Sample Guidelines for Agreeing Netiquette For Engagement in Online Teaching

In face-to-face environments, students and staff are usually clear in how they interact with each. They can use non-verbal feedback cues to agree on a positive atmosphere for teaching and learning. In virtual teaching spaces, agreeing a code of conduct (or 'rules of engagement') helps to ensure a similarly positive environment. Clarifying what you and your students understand as appropriate 'netiquette' for use is best done at the beginning of a module, just as you would make your expectations for students clear in-person in the first lecture. Making these explicit can enhance teaching and learning and encouraging more meaningful engagement for all. They also allow you to manage student expectations e.g. by setting boundaries on 'reasonable' response times to student queries.

Netiquette Guideline	Benefit to Lecturer	Benefit to Student
1. Use full names, not nicknames or pseudonyms, in all interactions.	Allows you to 'humanise' interactions by using students' names. Transparency with respect to who is contributing to tasks and attending lectures/tutorials.	Increases sense of community and connection with College. Students get recognition for their own contributions.
2. Put up profile pictures instead of blank screens where you can't, or won't, share video in live tutorials (e.g. in Collaborate, Teams etc).	Less intimidating than teaching to blank screens: makes the process feel more 'real'	Decreases sense of 'learning in isolation': students see peers as people and are more likely to feel part of a community of learners.
3. Be polite in all communications: try to avoid wry, dry, jokey or sarcastic comments in writing.	Without body language or tone cues, communications can be misunderstood or misinterpreted more easily than in person.	Students can be easily hurt, discouraged, or demotivated by 'sharp' communications.

4. Avoid using 'ALL CAPS' in communications.	Goes against inclusive teaching principles: 'ALL CAPS' is harder for students with additional needs to read. Often understood as 'shouting' in text-based communications.	Harder for peers to read. Can be 'emotional' in use and detract from content engagement.
5. Run emails/posts/text-documents through a spelling and grammar check before sending/posting.	Reduces guesswork for you as to what students actually mean in their writing.	Minimises reader confusion. Reduces the need for additional posts/clarifications.
6. Be polite when requesting information or contributions from others.	Turn-taking needs to be more structured online than in person. More planning is needed to ensure that students aren't talking over each other in live sessions and that contributions are meaningfully to written forums.	Reduces risk of disengagement with online posts (e.g. no 'flaming' of answers they disagree with which can shut down dialogue).
7. Keep contributions brief and meaningful both in written and spoken environments.	Stops 'monologuing' students from over-talking their peers. Enables richer class discussions.	Allows more time for others to contribute. Enables richer class discussions.
8. Be patient as everyone adapts to the new environment.	It's ok to not be an expert in online education. Humanises you to students: things are not going to be perfect and teaching is likely to be more 'work' than it is in face-to-face environments.	Students see you as more human, rather than as an 'instructor'. They will be more patient with you if you are patient with them.
9. Contextualise questions and responses	This allows you to track where a question is coming from, e.g. from a particular area of a discussion forum, live webinar, or lecture.	Students cannot refer back to previous materials as easily as in a face-to-face context.
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