



# **Digital Education Framework**

**Academic Year 2020-21**



## Contents

<b>1. Policy</b>	p3
<b>2. Principles</b>	p4
<b>3. Practice</b>	p5
Digital delivery will be supported by good communication and clear information	p5
Digital delivery requires full engagement with varied learning resources provided	p6
Digital delivery will meet some baseline expectations regarding unit content	p7
Digital delivery will be supported by robust student support structures	p7
Digital delivery will be supported by appropriate resources being recommended and supplied where possible	p8
Digital delivery may result in variations to assessments where appropriate	p8
Digital delivery will be supported by appropriate community-building initiatives	p9
Digital delivery will reflect the importance of delivering employability outcomes	p9
Digital delivery will comply with expected sector standards	p9
Appendix 1: Practice Guidelines: Higher Education Theology Courses	p11
Appendix 2: Practice Guidelines: Counselling and Pastoral Supervision Courses	p14
Appendix 3: Practice Guidelines: Equipped to Minister	p15
Appendix 4: Zoom and Netiquette	p18
Appendix 5: Advice regarding Working Environments	p22
Appendix 6: Guidelines for tutors when recording lectures	p23
Appendix 7: Key Contacts	p24

## 1. Policy

1.1 On 28 May 2020 the College Principal announced that, in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the academic year 2020-21 will begin with those theology students who would normally access onsite education studying through means of digital education as the College campus will be closed to students.

1.2 This decision was taken after careful consideration of many factors including:

- public health advice;
- government regulations about social distancing and COVID-secure environments;
- unique features relating to the College's cohort, physical features and location;
- the importance of making a decision which allows sufficient time for appropriate planning for quality education for the new academic year;
- the digital capability of the College to deliver an excellent quality of education utilising present IT equipment, expertise and experience.

1.3 At the heart of these deliberations were best interest considerations in terms of student physical, mental and intellectual well-being. The College's decision was also in line with sector guidance provided by the QAA which was released at the start of June 2020 and begins with the assumption that "higher education providers will be unable to return to pre-COVID models at the start of the academic year beginning in September 2020".<sup>1</sup>

1.4 The decision regarding onsite theology students in 1.1 was followed by consideration of appropriate plans for students on the Counselling, Equipped to Minister and Pastoral Supervision courses, which are reflected in this document.

1.5 The return to onsite activity for staff and students will be kept under review with the hope that at least some onsite education can resume during the academic year. However, in line with our commitment to the best interests of our staff and students, onsite activities will only be resumed when it is considered safe to do so in the light of health and safety legislation and government guidance - particularly as this relates to the establishment of COVID-secure environments. In the meantime the College has established some key principles for the digital delivery of our courses which align with our values as an institution.

1.6 This document does not apply to distance learning theology students who will continue to study in the same mode and receive the same tutorial access as previously. Although they, like other students, will not be able to access the physical library until it can be safely re-opened, they have access to the same range of electronic library resources as other students.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/guidance/preserving-quality-and-standards-through-a-time-of-rapid-change.pdf>

## 2. Principles

College Values	In the light of the College's values we will seek to uphold the following principles through the design and delivery of digital education
We believe in the inherent moral equality, dignity and worth of every individual.	<p>We intend to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide excellent digital education that maintains sector standards and quality</li> <li>• provide equity in digital delivery for all cohorts at each hub location, for example by not privileging one set of students within a cohort with regard to library access on account of geographical proximity</li> <li>• implement flexible learning support that can be delivered virtually</li> <li>• provide opportunities for varied viewpoints to be heard in relation to course content</li> <li>• provide creative and varied learning resources for our diverse student body</li> <li>• provide an equivalent level of support to what normally students would receive</li> <li>• promote regular opportunities for virtual community worship</li> <li>• promote regular peer-to-peer interaction</li> <li>• be open to learning from each other and listening to each other's needs, ideas and perspectives</li> <li>• safeguard equality of access and success for all students</li> <li>• seek to minimise any disadvantages to students</li> </ul>
We value the unique distinctiveness of each member of the College community.	
We celebrate the richness of being a diverse and inclusive community.	
We believe that as a community meeting daily for worship we must be careful to listen to God and discern his will and purpose.	
We will promote the general wellbeing of all members of the student community and College staff.	

<p>We are committed to assisting every student in reaching their potential</p>	<p>that are a direct consequence of digital delivery (e.g., by assisting in exploring practical solutions for students who are disadvantaged by IT poverty)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support students in any workplace learning environments and work with them to overcome present practical challenges</li> </ul>
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2.1 These principles will govern the College’s approach to digital teaching and learning. The intention is to continue to deliver programmes that encourage learning which is in nature and purpose:

- active rather than passive
- social rather than independent
- focused on key learning outcomes
- supported rather than isolated
- student-focused and student-led (i.e., the end-user is its driving force)

### 3. Practice

3.1 It is important that all staff and students clearly understand how the College will operate to successfully deliver its programmes while digital delivery is the norm across all its programmes. What will digital education look like in practice at Spurgeon’s College? Key points applicable to all programmes are set out here. A series of appendices sets out additional details applicable to specific programmes or groups of programmes.

#### Digital delivery will be supported by good communication and clear information

3.2 Students can expect:

- The College Principal and Heads of Department to provide timely information and updates on strategic decisions to all students via the Moodle platform as required.
- Important College news and information to be shared at the end of daily ‘virtual Chapel’ times.<sup>2</sup>
- The Student Reps to communicate with the student body and to continue to represent students’ views at their regular bi-weekly meetings with the Principal and Chief Operating Officer.
- College tutors and professional staff to respond to emails in a timely manner.
- Information about the delivery schedule for each programme and programme component to be clearly displayed on the appropriate page on Moodle well in advance.

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<sup>2</sup> Important College news and information will also be posted on the Moodle news page.

### 3.3 Staff will expect:

- Students to check Moodle regularly during term time for news and information.
- Students to be proactive in notifying relevant staff of any concerns and difficulties they are experiencing (e.g., with course access and/or content) as soon as possible.
- Students to read and respond to emails sent to their College email addresses.
- Students to use the booking system to book 1-1 conversations with staff when required.

3.4 The College is committed to involve students fully in any decision making process affecting their study programme as set out in the College's Student Protection Plan.<sup>3</sup>

### **Digital delivery requires full engagement with the varied learning resources provided**

3.5 The challenges created by Covid-19 require everyone to adapt to the new way of working demanded by the fluid circumstances facing the UK and the higher education sector in particular.

### 3.6 Students can expect:

- The provision of a clear schedule for their course.
- An appropriate mixture of pre-recorded and/or live teaching sessions to be held according to their course (see Appendices 1-3).
- The provision of learning resources adequate to their course. Before it is safe to re-open the College library, tutors will advise on available electronic resources.
- Video conferencing sessions and other live activities to be carefully managed by tutors to ensure maximum participation and engagement. This includes appropriate "Zoom etiquette" [See Appendix 4] and built-in breaks at points appropriate to the educational aim of the session.
- The purpose/ intention of varied elements of their course to be made explicit.

### 3.7 Staff will expect:

- Students to engage with the material which tutors identify as core for their course.
- Students to organise their study time in a way that enables them to stay in step with the weekly programme for study.
- Students to participate fully with interactive sessions (e.g., by preparing appropriately for discussions, by leading break-out groups as agreed).
- Students to show respect for each other and any guidelines tutors give for the conduct of live sessions.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.spurgeons.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/Documents/Miscellaneous/Student-Protection-Plan-2019-20.pdf>

## Digital delivery will meet some baseline expectations regarding course content

3.9 It is recognised that different programmes necessitate different approaches and that digital delivery is different from face-to-face classes, but students can expect that they will be provided with whatever is necessary to achieve the aims and learning outcomes of their courses.

## Digital delivery will be supported by robust student support structures

3.10 The College is mindful of the wide-ranging needs of both new and returning students who will begin the academic year working remotely.

3.11 Students can expect the normal support structures to be fully operational although their *modus operandi* may be varied:

- *Learning Support:* the designated learning support staff (co-ordinator and volunteers), supported by academic tutors, will continue to provide assistance to students who need help in skills associated with learning and writing assignments. The Learning Support Department's new Handbook outlines some of the services available. All new students will receive an introductory letter explaining how to access support. The Learning Support Department will have responsibility during this time to support students with specific-learning difficulties (SpLD).
- *Moodle and IT Support:* students requiring help using the College's VLE (Moodle) can email the Moodle Administrator. The College will be proactive in providing additional IT resources for students.
- *Online Calendar.* The College will introduce an online appointment system so that students can see College staff availability. A booking system for appointments for non-urgent issues is available.

3.12 Students can expect the Principal and Heads of Departments to:

- Keep abreast of changing government guidelines
- Keep the issue of library access under continuous review

3.13 Staff will expect:

- Students to attend pastoral groups in cases where they are normally required to do so.
- Students to keep appointments booked with the Learning Support Department staff
- Students to use the online booking system to make pre-booked appointments for non-urgent matters.

### **Digital delivery will be supported by appropriate resources being recommended and supplied where possible**

3.14 At the time of writing, the majority of the staff of the College are still working from home and a planned return to site has not yet been scheduled. Consequently the whole of the campus is closed, including the library. The senior management team continue to keep this under review, but it should be noted that like the rest of the country, there are issues with staff needing to shield, staff who are unable to get to work due to public transport restrictions, and the need to ensure the building is a COVID-19-secure environment for employees. In addition there are considerations regarding how students can get to the College, ensuring equal opportunity for those without their own transport and the challenge of providing a safe environment for students. The senior staff understand that the opening of the library is an important subject for students and it is being kept under constant review.

3.15 Students can expect the Library staff to:

- Provide an introduction to online library resources for new students via pre-recorded video material. On Theology and Counselling programmes these will be supplemented by a Zoom session in Orientation Week.
- Provide additional information and training videos covering specific issues as required.
- Update the Library's Moodle page with links to new resources as these become available.
- Work with tutors to link material on unit reading lists to electronic resources.
- Offer one-to-one assistance through Zoom sessions to assist students needing help finding resources for their assignments or dissertation.

### **Digital delivery may result in variations to assessment where appropriate**

3.16 Assessment activities will remain in line with sector standards. Students might see some changes to the form or details of assessment tasks. For example:

- Tutors are encouraged to use formative assessments to facilitate peer-to-peer contact and group working
- Tutors are encouraged to provide a greater number of options in terms of essay titles or assessment types appropriate to available student resources
- Tutors are encouraged to introduce more opportunities for self-assessment in the learning resources they provide (e.g., review and/or reflection questions; quizzes).

3.17 In line with the College's Mitigating Circumstances Policy, students are permitted to apply for extensions to the assignment submission deadlines. Students requesting extensions will need to submit the normal form which will be considered



by the Special Cases Committee.<sup>4</sup> For the purposes of the consideration of Mitigating Circumstances, the implications of COVID19 (e.g., on physical and mental health, social circumstances, caring responsibilities and working arrangements) are considered as “unforeseeable or unpreventable circumstances that could have a significant adverse effect on the performance of a student” (paragraph 2).

3.18 The College’s Malpractice Policy remains fully operational; students are reminded of the importance of academic integrity.

### **Digital delivery will be supported by appropriate community-building initiatives**

3.19 The College’s mantra for surviving and thriving while lockdown measures are in place is “Don’t get isolated, stay connected, remain supported”. This message underlines our conviction that working and learning socially will improve engagement, enjoyment and success as well as supporting good mental health.

3.20 College Chapel Zoom meetings will be held in order to align with our College values. Virtual Chapel will contribute to a sense of community as well as provide spiritual sustenance. Students for whom attendance at Chapel was required, will be expected to attend Virtual Chapel services in accordance with their normal College attendance expectations. Tutors are also expected to make College Chapel services a priority.

3.21 Other community events (e.g., Zoom Coffee Mornings; year group socials) may be arranged by staff and by students as appropriate. Such initiatives are welcomed but will not be organized centrally. Details of such community events will be posted on Moodle; students and staff are encouraged to participate when feasible.

3.22 The College is linked to TalkCampus which provides an online global mental health support network allowing students to access instant, online peer support.

### **Digital delivery will respect the importance of delivering employability outcomes**

3.23 The College recognises that workplace learning will be affected during these unusual circumstances. College staff will continue to monitor the situation and will work with colleagues in workplace settings to ensure that the employability and skills outcomes associated with such learning are protected. Where appropriate, existing arrangements may be extended or supplemented by future opportunities.

3.25 The College remains committed to helping students with career planning. Personal development interviews, as appropriate, will take place according to the normal schedule (via Zoom if necessary, subject to current social distancing advice).

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<sup>4</sup> For the Equipped to Minister course, see also Appendix 3, paragraph A3.15.

## Digital delivery will comply with expected sector standards

3.26 COVID19 presents the whole higher education sector with unprecedented challenges. After careful review and evaluation, the College is satisfied that its IT capabilities enable it to continue with the delivery of its range of programmes while maintaining high quality educational provision, even as circumstances and restrictions come and go.

3.27 There will be no changes to the learning objectives, study hours, quality, costs or length of courses; changes are restricted to the modes of delivery. Available unit options are usually variable in any given year depending on student numbers but it is not anticipated that options will be reduced in number because of the pandemic. The support for the four pillars of student success (academic support, technology support, sense of community and health and well-being) will be maintained during this time.

3.28 The quality of digital delivery will be kept under continuous review. This will involve feedback from students and staff. Appropriate responses to staff and students will be done in a timely manner. In addition, a formal mid-semester evaluation and review will be conducted.

3.29 In compliance with Consumer Protection Law, the College will clearly explain to prospective students the differences in delivery that will apply before their courses begin. Current students have the option to postpone their studies or transfer to another provider if they wish to do so. All students will receive this Framework document that outlines what they can expect during this period of varied delivery.

3.30 The provisions under the College's Student Protection Plan remain in place.

3.31 Complaints, appeals and requests for refunds and deferrals will be considered on a case by case basis in line with the established College policies which can be found on Moodle:

[https://spurgeons.moodle.webanywhere.co.uk/pluginfile.php/37778/mod\\_resource/content/1/Student%20Complaints%20Procedure%20%28Feb%202020%29.pdf](https://spurgeons.moodle.webanywhere.co.uk/pluginfile.php/37778/mod_resource/content/1/Student%20Complaints%20Procedure%20%28Feb%202020%29.pdf)

## Practice Guidelines – Higher Education Theology Courses

### Courses validated by the University of Manchester:

Certificate, Diploma and BA in Theology

Postgraduate Diploma and MA in Christian Thought and Practice

Postgraduate Diploma and Master of Theology

### Internal courses

Spurgeon's College Award in Theology

Spurgeon's College Certificate in Theology and Ministry

Spurgeon's College Diploma in Ministerial Formation

Spurgeon's College Commendation in Ministry

Spurgeon's College Commendation in Biblical Languages

### What can students expect of the College?

A1.1 The College aims to provide a digital learning experience for students on the HE theology courses which is as nearly equivalent to face-to-face learning as possible, while optimizing the flexibility and mitigating the disadvantages of the digital mode of study.

A1.2 All programmes will contain the usual elements of tutor input, question and answer, class interaction and peer group learning, in whatever form these may be configured.<sup>5</sup> The **core components** will differ between undergraduate and postgraduate courses (see A1.8 and A1.9 below). They will also provide students with appropriate learning resources on Moodle, guidance on relevant reading available electronically, and set assessments that can test learning based on available resources.

A1.3 The College recognizes the value of regularity and routine in learning. Classes have therefore been timetabled in the normal way. However, staff will be mindful of the stresses of too much screen use, and will not require students to be on screen (whether accessing recordings or engaging live) for the full normal duration of classes.

A1.4 Staff will be mindful of the normal demands and expectations for students on different programmes of study. Thus, for instance, we will enable those students who would normally be in College on just one day per week, e.g. Monday, to engage with the normal amount of core material (such as a lecture recording and Zoom q&a/discussion) within that one day if they need or wish to do so. For example, a student who would normally have a class from 8.30-10.20 a.m. on Mondays would be able to

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<sup>5</sup> Effective learning at its best is collaborative and social; collaboration and interaction sharpens understanding and communication and broadens our horizons.

listen to a 30-40 minute recording and engage in a 30-40 minute discussion within that period.

A1.5 Any prerecorded material will be made available to students during the week prior to the timetabled session, so that if students wish to access it at a different time, they can do so.

A1.6 At the start of the semester, tutors will provide a clear unit schedule<sup>6</sup> indicating the learning resources provided for each unit session, where they are to be found on Moodle, when prerecorded lectures will be available, and the timing for any 'live' interaction in which students are expected to participate. For instance, within a period of 8.30-10.20 a.m. timetabled for the class, tutors may set a time of 9.30-10.00 for a live discussion by Zoom.

A1.8 For **undergraduate** units of study, the **core components** offered will be a pre-recorded lecture on Panopto of 30-40 minutes (which may be broken up into two or more sections for educational reasons, and/or require some interaction via a forum) and a live Zoom session of 30-40 minutes (which may involve breaking out into small groups).

A1.9 For **postgraduate** units of study, the **core component** offered will be a live seminar of 90 minutes (broken up into two sections). Tutors may at their discretion choose to pre-record some material for students to access and reduce the length of the live seminar accordingly.

A1.10 Each unit will meet the overall learning hours requirement established in the Unit Descriptor (e.g., 100 study hours per 10 credit unit). The division of the study hours, however, between types of activities will vary from unit to unit.

A1.10 Tutors will carefully manage Zoom sessions and other live activities to ensure maximum participation and engagement. This includes appropriate "Zoom etiquette." [See Appendix 4]. Zoom sessions may be recorded in order to facilitate student access after the event if necessary, but only provided all present give their permission.

A1.12 Each unit will have a 20-30 minute live or recorded video to introduce it, survey its structure and its intended learning outcomes, and briefly explain the assessments.

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<sup>6</sup> A standard template for this will be agreed by tutors.

A1.13 Tutors will make the purpose of the various learning elements and resources clear in relation to the learning outcomes of the unit.

A1.14 Within the overall limits of the time available to students and tutors, tutors will offer opportunities for enhancing learning outside the class time, such as forums, online quizzes, and further reading suggestions.

A.15 The College will implement its “No Disadvantage” policy in line with the University of Manchester’s recommendations.

A.16 Pastoral tutors will continue to provide normal pastoral care for their students. Pastoral groups will be held weekly as normal and will take place on Zoom. Pastoral tutors may choose to set up WhatsApp Groups to facilitate communication between meetings.

### **What will staff expect of students?**

A1.17 Students will engage with the material identified as ‘core components’ of the units (see A1.8 and A1.9 above).

A1.18 Students will organise their study time in a way that enables them to stay in step with the weekly programme for study.

A1.19 Students will participate fully with interactive sessions (e.g., by preparing appropriately for discussions, by leading break-out groups as agreed).

A1.20 Students will show respect for each other and any guidelines tutors impose for the conduct of live sessions.

A1.21 Students will attend pastoral groups unless prior permission is granted to be absent.

## Appendix 2: Practice Guidelines for Counselling and Pastoral Supervision Courses

A2.1 It is expected that the Counselling and Pastoral Supervision courses may be able to be delivered face to face in College, taking into consideration the latest government guidelines regarding social distancing and health and safety requirements. In practice this will mean students being confined to a single classroom for the whole of the day without access to the communal areas of the College buildings. The only exceptions to this will be the toilets and the grounds. The toilets to be used will be the nearest ones to the classroom and will need to be cleaned following each person's visit.

A.2.2 Conducting counselling and pastoral supervision courses face to face in College will only occur if it is deemed safe enough to do so. Should a situation arise whereby someone falls ill then the class will be required to follow the current government and Public Health England's guidance and regulations. This is likely to include each student, within a class group, being required to self-isolate for 14 days. It is also likely involve passing each person's details to the Test and Trace service.

A2.3 If this happens, or it is deemed not safe enough to deliver the courses face to face in College, then the delivery will switch to digital mode. The teaching part of each session may be pre-recorded and uploaded on to Moodle along with selected reading(s). This may be supplemented by an interactive discussion via Zoom using Break-out rooms and plenary sessions or alternatively, the teaching may be delivered live using screen sharing.

A2.4 If the delivery is via digital means then skills sessions will also be conducted using Zoom. After acting as observers in those sessions, students will need to complete feedback forms using a computer and send a copy to the student they have observed.

A2.5 Tutors will conduct one to one tutorials via Zoom and following these students will need to complete tutorial records which they will put into their portfolio.

A2.6 Each counselling student will receive a Trainee Guide. This belongs to the individual student who receives it and must not be shared with any other student. This is to reduce the risk of any possible infection. It is anticipated that each student will be able to pick up their copy of the Trainee Guide in College on the first day of their course.

A2.7 Whether the delivery is face to face or digital, the submission of assignments, including Learning Reviews, Essays and Case Studies, will be via Moodle and students will receive feedback from their tutors in the same way.

A2.8 Library provision will be via Perlego, and other online library resources. Students will be issued with information as to how to access these resources.

## Appendix 3: Practice Guidelines for Equipped to Minister

### What can students expect from the College?

A3.1 The Course Director for Equipped to Minister will provide timely information and updates on strategic decisions to all EtM students via the Moodle platform or email as required.

A3.2 The Course Director, EtM tutors and support staff will respond to emails in a timely manner (or use “Out of Office” notices and holding emails to alert students to any unavoidable delays).

A3.3 Information about the delivery schedule for each module will be clearly communicated to EtM students via email or Moodle.

A3.4 Diverse learning resources will be provided, including recorded lectures and some of the following: reflective activities, biblical engagement, online quizzes, forums etc. Where required, tutors will provide detailed advice about the practicalities of engagement with such resources.

A3.5 Available modules usually vary in any given year depending on the EtM study track that students are following. It is the intention of the College (unless unavoidably forced to make a variation) to follow the all already published order of modules for each track in the 2020-21.

A3.6 Lectures and other content will be broken down into manageable chunks with signalled breaks included at educationally appropriate points..

A3.7 Appropriate additional extension activities will be recommended, e.g. further reading, research and reflection tasks, use of interactive websites.

A3.8 It is recognised that different modules necessitate different approaches. However students can expect:

- Each module will meet the overall learning hours requirement established in the module descriptor (i.e. 12 guided learning hours made up of 6 x 2 hour sessions).
- Six guided learning hours of material will be released to the students in calendar month ‘one’ and the other six guided learning hours will be released in calendar month ‘two’.
- All learning activities will have a specific educational aim rather than being introduced to ‘fill time’.
- Each module will begin with a 5-minute recorded video which will serve to introduce the module by surveying the module’s structure and intended learning outcomes (as found on the module descriptor).
- Each module will provide one 5-10 minute video for the purpose of discussing and giving guidance about the set assignments.
- Each session of the six module sessions will include:
  - At least one hour (in total) of tutor video recorded content.
  - A mixture of (as appropriate)

- collaborative elements e.g. online forums
- reflective, applied and enhancement activities to promote active learning
- Additional audio / video material (non-tutor produced) e.g. links to videos on YouTube or other websites

A3.9 The baseline expectations for digital delivery of EtM modules are summarized in two tables that are available separately to ETM tutors and students.

A3.10 Students can expect the normal EtM support structures to be fully operational although their *modus operandi* may be varied.

A.3.11 EtM students do not normally have physical access to the library included in their course fees, but do have access to the College electronic library resources by default. Those who wished to have access to the physical library (no borrowing rights) could normally pay the sum of £45 per year to gain this access whilst on the EtM course.

A3.12 All EtM students can expect the Library staff to:

- Provide an introduction to online library resources via pre-recorded video material.
- Provide additional information and training videos covering specific issues as required.
- Respond to email enquiries about electronic resources
- Update the Library's Moodle page with links to new resources as these become available.

A3.13 All EtM students who have paid for physical library access can expect the Library staff to:

- Offer one-to-one assistance through Zoom sessions to assist students needing help finding resources for their assignments.

A3.14 Assessment activities will remain in line with sector standards. Students might see some changes to the form or details of assessment tasks. For example:

- Tutors are encouraged to consider the diversity of student circumstances in regard to essay titles or assessment types.
- Tutors are encouraged consider introducing more opportunities for self-assessment in the learning resources they provide (e.g., review and/or reflection questions; quizzes) so students can assess their own learning.

A3.15 Students are permitted to apply for extensions to the assignment submission deadlines in line with normal EtM processes. In the COVID-19 situation the Course Director's authority to offer a one-month discretionary extension is extended to the authority to offer a two month discretionary extension. This recognises the greater difficulty that some EtM students will have in meeting deadlines. Students requesting a longer extension will need to submit a MC3 form which will be considered by the



Special Cases Committee. For the purposes of the consideration of Mitigating Circumstances, the implications of COVID19 (e.g., on physical and mental health, social circumstances, caring responsibilities and working arrangements) are considered as “**unforeseeable** or **unpreventable** circumstances that could have, or did have, **a significant adverse effect** on the ability to complete an assignment.”<sup>7</sup>

A3.16 The EtM course provides the training component for Baptist Union Nationally Recognised (‘lay’) preachers and pastors. The College recognises that this training needs to be varied in these unusual circumstances without reducing quality:

- The physical attendance requirement for the course will be varied during digital delivery to allow training for a Baptist recognised ministry to continue.
- The College will continue to write letters of confirmation of completion of training for association Ministerial Recognition Committees.

A3.17 The College will allow appropriate variance in the assignments for the preaching and leading worship modules which normally require student to physically lead and preach in a face-to-face environment.

A3.18 The College remains committed to helping students with ministerial recognition. EtM students may arrange a telephone / Zoom conversion with either the Course Director for Equipped to Minister or the Vice Principal for Ministerial Formation to discuss Baptist Union recognition.

### **What can staff expect from students?**

A3.8 Students will be proactive in notifying relevant staff of any concerns and difficulties they are experiencing (e.g., with course access and/or content) as soon as possible.

A3.9 Students will use email to discuss their learning with staff when required. A3.10 Students will be expected to engage with the core learning material provided at their own pace and complete all aspects of it.

A3.16 The EtM Plagiarism policy remains fully operational; students are reminded of the importance of academic integrity.

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<sup>7</sup> From the EtM Extensions and Mitigating Circumstances Policy

## Appendix 4: Zoom and Netiquette

A4.1 The College has been successfully utilising Zoom as an interactive platform during enforced closure of its suite. These guidelines are written specifically to provide best practice guidelines when using Zoom although many of the principles herewith can be applied to other platforms.

### Best practice for staff

A4.2 It is essential for staff to have a good grasp of Zoom so they can provide the best possible learning experience for students and assist them with the technology where necessary. Staff should follow these guidelines when delivering a lecture or tutorial via Zoom.

#### Pre-session

- Send invitations (including dial-in details)
  - Give notification of any advanced work students need to complete before the session
- Prepare lecture content
- Create optimal space for teaching via Zoom
  - Use somewhere quiet, comfortable and uncluttered
  - The space should be well-lit but not too bright
  - Use a plain background where possible
- Consider appropriate attire
- Position camera carefully (head and shoulders where possible)
- Carefully consider use of virtual background
- Test connection in advance (see section 3)
- Test technical elements in advance (audio, video, content etc.)

#### In-session

- Begin session early to allow for troubleshooting
- Start recording (where appropriate)
- Outline expectations (see below)
- Provide an explanation of the intended learning outcomes for the session
- Use varied content
- Provide interactivity/engagement via chat, breakout rooms, polling etc.
- Mute participants unless they are speaking
- Familiarise with basic troubleshooting in order to provide technical support to students if required
- Plan breaks if needed

#### Post-session

- Ensure that students know where to find the recording (if appropriate)
- Provide means and opportunity for feedback
- Direct students to additional support for ongoing technical issues

## Expectations

A4.3 Here are some suggestions of expectations that you might want to outline at the beginning of the semester/session:

- Be punctual
- Mute your microphones unless you are speaking
- Have your camera on (where possible) so that everyone can see you
- Remove distractions (mute notifications, phones etc.)
- Remain focused (no multitasking during the session!)
- Raise hand to speak (or use hand icon)
- Use chat to ask questions
- Respect your fellow students
- No eating during the session
- No inappropriate clothing or backgrounds
- Do you permit the use of virtual backgrounds?

Further guidelines specifically designed for educators see:

<https://zoom.us/docs/doc/Tips%20and%20Tricks%20for%20Teachers%20Educating%20on%20Zoom.pdf>

<https://it.umn.edu/services-technologies/how-tos/zoom-teach-online-class-sessions#engaging>

<https://www.unr.edu/tlt/instructional-design/instructional-technology-resources/web-conferencing/zoom/best-practices>

## Best practice for students

A4.4 We strongly recommend that students sign up for a free Zoom account: <https://zoom.us/signup>. However, students do not need to have a Zoom account in order to participate in a class. Here is a useful tutorial which explains how to join a Zoom session: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362193-Joining-a-Meeting>.

A4.5 Students can practice in advance by joining a test meeting via this link: <https://zoom.us/test>

A4.6 Tutors will send to students an invitation for each lecture via email. Alternatively students may receive one invitation for the whole series of Zoom lectures if lectures are recurring. Students should store the details somewhere safely (e.g., on electronic calendars).

A4.7 Students without a web camera can choose to join by audio only. Alternatively, students can dial-in from a mobile or landline using the instructions provided in the invitation. NB dial-in calls are charged at the local rate but are included in most call allowances.

A4.8 More information and resources can be found on the Zoom website: <https://zoom.us/docs/en-us/covid19.html#resources>

### General tips for students

- (i) **Setting**  
Try to choose a quiet, comfortable setting, where you will not be disturbed if possible. The space should be well-lit but not too bright.
- (ii) **Appearance**  
Think about your appearance beforehand – remember that the session may be recorded! Do not wear any inappropriate clothing.
- (iii) **Mute your microphone**  
Make sure you mute your microphone when you are not speaking, in order to keep background noise to a minimum.
- (iv) **Be mindful of background noise**  
When your microphone is not muted, avoid activities that could create additional noise, such as shuffling papers.
- (v) **Position your camera properly**  
If you choose to use a web camera, be sure it is in a stable position and focused at eye level if possible. Doing so helps create a more direct sense of engagement with other participants. Try to frame your head and shoulders in-shot and not sit too close to the camera!
- (vi) **Limit distractions**  
Turn off notifications on your device/s, close or minimise other applications, and mute your phone.
- (vii) **Avoid multi-tasking**  
Try to focus on the session. Please avoid replying to emails, or text messages, or completing other tasks during the class. You should also avoid eating during class.
- (viii) **Prepare materials in advance**  
If you will be sharing content during the session, make sure you have the files and/or links ready before it begins.

### Technical tips for all

A4.9 Everyone wants a high-quality video and audio connection to the Zoom session where you can see and hear everyone, and they can see and hear you. However, we all experience temporary (or ongoing) connection issues or bandwidth problems that can affect our ability to participate in a Zoom class.

A4.10 Try the following to improve your connections:

1. **Disconnect other devices** on your local network that may be using up bandwidth. Even “uploads” can cause “download” problems. In particular, streaming services (like Netflix) or online gaming via platforms like Xbox Live can have a dramatic impact on Zoom quality, so if you’re sharing an internet

connection with others, ask them to “pause” while you’re participating in your lecture.

2. **Use “Speaker View”** instead of “Gallery View” in your lecture. Having only one video stream on screen at a time reduces the bandwidth needed.
3. **Turn off your video.** Dropping the video during dips in internet bandwidth can help improve your audio.
4. **Quit other applications** on your computer that may be using significant processing power. Having lots of open browser tabs can cause problems.
5. **Use a smartphone** on a mobile (“LTE”) network instead of a laptop on your local network. Use the Zoom app on your phone and look at downloaded materials on a computer. Ask your tutor or meeting host to send materials in advance.
6. **Try calling** into the meeting with your mobile phone or landline. If necessary, ask your tutor or the meeting host to provide a call-in phone number. Local call charges apply.
7. **Use a wired connection** to your home router rather than WIFI if possible.
8. **Check your internet speed** with [speedtest.net](https://www.speedtest.net). Speeds of 600kbps (0.6mbps) are required for Zoom (both download and upload). Speeds of 1.2mbps are required for high quality video. If your speeds are below these values, consider using a smartphone or, if possible, connect to another network. Your internet provider may have options for increasing your bandwidth as well.
9. **Use headphones** whenever possible. Your audio issue may not be related to bandwidth at all. Headphones reduce echo and feedback issues. Those with microphones can reduce background noise.

## Appendix 5: Advice regarding Working Environments

A5.1 It is important that staff and students are aware of good practice guidelines in relation to their home work station. The most common problems can be overcome by adhering to some basic “quick fix” guidelines:

<b>Problem</b>	<b>Most likely cause</b>	<b>Solution</b>
Neck ache	Screen too low	Raise your screen
Back ache	Bad posture, chair not supportive	Sit upright, support your lower back with cushion or rolled towel
Wrist or arm pain	Mouse or keyboard too far away or resting arms on the desk	Move equipment within easy reach, don't rest your wrists or arms on the desk
Headaches	Lack of breaks, eye strain	Take at least a 5-mins break every hour, and look away from your screen regularly
Fatigue	Lack of breaks, lack of task rotation	Take at least a 5-mins break every hour, and vary what you're doing

A5.2 For further advice consult:

Display screen equipment (DSE) workstation checklist -

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/ck1.htm>

Are you sitting Comfortably? UNISON's Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Guide for Members and Staff - <https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2013/06/On-line-Catalogue172943.pdf>

If you are struggling with working at home and feelings of isolation the “Whole Self Toolkit – Working from home” is a helpful resource: <https://mhfaengland.org/my-whole-self/>

## Appendix 6: Guidelines for tutors when recording lectures

A6.1 The College has been successfully utilising either Panotop or Zoom for lecture recording. The follow are a set of guidelines that tutors should consider when recording lecture videos:

- Prepare lecture content for digital delivery rather than assuming what normally works in face-to-face teaching automatically translates.
- Create optimal an space for recording:
  - Use somewhere quiet, comfortable and uncluttered
  - The space should be well-lit but not too bright
  - Use a plain background or non-distracting background where possible
- Consider appropriate attire
- Position camera carefully (head and shoulders where possible)
- Consider the use of virtual background if your IT hardware / software allows this
- Be mindful of background noise. Reduce it to a minimum by closing windows and doors.
- Limit potential distractions:
  - Turn off notifications on your device as these may potentially flash up on your screen and be recorded, close or minimise other applications, and mute your phone.
  - Let other people in your household know you are recording and should not be interrupted
- If you have a slow internet connection try the following to improve your internet connection when uploading a recording:
  - Disconnect other devices on your local network that may be using up bandwidth.
  - If you use cloud storage (e.g. onedrive, dropbox etc.) pause file syncing as this may use bandwidth.
  - If you're sharing an internet connection with others, ask them to "pause" while you're uploading a lecture.
  - Quit other applications on your computer that may be using significant processing power. Having lots of open browser tabs can cause problems.
  - Use a wired connection to your home router rather than WIFI if possible.
  - Check your internet speed with [speedtest.net](https://www.speedtest.net). Your internet provider may have options for increasing your bandwidth without you have to pay more per month for your internet connection.

## Appendix 7: Key Contacts

A7.1 A full list of staff is available in the Student Handbook. This list is selective and identifies those who undertake roles which we believe will be most useful during the period of remote delivery of our courses.

Miss Katie Jack – Deputy Director of Operations – k.jack@spurgeons.ac.uk

Mr Rob Bradshaw – Librarian – r.bradshaw@spurgeons.ac.uk

Rev Dotha Blackwood – Chaplain – d.blackwood@spurgeons.ac.uk

Mrs Sally Marvin – Learning Support Co-ordinator – s.marvin@spurgeons.ac.uk

Miss Katie Walsh – Registrar – k.walsh@spurgeons.ac.uk

Yvonne Desborough – Student Rep –  
ydesborough2018.306@teneor.spurgeons.ac.uk

This framework was drafted by college staff following live consultation with groups of students on 15 and 22 June 2020 and input from various staff members. It reflects guidance from regulatory bodies, in particular the Office for Students, the Quality Assurance Agency, and the Counselling and Psychotherapy Central Awarding Body. It has been informed by discussions about the development of good practice in digital education facilitated by professional sector bodies, in particular Independent Higher Education and Advance HE. This draft is being publicised for consultation to all staff and students between 8 July and 15 July prior to agreement of a final version by the senior management team.