

Online Course Readiness Assessment

Will online learning fit your lifestyle and academic needs? Here are some questions to consider when deciding if an online course is right for you.

Why are you taking an online course?

People commonly mistake an online education for an instant education. Online learning is not easier than the traditional classroom experience. In fact, many students find it requires more time and commitment.

While you'll have more flexibility in organizing your study schedule, you still must do regular academic work. Virtual Academy course requires a minimum of ten hours of work per week. If you don't have sufficient time in your personal schedule to do the course work, you're setting yourself up for failure.

Don't consider an online course because you think the work will be easier than in a traditional class!

Do you schedule your work time and follow through to meet deadlines?

Good time-management skills are essential for successful online learning. Students must be disciplined and structure their own schedules. It's very easy to become distracted by personal or work commitments when attendance isn't required at a particular place and time each week.

It's important to complete all assignments on schedule because, once you get behind, it's very difficult to catch up.

Do you possess strong reading, writing, and critical-thinking skills?

EVSC Virtual Academy classes require you to learn from reading—typically using internet-based materials and readings from textbook and lab manual sources. You must be able to interpret and synthesize the written word; differentiate between facts and opinions; and evaluate sources for accuracy, relevance, objectivity, and currency.

In an online course, nearly all communication is written. Therefore, you must comfortably and effectively convey your ideas and opinions in writing. Remember, your participation requires written communication with your instructor

Are you comfortable with computers?

You don't have to be a computer whiz to succeed in an online course. However, you should possess basic computer skills: finding, opening, saving, printing, and managing files using Microsoft Office applications (particularly Word, PowerPoint, and, to a lesser extent, Excel). Additionally, students must be proficient in managing e-mails, sending file attachments, conducting web searches, and saving (or downloading) online files using a current web browser.

Since online courses are technology-based, you need a basic comfort level with computers, software, and internet service providers. If you're easily frustrated or intimidated by computers, then you probably won't be very happy in an online course.

Are you concerned about feeling isolated in an online course?

EVSC Virtual Academy courses are not independent-study courses. They are highly structured and involve frequent interactions with the instructor. It is critical you contribute your ideas, perspective, and comments on the subject you're studying in your written assignments to the teacher.

During the face to face study sessions and progress checks it is important to be able to share what you have learned in the course.

Interaction is an important key to success. By exchanging ideas and contributing to the lively give-and-take of discussions, you'll find the learning process more rewarding and enjoyable.

Are you willing to ask for clarification or help?

Many of the non-verbal cues instructors use in determining whether students are having problems (confusion, boredom, frustration, absence, etc.) are not visible in the online environment. If you experience difficulty on any level (either with the technology or the course content), you must communicate this immediately. Otherwise, the instructor may never know what's wrong.

If you have a problem, don't wait. Contact your instructor right away.