Educational Research Department – computer requirements for distance learners

It will be your choice to decide which web-enabled devices you use for your doctoral programme studies but these notes are intended to help inform that decision.

You should be able to use a mobile device for many of the tasks required for your PhD but for the longer writing tasks it is likely that you will need a device such as a laptop or desk-based PC.

**Essential tasks:**

1. Accessing Moodle which is the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) used at Lancaster University. Moodle is tested on a wide range of web-enabled devices including several brands of tablet computer. If you use a mobile device then the best way to access Moodle is via the iLancaster app (http://ilancasterinfo.lancs.ac.uk/);

2. Accessing Mahara which is Lancaster University’s e-portfolio and social networking site. Again this is tested on a wide range of web-enabled devices;

3. Using Library (http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/library/) search tools such as OneSearch and resources such as electronic versions of books and journal articles. Many library tools and resources are accessible using mobile devices;

4. Writing assignments which in part 1 may be up to 8,000 words in length. Your PhD thesis will be about 45,000 words in length;

5. Submitting assignments which is usually done using Moodle.

**Optional video conferencing:**

If you wish to participate in optional video conferencing activities then you will need a microphone (preferably as part of a headset), a webcam and a reliable internet connection. For video conferencing we currently use v-scene, WebEx or BigBlueButton. These work on many web-enabled devices but not all so you may need to try different devices.

Here are some of the video conferencing activities currently available in the Department of Educational Research:

1. Synchronous video conference sessions with tutors and students, for example, to hold small group discussions about assignment planning;

2. Synchronous discussions amongst students working together on group tasks;

3. Departmental online reading group (about 5 meetings a year);


Please contact Rebecca Marsden (Online Learning Support Officer) if you have any further queries.

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