Frequently Asked Questions about Online Courses

Can I apply to South Louisiana Community College online?

Yes, you can apply online. Go to solacc.edu/admissions and complete an SLCC application.

How does an online class work?

Instead of attending classes on campus, course work is made available online through the learning management system (LMS) which is Canvas. Some instructors may require proctored testing, which will be explained by the faculty member. But, there is no face-to-face meeting in online classes. You will be required to do a Canvas orientation module to insure you understand how to use Canvas. It is best to read the course syllabus to find out what the faculty requires for the course.

While learning materials vary from class to class, they usually include textbooks, audio recordings, PowerPoint presentations, interactive lessons, and web-based resources. Learning activities may include writing papers, posting comments to online discussion forums and responding to peers, completing individual or group projects, and taking quizzes and exams. While students can choose when and where they work, there are deadlines for homework and exams.

Students interact with their instructor and classmates (peers) via web discussion forums, e-mail, chat sessions, and phone calls. **If the course is hybrid, then there are face-to-face meetings on a specific day and time, which is listed on your course schedule.**

Is an online class the same as a self-paced/independent study class?

No, most online classes are NOT entirely self-paced. You can expect due dates for homework, online class participation, and other activities similar to those you would find in a "face to face" on-site class.

Is taking an online class easier than taking a regular class?

No. The course content of an online class is usually identical to a face-to-face class. Some students may think the course is even more demanding than a regular face-to-face class because you have to have good reading comprehension, good

computer skills, and be self-disciplined. It is best to have high-speed Internet access. There are some open labs available at SLCC campuses for students.

What Internet skills would be helpful in an online class?

The most successful students tend to have the following skills:
- Familiarity with web browsers.
- Familiarity with email program and attaching documents and opening attachments.
- Knowledge of how to make and organize electronic bookmarks.
- Familiarity with web-based interactions: email, listservs, online discussions, etc.
- Familiarity with Microsoft Word.
- Experience in successful Internet searches using a variety of search engines.
- A level of comfort using technology.

What equipment and software do I need to be an online student?

You will need:
- Access to a fairly new computer.
- Reliable Internet access.
- Latest version of a web browser. (Canvas supports the latest two versions of Internet Explorer, Firefox, or Chrome.)
- Word processing software.
- Course specific software as required by the instructor.

All online and hybrid courses use Canvas as the Learning Management System.

Do I have to own a computer to enroll in an online class?

No, but you must have access to a computer with reliable Internet access throughout the semester. Not having a computer at home is not an excuse for not completing your assignments or meeting course deadlines. However, please note: there are computer labs at SLCC campuses, but there are specific access times. You can also complete most of your coursework using the Canvas Mobile App, but the work quality may not meet the needs of the course. For example, you may have specific course software needs that you must be able to access.

How much time do I have to spend in an online class?

In short, you should plan to spend at least the same amount of time you would spend for a face-to-face class. For example, if you were in a night class that met once a week, that would be 3 hours, not including the time spent on assignments. In general, you should expect to spend 3-5 hours a week in an online class. Some online students agree that online courses are neither faster nor easier.

Do I have to log in to class at a particular time?

Usually not. You will have deadlines for posting your assignments, quizzes, etc., but when you complete that work is up to you. You would be well-advised to set up a daily schedule to avoid being overburdened at the end of the week. If you have a problem, contact the instructor or use the discussion board to try to get help from other students in the class.

Where do we meet for online class?

Generally, you won't meet in a face-to-face environment for an online class. Instead, the class will interact regularly through the Internet and everyone will communicate with each other using Canvas email and discussion. Your instructor will make course materials and assignments available using web pages, discussion boards, and announcements.

How do I turn in homework and take tests?

This varies, but you will usually get assignments in Canvas LMS and there will be specifics on where/how to upload the assignment, in the appropriate link. The faculty will inform you in the course syllabus of how tests will be given and how discussion will be completed. Instructors use Canvas to manage assignments, discussions, quizzes, and grading.

What is it like to be an online student?

Online classes are very different from face-to-face classes on campus. In general you can expect to:

- Spend 3 hours per week working on the class. For example, for a typical 3-hour course, you will spend at least 6-9 hours per week on course reading, assignments, and communication
- Participate in online discussions or other written communication

- Experience an uncomfortable transition period. It can take a few weeks to learn how the course works if you've never had on online class before
- Experience some frustration with written communication. Most people find it easier to ask questions face to face because the response is usually immediate. You can always call your instructor to discuss any issues that may arise.

What can I expect from my professor?

You can expect your instructor to do all the things he would do for you in a face-to-face class.

You can expect:
- A syllabus and course schedule.
- Assignments with clear instructions and timely feedback.
- Prompt responses to questions.
- Clear guidelines about how long it will take to get homework and quiz scores and responses to questions.
- Netiquette and protocol to be enforced.

You should not expect:

- 24/7 support. Honor the professor's virtual office hours. Your professor will not be available on the weekend.
- Help with basic computer or prerequisite skills. When you enroll in an online class, it is assumed you are computer savvy and ready to learn.

What do online instructors expect from students?

There typically is little difference in the expectation of online students than those in a face-to-face class.

Instructors expect everyone will participate in the class with courtesy and consideration for each other and for the instructor. Emails and web postings should be appropriate, relevant, and reflective of a professional demeanor. Inappropriate behavior includes, but is not limited to, the following: inappropriate remarks online, cyber bullying, and plagiarism.

It is a violation of college policy to plagiarize or to recycle work. Please refrain from:
- Taking others' thoughts or words without appropriate acknowledgment.

- Submitting work that has been written or revised in part or in whole by another person.
- Submitting work that you have submitted for another class.

Do you have any tips for online students?

- Schedule time to focus on the class. While you are not on campus, you do need to make time for your class in your schedule. Write session times in your calendar just as you would for an on-campus class, and make sure you have a quiet place to work.
- Keep up with the class and make it a top priority. The biggest problem online students have is gradually falling behind.
- Do assignments BEFORE the due date.
- Have a back-up plan in case of technical problems.
- Work with a small group, either in person or via phone or email.
- Communicate! Your instructor cannot see your facial expressions or body language. You must be willing to speak up using email, discussion boards, or phone calls. Ask if you are not clear about instructions, due dates, or your progress.

Where can I get materials and books?

Online class materials and books are available from the SLCC bookstore. Required class materials and text books are listed. All class materials and textbooks, unless otherwise specified, are required for the first day of class.

How do I get started?

For most **online classes**, you can log in two weeks before the start of the semester to preview the course. You may be able to complete the Canvas Orientation Module prior to the first day of class. To log on, click on the Canvas link on the college's home page. You should be able to log on with the same user name and password that you used to register for the class, your LOLA information. If you continue to have difficulty, email your instructor. All campus faculty emails are found in the SLCC directory.