

Bitter sweet experience of online courses

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Studying a course online is a solution for people with busy schedules despite the few hurdles associated with it. stock photo

In Summary

If you are interested in advancing your studies but are limited by busy schedules, studying online could be just what you need. But you must be careful to get an authentic institution.

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By Desire Mbabaali

Most working individuals today complain about limited time to advance their studies. “There is hardly enough time to do anything,” they say. But in this digital era, this problem might cease with online courses and institutions.

With online, one enrolls and studies for a course available in the institution of their choice on the internet rather than attend physical classes. Most of the lessons are conducted via the web or email with guidelines on when to write the assignments, tests and conduct discussions.

Denis Kuteesa, a 32-year-old engineer, applied for a Diploma in Occupation Health and Safety on Construction at the National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health (NEBOSH), a UK-based independent examination board delivering vocational qualifications in health, safety, environmental practice and management.

“I always ensured that I had my laptop connected to the internet at all times. Sometimes the notes provided were audios and when it came to examinations, it was mandatory for one to write text responses related to the exam question,” he says.

Kuteesa says the biggest challenge he faced during his course was there was hardly any room for clarification on particular topics or questions.

“But of course since it was an online course, there was always room to consult on other material during exams. But sometimes this would be checked in such a way that the questions required one to apply the knowledge they have been previously receiving during the online classroom sessions.”

Striking a balance

Mark Keith Muhumuza, a media specialist, says studying for a Diploma in Media and Land Governance at MS Training Centre for Development Cooperation (MS-TCDC) in Arusha, Tanzania in 2014 was not easy. The course involved face to face interactions with lecturers in Arusha as well as online modules.

“The online modules were the hardest I must admit, as they often clashed with my regular office work. It was hard to do the modules during office hours so I had to start at about 9pm until about 1am. Also, I had to make time to chat with the lecturers because this interaction also carried some marks. Because of the load, I often delayed to submit assignments. But it was worth my time,” Muhumuza says.

Poor Internet

Naomi Kaburungi, a communication specialist who was Muhumuza’s classmate, says the internet comes with challenges of unreliability.

“There were moments when the discussions were not smooth because of (internet) connectivity issues.”

However, for a person who has no time to travel and spend months studying at their preferred institutions, going online may be the ultimate choice.

The pros

Location. You won’t need to travel but can simply get a quality international degree from the comfort of your home.

Flexibility. Online courses give you the possibility to combine independent learning with your work or family responsibilities.