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Distance Learning

The term 'distance-learning' broadly means learning undertaken without the direct supervision of a tutor through use of various media, such as television. The defining feature of distance learning is that you do not need to attend the awarding university/institution in person. Many professional bodies were aware of the conflict that people face between the need to work full time and the need to acquire and keep up to date a professional qualification. Since the turn of the century, such bodies have offered their members the opportunity to gain qualification through correspondence courses. More and more further education colleges through the world are incorporating many distance learning materials and methods in their mainstream courses, thereby allowing increasing numbers of students to learn in ways which suit them best.

Distance learning suits people for many different reasons. For people whose job requires regular travel or irregular working hours, distance learning may be the only way they improve their qualification and seek promotion. In most cases students have the choice of when to study and how quickly they progress through the programme. Some programmes have minimum and maximum study times.

The support given to a student varies from the programme and the institution. In its simplest form students may receive basic assistance through special guides, papers and reports. Many programmes provide a wide range of materials through computer discs, videos, annotated texts etc. The tutor support may be available through seminars and e-mail/fax home assignments returned to the institution. Academic support is not the only thing required. The support of colleagues, family and friends is of great importance as well.

Although studying at a distance is usually cheapest than attending university, students must make sure they choose a programme that offers value for money. Institution offering degrees are professional qualification must meet stringent quality standards set by educational funding councils and professional bodies. The standards should be the same as those set for internal students so asking about standards is one easy way of ensuring a reputable institution is chosen