THE USE OF LAPTOPS AND OTHER MOBILE DEVICES IN CLASSES – GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS

This document sets out guidelines for students of the University of South Wales with respect to the use of laptops and other mobile devices that students may bring to, and use in, classes. It complements the policy approved by Academic Board to guide staff in enabling students to make best use of the technology available to them for learning (http://celt.southwales.ac.uk/documents/download/109/).

The University is a multi-cultural, multi-racial community of staff and students with a wide diversity of opinions, views and life-styles. As such, we are concerned to ensure respect for all members of our community[1]. The University is also keen to encourage flexible working by students and staff and has to objective of having a first-class learning environment for its students. Section 7 of the University's '*Regulations for the development, deployment and use of University computing and telecommunications facilities*' ensures that, when connecting personal equipment to the University's network, all such equipment and its use conforms to a 'good neighbourly' manner.

Devices such as laptops, netbooks, tablets, e-readers, MP3 players and mobile phones all have great potential as learning tools. You might use them to take class notes, access relevant electronic resources during class, record lectures for later reference, or take part in online learning activities; and if you're using your own device, of course, you will be more familiar with how the technology works.

The University's Disability and Dyslexia Policy already ensures that students with disabilities are able to use specific equipment to support teaching, private study, and assessment[2] these Guidelines are intended for students who do not come into this category, but who intend to bring a laptop or mobile device to classes to support their learning.

It is important to remember that if you choose to use a mobile device in your classes, such use should be to support your learning and you should endeavour not to disturb or hinder the learning of others[3]. Such disruption might include the tapping noise made by some keyboards or moving imagery on screens or you might be tempted to check your email, social networks or YouTube during class.

Many students will have questions about using laptops and mobile devices in classes. The following is a guide, in the form of a list of Frequently-Asked-Questions, to these issues:

1. What devices can I use?

You can use your own device, such as a laptop or netbook, tablet, e-readers, MP3 players or your mobile phones. If you don't own such a device, then it is possible to hire a laptop from one of the LRCs, the SportsPark or the Atrium. For further information, refer to http://lcss.glam.ac.uk/lrc/laptop/

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[1] *Guide to the Regulations for the development, deployment and use of University computing and telecommunications facilities* available at http://lcss.glam.ac.uk/media/files/documents/2011-03-18/Guide_to_regs07.pdf for the full regulations see http://academicregistry.glam.ac.uk/media/files/documents/2011-04-14/IT_Regs1.pdf

[2] http://dds.southwales.ac.uk/policies/disability_dyslexia/

[3] James Clay – University of Gloucester

2. Where can I access the internet during classes?

Wireless networking services are now available for students in most of the University's buildings including Treforest , Lower Glyntaff , Upper Glyntaff , the Sports Park (Tyn-y-Wern), Cromwell House and Cardiff Atrium. For further information on how to access the wireless network, refer to http://lcss.glam.ac.uk/is/wireless/

3. What can I access the internet for during classes?

Sites should be relevant to and support your learning and you shouldn't be using your laptop or mobile device to check your email or socialise online. Similarly, you should not view potentially offensive or inappropriate images during class nor view material that is not offensive *per se* but which could distract others. This would reasonably be deemed to interfere with the study, work or working environment of other members of the class and your lecturer could legitimately ask you to stop such activity.

4. What sort of activities can I use my laptop or mobile device for?

You can use your laptop or mobile device for any type of learning, within reason. In fact, for some class activities, the effective use of laptops and mobile devices can aid learning. For example you might choose to conduct research and gather information on topics in groups for synthesis. Using laptops and mobile devices also helps different students who have different styles of learning. Thus, while some may not believe that typing everything one hears in class is conducive to learning, some students may need to engage in that sort of transcribing activity in order to process information effectively. However, there will be times when your lecturer might legitimately require laptops and mobile devices to be closed. This could be during class tests or other forms of examinable work, or for short times during other learning activities, such as whole class or group discussions.

5. Can I record lectures?

The University is deploying 'Panopto', a system which makes it easy for lecturers to record their lectures and make them available in Blackboard. If your lecturer doesn't already do this, then it is good practice to ask him or her for permission to record him or her. If you do record a lecture, then you should do so for your personal learning use and the recording should not be published or shared online. For further information on the University's guidance on recording lectures, please refer to: http://celt.southwales.ac.uk/documents/download/19/

6. Some students in my classes make it hard for me to concentrate in the midst of all the tapping being made by classmates who are taking notes with laptops or other devices.

Some lecturers may remedy this problem by designating areas of your classroom as the "laptop zone" and others as the "non laptop zone." You could also ask your fellow students to place their laptop on something soft (like a piece of clothing), so that the tapping doesn't resonate through the hard surface of their desk or table. Remember that your lecturer

shouldn't discriminate against users with special needs by limiting laptop or mobile device use to them.

For more information about general IT use and support on campus, refer to:

http://unilife.southwales.ac.uk/pages/3035-it-frequently-asked-questions