
Greetings to you, My name is Professor Maphosa
I am the Director of the UNESWA Institute of Distance Education
I welcome you to our first ever virtual
orientation program and I also welcome you to
the Institute of Distance Education. As a new student
in the Institute, there are certain issues that you need to be
aware of, so that as you progress with your academic journey
you won't have any challenge. The Institute of Distance Education
is that segment of the University
which is aimed at delivering education at the doorstep of the student
We are not a part-time education Institution
but we are a distance education Institute and as an
Institute, our mandate is to ensure that we provide
flexible delivery models of learning
students are able to learn at their own pace, at their own place
and at their own time. So I would like to say
you made a very wise decision to enrol with the Institute of Distance Education
as you will be afforded the flexibility that i have just talked about
The COVID-19 pandemic has made us to hasten our plans of implementing
online learning. Therefore, we are utilising technology
for teaching and learning and as a student in the Institute
you are expected to at least have a mobile device
that will assist you to access the learning materials
via the Moodle learning management system. The University of Eswatini uses
Moodle learning management system as the official
learning platform, and as a student you have to learn quickly how to
navigate through the Moodle learning management system
Your course lecturers are going to be using the Moodle LMS
to communicate with you, to teach you, and to assess you.
Therefore, you need to learn how to use the learning management system
Your academic performance and ultimate attainment
will be dependent on how you will be able to use the Moodle learning management system
s please learn how to use the system
that you maximise your learning. As i have indicated before
being a distance education learner is not being a part-time learner
People often have that misconception ,that I am a part-time student
You are a fulltime distance education learner
Your materials are prepared in advance
and upon registration you are given
access to the learning materials .The reason why
you have those learning materials so that you can
program your learning according to your pace your conditions at home
and your workplace. You need to prepare in advance for any contact sessions
or for your virtual sessions that will be organised fro you
Students studying with IDE for
the first time or through distance education for the first time often have certain misconceptions
that i have to clear from onset, they would that we'll teach the same way
teaching is done in the fulltime sector of the University
that will not be case.the reason why we have already
provided learning materials for you in advance, is to show that
you can learn on your own and when contact sessions are

organised and virtual sessions are organised. They are simply meant to assist you with issues that may not be clear your course content, so take ownership of your learning

be a self-directed learner plan

your learning well in advance and don't wait until you have an assignment

to submit or you have a test to take before you can start

working on your course content. Always

make sure that every single day you allocate some

time to any one of your courses that you registered for

so that you keep up with the pace of distance

education learning. Coming to registration

issues as what is going to be explained in some of the presentations

Ensure from onset that you are properly registered

you should be aware of the courses that you are supposed to be registered

for that particular semester. If you are not clear of the courses

contact your programme coordinators

We have prepared a student handbook which you are going to get

a soft copy through our IDE website

Go through that handbook, which is going to give you information

about the support services that we offer at the Institute, including

the contact details for your coordinators

So the coordinators have to assist you to ensure that you are properly registered

because if you registration problems from the beginning

We will have problems in processing of your results

at the end of the semester.

I didn't talk about the importance of being fulltime

as a distance

education student.

We have problems students who consider themselves part-time

and that will obviously show

the kind of performance that you will have in the different courses

and some of the performances will result in you

having academic warnings or even ultimately asked to

discontinue from the program. We need to avoid those kind

of problems by ensuring that we are actively

engaged with our course content by working

together with our course instructors and also

fellow students. We have established

four digital learning centres throughout the country

We have a digital learning centre in Nhlanguano

A learning centre in Siteki, another one in Pigg's Peak

and a recently established one in Manzini at William Pitcher College

These digital learning centres are for your use

you need to visit those centres to access

The Computer technology facilities that are in those centers

All you need to do is to produce your valid

student ID then you will be given access

to the computer labs where you can access your

learning materials where you can type your assignments

and upload your assignments and do every other activity

that is related to online learning. So let us make

use of the digital learning centres

Coming to any challenges that you may encounter during your programme

duration of study in the Institute

We have clear structures that are in place to assist you

To deal with these challenges, the first point of call is your programme coordinator, who is your academic advisor. If you have any challenge let your programme coordinator aware of the particular challenges so that the challenge is addressed without any delay. We also have the office of the coordinator, Student Support Services

A lot is going to be said about the kind of assistance that you get through that particular office. What we are simply saying in a nutshell student is ,do not keep problems to yourself. If there are any challenges that you face as a student .Let us know those challenges so that we try and address them before it is too late. We do not want your academic performance to be affected by challenges that we can solve. As an Institute of Distance Education We are here for you, and all we want is for you to progress successfully with your studies so that at the end of 2 years , three years or four years depending on the duration of your programme of study, we will together celebrate at the graduation ceremony

So feel at home, work hard and remain focused and work extremely hard to ensure that you achieve your objectives and as i have already stated take advantage of the technologies that we are using to offer and deliver quality service to you

I wish you all the best ,thank you very much