Student Success Handbook
for
Online Learners
Is Online Learning Right for Me?

You may be interested in taking an online class but aren’t sure if the format would work for your learning needs and expectations. There are many things to consider when deciding to take any course, and there are special considerations when deciding to take your education to “the cloud.”

Some Questions to Ask Yourself Before Enrolling in an Online Course

- Do I have constant access to a computer and the internet?
- Am I self-disciplined?
- Determine your learning style. This information can help you choose an appropriate course subject to take online based on your learning style.
- Do I have at the very least moderate experience using the internet and various software applications (word processor, email, Java, browsers, etc.)?
- Do I have between 8-10 hours a week to reserve for an online course?
- Would I feel comfortable participating in the online environment, which almost always require written communications to share with the entire class?
- Do I feel comfortable using Canvas, the Learning Management System used at NCC to participate in an online course?
- Am I an independent learner?
- Am I resourceful, and a problem-solver?
- How are my time management and organization skills?
- Am I a self-starter and motivated?
Once you have decided to take an online course, there are a few things to consider while picking which course(s) you will register for. Find out about the course prerequisites, expectations, objectives, etc. While reading a course description, be honest with yourself about how much time you are willing to dedicate to the course. Online courses require exceptional organization and time management skills, as well as the ability to self-motivate and seek assistance as soon as a problem or issue arises.

**Tips for Taking an Online Course**

You’re enrolled in an online course! Great! Below are some proven characteristics and habits of successful online students.

- Make sure your computer meets minimum hardware and software requirements.
- Become a master of the course subject matter; explore all available and provided resources.
- Choose to take online course that are part of your major and/or personally interesting to you so that you will want to stay engaged and dedicated to the course.
- Read and re-read the syllabus often and check the Announcements on Canvas.
- Make efforts to internalize course expectations, procedures, and material.
- Create a personalized schedule that you will follow throughout the semester, specifically reserving time for the course and stay determined to stick to this schedule.
- Know that last minute work will not cut it in an online class!
- Ask for help as soon as you realize you need it, online instructors expect students to seek them out for assistance.
- Realize that an online course often requires more patience than a face to face course as you navigate through materials and expectation and possibly encounter technical difficulties.
- Stay Organized:
  - Most instructors will open a course and post required texts/materials and software prior to the first day of class. Take advantage of this opportunity to prepare and get a head start.
  - Record due dates of assignments in a calendar
  - Create dates and record in calendar to work on assignments, breaking down the various tasks and setting goals.
  - Create a realistic and unalterable schedule. Include school, work, family and other obligations.
  - Make your family/roommates aware of your schedule and ask them to respect it.
  - Find a constant study space that is equipped with all the essentials needed to complete course work.
  - Set a timer when you sit down to do your work, and don’t stop until the timer goes off.
## Online Course vs. Face-2-Face Course Comparison Chart

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<tr>
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<th>Online Course</th>
<th>Face-2-Face Course</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Format</strong></td>
<td>• Both synchronous and asynchronous</td>
<td>• Mostly synchronous</td>
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| **Presentation of Material**| • In the form of: videos, virtual lectures, podcasts, readings, web pages, etc. | • Similar formats to the online course with the addition of in-class lectures and discussions.  
  • Lectures sometimes recorded and archived. | • Students typically only hear a lecture once and mostly rely on memory recall and notes. |
| **Learning**                | • More solitary, self-directed.                                                | • Sometimes self-directed.                            |  
  • Students mostly control the pace of their learning. | • Instructors mostly control the pace of learning. |
| **Communication with Instructor** | • Email, phone, virtual chat, Discussion Board postings                      | • Email, phone, office hours, before/during/after class, Discussion Board |
| **Communication with Peers**| • Email, phone, virtual chat, Discussion Board                                | • Email, phone, Discussion Board before/during/after class.  |
| **Submitting Assignments**  | • Through Canvas tools like Turnitin, Assignments and/or other digital methods, for example, email. | • In-class, Canvas tools like Turnitin, Assignments, and/or other digital methods, for example, email. |
Taking a 100% Online or Hybrid Course at Nashua Community College? Links You’ll Need!

Below you will find resources available at Nashua Community College for online and hybrid learners.

- Academic Success Center 
  [http://www.nashuacc.edu/student-services/academic-success-center](http://www.nashuacc.edu/student-services/academic-success-center)
- Canvas Tutorials [https://www.ccsnh.edu/online-resources](https://www.ccsnh.edu/online-resources)
- CCSNH Online Resources [https://www.ccsnh.edu/online-resources](https://www.ccsnh.edu/online-resources)
- Canvas Login page [Click here](http://www.ccsnh.edu/distancelearning/documents/april08_Netiquette.html)
- Netiquette [http://www.ccsnh.edu/distancelearning/documents/april08_Netiquette.html](http://www.ccsnh.edu/distancelearning/documents/april08_Netiquette.html)
Hardware and Software Requirements to Run Canvas

**What are the basic computer specifications for Canvas?**
This is a list of basic computer system requirements to use Canvas. It is recommended to use the most up-to-date versions and better connections. Canvas will still run with the minimum specifications, but you may experience slower loading times.

Canvas and its hosting infrastructure are designed for maximum compatibility and minimal requirements.

**Screen Size**
Canvas is best viewed at a minimum resolution of 800x600. If you want to view Canvas on a device with a smaller screen, we recommend using the Canvas mobile app.

**Operating Systems**
- Windows 7 and newer
- Mac OSX 10.6 and newer
- Linux - chromeOS

**Mobile Operating System Native App Support**
As of January 5, 2019, Android apps require version 5.0 or later and iOS apps require version 11 or later. All Android and iOS both support the two most recent versions of their respective operating systems.

**Computer Speed and Processor**
- Use a computer 5 years old or newer when possible
- 1GB of RAM
- 2GHz processor

**Internet Speed**
- Along with compatibility and web standards, Canvas has been carefully crafted to accommodate low bandwidth environments.
- Minimum of 512kbps

**Screen Readers**
- Macintosh: **VoiceOver** (latest version for Safari)
- PC: **JAWS** (latest version for Internet Explorer)
- PC: **NVDA** (latest version for Firefox)
- There is no screen reader support for Canvas in Chrome
Student FAQs:

How do I get to Canvas?
Go to the Nashua Community College Website at www.nashuacc.edu
Click on Quick links on the top menu. A link to Canvas is there.

What is my Canvas username and password?
Your EasyLogin username and password, which can be found via SIS. (First initial, last name, 3 random numbers)

Why if a course I am taking not listed on Canvas?
When you register for a course, it may take 48 hours before you see the course listed in Canvas because Student Information Systems has to relay the registration information to Canvas. The instructor may not have made the course available. If you have been told to access your course on Canvas and do not see it in your course listings, contact the instructor and let them know.

How do I use the Discussion Board?
https://community.canvaslms.com/videos/1128-discussions-students

How do I view grades?
Select the Grades tool and view. If this tool is not showing, contact your instructor who can make it available. https://community.canvaslms.com/videos/1131-grades-students

What about pop-up blockers?
You may need to disable them.

What are the compatible file types I should use when submitting work through Canvas?
Assignments should be submitted as Word documents or pdf files. .doc, .docx, and .pdf are the preferred file extensions. Google docs and .pages files are not compatible. Individual courses and instructors may have other specific requirements.

How do I submit an assignment in Canvas?
https://community.canvaslms.com/videos/1121-assignments-submissions-students