

The Student's Guide to Successful Online Learning

1. Read the syllabus carefully and thoroughly. It tells you what will be taught, how you'll be graded, and the books and equipment you'll need to buy.
2. Note all due dates on a calendar you regularly reference, such as Outlook or Google. You can also sync to your Blackboard calendar and add contacts to your smartphone.
3. Schedule your study time just as you'd schedule a face-to-face class and homework time, Commit to at least six to twelve hours weekly, per course, as a general guideline.
4. Create a study space. Dedicate a place at home to your learning needs. Stock it with the items you will need. Request that it be off-limits from the rest of the family during your scheduled study time.
5. Have a Plan B. Locate optional places to do your coursework, such as the public library and campus computer labs. Know ahead of time where you can access public wi-fi with a tablet or laptop if necessary.
6. Assess your computing skills. You may need to do any or all of these things in an online course:
 - create, save, copy, move and manage files and folders on a computer
 - run applications such as Word or Excel when needed for a course
 - use a browser (such as Internet Explorer, Firefox, or Chrome) including navigational tools such as the "Back" button and bookmarks or favorites
 - use a search engine (such as Google) to conduct research on the internet
 - send and receive email
 - send and receive a file attachment with an email message
 - paste text into an email message from another application, such as Word or Notepad
7. Prepare your technology:
 - run a browser test. Check syllabus for equipment needed; buy and test it before you need it in class
 - customize your primary browser and download a secondary browser
 - download and install software, such as Blackboard IM
 - know how to clear the cache and browser history
 - know who to contact and how to contact them (internet provider, instructor, help desk, eLearning)
 - know how to describe problems accurately to technical support (write down or take screen shot of error messages, relay which platform, OS, browser you were using). What class, what section, what page were you on?
8. Save your work to your hard drive, then upload or copy it to Blackboard.
9. Become a respected course participant -- take the discussion boards seriously. Post thoughtfully, share your insights, and give others plenty of time to read and respond.
10. Open Cardinal mail to see the MS Office tools.