University of the Philippines
LOS BAÑOS

*STUDENT
GUIDEBOOK ON
FLEXIBLE LEARNING*

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Foreword:
Flexible Learning as the New Normal

Even as the world continues to wrestle with the COVID-19 enigma, the inevitable is already written on the wall: there is no going back.

Early this year during the UPLB Executive and Management Committee planning workshop, we plotted a vision towards Education 4.0 and a Food Systems Framework. I rationalized this direction as follows:

" I do not want UPLB to be "business-as-usual" and simply work on endeavors that UPLB has been traditionally associated with.

As an academic and research institution, I want UPLB to constantly challenge itself and to be brave to take on difficult but important work that will aid our country's development goals.

After all, this is what is expected from us, as part of the University of the Philippines System and as our country's national university."

Never did I imagine that these thoughts would reverberate with such powerful relevance today. Never did I imagine that our vision, specifically of Education 4.0 would suddenly become an urgent necessity rather than a distant dream.

Today, in the face of an emerging, unfamiliar social order, there is a widespread notion that education may come to a halt as the threat of COVID-19 continues to loom unpredictably. To me, this is suggesting the future to wait. Unfortunately, the future does not do so. In fact, I believe that it is now, more than ever, that our education system must not be compromised. I believe that it is in this historical moment of uncertainty that UPLB must take its leadership role more resolutely.

Indirectly, we have already started so. The vision for UPLB Education 4.0 emphasized imperatives to adapt teaching-learning with effective utilization of information-communication technology (ICTs), aligning skills and competencies targets to meet new requirements of modern industry, focusing on problem-solving, social and process skills through project-based teaching approaches, promoting values of accountability, time-management through self-help instruction and other means of more deeply infusing technology into instruction.

These features of an educational system for the future has become the focus of recent initiatives in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. There is now massive move to shift the Philippine educational system into remote teaching and learning systems premised on the belief that home education is the most feasible alternative to continue the development our youth while regulating public health risks.

Unfortunately, remote learning has various limitations and requires certain compromises, some of which may not be negotiable. For instance, the question on effective skills training without face-to-face instruction persists without any clear resolution yet. Furthermore, UPLB treats remote learning just as one dimension of a more sustainable solution. In the current social context, remote teaching and learning is just a temporary response to the immediate challenges of COVID-19 pandemic. Flexible learning, the more extensive system of education, must be the more long-term goal as it is a permanent necessity for the future.

While remote learning emphasizes distance education modality, flexible learning provides options in delivery systems and requires instruction that can effectively combine media-based with face-to-face interactions, modular with traditional curricula. As such, it will empower students to select how, what, when and where they learn at their own pace and place. It will allow them to combine work, study, and accomplish their learning tasks.

Professors and mentors, on the other hand, may deliver content using a range of options including adaptive learning, remote learning, distance learning, online learning, blended learning, project-based learning, modular instruction, individualized instruction, and other innovative modalities that will allow customization of teaching content and delivery depending on the needs and contexts of the students. For both student and teacher, flexible learning can reduce health and security risks, while developing a workforce competent in their fields of specialization and in utilizing information-communication technologies, which is a staple of the new normal.

Since flexible learning is the centrepiece of Education 4.0, UPLB has already laid the groundwork for it. For the last five years we have made substantial investments in improving our technological infrastructures, which include modernizing our library and knowledge management systems, securing our fiber optics and wifi connectivity as well as database, and developing state-of-the art multi-media management production, which boosts our capacity to produce information-communication-education materials. In research and extension, we have developed better database management systems to enhance access to knowledge products and related analytics.

But even as we have already made strides towards flexible learning, the challenges are still colossal. Pending deliverables, derailed projects and programs, other activities stalled by the pandemic, in addition to new other policies and systems that need to be put in place in light of the unprecedented times.

The most urgent and critical task is curricular development. This primer is part of the process to facilitate the difficult transition from familiarity to seeming uncertainty in our instruction. We need to adapt our methods and pedagogies, our practices and principles, our educational customs and beliefs to truly transcend this crisis and prepare for similar ones to come.

The daunting duty is shared by every educational institution worldwide, but in the Philippines, it is felt more so by UP as a national public service university. And I am committed to prioritize and fast-track faculty and staff development, increase funds for complementary equipment, rationalize our administrative protocols and further upgrade physical and technological infrastructure in support of our shift to flexible learning and consistent with our Education 4.0 thrusts.

In the past months we have been made to realize the frailty of our systems against natural perils. And given the magnitude of acceptance and change we are being asked to embrace, there is heightened sense of paranoia and mistrust among institutions, groups and individuals.

This is also the sentiment we may come to confront as we embark in this curricular shift and evolve into a flexible learning system. In the process, there will be criticism and dissent, apprehensions and doubts, even nostalgia. Since there is little historical precedence from which to draw wisdom and confidence from, it would not be surprising for cynicism to rear its ugly head along the way.

These sentiments will linger in the foreseeable future because the apprehension to abandon old ways and accept new ones is inherently human. But the spirit of resilience is also natural and the spirit of collegiality is intrinsic to our profession. Hopefully, they will soar higher than pessimism and negativity so that we can reach greater heights.

Because there is no going back, there is only going UP.

FERNANDO C. SANCHEZ, JR.
Chancellor

HOW TO USE THIS PRIMER

The COVID-19 pandemic forced us to rethink our ways of doing. Welcome to the new normal in higher education.

With the changed and ever-changing environment, adaptation is key to continue and sustain the goals of higher education, knowledge creation and management, and the learning process. As the University transitions to flexible modes of learning, we all need to be re-oriented towards making University processes and resources efficient and useful in the new normal.

This primer is designed as your basic reference about our new normal of off-campus flexible learning. It puts together information about modes of learning, possible concerns of learners, and support services for students.

Each section is designed to provide concise information that every student may need. If you are viewing this primer online, you can simply just click on the link to lead you to the specific website. Digitally bookmark those you need. You may opt to save the links to websites, email addresses and telephone numbers especially those for your college for quick access. We have summarized all websites, email address and telephone numbers in the Appendix section of the primer for easy reference.

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS USED IN THE GUIDEBOOK

ELVA	Electronic Library Virtual Assistant
LMS	Learning Management System
LRC	Learning Resource Center
ILC	Interactive Learning Center
ITC	Information Technology Center
OER	Online Educational Resources
OCG	Office of Counseling and Guidance
OSG	Office of Scholarships and Grants
OVCAA	Office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
OVCSA	Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
OUR	Office of the University Registrar
SAIS	Student Academic Information System
SFA	Student Financial Assistance
SLAS	Student Learning Assistance System
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment
UHS	University Health Service
UVLê	University Virtual Learning Environment

Flexible Learning Defined

Flexible learning is a learner-centered curriculum design that adapts to students' context and capability. It uses various learning delivery modes that are responsive to your needs as a learner.

A. Flexible Learning as a Learner-centered Education

Flexible learning is a learner-centered education that is personalized, inclusive, and collaborative.

• *Personalized.* In flexible learning, you have the choice about the pace, place, and mode of your learning.

• *Pace.* The speed by which you will be able to study

• *Place.* The location where your learning takes place such as in a classroom, at home, and even while travelling.

• *Mode.* The manner through which technologies facilitate your learning like online, blended, distance, remote, etc.

• *Inclusive.* Flexible learning helps all kinds of learners with different commitments and responsibilities in life. It creates a suitable learning environment that allows you to combine work, study, and family.

• *Collaborative.* In flexible learning, you and your teacher are co-creators of knowledge. With the guidance of your instructors and the University, you may set your own goal, monitor your progress, and make practical adjustments to balance academic as and domestic demands.

B. Flexible Learning is about different modes of instruction

Flexible learning is different from remote learning. While remote learning refers to exclusively home-based instruction, flexible learning systems provide options to combine multiple modes of education delivery modes including on-line and face-to-face. The following are common modalities and terminologies of flexible learning delivery systems:

• Blended learning refers to instruction undertaken using a combination of physical (i.e. face-to-face interaction) virtual delivery systems (i.e., online learning materials)
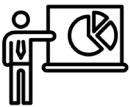
• Flipped learning is a learning methodology that prioritizes active learning during class hours by asking students to read lecture materials or view recorded presentations and videos at home.

• M-learning refers to the use of mobile tools as learning platforms and resources.

• Distance learning is a form of learning that is characterized by physical separation of teachers and students during instruction, use of various technologies to facilitate student teacher and student-student communication, remote submission of requirements, and other web-based interactions.

• Virtual education is the combined use of computer hardware, software, and educational theory and practice to facilitate learning.

• Adaptive learning is personalized, customizable approach to instruction using technology providing students with different experiences than they would have in standard online or hybrid courses.

• Online learning is the use of Internet-based sources such as online journal articles, online instructional video clips, net-based software, and social media. It is highly flexible but requires the learners to be self-motivated and self-regulated in their learning.

• Remote learning is learning that happens at home but follows the scheduled class times. It therefore requires more accountability on the part of the learner.

• Modular instruction is the use of learning modules (course modules and lesson modules) for teaching and learning. For flexible learning, modules can be online interactive modules or printed self-instructional modules.

C. *The two structures of flexible learning*

Flexible learning structures uses both synchronous and asynchronous learning structures.

• *Synchronous learning* is real time communication between teachers and learners (e.g., lectures, webinars, and teleconferences using platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet).

• *Asynchronous learning* is non-real time communication between teachers and learners – from text-based (basic email, FB messenger, Viber group, etc.) to online discussion boards in different platforms (UP's Learning Management Systems (e.g. UVLE, VLE), Canvas, Google Classroom, Edmodo, etc.)

D. *Places where flexible learning can happen*

In flexible learning, you may study in three different contexts:

• *Residential context* refers to face-to-face and lecture-based learning among students (i.e., learning sessions in a common physical time and space)

• *Virtual context,* which are online interaction between the teacher and the students

• *Remote context* is where the home environment of the learners

What Should I Consider as a Learner in a Flexible Learning Environment?

This section provides answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on off-campus flexible learning.

A. Connectivity, Technology, and Resource Considerations

1. Can I continue with my enrollment and studies even if I have limited Internet access or I don't own a computer under flexible learning mode?

Yes. Though having a reliable Internet access and personal computer or gadget may give you an advantage, these are not prerequisites to continue with your enrollment and learning. In the absence of these materials, you will be provided with other instructional and learning modes and course delivery. Furthermore, the University has prepared student learning assistance for eligible applicants.

2. Will the cost for flexible learning differ from residential learning mode?

The kind of resources you need in flexible learning and residential study may differ. For instance, in flexible learning delivered in remote mode, you may need to allocate a little more budget for Internet use, printing of materials, and communication. However, other expenses incurred in residential full-time study such as transportation, food, and lodging are also reduced or even eliminated.

B. Nature and Quality of Instruction

1. Is the quality of instruction in flexible learning similar to residential mode?

The quality of instruction in flexible learning can be equally good or even better than in residential mode. An advantage of flexible learning is that it is not constrained by the limitation posed by time and proximity. Learning can happen at your own pace and space. Flexible learning, however, demands specific skills, competencies, and attitude beyond just academic ability. Your sense of independence, study habits, sense of responsibility, and overall attitude will determine the effectiveness of flexible learning arrangements.

2. Will my experience of studying be better in a flexible learning mode?

Your experience in studying relies on various factors. Your surroundings, available resources, home, and community tasks will all affect flexible learning performance. Given the different learning environments, the experience is definitely different from what you are used to. You can make this new learning environment an advantage as it

will build your capacity to be a self-motivated learner, better in time management and communication with your teachers and peers.

Thus, similar to residential mode, you may need to assess your current condition, and tailor fit your learning experiences i.e., schedule, study habits, workload etc. based on those assessments.

3. Is it possible for me to do other commitments while studying in a flexible learning mode?

Just like in residential full-time study, managing your time and planning your schedule are important skills in flexible learning. You are free to fit academic schedules and tasks into your other commitments. However, this entails greater responsibility and accountability.

4. How can I enhance may immediate learning environment in a flexible learning set-up?

In flexible learning, the home and support of family matter a lot in remote learning mode, your home is your classroom. You, with the support of your household, may enhance your learning environment through the following:

- finding a space in your home where you are most comfortable to study;
- keeping a routine and ensuring that you allocate time for study as well as for performing other responsibilities, and for rest;
- negotiating your schedule and space with household members; and
- nurturing a support system beyond the family by keeping open and active communication lines with peers, friends, classmates, and teachers.

C. Course Preference and Advising

1. Do I have the freedom to choose the courses that I will enroll?

In full flexible learning, you have a freedom to choose courses that you will enroll in. You must note, however, that since you are working towards earning an academic degree, there are required courses that you should take in a particular order as indicated in your program's curriculum. Your academic adviser will be able to help you plan out your program of study.

2. Can I choose my professors and the schedule of the courses I am going to enroll in?

Courses offered in flexible learning adhere to a certain curriculum carefully designed to provide you with the competencies needed to achieve your academic goals and ultimately allow you to earn your degree. Whether you can choose your professors or schedule depends on how the curriculum is designed. However, in flexible learning, schedules are also flexible such that you may expect that synchronous meetings may be lesser and might be done on a date and time agreed by your class and your faculty-in-charge.

Section III

What are my tasks and responsibilities as a learner?

Your tasks and responsibilities as a learner in a flexible learning environment do not totally depart from what you've been doing as a student in the old normal. The main difference in the new normal of flexible learning is that learners are expected to be more responsible and mindful of tasks because there is a greater degree of independent learning here. Hence, the following are the things you need to remember:

A. Attend Synchronous Learning Sessions

- You need to attend and participate in the scheduled synchronous sessions of your course.

- Make sure to check the dates of the synchronous sessions.

- Check the link, ID, and password of the online platform that you are going to use. You may check this from your syllabus or from the LMS.

- Ensure that you have a good Internet connection.

- Get ready with your notes and pens.

- Make sure that you have a copy of the course module.

- Log-in at least 15 minutes before the start of the session.

- Once you are in the session, greet your classmates and your professor.

- Listen attentively, participate, and observe the house rules.

- Participate actively during the discussion.

- Ask permission to record your synchronous sessions. Do not post on social media the record of your session.

B. Perform Asynchronous Learning Activities

- Check your syllabus or the LMS and take note of the learning tasks that you are expected to do.

- Observe the deadlines and other scheduled asynchronous activities.

☑ If you have questions, send an email, call, or text your professor or your classmates.

☑ You are expected to work on your learning tasks as a responsible student. Make sure you do all the asynchronous learning activities scheduled in the syllabus.

☑ If you have group assignments and activities, make sure you cooperate and do your assigned task diligently.

☑ You will work at your own pace and place so you can always review your assignments and other lessons.

☑ Avoid posting your lesson activities in social media. Be responsible.

☑ Use the contents of your learning package:

- Read your modules, readings, and reference texts.

- Check the Online Educational Resources if you have Internet connection to read online references.

- Review the lecture notes or slide presentations.

- Watch the videos and listen to lectures.

- Answer the activity sheets and worksheets.

- Review the rubrics as you work on your requirements to guide you with the standards that you have to follow for each requirement.

- List questions that crop up and raise these during your class' scheduled meetings or post them on the LMS for later discussion.

C. Submit Class Requirements and Assessments

☑ Always check the schedule for submission of requirements.

☑ It is important to meet the deadlines.

☑ If you are submitting a learning portfolio, review the contents of your portfolio based on the list of requirements and the rubric.

- UP students must observe the value of "honor and excellence" at all times. You must work creatively and diligently on all the class requirements of your course.

- Review your work before submitting it.

- If you are doing a group requirement or project, you need to cooperate and ensure do your part so you would not be the cause of delay for submitting your group requirement.

- If you are submitting online, make sure the professor has received your submission.

- Do not post anything about your requirements in social media.

D. Consult Professors and Academic Advisers

- Your professor is your instructional coach during the entire semester. If you have questions, you can send an email or make a call during consultation schedules set by your professor.

- Consultations should always be academic in nature. Avoid personal conversations with your professor.

- Be polite when talking to your professor.

- Avoid consulting your professor a few days before the deadlines.

- If you are working on a thesis or a special project, make sure you follow the agreed timelines and schedule. Keep your professor updated on the developments of your projects or thesis.

- Make sure to follow their advice. If things are not clear to you, you can always consult your professor.

E. Become a Self-regulated Learner

☑ As a UP student, you are expected to behave as a self-regulated learner. This means you are capable of doing your studies independently and work with diverse classmates.

☑ Always do your learning tasks with "honor and excellence."
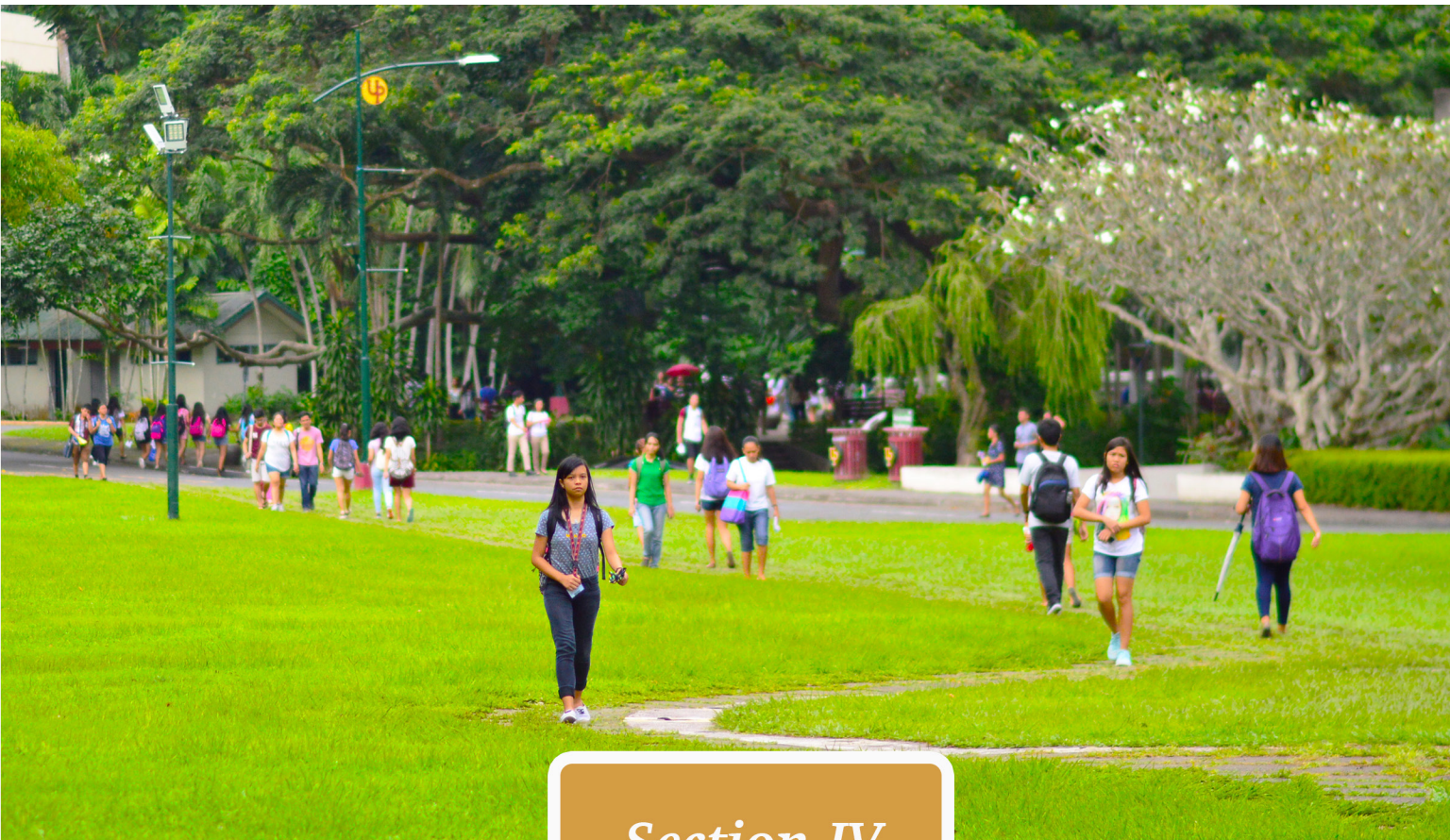
Section IV

What support services will be provided by my campus?

As the university transitions from the traditional residential mode to flexible modes of learning, you may have concerns regarding the next normal, i.e., self-paced learning, home as primary learning environment, digital divide, socio-economic circumstances that affect learning, and student mental health and wellbeing.

No matter where you are, our student support services needed in flexible learning are always accessible.

A. Academic and Instructional Support

Though flexible, remote learning does not automatically equate to online mode, the University has prepared for your connectivity needs. We have support systems that will ensure that you are linked to your classes and learning communities. Specifically, we have the following:

> 1. Student Learning Assistance System (SLAS) to aid students in need of equipment and subsidy for connectivity service; and
>
> 2. Peer Learning Groups or a network of peer tutors who are student assistants to support you in many remote learning contexts whether you are having difficulty transitioning to flexible learning, need assistance to understand a specific course, and other activities to enrich your learning experience.

These support systems for academic instruction have been created by the UP Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs through Memorandum No. 2020-68.2.

The Student Learning Assistance is part of the University's COVID-19 Crisis Action Plan to address the needs of the vulnerable students, particularly those who could be at a considerable disadvantage under the new normal when flexible, remote modes of learning take effect. To access SLAS, log-in to https://slasonline.up.edu.ph using your official UP Mail.

For New Freshmen, your UP Mail will be provided by the Office of the University Registrar (OUR). For continuing and returning students with no UP Mail, email the UPLB Information Technology Center (ITC) at itc.uplb@up.edu.ph.

With this grant, the University shall identify beneficiaries coming from students with limited means to purchase equipment. Connectivity services shall be provided by the

grant, which can be in the form of allowance to cover the cost of connectivity and/or a one- time benefit providing students with learning equipment. To learn more about the Student Learning Assistance, email the Office of Scholarships and Grants (OSG) at osg.uplb@up.edu.ph.

Under this learning assistance, peer learning groups will be established to assist students who may find it difficult to transition to remote learning platforms due to Internet connectivity issues and general learning at the home environment. To learn more about the Peer Learning Groups, email the Learning Resource Center (LRC) at lrc.uplb@up.edu.ph or the Office of Counseling and Guidance at ocg.uplb@up.edu.ph.

These initiatives aim to create mechanisms to provide financial and social support that enable students to effectively take part in the remote and flexible learning activities of the University.

B. Learning Packages

A learning package is a compendium of resources you need to be able to cope with academic requirements in a particular course. This often includes the course syllabus, lecture notes, worksheets, activity guides, and other materials provided by the faculty in charge of the course. These learning packages shall be available to all enrolled students by the opening of classes. For those with limited or no Internet connectivity, the learning packages (in print or digital files in a thumb drive) will be sent via courier service.

C. Learning Management System

A learning management system or LMS is an online platform used to serve as a repository of resources in your various subjects.

In some cases, an LMS also has functionality for asynchronous class discussions, requirement submission, and assessment, among others. The most common LMS used by teachers in some of their courses are Moodle, Canvas, Edmodo, and Google Classroom.

D. Academic Advising

Even during flexible learning, you are encouraged to continuously coordinate with your faculty advisers for any academic concerns. As mentioned earlier, your professors and advisers become your instructional coach in flexible learning.

E. Remote Registration and Enrollment

Your pre-registration, registration, and enrollment is through the Student Academic Information System (SAIS). This online student lifecycle data management system lets you pre-register needed courses for the coming semester, make changes or revisions in your pre-registered courses, and complete your enrollment during the scheduled period of registration. Here, you can view your grades earned for courses enrolled during the previous semester(s). Access the UP System's SAIS Portal through https://sais.up.edu.ph/.

If you have concerns, issues, or need further assistance and clarification regarding online registration, directly email the SAIS Team at sais.uplosbanos@up.edu.ph of the OUR for immediate feedback/action. You can expect advisories and updates/announcements in your UP Mail account on matters related to registration set by the SAIS Team.

Visit the OUR website at https://our.uplb.edu.ph for information related to registration. For further inquiries and concerns, email them at our.uplb@up.edu.ph or call (049) 536-2553/ (049) 536-2426.

Refer to the flowchart (Figure 1) to see how the process of registration will proceed.
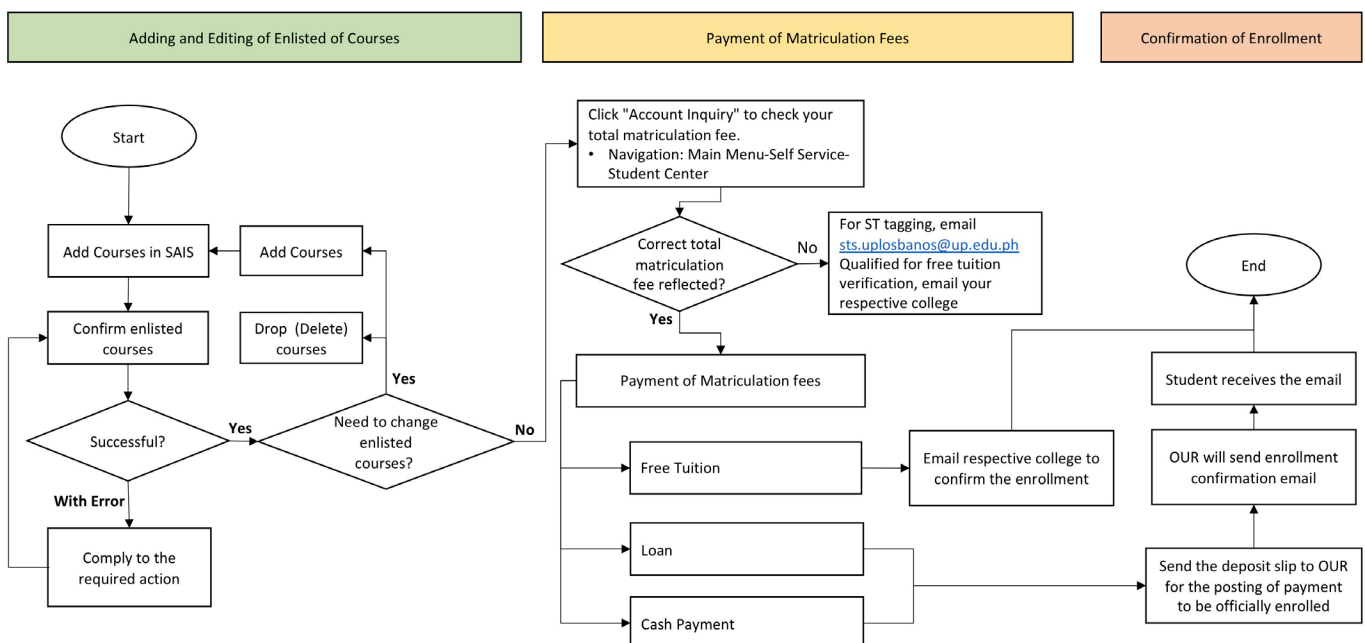
Figure 1. Process of registration flowchart

F. Access to Online Library and Other Online Educational Resources

We now have an online reference librarian to serve your needs remotely. Used wisely, it can be your perfect library partner in flexible learning.

ELVA short forElectronic Library Virtual Assistant, is a virtual reference desk to assist clients in their reference and/or information needs. ELVA can provide responses to queries in real-time or off-line. Just leave a message or query to be answered once the staff-charge is available online. Look for ELVA at the Library Website (https://library.uplb. edu.ph).
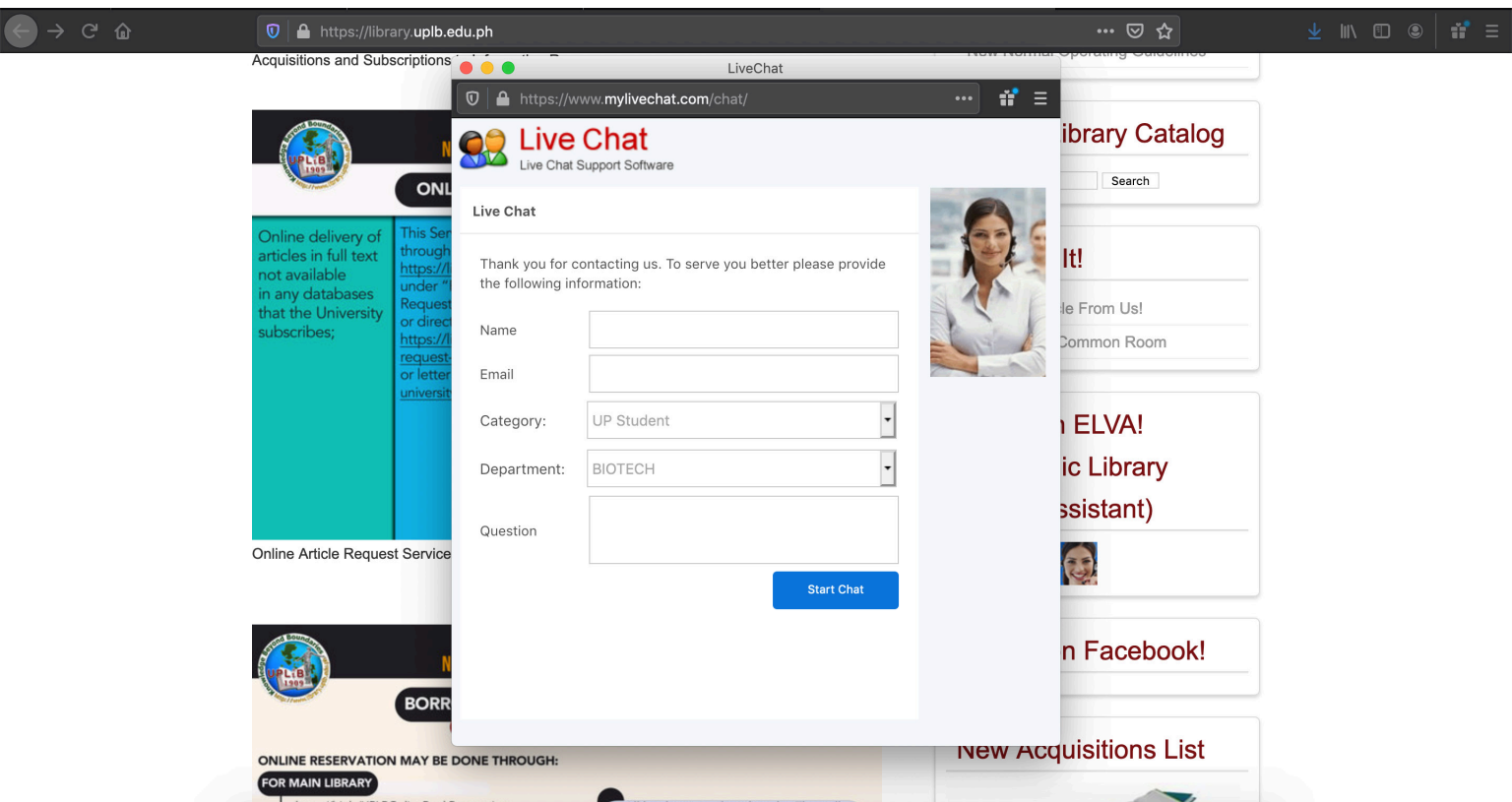
There are several other services available to enrich your learning resources:

- A library account to access book reservations as well as recommend books for purchase or journal for subscriptions

- Turnitin account (for originality check application)

- OpenAthens for remote access of library online databases and subscriptions

Here are services to provide you access to educational resources and make it more tailored-fit to your needs:

> • For assistance in accessing an article, go to this link to request for possible access. https://library.uplb.edu.ph/request-article-from-us

> • If you need information on a research topic, or list of article abstracts on your field of interest go to link for Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) or Literature Search Service (LSS) at https://bit.ly/LitSearchService

For your other library concerns, send an email to universitylibrary.uplb@up.edu.ph. You may also reach the University Library through its FB/Messenger account at https://www.facebook.com/UPLBuniversitylibrary/. If you prefer to call them, dial (049) 536-2326, VOIP – 1320 & 1321.

Queries about collections in specific College/Unit libraries can be directed to the following:

College Libraries	Email	FB / Messenger / Twitter	Website/chat box	Phone
CDC	cdclibrary@devcom.edu.ph		https://bit.ly/cdcLibRequest	
CEAT	ceatlibrary.uplb@up.edu.ph	FB: uplbceatlibrary FB: uplbceatlibrary/inbox Twitter: @uplbceatlibrary	http://ceatlibrary.uplb.edu.ph/ Chat Box: UPLB CEAT Library Help	
CEM	cemlibrary.uplb@up.edu.ph	FB: UPLB CEM Library Twitter: @cemlibrary	https://bit.ly/cemlibrequest	

CFNR	cfnrlibrary.uplb@up.edu.ph	FB: uplbcfnrlibrary1 Twitter: @uplbcfnrlibrary Instagram: @uplbcfnrlibrary	https://cfnrlibrary.weebly.com Chat Box: Ask FORA	
CHE	che_library.uplb@up.edu.ph		https://tinyurl.com/CHEOnlineLibraryServices	
CPAf	cpaflibrary.uplb@up.edu.ph		https://bit.ly/CPAfLibServices	
CVM	cvmlibrary.uplb@up.edu.ph	FB: CVMLibrary/ m.me/CVMLibrary Twitter: @VetMed_Library	http://library.cvm.uplb.edu.ph	(049)530-3439
PHTRC	phtrclibrary.uplb@up.edu.ph	FB: PHTRCUPLB	https://postharvestlib.uplb.edu.ph	
SESAM	sesamlibrary.uplb@up.edu.ph	FB: sesam-uplblibrary	https://sesam.uplb.up.edu.ph/resource-networks/library	(049) 536-2251; 09175056120

More resources at the OER

"Open Educational Resources (OER) are teaching, learning and research materials in any medium – digital or otherwise – that reside in the public domain or have been released under an open license that permits no-cost access, use, adaptation and redistribution by others with no or limited restrictions." (UNESCO)

There is a digital library of OER that is open to the public. OER Commons provide teaching and learning materials that you may freely use and reuse at no cost, and without needing to ask permission. Unlike copyrighted resources, OER have been

authored or created by an individual or organization that chooses to retain few, if any, ownership rights. These could be most helpful for your projects and requirements.

To learn more about OER Commons, explore https://www.oercommons.org/.

G. Scholarships and Other Student Services

The OSG can assist you in finding financial support through the following packages:

1. Reduce cost of tuition and other school fees
- Free Tuition (Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Act)
- Grants-in-Aid Program formerly Socialized Tuition (ST) System, if not covered by Free Tuition
- Scholarships and Grants Programs that waive tuition and other school fees

2. Living allowance on monthly or per semester basis
- Student and Graduate Assistantships (SAGA)
- Grants-in-Aid Program
- UP Presidential Scholarship Awards
- UP Presidential Leadership Awards
- Adopt-a-Student Programs and other awards that grant cash allowance

3. Deferred cash payments during the semester
- UP Tuition Loan Program
- Cash Loan Assistance Program (CLAP)
- Other tuition loan programs

To apply for any of the above, you need to access the UP Office of Student Financial Assistance's portal also known as SFAOnline at https://sfaonline.up.edu.ph/. If you already have an account, you may now use your credentials to log in. If you don't have an account yet, you need to contact SFA Helpdesk of UPLB via this email address: sts.losbanos@up.edu.ph, or call at (+6349) 536-3212.
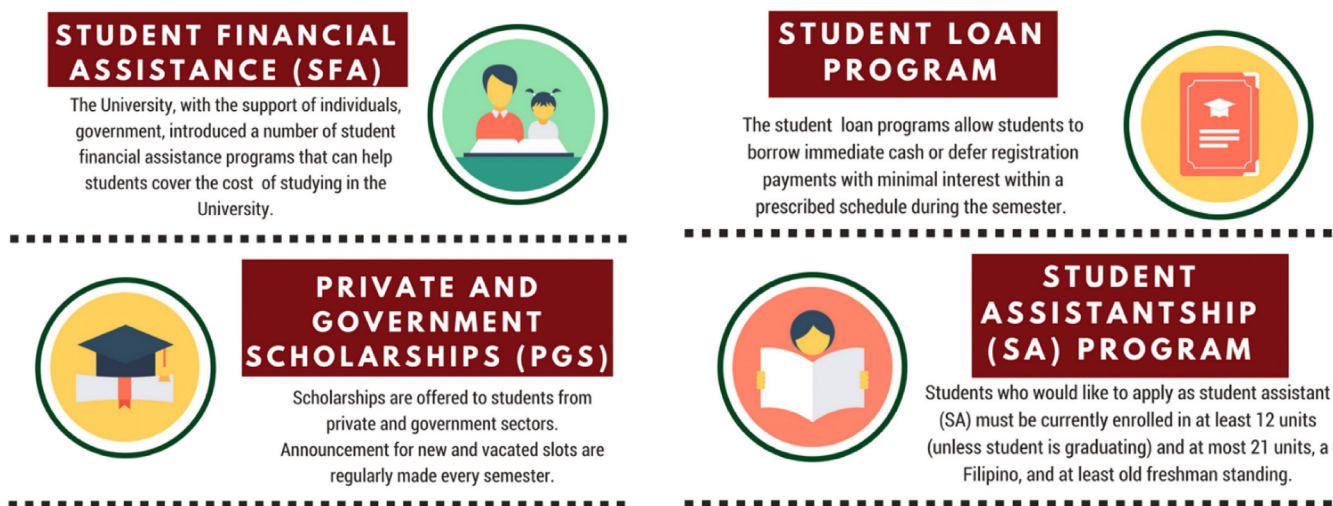
STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE (SFA)

The University, with the support of individuals, government, introduced a number of student financial assistance programs that can help students cover the cost of studying in the University.

STUDENT LOAN PROGRAM

The student loan programs allow students to borrow immediate cash or defer registration payments with minimal interest within a prescribed schedule during the semester.

PRIVATE AND GOVERNMENT SCHOLARSHIPS (PGS)

Scholarships are offered to students from private and government sectors. Announcement for new and vacated slots are regularly made every semester.

STUDENT ASSISTANTSHIP (SA) PROGRAM

Students who would like to apply as student assistant (SA) must be currently enrolled in at least 12 units (unless student is graduating) and at most 21 units, a Filipino, and at least old freshman standing.

Figure 2. Assistance programs available

As a program, SFA Online collects information needed to process your applications to various student financial assistance including the socialized tuition system, and scholarships, among others.

For the list of student financial assistance offered, check the OVCSA's official website at https://uplbosa.org/. You may check the tab under financial assistance. For more specific inquiries about scholarships, grants, and other student services, contact the OSG using the email address relevant to your inquiry:

a. OSG main office - osg.uplb@up.edu.ph
b. grants-in-aid program (socialized tuition system) - sts.losbanos@up.edu.ph
c. student loans - studentloan_osg.uplb@up.edu.ph
d. scholarships - scholarships_osg.uplb.edu.ph
e. student assistantships - saga_osg.uplb@up.edu.ph

Further, you may reach the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs via email at ovcsa.uplb@up.edu.ph or at their FB Page: https://www.facebook.com/uplbovcsa/ or Twitter: https://twitter.com/uplbovcsa

H. The UP System General Health and Well-being Services

The UP Mental Health and Wellness Program is a set of initiatives to address the needs of vulnerable students and promote care for mental health.

Your mental health, whether in residential 'traditional' or flexible learning mode, has always been the priority of the University. As defined in RA 11036, or the Mental Health Act of 2019, Mental Health is a state in which every individual realizes his or her own abilities, can adequately cope with the normal stresses of life, displays resilience in extreme life events, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make positive contributions to the community.

Just like in residential mode, ensuring your psychosocial well-being is a primary concern in flexible learning. The Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs through Memorandum No. 2020-68.2 has already put in place two programs to ensure your safety, health, and well-being:

1. Student Wellness System and Networks - This is a network that provides information, referral systems, and mental health services to students with additional needs. This is a referral system across UP campuses and linkage with agencies that can support better health outcomes.

2. Student Helpdesk and Guidance - This is a network of social workers and counselors who can provide academic, emotional, and legal support to students in special circumstances (e.g. career, domestic violence, legal concerns)

To learn more about the General Health and Well-being Services, email the Office of Counseling and Guidance at ocg.uplb@up.edu.ph. Check the next part for more details on guidance and counseling services during flexible learning.

I. OVCSA Guidance and Counseling Services

Our UPLB Office of Counseling and Guidance (OCG), under the OVCSA continues to provide tele-counseling and tele-support services. Below are the continuing and new programs that are available during flexible learning:

1. Counseling and Group Growth

a.Counseling Service (Online)

Our counseling service continues to serve our students even if they are not on campus. Guidance counselors have launched the online counseling services to assist you. This provides an opportunity for you to express and clarify emotional concerns, feelings, conflicts, plans, and other aspirations, which may be affecting different phases of your life especially during flexible learning.

The OCG has devised a college classification scheme for an organized and systematic process. See the list below. Each college has been assigned a counselor, a Tito/Tita who will be there to listen to you.

Guidance Services Specialist Directory:

Gonzalo H. Amante Jr.,RGC (Tito Bhojo)	CEAT
Ordina S. Carlos, RGC (Tita Dina)	CAS
Janett A. Dolor, RGC (Tita Janett)	CAFS
Erick Vernon Y. Dy, RGC (Kuya V)	CDC / GS (Int'l)
Maria Victoria C. Jimenez (Tita Mavic)	CVM
Analyn V. Rapas, RGC (Tita Ana)	CEM
Jisselle C. Villamin, RGC (Tita Aji)	CHE / GS (Local)

You may also opt to send private messages, queries, or requests for support to the Official OCG FB page: Office of Counseling and Guidance, OVCSA, UPLB at https://www.facebook.com/ocgovcsa or through its official email address at ocg.uplb@up.edu.ph.

b. Referral and Follow-up Services

OCG can also link you up with different agencies, institutions, and professionals if you need further expert assistance.

c. Orientation and Information Services

If you are a New Freshman, your notice of admission includes important activities before the start of classes. These activities are orientations to University academic policies and the various programs and services of the offices under the OVCSA. Were you able to attend the Pre-College Orientation? How about your parents or guardians? Were they able to participate in the Parents' Orientation? If you missed out on any of the OVCSA services, visit the OVCSA website at https://uplbosa.org/. Explore and learn more about student affairs and services!

d. Guidance Instruction Program for New Freshman

Transitioning to university life may entail some challenges for a new freshman. Your Guidance Instruction Program (GIP), or more popularly known as the Bloc Meeting, is one of the support systems that the University provides for new freshmen to adjust to life as a student of UPLB. Bloc meetings are about activities designed for the new freshman's growth and development and help cope with college life, and become a more socially effective and well-adjusted individual.

This program is delivered remotely through different mechanisms: (1) zoom/ Google meet, (2) discussion of relevant topics (through pre-recorded webinars), (3) self-directed activities (mode: asynchronous), or live meeting via Zoom. The details of this program is given during the Pre-College Orientation. If you missed it, email OCG at ocg.uplb@up.edu.ph to assist you.

e. Readmission Program

If you are a continuing student who had difficulty the previous semesters, the OCG gives appropriate recommendations to the Vice Chancellor for Students Affairs and Deans of Colleges about readmission of scholastically delinquent students. The recommendation is based on the assessment of the student's aptitudes, capabilities, interests, interview, and past records. Should you need to process your readmission, the online processing of documents is via email at ocg.uplb@up.edu.ph, and interviews are via videoconference meetings.

2. Assessment, Career Information, and Placement

Before leaving the University, OCG can assist you in career planning by providing information on job opportunities and employment trends. If you are graduating, you may want to avail the following services: (1) Pre-employment Webinar Series, (2) Company Visitation, (3) Career Convention, (4) Career Advising Program / Career Consultation, and (5) Entrepreneurship Program. These activities are usually done all year round. Kindly email OCG, or check their FB page for announcements.

3. Psychosocial Wellness, Education, and Mental Health

There are a number of programs and activities offered by OCG to promote mental health. The list below shows the various services you may want to be part of.

- HOPE (Health Orientation on Problems from Emotional Stress): A University-wide forum on mental health concerns, which promotes awareness and provides intervention to combat this issue.

- CARES: An OCG program to continuously provide and respond to the psychosocial needs of students. It includes tele-counseling, information, and referral services.

- VAL-YOUs (Valuing Academic and Life for YOUth to Succeed): Activities to instill the importance of values in relation to academic success and intelligent decision making.

- Me HEART (Mental Health Education and Role of Teens: Towards Responsible and Engaging Support System): Peer learning activities to increase awareness on mental health care and emphasize students' role and responsibility as part of the community and become a reliable and strong support system.

- Reach Out: A move to encourage a stigma-free university, and endorses the concept of participation in leisure activities, such as dancing, singing, creative arts and sports recreation, to be more resilient against stresses, and to reduce stress, anxiety, and depression.

- Alay Turo: A peer teaching program instituted to assist students with academic difficulties. Tutors are volunteer-students (Gabay Volunteer Corp) and scholars from different colleges who are academically qualified to assist their peers on problems in their respective courses.

J. Access to the University Health Services

There are several ways to reach the University Health Services (UHS) during flexible, remote learning. You may want to do an online medical check up using their FB/ Messenger page: https://www.facebook.com/uplbuhs/.

You may also call or send them a message using the following numbers:
(049) 536-3247 or 536-2470 local 109
0953-130-0521 (Globe or TM)
0912-528-7553 (Smart or TNT)

Photo courtesy of the UHS FB Page

Insurance Claims

Enrolled UPLB students under the Free Tuition Law are covered by group accident insurance. Accidents can happen anytime whether that's residential or remote flexible learning. If in any case you need insurance claims due to an accident, contact the Student Loans and Claims Division of OSG at studentloan_osg.uplb@up.edu.ph.

K. Technology Support

The Interactive Learning Center of the University produces multimedia materials as well as monitors and evaluates applications for and outcomes of instructional multimedia projects. It also ensures the accessibility of materials to you, our students, and faculty.

If the learning materials of the course you are enrolled in are under ILC, kindly visit their website at http://ilcecourses.uplb.edu.ph/. If you have any inquiries or requests for technical assistance and support, kindly reach them through the following email addresses: ilc.uplb@up.edu.ph, lhtorio@up.edu.ph, and brpabro@up.edu.ph. You may also want to access their ILC Helpdesk form via https://forms.gle/tbEuBBWG8xB1VUFR8.

L. Educational Enhancement Support

The Learning Resource Center (LRC) is mandated by the UP System to enhance and expand its existing programs and services, which are geared toward promoting your academic excellence. In flexible learning, the Center takes on the challenge of offering their programs to you using online platforms.

1. Instructional Assistance and Academic Enhancement Programs

Bridge Program (BP): The BP is a tutorial designed for incoming freshmen who may need to improve competencies in English and/or Mathematics. Each bridge course is equivalent to a summer course with 48 class hours. Specifically, the online BP will assist the students in their academic and social adjustments to college life. The orientation and graduation will be conducted through Zoom and Facebook Live while classes will be on Google Classroom.

Tutorial Services: LRC will soon implement online tutorial sessions, called T.E.A.M. or Together Everyone Achieves More Learning Sessions, which cater to all currently enrolled students who have difficulty in Mathematics, Chemistry, Physics, Biology, Statistics, and other subjects. The tutorials are free of charge and facilitated by faculty members.

The LRC will livecast or broadcast the online tutorials live (through Zoom, Facebook Live, and Youtube Live) and record them at the same time. The recorded livecast will be made available on LRC's Facebook page and Youtube channel. Enrolled UPLB students can participate in the livecast tutorials, while the public can view videos uploaded on the Center's FB page and Youtube channel.

P.L.A.Y. (Providing Learning Alternatives to the Youth): As one of the flagship programs of LRC, PLAY aims to enhance the learning experience of the new (and old) batch of UPLB students by producing entertaining OERs such as audio-visual presentations, board games, activities, problem sets, and others. These aid teachers in the conduct of their classes as well as help students better understand the lessons. LRC envisions PLAY as an important component in transforming UPLB's teaching and

learning culture. Further, it increases the online visibility and presence of the University, which is important in its internationalization. Pre-recorded video tutorials will be uploaded on LRC's Facebook page and Youtube channel. The Center also intends to partner with DZLB for the airing of produced LRC materials.

2. LRC C.A.R.E.S. (Creative Activities, Recreational and Educational Services)

The primary goal of LRC CARES is to provide mental health support through online workshops, training, and daily updates in LRC's Facebook page, e.g., self-care tips, health and wellness tips, inspirational messages, thesis assistance especially in developing a theoretical and conceptual framework, data encoding and analysis using Excel, and data visualization, etc.

Based on a survey of UPLB students, the top three trainings needed by students are research/thesis writing, data analysis using excel, and data visualization. Visit the LRC's FB page for the schedule of these activities, other announcements, and daily doses of inspiration.

For more information and other inquiries regarding LRC's programs and services, please feel free to contact them at 049-536-2761, email at lrc.uplb@up.edu.ph, or send a message through https://www.facebook.com/uplblrc.

Flexible learning and the UPLB 4.0

A. What is Education 4.0?

Education 4.0 refers to the transformation in teaching and learning among higher education institutions brought by the technological advancements of the fourth industrial revolution (4IR). Prior to the 4IR, three major industrial revolutions, through the technologies that enabled them, have changed societies over the last centuries. The first was the 18th century mechanical production, made possible by steam and water power. Machines enabled by electricity facilitated mass industrial production in the late 19th century, marking the second industrial revolution. In the 1960's, the third revolution happened because of the invention of personal computers and the internet (Frey & Osborne, 2013).
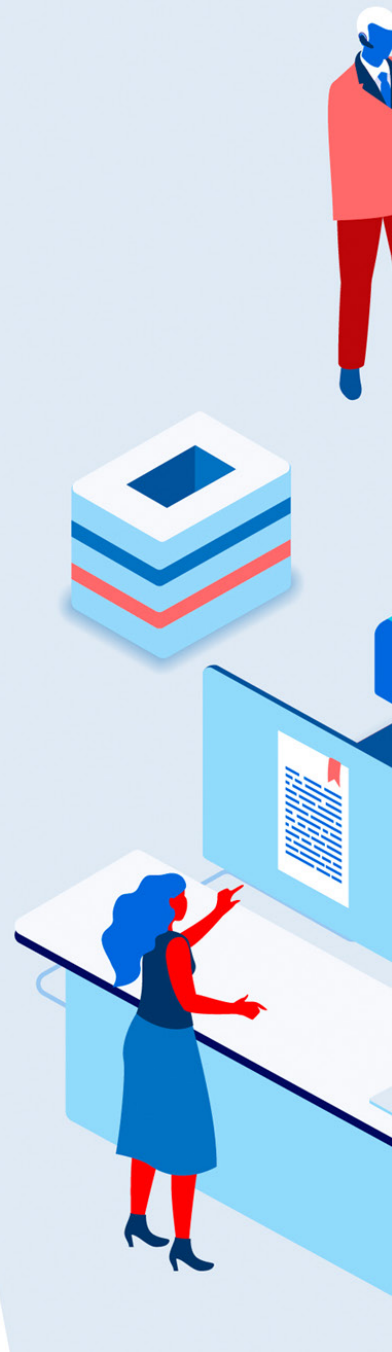
Flexible learning is not just a temporary response to the coronavirus pandemic. It is also our way of adapting to the changing nature of work brought by the so-called Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). It is the phase of society where technologies fuse together leading to the automation, not just of production, but of knowledge.

4IR is an age of automation of knowledge and production characterized by the fusion of several enabling technologies (Gleason, 2018) collectively known as cyber-physical

systems. These include mobile Internet, artificial intelligence, driverless cars, 3D printing, genetic engineering, and nanotechnology.

Like the previous industrial revolutions, the 4IR is radically changing the speed, breadth, and depth of our way of life and has resulted to revolutionary changes in both micro and macro social spheres.

- **New behaviors.** Facilitating new ways of communication and greater access to information through social media and the World Wide Web

- **Technologies.** Automating work and knowledge through advanced tecnhologies

- **The millenial workforce.** Working based on new attitudes and perceptions of the world

- **Mobility.** Converting the physical space into virtual where one can choose the time and device to work

- **Globalization.** Transcending boundaries to reach the whole world

Figure 3. Trends in the Fourth Industrial Revolution

These trends are expected to impact the future in the following ways :

• Introducing new kinds of work, especially in technology, software development, and social media

• Marginalization of traditional occupations (i.e., manual labor)

• Setting multiple competency requirements to meet multiple employment tasks

• Changing job tenure objectives from long-term careers to short-term engagements

• Increase remote or home-based work arrangements

• Utilization of ICTs to increase collaboration and productivity among differently skilled workforce

• Employment of artificial intelligence technologies for standardized, repetitive work

• Development of advanced robotics to change interface between humans and machines

Within such context, the World Economic Forum (2016) also projects a new set skills requirement.

Complex problem solving	Critical thinking	Creativity	People management
		Coordinating with others	Emotional intelligence
		Judgment and decision making	Service orientation
		Negotiation	Cognitive flexibility

Figure 4. Top 10 Skills Needed by Industries

Learning these new skills and developing competence to use and adapt to constantly emerging new technologies therefore becomes the primary challenge of higher education institutions in the 4IR. This requires changing the way we "view and do" education.

B. Effects of Education 4.0 to Higher Education

Along with changes in professional skill requirements, learning ecosystems in the future will likewise dramatically change:

• Learning will no longer be defined by time and place.

• Learners and their families will create individualized learning playlists reflecting their particular interests, goals, and values.

• Learning playlists might include a wide variety of digitally mediated or place-based learning experiences.

• Radical personalization will become the norm of learning, with approaches and supports tailored to each learner.

• Educators' jobs will diversify as many new learning agent roles emerge to support learning.

• A wide variety of digital networks, platforms, and context resources will help learners and learning agents connect and learn.

- Some of those tools will use rich data to provide insight into learning and suggest strategies for success.

- At the same time, geographic and virtual communities will take ownership of learning in new ways, blending it with other kinds of activity.

- As more people take it upon themselves to find solutions, a new wave of social innovation will help address resource constraints and other challenges.

- Diverse forms of credentials, certificates, and reputation markers will reflect the many ways in which people learn and demonstrate mastery.

- Work will evolve rapidly that continuous career readiness will become the norm.

- "School" will take many forms. Sometimes it will be self-organized.

(Bridge, n.d., p. 5)

Today, society is already confronted by the challenges brought by these new changes, and these challenges are only expected to intensify further. Currently, many higher education institutions in developing countries like the Philippines struggle to cope with technological and social changes, and this problem may only exacerbate as technological developments are expected to become more complex and sophisticated. As a result, the observation that many students are not adequately prepared to meet the rising demands of modern society only seem to grow year after year.

Understandably, traditional higher education systems have focused heavily on capacitating students through knowledge retention and limited academic performance measures (i.e., written exams, oral presentations, etc.). With the dawn of the 4IR, learning must go beyond information transfer and uni-dimensional assessments. In the new order, "creativity is the key." This means that educational institutions must shift focus on developing the following competencies :
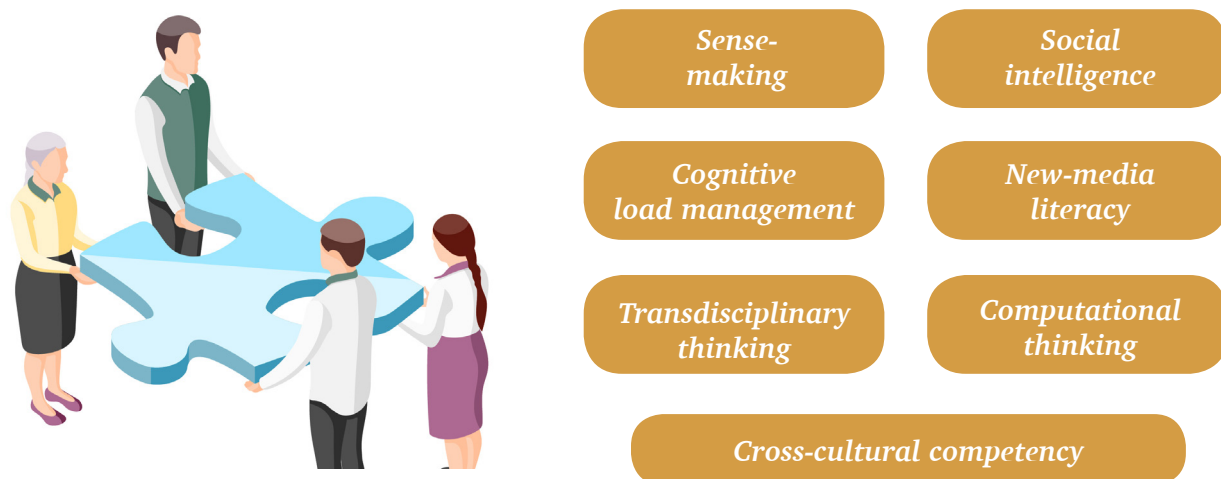
Sense-making	Social intelligence
Cognitive load management	New-media literacy
Transdisciplinary thinking	Computational thinking
Cross-cultural competency	

Figure 5. New Skills Learners Must Develop for the 4th IR

C. UPLB Flexible Learning: Today and Beyond

How, then, can we help you prepare for the future? UPLB, as part of the national University, is committed to fulfill its role to become the leader in higher education in the country.
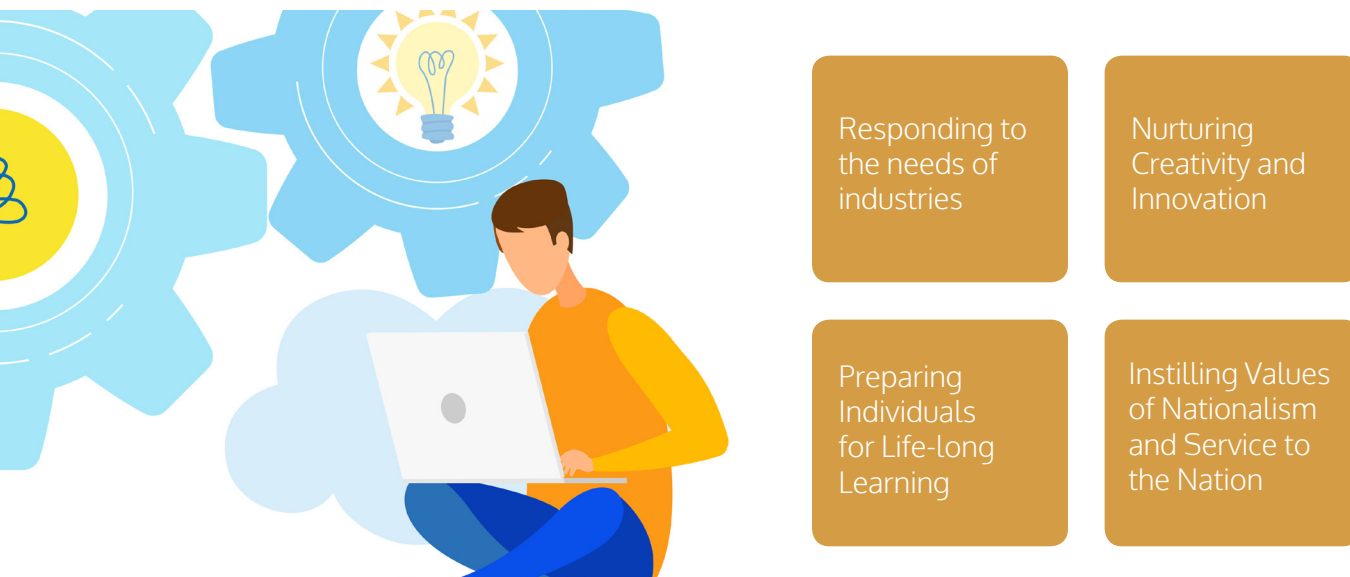
| Responding to the needs of industries | Nurturing Creativity and Innovation |
| Preparing Individuals for Life-long Learning | Instilling Values of Nationalism and Service to the Nation |

Figure 6. UPLB Education 4.0 Goals

The University ensures that it will help you receive quality education during the pandemic and prepare you for the future amid the demands of the 4IR. But it needs to respond not just to the impacts of COVID-19 but to challenges of the greater future. This necessitates the gradual adaptation with changing times and even more gradual dismissal of our old ways. Remote learning is a response to the current crisis, and we commit to it only as foundation for a more permanent aspiration. UPLB must eventually evolve into an institution of flexible learning to be continually relevant even after the COVID-19 crisis. If we must lead as a national university, we must do so not only past this crisis but beyond the visible horizon of the future.

APPENDIX
List of websites, social media, emails, and telephone numbers of UPLB Offices

REGISTRATION

Office of the University Registrar
https://our.uplb.edu.ph
our.uplb@up.edu.ph
(049) 536-2553
(049) 536-2426

SAIS Portal
https://sais.up.edu.ph/

SAIS Team
sais.uplosbanos@up.edu.ph

LEARNING SUPPORT

Interactive Learning Center
http://ilcecourses.uplb.edu.ph
Helpdesk https://forms.gle/tbEuBBWG8xB1VUFR8
ilc.uplb@up.edu.ph
lhtorio@up.edu.ph
brpabro@up.edu.ph

Learning Resource Center (LRC)
lrc.uplb@up.edu.ph

Office of Counselling and Guidance
ocg.uplb@up.edu.ph

University Health Service
https://www.facebook.com/uplbuhs
(049) 536-3247 or 536-2470 local 109
0953-130-0521 (Globe or TM)
0912-528-7553 (Smart or TNT)

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Grants-in-Aid Program (Socialized Tuition System)
sts.losbanos@up.edu.ph

Scholarships
scholarships_osg.uplb.edu.ph

Student Assistantship
saga_osg.uplb@up.edu.ph

Student Loans
studentloan_osg.uplb@up.edu.ph

OFFICE OF THE VICE CHANCELLOR FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS

https://uplbosa.org
https://www.facebook.com/uplbovcsa
https://twitter.com/uplbovcsa
ovcsa.uplb@up.edu.ph

LIBRARY RESOURCES

UPLB Main Library
https://library.uplb.edu.ph
https://library.uplb.edu.ph/request-article-from-us
https://www.facebook.com/UPLBuniversitylibrary
universitylibrary.uplb@up.edu.ph

CAFS-PHTRC Library
https://postharvestlib.uplb.edu.ph
FB: PHTRCUPLB
phtrclibrary.uplb@up.edu.ph

CDC Library
https://bit.ly/cdcLibRequest
cdclibrary@devcom.edu.ph

CEAT Library
http://ceatlibrary.uplb.edu.ph
Chat Box: UPLB CEAT Library Help
FB: uplbceatlibrary
FB: uplbceatlibrary/inbox
Twitter: @uplbceatlibrary
ceatlibrary.uplb@up.edu.ph

CEM LIbrary
FB: UPLB CEM Library
Twitter: @cemlibrary
cemlibrary.uplb@up.edu.ph

CHE Library
che_library.uplb@up.edu.ph

CPAf Library
cpaflibrary.uplb@up.edu.ph

CVM Library
http://library.cvm.uplb.edu.ph
FB: CVMLibrary/m.me/CVMLibrary
Twitter: @VetMed_Library
cvmlibrary.uplb@up.edu.ph
(049)530-3439

SESAM Library
https://sesam.uplb.up.edu.ph/resource-networks/library
FB: sesam-uplblibrary
sesamlibrary.uplb@up.edu.ph
(049) 536-2251
09175056120

Open Educational Resources (OER)
https://www.oercommons.org

University of the Philippines
LOS BAÑOS