



HOW TO BE A SUCCESSFUL ONLINE LEARNER

Starting March 23, 2020, George Mason University will move to an online environment. Classes will be conducted asynchronously and/or synchronously using Blackboard Learning Management system (mymason.gmu.edu) as well as other online tools.

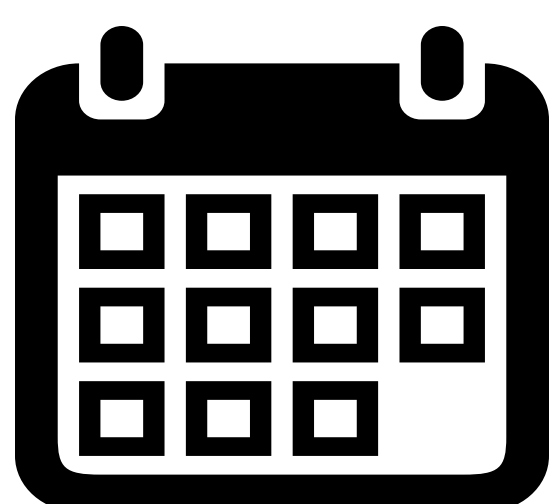
There are many unknowns & disruptions right now. Try to be patient with yourself, your classmates and your instructors during this time. Use this resource to help you plan and adjust your study strategies to learning online.

Whether you're new at online learning or you've already taken online courses, here are important tips to help you be a successful online learner.



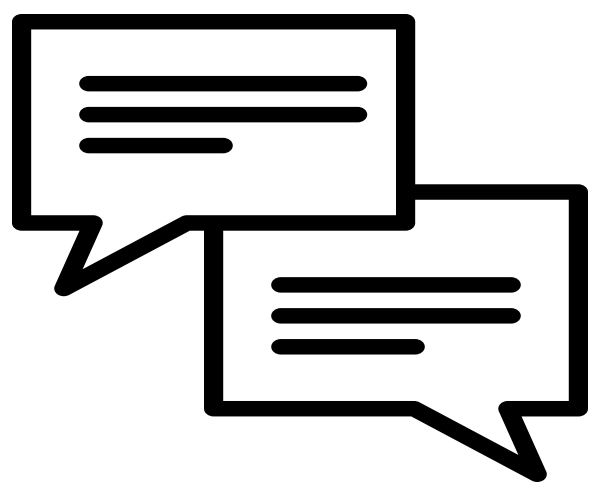
Evaluate Your Technology Access

- **Access Blackboard.** You'll need your Mason username (NetID) and password to access Blackboard. Log in to mymason.gmu.edu and select the Courses tab and locate your course. Blackboard Mobile App can help you keep track of your online courses using your mobile device.
- **Check your Internet connection.** To complete and turn in your assignments, you will need consistent basic wireless or cellular connection at your home or study site.
- **What if you need to join a video-conference or take a supervised exam?** For these you will need broadband wireless (or strong cell connection) capable of streaming video, as well as a web-camera as part of your computer or tablet.
- **Check the technology requirements of your class.** Ask your instructor if there are other programs or applications required by your department or program for your online course.
- **Consider back-up access.** If your wireless goes down or you're out of data, is there a library or other location you can go to safely to briefly access instructions and download large files or videos?
- **Inform your instructor right away** if you do not have reliable access to these resources.



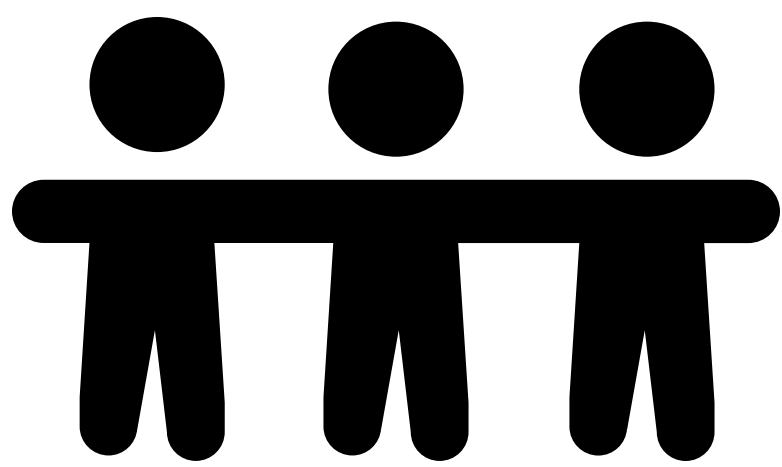
Stay Organized

- **Know where to find and keep track of lectures and activities for each of your classes.**
 - Where can you find it and how do you access it in Blackboard?
 - Will you need to attend/participate at a specific time (synchronous) or can you participate any time (asynchronous)?
- **Check to see if your assignments are changing.**
 - Are there new due dates?
 - Where do you submit your assignments?
 - Are there online quizzes or exams?
- **Set a schedule.** Setting a schedule for yourself can help provide structure and keep you motivated. Use a weekly or daily calendar to help you to organize your time, including time for exercise and self-care.
- **Allow adequate time.** Online assignments may take longer than you expect, especially if you're new to online learning. Adapt your study routines and habits to stay on-track, even if uncertain. Stay in touch with your instructors, classmates and others to build community in the virtual setting.



Communicate With Others

- **Stay in touch.** Communicate regularly with your instructor and your classmates. You can communicate within your online course (e.g., through discussion boards). You also may contact your instructor via email, virtual office hours or phone.
- **Be proactive.** In an online environment, your professor may have fewer “clues” about whether or not you understand course content. Reach out to your instructor if there is something that is not clear to you, or if you are having difficulty keeping up with the course. If you are having issues with the technology, let your instructor know and then contact Courses Support for help (support@gmu.edu). Also, make sure to inform your instructor if you become ill during your course, and may be delayed in completing assignments.
- **Check your email and Blackboard Announcements regularly & often.** Checking your email is important even under normal circumstances, but it's even more important when your course moves online. Your instructor will be sending you updates, announcements and reminders. Update notifications on Blackboard so you're always up-to-date. It is your responsibility as the learner to stay informed.
- **Use good "Netiquette" when participating and posting in your online course.** In online discussions and peer reviews, critique ideas but treat people respectfully & professionally. Remember that tone and humor may be easily misinterpreted by others in online discussions.



Be Patient with Yourself & Others

- **Be patient with your yourself, your classmates and your instructors.** Virtual alternative instruction will be new to many at Mason, including your instructors. Please be patient, kind, and supportive during this time. We all feel stressed and nervous, so let's work together.
- **Stay connected to others, to your instructors and to classmates, family and friends.** Reach out to others for assistance and help with your courses, and also for your self-care and well-being.
- **Be kind to yourself.** You'll find your way, you'll get back on track, and this way of learning will eventually become familiar.
- **Take a deep breath, do your best, get some rest, and let's carry on!**

Mason Resources

Blackboard Courses Support (Information Technology Services, GMU)

(<https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/>).

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the ITS Support Center at **703-993-8870**, or via email at support@gmu.edu.

Mason Online: Strategies for Online Learning Success (<https://masononline.gmu.edu/success/>)

This is a longer list of tips for a successful online experience.

Learning Services (<https://learningservices.gmu.edu/>)

If you need assistance, please contact Learning Services at **703-993-2380**, or via email at lsstaff@gmu.edu.

Counseling and Psychological Services (<https://caps.gmu.edu/>)

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) remains available to provide services to Mason students. Please see CAPS website for list of hours and resources. CAPS will be offering virtual workshops focused on healthy coping skills. Additional information will be on CAPS website soon. Contact CAPS at **703-993-2380**.