

BOSTON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
Online, Off-Campus, and Hybrid Programs

Conduct in Remote and Online Learning
Remote Learning Tips & Netiquette

Updated July 25, 2020

General guidelines

The [BUSSW Master of Social Work Academic Policies and Procedures](#) provides guidance regarding the School's policies and procedures. Papers and presentations in the School of Social Work must meet standards of academic honesty and integrity, avoiding any possibility of plagiarism or other forms of academic misconduct. Be sure to review the content pertaining to student conduct and please note that BUSSW students are expected to follow the [BUSSW Behavioral Standards](#).

Conduct During “Live Classrooms”



The time spent with your instructor and classmates is essential to your learning process. You have invested a lot in seeking a graduate education. While being in your home can make it feel less formal and can contribute to occasional interruptions that are unavoidable, your learning should be your main priority during the live classroom sessions for your courses. The expectation is that you will treat this time just as you would a class in a traditional classroom setting.

Here are some guidelines to support you in doing this:

- Gather all the items you think you will need prior to the start of class and have them nearby for easy access. (e.g. class work, food, drinks, pens, etc.)
- Find a quiet space in which to sit during class and let family members and roommates know to not disturb you.
- Avoid traveling during class, unless approved by your instructor prior to the start.
- Do not multi-task during class—while you may feel you can keep your attention, studies show that this is usually not the case, and it is potentially highly distracting to others.
- If you are interrupted for some reason, send a chat to the group excusing yourself for a moment and turn off your camera. Turn your camera back on when you return.
- Log onto your class a few minutes before the start in order to get settled and focused.
- While you can dress relaxed, please still dress appropriately. Pajamas are not appropriate for an academic setting.
- Please sit up, preferably where you have access to a table or other surface. If you have to sit on a couch or bed, please do not lie down.
- If you are going to be late, need to leave early, or miss a class, you must inform your instructor prior to the day of class whenever possible. Your grade may be impacted by absences.

Remote Learning Tips

Technology

- Prior to the semester beginning, make sure you have downloaded software or tools necessary to complete your classwork. Check the IS&T website for details on [available software](#) and [system requirements](#). Ensure your internet connection meets the [minimum standards](#) to use Zoom and other tools.
- Do not wait to reach out to your instructor or [IS&T](#) if you experience any technical difficulties.
- Make sure you have a webcam and a headset with a microphone to participate fully in Zoom meetings.

Engagement

- Check email regularly for class updates, events, resources, and other opportunities to connect.
- Take advantage of virtual opportunities to engage live. If you can't attend a Zoom meeting, you can email your instructor any questions you would like them to address during the session. Be sure to review the recording when it is made available.
- Take advantage of any outside class resources such as instructor virtual office hours or events hosted by your academic department.
- If your course is using discussion boards, post early and reply to peers with enough time to have a robust discussion.
- Use your Zoom account to connect with your classmates and peers, form a study group, or socialize and network with others.

Time Management

- Read through the entire syllabus at the beginning of the semester and add course deadlines and Zoom meeting times to your personal calendar so you can keep track of important dates on the go.
- Schedule blocks of uninterrupted time each week when you can focus on completing your work. If possible, find a distraction-free space where you can complete your work.
- Familiarize yourself with available resources before starting classes so you can quickly and efficiently use them during the semester if you need them.

Assignments

- Refer to your course syllabus to plan ahead for assignments throughout the semester. Use your calendar to set aside time to complete assignments well in advance of the deadline.
- Start assignments early. Getting an early start means you have more time to ask for feedback from your instructor or facilitator before the due date. [Communication](#)
- Emails should be clear and formatted professionally. Always include your name and a descriptive subject line. Instructors are communicating with many students each semester.
- Email instructors or teaching assistants early with questions or requests to meet.
- Email questions you'd like answered in lecture before the session.

Netiquette

Before posting to any discussion forum, sending email, or participating in any course or public area, pause before you post and ask yourself:

- How would I say this in a face-to-face classroom or when writing a professional email, article, or website?
- How would I feel if I were the reader?
- How might my comment impact others?
- Am I being respectful?
- Is this the appropriate area or forum to post what I have to say? Is this where my instructor directed the class to share this type of post?

When you are writing:

- Stay polite and positive in your communications. You can and should disagree and participate in discussions with vigor; however, be constructive with your comments.
- Pay attention to your tone. Without the benefit of facial expressions and body language, your intended tone or the meaning of the message can be misconstrued.
- Be thoughtful and remember that classmates' experience levels may vary. You may want to include background information that is not obvious to all readers.
- When appropriate, cite sources.

When you are reading your peers' communication, consider the following:

- Respect people's privacy. Don't assume that information shared with you is public. Check with your peers before sharing their information.
- Be forgiving of other students' and instructors' mistakes.
- If a comment upsets or offends you, reread it and/or take some time before responding.

Preparing for Remote Learning

Log in to your Blackboard account. Take some time to log in to your course if there are online components. Review the course syllabus and locate where to submit assignments or complete quizzes and exams.

- If your course has a Blackboard site it will become visible on the "Courses" tab under "Current Courses" once your instructors publish content for a course. Instructors publish courses at different times.
- Courses may appear in your course list before the semester but they will be locked. Your instructor will open the course on the first day of the semester.
- You can also access Blackboard Learn through your course listings on the [Student Link](#).

Log in to Zoom to automatically create your Boston University Zoom account. Students automatically receive Zoom Pro accounts.

- Once logged in, download the Zoom Client for Meetings from the [Zoom Download Center](#) on your home computer to access the full benefits of Zoom.

- Add any class Zoom meeting times and room information on your calendar so it's easy to join when it's time to meet.

Purchase textbooks. Purchase textbooks once your booklist is available. Shipping timelines may be delayed because of the pandemic. Consider rental or e-book options.

Use the library's digital resources. As a BU student, you have access to the services and resources of the Boston University Libraries. The library collection includes millions of electronically available items, including e-books, journal and newspaper articles, videos, and audio recordings. You can locate and access these electronic materials by searching the [library catalog](#). To find only items available electronically, choose the "Available Online" filter on the results page.

Your instructors may work with the library to make readings or other course materials available electronically via the library's course reserves. If your course includes course reserves, you can locate a course reserve list by searching the [BU Libraries Course Materials](#).

BU librarians are available to assist you with research and access questions via email, phone, and online chat. See the [Ask a Librarian](#) page for more information and refer to the [Resources for Students in Online and Off-Campus Programs guide](#) for more helpful tips and resources for learning remotely.

Request an accommodation through Disability & Access Services if needed. Contact disability@bu.edu to set up an appointment to discuss any accommodations you might need to complete your coursework. Accommodations are still available for asynchronous course requirements.