

Introduction to the digital learning environment: a guide for students

Whether you are studying on campus or online, ECU is committed to providing you with access to quality learning and teaching experiences and support. The information below is to help ensure that you can participate confidently in the digital learning environment.

Hardware

You will need reliable access to an internet connection and a computer or appropriate mobile device (ideally with a microphone and camera). For online students, lecturers will primarily engage with you through your Blackboard Unit sites. They will upload materials, run online tutorials, make announcements, and use the discussion board. As a result, it is important that you can log into Blackboard daily. You can access Blackboard on your smartphone via your browser, or a dedicated [Blackboard App](#). Instructions for using Blackboard are [available here](#).

Browsers

It is recommended that you install the latest versions of two internet browsers on your device to ensure the most reliable experience:

- [Chrome](#) (for Blackboard Collaborate sessions)
- [Mozilla Firefox](#) (for everything else)

If you are using a smartphone, ensure that you have applied all updates to your device. If you need support, follow these links to instructions for how to apply updates to [Apple](#) and [Android](#).

Software

Most of the video recordings you watch as part of your course will have been made using a tool called Panopto. These recordings are simply embedded into your Blackboard unit site, so you don't need the tool to view them. If you are asked to record your own videos, however, then you will need to use Panopto. Instructions for installing and using Panopto are [available here](#).

Learning activities may be on one of two platforms: Blackboard Collaborate Ultra or Microsoft Teams. As an ECU student, you should already have access to both.

- Blackboard Collaborate Ultra is available within your Blackboard unit site. Instructions for using it are [available here](#).
- Microsoft Teams is available as part of the Office365 suite when you log into your student webmail via the ECU Student Portal. To find and download Teams, follow the [instructions here](#).

For technical support with any of these tools [contact IT Services](#).

Questions?

For the latest information about ECU's COVID-19 response, please see the FAQs [available here](#). For any other questions, you can call ECU's Communications Centre on (08) 6304 0000 or submit an enquiry via the online form on [Ask Us](#).

Studying off campus

If you are new to online learning, this is a good opportunity to build your digital learning skills. A useful place to start is [Digital Essentials](#) on the ECU Library website. Preparation and organisation are important, as is regular engagement with your lecturers and tutors, the learning resources on Blackboard, and also with each other.

1. Establish a study space

Create a place where you can regularly use a computer, read unit materials, and take notes without being distracted.

2. Check in daily with your Blackboard unit sites

It's possible that unit content will be updated regularly as staff upload materials, run live online tutorials, make announcements, and fellow students make use of discussion boards to connect. [Taking good notes](#) will help ensure you keep your learning organised.

3. Set goals and plan your time

Set yourself daily goals for each unit (e.g. finish reading a chapter) and make a plan for completing assessments well ahead of the due date.

4. Ask questions

Don't be afraid to ask questions of your unit coordinators, lecturers and tutors. You can do this on your unit discussion board if it's a question that other students are likely to have, or by email if your question is personal. Responses might take up to 24 hours (and longer over the weekend), so it's better to ask sooner rather than later.

5. Make use of ECU services

Successful students make use of ECU's learning support services. You can book a 30 minute online, phone or face-to-face appointment with a Learning Adviser and access a range of learning support resources on the [Academic Skills Centre Blackboard page](#) or the [Library website](#). For semester 2, all ECU students can also receive online 24/7 study help thanks to a partnership between ECU and Studiosity. Access these services using the following links:

- [Book an appointment with a Learning Adviser](#)
- [Academic Skills Centre online workshops](#)
- [Studiosity](#)
- Library guides on [Research, Referencing and Endnote](#)
- Ask a librarian at library@ecu.edu.au

For Higher Degree Research (HDR) students, access the [HDR Skills Centre](#) and the [GRS Programs](#) Blackboard sites.

6. Stay socially connected

Even if you are not studying on an ECU campus, you are not studying alone. Stay in touch with other students through messaging systems to keep each other motivated. ECU's [Current Students Facebook page](#) would be a great place to start.