



QUICK GUIDE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS ONLINE

ALEXANDER COLLEGE

Based on the Faculty Handbook for Online Teaching and Learning,
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Introduction

Welcome!

Interested in taking an online course at Alexander College (AC)?

As an institution of higher learning, AC is committed to reaching a diverse student body by providing a wide variety of courses and programs. Online courses and programs provide a great opportunity for students to enhance their learning through the convenience of an online environment. Online delivery is especially helpful for students who do not live close to the college or whose time constraints from work, family, or disabilities prevent them from attending traditional classes on a regular basis.

About this Quick Guide

This quick guide is designed for students who are currently taking an online course or considering taking one in the future. It is intended as a reference to help you understand the “ins and outs” of online learning at AC.

AC’s Online Learning Philosophy

Alexander College is committed to providing quality teaching and learning in all of its programs. This commitment continues for online learning. The content of online courses is equivalent to face-to-face courses, and online students have access to support services such as the library, tutoring, and academic advising. Student feedback on course quality is gathered and reviewed to ensure student satisfaction. Technical support is provided by the IT Helpdesk, Canvas Help, and Microsoft Help.

Our Goals:

- To keep you informed of recommended procedures
- To provide answers to possible questions
- To offer insight into services available for students learning online



Being a Successful Online Student

Who should take classes online?

Students take online courses for a variety of reasons. Before enrolling in an online course, it is important to understand what taking an online course involves and consider if it is a method of instruction that will work well for you. Here are some things to consider:

1. View the [Semester Schedule](#) to see what courses are currently offered online
2. Contact Academic Advising to discuss your options:
 - o Email: academicadvising@alexandercollege.ca
 - o Drop in in-person or book an online appointment on [WCOnline](#)

Questions to ask yourself:

Do you have a computer at home or regular access to a computer at another location?

Do you have access to a stable, high-speed internet connection?

Do you know how to send and receive emails?

Do you know how to attach files to emails?

Have you ever used Microsoft Word?

How much time do you have to spend on an online course?

Are you self-disciplined and self-motivated?

How well do you manage your time?

How important is social interaction in the classroom to you?

What learning style suits you best?

- Are you a visual learner, learning best by reading and viewing pictures, charts, and graphs?
- Are you an auditory learner, learning best by hearing lectures, recordings, and music?



Online Learning: What to Expect from Your Course

Course Delivery

Online courses at Alexander College are offered in two formats: Hybrid (Synchronous) and Hybrid (Asynchronous).

Hybrid (Synchronous): Online courses with lectures held at specific, scheduled dates and times using the virtual meeting platform Zoom.

Hybrid (Asynchronous): Online courses with no set weekly lecture time. Students will follow assigned readings and participate actively with online discussions and assignments.



All courses, whether in-person or online, use the learning management software Canvas. All course content is hosted on Canvas. This may include pre-recorded lectures, readings, and links to external content. You may also be expected to purchase an external textbook as part of the course. Specific information will be provided in the course syllabus.

More information about Canvas, including instructions on how to login, can be found [here](#).

Instructor Communication

Online courses are supervised by Alexander College instructors who oversee the course content, discussions, and progress. Your instructor will provide you with weekly office hours which will be conducted over Zoom at particular times of the day. You can also contact your instructor by their email (listed in the course syllabus and course homepage) and through Canvas messaging. You can expect a response within 48 hours.

Student Interactions

Depending on the course, there will be different expectations regarding classroom interaction. Even in fully asynchronous online courses, students are expected to actively participate and interact with each other. All courses maintain an FAQ page monitored by the instructor where students can ask questions. Consult the syllabus for each class to learn about specific participation requirements.

Assessment

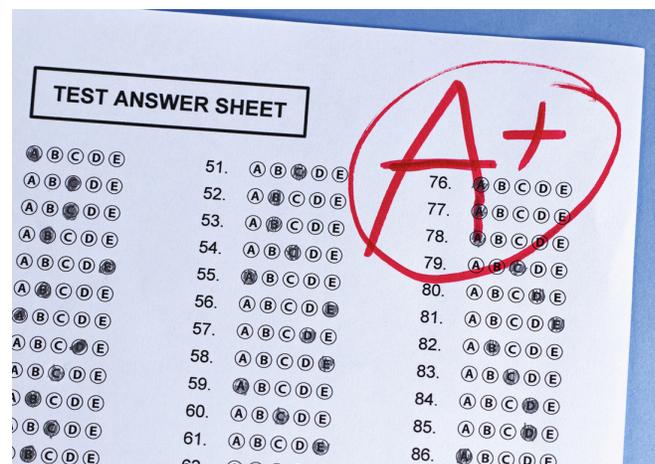
Assessments for online course are similarly varied and depend upon the instructor, the content, and the nature of the course. While most assessments are conducted asynchronously, for example in the form of take-home essays and Canvas quizzes that can be completed on your own time, others will require you to be present during specified times. Generally, final and midterm exams are conducted in person. However, your online class may not have an exam, or it may have an online exam. Check your course syllabus for information on midterm and final exams.

Types of assessments you can expect from your online course include but are not limited to:

- Canvas quizzes (timed and untimed)
- Take home essays
- Synchronous tests
- Graded discussion posts
- Recorded and uploaded presentations
- Midterm and Final Exams offered during predetermined dates and times

Synchronous and asynchronous online classes will have specific due dates for assignment submissions that must be adhered to. If you require accommodations or extensions due to extenuating circumstances or a disability, contact your instructor and [Student Rights & Responsibilities](#).

Grades for your assignments will be posted in your Canvas grade book.



Support Services for Online Learners

Alexander College proudly offers a wide range of support services for online learners.

Canvas Help

Course content for all online classes is available on Canvas. Information about Canvas, including how to log in, can be found [here](#).

Hybrid synchronous classes are delivered on Zoom and must be joined using the Zoom link in myAC not Canvas. If you have any difficulties using Canvas, contact Canvas Help by email at canvashelp@alexandercollege.ca. Canvas Help is also available in-person at the Writing & Learning Centre.

Microsoft Help

All Alexander College students are provided with a free Microsoft account which includes online access to:

- Outlook email (@myacmail.ca)
- Word
- Excel
- PowerPoint
- And more!



All communications from AC will be sent to your Outlook email. Watch [this video](#) to learn how to set up your Microsoft account.

You can learn how to use Microsoft Outlook, Microsoft Word, Microsoft PowerPoint, and Microsoft Excel in a free self-study Canvas course created by the Writing & Learning Centre. Watch [this video](#) to learn how to enroll.

If you have difficulties using your Microsoft account or have forgotten your password, contact Microsoft Help at microsofthelp@alexandercollege.ca or visit the Writing & Learning Centre for in-person assistance.

Information Technology (IT)

The IT Helpdesk supports students with basic troubleshooting questions about their computers and software. If you are experiencing software or computer issues, contact the IT Helpdesk at ithelpdesk@alexandercollege.ca or call 604-558-6198.

Academic Advising

Students who have questions about course planning or transferability to other institutions can book an online Zoom appointment with Academic Advising using [WCOOnline](#) or email academicadvising@alexandercollege.ca.

For more information about our Academic Advising services, click [here](#).

Health and Wellness

Our counsellors provide in-person and online appointments where students have a safe, supportive, and confidential space in which to discuss mental health or personal issues and ask for advice for things like time management or managing stress.

Full information about Health and Wellness services can be found on their [webpage](#).

Our counsellors can also be reached by email at healthandwellness@alexandercollege.ca or by phone at 604-558-6149.

Here2Talk

Mental health and wellbeing services are also available through Here2Talk, a free, 24/7 mental health support service that provides counselling in multiple languages without an appointment. Download the Here2Talk app, visit their [website](#), or reach them by phone at 1-877-857-3397 or 604-642-5212.



Regulated International Student Immigration Advisors (RISIA)

AC offers free RISIA services to all current and future students. RISIA services include guiding students with general inquiries regarding immigration issues, such as study permit extensions and restorations, and visa or permit applications for student's dependents, as well as initial study permit applications for future students. They can also answer questions about eligibility for online courses.

To contact RISIA, send an email to risia@alexandercollege.ca or book a Zoom appointment through [WOnline](#).

Writing & Learning Centre (WLC)

The Writing & Learning Centre (WLC) provides one-on-one tutoring support in-person and online. Unsure if you've cited your sources or paraphrased correctly? Struggling with your statistics homework? Confused about the college policies surrounding plagiarism?

Book an appointment with a tutor using [WOnline](#). The WLC also offers academic skills workshops and regularly updates resources for students, including academic writing and citation style guides.

Visit the WLC [webpage](#) for more information and to access online resources.

WriteAway

Students can also submit writing assignments to WriteAway for asynchronous feedback. WriteAway is an online tutoring service that supports students by providing personalized feedback on their writing. AC students can submit their work to WriteAway any time of any day and receive an email with feedback from a qualified tutor within 48 hours. To submit an assignment, please visit their [website](#).



Library

The Library serves as an information hub in which students can access a range of online databases, helpful 'How to' guides, and meet with Library staff for one-on-one research help appointments in-person and online. To meet with Library staff, login to [WCOOnline](#) and select one of the library research schedules.

The AC library subscribes to a significant collection of some of the world's best databases that can be accessed at any time from anywhere.

Your library database login follows this format:

Username: Student number

For example, "101123456"

Password: Date of birth (YYYYMMDD)

For example, January 1, 2003 would be "20030101"

More information on how the AC Library can assist with your online classes can be found on their [webpage](#).

AskAway

Have a research question but don't want to book an appointment? No problem. Students can chat with Library staff via [AskAway](#) and get help with topics such as finding materials, navigating databases, and evaluating sources.



Student Rights & Responsibilities (SRR)

Student Rights & Responsibilities (SRR) upholds and enforces college policies and assists students facing barriers in their studies.

Services provided by SRR include:

- Academic Appeals
 - If a student receives an Academic Alert that they believe is unfair or a mistake, they can file an academic appeal.
- Accommodation
 - Students with disabilities and other barriers can request accommodations such as extra time on exams, tests, and quizzes.
- Attendance Appeals
 - If a student is unable to meet an attendance requirement due to extenuating circumstances, they can submit an appeal.
- Exam Deferrals
 - Students who are unable to write an exam at the regularly scheduled time due to extenuating circumstances can apply to have their exam deferred.
- Grade Appeals
 - Students who believe that a final grade is unfair can submit a grade appeal to request their work be re-graded.

For more information on these and other services, visit the SRR [webpage](#).

For questions or requests, contact SRR by email at srr@alexandercollege.ca.



Expectations for Online Learners

Be Familiar with College Policies

All AC students, including students in online courses, are expected to follow college policies and rules. As an educational institution providing academic preparation and university transfer courses recognized by other academic institutions, AC is committed to maintaining the highest level of academic integrity in all courses. As a result, instances of academic and behavioural misconduct are taken very seriously.

In every course, Part 1 of the syllabus contains course-specific rules regarding Academic Integrity, and Part 2 includes a summary of key college policies regarding both academic and non-academic (behavioural) misconduct. Students are expected to read the syllabus for every course they take at the start of the semester.

For further information about college policies and rules, please refer to the [Student Handbook](#), our page on [misconduct](#), the [exam rules](#), and the official [Policy Manual](#).

Manage Your Time Well

Time management is a very important skill for online classes. In all courses, students are expected to submit assignments on time and be prepared for exams.

Quick advice:

- Do not overburden yourself with school, work, and other tasks. Consider how many courses you are able to take.
- Set goals for yourself (ex. a grade you want to achieve) to stay motivated.
- Create a weekly schedule and build a routine for studying and completing assignments.
- Set start dates (ex. start working two weeks before the due date) and early deadlines (ex. try to finish drafts at least two days before the final due date).
- Book appointments with the WLC or plan to submit to WriteAway a few days in advance so that you have time to incorporate feedback.
- Stick to your plan, but be flexible when necessary.
- Find ways to reward yourself for success.

Build Information Literacy Skills

To succeed in an online course, you will need to build strong information literacy skills, including:

- Using Microsoft Word and other applications
 - Consider enrolling in the WLC's free self-study [Microsoft Help](#) course
- Formatting academic papers and using citations
 - Consider enrolling in the WLC's free [Citation Skills](#) course and workshops
- Using Canvas and taking online quizzes
 - Check your course syllabus for more information
- Participating in discussion boards
 - Check your course's FAQ page for instructions

Follow "Netiquette"

Netiquette is short for "Network Etiquette." It outlines the rules for interacting with others online in a considerate and respectful way. AC strives to create a safe and supportive environment and foster a sense of community for all faculty, staff, and students (including online learners!). Follow the recommendations below when interacting with others online.

Email Netiquette

Email response times may vary depending on the recipient of your email. To minimize back and forth emailing or delays in resolving your issue, please follow all the guidelines below when sending emails.

- **Include your name, student number, and course code for email correspondence.** Without this information, the recipient may not be able to answer your question directly or provide specific information relevant to you. By including this information in your first email, you can avoid delays from having to email back and forth.
- **Use correct grammar and punctuation.** Otherwise, it may be difficult for the recipient to understand your issue, and it may take longer for your issue to be resolved. Outlook has built-in grammar and spelling checking software that can help you revise your email.

- **Create effective and appropriate subject lines for emails.** A subject line should be a short and concise sentence or phrase that summarizes your question. Avoid writing your whole message in the subject line, as it may not be readable.
- **Be polite.** Remember that you are sending a message to another person. Start your email with a greeting like “Hello,” use words like “please” and “thank you,” and end your email by signing off with a phrase like “Regards.”
- **Proof-read emails before clicking send.** It’s very easy to write out an email quickly, hit send, and then realize you have forgotten to include important information. Before sending an email, carefully review the contents. Only send it when you feel confident your email has followed the steps above.
- **Allow sufficient time to receive an answer.** We understand that waiting is frustrating, but please be patient and avoid sending multiple emails on the same subject. During weekdays, you can expect a response within 24-48 hours. Most staff and faculty are not available on weekends, holidays, or late evenings, so please take this delay into consideration

Email Tips

- Emails are usually responded to in the order they were sent, not how urgent they are. Including the word “Urgent” will not result in a quicker response.
- Reading your email out loud can help you notice confusing sentences or missing information.
- For more information about how to write effective emails, read the Outlook module in the WLC’s free [Microsoft Help](#) course.



Discussion Forum Netiquette

Discussion forums are often used in courses to share ideas, increase student interaction, and ask questions. When participating in discussion forums, follow these guidelines:



- **Do not re-state opinions or use other's ideas; provide your own thoughts on the topic.** Be original in your thinking! If you are struggling to come up with ideas, make a mind-map or brainstorm, review any relevant reading, and consider meeting with a tutor at the [WLC](#).
- **Use respectful language and avoid sarcasm.** Do not use any inappropriate or discriminatory language. Sharing ideas takes confidence and may be difficult for some students. Be sensitive, mindful, and considerate of other's feelings, and do not make fun of their responses. Inappropriate or discriminatory comments are considered behavioural misconduct and will be reported.
- **Use correct grammar and punctuation, and avoid typing in all caps.** Review and read your response out loud before posting. This can help you identify any spelling or grammar errors and any long, run-on sentences.
- **Listen and understand other's points of view – including perspectives that are different from yours.** Listening to and valuing other people's ideas and perspectives is an important skill. Successful academic writing will consult a range of ideas and sources, so being able to consider a topic from multiple perspectives will be useful when you are writing your assignments.
- **If someone asks a question and you know the answer, offer to help.** Discussion forums are a great way to interact with classmates and make friends. If you can help someone out or offer them recommendations, send them a message.
- **Thank those who help you online.** Show gratitude to others by sending them a thank you when they answer your question or share something you find helpful.

Succeed in Your Online Course

The best way to succeed in any course is to follow all college policies and rules and take advantage of the support services available to you as an AC student. Important sources of support include:

- Instructor – Meet with them during office hours or send an email or Canvas message to ask questions about assignments and expectations.
- Syllabus – Each course syllabus includes important information and should be read at the start of the semester and referred to later as necessary.
- [Writing & Learning Centre](#) – Book an appointment with an authorized tutor to learn more about citations, exam preparation, and to improve your assignments and academic skills.
- [WriteAway](#) – Receive personalized feedback on writing assignments from authorized tutors.
- [Library](#) – Get help navigating the library databases and finding academic sources for your assignments.
- [AskAway](#) – Ask questions about sources and citations.
- [Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) – Ask questions about college policies, discuss accommodations, and more.
- [IT Helpdesk](#), [Canvas Help](#), and [Microsoft Help](#) – For technological problems.

For more information about how to succeed at Alexander College, refer to the [Student Handbook](#) and explore the Alexander College [website](#).



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