Microsoft Teams recording guidelines

Those with presenter privileges in Microsoft Teams meetings are able to instigate recordings of those meetings. General guidelines around this are provided below, as well as specific guidelines related to recording of seminars and other small group teaching. For more information about how to record inside Teams, see the Recordings page in the Teams online course. For more information about working with and sharing recordings already made, see Microsoft Stream help.

General guidelines

- Attendees are to be notified of the recording by the chair or lead presenter of the meeting, before the recording is turned on.
- Any objections to the recording should be considered by the chair or lead presenter, and they should ultimately decide whether the is appropriate in light of any objection.
- Any late comers to the meeting should be alerted to the recording, by the chair or lead presenter, at the earliest opportunity.
- The recording should cease at the formal close of the meeting.
- Covert recording is not be allowed and could be viewed as a disciplinary offence.
- Other software can be used to record meetings as an alternative to using the in-built Teams recorder (e.g. Lancaster eStream), but all of the above guidance still applies to such recordings.

Seminars and other small group teaching

This note applies to any class where student interaction is to be recorded, irrespective of the nature of that class. For ease of reference, the term ‘seminar’ will be used throughout this document.

Whether a seminar can be routinely recorded depends on a number of factors, including the type of session it is.

Please note: if a session is recorded, it must only be used to provide access to students who are registered for those classes this year. It must not be used for any other purpose.

Students Objecting to being recorded

As a University, our rules provide a general right to record teaching activities for educational purposes. However, notwithstanding this general right, all students have a legal right under the GDPR to ‘opt out’ of a recording. Where they do so, their voice and face cannot be recorded.

Where seminars are repeated to accommodate student numbers, only one instance of the seminar needs to be recorded for those students who do not attend. Students should be told in advance:

- which session is to be recorded,
- how they can object to being recorded (i.e. to whom within the department they should submit their objection and by when), and
- what will happen where a student objects (i.e. the alternative).

It may be possible to identify a group of students who do not object to being recorded. If this requires students to be moved between groups, timetabling must be provided with these details as soon as possible.

A: Students studying online

This section applies where the student has: chosen not to return to the University for in-person classes; decided to leave campus and continue their studies remotely; or been given permission to study online only. It is not for those students who are self-isolating or ill (options for those students are discussed in section B).

Recording an in-person teaching event

Not every student will be able to attend in-person events, so a recording may allow other students to see this session, but only where it is possible to do so. However, while some teaching rooms are equipped with appropriate recording technology (e.g. Panopto), many are not (we are working on a solution to this). In addition, as most in-person seminars are taking place in Lecture Theatres to aid social distancing, a lapel/mobile microphone used by the lecturer may not adequately pick-up discussions involving students dispersed throughout the room. Assuming that it is possible to record the event, it is good practice to remind students that you are doing so at the start of the session. Where the room is not equipped to capture the session in an appropriate manner, an alternative solution will be required (discussed below).

Recording an online session

Microsoft Teams has the ability to record online sessions. While a warning is displayed to all those on the meeting when the recording starts, it is best practice to warn students before the recording starts.
Note: anyone invited to a Teams seminar can begin a recording of that seminar, unless the facilitator has disabled that facility. Students must not be allowed to make their own recordings on Teams. You should remind students not to use the recording function if it has not been disabled. If you notice that someone is recording the seminar, you should ask them to stop, as it is for the lecturer to determine whether a recording will take place and they are potentially breaching data protection regulations. If they refuse to stop recording, you should inform them that you will end the session.

The following scenarios apply where it has not been possible to move all students who do not wish to be recorded to another group (including because there is only one group).

Students can object to their voice being recorded. However, it may be that the session is not one where the voice needs to be heard. For example, if the session is more of an opportunity for students to ask questions of the tutor (rather than vice versa), then it is possible that objecting students could participate in alternative ways (see below).

In-person seminar

The tutor could arrange to use technology (including Teams) to allow students to ask questions and contribute to discussion without speaking, e.g. through Teams chat or other text-based solutions (e.g. Mentimeter), or allowing other students to ask a question on their behalf.

Online seminar

In an online seminar, Teams does not record the text within the ‘chat’ function. A tutor could read out the question and answer the question.

Under either of these scenarios, the session can be recorded despite the presence of objecting students because they have alternative and comparable ways of participating. Tutors will need to remember, however, that they cannot ask questions directly of a student who has objected to being recorded.

The following scenarios apply to sessions in which there is student interaction, i.e. the purpose of the seminar / small group teaching is for students to answer questions, and engage in discussion, not just ask questions.

While it is resource intensive, it would be possible to hold intensive tutorials (akin to the Oxbridge model) bringing together 1-3 students, in-person. This would mean holding sessions with students either for a shorter period or less frequently, and providing more intense individual engagement than would otherwise occur within a seminar (as even with 3 people, each student will get more individual attention than in a traditional seminar). This is likely to be seen by students as akin to 1:1 teaching, and they may see this as an appropriate solution.

You should inform Timetabling of which students object to being involved in recorded sessions, so that they can be removed from the relevant session. They will then identify a suitable time and room for alternative small-group seminars to take place (you should inform the Timetabling Team of the length and frequency of these tutorials). Due to the requirements for social distancing, the tutorials must not take place in the tutor’s office.

Similarly, if there are a small number of online-only students who do not wish to be recorded, you can organise intensive, synchronous tutorials online for them.

Timetabling should be told the students names and ID numbers, together with the length and frequency of the tutorials. They will then create an appropriate online, synchronous event.

Alternatives to recording seminars

This section applies where:

- too many students object to allow a single group to be recorded
- there are a large number of online-only students
- there is only a single interactive group scheduled (and at least one student objects)
- the session does not lend itself to being recorded.

(i) Create online synchronous activity

The preferred solution is to create a synchronous online event for those studying online. This could be:

- An online equivalent of a seminar (numbers could be slightly higher than normal, but it would seek to replicate the seminar activity).
A ‘Town Hall’ event. This would be for larger numbers and would provide an opportunity for the member of staff to go through the key points of learning and allow students to ask questions. If questions could also be posed through the ‘chat’ function, then this could be recorded (as objecting students could use chat rather than ask questions by speaking).

In order to do this:

1. Ask timetabling to create an online synchronous event (or more than one if multiples are required). This should be scheduled between 9am and noon GMT to facilitate different time zones.
2. Supply timetabling with a list of the students (and their ID numbers) who will be participating in this event.
3. Timetabling will remove these students from scheduled in-person events. Where such events are then no longer viable because the remaining student numbers are too low, they will work with you to merge events.

(ii) Asynchronous activity

While a synchronous activity is preferable, this may not always be possible. In these circumstances, departments should consider asynchronous activity. This could include:

- A podcast/videocast where the tutor summarises the key points from that seminar
- A written summary of the learning objectives of the seminar (including, for example, an annotated question sheet)
- An annotated bibliography
- Links to relevant videos/graphics/digital resources that explain the point
- A discussion board that allows students to post and discuss answers to the questions, with the tutor providing guidance on what is right or wrong.

Where only asynchronous activities are provided, departments must ensure that there is a way that students can ask questions of the relevant tutor. This could be, for example, through the provision of an office-hour, discussion board or guaranteed response time to emails etc. All students have the right to be able to ask questions of an academic member of staff, and to get responses within a reasonable timeframe, to ensure they understand and consolidate their learning.

B: Students self-isolating or ill

Students may need to self-isolate or may become ill (COVID or non-COVID related). We should support such students as best as possible. However, the limitations of this should be accepted. It is not possible to guarantee the same learning experience for students who are ill, and we would not do so if, for example, they had another illness (e.g. cold, flu, measles etc.).

This section identifies some of the ways in which we can support students in these circumstances.

1. Recording (if available)

While it was noted above that a recording may not always be possible, the reality is that sometimes it will be possible as a group of students may not object. In such circumstances, departments may wish to consider recording a seminar for students to watch when they are able.

2. Joining online synchronous activity

Where there is already an online synchronous activity for the module, departments could allow individual students to access this activity if they feel well enough to do so. This should only happen where it is not likely to detrimentally affect the learning experience for those who are studying online (i.e. if you have tens of students self-isolating, it may not be reasonable to put them in an online seminar of, for example, 15 students).

Where it is only one or two students who need to join this activity, then this can be actioned by the department by simply forwarding the relevant link to the student for that session.

3. Create additional online synchronous activity

Where there are several students who are self-isolating or ill, you may wish to consider creating an ad hoc online synchronous activity. This could be a seminar group or it could be a ‘Town Hall’ event similar to that described above, where a tutor summarises the issue, and there is an opportunity to ask questions.

The department can create a ‘Teams event’ and invite the relevant students to participate. Timetabling do not need to be involved for these short-term measures where there are no longer-term changes required to students’ timetables.

4. Intensive tutorial

If there are only one or two students who require alternatives because they are ill or self-isolating, you may be able to offer an intensive tutorial as discussed above, i.e. the student(s) are given a shorter period of time one-to-one with a staff member to go through the learning and to ask questions.
5. Asynchronous material

Asynchronous material may be made available to students instead. We would not ordinarily create additional teaching sessions if a student had an illness. While we should try our best to respond to these difficult circumstances (especially where they are self-isolating because, for example, a flatmate has COVID), we must recognise that we cannot guarantee to replicate the learning experience. Sometimes all that can be done is to provide the opportunity to ‘catch-up’.

Asynchronous materials such as those presented above could be used. However, students should always have the ability to ask questions of the relevant academic staff, and receive responses within a reasonable timeframe, either through office-hours, a discussion board or through email.