

Tips and Advice from COVID Cohort 19-20 to 20-21 Cohort

Reflecting on their own experiences of moving to and learning online since March 2020, the 28 PGTs offered the following tips and advice to the new cohort starting in Oct 2020.

In their own words:

Approach to online learning

- *Immerse yourself.*
- *Be organised.*
- *Be prepared to be independent. Be proactive in contributing to discussion posts. Try to adopt a routine.*
- *Manage your time. Have a to do list. Take a break.*
- *It's different, more difficult to concentrate so try to be somewhere with no distractions, put your phone away and it helps to take breaks.*
- *Be open to the idea because it's not as bad as it may initially seem, and you'll get used to it!*

About the Physical Environment

- *Make sure your desk chair is comfortable and a second desktop screen is extremely useful to go along with a laptop.*
- *Try new things to see what works for new (places to sit, ways of structuring your time). Take a good lunch break and don't look at your phone during it because you've been on the screen all day :)*
- *Definitely invest in a decent chair and make sure your set-up is comfortable. There are some great second-hand places out there.*

Familiarity with apps & tools

- *Play around with the features and/or watch some tutorials.*
- *There should be a guide to help people with Moodle if you're not used to it.*
- *Be there early, make sure your device is working.*
- *Download all of the university apps to your phone/tablet (Moodle, Teams, Zoom etc). I found the apple pencil (for iPad) really useful - for marking up PDF versions of papers and annotating things.*
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Attitudes to new (online) learning

- *At first it can be quite technical and daunting to get to grips with. However, as you continue to learn online you begin to become more confident and feel more autonomous in your learning. Confidence grows and moving online has forced many lecturers to place teach and learning interactivity at the forefront of their practice. This makes the lesson exciting, effective and engaging.*
- *Just go with it and trust it.*
- *Be open minded and try to adapt.*
- *Don't be worried about talking or that people are staring at you! It will soon become normal and everyone is thinking the same thing.*

Online Peer collaboration

- *Always feel free to ask questions either on discussion boards or email your course tutor when you are not sure of something.*
- *Take full advantage of opportunities to engage with other students - they make you feel less isolated!*

And a tip directed at tutors

- *I think it is really important that lecturers/course leaders plan very carefully to ensure remote learning is fulfilling, engaging and comprehensive.*

Last but not least, one PGT wisely reflected on what really makes a difference to the learning: *It's not that [online learning is] different, don't make too much of a fuss. The content of the module by the lecturers makes a much bigger difference!*

with many thanks to all CPA PGTs who participated in this survey and in the video production!

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