Online courses can be a convenient, efficient way to complete your degree. However, they do require students to be self-motivated, self-disciplined, and well-organized, because they require more reading, writing, time management, and computer skills than most face-to-face classes. Follow these strategies to increase your success in your online courses!

**Before the Semester Begins**

- **Get Up to Speed**
  - Arrange for additional equipment (webcam, headset, software) or accounts required by your course.
  - Contact the ITS Help Desk for tech support:
    - [https://odu.edu/its/helpdesk](https://odu.edu/its/helpdesk)
    - itshelp@odu.edu
    - 757-683-3192 (local)
    - 877-348-6503 (toll-free)

**Prepare to Use Technology**

- Confirm your computer meets ODU requirements: [https://tiny.cc/hsmvzy](https://tiny.cc/hsmvzy).
- Update your Internet browsers: [https://odu.edu/ts/browser-check](https://odu.edu/ts/browser-check).
- Locate tutorials for Blackboard or any tools you haven’t used before: [https://www.odu.edu/lynda](https://www.odu.edu/lynda).
- Learn to use web conferencing, if you have online meetings:
  - **Zoom**: [https://tinyurl.com/yxadbjrx](https://tinyurl.com/yxadbjrx)
  - Blackboard Collaborate Ultra: [http://tiny.cc/ir7hiz](http://tiny.cc/ir7hiz)
  - WebEx: [http://online.odu.edu/get-started-in-webeX](http://online.odu.edu/get-started-in-webeX)

**Improve Your Online Learning Experience**

- Prepare for how online courses differ from face-to-face classes: [https://online.odu.edu/online-learning-environment](https://online.odu.edu/online-learning-environment).
- Learn how to learn online: [https://clt.odu.edu/keep-learning/](https://clt.odu.edu/keep-learning/).
- If you need disability support, complete an Accessibility Accommodation Request: [https://odu.edu/life/diversity/accessibility](https://odu.edu/life/diversity/accessibility).

*Instructors DO NOT ACCEPT “technical difficulty” as an excuse for missing deadlines or online activities. Test your computer and logins before the semester begins!*
**First Week of Class**

**Get Organized**

- Record all due dates and deadlines on your calendar or phone.
- Add reminders for tests or live activities to your mobile device.
- Post your hellos to the discussion board, or connect with your classmates. Be respectful and professional: [https://online.odu.edu/online-class-behavior](https://online.odu.edu/online-class-behavior)

**Connect with your online course as soon as it becomes available in Blackboard. Check in with it every day.**

**Establish Your Learning Space and Routine**

- Maintain a study space — without noise or interruptions — for watching videos or attending online meetings (perhaps in an office or library).
- Establish a routine for online course work, so you prevent procrastination: [https://caps.ucsc.edu/resources/time-management.html](https://caps.ucsc.edu/resources/time-management.html)
- Plan to spend 9-12 hours/week on each 3-credit online course.
- Study online in small windows of time. Improve your focus by spacing out your study sessions and taking frequent breaks.

**Understand the Course Requirements**

- Contact your instructor with questions about online requirements or the syllabus. Follow the instructor’s email policies, and include your full name and course ID.
- Attend the instructor’s online office hours, if offered.
- Schedule an exam proctor, if required: [https://online.odu.edu/coursework/exams-proctors](https://online.odu.edu/coursework/exams-proctors)

It’s harder to catch up if you fall behind in an online course. To motivate yourself, treat your online deadlines as if you had to go to a classroom at that time.
Stay Engaged

- Form an online study group, to motivate yourself and engage with your classmates.
- Live chat with a librarian, for research assistance: [http://guides.lib.odu.edu/distance](http://guides.lib.odu.edu/distance)
- Improve your writing with help from the ODU Writing Center: [https://www.odu.edu/al/centers/writing-center](https://www.odu.edu/al/centers/writing-center)
- Be your own advocate! Seek tutoring or advising: [http://odu.edu/success/center](http://odu.edu/success/center)

Maintain Discipline

- Confirm the schedule and assignment deadlines — they can change.
- Stay in contact with your instructor. Email them immediately if you’re falling behind, and give the instructor time to respond before your assignment is due.
- Complete ODU’s mid-semester feedback form, if available.

Plan for Online Assessments

- Cite your sources, and don’t plagiarize: [https://wts.indiana.edu/writing-guides/plagiarism.html](https://wts.indiana.edu/writing-guides/plagiarism.html)
- Check testing technology in advance! Give yourself time to troubleshoot setup and connection issues before you begin an exam.
- Verify you can submit papers to SafeAssign in Blackboard, if required: [http://tiny.cc/dpx5zy](http://tiny.cc/dpx5zy)
- Confirm your exam proctor appointment, if needed: [https://online.odu.edu/online-experience/coursework](https://online.odu.edu/online-experience/coursework)

End of Session

Share Your Experience


Finish with Success!