

# How to be Successful in an Online Course

## Have access to a working computer.

To be successful in an online course, you need to have access to a functional computer that has the required software installed. [Visit the Student Computer Requirement page](#) to read more about minimum hardware and software recommendations. Productivity software (like Microsoft Office) is available from [UDit's software site](#). If you don't have access to a working computer, you need to make arrangements to use a computer at a local library or a campus computer lab.

## Be present and active.

It's highly recommended that you log in to your course every day to check for updates, view the course schedule, or contribute to discussions. At the very least, you need to log in every other day to participate in your online class. This will help you keep up with the pace of the course so that you're not playing catch up later.

## Set a schedule.

Just like taking a face-to-face course, you need to set aside time to do your online coursework. Note important due dates and come up with your own schedule for completing work on time (within the deadlines set by the instructor). Make sure to consider personal and professional obligations. For example, if you know you're going to be out of town at a conference, make arrangements to do your coursework there or submit your work before you go.

## Read carefully and then read it again to make sure.

In an online class, it's important to read the directions carefully and more than once. Your instructor will provide lots of detailed instructions and it's easy to miss a requirement of a module. If anything is unclear, you should ask your instructor to clarify his or her instructions. Chances are that someone else in the class will have the same question.

## Think before you type and re-read before you send.

Take your time when responding to a message or a discussion in an online class. Since typing is the main mode of communication, re-read your responses before you send them. Things that you say can be interpreted more than one way since you're not inflecting any tone like you would when you're speaking. If something has affected you emotionally, you may want to give yourself a few moments to calm down before you send a message and immediately regret it. You can use the

“save as draft” features throughout the system if you want to type something up and come back to it later.

Also make sure to use spell-check to help you spot typos and use complete sentences and proper grammar. In the world of texting and tweeting, it’s easy to forego proper grammar and sentence structure.

### Save your work often.

As you’re typing up a long assignment or a forum post, you may find it helpful to type your text in Microsoft Word and then copy and paste it into Isidore. Always make sure to save your file every couple of minutes so that you don’t lose your work if your computer shuts down unexpectedly. Always double check to make sure your assignment or test has been submitted successfully or your forum text has been posted before you log out of the system. Messages that you send through Isidore will automatically be saved to your Sent folder in Isidore.

### Be patient.

Remember that your instructor is facilitating learning for many students. Please give your instructor a couple of days to respond (by email) to your inquiries. Your instructor should give you an estimated response time for inquiries at the beginning of the course.

### Don’t multitask.

Although it’s very tempting to multitask while you’re taking an online class, you should focus on getting your schoolwork done. If you’re visiting social media sites or shopping online, it will take you much longer to complete your course work. Remain on your course site to ensure that you don’t get distracted by outside websites.

### Make use of breaks throughout the day.

If you’re working while taking online classes, take advantage of lunch breaks and log into your online course. By reading an article or checking the forums, you won’t have so much work to do in the evening. Let your employer know that you’re taking a class. Most employers encourage their employees to further their education and will be willing to accommodate your class schedule.