

A photograph of a maroon sign for the University of Ottawa. The sign features the text 'Université d'Ottawa' in white serif font, followed by the university's crest and the text 'University of Ottawa' in a smaller white sans-serif font. The background of the photo shows a brick building, green trees, and purple flowers.

Université d'Ottawa



University of Ottawa

A decorative graphic consisting of a series of grey dots of varying sizes, arranged in a curved, trail-like pattern on the left side of the page.

Fully Online and Blended Courses

A GUIDE FOR STUDENTS

TLSS

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I am enrolled
in an online or
blended course!

What do I do now?

You are enrolled in a course that takes place either fully online or blended. What to do now? Where to go? What should you do **before** the course? What should you do **during** the semester? Who can help you? The following pages will answer these questions as well as provide you with some helpful tips, best practices, and resources.



Fully Online Course

Unlike a traditional course, which takes place face-to-face, you will not have to attend classes on campus. You will have the opportunity to meet with your professor and classmates virtually, which will enable you to develop a sense of belonging in the online community. By actively participating in exchanges and group activities you will develop a sense of belonging to your online learning community. To help

you stay motivated, it is important that you take responsibility for managing your time and keep up with the class by preparing and maintaining a study plan throughout the course. While online courses offer more flexibility in your schedule, the time commitment required is equivalent to that of a traditional course. Remember, it is not true that online courses are easier than traditional courses; you will need to devote just as much time, effort, and energy in a fully online or blended course than a face-to-face one.

Blended Course

Contrary to a traditional course that takes place entirely in class, you will have to accomplish significant learning components online within a blended course. Face-to-face activities will allow you to actualize your learning while enhancing your learning experience through presentations, group analysis, case studies, lab work etc. While the online component will allow

you to peruse course material/content/assignments, view videos, participate in discussion forums, accomplish various formative activities, etc. Your greatest challenge will be to develop autonomous skills to accomplish the online component. You need to understand that the online component not only prepares you for the face-to-face sessions, but that the online activities are an integral part of the course.

Before the Course Starts

Get ready!

LOGISTICAL ISSUES

Fully Online Course

Develop a **personalized schedule** that you will be able to follow. Choose a time of day when you won't have any distractions so that you can focus solely and exclusively on your online course. For a 3 credit course you can expect to devote approximately 7-9 hours per week to accomplish work, which may include: reading/research, activities/assignments, participation to discussion forums, etc.

Blended Course

The general rule of thumb is for every hour of class time, there should be at least **2 hours of time** for reading, work, online discussions, research, etc. This, of course, varies from one course to another and from one student to another. Whatever formula you choose, make sure you put in regular and consistent effort every week.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

- **Make sure your computer is ready before you start the course.**

- » **Software**

- ~ Some courses provide PDF documents, PowerPoint® presentations, multimedia elements (video, audio, interactive activities, etc.). Make sure you have all the necessary software before the course starts.
- ~ If your course requires special software, you will find information about it on the course website.
- ~ Take the time to explore the Virtual Campus, do a "System Check", and consult resources prepared for students.
- ~ <https://tlss.uottawa.ca/site/en/getting-started-and-connexion-to-the-virtual-campus#for-students>



» Equipment

- ~ Adjust your chair, desk, keyboard, and monitor for better ergonomic positioning to eliminate the risk of poor posture that can cause back pain, headaches etc.
- ~ Sometimes it is easier to read a document on paper than on your computer screen. Do you have access to a printer?
- ~ If a specific piece of equipment is required for your course, you will find information about it on the course website – most likely in the course syllabus.

• For **technical** questions related to your fully online or blended course (problem accessing the course, error messages, etc.), please contact the Computing help Centre:

- » Information Technology (Request Help)
 - ~ <http://it.uottawa.ca/service-desk-request>
- » Telephone: 613-562-5800 ext. 6555 or toll free 1-877-868-8292, extension 6555

• For questions related to the **functionalities of your course in Virtual Campus** (posting in discussion forums, submitting assignments, using the email tool, getting access to your grades, etc.), please contact the Virtual Campus Support:

- » By phone 7 days a week from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.: 1-866-811-3201
- » Or by filling out the online support form (<https://tlss.uottawa.ca/site/support-form>),
- » 24 hours a day, seven days a week

STEPS TO FOLLOW BEFORE THE FIRST DAY OF YOUR ONLINE COURSE

• Connection to Virtual Campus

- » <https://uottawa.brightspace.com>
 - ~ Login: uoAccess ID (your uOttawa email)
 - ~ -Password: same as for your email

• Course outline/Syllabus: Once you have accessed your course website, find the course outline/syllabus. It is the best source of information for identifying what is expected of you in order to succeed in the course. Read it right away and use it to make up your schedule.

- » **Textbook:** It is possible that a textbook or other printed resources are required for the course. Make the time to order them right away so that you can stay on track. See the course outline/syllabus for details.
- » Shop online for textbooks sold by the University of Ottawa bookstore : <http://www.bkstr.com/ottawastore/home>
 - ~ Email : libbook@uOttawa.ca
 - ~ Telephone: 613-562-5353 or toll free 1-877-868-8292 ext. 5353

The course outline/
syllabus includes
all important
information
of the course.

- **Get familiar with the [course website](#).**

» Don't be afraid to click on all the links. Exploring will allow you to become more comfortable with this new environment.

 **Fully Online Course**

- Often professors prepare **ice-breaker** activities. Sometimes there is a short video presentation of the professor. Other times you will be asked to introduce yourself to the group in a discussion forum. **Go for it!**
- This is an opportunity for you to get to know the people with whom you will be interacting in the coming months, and at the same time testing out various tools at your disposal in the site.
- Have a look at the calendar in order to take note of activities/work that need to be accomplished on a short- and long-term basis so as to adequately plan for the session.

 **Blended Course**

- Make sure to consult the course plan in order to know which learning components will be face-to-face and which ones will be online. It will be very important for you to understand how the online components fit in with the classroom portion in order for you to accomplish work in a timely manner and fully participate in activities.
- So as to allow you to explore this new online learning environment, you may have access to a tutorial or a rally activity that will give you the opportunity to become familiar with course content while navigating the Website.

SUMMARY OF THINGS TO CHECK BEFORE THE FIRST DAY OF YOUR ONLINE COURSE:

- ✓ **Log in** to your course through the Virtual Campus
- ✓ **Explore** the website by clicking on the various tools and links.
- ✓ **Download** the course outline/syllabus.
- ✓ **Order** the textbook or course pack (if applicable, check the course outline).



During the Semester

Stay on track!

- **Be proactive!**

- » Do not hesitate to contact your professor or teaching assistant if you have any questions related to the course.
- » Demonstrate your ability to work autonomously. It is by fully participating in all activities that you will be able to further your knowledge and put your learning into practice.



Fully Online Course

- » Professors provide online office hours to answer questions students may have. See the course outline/ syllabus to find out when office hours are.



Blended Course

- » Office hours for blended courses are normally offered on campus according to a pre-established schedule.

- **Manage your time!**

- » Keep to the schedule you set for yourself.
- » Establish deadlines.
- » Take advantage of the time you set aside for accomplishing work, whether it be for a fully online course or the online component of the blended course.
- » Avoid distractions. To concentrate on your course, close Facebook and other social media sites, turn off your phone and the television.
 - ~ Watch this short video about multitasking:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iM4u-7Z5URk>
- » Allow enough time for reading. There could be more reading material (to replace lectures in class).

- **Use of computer/tablet/Smart phone**

- » It is time to consider your computer, tablet or Smart phone as a learning tool that will help you develop your research and analysis skills.
- » From now consider these devices as tools that will allow you to actively participate in your learning, giving you the opportunity to share your knowledge and build on your learning.

- **Refer to the syllabus often**

- » This is the document that your professor uses to explain everything about the course:
 - ~ The course description;
 - ~ The general and specific objectives;
 - ~ The schedule, including the distribution of activities per week;
 - ~ Important dates of submission of assignments and exams;
 - ~ Details of the course evaluation;
 - ~ Policies, grades and net ethics;
 - ~ And more!

Good time management is a key factor for the success of your online courses.

• Stay motivated!

Fully Online Course

- » In an online course, it can be a little harder to stay motivated throughout the entire semester.
- » Collaborate and participate on a regular basis!
- » Complete the activities as you go.
- » Break down activities into smaller tasks that are easier to manage.
 - ~ It is much easier (and more motivating) to take baby steps on a regular basis than to take a giant step all at once.
- » Use the communication tools available to you in the course website to communicate regularly with your classmates.
- » Pair up with someone else in the class to keep each other motivated.

Blended Course

- » In the context of a blended course, the role of the professor and the student change. Beyond being a subject-matter expert, the professor acts as a guide and facilitator to support your learning. As a student, you will be required to be fully engaged in your learning within this new, dynamic learning environment.
- » In order to stay motivated, it is important to closely follow the schedule and complete the required work and readings on time in order to be well prepared for class sessions.
- » Participate fully in class and within online group activities in order to share learning with your peers and build on your knowledge.

• Participate

Fully Online Course

- » An online course does not mean an easy course. You will need to actively participate in your learning by sharing your knowledge with your peers in order to create an engaging learning community.
- » You will often communicate in writing.
 - ~ Communicate clearly and in a timely manner. Consult the netiquette section in order to know how to communicate in a correct manner with your professor and your peers.
 - ~ Don't be afraid to participate and ask questions in the discussion forum. Chances are that others will have the same questions as you do.
 - ~ Don't wait until the day before a test or exam to ask questions.
 - ~ You will learn as much from the professor's answers as from discussions between students.

 **Blended Course**

- » In a traditional on campus course you were probably used to receiving information and may not necessarily have actively participated in class. As a student within a blended course format, you will be asked to participate more actively in your learning.
- » You will need to develop your autonomous skills in order to accomplish the online work component and also when you participate during in-class activities.

After the Course Ends

Close Up Shop!

Just like in a face-to-face course, you will be evaluated to determine your level of success in the course. The evaluation method may vary from one course to another, whether it is a fully online or blended course. In some cases, it will be the assignments and activities that you did throughout the course that will determine your final grade. In others, there may be a final assignment or a “take-home” exam.

 **Fully Online Course**

If a written final exam is required for your online course, you must notify your professor within the first 3 weeks of the start of the course if you are able to write the exam on campus. If you are unable to travel to Ottawa to write your exam, you will need to find a proctor to supervise your exam. This person must be approved by your department or by the **Centre for Innovative Technologies in Education (CITE)**. If you do not know how to find a proctor, you can contact the CITE for help with this by phone at 613-562-5787 or by email at the following address: distance@uottawa.ca.

Once the course has ended, you will no longer have access to the course website. After all your hard work, it will be time for you to:

- Create back-ups of the content (material) that you want to keep.
- Make copies of your assignments, blogs, portfolio, etc.
- Keep in touch with your classmates or with your professor. Do you have their contact information?

It is possible that access to the course website will be removed before your final grade has been posted. Not to worry, you will still be able to view your grades in uoZone:

<http://www.uottawa.ca/strategic-enrollment-management/>

Good luck with your studies!

The use of the masculine gender in this guide is for the sole purpose of brevity; it is not, in any way, intended to be discriminatory.

Annex 1

Services and Resources That Can Be Accessed Online

Whether you take a course that is hybrid or entirely online, this list might come in handy.

NAME	SERVICES	WEBSITE ADDRESS
uoZone	<ul style="list-style-type: none">All student Web tools and information are centralized in uoZone.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">http://www.uottawa.ca/en/students
Virtual Campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">List of courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Virtual Campus (Brightspace by D2L) https://tlss.uottawa.ca/site/support-form8 AM to 8 PM, 7 days a week by Phone: 1-866-811-3201
Technology Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">General computing helpPassword changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Telephone: 613-562-5800, ext. 6555 or toll free at 1-877-868-8292, ext. 6555Email: cybersos@uOttawa.caComputing Assistance Request form: https://it.uottawa.ca/service-desk-request
InfoService	<ul style="list-style-type: none">TranscriptsDocuNetCopies of diplomas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">http://www.uottawa.ca/strategic-enrollment-management/#service

NAME	SERVICES	WEBSITE ADDRESS
Library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Books • Articles • References • Course reserve • Videos • Databases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.biblio.uottawa.ca/html/index.jsp?lang=en • http://www.biblio.uOttawa.ca/html/Page?node=get-access&lang=en (Off-campus access)
docUcentre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase your Course Packs online 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://it.uottawa.ca/print/
Bookstore	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase your textbooks online 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.bkstr.com/ottawastore/home
SASS (Student Academic Success Service)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See the online resources available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents available online (referencing, grammar, the writing process, the structure of a paper): http://sass.uottawa.ca/en/writing/undergraduate/online-document.php • Questions via email: awhc@uOttawa.ca
University Lingo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words you need to know and understand! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.uottawa.ca/strategic-enrollment-management/
Financial Aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are many possibilities when it comes to financing your studies: scholarships, government loans, work-study program, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.uottawa.ca/strategic-enrollment-management/
Teaching Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide feedback on a course and an instructor's teaching by filling out a questionnaire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://www.uottawa.ca/vice-president-academic/evaluation/student-zone
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information and workshops on accessibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.uottawa.ca/accessibility/



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