Preparing to learn off campus: a guide for students

This is a time to stay connected, even if we all need to stay at home. ECU and ACBT are committed to providing you with continued access to quality learning and teaching experiences, support and care. The information below is to help ensure that you, together with our community of over 35,000 learners, can continue your studies until we return to campus.

Hardware

You will need access to an internet connection and a computer or appropriate mobile device. Lecturers will be primarily engaging with you through your Blackboard Unit sites. They will be uploading materials, running online lectures, making announcements and using the discussion board.

As a result, it is important that you can log into Blackboard daily. You can access Blackboard on your smartphone via your browser, or a dedicated Blackboard App. Instructions for using Blackboard are attached.

Browsers

It is recommended that you install the latest versions of two internet browsers on your device to ensure the most reliable experience:

- Chrome (for Blackboard Collaborate sessions)
- Mozilla Firefox (for everything else).

If you are using a smartphone, ensure that you have applied all updates to your device. If you need support, follow these links to instructions for how to apply updates to Apple and Android.

Software

ECU staff are collaborating with ACBT staff to provide alternatives to all scheduled on-campus learning activities until you can return to campus.

You are expected to engage in these, just as you would on campus. Most of the video recordings you watch will have been made using a tool called Panopto. These recordings are simply embedded into your Blackboard unit site, so you don't need the tool to view them.

Learning activities will be on Blackboard Collaborate. As an ECU student, you should already have access to this software:

- **Blackboard Collaborate** is available within your Blackboard unit site. Instructions for using it are attached.

For technical support with any of these tools contact IT Services:

- IT related issues, please contact Manager IT: Ranga.Gomes@acbt.lk

Assessments

Staff may need to change the formats or details of some assessments so that they can be conducted during a University closure. In line with ECU's [Assessment, Examination and Moderation Procedures](#), the assessments will address all the same learning outcomes, and the ACBT staff will consult with you about proposed changes and give you as much notice as possible.

Studying off campus

If you haven't studied off campus before, this is a good opportunity to build your skills in online learning. A useful place to start is [Digital Essentials](#) on the ECU Library website. Preparation and organisation are important, as is regular engagement with your lecturers and tutors, the learning resources on Blackboard, and also with each other.

1. **Establish a study space**

   Create a place where you can regularly use a computer, read unit materials, and take notes without being distracted.

2. **Check in daily with your Blackboard unit sites**

   It's likely that unit content will be updated regularly as staff develop and upload materials, run live online tutorials, make announcements, and students make more use of discussion boards to connect. [Taking good notes](#) will help ensure you keep your learning organised.

3. **Set goals and plan your time**

   Set yourself daily goals for each unit (e.g. finish reading a chapter) and make a plan for completing assessments well ahead of the due date.

4. **Ask questions**

   Don't be afraid to ask questions of your unit coordinators, lecturers and tutors. You can do this on your unit discussion board if it's a question that other students are likely to have, or by email if your question is personal. Responses might take up to 24 hours (and longer over the weekend), so it's better to ask sooner rather than later.

5. **Make use of ACBT support services**

   Students are encouraged to connect with their lecturer for learning support, as well as the contacts listed below.

   - For new students, if you are not sure who to contact, we advise you to first get in touch with your marketing counsellor or the Manager, Career Guidance: Manusha.manthilake@acbt.lk , who will guide to the right contact;

   - Finance issues, please contact the Accountant: Sharika.weerasinghe@acbt.lk

   - IT related issues, please contact Manager IT: Ranga.Gomes@acbt.lk

   - Exams, tests or assignment submission: Vipula.Wanigasekera@acbt.lk

   - Counselling: kalhari_30@yahoo.com

   - Any other support: Student Services Manager: Neranjala.Wickramaratne@acbt.lk

   - B.Commerce Course Coordinator: Sewwandi.nanayakkara@acbt.lk

- B.Science (Cyber Security) Course Coordinator: Udani.Wickramaratna@acbt.lk

6. Stay socially connected

Even though you are not on the ECU / ACBT campus in Sri Lanka, you are not studying alone. Stay in touch with other students through messaging systems to keep each other motivated.

Have different questions?

If you have any other questions, please contact:

- Associate Dean, Wasanthi.Madurapperuma@acbt.lk or +94 779538798; or
- Senior Deputy Principal: Sunimal.Wickramasinghe@acbt.lk +94 777 273345.