**Tips for Success Online**

Taking a course online is different from taking a traditional course in a physical classroom. To be successful, you must plan time to study and be disciplined in keeping pace with the course. Check out our [Tips for Success video](#).

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**Goals and Objectives**

Identify your short-term goals and write them down to help ensure that you achieve them. In addition your online classes will have goals and objectives as well as learning outcomes for each module.

- **Read the syllabus carefully.** Make sure you understand what is expected of you as well as the goals and objectives of the course. Ask questions if you are uncertain.
- **Review learning objectives** for the course and for each module. Use these to make sure you are on track when completing projects and assignments or participating in discussions.
- **Set study goals.** Create a list of things to accomplish in each log-on or study session. Check off items as you complete them.

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**Study Space & Organization**

Success in online classes requires you to be organized and have a place to study that works for you.

- **Set up your study space.** Create an area dedicated just for coursework. At a minimum you’ll need a chair and desk or table. Make sure that the lighting is appropriate for working on a computer as well as reading printed materials.
- **Keep study tools in one place.** Make it easier to get to work and stay focused by having a specific place or bag for all of your tools and supplies (books, computer, paper, pens, etc.).
- **Create a course folder on your desktop or Google drive.** Keep all files and documents for your course in one place that’s easy to find and access.
- **Have a backup plan!** Identify a strategy (flash drive, Cloud, Google docs) for backing up important files.

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**Time Management**

As an online student, it will be up to you to establish a regular study/learning schedule.

- **Note important dates and deadlines in your calendar.** Be sure to review the UNLV Academic Calendar as well as the course syllabus. Keep track of assignments and other requirements.
- **Check in daily.** Students who log in and participate consistently have a much higher level of satisfaction with their online learning experience.
- **Avoid interruptions** during the times you’ve set aside as “class time”. Turn off your cell phone. Let family members or housemates know not to distract you when you are “in class”.
- **Pace your work.** Regular, spaced study results in better learning. You want to learn the relevant skills and concepts presented in the course, not just cover material.
- **Look ahead.** Develop a plan to tackle assignments or projects that may have similar deadlines.
Communication & Interaction
Communication and interaction with your instructor and classmates are key to a successful online learning experience.

- **Make connections.** Get to know your instructor and classmates.
- **Participate in online discussions frequently and consistently.** Discussions are the heart of the online classroom. This is where you “talk” with your instructor and classmates. Generally discussions are focused on a dialogue between students as well as the instructor.
  - Read (and follow!) the course instructions and expectations for discussions carefully.
  - **Say something substantive.** Back up your opinions with facts to strengthen your position. Cite your sources to avoid plagiarism.
  - **Participate in discussions early and often.** You’ll miss out on the conversation if you wait until the last minute to post.
  - **Remember that discussions are a conversation.** Just as in a face-to-face classroom, you need to “speak up” to share your thoughts and contribute by posting to the discussion. You want to be part of the conversation but not dominate it.
- **Ask questions.** If something isn’t clear to you, ask. Know when and how to best contact your instructor. Remember that you can also post questions in the discussion forums; often some of your classmates will have the same question and one of your classmates may know the answer.
- **Be professional in your online communications.** Use an appropriate writing style for the environment and audience. An informal style may be fine when communicating privately with classmates. When contacting your instructor or posting in the discussions, write in full, grammatically correct sentences. Check spelling and punctuation. Review your message for tone and clarity. Practice good Netiquette. Review Virginia Shea’s “Core Rules of Netiquette” for tips.
- **Ask for help.** Unlike the face-to-face classroom, faculty cannot read students' facial expressions and body language. If you are struggling or have a question, it is up to you to let them know.
- **Identify your support network.** This can include friends and family members, as well as classmates, professors, mentors, university resources, and tech support.

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Learning Style
“Know your learning style and determine whether the on-line learning environment is compatible with that style and if not, look for ways to support your learning style albeit in ways that are not exclusive to the online environment.”¹ You may want to:

- **Utilize UNLV student resources** such as the Writing Center or Academic Success Center.
- **Visit the University Libraries** and use their Library Services for Online Education Students.
- **Join a study group** online or meet in person. Having other people to study with can help you gain new perspective on the material, reduce procrastination, and enjoy the class more.
- **Look for real-world examples.** The more relevant the subject is to your actual experience, the better you will understand and retain it.
- **Practice what you learn** as soon and as often as possible.
- **Talk about what you are learning with others.** One of the most effective strategies for learning is to explain what you have learned to someone else. Discuss concepts to reinforce your understanding.