



## **SHORTER COLLEGE**

# **FREQUENTLY ASKED ONLINE ACADEMIC QUESTIONS**

### **What are the advantages of taking classes online?**

Convenience and flexibility are the most common advantages of online classes. Taking classes online is ideal for someone who wants to continue working while earning an Associate degree. Online classes allow you to fit school into your schedule when it's convenient for you.

### **How much time should I spend on one class every week?**

The time you spend on a class can vary. No two instructors will format their classes exactly the same. Plan to spend 6-12 hours a week on one class. The number of credits per class varies by course.

### **How is the material available online?**

Online classes are delivered using a learning management system, called CANVAS. Students log into CANVAS and can select their course sites. Once a student is in their course site, they can access lectures, PowerPoint, emails, assignments, readings, documents, videos, links, discussion boards, their advisor and the assignment dropbox.

### **How do I interact with the professor?**

Students and instructors communicate primarily through the course site and emails in online courses.

### **Is there interaction with other online students?**

While you may not progress at exactly the same pace as other students as in a true degree program. In an online courses there is quite a bit of interaction among other students including group assignments, online discussion forums, online posting boards, reading reflections and class discussions.

### **Are there group projects within online courses?**

Yes, group projects are often a part of online courses. Students are grouped together and given a topic to investigate. The intent is for the students to work together electronically to accomplish their goals. Often, groups prepare and

give PowerPoint presentations electronically by emailing each other draft versions, and then posting the final product to the student discussion board. Students are often divided into groups or learning communities to discuss questions or cases developed by the faculty. By dividing students into small groups (versus entire class) the faculty can facilitate students getting to know each other better and achieve a higher level of interconnectivity.

### **What is a typical schedule for an online class?**

A three credit course will typically last 16 weeks. The syllabus outlines the requirements for the course. Students typically have several due dates a week where they post a response to a question or assignment and then later respond to other students posts. Quizzes and tests are also completed online.

### **What are some of the challenges when taking online classes?**

One of the keys to being a successful online student is self-discipline. Because you are not required to be in class at a specific time you have to be motivated to get the work done on your own. If you have a family and/or a full-time job while you are taking online classes it is important that you establish a schedule of when and how you will get your work done.

If you don't understand an assignment it is important to ask questions for clarification so you don't fall behind. Instructors make themselves available to students via e-mail, discussions boards, virtual office hours and conference calls.

### **How are online classes graded? What are instructor's expectations?**

Online courses are graded just like classroom courses. High-level critical thinking is required, and students leave the course with an understanding of the subject and an ability to apply their knowledge in a real-world setting. Standard assignments include reading the course text and additional materials, active participation in online discussions, quizzes or tests, writing papers etc.

### **Are tests available online?**

Yes. Many instructors assign tests in their online classes. Students may sign an ethical agreement saying they will not copy or share their exam, and that the person taking the test is the person registered for the course. Tests may be timed, and do not typically allow for open-book responses. Learn more about Shorter College's Honor Code.

### **Are online classes self-paced or scheduled?**

Online classes at Shorter College have a specific start and end dates along with due dates for assignments. The programs are not self-paced or independent study.

### **When can I start taking online classes?**

The academic year is composed of two 16-week semesters and two summer sessions (fall, spring and summer). New students are admitted each term

### **What technology do I need to be successful?**

Students are expected to be confident with their skills regarding standard computer applications for completion of their coursework. You should plan to review our posted technical requirements for a list of the minimum standards of technical equipment and competencies required of students.

### **What if I have technological difficulties?**

The Help Desk (501-791-7900 Shorter College's Help Desk) is available most days from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. CST to address technical problems students may encounter with online classes.

### **How often am I required to come to campus?**

Students are not required to come on campus unless there is a situation that cannot be resolved via the online portal.

### **Can I access Shorter College's library facilities if I'm taking online classes?**

As a two year institution, Shorter College has an extensive system of online library resources available to its students including multiple databases and full text articles. The inter-library loan service allows you to reserve books, order journal articles and receive materials from other libraries.

### **Can I go on vacation while taking an online class?**

Online courses require weekly logins and weekly assignment submissions. Students must ensure they are able to meet the course requirements throughout the duration of the semester.

### **Are there specific login or online participation times?**

Online classes may include conference calls, online chat rooms or Skype engagements that require a specific time commitment. Students should expect weekly due dates for assignments that require them to participate in the online course throughout the week.

### **How many students are in online courses?**

To ensure quality course delivery, online courses have an enrollment cap of 25- 50.

### **How do I access my textbook?**

Students will access their textbook via Cengage's App. Your instructor will provide you with the App and access code for the designated textbook and other materials for the course.

### **How do I access Disability Services if I have a learning disability?**

Students with disabilities are asked to self-identify to your instructor (s) of any learning disabilities that may impede your academic progress.