

Introduction of Online Learning Management System (Moodle) 2016-2018

The University of KwaZulu-Natal has decided to move away from providing paper based notes to students, to providing notes and lecture materials in an electronic form. This is a significant decision, and moves the student experience at UKZN into the electronic age. This will ensure that all students will acquire the necessary skills and be able to use all forms of electronic media confidently as graduates.

To facilitate this, UKZN has adopted an internet based online learning management system called “Moodle”. Lecturers will upload all notes and learning material on the Moodle system, where students will access and download the material. Moodle also provides a forum for interaction between lecturers and students.

This move away from paper-based to electronic learning material will be phased in for all first and second year students from 2016. This requires that all students have their own laptop, which will be used to download the learning material, and for studying using the electronic notes. First and second year students will be required to bring their own laptops when registering at the beginning of 2016.

All of the UKZN campuses have efficient wireless internet access, which means that students can access the internet from all over campus to access and download materials from the Moodle system.

There are various ways of funding the purchase of a laptop:

1. There will no longer be charges for lecture notes for first and second year modules in 2016 (and third and fourth year modules in 2017), which will reduce the overall cost for each module. The cost of investing in a laptop can be offset against the costs a student would have incurred for paper-based lecture notes over the course of his/her degree.
2. UKZN has joined the Student Technology Program, which negotiated affordable deals on laptops for staff and students from participating universities (visit www.stp.ac.za for more information).
3. From 2016, Student Funding Services will provide funding for new and second year students, who receive NSFAS, to purchase a laptop.
4. Note that other costs including (but not limited to) field trips, laboratory manuals and workbooks, laboratory coats and protective clothing will still be levied.