Checklist for Zoom Labs

This guide is for anyone who wants to use Zoom for basic teaching and learning tasks. For more advanced questions, contact IT Services at 773.702.5800 (2.5800) or send email to itservices@uchicago.edu.

Part A: Understand the options

There are several options for online lab environments. Understanding what is available will help you choose the right solution for your labs. You can use Panopto or Zoom in conjunction with any of these lab options to record or live stream labs for your students.

1. Virtual labs
   A virtual lab is an interactive online tool where students can imitate an experiment. They try to recreate a physical phenomenon with all of its related characteristics. Students will often collect the data from virtual experiments, process, and analyze it to write their own conclusions.

2. Online Simulations
   Simulations are similar to virtual labs but may not have interactive elements. They are typically shorter as well. Simulations will often demonstrate the phenomenon in question.

3. Lab Kits
   There are a variety of vendors which provide pre-assembled kits and host corresponding virtual labs on their online platforms. These kits are often mailed to students' homes which then allow for a blend of at-home physical and online virtual labs.

Part B: Best Practices for Labs

Zoom is designed to be intuitive. Still, it will work best if you make some key decisions before inviting students into an online meeting. Here are a few ways to prepare for your course and make the experience easy for your students.

1. Keep it simple
   - ❑ Announce your labs well ahead of time so that students have ample time to get any lab materials needed.
   - ❑ If possible demonstrate online labs, simulations, along with Zoom.
   - ❑ Post all the lab instructions in your Canvas course. This will reduce access problems for students
   - ❑ Require all of the student submissions through Canvas. This keeps everything in one place and reduces confusion.
   - ❑ Ensure the technology is as simple as possible so that students can focus on the lab rather than the tech.

2. Adapt previous labs rather than start from scratch.
    - ❑ Use parts of labs and revise sections which can't be done online.
    - ❑ Find online simulations of labs sections which can't be done in the home.
    - ❑ Remember to revise the objectives along with the labs.
3. Plan for help and support.
    - ❑ Establish set hours in Zoom where you or a TA will be online for lab related questions.
    - ❑ Offer clear directions and extra details for the complex parts of the lab. You can demonstrate complex parts of the lab through Zoom.
    - ❑ Use Panopto to record or Zoom to stream demonstrations of the lab for students.
    - ❑ Consider asking a TA to help the students deal with technology issues in the Zoom chat.
4. Encourage a sense of learning community by engaging with each other.
    - ❑ Consider asking students to meet in small groups to help each other with labs. You can use Zoom breakout rooms and Canvas groups to create virtual group spaces for them.
    - ❑ Direct students to ask each other questions on Canvas Discussion boards. Students can reply to each other to help point out common problems they encountered during labs.
    - ❑ Ask students to record and share their labs so they can present their work.
4. Lab Structure
    - ❑ Provide clear lab objectives and lab questions to help guide the students along.
    - ❑ Provide supportive documents and readings to help the students understanding of the lab material
    - ❑ Assign clear deliverables the students are supposed to submit as their lab work.

Part C: More Resources

1. Video tutorials
    - ❑ Getting Started on Windows and Mac
    - ❑ Zoom Video Tutorials
    - ❑ Zoom Frequently Asked Questions
2. Sign up for Zoom training
    - ❑ Zoom US Weekly Zoom Trainings
3. UChicago training

    We are in the process of writing and gathering a variety of resources. To see a complete list of training options please visit
    - ❑ Teaching Remotely
    - ❑ Web Conferencing with Zoom