

# Online Learning: Make it Work for You

*Depending on your course and university, you might still receive some form of online learning in the new academic year. Whether these are seminars and lectures or if they are meetings with your teachers and peers, we have compiled a quick guide to successful online study that you can read below.*

## **Get Ready!**

Before starting the new semester, try out these tips for preparing the optimum work environment:

- If possible, create a dedicated workspace. There's no need for a separate office, but an area free from distractions like TV or housemates and separate from areas of your home that you enjoy relaxing in, can help you to focus on your classes.
- Make sure you have everything you need. Is your internet signal strong enough? Do you have any digital equipment you might require such as a laptop with a microphone?
- Stay comfortable. Make sure you have a desk and chair that will allow you to work comfortably. Working from your armchair or bed might seem like a great idea, but you'll soon start to feel uncomfortable and might even suffer from head or back aches due to bad posture.

## **Stay Motivated**

Studying from home or attending online meetings require self-discipline and focus as it might be easier to get distracted. Consider the below tips for staying focused and motivated when studying online:

- Keep dedicated work hours. Write a timetable of your classes or meetings for the week, scheduling in private study slots that allow you enough time to prepare for classes and complete assignments.
- Working non-stop is unsustainable, and you'll soon lose motivation. So, make sure your timetable includes frequent breaks.
- Set realistic goals and reward yourself. Working in isolation, you can quickly find yourself working too hard or not hard enough. Speak to your tutors and peers about realistic work goals, and reward yourself when you achieve them.

## Stay Connected

Working online without the company of your tutors and peers can feel isolating at times, but there are a number of ways to stay in touch with your class online:

- One-to-one calls with your tutors. Many universities will introduce you to a personal or pastoral tutor when you enrol on your course. These staff members are there to discuss any problems you are having, personal or academic, and make sure you get the support you need.
- Stay in touch with your lecturers. All lecturers and academic tutors will have contact details on the universities' websites. If you are struggling with work, wish to discuss assignments, or are uncertain about any aspect of the course, get in touch with your teachers. They are there to help!
- Get to know your classmates. It may seem difficult to make friends with your classmates when you are not seeing them in person every day. However, it is important to connect with your peers, for academic as well as moral support. Your department may set up opportunities to speak with your classmates via social media platforms, or even organize digital Fresher's Week events where you can get to know your peers through online quizzes or meet-and-greet sessions. It may seem a little scary, but everyone is in the same situation, so get involved where you can.

## Digital Learning

Learning online can feel strange at first, and for some it can even feel a little bit daunting. However, here are a few tips on how to learn effectively online:

- Video call etiquette. Depending on your university, you might have to attend seminars or meetings with your tutors online. For these sessions, make sure you are somewhere quiet, that you have the necessary equipment, that you mute yourself when others are speaking, that you have your camera off when you do not wish to be seen, and that your profile name and picture are appropriate for academic calls.
- You might also be asked to attend lectures where you might not need to participate, but where you will be watching a presentation given by your lecturer. These classes are often recorded, so whilst you should always attend the scheduled lecture to ensure you do not fall behind with work, you can also re-watch the recordings to help you with your assignments or revision.
- University intranet. Your tutors will often use learning platforms to post learning resources or update students on changes to lecture times. Make sure to become familiar with these platforms by checking them regularly. Many university intranets also include message boards where you can post comments or have discussions about a tutorial, lab or reading. You might also be able to set up shared documents for when working on presentations or assignments in pairs or groups.

NCUK universities are making every effort to ensure that you study in a safe environment. They will also organize online or in person social events so you can get to know your teachers and classmates. We are therefore certain that you will thoroughly enjoy the semester ahead.

In the meantime, if you have any questions about starting university, please contact [student@ncuk.ac.uk](mailto:student@ncuk.ac.uk)