15 Tips to Succeed in Your Online Courses

Online courses can be intensive, and they require that you plan ahead for success. The tips below will help you be successful.

Plan and Organize

1. **Know your priorities.** If you don't have time to take an online course during the winter session or if a conflict arrives, drop the course as soon as possible. Let your friends and family know that you will be taking a course during the winter break to help with scheduling conflicts and distractions.

2. **Plan to spend sufficient time on your course.** Be prepared to spend a sufficient amount of time per week working on your course, just as you would in a face to face class.

3. **Purchase your textbook(s) before the first day of class**. If you don't have your textbook and course materials before the first day of class, you will fall behind—you will need to hit the ground running!

4. **Read the syllabus carefully prior to the start of the course.** You are responsible for knowing the requirements for your course, as well as the expectations, assignments and due dates for all assignments.

5. **Stay organized and make a plan.** Set aside a block of time each day to work on your course. Keep a copy of your assignments in case they do not submit correctly. Take notes while reading or watching videos and refer to your notes when studying.

6. **Figure out study habits that work for you.** Have a consistent and quiet workplace where you can study and work on assignments. Get an early start on course assignments. Don't procrastinate. Work ahead on your course assignments when you can.

7. **Create a Calendar with Due Dates.** Create a schedule with due dates and plan how you will manage your time. Use a calendar to stay on top of your coursework. Keep in mind that you may have assignments due on the first day of class.

Technology and Email

8. **Familiarize yourself with the Blackboard Learning Management System.** If you have trouble accessing the course in Blackboard or if you have trouble finding course materials, contact your instructor as soon as you can.

9. **Have reliable computer and Internet access.** Be sure that your technology is readily available and reliable. Create a technology back-up plan in case your computer or Internet stops working. The Thomas Cooper Library will be open most days during your course. Check the hours of operation for the library. If you are not located in Columbia, public libraries typically have computer and Internet access for use.

10.**Confirm technical requirements and skills.** Be sure that you are familiar with the technical requirements and skills that you need to be successful in your course before the course starts. You want to focus your attention on your course materials and not technology issues during your course.

11.**Log into your course and check your email every day.** Read the announcements in your course to see if new information has been conveyed. If you are expected to participate in discussion boards, check to see who has replied to your posts. Be sure to check your email often. Blackboard uses your @email.sc.edu by default.

Engage and Learn

12.**Be polite and respectful.** You are expected to treat your instructor and peers with respect and communicate with your instructor and peers in a professional manner.

13.**Ask Questions.** Don't be afraid to ask for help. If you don't understand course content or if you have issues in your course, ask your instructor for assistance as soon as you need help.

14.**Connect with your instructor and other students early.** If you have questions about the syllabus or course assignments, proactively ask your instructor for assistance prior to the due date of the assignment. Get to know your classmates at the beginning of the course. Interacting with your peers is critical to having an engaging experience in your course.

15.**Be honest.** Academic integrity is very important to the Carolina Community. You may feel overwhelmed by the amount of work you need to complete in your 3-week course. We expect you to approach your work with honesty, integrity and follow the values in the Carolinian Creed.