Tips and Tools for Students
Participating in Virtual Coursework

In response to potential campus closures, you may be asked to join your coursework virtually. There are a variety of ways faculty may facilitate this.

Live Video-Conferencing Sessions

There are a number of videoconference tools available to you and your faculty. Some of these include Zoom, Adobe Connect, Google, Microsoft Teams, or Skype.

To get started, you will need a stable internet connection, a web cam, and a microphone. Accessing these applications is easy, in many cases you won't even have to download anything. It will likely be as simple as signing up for an account or using your university credentials to log in.

Here are some things to keep in mind:

- Log in 5-10 minutes early to get familiar with the application and test your settings.

- You should plan to join the session in a distraction-free environment. This means that you should be in a quiet, well-lit room and plan on clearing your calendar for the length of the session.

- Ensure that you are positioned in front of the camera where the lighting is strong enough to illuminate your face and where the visual background is not distracting.

- Remember to mute your audio when not speaking. Depending on how your faculty sets up the session, you may not have audio access. If this is the case, you will need to use the chat functionality to communicate.

- Use a wired internet connection if possible. If you have a weak or unstable wireless connection, you can turn off your video as needed to save bandwidth.

- Use the chat area for communications to the group or individuals, just remember to double-check the intended audience before sending any messages.

- If you are screen-sharing, make sure you close all other applications to avoid inadvertently sharing the wrong information.

## Accessing Courses Through Learning Management Systems

In addition to attending your classes via a live online session, you may also be asked to access your course through your Learning Management System. Here are some things that you can likely expect as you experience your course in an online format.

Readings

Faculty will likely assign readings to help further your understanding of the concepts. Readings in your online courses may include, Physical Textbooks, Online Texts, News or Journal Articles, Whitepapers, or Case Studies.

Online Video
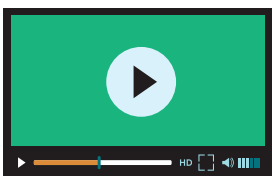
Whether it's an introduction to the course or module from your instructor or you are asked to watch videos as part of your lecture materials, online video helps bring course material to life.

Many online video platforms have settings that you can adjust to either speed up or slow down the video playback. Use this to your advantage to speed up to get to the point faster or to slow down and spend needed time grasping difficult subject-matter.

Discussion Boards

The free exchange of ideas and discussions about relevant educational topics, guided by an instructor, is one of the best ways to learn and solidify concepts. It is very likely your online course will have discussion boards (sometimes called discussion forums) for just that purpose.

As with face-to-face educational discussions, it's important to stay on topic and keep a professional discourse.

Assignments
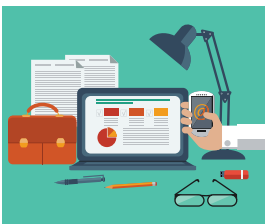
Assignments in online courses are not that different from those in a face-to-face class. You may be assigned anything from essays and article reviews to large-scale projects and research papers. These will provide you ample opportunities the enhance your knowledge of the topics and apply learning in tangible ways.

Remember to always check your assignment rubric if available to give you helpful insight into what is expected for that assignment.