Choose the Right Tool

CHOOSE THE RIGHT TOOL

Digital Essentials

THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND LIBRARY

The University of Queensland

CONTENTS

MODULE OVERVIEW

Aims and objectives

Finding the right software, tool or app can be challenging. As a UQ student, you have access to a range of digital tools via the UQ Digital Workspace. You can also access free tools that you can use now and after you graduate. This module is designed to help you find the right tool for your specific task, no matter what the task is.

This module will:

- help you find a tool for a specific task.
- allow you to compare similar tools to find the best match.

Module sections

1. Analysis and spreadsheet tools
2. 3D Modelling tools
3. Coding tools
4. Collaborative tools
5. Image, video, and audio tools
6. Presentation and Infographic tools
7. Study tools
8. Writing and referencing tools
9. AI tools
10. Conclusion

Download versions are available on the home page.

Duration:
Approximately 30 minutes

Student partnership

This module was developed with UQ student partners as part of a Student-Staff Partnership project.

Graduate attributes

Knowledge and skills you can gain from this module will contribute to your Graduate attributes:

Accomplished scholars

Courageous thinkers

This module is part of Digital Essentials, a series of online modules to help you quickly build your digital skills so you can succeed in study and work.

Return to UQ Library.

Tell us what you use!

Let us know what software, tool or app you find useful in the following form! The form is set to anonymous. We will get your response data but we won't know who has submitted it.

📊 Check out the responses so far!

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: https://uq.pressbooks.pub/digital-essentials-choose-the-right-tool/?p=5

1. ANALYSIS AND SPREADSHEET TOOLS

There are a lot of tools available to analyse data. Which tool you use may depend on a range of factors:

- **basic or advanced functions** — if you are working with a complex document you may require a tool with a range of formulas.
- **availability of training** — the availability of in-person training and online help varies between writing tools.
- **industry standards** — within certain industries there may be an expectation that you use a particular tool.

Find:

- Spreadsheet tools
- Data analysis tools
- GIS tools
- Text analysis tools

Icon key

(S) **Free** tools are completely free to use with all features.

Freeware tools include basic functionality for free. Additional features may need to be paid for.

Open source tools are developed in a collaborative manner and can be used, modified or shared openly. This software can be used for free and often includes a lot of support documentation.

Paid tools can only be used after purchasing, and agreeing to, a product licence.

Looking for help with your assignment?

Relevant Digital Essentials modules:

- Work with data and files — module on data sources, cleaning data, data storage, data analysis and presenting data.
- Types of assignments — information on written, video, audio, presentations, posters, 3D models and coding assignments.

Spreadsheet tools

Tool	Useful features and limitations	UQ Library training	Online training guides and courses	Tool cost
[Microsoft Excel](#)	Microsoft Excel is the standard spreadsheet tool commonly used in workplaces. It is recommended if you need a full range of specialized functions for data analysis and organisation tasks.	[Yes](#)	[Excel Essential Training (Office 365) (LinkedIn Learning, 2h24m)](#)	Free for UQ students
[Google Sheets](#)	Google Sheets is a free, web-based tool for creating spreadsheets and requires a Google Account to use. To access Sheets offline you need to use the Google Chrome browser and install [Google Docs offline Chrome extension](#).	No	[Google Sheets Essential Training (LinkedIn Learning, 1h52m)](#)	
[Calc (LibreOffice)](#)	Calc is a free spreadsheet tool you can download to your computer. Calc does allow you to share spreadsheets so multiple users can add data, however, real-time collaboration is not supported. File formats are compatible with Excel.	No	[Learn LibreOffice Calc 6 in Under 30 Minutes (YouTube, 22m3s)](#)	

Data analysis tools

Tool	Useful features or limitations	UQ Library training	Online training guides and courses	Tool cost
Matlab	Matlab is downloadable software you can use for data analysis, modelling and visualisation. UQ students can download MATLAB to their personal computers.	No	Learning MATLAB (LinkedIn Learning, 1h13m) Course: MATLAB 2018 Essential Training (LinkedIn Learning, 3h15m)	Free for UQ students
Python	Python is a programming language that can be used for data analysis and visualisation.	Yes	LinkedIn Learning pathway - Python	
R and RStudio	R is a language and environment for statistical computing and graphics. RStudio is an integrated development environment (IDE) to make R easier to use.	Yes	Pathway: LinkedIn Learning pathway - R. Resources - used in our different R courses.	
SAS	SAS's Education Analytical Suite is a data analytics tool available to be downloaded by UQ students.	No	Getting Started with SAS Studio	
SPSS	SPSS Statistics is a software package used for statistical analysis and is available for UQ students via the UQ Digital Workspace and in HASS/HABS Student Computer Labs.	No	Video: Introduction to SPSS for data analysis (YouTube, 16m17s). Course: SPSS Statistics Essential Training (LinkedIn Learning, 5h49m)	Free use on selected UQ computers.

Tool	Useful features or limitations	UQ Library training	Online training guides and courses	Tool cost
KNIME Analytics Platform	Use KNIME Analytics Platform to create data workflows, perform different analysis steps and display the results as models or interactive views for interpretation. KNIME analytics platform is available as a free open source desktop application under the GNU General Public Licence.	No	Resources from KNIME to get you started. Data Science Foundations (LinkedIn Learning, 4h3m) - sections on KNIME.	🔓

GIS tools

This table lists a few key GIS tools and training resources. See our Geographical information systems (GIS) guide for a more comprehensive overview of GIS resources for researchers.

Tool	Useful features and limitations	UQ Library training	Online training guides and courses	Tool cost
Carto	Carto is a cloud-based GIS platform built on open source software. Students can use Carto for free via the GitHub Student Developer Pack.	No	Carto tutorials	🔓
ESRI ArcGIS	ESRI ArcGIS is a downloadable tool for building and analysing geographical information. Students may use ArcGIS within specific courses. View the UQ Map Gallery from ArcGIS .	No	ArcGIS Pro Essential Training (LinkedIn Learning, 3h17m).	📖 Free for UQ students
Google Earth	Google Earth is a free mapping tool available online, via your desktop, or on your mobile device.	No	Become a Google mapping expert	Ⓢ
QGIS	QGIS is a free, open-source desktop application for creating, editing and analysing geospatial information.	Yes	Course: Learning QGIS (LinkedIn Learning, 2h57m) Guide: QGIS Training manual	🔓

Text analysis tools

This table lists a few key text analysis software tools and training resources. Our Text mining and text analysis guide provides a more comprehensive overview for researchers. It includes information on:

- Sources of text data.

- Preparing text for analysis.
- A tool comparison table.

Tool	Useful features and limitations	UQ Library training	Online training guides and courses	Tool cost
Leximancer	Leximancer is used for scientific qualitative data analysis including concept visualisation and mapping. UQ students can access a licensed version of Leximancer desktop software.	No	Leximancer Overview (YouTube, 1m44s). Advanced Leximancer Features (YouTube, 2m56s). Resources from Leximancer.	Free for UQ students
NVivo	Nvivo is software used to organise and analyse text and data. The software is available on Library computers. UQ students and staff can request a licence.	Yes	Using NVivo in systematic reviews guide. Getting started training manual - check under NVivo Pro.	Free for UQ students
OpenRefine	OpenRefine can be used as a powerful text search tool and to clean and transform data. It is useful for text and data analysis.	No	OpenRefine has short introductory videos and user documentation to get you started.	

2. 3D MODELLING TOOLS

3D modelling combined with 3D scanning allows you to create any object you can imagine or see. This is very useful if you are required to prototype a model for an assignment, or just want to make your own phone case.
Find:

- [3D modelling tools](#)
- [3D photogrammetry and reality capture tools](#)

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Looking for help with your assignment?

[Types of assignments](#) — Digital Essentials module with information on designing 3D models and how to get 3D models.

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3D modelling tools

Tool	Useful features	In-person training	Online tutorial	Cost
SketchUp	SketchUp is completely free and relatively easy to get started designing and building 3D models. There is no installation required, it loads in your browser.	No	Learning resources from Sketchup. Learning SketchUp Free (LinkedIn Learning, 2h56m).	📖🔒
FreeCAD	FreeCAD is an open-source 3D modeller. You can create a 2D layout and turn it into a 3D design or 3D into a 2D layout.	No	Get started with FreeCad	🔓
Autodesk	Autodesk offers a family of products for every type of 3D design. Their offerings include products like AutoCAD, Fusion 360, Inventor, Recap Pro and Revit. We recommend Meshmixer, an intuitive tool for 3D model sculpting, cleaning and designing.	Yes	3D Scanning with a camera (LinkedIn Learning, 57m25s) - goes through the process of creating a 3D scan and repairing your scan with Meshmixer. Autodesk Meshmixer manual.	📖🔒
TinkerCad	A browser based 3D modelling tool from Autodesk.	Yes	Learning Tinkercad (LinkedIn Learning, 2h18m)	💲
Blender	A free, fairly complex 3D modelling program with great functionality.	No	Blender 3.3 Essential Training (LinkedIn Learning, 5h1m)	🔓
Meshlab	Open source 3D model processing, editing and converting software.	No	Meshlab tutorials	🔓

3D photogrammetry and reality capture tools

Tool	Useful features	In-person training	Online tutorial	Cost
3DF Zephyr	3DF Zephyr allows you to easily construct 3D models from photographs.	Yes	Getting started with 3DF Zephyr	📖🔒
VisualSFM	VisualSFM is a 3D reconstruction application, that allows you to use photographs to create 3D models.	No	VisualSFM documentation	💲
Meshroom	Meshroom is a completely free and open source photogrammetry program which has specialised algorithms to allow you to construct 3D models using photographs	No	Tutorial: Meshroom for beginners	🔓
Agisoft Metashape	Metashape (formerly known as Photoscan) is a very powerful photogrammetry program, with many extended features such as GIS integration	No	Agisoft tutorials	💲

3. CODING TOOLS

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There are many different coding and development platforms available. If you need to learn a particular coding language, visit [Types of assignments](#) or one of the following resources.
Find:

- [Web development](#)
- [Software development](#)
- [Mobile application development](#)

Looking for help with your assignment?

- [freeCodeCamp](#)
- [The Odin Project](#)
- [Codecademy](#)
- [Khan Academy](#)
- [Stack Overflow](#)

Web development

Tool	Useful features	In-person training	Online tutorial	Cost
NotePad++	NotePad++ is a free source code editor for Windows that supports over 50+ languages.	No	Notepad++ resources	
Koding	Koding is a cloud development environment that supports Apache, PHP, MySQL, Node.js, Perl and Python, with any other language being able to be added as required.	No	Koding documentation	
replit	Build, test, and deploy directly from the browser	No	Getting Started with Replit: Intro to All Major Features (YouTube, 4m 54s)	
JSFiddle	JSFiddle is an online community for testing and showcasing code. It supports JavaScript.	No	JSFiddle docs and help	

Software development

Tool	Useful features	In-person training	Online tutorial	Cost
Visual Studio	Visual Studio has a family of products that can be used to create applications for any platform in any language. It can be used to create software, mobile apps, games, browser extensions and more.	No	Learning to code with Visual Studio. Learning Visual Studio Code (LinkedIn Learning, 1h20m).	
Lazarus	Lazarus allows you to develop applications of any type. It can be used on Windows, Mac, Linux and FreeBSD.	No	Lazarus tutorials	
IntelliJ	IntelliJ is another Integrated Development Environment (IDE) like Lazarus, it includes auto-completion and support for error analysis.	No	Overview of IntelliJ IDEA (YouTube, 5m46s). Learn and support.	

Mobile application development

Tool	Useful features	In-person training	Online tutorial	Cost
Adapty	Adapty has free and paid plans. It offers low-code SDKs for React Native, Flutter, Unity, and other major stacks to power these frameworks with full-scale and customisable subscriptions and analytics infrastructure in iOS and Android native apps.	No	Adapty Quickstart Guide	
NativeScript	NativeScript is another open-source tool for creating Android, Windows and iOS applications. Using NativeScripts allows you to build apps using JavaScript/ Angular/TypeScript.	No	NativeScript Documentation	

4. COLLABORATIVE TOOLS

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There are many tools to help you communicate and collaborate effectively. Which tool you choose depends on a range of factors:

- **video conferencing or text-based communication** — video conferencing may be a more effective means of collaborating at the beginning of your project to build rapport with unfamiliar team members.
- **course requirement** — your course coordinator may require you to use particular tools.
- **integration with other productivity tools** — some messaging and conferencing tools will integrate closely with collaborative writing and presentation tools.

Find:

- [Group messaging platforms](#)
- [Discussion tools used on Learn.UQ (Blackboard)](#)
- [Online meetings and video conferencing](#)

Looking for help with your assignment?

Relevant Digital Essentials modules:

- [Communicate and collaborate](#) — module on collaborating effectively, writing formal emails and online group work.
- [Types of assignments](#) — information on written, video, audio, presentations, posters, 3D models and coding assignments.

Group messaging platforms

Platform	Useful features	Help and tutorials	Cost
Microsoft Teams	Secure; searchable message archives; configure notification, integrates with the Microsoft suite	Get started with Microsoft Teams	ⓢ Free for UQ students as part of Microsoft 365
Slack	Integrates with Google Drive and many other apps; searchable message archives; configure notifications	Getting started with Slack	📖🔒
Messenger	Searchable message archives; configure notifications, available as a desktop app	How to start a group chat on Messenger	ⓢ
WhatsApp	Searchable message archives; configure notifications, available as a desktop app	Get started with WhatsApp	ⓢ
WeChat	The WeChat Chatterbox Blog outlines products and features	About WeChat	ⓢ

Discussion tools used on Learn.UQ (Blackboard)

Platform	Useful features	Help and tutorials	Cost for UQ students
Ed Discussion Board	File sharing, able to create categories for different discussion threads	Ed Discussion Board Quick Start Guide	ⓢ
Learn.UQ (BlackBoard) Discussion Board	Discussion threads, file sharing. Only instructors can set up group discussions	Using the BlackBoard Discussion Board	ⓢ
Padlet	File sharing, App for mobile devices, can be used as part of a live discussion	Padlet via UQ	ⓢ

Online meetings and video conferencing

Platform	Useful features	Tutorials and help	Cost
Microsoft Teams	App for mobile devices, file sharing, screensharing and chat function, whiteboard tools	Get started with Microsoft Teams	Free for UQ students as part of Microsoft 365
Zoom	App for mobile devices, file sharing, screensharing and chat function, whiteboard tools	Getting started with Zoom	Free account available via UQ
Google Meet	File sharing, screensharing and chat function	Google Meet training and help	

Other tools used for collaboration are discussed in the Communicate and collaborate module.

5. IMAGE, VIDEO AND AUDIO TOOLS

While at university, you may need to create videos, podcasts, or images. Which tool you choose will depend on a range of factors:

- **basic or advanced functions** — simple projects may not require professional-grade software, which may be more difficult to learn and operate.
- **cost** — video, photo and audio editing software can be expensive. Will you have access to this software once you graduate from UQ?
- **training** — the availability of training and online help varies between tools.

Find tools for:

- Images
- Video
- Audio

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👆 **Paid** tools can only be used after purchasing, and agreeing to, a product licence.

Looking for help with your assignment?

- Types of assignments — strategies and tools for creating videos, audio, presentations and infographics.
- Find and use media — information on how to find images, audio and video and copyright and licensing obligations.
- Understanding upload speeds guide.

Images

Tool	Useful features or limitations	In-person training	Online tutorial	Cost
Adobe Photoshop	Adobe Photoshop is one of the most well-known image editing software. Students who are currently enrolled in a degree-granting course can freely use the software on UQ campus computers. To use or trial Photoshop on your personal devices, go to Adobe.	No	Short course: Learning Photoshop (LinkedIn Learning, 3h18m) Full course: Photoshop 2023 Essential Training (LinkedIn Learning, 11h)	Free to use on UQ computers
GIMP	GIMP is a free image editing software that can be downloaded onto your Mac/Windows/Linux desktop. It offers many of the same features as Photoshop.	No	GIMP Essential Training (LinkedIn Learning, 5h10m) GIMP Tutorials	
Paint.net	Paint.NET is a free image editing software available on Windows computers.	No	Beginner Tutorials	
Photo Pos Pro	Photo Pos Pro is a free image editing software. It offers users a choice of interfaces including one for beginners and experts.	No	Photo Pos Pro Help	
Adobe Express	Adobe Express has a free basic plan for basic editing of images. Express does not include many of the features of a fully-fledged image editing tool. You need an Adobe account to use Express.	No	Learn Adobe Express (LinkedIn Learning, 1h16m)	

Video

Tool	Useful features or limitations	In-person training	Online tutorial	Cost
UQ Echo account	UQ students can use Echo to create video and audio. Use to submit video assignments.	No	Record video or audio through EchoVideo	(💲)
Zoom	While Zoom is primarily a video conferencing tool, you can use Zoom to easily record videos of yourself or your computer screen for your assignments or study.	No	Zoom video tutorials	📖🔒
Adobe Express is available to UQ students and staff.	Adobe Express does not include many of the features of a fully-fledged video editing tool.	No	Learn Adobe Express (LinkedIn Learning, 1h16m)	(💲)
iMovie	iMovie is a free video creation tool for Mac computers and mobiles. You can use to insert videos, photographs and sound recordings and create compelling videos. iMovie is a good alternative to more complicated video creation tools, like Premiere Pro.	No	iMovie 10.1.16 Essential Training (LinkedIn Learning, 2h31m)	(💲) for Mac users
Photos	Microsoft Photos is primarily a photography tool, however, it does allow users to create simple videos out of your existing photographs, videos, and sound recordings. This tool is available for your Windows desktop or mobile device.	No	Video: Basic video editing with Microsoft Photos app (YouTube, 8m4s)) Guide: Create films with a video editor	(💲) for Windows users
Adobe Premiere Pro	Adobe Premiere Pro is video creation and editing software. Students who are currently enrolled in a degree-granting course can use the software on UQ owned computers. They may not use the software on their personal computers or laptops. Students can trial or purchase Premiere Pro at the Adobe website.	No	Course: Premiere Pro 2022 Essential Training (LinkedIn Learning 6h23m) Guide: Premiere Pro User Guide	🤝 Free to use on UQ computers
Kdenlive	Kdenlive is a non-linear video editing program with a large range of features, very similar to Adobe Premiere Pro. This tool is available for download from Kdenlive.	No	Kdenlive Manual	🔓

Audio

Tool	Useful features of limitations	In-person training	Online training	Cost
Adobe Audition	Adobe Audition is professional-level audio editing software. Students who are currently enrolled in a degree-granting course can use the software on UQ owned computers that are located at UQ premises. They may not use the software on their personal computers or laptops. Students can trial or purchase Audition at the Adobe website.	No	Audition Essential Training (Linkedin Learning, 4h 15m)	Free to use on UQ computers
Audacity	Audacity is a free, cross-platform desktop audio editing tool. The tool includes a wide range of features.	No	Learning Audacity (LinkedIn Learning, 1h 42m)	
GarageBand	GarageBand is Apple's free audio editing tool. Primarily, Garageband is used for recording music but it can also be used for creating podcasts. This tool can be used on desktop computers or as a mobile app.	No	GarageBand Essential Training (LinkedIn Learning, 4h 4m)	
Logic Pro	Logic Pro X is a professional-level audio editing tool by Apple. It offers a range of plug-ins and sounds effects you can use.	No	Logic Pro X Essential Training (LinkedIn Learning, 9h 1m)	

6. PRESENTATION AND INFOGRAPHIC TOOLS

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The ability to deliver compelling presentations is increasingly important. Which tool you use to create, share and present your work may depend on a range of factors:

- **individual or group work** — different tools offer collaborative functionality.
- **basic or advanced function** — if you wish to incorporate complex data visualisations, or include special effects you may require a more advanced presentation tool.
- **availability of training** — the availability of in-person training and online help varies between presentation tools.

Find:

- [Presentation tools](#)
- [Infographic tools](#)

Looking for help with your assignment?

- [Types of assignments](#) — Information on written, video, audio, presentations, posters, 3D models and coding assignments.
- [Find and use media](#) – Find images, audio and video, comply with copyright and Creative Commons licences.
- [Analyse and display data](#) in the Work with data and files module.
- [Data visualisation guide](#)

Presentation tools

Tool	Useful features or limitations	In-person training	Online training	Cost
Google Slides	Google Slides is a free, web-based presentation tool that requires a Google Account to use. To access Google Slides without an internet connection you need to use the Google Chrome browser and install Google Docs offline Chrome extension. Slides offers a small range of templates. You can easily edit text as well as insert images, diagrams, videos, and shapes. You can export your files into a range of file formats, including PowerPoint (.pptx).	No	Google Slides Essential Training (LinkedIn Learning, 1h 8m)	
Microsoft PowerPoint	Microsoft PowerPoint is the standard presentation tool used in many workplaces and offers a large range of templates.	Yes	PowerPoint Essential Training (Microsoft 365) (LinkedIn Learning, 2h 32m)	Free for UQ students and staff
Impress (LibreOffice)	Impress (LibreOffice) is free, desktop presentation software you can download to your computer. Impress has a relatively small number of templates and limited collaborative functionality.	No	Limited online training. LibreOffice 5.3 New Features: Impress (YouTube, 44s)	
Prezi	Prezi is a web-based presentation tool that offers a tiered membership model. The basic membership type offers unlimited presentations but is limited in other respects. For instance, the Basic model does not offer presenter notes or offline access.	No	Prezi Essential Training (LinkedIn Learning, 2h 31m)	

Infographic tools

Tools	Useful features or limitations	In-person training	Online training	Cost
Canva	Canva is a web-based design tool with free plans available. It allows you to easily create slides, infographics and other visual components for your presentations. You can easily add your colleagues to your projects and collaborate.	No	Canva tutorials	📖🔒
GraphPad Prism	Graphpad Prism is a biostatistics, curve fitting (nonlinear regression) and scientific graphing tool. Easily organize, analyze and graph repeated experiments; pick appropriate statistical tests and interpret the results.	No	GraphPad resources	Free for UQ students and staff
Piktochart	Piktochart is a web-based tool you can use to create infographics and visualising data and includes a range of a range of templates for you to use. The free version allows you to download your infographic in PNG format.	No	Piktochart Tutorial: A Simple Guide to Piktochart for Beginners (YouTube, 5m11s)	📖🔒
Venngage	Venngage is a web-based tool for creating a range of data visualisations, including infographics, posters and reports, to share or download. The basic version of Venngage is limited in terms of templates, collaborative functionality, and support.	No	How to Create an Infographic with Venngage (YouTube, 5m6s)How to Create an Infographic with Venngage (YouTube, 5m6s)	📖🔒
Visio Online	Access to the web version to draw diagrams to communicate complex information.	No	Beginner tutorial for Visio- web version	Free for UQ students as part of Microsoft 365

7. STUDY TOOLS

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There are a range of tools available to help you with your study, including notetaking, brainstorming and mind-mapping tools, as well as tools to help you read, highlight and annotate PDF documents and books. Find:

- [Note-taking tools](#)
- [Brainstorming and mind-mapping tools](#)
- [PDF and eBook tools](#)
- [Organisation tools](#)

Looking for help with your assignment?

- [Write, cite and submit](#) – Covers plagiarism, referencing and referencing styles, EndNote software and assignment submission requirements.
- [Types of assignments](#) – Information on written, video, audio, presentations, posters, 3D models and coding assignments.

Note-taking tools

Tool	Useful features or limitations	In-person training	Online training	Cost
Microsoft OneNote	Microsoft OneNote is available online, on your computer or via a mobile app. Organise notes into notebooks, by colour-code, assign tags or search across all of your notes. Microsoft offers most of the text edit functionality, which makes this an ideal tool for recording lecture notes. Insert images, sound recordings, and other files into your notes. You can share material using OneNote and sync your notes across devices	No	OneNote Essential Training (LinkedIn Learning, 2h33m)	💲
Evernote	Evernote is available online or via apps and can sync across 2 devices. Evernote allows you to organise your notes by notebooks or by tag and has a robust search function. You can embed a wide range of file formats into your notes.	No	Using Evernote	📖
Google Keep	Google Keep is a streamlined note-taking tool available online or via a mobile app. You can colour or label your notes, or search by keyword. Google Keep is more suitable for short notes, or to-do lists, rather than lecture notes.	No	Google Keep by Dummies: Getting Started! (YouTube, 8m56s)	💲
Notability	Notability is a note-taking app available to Mac users. Notability allows users to type or handwrite create and sync notes across devices, embed PDFs, and sync lecture recordings.	No	How to use Notability as a student (YouTube, 6m32s)	💲
Notes	Notes is Apple's note-taking tool and is available on Apple products and online. You can sync your notes across several devices and can organize notes into folders, browse notes by material (photos, sketches, websites, audio, document), but cannot tag or colour code notes. This is a good option for someone who uses Apple products already.	No	Notes User Guide	💲

Brainstorming and mind-mapping tools

Tool	Useful features or limitations	In-person training	Online training	Cost
Bubbl.us	Bubbl.us is a free, web-based, collaborative mind mapping tool that includes a presentation mode.	No	Introduction to Bubbl.us (YouTube, 2m14s)	
Coggle	Coogle is a web-based, collaborative mind-mapping/flowchart tool. It offers users 3 private diagrams or unlimited public diagrams for free.	No	Coggle introduction (YouTube, 1m30s)	
Padlet	Padlet is an online whiteboard tool that is ideal for collaborative brainstorming. You can post links, images, sound recordings, screen recordings, and maps to the board. UQ has its own Padlet domain that offers additional functionality compared to the free version.	No	Padlet Help has guides and video tutorials	
Reasons.io	Reasons.io is an open source, digital argument mapping platform. You can embed it into any HTML page and create, edit, share, and export argument maps. Reasons was developed by Dave Kinkead for the University of Queensland Critical Thinking Project.	No	Getting started with Reasons.io	

PDF and eBook tools

Tool	Useful features or limitations	In-person training	Online training	Cost
Adobe Digital Editions	Adobe Digital Editions is an eBook reader available to download on your computer, table or mobile device. You can download and read Library eBooks in PDF or EPUB format, as well as organize your books using bookshelves. You can bookmark pages, highlight or annotate text.	No	Limited (see Adobe Digital Editions FAQ)	
Adobe Reader	Adobe Reader is a free PDF reader available on your computer, tablet or mobile device. Use Adobe Reader to read, annotate or highlight text, or share PDF with colleagues. By signing into Adobe Reader with your free Adobe ID you can sync your library between devices.	No	Adobe Reader Help	
Annotate	Annotate is an online annotation, collaboration and indexing system for documents and images, supporting PDF, Word and other document formats. On Annotate, you can now all comment on a single read-only copy online.	No	Annotate Support Resources	

Organisation tools

Tool	Features	Cost
OneDrive	Easy link sharing, use on most devices, can be used with Office365 apps to edit online. Available as part of Microsoft 365 with your UQ access.	
Dropbox	online cloud storage for personal files, allows for sharing with others so great for collaborating, subscriptions available to increase storage space	
Microsoft To Do	available as a free app or through your Microsoft account, share lists and set tasks and reminders	

8. WRITING AND REFERENCING TOOLS

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Icon key

Ⓢ **Free** tools are completely free to use with all features.

📖 **Freeware** tools include basic functionality for free. Additional features may need to be paid for.

🔓 **Open source** tools are developed in a collaborative manner and can be used, modified or shared openly. This software can be used for free and often includes a lot of support documentation.

👆 **Paid** tools can only be used after purchasing, and agreeing to, a product licence.

Writing is an essential activity for most university students. Which writing tool you choose will depend on a range of factors including:

- **individual or group work** — some tools incorporate collaborative functionality, while some are better for individual work.
- **basic or advanced function** — if you are writing a complex or technical document you may require advanced word processing functionality.
- **availability of training** — the availability of in-person training and online help varies between writing tools.

Written assessments will often require you to reference appropriately. Referencing can be time-consuming and difficult to manage. Referencing software can make referencing easier.

Find:

- [Writing tools](#)
- [Referencing software](#)

Looking for help with your assignment?

- [Write, cite and submit](#) – Covers plagiarism, referencing and referencing styles, EndNote software and assignment submission requirements.
- [Assignment writing](#)
- [EndNote referencing software](#)
- [Referencing style guides](#)

Writing tools

Tool	Useful features or limitations	In person training	Online training	Cost
Microsoft Word	Word is Microsoft's standard word processing software. Microsoft Word offers basic and advanced word processing functionality and is widely used.	Yes	Word Essential Training (Microsoft 365) (LinkedIn Learning, 2h 33m). Word 2016: Creating Long Documents (LinkedIn Learning, 2h 17m).	Available as part of Microsoft 365 with your UQ access.
Google Docs	Google Docs is web-based word processing software that you need a Google Account to use. To access Google Slides without an internet connection you need to use the Google Chrome browser and install Google Docs offline Chrome extension. While not ideal for long-from documents, Google Docs is a great collaborative writing tool as more than one person can work on the document at a single time.	No	Google Docs Essential Training (LinkedIn Learning, 1h 31m)	
Writer (LibreOffice)	Writer, via LibreOffice, is a free, open-access word processing tool. It offers much of the same functionality as Microsoft Word, including compatible file formats. Writer does not allow co-authoring of documents, so should not be adopted if you need collaborative software.	No	Writer Guide	
Overleaf	Overleaf is a web-based collaborative writing tool and LaTeX editor. Overleaf is ideal for students who need to include mathematical formulas. Free Overleaf Professional accounts are available to all University of Queensland students and staff.	No	An introduction to Overleaf (YouTube, 2m53s)	

Referencing software

Tool	Useful features or limitations	In-person training	Online training	Cost
EndNote	EndNote is one of the most popular referencing tools you can install on your computer or use online. When you install the EndNote program, the Cite While You Write add-in will be inserted into your word processing software. This add-in allows you to insert citations into your document, providing you use Microsoft Word or LibreOffice.	No	Online tutorials for EndNote 20	Free for UQ staff & students
Mendeley	Mendeley is a referencing tool you can install on your computer and use online. In addition to traditional citation support, Mendeley allows you to build a research profile and connect with other researchers.	No	How to use Mendeley (YouTube, 16m 53s)	
Zotero	Zotero is a referencing tool you can install on your computer and use online. Zotero is unique in that it offers a web browser add-on which can create automatic citations from a webpage. Zotero is run by a not-for-profit.	No	Getting Started with Zotero (YouTube, 4m22s)	

Write, cite and submit has more information on referencing, including an overview of the main features of EndNote, Mendeley and Zotero.

9. AI TOOLS

AI technologies — including the tools, functionality and applications — are rapidly developing. This page lists some useful tools for text, image and audio or video generation, but there are also specific tools you can use for research, literature searching, and writing.

[AI Student Hub](#) is your resource for understanding and using artificial intelligence (AI) in your studies responsibly. Use it to:

- learn how to use AI responsibly and effectively in your studies
- explore resources, tools and tips to confidently integrate AI into your learning experience at U

UQ's AI tools

Staff and students have access to [Microsoft Copilot](#) via the Edge browser or the [website](#) (UQ username and password required). You can also access [Adobe Express](#), a tool capable of generating images, text effects, and vectors.

Some AI tools have been denied for use on UQ-owned devices. Visit the [software approval list](#) for more information. Staff and students should consider UQ policies, procedures and licensing agreements when using AI, but also the the wider [ethical, legal and social impacts](#) of such tools.

AI tools for text generation

AI tool	Company	Type/Use	Costs
Claude	Anthropic	LLM	Free/ Subscriptions
ChatGPT	OpenAI	LLM/Search engine	Free/Subscriptions (varies according to model)
MS CoPilot	Microsoft	LLM	Available to UQ staff
Gemini	Google	LLM	Free
Perplexity	Perplexity AI	Search engine using LLM	Free/Subscription
NotebookLM	Google	Research assistant using LLM (Gemini 2.0)	Free/Subscription

Tools for image generation

AI tool	Company	Type/Use	Cost
Dall-E 3	OpenAI	Text to Image AI	Available via Chat GPT
Leonardo Ai	Leonardo Interactive	Text to Image AI	Free/Subscriptions
Ideogram 2.0	Ideogram	Text to Image AI	Free (40 Images a month)/Subscription
Adobe Firefly	Adobe	Text to Image AI	Include in Adobe products
Stable Assistant	Stability AI	Text to Image AI	Subscription

Tools for audio or video generation

AI tool	Company	Type/Use	Cost
Elevenlabs	ElevenLabs	Text to speech	Free/Subscription
Synthesia	Synthesia	Text to video	Free/Subscription
AIVA	Aiva Technologies	Music generation	Free/Subscription
Runway	Runway	Music generation	Free/Subscription
HeyGen Interactive Avatar	HeyGen	Text to video (uses avatars)	Free/Subscription
NotebookLM	Google	Podcasts, research assistant	Free/Subscription

Read about AI tools for literature searching. There are many new AI tools available to researchers and students that focus on academic sources (rather than general AI tools such as Copilot or ChatGPT).

10. CONCLUSION

Congratulations!

You have completed the **Choose the right tool** module.

Tell us what you think

Use our [Digital Learning feedback form](#) to give **anonymous** feedback on this module. You can provide your email if you would like us to reply to you.

Digital Essentials modules

Build your digital skills with Digital Essentials. Select modules from the 6 themes that match your interests and will help you succeed in study and work.

New to UQ?

- [Getting started at the UQ Library](#)
- [Use UQ systems](#), includes:
  - [Book rooms](#)

- ◦ [Printing at UQ](#).

Assignment essentials

- [Find and use media](#)
- [Information essentials](#)
- [Write, cite and submit](#)
- [Types of assignments](#)

Digital creation

- [Accessibility](#)
- [Choose the right tool](#)
- [Intellectual Property](#)

🔒 Digital security and safety

- [Digital security](#)
- [Internet essentials](#)
- [Social media](#)

👥 Professional identity and skills

- [Communicate and collaborate](#)
- [eProfessionalism](#)

📊 Work with information

- [Artificial Intelligence](#)
- [Work with data and files](#)
- [Document your research data](#)

Teaching staff – use the modules in courses

Teaching staff can embed or link the modules in courses to help build your students' digital literacy.

- There are interactive elements throughout each module and a short H5P quiz at the end.

- The modules are also available for your students to download in EPUB, PDF and HTML format to make them more accessible.

Learn how to <u>add the Pressbook module</u> to your Learn.UQ (Blackboard) course.

Assess student learning

Most modules have a final short quiz created in H5P. You can download the H5P quiz from the module and embed it in your course if you would like to check your students' completions or to allow for the results to be transferred to the Grade Centre in your course.

The H5P quiz content will not record any completion data unless you download and add the H5P quiz directly to your course. Students can screenshot the quiz if they are required to show completion.

Learn how to <u>add the H5P content</u> to your course.