



learning online with forums and chats:

1 netiquette for students

Online learning relies to a great extent on written communication, and can open up a range of questions around how to best talk to each other in a virtual space. It is essential for a learning community (or class) to agree on a set of rules so that everybody feels safe in expressing themselves and communicating online. **Netiquette** (or etiquette for the net) is designed to do exactly that – provide a framework for your behavior and manners online and ensure we all have a common understanding of what is expected in written online interaction. These rules are about acting responsibly and courteously in the virtual classroom, but they are also about efficient communication and learning. They will help establish a learning culture and a safe environment for everyone to enjoy.

You, the students in this class, are members of an online community, which is an essential cornerstone of successful online learning. Please consider and follow the rules below.

1.1 NAME IT

Use clear titles for your discussion posts. This will provide a clear structure to the discussion and help your peers find posts more easily.

1.2 STICK TO IT

Stay on topic and include relevant topics only. Try and structure posts so that different topics are dealt with in different posts.

1.3 READ-WRITE-READ-SEND

Carefully read your posts before submitting, and review your replies before sending them off. Tone or awkward formulation can easily lead to misunderstandings in the absence of visual cues (e.g. body language, facial expression), so be sure you send nothing that might be misunderstood.

1.4 KEEP IT SHORT AND TO THE POINT

Write clear and compact posts. Online communication requires careful and short language, but you can of course also include your personal style.

1.5 POST OFTEN

Often and short is much better than seldom and long. Don't spend hours composing an essay-like post, but post short and meaningful contributions more often.

1.6 DON'T BREAK THE RULES

Online posts are part of your academic work and need to comply with rules regarding copyright and academic integrity.

1.7 BE CAREFUL WITH HUMOR

Humor is good and can personalise a discussion. However, be careful with using sarcastic comments – they can be easily misunderstood in an online environment where there are no visual cues. This is even more important when working in a multicultural group.

1.8 BE NICE ☺

DON'T SHOUT! Writing in capitals is considered shouting in online conversation, so try to avoid it. Use emoticons (appropriately) to express feelings.

Flaming (writing provoking posts), bullying, sexist, racist or discriminatory comments are absolutely not allowed. Inappropriate posts will be deleted by the lecturer and will have the same consequences as inappropriate behavior on campus.

Be friendly and helpful, especially towards inexperienced peers. Don't ridicule someone else's post or question. Consider your tone, and try to use "neutral" language when you contribute to a discussion rather than being judgemental.

1.9 ADD VALUE

Stick to the topic and when referring to a peer's post, mention its value to you and the class. It's nice to be quite explicit about this, e.g. by saying "Thanks to XYZ for your post, which was very helpful. In addition, I would say....").

1.10 BE ACADEMIC

Structure your comments logically (e.g. through using a hierarchical order, or the use of key words or topics). Argue and substantiate your comments by referring to the literature or online resources. Ensure that any literature or other sources you use are cited correctly and that you don't breach the rules of academic integrity.



learning solutions guidelines.

1.11 BE RESPECTFUL

Be constructive and considerate when answering your peers. Start the post with a greeting / address (Dear/Hello/Hi XYZ) and finish it with a salutation and your name. If you don't agree with someone, say it with respect and tact (e.g. start your reply with a positive comment).

1.12 BE THERE!

Participate regularly in the discussion. You will not only increase your learning success, but also enjoy being active and engaged in the online discussion with your peers.