Remote Learning Orientation Guide

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
IYUNIVESITHI YASEKAPA • UNIVERSITEIT VAN KAAPSTAD

What do you need to be ready to learn online?

Part 1: Getting ready

Why are we doing this?

To minimise the spread of the Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) all South Africans must continue social distancing for an undetermined period of time. It is a time of uncertainty for people all over the world. We are not sure at this stage when you will be able to come back to residence or classes on campus.

This means UCT's academic programme for Term 2 and Term 3 will be online using our learning management system, Vula. Course resources will be in low-tech format to use as little data as possible.

What do you need to be ready to learn online?

Dedicated work space
Set up a dedicated learning area. By completing your work there repeatedly, you'll begin to establish a routine. Whether your workspace is your kitchen table, bedroom or a shared space, it's important to find an area that will work best for you in your current circumstance. Make sure this area is well-organised; the more comfortable your workspace is, the more likely you are to want to be there.

Device
You need a desktop computer, laptop or tablet to work on.

Internet access

UCT has so far established agreements with Cell C and Telkom to provide zero-rated (free) access to vula, lecture videos, the Library website, OpenUCT, and UCT's primary website www.uct.ac.za. Negotiations with Vodacom and MTN are ongoing. We will let you know when they are completed. There will be no charge or deduction of your mobile data when you access the websites on this list:

http://www.icts.uct.ac.za/Zero-rated-access-some-UCT-websites

Create a hotspot with your mobile phone to access these sites on your laptop. Here's how:

iPhone
Go to Settings, then Personal Hotspot
The next screen will let you set a password. The name of your network is the name you have given to your phone. Slide the switch to ON and follow the directions that appear.

Android

Go to Settings, then Mobile Hotspot & Tethering

Tap on Mobile Hotspot to turn it on, set the name of your network and set a password.

Connecting a Device to Your Wi-Fi Hotspot

You connect a computer or tablet to your phone's Wi-Fi hotspot just as you would connect to any other Wi-Fi network. Select the name of your phone's network, enter the password and connect.

You should not need data or airtime on your phone to reach a zero-rated site.

Finding a good time to work

Finding the best time to focus on your studies depends greatly on the movements in your household. When is it quieter? You may need to be more flexible in terms of how you prefer working (i.e. early mornings or late nights). You could work the same amount of hours every day or block out 3 to 4 days where you work for longer hours.

Your coursework has been planned to take approximately 30 hours per week combined across your courses. The term has been extended to accommodate this. If you are unable to fit in this much time please consult a student advisor or course convenor about restructuring your course load.

Manage the expectations in your household

You are still a student and completing your diploma or degree is very important. Have an honest conversation with the other people in your household. Ask them to support your study times. They may need your help with tasks around the house. Come to an agreement on when you will be available to help and when you will be studying. Being serious about your studies during the agreed times will also help them respect your efforts.

Alternative spaces to learn

After the strict lockdown is over, you may decide that home is not the best space for online learning. You could work in a library, community hall or relative's house. Just make sure that it is a quiet dedicated space, that you are safe and also able to practise social distancing.

Orientation Week

To make sure you feel comfortable in the online learning environment, you will be joining your **Faculty Orientation Week** on **20 April**. We will add you to your **Faculty Orientation course site** to help you get comfortable using Vula tools, test your connectivity and check that you can access your individual course sites.

Part 2: How do I learn online?

Your courses will be hosted in Vula and will be optimised for online learning. You can log in as usual to your course site.

How is it different?

All your course elements will be hosted in your Vula course site. This includes the content such as lectures or readings, activities and assignments. Your lecturers will use **Vula Announcements** to communicate with you. Your courses will be taught 'asynchronously' which means that you are not expected to be 'live' with your class - this is so anyone can participate regardless of internet speed. Instead of live lectures, your lecture

content will be provided in multiple formats. This might be recorded lectures, screencasts or readings. You will be able to work through them more flexibly. While learning remotely allows for a bit more flexibility, it requires you to establish your own routine, compared to when your class met face-to-face.

Even though you are a remote learner, you can still have online study groups with your fellow students where you stay in contact or work on tasks together.

For the period of the first semester there will be continuous assessment through regular quizzes, tests and assignments for your courses. Most F (first semester) courses will not be examined through an invigilated examination. All F courses, except exit level (final year) courses and the courses in the Faculty of Law, will have PASS/FAIL as the final mark. This will not be counted as part of your GPA. During 2020 there will be no academic exclusions.

Learning in Vula

You will need to become familiar with Vula and the various tools. Each course you attend may use Vula in different ways, but is likely to use some of the core features, like the **Lessons tool**, **Resources**, **Assignments** and **Tests & Quizzes**. The Faculty Orientation sites will show you how to use these tools Here is a quick overview:

Reviewing your course outline
You need to be familiar with your course outline including the modules or topics, the assignments and deadlines so make sure you can access it. You might find the outline for your course on a subpage in **Lessons**, as a document in **Resources** or on the left menu.

Navigating your course
Your course will be divided into topics, weeks or modules. You should expect a week's worth of work at a time. Take time to understand how your course is organised and how you can navigate between the various sections.

Reviewing the course content
Depending on your course, you will be offered lecture content via different forms of media. Sometimes your videos may be in **Lecture Videos**. If you are offered videos, there will be transcripts in case you have problems with bandwidth. Otherwise your lecturers may use screencasts, slides and notes. Take your own notes while reviewing the course videos, as if they were live lectures. When reading course materials, make notes of what you are learning.

Accessing resources
Resources are accessible via Lessons or in the **Resources** section of your Vula site. To download a file, you would right-click on the file you want downloaded and save to a suitable location on your device.

Assignments
Some of your courses will require you to submit assignments to be graded through the **Assignments** tool. There are a number of different kinds of assignments, such as ones you complete individually and ones you will complete as part of a group; assignments that you can only submit once or ones that allow for resubmissions; and assignments that will be checked for plagiarism through Turnitin.

Tests and quizzes
Some of your courses may set tests or quizzes for you to complete as part of your coursework. Tests and quizzes may consist of a number of different question types, such as multiple-choice questions, essay-type questions where you will need to type an answer, and file-upload questions that require you to upload a document, image or video file. Tests and quizzes are usually set with specific opening and closing dates, and may have time limits in which they must be completed. Try and make sure that if you need to take a timed test that you will have constant power for your device and enough connectivity to take the test in the time provided.

Q&A

The **Q&A** section is a place where you can submit questions, which can be answered by lecturers, tutors or other students (depending on your course). If your course site has a **Q&A** section, please read through the existing questions and answers to see if someone else has already asked any questions you have. If your questions haven't been asked, please add it to the **Q&A** before contacting your tutor or lecturer directly.

Taking part in a discussion

Your courses may use **Forums** for tutorial discussions, as general places to discuss the content of the course, or for other reasons determined by your lecturers. Your course may have one or several forums, and each forum will have one or more topics. For example, your course might have a general forum for discussing how the course will be run, with topics on assessment, tutorials, etc., and separate forums for each module or content section with topics on specific concepts, lessons or weeks. Your course may also use **Chat Rooms**.

Unlike face-to-face discussions which take place during a specified class period, online discussions can take place over many hours or even days. You may need to check into a discussion a few times to get the most out of the experience. Usually you will be asked to respond to a prompt or question. Depending on the nature of the prompt you can use a number of strategies to promote meaningful discussion:

• Use the course materials and readings to justify your answer, showing you have engaged with the materials.
• Provide concrete examples drawn from your own experience or from what you have read or researched.
• Challenge something posted in the discussion.
• Pose a clarifying question which will help others.
• Suggest a different perspective or interpretation to move the discussion.
• Respond to your peers and not just to the lecturer to promote peer learning.

Part 3: Communicating remotely

Learning remotely is much more than just sitting in front of your laptop. You are part of your class community. You may not see your classmates or lecturer face-to-face, but there are a number of channels you can use to communicate with them. Commit to being an active participant in your class community as it keeps you engaged with your studies.

Course-related personal communications

Communicate with your lecturer early if you are facing a challenge and can't make a deadline. This is especially important if you are ill or struggling with access to your course material. You will be advised in your course site what the best channel is to use to communicate with your lecturer.

General course communications

Your lecturer will alert you of important information through **Vula Announcements**, but confirm with your course convener which channels will be used. Confirm what part of Vula your convenor wants you to use to ask questions. Some lecturers might invite students to post any questions in the **Q&A section** on your course site where your classmates or lecturer can respond. Others may invite participation in the class conversation in the course **Forum.**

If your course is tutor supported, you will receive information about how your tutors will work with you. **Whatsapp groups** are useful for staying in touch with other students or for groupwork.

Be respectful

Remember that you come across differently in online communications. Keep your posts and comments constructive and respectful. Ask for clarification if you feel offended and always look for solutions first to avoid misunderstanding and disagreements.

Part 4: How to stay on track

In these challenging times you need to be able to take responsibility for your learning. You can't control what's happening in the world, but you can take control over your schedule and that helps ease your anxiety.

Plan

- Create a realistic weekly planner.
- Block out times to regularly work on your studies.
- Add assignment deadlines to your calendar and work towards them.
- Take one day at a time. If things don't go according to plan, try your best again the next day.

Stay motivated

- If you are struggling to stay productive, find someone in your household to help keep you accountable. Share what you want to achieve during your study block and give feedback afterwards. You can also get a study buddy and check in via WhatsApp.
- Ensure a healthy balance between your studies and social media.
- When you get stuck, ask yourself: "What do I need and who can help me with that?"

Keep well

Don't get so wrapped up in thinking about the coronavirus that you forget the healthy habits that affect your well-being.

- Maintain a daily routine.
- Do things you enjoy like reading a book or watching a movie.
- Maintain a regular sleep routine.
- Eat healthy food and drink enough water.
- Wash your hands often for 20 seconds with soap and warm water.
- Clean touched areas like computers, phones and handles regularly with a solution containing more than 70% alcohol.
- Try to keep active, for example doing some exercise in your own home or backyard.
- Avoid using tobacco, alcohol or other drugs to help you cope.

- Stay connected with friends and family using digital channels.
- Limit the news and make sure it's from a reputable news source.
- Be careful what you read online, negative social media can make you anxious.
- Look after your wider health needs and if you are on prescription medication, make sure it does not run out.
- Contact a professional should you feel your mental health is declining.

Ask for help when you need it

The **SADAG UCT Student Careline** is available 24/7. Send an SMS to **31393** and someone will phone you back. Phone consultations are available during office hours.

Talk to a **UCT Student Wellness** peer counsellor, social worker, psychologist or psychiatric nurse.

Book online

SADAG: South African Depression and Anxiety Group

What to do if I think I have COVID-19

If you suspect you or someone in your household may have COVID-19, contact the NICD 24h Hotline on **0800 029 0999 / 08000111132** or phone your health practitioner.
They will direct you to the nearest testing facility with the correct laboratory forms.

NCID: National Institute for Communicable Diseases

For Gov.ZA news and information on COVID-19

WhatsApp "Hi" to **0601023456**

Part 5: Next Steps

1. **Get yourself ready for learning remotely.**
2. **Log in to Vula on 20 April to access your Faculty Orientation site. We will see you there.**
3. **Consult our contact list so you know who to speak to if you need help.**

For help with technical issues or internet access contact:

IT Helpdesk (ICTS)
icts-helpdesk@uct.ac.za
+27 (0)21 650 4500

For help with Vula:

Vula Helpdesk
help@vula.uct.ac.za

Password self-service:
http://password.uct.ac.za or contact ICTS

For academic support, contact your faculty:

Commerce
com-faculty@uct.ac.za
+27 (0)21 650 4375

Engineering & the Built Environment
ebe-faculty@uct.ac.za
or your academic advisor
+27 (0)21 650 2699

Graduate School of Business
info@gsb.uct.ac.za
+27 (0)21 406 1922

Health Sciences (Undergraduate)
fhs-ug-admiss@uct.ac.za
+27 (0)21 406 6328

Health Sciences (Postgraduate)
fhs-pg-admiss@uct.ac.za
+27 (0)21 406 6340

Humanities (Undergraduate)
hum-ugrad@uct.ac.za
+27 (0)21 650 2717

Humanities (Postgraduate)
hum-postgrad@uct.ac.za
+27 (0)21 650 2691

Law
law-studies@uct.ac.za
+27 (0)21 650 3086

Science
sci-science@uct.ac.za
+27 (0)21 650 2712

If you are facing a personal crisis:

UCT Student Careline
SMS to 31393 - available 24/7
Survivor Support (Rape, sexual assault or domestic violence)
Call, SMS, miss call or send a WhatsApp to 072 393 7824

COVID-19 Hotline (NCID)
0800 029 0999 / 08000111132 - available 24/7

General Contacts:

Library Support
+27 (0)21 650 3134

For subject specific support see contact list here:
http://www.lib.uct.ac.za/lib/virtual-support#learning
Alternatively: libraries@uct.ac.za

Disability Service
dsa-disabilityservice@uct.ac.za

Fees Office
fnd-feeenq@uct.ac.za
+27 (0)21 650 1704

International students
iapo@uct.ac.za
+27 21 650 2822/3740

Postgraduate Centre and Funding Office
pgfunding@uct.ac.za
+27 (0)21 650 3622

UCT Careers Service
careers.service@uct.ac.za
or the Careers Service site in Vula
+27 (0)21 650 2497

Undergraduate financial aid
financialaid@uct.ac.za
+27 (0)21 650 3545

Peoplesoft
sss-helpdesk@uct.ac.za
021650 5227