

# Tips for UWI Students' Transition to the Remote Learning Environment

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## Increased Level of Self-directed Learning will be Required

- Ensure that you are registered for your courses! Without that, there will be no access to OurVLE.
- Ensure that you have access to OurVLE, and ensure that Blackboard Collaborate is fully functional on your device.
- Ensure that you are competent in navigating OurVLE, especially BlackBoard Collaborate. You will need to know, for example, how to upload assignments, how to make presentations, etc. Practice is important! There are many training modules available on OurVLE for bringing yourself up to speed. For Blackboard Collaborate, only use up-to-date Internet browsers that are supported. For Blackboard, use Google Chrome preferably.
- Use a hard-wired (Ethernet) connection, if available. If not available, use a Wi-Fi connection. If using Wi-Fi, try to be as close to the router as possible.
- Check your UWI-issued email on a regular basis for official announcements.
- Employ smart strategies to manage your workloads and new expectations. This is very important. It will require a different level of self-directed engagement, so:
  - Set goals/objectives to manage readings and assignments
  - Keep focused and try to stay motivated. Avoid multi-tasking
  - Get a quiet place/space for class participation, assignment preparation, study/reading, exams. Be sure to be seated upright around a workstation if possible. You might need headphones and earplugs to avoid distractions. Turn off any notifications and put away your phones if you're using your laptop
  - Plan and strategize: stick to class time schedules as much as possible if classes are asynchronous; create a timetable and stick to it; prepare daily checklists of activities
  - Evaluate progress weekly: check how well you've done on various weekly activities
  - Seek guidance from lecturers and tutors
- Remember that the Libraries are still accessible online.

## Managing and Transition

1. Transitioning to remote learning may be challenging, especially through this pandemic.
2. Speak with your lecturer about any challenges you may have ahead of time.
3. If you are balancing work, children, helping elderly parents/relatives, scheduling will be critical. Be realistic, but don't compromise your own learning.
4. Lecturers are also having to transition to online teaching and learning curves will be different for everybody. There'll be quite a bit of trial and error! Patience will be needed on all sides!
5. You may feel stressed out and anxious. It's perfectly normal, especially in this situation.

6. If you feel that you are not coping, please reach out to your lecturer and or Counselling services provided by the University Health Centre.

## **Changing the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Experience**

1. Remote teaching is our quick best response to the Covid-19 pandemic, so that we can recapture the semester and ensure that the learning objectives of each course are satisfactorily met. Almost all universities worldwide have moved to this teaching delivery method.
2. Some courses may have changed delivery formats! Asynchronous formats mean that you will have to be far more disciplined with your time to ensure that you are reading the course material and learning at the required pace.
3. The format of your exam and coursework assignments may change! You may, for example, be required to engage in discussion boards, upload assignments and make presentations using Blackboard Collaborate. This might be more advantageous to you, so try to embrace the new formats.
4. You can still excel with this changed format. Some of you may even do better where multiple types of assessments are permitted.
5. There may be challenges with the technology (Internet connectivity/ Electricity) due to increased pressure on our telecommunications services, so plan ahead and don't procrastinate.
6. Academic integrity always wins. It's less about passing the exam and more about learning the material and building competence.
7. Where applicable, you will be required to run your work through Turnitin prior to submission of coursework.
8. Refrain from being last minute! Pace your work - create a schedule and give yourself enough time for checking and reading over coursework submissions. For example, do not wait until an essay submission deadline is at hand before putting it through Turnitin. Also, just in case there might be technical difficulties or electricity outages, try not to wait until minutes before a submission deadline to attempt to upload it to OurVLE or email it your lecturer or tutor. Be wise!
9. Lecturers will still maintain their required Office Hours, but they will do so virtually. They will provide you with details about the time and the medium through which they will be available.