# Classroom PCs: Backing up your coursework

The aim of this fact sheet is to provide Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate students with guidance on backing up coursework files effectively, efficiently, and safely.

Backing up means making a copy of a file or files, to be kept somewhere safe, away from the copy you are working on. Backups are your insurance policy against corruption or loss of your valuable coursework documents and files.

## Why back up my work?

Most of the time, your PC will behave perfectly. However, software and hardware failure, virus attacks and, of course, human error (accidentally deleting a whole file or folder is easily done) can all result in loss of data. It is not unknown for students to lose whole dissertations or essays.

Prevent loss of work by backing up!

### How often?

How much work are you prepared to lose? Don't be afraid to back up every hour or every few hours, or even more frequently if you have made vital changes to a file.

### How?

We recommend you back up coursework directly to your **H drive**, where possible.

### What is the H drive?

Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate students at the University each have a default allocation of **10GB** of filespace for personal use. This filespace, usually referred to as the **H drive**, is a network drive resident on a central server. It is labelled with your **username**, e.g. u09jb99, or s01js9.

This is the most secure location for your files – as an area of managed filestore it is fast, reliable, secure, and backed up nightly. Backups are retained for 30 days, but we may be able to restore previous versions of files that you accidentally modified or deleted, or that were otherwise damaged going back two months.

> An alternative to your H drive, for saving to or backing up your coursework, is your *OneDrive for Business*. Find out more on our IT for Students web page and in Toolkit.
>
> **Note**: You will see a link to your OneDrive for Business on a classroom PC and when using the VDI (Virtual Desktop Infrastructure).

## Back up in the classroom

When working on classroom PCs, we recommend that you save your files directly to your H drive **as you create them**. Your H drive is accessible via **This PC** on the Desktop of any classroom PC that you log onto using your University username and password. Use **This PC** to create or move folders and files on your H drive just as you would on the hard drive of your own laptop/PC.

## What if I run out of space on my H drive?

If you've deleted all unnecessary and/or older files, the IT Service Desk can, for legitimate requests, increase your file space allocation.
You may also wish to use your OneDrive for Business, as that has 1 TB of storage space.

## What if the network is down?

The network is very reliable; however, very occasionally, your H drive may become temporarily unavailable, e.g. due to server downtime for maintenance or upgrades.

If this happens, you can work on the **S drive** of any classroom PC. This is a **temporary** storage area for your files. **It is important to note that any files you have on the S drive will be deleted when you log off** [1] - therefore, you will need to back up your coursework onto removable media (e.g. USB stick) before logging off and transfer your files to your H drive as soon as it becomes available. We do not recommend working directly on removable media.

# Back up on your own PC/laptop

Most of you will be familiar with saving and storing files onto the hard drive (usually C) of your PC/laptop, only backing up periodically, if at all. In order to ensure your coursework is secure, we strongly recommend that **you backup work-related files to your H drive where possible.**

## How?

Copy files from your PC/laptop onto a USB stick and then transfer them to your H drive using a classroom PC. You could also send your files to your university email account as attachments, then save them to your H drive the next time you are logged on to a classroom PC.

> If you have installed Microsoft 365 on your own PC using your University IT account, you will be able to map your OneDrive for Business and back up files to that.
>
> Alternatively, you can access your Microsoft 365 account including your OneDrive for Business on the web and upload there. Find out more on our IT for Students web page and in Toolkit.

# Virtual Desktop Infrastructure

You can use the **Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI)** to remotely access your H drive over the wireless network or an internet connection.

## How does the VDI work?

For instructions on connecting to the VDI, see our Remote Access - VDI guide, also in the Toolkit!

For more information about the Virtual Desktop Infrastructure, see our Working off-campus page.

# Removable media

In general, use removable media as a means of transporting data.

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[1] Don't forget that classroom PCs will also automatically log you out after 20 minutes of inactivity and any unsaved changes to open files will be lost.

- **Never** use it as your only method of storing and backing up your coursework.
- If you are using it for storage and backup, **never rely on just one copy** of your data.
- **Never** work directly on removable media.

## USB memory sticks (flash drives)

Memory sticks are one of the best ways of moving data around between PCs or from the hard drive of your own PC/laptop to your H drive on the University server.

These small devices plug into the USB port of your PC. They are relatively cheap and extremely practical. But beware – if you unplug the USB stick while your PC is in the middle of updating a file, you may end up with a corrupted file; *and* they are all too easily lost, stolen or stood upon!

All classroom PCs have USB ports on the front of the system unit. USB devices should only be inserted in these front ports to avoid disturbing or damaging the cabling at the rear.

# Further information and help

Find out more about the H Drive and about Remote Access using the VDI on Toolkit.

Use MyIT to contact the IT Service Desk: myit.abdn.ac.uk.