

**3 Steps to Online Success**

Taking courses online can be very different from taking courses in the classroom. Even if you have taken an online course before, this 3-step process can help you to be successful in a fully online format. Remember that each instructor, each course, and each student is different.

**Flexibility is key!**

**Step 1: What to do BEFORE the course starts:**

1. **Technological Readiness**
   1. Before beginning an online course, make sure that you are ready! Do you have the equipment that you need? A computer? Internet connection? Will you need special programs, and if so…how do you access those? *(This information is usually found on the course syllabus)*
   2. Do you have the necessary computer skills to accomplish the tasks of the course? Do you understand how to use Canvas, Word, Adobe, Google? If not, now is a good time to determine where to go for help. (See resources at the end of this document)
   3. If you have a visual or audio impairment, ensure that you have the necessary equipment to participate in the course.
2. **Courseware Readiness** 
   1. Purchase your course textbook, which may be an eBook. Many online courses complete the bulk of their coursework through an online program such as Pearson, or Connect. You are responsible for making sure that you purchase the appropriate materials so that you can access the content.
   2. Most eBooks have a built-in tutorial. Preview your materials prior to the start of the course. You should explore the tools built in to your online materials and become familiar with how to navigate the required programs and materials.
   3. If there is an online orientation for your course, be sure to watch or attend the session. This can offer you valuable information from the instructor that you might not otherwise receive.
3. **Mental Readiness**
   1. For the most part, you will be working independently in an online course. Be sure that you know how to contact your instructor, and what resources are available if you need help. Follow the actions outlined in Step 2 to ensure you start strong, and finish strong. Online courses require discipline and effective time management. You must be willing to put in the work.

**Step 1 Checklist: Complete BEFORE the course begins**

* Have course access by computer (this is most likely Canvas)
* Set-up an email folder for course emails and communication
* Have access to textbook and other required materials
* Start a Course Binder so you have everything in one place
* Print and read the course syllabus; store it in the course binder
* Create a time management calendar that outlines each day of the week. Include due dates of assignments, tests, lectures, and tasks
* Know the resources available if you need help, write them down and put them in your course binder. This could include PLUS, DSS, the Math Lab, or online resources
* Attend a course orientation if offered
* Purchase materials required for course
* Familiarize yourself with the book/eBook and the program used for your online course materials
* Contact your course instructor or the DSS office if you require special accommodations

**Step 2: What to do DURING THE FIRST WEEK**

**Controlling your Time, Tasks, and Online Learning Environment**

Now that your course has started, it’s time to make sure that you are on track to be successful. Some of the process outlined below will mimic the process in Step 1. This is because these actions are imperative to online success. By completing these tasks, you are giving yourself a better chance of starting strong, staying strong throughout the term, and finishing with a good grade.

1. **Create a workspace**
   1. Create a dedicated space to complete your online course tasks
      1. You will need somewhere with limited distractions
      2. Know what works best for YOU, and be willing and able to communicate this with those around you
      3. If you are distracted by TV or other noise, create your space away from those distractions
      4. Maybe your bed isn’t the best place for you to study; maybe you need to be at the kitchen table or the den
      5. Know that this may be fluid and can change from day to day, or even for specific tasks
      6. Make sure that you are able to practice good online etiquette
      7. Be aware of what time of day works best for you. Some people accomplish more in the morning, or do their best work at night
   2. Make sure that your workspace is conducive to getting work done
      1. Stable internet connection
      2. Are you physically comfortable in the space? Don’t sit somewhere that makes you sore after 20 minutes.
      3. Do you have room to store your course binder(s) and materials? Are you the only one using the space? If not, be sure you’ve communicated with the other people in the space about your materials and time needed in the space.
2. **Read the Course Syllabus**
   1. This may be a link in Canvas, or it may be a file that your instructor has uploaded into Canvas. Either way, make sure you are familiar with it.
   2. Have there been any changes to the syllabus since the course started? If so, be sure to note them on your printed copy stored in your course binder.
   3. Make sure you have located the following information on your syllabus: Required materials, assignments and their due dates, test dates, project dates.
   4. Make sure you know if you have weekly discussions. Many online courses require weekly discussions with other class members; be sure you have located where these live in Canvas and know how to complete them.
3. **Compile the Course Binder**
   1. In Step 1, you made a binder to store all of your materials. Now you can begin adding materials to it. Materials can include:
      1. Course Syllabus
      2. Weekly online lecture notes
      3. Handouts or other documents provided in modules.
      4. How-to pages from your courseware and instructions from your instructor.
      5. Your instructor contact information *(may be on the syllabus.)*
      6. A list of resources and online study tools.
4. **Get to know the other members of your online course** 
   1. If there is a discussion forum set up for you and your fellow students to get to know each other, use it. This is a good way to stay connected to people and can help you interact in a more meaningful way in discussion boards as a result.
   2. Make sure that your profile is updated. Upload a picture of yourself. You will find it’s nice to have a face to go with the names you will see in your course.
5. **Develop your time management schedule**
   1. This can be a digital version or a paper version.
   2. Include both online and offline tasks.
   3. Fill this out for the entire term.
   4. Include important due dates, tests, papers, projects, lectures, discussion boards, etc. Be sure to make the necessary changes as they occur .
   5. You may choose to make one for each online course, or one big schedule for all of your courses. Do what works best for YOU.
6. **Make a list or chart of resources you may need**
   1. Are there resources your instructor has included in Canvas or the syllabus?
   2. Do you have the phone number or email or web address of the resources on campus you may need? *(See resources at the end of this document)*
   3. Does your instructor have virtual office hours? If so, when are they?

**Step 2 Checklist: Complete DURING THE FIRST WEEK**

* I have mapped out an effective workspace
* I have communicated with those around me about a shared workspace
* Course binder includes useful course information
* I have successfully navigated the Canvas site and am comfortable using it
* Course syllabus is printed, read, and stored in course binder
* I have updated my Canvas profile and uploaded a picture
* I have gotten to know the people in my online courses
* My term calendar has been filled out with test dates, assignments, and submissions for both online and offline tasks
* I have created a list or chart of resources in case I need help or have questions

**Step 3: What to do BEYOND THE FIRST WEEK**

**Continue to work on your time and tasks at the beginning of each week, or at a predesignated time that makes sense for your course.**

1. Schedule time to look over any assignments that you must complete and list the individual tasks that need completed
   1. Upcoming assignments should already be in your course binder and in your Canvas TO DO list
2. At the end of each week, schedule time to review your course work. This is an important part of the review process and will help you to interact with the course content again. Be sure you have met the course requirements for submissions and discussion boards.
3. Use your institution’s resources for learning support
   1. If you need help, there are resources available! Know what they are and how to access them.
   2. If you are struggling or falling behind, SPEAK UP. Reach out to your instructor and let them know you are struggling.
   3. Reach out to other course members and see if you can set up virtual time to study together
   4. Does your course have online tutoring available? Check the PLUS schedule on the [PLUS website.](http://ewu.edu/plus)
4. Continue to effectively manage your time. Do not get behind. Online courses often require much more work than a regular lecture course, getting caught up could be tremendously difficult.

**Step 3 Checklist: Complete AFTER WEEK 1 AND FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE TERM**

* Regularly complete a weekly review of course work
* Preview the coursework for the next week PRIOR to the week starting
* Know how to contact resources (see resources at the end of this document)
* Know if there is an online tutor and what the schedule is
* Know how to access digital databases and onliine library resources if research is required
* Know when your instructors’ virtual office hours are
* Know and use the EWU help desk for computer or course management issues

**Online Course Help Directory**

**Don’t have a computer?**

<https://www.ewu.edu/coronavirus/student-info/computer-assistance/>

**Canvas Help**

<https://canvas.ewu.edu/courses/953165/>

**Linkedin Learning: Help with Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Adobe Suite, and a ton of other software!**

<https://support.ewu.edu/support/solutions/articles/10000030698-linkedin-learning-previously-lyndacampus-or-lynda-com->

**Zoom Tutorials**

<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/360029527911>

**EWU Help Desk (Technology, Canvas, email, Virtual Labs, Google Drive)**

<https://support.ewu.edu/support/home>

509-359-2247

**Disability Support Services (DSS) for accommodations**

<https://inside.ewu.edu/dss/>

509-359-6871

**Program Leading to University Success (PLUS) for online tutoring and academic coaching**

Get help with your specific course, or get help making a schedule, managing your time, setting goals, and more. Get live online tutoring, or work one-to-one with a coach via Zoom.

<https://inside.ewu.edu/plus/>

509-359-6505

**Veterans Resource Center**

<https://inside.ewu.edu/veterans/>

509-359-2811

***Online STUDY RESOURCES***

**Online Tutoring Portal (free to EWU Students)**

<https://etutoringonline.org/login.cfm?institutionid=40&returnPage=&institution=EASTERN_WASHINGTON_UNIVERSITY>

**PLUS Online Tutoring**

<https://inside.ewu.edu/plus/>

**EWU Math Lab**

<https://www.ewu.edu/cstem/mathematics/tutoring/>

**EWU Writers’ Center**

<https://inside.ewu.edu/writerscenter/>

**Online College Schedule Maker**

<https://www.freecollegeschedulemaker.com>

**Strategies for Online Success**

<https://www.northeastern.edu/graduate/blog/tips-for-taking-online-classes/>

**How to Study**

<https://howtostudy.org>

**Khan Academy for Math and Science Help**

<https://www.khanacademy.org>