STUDENT GUIDE FOR UNIPID VIRTUAL STUDIES
2016-2017

Introduction to UniPID Virtual Studies

UniPID Virtual Courses were developed as a collaborative initiative between universities in Finland to increase knowledge and education relating to sustainability and development cooperation, as part of the Finnish University Partnership for International Development (UniPID) network. Through these Virtual Courses, students have access to the specialised training and expertise taught by leading experts from different institutions and departments throughout the country.

UniPID courses are based on distance learning over the internet

Although the UniPID Virtual Courses are flexible with regard to location and schedule, you must make sure you have enough time to participate effectively. Students are responsible for their own learning. In order to study online, you must have access to a computer with internet access that has the basic programs for web browsing, word processing, presentation graphics, and spreadsheet calculation programs (e.g. Microsoft Explorer, Word, PowerPoint and Excel). If the course requires other tools, they will be mentioned in the description of the course. Virtual Courses rely on independent study over the internet, guided by the Course Coordinator. Students are

encouraged to stay in contact with Course Coordinators via e-mail, telephone or instant messengers.

Virtual Courses allow students to interact and study a particular topic across institutional, national and cultural boundaries and use a variety of tools to engage with students. These can include video lectures, blogs, discussion forums, weekly journals, quizzes and readings. Even though courses are completed individually on a computer, students are expected to engage and interact with each other in the virtual environment by posting comments and participating in discussions.

UniPID Virtual Courses use the open-source Moodle Virtual Learning Environment

Moodle can be accessed at http://moodle.org/. Students can access the learning environment with their student username and password. If necessary, course coordinators will also provide students with course keys with which to access course material.

Since Course Coordinators do not always have the time to teach the use of Moodle to each student, please familiarise yourself with the environment before the course starts.

UniPID Virtual Courses are free of charge for students enrolled at UniPID Member Universities. A limited number of external students can be admitted into some courses at the discretion of the Course Coordinator.

Virtual Course Admission

Students must apply for UniPID Virtual Studies Courses through the UniPID Courses page: http://www.unipid.fi/en/courses/. The application form for each course asks at least for the following information:

- Full name:
- Gender:
- Personal identity code:
  (for exchange students or other foreign students: date of birth):
- Address
- Telephone number:
- Email address:

- Place of residence:
- Nationality:
- Native language:
- Preferred language for contact: Finnish / English / Swedish
- Permission to forward personal information to the UniPID member universities:

- Finnish home university:
- Non-Finnish home university (if applicable):

- Student number:
- Faculty/school:
- Major/degree programme:
- Enrolled as present at home university: yes / no
- Degree for which courses applied for are intended to be included:
- Start date for degree studies:
- Estimated date of completion:

- Student agreed with whom (at student's home university's administration):
- Date of agreement:

- If the student is registered in the UniPID minor programme

Course Coordinators may also require additional information before the course starts, such as a motivational letter. The information required to register for the courses is needed both for administrative purposes as well as to help the Course Coordinator select candidates for the courses in cases where participant numbers are limited. Students enrolled in the UniPID Minor usually have privilege over other students.

Note: Completing the online application form does not guarantee admittance to the course.

Each UniPID virtual course is worth 5 ECTS
Remember to include UniPID Virtual Studies in your personal study plan (HOPS). Proposed studies must be approved in advance, i.e. you have your home university department's approval for the studies to be included as a part of your degree. UniPID Virtual Studies Contacts on each campus can help you with this procedure. The Contacts are listed in this guide.

The steps in the admission process:

1. **Select a course that interests you**
   Be sure to read the course description carefully to ensure that you meet the minimum requirements and that the course can be included in your degree.

2. **Apply online at** http://www.unipid.fi/en/courses/
   Please ensure that you complete all fields in the application form; incomplete applications will not be accepted.

   Note: Some courses may require an additional registration (e.g. into the Open University) – instructions are given in the course description.

3. **The electronic application form is sent to the Course Coordinator for approval**
   The Course Coordinator will contact you regarding the acceptance or rejection of your registration before the course starts. If you do not receive a confirmation of enrolment or a message declining admission within a week

after the registration deadline, please contact the Course Coordinator directly. You can also contact the UniPID Coordination Unit's Virtual Studies Assistant.

4. **Create your own learning environment**
   If accepted, you will get an account (if you do not already have one) for the Virtual Learning Environment (i.e. Moodle) and the Course Coordinator will send you the relevant information to access the course content.

   Note: you can usually login to Moodle with your existing username and password from your Finnish home university. Please make sure you have all the relevant material and time at your disposal before beginning the course and that you have familiarised yourself with the learning environment.

Virtual Course Procedures

1. **Please read the course overview and timetable carefully and make note of when assignments are due**
   Even though UniPID Virtual Courses are flexible and allow you to study from home, the workload is the same as any academic course and deadlines must be met. Without face-to-face contact, virtual courses usually require the submission of several smaller assignments to track your progress in the course.

2. **Maintain contact with the Coordinator to monitor your progress**

At the end of the course:

3. **You will be asked to complete the electronic student feedback form**
   This information is crucial to the development and success of UniPID Virtual Courses, so each student is expected to complete the form as a part of the course.

4. **Grading**
   Your assignments and participation in the course will be evaluated on a scale of 1-5 (1=poor, 5=excellent). The Course Coordinator/Instructor will inform you of your grade.

5. **Credit Registration**
   For students that have successfully completed the course, the grades and credits for the course will be registered to the system of the Course Producer University. Once the credits have been registered there, the student is responsible for transferring the credits to their home university. This is done by providing your home department's administration a copy of your transcript of records. The Course Coordinator and the administration at the Course Producer University can help you with this process if needed.

In some cases, the UniPID Coordination Unit can also issue separate course certificates for students (e.g. if the student comes from a non-member university).

TIPS
- Set aside regular times each week for your Virtual Course (e.g. 6-8 pm on Tuesday and Thursday). This will help you to progress through the course as planned.
- Take the opportunity to get to know students from different universities attending the same course and interact with them in the virtual environment. The virtual learning environment is a closed environment that is only accessible to students in the course and the Course Coordinator, so do not hesitate to express your opinion and discuss issues openly.

How are the Studies Organised?

The duration of each UniPID Virtual Course is approximately 8-10 weeks. Each course is worth 5 ECTS. Courses are open to students from all UniPID Member Universities.

Please note that some specialized courses require background studies in the topic as a prerequisite for admission. The course description outlines these additional requirements.

UniPID Virtual Courses can be taken as individual electives or as part of the UniPID Minor in Development Studies programme.
Please note that the Minor in Development Studies requires separate registration and admission.

There is no limit to the number of UniPID Virtual Courses that can be taken by each student but we recommend you take 1-2 courses at a time to ensure that you have enough time to devote to each course. Virtual Courses are challenging and students are expected to devote time and energy to complete the course successfully. Students are expected to progress through the course according to the set timetable and to submit assignments on time.

UniPID Courses are offered during the autumn (September-December) and spring (January-May) semesters. Approximately half the available courses are offered in the autumn and the other half offered in the spring. Courses are offered at the discretion of the Coordinator and course content may change each year. Thus, students are encouraged to take a course that is of particular interest when it is offered, as the same course may not be available the following year.

New Virtual Courses are constantly being developed. Please check the UniPID Virtual Studies website regularly to see the courses offered each semester.

UniPID Minor in Development Studies Programme: Sustainability in Development

The UniPID Minor in Development Studies programme comprises of at least five (5) courses (worth 5 ECTS credits each) for a total of twenty-five (25) ECTS. Students are free to choose courses of particular interest from the list of courses offered to tailor an individual study programme. The studies are divided into general and specialized courses and students doing the minor programme should take at least two introductory/general level courses.

Registration for the Minor in Development Studies programme is mandatory. It is recommended that students register for the programme before they begin taking courses so that the necessary approval procedure at each institution can be completed as soon as possible. This will help to avoid confusion and ensure that the Minor in Development Studies will be included as a part of the student's studies at their home university. In courses where participant numbers are limited, priority will be given to students enrolled in the UniPID Minor in Development Studies programme.

Students who have already completed some UniPID Virtual Courses can also register for the Minor in Development Studies programme. Students must contact their university's UniPID Contact Person to provide proof of completed courses and negotiate the inclusion of the minor programme in their own studies at their home institution.

Important: For the UniPID Minor in Development Studies programme to be included as part of a student's studies at the student's home university and appear on the transcript, the programme needs to be approved by the department at the student's home university. The UniPID Virtual Studies Contacts can help students with this process.

UniPID will issue a certificate for students who have been accepted into the UniPID Minor in Development Studies programme and complete the required courses. In order to get the certificate, please contact the UniPID Coordination Unit's Virtual Studies Assistant.

UniPID Contact Persons

The UniPID Contact Persons exist to help students with administrative issues relating to UniPID Virtual Courses at a student's home university. Contact persons can help students register for courses, register UniPID Virtual Course credits at their home university and answer questions that students may have about UniPID Virtual Studies in general. Course-specific questions should be addressed to the Course Coordinators.

If you need help and your university does not have a contact person, please contact the UniPID Virtual Studies Assistant:
http://www.unipid.fi/en/page/2/unipid_coordination_unit_contacts/

Aalto University: Heidi Pellinen ([heidi.pellinen[at]aalto.fi](heidi.pellinen[at]aalto.fi))

University of Helsinki: Maika Strömberg ([maika.stromberg[at]helsinki.fi](maika.stromberg[at]helsinki.fi))

University of Jyväskylä: Osku Haapasaari ([osku.haapasaari[at]jyu.fi](osku.haapasaari[at]jyu.fi))

University of Eastern Finland: Roseanna Avento ([roseanna.avento[at]uef.fi](roseanna.avento[at]uef.fi))

University of Lapland: Liisa Ansala (outgoing@ulapland.fi)

University of Oulu: Jaana Pesonen ([jaana.pesonen[at]oulu.fi](jaana.pesonen[at]oulu.fi))

University of Tampere: Anna Wansén-Kaseva ([Anna.Wansen-Kaseva[at]uta.fi](Anna.Wansen-Kaseva[at]uta.fi))

University of Turku: Rebecca Frilund ([rebfri[at]utu.fi](rebfri[at]utu.fi))

Åbo Akademi University: Ea Blomqvist ([ea.blomqvist[at]abo.fi](ea.blomqvist[at]abo.fi))

Common Rules for UniPID Virtual Courses

UniPID Virtual Courses engage students from numerous universities and educational backgrounds. It is important to set some common standards for students participating in the Virtual Courses to meet expectations and avoid misunderstandings. These are general guidelines that can be applied to all courses, but there are variations between different courses and disciplines. Please respect any specific instructions given by the Course Coordinators.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious offence (whether done intentionally or unintentionally). Please remember to acknowledge all ideas, phrases, quotations, etc. that are not your own. Several courses use anti-plagiarism software to ensure academic integrity. Students must ensure that proper citation is used. If you have any questions about citation, please do not hesitate to contact the Course Coordinator.

Here are a few tips and guidelines taken from www.plagiarism.org:

What is citation? (http://www.plagiarism.org/citing-sources/whats-a-citation)
A "citation" is the way you tell your readers that certain material in your work came from another source. It also gives your readers the information necessary to find that source again, including:

1. information about the author
2. the title of the work
3. the name and location of the company that published your copy of the source

4. the date your copy was published
5. the page numbers of the material you are borrowing

When do I need to cite?
Whenever you borrow words or ideas, you need to acknowledge their source. The following situations almost always require citation:

1. whenever you use quotes
2. whenever you paraphrase
3. whenever you use an idea that someone else has already expressed
4. whenever you make specific reference to the work of another
5. whenever someone else's work has been critical in developing your own ideas

Why should I cite sources?
Giving credit to the original author by citing sources is the only way to use other people's work without plagiarizing. But there are a number of other reasons to cite sources:

1. Citations are extremely helpful to anyone who wants to find out more about your ideas and where they came from.
2. Not all sources are good or right – your own ideas may often be more accurate or interesting than those of your sources. Proper citation will keep you from taking the rap for someone else's bad ideas.
3. Citing sources shows the amount of research you've done.
4. Citing sources strengthens your work by lending outside support to your ideas.

Doesn't citing sources make my work seem less original?
Not at all. On the contrary, citing sources actually helps your reader distinguish your ideas from those of your sources. This will actually emphasize the originality of your own work.

How do I cite sources?
Please see the following guide:
http://www.plagiarism.org/plag_article_how_do_i_cite_sources.html

What citation style should I use?
Students are allowed to choose a citation style (unless otherwise instructed in the course). It is important to be consistent with the style chosen. For a list of different citation styles and guidelines for their use see:
http://www.plagiarism.org/plag_article_citation_styles.html

Scientific Writing
Student performance in virtual courses is often assessed through written assignments. It is important for students to express themselves clearly and effectively through these assignments. Thus, students must pay close attention to writing style, grammar, structure and other elements of good scientific writing. Often

the **webpages of your own faculty** can provide good guidelines and rules on scientific writing.

Grammar and Punctuation

Please pay attention to the common rules of English grammar and punctuation. Rules vary between countries (e.g. US and UK), so please choose one set of rules and be consistent.

See the following link for a basic guide to grammar:
http://www.ucl.ac.uk/internet-grammar/home.htm

For a guide to using correct punctuation:
http://www.correctpunctuation.co.uk/

For an essay writing guide:
http://www.theory.org.uk/david/essay.htm

Contact Information

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