

LEARNING LAB



TampeRemote 2020

Remote Learning Handbook

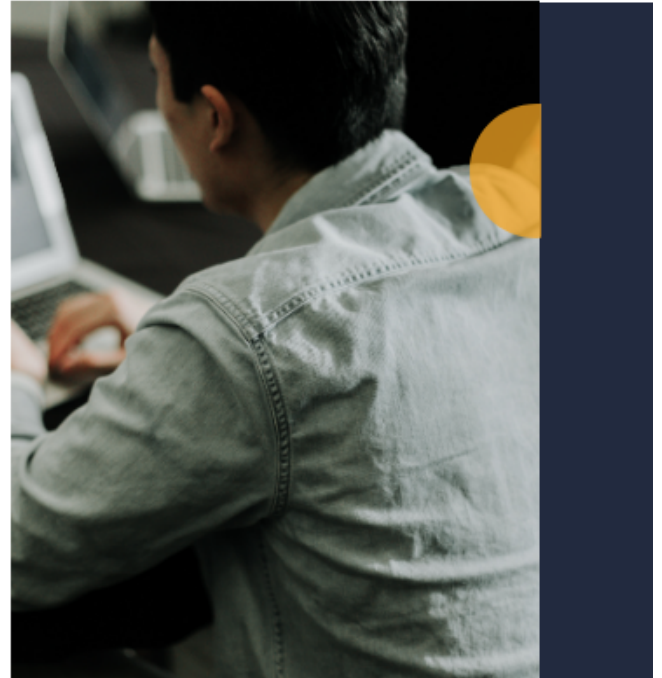
From students, for students



Tampere University of Applied Sciences

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WHAT IS THIS HANDBOOK FOR?

We are a group of students in Tampere working on a project about remote learning. Studying online has been both a challenge as well as an opportunity for us, and we think it is important to understand the pros and cons of remotely attending university.

So, if you are lost, have a sleeping disorder, haven't seen your friends in months, or simply don't understand what is going on around and what is coming next this handbook is for you!

If everything is stable in your life and you already kind of figured out how to use Microsoft Teams, eat healthily and socialize, this handbook might still be helpful for you. Technical info, mental and physical well-being tips, etc. It's worth checking it out!

BACKGROUND

This handbook is based on three different results of the surveys and on our personal experiences with remote learning.

Two of the surveys were conducted by Tampere University of Applied Sciences and one was made by us. Altogether, the surveys had around 2000 answers.

The biggest challenge of remote learning for students has been communication with friends, fellow students and teachers.

Students also mentioned having difficulties with:

- Motivation
- Concentration
- Doing tasks alone
- Stress
- Time management

Throughout this handbook, we will try to give you tips and ideas on how to deal with these difficulties, while keeping in mind that everyone is different. Find out what works for you!



STUDYING IN GENERAL

Communication can be challenging during remote learning. Both with other students and teachers. Remember to take advantage of various digital tools.



Don't hesitate to seek help from teachers if you need it. Despite their busy schedules, contacting teachers to ask for feedback is a great way to make sure you are on the right track with your studies.

Remote learning has been in actual use only for several months, so there may be still difficulties from the technical side and teachers' side. We should be well prepared for that situation, try to learn as much as possible and know that the best way to solve these problems is by contacting and talking to your classmates, teachers, and school staff. Things are solvable but something has to be done for them to be solved.

- It is a good thing to ask for more material / better material from the teacher if you feel like the quality of the material is lacking due to the remote way of learning
- It's okay to contact teachers
- It's okay to give constructive feedback about courses

SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING

Self-Directed Learning is a learning strategy in which individuals take the initiative with or without the help of others in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating goals, identifying human and material resources, and evaluating learning outcomes.

This method is very important during remote learning. Essentially, you are the one responsible for your own learning. But remember, this does not mean that you have to study alone!

Many of the students who answered the surveys, mentioned having issues with managing their time, being concentrated, and being motivated. Pursuing Self-Directed Learning can help with those issues. It provides students with the opportunity to teach themselves the most essential skill to become lifelong learners: knowledge of how to learn.

Self-Directed Learning can be divided into four steps: Assess readiness to learn, set goals, engage in the learning process, and evaluate learning.

A learning cycle is a tool our students can use to develop goals, develop a plan to achieve these goals, record and track progress toward these goals, show results of what they have learned, and take an assessment and reflect on their actions.

Wouldn't you like to have more control over your learning process?



HOW TO DEVELOP SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING

Developing a Self-Directed Learning Strategy isn't hard, but for most people, it just requires some practice. Here are some steps you can take to achieve it. We are all different kinds of learners, this strategy is a way to make learning fit to your interest.

1. Identify learning goals

You can never achieve anything unless you've envisioned it. Identify what you wish to learn, is the first step of the process.

2. Question the significance

Make a habit of not taking things for face value and you'll start to ask questions because you are actually curious and care about the answer.

3. Seek challenges

Challenges aren't always a bad thing. It can be rewarding and exciting to solve a problem that you care about.

4. Monitor your process

Learning is a lot more enjoyable when you've set your own standards. Regardless of grades, try to measure your progress against your own personal learning goals.

5. Understand your learning process

Do you really know what your learning style is? Take a moment to consider what format or medium helps you learn best.

6. Use reward-based motivation strategies

Reward systems can work wonders when it comes to self-directed learning. Give yourself fun and good reasons to challenge yourself and work hard.



7. Cultivate intrinsic motivation

Intrinsic motivation doesn't come naturally to everyone, but it can be learned. Help yourself enjoy learning more by collecting interesting facts and share your knowledge with others.

8. Research the background of a topic

Get to know the topic you are learning by checking the background of the topic. You can check various articles or the Wiki page on the topic. So you have a bit more context.

9. Create something out of what you learned

Make a habit of creating something with the new material you've learned. It can be anything you like. It can help solidify the material in your long term memory and also help you to look forward to future learning endeavors

10. Use time to your advantage

Life can get busy, but sometimes this can be an advantage. Why not listen to a podcast or an audiobook during lunch break or gym workout session about topics that interests you?

11. Make a list of topics you want to learn

Creating a list of topics to master is almost as fun as crossing them off. These can be broad topics or narrow ones.

12. Have realistic learning goals

Self-Directed Learning is built on a system we create ourselves. If you set unrealistic goals that you can't achieve, it can be very discouraging. So, create goals you can reasonably achieve.

13. Build a network of learning colleagues

We are collaborative learners by nature. Take advantage of online and in-person communities that will support you through your learning journey.

MOTIVATION

Motivation is a key factor in learning. A student who is highly motivated, but less able, can achieve greater success than the more intelligent student who is not motivated.

Motivation is described as a state that energizes, directs and sustains behavior. Motivation involves goals and requires activity. Goals provide the incentive for and the direction of action, while action entails effort: persistence to sustain an activity for a long period of time.

When everything is going well and the subject you are learning is interesting, it is easy to stay motivated. But that's not always the case when you don't feel that the subject is interesting or for any other reason, it can eat out your motivation.

Self-Directed Learning strategy, well-being, and other things mentioned in this handbook can help with that, but what can you do to sustain your motivation?

Try to discover why you procrastinate and ask yourself a few questions:



What are the factors that affect your motivation?

What are the things that reduce your motivation?

What can you do to motivate yourself?

UNIVERSITY FACILITIES

Even though we are studying remotely, it is important to remember that there are still many university facilities that can be used/are being used!

- Library facilities
- Campus medical aid room/student health care center/hospital near campus
- Counselors (social counselor, study counselor)
- Campus canteen
- Restaurants
- Campus Free WIFI
- IT helpdesk
- Labs
- Campus Gym
- Sport Services
- Student services hall
- Exam room



COMMUNITY

The Tampere university community is active, and students are contributing even when learning is done remotely. You can find about Tampere community events through various channels. Some of the events are happening online and few are happening offline.

- Clubs
- Tamko
- Tuni events
- Common facilities (library, studying places, special areas, classrooms, etc.)

WELL - BEING

Studying can cause stress, tension, and anxiety, which can affect your mental and physical well-being. Exercising, sleeping, and staying healthy can reduce those effects and boosts your academic performance, gives you more stamina and concentration.



The well-being of the students is the main concern during remote learning.

Here we tried to sum up the main points on how to have a balanced life - stay physically and mentally healthy.

Tips and info that are given here are from internet sources, from teachers/counselors/coaches, and from personal experience. Stay tuned!

HOW TO BUILD A NEW ROUTINE

During remote learning, you probably would need to build new routines to work or study more efficiently. It can be anything from short stretching sessions during the day to meditation. Setting a new routine can be quite uneasy, so here are the several good tips on how to make it happen:

- Connect with existing habits or alter, make a new one.
 - Start to change sports habits from a small place
 - Persevere every day
 - Choose the easier way. Don't set very high goals, start with something small and easily achievable
 - Reward yourself in time.
-

WHY EXERCISING IS IMPORTANT

Exercising is a great way to combat stress and feel more concentrated and energetic. Exercising encourages the body to secrete a substance called endorphin, which can improve people's mood and reduce anxiety.

Here are a few tips for students on different levels of activity:

LAZY KOALAS

You don't have to do one hour of gym session every day or practicing yoga 24/7. Try to do small things like stretching for a few mins in breaks between remote learning / video calls. Have a short walk for groceries, have a picnic with friends outside, you can play some games with your friends (Things that can make you move).

MORE ACTIVE STUDENTS

You have a perfect opportunity to fit your exercises or your physical activity sessions during remote learning because it's more flexible and less time-consuming. So many opportunities: outdoor activities, home exercising, walking, etc. Remote learning is also great for short stretches/exercising between learning sessions!

HARDCORE GYM SHARKS

There are several ways to keep up your high level of physical activity. You can choose home workouts or visiting your favorite gym or working out outdoors. The best thing – it all can be mixed, making the best personal workout solution. P.S. don't forget about safety rules and hygiene in the gym!

ACTIVITIES / OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Try new activities. If you don't have any old hobbies you want to regain, or have no hobbies at all, then try an activity that interests you. It is never too late to learn no matter when.

Try to find some interesting courses in the Tampere University community. It is best to learn new things, such as language or craftsmanship, and improve this skill through practice. Learning new things can force you to move away from stressors and make it easier for you to relax.



Many Facebook groups have social meetings trying to bring people together and often learn something new (speaking a new language, playing musical instruments, etc.)

It's always good to spend some time outdoors especially after you looked at your computer's monitor the whole day. Sunlight and forest are the natural antidotes to anxiety, tension, or even tiredness that we often can feel. Even if you can't get the sun or don't have the park nearby if you go outdoors, nature can relieve your stress: go for a walk in the park, cycling, go hiking in the mountains, go fishing, and many other things. When you enjoy nature and move your body, it is easier to breathe and relax.

Remember to follow SportUni on social media, they post videos of how to exercise and stay fit! They also provide high quality and versatile sport services for students and personnel of Tampere Universities. You can use three campuses' services for just one affordable fee!

IMPORTANCE OF SLEEP

the role of sleep is to supplement the body's energy, enhance its own resistance, promote the body's normal growth and development, and allow the body to get sufficient rest. Sleep is extremely important for protecting people's mental health and maintaining people's normal psychological activities.



- Sleep quality
- Get enough sleep
- No ideal regime, everyone is different
- Don't be afraid to take a short nap (about 20-30 mins) during the day
- Check your caffeine intake

Some people prefer to wake up earlier and others later, with many being the most productive either in the morning or in the evening. Once you know which time of day you are at your best and most energetic, it is possible to set an ideal routine for both work and leisure.

Are you sleeping enough?

NUTRITION

It's important to have a balanced diet, but at the same time, don't forget to treat or reward yourself from time to time! There are tons of material available online, find what works for you. Due to remote working physical activity or overall activity can decrease, so it might impact your body and your diet. Also, remember to drink enough water!

ROLE OF SOCIAL ACTIVITIES AND COMMUNICATION

Socialization and communication can enhance the feelings between people and narrow the distance between people. It's easier to find solutions to problems when you have other people brainstorming with you, and sharing their perspectives.

When feeling lonely and isolated, it will negatively impact a person's mental and physical health. For example, by contributing to anxiety.

Therefore, any type of social connection is important! Have a call together with other students to discuss assignments, feasible problems of course, or just for chit chat. That won't only make you feel less lonely but will also help with your studies and possible problems.

HOW TO SOCIALIZE WITH FELLOW STUDENTS

- Invite friends to eat and chat at home
- Video calls/audio calls (Discord, WhatsApp, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, etc.)
- Going out or outdoor activities
- Communicate through various channels (social media, messengers, email, letters, etc.)
- It's okay to not want to socialize and to just spend time with yourself
- Social gathering
- Make new friends (language learning pals, same interest groups, various apps like TAMK's Amigo app)



Microsoft Teams



Zoom



WhatsApp



Discord

COPING WITH FEELING LONELY AND ISOLATED

Loneliness is not only a state but also a subjective experience. Sometimes, even in a crowd, you will feel lonely, because you will find it difficult to integrate into this group.

As you already know, our mind and body are interrelated. Therefore, when we fall into loneliness and pain, then worse we feel, both mentally and physically. Thus, it is so important to do something to avoid falling into a fixed mindset of being all alone and being unable to extricate ourselves from it.



For example, try to take a few deep breaths, go for a walk, find a friend to have a meal with, watch a movie, meditate, change surroundings, etc. Through these activities, we can withdraw our thoughts and divert our attention, break the vicious cycle of thinking trap and get out of the strong sense of loneliness that can easily arise nowadays. It's important to remember – there is always someone that can listen to you or be near you and that we often tend to forget about it.

COPING WITH ANXIETY

Everyone has different ways of coping with stress and anxiety. Try as many solutions as possible to see what works for you. There is a very high chance that you will find something that would change your life in a better way or significantly make it easier.

For example, listen to music. Music has a great influence on a person's mood and mental state. Listen to your favorite soothing music and calm yourself down. For best results, even if you like heavy metal or rap music, it is best to try to listen to more soothing and soft music. Put a little music when you work, study, or participate in daily activities, it can change your stress value unconsciously.

Importance of silence: if you are surrounded by sounds the whole day it may be also important to give yourself a rest and not listen to anything/have a walk in nature/have an hour just reading or doing something that doesn't involve listening to anything. It can significantly reduce your stress level and calm you down.

Feeling anxious is typical when faced with uncertainty and challenges that you don't know how to deal with immediately. Overthinking and trying to solve too many problems at once become exhausting in the long-term. Your favorite hobbies and meeting friends can provide a much-needed break if your mind is losing focus!



What are your ways to relax?

STAY FOCUSED, KEEP SELF-ACTIVE

GET UP EARLY AND START WORKING

Get up early and start working shortly after that. At this time memory and work efficiency are very high. (it works for most people, but not for everybody).

MAKE A PLAN

Make a plan; even if the work is not complicated, it's always better to have a plan. Planning is the best positive start-up effect to start an action, which can move you forward.

DO ONE THING AT A TIME

Do one thing at a time; do not do two things at a time in your work. Doing a few things at a time is often a waste of time. When we concentrate on completing one thing, efficiency will be greatly improved.

CLARIFY YOUR GOALS

We must clarify our goals; clear goals are very important in our work. Let us have a clear goal for our work and not deviate from our work scope.

GET RID OF INTERFERENCE AND KEEP YOUR MIND CLEAR

It is necessary to get rid of interference to keep a clear mind; before starting work, shut down various communication software, and do not be disturbed by them, put away your phone, or hid it. There are also various apps to help with that.

BALANCE WORK AND REST

Balance work and rest. Have breaks, have breakfast, lunch, dinner preferably at one time.

HOBBIES AND NOT HAVING HOBBIES

Interests and hobbies can make us embrace life and adapt to the environment around us. Without hobbies outside of studying and work, a person might become more inflexible in their thinking and this could be reflected in their studies. Hobbies are a chance to step away from the demands of studying and working. One sign that a person has found a suitable hobby is that it makes them focus on it completely and forget their other worries, even losing track of time when immersed in the hobby.

Stick to your hobby. When we are anxious or nervous, we can easily put our hobbies aside, and then focus on what we think is important. But if there is no free time that will make you more nervous. Pick up your old hobbies, engage in your favorite sports, read art journals, or go hiking. Give yourself a little time to do what you like, so you will feel refreshed and better able to deal with stressors.



PERSONNEL FOR STUDENTS' WELLBEING

WELL-BEING COUNSELLING

TAMK's Well-being Counselling aims to enhance the well-being and welfare of students and to promote their ability to study. Well-being Counsellor can help you with:

- study burnout
- difficulties with depression or anxiety
- loneliness
- study motivation
- coping with stress
- managing a crisis
- learning difficulties

Well-being Counselling includes:

- individual guidance
- conversational support
- neuropsychiatric coaching
- service counselling



CONTACT

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Well-being Counsellor

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Email: wellbeingcounselling.tamk@tuni.fi

Bookings <https://bit.ly/TAMKhyvinvointi>

STUDENT HEALTH CARE

Student health services include health care, medical treatment, mental and sexual health care services and dental care. The City of Tampere organises health care services for university of applied sciences students who study in Tampere: Hammareninkatu 7, 4th floor.

Appointment and guidance

Mon-Thu at 8.15-14.00 and Fri at 8.15-13.00



Team 1: tel. 040 806 2454

Team 2: tel. 040 806 2459

Team 3: tel. 040 806 2455

Further information on Teams, health care, dental care and psychologist's services at www.tampere.fi/opiskeluterveys

COOPERATION WITH CONGREGATION

TAMK's pastor is Jussi Houttu. He is available for students and staff for example in the following situations:

- Confidential discussions
- Wellbeing at work, student wellbeing, overall wellbeing
- Relationship counselling
- Ceremonies, confirmation classes
- Conflict situations and crises (at a personal or community level)
- Tutor education
- Trips, events
- Lessons and lectures



CONTACT

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SOCIAL COUNSELLING FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

If you are an international student, International Coordinator for Social Counselling can advise you with many practical issues e.g:

- residence permit or EU registration
- housing
- finding furniture
- finding used household items, winter clothes, etc.
- applying for a Personal Identity Code and Home Municipality
- Finnish Social Security Institution (KELA)
- finding a doctor or a dentist
- problems with employers



CONTACT

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DIGITAL TOOLS FOR REMOTE LEARNING

Working and studying remotely requires the right tools and methods. Digital tools can help you to work more efficiently and help you to communicate with other people. There are various tools available online for free, here are some that we recommend.

TOOLS FOR COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION



WhatsApp is a free instant messenger that helps you to stay connected with other people. It's easy to create a group chat for your class, community or team, to keep the discussion going!



Microsoft Teams is a great collaboration and communication tool for teamwork.



Discord is an amazing tool for communication. Voice, video, chat, it has it all!



Kialo Edu - Free tool used by educators world-wide to teach critical thinking, facilitate rational classroom debate and explain controversial issues.

INFORMATION GATHERING



Andor is Tampere University Library's discovery service.



Zotero - Zotero is a free, easy-to-use tool to help you collect, organize, cite, and share research.



Joplin - Free, open-source note taking and to-do application, which can handle a large number of notes organized into notebooks.

TOOLS FOR COLLATING AND SHARING IDEAS



Adobe Spark

Adobe Spark - Create impactful social graphics, web pages, and short videos in minutes with Adobe Spark



Kahoot! – Is a game-based learning platform that brings engagement and fun!



Google Jamboard – A digital whiteboard that offers a rich collaborative experience for teams and classrooms. Watch your creativity unfold.



Flinga - Collaborative platform with integrated, engaging, pedagogical activities.



Coggle - A collaborative mind-mapping tool that helps you make sense of complex things.



Canva - A graphic design platform that allows users to create social media graphics, presentations, posters and other visual content



Visme - Make Professional Presentations and Infographics Online with Visme's free tool.

CONCLUSIONS

In summary, remote learning will become an increasingly popular option as many people may have gotten used to that and as a new development in higher education and life at university.

There can be many challenges involved with things like getting Zoom to work properly and contacting teachers via email but studying and work can also become more effective and easier in many ways when dealt with in a remote setting.

What we need to do is to adapt to this new change and be prepared to meet new challenges, as our community spirit says: Human potential unlimited!



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