



Support Guide  
Study Skills for Online  
Learning





# UPDATE

## Study Skills for Online Learning

This self-help sheet outlines some study skill approaches that you might find help you to study more effectively online.

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If this is the first time you have had to study online then you may find it challenging and you may need to adapt your approach to be successful.

Studying online may be very different to what you are used to in terms of going to a lecture or seminar and receiving printed material that you would normally annotate.

You may find that, for the first time, you need to rely purely on digital and downloadable content such as videos, audio files, online tests and assessments, ebooks, PDFs, etc.

### Think about Practices and Expectations of Online Learning

Some individuals may think that online learning is simpler, less effective or requires less effort to study than traditional approaches, this is not the case. The approach maybe different but the expected learning outcomes are the same. You need to commit yourself to online learning in the same manner you would to your usual programme of study, dedicate time to eLearning and consistently attend and engage with scheduled activities.

## The Online/Offline Division

This may seem obviously but be mindful of the difference between being online and offline and how you will divide your studying time accordingly. There may be resources or assessments you can download and view when you are offline, examples might be ebooks, PDFs and lecture slides. There will be other content that you must be online to access or use, examples would be accessing websites or submitting assignments electronically. When you are accessing a module online think about what material you want to download and engage with offline and identify items that can only be done online.

## Manage Your Time

Again, this may seem obvious but managing your time is key to effective studying and everyone will have their own ways to plan their time accordingly, online learning is no different. Refer to Self-Help Sheet #3, "How to Study Effectively from Home" for further ideas about managing your own time effectively to increase productivity.



## Bigger the Better

Consider getting a bigger screen or two monitors. While not essential there will be a number of times when having a large screen or two monitors will allow you to view two open documents or programs side by side. If you're a windows user and do only have a single, smaller, screen remember that you can use Tab+Alt to scroll through the previous windows you had open so you don't have to constantly click to switch between them. You can also use Windows Key+Tab to view open tabs. For Mac users you can achieve similar results by using Alt-Tab to open applications and Alt-` to open windows in an application.



## Practice Electronic Note Taking

Making notes online is a skill and like all skills it requires practice to become proficient. Although at first it may feel as if making electronic notes takes much longer than writing things down there are a number of advantages:

- Electronic notes are searchable which can be very useful when it comes to revision time
- You can add hyperlinks, video and other resources into your notes to help you learn or effectively
- Some dictation software allows you to make your notes verbally and so you don't have to type or write at all

There are a number of pieces of software that allow users to annotate web pages, then store and save those versions. Many of these, such as Microsoft OneNote work well on mobile devices.

When you are making electronic notes try to avoid simply cutting and pasting text from elsewhere, active reading, active note taking and paraphrasing are all critical to help your understanding.

## Participate in Online Discussions

It's easy to think that learning online means that you are learning alone, this isn't necessarily the case. Connecting with classmates in virtual classroom environments, through dedicated space on social media or through online course virtual forums will help you to discuss topics

and issues and will help with your learning process. These forums can also facilitate the sharing of study hints, provide areas where individuals can offer input into the online course and can also comment on what is and isn't working well for them.

## Ask for help

As with any relationship its important to establish a good rapport and maintain a good level of communication. You may find that by asking questions you are highlighting general areas where students maybe struggling and helping others as well as yourself. Remember that asking for help isn't a sign of weakness or that you 'don't get it' but rather can be an effective way of exploring topics in greater depth.

We are here to help you.

We are listening.

The Student Hub  
Library Building, Ground Floor

Email: [thestudenthub@bue.edu.eg](mailto:thestudenthub@bue.edu.eg)

