

University Guide



Cut costs by studying online

Advantages. Although online education has its limitations, there are several advantages compared to the traditional education.

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The challenges facing traditional universities, including higher tuition, budget cuts, and course shortages, have caused many students to search for alternatives with many students getting enrolled in online degree programs.

Online degrees are cheap, flexible you can study as you work, from any location in the world and are now accepted by most employers.

Improvements in technology, the Internet especially, means that more people are considering studying online rather than enroll in a bricks-and-mortar institution. And with exclusively online/distance education universities such as the Open University offering highly respected qualifications, the stigma once attached to degrees earned over the internet is ebbing.

According to education experts, online education is becoming a popular education alternative.

One of its benefits is self-paced learning where students can start completing the targets at any time and can arrange a learning schedule that meets their individual schedule.

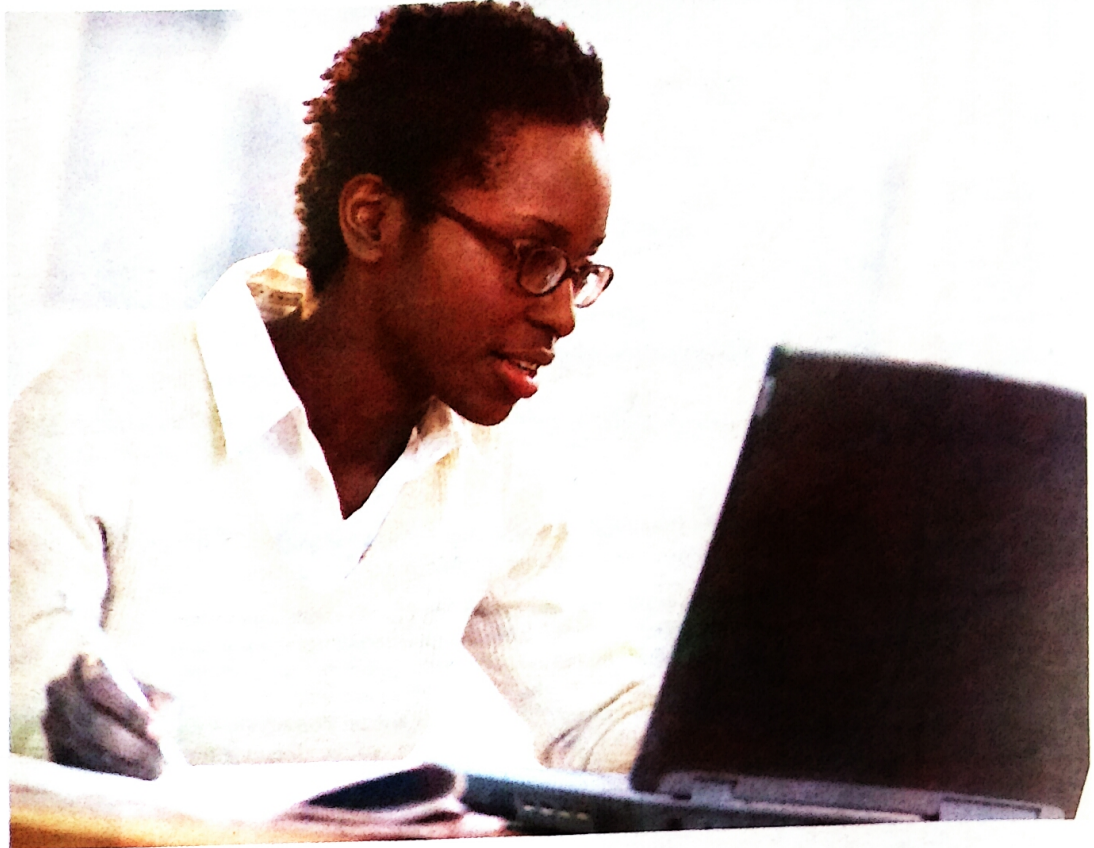
Online programmes are usually affordable options than attending university directly because there are no commuting costs, and sometimes there is also not any required course materials such as textbooks because those are often available online.

Free online courses such as these can help students fulfill general education requirements at little cost.

Online courses give students the opportunity to plan their study time around the rest of their day and students can study and work when they are at their peak energy.

Course material is always accessible online, so there's no need to schedule special trips to a library either. All of this makes online learning a good option for students who need to balance their work and family commitments.

While there is contradictory evidence about the rate of online student participation versus participation in traditional courses, one thing is certain: online courses offer shy or more reticent students the opportunity to participate in class discussions or chats with more ease than face-to-face class



Studying online enables a learner to plan his or her study time alongside other work. NET PHOTO

sessions.

Students also do not have to fight traffic, find parking spaces, leave work early to go to class, or miss important family time.

Students can take online courses and even complete entire degrees while working, while in-between jobs, or while taking time to raise a family.

Ms Florence Mutoni, an education consultant, recently said studying online provides comfort to students because education material can be accessed from the comfort of your home because they do not have to take public transport to get to campus.

She, however, says being constantly online and using a computer all the time can cause poor vision, strain injuries, and other physical problems.

Time management is a difficult task for e-learners, as online courses require a lot of time and intensive work. Furthermore, whereas it is mostly adults who prefer web-based learning programs for their place and time flexibility, they rarely have the time to take the courses due to their various everyday commitments.

A regular schedule planner

would be a significant help to these learners, as they could even set reminders for their courses and assignments.

Self-motivation is an e-learning essential requirement; however, many online learners lack it. After enrolling in distance learning courses, many learners fall behind and nurture the idea of giving up, as difficulties in handling a technological medium also seem impossible. Students need to find the motivation to follow the new educational trends and also properly equip themselves for future challenges.

She says only a positive attitude can help them overcome the challenges in e-learning though this is hard to practice, students need to understand that it is necessary in order to reap the e-learning's benefits in the future.

In Uganda none of the traditional universities offer online degrees as of yet. Instead, distance learning, where students collect notes and coursework from the university, sitting paper exams at the end of the semester, is embraced by Makerere University, Uganda Martyrs University, Uganda

Christian University, KIU and Kyambogo.

The growth of online education has been held back by their potential market. While the universities are reasonably equipped, most Ugandans, even those living in urban areas, access the internet only sporadically. Hence, internet savvy Ugandans interested in online degrees turn to foreign universities.

Ugandans willing to enroll in little-known online schools are advised to seek information from the NCHE first. Since it is legally mandated to accredit only local universities, the NCHE will contact the accreditation council in the country that hosts the university and then advise the interested party accordingly.

In Kenya and Tanzania, the University of Eastern Africa, Baraton and the Open University of Tanzania respectively are accredited to offer online courses. Information about accredited East African Universities can be obtained from the Inter-University Council for East Africa. So, while the advent of online education is a trend that should be embraced as fast as

possible, people interested in attending online universities should watch out for fake institutions.

TECHNOLOGY

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