



A black and white photograph of a young man with short hair, smiling broadly. He is wearing a light-colored polo shirt with dark stripes on the sleeves. The background is a bright, slightly overexposed outdoor scene with foliage.

CENTRE FOR INNOVATION IN LEARNING AND TEACHING (CILT)

Students' Guide to
Online Learning

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1. Introduction

Congratulations on your admission and registration as a University of Namibia (UNAM) student. Whether you are an undergraduate or postgraduate student, it is important to note that the University learning environment would be far different from the secondary schooling ones.

Whether you are a part-time or a full-time student, UNAM has a big proportion of its course delivery modes being either partial (blended) or completely online. This guide therefore takes you through some key aspects you would need to take note of in order for your learning online to be successful.

2. What does Learning Online mean?

While conventional learning (face to face class attendance) requires you to travel to the campus and attend lesson presentations/ lectures in physical venues, online learning on the other hand means you can learn from home or wherever possible, as long as you have access to internet.

- 2.1 Your meeting and/or interactions with your lecturers and fellow students will mostly be virtual.
- 2.2 Your learning resources will be availed online through a Learning Management System (LMS)
- 2.3 Most of your assessments (tests, assignments etc.) will be taking place on the LMS
- 2.4 You will need a laptop and a stable internet connection in order to be able to access the resources from internet as well as to be able to interact with your facilitator and fellow students
- 2.5 Unlike in the face-to-face where the lecturer would be likely to be the one dominating the learning process, in an online scenario, you will be involved more and you will need to take on most of your learning journey autonomously
- 2.6 You would need to visit your LMS and read your emails more often than before.

3 Digital Skills required for online learning

1. Basic Computer skills

Students should:

- 1.1 Be able to perform fundamental tasks on a computer
- 1.2 Know the types of web browsers and how to find resources through search engines.
- 1.3 Be able to Navigate through a website.
- 1.4 Be able to download learning resources and upload files or activities on the learning platforms.

2. Computer minimum requirements: Computer hardware and software

2.1 Computer hardware: A student should know the basic hardware components that will enable the student to learn Online.

2.2 Software: Students should be able to use basic software for online learning such as the video conferencing software (BBB & Zoom & Microsoft Teams) and the Moodle LMS.

2.3 Microsoft Office: A student should have basic competence for using productivity software such as Microsoft Office suit: Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook (mail), OneNote, etc.

3. Multi-device and Cloud Computing Competence

3.1 Multi-device use competence: students should be able to use multiple digital devices to navigate through online learning resources and access digital learning environments, namely both computers and mobile devices (smart phones, tablets)

3.2 Cloud Computing: students should be able to use cloud services such as creating documents, storing and sharing them, as well as collaborating with other students in the cloud (e.g. Google Drive, One Cloud)

4. Digital Learning dispositions

- 4.1 Student should be open to change, especially coming from the traditional face to face learning, to embrace technology, and appreciate the learning experience.
- 4.2 Students should develop self-directed learning skills to be able to learn on their own and collaboratively with others

4. Online Learning Communities

Studying face-to-face makes you part of a class group with which you interact naturally thereby, you will be able to instantly seek the attention of your fellow students and that of your teacher. Learning online on the other hand may leave you, feeling isolated. To avoid the isolation, you need to become a member of a virtual learning community, which can be achieved through joining the social networking groups such as on WhatsApp and/or Facebook. In addition, your LMS has tools that will enable you to interact with your fellow students any time anywhere, including Discussion Forums, Chatrooms and virtual classroom spaces.

You need to learn and understand Netiquette for online learning communities. The following is an example from the Rasmussen University:

[10 Netiquette Guidelines Online Students Need to Know | Rasmussen University](#)

5. How to be organised digitally

5.1 Moodle enrollment

- 5.1.1 Firstly, Students should make sure they are linked to the right Modules/ courses.
- 5.1.2 Ensure that your enrollment is done on time to avoid missing any lessons
- 5.1.3 If you register some courses late, it is your responsibility to ensure that you get enrolled to them on the Moodle LMS as well (AFTER they appear on your registration records)

5.2 Creating an effective workspace for studying/learning

- 5.2.1 When a student is taking an online class, the classroom is likely to be wherever they are and therefore the student needs to organize a place that is quiet and provides enough room for them to take down notes.
- 5.2.2 Students have to make sure there is an electric outlet nearby to keep their device charged while logged into the class.
- 5.2.3 Ensure that there is a strong Internet connection before attempting any online activity/task.

5.3 Organising Learning Resources

- 5.3.1 As a student, you are supposed to know where to access your course documents
- 5.3.2 Make sure it is easier to find your study materials such as notes, assignments and quizzes.

- 5.3.3 Create an easily accessible file where you keep your documents and also name the files accordingly to avoid misplacement.

5.4 Organising and managing time

- 5.4.1 **Timing:** Students should keep track of their assessment's dates and time
- 5.4.2 **Setting reminders and following academic calendars:** could be very helpful as it could help you keep in check with when your next test is, assignment due and avoids surprises.
- 5.4.3 **Monitoring notifications:** check Moodle and email notifications daily

6 Managing Digital Distractions

While learning face-to-face you may always have advantage of often being monitored and guided by your lecturers. Learning online on the other hand gives you a lot of autonomy and freedom. If such freedom is not managed, you may not be able to attend to and accomplish most of your academic work. Distractions have implications, namely:

6.1 Lack of respect and courtesy: When being distracted while in class by attending to other non-class issues (cellphone ringing, social media, etc.), that implies that you don't show respect to either your tutor or peers and you are not being courteous with either or both of them.

6.2 Losing focus on learning: Being distracted implies that your focus on learning is being strained. This may pull you away from the learning environment. Some of the reasons why you cling to your devices even during class time may be for wanting to stay connected and the fear of missing out (FOMO). You need to learn how to control the distractions around you.



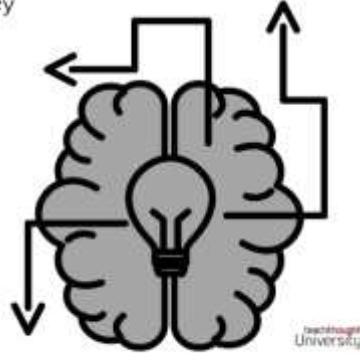
Distractions may come from:

- Social media
- Household chores
- Snacking
- Sleeping
- Friends/family
-

Read about the [25 tips of reducing distractions](#) as presented by "Teachingthought university", which are also summarized in the image below

25 TIPS TO REDUCE DIGITAL DISTRACTIONS AND IMPROVE YOUR FOCUS

- Value quality over recency
- Use the Forest app
- Track your productivity
- Set boundaries
- OneTab
- Filter
- voice commands
- Turn off notifications
- Work thyself
- Choose the medium
- Use one screen
- Background noise



7 Managing and Securing your Information Online

Your online profiles and credentials are important such that you can suffer Internet attacks where your information can be used with malicious intent. It is therefore imperative that you:

- 7.1** Make sure to keep your login credentials private by never sharing your passwords with anyone.
- 7.2** Make sure to always logout of your eLearning platforms, especially if you use public devices such as library computers or computers at internet cafes.
- 7.3** Do not store your login credentials on the web browsers on public computers.
- 7.4** Regularly change your password from time to time (e.g. once a month).
- 7.5** Whether it is writing a test, a quiz, an examination or submitting an assignment on a device with multiple accounts, make sure you are logged into the correct account (your account).
- 7.6** When you suspect that your account may have been accessed without your permission, immediately change your password and report the issue to the University.

8 General Tips for Learning Online

8.1 Treat an online course like a “real” course.

- 8.1.1** Have the discipline to sit down and say, “I am going to work on this,” as well as the dedication to follow through.
- 8.1.2** Remember that you are paying to take this online course, therefore you must “show up” if you are going to get real value out of your class
- 8.1.3** Treat your online classes the same way you would a face-to-face class – or, better yet, a job – and you will be off to the right start.

8.2 Hold yourself accountable

- 8.2.1** Set goals at the beginning of the semester and check in with yourself weekly.
- 8.2.2** Make sure you have allotted enough time to complete the work so you are not starting an assignment the day before it is due.
- 8.2.3** Pair up with a fellow classmate or enlist the help of a spouse or friend to check in as an accountability partner.
- 8.2.4** By being organized, proactive, and self-aware, you can get the most from your online class even when life outside of school becomes chaotic.

8.3 Practice time management

- 8.3.1** The flexibility to create your own schedule is often one of the biggest appeals of taking online classes.
- 8.3.2** Have solid time management skills, without them, you might easily to find

yourself cramming before classes or handing in subpar assignments.

- 8.3.3 Though how you manage your time will depend on your schedule, learning style, and personality, here are some universally valuable tips to help you practice and improve your time management skills:
- 8.3.3.1 Look at the syllabus at the start of the semester and make note of major assignments.
 - 8.3.3.2 Mark them on a calendar you check regularly so you know what workload is coming in the weeks ahead.
 - 8.3.3.3 Factor in prior commitments that may interfere with your regular study schedule, such as weddings or vacations, so you can give yourself enough extra time to complete assignments.
 - 8.3.3.4 Create a weekly schedule that you follow, designating certain hours each week to reading, watching lectures, completing assignments, studying, and participating in forums.
 - 8.3.3.5 Commit to making your online coursework part of your weekly routine and set reminders for yourself to complete these tasks.
 - 8.3.3.6 Try time-blocking, allotting yourself a certain amount of time for each task before moving on to the next one and setting a timer to keep you accountable.
 - 8.3.3.7 Check-in periodically throughout the term and look at how you are spending your time.
 - 8.3.3.8 A little self-reflection and adjustment can go a long way.

8.4 Create a regular study space and stay organized.

- 8.4.1 Set up a dedicated learning environment for studying, establish a routine.
- 8.4.2 Determine the type of environment, which will work for you, workspace is your kitchen table, a library, or the corner booth in a local coffee shop.
- 8.4.3 Setting up a regular workspace or office will also help you to stay organized.
- 8.4.4 Knowing exactly where important dates, files, forms, syllabi, books, and assignments live will help keep you on track towards hitting your goals.
- 8.4.5 When setting up your study space, make sure you:
 - 8.4.5.1 Have a high-speed internet connection
 - 8.4.5.2 Have the required books, materials, and software for the course
 - 8.4.5.3 Have headphones for listening to lectures or discussions (especially important in shared spaces)

8.5 Eliminate distractions

- 8.5.1 The best online students know how to lessen these distractions and set aside time to focus.

- 8.5.2 Regardless of where you choose to work, consider turning your cell phone off to avoid losing focus every time a text message or notification pops up.
- 8.5.3 If you're still having trouble resisting the temptation to check your email or surf the web, try downloading a website blocker.
- 8.5.4 Using applications like Cold Turkey and Freedom can help eliminate distractions by blocking the apps or websites that tend to compete for your attention, such as Facebook and Twitter.

8.6 Practice Using Technology

- 8.6.1 Learners of all ages can struggle when they need to use a new tool or software for the first time.
- 8.6.2 Researchers recommend that students and instructors familiarize themselves with online teaching tools and platforms by completing low stakes activities before moving on to more critical work.
- 8.6.3 If a course requires the use of a new software or technology, spend time using the tool to practice on a low-stakes assignment or a personal task with fewer learning consequences.

8.7 Avoid Fatigue and Burn Out

- 8.7.1 Zoom fatigue is real; the term describes "the tiredness, anxiety, or worry resulting from overusing virtual platforms."
- 8.7.2 If students feel tired, overwhelmed, or anxious, taking a break can improve focus and task completion. Students can try to schedule breaks between classes and consider changing their settings to get fresh air, sunlight, or a drink of water.

8.8 Reward Yourself

- 8.8.1 Rewards can help students maintain motivation and morale.
- 8.8.2 When students are extrinsically motivated, they might engage in an activity to attain a reward, avoid a punishment, or achieve a valued outcome.

8.9 Figure Out How You Learn Best

- 8.9.1 Established where you will learn, think about when and how you accomplish your best work.
- 8.9.2 If you are a visual learner, for example, print out transcripts of the video lectures to review. Learn best by listening?
- 8.9.3 Make sure to build time into your schedule to play and replay all audio- and video-based course content.

8.10 Actively participate

- 8.10.1 Participate in the course's online forum to help you better understand course materials and engage with fellow classmates.
- 8.10.2 This might involve commenting on a classmate's paper on a discussion board or posting a question about a project you are working on.
- 8.10.3 Read what other students and your professor are saying, and if you have a question, ask for clarification.
- 8.10.4 Make sure you are checking in as often as you can, too.
- 8.10.5 Set a goal to check in on the class discussion threads every day.

8.11 Leverage your network

- 8.11.1 Most online courses are built around the concept of collaboration, with professors and instructors actively encouraging that students work together to complete assignments and discuss lessons.
- 8.11.2 Build relationships with other students by introducing yourself and engaging in online discussion boards. Your peers can be a valuable resource when preparing for exams or asking for feedback on assignments

For more on how to be a successful online learner, explore our related [online learning tips and advice posts](#),

Source: Northeastern University

9 Monitoring and Evaluation of Learning and Teaching

9.1 What is evaluation of learning and teaching?

An evaluation is a process of assessing all of the lecturers' activities inside and outside of the classroom, lecture halls or laboratories that are aimed at identifying strengths and weaknesses in order to enhance student learning.

9.2 Why is the evaluation needed?

The evaluation serves three major purposes, namely to:

- 9.2.1 Provide feedback on teaching effectiveness, as perceived by students, lecturers and academic supervisors
- 9.2.2 Promote improvement in teaching approaches
- 9.2.3 Enhance student learning outcomes
- 9.2.4 Offer feedback to faculty and contribute to management decisions on promotion and tenure
- 9.2.5 Provide information to support programme development and accreditation

9.3 How is learning and teaching evaluated?

Using questionnaires, the evaluation of learning and teaching is conducted in a “360 degree” approach, through four main ways:

- 9.3.1 Students assess the lecturers’ teaching effectiveness by expressing their perceptions by completing an online questionnaire
- 9.3.2 Lecturers assess one’s own teaching effectiveness by completing a questionnaire (hard copy or online)
- 9.3.3 Lecturers’ assess their peers’ teaching effectiveness by observing peers’ teaching and expressing their perceptions by completing a questionnaire (hard copy or online) and conducting interviews with specific peers. Head of departments are responsible for selecting evaluators.
- 9.3.4 Academic supervisors assess the lecturers’ teaching effectiveness by completing a questionnaire and conducting interviews with specific lecturers.

9.4 What instruments are used in evaluations of learning and teaching?

The primary instrument used is the Student evaluation instrument. This tool is completed by students once each semester, to evaluate their lecturers’ instructional practices.

9.5 When are the evaluations administered?

Student evaluations are administered to students once each semester, for the purpose of evaluating their lecturers’ instructional practices and their own learning and teaching experiences.

9.6 What online system (currently) is used to administer evaluations?

All evaluations of learning and teaching are administered on an online system known as the Education Surveys Automated Suite (EvaSys). However, plans are underway to relocate all evaluation functions to the Moodle Learning Management System (LMS). This system is open and free software.

9.7 What is EvaSys?

EvaSys is a proprietary software. It is also an automated education survey platform, used by the University of Namibia (UNAM) to evaluate teaching and learning activities and experiences of both the staff and students.

9.8 How does EvaSys work?

Students complete an online questionnaire to evaluate their lecturers and modules. EvaSys is housed within the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Section (LTE) in the University’s Centre for Innovation in Teaching and Learning (CILT).

9.9 The survey link is inactive/not working, what do I do?

If the survey link is inactive, the staff/student should contact the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) unit, at LTE Section. Tel: +264612064671/3906;
E-mail: hshemuketa@unam.na/sshakaalela@unam.na

9.10 I cannot see the password, what do I do?

The password consists of 5-characters (a mixture of letters and numbers, letters only or numbers only) and it is located at the end of the survey link. Kindly see an example below:

<http://evasys.unam.na/evasys/onlinphp=8E3DA>

The password in this example is **8E3DA**.

9.11 After submission, how do I know my responses have been recorded?

At the end of the online questionnaire, you will be requested to click on “Submit”. Immediately after clicking submitted, you should be returned to the first page of the survey, this means your responses have been successfully submitted.

9.12 What reports are created in EvaSys?

The following report is created in EvaSys:

- **Student evaluations reports:** after students have completed the online questionnaires to evaluate lecturers.
- Other survey reports can also be produced as it may be requested.

9.13 In what ways can lecturers use feedback from students?

Faculties, schools, departments and individual lecturers can use students' feedback in the following ways:

- 9.13.1 Analyse and compare how the evaluation feedback provided fits in with their own teaching goals and their faculty/school/department's expectations for teaching
- 9.13.2 Check for patterns and themes in students' feedback, to identify trends, take note of what has been done well and what needs improvement, while considering their own experiences, the context and characteristics of the course/module and student profiles.
- 9.13.3 Use student feedback to improve their own teaching methods, in order to enhance student learning experiences and improve student performance
- 9.13.4 Inform students that their honest opinions and constructive feedback are valued, and used for improving learning and teaching.
- 9.13.5 Inform students that lecturers are interested in both positive and negative feedback on the course/module.
- 9.13.6 Inform students about the kind of feedback lecturers find most useful.

9.14 Is EvaSys linked to other UNAM systems?

EvaSys is an independent commercial system, but it is linked to your UNAM Portal where the survey is conducted. But it is not linked to any other UNAM systems such as ITS.

9.15 Where is the data stored?

All the data are stored in an EvaSys server at the University of Namibia.

9.16 How can I access my evaluation report?

Currently, evaluation reports are not accessible outside of EvaSys. One needs to be registered on EvaSys in order to obtain a username and a password to logon to the system. However, the rights to access information on EvaSys are restricted to administrators only.

9.17 Who else has access to the information on EvaSys?

A few individuals in the Department of Information and Technology Services (DITS) that provide support as technicians and managers have access. They are directly accountable for the functioning of the EvaSys systems and are therefore permitted to access information on the system.

9.18 Why are the students reluctant to participate in evaluating modules?

There may be a number of reasons (some of them not genuine) why students are reluctant to evaluate their lecturers/modules, as students may feel that:

- 9.18.1 There are no observable/tangible benefits for them in completing the questionnaire
- 9.18.2 They are being used by lecturers who require student evaluation reports for appraisals, probation approvals and promotions.
- 9.18.3 Their issues raised in evaluation reports are not adequately attended to by the University.
- 9.18.4 Evaluations are just routine exercises without any genuine purpose, thus a waste of time and energy.

Nevertheless, student evaluations are important because:

- 9.18.5 Students' voice is an essential element of a comprehensive strategy for improving teaching and enhancing learning.
- 9.18.6 Students provide vital data, right from the classroom where most of the learning and teaching occurs. These data manifest the realities of teaching and assessment practices in actual time.
- 9.18.7 Data from students are used by lecturers to adjust their teaching and assessment practices in order to enhance student learning.
- 9.18.8 Data from students inform the review of course content whereby academics incorporate essential employability attributes and soft skills requirements for programme development.
- 9.18.9 Data from students inform management decisions on academic staff employment appraisals, contractual renewals, probation approvals and promotions.

9.19 Are the evaluations mandatory?

Staff and student evaluations of learning and teaching are mandatory as per the UNAM Policy on Learning and Teaching of 2019 (see page 10).

9.20 Will the lecturers be able to trace students' responses back to them?

When student evaluations are completed online, the anonymity of student responses is guaranteed. Lecturers or any other persons cannot identify individual students who expressed their opinions in an online questionnaire.

9.21 How will students benefit from their responses?

Depending on the study level, (say you are a first, second- or third-year student) then you will directly benefit because your responses will shape the immediate future delivery of the module being evaluated. Lecturers will use your suggestions to adjust their teaching and assessment approaches for the modules to be taught in the next semester.

9.22 How will students know that their suggestions are being considered?

One way to demonstrate inclusion of student opinions is to hold discussions with students where lecturers discuss specific suggestions in class, as a form of feedback to students regarding their responses to evaluation surveys. There could be other innovative ways in which inclusion of students' voice can be demonstrated.

9.23 How will students/staff know if the surveys are open?

When the surveys open for each course/module enrolled in each semester, students will receive an e-mail notification from the Evaluation Administrators. The notification will contain the link to the Student Portal, where students can access evaluation surveys.

To increase awareness, lecturers are encouraged to inform students once the surveys become available for completion on MyUnam Portal and on Moodle. Further announcements will be placed on the MyUnam Portal and on Moodle after the surveys open for completion each semester. Students and staff will receive reminder emails every few days once the surveys open.

9.24 The lecturer's name is missing/incorrect on the survey, what do I do?

If the lecturer's name is not listed on the evaluation survey questionnaire OR is incorrect, please notify your lecturer immediately. The lecturer will then contact the M&E unit immediately at **Tel:** +264612064671/3906,

E-mail: StudentEvaluationSupport@unam.na

10 How to contact us?

eLearning (Moodle LMS) Queries	Online Queries/ eTicketing
Mrs. Selma Limbo Digital Learning Systems Officer Email: slimbo@unam.na Anna-Marie Murere eLearning officer (Helpdesk services) Email: amurere@unam.na	Access the eticketing system here: https://elearning.unam.edu.na/support/ Tutorial on using eticketing system: https://youtu.be/3m0YJBu-pnw
Online Exams	Video Lectures (Digital Media Unit)
For issues related to exams administered online please email: onlinexamsupport@unam.na	For issues with online video lectures please email: panopto@unam.na
Work Integrated Learning/ Work Readiness Programme (Industry and Cooperative Education Unit)	Student Lecturer Evaluation (Monitoring and Evaluation Unit)
Mrs Lovisa K Nghipandulwa Coordinator: Industry and Cooperative Education E-mail: kngchipandulwa@unam.na 061-2064891 Ms Josephine Nghipandwa, Assistant Coordinator, Industry and Cooperative Education unit, E-mail: jngchipandwa@unam.na Tel 061 206 4774	Mr Havelinus N. Shemuketa Coordinator: Monitoring and Evaluation Tel: +264 61 206 4671, e-mail: hshemuketa@unam.na or Mr Sakaria O. Shakaalela Assistant Coordinator: Monitoring and Evaluation Tel: +264 61 206 3906, e-mail: sshakaalela@unam.na E-mail: StudentEvaluationSupport@unam.na
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