

Learner Guide to Online Learning

What is eLearning and why should I do it?

ELearning is when you use a computer to access learning resources and support for your learning. This is usually done via the internet. For busy professionals this means you have the flexibility to study and learn anywhere, anytime.

It reflects the way we live now days. You can learn at home, at work, in the car, on the bus, or on the beach. All that you need is access to a digital device and access to the internet or stored information.

Online learning is a term that is used interchangeably with eLearning and really means you are using the internet for your learning and usually this is done through a web based platform. We use MOODLE for this. But have also run courses using Facebook and blogs which also facilitate the delivery of learning online.



The online course is a web page on the internet. You can access it from anywhere and you don't need a lot of specific software on your computer. You will benefit from Adobe Reader, PowerPoint (or PPT viewer) Word and Excel (or similar). You need sound cards as well as a media player; quicktime or windows media.

At *Skills Strategies International* we also use web conferencing which is an online meeting where you can see and talk to the facilitator and other learners, view PPT's, video's and share files

What will I need for online study?

To access your online course and progress with your learning you will need:

- A computer with internet access
- An email address
- A telephone
- Basic computer skills

Most of our courses at *Skills Strategies International* are at management level and you are expected to have the appropriate technical skills for this level. However, if you are doing one of our entry level courses and need computer assistance you should talk to your facilitator about support.

Login details

Your online course can be accessed by going to www.skillstrategies.wa.edu.au and selecting eLearning login.

Username will be your *firstnamesurname*

Password will be *changeme*.

Familiarise yourself with your course

- As soon as possible, familiarise yourself with information relating to the course in order to establish what is expected of you.
- Look at any information available relating to:
 - the course description
 - the course objectives
 - the course requirements
 - the course programme
 - Creating your learning schedule
 - scheduled course meetings
 - assignments
 - the media and technology required
 - the course calendar or assignment schedule
 - contact information
- Make sure you have access to and allow yourself time to learn to use any software required.
- Navigate and become familiar with MOODLE
- If you use Skype or Lync as part of your course give yourself time to become familiar with them prior to using them for the course.
- Ensure you find out about any set reading material as soon as possible.

Learn to manage your time effectively

- Although you may not have to attend classes regularly, you will still have to set aside regular time for studying.
- Try to commit a certain number of hours per week to your course. (Note that online courses often require greater time and commitment than traditional courses because it is so easy to put off your course work).
- Make sure you complete assignments on time and do not fall behind.
- Set up a schedule and allow yourself the same time each day/week to study. Having a routine will make it painless.

We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, therefore, is not an act but a habit.
- Aristotle -

Learn to be self-motivated and self-disciplined

- Set regular goals and deadlines and stick to them. (There has to be something in it for you)
- Set some interim deadlines instead of waiting to the last minute to start assignments.
- Reward yourself for reaching your targets
- Ask your facilitator for advice on how to become more motivated. You may be able to do a short course to assist.
- Ask for assistance on how to set manageable and realistic goals.
- Avoid procrastination. There is nothing worse than a blank page – so put something on it that can be edited later.

Whether you think you can or think you can't, you're right.
- Henry Ford -

Find an appropriate environment for study

- Find a quiet place free from distractions that you can use specifically for studying.
- Create a work atmosphere e.g. by working at a desk.
- Have regular breaks. It is difficult to work for more than 45 minutes without a break.
- Try to avoid using your study place for relaxing or social activities such as chatting, writing letters etc.
- Keep your work place free from clutter.
- Insure that your study area has:
 - good lighting
 - ventilation
 - low noise level
 - a comfortable (but not too comfortable) chair
 - a desk large enough to spread out your materials
 - all the equipment you need
- Ensure that your study area does not have:
 - a distracting view
 - a telephone
 - loud music
 - a television
 - other people who want to chat

Organise your materials

- Start a good filing system - organise documents into either traditional folders or folders on your PC.
- Use the folder feature in your e-mail package to store your online interactions.
- Save everything you write as you never know when you may need to refer to it again.

An idea can only become a reality once it is broken down into organized, actionable elements.”

- Scott Belsky -

Keep in touch with your Course Facilitator

- Contact your facilitator regularly either by e-mail or telephone.
- Ensure you seek immediate guidance if you do not understand the course material or are experiencing any other difficulties.
- If you have an unusual situation that hinders your work and prevents you from meeting a deadline, let your facilitator know immediately.

Develop good communication skills

- Pay careful attention to any instructions and ensure that you understand what is required when submitting assignments.
- Ask questions and do not be afraid to speak up if anything is unclear.
- Communicate any technical problems quickly as losing your Internet connection or e-mail facility can interrupt your progress.
- Try to participate as often as possible in online activities such as discussions and Virtual Classroom sessions.

Evaluate your own progress regularly

- Re-read the course objectives on a regular basis to see how you are progressing with them.
- Make an honest assessment of your progress.
- Discuss your progress with your facilitator and seek feedback.
- Take any necessary action if your progress is not as it should be.

Learn to work with other learners

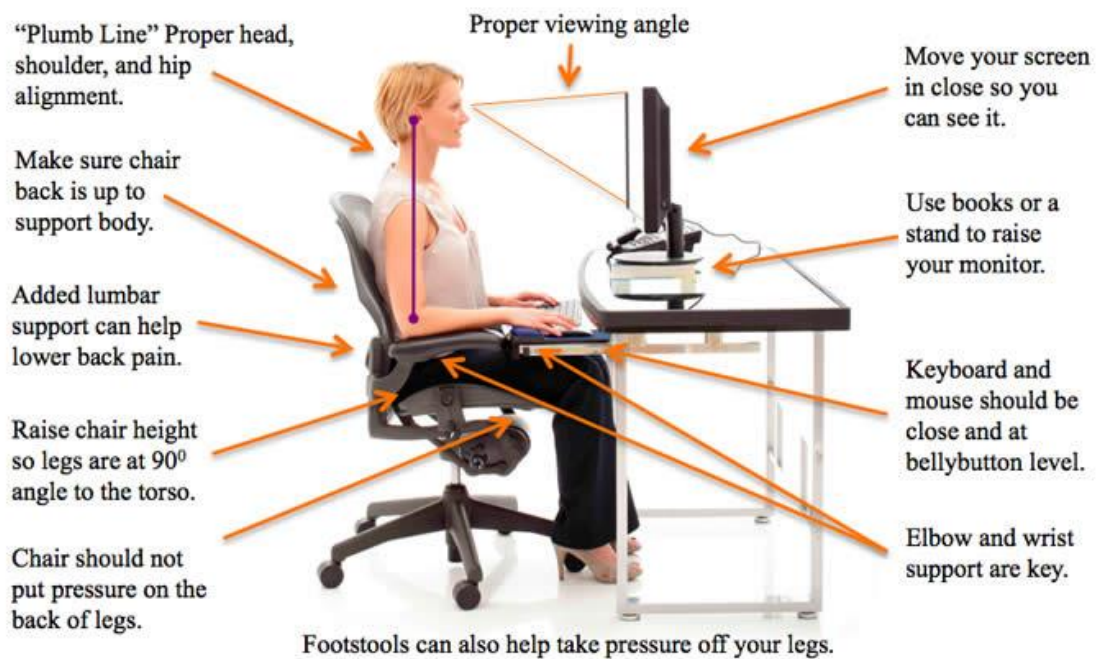
- Develop the necessary skills to work with others to complete projects.
- Participate in a study group with fellow learners. Group study sessions can still be carried out "virtually" even though you are taking an online learning course.

Working safely

- Taking regular breaks is an important part of working safely.
- Set up your desk so you don't experience fatigue.
- Focus your eyes on other things than the screen at regular intervals.

Set yourself up correctly

- Adjust your seat height so your wrists are in-line with your forearm when typing
- Check that your back is straight and supported
- The screen should be about 65 cms from your eyes
- Use a footrest if needed. You may be able to improvise with telephone books.



Resources you need to have at hand

- Your learning plan
- Schedule of learning events
- Notebook
- Portfolio for saving drafts and notes
- Contact details for your facilitator

ELearning should be an enjoyable experience enabling you to learn at your own pace in your own place. It enables your individual needs to be met and can encompass all the advantages of group learning.