SOUTHEAST MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY · 1873

GUIDE TO SUCCESS

ONLINE AND GRADUATE SERVICES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WELCOME TO ONLINE AND GRADUATE SERVICES

My name is Abby Ruessler, and I am the operations coordinator of online and graduate services. We are the online degree programs' office at Southeast Missouri State University. Having worked with online students and taken online courses myself, I understand the challenges online learning can present.

The online and graduate services team and I have created this guidebook for you to use as a resource when completing an online course.

IN THIS BOOK, WE'LL HELP YOU

GET PREPARED FOR THE FIRST DAY OF YOUR ONLINE CLASS	UNDERSTAND WHAT A LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IS	ENSURE THAT ONLINE LEARNING IS A GOOD FIT FOR YOU	UNDERSTAND THE RESOURCES AVAILABLE

We hope this guidebook helps you in your online courses. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

**WE WISH YOU EVERY SUCCESS
IN YOUR COURSE WORK!**

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ONLINE COURSE BASICS

Earlier versions of this guidebook started with the sentence, "An online course is a class taught via the World Wide Web."

We laugh at that now because almost everyone knows about the internet. Still, we think there are some basic principles of online learning that are worth sharing.

/ Fully online programs do not require you to come to campus.
/ Students can complete their degree entirely online from anywhere in the world.

SCHEDULING AND PACING

Online courses at Southeast are not self-paced courses. Our online courses have material and assignments given at least once a week.

ASYNCHRONOUS

Online courses at Southeast are asynchronous. Students are given timeframes or deadlines for when work must be completed. However, discussions, lectures and reading materials can be accessed prior to those deadlines.

COMPARED TO F2F CLASSES

Southeast Online's courses are the same courses that are taught in the face-to-face (F2F) classroom. For the most part, the content, materials, and the professors are the same as you would encounter in a F2F class.

GROUP WORK

Even though you will be able to take all your classes asynchronously, there will often still be group work assignments that you will need to complete in an online degree. You may have to work synchronously with other class members to complete group work when it works with the groups' schedules.

BE ORGANIZED AND TIMELY

Online courses are time intensive. Plan on spending as much time in your online course as you would spend sitting in a classroom, listening to a lecture, and doing your homework outside of the classroom.

HYFLEX AND BIFLEX COURSES

HyFlex courses offer three different modes of attending class. You can be completely asynchronous online, synchronous (with zoom lectures), or in-class instruction. Students enrolled in a BiFlex course will have different options to attend online and synchronously at the same time. This way you will have many options flexible for your convenience. If HyFlex and BiFlex are still confusing to you, your advisor will happily answer any other questions you have about it.

IS ONLINE LEARNING RIGHT FOR YOU?

In a traditional course, you attend class at a specific time. The instructor facilitates your learning by lecturing, leading discussions, giving slideshow presentations, etc. The instructor is in charge of the pace and the timing. In an online course, you, as a student, take a more active role in your learning. This level of responsibility for your learning will require you to be motivated, organized, and have a routine in place for completing your course work.

Before enrolling in an online course, consider your time commitments. For a 16-week course, plan to spend, on average, 9 hours per week on course work. Shorter courses, 4-, 6-, or 8-week sessions, are condensed and require more of a time commitment. In essence, one day in a 4-week summer course will cover the same material as one week of a 16-week course. Also, some courses, like math, may require even more time commitments.

ONLINE COURSES CAN BE MUCH EASIER FOR YOU IF YOU HAVE

/ Regular access to a computer and a broadband internet connection

/ Access to a device with a webcam, microphone, and speakers

/ The ability to type quickly and accurately

/ A good understanding of the resources available to you. Check the RESOURCE INDEX in this book for sites that can help with these items.

HOW IT WORKS

The Learning Management System (LMS) is the software that delivers your online course. At Southeast Missouri State University, we utilize **Canvas** as our LMS.

To see how Canvas works here at Southeast, visit the Canvas for student's page for guides and a link to the demo course:
https://semo.instructure.com/
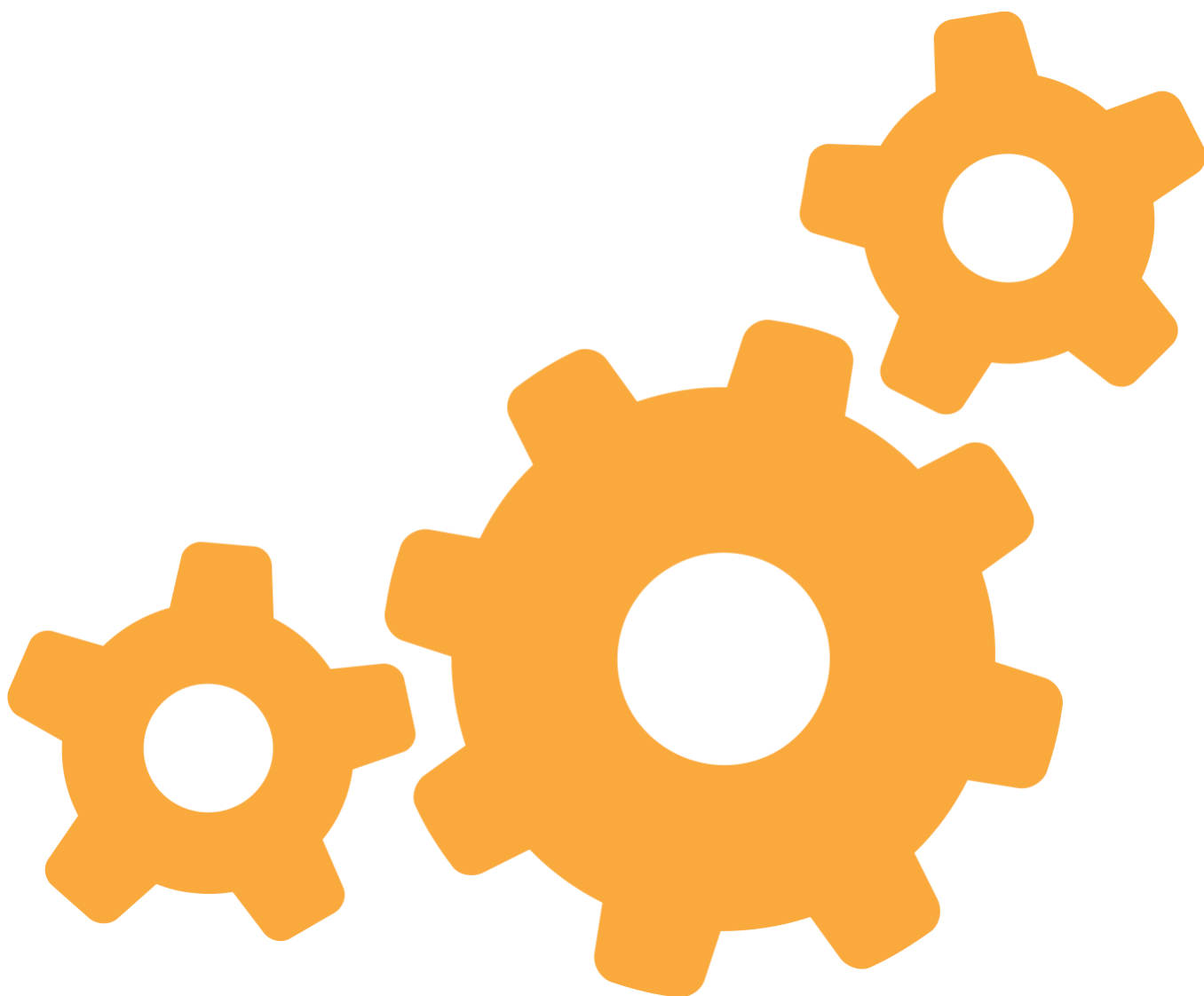
COMMUNICATING ONLINE

One major difference between online courses and the traditional classroom setting is that in an online course, most discussions are in a written format.

Writing your thoughts down can help you organize what you want to say before you post. This format also allows others time to respond.

NETIQUETTE

/ Be polite and respectful. It is sometimes tempting to say things you wouldn't say in person because online classrooms can be more anonymous, but remember, there are real people reading and responding to your messages.

/ Be tolerant of others' views. Keep in mind that you will encounter views and backgrounds that are different from your own.

/ Be careful when using sarcasm or humor. Without seeing facial expressions or hearing the tone of your voice, people may take your humor in ways that were not intended.

/ Double check to whom you are sending an email. It can be embarrassing when an email that you meant for one person ends up being read by others.

/ Using all capital letters in email is the equivalent to SHOUTING. Avoid it whenever possible.

/ Use a meaningful subject line so your readers will have a clear idea of what your message contains.

CONTACTING YOUR INSTRUCTOR

It is important to know how to contact your instructor. Your instructor should provide their contact information in your course syllabus. Make sure you take note of any preferences they specify.

Email is your connection to your instructor. It is important to maintain open communication and to check your student email frequently. When contacting your instructor, always use your student email account. Be sure to include your name, course, and section when emailing an instructor or staff member. You may also consider putting your student ID number in your email signature line. Always proofread before sending an email and remember to be polite and respectful.

GETTING HELP

We all need help sometimes, so don't be afraid to ask for help. The resource index in this guide provides links to many helpful resources. Here are a few that we'd like to discuss in detail.

ADVICE

Your advisor and faculty on campus are great resources for you. They can help you choose the best major for you and schedule classes within that major. Advisors can also help direct you to resources that will benefit you.

You can also use fellow classmates for advice. Your online course should allow for forum discussions where you can share ideas with other students and get feedback.

COMPLETING COURSE WORK AND ASSIGNMENTS

If you are struggling with completing your course work or specific assignments, contact your professor. If applicable, you may also want to contact the Learning Assistance Programs office. If you believe you might qualify for their services, it would also be beneficial for you to contact the Office of Accessibility Services.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

The help desk should be able to assist with general computer questions, email, and basic questions regarding online courses. We recommend you first contact your professor for help regarding your online class.

OTHER PEOPLE AND PLACES WE RECOMMEND YOU FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH:

/ Student Financial Services
/ Library
/ Military and Veteran Services
/ Registrar
/ University Bookstore

/ Textbook Rental
/ Learning Assistance Programs
/ Testing Services
/ Writing Center
/ Counseling Services

IT HELP DESK
573.651.4357
HELPDESK@SEMO.EDU
SEMO.EDU/IT/HELPDESK

SETTING YOURSELF UP FOR SUCCESS

CREATE A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT
To help with your routine, we recommend you designate a specific area in your apartment, dorm, home or somewhere on campus where you can go to complete course work. We recommend the area be free of noise, visual distractions, and electronics.

CREATE A SCHEDULE

You won't have required time to meet each week, so it is important that you designate time to complete course work. We recommend you block out at least 9 hours per week for a 16-week course.

BE STUDIOUS

To make the most out of your online experience and to be successful in your courses, we recommend that you:

/ Check your email frequently

/ Log into your course every day

/ Keep in contact with your instructor

/ Allow a reasonable amount of time for instructor responses (minimum of 48 business hours)

/ Interact with your classmates as much as possible

/ Contact the instructor for help if you have trouble understanding a unit of study

/ Apply what you learn

RESOURCE INDEX

Use this list of resources to enhance your online learning experience.

/ 150 Resources to Help You Write Better, Faster and More Persuasively
http://oedb.org/library/features/150-writing-resources

/ Improve Typing Skills and Speed
http://www.nchsoftware.com/typingtutor

/ Study Guides and Strategies
https://semo.edu/blog/blog-posts/beginners-guide-to-studying-for-finals.html

/ Reading Comprehension Lessons http://www.readtheory.org/

/ How to Study
http://www.howtostudy.org

/ Microsoft Office Guides
Article - Downloading Microsoft Offic... (semo.edu)

/ Canvas Demo Course
https://semo.instructure.com/enroll/JFJE78

/ Canvas Tutorials and Tips
https://community.canvaslms.com/t5/Canvas-Student/ct-p/canvas_student

/ Online Tutorial for Citing Your Sources
https://semo.edu/writing-center/writing-lab/apa-style.html

/ Computer Basics
http://www.gcflearnfree.org/computerbasics

STUDYING TIPS

Taking online classes means it's up to you to put in the time to be successful, but with these helpful tips, you're sure to meet your goals.

/ Read the entire course syllabus. The syllabus contains the course description, objectives, requirements, assignments, and instructor contact information.

/ Keep up with your course. Online courses are time consuming, and it is up to you to keep up with the course work. Letting your course work pile up can leave you with an overwhelming task and added stress.

/ Keep in touch with your instructor. If you do not understand an assignment, have problems downloading information, or have problems taking a quiz or test, contact your instructor immediately.

/ Schedule regular study periods. If you don't set aside a specific time each day to work on your online course, you are more likely to fall behind. It is better to study more often for shorter periods of time, than to try and cram a lot of information in during long study sessions. Decide what your best time of day is (morning, afternoon, late night) and try to schedule your study time accordingly. You'll accomplish more if you are awake and alert.

/ Learn about library resources. Kent Library has a wealth of electronic resources available. Make yourself familiar with the library subscription databases and electronic books available to online students.

/ See Help and Information for Distance Students from Kent Library (http://semo.libguides.com/onlinelearners) for details.

/ Check out http://www.howtostudy.org and https://semo.edu/blog/blog-posts/beginners-guide-to-studying-for-finals.html

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

All online students are required to abide by the Student Code of Conduct. You can find Southeast Missouri State's student code of conduct at https://semo.edu/student-conduct/_pdfs/code_of_student_conduct_3.pdf. The Student Code of Conduct contains information on plagiarism, academic honesty, civil policies, and the student judicial affairs process.

ACCORDING TO STEPHEN WILHOIT, AUTHOR OF "HELPING STUDENTS AVOID PLAGIARISM,"

EACH OF THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES CONSTITUTES AN INSTANCE OF PLAGIARISM:

/ Submitting a paper purchased from a research service or term paper mill

/ Submitting another student's work with or without that student's knowledge

/ Submitting a paper written by a peer

/ Copying a paper from a source text without proper acknowledgment

/ Copying materials from a source text, supplying proper documentation, but leaving out quotation marks

/ Paraphrasing or summarizing materials from a source without appropriate citation

/ Turning in one paper for two or more classes without the express permission of all the instructors involved

/ Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to complete and assignment when the instructor has outlined AI use as cheating

Southeast Missouri State University's Kent Library provides useful resources, including a style guide for citing your sources, at http://semo.libguides.com/citations .

View Southeast's online tutorial for citing your sources at http://www.semo.edu/writing/quick_ref.html

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ACADEMIC ADVISOR
provides academic counseling and registration information and refers students to resources on campus

BIFLEX COURSES
a course that allows you to choose between two predetermined modes of attendance. You get to choose how you attend each class, and you can't be forced to go in person.

CAREER SERVICES
office which assists students and alumni with major and career exploration, internships, career planning, and graduate school preparation

DEGREE MAPS
allows you to keep track of the classes in progress, already taken, and still needed

DISCUSSION BOARD/FORUM
located on your course page, this is where class discussions take place

DROPBOX
located on your course page, this is where you can submit class homework

GPA CALCULATOR
helps you calculate your GPA: http://cstl-csm.semo.edu/ltansil/script/gpa/predict.htm

HYFLEX COURSES
A course that allows you to attend classes in three ways - online, in person, or through a live online session. You choose how you attend each class, and you can't be forced to go in person.

LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (LMS)
the application's website that allows students to access online courses

PRIORITY REGISTRATION DATE
date of registration, dependent on number of hours completed

SYLLABUS
guide to the course and what to expect from the course, typically includes policies, assignments, learning outcomes, and information on how to contact your instructor

TRANSCRIPT
formal record of all courses taken and all transferred courses

UNSATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS
failure to complete enough course work to satisfy financial aid requirements

CHECKLIST

- ☐ **VIEW YOUR COURSE SCHEDULE**

- ☐ **KNOW HOW TO CONTACT YOUR INSTRUCTORS**

- ☐ **MEET THE TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS AND SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR YOUR INDIVIDUAL ONLINE CLASSES**

- ☐ **CONTACT THE OFFICE OF ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES TO COMPLETE THE REGISTRATION PROCESS IF YOU ARE A STUDENT WITH A DISABILITY SEEKING ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS**

- ☐ **REQUEST THAT YOUR TEXTBOOKS ARE SHIPPED OR MAKE A PLAN TO PICK THEM UP**

- ☐ **DETERMINE THE BEST TIME TO WORK ON YOUR CLASSES EACH DAY**

- ☐ **MAKE SURE ALL CHARGES ARE PAID OR A PAYMENT PLAN HAS BEEN SETUP**

- ☐ **VIEW STUDENT DEGREE AUDIT TO SEE DEGREE REQUIREMENTS ON THE STUDENT PORTAL**

NOTES