SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTION PROGRAMME

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. General Overview of SI

1.1 What is Supplemental Instruction (SI)?

Ans: SI is an academic support programme that uses peer-led group study sessions to help students succeed in modules that are historically challenging or difficult to pass

1.2 How does SI differ from traditional tutoring?

Ans: SI focuses on collaborative learning led by a student who passed the module, whereas tutoring led by a highly qualified Tutor

1.3 What is the purpose of online SI sessions?

Ans: Online SI sessions aim to provide accessible academic support to students regardless of location

1.4 Who can attend online SI sessions?

Ans: Any student enrolled in a module identified for SI support can attend the sessions

1.5 Are online SI sessions mandatory?

Ans: No, participation in SI sessions is voluntary but highly encouraged

1.6 How are online SI sessions scheduled?

Ans: Sessions are scheduled based on general student availability, after online classes have taken place, and timetables are posted on the SI website

1.7 What platforms are used for online SI?

Ans: For now, only Microsoft Teams is used

1.8 How do I access the online SI timetable?

Ans: Timetables are available on the SI webpage and/or the module site (announcements)

1.9 Is there a cost to attend online SI?

Define tomorrow.

UNISA university of south africa

Ans: *No, SI sessions are free for all eligible students*

1.10   Which modules are targeted in online SI?

Ans: *Modules that are critical for students progression, and are historically difficult or challenging to pass*

2.   Technology & Access

2.1 What device do I need to join online SI?

Ans: *A computer, tablet, or smartphone with internet access*

2.2 How do I log into the SI session?

Ans: *Use your myUnisa credentials to join sessions*

2.3 Can I join SI sessions from my phone?

Ans: *Yes, make sure you have Microsoft Teams App downloaded on your smartphone*

2.4 Are sessions recorded for later viewing?

Ans: *Yes, all SI sessions recorded and available in the relevant module folder on Microsoft Teams*

2.5 How do I troubleshoot login problems?

Ans: *Check your credentials (must be myUnisa), or internet connection*

3.   SI Leaders & Facilitation

3.1 Who are SI Leaders?

Ans: *SI Leaders are trained students who have successfully passed the module (recently, and with a minimum of 65%), endorsed by the module Lecturer, and officially appointed by Unisa to facilitate SI sessions*

3.2 How are SI Leaders selected?

Ans: *They are selected based on academic performance, and subjected to a recruitment process that includes application, shortlisting, and interviews*

3.3 What training do SI Leaders receive?

Ans: *They undergo training in facilitation, collaborative learning, and use of online tools*

3.4 Can I contact my SI Leader outside SI sessions?

Ans: *Yes, but only through the Microsoft Teams Chat platform for the relevant module*

3.5 What is the role of the SI Leader in online SI sessions?

Ans: *They guide discussions, encourage participation, and clarify concepts*

3.6 How do SI Leaders prepare for online sessions?

Ans: *They attend online classes led by the module Lecturer, review course material, plan activities*

3.7 Can I become an SI Leader?

Ans: *Yes, if you meet the eligibility criteria (academic performance), apply and get appointed, and then successfully complete compulsory training*

3.8 What qualifications are needed to be an SI Leader?

Ans: *An SI leader is a currently registered student with a strong academic record, interpersonal skills, and has passed the module they want to be an SI Leader in*

3.9 How do SI Leaders manage group dynamics online?

Ans: *They use breakout rooms, polls, games, and interactive tools to engage students*

3.10   Are SI Leaders evaluated?

Ans: *Yes, through student feedback and SI Coordinator observations*

4.   Session Content & Structure

4.1 What happens during an online SI session?

Ans: *Students review course material, suggest topics to be covered, collectively resolve difficult concepts, and engage in discussions*

4.2 Are sessions lecture-based?

Ans: *No, they are interactive, student-centered and focus on areas that students need assistance with*

Define tomorrow.

UNISA | university of south africa

4.3 How is collaboration encouraged online?

Ans: Through group activities, discussions, and shared documents

4.4 Are quizzes or polls used in sessions?

Yes, to assess understanding and promote engagement

4.5 Can I suggest topics for SI sessions?

Ans: Yes, students are encouraged to share their learning needs. While the idea is to align SI sessions with the online class topics, students are free to suggest topics to be covered in an SI session. An SI Leader will provide guidance on this

4.6 How are difficult concepts explained?

Ans: SI Leaders use examples, analogies, and peer discussion

4.7 Are breakout rooms used?

Ans: Yes, these are encouraged for small group collaboration

4.8 How long is each session?

Ans: This differs from college to college but SI sessions are typically one-hour to two-hours

4.9 Is homework given in SI?

Ans: No, but additional practice may be suggested

5. Learning Outcomes & Benefits

5.1 How does SI improve academic performance?

Ans: By reinforcing module content and promoting active learning

5.2 What skills can I gain from SI?

Ans: Critical thinking, collaboration, and study strategies

5.3 Is SI effective for online learners?

Ans: Yes, it provides structured support and peer interaction

UNISA | university of south africa

5.4 Can SI help with exam preparation?

Ans: Yes, sessions often include review and practice questions

5.5 How does SI support independent learning?

Ans: It encourages students to take ownership of their learning

5.6 Are there statistics on SI success rates?

Ans: Yes, there are over 800 institutions in the world that are implementing Supplemental Instruction programmes and reports indicate that participating students improve their academic performance and are less likely to dropout

5.7 Can SI help with time management?

Ans: Yes, by promoting regular study habits

5.8 Does SI improve confidence in the subject?

Ans: Yes, through peer support and mastery of content

5.9 How does SI support first-year students?

Ans: It eases the transition to university-level learning (some modules are at second- and third-year level)

6.   Attendance & Participation

6.1 Is attendance tracked in online SI?

Ans: Yes, for monitoring and improvement purposes

6.2 What if I miss a session?

Ans: You can attend another session or review shared materials or watch recordings

6.3 Can I attend multiple sessions per week?

Ans: Yes, if multiple sessions are scheduled

6.4 Do I need to register for each session?

Ans: No, SI sessions are voluntary for all students who registered for the SI modules, no additional registration is required

UNISA | university of south africa

Define tomorrow.

6.5 Is participation graded?

Ans: No, SI is non-credit and voluntary

6.6 How do I actively participate online?

Ans: By first attending an online class offered by the module Lecturer, asking questions, participating in discussions, and completing activities

6.7 Are there incentives for regular attendance?

Ans: Yes, you will be better prepared for your assessments and have a good chance of passing your module. You can also use skills learned and apply in other modules that do not have SI support

6.8 Can I attend SI sessions for modules I'm not enrolled in?

Ans: No, SI is module specific

6.9 What if I feel shy participating?

Ans: You can engage through chat or smaller breakout groups

7.   Monitoring & Evaluation

7.1 How is the SI programme evaluated?

Ans: Through surveys, attendance data, and academic outcomes

7.2 Are student feedback forms used?

Ans: Yes, to improve session quality

7.3 How do SI Coordinators monitor online SI sessions?

Ans: By attending SI sessions, conducting observations, and hosting debriefing sessions

7.4 How is quality ensured in online SI?

Ans: Through training, observations, and feedback

7.5 How often is the programme reviewed?

Ans: Annually or per semester

8. Integration with Academic Programmes

8.1 How does SI align with course outcomes?

Ans: It reinforces learning objectives and complements instruction.

8.2 Do lecturers collaborate with SI Leaders?

Ans: Yes, to ensure alignment and support through regular interactions

8.3 How does SI support blended learning?

Ans: By providing synchronous (live online SI sessions) and asynchronous support (recorded SI sessions)

8.4 Are SI sessions linked to assessments?

Ans: They support preparation but are not graded

9. Inclusivity & Accessibility

9.1 Is online SI accessible to students with disabilities?

Ans: Yes, guidelines to activate certain Microsoft Teams features assist with accessibility

9.2 Can international students attend?

Ans: Yes, but the SI session times will be based on GMT+2

9.3 Is closed captioning available?

Ans: Yes, Microsoft Teams has a captioning feature (subtitles)