

Successfully Participating in Classes Remotely



What to Expect when participating in classes remotely (Introduction)

At Morehouse School of Medicine, we excel at intimate faculty-student relationships, in-person discussions, and impromptu hallway exchanges of thoughts as a closely-knit community. Sometimes, you may have an opportunity to participate in classes from a remote location. This guide is to help you make the most of your remote class participation.

In this guide, we will discuss pertinent information that will help you have a productive and engaging experience when participating in remote learning here at Morehouse School of Medicine.

Technologies and Resources for Remote Class Participation

Remote class participation relies heavily on technology and other resources. For success in your courses, it is important that you know the resources available, how to access them and how to use them. Your courses at Morehouse School of Medicine use the following resources.

Zoom

Zoom is the video conferencing tool used by MSM. Zoom is fairly easy to use but if you have not used zoom before you may want to visit the [Zoom Show Me Videos](#) website. Along with Zoom, we are working towards an add-on “Class for Zoom”. Class adds features to Zoom to make the experience seem more like an actual classroom.

Panopto

Panopto is our video recording system. Panopto is used to record class lectures and Zoom meetings. In addition, your instructor may create other videos for your course. Panopto is fully integrated with the Canvas LMS. So, lecture recordings and instructor videos will be available on your course page in Canvas.

Turning Point

Turning Point is used to create live polls and quizzes in your face-to-face and online classes. You'll enter your response through the [web site](#) or [app](#).

Canvas

Canvas is MSM's learning management system (LMS). It is a central location for all your course content. You can use it to access your course syllabus, recorded lectures, and other learning materials.

Exemplify

Exemplify is the student interface for ExamSoft, the school's computer-based testing software. Students complete all tests and many other assessments from tested courses using Exemplify. Each student must have a personal laptop that meets the minimum system requirements. Refer to [Exemplify's MSRs](#) for Windows, Mac, and iPad.

Technologies and Resources for Remote Class Participation (cont.)

Student Tech Bar

Remote learning relies on technology. When your technology goes awry, you can turn to the MSM Information Technology (IT) Student Tech Bar for support. The tech bar is located on the first floor of the Hugh Closter building. For phone support you can dial 404-752-1111 or file a [SysAid](#) help ticket. If you need to reset your password, you can do that online with a [Password Reset](#) through Office 365.

Office of Digital Learning

The Office of Digital Learning provides learning resources, online courses, training and support for faculty, students, and staff. They can answer questions you may have with Canvas, ExamSoft, Panopto, or TurningPoint.

OSLER

The [Office of Student Learning and Educational Resources](#) (OSLER) is a comprehensive resource dedicated to providing services for academic enrichment, career development, and learning skills development to all students from each degree program at Morehouse School of Medicine. You should take advantage of OSLER's resources as early as possible.

Preparing for Remote Participation

Learning from a remote classroom means you have freedom to participate in the class session from a place of your choice. But taking the time to properly prepare for a remote class participation will increase your information processing and retention. Here are suggestions to help you prepare for your remote class participation.

Get some peace and quiet

You will need a quiet place to work without distractions from things like television, family, or roommates. Have headphones for listening to lectures or discussions (especially important in shared spaces).

Turn off your cell phone

Make friends and family aware of the hours that you will be "at" school. If you are in your own room, consider putting a sign on your door like "in class, please do not disturb." (A sign is available to on the last page)

Avoid social media

Consider installing website and app blockers that prevent you from using social media during specific times.

Consider ergonomics

Adjust the height of your chair, keyboard, and screen so that you are comfortable. Forearms and thighs should be level and parallel to the floor. Wrists should not be bent while typing.

Set up good lighting and comfortable seating. Lighting in the room should be at least as bright as the computer screen to avoid eye strain.

Class Participation through Zoom

You will participate in class sessions through Zoom. Here are some helpful Zoom meeting etiquette tips to guide your class participation and help you get the most out of your digital class sessions. Before class:

Mute Your Microphone

Your instructor may adjust the meeting settings so that you enter the meeting on mute. But if not, your mic will probably be "hot" when you enter and everyone will be able to hear you. Remember to mute and unmute your mic as needed throughout the session, and leave your mic muted when not talking to avoid background noise interrupting the class.

Test Your Connection

Zoom's bandwidth requirements are relatively low, but a weak internet connection can result in choppy audio and video. Test your connection using a tool like **Speedtest.net**. Turning off your video can also help improve the experience when you have a slower connection.

Customize Your Profile

You can modify how your name appears and even upload a static image that appears on screen when you aren't using your camera. While instructors often prefer that students use video, being able to see images instead of just a list of names is helpful, too.

Stage Your Background

A professional-looking space isn't always available, but you should think about what will be behind you when you turn on your video and take a little time to declutter that area. Zoom also makes replacing your background with a virtual backdrop very easy.

Keep People and Pets Off Screen

It can be fun to see your classmates' or instructors' pets, but a lot of jumping around or barking can end up being a real distraction for everyone. Try to put yourself or your pets behind a closed door, and let your family or roommates know when you plan to join a live class meeting. Posting a sign outside your study area can be a helpful reminder.

Class Participation through Zoom (cont.)

Dress Appropriately

There's no doubt that our school wardrobes have become more casual than they might have been a year ago. Casual dress can work for an online class, but it's important to remember that you're still in a professional setting. Please present yourself in the best possible light.

During Class

Be On Time

Live class sessions are, well, live, so showing up on time is part of your responsibility as an attendee. While it may be easier to slip into a virtual class later than it would be to walk into a physical classroom, either way you're going to miss something and potentially cause a distraction. Set up calendar notifications that remind you to log in a few minutes before the scheduled start time.

Raise Your Hand

Zoom allows you to raise your virtual hand. It's a polite way to ask for an opportunity to speak and helps your professor manage the discussion, especially in a large class.

Using Chat Feature

This is a great conversation tool when you have a question, need a step or directions repeated or a thought comes to mind without interrupting the speaker.

Avoid Multitasking

When in an online meeting, it can be tempting to open other windows and tabs, check your email and social media feeds, or switch your attention to your phone. To avoid this, mute your phone and any pop-up notifications on your computer. Also, try to refrain from eating during online class sessions whenever possible.

Turn It Off (Sometimes)

Feel free to turn off your video if you need to leave your computer briefly during a session or eat a quick snack. Otherwise, it's best to keep your video on to help establish a sense of community with your classmates and instructor.

Class Participation through Zoom (cont.)

Be Professional

Although it seems easy, it isn't always easy in practice. In the physical presence of your professor and classmates, if you wouldn't say something out loud then it's not appropriate to say in a Zoom session or a chat window. Courtesy, compassion, and generosity go a long way in group settings. Your peers are part of your professional network, so focus on building positive relationships.

Practice Time Management

Learning in a remote classroom asks for more proactivity and preparation than an in-person class. Without solid time management skills, you might easily find yourself cramming before classes. Here are some valuable tips to help you practice to improve your time management skills.

Preview lectures before class.

Review class lectures, book chapters and powerpoints in Canvas to prepare for upcoming content and potentially difficult material that you will be learning. Mark the difficult material and pay attention to these during class lectures. This will help with comprehension, reinforcement of concepts, and to deepen the connections among the concepts.

Make a daily "To Do" list

Create a daily schedule that you follow, designating certain hours each day to reading, watching lectures, completing assignments, studying, and participating in forums. Commit to making your online coursework part of your weekly routine, and set reminders to complete these tasks.

Practice Time Management (cont.)

Stay organized

If you have separate binders, notebooks, and folders, you will be able to locate assignments easier. Also, avoid clutter. You can also use digital note taking systems like OneNote (installed on student laptops).

Stay healthy

Regular exercise keeps energy levels up, resulting in a more engaged mind. Getting adequate sleep and eating healthy also helps. Remember the energy triangle

Check in periodically throughout the semester and look at how you're spending your time. Ask yourself: How much time am I dedicating to course reading and assignments? Am I regularly underestimating the time it's taking me to get things done, forcing me to cram the night before the exams? A little self-reflection and adjustment can go a long way.