



UNIVERSITY OF THE
COMMONWEALTH
CARIBBEAN (UCC)

Fostering Leadership & Innovation

UCC ONLINE STUDENT HANDBOOK

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WELCOME

The University of the Commonwealth Caribbean (UCC) is a private tertiary institution renowned for its innovation and quality academic programmes. With approximately 4,000 students in Jamaica and the Caribbean and over 65,000 alumni to date, UCC prides itself on providing world-class learning, a rich and diverse curriculum, and dedicated faculty who are not only academicians but also accomplished industry practitioners.

UCC Online offers students the opportunity to advance their education at the undergraduate and the graduate levels in two ways: online using a blend of both online and on-campus studies (i.e. students in Jamaica can select an online course as well as an on-campus course in a semester) or completing all your courses online (except for End-of-Module exams for students residing in Jamaica). Since Fall 2016, students residing outside of Jamaica and pursuing studies with UCC Online sit their end-of-module examinations from the convenience of their home using a 'live' online proctoring service called **ProctorU**. For online studies, students will participate in both asynchronous and synchronous learning environments.

This Handbook does not replace the **UCC Undergraduate Student Handbook** which is intended for all UCC students but rather provides information specific to UCC Online students. This Handbook has been created to provide incoming and returning students a quick reference to the policies and procedures for online instruction.

POLICY & PROCEDURES

Policy

It is the policy of the UCC Online Unit to accept students to learn via online, once the matriculation requirements have been met and documentation has been received from the Registry to support

the students' status. This policy is to be read in conjunction with the latest edition of the **UCC's Undergraduate Student Handbook**.

Purpose

The purpose of these operating procedures is to provide for new and returning students, an overview of the processes and practices that govern the operations of the programmes offered via Moodle (our Learning Management System) at UCC Online. These policies also provide an overview of the appropriate pedagogical strategies employed by UCC as it seeks to make tertiary education accessible and meaningful to students challenged by time and distance. In this way, UCC's online learners will be guaranteed the same high quality of course content, lecturer input, examination and learning support as the traditional face-to-face students.

Scope

The policy and procedures apply to all online students pursuing courses for degree programmes through UCC Online at all locations in Jamaica and overseas.

What is UCC Online?

UCC Online offers/delivers courses for students pursuing UCC undergraduate degrees (and graduate degrees through the Graduate Studies Office). These courses are equivalent to those offered in the traditional classroom setting. While the online courses offer greater flexibility and convenience (the ability to study from home), UCC's online courses are not self-paced courses. The courses are delivered within the same academic period as face-to-face courses and are fully comparable in rigor to the curriculum delivered on any UCC campus.

UCC Online uses **MOODLE** as its primary online course management software to offer courses via distance learning. Students of UCC Online communicate with their instructors and classmates via this web page link: <http://courses.ucc.edu.jm>. Once accessed, students may view lecture notes, announcements, view and upload assignments and complete examinations online. (SEE Frequently Asked Questions at Appendix C for more).

Delivery Models

- **Hybrid:** Students have the option of selecting to complete some of their courses online and other courses in the traditional face-to-face/classroom option. The Hybrid model is available currently only to students residing in Jamaica who can choose to complete a course at one of UCC's campuses. The conduct of a face-to-face class is subject to enrolment numbers at the UCC campus of choice. The *UCC Online* programmes demand the same standard of academic performance and rigor from students as is required from students in traditional UCC programmes.
- **Online:** The student can select to do all online courses for their undergraduate degree. These courses are taught completely online but will require the student in Jamaica to attend a campus/approved centre to sit proctored end-of-modules examinations. Students studying outside of Jamaica will now sit their end-of-module examinations from the convenience of their home using a 'live' online proctoring service called **ProctorU**.

Programmes offered at UCC Online

The following represent the undergraduate programmes being offered at UCC Online:

Bachelor of Science degree in

- Business Administration
- Business Administration majoring in Accounting and Financial Management
- Business Administration majoring in Accounting (start: Fall 2017)
- Business Administration majoring in Financial Management (start: Fall 2017)
- Production & Operations Management (start: Fall 2017)
- Information Technology
- Business Administration majoring in Information Systems Management
- Human Resource Management
- Marketing

The following graduate programmes are offered online:

- UCC/Commonwealth Executive Master of Business Administration
- UCC/Commonwealth Executive Master of Public Administration.

Course Delivery

UCC Online courses are designed to have a blend of student-to-student and instructor-to-student interactions and create activities that require the students to engage in the course content and with each other. UCC Online courses are delivered in two basic formats:

1. Asynchronous: this format does **not** require the instructor and student to be online at the same time. Asynchronous learning at UCC Online allows students to review course materials including lecture notes, PowerPoint presentations and other resource materials (including audio and video lectures); download documents; send assignments via a Drop Box facility; and respond to discussion questions in a forum posted by lecturers.
2. Synchronous: this means the instructor and the student are present at a scheduled time (in real-time) for chats/discussions, instruction and activities.

Technical Requirements

To ensure that your online learning experience is successful, please refer to the following basic guidelines:

Hardware - System Requirements:

- Windows Users
- Windows 7, XP or Vista
- 128 MB RAM
- 28.8 kpbs
- Soundcard with Speakers
- Microphone
- Webcam
- Updated Internet
- Explorer
- Microsoft Office 2003 and above (Word, Excel, PowerPoint)
- Pop-ups must be allowed for Adobe Connect and MOODLE

Browser Requirements:

The Browsers below work best with the learning platform.

- Google Chrome
- Mozilla Firefox
- Internet Explorer

Software Requirements

- Microsoft Office Suite or other word processing programme capable of saving files in RTF (Rich Text Format).
- Your course may require special (free) plug-ins to access streaming media, PDF files, or other web components. If this is the case, you will learn more about these special requirements from the instructor.
- Antivirus software is highly recommended. (AVG is free and can be downloaded online.)

Is UCC Online for me?

To be successful as an online student, you must exhibit certain behaviours. Before signing up for UCC Online, please take a few moments to complete the following survey to see if you are ready for the commitment involved in online education. Respond 'Yes' or 'No' to the following statements:

	YES	NO
1. I am good at setting and keeping goals and deadlines for myself.		
2. I finish the projects I start.		
3. I do not quit when things get difficult.		
4. I learn fairly easily.		
5. I am self-motivated, self-disciplined and can work independently of others.		
6. I can learn from a variety of media (audio recordings, material in print etc).		
7. I am willing to have discussions with people I might never see.		
8. I am willing to spend at least 6 hours per week on each (3-credit) course.		
9. I am responsible for what I learn.		
10. I do not put off assignments until the day before they are due.		
11. I can express myself well through written communication and can follow written instructions.		
12. I know how to do web searches, download files and install software.		
13. I can use "chat" features for real-time communication.		
14. I have access to a computer with a recent operating system (Windows or Macintosh) installed.		
15. I have reliable, high-speed internet access.		
TOTAL RESPONSES		

Tally the number of 'Yes' responses. Now evaluate your readiness for online education using the guide ahead:

- 13-15 'Yes' responses: You are capable of taking an online class.
- 10-12 'Yes' responses: You might be successful in online studies but you will need important preparatory work before you undertake online classes.
- 9 and fewer 'Yes' responses: You should delay taking an online class until you can improve your study habits, commit time to independent study and/or improve your computer skills.

See also **Tips for Succeeding at UCC Online** at *Appendix A*.

Activating Your UCC Student Account

Your acceptance package from UCC contains information related to your Student Identification Number, Programme of Study, Year Accepted and Exemptions (if any).

Each UCC Online student is required to activate the unique UCC Student Account on Aeorion, which is the Student Management System used to manage the teaching- learning experience at UCC as well as your UCC Student Email (___@stu.ucc.edu.jm).

Registering for Your Online Courses

Dates related to the Registration period for each semester are available in the published Academic Calendar (available at the UCC website at www.ucc.edu.jm and on the home page of UCC Online/Moodle at <http://courses.ucc.edu.jm>). The Registration period is that period when students select and pay for the courses they intend to pursue for the upcoming semester. To register for UCC Online courses, take the following steps:

1. **AFTER** activating your Aeorion Account (follow steps given in package), log in to Aeorion, select link "Register for Classes" to start the registration process.
2. Select ----Year (20__)→ --Term (Fall, Spring or Summer) -> Schedule (Undergraduate)
→Campus (UCC Online)- Jamaican students in Jamaica; Jamaican students residing overseas

- select → Campus (UCC Online JO); International students (residing in Jamaica or in their home country) select → Campus (UCC Online International)
3. There are four (4) steps involved in the actual registration process. Step One is course selection; Step Two calculates your charges; Step Three is where you pay fees. STEP 4 completes your registration process. If you pay a portion of your fees whether by credit card or at a UCC offline facility (Scotia Online, JNBS or Manager's Cheque), you must call, visit or email (and send proof of payment receipt to) **Student Financial Services** (or SFS) at sfs@ucc.edu.jm to be deemed fully registered. We also recommend that all online students who are resident overseas send a copy of their payment receipt to the UCC Online coordinator at online@ucc.edu.jm. Otherwise, you may pay in full online and be deemed **fully** registered.
 4. When you are fully registered by SFS, please wait 24-48 business hours to be **enrolled** to Moodle.
 5. Contact: SMSSupport@ucc.edu.jm for assistance with activating your **UCC student email account**.
 6. UCC Online will then send you log in instructions for accessing the course for which you registered to your UCC student email (___@stu.ucc.edu.jm) (Absolutely NO PERSONAL EMAILS will be used).

Preparatory Sessions for Online Students

Before starting your online classes each semester or teaching period, all students (new and returning) will be required to complete the scheduled Preparatory Session. This is meant to increase and improve your readiness for the semester. The Preparatory Session may or may not account for 2% of your grade for your participation in a Discussion Question for one course for which you are registered during semester.

How to log in to your courses on UCC Online

1. Visit the UCC Online website at <http://online.ucc.edu.jm>.
2. Click on the Moodle link at the UCC Online website.

3. The Moodle login page will be displayed.
4. Enter your **username** and **password**, which will be sent to your UCC student email **only** when you are fully registered.
5. Click the **Enter** button. The system will prompt you to reset your password from the default (password) given.
6. After you have successfully logged into the Moodle website, scroll down to “Course Categories” or go to “Search Courses” to find the course for which you registered.

Please remember: ***You will not get online access unless you are fully registered.***

How to log into your Chat Sessions

Chat sessions are held once per week. In the Fall of 2017, chat sessions will commence again in the **FIRST** week of the semester. Each session lasts for one hour. Chat sessions are held using a software called Adobe Connect.

Read the following visual quick start guide to using Adobe Connect Meeting Room:

<http://www.adobe.com/content/dam/acom/en/products/adobeconnect/pdfs/VQSG-Participants.pdf>

You may also watch the following Youtube video tutorial to guide you:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BgFov_GlmC4

When using Adobe Connect Meeting Room, you must have the following:

1. High speed Internet
2. A microphone
3. A headphone to prevent feedback from external speakers through your microphone. Feedback is unwanted noise that will disturb the meeting.

Please test your devices before the meeting. This is your responsibility.

Use the following Adobe Connection Test to see if your system is configured for running Adobe

Connect: http://admin.adobeconnect.com/common/help/en/support/meeting_test.htm

Grading guidelines for participation in UCC Online Classes

Discussion fora and chat sessions provide the bases for interaction between student and instructor and participation by students in all UCC Online courses. Participation in discussion fora accounts for **10 percent** of the grade and participation in Chat Sessions accounts for **10 percent** of the grade. Both sets of scores are then averaged and account for **10 percent** of your coursework grade.

Students are required to participate in a variety of discussions and activities and chat sessions with their team. A student's participation will be evaluated on the extent to which he demonstrates an understanding of the course content and an ability to apply this knowledge to the dynamics operating in organisations, businesses or society.

"Attendance" (virtual) and active participation in every discussion and chat session is required to achieve the maximum participation mark.

Guidelines for Attendance for Discussion Fora:

Students are expected to:

- Submit one posting for each Discussion Question as per the grading guidelines below.
- Respond to at least one colleague's post for each Discussion Question to engage in the discussion as it develops.

Guidelines for Posting to Discussion Fora:

Students will be expected to do the following:

- Focus on question(s) posted by the Instructor.
- Include related thoughts and materials or other readings applicable to the discussion.
- Respond to posts within one week of posting.
- Submit posts ranging between one to three paragraphs in length.
- Use proper etiquette, and more specifically, respectful language.(See Appendix B)
- Submit posts that reflect an understanding of the material and further the discussion.
- Include websites and sources to support arguments and respond to each other's messages.

Some ways to further discussion include:

- Offer an opinion
- Suggest a conclusion
- Be thought provoking
- Pose a question

- Disagree

In particular, the instructor will look for commentary that:

- indicates critical thinking about the topic at hand
- draws from the assigned readings
- doesn't place a burden on the rest of the group by including unnecessary information
- interacts and/or responds to the postings of other learners.

The following are the grading guidelines* for student participation in the discussion fora and in chat sessions.

For Discussion Fora:

9-10	Outstanding contributor: Contributions reflect excellent preparation. Ideas offered are always substantive, yield one or more major insights, and provide direction to the class. Arguments are well-substantiated and persuasively presented. In addition learner must have been involved in ALL discussions and must have responded promptly to receive a 9 to 10.
7-8	Good Contributor: Ideas are usually substantive, provide good insights into the topic under discussion, and sometimes provide direction for the class. Arguments reflect clear thinking.
5-6	Adequate Contributor: Contributions in class reflect satisfactory preparation. Ideas could be more substantive, could provide generally more useful insights. Seldom offers a major new direction for the discussion.
3-4	Minimal Contributor: Ideas offered are seldom substantive OR are often off-point OR provide few (if any) insights, OR give no constructive direction to the class. Clear arguments on the topic at hand and/or integrative comments are absent.
0-2	Non-participant: The person has contributed little or nothing to this class.

*Adapted from Tracy Roberts, "Assessing Online Participation, Exploring the Problem & Possible Solutions", Royal Roads University, 2010.

For Chat Sessions: Rubric for Assessing Chat Participation**

Number of Points	Skills
9-10	Logs into chat in a timely manner; fully participates during entire period on a consistent basis; follows discussion thread; responds readily to direct questions. All responses are self-initiated.
7-8	Logs into chat in a timely manner; generally keeps up with discussion thread but will participate in some topics more than others; may need an occasional prompt from the chat manager.
5-6	Is sometimes late to log in. Spotty participation; may disappear from

	chat for long periods of time; contributes infrequently; often requires prompting.
1-4	May miss chat altogether without explanation; displays little evidence of following discussion; rarely participates freely.

**Adapted from *Assessing Student Work from Chatrooms and Bulletin Boards* (John F Bauer):

http://www.acousticlab.org/dots_sample/module3/Bauer2002AssessingChatrooms.pdf

Guidelines for Attendance for Chat Sessions:

- A minimum attendance of **75% attendance** is required for participation in Chat Sessions. Students should notify the UCC Online coordinator in writing of any predictable or unavoidable absence. (See Attendance Policy, **Undergraduate Student Handbook 2016-2017.**)

Assessment

Students will be assessed in a number of ways including (participation in Discussion Questions & Chat Sessions), coursework/assignments, projects, essays, group work, quizzes, mid-module and end-of-module examinations. Some courses do not have mid-module examinations. All coursework must be attempted and submitted (via the online DROP BOX) within the time-frame given by the lecturer. If late assignments are submitted by the student and accepted by the lecturer, penalties can be imposed.

Assignments must be submitted using the Standard Cover Page (sample found at online.ucc.edu.jm) If a student experiences any challenge during the sitting of a mid-module or end-of-module exam, it is the student's responsibility to inform the UCC Online coordinator within 12 hours by email of the challenge(s). The lecturer must also be copied on the email.

Proctored Examinations with ProctorU

End-of-Module examinations are administered for UCC Online students in Jamaica at UCC centres. Students outside of Jamaica will register to complete their end-of-module examinations via ProctorU. This proctoring service is available at a cost of US\$36.00 for each course registered. This fee is already incorporated in the fee structure for **UCC Online Caribbean** students. Jamaican students who may have to travel during the period of their end-of-module examinations:

- Advise the UCC Online Coordinator in writing by the end of the ADD/DROP period of the travel arrangements.
- Must pay the required ProctorU fee for each course registered.

- Create a ProctorU account via <http://proctoru.com/portal/uccedujm>.

Please note that all students will be required to present at the time of the examination scheduled by UCC, a UCC-issued Student ID and Exam Permit.

Alternate Exams

Alternate exams are allowed ONLY if a student missed the sitting for an EOME or MME for the following reasons:

- Sickness (doctor's certificate must be provided)
- Death (death certificate or letter from JP must be submitted)
- Work-related (letter from organisation must be submitted on company letterhead)

If a student experiences any challenge during the sitting of a mid-module or end-of-module exam, it is the student's responsibility to inform the UCC Online coordinator within 12 hours by email of the challenge(s). The lecturer must also be copied on this email.

Location Survey

Usually mid-semester, UCC Online will dispatch an exam location survey. This is where you will indicate your intended location at the time of your final exam. It is the student's responsibility to advise the UCC Online coordinator of any change in location for examinations. Do not wait until the day of your exam to advise the office that you wish to sit your exam in a new location.

Who to Contact

Students may contact the following persons to address any challenges with their online studies:

- Director, UCC Online – Ms. Jackie Thelwell, email: ucconline@ucc.edu.jm . Tel: (876)665-4008
- Programme Coordinator, UCC Online – Mrs. Nichole Dixon-Jacobs, email: ucconline@ucc.edu.jm or ndixon-jacobs@ucc.edu.jm. Tel: (876)665-4007
- Programme Coordinator UCC Online – Damion Malcolm, email: ucconline@ucc.edu.jm or ucconlineofficer@ucc.edu.jm . Tel : (876)665-4009

- Moodle Web & Adobe Connect Administrator, Mr. Neil Rhule email: neil@thinkwebgroup.com or . Tel: (876)892-8029
- Student Financial Services, sfs@ucc.edu.jm
- Aeorion Administrator, sms@ucc.edu.jm
- Library services (past papers etc): asklibrary@ucc.edu.jm

Students can find other resources to assist them with their online experience at the UCC Online website: <http://online.ucc.edu.jm> and at the general UCC website at <http://ucc.edu.jm> . These sources provide student access to accurate and timely information about the institution, its programmes, courses, costs and related policies including but not limited to admission application, registration and pre-registration advising, information on financial aid, scholarship awards, leave of absence forms, and document request forms.

APPENDIX A

Here are **10** tips to help you succeed as a UCC Online student:

1. **Devote time to school work.**

You must devote time every week to concentrate on your online classes. In fact, you must be willing to devote at least **3 hours** per week on each 3-credit course. In the online classroom, all of your lectures, class work and participation in discussion boards/sessions happen on your time.

2. **Always post on the discussion board.**

You will be required to 'post' a discussion or your views on a discussion board at least five times during your studies. Each post will count as class participation and is a significant part of your grade. You not only need to post your discussion on the topic the lecturer has posted but you must also respond to the posts of others within the prescribed timeframe. If you fail to post your discussion in the required time, you may lose points.

3. **Read the course materials that you are given.**

Lecturers will send you course material via PowerPoint presentations, lecture notes, video, audio or e-links. Make sure to read, listen to or watch these for they usually form the basis for your online quizzes. In addition to the course materials sent by lecturers, students are responsible for sourcing and reading the required reading texts.

4. **Read recommended material.**

Your lecturers will usually send you additional suggested reading material to help you to better understand the course you are doing. Make sure to read these other materials to assist you in your learning.

5. **Submit assignments early.**

Make sure you plan way ahead, get started early on your assignments, do your research and submit your assignments early. An unreliable computer or network is no excuse for late submission of assignments. Do your own assignments unless you are asked to submit them as group work.

6. **Participate in Chat Sessions.**

Where Chat Sessions are scheduled, make sure to participate. Such schedules are held in real-time, so you must ensure that you check the days/times posted on your course page on MOODLE for your Chat Sessions and participate in these.

7. **Keep in touch with your lecturers.**

Your lecturers will provide you with their email addresses and/or telephone contacts. Do not be afraid to ask them questions related to your course during their "office hours".

8. **Keep in touch with your coordinator.**

UCC assigns a coordinator in Jamaica to assist you with your online learning experience. Your online coordinator may be reached at 876-665-4007 or 665-4009 or at ucconline@ucc.edu.jm. For technical related issues, you may email our external Web Administrator at support@thinkwebgroup.com.

9. **Read your UCC emails and log in to MOODLE daily.**

You must read all communiqué from your UCC coordinator who may send you any changes in schedules or other advisories from time to time. You must also make sure you check MOODLE **daily** for changes in schedules, new assignments, reminders from your lecturers or from UCC.

10. **Make sure you have a reliable computer and internet connection.**

As an online student, you must have access to a reliable computer and high speed internet access (with a minimum bandwidth of 2Mbps). We suggest you upgrade your internet browser (Internet Explorer, FireFox, Chrome or Safari) to the most recent version. Remember, from time to time, you may be downloading and uploading large audio, video and text files. Mobile devices may be used as a matter of convenience but are not reliable devices and **NOT** recommended for online classroom use.

To access your classes, log on to: online.ucc.edu.jm or <http://courses.ucc.edu.jm>

APPENDIX B

Netiquette Guidelines

In an online environment it is not possible for others to read your body language, tone of voice, or facial expressions. Therefore, a special set of rules has emerged for online communications, called **Netiquette**. Here are some basic Netiquette rules that should be followed during online discussion board, chat sessions, or e-mail:

- Never give your user ID or password to another person (Do not use your ID Number in your online chats).
- Sometimes a good way of entering a discussion board or chat is to briefly introduce yourself.
- Before posting to a discussion board, you should read prior messages to get a sense of the flow and language of the discussion.
- Always title your messages. Be sure the subject line reflects the topic of discussion. Do not auto-reply and start a new thread leaving the old subject line in the header.
- Always check your spelling before posting a message to a discussion board. It will be the first impression you may make on someone, so it is important that your message be free of spelling errors. However, if you are on a synchronous chat, correct spelling would be nice but not as much expected, as the conversation goes much faster.
- Keep your questions and comments relevant to the topic of the discussion. If another person posts a comment or question that is off the subject, do NOT reply to the discussion board. If you want to reply, do so in private e-mail directly to the original poster.
- Do not use ALL CAPS. It gives the impression that you are shouting. Capitalize words only to highlight an important point or to distinguish a title or heading. *Asterisks* surrounding a word can also be used to make a stronger point.
- Keep paragraphs and messages short and to the point.
- Know what you are talking about and make sense. Make sure your postings contain correct information. Try not to post comments that don't add anything to the discussion.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions within the course discussion group, or to share what you know. It's especially considerate to share the answers to your questions with others. Also, if you've researched a topic that you think would be of interest to others, summarize it and post it to the group.
- Cite all quotes, references and sources and respect copyright and license agreements.
- If you do post a different view point, first acknowledge what someone else has said. If you disagree with someone, it is better to start a message by briefly restating what the other person has said in your own words. This lets the other person know that you are trying to understand him/her.

- When presenting a controversial point of view, state whose view it is. For example, if it is your opinion, you can begin with “in my experience....” If it is a view of someone else, you can begin with “according to NAEYC...”, or “the president’s view is....”
- When you post or e-mail a question, make it as easy as possible for others to understand what you ask. Make sure your question is clear and specific and check replies to your question.
- Treat the others on the discussion board in a polite and respectful manner. Never mail or post anything you wouldn’t say to your reader’s face.
- Try to stay calm and do not get offended easily. If you feel the need to send an angry message, take a break.
- Do not “flame” others on the discussion board. Flaming is the act of responding in a highly critical, sarcastic, or ridiculing manner - especially if done on a personal level. Remember that these discussions are meant for constructive exchanges and learning.
- When quoting another person, edit whatever isn’t directly applicable to your reply. Take the time to edit any quotations down to the minimum necessary to provide the context for your reply.
- E-mail messages should be considered private and not shared with others or quoted without permission. However, whatever you post to a newsgroup or discussion board is public. You never know who might read what you posted.
- Advertisements and spam messages are not permitted on online course discussion boards.
- Sometimes emoticons (☺) are used to express emotion or abbreviations are sometimes used (FYI, BTW) but these must be used sparingly if permitted by your facilitator.

REFERENCES:

“Email/Discussion Group Netiquette Tips”

<http://earlydues.usanethosting.com/ieel/netiquette.htm>

“Netiquette: A guide to respectful behavior on the Internet”

<http://www.state.vt.us/srs/fwc/netiquette.html>

“Netiquette” by Virginia Shea (1994).

<http://www.albion.com/netiquette/book/index.html>

“The Net: User Guidelines and Netiquette” by Arlene H. Rinaldi

<http://www.cs.biu.ac.il/home/leagal/netguide/index.html>

APPENDIX C

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION (FAQs)

UCC ONLINE responds to the growing number of students who are eager to earn university degrees but who require more flexibility than the traditional on-campus courses allow. Studying via UCC Online is an attractive alternative because you can:

- Schedule course work around jobs and family responsibilities.
- Work independently.
- Acquire new skills and knowledge to compete in the workplace.
- Improve your lives through enriched learning experiences.
- Complete course work toward a university degree.

1. What is UCC Online?

UCC Online is a distance learning vehicle which uses technology to deliver UCC's degree programmes. The programmes offered through *UCC Online* are offered using the following models:

- Fully online (except for end-of-module examinations for students in Jamaica). Students in Jamaica sit their end-of-module exams at their respective UCC Campus.
- Hybrid model, that is, students have the option to complete some of their courses online and other courses in the traditional face-to-face/classroom option. The Hybrid model is available currently only to students residing in Jamaica who can choose to complete a course at one of UCC's campuses. The conduct of a face-to-face class is subject to enrolment numbers at the UCC campus. The *UCC Online* programmes demand the same standard of academic performance and rigor from students as is required from students in traditional UCC programmes.

2. How does the UCC Online mode of delivery work?

Students receive their instruction from lecturers via a web-based learning platform known as MOODLE.

- This platform allows students to view lecture content/notes, PowerPoint presentations, video and audio resources provided by lecturers. Lecture content is available from week one of the semester.
- Lecturers and students interact in (live/synchronous) chat sessions and discussion fora (asynchronous).
- Starting again in Fall 2017, chat sessions begin in the first week of the semester, are conducted via Adobe Connect and run for a minimum of 10 weeks. During the Fall and Spring semesters, chat sessions are one hour each week and are conducted after work hours between Mondays and Thursdays, on Saturday nights and/or Sundays. During the summer session, chat sessions will be approximately 1 ¼ hour each. Chat sessions are recorded by the lecturer and posted within 24 – 48 business hours for students to re-play. Participation in Chats is graded.
- *Starting in Fall 2017, UCC Online will also introduce courses with PowerPoint notes presented with audio. Students will be required to listen, read and follow the instructions of the audio tutor. Your lecturer will be available for **at least three live sessions** to provide additional guidance where necessary and offline to grade and comment on assignments and respond to your queries.*
- Lecturers post their discussion questions (DQs) via the discussion forum in the first week of the semester. Students must respond to these questions and to the response of at least one classmate at the deadlines given. A minimum of five DQs is given for the semester. Participation is graded.

- Lecturers also provide self-assessment quizzes for students. These are not graded but they help students to check if they are familiar with the material.
- Students submit assignments and sit exams (mid-module) online from the comfort of their home or office computer.
- In some classes, students will also be exposed to instruction offered via MOOCs providers.

3. What degree programmes are offered at UCC Online?

UCC Online offers a Bachelor's degree in the following areas:

- Business Administration
- Information Technology
- Human Resource Management
- Marketing
- Production & Operations Management
- Business Administration (with a major in Accounting)
- Business Administration (with a major in Financial Management)
- Business Administration (with a major in Accounting & Financial Management)
- Business Administration (with a major in Information Systems Management)

And graduate degrees in:

- UCC/Commonwealth Masters of Business Administration
- UCC/Commonwealth Masters of Public Administration

A programme of study may be withdrawn in the event of under-enrolment in a given cohort.

4. What will I need to take an online class?

Generally, you'll need a computer with access to the Internet and a (UCC-student) email account. High Speed Internet Connectivity (ADSL) with a minimum bandwidth of 2Mbps for online courses is best to handle online courses because these courses typically use/include video, audio and podcasts to deliver information.

Preparatory Sessions: Before starting your online classes each semester or teaching period, all students (new and returning) will be required to complete the scheduled Preparatory Session. This is meant to increase and improve your readiness for taking online classes during the semester.

5. How do I apply for a degree programme being offered online?

Applicants interested in pursuing an undergraduate online degree, apply using this link:

<https://www2.ucc.edu.jm/AppNetP/UnityForm.aspx?key=UFSessionIDKey>

Follow instructions for sending your application. To complete your application, you must send the following:

- a. Certified copies of your CSEC/GCE exam passes
- b. Certified copy of your birth certificate
- c. Certified copy of marriage certificate (if applicable)
- d. An electronic passport size photo

You are also required to send an official transcript of any post-secondary studies you've done. This transcript must be sent directly from the institution at which those studies were completed to the UCC

Registrar, 17 Worthington Avenue, Kingston 5. (If you are an international student, other documents will be required. Please contact the International Office by email for further information at: international@ucc.edu.jm). Jamaicans applying for graduate studies will use this link to apply: recruitment@ucc.edu.jm.

Applicants will then be contacted via email by a member of the Registry staff with relevant follow up and a decision on admission is usually made within a month or less.

6. How do I get my textbooks and other course materials?

Students will have to purchase the required textbooks via online bookstores, The UCC Campus Store or traditional bookstores. Lecturers will send other resource materials such as e-texts or links to e-texts as necessary.

7. How do I interact with course instructors/lecturers?

- Asynchronously – your interaction is not in real time. This allows you to participate according to your schedule and be geographically apart from the lecturer.
- Synchronously – your interaction is real time which means you will have to be online at scheduled class times using video conferencing or chat rooms. The scheduled times are usually after work hours (except Fridays), Saturday nights and on Sundays. UCC Online will post a schedule of the chat times during the registration period on Aeorion as well as at our website at <http://online.ucc.edu.jm>.

8. How many courses can I take per semester?

We recommend that part-time online undergraduate students register for a minimum of three UCC courses per 10 or 13-week semester. Students are advised to follow the sequence of courses as outlined in their curriculum map.

9. Is the curriculum the same as that conducted in face to face sessions?

Yes. All UCC students pursue the same courses and sit the same examinations as their counterparts across all campuses irrespective of location throughout the Caribbean and extra-regionally. This is in keeping with the University's policy and is supported by the University Council of Jamaica (UCJ).

10. How are exams given?

For students resident in Jamaica, end-of-module exams will be administered as paper-based exams in a proctored face-to-face setting at UCC campuses. Students outside of Jamaica as at Fall 2016 will sit their end-of-module exams from the comfort of their home using a 'live' online proctoring service, ProctorU. There is a fee of **US\$36.00** associated with proctoring of each exam by ProctorU. This fee is already calculated in the fees for students who select UCC Online Caribbean for the registration portal. Mid-semester exams are administered online.

11. How do students submit assignments?

Assignments are submitted electronically on the Moodle course page (using Drop Box).

12. How are grades disclosed?

Coursework grades and grades for participation in Chat sessions and Discussion Questions are posted on Moodle. Final grades are published on UCC's student management system (SMS), Aeorion, which the student only can access using his username and password.

13. How much does a UCC Online course of study cost?

The cost for each programme varies, so please visit our website at www.ucc.edu.jm and click on the country in which you reside (or on tuition plans) to get the cost of your desired *UCC Online* programme. You may also contact our recruitment office at recruitment@ucc.edu.jm to get the costs.

14. How can I pay for my online education at UCC?

You can pay for it yourself using UCC's very flexible payment options, see if your employer offers an education assistance programme or seek scholarships and loans. Jamaican students can also visit the Student's Loan Bureau (SLB) in Jamaica for financial assistance. Other grants are also available through your respective Governments. Financial aid deadlines are often much earlier than registration deadlines.

15. How do I pay my fees?

Students have the following options:

- a. **Online** using Visa, MasterCard or NCB Keycard (Credit Cards) using your Aeorion account - Simply go to www.aeorion.ucc.edu.jm, log into the student account using your Aeorion ID number, select the "Pay with Credit Card" link and follow the instructions.
- b. From your BNS accounts using **Scotia Online (Debit Cards)** - Log on to your Scotia Online account, select UCC as the payee under the bill payment section, enter your eight digit Aeorion student ID as the account number, then submit. Proceed to make payment.
- c. **Jamaica National Building Society (JNBS)** - Payments can be made using the drop box facility only.
- d. **JN Money Shop**. Payments can be made in cash.
- e. By manager's cheque or debit or credit card at the Cashier, UCC Campus locations (please be guided by the opening hours of each location).

Students outside of Jamaica are required to pay their fees by credit card or by sending via courier, a manager's cheque written to the University of the Commonwealth Caribbean to the attention of The Accountant, 17 Worthington Avenue, Kingston 5, Jamaica or by wire transfer. (For details on transmitting funds by wire transfer, please call the UCC Student Financial Services office at 1-876-665-3000/665-3978-80) or write to sfs@ucc.edu.jm.

16. I'd like to earn a university degree. How long will it take me?

There are several factors to consider:

- The type of degree you are seeking (for example, associate or bachelor or master's) and the number of credits required for that degree;
- The number of credits you've already earned that will count toward your degree;
- The number of classes you're able to take each semester (depending on your schedule and what you can afford).

Generally however, for part-time students, the minimum completion time for a UCC bachelor's degree will take about 4 ½ years. A Master's degree takes 20 months (part-time).

17. Does UCC accept course credits from other institutions?

UCC will accept a **relevant** transferable course taken at an accredited college as long as you earned a "C" or better. Evaluation of transcripts is done on official copies only.

18. How do I get a transcript from the schools I attended?

You will need to contact your former school(s) in writing with a request. You can download a UCC Transcript Request Form (also called an Official Document Request Form) from www.ucc.edu.jm that you can use. The information on the form is typically what is required to obtain a transcript.

19. The school wants an official transcript. How do I know mine is official?

A signed transcript in a sealed envelope is considered official. It is usually sent directly from one registrar's office to another. You may also request that official transcripts be sent to you in sealed envelopes and they will remain official as long as you do not open them. You can hand them to the Registrar or enclose them with your physical application.

20. How do online students receive certification?

1. Students attending graduation receive their certificates at the ceremony.
2. Students not attending graduation will receive their certificates in the mail.
3. Students in the Caribbean may participate virtually but will be invited to attend the annual ceremony in Jamaica.

21. What online support do you have in place for students?

Online support comes in three forms:

1. A Programme Coordinator is available Mondays to Thursdays between 8:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. and on Fridays between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. (Jamaica time) by telephone and email to handle all student queries as they relate to academic matters e.g. exam dates; missed deadlines; course information; course set up – UCC Online access and financial and registration direction.
2. Technical support with respect to log in password; set up of UCC email account: smssupport@ucc.edu.jm.
3. Access to online library database which students are given after their passwords are activated.

23. What are the mechanisms in place for students' complaints?

Students submit administrative complaints to their online Programme Coordinators at ucconline@ucc.edu.jm and lecturer-related matters to the lecturer. If students are unable to reach their lecturers for any reason, they must inform their coordinator at once via email at ucconline@ucc.edu.jm.