

# Remote Learning Readiness Guide



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UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN  
IYUNIVESITHI YASEKAPA • UNIVERSITEIT VAN KAAPSTAD



## Part 1: Getting ready

### Why are we doing this?

Despite having passed the first peak of COVID-19 infections, all South Africans must continue social distancing for an undetermined period of time, to minimise the spread of the Coronavirus disease. Most of us will not be returning to classes on campus for the second semester and will continue learning online through Vula. This document provides a brief recap how best to manage learning online during this time.

## What do you need to be ready to learn online?

### Dedicated work space

Set up a dedicated learning area. By completing your work there repeatedly, you'll begin to establish a routine. Whether your workspace is your kitchen table, bedroom or a shared space, it's important to find an area that will work best for you in your current circumstance. Think about how this arrangement worked for you last term and whether there are any changes you can make to improve the work space, within the limits available.

### Device

You need a desktop computer, laptop or tablet to work on.

## Internet access

### Data bundles

UCT has purchased a data bundle for each student with a valid South African cell number. Each student will receive including 10GB daytime data depending on their network provider, valid for 30 days. (For details see <http://www.icts.uct.ac.za/Zero-rated-access-some-UCT-websites>)

### Managing your data

Trying to track data is not simple and there are many variables to consider:

- Different devices (ie cellphone, laptop, tablet) consume data in slightly different ways
- Background processes and systems running on your device (for example: existing open tabs, auto updates, syncing apps, anti-virus programmes)
- Pre-existing settings on your device which are set to allow or disallow certain file types to load, pre-selected video quality
- Other apps which may connect automatically such as settings which allow apps to accept incoming messages or files

If you're dependent on mobile data, plan your day so that you can work offline most of the time, and then only go online when you absolutely need to, such as to check emails or access documentation.

ICTS has further tips for managing your data.

Cell C, Telkom, Vodacom and MTN have all agreed to UCT's request to zero-rate access to certain UCT websites. There will be no charge or deduction of your mobile data when you access the websites on this list:

**<http://www.icts.uct.ac.za/Zero-rated-access-some-UCT-websites>**

Create a hotspot with your mobile phone to access these sites on your laptop. Here's how:

### iPhone

Go to Settings, then Personal Hotspot

The next screen will let you set a password. The name of your network is the name you have given to your phone.

Slide the switch to ON and follow the directions that appear.

### Android

Go to Settings, then Mobile Hotspot & Tethering

Tap on Mobile Hotspot to turn it on, set the name of your network and set a password.

### Connecting a Device to Your Wi-Fi Hotspot

You connect a computer or tablet to your phone's Wi-Fi hotspot just as you would connect to any other Wi-Fi network. Select the name of your phone's network, enter the password and connect.

You should not need data or airtime on your phone to reach a zero-rated site.



## Part 2: Remote learning in semester two

As with the previous semester, your courses will be hosted on Vula and you will be expected to visit the course site regularly to keep up to date with expected learning activities. Given that you will have several courses, make use of your calendar to set out all the crucial dates - for assignments, tutorials, tests and exams - so you don't miss anything.

### What is different in semester two?

- The whole of semester two will be online (unless you are specifically advised differently by your department).
- The academic calendar has been adjusted - see details of term dates and exam period <https://www.news.uct.ac.za/article/-2020-07-27-guidelines-on-completing-2020-academic-year>
- Pass/Fail grading will applied - except for exit level S, H and W courses and courses in the Faculty of Law. Please see: <https://www.news.uct.ac.za/article/-2020-08-07-assessment-dropping-courses-and-fee-rebates-in-the-second-semester>

# Common Vula tools



## Assignments

Some of your courses will require you to submit assignments to be graded through the Assignments tool. There are a number of different kinds of assignments, such as ones you complete individually and ones you will complete as part of a group; assignments that you can only submit once or ones that allow for resubmissions; and assignments that will be checked for plagiarism through Turnitin.



## Blogs

**Blogs** are for writing individual longer pieces. **Blogs** can be made visible to the whole class or only to the creator and the lecturers (for private work). It is an internal tool in Vula.



## Chat Room

**Chat Room** is a live text chat space for short conversations and questions. A site may have multiple parallel chat rooms.



## Commons

**Commons** is a new tool, similar to a social media wall (e.g. Facebook wall) for posts and updates on the Vula site. Site members can post to the “wall” and reply to posts made by others.



## Drop Box

**Drop Box** is a tool for students to upload content to Vula to share with lecturers. It can be used for sharing first drafts or final versions of work, supplementary resources that students themselves have sourced, or any other file that needs to be transmitted privately between student and lecturer.



## Forum

Your courses may use **Forums** for tutorial discussions, as general places to discuss the content of the course, or for other reasons determined by your lecturers. Your course may have one or several forums, and each forum will have one or more topics. For example, your course might have a general forum for discussing how the course will be run, with topics on assessment, tutorials, etc., and separate forums for each module or content section with topics on specific concepts, lessons or weeks.



## Lecture Video

Depending on your course, you will be offered lecture content via different forms of media. Sometimes your videos may be in Lecture Videos. If you are offered videos, there will be transcripts in case you have problems with bandwidth. Otherwise your lecturers may use screencasts, slides and notes.



## Q&A

Questions and Answers (**Q&A**) is a place where you can submit questions, which can be answered by lecturers, tutors or other students (depending on your course). If your course site has a **Q&A** section, please read through the existing questions and answers to see if someone else has already asked any questions you have. If your questions haven't been asked, please add it to the **Q&A** before contacting your tutor or lecturer directly.



## Resources

Resources are accessible via Lessons or in the Resources section of your Vula site. To download a file, you would right-click on the file you want downloaded and save to a suitable location on your device.



## Tests & Quizzes

Some of your courses may set tests or quizzes for you to complete as part of your coursework. **Tests and Quizzes** may consist of a number of different question types, such as multiple-choice questions, essay-type questions where you will need to type an answer, and file-upload questions that require you to upload a document, image or video file.

**Tests and Quizzes** are usually set with specific opening and closing dates and may have time limits in which they must be completed. Try and make sure that if you need to take a timed test that you will have constant power for your device and enough connectivity to take the test in the time provided.



## Part 3: Communicating remotely

Learning remotely is much more than just sitting in front of your laptop. From the student experience survey feedback, many felt socially isolated during remote learning. See:

<https://www.news.uct.ac.za/article/-2020-08-05-survey-reveals-remote-learning-highs-and-lows>]

Reach out to friends or class mates and form online study groups to get help and keep motivated.

### Course-related personal communications

Communicate with your lecturer early if you are facing a challenge and can't make a deadline. This is especially important if you are ill or struggling with access to your course material. Information about which channels to use to communicate with your lecturers will be in your course sites.

### General course communications

Your lecturer will alert you of important information through **Vula Announcements**, but confirm with your course convener which channels will be used. Confirm what part of Vula your convenor wants you to use to ask questions. Some lecturers might invite students to post any questions in the **Q&A section** on your course site where your classmates or lecturer can respond. Others may invite participation in the class conversation in the course **Forum**.

If your course is tutor supported, you will receive information about how your tutors will work with you.

**Whatsapp groups** are useful for staying in touch with other students or for groupwork.

### Be respectful

Remember that you come across differently in online communications. Keep your posts and comments constructive and respectful. Ask for clarification if you feel offended and always look for solutions first to avoid misunderstanding and disagreements.



## Part 4: How to stay on track

In these challenging times you need to be able to take responsibility for your learning. You can't control what's happening in the world, but you can take control over your schedule and that helps ease your anxiety.

### Plan

- Create a realistic weekly planner.
- Block out times to regularly work on your studies.
- Add assignment deadlines to your calendar and work towards them.
- Take one day at a time. If things don't go according to plan, try your best again the next day.



### Stay motivated

- If you are struggling to stay productive, find someone in your household to help keep you accountable. Share what you want to achieve during your study block and give feedback afterwards. You can also get a study buddy and check in via WhatsApp.
- Ensure a healthy balance between your studies and social media.
- When you get stuck, ask yourself: "What do I need and who can help me with that?"

### Keep well

Don't get so wrapped up in thinking about the coronavirus that you forget the healthy habits that affect your well-being.

- Maintain a daily routine.
- Do things you enjoy like reading a book or watching a movie.
- Maintain a regular sleep routine.
- Eat healthy food and drink enough water.
- Wash your hands often for 20 seconds with soap and warm water.
- Clean touched areas like computers, phones and handles regularly with a solution containing more than 70% alcohol.
- Try to keep active, for example doing some exercise in your own home or backyard.
- Avoid using tobacco, alcohol or other drugs to help you cope.

- Stay connected with friends and family using digital channels.
- Limit the news and make sure it's from a reputable news source.
- Be careful what you read online, negative social media can make you anxious.
- Look after your wider health needs and if you are on prescription medication, make sure it does not run out.
- Contact a professional should you feel your mental health is declining.

### Ask for help when you need it

The **SADAG UCT Student Careline** is available 24/7. Send an SMS to **31393** and someone will phone you back. Phone consultations are available during office hours.

Talk to a **UCT Student Wellness** peer counsellor, social worker, psychologist or psychiatric nurse.

### Book online

**SADAG:** South African Depression and Anxiety Group

### What to do if I think I have COVID-19

If you suspect you or someone in your household may have COVID-19, contact the NICD 24h Hotline on **0800 029 0999 / 08000111132** or phone your health practitioner.

They will direct you to the nearest testing facility with the correct laboratory forms.

**NICD:** National Institute for Communicable Diseases

**For Gov.ZA news and information on COVID-19**

**WhatsApp** "Hi" to **0601023456**



## Part 5: Support and assistance

# UCTCARES

For students requiring information or who need help connecting to the right department, person or service at UCT, the UCT Call Centre and Referral System - **UCT\_Cares** - is there to help you.

You can send an email with your query to [uctcares@uct.ac.za](mailto:uctcares@uct.ac.za) and an agent will get back to you. For more efficient service please include important details like your ID and faculty in your email.

For help with technical issues or internet access contact:

**IT Helpdesk (ICTS)**

[icts-helpdesk@uct.ac.za](mailto:icts-helpdesk@uct.ac.za)

+27 (0)21 650 4500

**For help with Vula:**

**Vula Helpdesk**

[help@vula.uct.ac.za](mailto:help@vula.uct.ac.za)

**Password self-service:**

<http://password.uct.ac.za>

**Or contact the ICTS**



### For academic support, contact your faculty:

#### Commerce

[com-faculty@uct.ac.za](mailto:com-faculty@uct.ac.za)

+27 (0)21 650 4375

#### Engineering & the Built Environment

[ebe-faculty@uct.ac.za](mailto:ebe-faculty@uct.ac.za)

or your academic advisor

+27 (0)21 650 2699

#### Graduate School of Business

[info@gsb.uct.ac.za](mailto:info@gsb.uct.ac.za)

+27 (0)21 406 1922

#### Health Sciences (Undergraduate)

[fhs-ug-admiss@uct.ac.za](mailto:fhs-ug-admiss@uct.ac.za)

+27 (0)21 406 6328

#### Health Sciences (Postgraduate)

[fhs-pg-admiss@uct.ac.za](mailto:fhs-pg-admiss@uct.ac.za)

+27 (0)21 406 6340

#### Humanities (Undergraduate)

[hum-ugrad@uct.ac.za](mailto:hum-ugrad@uct.ac.za)

+27 (0)21 650 2717

#### Humanities (Postgraduate)

[hum-postgrad@uct.ac.za](mailto:hum-postgrad@uct.ac.za)

+27 (0)21 650 2691

#### Law

[law-studies@uct.ac.za](mailto:law-studies@uct.ac.za)

+27 (0)21 650 3086

#### Science

[sci-science@uct.ac.za](mailto:sci-science@uct.ac.za)

+27 (0)21 650 2712

### If you are facing a personal crisis:

#### UCT Student Careline

SMS to 31393 - available 24/7

**Survivor Support** (Rape, sexual assault or domestic violence)

Call, SMS, miss call or send a WhatsApp to 072 393 7824

#### COVID-19 Hotline (NCID)

0800 029 0999 / 08000111132 - available 24/7

### General Contacts:

#### Library Support

+27 (0)21 650 3134

For subject specific support see contact list here:

<http://www.lib.uct.ac.za/lib/virtual-support#learning>

Alternatively: [libraries@uct.ac.za](mailto:libraries@uct.ac.za)

#### Disability Service

[dsa-disabilityservice@uct.ac.za](mailto:dsa-disabilityservice@uct.ac.za)

#### Fees Office

[fnd-feeeng@uct.ac.za](mailto:fnd-feeeng@uct.ac.za)

+27 (0)21 650 1704

#### International students

[iapo@uct.ac.za](mailto:iapo@uct.ac.za)

+27 21 650 2822/3740

#### Postgraduate Centre and Funding Office

[pgfunding@uct.ac.za](mailto:pgfunding@uct.ac.za)

+27 (0)21 650 3622

#### UCT Careers Service

[careers.service@uct.ac.za](mailto:careers.service@uct.ac.za)

or the Careers Service site in Vula

+27 (0)21 650 2497

#### Undergraduate financial aid

[financialaid@uct.ac.za](mailto:financialaid@uct.ac.za)

+27 (0)21 650 3545

#### Peoplesoft

[sss-helpdesk@uct.ac.za](mailto:sss-helpdesk@uct.ac.za)

021650 5227