disturb' feature on your devices, so that you don't receive multiple notifications outside of your work hours.

Most communication between teacher and students will usually take place on the class Team. This is where the teacher will post announcements and reminders for the students. If you have a question or a response for a particular announcement or conversation, make sure to use the 'reply' button – this will keep all related communication together. You can also create a private chat with your teacher by sending them a message; important chats can be 'pinned' to the

top of your chat bar so you can easily find them. It's also possible to create private group chats; just add all the people you want to include to a chat using the New Chat function. You can then give the group chat a name – e.g. Study Group.

You can send messages on Teams at any time, but be aware that others might be offline or unavailable at that time. Teachers might provide 'office hours' for their students – a specific time each day when they will be able to respond quickly to student messages and chats. Generally, you should try to respond to direct messages soon after reading them – this might just be by 'reacting' to the message, or it might require a reply. If you want to speak to someone over video chat, you should send them a message first to make sure that they are free to take a call.

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## EMAILS

Staff and students should check their university email accounts at least once a day. If you are ill or absent for some other reason, you should set an automatic reply on your email account, including the date you expect to return. You should try to respond to emails which need a response within 1 working day of receipt.

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## CANVAS VLE

If this forms a part of your course your teacher or course coordinator will let you know which types of communication will take place on that platform. You may be asked to participate in a discussion board; this can form an important element of your learning community. You should follow any rules established by your teacher or course coordinator for interactions, for example, logging on and posting X times/ week, and respond thoughtfully and professionally. You should respond to Direct Messages sent through the VLE in a similar way to emails – normally within 1 working day, unless otherwise specified. VLE notification settings should also be checked and adjusted as necessary; you might like to receive a 'daily digest' email notification.