



Online Assessment: Guidelines and Troubleshooting

Online assessments and examinations are quite different from the usual way we complete assessments, and successful completion will require some earnest preparation, planning and dedication on your part. This document serves as a checklist to provide you with some **guidelines and troubleshooting advice to help you prepare for, complete, and improve on your online assessment experience.**

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ASSESSMENT PREPARATIONS

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- 2) Study and plan
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- 3) Assessment etiquette and academic integrity
- 4) Technical difficulties

AFTER THE ASSESSMENT

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Preparation considerations:

1) Ensure you know the scope of the assessment and how you will be assessed

- Which chapters/topics/themes will be assessed?
- How will these chapters/topics/themes be assessed: Quiz/Assignment/Other?
- Which question types will be used (essay, calculations, multiple-choice questions etc.)? Will you be able to navigate freely between questions, i.e. can you go back and forth between questions or only answer sequentially?
- From which date and time will the assessment be available, and when is the cut-off date and time?
- How much time do you have to complete the assessment?
- How much does the assessment count? If you have this information and the assessment timing you can estimate the amount of time you have to spend on each question.
- Late submissions: Will late submissions be accepted and if so, will a penalty be applied for late submissions?
- How many attempts are you allowed to complete?
- Are there any additional instructions, such as the specific file type you need to upload (Word, PDF, audio file)?
- May you use your notes, summaries, mind maps, textbooks or any other materials when completing the assessment?

If you are unsure about anything, check with your lecturer or tutor at least 72 hours in advance.

2) Study and plan

- Plan a study schedule.
- Study as you would for any class- or examination room-based assessment.
- This is also true for an open book and/or take-home assessment, as you will not have enough time to search for information when formulating your answers.
- Plan and schedule when you will take the assessment. If the test will be available for several hours or a few days, choose a suitable time for you to complete it.
- Plan “in case of emergency” time in case something goes wrong or you experience technical difficulties.





3) Prepare your space

- Find a quiet (or quiet enough), comfortable space to complete your assessment.
- Communicate your assessment schedule with family members and housemates and ask them not to interrupt you at these times.
- Minimise any distractions: switch off the TV, switch off your phone and close emails and all social media apps.
- Make sure you have everything you need to complete this assessment:
 - If you may use your notes, summaries, mind maps, textbooks, or any other materials, ensure that they are neatly arranged and readily available.
 - Declutter and remove any unnecessary books or notes from the assessment space.

4) Prepare your technology

- Ensure that your SUNLearn profile is up to date and that you have access to SUNLearn. You can check this by going onto SUNLearn regularly and ensuring you can see and access your modules.
- Ensure your SU password is current and has not expired. Check this by signing in to SUNLearn and your SU email regularly (including the junk mail/spam folder). If you need to change your password, click [here](#).
- Ensure that you will be able to complete the assessment with your device type (especially if it is a mobile device). If need be, try to borrow a laptop or tablet from a family member, neighbour or friend.
- Ensure your device is fully charged and/or plugged in.
- Test and, where necessary, update the software you will be using to complete this assessment (such as Word and/or Excel). If you complete the assessment by hand and scan the document to upload it, ensure that you have downloaded the correct application and know how to use it properly.

To update your Office 365 applications, click [here](#).

For the proper use of scanning applications, click [here](#).

- Test and, where necessary, update your internet browser(s). If possible, ensure that you have access to TWO internet browsers in case you experience problems viewing or opening a SUNLearn test on one of them.
 - We recommend downloading and using Microsoft Edge, Google Chrome and Mozilla Firefox when accessing SUNLearn. Download via these links:

[Microsoft Edge](#)





Google Chrome

Mozilla Firefox

- Plan your internet access in advance:
 - Ensure that you have a stable internet connection at the time of assessment.
 - Ensure that you have enough data to access and complete the assessment.
 - If you make use of a wi-fi router that is shared with family members or housemates, ask them to disconnect their devices during your scheduled assessment time. Remember: the more active devices that are linked to a wi-fi router, the slower the internet connection.
- **Manage loadshedding**
 - Know your loadshedding schedule: Download a reliable app and check it regularly for updates on loadshedding levels. **Eskom se Push** is the recommended app for keeping an eye on the loadshedding schedule and status:

[Click here](#) to download Eskom se Push from the Google Play Store.

[Click here](#) to download Eskom se Push from the Apple App Store.
 - Charge your laptop, phone and mobile router (if you have these devices available) beforehand.
 - Your phone can be used as a WiFi hotspot for internet connection during loadshedding. Test this beforehand so that you know what to do when you need to use it.
 - If you know that loadshedding will be implemented during an assessment opportunity, find an area close to you that does not have loadshedding during that time. Try to find a public space with reliable WiFi. Alternatively, you can ask a friend or relative, in a different area, whether you can do the assessment at their home.

During the assessment:

1) Read the instructions carefully

As with any assessment, take the time to read your instructions very carefully and make sure you understand what is expected of you.

- **Take note:** If you are inactive on SUNLearn for too long, or keep the SUNLearn tab open in the background, your session will timeout and ask you to log back in. This





may create potential problems accessing SUNLearn again. Therefore, if the assessment requires you to work offline before uploading your submission (such as typing an assignment), rather close SUNLearn whilst completing this activity.

2) Plan and keep track of your time

Once you start the assessment you may have limited time to complete it. Therefore, set an alarm at certain intervals to notify you how much time is left – like the invigilator in a class- or examination room-based assessment would do.

- Plan enough time to read your instructions.
- If there are any files you can download beforehand, do so.
- Estimate how much time you may need for each question (by looking at its grade allocation) and try to keep to that.
- Try and plan some “buffer time”: Extra time for you to return to questions you could not initially answer (if the assessment allows for this) and time to read through your answers and ensure that you have completed them all.
- Plan “in case of emergency” time to ensure that you will be able to successfully complete your assessment, even if something goes wrong.
- **Take note:** Assessments that require the submission of answer scripts or the uploading of documents will have an additional 30-minutes submission time. This is **not extra writing time** but is to allow for any technical difficulties that you may experience during submission.

3) Guidelines on assessment etiquette and academic integrity

As with all assessments throughout your studies we expect you to follow proper etiquette and comply with the University’s academic integrity stipulations. Carefully read the following instructions on academic integrity and honesty. If you are found to have contravened these conditions you will be subject to disciplinary action.

Remember: this must be your work, and your work only!

Unless the assessment instructions expressly state otherwise, the following apply:

- You are **not allowed to copy this assessment** or to create images of the screen showing any part of the assessment (including, but not limited to, images obtained by means of screenshots, photographs and any software applications).





- In the case of an **open-book assessment you may only consult the sources** that are explicitly allowed by the lecturer, from the time that the assessment becomes available on SUNLearn until you have submitted all your answers. For example, the textbook and sources prescribed, recommended or provided by the lecturers; notes or materials that you created personally and independently using the aforementioned sources; and sources expressly allowed by the question paper or assessment documentation that is made available before commencement of the assessment.
- You are **not allowed to communicate** with another student or anybody else, about any aspect related to the assessment from the time that the assessment becomes available on SUNLearn until you have submitted all your answers or assignment or until the opportunities for submitting the assessment (i.e. as per the due date and time, as well as extra time allowed for submission) have closed. This prohibition includes, but is not limited to, telephonic communication, SMSes, WhatsApp, Messenger, any social media, e-mail and any other form of communication. The only exception is communication with the official institutional assessment support channels for issues pertaining to the assessment.
- You are responsible **for successfully submitting** all your answers/uploading your completed assignment and required documents. You may not assume that submission was successful until the SUNLearn system shows that your submission was accepted. Once the assessment/assignment opportunity has closed no submissions or uploads will be accepted.

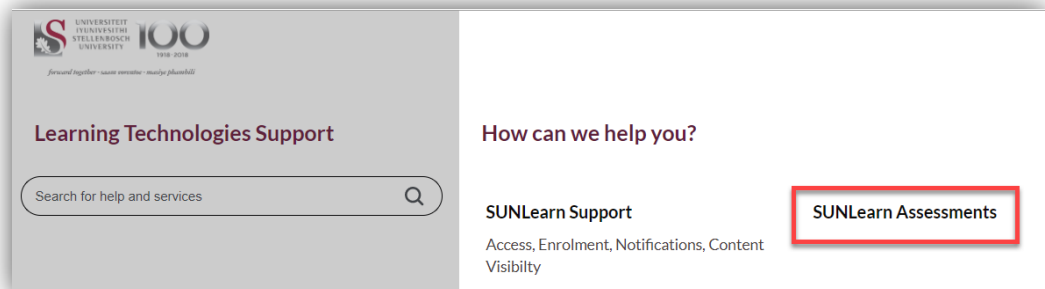
4) What do I do if I experience technical difficulties?

- Make sure that you are connected to the internet and that you have data.
- Make sure that you are using Microsoft Edge, Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox when using SUNLearn.
- Ensure your password is still active. If you need to change your password, click [here](#).
- **If you cannot access SUNLearn, follow these steps:**
 - Test the Single Sign On login:
 - First, open the link <https://sso.sun.ac.za/logout>
 - Then, open the link <https://sso.sun.ac.za/login>
 - Clear your browser cache:





- While having your browser open, press the Ctrl+Shift+Del keys (Cmd+Shift+Backspace in Mac) on your keyboard.
 - If you are using Google Chrome, be sure to select the Advanced tab.
 - The window that opens will show Clear browsing data or Clear all history.
 - Next to the Time range, select Everything, All Time or The Beginning of Time.
 - Select all check boxes listed (in Firefox, select the check boxes under both History and Data).
 - Click Clear, Clear Now or Clear Data.
 - Wait for the browser to finish clearing. Once finished, close the browser completely, including any other sessions that may have been open at the time.
 - Open this link <https://sso.sun.ac.za/login> again.
 - If you receive an error now, please take a screenshot and log the call and screenshot at <https://servicedesk.sun.ac.za>.
- **If your assessment stalls or is interrupted**, click F5 or the “Refresh” button on your internet browser to see if you can return to the assessment.
 - **Close and reopen SUNLearn** and try to return to the assessment.
 - **If none of the above work, follow this procedure:**
 - Take a screenshot of your problem (it must be a full screenshot of the entire page that includes the date and time, and SUNLearn module details).
 - **Log a call** for assessment assistance (see picture below) on the SUNLearn helpdesk <https://learnhelp.sun.ac.za> or **call** the SUNLearn helpdesk at 021 808 2222.



- **Provide a clear explanation** outlining the nature of your challenge and **attach appropriate evidence** (including, but not limited to, screenshots or





photos of the error). In other words, clearly explain the reason why you could not submit via SUNLearn.

- **Keep the ticket number (CLT-XXX) and include it in your email to your faculty's emergency submission email address.**
- **Send an email to the emergency email address:**

Each faculty has an emergency email address to which students who experience technical difficulties when uploading their assessment onto SUNLearn within the allowed 30-minute submission time, can send their document. Since this email address is focused on file submissions it can only be used where students are expected to submit a file (e.g. Turnitin assignment, Assignment or Quiz essay type questions that allow file submissions).

Important

- Ensure that you know your faculty's emergency submission email address, as well as the specific guidelines on its appropriate use.
- Submissions that do not comply with the guidelines will NOT be accepted.





After the assessment:

1) Reflect on your experience

Reflect on how well you think the assessment went. This is generally a very difficult and awkward activity to do, so ask yourself:

- Could you answer the questions with ease, or would you need to study a bit more in the future?
- Did you plan enough time to answer all the questions or did you have to skip some?
- Did you have any technical difficulties that you could rectify in the future?

2) Revise your strategy and approach

Use the abovementioned reflections to revise your learning strategy and approach. This may mean that you spend more time studying, or at least adjust your study-technique to better retain and retrieve information. Take time to plan your next assessment carefully and make sure that any technical difficulties are resolved.



