Lecturers’ Guide for Online Learning

Getting Started as an online lecturer

1. Ensure you have remote access to the AMS
   - Web_VPN_Access_Guide.pdf
   - Accessing shared folders
   - Contact your school administrator

2. To start you off, make sure you have basic content in the university elearning site
   - Getting started on the Strathmore University moodle elearning site
   - Request schedule for next CTE module course

3. Decide on a delivery tool that you want to use: Big Blue Button, Zoom, Skype for Business, etc
   - Big Blue Button Intro
   - Getting Started on Zoom
   - Skype for Business for beginners
   - Get help on tools here...

4. Make sure your class have a "Homeroom". This is usually a class Whatsapp Group.
   - Why does the class need a Homeroom?

Class Preparedness
i) Before you begin, do a quick sound check to ensure that your audience can hear you.

ii) Ensure everyone has the latest class ID and keep checking on other social media platforms the group may be on to see the pre-class behavior. There may be people locked out or struggling with their devices.

iii) Spell out any rules you may have so that you have an orderly class, if possible, on other platforms like WhatsApp. E.g. if you are using Zoom, encourage participants to request to speak rather than interrupt a conversation.

iv) Familiarise yourself with the technology beforehand to avoid fiddling around with equipment during a session.

v) Be flexible with some of the rules that do not interfere with the flow of the session- for example, some participants may not want their video on.

vi) Make sure you have all your essentials together – notes, marker pens, visuals etc.

vii) It is good practice to share the learning outcomes of a session pinned on phone based platforms and encourage students to keep referring to them.

viii) Remember to ensure that the usual requirements of the university and your respective school are met. E.g. ensure that students have their course outlines with updated course material in advance, teaching schedule etc.

ix) Be prepared for the class. Remember that online classes cannot carry as much content as a physical class as the chances of losing the student are even higher.

Class handling

i) In a relatively small class, you can have a quick rollcall. Keep referring to the students by name.

ii) Teach in a quiet place to avoid feedback on the microphone.

iii) Consider other ways of engaging students outside the session so that they continue learning beyond the online session.

iv) Make use of different platforms and be flexible on the options in order to be as inclusive of many students as possible. For example, post guiding questions of problems on email, e-learning and one other platform accessible to students.

v) Be present and take care of the students’ wellbeing. For example take note of an unusually quiet student and encourage post classroom feedback from students.

vi) Be creative:
   a. In your teaching during the session. There are many resources online that can help you learn how to blend your online session.
   b. In giving feedback during and after the session. In a large class, for example, record audio feedback for students to work on or think about.
   c. In assessment - whether it is formative or summative.
   d. In encouraging discourse amongst students – do not be the only one talking.
Cyber security

i) Ensure that you check the settings on the platform you are using so that you as the host have rights to invite participants and can remove participants you deem to be distractive to the group.

ii) Enable the virtual waiting room

iii) Require meeting ID and password

iv) Ensure that you are the punctual arriving some time before the session so that you can invite participants.

v) Students must always to use their real names rather than pseudo names

vi) Students and lecturer to use real profile photos rather than avatars

vii) Depending on the platform, disable any settings that may cause trouble. Settings that allow screen and file sharing should be disabled by default and require your permission. NB. Do not disable too many functions such that your students become totally passive listeners.

viii) Do not allow removed participants to come back without your consent.

ix) Regularly check the list of participants and call them by their names during the session

Online teaching etiquette

i) As far as possible you want to reproduce the Strathmore University learning environment into the virtual class. This means always using branded materials, protocols, guidelines, in line with all existing policies.

ii) Dress only as you would in a Strathmore face-to-face class.

iii) Use only formal language types that you would use in a Strathmore face-to-face class.

iv) Be careful about the non-verbal language you exhibit.

v) Microphones should be kept off by default. Microphones catch even subtle, and otherwise annoying behavior like clearing one’s throat.

vi) It is courteous to open and closing sessions formally. Use video at least at start and end, and require students who are able to do so to. Video improves the social atmosphere and helps the learning process, but balance it off with data flow and bandwidth limitations.

vii) Record your class and let the students know.

Helping your students prepare for class – points of emphasis
i) It is easy to lose focus during an online class. Prepare your mind to focus well before class beginning with yourself and then the students. Use the whatsapp group to notify the students of the upcoming session’s learning outcomes, expectations, preparations, etc.

ii) Gather any stationery or class material you would need. Files that will be screen shared should be ready on the screens.

iii) Require students to have sent you in advance all materials, individual/group assignments that they will screen share.

iv) Prepare for your readings should the class have any.

v) Class becomes much more interesting when the students are engaged. Ask students to read your materials, to fill in gaps, for obvious statements and conclusions ask questions instead of saying it yourself. Prepare your questions beforehand.

vi) Take time to organise your learning area before time, so that you spend class time focusing only on content.

vii) Choose a venue for your class that has minimal distractions for you but also for the others who might be in the video class.

viii) If necessary when using certain tools (like Zoom) remind students to create profiles with official name and photo to ensure that the lecturer can recognise them and offer individualized assistance.

**Helping your students during class – points of emphasis**

i) Choose to focus by reducing all distractions (switch off your phone notifications, etc).

ii) Encourage active participation in the class. In small classes make sure every single student has spoken during the session. In larger classes always prepare breakout rooms where everyone participates.

iii) Lecturer and students should always have a separate notebook to take notes.

iv) Be cautious of any sounds that may come from use of gadgets that could interfere with the session. For example the (clicking sound of a desktop computer keyboard, dogs barking in the background, etc.

v) Use functions such as the chat, poll, collaborative whiteboard, Q&As to keep the students engaged.

vi) Here is a list of instructional activities that you should choose from: [click](#).

**Help your students observe online learning etiquette – points of emphasis**

“As Etiquette is acceptable behavior in a given context”

i) Students should to dress as they would in a physical Strathmore classroom.
ii) All usual classroom etiquette applies: managing the use of phones, apologizing for lateness, asking permission to leave

iii) Students should not walk around, even if using a portable device and earphones.

iv) Enhance the social learning environment in a controlled manner: no private chatting, all chats should be for everyone

A quick look at Summative Assessments - Examinations

Online examination policy

Online examination procedures

SOME DETAILED PROCEDURES

Login as lecturer/facilitator

It is important that when facilitators log into the system, they do not allow the student to view the online interactive class before beginning the session. This ensures the lecturer is in control of the learning environment. Some video conferencing facilities have break out rooms or waiting rooms that can be used to control the virtual online environment. It is critical that when facilitators logs into a session that allows video and/or audio is muted for all learners and they are well prepared to appear before the microphone or video. It is critical to control the ‘physical’ learning environment through using rooms where there are no interruptions. Physical ways of preventing direct access may be important to ensure that the class proceeds according to plans.

Class Preparedness

Preparation of course materials

It is important for the lecturer/facilitator to decide if he wants to compile materials from scratch. In doing this, it is essential for the facilitator to know the needs of the learners and how IT savvy the learners are, including which kind of technological devices will they use to access the material. Preparation of course materials should follow open standards and should allow deployment on multiple platforms. The use of Moodle which uses SCORM (Shareable Content Object Reference Model) will enable the tagging, re-use of learning content and its customization. The Application Programmable Interface integrated into the different e-platforms should enable learner assistance service, testing
service and content management service. Developers of modules on e-platforms should be aware of user and course needs when developing their course materials.

**Instructional activities**

Before beginning any learning activity, there should be clear learning outcomes. The learning outcomes express the broader aims of the course. Typically, these are operationalized through Blooms Taxonomy. Facilitators must be clear on which knowledge, skills and attitudes they are trying to cultivate within a specific course. It is important to insist that each topic within a course or module should have a clear outcome, specific activities and ways to assess that learning has occurred. This should not be pushed until four or five weeks after the course has started. Curriculum and instructional activities should be clear on which possible e-resources will be developed, who will develop it and the target needs of learners. Assumptions of learning needs and level of knowledge should be explicit from the onset of the instructional activities. Facilitators should be assisted through e-learning modules developed on e-platforms to aid them develop content for technology enhanced learning or blended learning. The assessment of modules should take cognizance e-instructional materials developed. Additional curriculum reference materials can be given to support e-content developed.

A diagram of how a topic within a module is as follows:

---

**First section**

- Strategic Management Course Outline
- News forum
- Dr. John Mahasi Faculty Profile
- MBA 2017 Trimester Two Syndicate Groups
Staff Support activities

There should be adequate staff-support activities to enable them use and deploy e-resources. These staff support activities can be at an institutional level or departmental level. Regular training of staff and updating of training materials on e-platform will ensure that lecturers can deploy these materials easily. Training and support materials should also include mechanisms that enable lecturers evaluate how to convert credit hours conducted through e-platforms from face-face and suitable assessments. There should be provision of training manuals, help-desk support, online support, and logging of errors and inventory of equipment. The administrators in each school or faculty act as critical points to enable staff-support activities.

Student Support activities
There should be adequate students training activities and facilities to enable the use of e-resources. These will include: development of online training modules, training packs, online help facilities, social learning communities (community of learning), logs of learners’ complaints and integration of constructive activities that practically help students learn. In the case of Strathmore University, we have a section on the eLearning platform which avails materials and videos on how to deploy certain materials on Moodle and how lecturers should format their work.

**Evaluation and Assessment**

There should be evaluation activities of e-resources at the micro level and macro level. At the micro-level, this will include an assessment of the effectiveness of the e-platform learning and teaching activities, ability to gauge the knowledge differential (through multiple choice questions, aptitude and proficiency tests), assessment of skills and knowledge of facilitators and learners and achievement of their aspirations. The e-platform should enable an accumulation of e-portfolios to gauge constructive knowledge development. At the macro-level this will include university audits of use of e-resources and feedback from external stakeholders on effectiveness of technology enhanced and blended learning courses. A lecturer must decide the form of formative and summative evaluations to conduct in learn with learning needs. Formative assessments include case studies, projects, multiple choice questions, essays. Summative assessments are the final exams that a student is required to do to gauge the breadth and depth of learning. In some cases, the university can use proctored exams which ensures that specific assessments meet a specific criterion of integrity. This can either be integrated into Moodle or done through a third-party vendor. This will usually be provided through the exam’s office.

**Promotional activities**

Promotional activities are those actions taken to inform internal and external stakeholders on the availability and use of e-resources. It aims at creating a synergy between different stakeholders to ensure efficiencies. It is important that a lecturer communicates which eLearning platform and tools he will use including when the tools will be used and how. This should not be left to chance and rigorous preparation, with the help of school administrators can facilitate this.

**Starting and conducting lectures**

*Dressing and how to begin the interaction.*

It is critical that lecturers dress to impress the students. The same way a facilitator appears in a physical classroom should be the same way they appear in a virtual classroom. Professionalism is critical in controlling the virtual learning environment. Informal language should not be used as much as possible, unless it is to break the ice and to make the learning environment more amiable.

**During the lecture**

When beginning the lecture, it is important to gain the attention of the learner. Online learning experience requires the facilitator to address the learner by name. The facilitators should from the start set clear expectations and try to evaluate prior learning experience that a learner has. They should provide clear guidance on how the lecture will proceed and the kind of activities the learners will be involved in. It is always important to elicit feedback either through comments, emojis or verbal comments. In the situation where video conferencing is used and learners’ videos are activated, it is
critical to assess the body language of the student to gauge the level of involvement. It is important that facilitators always appeal to learner’s interest through being able to switch between subjects and giving real life stories.

**Managing interaction**

The ARCS model can be used to motivate learners to learn. ARCS refers to attention, relevance, confidence and satisfaction. In gaining attention, especially with Strathmore University, it is important the facilitator provides materials prior to the engagement and inspire the student through stories and examples. Sometimes it may be important to switch between windows that include videos, webpages and handbooks.

At the start of the lecture, a critical issue is to ask the learners whether they remember the learning outcome of that specific topic and what are the main issues they have read in previous reading material provided. This makes the course relevant to the learner. In inspiring confidence, it is important to use group exercise for instance break out rooms, flip charts, white boards, recording and similar activities. Material which engage more than one sense can be remembered easily by students. Commending a student on a positive point and showing that you are following the conversation is critical in maintaining confidence.

In creating satisfaction, it is important that before the end of the session questions are asked about how the session was, issues the facilitator needs to improve, provide other reference materials in the web and devise interactive assessment activities.

**Time management**

“Time management is important in all learning methods, and the online environment offers some useful structuring opportunities to assist students and academics with their management of time. Planning the timing of activities and events is at the core of any design of learning and teaching processes. Online learning can be a good means of keeping students on track with their learning. In face-to-face teaching, tutors have control of the timing of individual sessions, but are often frustrated by their ability to engage students in reflective and critical practice between classroom sessions. Tutors generally work to a time plan which ensures that they can achieve the learning aims and objectives of a session within the time slot available on the timetable. Academics have been challenged to look beyond the classroom and to design learning in the classroom that will promote self-study before the next teaching session. In online learning, students do not have their facilitated learning closely time-managed by a tutor in a classroom setting. They often do not know how much emphasis to place on allocating time to different learning tasks and discussions. It is very helpful for a student not only to have navigation information within the online learning spaces prepared well ahead, but also to have some idea of how long to spend on each task. This prevents ‘the task expanding to fill the time available’ and helps students to spread their efforts appropriately. The technical resources in many Virtual Learning Environments usually allow the release of materials at set times and remind students of key dates and deadlines by announcements and emails. These are important opportunities to assist online students with their time management.

In terms of engaging communities of learning and specifically virtual learning communities learning experience of personal bonds and ties takes on a new and different form. Although there may be less
face-to-face contact between the learners, personal interaction still takes place and becomes significant to the lives of the members. The online teacher often acts as a facilitator and ensures that student interactivity does take place. Personal feedback is a vital part of ensuring that a positive feedback loop occurs. (Bach et al, 2006-Online Learning and Teaching in Higher Education)."

### Managing interruptions

A lot of interruptions are technical – power outages, machine breakdowns, network problems and access issues. Having a list of possible mitigations is vital – these include having a spare laptop, and the homeroom.

### Administration of online lecturers learning

It is critical that at the end of every week, management of the School does a recap of the online learning activities. For this to be enabled, it is critical that a log of activities be maintained by the class administrators. These logs of activities will include the session, the number of participants, the kinds of activities, the form of interaction that took place, responses to assessments and chats, challenges and any other issues important to improve the eLearning experience.