



Royal Conservatoire
of Scotland

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Remote Teaching Guidance

Document Revision History

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1.1	May 2020	Caroline Cochrane	TELF & AMT	Created in response to COVID-19

Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

Remote Teaching Guidance

During the COVID-19 crisis, this document is intended to support teaching staff at RCS to navigate the issues surrounding the move to delivering teaching and assessment remotely and online, while also signposting resources and support for moving teaching into the online environment. The provisions we are directing staff to are to support the current necessity to teach remotely and therefore it must be emphasised that this is not a guidance document for “Online Learning”. RCS recognises the gulf between *planned* online learning and design, and a remote alternative delivery, which would require a significant change in philosophy, resource & staff development.

The purpose of this guidance is to:

- ✓ ensure the online safety and security of staff & students when using online tools for learning, teaching and assessment
- ✓ provide staff with the overarching principles that guide our approach to online delivery
- ✓ ensure that, as an organisation, we operate in line with our values and within the law in terms of how we use online tools
- ✓ recognise the online world provides multiple learning opportunities; however it can also present risks and challenges
- ✓ support and encourage staff and students to use online tools in a way that keeps them safe and shows respect for others
- ✓ ensure personal information about staff, students and invited guests involved in RCS systems is used effectively, held securely and shared only as appropriate

The policy statement applies to all staff, students and contracted third parties involved in Royal Conservatoire of Scotland’s activities.

Remote Learning & Teaching

It is recognised that RCS has had to move rapidly to an online delivery model. It’s also recognised that while our courses were not designed for online delivery, at this time, the underlying principles and practices that define our approach to teaching will still apply: the technology is simply providing spaces to be together at the same time. The online spaces available to deliver teaching are:

- [Moodle](#) – to deliver Moodle course pages and content, forums for communication and interaction, and Moodle assessment functions.
- [Portal](#) – for e-Portfolio work and creative space creation
- [MS Teams](#) for live real-time interaction including 1:1 and group sessions.

All RCS staff and students already have access to [Microsoft Teams](#). The MS Office 365 suite of tools (inclusive of Teams) is centrally supported by RCS IT and has been endorsed by CSMT as the primary platform to deliver remote lessons and to facilitate remote working. Access to MS Teams is available to all students and staff of the Conservatoire and instructions on downloading and using Teams can be found on the [Portal: Online Teaching](#)

Students and staff will need an internet enabled device with a camera/webcam and a microphone in order to participate or organise lessons via Teams. Teams participants should be aware that by joining an MS Team community, their email address will be visible to other Teams participants. We would expect all Teams participants to respect the privacy of other Team members and not to use Team member’s data for any purposes whatsoever. You can find guidance on data protection on the [Portal: GDPR and Using Online Communication Platforms](#). Other online collaboration tools such as Zoom, Skype etc. are available however, users should be aware of all the security settings and best practice guidance in using these tools. You can find guidance on this on the [Portal: Teams & Zoom Security Settings](#)

Data Protection and Recording

As a result of the RCS campuses closure due to Coronavirus and with the RCS moving its activity online, we want to reassure all users that your privacy and the protection of your data still remains paramount.

It is important that staff and students are clear as to the institutions position on recording. If you would not normally record 'live' 1 to 1 or group lessons, classes, meetings or calls then there should be no reason to record via Microsoft Teams or any other collaboration platform. As soon as the Conservatoire makes a recording of a meeting or call then it must have a lawful basis for doing this and ensure appropriate retention in line with data protection legislation. This guidance also applies to screen shots.

As part of the teaching process, there may be an exception where it is beneficial to record an online 1:1 or group session(s) with students, or for students to submit pre-recorded materials for the purposes of learning, teaching, reflection and personal study.

'Live' recordings are to be made for learning and teaching purposes only and will only be shared with the individual student(s) and the tutor(s) leading the session. If a recording is going to be made of a 'live' session, participants should be informed at the start of the session, and they do have the right to object. **If an objection is noted, the session will not be recorded.** If a recording is made and shared with the participant(s), the participant(s) must only use that recording for personal study purposes and must not share or distribute it any further.

The RCS will retain a copy of the recording and store it securely for a period of up to 1 year (kept only as long as necessary), thereafter the recording will be securely deleted.

You can find further information regarding how the RCS handles personal data in the [RCS Privacy Notice](#).

Online Safety & Security Tips

RCS staff should ensure that professional standards during online lessons are maintained to the same standard as face to face lessons and contact.

Before and during lessons

1. RCS staff and students must only engage in 'live' 1:1 and group online teaching using their RCS email address. It is not permissible to use personal e-mail accounts to conduct RCS business.
2. All parties will be made aware that the delivery time will be used exclusively for the purpose of delivering RCS lessons, tutorials or one to one feedback/coaching sessions. RCS staff members will not engage in online discussions on personal matters and maintain professional boundaries at all times.
3. RCS staff should protect themselves from accidental inappropriate contact with students by restricting their online profile so that it does not automatically accept contact requests and is not accessible to all students. Staff must use the online profile/platform recommended by the RCS solely for RCS teaching/lessons, and not for any other social interactions. Staff must keep their professional profile separate from any personal profiles. Do not share any personal information about yourself e.g. personal telephone number, email accounts, Facebook and other social media links.
4. RCS staff should be in a suitable room where others within their household cannot see the student(s) on screen or listen in to the lesson taking place. If this is not possible, then headphones must be worn, and screens angled away towards a wall and away from any other people. Microsoft Teams also offers participants the option to blur their background during calls: staff are advised to enable this feature as good practice.

5. Staff and students should be aware of the windows open on their device when enabling any screen sharing features. Make sure all other windows are closed or minimised to ensure no inadvertent sharing of information
6. Staff should always ensure that they test their set-up before 'going live': are the camera and microphone working properly? Is the camera in the correct position for optimum teaching? Is it possible to blur your background to limit distraction? Double check your surroundings, do you have photos of family in the background you would prefer were not shared with others in your call?

Work of a Sensitive Nature

It is understood that work of a sensitive nature may continue to be conducted in the online environment, in a similar way as it would do be conducted in the building. If work of this nature is identified, it should be discussed in advance, and agreed risk assessment work should be conducted to ensure all appropriate safeguards and privacy protections are in place, taking into account all the guidance regarding suitable spaces and privacy protections outlined above. Staff should ensure that their Head of Department is fully aware of work of this nature and the parameters surrounding it. Recordings of work of this nature should be avoided.

Health, Safety and Wellbeing – Teaching online

RCS provides a safe working environment in all its buildings which has been risk assessed, monitored and maintained to a high standard. We are unable to do this for teaching taking place in homes and you may not have the 'perfect' environment but we do want everyone to teach, and be taught, in a safe environment. Staff have had Health and Safety training so can adopt the same principles they are taught at home and should confirm that students have enough space for the activity they are doing. We encourage students to ensure the area they are working in is safe and clear of obstructions. The following will help students and staff, work safely at home.

- A suitable teaching/learning environment – both staff and students must be physically located in safe working spaces, appropriate for online lessons and should limit any distracting activity in their room where possible.
- Keep any electrical cables tidy to avoid trip hazards
- If standing and moving make sure you have clear floor space for the activity you are doing
- Take breaks from screens - at least 5-10 minutes every hour but ideally 5 minutes every 25 minutes
- Keep hydrated by drinking water regularly
- Working online may be more tiring or stressful for some people so have rest breaks and move regularly
- Ensure the lighting in the room you are using is suitable for the activity
- If possible use a space that has a window that opens for ventilation
- Try to keep the temperature at a comfortable level for you but if you feel tired or too hot take a break
- If sitting at a computer for several hours try to ensure a good workstation setup – advice can be obtained from healthandsafetydeptment@rcs.ac.uk

Additional Support Resources

[Online Teaching Top Tips](#) - The Head of Post Graduate Learning & Teaching has created a series of videos to support teaching staff who are moving into the online learning environment.

[How to Teach Online](#) - Future Learn offer a diverse selection of courses from leading universities and cultural institutions from around the world. Courses are self-directed and often free.

[Online Teaching](#) – a RCS Portal space with multiple resources to support RCS staff & students.