



Setting expectations

Communicating expectations with students

Students are likely to be nervous about making a transition to fully online learning, so it is important that you take time to set the expectations and boundaries in your new online learning environments as soon as possible.

Don't be afraid to set expectations high – but you will need to be as clear as possible about what it is that you require your students to do ([Scully & Kerr, 2014](#)).

A good way to communicate your expectations is via an **Announcements forum post** each Monday morning that explains what students need to be doing for that week.

Topics covered in such a post might be

- Concepts being introduced
- Activities they need to complete
- Zoom meeting times
- Assessment progress – what students should be doing this week to complete their assessments on time
- Your online office hours - when you will be online during the week and attending to that course
- Public holidays – and how they impact the course
- How they are to communicate – when to use a forum and when to use email.
- When they can expect a reply from you (e.g. within 24 hours).

If the text starts to get too long, you can break it up with bolded headings to make the post easier to read.

These regular posts will help build rhythm and structure within your course and will settle your students.

Another common way to convey expectations is to list the ‘**Need to know**’ and ‘**Need to do**’ for each week in a table at the beginning of each week in the course website. The ‘*Need to knows*’ are the new concepts being introduced and the ‘*Need to dos*’ are the activities and assessment expectations for that week. These lists become mental organisers for students to check their progress and reassure them that they are not missing anything.

This example comes from the SCEDS 90004 course:

Need to Know	Need to Do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner life worlds and implications • Pedagogical justice and its implications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch - Toward pedagogical justice • Watch - Defining culturally responsive pedagogy (interview) • Learning activity 4.1 - Enactments of culturally responsive pedagogy • Read-Two journal articles • Submit Assessment 2

Realistic expectations

Be mindful of what you are asking students to do and how long it would take them to do each activity.

Time budgets ([Quinn & Wedding, 2012](#)), which map out in a table what students need to be doing each week, and how long they should spend on it, can be a helpful way to concisely communicate your expectations to students ([example in a course](#)).

Colour coding can be used to convey if the activity is asynchronous or synchronous, if specialist software required, or if the activity is related to an assessment.

Remember to include time for reading as part of your calculations and that the reading type impacts reading speed ([Lockwood 2005](#)).

- 'easy' 100 words per minute
- 'moderate' 70 words per minute
- 'difficult' 40 words per minute.

An online tool that can help with these calculations is [word to time](#).

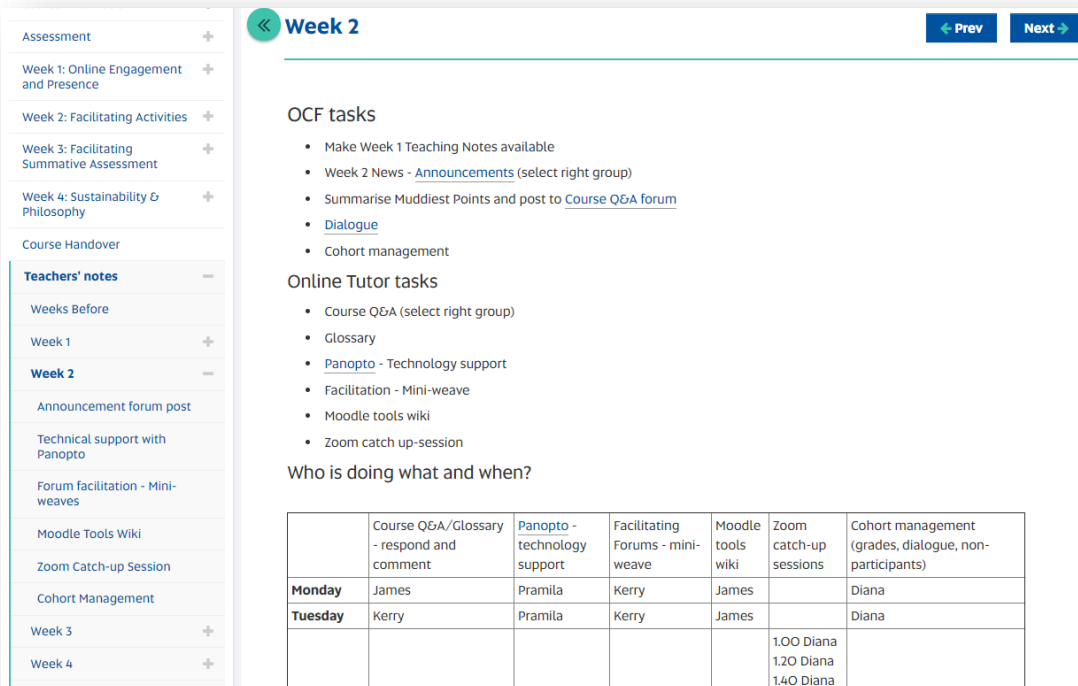
Communicating expectations with the teaching team

You will also need to communicate well with the members of your teaching team.

Many online courses create a hidden part of their website called **Teacher's notes** that provides weekly guidance to the teaching team and what is expected of each member of the teaching team.

Copies of the planned forum posts can be stored in the Teacher's notes part of the website to be recycled for use with the next cohort.

You can see an example of Teacher's notes in the short course [Engaging Learners Online](#) in the UniSA Online environment (flexible sections),



The screenshot shows a course page for Week 2. The left sidebar contains a navigation menu with items like 'Assessment', 'Week 1: Online Engagement and Presence', 'Week 2: Facilitating Activities', 'Week 3: Facilitating Summative Assessment', 'Week 4: Sustainability & Philosophy', 'Course Handover', 'Teachers' notes', 'Weeks Before', 'Week 1', 'Week 2', 'Announcement forum post', 'Technical support with Panopto', 'Forum facilitation - Mini-weaves', 'Moodle Tools Wiki', 'Zoom Catch-up Session', 'Cohort Management', 'Week 3', and 'Week 4'. The main content area is titled 'Week 2' and includes 'OCF tasks' (Make Week 1 Teaching Notes available, Week 2 News - Announcements, Summarise Muddiest Points and post to Course Q&A forum, Dialogue, Cohort management) and 'Online Tutor tasks' (Course Q&A, Glossary, Panopto - Technology support, Facilitation - Mini-weave, Moodle tools wiki, Zoom catch up-session). Below this is a table titled 'Who is doing what and when?'.

	Course Q&A/Glossary - respond and comment	Panopto - technology support	Facilitating Forums - mini-weave	Moodle tools wiki	Zoom catch-up sessions	Cohort management (grades, dialogue, non-participants)
Monday	James	Pramila	Kerry	James		Diana
Tuesday	Kerry	Pramila	Kerry	James		Diana
					1.00 Diana 1.20 Diana 1.40 Diana	



or using the book tool in learnonline in the course ENR101.

The screenshot shows a course page with a table of contents on the left and teachers' notes on the right. The table of contents lists 'Week 3' as the current page. The teachers' notes section is titled 'Teachers' notes' and includes a red-bordered box for 'Week 3' containing a 'Teaching team meeting' agenda. Below this, there are sections for 'Web site Adjustments' and 'For the Unit Coordinator' with specific instructions.

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- Week 1
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- Week 6
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- Week 11
- Week 12
- Week 13
- Examination weeks
- Finalising results

Teachers' notes

Week 3

Teaching team meeting.

This week we will have a staff meeting in the virtual classroom

Agenda:

- discuss use of virtual classroom sessions and if necessary reschedule times
- discuss how students are interacting with the materials and forums
- review evaluation data
- adjust the teachers notes to better reflect what is needed.

Web site Adjustments

- UniSA-OUA academic services will change over the section highlight to be Week 3.

For the Unit Coordinator

1. Monitor activity of students. If students are not participating – write a personal Dialogue message or telephone them to see if there are any issues.
2. Monitor students' activity in quiz 1 – and troubleshoot any issues. They are allowed 2 guesses for each question and two attempts at the quiz.
3. News Forum. Post a modified version of the following notice to the **News Forum**.

It is also a great idea to schedule regular meeting times in Zoom with the teaching team so that you are all on the same page for the week's activities.

If you would like to ask online teaching and learning questions related to your course, you can look through our [FAQs](#), write to TIU@unisa.edu.au, have an online [consultation with a member of the TIU](#), attend a [Zoom workshop](#) or complete the online modules as part of [Introduction to Engaging Learners Online](#).