



# “Circle Online”

## Develop Your Online Teaching Skills

This is an invitation to DCU staff to join a new peer learning professional development initiative to support online teaching. *Circle Online* is a collaborative initiative between the Open Education and Teaching Enhancement teams in the National Institute for Digital Learning (NIDL) at DCU.

### **What is Circle Online?**

*Circle Online* adapts the concept of “meetups” with the format of peer mentoring circles to provide an engaging, informal and conversational online forum for DCU staff to share their ideas, suggestions and experiences of teaching online. Each circle is intentionally limited to a small group to ensure interactivity, meaningful conversations and sharing of practical knowledge. The initiative recognises that people have differing levels of online teaching experience and there is considerable value, in particular given the current challenging circumstances, in having a safe place where staff can support each other as they develop their skills.

### **Why join a Circle Online?**

If you are new to online teaching, or want to develop your skills in relation to designing engaging online learning experiences, then this is an excellent way to learn from colleagues and share your own knowledge. The circle format allows you to ask questions, seek ideas and discuss and share your experiences---for better and worse--on a weekly basis. In this respect, we are all learning how to develop our skills of teaching online and the power of the circle is the valuable knowledge and wisdom distributed amongst the group. Participation in the circle offers a professional network where we can support each other and find out about resources as your teaching needs arise. Each circle will be facilitated by an experienced online educator but importantly participants help to frame discussion topics based on specific interests and their own needs. Depending on the level of interest, at least one *Circle Online* may invite members to participate in the new FutureLearn course, “[How To Teach Online: Providing Continuity for Students](#)”, starting on 23rd March, as the basis for learning, critical reflection and group discussions. This course, which the NIDL is supporting, has been specifically designed to provide “just-in-time”, “just-enough” and “just-in-case” professional development to meet your immediate needs.

### **What is involved?**

If you register to participate in *Circle Online*, then you will join a small group of colleagues in your circle with the expectation that each group will meet online at least once a week over the next month or so. The initial meeting will take place using Zoom where you will have the opportunity to help frame topics for weekly discussion as well as decide on the most convenient day/time for future meetings. In keeping with a practical focus, which supports your immediate needs, there may be follow up

individual or group conversations during the week as well as sharing of useful and timely resources. A real strength of *Circle Online* is the informal, “just-in-time” peer learning nature of participation, which complements other more formal professional development initiatives. In sum, this new initiative offers an online meetup where you can actively shape the conversations according to the group’s particular interests as we endeavour to share good practice and learn what works and why in online teaching and learning.

### **How do you join?**

Please complete the following Google registration form so that we can manage the number of groups and ensure that you join a circle most relevant to your particular interests or needs. On completion of the form you will be contacted with information about next week’s first meetup including a link to the Zoom room:

<https://forms.gle/qEc3B8bbo1Jr3Qte9>

If you would like more information about this initiative, then please contact Dr Eamon Costello, Head of Open Education:

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