



Student Support: SIM Cards for Mobile Data

You can purchase, RICA and activate a prepaid SIM card for Vodacom, Cell C, MTN or Telkom at food retailers such as Checkers, Shoprite and Pick n Pay. This is also possible during lockdown. You will need your ID and proof of address to have the SIM card RICA'd and activated.

SIM cards cost very little. For instance, the current prices at Checkers are:

- Vodacom Starter Pack: R3,50
- Telkom Single SIM: R0,99
- Cell C 3 in 1: R3,99
- MTN Bonanza: R3,49

However, with most SIM cards you will not be able to access the Internet through a browser unless you have loaded a small data bundle (e.g. as little as R7,30 for 25 MB for Telkom). The minimum data bundle is therefore necessary to access the zero-rated websites, but no further fees will be incurred.

Use SUNLearn – it's zero rated

Zero rating is when Internet service providers charge no fee for users to access and use specific Internet pages. This is an arrangement between the service provider and the host of the Internet page. SUNLearn is currently zero rated for Vodacom, Telkom and MTN (with a 500 MB cap). If you are on a network that does not provide zero rating, you can purchase a SIM card for one of the other mobile providers from most retail stores, even during lockdown.

See the details below on how zero rating will apply to you:

- Vodacom and Telkom require a minimum amount of data to allow access to SUNLearn. Telkom will not open SUNLearn if your balance is zero. You should therefore always maintain a minimum data balance (it can be a small data bundle) even though SUNLearn is zero rated.
- MTN has a daily cap of 500 MB free SUNLearn usage. Once you have reached that cap, you will incur data costs when using SUNLearn.
- The SUNLearn app is also zero rated and is a handy app to use when working offline.

More data-saving tips

General tips:

- Switch off the data source when you don't need it. This can include disabling mobile data on your phone or shutting down your router.

Laptop tips:

- Switch off all updates or set them to update manually:
Windows 10: Go to Start – Settings – Updates & Security – Advanced options – Automatically download updates: “Off”.
- Set your mobile data connection to “Metered”.
Windows 10: Go to Start - Settings - Network & Internet – Show available networks – Choose your network which uses mobile data – Properties – Metered connection: “On”.
- Close unnecessary apps.
- Download updates while on Wi-Fi / fibre / ADSL or a lower cost network. Remember to check for general and security updates as regularly as you can!

Mobile phone tips:

- Use the SUNLearn app and sync your courses while on Wi-Fi.
- Monitor your data usage and set usage limits on your mobile phone or mobile data account. Also activate warnings as your data gets depleted (e.g. at 50% and 75%) to avoid using out-of-bundle data. With prepaid, the risks are fewer but the same principles apply. You can set a monthly data limit, select the Smart Data Saver option (or equivalent), or simply set which apps may use mobile and background data.

How to do this: Go to Settings – Networks – “Data usage”.

- Lessen the data usage of e-mail apps by deselecting the sync option (Gmail) and deselecting background data (Outlook).
How to do this for Gmail: Open app – Settings – Choose your Gmail account – Data usage – Deselect “Sync Gmail”.
How to do this for Outlook: Settings – Apps – Select Outlook – Data usage – Deselect “Background data”.

This does mean that you will have to sync your e-mail manually. Therefore, make sure to open, sync and view your e-mails regularly to stay up to date.

- Disable notifications as these also use data. You can set these in each app itself or via the Settings function.
- Switch off all updates or set software to update manually:
On Android: Play Store – Settings – App download preference “Over Wi-Fi only”; Auto-update apps – “Don’t auto-update apps”
On IOS: Settings – iTunes & App Store – “Off”

Where to find help

1. Log a request at the SUNLearn Help Desk: <https://learnhelp.sun.ac.za>.
2. Ask a friend who is familiar with SUNLearn.
3. Ask your lecturer or course tutors.