

Advantages of on-line study

Here is what one student has said about taking an on-line unit:

“My thoughts on taking an online unit:

- Since all of the course materials were available from the commencement of the course, I was able to pace myself and do my readings any time I wanted to (which helped me a lot because I was also working).
- The use of discussion boards was a fantastic way to improve on my written communication.
- I also found that often in a face to face class, when questions are asked, there are students who may not be confident in expressing their views and opinions. With the online discussion forum, I noticed that the number of responses to posted discussions were of a higher volume (and sometimes of a better quality) than answers to questions posed in a classroom situation. Now this may be as a result of the fact that you are only known by your username, hence giving a sense of anonymity (or it could simply be the fact we were marked on our contribution). But also because you are given more time to think about the question and develop a clear answer.
- There was a group assignment involved and I have to say that in terms of team management, it was one of the easiest group assignments I have been involved in. The fact that a team member in another time zone could be working on the assignment whilst your asleep vice versa is great!
- Of course there are some things that it cannot replace from a traditional classroom setting e.g. face-to-face interaction with other people, developing the ability to speak in front of people etc. But I would definitely recommend students do at least one online course during their studies. It's quite a different experience.”

Here is what a lecturer teaching an on-line unit has said:

“It is going great, better than I expected, I'm very happy with it.

Of course, you don't quite get the same experience as you can face to face.

By the same token, online seems to draw out other things from students that face to face doesn't. In particular, they are engaging with the material week by week, which sometimes doesn't occur in a normal course. Also, students use the web more to search and share materials. And students can study on "flexi-time", ie fit it around their job etc and this seems to make them more satisfied.

We have had a couple of hiccups due to technical bugs, but these have generally been ironed out quickly. The efficient and prompt support of MQ IT technicians is vital.”