

Interactive Video for Distance Learning (IVDL) System

Student Guide

The university's new interactive video for distance learning (IVDL) system enables faculty and staff to teach and collaborate in two classrooms (STEM 2101 and Pearland 104) at the same time. The system provides real-time, two-way audio and video communication, enabling an instructor to communicate with learners at both sites, and enabling all students to communicate with one another and the instructor. In some instances, the instructor may be present in your classroom, whereas at other times, she/he may be at the other site.

System Components

The system in each classroom consists of the following parts:

- **Cameras** – Several cameras throughout each room will capture your instructor as she/he moves around the front of the room. In addition, the cameras will zoom in on students when they press and hold the talk button on the desktop microphones.
- **Video Monitors** - In the front of each classroom are several video monitors, displaying your classmates at the other location, your instructor, and any visuals (e.g., PowerPoints, documents) that your instructor projects for the class. NOTE: As documented by Luck (2005),

You will notice that the quality of the video, while good, is not the same quality that you see on your television screen at home. This is because the system utilizes “compressed video” technology. This technology requires less bandwidth to transmit the information and is, therefore, less costly than the type of video transmission utilized in your home. The only noticeable difference you may detect will be a slight “strobe” effect when someone makes a quick movement in front of the camera.

- **Microphones** – The instructor will likely be using a wireless microphone, which enables them to walk around the front of the room, rather than standing behind the podium all class. Each two-person student desk in both classrooms has a microphone, similar to that shown below:



When called upon by your instructor to ask a question, answer a question, or respond to a discussion, **press and hold** the PUSH area on the bottom center of the microphone.

- [Computer Workstation and Document Camera](#) – Your instructor will have access to both a computer and a document camera, in order to provide visual information during class.

Unless you have been asked to make a presentation with visuals to the class (covered in a separate document), the only part of the IVDL system that you will use as a student is the desktop microphone.

Tips for IVDL Students

Although using the IVDL system may feel unusual or uncomfortable for the first couple of sessions, you should adapt to it quickly. The important thing to keep in mind is that there is a whole other classroom of students at the remote location who will need to be able to hear any questions asked or comments that you make during class. Always **press and hold** the PUSH button on the desktop microphone when speaking to your instructor or to the class as a whole.

- **Please keep food/drink off of the desks!** A spilled drink could easily damage the microphone on your desk.
- **Do not set anything (e.g., cell phone, notebook) on the microphone.** Doing so could trigger the talk button.
- Unless asked by your instructor to do so, please do not walk in front of the first row of tables at the front of the room.
- Even more than in your regular face-to-face classes, you need to avoid making any extraneous noises during class that could be picked up on a microphone. Make every effort to arrive to class on time (if not early), silence your phone, avoid whispering and other “side talk” with others near you, and don’t tap pens/pencils, or make other extraneous noises.
- Always wait until your instructor calls on you before activating your microphone and speaking. To avoid a loss of audio, only one person at a time can speak and there needs to be a 1-2 second delay between different speakers.
- When it’s your turn to speak, **press and hold** the PUSH button on the microphone and **speak strongly and clearly**. If you let your voice get softer at any point, the camera will zoom away from you, which signals that students at the other side may not be able to hear you.
- If your instructor is also using Blackboard to support the class, make sure to check in the Blackboard courseroom before class to see whether any readings or other materials have been posted that you’ll need for the class meeting.
- Pay attention to any instructions from your instructor, whether during class or in the syllabus, about his/her backup plan for having class if the IVDL system fails.
- You don’t need to fear the camera, and please don’t let that prevent you from asking questions or participating in class discussions. Keep in mind that you’re not on national television; you are in a class in which some of your peers, and possibly your instructor, are in a different location.

Technical Assistance

If you encounter any technical difficulties that your instructor is unable to resolve, please use the telephone in the classroom to contact the Support Center at ext. 2828.