Frequently Asked Questions

Online courses are often the answer for students who are very busy, have difficulty driving to the college, or who live far away. With a different format from the traditional learning environment, students should consider a number of factors to determine their chances for success. The FAQ’s below may help the student determine their readiness and compatibility for such courses.

1. **Is a Distance Education (DE) or Online class easier than a traditional class?**
   No. Actually, Distance Education classes may be more difficult due to the amount of self discipline, motivation and time that is required to successfully complete a DE class. While they do offer flexibility and convenience for people with already busy schedules, the motivation for completing the assignments, taking the tests and all other requirements falls to the student. The student must continually login everyday to the course to check for announcements, updates, new postings, etc and take the appropriate actions. Most DE courses are NOT self paced, they do have deadlines set for turning in assignments and taking the tests just like a traditional class would have.

2. **How do you know if Distance Education classes are a good fit?**
   Distance Education classes are definitely not for everyone. In a typical DE class, the student will be working independently and in an asynchronous environment. There is not much real-time interaction between the students and the instructor. Additionally, the student’s typing skills, reading and communication skills and general computer skills need to already be in place. You need to know how to attach documents, upload and download files, email and post discussions. The successful DE student will be self motivated, have good time management skills, have self discipline, and be independent.

3. **Are Distance Education courses accessible from anywhere?**
   Yes it is available anywhere that has high speed Internet access. If you have Internet access, you should be able to access your courses. People considering DE courses need to consider what type of Internet service they have access to. If only dial-up Internet is available, distance education courses may not be the answer to your education needs. If the Internet service in your area is not ideal, check out other resources in your area such as the public library that might be better.

4. **Will I be required to come to campus during the semester if I am taking a DE course?**
   It is a possibility: Courses marked as “H01” are “Hybrid” and will have 51%-84% of instruction will occur in Blackboard
   Marked as “OL01” will have 85%-100% of instruction will occur in Blackboard
   Some instructors do require that students come to campus to take their exams. Depending on the course, students might also be required to come to campus for activities related to course work.

5. **How much time is required for a DE class?**
   A DE class is typically going to require significantly more time than a traditional one. Students should understand that each hour of class credit requires three hours per week: one hour in lecture and two hours personal study/homework. Thus, a three-hour course requires nine hours per week: three in class and six on your own. The responsibility is on the student to log in and check for announcements,
emails, new discussion postings, assignments or assessments that have been released and complete the work. Also, students should not wait until the last minute to submit assignments or take the assessments. Technical glitches are a very real possibility. If something does happen while taking an assessment or trying to submit assignments, students should notify the instructor immediately. Don’t wait 2 or 3 days to inform the instructor.

6. **Since the Distance Education class is online, does that mean it is self-paced or can the student complete it whenever?**
   No. The majority of DE classes will have assignments/assessments that have due dates associated with them. Once those dates have passed, the assignment/assessments will show as “missed” and Students will not be able to access and submit assignment/assessments once they have been missed. Students need to contact their instructors immediately if they are having trouble with assignments/assessments. Again it is important complete work in advance, and **not** to try to complete course material immediately before the deadline.

7. **Are all Distance Education classes Blackboard classes?**
   Yes every instructor uses Lee College’s LMS, currently Blackboard, for their DE classes.

8. **What is Blackboard?**
   Blackboard is a company that develops Learning Management Systems. It is a self-contained place to present material to students. Blackboard can be used in a variety of manners, i.e. online or hybrid instruction, to enhance a traditional class, as a community for users such as the drafting community or the nursing community, honor societies, or Faculty Learning Communities to post information relevant to all its members. The advantage of using such a system is that it is self-contained; therefore, sensitive information is not accessible to unauthorized users.

9. **Do I need to own a computer?**
   Yes. DE courses are designed for the student who, for various reasons, wants to study at a different location from the school and instructor, but has access to high speed Internet.

10. **What are the basic computer requirements?**
    To be successful in an online course, students who use their personal computers must have high speed Internet access. Online course users will need at least 2 Internet browsers; for PC users, Internet Explorer and Mozilla Firefox, and for MAC users, Safari and Mozilla Firefox.
    PC users need an operating system of Windows XP, Windows Vista, or Windows 7. Mac users will need an operating system of 10.5 or 10.6. To view all information, including pop-ups, etc, JAVA should be installed on the computer.

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