

Guidelines for the Use of Mobile Computing and Communications Devices in Classes at McGill

More and more students are using mobile computing and communication (MC2) devices in class, and some instructors and students find this inappropriate or distracting. Therefore, the APC Subcommittee on Teaching and Learning struck a work group to propose a framework for the use of MC2 devices in classes at McGill. These guidelines are based on best practices of peer institutions, a comprehensive literature review, a survey of McGill instructors and students, and extensive consultation. They were unanimously endorsed by APC at its meeting of May 27, 2010.

Introduction

Instructors are encouraged to discuss their expectations about the use of MC2 devices openly with the class, and provide a statement about the nature of MC2 use permitted, a rationale for their choice of usage permitted, and how non-compliance will be handled. Instructors are free to change their guidelines during the term, with the expectation that any changes will be discussed with students.

Students are reluctant to formally complain about behaviour by their peers that they find distracting in class; however, they should be encouraged to inform the instructor of any concerns that they may have, or that may develop over the term, about the use of such devices in class. This is not in the spirit of "getting someone in trouble," but rather helping the instructor create an atmosphere conducive to learning for all.

Sample wording

The texts in italics below provide a range of sample wording that may be used and adapted by instructors on their course outlines and form the basis of class discussion.

I-Common to all courses

1. All McGill policies must be respected at all times; those of particular relevance are highlighted. The use of MC2 devices must, in all cases, respect policies and regulations of the University, including in particular the following:
 1. The Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures
 2. The Policy Concerning the Rights of Students with Disabilities
 3. The Policy on the Responsible Use of McGill IT Resources
2. Due to the potential use of MC2 devices for recording and voice communication, such use is not permitted without explicit permission.

No audio or video recording of any kind is allowed in class without the explicit permission of the instructor.

MC2 devices are not to be used for voice communication without the explicit permission of the instructor.

III-Rationales for different levels of usage