

## **Section 1: Questions to ask before taking an online learning course**

### **As a learner, what is your skillset, experiences & expectations that will help you succeed in online learning?**

Preparing yourself for an online course, whether it is totally online or with some classroom time (blended learning), is still a matter of asking a series of questions.

Studies have shown that it takes a certain amount of self-discipline and motivation to schedule and to manage yourself through such a course.

If this is your first experience with online or distance learning, your skill set of experiences and expectations begin with your educational goals with the course.

### **What purpose does this online course serve in my education?**

Think the process through! You may have to work without face-to-face contact with your teacher, your classmates, and possibly outside academic support

### **What motivates you? What are your educational goals?**

How will your life's experiences contribute to your desire to complete your education?

What resources do you have to support yourself? You will need to coordinate and manage: time management, coping and communication skills, etc.?

### **How confident am I of**

- Taking responsibility for my education?
- How prepared do I think I am?
- Managing my time?
- Do I think I have the self-discipline to succeed in online learning without a formal "classroom" to keep me on track?
- Keeping my focus on the course objectives and assignments?
- Taking responsibility for accomplishing my assignments?
- Meeting unexpected problems or challenge

### **What elements should I consider in choosing courses?**

#### **The course syllabus provides information about**

- What are the Prerequisites/preconditions;
- Course objectives and priorities

- Who is the teacher and the language of instruction
- How is course content delivered?
- textbooks, handouts, digital texts; course website; course management system
- What is the course schedule
- or pacing as regards timelines for completing tasks
- or whether the course is "unpaced" with only broad deadlines
- What are the assignments and the procedures for completing them, as well as procedures for submitting them
- Requirements for interaction
- whether live or asynchronous contributions
- whether in person or online via email, text messaging, chat rooms, video conferencing
- whether discussions, feedback on projects, Q&A sessions,
- whether with the instructor, course mates, experts
- How and when is my performance assessed?
- Tests; criteria for grading on assignments

#### **What is my course electronic learning environment like?**

- What are the course technical requirements
- hardware, software, specialized applications
- What is the optimal browser, and perhaps email client
- What training is necessary for the course applications?
- What training or orientation is available for additional communications options?
- Conference or chat rooms, discussion boards, video conferencing, email, voicemail, text messaging, etc.

#### **What is my home learning environment like?**

- What hardware and software do I have at home?
- What access to the Internet and email do I have?
- How fast is the connection and what connection is necessary?
- What technology and applications does this course require?
- (If not explicitly stated, ask the teacher)
- If I should have a computer failure at home (disk crash, network failure or virus remediation),
- what is my back up?
- What institutional resources are available to help me at home?
- Can I schedule time to complete assignments without interference?

## Who makes up my community of learning to help me succeed?

- Teacher and teaching assistants; support professionals: librarians, tutors, study skills professionals, lab managers, etc.; fellow students; family.
- What degree of independence is necessary or unavoidable with my community?
- What (online) communication skills and methods are useful? Are necessary?
- Individual: email, voicemail and text messaging;
- Group: video conference/chat rooms/discussion boards;
- What other applications are useful, such as for Internet voice calls outside of phone/cell services
- What are the rules of engagement in communications, as for netiquette

## Section 2: Students' Guide to Online Learning

### Learning to learn:

Your path for most effective learning is through knowing

- yourself
- your capacity to learn
- the process you have successfully used in the past
- your interest in, and knowledge of, the subject you wish to learn

It may be easy for you to learn physics but difficult to learn tennis, or vice versa.

All learning, however, is a process which settles into certain steps. The following is an exercise of four steps to help you understand how you learn: Begin by selecting each step and answer the questions. Then plan your strategy with your answers

### These are four steps to learning.

Begin by printing this and answering the questions.

Then plan your strategy with your answers.

- Did you or can you?
- Proceed to the Present
- Consider the process, the subject matter.
- Build in a review

**Download this check sheet and evaluate as you study or at the end of a Unit of study**

### Learning Styles:

#### **Active learning - is experiential, mindful, and engaging.**

Through it you can explore a set of learning experiences that can be more effective and interesting, and you can take more responsibility for your education. This is especially critical in an online environment where you may not even meet your teacher or fellow students. Begin by defining content (what to study) and establishing your objectives (what to learn). Next read! Do your research. Then build a foundation of activities that can help you learn, and communicate what you have learned. See our guide on Active learning

## **What is active learning?**

### **Active learning is experiential, mindful, and engaging.**

Through it you can explore a set of learning experiences that can be more effective and interesting, and you can take more responsibility for your education. This is especially critical in an online environment where you may not even meet your teacher or fellow students.

Begin by defining content (what to study) and establishing your objectives (what to learn). Next read! Do your research. Then build a foundation of activities that can help you learn, and communicate what you have learned. Some may not be interesting to you; some a nice fit with your preferred learning style(s).

### **Active listening:**

Active listening intentionally focuses on who you are listening to, whether in a lecture, in a conversation, or a group, in order to understand what is said. As the listener, you should then be able to "replay" or repeat back in your own words what they have said to their satisfaction. This does not mean you agree with, but rather understand, what they are saying. See our guide on active listening.

### **Looking/seeing**

Look at images, such as pictures and graphs and maps (for example, the Cone of Learning below). Try to understand the use and importance of each image: enter key words that come to mind. Verbal cues, such as titles and authors, and visual cues such as line, colour, visual organization, etc. will help you interpret information and understand its story without the words. Often the context of the image is vital to understanding it, as illustrations in a text book, examples in a catalogue, and graphs in a financial statement. So also a painting can be better understood by its time, art movement, etc.

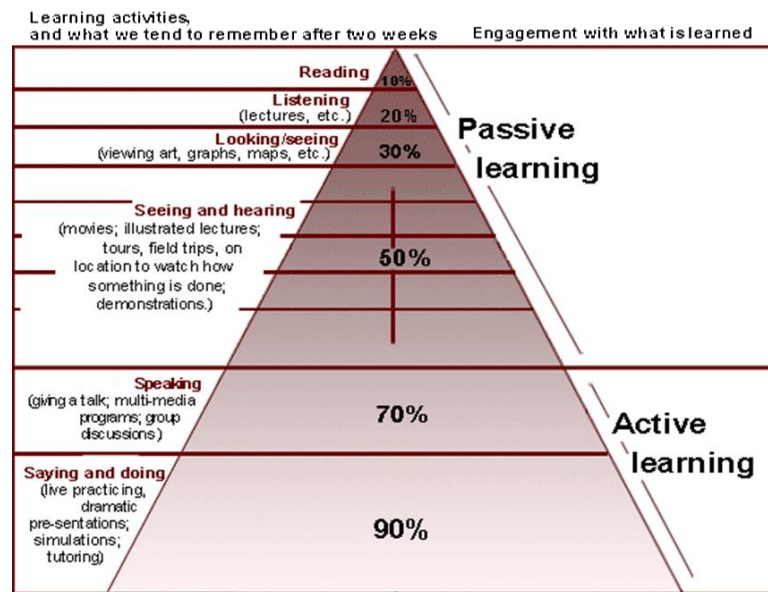
### **Seeing and hearing:**

In addition to PowerPoint lectures, multimedia and movies have the advantage of illustrating reading and lecture content in new (engaging) formats.

Demonstrations and field trips build on classroom experiences and can provide you as an individual with a shared learning experience on a topic.

They also enable you as learner to witness how concepts are practiced or exemplified in real life processes or situations.

Remember: you don't need a classroom trip to visit locations that will help you understand your studies! Brainstorm organizations, factories, etc. and send an email or phone to set up a visit. Don't just go and expect professionals to stop their work.



Cone of Learning adapted from Edgar Dale (1946)

As we progress into "active" learning, a group can make the task more effective. Within the group, you share responsibility to participate and collaborate, take advantage of each participant's strengths, and rely on each other for good project management and effective learning.

### Classroom, online and public presentations:

Develop, produce, practice and deliver speeches and presentations; multi-media and interactive programs; newsletters, Websites and blogs, etc.

Stages to develop these include:

- Defining objectives
- Developing your "voice" and point of view
- Identifying and writing for an audience
- Mapping out program content
- Identifying presentation tools/resources and communication technologies
- Scripting/developing the piece; practicing and presenting it
- Documenting your message
- Evaluating how you could have done better.

As an exercise, this is not static but rather a dynamic learning process.

Build on, apply and reinforce what you have learned, not only what its content it, but also the process in developing it.

In the process of translating content into message, you refine what you think you know, and uncover more that you will need to understand since communicating relies on developing your message for a specific audience.

If in a collaborative project, you have the advantage of sharing perspectives as well as skills; each should be open to personalized feedback that includes questioning, listening and evaluating answers.

## **Saying and doing:**

The more you work with the content of what is learned, the more confidently you will recall it.

Examples include interviewing and developing oral histories; role playing, performing, debating through opposing points of view; case studies and problem-based learning, gaming and simulations; research projects and symposiums; developing models; student teaching including developing evaluation instruments (test questions); leading discussions and review sessions. There is no better way to learn a language than to live in its environment.

## **Writing**

Writing is communicating/expressing what you learned, a method of evaluating what you know, as well as an active learning exercise.

In pairs or a group, online or in person, you can read and react to what other learners post/write, and respond to and provide feedback in a collaborative environment, even collaborate on the development of an exercise.

**Understand writing as a process** rather than a simple exercise of drafting and editing.

The goal is to refine its message value for an audience, and for that you need an audience!

- Learn how to exchange feedback on an assignment.
- Learn to listen to comments about content as if peers are the audience of the piece:
- How they understand it, or expect to understand it:
- What are the strengths and weaknesses, point of view, etc.
- What is the role of grammar and vocabulary you are using?
- Collaborating on the writing of an assignment, either in groups or online, can be practice for employment situations!

## **Online Training:**

Develop, produce, practice and deliver speeches and presentations; multi-media and interactive programs; newsletters, Websites and blogs, etc.

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### **Description of our online courses**

"Distance education is based on the premise that students are at the center of the learning process, take responsibility for their own learning, and work at their own pace and in their own place. It is about ownership and autonomy." \*

**The good news:** studies have shown that below grade students perform better in distance education courses if they finish them; and that at-grade or better students perform about the same.

**The bad news:** students tend to procrastinate and drop out at higher levels than in traditional courses, especially below grade students/

**If you wish to succeed in an online course, here are some details to collect:**

#### **Course information:**

- Course website address
- Teaching assistant name, office location and hours, telephone, fax, e-mail address

#### **Logistics**

- Course materials you can expect to use
- How you will receive the course materials
- How you will be notified, or learn, of course announcements and class cancellations

#### **Technical requirements:**

- computing and internet hardware, platform, and specifications
- software type and version
- multimedia accessibility

#### **Schedule yourself, and stick to an assignment schedule, that**

- coincides with the course syllabus, or that
- is negotiated or verified with the instructor

**Or both. Here is a sample daily schedule.**

## Schedule yourself daily/weekly for course communications for

Peer learning/fellow student interaction via discussion groups, case studies, etc.

- Often you will be required to work on group projects or case studies, whether at one location or through the Internet.
- Feedback to the instructor

in a face-to-face course, an instructor relies on feedback from students, whether with questions or facial/physical expressions. In a distance situation this is most difficult, and you carry the responsibility to inform the instructor how you are doing in the course, whether by appointment or through phone conversations or e-mail..

- assignment progress and submission
- Progress reports: The instructor will provide feedback to you on your progress through the course. But the standard operation of RTO will be that after all submissions for a unit of study, a feedback form will be sent to you on the evidence, assignment quality and test results for that unit of study

## Section 3: Time management

**Developing time management skills is a journey** that may begin with this Guide, but needs practice and other guidance along the way. One goal is to help yourself become aware of how you use your time as one resource in organizing, prioritizing, and succeeding in your studies in the context of competing activities of friends, work, family, etc.

### Managing stress and organizing tasks

In the exercise below, enter three tasks you need to accomplish in order to organize and prioritize your tasks, and reduce your stress.

If you cannot access the exercise, follow this text exercise:

Develop each task into three steps.

If each task has less, no problem

Organize!

Re-arrange each of the steps from earliest due date

(1 or highest priority) to those further out (12 or less).

**Download, print and post as a to-do list**



## My calendar; my goals:

(This is the big picture, don't include too much detail)

1. **Pick up a copy of your calendar** (if applicable)
2. **Develop a calendar of important dates for your classes:** Tests, papers, projects, readings, mid-term and final exams, holidays, breaks, study days, etc. (if available)
3. **Enter important dates for your work, social and family life**
4. **Each week develop a daily schedule:** that includes routines and important dates
5. **Post this schedule in your study area:** for referral and review, and to mark your progress
6. **Each evening develop a schedule to help you organize the next day,** include routines, errands and important appointments
7. **Review each day's schedule that morning**

Download a simple "Long term planner" [here](#)

Making a habit of the above suggestions will be a product of Motivation! | Trial and error! | Practice!

1. **Document the sequence!**  
Note that you need to write these down, either for posting on a wall, or better yet, entered into your computer for reminders, especially 4-7.
2. **Commit to a trial period**  
Three to four weeks or a month...  
Think of the schedule as an experiment, but commit yourself to it.
3. **Think of this as an "organizer"**  
rather than a task list. Your to do lists, etc. are part of #2.  
Set your computer calendar to remind yourself of important events as numbers 4 - 7
4. **Relate this schedule to a reward**  
and post it prominently as an incentive in your room.  
If you need to give up something, replace it with a positive benefit.
5. **Find someone to partner with, or adopt a role model**  
so that you can find reinforcement. The person will not have the same school, family or work schedule, but can be there to encourage and suggest.
6. **Don't expect perfection**  
it is the enemy of the good.  
You are developing a new or altered way of achieving your goals. Sometimes, there will be events that interfere, and are cause for re-evaluating this schedule.

## Goal setting

In the exercise below, write in three tasks or goals that you would like to accomplish.

Then develop each into one to three steps.

Then prioritize them, print and follow up as in a "to do" list.

**List three goals or objectives that are most important to you,**

and indicate whether they are long range, medium range, or immediate:

**1. Goal one:**

(long range) (medium range) (now!)

**2. Goal two:**

(long range) (medium range) (now!)

**3. Goal three:**

(long range) (medium range) (now!)

**How much time have you set aside to meet each goal during your week?**

**1. Goal one:**

**2. Goal two:**

**3. Goal three:**

Does your time allocation reflect the priority of your goals?

Can you change your hourly commitments to meet your priorities?

Where do you have the most flexibility: weekdays or weekends?

Can you change one or the other? or both?

Can you change your goals? What are your options?

Can you postpone any goals until school breaks?

How will assignments and tests affect your time allocation?

What can you change to meet your class responsibilities?

## The what, why and how of to-do lists

### Developing time management skills is a journey

that may begin with this Guide, but needs practice and other guidance along the way.

#### What:

- Listing!
  - A simple presentation of three to five tasks that enables you to identify and visualize a core group of tasks in one place for easy reference
  - It grows and shortens as you work through items
- Posted
  - on a bulletin board, refrigerator or space
  - readily reminds you of what you prioritize to do and when you need to do it (deadlines)
- Organize!
  - It is an organizational tool that can be used for scheduling with electronic calendaring, strategic post-it notes, email, instant messenger, SMS and other communication services, etc.
- It can be a Not-to-do list where the time is not right, but you don't want to forget the item
- May help you develop timelines, sub-tasks, etc. to get the job done!  
(but separate from the to do list!)

#### Why:

- Reduce stress
  - You can reduce stress by itemizing and prioritizing tasks and giving them a place in your life.
- Remind yourself
  - A list displayed in a prominent place can remind you of what you consider important to do.
- Strategize completion
  - When reminded, you also are thinking about the task, as well as what resources, strategies and options for completing the task!
- It can be fun!
  - Playing with the list can encourage thinking outside of the box for solutions.
  - Add images and pictures to create a more enjoyable even accurate presentation.

#### How:

- Use the simple exercise above to identify tasks
- Enter items into electronic calendaring, strategic post-it notes, email, instant messenger, SMS and other communication services
- Share
  - With friends, family and colleagues for assistance and insights to communicate what you are working on and where you are
- Cross off items and celebrate their completion
- Apply the to do list to your daily life

**[Download a simple to do list here](#)**

## **Avoiding procrastination**

Is your procrastination related to a project?

Or is it a habit?

### **To remedy procrastination:**

1. Begin with one, modest project
2. Answer these basic questions
3. Keep the answers before you as you mark your progress

### **What do you want to do?**

- **What is the final objective, the end result?**  
It may be obvious, or not
- **What are the major steps to get there?**  
Don't get too detailed: think big
- **What have you done so far?**  
Acknowledge that you are already part of the way,  
even if it is through thinking!  
The longest journey begins with a first step

### **Why do you want to do this?**

- **What is your biggest motivation?**  
Do not concern yourself if your motivation is negative!  
This is honest and a good beginning.  
However, if your motivation is negative,  
re-phrase and re-work it until it is phrased positively
- **What other positive results will flow from achieving your goal?**  
Identifying these will help you uncover  
benefits that you may be avoiding: Dare to dream!

### **List out what stands in your way**

- **What is in your power to change?**
- **What resources outside yourself do you need?**  
Resources are not all physical (i.e. tools and money),  
and include time, people/professionals/elders, even attitude
- **What will happen if you don't progress?**  
It won't hurt to scare yourself a little...

### **Create a simple "To Do" list**

This simple program will help you identify a few tasks, the reason for doing them, a timeline for getting them done, and then printing this simple list and posting it for reminders.

### **Admit to:**

- **False starts and mistakes as learning experiences**  
They can be more important than successes, and give meaning to "experience"
- **Distractions and escapes**  
Do not deny they exist, but deny their temptation
- **Emotion**  
Admit to frustration when things don't seem to be going right  
Admit that you have had a problem, but also that you are doing something about it
- **Fantasy**  
See yourself succeeding

### **Finally, if procrastination is a habit of yours:**

Focus on the immediate task and project, and build up from there.

Each journey begins with one step.

### **Developing self-discipline**

Self-Discipline can be considered a type of selective training, creating new habits of thought, action, and speech toward improving yourself and reaching goals.

Self-discipline can also be task oriented and selective.

View self-discipline as positive effort, rather than one of denial.

## **Section 4: Tips and hints for better learning outcome**

- Schedule a particular task in the morning and once in the evening.
- The task should not take more than 15 minutes.
- Wait for the exact scheduled time.  
When the schedule time is due, start the task.
- Stick to the schedule for at least two months.  
Advantages: Scheduling helps you focus on your priorities.  
By focusing on starting tasks rather than completing them, you can avoid procrastination.
- Schedule a task and hold to its time;  
Avoid acting on impulse.
- Track your progress;  
At the end of the allotted time, keep a record of accomplishment that builds over time.  
Advantage: Building a record will help you track how much time tasks take.
- If you begin to have surplus time, fill it with small tasks, make notes to yourself, plan other tasks, etc.

### **Harness the power of routine.**

- Instead of devoting a lot of hours one day, and none the other and then a few on an another day and so on, allocate a specific time period each day of the week for that task.
- Hold firm.
- Don't set a goal other than time allocation, simply set the habit of routine.
- Apply this technique to your homework or your projects, you will be on your way to getting things done.  
Advantage: You are working on tasks in small increments, not all at once. You first develop a habit, and then the habit does the job for you.

### **Use self-discipline to explore time management**

Time management can become an overwhelming task.

When you do not have control over your own self, how can you control time?

Begin with task-oriented self-discipline and build from there.

- Advantage: As you control tasks, you build self-discipline.
- As you build self-discipline, you build time management.
- As you build time management, you build self-confidence.

### **Maintain a self-discipline log book.**

- Record the start and end times of the tasks.
- Review for feedback on your progress.  
Advantage: This log book can be a valuable tool to get a better picture over your activities in order to prioritize activities, and realize what is important and not important on how you spend your time.

### **Schedule your work day and studies.**

- When you first begin your work day, or going to work take a few minutes and write down on a piece of paper the tasks that you want to accomplish for that day.
- Prioritize the list.
- Immediately start working on the most important one.
- Try it for a few days to see if the habit works for you.
- Habits form over time: how much time depends on you and the habit?  
Advantage: When you have a clear idea as to what you want to achieve for the day at its start, the chances are very high that you will be able to proactively accomplish the tasks. Writing or sketching out the day helps.

**Discouragement:**

- Do not be intimidated; do not be put off by the challenge
- If you slip, remember this is natural
- Take a break and then refresh the challenge

**Tricks:****Associate a new habit with an old one:**

If you drink coffee, make that first cup the time to write out and prioritize your tasks.

Advantage: Association facilitates neural connections!

**Mark your progress:**

On a calendar in your bathroom, on a spreadsheet at your computer, on your breakfast table: Check off days you successfully follow up. If you break the routine, start over!

Advantage: Visualizing is a ready reinforcement of progress

**Role models:**

Observe the people in your life and see to what extent self-discipline and habits help them accomplish goals. Ask them for advice on what works, what does not.

**Time management****Developing time management skills is a journey**

that may begin with this Guide, but needs practice and other guidance along the way.

One goal is to help yourself become aware of how you use your time as one resource in organizing, prioritizing, and succeeding in your studies in the context of competing activities of friends, work, family, etc.

## Strategies on using time:

These applications of time management have proven to be effective as good study habits.

As we go through each strategy, jot down an idea of what each will look like for you:

- **Blocks of study time and breaks**

As your school term begins and your course schedule is set, develop and plan for, blocks of study time in a typical week. Blocks ideally are around 50 minutes, but perhaps you become restless after only 30 minutes? Some difficult material may require more frequent breaks. Shorten your study blocks if necessary-but don't forget to return to the task at hand! What you do during your break should give you an opportunity to have a snack, relax, or otherwise refresh or re-energize yourself. For example, place blocks of time when you are most productive: are you a morning person or a night owl? Jot down one best time block you can study. How long is it? What makes for a good break for you? Can you control the activity and return to your studies?

- **Dedicated study spaces**

Determine a place free from distraction (no cell phone or text messaging!) where you can maximize your concentration and be free of the distractions that friends or hobbies can bring! You should also have a back-up space that you can escape to, like the library, departmental study center, even a coffee shop where you can be anonymous. A change of venue may also bring extra resources. What is the best study space you can think of? What is another?

- **Weekly reviews**

Weekly reviews and updates are also an important strategy. Each week, like a Sunday night, review your assignments, your notes, and your calendar. Be mindful that as deadlines and exams approach, your weekly routine must adapt to them! What is the best time in a week you can review?

- **Prioritize your assignments**

When studying, get in the habit of beginning with the most difficult subject or task. You'll be fresh, and have more energy to take them on when you are at your best. For more difficult courses of study, try to be flexible: for example, build in reaction time when you can get feedback on assignments before they are due. What subject has always caused you problems?

- **Achieve "stage one"--get something done!**

The Chinese adage of the longest journey starting with a single step has a couple of meanings: First, you launch the project! Second, by starting, you may realize that there are some things you have not planned for in your process. Details of an assignment are not always evident until you begin the assignment. Another adage is that "perfection is the enemy of good", especially when it prevents you from starting! Given that you build in review, roughly draft your idea and get going! You will have time to edit and develop later. What is a first step you can identify for an assignment to get yourself started?



- **Postpone unnecessary activities until the work is done!**

Postpone tasks or routines that can be put off until your school work is finished!

This can be the most difficult challenge of time management. As learners we always meet unexpected opportunities that look appealing, then result in poor performance on a test, on a paper, or in preparation for a task. Distracting activities will be more enjoyable later without the pressure of the test, assignment, etc. hanging over your head. Think in terms of pride of accomplishment. Instead of saying "no" learn to say "later".

What is one distraction that causes you to stop studying?

- **Identify resources to help you**

Are there tutors? An expert friend? Have you tried a keyword search on the Internet to get better explanations? Are there specialists in the library that can point you to resources? What about professionals and professional organizations. Using outside resources can save you time and energy, and solve problems.

Write down three examples for that difficult subject above?

Be as specific as possible.

- **Use your free time wisely**

Think of times when you can study "bits" as when walking, riding the bus, etc. Perhaps you've got music to listen to for your course in music appreciation, or drills in language learning? If you are walking or biking to school, when best to listen? Perhaps you are in a line waiting? Perfect for routine tasks like flash cards, or if you can concentrate, to read or review a chapter. The bottom line is to put your time to good use.

What is one example of applying free time to your studies?

- **Review notes and readings just before class**

This may prompt a question or two about something you don't quite understand, to ask about in class, or after. It also demonstrates to your teacher that you are interested and have prepared.

How would you make time to review?

Is there free time you can use?

- **Review lecture notes just after class**

Then review lecture material immediately after class.

The first 24 hours are critical. Forgetting is greatest within 24 hours without review!

How would you do this?

Is there free time you can use?

### **Select one of the ten applications above and develop a new study habit!**

Try something you have a good chance of following through and accomplishing.

Nothing succeeds like a first successful try!

Develop criteria for adjusting your schedule to meet both your academic and non-academic needs

## Effective tips:

- **Create a simple "To Do" list**  
This simple program will help you identify a few items, the reason for doing them, a timeline for getting them done, and then printing this simple list and posting it for reminders.  
**Download a simple "to do" list here**
  
- **Daily/weekly planner**  
Write down appointments, classes, and meetings on a chronological log book or chart.  
If you are more visual, sketch out your schedule  
First thing in the morning, check what's ahead for the day  
always go to sleep knowing you're prepared for tomorrow  
**Download a simple "Daily/weekly planner" here**
  
- **Long term planner**  
Use a monthly chart so that you can plan ahead.  
Long term planners will also serve as a reminder to constructively plan time for you.  
**Download a simple "Long term planner" here**

## Section 5: Netiquette

### E-guide on social interaction and communicating electronically

**Communicating clearly on the Internet** without creating misunderstandings is a challenge.

One problem is that you haven't any facial expressions, body language, or environment to help you express yourself; another that there is little "give and take" for developing what you mean to say or are discussing

### **These guidelines hopefully will help you:**

- **Be clear**  
Make sure the subject line (e-mail) or title (web page) reflects your content
- **Use appropriate language**  
If you have a question on whether or not you are too emotional, don't send the message, save it, and review it "later"  
Remember: no one can guess your mood, see your facial expressions, etc.  
All they have are your words, and your words can express the opposite of what you feel  
Don't use ALL CAPITAL LETTERS--it's equal to shouting or screaming
- **Be brief**  
If your message is short, people will be more likely to read it
- **Make a good impression**  
Your words and content represent you; review/edit your words and images before sending
- **Be selective on what information**  
you put in an e-mail or on a web site:

Information on the Internet is very public, and can be seen by anyone in the world including criminals, future employers, and governments

- **Forward e-mail messages you receive**  
only with permission of the sender
- **Remember you are not anonymous**  
What you write in an e-mail and web site can be traced back to you
- Consider others  
If you are upset by what you read or see on the Internet, forgive bad spelling or stupidity;  
If you think it violates the law, forward it to the FBI or your state's Attorney General
- **Obey copyright laws**  
Don't use others' images, content, etc. without permission  
Don't forward e-mail, or use web site content without permission

## Section 6: What you need

### Online Training Computer Requirements

Realistic Training Options Online is primarily an internet-based program, so some basic computer skills and tools are required to use it. Fortunately, if you've gotten this far you are well on your way to getting the most out of Realistic Training Options Online. However there are a few things which we encourage participants to check to ensure they have the best experience. Please note that all of the software listed here is free – you shouldn't have to pay for any software to complete the course.

#### 1. **Bandwidth (internet speed)**

Poor bandwidth will not prevent you from completing Online Chemical Accreditation, however you will have to wait longer for a presentation to download before you can view it.

#### 2. **Firewalls**

Some firewalls may block parts of Online Accreditation. If you have trouble viewing presentations or downloading files, particularly if you're using a company computer, you may need to consult whoever manages your computer.

#### 3. **Update your internet browser**

This is the software that sits between the internet and your computer screen. If you are reading this then you are already using an internet browser. There are a few different brands of browser, the most common of which are: Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox and Google Chrome. This is always good practice because the latest versions have more features, and are faster and more secure.

#### 4. **Get Adobe Flash Player**

Adobe Flash Player is a software that works with your browser to bring video, audio and other interactive elements to the web. We use Flash for our online presentations and videos, so it is essential to successful completion of this course. Even if you already have Flash installed, we recommend that you get the latest version of Adobe Flash Player. Please note that it is NOT necessary or recommended to install 'Google Toolbar' with Adobe Flash Player.

#### 5. **Get Adobe Reader**

Adobe Reader is a software which allows you to view PDF files. We occasionally use this format to provide resources such as spray records because you can easily view the files for free. We recommend that you get the latest version of Adobe Reader. Please note that it is NOT necessary or recommended to install 'Google Toolbar' with Adobe Reader.

## Section 7: Assessments

### Assessment Requirements

Each unit of competency contains assessment requirements grouped into three areas:

- performance evidence
- knowledge evidence
- Assessment conditions.

Performance and knowledge evidence describe what a learner must demonstrate in order to be considered competent. Assessment conditions describe the conditions under which a learner must demonstrate this, including any specific requirements for resources, trainers and assessors and the context for assessment.

Some training packages and courses may not have been updated to this format. In these cases, 'required skills and knowledge' and 'evidence guide' or similar terms are used. Refer to the criteria for the unit of study this can be found at [www.training.gov.au](http://www.training.gov.au).

When planning assessment, ensure you address all of the requirements of the unit or module. This does not mean you have to develop separate assessment activities for each item, but that, as a whole your assessment activities must cover every area required. To achieve a 'competent' result, learners must meet all the requirements of the unit.

As similar requirements are often expressed in multiple units of competency, you can often 'cluster' a number of units together for assessment to avoid repeating assessment of the same tasks. If you do this, take care to address all relevant environments and contexts in the assessment process and to meet any pre-requisite requirements for every unit or module in the cluster. Analysis of each individual requirement across the cluster of units will reveal where such assessment methods are appropriate and where discrete assessment activities may be required.

The following is a sample of the document that may be required to assess your competency:

1. Self-assessment tool
2. RPL tools
3. Practical demonstration / assessment
4. Assignment tasks
5. Third party reports
6. Theory assessment