Online courses can be a convenient, efficient way to complete your degree, because you study on your own time and can customize your learning experience. However, online courses do require students to have strong study habits. You must be self-motivated, self-disciplined, and well-organized, because online courses 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

Confirm that your computer meets ODU requirements: [http://tiny.cc/mphizx](http://tiny.cc/mphizx). You’ll need sufficient RAM, bandwidth, etc. for online technologies.

Update your Internet browsers: [http://odu.edu/ts/browser-check](http://odu.edu/ts/browser-check)

Test your Blackboard login and review its tutorials: [http://odu.edu/blackboard-student](http://odu.edu/blackboard-student)

Conduct a practice session for Web conferencing, if your course includes online meetings:
- Adobe Connect: [http://tiny.cc/9bcdjy](http://tiny.cc/9bcdjy)
- Blackboard Collaborate Ultra: [http://tiny.cc/tbcdjy](http://tiny.cc/tbcdjy)
- WebEx: [http://online.odu.edu/get-started-in-webex](http://online.odu.edu/get-started-in-webex)

Prepare to Use Technology

Arrange for any additional equipment (webcam, headset, software) or accounts required by your course.

Contact the ITS Help Desk for tech support: [http://odu.edu/its/helpdesk](http://odu.edu/its/helpdesk)

Instructors do not accept “technical difficulty” as an excuse for missing deadlines or online activities. Test your technology in advance!

Reflect on Your Online Learning Experience

Consider how online courses differ from face-to-face classes: [http://online.odu.edu/online-learning-environment](http://online.odu.edu/online-learning-environment)

Look for resources and support many—ODU departments assist online learners: [http://online.odu.edu/student-support](http://online.odu.edu/student-support)

If you need disability support, complete an Accessibility Accommodation Request: [http://odu.edu/life/diversity/accessibility](http://odu.edu/life/diversity/accessibility)

Connect with your online course as soon as it becomes available in Blackboard. And check in with it every day.
**First Week of Class**

**Get Organized**

**Understanding the Course Requirements**

- Review the entire syllabus and schedule!
- Plan both your semester and weekly workload. Overestimate the time needed to complete and submit assignments.
- If offered, attend the instructor’s virtual office hours.
- Email your hellos or connect with your classmates, if you have questions.
- Record all assignment due dates and test dates on your calendar. (Or in the iAchieveODU app: [http://clt.odu.edu/iAchieveODU](http://clt.odu.edu/iAchieveODU))
- Email your instructor(s) with questions about course requirements or the syllabus. Use Blackboard’s email tool and include your course ID and full name.
- Schedule an exam proctor or ProctorU, if required: [https://online.odu.edu/coursework/exams-proctors](https://online.odu.edu/coursework/exams-proctors)

**Establish Your Learning Space and Routine**

- Maintain a quiet study space where you can watch lecture videos or attend Web conferences without noise or interruptions.
- Consider studying in an office or library to avoid distractions.
- Establish a consistent routine for course work, so that you prevent procrastination: [http://www.sunyorange.edu/ol/faq/procrastination.shtml](http://www.sunyorange.edu/ol/faq/procrastination.shtml). Study on the same day(s) each week.
- Schedule study time. Plan to spend 9-12 hours/week on each 3-credit online course.
- Use small windows of time throughout the day—spacing out your study sessions and taking frequent breaks can help your focus.
Mid Session

Stay Engaged

Stick to your study routine!

Set reminders for due dates and prioritize your assignments as you get busier.

Support and help your classmates by participating in online discussions. Form an online study group, if wished.

Improve your writing with help from the ODU Writing Center: http://odu.edu/al/centers/writing-center

Maintain Discipline

Confirm the schedule and assignment deadlines—they can change.

Stay in contact with your instructor. Email them immediately if you're getting behind or not grasping course content.

Be your own advocate! Seek tutoring or advising as soon as you need it: http://odu.edu/success/center

Improve your writing with help from the ODU Writing Center: http://odu.edu/al/centers/writing-center

Stay Accountable

Submit assignments early, in case of technical difficulty.

Contact your instructor well before assignment due dates, so they have time to respond. (Most instructors are not online at the moment of the deadline.)

Be courteous when interacting with your instructor or classmates: http://online.odu.edu/online-class-behavior

Don’t plagiarize! http://lib.odu.edu/resourcesfor/plagiarismsheet.pdf

Complete ODU’s mid-semester feedback form, if available. Or, contact your instructor with feedback.

Plan for Online Exams

Check any testing technology in advance! Give yourself time to resolve technical difficulties before you begin the exam.

Confirm that your exam proctor or ProctorU is scheduled, if needed: http://online.odu.edu/coursework/exams-proctors

End of Session

Share Your Experience

Complete the Student Opinion Survey: http://odu.edu/academics/courses-registration/studentopinionsurvey. Your feedback helps instructors improve the course.

The best way to learn how to be a successful online student is by asking other students what techniques worked for them. Share your experiences.

Finish with Success!