

Frequently Asked Questions – Online STEM+ Tutorials

Center for Academic Excellence, updated 08.24.2020

Topic Directory:

How to Access Online Tutoring

1. [How to book an online tutorial](#)
2. [Using the right process to book a session](#)

Before your Zoom Session

3. [How to prepare for a Zoom session](#)
4. [Technical best-practices before a Zoom session](#)
5. [Accessing a Zoom session](#)
6. [What to expect in a Zoom session](#)
7. [How tutors can and cannot help](#)
8. [Limits to completing work in sessions](#)

Using the Zoom Room for Tutoring

9. [Zoom waiting rooms](#)
10. [Audio and video options for tutorials](#)
11. [Troubleshooting audio and video](#)
12. [Sharing your paper during a tutorial](#)
13. [Using the whiteboard space in a tutorial](#)
14. [Using annotation tools in a tutorial](#)

Using Zoom for Group Tutorials

15. [Accessing group tutorials through Zoom](#)
16. [What to expect in Zoom group tutorials](#)

Using Zoom for Drop-In Tutoring

17. [Accessing drop-in tutoring through Zoom](#)
18. [What to expect in Zoom drop-in tutoring](#)
19. [Using drop-in tutoring for other ICS courses](#)

Frequently Asked Questions – Online STEM+ Tutorials

Center for Academic Excellence, updated 08.24.2020

How to Access Online Tutoring

1. How can I book an online tutorial?

Online tutorials can be booked the same ways that onsite sessions were booked:

- **Visit** <https://my.metrostate.edu/my-apps/schedule-tutoring>, log in or create an account, and then select any open block in the schedule (indicated by white boxes) to book a session. Enter the required information (Course Subject and Number, what you want to learn about), and upload the document you want to discuss and assignment instructions, or -
- **Call** our Front Desk staff during working hours at 651-793-1460. They can assist you in booking, modifying, or understanding more about your tutorials, or-
- **Email** our Front Desk staff during working hours at centerfolk@metrostate.edu. *Note: please allow about an hour for responses during working hours.*

2. I used CAE tutoring for a STEM+ course onsite. Can I call or email a tutor I've worked with before to get online help?

To preserve equity in our services, serve as many students as possible, and protect tutor's personal information, staff at the CAE **do not** use personal email or phone numbers for tutorials. All tutorials need to be booked through WOnline or by contacting our Front Desk staff (see answer to question 1).

Emails or phone calls directly to tutors will be redirected to Front Desk for follow-up. Please do not contact tutors to book tutorials or to seek help with writing outside of scheduled tutorials.

Before Your Zoom Session

3. What do I need to do to prepare for a Zoom tutorial?

If this is your first time using Zoom for tutoring, you can do a few things to help the session be more successful and use your time most effectively:

- Review our [Student Start-Up Guide for STEM+ tutorials](#).
- Download and install the Zoom Web Client (see instructions for how to do this in the [answer to question 5](#)).
- Use the [Zoom test meeting](#) to test and configure your audio and, optionally, video.

Frequently Asked Questions – Online STEM+ Tutorials

Center for Academic Excellence, updated 08.24.2020

- Collect any materials you may need for the session. If you are using physical materials you will need to share with a tutor, you may want to take photos of the required content or scan the pages you will need to share.

4. Do I need to install or update anything to use Zoom for tutoring?

Since Zoom is link-based and the program prompts you to download all necessary add-ons, all you need to attend a tutorial through Zoom is the link for your individual meeting, located in your tutorial slot on WCOOnline.

However, it is a good idea to take a few steps to make your use of Zoom for tutoring easier and more intuitive for you and the tutor.

First, download and install the [Zoom Web Client](#), or optionally, [the Zoom desktop client](#). Either will work for accessing Zoom meetings for tutoring. Having one of these clients downloaded is required to use Zoom meetings through any browser. Installing them ahead of the meeting saves time when you try to enter a tutorial.

Log in to either client using your Metro State Star ID (Zoom calls this SSO, or single-sign-on). See more here about logging in to the web client or desktop application using SSO [here](#).

Now that you are signed in, clicking a meeting link will automatically redirect you to the version of Zoom you are using (web or desktop) to open the meeting. It will also ensure that your proper information (such as name) and settings are reflected in your meetings.

If you use the Zoom desktop client, you may be prompted to install updates occasionally. It is a good idea to keep up with these updates, as they include important security fixes and may allow access to new features.

5. How do I access Zoom to use for tutoring?

Zoom meetings are link-based, meaning if you have the link you can usually access the meeting. The easiest way to access your meeting link is to look for the **link labeled "Join [Tutor Name] on Zoom"** that appears in your confirmation email.

You can also access your tutorial on WCOOnline by:

- Logging in to WCOOnline and locating your scheduled tutorial.
- Clicking the tutorial box to open the tutorial information dialog box.
- At the time your tutorial begins, clicking **the blue link labeled "Join [tutor name] in Zoom"**, located in the tutor bio section of the appointment (see example below).

Frequently Asked Questions – Online STEM+ Tutorials

Center for Academic Excellence, updated 08.24.2020

APPOINTMENT LIMITS: Appointments must be between 1 hour and 2 hours in length.

Join Peter on Zoom: <https://minnstate.zoom.us/j/97256138023?pwd=dkpRZGlyNEUwRjdXamNOaDIIQjdBdz09>

Peter (he/him) is a professional writing tutor.

He has worked at Metro for 11 years and has a degree in Environmental Studies. Peter often uses whiteboards for organization and helping to understand the writing process. He always tries to encourage writers to think for themselves and gain skills that will help them be independent writers and stronger critical thinkers. In his spare time, he enjoys bicycling, trivia, Star Trek, and video games.

Note: if you experience any technical issues accessing your meeting, email centerfolk@metrostate.edu as soon as possible so your tutor can be informed, and so front desk staff can assist you in gaining access to the room.

6. What should I expect to occur in a Zoom tutorial?

Tutorials in Zoom closely resemble face-to-face sessions. They follow the same basic pattern and offer the same ability to discuss ideas with a tutor, clarify difficult points, or explain your thinking out loud.

The tutor will always first introduce themselves to you and ask about what you need to work on in the session.

Then, the tutor may take a few minutes to make sure you are comfortable with the tools they will use in Zoom – especially if this is the first time you are using this kind of tutoring. They will direct you to tools like chat, screen-sharing, the whiteboard tool, and audio/video controls that you may need to use in the session.

The tutor usually next sets an agenda for the session by explain how they'd like to proceed to address the goals you've identified. This will vary depending on your need – anything from reviewing core concepts to checking work or problems you have already completed.

Towards the end of the session, the tutor will let you know when about 5 minutes remain and prompt you to begin wrapping up the session, saving your work, and retrieving anything from the Zoom space (such as notes, drawings, or resources) that you may want to continue your work.

Frequently Asked Questions – Online STEM+ Tutorials

Center for Academic Excellence, updated 08.24.2020

7. I need help completing a problem set/project and I'm stumped. Can the tutor do some of this work with me?

Tutors at the CAE **do not complete work for students**. Our goal is to empower students to learn effectively from their assignments and complete them with confidence. We operate on [principles of tutoring](#), including promoting “student independence and responsibility for learning” and respecting “boundaries of what we can and cannot do” – including completing or directly revising work for students.

Instead, we offer guidance, expert advice, and help in troubleshooting difficult concepts and problems in STEM, ICS, MIS, accounting, finance, and economics.

Tutors will always strive to help you move forward when you are stumped, and will often model a challenging concept using a similar problem or model. They will provide direct connections between these examples and the problem you are trying to solve. They may also provide resources for you to use in continuing your work and evaluating the accuracy of your understanding.

8. I have a project/assignment that is due tomorrow. Can the tutor help me finish this?

The goal of a tutorial at the CAE is not to complete work but to facilitate learning. In that process, students almost always complete some of the assignments or projects they bring into tutorials, but it is unlikely that you can finish an entire assignment or project in one 50-minute session.

It is a good idea to set one or two priorities for a session before you begin, but try to be flexible during the session. Sometimes, you may need to review some material with a tutor to help you solve the next problem or move forward with your work.

Tutors can help you evaluate how much you might be able to get done in a single session, and can recommend follow-up sessions to continue working and provide direction for how to best proceed.

Using the Zoom Room for Tutoring

9. I arrived in a tutorial in Zoom and all I see is a white screen with a waiting message. Am I in the right place?

Yes! No need to leave or worry – you are just in the waiting room for the session. As soon as your tutor is available, they will admit you into the meeting space and your tutorial can begin.

Frequently Asked Questions – Online STEM+ Tutorials

Center for Academic Excellence, updated 08.24.2020

Our tutors use waiting rooms to ensure that each student has confidential access to their session, and to avoid confusion or disruptions in tutorials.

If you wait in a Zoom waiting room for a session for more than 5 minutes, feel free to email centerfolk@metrostate.edu to check in, and the tutor will be with you as soon as possible.

10. Do I need to use both audio and video for my session?

No. While audio is recommended for live tutorials to make communication easier and more efficient, video is entirely optional.

Some students prefer to have both audio and video to most closely emulate a “face to face” session. You may also find it useful to be able to use video to show a tutor a physical document, problem, or other image.

However, if your internet connection is undependable or slow or if you’d prefer not to show your background, feel free to turn off the video during your tutorial.

11. My audio and video are not working correctly. How can I communicate with my tutor?

First, try to resolve the issue by ending the meeting and reentering through the same link you accessed the first time. This sometimes resolves audio and/or video issues.

If the issues persist, inform your tutor that you’re having issues using the chat option in the meeting space. You can communicate with the tutor while you troubleshoot using chat.

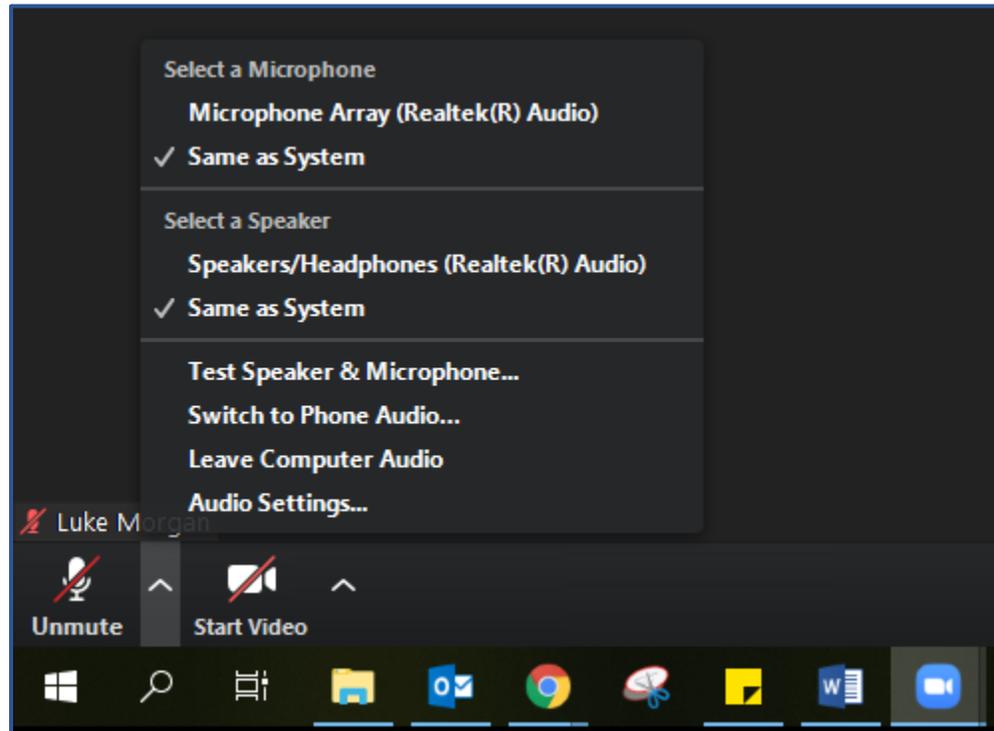
If your video is not working, turn it off and proceed with the tutorial. Since video is entirely optional for tutorials, the session should still be fully functional.

If your audio is not working, try these solutions:

- Check that the correct microphone and audio sources are selected in Zoom. Click the arrow next to the microphone icon in the meeting space toolbar to open audio options (see below).

Frequently Asked Questions – Online STEM+ Tutorials

Center for Academic Excellence, updated 08.24.2020



Ensure that the correct options are selected (usually “same as system” unless you are using an external mic, headphones, or headset, which should be labeled and available in the list).

Test your mic and audio with the new devices selected to ensure they work.

- If your audio still does not work, you can **use your phone for audio** instead of your computer.

To use phone for audio, use the same arrow next to the microphone icon to open options, then select “Switch to Phone Audio.” A dialog box displaying the number to call, meeting ID, and participant ID will appear (see example below).

Frequently Asked Questions – Online STEM+ Tutorials

Center for Academic Excellence, updated 08.24.2020



Use your phone to dial the first number listed (1-312-626-6799). When prompted, enter the meeting ID followed by pound (#), and do the same for the participant ID. You can now use your phone for audio.

Note: your meeting ID and participant ID will not be the same as the example listed above; these are unique to each Zoom meeting.

12. How can I share my assignment with a tutor in Zoom?

You can use the "Share Screen" option in Zoom meetings to allow a tutor to follow along as you work on your assignment. In the window that opens, select "Screen" or "Desktop" to share your whole screen.

Generally, tutors can see anything you can see in the application.

See the Start Up Guide directions for using screen sharing in tutorials – p. 10.

You may also choose to use [Annotation tools](#) to mark on top of the paper, or the [whiteboard screen](#) to draw or sketch (for example, to draw a chart or diagram). See more about how to use these tools in question 12, below.

Frequently Asked Questions – Online STEM+ Tutorials

Center for Academic Excellence, updated 08.24.2020

13. What is the whiteboard space, and how can I use it in a tutorial?

The whiteboard space is like a physical whiteboard for Zoom. It includes annotation tools (see question 14, below) that allow participants to draw and mark on the screen. The whiteboard is a good place to work through ideas visually with your tutor. You can use the whiteboard for:

- Complex problems that need to be drawn by hand, using the annotation tools in the whiteboard emulates using a whiteboard or pencil and paper. While drawing with a mouse can be clunky, if you have a tablet or touch-screen laptop, drawing this way can be a bit easier.
- Diagrams, charts, word-webs, and other visual organizers can all be constructed in the whiteboard space using shapes, lines, and freehand drawing from the annotation tool bar.

14. What are annotation tools, and how can I use them in a tutorial?

Annotation tools allow you and the tutor to mark, draw, and create text in the whiteboard space or over any shared screen. You can learn more about what annotation tools are and how to access them [here](#).

Annotation tools are **only accessible** if you are using the Zoom desktop client or zoom mobile app – web-only access does not include annotation. You can learn more about downloading and using the desktop application in the [answer to question 4](#), or [online from Zoom here](#).

For tutorials, annotation tools can be used several ways:

- While interacting with a shared screen, both the student and tutor can use annotation to direct attention to particular parts of the screen by circling the images or text they want to discuss.
- Tutors may use annotation to help identify issues in a problem or assignment in a shared screen.
- Tutors may also use annotation tools to work alongside a student in the whiteboard space, drawing examples or models.

You may want to save drawings in the whiteboard or markings on a shared screen for later reference. Check with a tutor before doing so. Then, use the “Save” option in the annotation toolbar to download an image of the screen.

Note: the tutor must allow you to access annotation; if you cannot use annotation tools initially, ask the tutor to change this setting for you.

Frequently Asked Questions – Online STEM+ Tutorials

Center for Academic Excellence, updated 08.24.2020

Using Zoom for Group Tutorials

15. How can I access group tutoring through Zoom?

Accessing group tutorials through Zoom may be a little different than accessing an appointment through WOnline.

If your class includes a weekly (or twice weekly) group tutorial, the tutor will share the link for this meeting room with your instructor or directly with your class. You may find the link posted on the class D2L page, or you may receive it by email. The link will remain the same for each weekly meeting, but it may require a password. (Review the meeting invite to find the password, listed directly underneath the meeting link.)

To access a group tutoring room, you may first arrive at the waiting room. The tutor will let you into the meeting space shortly so you can get started.

16. How do group tutorials in Zoom work? Will I still get to talk to a tutor one-on-one?

Group tutorials on Zoom will usually follow the same model the tutor used when meeting onsite, which varies slightly depending on subject and tutoring style.

Typically, a group tutorial will include reviewing the week's content and key points from the class. The tutor may field questions from individual students, or allow the whole group to work collaboratively on problems or discuss concepts as a large group.

In larger group tutorials, the tutor may set up a rotation system to be sure that they get to check in with each student briefly. This is a good opportunity to check your understanding about the week's work. If you need additional one-on-one support, you should plan to make an appointment with that tutor or another who tutors the subject in which you need help.

In the Zoom meeting space, the tutor may use breakout rooms to allow students to work individually or in small groups, or have the full group work in the meeting space together. The tutor will give directions for how to proceed if they are utilizing a different way of interacting in the Zoom room.

Using Zoom for Drop-In Tutoring

17. How can I access drop-in tutoring through Zoom?

Drop-in tutoring is currently only available for ICS 140, 141, and 240. It takes place on Saturdays (when class is in session) from 10a – 12:50p, and 2p – 3:50p.

Frequently Asked Questions – Online STEM+ Tutorials

Center for Academic Excellence, updated 08.24.2020

An ICS tutor (or tutors) will be available to work support students as they work independently or in small groups.

You can access ICS drop-in tutoring by following the link posted in announcements on Schedule 03 – ICS in WOnline, in the box at the top of the schedule page. This link will take you directly to the Zoom meeting room when it is available.

Your instructor or tutor may also share the link with you directly by email, or by posting to your course D2L page.

Note: the link will change each semester; if you bookmark the link, be sure to update it every semester.

18. How does drop-in tutoring in Zoom work?

Drop-in tutoring for ICS 140, 141, and 240 follows much the same model as it did when available onsite. The tutor will use the Zoom meeting space, with the assistance of a front-desk staffer, to create spaces for students to work individually or in small groups as needed.

When you enter the Zoom meeting space for drop-in tutoring, you may arrive in the waiting room. The tutor will admit you shortly.

In the Zoom meeting room, a front-desk assistant (their displayed name will be "Centerfolk Zoom") may ask you for your name, email, and Tech ID. This information is used for our records of tutorials on WOnline. The front-desk assistant will check you in for the session before you begin working.

The front-desk assistant or tutor will then ask what you need help with. If the tutor is immediately available, the tutor may begin working with you then. If the tutor is already working with another student, you may be set up in a breakout room to work individually until the tutor can check in with you.

Students should work individually while the tutor meets with other students. The tutor will check in with you periodically throughout the session, as time and the number of students attending allows.

19. I am working on assignments from ICS courses other than 140, 141 or 240. Can I still come to drop-in tutoring?

Yes – but since drop-in tutoring is designed to support students in 140, 141, and 240, the tutor may only be able to work with you for a very limited amount of time. Additionally, the tutor may not have as much experience with the course you are working in and may only be able to help you to a limited degree.

Frequently Asked Questions – Online STEM+ Tutorials

Center for Academic Excellence, updated 08.24.2020

The tutor will first work with any students from 140, 141, or 240 before checking in on you if you are working on content from other courses.

To get the most effective support for your work in other ICS courses, book an appointment with a tutor with a specialty in the right subject on WOnline.