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## A GUIDE TO SUCCESS IN RANKEN ONLINE COURSES

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### STUDENT SUCCESS CENTER

Like most colleges and universities across the country, Ranken offers many online courses. These courses can give students the opportunity to learn and to complete their graduation requirements while working around their busy schedules. However, sometimes students struggle in adapting to the online format. These tips will help you be successful in your online courses at Ranken.

- Always remember that an online course is just as “real” as any other course. You will receive college credit for these courses. The courses are required to be as rigorous as the seated courses and must achieve the same objectives. Online courses are not easier, nor do they require less work. In fact, since you do not spend time in the classroom, some courses expect you to spend more time working on the course.
- Attend an orientation session. Even if you have taken an online course before, you should attend an orientation session each semester just in case anything has changed. If you are unable to attend an orientation session, it is imperative that you contact the instructor right away. Your attendance and grade may be affected by your absence.
- Check Inside Ranken and your Ranken student email account regularly. Your instructor and classmates need to be able to contact you, and they will rely on Inside Ranken and email to be reliable methods to do so. Make sure you check each of these sites at least once a day and respond to any messages.
- Remember that the instructor is there for you. Although your course is distributed through a computer, it is not taught by a robot. For every online course, there is a very qualified instructor. If you have a question about the course format or content, contact the instructor through email or by phone. Most instructors are also available to meet with you in person if necessary.
- Manage your time and make the class a part of your daily routine. Sometimes students have a difficult time remembering to fulfill their responsibilities for online courses. It is important to make the course a part of your daily routine. Complete something for the course every day, even if it is something small. This routine will keep you ahead on assignments and create effective habits. Use a calendar and set aside time that you will devote to the class. Do not get distracted by browsing the web or checking email during those times.
- Motivate yourself to complete your responsibilities. Some students need to see an instructor every day in order to remain motivated to complete the requirements. Online courses expect you to find your own source of motivation. So, remind yourself of why you are taking the course and how successful completion will help you achieve your goals.

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- Learn the course requirements. Every online course is unique. Make sure you understand when assignments are due and how they are to be submitted. If an assignment requires 50 words, do not submit 49. Look ahead at the course schedule so you do not have to complete assignments at the last minute.
- Prepare for unexpected problems. Remember, computers break, and Internet access fails. Your instructor is unlikely to have sympathy for these problems if you are attempting an assignment at the last possible moment. Always give yourself enough time and have a back-up plan, such as going to Ranken's campus or a public library to complete the assignments.
- Use resources. Not having access to a computer, the Internet, or specific software is never an acceptable excuse for not completing requirements. Ranken's computer labs and Student Success Center have the necessary equipment if you do not have it at home.
- Read and adapt to feedback. Remember the instructor who is there for you? He or she is committed to providing you with feedback to help you grow and succeed in the course. Familiarize yourself with your instructor's method of delivering feedback and make the proper adjustments on future assignments. Your instructor expects that you are reading the feedback and improving your work accordingly.
- Keep a printed hard copy of the syllabus and course schedule. All of this information is available on Inside Ranken, but you might need the hard copy in order to contact the instructor when you do not have Internet access. Or, you might not want to log on every time you forget when something is due or what a policy is. Printing off copies of important material will help keep you prepared. You can always print off such material in the Student Success Center.
- Be respectful and appropriate. At times, students do not necessarily feel connected with an online class and, as a result, take liberties they would not take in a traditional course. It is important to always remain respectful to your instructor and peers (even in the midst of lively discussion). Respect the requirements of the course and refrain from using inappropriate language. As a rule of thumb, do not say (or type) anything online that you would not say face-to-face.

**If you need assistance with your online course,  
be sure to visit the Student Success Center.**

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