

Tips for Success in Your Online Studies

Welcome to OES!

We know that success is foremost in your mind as you begin your studies with us, so to help you reach your goals in the best way possible, here are some tips to get you going in the right direction.

#1: Know your technical tools.

It's better not to assume that you'll know how to use all of the tools—including the Moodle itself.

Your courses will require you to submit work in a variety of formats. At a minimum, you should be comfortable with a word processing tool like Microsoft Word or Apple Pages. You also may have to submit presentations created with something like PowerPoint, Keynote, Google Slides, Prezi, or one of the many other free tools available online. Also ask yourself if you're comfortable with the tools needed for video and audio recording – they are often required for oral presentations.

Most importantly, do you know how to submit everything properly on Moodle? If you need to include a copy of a CheckBric or rubric with your submission, do you know how? Be sure to review everything before you start and let us know if you need assistance.

#2: Communication is key.

Asking for help is only one of the many reasons why communication is so important for your success. This is especially the case in an online school, where your teacher and fellow students cannot see you or prompt you with questions.

If your teacher sends you an email, you should do your best to respond, even with one or two sentences. Acknowledge them. Your silence suggests that you may not be present or engaged.

If a student responds to one of your forum or blog posts, you should answer them in kind. Think about the equivalent in the classroom—at the very least, you nod to acknowledge someone speaking to you.

Last but not least, when a video chat is required, don't ignore that requirement! If the teacher is asking about you, share! Particularly in the beginning, it is essential that you and your teacher get to know one another. Remember: the best way for your teacher to support you is to know something about you. Communicate to help them help you.

#3: Be proactive.

Sometimes, good communication might also mean becoming proactive.

In the physical classroom, students tend to be more reactive. They wait for the teacher to teach them the lesson, ask questions, prompt discussion, and assign the work. It's a passive approach that often works when there are 30+ people in the room.

But, that is not the case online. Now it's up to you to make things happen *for you*, instead of *to you*. You can no longer wait for someone to move you forward with your learning and your assignments.

It means if you have a question, you have to actively pursue the answer. With each assignment, you have to set your own deadline and then it's up to you to meet it. If you need to meet with the teacher, you are the one that will schedule that meeting. Look at this way: you want success, so you must pursue it!

#4: Get organized.

Everything is laid out for you on the Moodle and you have your course outline in hand. You should even have a date in mind for completing the course. Now it's time to get organized.

One of the great things about the course layout will be the clarity of time requirements. From the start, you know how much time you need to give the course to get it done, unit by unit, lesson by lesson, and task by task.

So, get out your favourite calendar tool and plan your time. Figure out what you need to give from your schedule in order to get your desired result: successful completion of the course.

#5: Consider this your new job!

Everything above should remind you of something, if you've ever looked at a job listing. They are all requirements for a typical job, particularly a professional one. Look at the requirements in any job ad, and you'll often see any number of technical, communication and organizational skills listed.

Usually, there is also something along the lines of being "hands-on", or of having "initiative". In other words, being proactive is strongly encouraged.

Bottom line: what is going to lead to your success in this online course will also be what helps you succeed in college, university, and beyond into your professional career.

We hope you find these tips not only helpful but encouraging. You are about to begin a great new adventure in learning, and it's not just about the course content (though that will be great too). It's about how you will grow personally and professionally as a result of what you practice and achieve.

OES is thrilled to be with you on this journey. Here's to your success!

