

Check Out Your Course Expectations

The first step toward a successful online learning experience is to **be aware of what will be expected of you** in your online course. Once you have logged into your course, check out the course **Syllabus**, your instructor's **Welcome Letter**, and any other documents your instructor has posted. These additional documents might be titled: Course Information, Introduction, Overview, or Start Here.

Find specific answers to as many of the following questions as you can. They will provide a good idea of what you will need to do to be successful in the course you are taking.

I. Check out course requirements.

1. Attendance: Surprised? Yes, this exists in an online course.

- How often are you expected to login to the course website each week to check for posted information, participate in a discussion, or submit an assignment?
- Are there weekly discussions?
- What quantity and/or quality of contribution is required?

2. Textbook

- What textbook(s) are required for your course?
- Do you have the correct text for your course section?
- Is an access code from the textbook publisher required to view online materials associated with the textbook?

Note: Textbooks can be ordered online or obtained in person from Oakton's Bookstore. They are listed by course and section number, ex. PSY 101-OC1

3. Learning activities and assignments:

- What types of activities and assignments are

required?

- When must they be completed?
- How do you submit your work?
- Are you expected to come to the campus to take exams or for other learning activities?

Note: Students residing outside Oakton's district may arrange to take required exams at a local college or university. Check out these "[Proctoring Requirements](#)" posted on the Distance Learning website. You may also contact Alternative Education for further details, alt-ed@oakton.edu, Phone: 847-635-1970

4. Grading:

- What is the grading scheme?
- What are assignments, exams, participation, projects, and/or quizzes worth toward your final grade?
- Is there a rubric or set of guidelines for work you submit?
- Will late work be accepted?
- What are the penalties and procedures involved with submitting work late?

II. Know how to contact your instructor

If you have a question about something you don't understand in your course, contact your instructor.

- What is his/her Oakton email address (outside of the course) and phone number?
- When does he/she have office hours?

III. Find out how you will receive feedback.

Feedback can be anything from a numeric grade to extensive written comments.

- How will you receive feedback – by email, in a private discussion, or by another means?
- How frequently will you receive feedback on your work?

IV. Investigate how much course discussion matters.

- Does discussion play a large or small role in how the course is conducted?
- Are you expected to participate in a discussion each week?
- How much are you expected to participate?
- How much does your participation count in your grade?

V. Have a backup plan.

What if your computer crashes? What if your Internet connection fails?

- Try to submit your work with sufficient time to seek out solutions if you run into problems. Waiting until the last minute puts you and your hard work at risk.
- Identify a backup computer or Internet connection. Do you have another computer with Internet access at home? Do you have a friend or neighbor who could help? What about the local library?
- In the event you don't have time to correct the situation before a major deadline, contact your instructor by phone (or by email if you are able), right away, alerting him/her to your difficulties.