



A guide to help students prepare for online study

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Getting started

	Information	Tips
Before you start	Taking a little time to get ready before starting activities will help set you up for success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Get focussed. Treat online study like class time. Turn off your phone, the TV and anything else likely to distract you. Find a comfortable and quiet space to study where you will not be disturbed.• Orientate yourself. Spend a little time before starting activities understanding how the course is structured and how to navigate through the course material. Spending just a little time getting to know how the learning management system works makes a big difference.• Be clear. Read any introduction announcements and welcome content and make sure you are clear on the expectations of the course and your teacher. Check with your teacher if they haven't made it clear when they can be contacted and how often they can respond.• Be organised. Check when assessments are due and how they are connected to other content and learning activities. Create a study schedule. A regular routine for studying will help you to stay committed and pace yourself through a course.• Be prepared. Scan through the topics and activities before you begin. Make note of any areas that you think you may have trouble with and allow a little extra time for these areas.

Types of engagement

	Information	Tips
With peers	Online courses can include discussion activities. Interacting with other students is an important step in getting the most out of an online course.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Login regularly. Check your messages and any discussions you're involved in so that you can stay up-to-date with conversations and promptly respond to peers.• Avoid using humour and sarcasm. This is easily misinterpreted online and can lead to offence or misunderstandings. Keep your posts focussed on the activity or topic.• Be polite. Don't say anything online that you wouldn't say to someone in person. Also, pay attention to how what you've written comes across in a discussion. For example, capitalised words can seem like shouting.• Don't be repetitive. Before replying in a discussion forum or asking a question, read all comments made by other students. This will stop the same ideas from being repeated and help discussion to continue.• Be collaborative. Take advantage of the knowledge of other students. Don't be afraid to turn to other students for learning, motivation and support. An online course works best when students work together to build and extend their knowledge.

	Information	Tips
With a teacher	In an online course a teacher has many roles. Your teacher wants you to succeed but it is important to understand the role of your teacher and have reasonable expectations on their time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect the limits of your teachers' availability. Just because you can ask a question at any time does not mean you can expect (or need) an answer immediately. Everything you need to succeed is in the course. • Ask for help when you need it but check the discussion forums first to make sure your questions or concerns have not already been answered somewhere else. Help can be available in many places. • Remember that your teacher is not technical support. Be aware of the difference between technical problems and content issues and how they are handled in your course. Unlike content issues, your teacher may not be able to help you if you experience technical problems. • Be kind. It can be easier to say things online that you never would face-to-face. Your interactions with your teacher should be as polite and respectful as if they were standing in front of you. • Work together. Remember your teacher is doing their best to help you through the course and they want you to succeed. Take opportunities to support your teacher.
With course content		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't panic. It can be overwhelming to look at the entire course at once. Concentrate on the assessments and content one week at a time. Be kind to yourself and take regular breaks. • Be present. Use the time you would have otherwise spent in class to read through the content for the week and complete any activities. You should spend at least as much time online each week as you would have spent in class. • Be pro-active. Take the time to work out what is expected of you and plan your own path for completing assessments. Seek out extra information when you need it. • Participate. Taking part in the activities and contributing to discussion will help you make the most of the course. Don't worry if you are nervous about posting - your teacher will help you. • Be patient. Be patient when waiting for someone to respond to a question or concern. Just like students, your teacher may have several commitments, but they are there to help you. • Be reasonable. Broken links and spelling mistakes happen. Let your teacher know about any errors in your course, but try to keep them in perspective and instead focus on the essential information you need for your study and assessment needs.

	Information	Tips
Synchronous online learning	Synchronous online learning is learning that happens in real time online such as watching a live lecture or chatting online with students or teachers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand time difference. Make a note of the time in Australia to ensure you don't miss a live session. For instance, Melbourne Australia is 3 hours ahead of Beijing time. • Limit demands on internet speed. Video can slow down your internet speed so consider switching off your video when participating in a video conference and use audio only. • Download slides. If you need to mute your video in a Collaborate Ultra session, you can still follow the presentation by following the slides and listening to the audio. • Minimise Noise. Try and select a quiet place to sit when joining a video conference. And remember to mute your microphone when not speaking in a video conference to avoid background noise.

Further Reading

Ramussen College, Online vs. Traditional Education: What you Need to Know

<https://www.rasmussen.edu/student-experience/college-life/online-vs-traditional-education-answer-never-expected/>

Online Study Australia, How to Succeed in Online Courses (18 Tips)

<https://onlinestudyaustralia.com/courses/how-succeed-tips/>

Upskilled, Your online learning survival guide | 6 tips for study. Accessible at

<https://www.upskilled.edu.au/skillstalk/your-online-learning-survival-guide-6-tips-for-study>

