

Dear Students,

Re: Uploading of course materials on *WawasanLearn* - a move towards making access to learning more convenient and student-friendly

Wawasan Open University has always been sensitive to the learning needs of our students, along with the need to be innovative in keeping up with the global standards and best practices in the delivery of Open Distance Learning courses. We have been receiving useful feedback from our students from time to time regarding the effectiveness and user friendliness of WOU course materials as well as the various forms in which the course materials are distributed.

In accordance with the scheduled time frame of the University's road map towards full implementation of e-learning, all course materials will be made available on *WawasanLearn*, WOU's learning management system, beginning July 2013 semester. This means that hard copies of the course materials will no longer be distributed to students from the July 2013 semester onwards. This decision was based on the following considerations.

1. Global ODL trends show that switching to an entirely e-learning environment is inevitable sooner or later. As a forward-looking University, WOU is working toward equipping itself, as well as developing its student and staff capacity to operate and function in the e-environment. Since 2009, WOU has embarked on digitising all of its course materials into web-based text and multimedia content to enrich the learning experience of every student. Back in 2009 when we began to deliver course materials in CD-ROM format, we had indicated that WOU plans to digitise all of its course materials for the delivery of all courses through the Internet (Web-based) by the year 2016 or sooner.
2. WOU has also started incorporating multimedia (audio and video) components in many of our course materials. We are making efforts to extend this provision to all courses, eventually as a move to add more value to our course materials.
3. *WawasanLearn* has been upgraded following a decision to switch to using a newer version of Moodle in July 2012. The upgraded *WawasanLearn* is now able to support all text and multimedia materials. It also provides hyperlinks to Open Educational Resources for students to access such additional learning materials.
4. WOU is in the process of making all course materials self-sufficient and self-contained without having to depend on a prescribed textbook to enhance self-directed learning by students. Additional reading materials and of course other learning support materials (audio-video) will be made available to students on *WawasanLearn*.
5. After presenting various formats of digitised (multimedia, e-publication, PDF) course materials to students, the University has found that students generally prefer the PDF format which is more compact and can be speedily downloaded for reading or printing, even with low speed connectivity. The PDF files can readily be saved and read on mobile devices like iPads and other tablets.

6. Offering the course materials online enables all students and tutor to have immediate access to their course materials. The materials are immediately downloadable once they are uploaded on *WawasanLearn* by the Course Coordinators. Students who were not able to personally collect their materials on time in the past can now access them from home or office. Hence, students will have adequate time to study the materials prior to their tutorial classes. Tutors too will also have adequate time to plan and prepare for the tutorials. Therefore, this enhances the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

Considering all the above, WOU thus decided to upload **all course materials in PDF format on *WawasanLearn* along with other additional materials in audio and video format, effective July 2013 semester.** This will enable you to download the materials to your laptops or tablets for learning while on the move. The course materials can easily be printed as they are in PDF format. If necessary, you can also make use of the computing facilities at your Regional Centre to download course materials. In the near term WOU will also make available CDs containing the same PDF course materials at Regional Centres for students to collect if necessary.

To conclude, I wish to reaffirm that WOU always keeps our students' best interest at heart while embarking on a new initiative. Our goal has always been to make your learning in WOU both effective and convenient. We are also grooming you to become effective e-learners in this ICT world of the 21st century.

I wish you all the best in your studies!

Professor Dr. Mohandas B. Menon
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