What to expect in an online class

Online classes are a convenient and flexible way for many students to learn. Students often report that they learn more in online classes and find the experience more rewarding than in traditional classes conducted in a classroom. Still, online classes may not be suited to individual learning styles, so it is important for you to understand how online classes work.

- Online classes are student-centered. The instructor guides and facilitates your learning, but it is up to you to be motivated and conscientious so you will get the most benefit from the class.
- Course work is conducted when and where it is convenient for you, but you still have deadlines for participation, assignments, and tests. Each course provides a syllabus and details on due dates.
- Course materials are presented online through web pages, video and audio presentations, articles, and other means. Materials are organized by week so you know what you should be working on during each week of the class.
- Interaction with your instructor and classmates is mostly accomplished through online discussion boards and emails. Occasionally real-time chats or webinars are offered as an optional way to communicate. Online students often report that they get more attention from their instructors than in traditional classes. Instructors respond to questions within 24 hours.
- Assignments are explained in the course materials and are submitted online by the due dates. Tests are also completed online with students often having a few days to complete them. Grades and feedback are provided within 7 days of due dates.
- If you have technical difficulties, support is available via phone, email, or chat 24x7 through a Student Help link in each course site.

People who learn effectively in online classes are:

- Self-motivated
- Self-disciplined, able to manage time effectively, and conscientious about meeting deadlines
- Comfortable using computers and the Internet
- Proactive about contacting their instructor when they have questions or concerns
- Able to communicate well in writing