

Virtual Physics Clinic FAQ

Answers to questions about how this is going to work (we hope)

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Updated

Why are we having a Virtual Physics Clinic?

The department of physics has a mission to broadly educate students in physics. We have found that physics is best learned when people practice and get feedback. Yet, we don't always know when the best time for students is. In order to serve our students better in a way that is similar to how we served you previously, we are creating a Virtual Physics Clinic. The TAs have worked hard to learn this system, and we take educating you very seriously. We also realize that this will not be as good as your normal in person help, but we are trying our best to help you!

Where is the Virtual Physics Clinic?

The Virtual Physics Clinic will be hosted on Zoom. You can access it using this link: <https://zoom.us/j/668912935>

If you need other ways to connect without the internet, please let us know by emailing the Associate Chair of Physics: jlross@syr.edu

When can I go to the Physics Clinic?

Just like the In Real Life (IRL) Physics Clinic, the Virtual Physics Clinic is available all day. Unfortunately, due to the schedules and the needs of the Virtual Physics Clinic, we can only guarantee staffing from 1pm - 7pm Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) daily. If you are in a different time zone and these times don't work for you, please let your TAs and instructors know. Please try to make meeting times with your TAs and instructors. You will still be able to meet in the Virtual Physics Clinic space, but additional TAs will not be there to help you.

When will TAs be available to help me in the Virtual Physics Clinic?

The TAs will staff the Virtual Physics Clinic 1pm - 7pm EDT Monday through Friday.

What will I see when I go to the Virtual Physics Clinic?

When you enter the Virtual Physics Clinic, your microphone will be muted and your video will be off. You do not have to use your video. For most laptop users, the controls for the environment will be in the bottom of the window. You can see the other participants by pushing the "Participants" icon. The TAs will identify themselves with "(TA)" after their names.

Because conversations about physics may be ongoing in the virtual environment, we recommend that you do not unmute yourself until the Host TA can address

you. Please push the “Raise Hand” button, which will let the Host TA know you need help. You can also communicate with everyone or just the TAs using the “Chat” box. To call up the Chat box, push the “Chat” icon. This will allow you to communicate even if you do not have a microphone working. It will also allow you to let the TA know what help you need without disrupting ongoing work in the Virtual Physics Clinic.

How can I get better help in the Virtual Physics Clinic?

We recommend that when you come into the Virtual Physics Clinic, you update your name to be your first name with the class you are working on in parentheses. For instance, rename yourself like this: “Jenny (PHY216)”. This will help the TAs know which class you are working on and be able to address you by your preferred name.

You can rename yourself by clicking the “Participants” icon to bring up the list of participants. From there, you can highlight your name by scrolling over it and select the blue button marked “Rename”.

How do I write physics and math equations in the Virtual Physics Clinic?

We recommend that you use a smart device that allows writing such as a tablet PC, an iPad or other tablet, or even a smart phone screen to help you interact with the TAs and other students in the Virtual Physics Clinic. There is an option to share your screen and use a whiteboard that multiple people can annotate (write on) together. You can create a new whiteboard by clicking “Share” or “Share Screen” icon, which is a green box with an upward pointing arrow. Select the second option “Whiteboard” which will pull up the whiteboard that you can share with other students.

What if I want to work with someone and talk, but I don't want to disturb others?

We anticipate that multiple ongoing conversations may need to happen simultaneously in the Virtual Physics Clinic. Unlike in the IRL Physics Clinic, where you can spread yourselves out physically in the room, these conversations will likely be disruptive in the Virtual Physics Clinic. In order to help with that, we will assign small groups to breakout rooms. We already created rooms specifically for classes.

Please communicate with the Host TA that you want to join a chat and they will either add you to a room or create a new room for your group. They will assign you, and you will see an invitation to “Join a Breakout session”. Click to accept, and you will be taken to a new virtual environment. Within the breakout session, your participants list, chat box, screen share, and audio and video will only be

accessible to people in the same breakout room with you. It is a completely private environment.

How do I get help, if I am in a breakout room?

If you are in a breakout room working with other students, and you need a TA, please push the “Ask a Question” button at the bottom. This will alert the Host TA that you need help. The Host TA or another TA will try to come to help you as soon as possible. If you have been waiting for a while, you can always leave the breakout room and go back to the main virtual environment to ask for help or remind the TA on duty that you need help in the breakout room. When you leave a breakout room, you will have a new option on the bottom control panel icons of returning to that breakout room at any time. So, you will be able to get back just by clicking that button.

How do I leave a breakout room?

When you are in a breakout session, you can always leave and return to the same room. To leave, you click the red words that say, “Leave Break Out Room”. When you go into and out of a breakout room, you will see a new icon that says “Breakout Room” and you will be able to click that to return to the breakout room to which you were assigned. You will not be able to visit other breakout rooms unless the Host TA assigns you to that new room.

How do I leave the Virtual Physics Clinic?

You can leave the Virtual Physics Clinic at any time by clicking the red words that say “Leave Meeting” at the bottom of the screen.

How can I give feedback about problems with the Virtual Physics Clinic?

If you have issues connecting or using the Virtual Physics Clinic, please feel free to communicate to your TA, instructor, or send an email to the Associate Chair of Physics: jlross@syr.edu

We are trying very hard to replicate the in person help and service we are able to provide you in your on campus experience, but we know it won't be perfect. That is why you attend Syracuse University. No virtual help will ever be as good as the in person help we try to provide through in class instruction, recitations, and the IRL Physics Clinic. Please do feel free to give us feedback, so we can try to make the Virtual Physics Clinic better for you.