

Learning Café Quick Study Tips

SUCCEEDING IN YOUR DISTANCE EDUCATION COURSE

Increasingly, the world of higher education is moving towards the delivery of courses in a distance education format. This may mean students are completing more independent study or online courses. Students in these courses may meet in one or multiple locations at certain times, or they may not meet at all. As a result, students must take much more responsibility for their learning.

***So, what should you do to be successful
in your distance education course?***

FIND OUT EVERYTHING YOU CAN ABOUT THE COURSE!

Course website location

- Where is all the course information posted?

Technological requirements

- What are the computer & internet requirements (hardware & platform requirements, software & multimedia needs)

Course materials

- What is available?
- How do you obtain the materials?

Course communication

- What is the preferred manner of communicating with the instructor/teaching assistant?
- How much of the course is delivered face-to-face or online? If face-to-face, where & when will you be meeting?
- How will you be notified of course instructions & assignments, announcements, class cancellations, etc.?
- How will assignments be submitted & returned?

Familiarize yourself with course details & requirements.

- Course syllabus, objectives, & outcomes
- Grading
- Important dates
- Required materials
- Other policies & details

FIND OUT WHAT YOU CAN ABOUT COURSE CONTACTS & SUPPORTS

Instructional support information

- Instructor name, office location & hours, telephone & fax numbers, email address
- Teaching assistant name, office location & hours, telephone & fax numbers, email address

Additional resources & contact information (who & what is available?)

- Library supports
- Learning skills & tutoring supports
- Technical supports

IDENTIFY & SET YOUR LEARNING GOALS

Some distance learners find it difficult to maintain momentum through a course because they are unclear about their motivations & goals. Take time to identify your reasons for taking the course & the benefits, both short & long term, of completing it.

GET ORGANIZED

Distance courses require that students assume a greater amount of responsibility for & independence in their learning; it is important, therefore, that students develop strong time management & organizational skills. You are strongly encouraged to do the following:

Organize your materials & establish a study space.

Creating a serious space for your course work will help you stay organized & accomplish your tasks more efficiently.

Create a schedule.

Distance students can easily get sidetracked because they do not have the same routines as traditional classroom learners. To stay on track, you should

- track all course assignments, readings, & exams (an agenda works well).
- set deadlines for completing course tasks & assignments.
- track designated class meeting times & places (if applicable).
- plan for specific periods of personal study & interaction with course materials.
- schedule regular times for course communication, such as
 - contact with instructor regarding questions or concerns about course material, assignments, or progress reports.
 - contact with other students. This may include listservs, discussions groups, blogs, etc. You may also need to communicate about class assignments or group projects.
 - assignment progress & submission.

*For more information on any of the suggestions given here, please visit the Learning Café, located in the library (CE1340) / 403-382-6952 / learningcafe@lethbridgecollege.ca
Or sign up for a Student Success Workshop!*

