

# Process Work Institute Graduate School

2049 NW Hoyt Street, Portland, Oregon 97209 • 503-223-8188 • Fax: 503-227-7003

---

## A Guide to Distance Learning Technologies

Some of the courses you will be doing in this program require using distance learning technologies. Distance learning refers to a blend of technologies that help connect participant to participant, participants to facilitator, and participants to the course content through the use of computers and telephones.

In addition to course work, you may use distance technologies to set up study committee meetings, meetings with your peer groups, or for other purposes.

### Technology Requirements for Distance Learning

- Access to a computer with an internet connection, preferably high speed (at least once a week)
- Private email address
- Telephone – for teleconferences a land-line is better than a mobile phone.

### Technology Tools and Their Roles

- Email
- Email groups such as Yahoogroups, Google Groups, MSN Groups, etc.
- Telephone and teleconferences
- Telephony (VoIP) such as Skype
- Chat Rooms
- Social networking sites such as LinkedIn, YouTube, Facebook, MySpace
- Message or Bulletin Boards
- Blogs
- Wikis
- Collaborative software

In this program, you will primarily be using email, listserves or discussion groups, social networking sites, and teleconferencing. Below is a brief description of the most commonly used tools and tips on their use.

#### Email

Sending email messages is a common and inexpensive way for participants and faculty members to communicate. In some cases, a course will have a distance learning component that will use email as a method of communication. In other cases, email may be used to set up meetings with study committee members or peer groups, or to conduct peer group meetings. Email can also be used together with teleconferencing in some courses, and to create group discussions or learning events.

# Process Work Institute Graduate School

2049 NW Hoyt Street, Portland, Oregon 97209 • 503-223-8188 • Fax: 503-227-7003

---

## Email Groups

In addition to "regular" email messages, email groups can also be used to conduct distance learning initiatives. Email groups are automated email distribution systems. There is one central address to which everyone sends messages for the group, and from there the email is sent out to all subscribers. A person receiving the mail has the choice to respond either to the sender individually, or to the whole list. Email groups help people communicate effectively using email and the Web. Every group has a home page where members can start new discussions or reply to older topics. Every group also has its own email address to help its members stay in touch with each other. Members can read and search all public content, post photos, conduct a poll, and post documents.

With an email group all the emails are stored online, and members can easily look up previous posts. You also have options for receiving each individual email, a daily digest (a daily summary – one email -- of all posts to the group) or web-mail, that is, reading the posts on the website, rather than receiving them in your email Inbox. Daily digests are very helpful if you have slow dial up, or have expensive online costs.

You can set up an email group for your peer group, study committee, or for a course. Most Process Work students and instructors use either Yahoo or Google Groups:

[www.yahogroups.com](http://www.yahogroups.com)

<http://groups.google.com/>

## Netiquette for Email Groups

1. Remember some people might share their email addresses with other family members, or they may only be able to access emails through work. Therefore, please do not use PWI's email lists or yahoogroups to send spam, photos, jokes, or any other unsolicited materials.
2. Sometimes you need to say something to someone that it isn't appropriate to say in a public space. Always check whether you are replying to an individual or to the whole group!
3. Try to use each email group for its intended purpose only, and not as a place for general conversation. If the email group is overloaded with general conversation, people have a tendency to "tune out," and may not catch when course related materials are sent.
4. Also, do not forward or attach someone's email to a discussion group or to another person without the person's permission.

# Process Work Institute Graduate School

2049 NW Hoyt Street, Portland, Oregon 97209 · 503-223-8188 · Fax: 503-227-7003

---

## Teleconferencing or Audio Technology

In addition to email, teleconferencing may also be used for some components of courses, or for study committee meetings, peer group work sessions, or sessions with advisors or supervisors. Teleconferences are a great way to work together. Unlike email, hearing someone's voice can make the session seem more lively and immediate.

There are several web-based teleconferences you can utilize. Some cost money and others offer free conference calls. [www.freeconference.com](http://www.freeconference.com) is a very easy to use and efficient teleconferencing site, and offers a simple way of setting up conferences.

Even though the conference is free, participants are still responsible for long distance costs. Also, with international groups, make sure your number includes the international country code.

### *Scheduling and Preparation*

Whereas email is asynchronous (each person is not on email at the same time), teleconferencing happens in real time. Thus, when scheduling teleconferences, you will have to take into account world time differences. Always double check time and world time differences before scheduling a call. A good website to use for this is [www.worldtimeserver.com](http://www.worldtimeserver.com)

If a far-flung group is trying to schedule a series of meetings, it is a good idea to 'split the difference,' and rotate the times of the meetings, so each one will have an opportunity to make the meeting at a reasonable hour.

### *Tips for setting up and moderating a teleconference*

- Phone conversations go by quickly! If you have a lot to do, have the agenda in place before the call, and send it out to participants via email.
- To stay on track, it may be helpful to choose a moderator, if one is not already chosen. Remember, that comments take up time. If you want everyone to comment on the agenda items, this will shorten the number of agenda items you can get through in an hour.
- Don't forget to consider time zones when scheduling.
- Distribute any support documents, email attachments, files, or supporting documents/files well before the call starts. If you expect people to read the documents, send the support documents at least five working days before the conference.

# Process Work Institute Graduate School

2049 NW Hoyt Street, Portland, Oregon 97209 • 503-223-8188 • Fax: 503-227-7003

---

- If participants have second lines or cell phones, have a list on hand of those alternative numbers, just in case you need to contact a participant who is having technical difficulties or who forgot the conference.

## *Moderating tips and protocol for teleconferencing*

- The moderator or call convener should greet people as they come online.
- Say your name before taking a turn.
- Call from a quiet location. Don't eat, have the radio or TV on while on the phone.
- Avoid cell phones. If you use a cell phone, put on mute when not talking.
- Avoid speakerphones or if using speakerphones, use the mute button.
- Announce to the group if you have to leave, or if you return.
- Long calls are hard on bodies and attention spans! If you need to schedule a long call (more than an hour and a half) include breaks.
- Speak clearly and slowly. Remember some participants do not share the same language or dialect.
- Stop and ask for feedback more often than you would in face-to-face meetings. Check on speed and comprehension, and whether or not everyone is following.
- One way to keep everyone involved is to assign people different roles - note taker, timekeeper, "turn taking" moderator, etc.
- End the call and hang up promptly. Going over time could run into someone else's scheduled conference, or might incur teleconference penalties.

## **Skype**

Skype (rhymes with *type*) is a peer-to-peer internet telephone network. Skype allows users to call other users for free, from their computers and communicate via microphone, as well as call and be called from regular phones. Skype can also be used for conferencing and instant messaging. Skype is easy to use, and is a great way to have sessions, peer group meetings, study committee meetings, or to send a quick message.

Software is free to download: [www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com)

## **Google Documents**

Google Documents is a useful tool for sharing, collaborating, and viewing files. You can work on group assignments together, send documents for review to your study committee, keep your student records, and even use the Google Calendar function to keep an overview of courses, assignments, sessions, etc. PWI uses Google to create a private account for students to view their records.

# Process Work Institute Graduate School

2049 NW Hoyt Street, Portland, Oregon 97209 · 503-223-8188 · Fax: 503-227-7003

---

## Here's what you can do with Google documents:

- Upload Word documents, OpenOffice, RTF, HTML or text (or create documents from scratch).
- Use our simple WYSIWYG editor to format your documents, spell-check them, etc.
- Invite others (by e mail address) to edit or view your documents and spreadsheets.
- Edit documents online with whomever you choose.
- View your documents' and spreadsheets' revision history and roll back to any version.
- Publish documents and spreadsheets online to the world, as Web pages or post documents to your blog.
- Download documents to your desktop as Word, OpenOffice, RTF, PDF, HTML or zip.
- Email your documents out as attachments.