Online distance learning case study: MSc Global Mental Health

Course code	MED5448, MED5452, MED5445, MED5449, MED5447, MED5450, MED5499 and MED5446P
Title of course	Global Mental Health – Online Distance Learning (Msc/PgDip,PGCert)
Course lead contact	Dr Julie Langan Martin (julie.langan@glasgow.ac.uk)
No of credits	180 (60 credits per year)
Level of course (UG/PG) & year	MSc (36 months part-time)
No. of students	8
Platforms used	• Moodle • BigBlueButton • Aropa

Multimedia content	Learning activities
• Text • Video – short clips e.g. YouTube • Video – Camtasia screen recordings or mini-lectures	• Forums • Peer-review • Podcasts • Quizzes • Readings • Creating Information Sheets • Posters • Press releases

Describe your online learning approach.	This is a part time course running over 3 years. The core teaching is based around lectures, which are presented as story lines often with interactive tasks and quizzes. We use forum tasks, which are considered to be "core" or "supplementary" to engage students and consolidate learning. We have a variety of assessments including: podcasts, posters, designing information sheets and press releases.
Why was this online approach taken? i.e. what issue was it trying to solve?	The online MSc in Global Mental Health (GMH) was developed as an online version of an existing on-campus MSc degree programme. It is unique to Scotland and is the only online Global Mental Health Postgraduate course offered anywhere in the world. This allows (mostly professionals) to undertake flexible, part-time learning. These individuals would not otherwise give up their career for a full-time year-long Master's degree. The online course also further enhances our international engagement and accessibility.
What advice would you give to other teachers taking this approach for the first time?	During the development of the course, it is important to discuss ideas with the Digital Education Unit (DEU), and/or Learning Enhancement and Academic Development Service (LEADS), and colleagues. Get feedback from existing students about your ideas. Find out what other courses do and see if it would align with your ideas. The course is still in the process of being launched and we are adapting and changing the course, in line with student feedback so being dynamic is important. Interacting with students in the online fora is important to stimulate discussion and encourage engagement.
What student support needs should be taken into account? i.e. how did you support their transition into this way of learning?	In response to student feedback, the Digital Education Unit were able to ensure that the slides are available as pdfs. This allows students to print them off and annotate them if required. This flexibility is essential to support students in their transition to this way of learning.
What are the lessons for the institution and the sector from this work?	The launching of an ODL programme is a huge undertaking but is possible with the right support and enthusiasm from staff. The ODL resources can be used to enhance on-campus teaching and promote blended learning. This is a great resource as can provide more flexibility for on-campus staff.