Student Guide to Learning Remotely*

When the Portland State campus experiences unexpected challenges that require face-to-face classes to be held remotely, your instructors and PSU staff are working diligently to ensure your transition to remote learning is as smooth as possible.

This page is a quick reference guide to help you get started in your remote courses, which will likely take place in D2L. Your instructors will also likely contact you via your PSU email and may use Google tools, Zoom video conferencing, and other tools to help you stay connected while you learn remotely.


How do I access my course?

You'll find D2L (Desire2Learn), PSU's learning management system, by going to [d2l.pdx.edu](#). Once there, log in with your Odin name and password. Discussions, quizzes and assignment submission may be added by your instructor for courses being presented remotely. Make sure to check your courses, your D2L mail, and D2L announcements daily for updates.

- [D2L student tutorials](#)
- Need help getting started? OIT has [tech support for online students](#).

How do I communicate with my instructor?

Check your PSU email and log into D2L daily to check for announcements or direct messages in your online courses. Keep in mind that your instructors are moving quickly to transition all of their courses to this remote format, so expect your D2L courses to be works-in-progress. Using your PSU email to communicate directly with your instructors and peers is recommended.

- [PSU Gmail](#): PSU Gmail is the place to go for information from your instructors, and for important campus updates.
- [D2L email](#): We do not recommend emailing your instructors or peers through D2L because they may not see the message. However, this link shows you how to check your own messages and find your peers’ email addresses.

Will I have class at my scheduled time?

Some instructors may choose to hold live, synchronous classes at your scheduled class time. If you are asked to meet via video conferencing, Zoom or Google Hangouts may be used.

- [Zoom Meetings](#): Your instructor may host remote classes using Zoom, a video conferencing tool. Zoom is available externally to all users at pdx.zoom.us, or it can be accessed through D2L courses. If you don’t have a laptop or desktop computer, you can use [Zoom on your mobile device](#) to join remote classes.
● **Google Hangouts Meet**: Your instructor may use Google Hangouts to host remote classes. If you don't have a laptop or desktop computer, you can install and use the Hangouts app on your mobile device to join remote classes.

If your instructors choose not to conduct class during your scheduled time, they may post videos, slides, texts, and other content for you to engage with independently in the Content section of D2L. Check your syllabus and D2L for due dates.

- **D2L content**: use the Content tool to access course materials, complete required activities, and monitor your completion progress on topics contained within each course module.

- **Media Space**, PSU’s video platform solution, is a place where your instructors may upload recorded lectures for you to watch at home. You can typically access these through your instructors' D2L course, or through a link they share with you.

### How do I turn in homework?

Your instructor has likely created a way for you to submit homework electronically, either through D2L or your PSU Gmail. Check your syllabus, and ask questions of your instructor and peers to get clarification if you’re unsure when something is due or how to submit it.

- **D2L assignments**
- **D2L discussions**

### What if I need to create a video?

Use [Kaltura Media Space](https://kaltura.psu.edu) to record, edit, and store videos. Log in with your Odin, and click “Add New” to get started.

### What technology and skills do I need to learn remotely?

Make sure you have access to a computer that meets the technical requirements for online learning, and contact support on campus if you don’t.

- **Minimum technical requirements** to participate in online coursework
- **Computer Labs**: OIT Computer Labs will be open and available for attending remote lectures and accessing coursework if you don't have a computer or mobile device available.
- **Library Checkout**: The Library has technology, including laptops, available for checkout and use in Library Study Rooms.
- **Student Resources for Online Learning**

To participate successfully in online courses, you should be able to…

1. Download, install, launch, and quit applications such as Microsoft Word or a web browser.
2. Create, edit, and save files using word processing, spreadsheet, or presentation software applications.
   a. **Google Drive**: You can use Google Drive to create and share documents with your classmates and instructors from any desktop, laptop, or mobile device.

3. Configure and use an email client to retrieve, view, create, and send email messages including messages with attachments.

4. Operate a web browser, including navigating web pages, clearing a browser's cache and installing or disabling plugins.

5. Update your computer operating system and computer software applications.

6. Access and change computer operating system settings as well as computer software application preferences, options, and settings.

7. Understand basic computer terminology in order to describe technical issues you may experience with technology.

What strategies should I use to be successful in my remote learning courses?

If you have never taken a course remotely before, you will likely need to give yourself time and space to discover all of the details of your virtual classrooms. Following these tips will help you along the way:

- **Time**: Give yourself more time than you think you need to complete assignments. Online classes can require more time than face-to-face, so don’t be surprised if you find yourself taking an extra hour or two to finish your work.

- **Space**: Imagine that you’re going to class every week, and choose a place where you feel comfortable and focused. Maybe you need a little background music or complete silence. Consider what works best for you, and create that space while you’re engaged in your online coursework.

- **Calendar**: Keep a calendar, weekly chart, or list of all the work you need to complete in each course. Staying organized is half the challenge to being a successful online student. Set aside regular times on your calendar to ensure you don’t fill your schedule with other obligations.

- **Questions**: Ask questions. A lot. In face-to-face classrooms, we rely on our ability to ask questions in the moment and get immediate feedback from our instructors and peers, but in a remote course you should expect some lag time, so set aside time to look through each week’s assignments and ask your instructor questions via email or in a D2L Q&A discussion board if they have set one up.

- **Interaction**: Many remote courses require you to interact with your peers and instructors through video, collaborative software, or Google docs. Treat your classmates like they’re in the room with you, and find constructive ways to support each other.

- **Help**: Don’t wait until the last minute to reach out for help if you feel stuck. After you’ve read the course materials carefully, reached out to your instructor, and emailed a classmate, contact one of these campus resources for support:
- **Online Tutoring Center** for help with math, sciences, world languages, study skills, and other subjects.
- **Online Writing Center** for support for your writing assignments.
- **Disability Resource Center** for help getting accommodations for a disability.

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