

# Online etiquette and appropriate online behaviour

This guide should be read in conjunction with the **USQ Student Code of Conduct Policy**.

It is important to be polite and respectful when communicating online, just as you would when communicating face-to-face. Here are some of the reasons:

- » Without being able to see a person's face or body language, it is easier to mistake their meaning or intention
- » Public social network sites and websites, as well as USQ discussion boards, online classrooms and emails can provide a permanent record of your comments and be accessible for decades, even if you think they are private.

## General guidelines

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- » Be polite and avoid the use of unprofessional language.
- » Treat your peers and teaching team with respect and fairness in all online communication.
- » Use clear and concise language with correct spelling and grammar.
- » Use correct written English and avoid the use of acronyms and abbreviations where possible (unless you explain them first).
- » Type in lower case as typing in ALL CAPITALS can be interpreted as aggressive/shouting.
- » Limit the use of emojis, unless they aid in interpretation.
- » Be cautious when using humour as the tone can be lost online.
- » Avoid sharing too much personal information online, regardless of whether it is an internal USQ system or a public website.

## Zoom and online tutorial guidelines

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- » Be aware of your surroundings and consider your actions.
- » Ensure your background only has items you are happy to share in it (e.g. you might want to keep family photos private).
- » If you are sharing your screen, check you do not have any inappropriate windows open (such as online banking, personal social media accounts etc.).
- » Mute your microphone when not speaking to avoid background noise and feedback noise if you are not using headphones.
- » Use the chat function to ask questions to avoid interrupting conversation.
- » Present yourself as if you were meeting in person (e.g. not lying in bed in your pyjamas).

## Discussion forum guidelines

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- » Make posts that are on topic.
- » Keep any off topic discussion to a social forum space designed for that purpose.
- » Read all messages before replying, to make sure you are not repeating ideas if the discussion has moved on.
- » Avoid short responses, such as 'I disagree' without elaborating.
- » Be respectful of others' opinions and do not make personal or insulting remarks.
- » Try and keep your messages short.
- » Copyright and plagiarism apply to discussion forums as they do to other scholarly work. Ensure you cite other people's work appropriately and do not share pictures, documents or other items that are covered by copyright.
- » General questions about the course content or assessment should be posted on a forum, as all students will then be able to benefit from the Course Examiner's response.
- » Private messages for your Course Examiner should be communicated through email, not a public forum.

## Email guidelines

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- » Email from your student account.
- » Maintain formality in your address, avoiding opening lines like 'Hey'.
- » Include your course code in the subject line as members of your teaching team might be teaching many courses over one semester.
- » Always be mindful that emails can be easily distributed and passed on.



*USQ is working to ensure consistent University-wide responses to your important questions about online learning and online assessment. If there is unintentional conflicting information between what you hear here and through other sources, please follow the advice of your Head of School.*

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