

Policy on Use of Electronic Devices at VIA Events

Approved by VIA Committee on May 1, 2015

Values, Ideas and the Arts (VIA) events are an important part of the Manchester University academic curriculum. They supplement classroom courses, laboratories, field trips, and other activities Manchester students are required to participate in as part of their agreement to complete an academic degree from Manchester.

VIA activities are planned, intentional learning opportunities which vary in their content and style, but all are intended to be an integral part of a student's formal education at Manchester. Multiple opportunities are provided so that each student has ample choices about which events they will attend.

When students choose to attend a VIA event, they are expected to give their full attention to the presentation. This is considered part of being a responsible member of the Manchester community, out of respect for the presenter(s) and other members of the audience.

Because of the proliferation of electronic devices in our society, bringing devices to many public meetings is considered acceptable behavior. But those devices can be a problem in several ways:

- 1) Keeping the device's owner from giving their full attention to the learning opportunity presented
- 2) Distracting other members of the audience sitting nearby
- 3) Distracting the presenter(s) directly, or indirectly, because of inattentive audience behavior.
- 4) Conveying to the presenter a negative impression of Manchester students and the University
- 5) Interfering with the audio system, especially at artistic performances.

There may be VIA presentations in which the presenter uses electronic devices and solicits such participation from the audience. In that situation, active use of devices is encouraged.

- 1) **Having recognized these realities, using electronic devices during a VIA event in ways that are not related to the presentation undermines the learning environment of Manchester University.**
- 2) **A member of the audience who is being distracted by someone else's use of an electronic device has the right to ask the person to turn off the device to avoid the distraction.**
- 3) **VIA ushers have authority to ask a member of the audience to turn off an electronic device being improperly used during a VIA program.**
- 4) **If a person persists in using an electronic device after being asked by a VIA usher or another audience member to turn it off, that person may be informed by an usher or a member of the VIA Committee that they will not receive credit for attending the event.**