



Online Learning is one of the fastest growing instructional delivery formats in education today. Mount Wachusett Community College has been a leader in the development of online and structured learning courses, while maintaining the academic integrity of our courses and programs. We are proud of our achievements and are continually working to develop more online offerings for our students.

Our online learning students are able to take accredited courses that apply to associate degree programs, without the high price that many online universities charge. Some students, who could not otherwise take classes due to scheduling or transportation issues, benefit from the flexibility that online learning classes offer.

While online learning is a benefit for many, we have learned that it is not for everyone. This guide will help you decide if online learning is for you.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT TYPE OF STUDENT SHOULD TAKE ONLINE LEARNING COURSES?

The most important characteristic of an online learning student is self-motivation. You must motivate yourself to get your work done in a timely manner. If you are a procrastinator, an online learning course is not a wise choice.

I HAVE NEVER USED A COMPUTER. SHOULD I TAKE ONLINE LEARNING COURSES?

You should not take an online learning course if you do not feel comfortable with your computer skills. You do not have to be an expert, but you should have basic experience with

- Navigating through files and menus
- Saving files and organizing them in folders
- Sending/receiving email and email attachments
- Searching and browsing the Web
- Using a word processor, e.g. MS Word

HOW MANY ONLINE LEARNING CLASSES CAN I TAKE IN A SEMESTER?

It is strongly recommended that you begin by taking no

more than one online learning course. You will be covering the same amount of material as in a traditional course. Therefore, you should expect to spend at least the same amount of time on an online course as a traditional course (8 - 12 hrs. per week).

ARE ONLINE LEARNING COURSES SELF-PACED?

No, in most courses you must keep up with the scheduled course work. Courses are instructor-led and follow the same semester schedule as traditional courses. All specific course information such as how to reach the instructor, what work is expected, and deadlines to turn in assignments and take tests will be found in your course site.

HOW LONG DO I HAVE TO COMPLETE AN ONLINE LEARNING COURSE?

Students follow the course schedules and assignment deadlines outlined by their instructors. Keeping pace with the course requirements is a key to student success.

DO ONLINE LEARNING COURSES REQUIRE ANY ON-CAMPUS MEETINGS?

The majority of courses do not require students to come on campus. If you are unsure if a course requires on-campus meetings, please contact the Division of Lifelong Learning and Workforce Development at 978-630-9275.

WHAT EQUIPMENT DO I NEED?

MWCC uses Blackboard distance learning software to deliver course materials. In order to use Blackboard, your computer needs to meet the following minimum specifications:

- Platform: Windows XP, Vista or Mac OS X
- Hardware: 256MB of RAM, 1 G of free disk space
- Internet connection of 56k or higher
- Software: Word processing program, preferably MS Word, and Adobe Acrobat Reader
- Browsers: Microsoft Internet Explorer 6, Firefox or Safari.
- JavaScript and cookies must be enabled
- An email address (provided by MWCC)

WILL I NEED ANY OTHER SOFTWARE?

Some courses also require access to specific software to complete assignments and tests. Software requirements are noted next to the courses in the online learning section of the current semester bulletin. If you are not sure if a course requires additional software,

please feel free to contact the Division of Lifelong Learning & Workforce Development.

NOTE: *MWCC does not supply software, nor does it provide support for any software installed on your computer. Before installing any software on your system, please refer to the system requirements provided by the software maker. If you have technical questions with the software, please contact the software maker's technical support, which should be listed in the information accompanying the software.*

WHAT WILL I NEED FOR MATERIALS?

Courses may require students to purchase

- Textbooks
- Publisher content online access codes
- Lab manuals
- Student guides
- Course content CDs

To find out what materials are required for your course, please refer to the course syllabus. All materials will be available at the MWCC Bookstore, Gardner campus, 978-632-8238 or the Bookstore's online site at <http://www.whyywaitforbooks.com>.

WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS?

Live and off-line tutoring are available to students 16 hours a day, 7 days a week in English, mathematics (developmental through college calculus), statistics, accounting, and science: <http://www.etutoring.org>.

The **MWCC Library's** online catalog and periodical databases give students remote access to books and millions of full-text magazine and journal articles. Reference assistance is available via telephone, email, and AOL Instant Messenger. Visit the library's Web page for more information: <http://library.mwcc.edu>.

HOW CAN I SEE A DEMONSTRATION OF BLACKBOARD?

If you would like to view our demo site, go to the following Web page: <http://bb.mwcc.edu>. Click on "Login" and enter the word "demo" as the user name and the password. Individual course profiles can be found in the Course Information section.

HOW DO I ACCESS MY ONLINE COURSE?

Since instructors may modify course content between semesters, students will be able to access their online courses on the **first day of the semester**.

BLACKBOARD AND MWCC STUDENT EMAIL USERNAME AND PASSWORD INFO

Due to federal security regulations, MWCC has changed ALL student logins to a unique username and randomly assigned password. This change will affect your student email (Gmail), Blackboard, WebConnect, Wireless Access and logging on to all MWCC computers.

To get your unique MWCC student username and password, log on to the MWCC main web site at www.mwcc.edu and go to the "Activate Your Account Create Your MWCC Login and Password" link.

Blackboard access- <http://bb.mwcc.edu> or <http://mwcc.blackboard.com>. Click "LOGIN." Enter your user name and password and click "LOGIN." Click on the title of your course(s) to begin.

Student email access- <http://mail.mwcc.edu>
Enter your Login (user) name and password and click "ENTER."
MWCC will send ALL correspondence to your MWCC email account only and will not send information to home email addresses.

For Blackboard and MWCC email support please contact the **MWCC Support Center available 24/7 toll-free at 1-866-520-7129** or <http://smartipantz.perceptis.com/mwcc/content/default.aspx>



DIVISION OF LIFELONG LEARNING &
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

444 Green Street
Gardner, MA 01440-1000

Phone: (978) 630-9275

Fax: (978) 630-9537

email: LLL@mwcc.mass.edu

College website: www.mwcc.edu

Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Institution



Guide to Online Learning

Blackboard and
MWCC student email
access information
2009/10

DIVISION OF LIFELONG LEARNING &
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
LLL@MWCC.MASS.EDU