



Virtual Research Experience

Top tips for students

What to know before you start

- **Set and communicate clear expectations with your supervisor**
Agreed working hours, break times, mode of communication and frequency of meetings. If possible, set up a team chat to replace the “water cooler” conversations or quick questions experienced in physical environments.
- **Know you are cyber safe**
Review the cyber security essentials and/or complete the student online training [available here](#). Check with your supervisor if they have any specific requirements.
- **Questions are good**
Ask - if you do not know or are unsure of something. This is a learning opportunity and you are not expected to know everything.
- **Clarify objectives**
It is important to know the objectives and expected outcomes before you start. If you need further guidance or detail on a task, it is best to ask at the start and to seek clarification from your supervisor or unit coordinator whenever necessary.
- **Set goals**
Know what you want to achieve before you start. Setting goals and learning objectives early will help you to turn this ‘work done’ into ‘experience gained’ when you reflect on it later.
- **Don't be afraid to join in**
It is easy to lose the sense of connection in virtual opportunities. Ask your supervisor if they would include you in meetings or other virtual get togethers whenever possible.

Tips for virtual engagement

- **Review the Research Policy**
While conducting research activities remotely, research must still be conducted responsibly, ethically and with integrity. The UQ policy, [4.00.01 Responsible Research Management](#) applies to all staff and students who conduct, or assist with the conduct of research.
- **Workstation setup**
We ask that you complete a [self-assessment tool](#) to optimally set up your home office workstation. It may not be practical to action everything in these guides so please employ common sense and prioritise your health, comfort and safety.
- **Don't underestimate the small talk**
Set a communication channel (Zoom, WhatsApp etc) and make time to connect with your team via video (where possible) each day outside of set meetings. Learning to build a rapport with colleagues is an important skill to build.
- **Stick to a routine**
Set and end your day with a routine, go for a walk, change into work clothes, etc. Maintain regular breaks and set an agreed upon lunchtime away from your computer. It can be easy to be always ‘on’ when working virtually, ensure you keep work and personal time separate and take care of your own physical and mental wellbeing.
- **Ask for feedback**
Feedback comes less naturally when communicating virtually. If you want feedback it is ok to ask for it. Be prepared to take this feedback on board and put it into practice moving forward so at the end of the opportunity the feedback provided is even more valuable.
- **Start with the end in mind**
Do not wait until the end of your experience to reflect on all you have achieved and learnt. Keep note in a WORD document, OneNote of all the tasks you have worked on, key learning points, successes, failures and feedback, as it is good practice and a way to accumulate points for reflection.

What if I need help?

Project help

Your research supervisor is there to support you. Do not be afraid to reach out and ask questions, for more information or for support during your research experience - they want to see you succeed.

If you have concerns about your participation in the research experience, please contact the Unit Coordinator for your research unit. They are listed under the '**Find a Project**' page online.

Virtual Private Network (VPN) setup

The **VPN** acts as a 'secure tunnel' from your computer to the UQ network. Once connected, your computer will behave as if it is on the UQ network. If you're off campus and have a stable internet connection, you can use the VPN to access UQ resources.

Please be mindful that the VPN should only be used while conducting research activities and if you are using your computer for personal use, you should disconnect from the VPN.

Personal support

As a UQ student, you have access to a wide range of supports and services. The majority can be found via the **Student Services webpage** or **Employability website**. However if you cannot find what you are looking for, your Unit Coordinator should be your next point of call.

Something is not quite right

If at any time during your Virtual Research Experience you do not feel comfortable with a person, task or request, please reach out to your Unit Coordinator immediately.

If you would prefer to speak to someone in confidence, the **UQ Counselling Team** can support you virtually and provide further advice as required.

Free software for students

To support remote study during COVID-19, students can now access many specialist applications for free. This access is temporary and may change when remote studying is no longer required.

We suggest you speak with your supervisor to determine what software you will need you to have access to. Any specific software needs that aren't listed **online** will need to be requested through IT Support and approval provided from your supervisor.

Library and IT support at Home

The library can assist students with IT issues online or by phone, including help with student passwords and issues accessing UQ systems and resources. Students can contact the library's **AskUs service** online.

For urgent support contact the ITS Service Desk on (07) 3365 6000

You can find further support by logging a **Student IT Request**.

For further details, please contact:

Student Enrichment and Employability Development
employability@uq.edu.au
employability.uq.edu.au



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CREATE CHANGE

Home Office Inspection Checklist



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Workstation environment	✓
Floor space There is adequate floor space to facilitate safe use of workstation.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lighting Lighting levels adequate for tasks, absence of glare	<input type="checkbox"/>
Noise levels acceptable Absence of distracting noise, workstation separated from any loud equipment or appliances, noise levels minimised as much as possible	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adequate ventilation and comfortable thermal environment Temperature, humidity	<input type="checkbox"/>
Electrical safety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Safety switch installed and/or RCD protection ○ Electrical equipment in good condition; No frayed cords ○ No double adaptors or piggyback extension leads; Individual switches on power boards Adequate electrical equipment ventilation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Floors / Slips / Trips <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Floor surface appropriate, non-slip ○ Slow rolling castors for seating on tiled, timber or vinyl floor surfaces Ensure rugs and cables don't pose a tripping hazard	<input type="checkbox"/>
Storage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure storage shelves or filing cabinets are not overloaded, and/or anchored when necessary Store heaviest items on low shelves or drawers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emergency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Emergency phone numbers located near phone ○ Suitable first aid supplies Fire protection equipment / Smoke alarm installed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adequate rest breaks and postural variation every 30 minutes Change posture regularly by stretching, standing, walking and gently mobilising your body	<input type="checkbox"/>
Children <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Childcare tasks (such as feeding, nappy changing) should not be performed in the designated workplace area. Where ever possible children should be located in an area beyond the immediate workplace. Control potential risks such as heavy objects falling from the desk top (e.g. a child pulling a computer screen downward), sharps (scissors, staplers), electrical hazards (power points, metal objects, water).	<input type="checkbox"/>
Workstation Desk	✓
Suitable desk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Recommended minimum desk size: 1200mm length x 700mm depth ○ Recommended desk surface thickness <33mm ○ Recommended seated desk height: between 690-720mm 	<input type="checkbox"/>
For a seated workstation, ensure feet are flat on the floor (or on a foot rest) and that worker can use keyboard with forearms at right angles, and comfortably supported on the desk	<input type="checkbox"/>
For a standing workstation, ensure appropriate height/design for worker	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chair	✓
Chair adjustable, comfortable, in good condition, with a stable 5 star castor base	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seat height and backrest adjustable. Seat height able to be adjusted to align forearms to desk height. Lumbar support positioned at lumbar level, and backrest able to adjust to a comfortable angle to provide effective postural support for user	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Chair able to be positioned close enough to the desk to obtain comfortable forearm support on the desk, and effective back support from the chair e.g. ensure chair armrests (if present) do not inhibit positioning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Computer/monitor(s)	✓
Monitor/s able to be positioned and adjusted (e.g. height, angle, location and brightness/contrast settings) to ensure comfortable, sharp, clear and glare free viewing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Computer Workstation: Design & Adjustment	✓
Apply the Computer Workstation Self-assessment Tool to the home office workstation to minimise risk of musculoskeletal disorders.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corrective Actions Required / Additional Comments / Other Considerations	
<div></div>	