



AUT

LEARNING FROM ANYWHERE

**SUPPORTING STUDENTS
STUDYING REMOTELY**



CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	2
REMOTE LEARNING + ONLINE STUDY	2
WHAT TO EXPECT	4
BEFORE YOU START	5
NINE HABITS FOR SUCCESSFUL REMOTE LEARNING	8
USEFUL APPS	14
AUT SUPPORT RESOURCES	15

INTRODUCTION

As a campus-based university, we pride ourselves on the high-quality learning experiences and the quality interactions between our staff and you, and of course between students. AUT supports a blended learning approach of face-to-face supported by online learning, as we believe this approach suits our curriculum and the learning needs of our students.

The disruption posed by COVID-19 has meant that we've had to re-think how to support you, so you can continue to learn remotely. To do so, we've moved to make available, as many papers as we can, online.

For some students, this may prove quite a challenge. It may not always be easy to regulate your own study and to utilise the online videos, lecture recordings, access the online discussion forums, and course resources to their full potential, but here are some guidelines to help you with the online learning and support you this semester.

This Learning From Anywhere handbook has been designed to support you as you transition to a new mode of delivery and way of learning at AUT. We help you to understand the move to online learning, what you can expect, strategies and resources for adapting to a new way of learning, and ideas for how you can stay connected and get assistance when needed.

REMOTE LEARNING AND ONLINE STUDY

Remote learning simply means that you can continue to learn through periods where you're physically separated from your teachers and fellow students. It allows your teachers to continue to deliver their papers online, and for you to engage in learning experiences and complete projects and assessments.

From 28 April, students can expect to access the online course resources and continue learning in the courses and papers you started this year. This means that we're able to keep you engaged in your studies, and has the flexibility for us to move between delivering remotely in a fully online mode, and during those periods when there will be opportunities to work with you face-to-face on campus. When such opportunities occur, we'll be communicating with you via the AUT Student App and Blackboard.

Each paper and course has been specifically designed for you with online resources and learning activities, to support you learning online anywhere in environments that aren't on campus.

You'll be able to access all online course resources by going online to your **AUT Blackboard papers** at any time of the day during the week, so that your learning and study best fits in with your family, work commitments, and your individual living arrangements and study environment.

We've included the full academic calendar for 2020 below, so you can visualise and plan for the rest of the year. Semester 1 has been extended by one week, and Semester 2 starts one week later and finishes as scheduled.

SEMESTER 1: Commences 24 February	
Orientation	17 – 20 February
Week 1	24 – 28 February
Week 2	2 – 6 March
Week 3	9 – 13 March
Week 4	16 – 20 March
Mid-semester break	23 March – 27 April
Orientation	23 – 24 April
Week 5	27 April – 1 May
Week 6	4 – 8 May
Week 7	11 – 15 May
Week 8	18 – 22 May
Week 9	25 – 29 May
Week 10	1 – 5 June
Week 11	8 – 12 June
Week 12	15 – 19 June
Final assessment	22 – 26 June
Semester 1 ends	Friday 26 June

SEMESTER 2: Commences 20 July	
Orientation	16 July
Week 1	20 – 24 July
Week 2	27 – 31 July
Week 3	3 – 7 August
Week 4	10 – 14 August
Week 5	17 – 21 August
Week 6	24 – 28 August
Week 7	31 August – 4 Sept
Mid-semester break	7 – 18 September
Week 8	21 – 25 September
Week 9	28 Sept – 2 October
Week 10	5 – 9 October
Week 11	12 – 16 October
Week 12	19 – 23 October
Final assessment	27 – 30 October
Semester 2 ends	Friday 6 November

WHAT TO EXPECT?

We've been working hard to ensure that remote learning is active, and the learning is meaningful. What can you expect from this way of learning?

From 23 and 24 April, all your timetabled information is set out in your study guides. This will show you any synchronous [scheduled activities] and asynchronous [unscheduled activities]. Depending on the specific nature of the paper and/or the courses you are completing, this may vary.

Blackboard is your primary 'go to' place and will have all the information you require about your online course or paper. To find out more about the specific days or times you're required to complete online learning activities, view resources, complete assessments and/or attend any online forums and discussions please visit Blackboard. To make it easy, you'll find a 'timetable' button in each of your Blackboard sites.

Depending on the specific nature of your course, you may expect to be engaged in some of the following learning activities:

Download and view 'lecture' or 'presentation' material from Blackboard

The format **may** vary but you may expect short video segments, or PowerPoint slides with voice over. This will normally be done in your own time and depending on the type of course you're completing you may be assigned reading (or video); a brief document (or video) summarising the main points of the week's content; a full set of PowerPoint slides (including further links and discussion questions); narrated PowerPoint slides in which one of your lecturers explains and discusses the key points; and in some cases a worksheet that sets out some questions for you to consider. The expectation is that you read, watch, and work through these materials carefully.

Active participation in small group workshops

You may also be asked to be available for 'live' small group sessions. This will require you to be available at a nominated time and day, and your lecturers will let you know when this will take place each week.

These sessions are designed to enable you to review key lecture material with the guidance of a teacher or teaching assistant. These are important opportunities for you to ask questions, clarify your understanding of key concepts, and to connect with your peers and teachers.

Other structured learning activities might include:

- Reviewing key readings or material such as videos, or podcasts in preparation for lecture and/or small group session
- Engage in discussions, either synchronously or asynchronously
- Complete short quizzes or learning activities to reinforce key concepts

As well as this individual work, your lecturers may provide different channels through which you can discuss the material with your classmates and with lecturers. These may include:

Online Discussion Board

Set up by your lecturers on Blackboard where you respond to questions, comment, and contribute to the answers posted by your classmates. This forum is designed to replicate the sort of discussion that would normally happen face-to-face in class.

It will also be a good forum for asking questions about the course content and your assessments, and it's also important to keep up to date and check announcements from your lecturers on Blackboard.

Online office hour

Your lecturers will want to provide as much flexibility for you as possible, so you may be invited to join an Online Office Hour at a time that suits you best to discuss any questions that you have regarding the week's content, or upcoming assessment tasks. These office hours may be offered as a voluntary forum for you to ask face-to-face questions of lecturers.

As the semester progresses, the teaching team will do their very best to support your learning in this online environment. At AUT, we welcome your feedback on what's working well for you, and what aspects aren't working well for you. We'll do our best to address your feedback and to make what changes we can.

Where it seems helpful, we'll also establish general FAQ pages on AUT website, on the Student Hub Online and the AUT Student App to address common questions about technology and administrative issues. Your programme, course, and assessments information will be available in Blackboard.

BEFORE YOU START

You'll need to prepare before you begin to study online and it's important you have access to all the essential course requirements and technology.

We're working hard to ensure every student reliable and stable internet access, and appropriate technology to successfully access the online course resources when studying remotely. If you don't have access to the essential course requirements below and need support before you start the online

course, it's important that you let us know. Please contact studenthub@aut.ac.nz and a Student Hub Advisor will be in contact with you to discuss your options.

STEP 1 - Check you have all the essential course resources

- Laptop or desktop computer
- Check that your access to internet that is stable and secure.
- Camera and microphone - most laptops have built-in cameras and microphones, but you need to check that these functions are working on your computer.
- A suitable, comfortable, and quiet study space with good lighting.
- Your AUT login details so you can access Arion, and the three learning platforms: Blackboard and Microsoft Office 365 Pro Plus, Zoom.
- Download Microsoft Office 365 Pro Plus onto your computer. This will include the Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, Teams, OneNote, and OneDrive for Business. Because it's cloud-based, you can access it anywhere and from your home.
- If you have an iPad and have download Microsoft Office onto the device, you'll be able to study online however there may be some constraints when reading and writing on the small iPad screen.

STEP 2 - Set up a dedicated study space

If you're used to studying in the campus, or the library you may find it a difficult to transition studying at home for the majority of the time. There are a few things you can do to get yourself focused on learning and working in the right mindset.

- Identify an area where you can sit and work. Whether you decide to study in your bedroom or living room, ensure that this place is quiet, organised, and distraction free. Some students maybe lucky enough to have a desk or table, but if you don't any surface where you can sit comfortably with your laptop and notes is good enough. Then ensure you keep all the things you need nearby, so you don't have to keep getting up.
- When sharing your study space either in your living room, kitchen, or other common areas in the house where your whānau and friends frequently gather, use ear plugs or headphones when studying to block out distracting sounds and activities.
- Consider turning off your phone and logging off all social media and networks Ask your friends, relatives, and colleagues to respect you when you are in 'work mode'. You won't want to be distracted or interrupted and avoid surfing the internet when you're during your online study hours.
- Be flexible when you study and when completing the learning tasks and activities
- Being flexible about your independent study time will help you to find the best times in the day which help you to get more done and be more productive with your time. You'll soon discover the times in the day you can work best. Trial studying as soon as you wake up and remember to keep a add into your calendar or phone (with sound alerts) the key assessment dates, scheduled online discussion forums, office hours, and any important key dates.



STEP 3 - Now let's get comfortable

During times when we're advised to study and work from our home, you'll want to create a workspace that allows you to focus. This can be difficult, and you may not be able to control your environment, but here are nine things to consider when planning your study environment:

1. Close the door where you're studying to reduce interruptions
2. Sit at a desk or table or have a flat surface where you can spread out your materials
3. Remove anything from your workspace not related to the task at hand; for most of us this means silencing our phones, closing unnecessary tabs on your computer, and turning off notifications
4. Use a chair that's comfortable, and that provides good support
5. If you're someone that needs quiet in order to concentrate, you might like to wear ear plugs or listen to background music to minimise sound distraction
6. Let others know in advance when you're available to talk, and when you'd like to be left alone to study
7. If you're working in your bedroom, make your bed to reduce the temptation to work in it or to take a counterproductive long nap
8. Provide yourself with healthy things to drink or snack on and take regular breaks
9. Start your day as though you were getting ready for uni, as tempting as it is to remain in our pajamas, dressing as though you were leaving the house can be more productive.

[adapted from learningconnection.stanford.edu]



NINE HABITS FOR SUCCESSFUL REMOTE LEARNING

Two key advantages of learning online are flexibility and convenience. Online learning is a lot more challenging than it may seem. In reality, online courses require just as much, if not more, time and energy as traditional classroom courses. It also requires specific skills and learning strategies in order to succeed.

1. Make a study plan

A study plan is critical to successful online learning. Here are some tips to help you:

Plan ahead

Don't wait until the assessment is due to start working on it. This will prevent you from completing the assessment. Knowing when all your assignments and assessments are due will assist you with effectively time management and independent study skills. Students who succeed are those who log into Blackboard and make progress every day. This is especially important after the novelty of attending classes online starts to wear off.

Have an effective calendar system. Set up a manageable study schedule for yourself and stick to it

Online learning needs structure. Create a study calendar. Block in key dates – for example assessment deadlines, online forums, discussion group times, days in the week when you can access the online lectures or times when you choose to download the weekly course resources or videos. You can save your calendar on your computer or mobile phone device and add functions to receive sound notifications and alerts that will prompt you to complete the tasks and online learning activities.

Create a daily to-do list

At the start of each week, make a daily to-do list of the activities and tasks you need to complete by the end of the week. This is an excellent way to prioritise your study plan and stay on track. Reward yourself as you check off the tasks.

2. Stay on schedule and learn persistence

Persistence is perhaps the biggest key to success in online learning. Students who succeed are those who are willing to tolerate technical problems, seek help when needed, work daily on every class, and persist through challenges. When you run into a challenge, keep trying and ask for help.

When you start studying online, it's important to estimate how much time each task and learning activity will take to complete, whether it's specific to an assignment or simply reading and referring to online sources and references. Try to stick to your time limits and this will help you complete the assessments on time and avoid procrastination.

- Stick to your study plan and stay organised so you don't fall behind in your online courses
- If you're having difficulties submitting your assignments on time, contact your lecturer and/or tutor so they can help you create a consistent study routine
- Ask for help when you need it.

3. Stay connected

Keep in contact with your lecturers and ask for help when you need it. You may no longer be able to see your tutors or lecturers during their regular office hours, but ensure you keep in contact with them on a regular basis and keep up-to-date with the online resources and Blackboard announcements, slides, videos, and assessment information.

In most cases, it may be best to refer to your online course resources, but it's also important you build a positive learning relationship with your lecturer and/or tutor and peers. Make sure you know where and how you can get information and support for learning in a remote environment.

- **Don't be afraid to ask your lecturers to clarify problems, ideas or course content**

If you need to confirm something about an assignment, contact your lecturer/tutor directly. They can provide useful information, support, and suggestions and will let you know their preferred method of contact. (To find their contact information, look on your Blackboard site).

If you're unsure about their preferred method of contact, email is generally the safest option. Be courteous – “please” and “thank you” go a long way and remember that every question is a good question.

Asking questions about your problems and queries will also help your lecturers evaluate the learner's level of understanding of the online course material, and to get an overall idea of the effectiveness of the online course. Keep in mind that if you don't ask for help when you need it, your lecturer or tutor may never know something is wrong and you will also be helping the other virtual classmates.

- **Be patient when expecting a response to your question**

Your lecturers and tutors may be under immense pressure to prepare lectures and course resources for online delivery, so do give them time to get back to you. Be patient when expecting a response and remember if they are full time working for AUT, the standard office hours NZT 8.30am – 5pm, Monday to Friday.

Ask questions early. If you do have questions about the class or an assignment, it's best to ask right away, rather than waiting. This gives your teacher more time to respond, and it also gives you more time to make any necessary adjustments.

- **Monitor your email and Blackboard closely for any instructions from your teachers on communicating, as well as general instructions about the class**

Many of your teachers will be scheduling virtual office hours, through Zoom or Microsoft Teams – if that's the case take advantage and book into your calendar.

4. Effective and appropriate communication

Communication skills are vital in online learning because students must seek help when they need it. Teachers are willing to help students, but they're unable to pick up on non-verbal cues, such as a look of confusion on a student's face. Follow these tips:

- **Use the tools provided by the school to communicate with your lecturers and tutors**

Many of the online courses will provide several ways for students to communicate with lecturers and staff. These might include e-mail, discussion groups, virtual office hours, mobile, and even text messaging. AUT lecturers want to help you to succeed in your classes and will do their best to answer your questions. It may feel awkward to talk with your lecturers and your tutors in this way, but don't worry. If your teacher has virtual or mobile phone office hours, don't be shy about using those tools to communicate.

- **Use appropriate style and language for university and treat people with respect**

When communicating with teachers and other staff, you should write in full, grammatically correct sentences, and with a respectful tone. Many students are used to a very informal style of writing in chat rooms, blogs, text messages, and so forth. Because of the distance, it's tempting for some students to say things out of anger or frustration that they would never say to a fellow student or teacher in person. Treat them with respect and courtesy.



5. Effective time management

Effective time-management skills don't just happen. They must be learned. It takes time to develop good habits, but you'll gain satisfaction from being well-organised and accomplishing your tasks. Once you learn these skills, they will benefit you throughout your life.

Many of the courses are not delivered in real time and occasionally there are no set times for classes, so you must be able to manage your time well. Flexibility is one of the great benefits of online learning, but it can also be a drawback for a student who procrastinates, is unable to stick to a routine study schedule, or isn't able to complete assignments without daily reminders from a teacher.

Remember to review the study guide for each of courses and papers and regularly update your individual plan for completing your major assignments.

6. Back up your work

Technology glitches happen all the time and you need to make sure you have reliable and stable internet access and back up your work.

To avoid mishaps, ensure you save your work and back up regularly using cloud storage, for example Dropbox or Google documents in order to access your previous work. Ensure that you not only have a backup of your online course resources and assignments, but you also have your lecturer and/or tutor's email contacts.

A reliable internet access will also give you the opportunity to check in, stay current with your learning, access the course resources and assignment information, and deal with sudden and unexpected changes.

Your lecturers will require a well-functioning computer and a good internet connection. Some students already have these things, but if you don't speak to your tutor or the Student Hub about how we can support you.

Make sure you also have enough stationery (pens, high lighters, notebooks etc.) and can access the correct books or articles to study from, whether hard copies, digital versions, or e-books.



7. Coordinate group chats

Collaborating with your peers and adding social contact into your weekly schedule will ensure you stay connected and avoid getting too isolated when studying alone.

- **Online learning doesn't mean learning in isolation**

Connecting with your virtual classmates on social media or setting up online forums (via Microsoft Teams, Zoom or Skype) will enhance your learning experience. This is a great way to discuss and exchange ideas with your classmates, analyse course resources and swap study tips.

- **Remember to also participate in the online discussion forums that are organised by your lecturers** as this will help you engage in new ideas.

8. Take regular breaks

Taking regular breaks during the day keeps your mind fresh and is one of the easiest ways to avoid burnout.

Try to get out from your 'study mode' each day and integrate personal time into your study routine. You'll be able to work more effectively on your online courses and it's important to give yourself things to look forward to each day.

- **Step away from your computer every few hours and do something you enjoy to break-up your study during the day**

When taking a break, make sure you get away from your study space and have a change of scenery. This will help you maintain balance and return to studying with a focused and clear mind. It's also important to have a clear cut-off point when you finish studying each day. Remember to pack up your study space and have time to relax and reflect on the day.

- **Avoid multi-tasking**

To optimise your productivity, focus on just one task and learning activity at one time and try to avoid social media and any other distractions. It's important to let your friends, whānau, and colleagues know when you're planning breaks during the day and when you are focused on studying.

9. Stay motivated

To be successful, an online student must want to succeed. Online learning requires independence, internal motivation, responsibility, and a certain level of maturity. Have you given some thought to your own personal reasons for attending school? Are you determined and self-motivated to succeed?

There are many worthwhile reasons to work hard with your university studies. You might want a greater level of personal satisfaction with your future career? Perhaps it's personal pride in your accomplishments? Maybe you are seeking a wider range of opportunities available to you with higher education or a higher income?

Don't underestimate the effort needed to fully commit to your online course. To make sure you stay motivated and engaged in your online learning experience, you may want to consider the following:

1. Create your own study routine at a comfortable pace.
2. Inspire yourself with inspirational quotes
3. Never forget the reason you chose to study
4. Accept you will have productive and less productive days.
5. Have healthy snacks nearby to boost your energy
6. Reward yourself every time you complete a challenging task.
7. Make sure you make time for yourself
8. Stay positive and develop a growth mindset – the belief your intelligence is changeable and hard work enables you to become more skilled.

SUCCESSFUL ONLINE LEARNING TIPS

You will need to have an open mind when you start studying remotely you may be expected to:

- Fully commit yourself and participate in the virtual lectures and videos, online resources, and discussion forums
- Be willing to increase your comfort and confidence with technology
- Connect with others and work with your Lecturers and peers effectively
- Be prepared to ask questions and seek out help when needed
- Complete your learning tasks, activities, and assessments on time
- Be self- disciplined
- Look after yourself and take study breaks.

GETTING HELP WHILE AWAY FROM CAMPUS

AUT has a lot of services and resources designed to help you throughout your study. Have a look around the AUT website to find out what's available to you. There are also online platforms that you will regularly use while you're a student and you can access these using your AUT network and password.

- **Arion** for your viewing grades, paying fees, and to enrol.
- **Blackboard** for accessing all online course materials, resources class information, study guides, assessment information, and for keeping up to date with announcements from your lecturers.
- **Student Hub Online** for all student services and AUT information, such as events, notices and for accessing other online systems like the Library, Studiosity, resources to help you learn the technology skills, and improve your study skills, employability, and careers workshops etc.

AUT APPS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Now is a great time to stay connected with the AUT community download the AUT apps. If you turn the notification function in your phone settings to 'on', you'll receive up-to-date announcements, and key information directly to your phone or iPad.

It's also important to stay in contact with your friends and colleagues, and there are a number of social media channels.

- **AUT Student App** connects you to key academic information and student support services. The app allows you to ask specific questions and connect with other students and AUT staff. It includes easy steps to link and connect with all AUT apps.
- **AUT Resilience App** provides you with information and tips about look after your physical and mental health. Each week we will provide you with something to enjoy and to stay motivated and this app also links you to **aut.nz/stayconnected**
- **AUT Safe** is an app designed specifically for COVID-19 updates, and to keep you and the AUT community safe.

AUT social media channels include:

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Twitter

APPS/WEBSITES FOR GENERALLY PRESERVING FOCUS

- **SelfControl**

This application for macOS allows you to block distracting websites for a designated period of time and display the amount of blocked time remaining on your screen. Alternatively, you can select specific websites to whitelist and block everything else.

- **StayFocusd**

This extension for Chrome browsers lets you pick how much time you're allowed to spend on a website before it's automatically blocked. There is also a "nuclear" option that allows you to block the same websites (or alternatively, only allow whitelisted websites) for a certain amount of time.

- **Forest**

This mobile app prevents you from using your phone by growing a tree on your screen. If you navigate away from the app, the tree dies, and you must start over.

APPS/WEBSITES FOR MANAGING TASKS AND LISTS

- **Google Keep**

This Google Account feature lets you write, and record notes and stores them on the side of your screen for easy access.

- **Todoist**

This list-based app and website help you keep your to-do lists in order. You can organise your lists by category (for instance, you might have a to-do list for each class), and even create recurring tasks.