Expectations of Students Taking Virtual Courses v2

General Overview of Expectations of Students Participating in Virtual Class Meetings

Students enrolled in virtual synchronous courses, which are delivered remotely through class meetings held via WebEx or another appropriate videoconferencing platform, should conduct themselves as if they were enrolled in in-person courses. That is, students should approach learning, participation, classroom behavior, and attention in the same manner. This document is divided into two sections: what students taking virtual courses must do and what virtual class participants should do to maximize their chances for academic success.

Students participating in virtual class meetings (e.g., a WebEx class session), faculty office hours, virtual group meetings, etc. must comply with the following:

- Be safe while participating in virtual meetings by not driving or engaging in other behaviors that would be dangerous if distracted.
- Plan work schedules and other external commitments around scheduled virtual class meeting days/times.
- Unless otherwise directed or permitted by your instructor, keep your webcam on during virtual synchronous class meetings in order to have your attendance recorded and to maximize opportunities to engage and participate in the virtual session.
- If other people are present at your remote learning location, especially when sensitive topics are being discussed or presented, use headphones to protect the privacy of other students in the course and use the chat feature of WebEx to privately communicate your thoughts or responses.
- Mute your microphone and turn off your camera when your remote learning environment will distract others who are participating in the virtual session.
- Do not share with any individual who is not enrolled in the course your password to Canvas, WebEx session links, any course materials, or video recordings of class sessions, faculty office hours, virtual group meetings, etc.
- Sign a waiver to permit your instructor to video record you during a virtual class session or, otherwise, turn your webcam off while your instructor is recording.
- Request and obtain written permission of your instructor or all group members before audio or video recording any amount of a virtual class session or office hour or virtual group meeting, respectively.¹

Students participating in virtual class meetings (e.g., a WebEx class session) faculty office hours, virtual group meetings, etc. should do the following:

¹ Important note: OSS-affiliated students who have been approved to audio record class sessions, office hours, meetings, etc. as an accommodation need not request and obtain written permission to do so. These students must follow the OSS accommodation notice process, which requires them to sign an agreement stating that the recording of classes is purely for study purposes. Faculty will be informed of this approved accommodation (i.e., audio recording) through the procedure followed by the Office of Specialized Services.
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- Participate in the virtual session with the same demeanor, respect, and attention you would exhibit at an on-campus meeting.
- Refrain from eating, sleeping, etc. while on camera during a virtual meeting.
- Dress appropriately and be mindful of how your remote learning environment appears to others; you may wish to use the blurred background feature in WebEx.
- Be sure to join the WebEx class session on time and stay until the session ends unless you have discussed alternate plans with your professor.
- Devote your full attention to the class session, faculty office hour, or virtual group meeting even when your audio/video is off.
- Utilize the chat feature of WebEx when you cannot use your microphone.
- Plan to spend time in addition to that which is spent attending virtual class meetings to learn course content and/or complete coursework. [Note: For example, as per the definition of a credit hour established by the US Department of Education, a student enrolled in a 4-credit lecture course should expect to spend 200 minutes (i.e., 3 hours and 20 minutes) per week for instruction and exam time and 400 minutes (i.e., 6 hours and 40 minutes) per week to study course content and complete assigned coursework. See the College’s Credit Hour Policy for other examples and further information.]

Additional details on several of the items listed above are provided below for your reference.

Sharing Passwords and Course Content

The College’s Responsible Use of Electronic Communications, section on Copyright Compliance, outlines what the expectations are related to protecting passwords, not sharing course materials, etc. Prohibited actions include providing others with unauthorized access to Ramapo public servers, email accounts, learning management system (Canvas) courses, other digital platforms used in courses; course material deemed to be the intellectual property of others; violating copyright law; and more. If it is unclear whether certain individuals should have access to that which the enrolled student has access to, the student should refrain from sharing access until the matter is fully clarified through consultation with Information Technology Services, a faculty member, or other appropriate College personnel.

Online and Remote Learning Safety and Privacy Concerns

If you are attending virtual WebEx class sessions, group meeting, professor’s office hours, tutoring sessions, etc. from a remote location/setting where other people (e.g., family members, coworkers, roommates, the general public – any individuals who are not enrolled in the course) can see and hear what is going on, please use any of the options listed below that are practical
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to the specific situation. This will help protect the safety and privacy of all participants including yourself, your classmates, your instructor, and your tutor.

- Use headphones or at least a low-volume setting on your computer/tablet/device.
- Use one of the on-campus study spaces or computer workstations, which may be reserved by students who wish to attend virtual classes from a campus location.
- Be mindful of when you are or are not muted and on camera. Use the mute button and camera off option, as appropriate.
- Use the chat feature in WebEx rather than your audio or video, as appropriate.
- Use a blurred or virtual WebEx background if you have your camera on during class, which is encouraged to optimize the chance of simulating a face-to-face class environment. (If your instructor requires use of the Respondus Monitor online test proctor software, your background will need to be visible to the instructor but it will not be visible to your classmates.)
- Request that others present in your remote location/setting remain off camera whenever possible and explain that they should not participate in the course (i.e., class participation, materials, etc. are restricted to individuals who are officially enrolled in the course).

Recording Virtual Synchronous Course Material and Class Sessions

Faculty teaching a virtual course may record WebEx class sessions directly by using the WebEx recording option or via Knowmia or other screen/lecture-capture system. New Jersey law permits audio and chat to be recorded without obtaining explicit consent of session participants. Instructors who wish to video record their WebEx class sessions must have participants sign waivers at the beginning of the semester that convey their permission to be video recorded in the course throughout the semester. Any students who do not agree to be video recorded assume the responsibility of making sure their cameras are off while the WebEx class sessions are being video recorded by the instructor.

All recordings associated with a course (e.g., a faculty member's recording of a live WebEx class session, a student presentation, a pre-recorded lecture/video provided to students) are strictly for the exclusive and appropriate use of individuals enrolled in that course. That is, these recordings may not be shared with persons outside of the course, posted on social media, etc., as these materials are considered private to the course and are not to be considered as publicly available. To share such materials might violate and individual's Intellectual Property rights and would violate the College’s Policy on Responsible Use of Electronic Communications.

Students are not permitted to record audio or video of class sessions themselves, unless express permission is given by the instructor. Please be aware that, even if instructor permission is given,

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recordings by students must not be shared. Further details are available in the Student Handbook – Student Code of Conduct, Section 24b, which prohibits any electronic invasion of privacy including photographing, filming, videotaping, recording, or otherwise reproducing in any manner or disclosing the image of another person.

Passwords that are created to limit access to course materials and recorded class sessions, including Canvas content, WebEx session links, recordings, etc. should not be shared with anyone not enrolled in the course. The passwords and all course materials are exclusively to be used by students enrolled in that course.

Student Expectations for Virtual Learning Class Time

Students enrolled in any Ramapo College course are expected to devote their full attention to class meetings, whether they are held virtually or in person, on campus. Students must carefully review the course syllabus for additional expectations and requirements for a particular course. Students enrolled in any college course are expected to devote a certain amount of time each week, as per the definition of a credit hour, which is explained fully in the College’s Credit Hours Policy/Procedure.

If the course delivery mode includes a combination of synchronous class meetings and asynchronous learning opportunities that are created by the instructor, then the student must be prepared to spend an appropriate amount of time outside of regularly scheduled class meetings to complete the asynchronous work. Students enrolled in courses that are not fully synchronous are expected to participate in all scheduled class meetings, as well as to abide by deadlines prescribed for the completion of asynchronous learning opportunities and other course work.

Other Resources

- ITS Handbook
- Student Handbook
- Policy/Procedure on Responsible Use of Electronic Communications