

## Online Course Policies, Expectations, and Guidelines for Students

### **EXPECTATIONS**

1. Online courses are not self-paced and regular participation in online courses is required and will be recorded by your instructor. Students are expected to complete all course assessments using MSC Vista.
2. Online learning assumes a high level of maturity and professionalism. It is designed to make learning more convenient but no less rigorous. The lack of a formal meeting schedule in an online course can be liberating. It can also be demanding because you must determine when to make time for class. Self-discipline and good time management skills are necessary when taking an online course.
3. Please remember that you will spend as much or more time completing an online course as you would taking it in a traditional face-to-face/classroom format. The special circumstances of taking an online course demand regular and consistent participation. Be sure to pace yourself throughout the semester making sure your responses to communications and assignments are timely. If you are not able to participate in any assigned class activities, you must contact your instructor immediately.
4. The instructor is required to report “no-shows” or students who do not show up the first day of class. Therefore, all students enrolled in the course must verify their enrollment. This can affect financial aid and you may be dropped from the class. Your instructor will notify you as to how to verify your enrollment before the beginning of the term to ensure that you are not reported as a “no-show”.

### **ONLINE COURSE POLICIES**

1. Students are required to have access to a computer and the Internet.
2. All course materials (i.e. course syllabus, course content, the assignments and the schedule of activities, etc.) are posted in MSC Vista’s course/class web site.
3. MSC email and/or MSC Vista are used only for communication between the instructor and students. The instructor will endeavor to reply to your email queries within 12 hours of their receipt, excluding weekends and holidays or during semester breaks. Private email accounts must not be used to communicate between the instructor and students.
4. Students must immediately review the tentative course schedule (included as part of the syllabus) for the schedule of discussion activities, assignments, projects, and/or examinations.
5. Students must attend class if they are to be well prepared for the workplace. Online courses are no different from on-campus classroom courses in this regard. Therefore, online students are subject to the college’s attendance policy. Please see the “Attendance Policy” in the college’s catalog. For online classes, participation must be defined in a different manner. Student attendance in online courses is defined as active participation in the course as described in the course syllabus.
6. Online courses will, at a minimum, have weekly mechanisms for student participation, which can be documented using any or all of the following methods:
  1. a graded discussion activity that is integral to student engagement and learning;
  2. a graded assignment/project/examination.

7. Your instructor will begin grading all assessments after the deadline and make the results available to you within one week after the due date for the assessment.

## **ONLINE DISCUSSIONS AND POSTINGS**

### ***Expectations for Achieving Responsible Online Discourse***

One value we must share is respect for individuals - their experience and their ideas or social positions. We also share a genuine desire to learn from one another. In order to demonstrate these shared values, you are encouraged to consider how your tone, word choice, and content may affect other readers. Some ways people achieve responsible public electronic discourse include

- a) calling each other by name on the screen,
- b) using smiley faces (=) to clarify meaning if a writer's tone might be ambiguous,
- c) clarifying with someone courteously before "flaming" back a quick response, and
- d) refraining from publishing or forwarding any questionable jokes or strong language that could offend various readers.

### ***Guidelines for Online Discussions***

1. Not only respond to your instructor's questions, but carry on a dialogue with your classmates as well. This is a discussion, not just a question and answer session, and is one of the items that make a good online course and establishes community. If you only respond to your instructor's question it makes the discussion more of an "exam" rather than a dialogue.
2. Do not get caught up in "winning" the debate. We are here to learn the material, have fun, and to discuss matters of importance with others.
3. Read all postings from your classmates, not just those from the instructor. Sometimes future questions are based on the insights of your classmates.
4. When you reply to a post, don't just say "I agree". Give the person or person's name you are agreeing with and be sure to put the reply in the right thread. Also include a brief sentence or two summarizing what they said that you are agreeing with and then your views. You might also consider changing the subject line to reflect your posts. Make it easy for us to figure out who you are talking to and what you are talking about.
5. If you express an opinion, support it with material from our readings or other sources if applicable. When you quote, summarize, or paraphrase from the text, be sure to give the page number(s) -- This is important!
6. Count on checking the class website for assignments or discussions at least twice or more per week.