

HYBRID TEACHING AND LEARNING GUIDANCE

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the place of useful learning

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Document History

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1. Introduction

This document outlines the guidance provided for undertaking undergraduate, postgraduate and non-credit bearing teaching under the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic for academic year 2021/2022, where the normal capacity of the campus to support teaching and learning is interrupted or transitioning out of restrictions. It provides guidance for teaching and support staff to consider their approach to provision of [hybrid learning](#) opportunities. This guidance is provided in the context of the official [Scottish Government Guidance](#), and the [Coronavirus Protection Levels](#) in particular and it should be noted that the potential changing nature of restrictions provides uncertainty with regard to the exact limitations of use and requirements for behaviour on campus.

This guidance is provided in the wider institutional context in which the University seeks to support staff and students in a flexible and supportive teaching and learning environment while maintaining a high-quality student experience. It is expected that these guidelines will be supplemented by programme and Faculty engagement with students, and that the detail of Hybrid Learning provision will be Faculty, School, Department and programme dependent.

The University's COVID-19 advice is updated regularly for [staff](#) and for [students](#).

At the start of academic year 2021/2022 it is anticipated that most modules will be delivered via *Blended Learning*. This Hybrid Learning and Teaching guidance has been prepared to support staff in preparing for scenarios where students may be unable to participate in on-campus or synchronous online activities. The ability for programmes to provide alternatives to placements is programme-specific, particularly in relation to Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB) and approval. It is possible that some programmes may not be able to offer an alternative that satisfies the relevant PSRB.

2. Definitions

2.1 Face-to-Face Teaching/Learning

Teaching that is delivered largely according to the traditional method with in-class teaching. In this method of teaching and learning, although an online platform such as Myplace may provide some support, it is not a primary tool for student learning activity.

2.2 Emergency Remote/Pivoted Online Learning

This is typically campus teaching delivered through other means, as seen in the measures taken at short notice to continue teaching after the introduction of campus restrictions from March 2020. Direct alternatives were sought for campus-based activity, in many cases without classes being significantly redesigned or redeveloped. For example, scheduled lectures were conducted through platforms such as Zoom, usually at the time previously scheduled for the face-to-face class. Tutorials and seminars were carried out similarly. Where teaching, learning or assessment activities could not be conducted in their planned manner, alternatives were provided in an agile manner which met learning outcomes and academic requirements.

2.3 Planned Online Learning

Planned Online Learning is teaching which is planned and developed over an extended timeframe, and quality assured before delivery. The planning process is sophisticated, engaging specialists (academic teams, learning technologists, videographers, project managers) from across the campus to ensure high quality online modules, delivered to a schedule. Examples include Graduate/Degree Apprenticeship programmes, fully online PGT/UG programmes and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs).

2.4 Synchronous Learning Activities

Synchronous learning activities are those where the student is required to be present at the same time as the member of staff who is teaching. This is a term generally applied to online activities, such as a live online lecture or tutorial.

2.5 Asynchronous Learning Activities

Asynchronous learning activities are those where the activity is designed and developed in advance of the student engaging with it. Examples include pre-recorded lectures, discussion forums and online quizzes.

2.6 Blended Learning

Blended learning combines aspects of Face-to-Face Learning and Planned Online Learning. Aspects of Face-to-Face Learning which are most useful to student learning or cannot be run to the same level of efficacy online are maintained. Activity which can be conducted online to the same or greater efficacy, are used in tandem with Face-to-Face activities. This mode requires the planning aspects of Planned Online Learning to ensure a robust student learning path is provided.

Where Blended Learning is adopted, this will consider aspects of campus teaching that cannot otherwise be delivered to the same standard. This may require:

- Face-to-face campus teaching, either whole-class or group activities, aspects of which may be modified in the form of a Flipped Classroom (see below).
- Mixed-delivery teaching where face-to-face aspects are simultaneously provided online e.g. a live lecture also streamed online e.g. via Zoom.
- On-campus practical and laboratory teaching, where this cannot adequately be provided through other means.
- Online practical and laboratory teaching e.g. normally held in PC labs where this can instead be provided effectively online.

2.7 Hybrid Learning

“Hybrid Learning” is an emergent term which in the past has been used interchangeably with “Blended Learning” (Quality Assurance Agency, 2020). The two terms have recently diverged in meaning. Hybrid Learning can be differentiated by *the provision of alternative means of study of learning activities for students unable to study through the primary mode.*

Examples might include:

- Provision of lecture recordings to students who were unable to attend an on-campus lecture, or an online lecture delivered live
- Provision of moderated online discussions where students were unable to contribute on campus, or in an online synchronous discussion
- Provision of an online tutorial session via Zoom or Teams for students unable to attend on campus

3. Hybrid Learning

3.1 Purpose of Hybrid Learning

Hybrid Learning is primarily intended to support students who are unable to attend on-campus timetabled teaching provision, or synchronous online activities. It is not primarily intended as an accommodation of students' preference for place or mode of studying.

3.2 Students Requiring a Hybrid Learning Pathway

Students that have personal circumstances which mean that they need to request to follow classes via a hybrid learning option should make this request formally to the Department or School that runs their programme. Students should be advised to follow the [Personal Circumstances Procedure](#). Note that this should also be taken as the applicable procedure should a student be unable to travel to the UK from overseas.

3.3 Communication

To avoid perception of unequal consideration of students it is recommended that Departments and programmes communicate the following to students at the earliest appropriate opportunity:

1. What Hybrid Learning is
2. Who Hybrid Learning is intended for
3. How to formally request Hybrid Learning

3.4 Simultaneous Provision for Split Cohorts

Note that it is generally **not** expected that simultaneous provision of teaching activities is provided such as a lecture being given face-to-face while also being streamed live via Zoom or Teams. Exceptions for this may be at the discretion of an individual member of staff when, for example, a single student is unable to attend a campus tutorial – perhaps through self-isolation – and the member of staff feels that appropriate technology is available to allow the student to participate effectively in the on-campus tutorial, while not unduly adding to the technical or coordination burden on the staff member.

3.5 Notice of Requirement for Hybrid Teaching Option

Where a student has provided short notice of a requirement for a hybrid learning option, perhaps due to a requirement to self-isolate, it is likely that options available for hybrid teaching are fewer. In this instance it may not be practical, for example, to request a room equipped for simultaneous teaching and/or teaching session recording. In such instances, Departmental/Faculty IT support (see [Contacts and Resources](#), below) should be sought, with example measures such as audio-only recording through use of a mobile or similar

recording device being considered. This would then be provided to the student(s) with any accompanying teaching materials (slides, handouts etc) and transcribed via MS Stream. If these options are not practical in the given situation, other methods may be used to facilitate the student catching up with their class, such as provision of a summary of the missed class.

3.6 Hybrid Learning – Expectations

Hybrid Learning good practice, where possible and appropriate, should provide:

1. A learning experience of equivalent quality to that of face-to-face teaching
2. Greater flexibility of learning in terms of place and time for students

While the University operates under the Scottish Government's Coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions, Hybrid Teaching and Learning opportunities should be provided to support students with personal circumstances, as far as possible, in addition to a Blended Learning approach (see [definition above](#)). [Blended Learning Guidance](#) is available.

When learning resources are provided to specific students as a Hybrid Learning option e.g. audio/video recordings, lesson summary, it is recommended that these are provided to all students in the class as supplemental resources, to ensure equal access to these as revision materials.

3.7 Good Practice in Hybrid Teaching and Learning

Planning is required to provide Hybrid Teaching and Learning opportunities as retrospective provision can add considerably to the work required. It is recommended that planning takes place in the following order:

1. Planning of the Blended Learning delivery of a class, and programme. See the [Blended Learning Guidance](#).
2. Where on campus activity, or synchronous online activity, is planned, alternatives are considered which balance quality of learning experience, flexibility to students, and burden on the member(s) of staff teaching and supporting the activity.

The following staff development sessions are available:

- For a general overview of Blended Learning: **Planning Blended Learning:** <https://bookings.strath.ac.uk/Home/Course/5475>
- **Hybrid Teaching** – a short session focussing on Hybrid Learning for those who have extensive experience of Blended Learning, or have previously undertaken the Planning Blended Learning session: <https://bookings.strath.ac.uk/Home/Course/5807>
- **Blended, Online & Hybrid Teaching and Learning Drop-In Sessions** – sessions designed to allow staff to drop-in to seek advice on any aspect of learning and teaching using blended, online and hybrid learning: <https://bookings.strath.ac.uk/Home/Course/5472>

4. Modes of Teaching and Hybrid Options

4.1 Mode of delivery: Lecture

If lecturing is core to your teaching, consider how much live engagement you typically have with students during a lecture. If your lectures require little or no live engagement with students, consider if there is sufficient benefit to running them live. Greater flexibility might be provided to both your students and academic staff through making recordings, perhaps of shorter sections, available for them to follow. Scheduled contact time (online or face-to-face) with a class may be usefully spent on aspects other than direct instruction. A prominent model for this mode of teaching is the “Flipped Classroom” (King, 1993).

Considerations

On-campus attendance and delivery of lecture required

Students engage live, in-class.

Hybrid Teaching and Learning Considerations

Teaching rooms that more easily support recording of on campus teaching activities for upload to MS Stream have been distributed between the Faculties. Recordings and transcripts can be made available for use by those in attendance face-to-face and those unable to attend live. [Guidance on transcriptions and captions](#) is available.

Engagement could be supported in a structured Myplace forum activity. If a forum is used, prompts such as “Post any questions here” should be avoided as students are often reluctant to post to such forums without the structure of recommended activity. Directive language in the forum introduction can be helpful, such as “Each student should suggest a concept from the module that they feel confident about, and one which they feel they need to consider more deeply”. Relate the forum activity to discussion and student contributions from the live class and encourage students who attended the live class to support their peers who were unable to attend, by engaging with the forum.

4.2 Mode of delivery: Small Group Teaching e.g. Seminars, Tutorials

Small group teaching in a seminar or tutorial is key to many disciplines. If the circumstances are such that some groups are required to work entirely virtually, entirely face-to-face, or a mix of these modes, this opportunity must be provided equitably and to the same standard across modes.

Considerations

On-campus attendance and provision of Small Group Teaching required

Certain disciplines may require the use of campus spaces for physical group activities to take place. Students engage live, in-class.

Hybrid Learning Considerations

1. Including an off-campus student in a synchronous activity

Depending on numbers in the group, the number of students unable to physically attend, and/or the technology and support available, a member of staff may choose to include an off-campus student or students in a small group teaching activity. If the requirement for this alternative method of participation is requested at short notice, or the member of staff does not feel that they can adequately prepare the session and support this delivery, other methods should be considered (see point 2 below).

Teaching rooms that more easily support recording of on campus teaching activities for upload to MS Stream have been distributed between the Faculties. Recordings and transcripts can be made available for the use by those in attendance face-to-face and those unable to attend live.

If no teaching room is suitable and available to use, consider the following factors when deciding whether to include an off-campus student or students

- a) Are both audio and video necessary?
- b) Do you have suitable equipment? Faculty IT support can advise on suitable technology e.g. an omnidirectional desk microphone placed in the middle of a group will be better at picking up multiple voices than a web camera microphone.
- c) Can the remote participant be seen on screen? An off-campus participant who can be seen, even by tablet, phone or PC, will be easier to include in a group activity than one who can only hear and be heard.

2. Off-campus students not included in a synchronous activity

Depending on how many students are unable to engage with the synchronous small group activity, and the notice of this requirement that has been provided, an alternative online activity may be chosen (see [Blended Learning Guidance](#)). Note that adequate notice of the change needs to be provided to students attending this activity on campus.

Where an on-campus small group activity will go ahead, and an alternative must be provided for students unable to attend, consideration should be given to the ability of an asynchronous online or offline substitution being of equivalent quality. Appropriate substitutes are likely to vary considerably dependent on discipline and aim of the activity. If practical, recordings of synchronous teaching sessions can be provided and where not practical, summaries of teaching sessions may be a suitable substitute.

4.3 Mode of delivery: Non-PC Laboratory work e.g. Engineering, Physical Sciences

Consider what aspects of laboratory work and assessment can reasonably be replaced with equivalent activities of self-study off-campus or online.

Considerations

Consider if there is essential laboratory work that features aspects of demonstration and if these aspects can be filmed by a Faculty video team. If sufficient quality can be achieved, this may be carried out by the member of academic staff, should it be safe to do so. For example, in 2019, SIPBS considered the cost and logistics of one student lab dissection exercise to be too high. A single sample was ordered for dissection, and the process was filmed by Education Enhancement videographers from multiple angles, with voice-over added.

Heriot Watt University has produced a short guide “Practice-Based Activities: Labs, Studios & Fieldwork” to provides advice and links to resources to help to develop online and blended alternatives to labs, studios and fieldwork (https://lta.hw.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/03_RBL_Practice-based-activities.pdf).

4.4 Mode of delivery: PC Laboratory work

Consider what advantages there are from being co-located in a lab with students. Zoom allows students to screen-share their PC desktop in an online session.

Considerations

On-campus attendance and provision of PC laboratory work considered practical

Consider if a lab session can be held simultaneously face-to-face and online for those students unable to come to the campus. This may work well if lab tasks are individual. Group tasks will require greater classroom planning and management to ensure equity amongst participants.

If the lab cannot be run separately to include all students, consider if the laboratory work needs to be done synchronously or if students can submit work for tutor or peer review and feedback.

Specialist software is provided via Azure Virtual Desktop even in on-campus PC labs. As such, the vast majority of specialist software available in the labs is also available from home. While there are normally around 1500 PCs around the campus in bookable rooms and in the library, the capacity of these spaces is likely to be reduced in 2021/2022.

5. Contacts and Resources

5.1 Useful Contacts

Faculty IT Contacts – for information on Faculty-held teaching facilities, and for advice on local support for hybrid provision:

- SBS – sbs.support@strath.ac.uk
- HaSS – hass-it@strath.ac.uk
- Science – science-it@strath.ac.uk
- Engineering – eng-online@strath.ac.uk

5.2 Availability of on-campus in-class recording facilities

Investment in a number of on-campus rooms is being made in advance of Semester 1 2021/2022. These will be announced to all staff and will be listed in the [room lookup facility](#).

5.3 Additional Resources

- [Academic Continuity Guidance](#) to support online and blended delivery has been developed. It covers live teaching (Using Zoom with Myplace), online collaboration (Using Zoom outside of Myplace), pre-recorded teaching, assessment, resources and support contacts.
- [Guidance for planning and delivering Blended Learning](#) has been provided, overseen by the Education Strategy Committee, with input from the faculties.
- [Guidelines on the recording of Zoom teaching sessions](#)
- [Guidance on producing video for teaching at home](#).
- [Student engagement guidance](#) assists with consideration of:
 - risk to individual student retention in an online class
 - risk of low engagement of an individual student in an online class
- [Transcription and captions guidance](#)

5.4 References

King, A. (1993). From Sage on the Stage to Guide on the Side. *College Teaching*, 41(1), 30-35. doi:10.1080/87567555.1993.9926781

Quality Assurance Agency. (2020). *Building a Taxonomy for Digital Learning*. Retrieved from <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/guidance/building-a-taxonomy-for-digital-learning.pdf>