**Student Handbook for Online Learning**

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**The Feather River College Campus**

## This student handbook is designed to assist and prepare you to be successful online learners.

**Updated 7/24/2019**

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**Dear Online Student,**

Welcome to Feather River College (FRC)! We are excited that you have enrolled in an online class. Feather River College is committed to quality online courses and online support in every aspect. We want you to succeed as an online student. An online course is similar to a traditional, face-to-face course; it requires commitment and time management.

Canvas, FRC’s learning management system, provides a supportive help center that is available 24/7. You can access this help using the question mark icon in the bottom of the global navigation pane once you log in. Use this resource if you are having trouble logging in or as other technical issues arise. Note: If you find yourself having trouble with course content, please contact your course instructor and not Canvas.

Use this handbook as a reference for your hybrid or fully online courses. When there is a change in the Learning Management System or important procedures, we will update this handbook and our Distance Learning Web pages as soon as possible. Feel free to contact me with any questions you may have about being an online student.

The Student Handbook sets forth the general administrative policies, procedures, and benefits of being an online student with 24/7 access to your course work.

Feather River College strives to be an equitable institution. Therefore, the school provides support for students with disabilities. For more information, contact the DSPS Office at (530) 283-0202 Ext. 255, or the Director of DSPS Marci Lang at mlang@frc.edu. FRC website contains more information about their services, programs they support and departmental procedures.

For students new to online learning, you can find resources for how to prepare yourself for the online learning environment by clicking on the Online Readiness Resources on the FRC website under Distance Education DE.

I realize that I may be using terminology that may be new to you. Do not worry. This handbook explains it all. Good Luck!

Sincerely,

**Kim Beaton**

Kim Beaton

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**Feather River College’s Online Teaching Philosophy**

Feather River College has been involved in developing and providing distance education since the fall of 2003.Our online instructors are provided with ongoing training programs that focus on online design and development, student-learning outcomes, student-learning styles, regular and effective communication and creating a human presence in the online class.

The success of our online offerings is based on providing quality online education with trained and enthusiastic instructors.

There are many advantages for taking online classes**:**

• Students with Busy Schedules

• Self-paced

• 24/7 Classroom

• Transportation Issues

• Remote Areas

• Childcare Issues

• Need to Update Skills for Employment

• Courses Not Offered Locally

• Disabled or Homebound

• Shyness in Large Groups

# Distance Education Mission

Feather River College Distance Education will enhance the course schedule and access to the college curriculum to help FRC students meet their educational goals. It will supplement courses taught in the face-to-face mode as well as offer courses taught entirely in the distance education mode. FRC DE will reflect the college Statement of Mission, FRC Institutional Code of Ethics, instructional standards and practices for ensuring quality, and reinforce campus values. FRC DE will enable the efficient use of college resources and facilities, and make every reasonable effort to ensure its instructional technology is accessible, reliable, and user friendly for both students and instructors.

**Definitions**



  Student looking at a laptop

* **Accessibility** - Accessibility means that people with disabilities can understand, navigate, interact, and contribute in a course.
* **Asynchronous -** There is no requirement to participate with other students at the same time, in real time. A student can participate at any time. Online Courses at Feather River College are asynchronous. The student can log in to their course at any time of the day or night.
* **Class Attendance** - Attendance in distance education courses will be determined by the participation of the student through the completion of class activities, such as the submission of an assignment, completion of an exam, attendance in an online chat, or the posting to a discussion forum. Your instructor will determine how much participation is required.
* **Distance Education (DE)** – Distance Education (DE) includes fully online and blended courses and is a formal educational process in which the majority of the instruction (interaction between students and instructors and among students) in a course occurs when students and instructors are not in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous. Interaction between the instructor and the student is regular.
* **Fully Online Courses** - courses that meet 100% online.
* **Global Navigation -** serves as a template to allow users access to content on the site.
* **Hybrid or Blended Courses** - Courses that are a combination of online and face-to-face. Students meet face-to-face for 50% or less of the course and complete the rest of their coursework online. Blended courses allow faculty and students both the opportunity to build strong personal relationships through face- to-face interaction and the opportunity to explore new types of learning. Dates, times and locations for face-to-face meetings will be published in the official class schedule.
* **Learning Management System (LMS)** – Learning Management System (LMS) is a web- accessible software application that provides for the administration of course content, delivery of assessments, communication and collaboration between students and instructors, and the ability to track grades and other relevant performance data. Feather River College is currently using Canvas, as its learning management system as are all of the California Community Colleges.
* **Online Enhancement** – Face-to-Face courses that use the internet and course management software to supplement traditional face-to-face instruction.
* **Synchronous -** There is a live, real time interaction between student and instructor, or student-to-student. Synchronous communication tools include, chat rooms, CCC Confer Virtual Conferences, ConferNow, Skype, and other live, real time tools.

# Overview of Distance Education

Distance Education focuses on utilizing technology and teaching methods to provide instruction to students outside the traditional classroom and provide flexible scheduling options.

Blended and online DE courses require that students have a computer and Internet access that meet at least minimum technical requirements as delineated by the College. Additionally, DE courses require computer literacy skills, as well as self-discipline and motivation. Students register for online courses in the same way they register for traditional courses.

## Goals of Feather River College’s Distance Education Program

1. To identify, provide, expand, and coordinate the development of quality courses and programs to meet the needs of students.

2. To promote and provide guidelines for training and provide technical support.

3. To periodically evaluate the Distance Education Program and to use these results to restructure and improve the program.

The purpose of a Distance Education programs is to provide quality educational coursework through nontraditional means, allowing students to acquire knowledge in academic, professional and technical education, and skills for lifelong learning. Distance Education students are entitled to the same support services available to traditional students.

# Minimum Technical Requirements



A woman working at a laptop

## Hardware and Software Standards

The computer hardware requirements for the Canvas application are not high, and most computers purchased within the past several years should function without any issues.

### Computer Requirements

* Windows 7 and newer
* Mac OSX 10.6 and newer
* Linux - chrome OS

Students should also have access to a reliable email, which is obtained through the college. If you are not on campus, an Internet web access account with a commercial Internet Service Provider (ISP). Soundcards, speakers and appropriate software are highly desirable. It is important to have easy access to all of the above on a 24/7 basis from an off-campus site. Technology Skills such as the knowledge of working with file attachments and previous web browsing and web research experiences are strongly recommended. Experience uploading and downloading files to a jump drive also known as a USB drive is also recommended.

## Browser Compatibility

It is always important to have the most up to date browser requirements for the current version of Canvas. Please check with your instructor to see which plugins, if any, are required to view media for the course.

# Learning Management System

Canvas is the learning management system used by Feather River College. Canvas is a Web-based platform that provides faculty and students with features including:

* Content: This feature allows teachers to post articles, assignments, learning modules, videos etc.
* Calendar: Teachers can use this function to post due dates for assignments and tests.
* Assessments: This tab allows instructors to post quizzes and exams and allows students to access them anywhere there is a sufficient Internet connection.
* Assignments: This feature allows for assignments to be posted and for students to be able to submit assignments online.
* Grades: Teachers post grades on Canvas for students to view. This feature allows students to view their grades in each class at any time.
* Canvas app, which allows for quick and easy access to your courses through your phone.

# Student FAQ’s (Frequently Asked Questions)

**What is Distance Education? Can anyone take these classes?**

Distance Education courses are designed for students who desire flexibility and convenience. DE courses are equivalent to on-campus courses. Anyone who is eligible to take regular courses on campus may enroll in online courses.

**Will I be required to attend class meetings on campus?**

Generally, no. (Check Instructor syllabus.)

**How do students register for online classes?**

Students register for online classes in the same way that they register for on campus classes.

**How much do online classes cost?**

Online courses cost the same as any other FRC course.

**Can I take both online classes and regular traditional classes?**

Yes! You can choose courses that fit within your schedule.

**Are online classes more difficult than traditional classes?**

Online classes are the same as traditional classes. The difference is only in the way the class is conducted.

**How are exams administered?**

This is determined by the instructor. Some exams may be proctored either by an individual at a specified location or by the online proctoring service.

**Can I still use FRC campus resources even if I take a blended or online class?**

Of course!

**Am I eligible for financial aid if I take online classes?**

Yes. Call our Financial Aid office at 530-283-0202 ext. 603 or email financialaid@frc.edu for more information.

**Can I transfer online classes to another institution?**

Yes, in most cases. You must check with the Institution.

**I think I have the technical skills I need, but I’ve never taken a course like this. How do I know if this is right for me?**

In order to succeed in an online course, you must be self-motivated and be able to work well independently with minimum supervision. Be sure to check out the online resources available in Canvas and on our website under Distance Education. Take the Readiness Questionnaire,

**Will I have to be online at a particular time?**

Generally, no. Although, some tests are tied and may require the student to participate during a specific time interval.

**What do I do if I cannot access my course online?**

If you cannot access your course, email your instructor and contact the help desk, click the”**?**” Icon, lower left side of the screen in Canvas.

**Will I have to buy books for the course?**

You will most likely need to purchase or rent books for your classes. Your instructor will give you information in the syllabus about the text materials you will need for your course.

**What if I find I cannot continue in my course? Can I withdraw from it?**

Yes, but in order to receive a “W” (Withdrawal), you must withdraw before the deadline. The deadline date is on our website. Please note that dropping a course is your responsibility.

**What if I have trouble with the course?**

If you have academic trouble with a course, please contact your instructor. If you have trouble navigating a course, first review the orientation your instructor provides or the student online orientation provided by the college.

**Online Training and Support**



A computer screen with a person pointing to a board

Canvas is the Learning Management System used by all California Community Colleges. There are many online resources and training orientations to help you succeed as an online student. Canvas has helpful [Student Guides](https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-4121) and more. Check out the [Canvas Informational Webpage](http://www.gocolumbia.edu/online_learning/canvas.php) for up to date information on Canvas Support.

We can also schedule drop in training a few days before and several weeks after the semester begins. If you are new to online learning, we highly recommend taking the “Quest for Success” course. Please notify either your advisor or email Dr. Kim Beaton, Assistant Dean of Instruction, kbeaton@frc.edu to be enrolled.

Your online instructors will provide embedded technology skills, “Getting Started” learning modules, contact information and regular and effective communication tools to help you succeed.

## Are Online Classes Easier than Face-to-Face?

Online classes require time management skills. Often students’ expectations of online classes are that they are less work or easier. The fact is you will be engaged more frequently in the online class and be responsible for meeting deadlines, checking grades and participating in online class activities regularly.

# Technological skills that will be important to know and practice

* Using keyboard and mouse
* Managing files and folders: save, name, copy, move, backup, rename, delete
* Using software applications, such as Word, PowerPoint, Excel,
* Knowledge of copying and pasting, spell-checking, saving files in different formats
* Sending and downloading attachments
* Internet skills (connecting, accessing, using browsers) and ability to perform online research using various search engines and library databases.
* Ability to use online communication tools, such as email (create, send, receive, reply, print, send/receive attachments), discussion boards (read, search, post, reply, follow threads), chats, and messengers.

# Tips for being a Successful Online Learner

The faculty, staff, and administration of Feather River College strive to provide a positive, enriching academic environment for each student. It is the student’s responsibility to:

* Within the first week of school, contact the instructor and visit the course site.
* Read the course syllabus and any other documents related to the course to be sure that they are aware of all instructor policies. Sign and return any Document of Understanding or syllabus verification if requested by the instructor.
* Meet course schedules and deadlines without the continued prompting.
* Use the communication procedures established by the instructor for submission of assignments and for completing course requirements.
* Notify the instructor, in advance, if you are unable to meet any course deadlines.
* Ask questions. If you do not understand the instructions, assignments or learning materials, it is your responsibility to ask for help. Students who ask content related questions tend to retain the knowledge they have learned in the class.
* Cite sources carefully. This is one of the simplest ways to prevent plagiarism.

# Steps to Success

### Communicate

It is very important that you communicate with your instructor and with your classmates. Login to your course regularly, read the postings, and contribute your own thoughts and ideas.

### Don’t Fall Behind

Since you do not see your instructor as you would in a traditional on-campus class, it can be very tempting to procrastinate. Complete your assignments in a timely manner.

### Speak up if you are having problems

If you are having technical difficulties or problems understanding something in the course, you need to let your instructor know.

### Be Courteous

Be polite to your classmates and respectful of their opinions. Keep in mind that meanings can be misinterpreted in an online environment.

# Group Projects & Netiquette

### Group Projects

Group projects are usually meant to be worked on over a period of time. One person, not the group, generally completes group work left for the “last-minute”. Here are some guidelines to prevent the unbalanced load in a group project:

* Develop a communication plan with your group as soon as possible.
* Coordinate time. Have a realistic expectation of time.
* Clearly define each person’s task.
* Encourage your fellow group members. This keeps the project collaborative

### Chat/Discussion Netiquette

* Say “hello” when you enter the room
* Make sure to read any assigned content on the topic before the assigned chat.
* Spend a few minutes seeing the current conversation in the room before you jump in with questions.
* Do not use emoticons (keyboard combinations that look like faces) or acronyms unless everyone knows what they mean.
* Do not use ALL CAPITAL LETTERS. This is considered yelling and is rude.
* Respect other’s opinions. If you do not agree with their chatter, express your opinion in a respectful manner.
* Use researched references to the topic if possible.
* Be careful when interjecting humor and never insert sarcasm. The other students or instructor may not know your personality; it is easy to take remarks out of context.
* Keep the discussion postings within the scope of the course material.
* College level communication is reflected in correct spelling and grammar. If you intend to post a long comment in a discussion, you may want to prepare it in word, review it for spelling, grammar, and then copy and paste it into the conversation. You can use Ctrl + C to copy and Ctrl + V to paste the message.
* Break long messages into paragraphs for easier reading.

# Student Passwords for Online Classes

If you are **new** to logging into a Canvas course, you will need to take the following steps:

**Students** will have a single-sign on for your FRC email and Canvas. Here are the [single sign-on instructions](https://www.yosemite.edu/studenthelpdesk/singlesignon) for getting set up.

1. Go to [https://frc.instructure.com/](%20https%3A//frc.instructure.com/)
2. **Your Canvas** User ID is your FRC email. Do NOT add the @frc.edu. It is already added.
3. **Your password** is usually first initial+last four digits of the student ID+last initial, lower case.

For FRC Email and Canvas Login Issues: Use the "**Request FRC Email Account**" form on the right of the page, or links found next to the login box for canvas: "Forgot your password?" or "Need Help?"

Be sure to select the topic of your request in the form so the form are sent to the proper staff. Alternatively, cut and paste the address to the help forms into your browser: http://frc.hesk.com.

Help with Using Canvas after Logging In: Click the "?" at the bottom left on all Canvas pages. You will see links to Canvas guides, a form to report a problem if Canvas is not working correctly, and a Canvas support hotline number. Phone support for Canvas is available 24/7, and holidays.

**NOTE:** We highly recommend logging into Canvas before the class begins to check the computer and browser requirements.

**Online Policies and Procedures**

## Dropping an Online Class

When you drop your online course through the Admissions Office or through MY FRC, you are removed from the online class and can no longer access the materials or content. If you ***accidentally*** drop your online class contact your instructor immediately.

## Proctoring Policies

A proctored exam or activity is one that is overseen by an individual (called a proctor) who monitors or supervises a student while he or she is taking an exam. The proctor requires a valid ID and ensures the security and integrity of the process.

In addition to using a Proctor for exams, FRC also uses Proctorio, an online proctoring software. The instructor will notify you ahead of time if you need to arrange to attend an exam center or find a proctor to oversee your exam or if Proctorio will be used for the exam.

## Holidays

You can access Canvas during holidays. The instructor will inform you of any due dates and deadlines. Use discretion if you need to work on holidays to meet class expectations.

## Academic Integrity

Students of Feather River College (FRC) are expected to behave as responsible members of the college community and to be honest and ethical in their academic work. FRC strives to provide students with the knowledge, skills, judgment, and wisdom they need to function in society as educated adults. To falsify or fabricate the results of one's research; to present the words, ideas, data, or work of another as one's own; or to cheat on an examination corrupts the essential process of higher education

## Maintaining Academic Integrity

Each faculty member is encouraged to include in his or her introduction to the course a statement of the applications of the Academic Integrity Policy within his or her course as well as a statement notifying students that violations of the Academic Integrity Policy will be reported.

## Violations of the Academic Integrity Policy include:

Plagiarism: the use of another's words, ideas, data, or product without appropriate acknowledgment, such as copying another's work, presenting someone else's opinions and theories as one's own, or working jointly on a project and then submitting it as one's own.

Cheating: the use or attempted use of unauthorized materials, electronic devices, information, or study aids; or an act of deceit by which a student attempts to misrepresent academic skills or knowledge; unauthorized copying or collaboration. Fabrication: intentional misrepresentation or invention of any information, such as falsifying research, inventing or exaggerating data, or listing incorrect or fictitious references.

Collusion: assisting another person to commit an act of academic dishonesty, such as paying or bribing someone to acquire a test or assignment, taking or assisting in a test or doing an assignment for someone else, or allowing someone to do these things for one's own benefit.

Other Acts of Academic Dishonesty: the intentional violation of college policies, such as tampering with grades, misrepresenting one's identity, or taking part in obtaining or distributing any part of a test or any information about the test.

Academic Dishonesty Process: When a student is accused of any form of academic dishonesty, the faculty member may initiate an informal as well as a formal action.

## Turnitin/Vericite

Turnitin is an anti-plagiarism tool that helps students to write and summarize thoughts and ideas in their own words; and cite sources properly to ensure academic integrity. Your instructor will provide instructions on how to upload your documents to the Turnitin assignment area.

## Online Attendance

Always check your Syllabus for information on your instructor’s expectations of frequency of participation.

## Instructor Availability

Each instructor will post their office/contact hours in the Syllabus and provide two or more communication tools in the online environment. Instructors will set guidelines for their timeframe for returning grades and responding to students.

# Online Student Services

## Admissions - Online Enrollment and Fees

New students must submit an application as the very first step to enroll at Feather River College. Once the electronic signature is processed, the Admissions Office will send an acceptance email, which includes the dates for Assessment, Orientation, Advisement and Registration.

**Always check the latest information for fee increases.**

                    A computer mouse

Online courses have the same fee schedule as face-to-face classes.

## MY FRC

MY FRC is a web portal at Feather River College that will help you to register for classes and check your grades online.

## Library

The Feather River College Library available to registered students and college employees and is accessible online on the college homepage.

## Online Bookstore

To buy textbooks for a specific class, you must be enrolled in that class. The following is the link to ebooks <https://frc-store.vitalsource.com/>.

## Learning Resource Center

The FRC Learning Resource Center serves the entire college student body. Our primary goal is to assist students in becoming more independent, efficient, and effective learners. We are here to help students improve their academic skills and aid in their academic success.

## DSPS - Disabled Student Programs and Services

It is the student's responsibility to initiate requests for services at [Disabled Student Programs and Services](http://www.gocolumbia.edu/dsps/default.php). Students are encouraged to consult community agencies for services outside the scope of Disability Support Services, including attendant care, mobility training, and rehabilitation services.

### Financial Aid

The mission of the [Feather River College Financial Aid Office](http://www.gocolumbia.edu/financial_aid/default.php) is to heighten awareness of financial aid opportunities and to ensure availability of financial aid for students who, without such assistance, would be unable to pursue their educational goals.

## Advising

Feather River College Advising Department is dedicated to student success.  Our mission is to provide quality services in a supportive environment that assists students in identifying and

achieving their educational, career and personal development. Online advising is available through Cranium Cafe.

Advising services are available to traditional, non-traditional and online students by telephone (530) 283-0202, ext. 313 or 215, scheduling an appointment online or through Cranium Café, an online advising service.

Students are encouraged to meet or speak with an advisor before their first semester of enrollment.

Academic advising sessions assist students in developing educational plans to reach life goals. This includes but is not limited to the selection of courses for each semester, learning how to read a degree plan, and discussing career and educational options after completion of an Associate’s Degree.

