Expectations of Students Taking Online Courses

All courses in the special education master’s program vary in format. The format of the class is determined by the instructor; it is critical that you determine the course format and requirements prior to beginning a class. **Be aware that the biggest mistake students make about taking online courses is thinking that they will be easier than face to face courses.** The opposite is true since online courses are typically more time-consuming and difficult than face to face courses. Success with online courses can be achieved by doing the following:

**Before the Class Begins (preferably 2 weeks before)**

- **Order your textbooks.** Go to the UND Bookstore website (the UND homepage at [www.und.edu](http://www.und.edu), click on A-Z, click on “B”, and click on Bookstore) and determine the textbooks for each of your courses and order all books in time to have them for the first class. (You may order your books from any online source as long as you have the correct ISBN.) Instructors will expect you to have textbooks by the first class and if you do not, you may be delayed in completing assignments thus losing points towards your semester grade.
- **Login to Blackboard** (click on My UND on the UND homepage and then Blackboard) to see if there are any announcements for your classes or syllabi posted. Instructors may/may not open their Blackboard course sites until closer to the time the semester begins, which could vary from instructor to instructor. Blackboard course sites may be made available to students anywhere from two weeks to a few days before the semester starts.
- **Check the computer requirements for online courses** (under Blackboard Student Resource Course on Blackboard) and make sure that you have the equipment, including both hardware and software, required for each course. Additionally, you are responsible for ensuring all equipment is working prior to the first class. Please also be aware that most tablets (iPads, Kindle Fire, etc.) may not be compatible for online courses.
- **Check all the information in Blackboard Student Resource Course** which describes all aspects of using Blackboard for an online course. You will be expected to know how to post comments on a blog, use the discussion board, retrieve and submit assignments, check your grades, and many more aspects of Blackboard. It is your responsibility to find out how to use all of the various components and content areas of Blackboard.
- **Contact UND Tech Support** at 701-777-6305 if you need any technical assistance.

**During the Class/Throughout the Semester**

- **Plan to spend sufficient time on the course.** You are expected to put in the same amount of time in online courses as you would if they were face to face courses on-campus. For example, if a three credit course were meeting on-campus it would meet for 3 hours each week for 16 weeks. In addition to this meeting time, you would be expected to spend a minimum of an additional hour for each hour of class on assignments and readings. Thus, you would be expected to spend at least 6 hours each week on a three credit class (e.g., readings, working on assignments, chat sessions).
- **Check the Announcements on Blackboard** for each of your classes on a daily basis, Monday through Friday. Checking once a day will ensure that you are aware of any new information being conveyed through the Announcements content area for the class.
- **Communicate with the instructor.** Even though you may not see the instructor each week, any needed communication with the instructor should be done via email, Skype for Business found on your UND email account, or telephone in a timely, prompt manner. Please check your course syllabi for the instructor’s preferred method of communication, as well as office hours.
- **Plan to take the course as presented.** Just as with an on-campus course, you should refrain from asking for the course to be customized to fit your vacation and/or professional schedule. Requests for early release of modules/weekly lessons will not be granted.
- **Log-in to your UND email account daily.** All UND communication related to courses, School of Graduate Studies, student account services, etc. is directly linked to your UND account and cannot be changed. If you wish to forward your emails to a different email account, you are responsible for making that change. You are responsible for all emails sent to you so ensure you check your UND account daily.
- **Read & understand your course syllabi prior to the semester starting, as well as throughout the semester.** You are responsible for knowing the syllabi requirements for your courses, as well as the expectations, assignments, and due dates set forth by each instructor. As soon as modules are released, review the content & assignments so you can manage your time accordingly. Additionally, be mindful that your courses follow a semester-based calendar.

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