



right where you are

Office of Distance Learning

Responsibilities and Pathways for Students Taking Online or Hybrid Courses

Online learning provides students with a convenient, efficient way to complete their degrees, since they can study on their own schedule and at their own pace. However, this learning modality requires that students have a good work ethic and study habits, and that they be self-motivated, self-disciplined, and organized, with a strong ability to work both individually and collaboratively. In general, online courses require the meeting of weekly deadlines for reading, assignments, discussion board postings, and other learning activities. Because of their delivery method, online courses require more reading, writing, typing, and computer literacy skills than most face-to-face courses require.

To ensure an effective learning experience, Old Dominion University students taking online or hybrid courses will want to consider and abide by the following best practices:

1. AS YOU DECIDE TO ENROLL IN AN ONLINE OR HYBRID COURSE:

- a. Explore Distance Learning at ODU: <http://clt.odu.edu/oso/>
- b. Explore "Is Distance Learning for Me?": <http://clt.odu.edu/oso/>
- c. Explore the Distance Learning Website for online program/course requirements: <http://dl.odu.edu>
Click on "Find a Course" link.
- d. Learn about ODU's variety of delivery modes: <http://clt.odu.edu/dm/>
- e. Learn about Undergraduate Transfer procedures: <http://admissions.odu.edu/undergraduate.php?page=transfer>
- f. Learn about Graduate admissions procedures: <http://admissions.odu.edu/graduate.php>

2. UPON ADMISSION TO ODU AS A DEGREE-SEEKING OR NON-DEGREE-SEEKING STUDENT:

- a. Complete all sections of Distance Learning Orientation: <http://clt.odu.edu/oso/>
- b. Familiarize yourself with all sections of the Distance Learning homepage: <http://dl.odu.edu>
Click on the "Find a Course" link.
- c. Activate your MIDAS ID which will create an ODU email account: <https://midas.odu.edu/validateIdentity.do>
- d. Review University computer standards to assure that your computer is compatible with University software:
<http://occs.odu.edu/hardwaresoftware/compstandards/>
- e. Complete the Computer Literacy survey: <http://clt.odu.edu/oso/>
- f. Prepare your list of questions, and contact your ODU advisor using your ODU email account to learn more about the degree program requirements such as software, Internet connectivity, cost, deadlines, time commitment, exams, grade point average (GPA), practicum, and other requirements.
- g. Discuss your enrollment plan with your advisor. See "Find an Advisor": <http://dl.odu.edu/advising/findadvisor.shtml>
- h. Register for classes:
 - i. First, identify the courses you want to take using the Course Schedules in LeoOnline: <http://www.leonline.odu.edu/>
Click "Class Schedule Search."
 - ii. Then, log in to the LeoOnline News and Secure Area to register online.
- i. Purchase your textbooks early. Late receipt of your textbooks can hinder your capacity to keep pace with the course requirements. The official bookstore for ODU distance students is <http://www.odudlbooks.com>. You can purchase your books at the time you register using LEO Online by simply clicking the link "Shop at the Bookstore" from the registration page.
- j. Familiarize yourself with the learning environment's technical requirements:
 - i. Complete all of the Blackboard tutorials: http://clt.odu.edu/oso/index.php?src=learning_online
 - ii. Complete various tutorials related to your required software.
- k. If you're an undergraduate transfer student, complete your preview: <http://studentservices.odu.edu/preview/>
As part of Preview, you will learn about the Old Dominion University Writing Sample Placement Test (WSPT) requirement.
- l. Reflect on your commitment toward your specific degree program and your interest in the course content.
- m. Familiarize yourself with the library resources: <http://www.lib.odu.edu/resourcesfor/distancelearning.htm>

3. BEFORE THE FIRST WEEK OF CLASS:

- a. Review the Blackboard and other technology tutorials: http://clt.odu.edu/oso/index.php?src=learning_online
- b. Once a Blackboard course site is available for your courses:
 - i. Familiarize yourself with the course learning environment: navigation, structure, etc. Click on all the course links available on your course's Blackboard site.
 - ii. Read the syllabus and make sure you understand course requirements and expectations: instructor contact information, contact policy, readings, description, schedule, grading criteria, student responsibilities, and course policies (attendance, tests and make-ups, honor code, special needs, email policy, withdrawal, etc.).
- c. If use of Acrobat Connect is part of your course requirements, check your hardware and software requirements (high bandwidth, web camera and microphone with headset). Conduct a practice session prior to the first class. If you run into technical problems, contact the Technical Support Center at ocshelp@odu.edu, 757-683-3192, or call the toll-free number: 1-877-348-6503.
- d. If Video Streaming is part of your course requirements, visit the Distance Learning Video Streaming resources and complete the required and recommended steps: <http://dl.odu.edu/tools/vstream>
- e. Set up a quiet and comfortable space at home for online learning. Keep distractions and noise to a minimum and maintain it as a study space.
- f. Get organized. Establish a consistent work schedule that coincides with your course syllabus deadlines.
- g. Plan on spending between 8-10 hours per week on each online course you're taking.
- h. Review course communication protocol and email etiquette: http://clt.odu.edu/oso/index.php?src=lo_communicate
- i. Establish contact with various university support services (ex. advising, library, technical support) and keep contact information handy.
- j. Connect with classmates by using various technologies: Skype, Facebook, Twitter, chat rooms, Blackboard, message boards, email, phone, etc. (NB: Some of these technologies are not supported by the University.)

4. DURING THE FIRST WEEK OF CLASS:

- a. Review syllabus and weekly requirements. Understand and estimate weekly workload. Record tests and assignments on your calendar. Tests and exams that are not taken online will likely require a proctor. See <http://clt.odu.edu/proctor> for directions.
- b. Use the syllabus schedule to plan and sketch your semester. Organize and prioritize tasks and plan for completion of large assignments.
- c. If a discussion board is set up for student introductions, take the time to introduce yourself to your classmates. Share information as you feel comfortable (your major, employment, hobbies, pets, why you enrolled in the course, etc.).
- d. Consider studying at an office or library to avoid distractions at home.
- e. Use only your ODU email account to email your instructor or other University personnel if you have any questions about course requirements and or expectations. Always include your course ID as part of the subject, for example:
 - i. If you generate email from your student account, always append your subject line with the course ID (ex. Assignment1_DL101).
 - ii. If you generate email from your Blackboard course site, the course ID will be appended for you automatically (ex. Assignment 1 200920_SPRING_DL101_78901).
- f. Create meaningful file name for your assignments: your last name and course ID followed by assignment number: doe_DL101_assignment1. Or follow your instructor's file-naming conventions, if they are different.
- g. Be patient with your instructor and other students in the class.
- h. Provide feedback to your instructor about course syllabus, material, assignments, progress, or any other issue.
- i. Check with your instructor to determine if he/she will be holding virtual office hours to answer students' questions about course requirements, expectations and deadlines. Your instructor may use Blackboard chat or Blackboard Virtual Classroom for these meetings.
- j. If you're facing any type of problem, don't be afraid to ask questions. Ask them promptly.
- k. Support and help your classmates by offering technical help, answering questions, etc.
- l. Learn how to balance family and course work. Schedule study time.
- m. Develop your own strategies of ways to stay engaged in your course tasks.

5. AFTER THE FIRST WEEK OF CLASS AND PRIOR TO MID-TERM:

- a. Maintain discipline. Dedicate consistent time to complete course readings and online discussions.
- b. Do not procrastinate. Learn more at <http://ub-counseling.buffalo.edu/stressprocrast.shtml>
- c. Stick to your weekly schedule. Stay on the top of course deadlines.
- d. Check scheduled course activities and upcoming deadlines.
- e. Create a study routine. Do your best to study at the same time each day, spacing out your study periods by taking regular breaks. (Ten minutes per hour is recommended).
- f. Plan for weekly reviews, and email your instructor immediately if you feel like you're getting behind or not grasping course content.
- g. Submit assignments early and ensure that your instructor has received them. Do not wait until the last minute to complete assignments.
- h. Check your grades regularly and let your instructor know if one of your grades is inaccurate.
- i. If you disagree with your instructor, provide your counter arguments in a courteous and concise manner.
- j. Prepare, review, and reflect on your ideas before posting messages to the course's discussion board. Remember to follow posting rules, guidelines, and timelines.
- k. Review the University Honor Pledge: http://orgs.odu.edu/hc/pages/Honor_Pledge.shtml
- l. Be aware that ODU, like all universities, expects you to do your own work. Review the ODU plagiarism policies: <http://orgs.odu.edu/hc/pages/plagiarism.shtml>

6. AT MID-TERM:

- a. If you are using a proctor for your exams, refer to the guidelines for scheduling your exam with your proctor: <http://clt.odu.edu/proctor>
- b. If you have a mid-term exam, begin your exam promptly. Allow for extra time, in case of technical problems.
- c. Complete the mid-semester feedback form if one is available. If an online form is not available, feel free to email your instructor with your feedback about how the course is unfolding: content, activities, assignments, questions, suggestions, etc.

7. NEAR END-OF-TERM:

- a. Plan your end-of-the-semester schedule and complete all course requirements on time.
- b. Complete course evaluation. Remember that course evaluation provides faculty with valuable feedback and enable them to improve future offerings of the course.

8. AFTER THE COURSE IS OVER:

- a. Check your grade online to assure that it is correct.
- b. Stay in touch with your classmates.
- c. Share successful learning experiences with classmates.

Best wishes for a successful semester!