

Participating in Online Classes – Advice to CMI Students.



We understand that for many students taking part in online classes is a new experience, so to help everyone adjust to the new online classroom, we would like to offer the some helpful advice and guidance on how best to engage and interact with this new forum, and make the best of the learning opportunities that it presents for all CMI students.

Politeness and Online Etiquette



While classes may be delivered in an online environment, nevertheless the normal standards expected of everyone, in terms of personal classroom behaviour, politeness, courtesy and respect to your teacher and classmates applies. In practice this means,

- Treating your online class in the same manner as you would when you attend for a normal classroom setting. This means paying attention to the image you project, in terms of your clothing and the language you use to interact with your teacher and classmates.
- Not distracting your classmates via internal messaging, while the online class is ongoing.
- Not adding personal messages via public chat including sharing private data including mobile phone or addresses
- Trying to engage in your online class from a private low noise setting.
- Muting your microphone to keep background noise to a minimum, only switching this on when you would like to contribute to the discussion.
- Consider using a headset/headphone, to make online interaction more user friendly.

Online Language



- Try to be aware of strong language, capital letters and exclamation points, as it is easy for written text to be misread and misunderstood. Read something out loud before you send it, and ask yourself is there anything in your message that could be taken the wrong way?
- Use proper language and try to avoid slang words that may not be appropriate to an educational setting. Be aware that texting abbreviations, and use of acronyms e.g. LOL, are more appropriate to when you text your friends and may not be understood by some of your classmates. Always try to keep your writing as professional and articulate as possible.
- Don't send anything in writing that you wouldn't feel comfortable saying to someone in person. Once it is written and sent, you can't take it back.

Humour and sarcasm



- Be careful with attempts to make jokes online and avoid use of sarcasm, as this can often be misinterpreted and may offend other participants. Derogatory and sarcastic comments and jokes that marginalise anyone can hurt and damage relations with your classmates, and negatively impact the safety and support functions of the online forum. Even though your intent may be to be funny, it may not come across that way.
- Emoticons and smileys can be helpful to clearly indicate that your contribution is meant to convey humour, however these should be preceded by language that you are sure is not intended to offend. Be conscious that your classmates may well come from different background and lifestyles, with different views on what makes things funny.

Respect the opinions of your classmates



- If you feel the need to disagree with somebody's contribution try to do so respectfully, acknowledging the valid points in their argument, and using language that is tactful, well-meaning and well-articulated.
- Try to recognise that everybody is trying to understand often complex ideas in their own way, and that expressing and listening to different opinions and understandings, and respecting diversity is all part of the educational experience.
- Try not to consider anything as "common knowledge". Always remember that your classmates may not be familiar with aspects of your own culture, lifestyle and background. Try to provide some brief background on any term or idea, that may be unfamiliar to your classmates, to allow them to situate your comments in a context.

Giving feedback to your teacher



- Be conscious that the giving and receiving of online feedback may well be just as new for your course teacher as it is for yourself. If you wish to offer constructive feedback about anything that you feel would improve your learning experience, be sure to do so after the lesson via e-mail or the online Moodle forum.
- You may wish to highlight to your teacher parts of the lesson that you found particularly helpful and ask for further information on a topic you find interesting. Direct communication with your course teacher after the lesson, via the above means, will be the most appropriate manner to do this. This is an excellent opportunity to ask your teacher to point you towards any additional learning references, to supplement online classroom learning content.

Ask clear questions



- Try to be an active participant in your learning experience by asking your teacher detailed questions if you are unclear about something or would like to have further information. Your teacher will be able to send you a separate communication following the lesson.
- If you wish to follow up on a contribution by one of your classmates, the Moodle online forum, following the lesson, is an appropriate place to do this. Be conscious that the forum is open to all the class, and that this sharing of knowledge may well be beneficial to all.
- Always try to remember your reasons for doing this learning in the first place and use all opportunities that your online classroom presents, as a constructive learning experience.

Remember the Golden Rule



“Do unto others as you would have others do unto you”.

Understand that everyone has a different level of technical, professional and educational experience, and that your course is an opportunity to learn from each other, as well as from your teacher. Be patient and polite with one another in the online classroom and try to treat others as you would want to be treated yourself.

“Education is not received, it is achieved” - Albert Einstein.

Student Support

Should you have any special needs to assist you to complete your course, or are having difficulty with any aspect of the CMI online learning experience, please send a communication to:

admin@cmi-ireland.com (student support, Dr. Thomas Connolly).