# Being A Successful Online Learner

At the University of Idaho, we take our commitment to student success seriously. We strive to provide expert-led instruction in all fields of study and across all instructional modalities. We understand the challenges many of our students face and work diligently across multiple units to remove barriers to learning. This includes the online teaching and learning environment.

This document is designed to introduce students to core attributes, skills, and strategies associated with successful online learning.

**Qualities and Attributes**

Research and experience demonstrate that successful online students share a positive attitude towards distance learning and embrace the unique opportunities afforded by asynchronous instruction. They are comfortable with technology, intrinsically motivated to succeed, and have agency in the learning process. Specifically, successful online students:

1. Recognize the value and the demands of online learning,
2. Are goal oriented,
3. Motivated,
4. Capable of self-regulated learning
5. Thoughtful and reflective in the learning process,
6. Resourceful and not easily frustrated,
7. Handle challenges, setbacks, and feedback effectively,
8. Are persistent,
9. Organized, and
10. Possess a growth mindset.

**Essential Skills**

There are certain skills essential to successful online learning. Many are transferable from one learning modality to another and reveal that the rigor and expectations of higher education are more similar than different in online classes. Key skills include:

1. Written communication –successful online learners demonstrate their learning in a variety of written forms, from 1:1 correspondences to group discussions and different types of written assignments designed to reveal the accomplishment of learning goals and objectives.
2. Oral communication –online learning experiences are becoming more and more interactive, communicative, and collaborative. Whether in real time or asynchronously, online students routinely use technology to facilitate conversation, to record and share presentations, and to engage in groupwork.
3. Performative communication –across the curriculum, the expectations of students vary widely. In one discipline, a student may be asked to live-stream or upload a recording of a musical performance. In another, a student may be asked to "show their work" in solving a problem or presenting a persuasive argument.

4. Technological confidence and competence –online courses require the use of technology. Successful online students are comfortable with new technologies, see their relevance to learning, and are capable of troubleshooting problems if and when they arise.
5. Time management –one of the great benefits of online classes is the ability students have to work on their own schedule, any time and anywhere. This requires good time management skills. Successful students are capable of developing and sticking to a schedule, staying on-task, and meeting deadlines.
6. Meaningful attention to instructions –good online instructors provide clear instructions and instruction. Good online students read, process, and apply instructions carefully in the development of their work.
7. The ability to work independently –while online classes are increasingly designed to foster interaction, there is a considerable amount of work that can and must be done independently and remotely. This requires familiarity with, and a proactive approach to using, online educational resources such as the library and student support services, and the ability to complete work independently.
8. Problem solving –most learning experiences involve problem solving. Online courses have the added expectation of troubleshooting and solving problems involving your computer and relating to technology-based participation. Faculty can help you participate meaningfully in the online environment. Occasionally they can help when something goes wrong or point you in the right direction for assistance. Often, however, the asynchronous and remote nature of online classes requires students to find solutions on their own.
9. Taking initiative –online learning is not a passive experience; it requires initiative. Successful online learners speak up, ask questions, and seek help and advice.
10. Embracing diversity –online courses include students and faculty from all over the world. Different worldviews, manners of communication, and representations of identity, abound and enrich the learning environment. Respect and civility are critical.

**Timely Tips**

Finally, we offer a few timely tips for succeeding online. Some are logistical and others focus on mindset and perspective. All will help you succeed. Take a deep breath and…



1. Embrace the process and promise of online learning.
2. Accept that it is not the easy alternative, but a chosen alternative.
3. Know that there is a rhythm to successful online learning and that it requires time-on-task.
4. Understand that while online learning requires independent effort and initiative, it is also interactive. Online learning does not occur in isolation.
5. Give yourself time --allocate and schedule time for your academic work.
6. Give yourself space –literally. To the best of your ability, create a productive workspace where the demands of online learning, including recording yourself, can be met comfortably and professionally.
7. Stay positive --remember your goals and how online classes help you accomplish them.
8. Prioritize well-being. Make time for it, just like you do for your coursework.
9. Stay focused on the task at hand and on your goals.
10. Take pride in being a University of Idaho Vandal and take advantage of the vast array of experiences open to you, wherever you are.

**Need Help?**

The University of Idaho provides a wealth of support systems and personnel dedicated to your success. Below are just a few that can help you thrive online:

- For disability support services, please visit the Center for Disability Access and Resources (CDAR) (https://www.uidaho.edu/current-students/cdar)
- For help with Zoom, please visit Zoom Support (https://support.uidaho.edu/TDClient/40/Portal/KB/ArticleDet?ID=2079)
- For tutoring and coaching, please visit Strategic Enrollment Management (https://www.uidaho.edu/sem/departments)
- For help navigating university policies, supports, and opportunities, please visit the Dean of Students' Student Support Services directory (https://www.uidaho.edu/student-affairs/dean-of-students/services)
- For well-being resources, please visit Vandal Health Education (https://www.uidaho.edu/current-students/vandal-health-education/live-well/mental )
- For Library services, please visit the University of Idaho Library (https://www.lib.uidaho.edu)
- For IT student support, please visit Office of Information Technology (OIT) (https://www.uidaho.edu/oit)
- For help with Canvas, please see https://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/cetl/canvas-student-start.asp