What is Web Conferencing?

Virtual conferencing allows you to hold a virtual meeting. That is, you are in one location and students are in another.

There are two methods by which you can have a virtual conference. You can have a web or video conference. With a web conference the facilitator and participants are at their respective desktops and the conference is held online using the internet. For video conferencing the facilitator and participants need to be in specific locations where video-conferencing equipment is set up. Here a dedicated network, rather than the internet, is used and this can provide a more reliable or robust service.

How will this help me with my learning?

If you are studying flexibly, online, remotely or cannot get into a classroom, your facilitator may organise sessions via a web conferencing facility. You will be able to interact in real time with voice and video with other learners and your facilitator.

What resources do I need?

- A computer
- Internet connection along with a compatible internet browser.

Where can I find out more?

There are many but three that your facilitator may use are:

Adobe Connect Pro [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2syFXr6pRZ8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2syFXr6pRZ8)

Bridgit [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OmsGUJm-TLM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OmsGUJm-TLM)

How do I set up an account?

Your facilitator will advise you of the web conferencing software that is used and give you log in details.

Basic functions:

Each virtual conference software program has a different interface, however many have the same basic functions.
Web conferencing typically has a few areas on the screen where different functions can be performed. These basic functions don’t generally need to be set up as they come with the standard interface for web conferencing software. However, you may need to customise.

For example, there should be an area indicating who is attending the conference. This gives you a record of attendance. Participants can also use buttons to make emoticons appear next to their name, so you can see if someone wants to ask a question.

There should also be a space for text chat. This can be a key means of communication for your group and gives you a back up for communicating if the voice communication fails. Anyone in the conference can type a question, answer or comment and entries are identified by the name of the person who entered the text.

There should also be an area where documents or files can be uploaded so that everyone can view them. For example, a Microsoft® PowerPoint® slide or Word document can be shared.

**Additional functions:**

Some extra features that your virtual conferencing software may include:

- **A talk function** so that participants can hear each other: All participants need headphones (to hear others talking) and a microphone (to talk at the conference) connected to their computer.
- **A camera function** so that participants can see each other: All participants need a webcam on their computer so that others can see them.
- A tool to conduct polls and multiple-choice questions.
- **A whiteboard** area where participants can write.
- The ability to share computer desktops with other participants.
- The ability to take over the operating of a participant’s computer software.
- The ability to record the conference so that the conference recording is then available online for people to go to and 'play' so they can see and hear all the activity that occurred during the conference.

**Video conferencing**

As well as a dedicated video conferencing system, the tools you might use are video cameras, a remote control and TV monitor.