Online learning

A guide to online learning at Te Kura for secondary dual students

2016

Introduction

To succeed in our digital world, where technology is part of everyday life, learning how to use it effectively is an essential skill.

To ensure Te Kura students have the opportunity to gain these skills, we have developed new online courses for curriculum levels 3–5 and we are adapting our NCEA courses to be interactive online modules accessible through our Online Teaching and Learning Environment (OTLE), starting with NCEA Level 1.

By learning online, students can receive feedback from their teacher much faster and move onto their next module or unit of work. This is particularly important with changes to postal delivery services which have increased the time it takes to send parcels through the post.

This resource has been developed for schools which register secondary dual students with Te Kura. Please read it carefully to find out what you need to support your student's learning online. You will also find detailed information under 'Dual tuition' on our website.

Contents

What does it mean to learn online?

Te Kura's online courses are delivered through our Online Teaching and Learning Environment (OTLE), which is a secure, online space accessed through an internet browser such as Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, or Safari[1].

Students enrolled in an online course use a mix of text and other online resources as part of their learning. Online resources include quizzes, games, surveys, audio and video files. Topics or units of work are called modules. A module of work generally takes about 10 hours to complete, depending on the course. In some courses students are able to choose the order in which they work through the online modules. In other courses the teacher will decide which module the student should complete next.

Instead of waiting for booklets to arrive through the post, students who are learning online can access their learning materials instantly. They can submit their assessments as soon as they are completed by uploading to the course dropbox. Te Kura teachers then assess the work and provide feedback online. Students can also communicate online with their teachers and other students who are enrolled in the same course.

In addition to online resources and activities, most courses also include practical activities for students to complete away from the computer.

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[1]   Please note that the browser Internet Explorer should not be used with Te Kura's OTLE as it does not support all of the online learning tools we use.

Which courses will be online in 2016?

Curriculum levels 3–5

In 2016, the following courses at curriculum levels 3–5 (years 9 and 10) will be online. This means that most of the learning resources and the activities students need to complete are in the form of interactive modules accessed through the OTLE. Language courses will use a mix of interactive online modules and printed booklets until development of all the new online modules is complete by the end of 2016. Exceptions to this are Latin LA000 and Life skills LS100, which will continue to be available in booklet form during 2016.

Curriculum levels 3–5 courses	Code
Agriculture	AG000
Art	AR000
Chinese	ZH000
Digital Technology	DT000
Design and Visual Communications	DVC000
English	EN000
Enterprise Studies	ES000
French	FR000
German	GR000
Health & Physical Education	HP000
Horticulture	HT000
Home Economics	HE000
Japanese	JP000
Mathematics	MX000
Music	MC000
Science	SC000
Social Studies	SS000
Spanish	SP000
Technology	TE000
Te Reo Māori	MA000

Any students who are working at curriculum level 2 will continue to receive printed booklets. However, they will require access to a device and internet connectivity when they move up to curriculum level 3.

NCEA Level 1

A number of our courses at NCEA Level 1 are already available as fully online courses (indicated in the following list with an *). We are progressively adapting booklets in the remaining courses into interactive online modules. At the beginning of the 2016 year there will be at least five (or equivalent) online modules available in each NCEA Level 1 course. All NCEA Level 1 students will start their courses online via one of the new interactive modules.

Booklets which are still to be adapted will be available as digital copies of the existing booklets in PDF format, until they have been adapted for online delivery.

The PDF booklets can be downloaded and saved to be edited by students online, or printed and written on the same way as a pre-printed booklet. Edited PDFs can be saved and uploaded directly to the dropbox. Printed work can be scanned and uploaded to the dropbox, except for those courses which specify that students are to return completed assessments through the post[1]. Students will be given clear instructions on how to return their assessments.

Some of the new online courses include assessment activities in PDF format which are available via OTLE or in some cases via email. In some of our courses, students may be required to complete the work for these assessments by hand.

As the interactive online modules are added to the OTLE, the corresponding PDF file will be removed. By the end of 2016 all of our NCEA Level 1 courses will be available as interactive online modules only.

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[1] Please note that posting bags and address cards will not be supplied to schools for dual-registered students.

NCEA Level 1 courses	Code
Accounting	AC1000
Agriculture	AG1000
Art*	AR1000
Business Studies	BS1000
Biology	BY1000
Chemistry	CH1000
Chinese	ZH1000
Commerce Studies	CM1000
Economics	EC1000
Design and Visual Communications*	DVC1000
Digital Technology*	DT1000
English	EN1000
Literacy	LY1500
French	FR1000
German	GR1000
Geography	GE1000
Health Education	HP1000
History	HS1000
Home Economics	HE1000
Horticulture	HT1000
Japanese	JP1000
Legal Studies	LG1000
Music	MP1000
Mathematics and Statistics	MX1000
Mathematics and Statistics	MX1600
Media Studies*	MS1000
Pathways	PW1000
Performing Arts	PA1000
Physical Education	PE1000
Physics	PH1000
Science	SC1000
Everyday Science	SC1600
Spanish	SP1000
Technology	TE1000
Te Reo Māori*	MA1000

What equipment do students need?

Students enrolled in online courses need access to a suitable device and internet connectivity.

Devices

A suitable device is one that enables the student to:

- access the internet and Te Kura's OTLE (via a web browser)
- make audio and video recordings
- create and edit documents, including spreadsheets and presentations (using PowerPoint or Prezi, for example).

A laptop or desktop computer, netbook, or tablet PC (also known as a Smart PC) with at least a hard disk drive of more than 80GB and memory of more than 4GB are the best options as they offer a greater range of functionality than most standard tablets or iPads.

Internet connectivity

Broadband internet or equivalent is necessary for students learning online. We recommend a data plan of at least 30GB. Dial-up internet is not suitable.

Software

The OTLE itself provides a lot of the software and tools students will need to learn online, along with instructions on how to use them. However, there are some other software and online tools students will need access to that are available for free, including:

- an email account – Te Kura offers all students a 'My Te Kura' email account which also provides access to free Microsoft software (see page 11 for more information). Alternatively, students can use an existing email account or Gmail, Yahoo, Hotmail etc.

- internet browser – we recommend Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox or Safari and these are available to download online. Many devices come with a web-browser already installed
- word processing software. Page 13 has information about how Te Kura students can download free Microsoft software using their My Te Kura email account. There are other software packages such as Google Drive and Open Office which are free to download
- PDF editing software – there are different options available which enable students to write directly into PDF files, save their work and upload it to the OTLE for assessment
- anti-virus software
- a Gmail account for access to GoogleDocs.

Links to these and other websites for downloading recommended software are available in the OTLE.

Schools should ensure YouTube access is not blocked.

Access to a printer and scanner would be useful, particularly for students enrolled in NCEA Level 1 courses, where they will be using a mix of interactive online modules and PDF files. Some courses require students to write or draw some of their work on printed worksheets which can be downloaded and printed from the OTLE.

PDF booklets can be downloaded and any assessment activities completed online using PDF editing software.

There is a range of free PDF editing tools available, including Adobe Reader, PDF Escape or Google. Some of these editing tools need to be downloaded to a device first, so they are more suitable for students who have their own device or access to shared software.

Alternatively, PDF files can be printed off – in most cases, students will not need to print the whole booklet in order to complete the activities.

Here's a checklist of the equipment or software students may need.

Item	Essential	Desirable
A suitable device: desktop PC, laptop, netbook or tablet PC	✓	
Internet connection and data plan (we recommend 30GB of data per month)	✓	
Internet browser – Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox or Safari	✓	
Webcam – built in or separate	✓	
Microphone (may be built into the device or separate)	Essential for courses such as languages and music which require audio recordings	✓
PDF editing software	Essential for most NCEA Level 1 courses and for dual-enrolled students	
Anti-virus software	✓	
Printer		✓
Scanner		✓
Digital camera – either a dedicated camera or built into a tablet or smartphone		✓
Headphones	Essential for languages courses	Desirable for other courses
PDF editing software such as Adobe, PDF Escape	✓	

Word processing software such as Microsoft Office, Open Office, Google Drive or Office Works	✓	
An email account such as My Te Kura, Gmail, Yahoo, Hotmail etc.	✓	
A Gmail account for access to Google Docs	✓	
USB DVD		Desirable if the main device does not have a built-in DVD drive

As with our booklet-based courses, some courses require students to use particular items of equipment. Details of any equipment required are specified within the course in OTLE.

'My Te Kura' email account and Microsoft Office software

Te Kura has partnered with Microsoft to give Office 365 to every student free of charge. With Office 365 Pro Plus, Te Kura students have access to the latest version of Word, for writing; Excel, for spreadsheets; PowerPoint, for presentations; OneNote, for organisation and note taking; and much more. Students can install Office 365 Pro Plus on up to five compatible PCs and Macs, plus five tablets (including iPad).

To enable our students to take up this offer, we have allocated every student a 'My Te Kura' email address which they must use to sign in and download the software or access it through the Cloud. The format for this email address is the student's firstname.lastname@mytekura.school.nz and the password is their Te Kura student ID number. Students may nominate to use this email account as their primary account for emails to and from Te Kura.

The software must be downloaded from the internet. Our website provides simple instructions to download Office 365 at www.tekura.school.nz/enrol-with-us/free-microsoft-office-for-students/

Technical assistance

Te Kura has a dedicated helpdesk for students requiring technical assistance while learning online.

The helpdesk can be reached by email to helpdesk.OTLE@tekura.school.nz or by calling 0800 65 99 88 ext. 8712 between 8am and 5pm Monday to Friday.

Advice and support for students learning online

An introductory course, called OTLE HUB, is available within the OTLE. We encourage students to work through the course before getting started on any other courses, as it contains useful advice and resources designed to prepare students for studying online with Te Kura. Students will learn about digital citizenship, OTLE tools and other online tools which are used in our online courses.

Coordinators should ensure all students are familiar with the content of this course. Subject teachers are also available to support students.

How can coordinators support students who are learning online?

In addition to ensuring students have the right equipment and resources to learn online, there are other ways coordinators can support students online.

Cybersafety

School coordinators are responsible for ensuring that students registered with Te Kura behave appropriately in an online environment and comply with their school's cybersafety/digital citizenship policies.

There is information about cybersafety and online behaviour in the OTLE HUB course.

Viewing students' online work

Coordinators can view the content of their students' courses via their school's OTLE access. Using the 'Audit Function' on this screen, coordinators can see if a student has uploaded any work to a course dropbox and see feedback from the teacher that's been added to the dropbox (although they cannot open the files the students have uploaded).

We recommend that coordinators familiarise themselves with OTLE by working through their own OTLE course: 00-DUALSCH and are also aware of the specific requirements of the courses their students are enrolled in.

Coordinators should contact their Regional Relationship Coordinator if they need help with accessing their course or their students' courses on OTLE.

Glossary of online learning terms

Adobe Connect	Adobe Connect is a collaboration tool that includes video conferencing, application sharing, live polling, chat, whiteboards, and presentations. You can use your desktop to host live, synchronous interactions with small or large groups.
Cloud	The cloud is a network of remote servers hosted on the internet. It is used to store, manage, and process data in place of local servers or personal computers.
Data plan	A monthly subscription to a cellular or other internet service provider for the transfer/use of data over its network. There are different types of data plans, including unlimited-use plans where there is no limit on the amount of data used, and plans which specify the amount of data which can be transferred within each month. Some plans may also specify a different price or limit for data for different times of the day.
Desktop PC	A desktop computer (or desktop PC) is a computer that is designed to stay in a single location. It may be a tower (also known as a system unit) or an all-in-one machine, such as an iMac. Unlike laptops and other portable devices, desktop computers cannot be powered from an internal battery and therefore must remain connected to a power outlet.
Download	Copying data (a file, software, music etc.) from one computer system to another, typically over the internet, is called 'downloading'. For example, opening a PDF file from a website and saving it to computer or downloading free software from a website to use on a computer or device.

Gigabyte	A gigabyte (GB) is a measure of computer data storage capacity and is 'roughly' a billion bytes. A gigabyte is also used to describe the amount of data on an internet service plan.
Hard drive	The hard drive is the part of the computer that holds all your data. It houses the hard disk, where all your files and folders are saved.
Internet browser	An internet browser is the program that you use to access the internet and view web pages on your computer. Some common internet browsers include Chrome, Firefox, Internet Explorer, and Safari.
Laptop	A laptop is a portable and compact personal computer with the same capabilities as a desktop computer. Laptop computers have the ability to run on either an internal battery or by being connected to a power outlet.
Memory	Memory can refer to any medium of data storage. It usually refers to RAM, or random access memory. When your computer boots up, it loads the operating system into its memory, or RAM. This allows your computer to access system functions, such as handling mouse clicks and keystrokes. Whenever you open a program, the interface and functions used by that program are also loaded into RAM.
Netbook	A netbook is a small, light, low-power computer that has less processing power than a full-sized laptop but is still suitable for word processing, running a web browser and connecting wirelessly to the internet.

Operating System	An operating system, or 'OS,' is software that communicates with the hardware and allows other programs to run. It is comprised of system software, or the fundamental files your computer needs to boot up and function. Every desktop computer, tablet, and smartphone includes an operating system that provides basic functionality for the device.
OTLE	Short for Online Teaching and Learning Environment, OTLE is Te Kura's learning management system.
OTLE dropbox	Each course in Te Kura's OTLE has a dropbox where students can upload their school work for their teacher to assess. Students do not have access to other students' dropboxes.
Plug-in	A software plug-in is an add-on for a program that adds functionality to it. For example, a browser plug-in (such as Macromedia Flash or Apple QuickTime) allows you to play certain multimedia files within your web browser.
Skype	Skype is a computer program that can be used to make voice and video voice calls over the internet to anyone else who is also using Skype. It's free and considered easy to download and use, and works with most computers.
Tablet PC/Smart PC	A tablet is a wireless, portable personal computer with a touch screen interface. They are typically smaller than a notebook computer but larger than a smartphone.

Upload	Uploading data is to copy data from one computer to another, typically to one that is larger or remote from the user or functioning as a server, e.g. copying a file to the OTLE dropbox or uploading a photo to Facebook.
USB	'Universal Serial Bus' or USB is the most common type of computer port used in today's computers. It can be used to connect a wide range of other devices to your computer, such as keyboards, mice, game controllers, printers, scanners, digital cameras, and removable media drives.
Webcam	The term webcam is a combination of 'web' and 'video camera.' The purpose of a webcam is to broadcast video on the web. Webcams are typically small cameras that either attach to a user's monitor or sit on a desk. Most laptops, netbooks and tablets have built-in webcams. A webcam enables students working online to make videos or audio recordings which they can then upload to the OTLE.

Acknowledgements

Every effort has been made to acknowledge and contact copyright holders. Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu apologises for any omissions and welcomes more accurate information.