



# UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF THE CARIBBEAN

## UCC ONLINE PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

The UCC **ONLINE** degree programme responds to the growing number of students who are eager to earn college degrees but who require more flexibility than traditional on-campus courses allow. The programme is an attractive alternative because students can:

1. schedule course work around jobs and family responsibilities
2. work independently and at their own pace
3. acquire new skills and knowledge to compete in the workplace
4. improve their lives through enriched learning experiences
5. complete course work toward college degrees

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ'S)

These FAQ's are a quick way to get answers to some general questions you may have about distance learning

#### **1. What is distance learning?**

In its simplest form, distance learning involves a student and instructor, separated by time and distance, using technology to complete instruction. The formal origins of distance learning can be traced back to the early 1800's. Since then, distance learning has evolved by embracing new technological developments – radio, television, satellite, and today, the internet and wireless cable TV - to deliver educational opportunities to learners whenever and wherever they are.

#### **2. How to enroll in a degree programme**

Please visit our website and click on the link: <http://www.ucc.edu.jm/prospective/get-started/apply-online/> to apply

**Step 1.** Complete all relevant fields

**Step 2.** Print and sign application form

**Step 3.** Scan and send your completed application form to [programmeapplications@ucc.edu.jm](mailto:programmeapplications@ucc.edu.jm)

Students will then be contacted via email by a member of the Registry staff with relevant follow up and a decision on admission is usually made within a month or less.

#### **3. Can I take a distance learning course without ever going to campus?**

No. Classes will be offered via a hybrid model. Therefore, you will be required to attend some face-to-face lectures at one of UCC's designated Centres in Jamaica or any of six OECS islands depending on the module being offered. You may also be asked to come in for tutorials depending on the assessment of your lecturer and the perceived need for face to face tutorials by the group. End of Module Exams will be taken onsite but you can complete most of your coursework from home or the office. The Office of Distance Education & Global Learning (DEGL) at the UCC's main campus in Kingston or our local partners in each island can provide you with more information.

**4. How do I get my textbooks and other course materials?** Course materials will be included in your tuition package. The primary texts will be e-texts and hard copies will be sourced and provided as necessary.

#### **5. How are exams given?**

End of Module Exams will be administered in a proctored setting at designated UCC Centres. All other exams are administered online.

#### **6. How many courses can I take?**

Most students who are working full-time can handle three courses per 14-week term.

#### **7. How much does a distance learning course cost?**

The cost for each programme varies so please visit our website at [www.ucc.edu.jm](http://www.ucc.edu.jm) and click on the country in which you reside and you can get updated information about UCC Online programme cost.

## **8. Can I get financial aid?**

There are several options in acquiring Financial Aid for students in each island. UCC offers flexible financial plans and Jamaican students are also able to visit Student's Loan Bureau for financial aid assistance as UCC is SLB approved. There are also local commercial banks, credit unions such as COK in Jamaica and other grants through your respective Governments that are able to give assistance based on students fitting the required criteria. If this is something you are considering, be sure to call the UCC in Jamaica or its partners in each island as early as possible. Financial aid deadlines are often much earlier than registration deadlines. University College of the Caribbean (UCC) offers a number of scholarships such as the Canada CARICOM Leadership scholarship, to study at Universities in Canada.

## **9. Is there any difference between a UCC Distance Education Degree and the UCC degree offered through in classroom courses?**

The course is the same as those taught in the traditional classroom based programme. In fact, your degree certificate will say the same thing as a degree earned in the classroom based programme. It will NOT state that you earned your degree in the Distance Education programme. But the standards are the same.

## **10. I'd like to earn a college degree. How long will it take me?**

There are several factors to consider

- The type of degree you are seeking (for example, associate or bachelor) and the number of credits required for that degree
- The number of credits you've already earned that will count toward your degree;
- The number of classes you're able to take each semester (depending on your schedule and what you can afford).

Once you've chosen a degree, your academic advisor can tell you how many credits you need to earn.

Then you can create a timeline and a plan for completing your degree.

## **11. How many credits do I need to earn a degree?**

The average number of credits needed for an associate degree range between sixty to sixty-five credits. A bachelor degree requires 120 to 128 credits.

## **12. What is the difference between credit and non-credit learning?**

Basically, for-credit classes are assigned a score called an academic credit. The score is tabulated to help determine your degree or certificate. In addition, courses that earn academic credit usually have a theoretical component. Non-credit courses usually focus on specific skills or non-academic knowledge. Some non-credit courses may carry CEUs (Continuing Education Units), which are not the same as college credits.

## **13. I took courses years ago. How do I find out if they will transfer?**

The UCC will accept any course taken at an accredited college as long as you earned a 'C' or better; The UCC admissions office should be able to provide you with a tentative credit evaluation. Though not a guarantee, this is usually very close and will give you a general idea about which credits will transfer.

## **14. Can I get college credit for what I've learned from work or life experience?**

The answer may be yes! For a full explanation, please contact the UCC Registry Department.

## **15. Are any of the courses evaluated for college credit by the American Council on Education, ACE?**

Yes, many of the courses in the lower level of the bachelor degree have been successfully evaluated and recommended for college credits by the ACE.

## **16. How do I get my transcript?**

You will need to contact your former school(s) in writing with a request. The cost to send a transcript varies. Expect it to take 4-6 weeks before your transcript is received. You can download a UCC Transcript Request Form from [www.ucc.edu.jm](http://www.ucc.edu.jm) that you can use. The information on the form is what is typically required to obtain a transcript. Don't forget to include payment with your request, or delivery will most certainly be delayed. And keep in mind that if you owe money to the institution, they will not send copies of transcripts until all outstanding bills have been paid.

## **17. The school wants an official transcript. How do I know if mine is official?**

A signed transcript in a sealed envelope is considered official. It is usually sent directly from one registrar's office to another. You may have exactly the same information on an unofficial or 'student'

copy, but it is not official because your copy has been opened by you. You may also request that official transcripts be sent to you in sealed envelopes, and they will remain official as long as you do not open them. You can hand them to the registrar or enclose them with your application.

***18. Before I got serious, my college grades were really bad. Should I send a copy of my transcript anyway?***

As long as you completed the coursework (with a passing grade), the time spent in class years ago can often help you attain the degree you want now. Even if you only have one class that will transfer to fulfill a requirement that will bring you one class closer to graduation. During the admissions process, the UCC Admission's office will want official copies of transcripts from each institution you ever attended. The good news is that you start with a clean slate at a new institution; your old grades don't follow you-only the credit for the courses you passed.

***19. What is accreditation and why is it important?***

First, all our associate and most of our bachelor degree programmes are fully accredited by the official accreditation body in Jamaica. Others including the relatively new and internationally recognized masters in business administration and public administration (MBA and MPA) are candidates for accreditation. Accreditation is the quality assurance process used in higher education. When a college degree is accredited, it means that it has passed through a rigorous evaluation to determine that it provides quality academic programmes. Accreditation is important if you want your coursework or degree to be accepted by other colleges or employers.

***20. How does the UCC Online Delivery work?***

The UCC Online mode of delivery is via Moodle which is a learning platform that is used by our lecturers and students. Users access and upload course content through a username and password. This gives students for full utilization of our system after going through the registration and orientation process. The course information is uploaded by the lecturers of the various modules being offered and the students are able to view lecturer notes, answer discussion questions, participate in chat sessions with their lecturers, chat among themselves, also hand in assignments and sit Mid-Module Exams.

***21. What is the class schedule?***

The class schedule will be announced to registered students when it is finalized. The class schedule is a list all the modules being offered at a particular semester/term, with the start and end dates of the modules also confirmed lecturers for those modules and their contact details.

***22. How many classes/lectures will be on line and how many in classrooms***

This ratio will vary according to the type of course. For example classes in Public Speaking and Interpersonal Communication will require more face-to-face, classroom sessions than courses like Quantitative Techniques. The UCC will tailor the ratio of online to classroom time to optimize the delivery of each course

***23. Will the schedule for term/semester be dependent on registered cohort?***

The availability of the UCC programme is dependent on the number of students who register to participate. If there are an insufficient number of students in a particular area then the UCC reserves the right to not offer classroom tutorial support for the programme in that area. Each programme cohort will consist of students from across all ten (10) countries including Jamaica, Suriname, Bahamas, Trinidad and the Turks and Caicos. However, if there is not enough enrolled students in a given cohort, , for your convenience we would recommend that you not participate and we would refund your tuition.

***24. Will local lecturers be used for the classroom sessions?***

Yes. Tutorials will be led by local lecturers who are experienced educators and expert in their field. If you are an educator, qualified to at least the MSc level in business subjects, you may be considered as a tutor for this programme. Please contact the Office of Distance Education & Global Learning at 1888-CALL-UCC or email [degl@ucc.edu.jm](mailto:degl@ucc.edu.jm)

***25. How will students send in their questions to a lecturer?***

Students can send in their questions by posting on Moodle, cell phone text message, e-mail, or voice mail. Outside of lectures, students will be able to communicate with their lecturers via email and telephone.

***26. How will this new modality guarantee learning?***

The UCC Online hybrid model uses the time proven concepts of engaging student attention, constant reinforcement and testing to encourage learning. First it uses the computer to deliver engaging content

from educators skilled in electronic delivery. Second it uses classroom based and chat session tutorials to reinforce what was posted on Moodle. Finally, mandatory assignments and traditional classroom based exams reinforce, test and measure learning

The UCC Online programmes demand the same standard of academic performance and rigor from its students as is required from students in traditional UCC programmes.

Beyond focusing on delivering, reinforcing and testing knowledge no teaching method can guarantee learning. It is the individual student who determines their academic success.

### **27.How do the online students receive certification?**

1. Students attending graduation receive their certificates at the ceremony.
2. Students not attending graduation will receive their certificates in the mail.
3. A decision is to be made as to whether students in the islands will have mini ceremonies in each territory, participate virtually or be invited to attend the annual ceremony in Jamaica

### **28.How do students hand-in assignments?**

Assignments may be either hard copy of online assignments. For the hard copy assignments, these would be handed in either to the lecturer in the face to face classes or to the Managing Centre nearest to them for submission to the lecturer either in the home country or to the country where the lecturer is based.

### **29.How would we know the schedule for classroom lectures for each territory?**

Based on the 80:20 ratio of online to non online classes, when the non online classes are to be held, a notice would be sent from the UCC Online office. Class schedules are based on number of students and the application deadline impacts on the schedule being finalized as changes may be made with respect to which courses students take.

### **30.Are there any exams and how are they taken?**

All courses have exams. The Course Outlines for each course indicate which courses have no sit down exams. For example, the Major Project and Public Speaking carry no sit down exam.

### **31.What online support do you have in place for students?**

Online support comes in two forms:

1. A Course Coordinator who is available by telephone and email to handle all student queries as they relate to academic matters eg. Exam dates; missed deadlines; course information; course set up – Moodle access and SFS and Registration direction
2. Technical support with respect to log in password and challenges and personal technical challenges such as screen failure issues etc.

### **32.What are the mechanisms in place for students' complaints?**

Students submit administrative complaints to their online Course Coordinator and lecturer related matters to the lecturer.

### **33.Will students have access to live tutors while pursuing online studies?**

The online model currently sees students participating in discussion forums online with their lecturers. Students also have access to lecturers via email and through telephone contact

### **34.How does an online student receive their grades?**

All students at UCC receive their grades in the same way, via email to their group email address or published via the highly integrated student management system, SMS, Orion.

### **35.What is the duration of the accredited online courses?**

Courses at UCC are currently 14 weeks long including assessments.

**36. Could you describe the enrollment process for library access?**

All registered students are automatically eligible to access library services online. To access the online database, instructions are sent via email to each student so that their password can be activated by them.

\_\_\_\_\_ *Going The Distance For You* \_\_\_\_\_