



Guidelines for using WhatsApp for teaching

The use of WhatsApp as a communication tool between lectures and students has emerged from a personal messaging app to a trend for establishing a sense of community and communication with students.

All WhatsApp and other external tools will require students to use their own data to participate.

Already using WhatsApp?

The following is suggested:

- It is NOT advisable to use WhatsApp as the predominant platform for teaching and communication, as this may exclude students who do not have / cannot afford data. If used, the platform should be used to prompt and direct students to engage with the instructions, study content, and assessment opportunities in the established module site on eFundi or activities in the existing study guides in order for the student to be able to achieve specific outcomes.
- Confirm the purpose of using WhatsApp and decide whether you want students to be able to post on the group, or if you are the only user that can post. If students can post, set out clear guidelines / netiquette on how students should / should not respond.
- As far as possible, confirm that all students have access to the WhatsApp group.
- Important information / communication exchanged in WhatsApp groups should ALSO be communicated on eFundi (e.g. Announcements).
- Do NOT send videos or large documents (greater than 100MB) via the WhatsApp group; instead, prompt students to visit the module site on eFundi to view and engage with the documents and other resources.
- If using WhatsApp: Use the platform to inform and motivate students about weekly activities, assessments, and important announcements sent from eFundi, a new resource that has been uploaded, or to give feedback on administrative questions.

The WhatsApp platform

The WhatsApp application is a free messenger app that can be downloaded from the Google Play store and the Apple App store (while having access to data).

- The platform fosters instant one- or two-way communication between lecturers and students. Users can exchange text messages, voice messages, documents and videos. CAUTION: It is NOT advisable to send videos or large documents (greater than 100MB) as content in these formats should rather be added to the Resources folder or embedded in the lessons you have created using the Lessons tool in eFundi.

- Messages are saved automatically if the student's device is offline and can be accessed once the device is back online.
- WhatsApp supports up to 256 participants per group, students can join a WhatsApp group, the joinable link to the group can be sent via eFundi with an announcement or in an email.
- WhatsApp groups can be set up that only approved administrators can send messages.
- WhatsApp Web allows for typing, downloading and uploading on a desktop or laptop (<https://web.whatsapp.com/>).
- If you are not comfortable with sharing your personal details with a group of students, you can either add another SIM card to your existing phone if it has the dual-SIM capability (See tutorial here <https://faq.whatsapp.com/en/android/26000095/>), or use a different phone to communicate with students.