



Te Kura

TE AHO O TE KURA POUNAMU

THE CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL

Online learning

A guide to online learning at Te Kura

2017

Introduction

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

Learning online allows Te Kura's students to learn digital literacy skills in a safe and supportive environment. Through Te Kura's Online Teaching and Learning Environment (OTLE), students can communicate with their teachers and peers online, work collaboratively with other students and share ideas. They are able to receive feedback from their teacher much faster and move onto their next module or unit of work.

Most of Te Kura's courses will be online by the end of 2018 and many have already moved online. Please read this booklet carefully to find out what you need to learn online effectively and where to find more information.

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How online learning works

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

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 two weeks 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 others the teacher will decide which module the student should complete next.

‘Learning online makes the topics come alive and students become more active and reflective learners.’

Sharee Chapman, Southern region teacher

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 them 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.

Online courses in 2017

The following courses will be available as interactive online courses in 2017:

- Courses at curriculum levels 3–5
- NCEA Level 1
- NCEA Level 2 (these courses will be a mix of interactive online modules and PDF booklets).

In 2017, Te Ara Hou students will use a mix of online content and print-based resources, with some students doing most of their schoolwork online.

“Learning online has enabled my son to be part of a class environment and to interact with other students through chat or video. This is vital to a student who lives in an isolated area.”

Dianne Stephens, Supervisor

Te Kura is in the midst of moving to online delivery, so some of our courses are not yet in the same format, and some of the existing online courses at NCEA level look and function differently to others.

Courses at NCEA Level 3 will continue to be largely booklet-based for 2017.

Te Kura aims to have most students learning online by the end of 2018.

Essential and recommended equipment

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. Households or learning centres with more than one student learning online may need more data than this, depending on the number and year level of the students. 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 9 for more information). Alternatively, students can use an existing email account or Gmail, Yahoo, Hotmail etc.

- internet browser – many devices come with a web-browser already installed, however OTLE is not compatible with Internet Explorer so we recommend students use Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox or Safari, which can be downloaded online
- word processing software. Page 9 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. See page 17 for more information about working with PDF files
- 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.

Printer

Access to a printer and scanner would be useful, particularly for students enrolled in NCEA Level 2 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. Full-time students or young adult students enrolled in three or more courses who do not have access to a printer can ask to receive these printed pages through the post.

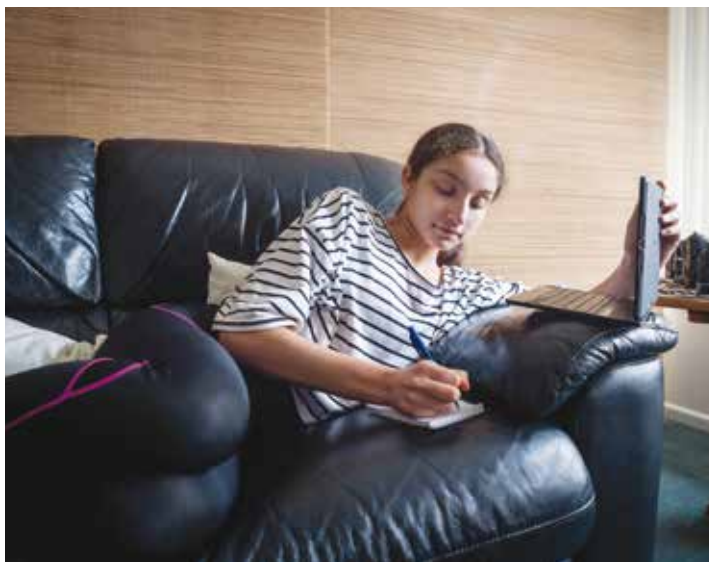
Checklist of equipment or software

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

We also recommend a surge protector for devices while they are plugged into the power supply, insurance and warranty cover.

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



Assistance available

Laptop and internet assistance

Te Kura does not receive additional funding for the provision of devices and connectivity. However, we recognise that families on limited incomes may struggle to meet the additional costs involved and have set aside funding to assist as many students in need as we can.

If you don't have access to the internet or a suitable device to learn on, you can apply for assistance. Eligible students will receive a second-hand laptop computer and an internet subsidy of \$30 per month (or an additional \$30 for those in rural areas) during the school year which is paid directly into the applicant's bank account.

We are unable to support all of our students in this way, so eligibility for a Community Services Card or receiving a benefit are ways we can easily identify those who are most in need. Community Services Cards are available for low to middle income earners, with annual income thresholds that start at \$49,447 for a family of two. More than 870,000 New Zealanders already hold one.

Eligibility criteria

Applications will be approved if the applicant meets the following criteria:

- the application is made on behalf of a full-time student, or young adult student enrolled in three or more courses
- the student is enrolled in Te Ara Hou, an online OOO, or NCEA course (at any level)
- the applicant is a beneficiary or Community Services Card holder and provides their beneficiary or Community Services Card number with their application
- a valid student ID number is provided with the application
- the applicant and student are resident in New Zealand.

How to apply

Visit our website to apply online or download an application form to fill in and post. Alternatively, call us on 0800 65 99 88 (select option 1 from the menu) to apply over the phone or ask for an application form to be posted to you.

You will find out whether your application has been approved via email or letter.

Find out more

See page 14 for frequently asked questions about laptop and internet assistance.

Free Microsoft Office

Te Kura has partnered with Microsoft to give Office 365 to every student free of charge.

Office 365 Pro Plus includes access to the latest version of:

- Word (for writing)
- Excel (for spreadsheets)
- PowerPoint (for presentations)
- OneNote (for organisation and note taking).

Students can install Office 365 Pro Plus on up to five compatible PCs and Macs, plus five tablets (including iPad).

Visit our website to learn how to download this software using the 'My Te Kura' email address (the username is the student's firstname.lastname@mytekura.school.nz and the password is the student's student ID number).

Introductory course

We offer an introductory course in OTLE called OTLEHUB, which we recommend for students and supervisors. This course contains useful advice and resources designed to prepare students for studying online with Te Kura.

Technical assistance

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

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

Te Kura staff

Subject teachers and learning advisors are there to help and answer any questions students or supervisors may have.



Supporting students to learn online

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

Talk about internet safety

The internet and other digital technologies offer plenty of educational and social benefits to students. However, it's important to be aware of the risks. We encourage supervisors to talk to their student about the safe use of the internet on a regular basis. Being aware of the risks enables children and young people to make safer decisions when they are using digital channels.

Being a responsible cybercitizen involves:

- protecting personal information online
- behaving responsibly towards others online
- managing potentially risky situations
- being able to judge the credibility of material found on the internet.

There is more information about cybersafety and online behaviour in our OTLEHUB course and on the Netsafe website www.netsafe.org.nz. Websites like Vodafone's digi-parenting site are also a good source of information and ideas for families: <https://digi-parenting.co.nz>

Familiarise yourself with OTLE

OTLE is a password-protected online environment which is only available to Te Kura students, teachers and supervisors. Te Kura teachers have an active presence in OTLE to support their students' learning. We also encourage parents and supervisors to take an active interest in what their students are doing online. Supervisors of students learning online can use the OTLE to help monitor their student's learning activities.

Supervisors can log into OTLE to see what their student is required to do as part of their course. This includes the content of each course and their student's dropbox submissions for each course, although supervisors will not be able to open the individual submissions to view the student's work.

‘The kids are learning to take responsibility for their own learning.’

Natalie Colello, Supervisor

Supervisors can be issued a unique ID number to log into OTLE by contacting the OTLE helpdesk at helpdesk.OTLE@tekura.school.nz.

The OTLEHUB course includes information and resources specifically developed for supervisors as well as for students.





Creative online collaboration

Students don't have to learn in the same location to collaborate effectively. Students have the chance to collaborate online through projects like Collaborate to Create – a collaborative music video led by students. In 2016, more than 50 students of all ages co-wrote a song called 'Echoes of the Sun' via a discussion forum in OTLE. Students submitted video clips related to the theme or sent videos of themselves singing or dancing along to the chorus. Two students were responsible for arranging and producing the song and bringing the video footage together.

The production was student-led, with a teacher as facilitator. Keep an eye out for notices about our next online collaborative project, and be sure to join in the fun!

To watch 'Echoes of the Sun' visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=CWUvhhk1jg

Frequently asked questions

Supervisor access to OTLE

Can supervisors view their student's online work?

Supervisors can view the content of their student's course, as the student sees it, and can see if their student has uploaded any work to the course dropbox. Supervisors can also see feedback from the teacher which has been put in the dropbox, though they cannot open files their student has uploaded. We recommend that supervisors familiarise themselves with OTLE and the specific requirements of courses their students are enrolled in. Supervisors should ask to see their student's school work before it is uploaded to the dropbox. Teachers will also be keeping track of students' activities within OTLE.

Applying for device and connectivity assistance

If my application is approved, how long will it take for the laptop to arrive?

Depending on where you live, it may take five to 10 working days for your device to be delivered. Please note that laptops are delivered by courier and the courier will not leave the laptop at your address if there is nobody home to sign for it.

Can I apply for assistance for more than one student?

Yes, providing the other student(s) are enrolled in Te Ara Hou, an online 000, or NCEA course and you meet the other eligibility criteria for assistance.

I/my student is enrolled in another online course – can I still apply for assistance from Te Kura?

At this stage our assistance programme is only available for students who are enrolled in Te Ara Hou, an online 000, or NCEA course.

What training or support is provided for students using the new device?

Simple instructions for operating your laptop will be included with your device when it is sent out to you. We recommend Digital Unite as a great place to learn computer basics: www.digitalunite.com/guides/computer-basics. All our students are able to download Microsoft Office 365 for free.

Will Te Kura contact my preferred service provider to arrange connectivity?

No. Te Kura will pay the subsidy directly into your bank account. If you have a current broadband provider you do not need to do anything, but if you don't yet have an internet connection to your home you will need to arrange that with your preferred provider.

If you're also applying for a laptop, we recommend that you set up your internet connection as soon as your application is approved.

What options are there for families who aren't eligible for assistance through Te Kura?

You may be eligible to participate in the 2020 Communication Trust's Internet@Home equity programme. This programme is intended for low income families who do not have a fixed telephone line and would struggle to pay monthly internet charges in advance, or who may be declined service because of a poor credit record. Families with a fixed telephone line are encouraged to ask their telephone service provider for a bundled phone and internet service.

Families can register their interest in being part of this programme by sending an email with their name and contact details to kristina.parbhu@2020.org.nz or by calling her on 0800 272 020 between 9am and 3pm on weekdays. Participants may be required to attend a half-day internet training session.

Who qualifies for the internet connectivity top-up?

If you have a full-time student enrolled through one of the geographical isolation/itinerancy enrolment gateways you can apply for the internet connectivity top-up of \$30 per week. Other full-time or young adult students in rural areas who are not enrolled through these gateways but are otherwise eligible for assistance can also apply for the top-up, providing they meet the same criteria as they would if they had been enrolled through one of the full-time enrolment gateways, i.e.:

- the student would be unable to attend a reasonably convenient school because of its distance or inaccessibility from their home. To qualify, the student's nearest school for their age, gender, and in their preference of English or Māori medium, and school bus route and public transport must be:

- a. more than 4.8 kilometres away (private road distance does not count)
- b. located behind a geographic barrier preventing reasonable access to a school, suitable public transport or school bus route.

To apply for the assistance, email ruralsubsidy@tekura.school.nz (or apply in writing via post if you do not have an email address) outlining how you/your student meets these criteria. This will then be assessed by a team leader or the Manager, Enrolment Services and if eligible the application will be approved and you will be advised of the outcome in writing.

Are overseas students eligible for assistance?

No, the student must be living in New Zealand.

What happens with the laptop and internet subsidy after leaving Te Kura?

The laptop and subsidy are only available while enrolled with Te Kura. When you apply for a subsidy you are required to sign a declaration that you'll let Te Kura know if you/your student is withdrawing from the roll. We will then arrange for the laptop to be returned and the subsidy payments will be cancelled.

What can I do if my application doesn't meet the criteria or is declined?

In exceptional circumstances Te Kura may approve applications on behalf of students who do not meet the eligibility criteria. You may make an application for assistance by writing to Te Kura's Chief Executive outlining why you are unable to access a suitable device or the internet and why you do not have a Community Services Card or beneficiary number. Please provide as many details as you can in your letter, including student name and ID number.

Applications should be sent to:

Chief Executive
Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu
Private Bag 39992
Wellington Mail Centre
Lower Hutt 5045

Printing and posting

Will students learning online require access to a printer?

Access to a printer would be useful, but is not strictly necessary. Some of the new online courses require students to complete printable worksheets – full-time students or young adult students enrolled in three or more courses who do not have access to a printer can ask to receive these printed pages through the post.

Do PDF booklets need to be printed off for students to write on?

No. 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.

Online learning glossary of terms

OTLE	Short for Online Teaching and Learning Environment, OTLE is Te Kura’s learning management system.
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OTLE dropbox	Each course in Te Kura’s OTLE has a dropbox where students upload their school work for their teacher to assess. Students do not have access to other students’ dropboxes.
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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.
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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.
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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.
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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.
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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.
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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.
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.
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.
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.
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.

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.

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.

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 Google, Firefox, Internet Explorer and Safari.

Webcam The term webcam is a combination of ‘Web’ and ‘video camera.’ The purpose of a webcam is, not surprisingly, 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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Phone 0800 65 99 88