

Preparing to Succeed as a Work-from-Home Student



Monitor kpu.ca and check your @email.kpu.ca account regularly for updates

The Learning Centre is online!

Book a video/chat session with a tutor or learning strategist and upload your writing assignments at tlc.kpu.ca

Material in this guide is adapted from The University of Virginia "Coronavirus Help: Preparing to Succeed as a Work-from-Home Student" (<https://advising.virginia.edu/resources/coronavirus-homestudy/>)

Should you find yourself having to continue your studies from home or off campus, remember that you, your classmates and your instructor are all in the same situation. Keep calm! Some of your classes may not require you to be online at a specific time, while others may. So set up a schedule. Just because you don't have to come to class doesn't mean that you don't have to set aside time for your courses. You will need plan your time to complete the work required on a daily and weekly basis.

First, recognize that you, your classmates, and your instructors will all have to work together to adjust. Be patient with yourself and with others during this time. Second, the overarching theme of the guidance below is that you will need to create structure for yourself in order to succeed as an online learner. Your routines with friends, student organizations, and work will change. If some of your classes move to a format that does not require you to be in class at a specific time, or if attendance policies change, you may not feel the same pressure to structure your life around your coursework.

To adjust for these changes, you will need to find ways to create that structure for yourself. Below are some suggestions and considerations as you work to do this.

Plan your time

- Choose your preferred tool for keeping track of your to-do list, due dates, and schedule. This may be a mobile app, wall calendar, or bound paper agenda. The important thing is that it is a format that you will actually use. You might consider whether it would be helpful to keep your schedule somewhere that is visible to your family or roommates so that they know when you are likely to be unavailable – in an online lecture or working on your assignments.
- Review each of your course presentations and watch for communications from your instructors on changes to due dates, assignments, and exams. Update your calendar accordingly. Block out class sessions and other time-specific obligations, write down deadlines, and create phone or sticky note reminders for important tasks.
- Normally, you might keep a semi-regular schedule that includes things like going to the library or studying on-campus. Do you really know just how much time you spend on coursework, though? Figure out how much time you typically need to devote to each class and account for when you will need extra time for major assignments or exams. Write this information out in a way that makes sense to you, and use it to draft a daily and weekly task list and schedule. Be realistic about how much you are able to accomplish in one day, and build in extra buffer time when you have big assignments due.
- While class times and other meetings may have a predetermined time, it will be up to you to define the structure of much of your day. Once you know how much time you will need to devote to your coursework, think about the best time of day for you

to do that. Depending upon your living arrangements, you should consider the schedules of others in your house or apartment.

- Schedule time to spend with family and friends, even if it is over the phone or online. There are a few reasons to do this. First, knowing that you have made time for relaxation and socializing will make it easier to focus on the task on hand when you need to be reading or studying. Second, it will signal to your friends and family that you have considered their needs and schedules and that you care about them, but that you also need to prioritize your coursework.

Discuss schedules, boundaries, and expectations with your family or roommates

- Whether you are living at home with your family or with other students in a house or apartment, you should sit down and have a discussion about how you can help each other with this adjustment.
- Prepare for this discussion by constructing an outline of the amount of time that you will need to devote to coursework and the types of tasks you will be doing. For example, will you sometimes need quiet space so that you can engage in online class discussions using a speaker and microphone? Your family or roommates will be better able to support your learning if they are aware of your needs.
- If you are living at home with family members who work or are also in school, consider working during the same hours that they do to help remove the temptation to socialize when you intended to be studying. If other family members are also working from home, plan ahead to share technology resources or favored working spaces.
- If you are living in a household with young children or others who require care, be sure to clarify with the rest of your family who will be responsible for providing that care and at what times.

Prepare your study space and state of mind

- Keep your learning materials handy. Make it easy for yourself to attend class or complete assignments. Keep paper, pens, chargers, and other materials all together to make work convenient. If possible, keep a dedicated space in your home set up with these materials ready to go. If it's not possible to keep a dedicated space, then keep everything together in a box or backpack, and treat that as your mobile home office.

- Do you need quiet space to engage in online classes? If you cannot escape background noise in your home, remember to mute the microphone as needed. Keep a notecard handy stating that class is in session, and make it visible to others in your living space.
- You should develop habits around your state of mind as well. Get dressed for an online class just as you would for an in-person class. Take a few minutes before each class session to think about what material will be covered that day and what questions you may have. You might normally do that while you walk or ride the bus to class. That's a great habit, and you should try to maintain it as an online learner. If you have trouble shifting your focus away from goings-on in your apartment or with your family, try quiet breathing exercises as you sit down to study.

Stay connected to friends and University resources

- Find ways to stay connected with friends and classmates. You might try having a regular call with a friend or a group while you eat so that you can catch up and support each other. Designating a time for these chats will also help to keep you focused during your scheduled work hours. Lean on your friends for social support, but also work to keep each other accountable to your goals and priorities.
- Check with your instructors about whether they encourage similar online interactions for class study groups. They may be open to ideas about how to engage students in their coursework and support their success during this time.
- While it may take some time—especially at first—for instructors and KPU departments to be able to return every email or find out the answer to every question, we still encourage you to reach out and ask for help when you need it.
- Be patient with your instructors as they work to reformat their courses and address any unforeseen issues that are likely to arise, but be sure to email or call (as directed by each instructor) when you need clarification or feel that you are missing information. Don't wait till the last minute!
- Book an online session with a tutor or learning strategist at <http://tlc.kpu.ca>
- You can also submit your written work for feedback to <http://tlc.kpu.ca> and <http://writeaway.ca>
- Our libraries are open and staff are prepared to assist with research and coursework. Don't hesitate to ask! If you don't know where to start, try AskAway – available at <https://www.kpu.ca/library/services/askalibrarian>

Additional guidance

- It is possible that public spaces in your community where you would normally be able to find internet access may begin to close or to discourage visitors. Therefore, you will need to be proactive in communicating to your instructors that you are concerned about your ability to access course materials. Information about these considerations is still forthcoming at the time this document is being written, so keep an eye out for related communications from KPU.
- If you find that you are having trouble creating or sticking to a structured schedule, think about keeping a time diary. Write down just how much time you are spending on various activities each day. If the results show that you are spending too much time watching TV, for example, then this will help you to be honest with yourself and to align your daily activities with your priorities and goals.