infopack
blended learning at mci.

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INFOPACK FOR LECTURERS

Introduction

Welcome!

As you take this info pack in hand, you're probably either about to prepare for teaching in a blended (or online) format at MCI, or you have already started. In any case, we are pleased to be able to support you in this endeavor. With this info pack we would like to provide you with some important information about the MCI's blended learning approach and in particular the virtual learning environment.

Besides a general introduction to blended learning, this info pack contains a detailed overview of our virtual learning environment with descriptions of the learning management system Sakai and web conferencing solution Adobe Connect, as well as hints and tips on how to use these technologies in teaching.

At this point we would like to draw your attention to the Learning Solutions training program which offers regular courses on these tools but also on didactic approaches and the planning and implementation of blended learning courses. The Learning Solutions team will support you in the design, development and delivery of courses in blended learning or online mode.

We look forward to working with you and wish you and your students success and fun with blended learning!

Your Learning Solutions Team

Contact

You can reach us at learningsolutions@mci.edu For technical support, please contact the IT Helpdesk at helpdesk@mci.edu

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blended
learning

1 blended learning at mci.

This section provides you with a brief summary of the most important aspects of blended learning (combination of online and face-to-face instruction phases) at the MCI.

1.1 PREPARING FOR THE COURSE

In order to prepare for teaching your course you should get familiar with the overall study program curriculum (also in collaboration with the Head of Department). This will enable you to better assess the importance of your course within the overall study program and the students' prior knowledge, and to clearly define the learning objectives. All current curricula are available on the MCI website.

1.2 SYLLABUS

A vital step in planning the course is to prepare the syllabus, which sets out the contents, learning objectives, schedule and deadlines, examination details, learning events, etc. This document supplies the students with important information. A model syllabus is made available on the mci4me page https://my.mci4me.at/.

1.3 LECTURE NOTES AND OTHER LEARNING RESOURCES

In preparation for your course you will create and/or select various learning materials. If required, the Learning Solutions team will assist you in the creation of (multimedia) contents for your course.

- Course teaser: A course teaser, i.e. a short video in which lecturers present their course (and which is created in collaboration with the Learning Solutions team), is a useful tool to present a course in a blended learning study program.
- Lecture notes: Course lecture notes may already be available, dependent on the subject area, or they are prepared by you (on the basis of MCI model lecture notes).
- Planner: Especially for online instruction phases it is important for students to know which learning activities are to be completed at which time. A "guiding thread" or planner may be helpful in this regard.
- Other resources: Other resources may, of course, be incorporated into the course via the Campus Library or the internet. It is essential to observe copyright at all times.

1.4 SAKAI COURSE PAGE

For every MCI course a web page is created on the Sakai learning platform (https://sakai.mci4me.at). Sakai enables you to create or file learning contents, hold online discussions, create online tests and announcements, etc. Students are automatically registered for the Sakai course. Introductory training for lecturers is provided by the Learning Solutions team.

1.5 FACE-TO-FACE AND ONLINE INSTRUCTION PHASES

The blended learning study programs at the MCI include face-to-face sessions in Innsbruck and online sessions. There are two forms of online instruction:

- synchronous learning phase, i.e. classes held in real time (such as e.g. webinars);
- asynchronous learning phase, i.e. learning units completed by the students independently at any time they choose (e.g. self-learning modules) or in collaboration with others (e.g. forum discussions).

When planning the course it is important to consider which contents and activities are suitable for face-to-face, and which are suitable for online instruction respectively. A class in which contents are presented, for instance, can be easily recorded and then watched by the students at their convenience, whereas the time in the classroom is useful for discussing organizational issues, addressing problems, case studies, group assignments, student presentations, for student orientation, and to bring in the 'human' element. An overview of teaching activities suitable for each form of instruction is provided in the next section.

Teaching in a virtual environment differs from face-to-face instruction in various aspects. Most importantly, lecturers need to deal with the fact that they may not meet the students for long periods of time (and vice versa), while the intense learning process nevertheless needs to continue. In contrast to distance learning courses, in which students manage their learning activities completely independently, in MCI Blended Learning courses it is considered important to provide continuous support to the students also during the online instruction phases.

1.6 WORKLOAD CALCULATION

All components of the online phase need to be clearly documented on Sakai, and you should clearly map most of the workload of your course via Sakai. The workload planned must match the ECTS credit points for your course.

ECTS credit points provide an overview of the estimated student workload (workload in hours) required to achieve the learning objectives (European Commission ECTS Guide, 2009).

1 ECTS Credit Point equals 25 actual working hours.

For simplicity's sake, face-to-face instruction phases with 1 SWS are counted as one full hour, even if one teaching unit on campus is 45 minutes. If we now start from a lecture period of 15 weeks per semester and the lecture takes place weekly, the result is 1 SWS = 15 teaching units.

1 SWS = 15 sessions per semester à 1 h = 15 h

If a course has face-to-face instruction phases with 1 SWS calculation and a workload of 2 ECTS (50 h), we first subtract the face-to-face time from the overall workload, leaving us with a value of 35 working hours which must be carried out by the student via self-paced learning.

What does self-paced learning consist of?

Self-study includes:

- The preparation and follow-up of the courses

- Test preparation
- Reading assignments, working with literature, research
- Exercises
- Writing papers, project reports, or similar written work
- Self-Assessment (checkpoints etc.)
- Consultation hours

How can I estimate the time for self-paced learning or calculate the workload for it?

It is not always easy to give exact times for self-study activities, as students cannot always be expected to have homogeneous prior knowledge, study experience, etc.

When estimating the workload, start by determining the steps required for the activity. For example, writing a paper always includes research that the students have to do, editing of the paper in the form of different drafts etc.

Assign the estimated time to each of these steps. For example, you calculate the reading effort for an article by linking the degree of difficulty of the text to the number of pages to be read.

As a reference, you can also use the time that you as an expert would estimate for yourself for the task. Add extra time of at least 50% to this time for your students and note that your basis should not be your highest performing students. Rather, the estimation should be based on students with a medium level of achievement.

When calculating the workload, always consider your students' previous experience. In the first two semesters, for example, Bachelor students need a little longer for preparation than, for example, Master students in higher semesters. It also makes a difference whether the workload has to be performed in a short period of time or over a semester (e.g. once a week).

A calculation of the students' workload for a course with 1 ECTS could therefore look as follows:

ACTIVITY	UNIT	WORKING HOURS
Course (Face-to-Face or Webinar)	6 UE	6
Group work	2 tasks with report	2
Essay, project report	1 page (350-400 words)	5
Presentation	5-10min	1
Writing exam	1 h	1
Compulsory reading (difficult)	10 pages	4
Exercises	6 mini-tests	1
Case study (easy)	3 pages & solution finding	2
Forums (difficult) and summary		3
Total		25

1.7 SUPPORTING STUDENTS ONLINE

Online students may quickly come to feel isolated or lose motivation unless they receive adequate support and feel they are part of a learning community. Online communication and collaboration tools are important in this context as they help to create and maintain "social presence" within the framework of an online course. As a lecturer you are responsible for shaping and supervising the students' communication and interaction online. This includes so-called "e-moderating", e.g. in discussion forums, and managing synchronous events (e.g. webinars), as well as supervising project and group assignments. The information provided in this info pack will be useful for you in planning and implementing these teaching activities, in particular for moderating synchronous and asynchronous learning activities.

1.8 ONLINE ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OUTCOME & FEEDBACK

Online students profit considerably from a continuous assessment of the learning outcome achieved, as well as from specific and frequent feedback. We recommend to use relevant tools, e.g. online tests, polls, etc., to motivate and support the students. Tools such as Sakai and TC Exam enable you to create online tests for your course, have students submit their assignments virtually, and provide feedback..

2 the virtual learning environment.

The MCI's **centrally supported virtual learning environment** comprises the following systems and tools:

Sakai is the MCI's learning management system. It includes a variety of e-learning and blended learning features.

Adobe Connect is a web conferencing software enabling the organization of live online lectures.

TC Exam is the MCI's centrally supported online examination system. It enables the creation of online exams using various types of questions that are corrected automatically. **Please contact your study program's TC Exam administrator if you wish to use this tool.**

Each student has a 'MyMCI' account, which can be used as a communication hub and is also primarily used for the communication of grades etc.

sakai

3 sakai - the core component of the virtual learning environment.

Sakai, as a learning management system and virtual learning environment, facilitates flexible, collaborative and multimedia-based teaching and learning. A variety of different tool sets enable you to make available materials in different formats (images, texts, films) to your students and use these materials systematically. Discussion forums and chat functions provide opportunities for students to discuss contents with each other and learn from one another. You as a lecturer are thereby enabled to respond to documented learning behavior, and furnished with a tool for the central online management of exams, term papers, project assignments, etc.

As an additional learning environment for your classroom courses Sakai provides a central and flexible interface for communicating with students, and for documenting teaching and learning

4 sakai basic toolset.

The following tools are enabled for all newly created course pages in Sakai and are part of the course toolbar. Lecturers are strongly encouraged to use these tools in their teaching.

4.1 ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Announcements feature enables you to easily and quickly create announcements for the course participants. They are shown on the start page of the course as well as in the users' workspace area. Announcements may include attachments, Word or PDF documents and can also link to content in Resources.

4.2 RESOURCES

The Resources tool enables you to upload documents and learning resources in different file formats, and share them with course participants in structured directories. The following formats are supported: .txt, .doc, .pdf, .pptx, .mp4, .mp3, .jpeg, .png. Please ensure that you organize your files in a logical way and give files and folders short and appropriate titles.

4.3 FORUM

The forum tool can be used for discussions and exchange between students, e.g. to have students prepare a topic, to discuss a topic in depth, or to introduce new topics.

4.4 MESSAGES

The Messages tool is an e-mail system within Sakai and allows you to send course-specific messages to individual students or groups. Please do not disclose your private e-mail address to students but use the Messages tool instead.

4.5 ASSIGNMENTS

In your courses, the Assignments tool can be used to create assignments, make them available to the students, enable online submission, and provide feedback. Assignments submitted by students are private and not visible to any other course participants. You can also set a deadline for submission. Once the assignments have been submitted you can mark assignments directly and immediately forward individual feedback to students. The Assignments tool includes "Turnitin", an integrated tool comparing the submitted assignments with a series of online sources to identify text matches (plagiarism check).

4.6 LESSONS

The Sakai Lessons tool allows you to create a structured presentation of your teaching contents (e.g. in the form of individual lessons). You can easily establish links to other areas of your course page, which enables you to define clear learning pathways and work packages for your students (see also the section on Learning Paths below). The tool also facilitates the creation of pages and subpages with different types of contents (e.g. text, resources, images, html, multimedia, web links, assignments, etc.).

5 learning path.

5.1 WHAT IS A LEARNING PATH?

The preparation of online course content on Sakai is an essential part of the preparation for online teaching. This is where the learning paths come into play. A learning path should give students clear directions and help them achieve their learning goals. Teaching content should be presented in individual work packages, so that a clear learning path is visible for the students. A given learning path is of particular importance for online students, as support and guidance are essential for the successful completion of a course and cannot be provided in the same way as in a face-to-face way.

5.2 ILLUSTRATION OF A LEARNING PATH IN SAKAI

In the "Lessons" tool in Sakai, a learning path can be displayed attractively and comprehensibly with the help of icons, subpages and individual sections. Care should be taken to ensure seamless and intuitive navigation as well as logical and consistent naming and organization of the content. Additionally, a link to other areas on the course page (e.g. to Assignments or Forums) is possible, which once again enables an integrated design of the course with all its elements.

Below is an illustration of a possible learning path:

OVERVIEW

Provide an overview of the content, methodology and learning outcomes of the learning unit.

GETTING STARTED.

List terms, definitions and concepts (if applicable) which are important for completing this learning unit. Self-Assessments are also a good way of helping students find out where they stand with regard to their prior knowledge in this course or content area.

CONTENT

Videos / Articles / Text / Screencast

Provide learning input/learning material here.

When making learning content available, it is important to provide guidance on how to engage with it. This is particularly important when using a combination of articles, chapters, external videos, websites, etc., where written commentary is required to guide the students through their work (e.g. reason why relevant, particularly important points, references, etc.).

Make sure that the content is well organized and that you a use clear and logical structure when preparing your materials.

CHECKPOINT

Create a short quiz about the learning unit (self-assessment, retrieval practice, automatic feedback)

WEBINAR

Link to the recording of the weekly webinar

TRANSFER

Forum / Assignment / Presentation / Task / Reflection

Transfer tasks allow students to apply what they have learned in practice, to reflect, to repeat, to put it into a new context, to establish relations and/or to discuss the learning materials and content.

CASE STUDY, EXAMPLES AND ACTIVITY

A (mini)case study ensures practical application and reference to real business cases/problem/framework, etc. In contrast to transfer tasks, case studies always have a practical relevance and real world context.

webinar

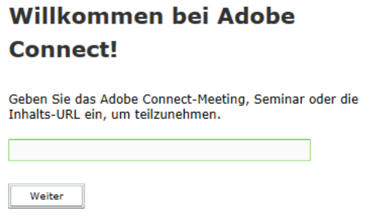
6 adobe connect guidelines for lecturers.

6.1 ACCESS YOUR MEETINGS

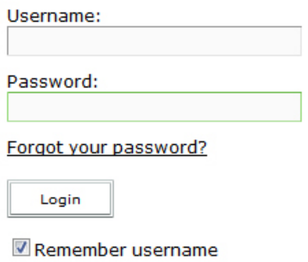
- Install the Adobe Connect Meeting Application:
  For Windows: http://www.adobe.com/go/ConnectShell11
  For Mac: http://www.adobe.com/go/ConnectSetupMac

- Open the Adobe Connect Meeting Application on your device

- Navigate to the URL of the meeting room (you will receive the link from the department)



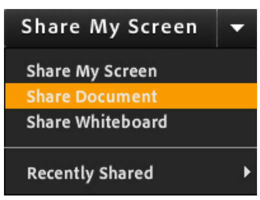
- Log in with your Adobe Connect username and password which you receive from your department.



- Once your password has been confirmed, the Adobe Connect meeting room will open up.

6.2 SHARING POWER POINT CONTENT

- Click the right arrow next to **Share My Screen** and select **Share Document**.
- Click **Browse my Computer** to select a file from your system. In the Browse dialog, locate the Power Point (PPT or PPTX) presentation you would like to share and click **Open**. The file is automatically uploaded and converted.



- Once the file has been converted, it will appear in the Share pod. Use the **Next** and **Previous** controls to navigate through your presentation.

6.3 SHARING YOUR SCREEN

- Click the **Share My Screen** button in the Share pod.

- In the Start Screen Sharing dialog, choose how you would like to share your screen.

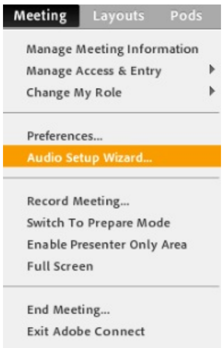
  Desktop: Share all applications on your Desktop
  Windows: Choose specific, (already) open windows to share
  Applications: Share one or more applications along with related windows.

- After selecting your desired option, click **Share**.

- A toolbar will appear while you are sharing your screen. The toolbar enables you various option like stopping the screen sharing or making the chat pod visible.

6.4 USING VOICE-OVER-IP (VOIP) FOR AUDIO COMMUNICATIONS

- Voice-over-IP allows you to communicate with meeting attendees using your computer microphone and speakers. If you intend to use this feature, it is recommended that you first run through the **Audio Setup Wizard**. To do this, begin by selecting **Meeting > Audio Setup Wizard**...



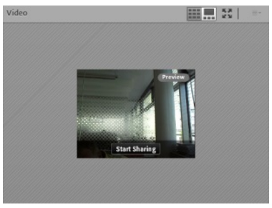
- The wizard guides you through four steps in which you are asked to test your speakers, select a microphone, and optimize the audio. If you´ve never used Adobe Connect before, you may see a Flash Payer setting box asking for permission to use your camera and mic.

- To begin using Voive-over-IP, locate the Microphone button near the top of the application.  Click the button once to activate VoIP. You can use the arrow beside the icon to mute your mic or adjust your volume.

6.5 SHARING WEBCAM VIDEO

- You can easily share webcam video with meeting attendees. To do this, make sure your webcam is plugged in and click either the webcam button or the **Start my Webcam** button on a Video pod. 

- The webcam will give you a preview of what will be shared. If you are happy with the preview, you can click **Start Sharing** to broadcast your webcam to all participants.



- If you´d like to adjust the setting for your webcam to increase or decrease the quality based on available bandwidth, click **Preferences** from the Video pod options dialog, or select **Meeting > Preferences > Video.**

6.6 MANAGING ATTENDEES

- Meeting attendees fall into three roles:

Host: Organize and facilitates the meeting
Presenter: May assist in meeting facilitation, presenting content, or sharing their screen
Participant: Largely a spectator in the meeting who can chat, respond to polls, and change their status.

- There are two easy ways to change any participant´s role: Hovering over a participant´s name will bring up a menu with several options giving you the ability to choose a role for the individual.

- Additionally, the Attendees pod support drag and drop functionality. Click and drag users from one role to another.

7 creating a successful webinar. design and moderation guidelines for synchronous online teaching.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Until just a few years ago, the concept of e-learning was associated with one of the less favorable aspects of a traditional correspondence course, namely the social isolation it often entails; this has, however, changed considerably over the past few years. The new, truly user-friendly tools now available for holding webinars (often referred to as "virtual classrooms") actually make it possible at least to some degree to transfer the classroom, and therefore also the related social component, into the students' home.

These guidelines have been compiled to furnish MCI lecturers with practical advice to enable them to plan and host webinars even without extensive prior experience.

7.2 WHAT IS A WEBINAR?

A webinar is a live "seminar on the web", i.e. a seminar for which the participants meet and communicate online in a "virtual classroom" at the scheduled time. As a rule webinars are (at least to some degree) interactive (other than e.g. webcasts or screencasts, where communication is only one-sided). A number of different teaching/learning strategies are available to the lecturers, e.g. presentations, polls, discussions (via audio and chat), interactive whiteboards, desktop sharing, file sharing, and quizzes. The students can be split into groups to collaborate in so-called "breakout rooms". Attendees can log in from anywhere in the world, provided they have access to the internet. Webinars also help students to acquire valuable experience and skills for their future careers given that many international corporations use webinars as a collaboration, communication and learning tool.

The MCI uses the Adobe Connect tool for hosting webinars.

7.3 PRACTICAL ADVICE ON HOW TO PLAN AND HOST A WEBINAR

7.3.1 Design and planning

The more efficiently you prepare your webinar, the less nerve-wracking it will be for all participants and in particular for you as the lecturer. The following suggestions may help you to plan your webinar:

- **Learning goals:** Plan the learning goals for the course – carefully think about what your students are supposed to learn and achieve in the webinar, and explicitly define these goals.
- **Contents:** When preparing slides, make sure to cover all essential aspects, then upload them into the system. You need to take into account not only the contents but also any activities you might be planning for the webinar. A slide as a "stand-in" for parts with no specific contents fills the otherwise empty screen.
- **Use of teaching materials:** When you use third-party teaching materials for the webinar you are, of course, obliged to comply with all relevant requirements under copyright law. Please note that different requirements apply if the webinar is recorded. It is recommended e.g. that if

you show a video as part of the webinar, you stop recording before the video starts and only continue once the video is over.

- **Plan interactivity:** Try to find a way to make your students "stay on the ball". When you intend to give a lengthy presentation of contents, split it into chapters of 5-10 minutes' duration each, and for the breaks between the chapters plan activities that encourage the students to participate. Examples are described in the next section.
- A **lesson plan** is a useful tool for planning learning goals, contents and interactivity. Similar to a screenplay, a lesson plan sets out everything that is supposed to happen in the webinar in chronological order; typically, it includes the following details listed e.g. in a chart, as in the following example:

Time (from – to)	subject	Teaching activity	Learning activity	Resources
8:30-8:45	Introduction	Presentation of contents and learning goals of the webinar	Answering poll on their most important learning goal	Slides Learning goals Poll

- **Inform the students**: Make sure that your students are supplied with all the information they need about the webinar, and that they carry out the audio check in due time BEFORE the start of the webinar, so you will not need to spend too much time on technical explanations at the beginning of the first session.
- A standard **webinar invitation** e-mail in German and English that includes all relevant details can be obtained from Learning Solutions, as well as relevant **Guidelines for Students**.
- **Rules of behavior:** You may want to define some rules of behavior for your webinar, e.g. when is it allowed to ask questions, are there any acronyms that may make communication faster and easier, do you use the "Raise Hand" feature to draw attention to yourself, etc. These rules should be communicated to the students at the beginning of the first session.
- **Practice:** If you have little or no experience in hosting webinars, put in some practice before the first session and make yourself familiar with the Adobe Connect features. **The Learning Solutions team provides relevant trainings and coachings.**

7.4 IT'S SHOWTIME – TIPS FOR HOSTING A WEBINAR

7.4.1 Introduction

- **Start:** Log in to the webinar at least 15 minutes before the scheduled starting time. You can use the time for "small talk" with the first students to log in. The attendees will usually announce their presence via the chat function and start to communicate. It is important that you, as the lecturer, also demonstrate your presence in the chat (friendly greeting, general questions) so the students become aware that this is a "semi-public" area. It is also an opportunity for you to start creating a positive communication environment.
- **Right to speak:** If the group is not too large and the students are experienced webinar participants, you can initially give all attendees speaking rights, while advising them to mute their audio straightaway. This will make it easier for you to assign speaking rights more quickly at a later stage.
- **First impressions:** Provide your slides or, if you don't want to use slides at the start, a welcome page / screen (or maybe just a brief text on the whiteboard) so the students will not have to face an empty screen.

- **Off you go:** Start the session on time. Remember to start the recording of the webinar, and to inform the participants that the webinar is being recorded. Explain for which purposes the recording will be used, e.g. who will have access. Dedicate the first five minutes to general remarks to give latecomers a chance to log in.
- **Can you hear me?** When you start the session, ask again whether all attendees can hear you, *and also write the question into the chat* – anyone who can't hear you has no way of knowing that the session has started. If any students have trouble with the system (e.g. audio settings) refer them to the audio check and the information leaflet for students.
- **Schedule:** Provide an overview of the webinar so the students know what to expect. Clear instructions regarding assignments, timeframes, results, work media help to reassure the students and facilitate the smooth running of the webinar.
- **Clear instructions:** Make sure to provide your instructions also in writing on the screen. Every instruction must come with an exact timeframe, as an important reference point for the students.
- **Additional remarks:** Write any additional remarks into the relevant pod (area) provided in Adobe Connect (noticeboard beside the chat window).

7.4.2 Interactivity

Make sure that all students are involved in the webinar and are encouraged to participate actively. A few suggestions:

- Ask whether everyone understood the concept (students can use the green check mark to indicate yes).
- Ask a question relating to contents you have already presented, e.g. the definition of a technical term, and ask all attendees to answer the question in the chat.
- Schedule a break for receiving questions; students can post them in the chat.
- Make a poll, e.g. asking the students about their views on the subject you are just addressing, or asking a comprehension question. Prepare polls in advance so you can publish them quickly when you need them.
- Invite the students to speak individually (remember to hand over the microphone).

7.4.3 Students' questions

In webinars, as in "traditional" classes, students ask a lot of questions. It may be helpful for you to design a strategy for dealing with these questions, e.g. when best to address them without interrupting the session.

- You can ask the students to note down their questions. After having completed your lecture or presentation chapter, you have a break during which you answer questions. If the students note down their questions in a Word document they can copy and paste them easily during question time, so no time will be wasted by typing out questions only after the break has started.
- You can use the "Raise Hand" feature for accepting questions via the audio channel. Adobe Connect will number all entries, enabling you to call the students in the correct order to answer their questions.
- After a while you will find out which students ask many questions and which students rarely or never ask to speak. You may consider to address the silent attendees directly to give them an opportunity to speak.

- When you expect a lot of questions on a subject it is advisable to use the Sakai discussion forum. Create a specific forum (e.g. entitled "Questions on…") and ask students to post their questions in the forum prior to the start of the webinar session. This enables you to prepare your answers in advance, and to identify areas that students find difficult and for which you may want to prepare additional materials.
- Decide before the start of the webinar what kinds of questions you want to ask. Open-ended questions requiring lengthy answers are as a rule difficult to handle and more suitable for asynchronous communication in the discussion forum.

7.4.4 Group assignments

Adobe Connect includes the option to create so-called breakout rooms enabling you to split the class into smaller groups. Carefully consider which types of group assignments could benefit from this strategy, and provide precise written instructions (objectives of the group assignment, available timeframe, what kind of results are the groups supposed to present or produce, etc.). Please note that in a breakout room all attendees have the same rights, including audio rights. The groups should therefore not have more than five or six members.

In your capacity as the lecturer you have the right to "visit" the individual breakout rooms. It is, however, NOT possible to get in touch with all groups simultaneously via the chat function, but you can broadcast brief messages to all breakout rooms. Any technical problems experienced by individual participants will mostly need to be dealt with in the main room.

There are various options for reporting on group assignments, e.g. by activating group whiteboards, handing over the microphone to the group speaker, or desktop sharing of a document developed by the group.

7.4.5 Individual assignments

Webinars of a longer duration can also include phases during which students are given individual assignments. The results can be presented verbally or via document upload in Adobe Connect, or e.g. in a discussion forum or other Sakai feature (e.g. Assignments). As in the case of group assignments, precise instructions are important. Individual assignments may include e.g. to study an article, make a web quest, answer a list of questions, etc

7.4.6 Handing over the microphone to a student

Even though on the face of it, microphones may seem like a great tool for promoting interactivity you should consider carefully when and how to hand over the microphone to students, as this is the most frequent cause of problems. In particular with larger groups we recommend that you only hand over the microphone specifically to individual students. Also bear in mind that not every student has a high-quality microphone.

7.4.7 Mode of presentation

Always bear in mind that your students cannot see you (unless you activate your webcam) and that, therefore, your voice and tone take on all the more importance. There are a number of useful strategies:

- Voice modulation: Let your students hear how enthusiastic you are about your subject!
- Clearing your throat, repeated uh, er and um sounds and other fillers – try not to overdo it, otherwise your students may get the impression that you are insecure or lack competence in your subject.
- Use PowerPoint presentations to make the webinar more colorful and visually attractive (Adobe Connect has a very neutral design). The MCI will be happy to supply you with sample presentations.

7.4.8 Tips for hosting webinars with large numbers of attendees

Ideally, a webinar should have between 10 and 20 participants. In practice, however, the host often has to deal with larger groups; sometimes webinars may have as many as 60 participants. With a group this large, and in particular if the webinar is of a longer duration, the greater part of the course will naturally be delivered lecture-style. Please be aware, however, that in a webinar scenario the students' attention span is shorter than in an actual classroom and you may therefore need strategies to motivate them. The following suggestions may be helpful for handling webinars with a large number of attendees:

- Expectation management is important! At the start of the webinar, communicate to your students that you will not be able to address all comments and questions but that the participation of all students is nevertheless required and appreciated.
- Include comprehension questions at regular intervals to stimulate your students' attention and interest. You can use the green "Agree" button for yes/no questions, or even the chat function to allow short individual answers. Make sure your questions are comprehensible and do not ask for too complex answers.
- Use polls; on the one hand they liven up the session, on the other hand they may help you to identify contents students have trouble comprehending. Polls are also useful to get some insight into the prevailing mood in the virtual classroom, to quickly solve logistical questions, or to learn about the students' previous experience and knowledge.
- Briefly summarize the contents at regular intervals, use images, mind maps and other visual tools.
- Give students individual assignments to be completed within a given timeframe. Such assignments may include e.g. to study an article, watch a video, search information on the internet or answer questions. Allow between 20 and 30 minutes as a reasonable timeframe, but not longer, as otherwise you run the risk of "losing" the students. Bear in mind that for "offline" assignments your students will use the internet as their primary source of information.
- When discussing the results of individual or group assignments it is important to communicate to the students that you will not be able to comment on all results but only on specific selected contributions. Make sure that as many students as possible get an opportunity to speak and receive feedback.
- Address the students by name to create a familiar atmosphere even in large groups.
- It is also possible to address several subjects in one session. This can help to reduce the cognitive load and keep the students motivated.
- The use of elements such as humor, stories, examples, etc. helps to liven up the session and illustrate the contents.

7.4.9 **Concluding the session**

Conclude the session on time by recapitulating the salient points of your lecture. Let the students know how you can be contacted if they have any questions. Remain logged in for a short while after the end of the session, as sometimes students who have questions, etc. will try to contact you via the private chat function.

7.4.10 **After the session**

Finish the recording and ensure that all required follow-up activities (e.g. unresolved questions, uncompleted group or individual assignments, etc.) can be completed without undue delay.

In some cases it may be useful to make available the materials used in the webinar (slides, handouts, etc.) also on the Sakai course page.

tips & tricks

tips
& tricks

8 moderating online discussion forums: tips and tricks.

Online discussion forums constitute an essential part of many online courses, in that they facilitate the actual learning process in the sense of knowledge construction, exchange and analysis. Online discussion forums are an excellent tool in particular for courses on subjects that are suitable for debate.

However, in order to use this tool in a way that promotes effective learning, good planning and careful moderation are required. The moderation of a discussion forum is first and foremost aimed at steering, canalizing and structuring the learning process. In addition, the moderator's job is to prevent, or call attention to, cross-postings and multi-postings, and remind the participants of the agreed rules of behavior whenever required. The following paragraphs include examples of the use of discussion forums, as well as suggestions for an efficient moderation.

8.1 BENEFITS

- "Social presence": Discussions are an opportunity for students and lecturers to be "present online", thus helping to prevent them from becoming isolated as participants in an online study program.
- Participation: Students who do not usually speak in front of an audience (e.g. in a classroom course) get the opportunity (and are required) to participate in the discussion. Some groups of students are less hesitant about participating in the debate. Facial expressions, gestures and looks become irrelevant.
- Consolidation of knowledge: Enhancement and consolidation of knowledge – students have enough time to think about how to reply to questions, and to find additional sources and materials to support their arguments.
- Skills: Students practice their argumentative writing and, if the discussion is in a foreign language, their foreign-language skills.

8.2 EXAMPLE OF THE USE OF ONLINE DISCUSSION FORUMS

Introduction: as an opportunity for students to introduce themselves/get to know each other (in particular students who have never met personally); a special forum for introductions or e.g. a "café" may be helpful in this regard.

- **Debates:** for presenting and analyzing different perspectives, e.g. in a debate (pros and cons).
- **Organizational issues**: a forum for FAQs can save lecturers a lot of work, as their answers (which they need to provide only once) will be visible to all participants; FAQs may of course also include technical questions.
- **Feedback**: establishing a forum for feedback and suggestions by students may help to evaluate and improve the course.
- **Group assignments:** as a platform for online group assignments – enabling students to use the forum for their group discussions and to upload their results.

8.3 HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS FOR MODERATORS

- **Café:** Establish the first forums before the start of the course, e.g. a forum headed "café" where students can meet and chat.

- **Icebreaker:** Start out with an *icebreaker* discussion that will not be assessed (e.g. students briefly introduce themselves, post their expectations or learning goals, etc.). This is a way for you to make sure that all students know how to create discussion entries.
- **Netiquette:** The moderation of online sessions requires a certain degree of practice on the part of the students. They need to learn how to "discuss in writing" and adhere to new sets of rules that govern the communication. The definition of specific rules for online communication (netiquette) is of particular importance. The **rules of netiquette** (cf. the Learning Solutions information leaflet on netiquette) are so to speak the **rules of good behavior for (written) online interaction**. Their purpose is in particular to ensure **responsible behavior in virtual space** as well as **good and efficient communication**. **Rules of netiquette also set a standard** for how to treat one another, and facilitate the development of a collective **culture of learning**. A set of netiquette rules compiled by the Learning Solutions team is attached hereto.
- **Role model:** The style of communication and tone adopted by you as the lecturer serve as points of reference for your students. Communicate in a structured manner, choose a neutral and friendly tone.
- **Relevance of discussion:** The discussion should be clearly related to the learning goals of the course, in order to make students understand why they are supposed to make a contribution to the discussion. The discussion should be consistent with the overall concept of the course.
- **Assessment:** In many cases the quality of forum entries will be higher if students know their contributions will be assessed. Decide before the start of the session whether the discussion entries will be assessed, and if so, inform the students about when the assessment will be made, and which will be the relevant criteria. An assessment rubric for discussion entries is available from the Learning Solutions team.
- **Asking questions:** It is important how you ask questions – use open-ended questions that encourage students to analyze and reflect on problems and situations.
- **Large groups:** It may be advisable in case of larger groups to split them into smaller subgroups to make it easier to handle the discussion.
- **Structure:** The discussion forum should be structured based on the contents; describe every discussion thread in a short but informative statement.
- **Be there!** Log in to the forum regularly (daily) and answer posts, or initiate a discussion where required. Let your students know how often you will be online.
- **Feedback:** Provide individual feedback, based on the relevant assignment and assessment, and let your students know how often and at what times to expect feedback from you.
- **Nonattendance:** Students who fail to attend or do not contribute postings, or who post inappropriate remarks, should be contacted by e-mail. It is important to react immediately to inappropriate remarks in order to prevent the tone or attitude from spreading in the forum.
- **Consolidation:** Summarize the discussion threads at regular intervals and post the summaries, relating the contents to other components of the course. This may also be useful to help answer questions and prevent comprehension problems, identify common topics, or establish a connection between posts. *Tip: You can also request students to make a summary.*
- **Conclusion:** Choose the right time to conclude the discussion, and clearly communicate to the students that it is concluded. A final summary to round off the discussion – you may also consider hosting a webinar for this purpose – is an excellent opportunity to recapitulate the contents, highlight exceptionally good contributions, and draw attention to new perspectives.

9 netiquette and tips for students.

Online learning relies to a great extent on written communication, and can open up a range of questions around how to best talk to each other in a virtual space. It is essential for a learning community (or class) to agree on a set of rules so that everybody feels safe in expressing themselves and communicating online. **Netiquette** (or etiquette for the net) is designed to do exactly that – provide a framework for your behavior and manners online and ensure we all have a common understanding of what is expected in written online interaction. These rules are about acting responsibly and courteously in the virtual classroom, but they are also about efficient communication and learning. They will help establish a learning culture and a safe environment for everyone to enjoy.

You, the students in this class, are members of an online community, which is an essential cornerstone of successful online learning. Please consider and follow the rules below.

NAME IT

Use clear titles for your discussion posts. This will provide a clear structure to the discussion and help your peers find posts more easily.

STICK TO IT

Stay on topic and include relevant topics only. Try and structure posts so that different topics are dealt with in different posts.

READ- WRITE- READ- SEND

Carefully read your posts before submitting, and review your replies before sending them off. Tone or awkward formulation can easily lead to misunderstandings in the absence of visual cues (e.g. body language, facial expression), so be sure you send nothing that might be misunderstood.

KEEP IT SHORT AND TO THE POINT

Write clear and compact posts. Online communication requires careful and short language, but you can of course also include your personal style.

POST OFTEN

Often and short is much better than seldom and long. Don't spend hours composing an essay-like post, but post short and meaningful contributions more often.

DON' T BREAK THE RULES

Online posts are part of your academic work and need to comply with rules regarding copyright and academic integrity.

BE CAREFUL WITH HUMOUR

Humor is good and can personalize a discussion. However, be careful with using sarcastic comments – they can be easily misunderstood in an online environment where there are no visual cues. This is even more important when working in a multicultural group.

tips & tricks

BE NICE

DON'T SHOUT! Writing in capitals is considered shouting in online conversation, so try to avoid it. Use emoticons (appropriately) to express feelings.

Flaming (writing provoking posts), bullying, sexist, racist or discriminatory comments are absolutely not allowed. Inappropriate posts will be deleted by the lecturer and will have the same consequences as inappropriate behavior on campus.

Be friendly and helpful, especially towards inexperienced peers. Don't ridicule someone else's post or question. Consider your tone, and try to use "neutral" language when you contribute to a discussion rather than being judgmental.

ADD VALUE

Stick to the topic and when referring to a peer's post, mention its value to you and the class. It's nice to be quite explicit about this, e.g. by saying "Thanks to XYZ for your post, which was very helpful. In addition, I would say....).

BE ACADEMIC

Structure your comments logically (e.g. through using a hierarchical order, or the use of key words or topics). Argue and substantiate your comments by referring to the literature or online resources. Ensure that any literature or other sources you use are cited correctly and that you don't breach the rules of academic integrity.

BE RESPECTFUL

Be constructive and considerate when answering your peers. Start the post with a greeting / address (Dear/Hello/Hi XYZ) and finish it with a salutation and your name. If you don't agree with someone, say it with respect and tact (e.g. start your reply with a positive comment).

BE THERE!

Participate regularly in the discussion. You will not only increase your learning success, but also enjoy being active and engaged in the online discussion with your peers.

checklist

10 checklists.

CHECKLIST: PREPARATION OF A BLENDED LEARNING COURSE

This checklist shows the different steps to be carried out by lecturers in the preparation of courses in online study programs at the MCI.

Basic course information and scheduling

- ☐ Discussion of context / placement of the course in curriculum, syllabus
- ☐ Scheduling with the department
- ☐ Getting information on the blended learning model and specifications in the department:
  - ➢ Webinar / face-to-face / online phases (study rhythm)
  - ➢ Students' workload (1 ECTS is equal to about 25 h total student workload)
  - ➢ Format of learning materials
  - ➢ Assessment types
  - ➢ Recording of webinars, administration (process)
  - ➢ Responsibility for attendance checks
- ☐ Registering and attending the necessary training courses

Planning the course

- ☐ Create syllabus (see https://my.mci4me.at -> teaching)
- ☐ Create clear learning goals suitable for the target group
- ☐ Create and/or collect teaching materials, e.g.:
  - ➢ Literature / website lists
  - ➢ Text based materials (Sakai Lessons, Powerpacks)
  - ➢ Planning and producing learning videos, course teasers, screencasts
  - ➢ Creating Powerpoints for Webinars
  - ➢ Collect existing materials (e.g. book chapters, articles, websites, graphics, etc.)
  - ➢ Finding Open Educational Resources (OERs)
- ☐ Plan learning activities, e.g.:
  - ➢ Creating checkpoints (Self-Assessments)
  - ➢ Exercises
  - ➢ Questions for group discussions / forum
  - ➢ Worksheets
  - ➢ Group work activities
- ☐ Prepare exams (format, evaluation criteria / rubrics, etc.)
- ☐ Plan communication and interaction modes with students

Preparing the learning environment

- ☐ Sakai course site is ready
  - ➢ Course overview, learning objectives, study chart, assessment, communication
  - ➢ Uploading and embedding teaching materials in the above formats
  - ➢ Create / implement learning activities in the formats mentioned above
- ☐ Assessment is created (Assignments)
- ☐ Adobe Connect room is prepared (you receive your access information from the department or on your Sakai course site in Resources)
- ☐ Ensure that you have the necessary technical equipment
- ☐ Testing Adobe Connect (1 week before the first webinar starts)

Support

The Office Management in your department is the first point of contact for questions regarding your course organization.

Further Support Services:

- ☐ Learning Solutions (learningsolutions@mci.edu)
    - ➢ Training and coachings
    - ➢ Didactical and pedagogical questions
    - ➢ Use of Sakai, Adobe Connect and TC Exam in teaching
    - ➢ Video production
    - ➢ Creating content in various formats

- ☐ IT Helpdesk (helpdesk-it@mci.edu)
    - ➢ Technical support (i.e. Sakai)

CHECKLIST: STARTING AND ENDING A WEBINAR

This checklist contains the most important steps for starting and ending a webinar. It can be applied in various types of teaching sessions (lectures, Q&A sessions, etc.).

Before the webinar starts

- Make sure you open the meeting room well on time, i.e. at least 10 minutes before the official start to allow enough time to get ready
- Open the Adobe Connect meeting room by inserting the respective link to the meeting room into the Adobe Connect Meeting Application (you will receive the link from the department)
- Log in with your Adobe Connect username and password
- Run through the Audio Setup Wizard
- If necessary upload Power Point slides or PDF's in the Share Pod
- Optionally open the Adobe Connect meeting room on a separate screen and using a different browser to get an overview over the participants' view

At the start of the webinar

- Activate the microphone by clicking on the respective button
- Start the recording of the meeting. Always comment that the meeting is now being recorded.
- If necessary activate the webcam for the introduction (it is recommended to deactivate the webcam afterwards to save bandwidth)
- Check the participants' attendance and make sure if the participants can hear you Via the status tool, the participants can select the green checkmark and confirm their presence.
- Define rules of behavior for the webinar, e.g. communication/asking questions via Chat or audio, expectations regarding student interaction, using the „Step Away" status , if somebody has to step away for a moment, etc.

Ending the webinar

- Finish the recording
- End the webinar explicitly by saying your good-byes
- Mute the microphone
- Remain logged in for a short while to answer possible questions from students
- Leave the meeting room by clicking on Meeting – End Meeting
- „Clean up" the meeting room (remove Power Point slides, clear chat history etc.)

CHECKLIST: SAKAI COURSE SITES

This checklist was developed as an instrument for quality assurance in online teaching at MCI. It is intended to support the planning and implementation of a course as well as the implementation and design of its contents on the learning platform SAKAI. In addition, the checklist serves as an instrument for self-evaluation to reflect and improve your own course.

DESIGN AND LANGUAGE

Look & Feel to reduce the cognitive load

- ☐ The SAKAI course site has a clear and consistent structure
- ☐ Design elements (icons, pictures, colours, font sizes) are used consistently and appropriately
- ☐ The course site is not "overloaded", it allows for easy navigation and gives a quick overview

Language

- ☐ Texts are formulated in a clear, comprehensible and gender-appropriate language
- ☐ Texts are grammatically and idiomatically correct

Legal Aspects

- ☐ Copyright is taken into account and all sources (also pictures) are quoted correctly
- ☐ Information about possible recordings of webinars is provided

DIDACTIC CONCEPT

	COURSE CONTEXT
☐	In Home/Overview an informative introduction to the course is given, e.g. with a short text, or by recording and embedding a Course Teaser
☐	The relevance of the course is clear, e.g. topicality, real-world application, relevance for professional practice etc.
	OVERVIEW
☐	The overview section provides a narrative overview of the course as well as single topics
☐	Appropriate media is used to motivate and engage students, e.g. through current articles, videos, animations, etc.
	LEARNING OBJECTIVES
☐	The overall learning objectives are formulated clearly and in a target group-oriented manner
☐	The learning objectives of each sub-chapter are formulated clearly
☐	Learning objectives reflect different levels of Bloom's taxonomy
☐	Knowledge – Comprehension – Application – Analysis – Synthesis – Evaluation
	STUDY SCHEDULE
☐	A detailed overview about individual work and reading tasks is given in tabular form, including a detailed time schedule
	ASSESSMENT
☐	All assessment items are clearly connected to the stated learning objectives
☐	The assessment type or mode is described in detail
☐	Due dates and times are given
☐	In case of several assessments, an exact weighting of the individual parts is given

TEACHING MATERIALS

- ☐ Teaching materials are available in the Lessons-Tool and/or in the Resources in a clear and well-structured way
- ☐ Media and teaching materials are chosen to support the learning objectives
- ☐ Teaching materials are structured and displayed clearly and comprehensibly
- ☐ Structure and sequence of the content are clear, consistent and logical
- ☐ Folders and files in the Resources-Tool have short, meaningful and consistent names
- ☐ Pictures, videos, web links etc. are used purposefully and meaningfully
- ☐ All web links and multimedia elements work correctly

TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESSES	
	LEARNING ACTIVITIES
☐	Learning activities are clearly connected to the learning objectives
☐	Learning activities are formulated in a comprehensible and detailed way
☐	Support und feedback mechanism are described clearly
	SOCIAL AND COLLABORATIVE LEARNING
☐	Communication channels and conventions between students and teachers is described clearly
☐	Communication tools on SAKAI are used appropriately, e.g.
	- Announcements for messages from lecturers to students) - Messages (for in-course emails from lecturers to all/groups/single students or from students to lecturers or peers) - Forums (for online discussions, Q&A, sharing working results, etc.) - Comments (allows students to comment on any content in the Lessons-Tool) - Polls (for questions about student knowledge, experience, preferences, etc.) - Adobe Connect (live lectures / webinars)

Source: Partly based on Bratengeyer, E., Bubenzer, A., Jäger, J., Schwed, G. (2013), eLearning Qualitäts-Evaluationstool – Endbericht.