



Guidelines for Online Learning Students

2012-2013

Online Learning Program Expectations

By registering in an Online Learning course, each student agrees to abide by the following guidelines. All students or prospective students must read the following carefully, so they know exactly what is expected of them, and what they can expect from the program.

1. Online Learning students are responsible for obtaining the basic software and stable Internet connections (high speed is essential) required for successful completion of the online course, when you are working at home.

The needed software and computer access will be provided at your home (Waterloo CDSB high school), for day students enrolled in the program.

- Students can download Adobe Reader, free of charge from the official Adobe web site. If they don't already have it on their home computer, students will need this program to open many of the textbook and information files provided in online courses.

Students must submit files in one of the following approved file formats:

- WORD (version 2010 or lower) – file extension is .docx or .doc
- EXCEL (version 2010 or lower) – file extension is .xlsx or .xls
- Rich Text Format (File, Save As, change file format at the bottom of the dialogue box to Rich Text Format. An extension of .rtf will automatically be put on your file).
- Any OpenOffice file format (OpenOffice is a free download from www.openoffice.org)
Note: file extensions such as .wps, .wks or .wpd are not acceptable formats.

If their word processor applies one of those extensions to the filename, then students **MUST** save their files as a Rich Text Format (.rtf) files, as described above, or use OpenOffice programs.

2. Attendance:

- Students are expected to submit tasks as listed on the Course Checklist, and meet each Unit/Activity deadline.
- Students are considered to be present for the entire week of eLearning, if they have logged in regularly to the course site and/or completed required work, over the week.
- Students who are consistently absent, based on the above criterion, may be withdrawn from the program.

3. **Midterm Week:** A Midterm Week is designated for each semester. Interim grades will be prepared and sent to students at the end of the midterm week.

4. **Final Course Completion Date:** A student is to complete the eLearning course by the Final Course Completion Date for the current term. All Summative Assignments, Unit Tests, Culminating Activities/Exams and Independent Study work must be submitted by the completion date for the current term.

- Final Course Completion Dates:
- Semester 1: January 31, 2012 - Semester 2: June 26, 2013

5. A student can expect feedback from the course instructor, concerning a submission, within a week of receipt of the assignment under normal circumstances. The course instructor will notify a student within that time if there will be a delay. It is important to build on learning throughout a course, using the comments and suggestions provided by the instructor. Students should send in an activity's assignments as soon as the work is completed.

6. Each assignment must have the following information at the top of the page (not just in the filename!):

- Student Name
- Course Code
- Unit/Activity Number
- Specific question/assignment/activity number as described in the course material

7. Students must complete **SUMMATIVE** and **CULMINATING** Activities required by the instructor, before a credit will be granted. Each activity is designed to address at least one major expectation of the course, as per the Ministry of Education document. These major expectations must be met before a credit can be granted. **FORMATIVE** Activities should be completed. These activities are designed to build the skills required for successful completion of the Summative Activities. Students who do not complete the Formative Activities **MAY** be denied the opportunity to improve a poor Summative activity performance.

8. A student should expect to spend a minimum of 8 hours per week on an eLearning course. Students must ensure that they have this much time to devote to eLearning studies before enrolling in an eLearning course. It is suggested that each student set a schedule of days and hours each week, when he/she will work on the online course. If a student leaves the work until he/she 'feels' like it, the work will not get finished!
9. Online Learning students should always leave a work session with enough information and/or assignments printed or downloaded to allow them to work offline if necessary for at least one day. Because this program is Internet based, it is possible that the website may be inaccessible for technical reasons from time to time. This way, students will always have work to do, regardless of whether the website is available or not.
10. If students experience any technical problems while working on an Online Course (for example, the website or course email is not functioning normally) contact the Helpdesk at Desire2Learn: Phone: 1-877-325-7778
Email: helpdesk@desire2learn.com
11. If students experience problems with the content of a course, they should email the course instructor and, state the course name, the unit, the activity and the section (content or assignment) in which the problem occurs. Copy the question or statement that is giving the difficulty, or describe the link that is not working. It is much easier for the course instructor to help if he/she is given this kind of direction. If a link is not working, be sure to clearly identify where the link occurs, and what error you receive when attempting to open it.
12. **Reporting Periods:**
 - A Midterm Report will be distributed by your home school guidance counselor shortly after the end of the Midterm Week. If you are not currently attending a school, the midterm report card will be mailed directly to you.
 - The DATE OF RECORD. Any student who is on the class list of an eLearning course on the 'date of record' (Mid-term time frame) will have a mark entered on his/her permanent record - even if you withdraw after that date.
 - A Final Report will be mailed to each online student's home after the end of semester date. A copy of this Final Report will also be sent to the student's Home School, for inclusion in the permanent record.

Six Attributes of the Successful Online Learner

Here are six attributes that you should have or need to develop for successful online learning:

1. **You have to have a sense of self.** Successful learners online have an awareness of metacognition -- self-motivation, self-starting, and ownership of one's actions. In other words, they reflect on how they learn as well as what they learn.
2. **You need to be able to manage your time wisely.** They must be able to lay out their tasks with a critical eye, plan them accordingly, and follow them through to fruition -- many times without someone looking over their shoulder.
3. **You have GOT to know how to collaborate.** This is critical. More than an understanding of technology, more than a perfection of writing skills, the ability to collaborate is one that must be used comfortably online.
4. **You need to be able to set goals for yourself.** Being able to see the target and backwards plan towards that target is vital.
5. **You need to communicate well in writing.** The entire online community is based on the language of words and how to communicate them effectively. One cannot use texting language and expect to be heard. A student needs to use their best level of writing.
6. **You must follow the community norms.** Just like a classroom has a set of rules, so does an online class. A student must function within the norms and rules of netiquette set up by the instructor (or, better yet, agreed upon by the class itself).