**Learn from Anywhere - Remote Learning Tips**

In this document you will find a collection of learning tips that particularly apply to learners in instructional settings that combine synchronous and asynchronous activities – Learn from Anywhere is such a setting. We have compiled these tips over many years and want to share them with you so you can prepare yourself for this new way of interacting with your classes and educational journey.

Technology

- Before the semester starts, make sure you are prepared to successfully engage in the online portions of your class. Most important is to check the Information Services and Technology (IS&T) TechWeb site to make sure that your computer meets the recommended system requirements. Boston University also provides access to a broad variety of software that you may need during your studies. Make sure you have downloaded the software or tools necessary for your classwork before your classes start. Ensure your internet connection meets the minimum standards to use Zoom (video conferencing) and other tools.
- Make sure you have a webcam and a headset with a microphone to participate fully in Zoom meetings. As a member of the BU community you have access to a Zoom Pro account. Install the Zoom client and test your video and audio setup before the first meetings of the semester.
- Do not wait to reach out to your instructor or IS&T if you experience any technical difficulties. Help is available and the IS&T staff will be glad to address the issues that you may be facing.

Engagement

- Check your BU email regularly for class updates, events, resources, and other opportunities to connect. Messages may arrive from the instructor, the Learning Management System (LMS, Blackboard Learn), or other BU offices.
- Take advantage of online synchronous opportunities, like Zoom classrooms, to engage with your fellow learners and the instructors. 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 resources and meetings that are available outside of the class meeting times, such as your instructor's virtual office hours or events hosted by your academic department.
- If your course is using discussion boards in a Learning Management System (LMS) such as Blackboard, post early and reply to peers leaving enough time to have a robust discussion. Check back regularly or enable notifications on the discussion topics to be notified of replies and new posts.
- 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 specific 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 and carefully make a plan for assignments throughout the semester with ample time to complete them. Use your calendar to mark the time set aside well in advance of the deadline.
- Start assignments early. Getting an early start means you have more time to ask for feedback from the instructional staff before the due date.

Communication

- Write your emails with a focus on clarity and format them professionally. Always include your name, to which course the email refers, and a descriptive subject line. Instructors are communicating with many students each semester and teach multiple courses at the same time.
- Don't delay asking questions. Proactively email instructors or teaching assistants early with questions or requests to meet.
- Send questions you'd like answered in a lecture before the session happens. Email the question with enough time before the lecture for the instructional staff to review them.


Learning and communicating in an asynchronous mode poses challenges and opportunities that are different from communication synchronously, i.e. talking to each other in person. Many factors that are present in face-to-face communication are absent: tone of voice, inflection, emphasis, body language, facial expression, even the timing of the words. The following section addresses some of these topics and will help you to be better prepared for engaging in this way of interaction and communication.

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. Always aim your comments at the topic, not any particular person.
- 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 misread.
- 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, especially when 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 be listed on the "Courses" tab under "Current Courses" for the term. Course will appear "locked" until the respective instructor releases content. Instructors release content at different times, so you may see your course listed, but locked before the semester begins.
- 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 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 the e-book or rental 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.