



# What is online learning?

Online learning refers to when a course (or part of a course) and/or its assessment are delivered online. It is also known as 'eLearning' and 'technology enhanced learning', and this learning can take many different forms. At UniSA, online learning takes place primarily through your courses' *learnonline* websites.

Online learning activities might be carried out individually, or they might be interactive and may include:

- reading set weekly materials
- listening to lectures online
- participating in discussion forums
- attending virtual classrooms
- contributing to blogs and wikis
- completing online quizzes and other activities

**Table 1: Benefits of online learning**

<b>It's convenient</b>	You can complete online learning activities whenever and wherever you like. This is a bonus for anyone with a busy lifestyle.
<b>It's for everyone</b>	It doesn't matter whether you are young or old, male or female: age and gender are not barriers to success in online learning.
<b>Shy people get a chance to shine</b>	Online learning gives everyone an equal chance to participate.
<b>It helps develop new skills</b>	Online learning gives you a chance to develop computing skills.
<b>You can work at your own pace</b>	Online learning also gives you a chance to work slowly and carefully. You can take a little extra time to consider your responses and compose your writing carefully.

## Strategies for successful online learning

### 'Netiquette':

- Introduce yourself briefly in your first contribution, as you would when meeting someone for the first time.
- Challenge ideas in ways that are respectful of others. If possible, offer a positive comment before a negative one.
- Review and proofread your contribution carefully before sending it.



**Communicate effectively by:**

- keeping to the topic under discussion
- being moderate (i.e., not too long) in your contributions
- making sure you address any specific questions/topics the lecturer requests
- respecting your audience and their beliefs

**Contribute to discussions by:**

- agreeing with what others have said and explaining why you agree
- giving examples or evidence supporting others' ideas
- explaining why you may disagree with others' statements
- asking another participant to explain or elaborate on their contribution
- inviting others to comment on, add to or critique your views
- suggesting another direction the discussion could take
- sharing links to relevant websites or other resources
- asking questions

**Introduce a new topic by:**

- using expressions like *'What I think xx means...'* or *'I like Blogg's definition of xx...'*
- saying what you find interesting or surprising about something
- describing the insights you have gained from your reading and thinking
- explaining why you consider the topic relevant (or not)
- asking a question relating to a new topic

**Develop self-regulation skills by:**

- not postponing or delaying online learning commitments
- setting aside regular time to participate
- using a weekly or study period planner

**Become familiar with Learnonline site and learning materials by:**

- clicking on every link your course site contains
- comparing one course page to another
- using the 'Help' button in the top right-hand corner

**If you need help:**

- use the UniSA IT help facility
- ask your tutor or course coordinator
- ask a question on your course's forum