



S U C C E S S

ONLINE LEARNING

GETTING STARTED

ONLINE COURSE WEBSITE
Scholar360.com/Cabarrus

WHO TO CONTACT

Contact your instructor with questions about your online course. Contact information is available on the course syllabus or at cabarruscollege.edu. You can also use the help button in Scholar 360.

ONLINE COURSES

Online classes are a great alternative to the traditional classroom environment, provided you are a motivated, self-disciplined, and responsible learner. The lack of face-to-face contact in an online course can present a challenge to students who like and learn best by the social interaction of a traditional classroom environment. That doesn't mean that if you are one of those students you shouldn't take an online class, it means that you need to understand what is involved before you begin and plan accordingly. Online courses are taught almost entirely over the Internet. This means that you do not have to physically come to campus and sit in a classroom, so you could take a course from anywhere in the world if you want. Your instructor's lectures, usually brief, are in a text format and can be read from your computer screen or can be printed out and read later.

WHAT ONLINE CLASSES ARE NOT

Students sometimes believe that online courses are an easy alternative to the traditional method of classroom instruction, and that there won't be as much work. In most instances, this is simply not the case. Online courses are just as rigorous as any on-campus course, sometimes more so because this method of instruction places more responsibility for learning on the student. You do not have an instructor physically in the classroom providing your next assignment or reminding you of due dates. You also lack immediate feedback and instant answers to your questions. However, you do have access to these essential elements via your computer and the Internet.



READING AND COMMUNICATION ARE KEY TO SUCCESS

Remember that you won't have all those non-verbal cues that you get in the physical classroom and neither will your instructor. Also, your instructor's role will be much less that of the distributor of information, and much more that of a guide or resource for you in exploring an area of knowledge. Almost all your information will come in the form of words. Words on the screen help the instructor "see" you much more clearly. The teaching style used in online courses may be different from the traditional college model. Taking a class online means you won't be sitting quietly in the classroom; participation is even more essential.

Effective communication is also critical to success. Your instructor can't see your frown, or hear the question in your voice. Online, you'll be responsible for initiating more contact, for being persistent and vocal when you don't understand something. Your instructor wants to help -- please write your question and send it along, express your confusion, your concern, and be direct! You will save a lot of time, and both you and your instructor will know better what you intend. Be sure and ask about anything and everything that has to do with course content, course procedure and evaluation.



SURVIVAL TIPS FOR ONLINE COURSES

Familiarize yourself with the course design. Study the syllabus. Make sure you understand not only what is required, but when it is required, and how to do each requirement.

Read all of the course syllabus. The course syllabus contains all of the information you will need to progress through an online course. This includes information about the course description, objectives, and requirements, course meetings, assignments and testing, media and technology used, a course calendar or assignment schedule, and support contact information.

Be Realistic. You will not have to keep a class attendance schedule, but you will have to do regular academic work. Remember you should be spending at least three study hours each week for every credit you are taking. So if there is insufficient time in your personal schedule to do the work of the course, you will be frustrated.



Set goals and deadlines for yourself, and stick to them. Keep a calendar showing the number of weeks in the semester and mark it off with the amount of work you need to do each week. Mark in the days when you will expect to take tests, submit projects, contact the instructor. Don't fall behind in your work! Keep reminding yourself that you will always have more to do near the end of a course than at the beginning.

Organize your goals in a study schedule. Identify study times when you are fresh and attentive and stick to those times every week. Think of the study times as "reserved time." If you miss too many study times, revise your schedule.

Avoid interruptions. Avoid all interruptions and distractions while you are working on the computer, reading, or studying. Take the telephone off the hook if there is no one available to answer it but you.

Know where to study. Find a place that is free from distractions. You might consider work--before or after hours and on your lunch hour--a public library, or a separate room in your home.

You need to stay in touch with your instructor. Contact your instructor regularly, especially when you have questions about course content materials. Instructors are available by phone and/or email, or you may make an appointment for an on-campus meeting. You may also correspond with your instructor by mail or by FAX.

Prepare for assignments and tests. In online courses, course assignments could involve the use from different mediums: print, videos, audios, and the Internet. Remember you are not just watching or listening. You are learning from the information on those various mediums. Take notes. Imagine questions that might be on a test from your study guide, from your textbook, from videos or audiotapes, or from the Internet course assignments.

Take the course and yourself seriously. Elicit the support of your colleagues, family and friends before you start your online course. This built-in support system will help you tremendously since there will be times when you will have to sit at your computer for hours at a time in the evenings and on weekends. You are also responsible for planing for the unexpected; make sure your computer is functioning properly.

Contribute your ideas. Whether you are working alone, or in a group, contribute your ideas, perspective and comments on the subject you are studying, and read about those of your classmates. Your instructor is not the only source of information in your course. You can gain great insight from your peers and they can learn from you as well.