UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS AT MONTICELLO

Monticello, Arkansas

STUDENT HANDBOOK FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION

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University of Arkansas at Monticello

Student Handbook for Distance Education

        The University of Arkansas at Monticello is committed to quality distance education as a method of improving education opportunities for students.

        This student handbook outlines resource information that will enable a student to benefit from the opportunities afforded by distance education.

A Basic Checklist:

- ✓ Do you have consistent/easy access (12-15 hours <u>per week per online class</u>) to a reliable computer with the software required?

- ✓ Do you have access to a computer with high speed Internet access?

- ✓ Are you comfortable using the Internet to find information?

- ✓ When you read a textbook do you tend to understand and remember most of what you have read?

- ✓ Do you do a good job of meeting deadlines so your work is on time?

- ✓ Are you comfortable expressing your ideas in writing?

- ✓ Is it easy for you to read and follow directions?

- ✓ Do you require face-to-face interaction to understand something?

- ✓ Can you work independently (You do not need someone looking over your shoulder to motivate you.)?

- ✓ Do you have word processing skills such as creating, editing, or saving documents?

If you answered NO to <u>any</u> of these questions, you probably do not need to take an online course this semester. Without these basics, you may not experience success in an online course.

If you answered YES to all of these questions, you have the time and skills to take an online course.

A successful online learner:

- Is responsible for maintaining his/her own equipment and internet connection.

- Is expected to use professional communication at all times. (See Appendix A.)

- Is responsible for meeting all deadlines – plan ahead. Procrastination is the enemy.

- Is expected to have a high speed internet connection, although most UAM courses will run on a dial up connection, it is not efficient.

- Is proficient in the use of computers and productivity software such as email and word processing.

- Participates in the class with the instructor and classmates.

- Takes notes!

- Reads, listens to, and/or watches the course materials as often as required by the course.

- Develops self discipline.

- Can problem solve
  For example: What if you have a family emergency? What if the electricity goes off? What if your computer crashes? What if you lose your jump (or other) drive?

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Can I work at my own pace or do I have to follow a schedule when taking a distance education course?

Most instructors have a schedule for completing the class. You will need to refer to your syllabus for details about when assignments/tests are due.

2. Do I ever have to come to campus for a distance education course?

Some courses require that you come to campus to take tests; some require that the final exam be taken on campus or at a proctored location; and still others have no face-to-face requirements. Refer to your syllabus for the course for details, or prior to enrolling in the course, you may ask/email the instructor for details.

3. Does a distance education course require less time to complete than regular on-campus course?

Because most online courses follow a schedule of activities that last the entire term or semester, plan for your distance education course to last the same amount of time as an on-campus course.

4. Will I know if there are other students in my class? Will I know their names?

Most online courses have discussion threads, chat rooms, etc. to which you must post and students identify themselves by name. Generally, instructors ask for students to identify to the class with a bit of personal information. Become an active learner: take part in the discussions, ask questions, jump in!

5. What if I need the library?

The Taylor Library has a number of databases a student can access from off campus. Here is the library link: http://www.uamont.edu/library/

The Taylor Library also has a special section for distance learners, here is the link: http://www.uamont.edu/library/serv/distance.htm. Note that some services have a fee attached.

6. What if I need to talk to my advisor?

An academic advisor will be assigned to you. You will need to contact that advisor by telephone or email. Academic advisor information can be found in WeevilNet:
> Go to Student Center
>> Advisor information is in the bottom right-hand corner of the page.
> There is a list of faculty and staff telephone numbers and email addresses from the homepage: http://www.uamont.edu/onlinedirectory/

7. How much do I need to know about my computer to be able to take an online course?

A student should have basic computer skills including:
- Operate a Windows-based computer
- Perform common computer operations such as
- Create folders
- Find, copy, move, rename, and delete files
- Create back up files
- Create, edit, format, spell check, save, retrieve, and print a document (continued on next page)

- Copy/paste information
- Use email to
  - Send, receive, store, and retrieve messages
  - Send, receive, and open attachments
- Utilize a web browser to
  - Access the internet
  - Open web pages
  - Open, print, and save in Adobe Acrobat (.pdf)
  - Copy URLs to Microsoft Word
  - Use a search engine

8. How do I know if I am correctly enrolled in the course?

Course enrollment can be found in WeevilNet:

Go to Student Center to view your Study List (current term enrollment)

You will need to create a Blackboard (online learning management system) account to access a course for which you are enrolled. Log into Blackboard tomake sure the course is listed under your courses. For questions about Blackboard, call Academic Computing at 870-460-1663.

9. What if I forget my password?

A student who forgets his/her password must call the IT (Information Technology) Department at 870-460-1036 for assistance with re-setting a password. The IT Department is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.

10. What if my internet access is down and I have an assignment due?

Phone your instructor immediately and ask for guidance. Leave him/her a voice message immediately! Because there are always potential problems with technology, never wait until the last minute to submit an assignment.

Find internet access! Call a friend who has a computer; visit a public library and use their computer; if you have wireless, go to McDonalds's or Starbucks!

11. Where can I see my grades?

Grades are available on Blackboard throughout the semester under the Grades Tool and on WeevilNet, accessible from the UAM homepage, at the end of the semester.

12. How do I drop a course?

A student who wants to drop an online course should email the Director of Academic Advising (Ratliff@uamont.edu) for details.

13. How do I get a copy of my transcript?

To receive an official copy of a transcript:
Go to the UAM homepage (http://www.uamont.edu)
"Transcript Request" on the left menu
"Request a Transcript" from the main menu on that page.

Official transcripts have a fee attached; the online form will indicate the current fee. Unofficial transcripts are available through WeevilNet.

Course Expectations

In order to be successful in any course, you will need to know the course requirements and expectations. This is where your syllabus comes in: your syllabus is a contact between you and the instructor, outlining what will be taught, how the instructor will know that you understand the content, and how you will be assessed in the course.

Read the syllabus carefully; ask questions if you do not understand any of the course requirements. Do not expect the instructor to answer questions where the syllabus can be used to find the answer! However, if an instructor does not hear from you, he/she may well conclude that you are grasping the material and do not need assistance.

You are also expected to observe proper online etiquette. Appendix A, Netiquette, has the basic rules or you to follow.

Library Resources

The Fred J. Taylor Library and Technology Center and website provide access to materials you may need for your course. Hard-copy books, periodicals in print or microfilm, links to all e-journals, e-newspapers, electronic databases, etc. are available.

The library website is available from on- or off-campus at the following link: http://www.uamont.edu/library/

The Taylor Library also has a special section for distance learners, here is the link: http://www.uamont.edu/library/serv/distance.htm. Note that some services have a fee attached.

Proctored Testing

Proctored <u>final</u> exams may be taken at the Testing Center located in Room 201 of Harris Hall or at an approved testing site. A list of approved testing sites can be found on the UAM Testing Center website (http:// www.uamont.edu/StudentAffairs/CounselingTesting/home.htm) A student may also find an alternate testing site if he/she lives more than 75 miles from UAM. ***The instructor must approve any testing site <u>not listed</u> in the above list of approved testing sites prior to testing.*** An alternate testing site must be approved by having the student and proctor complete the Alternate Testing/Proctor Request Form (Appendix B) on or before Friday of the second week of class. The completed form should be emailed to the instructor.

Failure to secure appropriate off-site testing by a student who cannot use UAM's Testing Center or approved testing site will result in the student being dropped from the course unless he/she has communicated with the instructor. Once a student has selected a testing site, the student will not be allowed to change testing sites. The instructor will send testing materials to the indicated testing site.

It is the student's responsibility to check with the alternate testing site for the dates and times of operation if the student is taking the test at a site outside the UAM area or an approved testing site.

Choosing an Alternate Testing Site

If a student chooses a testing site not listed on the approved list of testing sites, an alternate testing site may be selected. Remote site testing must be at a college, university or military Educational Services Office. Test proctors must be authorized by UAM to administer tests or in the case of Educational Services Office; personnel must be assigned or appointed to the Educational Services Office department.

There are two ways that a remote test site can be identified:
- Contact the local college, university or Educational Services Office.
- Check the National College Testing Association Website at http://testing.byu.edu/NCTA/Consortium. This is a free referral service to facilitate distance learning testing.

These testing sites have been verified and confirmed as meeting UAM testing standards. Any testing fees charged by non-UAM testing centers are the responsibility of the student. Once a college, university or Educational Services Offices has agreed to proctor the tests, the student will need to work with the Educational Services Office to complete and return the Alternate Testing Site Location Form to the instructor no later than one week prior to any online testing.

Supplies

       Although you may be taking an online course, a TEXTBOOK will most likely be required. Check your syllabus for details regarding your textbook and other course supplies that are needed.

Support for Distance Education

       The Office of Academic Computing provides support for distance education students.

       The website for the Office of Academic Computing is:

              http://www.uamont.edu/AcademicComputing/

       The Office of Academic Computing is located in the Taylor Library and Technology Center, 2nd floor, Room 210, 460-1663.

Time Requirements

       Taking any online course takes TIME. While you might save valuable commuting time, you might spend *more* time on the course itself or working with technology requirements.

       Time constraints are set by the University. For example, if you have an assignment due at midnight, that is midnight on the UAM campus, not your time or your computer's time. Plan ahead.

       Typically you *cannot* simply work at your own pace: faculty have periodic assignments—perhaps daily, weekly, or following some other timeframe set out in the course syllabus.

       You will need to set aside time to access the Internet and your course on a regular schedule each day, or every few days during each week. to work on your online course. Your syllabus will indicate if you are required to participate in activities at specific times—plan ahead for these times. Remember too, that you can access an online course from anywhere in the world so you will need to keep in mind time zones that may be different from yours.

Best wishes for your online success!

UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS AT MONTICELLO
Netiquette

Source:

Network Etiquette (netiquette) is "cyber speak" for etiquette on-line and in e-mail: manners, civility, and shared rules. The rules of netiquette apply to everyone who uses the Internet or any kind of network to communicate to any other person in the world. Here are some very simple rules to follow that will help you to converse more smoothly with your fellow computer users.

Treat other people in cyberspace the way you would like to be treated. Remember that without facial expressions some comments may be taken the wrong way.

Review discussion threads before you enter the discussion. Be careful to write only relevant comments.

Maintain threads by using the "Reply" button rather than starting a new topic.

Limit the abbreviations that you use, such as "u" for "you," "k" for "OK", and "ne1" for "anyone". This will ensure that everyone understands your message.

Assume that the other person will <u>not </u>immediately know what you are talking about; give a little background information to help the reader understand your topic or position.

Respect other people's privacy.

Writing something in all CAPS is equivalent to yelling. Try to avoid this.

An emoticon is a text representation of an emotion. For example, :) is equivalent to a smile. Do not overuse emoticons, but they can be useful to avoid having a statement be misinterpreted.

Do not make insulting or inflammatory comments to other members of discussions. Be respectful of other's ideas.

Do not leave the subject field of an e-mail blank. Your e-mail provider may send it to BULK, or JUNK instead of the inbox of the receiver, or your anti-virus software may think that it is a virus of some kind. A subject also allows the receiver to tell what the email is about at a glance.

NEVER give out personal information of any kind via email, chat, or instant message. <u>Phishing</u> refers to the tactic used by criminals in which they will send a legitimate sounding email to your address and ask for information to verify an account. A reputable company, such as a bank, will not ask for usernames, account numbers or passwords through e-mail.

Appendix B
University of Arkansas at Monticello
Alternate Testing/Proctor Request Form

Students who wish to take any test at a site *other than the main campus* of the University of Arkansas at Monticello must complete and submit an **Alternate Testing/Proctor Request Form** to the course instructor for approval. The proctor must be a staff member at the alternate testing center of a college or university. A p**roctor cannot be a family member.**

The instructor in consultation with the UAM Testing Center must approve all proctors and reserves the right to reject requests or proctors for any reason. The instructor is responsible for sending exams to the proctor. The instructor will contact the student if the proctor/testing center is not approved.

The student is responsible for any fees or postage charged by the proctor and/or testing center.

STUDENT AND COURSE INFORMATION – PLEASE PRINT
(Complete one form for each course.)

Student's Full Name:	Student ID:
Address: Course/Section/Instructor:	
Day Phone: ( ) Night Phone: ( ) Semester: Fall Spring Sum Yr.____	
E-Mail:	
Reason for Request:	
Signature:	

PROCTOR INFORMATION –PLEASE PRINT (To be completed by proctor.)

Proctor Name: Title:	
Place of Employment: Department:	
Complete Mailing Address:	
Office Phone: ( ) Fax Number: ( )	
E-Mail Address:	

_____ Approved   _____ Not Approved   _____

                                                         Instructor Signature