10 Top Tips for Students Learning Online in UCC

The global COVID-19 public health emergency requires UCC's students to engage with online learning instead of attending campus-based lectures. These top tips for learning online in UCC will hopefully make this move to online learning easier.

1. **ACCESS to Online Learning Resources and Assessments**

   Make sure you have what you need to access content online in terms of reliable internet access and a reliable desktop or laptop. We appreciate that this might not always be possible and where you cannot secure reliable internet access, please ensure your lecturer/module coordinator is made aware of the challenges you are facing. Information on available support is included at the end of this document. **ASSESSMENT: UCC expects to keep to the current Assessment timetable, which means any examinations you were scheduled to take will now take place online at the same time. Please ensure you are registered on the correct modules and have appropriate access to the Internet in order to be able to complete these.**

2. **DEDICATED STUDY SPACE**

   Create a study space which **works for you**. You may have a dedicated office space for your study which is ideal, but not at all the only option. You can carve out a space in your bedroom, kitchen, living room etc. and critical to this is ensuring minimal distractions. Communicate this to others in your house so that they are aware of your space, and your time within that space. Studying in the same place each day is recommended. A quiet space is ideal and limit social media time during your study. Make this 'your' space which is personalised to meet your study needs.

3. **DEDICATED STUDY TIME & ROUTINE**

   Create a study plan that **works for you** and your life. Stick to it. Routine is critical to study success. The 'right' study plan is the plan that works for you. Create contingency plans in case something changes. Do not leave anything to the last minute. Keep on top of your online content and coursework. Make sure you are working within strict timelines, either set by yourself or your lecturer. A schedule that works for you, which is responsive to your individual needs, will be powerful in terms of your study success. Be disciplined, consistent and you will reap the benefits. And remember, take regular breaks also!

4. **KEEP INFORMED and COMMUNICATE**

   Please stay in contact. If you have questions your first point of contact on your module/course is your lecturer or course coordinator / module coordinator. You can **email** your lecturer any questions you have in relation to course content, assessments and to clarify any expectations you have of each other. If they cannot answer your specific question, they will certainly

guide you in the right direction to someone who can. Uncertainty is not a place you want to be – so **PLEASE ASK!** Communication is the number one thing that will make online learning a positive experience.

5. CONNECTING WITH OTHERS

It is also important to stay in contact with your **fellow classmates and friends**. You are a huge resource to each other. Perhaps your lecturer has already established a virtual discussion board on Canvas or you can set up a group on google hangouts, or chat via Canvas, or indeed via social media platforms /texting etc. The most important thing is to communicate and connect with each other regularly as you will learn a lot from each other.

6. YOUR ROLE – STAY MOTIVATED!

Learning online can certainly create different challenges and opportunities for those of us used to learning in the 'traditional' classroom environment. While we can appreciate that this is a challenging time for all, try not to view the experience as an obstacle, but rather a new and exciting way to learn. The key to success as an online learner is **motivation**. While there are UCC supports available for you, if you are **organised and motivated** this will ensure a more positive online experience for you.

7. PREPARATION FOR ONLINE ASSESSMENTS

Familiarise yourself with what is now expected of you to complete your assessments online. Ensure you have access where possible to the resources and platforms involved. Ensure you regularly log into Canvas for notifications and updated content and assessments.

8. DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

Be kind and respectful to your online classmates and lecturer. Think of the social conventions and norms that exist in a face-to-face classroom – these same rules apply when online. Please remember that your lecturers might be lecturing online for the very first time, and many of you might be trying it for the first time, too. Be patient with each other. If something doesn't work, don't get frustrated. Mistakes will happen. The most important thing is that we remain connected as a UCC learning community and support each other. If you need help – please reach out and ask.

9. MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

Mind yourself. Be kind to yourself. If you feel frustrated or confused at any stage, remember this is absolutely normal. Take a break. Speak with someone you trust. Get some fresh air. Remember, there are others who are experiencing very similar feelings so please reach out to friends and classmates too. Isolation can be challenging so keeping regular contact with people is critically important. We in UCC will always be there for you our learners, so please reach out and ask, and we will do our very best for you.

UCC has a Student FAQs section to answer any questions you might have at this difficult time.

10. FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE

This is an opportunity to collaborate and connect in a new and exciting way. There is an opportunity to manage your own time and work in the way that suits you best. There is technical support available as well as academic support – and so make sure to avail of this when you need it. This experience will improve your technical skills, as well as your life skills and this will stand to you in all future life challenges and opportunities. Remember, we are all human, there will be days where it will be challenging to motivate ourselves, but tomorrow brings a fresh start and you are in charge of that.

Important Notes:

IT Support: The Student IT website at https://sit.ucc.ie is the landing page for accessing our Student online services.

Canvas Help: All students are automatically added to their registered modules in Canvas, and lecturers use this for sharing lecture notes, reading materials, as well as building assessments and various types of digital content including recorded and live video. **It is vitally important that students can see the modules for which they are registered when they log in so please check this as soon as possible if you haven't already done so.** Each programme will differ in how they use Canvas, so for specific help with online module content you should liaise with the module teaching team. For Canvas-related issues, students should access the Learning with Canvas online module, call the specific Canvas Support Hotline on Freephone 1800 852 159 or chat live with a Help staff member when logged in.