

**Consortium of Eastern Ohio Master of Public Health
Distance Learning—Interactive Videoconferencing
Frequently Asked Questions**

❖ **What is “distance learning?”**

Distance learning (DL) is a method of teaching that takes place without the learning being in the physical presence of the instructor. Therefore, distance learning may mean using the Internet, satellites, computer-based instruction, audio or video teleconferencing, or even the mail. Some of your class sessions will be offered using synchronous (“live”) two-way or “*interactive*” *videoconferencing* mixed with online (asynchronous web-based) instruction. Students and instructors will be able to hear and speak to each other using audio and video technology during class sessions in special classrooms on the campuses. In addition, class materials, assignments and some lectures for core courses may be downloaded from the program web site using Brightspace (<http://brightspace.uakron.edu/d2l/home>). We use e-mail extensively to update students on class assignments and updates. A video will be shown to you on orientation day on the use of interactive videoconferencing. Also, you can view this video from the CEOMPH web site (this video was made before Ohio University joined the program, so the video title uses the former name of the MPH program, Northeastern Ohio Universities Master of Public Health).

❖ **How else is interactive videoconferencing different from a traditional classroom?**

In some cases, you will have the instructor in the same room as you; on other days, the instructor will be at a remote site. At any one time, the instructor will only be able to see two sites, so in some cases, no one may be able to see your site. In other cases, your site may be on the monitor in the front or back of the room—you do not know who may be seeing or hearing you! So, please be courteous—extraneous noise or movements may be distracting for the instructor and other students. Also, because you are not necessarily face-to-face with the instructor, he/she may not know (via body language or facial expressions) that you have questions or concerns. Feel free to use your microphone to ask your question.

❖ **Are all the rooms on each of the campuses the same?**

No. All of the rooms are not the same. However, each room has the same basic capabilities. They all have a screen in the front of the room, which will allow you to see the instructor or audiovisual aid the instructor is using (Power Point presentation, overhead, videotape, etc.). They all allow you to see the “remote site” when a student is asking a question. Rooms may differ in the kinds of equipment (fax machines, Smart Boards, etc.). In some cases, the rooms may have access to See-N-Share—a technology which makes it possible for you to see the desktop of the instructor site. In other cases, we will make the See-N-Share available to you so that you can log in on your laptop.

❖ **How do I ask a question?**

In most cases, press the “my turn” or “touch” button on the black microphone on the desk. In some of the sites, the camera in the front of the room will know that you have activated your microphone and will focus on you while you ask your question so that everyone will be able to see and hear you. You may or may not need to keep your finger on the button as you ask your question. The technician at your site will explain the use of the microphone at your site. Please keep papers and other materials away from the microphones—even when the button is not pushed, low levels of noise may still be detected, and the other sites may still be able to hear you or other noises close to the microphone.

❖ **What happens if two people push the button to ask a question at the same time?**

The person who pushed the button first will be the one seen on the “large” screen. If this happens, let the first person finish the question. While we encourage active participation, please be courteous and try to speak one at a time. You may be able to see all sites at one time and the site who speaks last will be in the “main” screen. Depending on the class activity, you will be able to see all the sites at one time on the main screen (the site that controls the connecting bridge can adjust the view to a full screen view or a multiple site view).

❖ **Does it matter where I sit?**

All the rooms have different camera “presets.” Some of the students may not be in view. The instructor may tell you to move to a part of the room where you may be seen. You do not have to sit in the same place all the time, but we would appreciate it if you sat in a place where you can be seen on the screen.

❖ **What happens if I can't hear the instructor or see what he or she wants me to see?**

Tell your instructor. The instructor may not be aware that you cannot see the visual aid or that a problem is occurring. In some cases, a simple press of a button is all that is needed to change the "view;" in other cases, a more extensive adjustment must be made. Problems will be fixed as soon as possible; however, sometimes additional technological help may be required, and a delay might occur. If you cannot talk to your instructor because the audio is not working, then call Amy Lee on her cell phone at 330-701-1209 or the phone in the Akron campus classroom (the numbers will be provided to you).

❖ **What happens if I can't contact the instructor when a problem arises?**

Contact the technician at your site. If he/she is unavailable, call the number of the room at The University of Akron in your connection or the room the instructor is located. Also, you can call Amy Lee's cell phone at 330-701-1209, provided to you on orientation day on the "general program tips" sheet. If the problem cannot be corrected immediately, contingency plans will be used.

❖ **Do instructors need to change teaching styles when interactive videoconferencing is used?**

Instructors will need to change some aspects of how they teach your class. For example, they may call you by name or by university site to answer a question—this allows for a more coordinated approach for participation. Also, there is at least a two second time delay from the time a person speaks from a remote site to when you can hear what he/she said. The sound travels from the instructor's site to a bridge in Akron, then back to your classroom. For example, if the instructor tells a joke, it'll be a few seconds until laughter is heard (only the joke was funny!)—responses do not come immediately. Instructors often can still walk around the room and often use the same visual aids they have always used in addition to the "high-tech" aids in the room.

❖ **What happens if I have additional questions and the distance learning system has already shut off?**

The system is scheduled from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. each Saturday the distance learning classrooms are being used. When you see color bars on the screen, the transmission has ended. Make sure you find out from your instructor at the beginning of class how to make contact in case this happens. In most cases, e-mail is a good way to communicate.

The use of distance learning technology will be different from your previous experience in the traditional classroom. However, once you become accustomed to it, interaction and learning will become easier. We welcome your thoughts and suggestions on how we may improve the use of this technology.