

Ten Qualities of Successful Online Students

Online learning has many benefits, such as the ability to do coursework from home and choosing your own study time. However, online learning is also rigorous and requires a good deal of self-discipline and focus. If you're considering online education, the following ten qualities will help you decide if it's right for you.

1. **You have the required technical skills.** This means that you are comfortable using a computer and the internet, and can do the following:
 - Send and receive email (and check it multiple times per day).
 - Use a search engine.
 - Download and install required software when needed (i.e. internet browsers such as Chrome or Firefox and programs such as Skype).
 - Play various media and audio files such as mp3, mp4, etc.
2. **You have the right technology.** First, you need a desktop or laptop computer that is recent enough to play media files with no problems. Second, you need a high-speed internet connection that is always on to ensure consistent access to course materials and the ability to submit assignments on time.
3. **You are open to learning in new ways.** In a traditional face-to-face class, the teacher generally delivers course material by teaching or lecturing. The flow of information is mostly from teacher to student. In an online course, you will receive content through a variety of means, including video, audio, and reading material. In addition, you will be participating in discussion forums with other students.
4. **You can manage your time well.** Each 8-week online course will require anywhere from 15-20 hours per week. Therefore, you will need to make careful decisions about how to budget your time. You may need to reduce your commitments in other areas of your life while you commit to completing an online degree program.
5. **You are a participant in the learning process.** Online courses require that you be fully engaged with the course material, the teacher, and other students. If you are the type of student who would normally sit in the back row of a classroom and never ask a question or participate in a discussion, you will have a difficult time in online courses. This type of learning requires that you take a much more active role in your education.
6. **You are proactive in asking for help.** At time you will have questions about an assignment, a technical issue, or some other need. Good online learning rests on the bedrock of reliable technology and good communication among the teachers and students. When you don't understand something or have a problem, you must take the lead and ask for help as soon as possible.
7. **You have good communication skills.** You will need to practice proper "netiquette" (short for "internet etiquette") when communicating via email, in discussion forums, and generally with anyone online. This includes a number of guidelines:
 - Treat the student and instructor with respect in every situation
 - Be clear and concise in your statements
 - Use correct spelling and grammar
 - DON'T USE ALL CAPS because it's usually interpreted as YELLING
 - Be careful when using humor and sarcasm since it rarely comes across correctly in writing
 - Follow directions for assignments
 - Avoid insulting or criticizing someone
8. **You can establish a regular study time.** Each 8-week online course is a condensed version of a regular full-semester course. It is vital that you maintain a regular study schedule during the week. Think of it like a part-time job when you have set hours. Put your class time on your calendar as you would any other commitment, and make a covenant with yourself that you will keep that time sacred. A regular study time will ensure that you stay on top of work and don't get behind.
9. **You can maintain a good study environment.** You will want to have a regular place where you do your coursework. Although you are working on a computer and can complete your work anywhere, a regular study location will help you maintain a good routine. Designate a table or desk in your home

or office where you can work undisturbed, away from noise and other distractions. If you have children at home, you may need to get creative with your study times and locations to help ensure your success in online courses.

10. **You are able to keep up with the coursework.** All of the previous tips point to one thing: doing the coursework and successfully completing each online course. It is vital that you don't fall behind in assignments. Log onto the system every day to check messages and stay current with assignments.

What kind of person is successful in online courses? In short, it's a person who is hungry for success and is willing to make the necessary sacrifices. If you want to enjoy the benefits of online learning and are ready to take on the challenges, apply to one of our online programs.