

Congratulations on your decision to give yourself the gift of more education!

How to Succeed in your Online Classes

Tips from SUNY Broome Professor [Kathleen McKenna](#), January 2021

I. All online classes:

Stay in regular contact with your professors from before the semester starts until the end of the semester. If there is **anything** you don't understand--how to do things, or content in the course--Ask! There's no such thing as a stupid question.

Learn how to use all the technology required for the course--ideally before the course begins. Take the Blackboard orientation course found in your Blackboard account.

Keep a good planner, and include everything you need to do each week: your class meetings, your deadlines, your time for homework/projects, your time for exercise, your time for relaxation, and time for a job if you have one. If you are a full-time student, expect to dedicate about 30-40 hours per week on average to school--including classes and homework.

As you plan, be realistic. When is the best time of day for you to read, to exercise, to work on written work? How long can you realistically focus on one thing?

Read the syllabus for each course. Learn each professor's policies and expectations. Include key dates in your planner. Ask questions if anything is unclear. Pay particular attention to the question of how your professors will treat late work.

Pay close attention to the grading rubrics for everything you will do. They explain exactly how the assignment will be graded and how much each aspect of the project is worth. Use each rubric as a checklist when you work on an assignment.

Check your sunybroome email regularly. Professors often email announcements to the whole class, or reach out to individual students via SUNY Broome email.

If you have an emergency, please don't disappear. Stay in contact with us. We will work with you.

II. Your asynchronous work in Blackboard. Asynchronous = you decide when you will complete the work that is due each week. Some classes are fully asynchronous. Others have asynchronous assignments in Blackboard.

Keep a calendar. This is even more important here--no one will be reminding you of the work you need to complete each week. When in doubt, ask your questions early about an assignment.

Do your work first in a GoogleDoc or in Word or PowerPoint. Save it there and then copy it or upload it into Blackboard. (Blackboard is notorious for not saving work if you move to another screen while a project is open.)

If you are answering a question in a Discussion, copy the question into your answer too. It makes it easier for you and for your readers.

Unless you are dealing with an emergency, do not miss deadlines for assignments. Start on them early and turn them in on time. You may not be able to do your very best work every week, but *something* is better than a grade of zero. Zeros destroy averages.

II. Live online / remote / teleconference classes with Zoom or Collaborate

Get up out of bed. Get dressed. Settle in at a work space where you can use your computer and a notebook.

Come on time and be there every time, unless you have an emergency.

Have paper and pen/pencil there every time.

Use the Chat function. Ask questions. Participate. Offer your own ideas.

Consider making a commitment to having your camera on when you can, even if your professor doesn't require it, and even on bad hair days. We have bad hair days too, especially during the pandemic ;-). Having your camera on may minimize other temptations that pull on your attention.

Faculty and other students often rely on nonverbal cues to see when you have a question, or see something differently, or simply want to join in the conversation.

Leaving your camera on will also help us all get to know you and help you get to know us all too, and to be part of the class community--a nice counter to the isolation of the pandemic.

It's also good experience for future professional settings, and for job interviews too.

(Note: there's a real conversation going on among the experts, including experts on this campus, about whether or not professors should require students to turn on their cameras, with pros and cons on both sides. We recognize that it's not possible for all students every day. Stay in touch with us about what you can and cannot do.)

Remember, we are all in this pandemic together! We need to be creative, to be flexible, to work hard, to work steadily, to maintain a sense of humor, and to support one another over our 15 weeks together.

We are all cultivating useful new 21st Century skills.

We are only in class a few hours each week. We want to help. We want you to succeed. Reach out to us for help in class and out of class.

We will all have stories to tell our kids and grandkids about 2020-2021!