Navigating Online & Physically Distanced Learning

A GUIDE for Postgraduates

In 2022 Physically Distanced Learning (PDL) involves on-campus, in-person and online teaching, enabling you to complete your postgraduate degree timeously, as well as ensuring the health and safety of all. For ease of reference, this guide contains essential links to UCT communication, videos and guides that will help you create a productive learning environment.

Important UCT Communication

- Plans for 2022 academic year

Accessing UCT resources

Resources for you:

- Complete the Information and Communication Technology Services (ICTS) digital checklist to ensure you get access to UCT networks, systems and software.
- As in 2021, laptops are for 1st entry UCT students based on them opting in for one. Students will be charged for the laptops as it's no longer free to anyone including NSFAS students who would have to cover the cost using their book allowances. The first-year campus reception (@ Sports Centre) starts on the 29th till 31st January whereby all 1st year students should go through campus reception to get their student cards and if they opted in for a laptop, collect their laptops as well. The laptops available are i3 Lenovo laptops for all students except for i7 Dell laptops for Architecture students only. 1st year students will receive all the necessary information in their offer letters..
- Check the list of 'zero rated' UCT websites. While the country is in a State of Emergency, South African mobile service providers are providing free access ('Zero rating') to specific UCT websites, and UCT is assisting registered students who have SA mobile numbers with data bundles.
- Get tips from ICTS for managing your data when working away from campus
- Should you not wish to work from home, you can access the Eduroam Interactive Map to access libraries where eduroam is available
- You can access a range of development and support services that will help ensure your academic journey is safe, healthy and successful on the Postgraduate Hub site
- You can access the UCT libraries and support via virtual services portal.

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Accessing Vula:

Depending on your course, your teaching may be fully online or will be a combination of online and in-person activities. Online activities will be supported through Vula, which is UCT's online collaboration and learning environment.

If you have course work, you're courses will each have their own Vula sites. Please review these five videos that will help you navigate Vula sites:

1

Logging into Vula

For UCT students and staff
https://vula.uct.ac.za

https://youtu.be/-hoIi2gPOR0

2

Finding your course content

https://youtu.be/AjDvDYwH5J4

3

Finding your course sites

https://youtu.be/7FsM7CM31DU

4

Communication in Vula

https://youtu.be/uGL60Yhxr7Y

5

Completing assessments

https://youtu.be/krfadsRTHKg

Your Wellbeing

Helping you manage time:

You may have your own approach to managing your time when studying. However, you may find this "quadrant approach" useful. This approach allows you to think about the bigger picture and to categorise your life's activities such as your social, family and work life.

Ask yourself the following questions when prioritising

- Where do my various activities fit into the following quadrants?
- What is urgent vs what is an important task?

MANAGE	FOCUS	AVOID	LIMIT
Short-Term Crises & Problems	On Long-Term Strategic Goals	Distractions & Interrruptions	Time-Wasting Activities
1	2	3	4
Important & Urgent	Important but not Urgent	Urgent but not Important	Not Important & not Urgent

Procrastination

Many of you may be in paid employment, have domestic responsibilities or be working from home amidst the pandemic. Time management for your year ahead will be important, and so will be minimising procrastination.

Tips to manage procrastination

- Find a good place to work on tasks without distractions
- Think positively about the task you are about to tackle
- Before you work on a task, motivate yourself with thoughts like "there is no time like the present."
- Prioritise the tasks you have to do according to what is important and urgent: Remember the 4 quadrants!
- Eliminate distractions that interfere with working on tasks. Eg. switch off your cell phone if it is a distraction

- Commit yourself to completing the task once you have started it

- Break large tasks into small manageable parts
- Work on tasks as part of a study group
- Get help from Lecturers, Tutors or other students immediately when you find a task difficult
- Make a schedule of the tasks you have to do and stick to it
- Set reasonable standards that you can meet for a task within a certain time frame
- Take breaks when working on a task so that you do not wear down
- Work on difficult and/or unpleasant tasks first
- Work on a task you find easier after you complete a difficult task

Staying healthy in more ways than one

Most of us arrive focused on the academic work we have committed to do, but paying attention to general wellbeing will give you the best chance to achieve your academic goals.

Wellbeing can be divided into 3 categories:

- **Physical (exercise, diet, sleep)**

Studying online may lead to new sleep patterns like working at night while the rest of the household sleeps or to access cheaper data. But don't cheat on sleep as it is essential for our minds and body. Read more about "Sleeping to Succeed".

Time and budget constraints means that we tend to neglect what we put into our bodies. This student guide for shopping and cooking will assist with budgeting when you want to eat healthier on a limited budget.

There are many UCT sports clubs that provide opportunities to continue with your preferred forms of exercise and also socialise with other students. Visit the Virtual Students Organisation Exhibit to sign up for clubs and societies.

The Student Wellness Service offers a comprehensive outpatient medical service by both medical practitioners and nurses, who are dedicated to helping students to remain healthy, while pursuing their academic goals.

2. Mental (psychological and emotional state)

It's not unusual to experience stress at university. This stress is most commonly caused by adjusting to university, academics, finances, relationships and future plans. It's important to remember that everyone experiences stress differently. Stress can be defined as the external and internal demands on an individual, which are perceived by the individual as going beyond their ability to cope. Read the Department of Student Affairs, 'Are you feeling stressed out? resource.

Stress can manifest in several ways, for example:

Physically (headache, acne, stomach ache, sweating, exhaustion)
Emotionally (irritability, frustration, hopelessness, isolation)
Behaviourally (avoidance, procrastination, aggression, smoking, drinking, drug use)

Which ways do you manifest your stress?

Managing stress

There are many ways in which stress can be managed, and everyone has a different approach
If you perhaps need to speak to a professional to help you cope more easily - you can access the support channels UCT has in place to help students.

Some of the support channels:

• Talk to your supervisor or course lecturer who will quickly be able to point you in the right direction
• Approach the appropriate UCT Support structures

For those experiencing stress and anxiety, please use our Student Wellness Service or reach out to teachers, friends, colleagues or family for support.

Studying in and of itself is stressful and can create anxiety, and the situation is exacerbated by the pandemic. The Department of Student Affairs offers various suggestions and resources for UCT students on stress management.

UCT STUDENT CARELINE
0800 24 25 26 or SMS 31393

3. Social health (relationships)

We need to be socially connected to each other to maintain our life balance and mental wellbeing. Explore the social, cultural and faith-based student societies at UCT through the Department of Student Affairs website or the Virtual student organisation exhibition.

Stress can impact negatively on our social relationships - here are 10 tips for building healthy relationships.

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POSTGRADUATE HUB

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