



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

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INFORMATION HANDBOOK FOR ONLINE TUTORS
2020/2021

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This tutor's information handbook has been prepared to guide and facilitate orientation of tutors for online and distance teaching at the University of Nairobi. The handbook is divided into three key sections. The first section covers the structure of the University. The second section covers online and distance learning mode of delivery while the last section addresses learner support services offered to online and distance learners..

After reading this handbook you should be able to provide tutorial support services to online and distance learners.

2.0 UNIVERSITY STRUCTURE

At the top of the management structure of the University of Nairobi is the Chancellor and the University Council. The current Chancellor is Dr. Mrs Vijoo Rattansi and the Chair of the Council is Prof. Julia Ojiambo. Next in the hierarchy is the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Gitahi Kiama. This is followed by four Deputy Vice-Chancellors (DVCs), namely, the DVC in charge of Academic Affairs, Prof. Julius Ogengo; the DVC in charge of Finance, Planning and Development, Prof. Margaret Jesang Hatchison (Acting); the DVC in charge of Research, Innovation and Enterprise, Prof. Madara Ogot and the DVC in charge of Human Resource and Administration, Prof. Enos Njeru (Acting).

Next in the hierarchy are the Principals who are the academic and administrative heads of Colleges. There are seven Colleges of the University. The Principal of the College of Education and External Studies, which is located at Kikuyu Campus and Kenya Science Campus is Prof. Isaac Jumba. The Principal of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, which is located at the Main Campus, Lower Kabete Campus and Parklands Campus is Prof. Jama Mohamud Abdi (Acting). The Principal of the College of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences, which is located at Upper Kabete Campus is Prof. Rose Nyikal (Acting). The Principal of the College of Health Sciences, which is located at Kenyatta Hospital Campus is Prof. James Machoki (Acting). The Principal of the College of Architecture and Engineering, which is located on State House Road and Harry Thuku Road is Prof. Peter Ngau. The Principal of the College of Biological and Physical Sciences, which is located in Chiromo Campus is Prof. Francis Mulaa (Acting) and the

Director (equivalent to Principal) of Open, Distance and e-Learning Campus, which is located on University Way and has regional Learning Centres is Prof. Christopher Gakuu. There is also the Graduate School which is located on the University Way and the Director (equivalent to Principal) of the School is Prof. Lydia Njenga.

After the Principals are Deans of Schools and Faculties and Directors of Institutes and Centres. These are followed by Chairmen of Departments and Thematic Heads of Units.

It is important for you as a tutor to familiarise yourself with the university structure so that you can know where to channel issues concerning learners.

3.0 OPEN DISTANCE AND E- LEARNING

It is important for you as a tutor to be familiar with the concept of , open, distance and e-learning. Open learning is an institutional based mode which is characterised by flexibility in which learners are allowed to learn where and when they want. Learners are free to join courses when they want, take bridging courses where necessary for enrolment, take time off their studies and resume when they are able to, transfer credits, seek exemptions from courses already covered elsewhere, and so on.

Open learning students can study through face to face (synchronous)teaching, distance learning, e-learning or blended learning. When face to face teaching is used, the role of the instructor is to teach face-to-face like in the traditional classroom. The only difference is that flexible teaching timetables are required to accommodate learners during times when they are available,be it during the day, in the evenings or on weekends. It should be noted that face-to-face teaching in Open learning has been discontinued and all the teaching is now done using online multimedia platforms such as University of Nairobi e-Learning Portal (eclass), Google meet, Google classroom, Webex, Microsoft teams and Zoom.

Distance learning is also institutional based learning which takes place when tutors and learners are separated in time and space most of the time or all the time. In this case, learning will take place through the use of two-way communication media to facilitate learning transaction between the tutor and the learner, among learners as well as provision of learner support services by the institution. The instructional media used consist of e-learning, portable devices such as

flash cards, videoconferencing, computer mediated communication, computer based learning and multi-media system. In some forms of Distance learning, limited face to face tuition is also provided to learners during a learning period such as a semester. Distance learning systems use the media to prepare and provide learning content to the learner to study. They also provide learner support services to facilitate the learning process. Distance learning is also characterised by flexibility though to a lesser extent than Open learning. For example, admission requirements to programmes are fixed, mode of study is fixed and maximum time allowed in a programme is also fixed. Nevertheless, learners have the freedom to take time off their studies and resume when they want, seek credit transfer and exemptions, defer commencement of their studies and so on. In Distance learning, the role of the instructor is to provide tutorial support and other forms of learner support services since the learner will already have been provided with the learning content on one or more of the technological media platforms mentioned above. The support services can be provided through face to face meetings, call centre, regional learning centres or social media platforms. It should be noted that the learning courseware for Distance learning at the University of Nairobi is now provided on the Moodle Learning Management System while face-to-face sessions are conducted online using multimedia platforms such as Google meet, Webex and Zoom.

E-Learning is another institutional based learning which refers to electronic applications and processes to learn. E-Learning consists of web based computerised learning, virtual or multimedia classrooms and digital collaborations. Learning materials are developed and uploaded on the University of Nairobi Learning Management System (LMS) dubbed eclass. The LMS is designed with instructional features through which the tutor interacts with the learner and where learners carry out collaborative learning activities individually and as groups. The institutions also use the learning platforms to provide aspects of learner support services to the learner. The LMS features vary for different designs but generally they consist of elements such as course description, agenda/calendar, announcement, document, exercises, learning path, assignment and quizzes, forums, groups, users, chat, survey, edit tool list, course settings, manage session courses, and statistics/analytics. Some institutions offer learning programmes on e-Learning alone while others combine it with some face to face sessions in the beginning and at the end of a semester to provide orientation and final assessments. When one mode of learning is

combined with another in this way, the new form is referred to as blended learning. It should be noted that blended learning has become the more common mode of online and distance learning in many learning institutions. In Distance learning, the role of the instructor is to provide tutorial support and other forms of learner support services since the learning content will already be available to the learner on the e-learning platform. The support services can be provided through the e-Learning platform, multimedia classrooms, call centre, regional learning centres or social media platforms. At the University of Nairobi, the most commonly used multimedia platforms are Moodle LMS, Google Classroom, Google Meet, webex and Zoom.

4.0 LEARNER SUPPORT SERVICES

Learner support services refer to services provided to the learner to help in the learning process other than the main media used to teach. Learner support services can be broadly classified into three main categories namely: academic or cognitive support, organizational support and emotional support. Organizational support and emotional support can be referred as non-academic support.

Academic support involves developing a student's learning and cognitive skills. It deals with tutoring and helping students develop learning skills together with important skills of assessment and feedback. Tutoring includes activities such as defining the course territory, explaining concepts, demonstrating, giving examples, clarifying concepts and monitoring student progress. Assessment includes formal evaluation and informal feedback to help students reflect on their strength and weakness. Developing learning skills means helping students with numeracy and study skills.

Organizational support involves helping learners to join the institution and access its learning resources and includes services such as application and registration for programmes, student web portal support, registration for course units, provision of learning materials, management support, library support, bookstore/bookshop services, ICT support, financial aid support, disability support, community support, clearance from university support, graduation and post graduation support.

Emotional support involves helping students to cope with personal and psycho-social challenges and include such services as guidance and counseling, advocacy, retention and sense of community support.

As a tutor it is important to note that learner support services are offered to the learner at different stages of the study. These include pre-entry stage, on course or during the course and at post graduation or at exit stage. The following are learner support services that are normally provided to students who have registered in various open, distance and e-learning programmes at the University of Nairobi:

- ◆ Application and registration for programme

Application support refer to the support given to learners when applying to the university so that they can be considered for admission into various programmes offered by the university. Registration for programme support is usually given once the learners have been admitted in the university.

- ◆ Student web portal support

This support is offered to learners to help them to navigate the e-learning portal of the University. Through this support learners are able to perform a number of activities on the student web portal like accessing learning materials, participate in online group discussions, online chats, upload assignments and other activities.

Through the student management information system (SMIS), the learner is able to access emails, check fee payment, fee balance, exam results and access to e-resources.

- ◆ Registration for course units

This support is given to learners to help them register for the courses they are supposed to study in a particular programme for a period of time like in a semester.

- ◆ Provision of learning materials

This support is given to enable learners get the learning materials or courseware that they are supposed to use during their study. Learning materials can be in many forms like printed modules, flash card, C.Ds or e-learning materials.

- ◆ Tutorial support

Tutorial support is given to learners to help them master the content of their courses. This can be given through face to face interaction of learners with their tutors or it can be given on-line where learners and tutors interact using various media.

- ◆ Academic advising support

This support is given to learners to empower them to make academic choices that incorporate their individual interests, values and skills. This support enables the learner to decide which course or courses to take.

- ◆ Management support

Management support refers to a wide range of support given to learners to enable them go through their studies. It includes supporting learners to register for the units through Student Management Information System and helping learners to access course materials.

- ◆ Counselling support

This is the support given to learners to help them go through the course. Learners can be counseled on academic as well as on psychosocial issues. Academic counseling will empower the learner to gain knowledge and skills to enable successful completion of the course. Psychosocial counseling is given to learners to cope with non-academic problems like financial issues, family disagreement, diseases which might prevent the learner from

concentrating on the studies. As a tutor you are encouraged to acquaint yourself with these issues so that you can offer counseling services appropriately.

- ◆ Library support

Library support is given to learners to enable them access the library services. This involves directing the learners to the nearest library facilities where they can access more reading materials. Library support also entails directing and guiding learners on how to access the e-resources like e-books and e-journals that are hosted by the university library. As a tutor it is advisable that you familiarize yourself with the various library services that can be of benefit to your learners.

- ◆ Bookstore/bookshop services

Book store or bookshop services entail supporting learners to access bookshop services. The University of Nairobi has a bookshop where learners can buy books and other academic materials that are of interest to them. There are also bookshop services that are available in major towns that offer services like binding, photocopying and printing. It is important for you as a tutor to know where the learners can get bookshop services

- ◆ ICT support

Information Communication and Technology support refers to helping the learners to use various ICT tools. Information communication and technology support is an important support for the learners because right from application up to graduation, learners are expected to use these tools. Functions like registration of the courses, fees payment, access to courseware,

checking fee balances and checking the results are all automated. Therefore, as a tutor it is important that you familiarize yourself with these processes in order for you to advise learners appropriately.

- ◆ Financial aid support

Financial aid support involves advising learners on how they can be supported financially so that they are able to pursue their courses. As a tutor you can guide learners on scholarship opportunities available that are beneficial to learners or direct learners to relevant offices that can help them get financial aid.

- ◆ Advocacy support

This is a support that provides advice to learners about many issues that may affect their studies including academic concerns or complaints and financial assistance.

- ◆ Services for students with disabilities

This is the support given to learners with temporary or permanent disabilities that affect their ability to study. It is advisable that learners with disabilities notify the Dean of students at the earliest time possible. As a tutor you are expected to guide learners with disabilities to the relevant offices where they can get special services.

- ◆ Services to promote a sense of community

Community services are defined as services that are identified by the university through formal or informal consultation with local nonprofit, government, and community-based organizations, as designed to improve the quality of life for community residents, particularly low-income individuals, or to solve particular problems related to their needs. As a tutor it is important that you sensitize learners on the importance of community service.

- ◆ Retention support

Retention support is the advice and guidance given to learners who are facing challenges that may force them to drop out of the course. For example a learner may face financial issues that may make the learner want to drop out of the programme. As a tutor you can guide such a learner on how to get financial support. It is important to note that retention support is also given to those learners who have dropped out of the programme. This will enable them to rejoin the course and continue with their studies.

- ◆ Coursework deadlines support

Coursework forms the core of tutoring and therefore it is the responsibility of the tutor to inform and remind learners on the deadlines given for submission of any assignment that form part of the coursework.

- ◆ Examination schedules support

Examination schedule support refers to helping learners by giving them the schedule containing the nature of examination and the dates proposed for those examinations. As a tutor it is important to note that learners are informed and given the examination schedule in advance probably at the beginning of the academic year. This will enable them to plan their activities well.

- ◆ Clearance from university support

This support is given to learners when they are about to clear from the university. The University of Nairobi has developed and operationalised an on-line clearance system for learners who have completed their studies. As a tutor it is advisable that you inform learners about the on-line clearance system and the relevant offices.

- ◆ Graduation support

Graduation support is given to learners to help them graduate from the university. It involves getting clearance from the various departments, paying fees for graduation, getting graduation gowns, participating in the graduation rehearsal and participating in the graduation ceremony. All these processes require that learners are supported effectively. As a tutor it is recommended that you familiarize yourself with these processes and be able to guide learners appropriately.

- ◆ Post graduation support

Post graduation support is given to learners who have exited from the university after completing their courses. This support enables the learners to be in touch with the university through the alumni network of the university. In addition learners are given support in terms of carrier progression and job openings.

5.0 LOCATION OF LEARNER SUPPORT SERVICES

As a tutor it is important to know where the learner support services discussed in the previous section are provided to learners. You should note that learner support services are provided at various points depending on the support that is offered.

The following are the locations where these services are provided:

- ◆ On the Learning Management System (LMS), on e-Learning portal, that is, eclass,
- ◆ In Online Information Handbooks (available on the ODeL Campus website and on University of Nairobi website)
- ◆ During orientation of students by online and distance learning experts (online or face-to-face),
- ◆ During induction of tutors by online and distance learning experts (online or face-to-face),

- ◆ During tutorial sessions by tutors (online or face-to-face),
- ◆ At the Call Centre in ODeL unit located at Main Campus and
- ◆ In the hosting Colleges by Programmes Coordinators (of ODeL Campus and their counterparts in the hosting Colleges) and in the regions.

6.0 TUTORIAL SUPPORT SERVICES

As a tutor, you are the link between the institution and the learners. Your role therefore goes a long way in helping learners to learn effectively.

Tutorial support service can be rewarding for you as well as for your learners, but it is also demanding. Your main role is to lead, manage and conduct tutorials. For open learning students you will:

- a) Provide tuition services to the learners;
- b) Provide guidance and counselling to the learners;
- c) Assess the learner in continuous assessment and final examination.

For distance learning students you will

- a) Provide tutoring services to the learners using available technology to bridge the gap between yourself and the learner ;
- b) You will prepare well organised learning materials/ modules/ course unit/ courseware to be used by learners while they are away from campus;

- c) Provide limited face to face tutoring to the students when they are scheduled;
- d) Provide guidance and counselling to learners;
- e) Assess the learner in continuous assessment and final examination.

For e-learning(this includes online) students you will need to do the following:

- a) Provide tutoring support services to the learners;
- b) Provide guidance and counselling to learners;
- c) Assess the learner in continuous assessment and final examination on e-learning platforms or at designated points;
- d) Organize and moderate online group discussions and chats for the students;
- e) Be available for learners to provide interaction on the e-learning platforms;
- f) Perform some administrative duties such as creating groups, etc.

It is important to make your students know you during the first tutorial class. You also require to make it clear to them that they have a responsibility towards each other in contributing to their tutorials and discussions.

During tutorials you should take attendance record using the monitoring tool of the e-learning platform used.

As a tutor, you should emphasize the requirement for original work as plagiarism is a serious offence at the university. Therefore, as part of tutorial support, you should introduce students to ways of checking their work using available softwares to avoid involvement in plagiarism.

7.0 USE OF MEDIA IN TUTORIAL SUPPORT SERVICES

Open, Distance and e-learning Campus in collaboration with your school or department will provide you with necessary resources to offer the tutorial support services. These will include orientation and training on e-learning pedagogy and andragogy as well as use of multimedia platform tools for teaching and assessment.

8.0 TUTORING

Your role as a tutor is to guide the learners enrolled in open, distance or e-learning programmes at the university. This guidance should aim at promoting learner centred or individualised learning and it is different from classroom face to face (regular) teaching. In order to be effective, you need to appreciate the difficulties of the learners at various stages of their learning.

They require encouragement, guidance, reassurance, development of confidence, empathy communication, constructive and prompt feedback on the assignments, trust and confidence in you. To meet these needs you must be sound academically and professionally. Therefore, you should have a thorough understanding of the syllabus, course content, instructional design/format and any other related issues.

Specifically, your role will be tuition or tutorial support online depending on whether or not course modules have been developed. Where course modules have not been developed, your role will be to:

- * Provide an overview of the course outline
- * Discuss special requirements for the course, e.g. Experimental kits, fieldwork instruments, maps, etc.
- * Caution the learner on assumptions and misconceptions
- * Motivate the learner by showing him/her suitable approaches of studying
- * Conduct tuition online for the required contact hours in a semester using available online multimedia tools such as Google meet, webex or Zoom
- * Discuss the problems expressed by the learner in the course unit on various topics
- * Assess the learners during the course (coursework) and at the end of the course (final examination)
- * Provide prompt feedback to improve learning
- * Develop a study module for the course unit

Where study modules have been developed, your role will be to:

- * Provide tutorial support for 25 contact hours in a semester

- * Provide an overview of the study unit using table of contents or outline of course
- * Discuss key concepts or ideas in the topics covered
- * Introduce the learner to the language of the subject or course
- * Discuss the format of the lesson presentation in the module – expected learning outcomes, self assessment questions, summary, activities, references and other recommended reading materials
- * Skim through the course module
- * Discuss special requirements for course unit, eg. Experimental kits, fieldwork instruments, maps, etc
- * Provide details on selected topics or ideas
- * Caution the learner on assumptions and misconceptions
- * Motivate the learner by showing him/her suitable approaches of studying
- * Show the application of concepts with examples
- * Revise selected topics that cut across the course unit during revision
- * Discuss the problems expressed by the learner in the course unit

- * Assess the learners during the course (coursework) and at the end of the course (final examination)

- * Provide prompt feedback to improve learning

9.0 GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING

The tutor also provides guidance and counselling services to online and distance learning students on academic and psychosocial issues. This requires that the tutor has good knowledge of the characteristics of the learner, namely; the learner's demographic factors, motivational issues, learning styles, and skills, subject background and resource factors. The tutor should also be familiar with typical problems of online and distance learners such as family pressures, worries about work and money, isolation, lack of books and libraries, lack of self confidence, low reading ability and so on.

As an academic guide and psychosocial counsellor, the role of the tutor is to advise the learner on the general and special study skills such as what, where, when (timetable) and how to study and how much time to spend studying. Learners should also be guided on study techniques such as SQ3R (survey, question, read, recall and revise and SARWET (skim, ask, read, write, evaluate and test) so that they are able to study systematically and be able to determine meaning from context, find main ideas, draw inferences, draw conclusions and make generalizations. Tutors should also discuss academic problems such as poor performance in tests and assignments or failure to perform specified academic tasks; encourage the formation of study groups or circles; assist learners to develop and sustain self confidence and self reliance; guide the learner on how to obtain recommended reading materials and other learning resources; advise the learner on personal issues such as anxiety, isolation, withdrawal, anti-social behaviour, financial difficulties and family problems.

There are many handbooks that the tutor can recommend to the learner to browse on the web and read on such topical issues as 'how to make sure that distance learning is right for you', 'how to choose the course that is right for you', 'how to apply for a course', 'financial assistance and

how to apply for it in your locality’, ‘how to cope with unfamiliar technologies’, ‘how to write essays, study skills, time management’, ‘how to revise for examinations’, ‘strategies for overcoming examinations anxiety’ and ‘how to plan for a new career’. Where the tutor is not able to assist a learner directly on their psychosocial needs, they should refer the learner to the office of the Dean of Students for further guidance. The email for the Dean of students is dean-students@uonbi.ac.ke

10.0 FACE TO FACE TUTORING

Face-to-face tutoring has been phased out in online and distance learning mode of learning and may be used only in blended learning where online or distance learning is combined with practical sessions which require learner to come together. As an online and distance learning tutor, you may be required to conduct face to face tutorials in situations requiring practical, laboratory, or field work. Specifically, you will be required to:

1. Establish a personal link
2. Offer individual help
3. Allow the learners to interact
4. Give psychological boost
5. Provide practical experience
6. Provide opportunity for written work
7. Help students to work confidently when on their own
8. Encourage students to work independently
9. Form self-help groups

11.0 TECHNICAL SKILLS IN E-TUTORING (ON-LINE TUTORING)

Good communication is key to success of students. You should therefore maintain good communication between yourself and other tutors, staff, students, course administrator and your senior tutor. To ensure effective communication, make sure that the course administrators, other staff and your students have your contacts. Use your university e-mail address to communicate. Check your email regularly to pick up any messages.

As an online tutor you must be familiar with online instructional tools and the learning management system, and any other e-learning applications being used in the university. This may include:

- a) Log in features
- b) Edit features
- c) Access to courses
- d) Course management tools
- e) Instructional device tools and their functions for instance course description, agenda, announcement, document, exercises, learning path, assignments, forums, groups, users. Wiki, chats, and survey

In case of any difficulties you should seek help immediately to avoid gaps in your teaching or tutoring support. You should direct your questions and concerns to the e-Learning support team via the email: lst@uonbi.ac.ke.

12.0 ADMINISTRATION

Although the role of the tutor is primarily academic, tutors also play some administrative roles in online and distance learning mode of teaching and learning. The tutor is usually the main contact between the learner and the institution and is often the first person a learner contacts when requiring help on administrative issues. It is therefore important for the tutor to be familiar with the administrative procedures related to management of deadlines for assignments, assignment marking and return, tests and examinations scheduling and supervision, forwarding and/or uploading marks. Usually, the administrative responsibilities and workload for a tutor will depend on the staffing structure in the School or Faculty.

As a link between the learner and the Faculty/School, the tutor should have communication and problem-solving skills. He/she should also have a working knowledge of academic and administrative regulations governing online and distance learning mode of delivery at the University of Nairobi, be clear on what administrative issues they can address and which ones they need to refer to other offices, be informed about the roles of online and distance learning administrators and their areas of responsibility and how to contact them. Issues which online and distance learning tutors may be frequently required to explain to learners will revolve around the sequencing of courses and the reason for the sequence, pre-requisites for courses, subject combinations, rationale and purpose of the assessment methods used in a course and compensated pass regulations.

13.0 KEEPING RECORDS ABOUT LEARNERS

Tutors should keep notes and records of all contact they make with learners. This will enable the tutor to retrieve information about learners easily and quickly when learners contact them, or when information is required by administrators. In many instances, it is the tutor who is expected to have most up-to-date information about the progress of the learner. The tutor should keep student records for three main reasons, namely; to support his work as a tutor so that s/he can maintain continuity of information about a student, maintain formal records in formats established by the Faculty or School so that the information can be used for official purposes, and keep track of key dates for the course and for the Faculty or School, such as start and end of semester dates, assignment and test dates and examination dates.

The information a tutor should record will depend on what they need to know about the learner. The basic records will usually include names of learners and their contacts, name of the course, notes about each contact and more detailed notes on assignments, tests and examinations. The master file should identify key dates of the academic calendar, texts and other resources for the course and any other specialised requirements. Examples shown in Tables 1 and 2 could provide a useful format for records that a tutor should keep about the learners.

Figure 1: INFORMATION ON COURSE UNITS

Course name	Text	Orientation, Tutorials	Assignment, Tests, Exam dates	Notes
BBS 101: Introduction to Business Studies	Good background in Business studies	May 10, 13-17 July 12-16 Sept 2-6	July 17 July 19 Sept 10	

Figure 2: INFORMATION ON LEARNERS

Learner Name Reg. No.	Telephone, email	Dates of Contact	Notes on messages	Assignment notes and marks
MumoMueke L26/20148/2016	+254711267384 mueke@gmail.com	June 1, 14 Aug, 3, 13, 26	Missed July 14 tutorial – unwell	Assign-11 Test-09 Exam 54 Total-74

However, it is important for a tutor to confirm with the Department, Faculty or School the official format for student records, if any. The tutor should also consult the Faculty administrator to ascertain the platform on which student records should be kept. This is because some records may need to be kept in manual files while others may need to be in a section of the e-learning platform.

14.0 ASSESSMENT

As an online tutor you will be required to carry out an assessment of your learners to gauge their learning so that you can devise appropriate strategies to help them overcome any challenges they may be facing in the programme. Assessment is normally done during the course and at the end of the course or semester. As a tutor you will assess your learners through:

- Tests
- Assignments
- Projects
- Practicals

- Final examinations
- Others

For an effective assessment to be achieved, you will be required to perform the following key functions on the selected online platform:

- Set appropriate questions
- Work out solutions or marking schemes
- Mark the scripts
- Make appropriate comments on the continuous assessment scripts to provide feedback to the learner
- Provide follow-up discussions on problematic aspects of tests and assignments

15.0 CALENDAR AND TIMETABLE

Any good teaching requires planning. At the University of Nairobi, this involves preparation of a schedule of teaching and learning sessions for one academic year consisting of at least two semesters. The calendar spells out the starting date of a semester, the end date for teaching in the semester, and starting and end date for examinations in the semester. This cycle is repeated for the next semester at the end of which there is usually a break before the next academic year starts. The length of a semester is usually 15 weeks.

Once an academic calendar has been prepared and approved for use by the University Senate, detailed teaching timetables are then prepared to show the times of day when each course unit will be taught in a week. Such a timetable is then followed by the tutor throughout the semester. An examinations timetable is also prepared to administer end of semester examinations during the last two weeks of a semester.

A further weekly timetable which shows the details of individual lessons is prepared by teaching Departments to be used during the semester for face-to-face or online teaching without study modules.

For distance mode of learning with learning modules provided on the learning platforms, what the learners require are tutorial support services and so academic calendars are slightly different. The calendars indicate the starting date for a semester, orientation dates for tutors and learners, introduction tutorials, home study, submission of term papers, continuation tutorials, timed tests, home study, revision tutorials, end of semester exams and end of semester date.

The schedules and timetables are posted on the SMIS and elearning portal where tutors and learners can access them. It is therefore important for tutors to participate in the planning process for teaching their students in online and distance mode in their Faculties and Schools in the same way as they do for their students on the face to face and online mode. This will make it easy for tutors to be familiar with the teaching schedules which they should follow in a semester.

In addition to learning events provided in academic schedules and timetables, there are learning activities that tutors of online and distance mode can post in the Announcement section of the elearning portal as the semester progresses to clarify issues or adjust timelines. This makes it possible for the tutor to move together with learners as a team.

16.0 NEW ONLINE AND DISTANCE TUTORS

As you will realize, it is possible to interact with learners using various technologies without much difficulties as long as you have the technical skills to use these technologies. Most online and distance learning tutors are actually able to interact with a diversity of students in ways that are not limited by face-to-face contact on multimedia platforms such as email, telephone, sms, fax, Google meet, Google classroom, Webex, Zoom, LMS, etc.

For new online tutors, it is advisable that you familiarize yourself with the various technologies that are in use.

It should be emphasized that the use of various technologies in delivering instruction to learners should not in any way curtail or limit the ability of the tutor to deliver. In fact the use of technology in delivering the instruction actually enhances the quality of delivery and makes it easy for the tutors to carry out their role and for learners to be motivated and enjoy the learning.

17.0 MOTIVATING FACTORS FOR ONLINE TEACHING

Motivation can be described as the driving force behind people's actions or behavior. Motivation is also one's direction to behavior, or what causes a person to want to repeat a behavior. It comes from within the individual.

There are a number of factors that motivate online tutors to carry out their role of tutoring. In this section we are going to look at some of these factors. Among the top factors motivating tutors to participate in online teaching are:

17.1 Opportunity to reach remote students

Unlike face to face teaching where the tutor teaches the learners who are physically located in a particular place, online and distance learning tutoring allows the tutor to reach those learners who are away from him through the use of various technological media.

17.2 Intellectual challenge and opportunity to develop new ideas

Tutoring online allows the tutor to prepare the courseware in advance following a properly laid down procedure. In addition the content is taken through quality assurance mechanism which allows the tutor to exercise his intellectual capacity and incorporates new ideas in the instructional modules.

17.3 Opportunity to work with highly motivated students

Online tutoring involves interacting with learners who are enthusiastic and interested in the courses they have enrolled in. The online tutor is therefore presented with the opportunity of directing and guiding learners who are willing and ready to learn.

17.4 Opportunity to have free time when using asynchronous forms of distance media

Online and distance tutoring at the University of Nairobi allows the tutor to interact with learners either synchronously or asynchronously, respectively. When the tutor interacts with learners asynchronously s/he will have some free time to engage in other academic functions like attending conferences and research without missing classes.

17.5 Financial reward

Tutors participating in online and distance tutoring may be eligible for some monetary compensation for developing study modules and excess teaching load. The university has an elaborate policy for compensation. As a tutor you are encouraged to familiarize yourself with the policy.

17.6 Opportunities for research

Online and distance learning tutoring is an academic activity and therefore tutors will be exposed to avenues for carrying out research that is related to their area of interest. As an academician you are encouraged to carry out research in your area of specialization.

17.7 Motivation to use technology

Online and distance learning tutoring involves the use of technology to interact with learners. These technologies facilitate the learning process since they make it easy for you as a tutor to carry out your role. This increases motivation and makes teaching enjoyable.

17.8 Opportunity for recognition

Online and distance learning tutoring are recognized by the University for providing their services to the learners. The tutors can benefit through promotion and career advancement.

17.9 Opportunity to use support services

There is a range of learner support services that the tutor can use to support the learners. For example a tutor can guide learners on how to access academic resources from the library to support the course that is being tutored.

17.10 Reduced need for travelling

Online and distance learning tutoring reduces the need by tutors to travel from one place to another. The technology used enables the tutor to interact with the learners who are located anywhere anytime without making physical movement.

17.11 Increased course quality

Online and distance learning tutoring provides opportunity for tutors to develop study modules to be used, following properly laid down procedures. The modules are taken through quality assurance mechanisms with the aim of improving the quality of the product.

18.0 CHALLENGES FOR NEW ONLINE AND DISTANCE TUTORS

In the previous section we looked at factors which motivate online and distance tutors to carry out the tutoring role. It is worth noting that there are other factors which can make the tutor lose the motivation to carry out his duties. Among the factors that de-motivate tutors from online and distance teaching are:

18.1 Increased workload

Sometimes tutors are allocated many learners that they cannot handle or they are given more classes which tend to increase their workload. It is advisable that before allocation of courses, the workload is rationalised and that tutors are given manageable workload.

18.2 The changed role from instructor to facilitator or mentor

Online and distance learning tutoring requires that the tutor becomes the facilitator and not necessarily the content provider. This poses some challenges especially to tutors who are used to traditional face to face teaching. It is recommended that first time tutors for online and distance tutoring be taken through orientation where they will be given the required skills for this mode of instruction.

18.3 Lack of technical or administrative support

Online and distance learning tutoring requires that tutors have both technical and administrative capacity to carry out their role. If tutors are not conversant with the technology they are using or they lack any administrative skills, then they are likely to be de-motivated and therefore they will not be able to support the learners as required. It is therefore paramount that tutors are trained on the technology they are going to use. In addition, tutors especially those who are not conversant

with online and distance operations should be given orientation on administrative support for this mode of teaching and learning.

18.4 Reduced course quality

There is the perception that online and distance learning tutoring reduces the course quality since the tutor is away from the learner and that the time given for face to face interaction is not enough. This might discourage the tutors. However, research indicates that the course quality for face to face and online and distance learners are comparable. It is important to sensitise online and distance tutors on these facts.

18.5 Negative attitude of colleagues

There is also the attitude or perception of fellow tutors towards online and distance tutors. This mostly happen in institutions which practice dual mode of delivery where online and distance mode may be viewed as inferior to face to face or traditional mode of delivery. To overcome this, there is need to sensitise and involve all teaching staff in both modes of delivery.

19.0 COMMON MISTAKES OF NEW TUTORS

You may find tutoring challenging if you have been used to face-to-face instruction in regular/traditional classroom teaching. Difficulties experienced in adopting online and distance tutoring may be due to some common mistakes such as:

- a) Using cutting edge technologies when simple measures would be adequate
- b) Not taking time to learn the technology
- c) Failure to attend tutorials and offer support as expected
- d) Lack of prompt feedback
- e) Putting the text book online. This frustrates students when they have to read long texts on computer screens
- f) Failing to develop course structure and clear requirements
- g) Failing to interact with students and make regular follow up.

20. 0 CONCLUSION

We have now come to the end of this tutors handbook and we hope that the skills learnt in this handbook will enable you provide various learner support services to the learners with confidence and enable them to achieve their academic endeavours.

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