

SCOTTISH MATHEMATICAL SCIENCES TRAINING CENTRE

Policy on online video-conferencing (revised May 2025)

1 Introduction

SMSTC lectures take place via Zoom. This raises legal, technological and pedagogical issues, which the following policies have been introduced to address. Anyone who breaches these policies may be removed from the module and refused the right to participate in further SMSTC activities.

2 Access and attendance

It is expected and encouraged that students will gather in groups (e.g., in dedicated videoconferencing rooms at their university) to participate in SMSTC lectures. However, we recognize that this is not always possible. The availability of Zoom links makes it possible for students to join lectures from their own home, office or elsewhere when required. Despite this, it may be the case that some students will not have suitable technology and working space to allow them to attend Zoom classes. Therefore, these classes must not be treated as mandatory. The consequences include:

- Comprehensive written notes must be supplied (possibly after each class) so that students who cannot attend can still access the material.
- Students' attendance must not be monitored or recorded.
- Both students and lecturers are free to turn their video feed off at any time, although lecturers are encouraged to keep their video on if they can reasonably do so.
- If an assessment takes a form (e.g., a presentation) which requires access to Zoom, an alternative must be offered to any student who requests it.

3 Security and privacy

Classes will be booked centrally by the SMSTC Administrator. To prevent abuse and to protect students' privacy, the following policies apply.

- Access will be restricted to those enrolled on the module: only the lecturer and enrolled users will be sent the login details for each class. These details must not be shared further.
- Login details will be sent to students via email by the SMSTC Administrator. They will not be sent automatically using Zoom, and email addresses will not be shared with Zoom.
- All users must set their screen name to their real name before joining a class. Those who do not may be refused access.

- Students and lecturers are advised not to have personal or confidential material on screen during classes.

4 Recordings

To protect students' privacy, neither lecturers nor students are permitted to record Zoom classes (either as video or as audio).

If a student requires recordings for a valid reason (e.g., a disability or other accessibility requirement) then the procedure is as follows.

- The student should notify an appropriate person within their department (e.g., their supervisor, PG Director, or departmental disability contact).
- That person should contact the SMSTC Director, indicating for which classes recordings are required. They do not need to supply details or evidence, and we do not need to know the name of the student. (The principle is that the student's privacy should be preserved as much as possible.)
- The Director will inform the lecturer and students involved that the class will be recorded.
- The Director will arrange for these classes to be recorded and for the recording(s) to be made available to the student for a limited time, typically two weeks from the date of the class. (If a longer period is required then this must be notified when the original request is made.) The student must not share or retain copies of these recordings.

Please note that neither a student's convenience nor a clash of SMSTC lectures with other academic commitments is regarded as a valid reason to record classes. There is a genuine tension between privacy and accessibility, and if the system is abused this may cause harm. SMSTC lectures are intended and designed for live participation, and should be treated as events around which other commitments should be scheduled whenever possible.

5 Pre-recorded material

If a lecturer wishes to produce pre-recorded material such as podcasts or videos to supplement the module then they may do so. They should note the following.

- Lecturers retain performer's rights and moral rights to all such material; copyright of the content belongs to their employers in the usual manner.
- SMSTC does not have the facilities to host this material; it should be hosted elsewhere and linked to from the SMSTC website.
- It is lecturers' responsibility to comply with all legal requirements concerning accessibility. Recorded material in general presents more accessibility problems than written material, and should never be used as a substitute for written notes.