Ten Steps Students Should Take Before Enrolling in an Online Class

1. **Determine if you are a good fit for an online class.**

Ask yourself and those around you who know you very well, such as parents, siblings, good friends, or a teacher or mentor who you respect, to tell you if you are:

1. A self-motivated, self-driven person who wants to learn, and is willing to make it a priority
2. Willing to initiate conversation and communication with new people whom you have just met
3. Someone who possesses effective time management and is rarely known to procrastinate
4. Someone who doesn’t give up easily under pressure, is persistent and perseveres through challenges
5. Willing to admit “I don’t know,” and ask for help

**Questions for** **Ranking based on the scale of 1 to 5; 5 being the highest and 1 the lowest**

**Discovering yourself** Yourself One of Close friend Sibling or Student Faculty Total

Your cousin you know you know Points

parents

A self-motivated, self-   
driven learner?

Willing to initiate

conversation and

communication with

new people who you

just met?

Has no tendency to

procrastinate and

possesses effective

time management?

Won’t give up easily

under pressure, instead

showing persistence

and perseverance?

Willing to admit you

don’t know, and ask

for help?

**Total Points**

1. **Research the status of your devices for accessing online learning environments.**

What type of devices do you have for accessing the online learning environment and completing your online assignments? Which one of them is your primary device?

1. **Know your own limitations with regards to literacy with media and digital skills.**

Having a computer and knowing how to use it is not enough to ensure success in the online learning environment. Today, digital literacy is the main way to gather information. You must have the ability to find, access, manage, evaluate, analyze, synthesize, utilize, share and create new knowledge and content using information technologies and the Internet.

1. **Identify your primary connection to the Internet and backup connection.**
2. Do you have reliable internet access?
3. How close are you to a public library with computers, internet access and Wi-Fi access?
4. How close are you to other public places that have internet access such as Starbucks, Panera, Whole Food Markets, Target, etc.?
5. What are your alternative plans for internet access?
6. In addition to Wi-Fi, do you have the possibility to directly connect to internet at home?
7. If you are also working, does your workplace allow you to use internet and/or Wi-Fi access to do your school assignments before and after work?
8. **Talk to other students who have taken courses online to get information about the online learning platform.**

Getting information about the online learning platform by talking to those students that have taken courses online is very useful for any student who is thinking of taking online courses. You can learn a lot from a recent student about the kind of personal characteristics that you must have in order to succeed in the online learning environment. In addition, you will learn about the types of digital skills that will be required using the interface and the support systems that are available.

1. **Find a mentor.**

Colleges and universities provide students with mentors and advisors through the Student Services and Advising departments. Students who take advantage of this opportunity, perform better in their online classes.

1. **Try taking a blended/hybrid or flipped course.**

See if the opportunity is available for you to take blended/hybrid and or flipped courses before taking an online class. This will provide experience on how to learn in an online learning environment.

1. **Take a free online course.**

If the college or university provides free online courses for students, employees, etc. consider enrolling in one. Other free options include Coursea, EdX, Udemy, ITunesU, Stanford Free, etc.

1. **Consider whether or not your online courses of interest are accepted and accredited in your desired academic plans.**

Before taking any online course, think about whether an online course is going to be accepted as you move towards your academic goals.

1. **Consider your post-graduation career plans carefully.**

Some graduate schools and corporations are open to students who have earned a degree with online learning and others are not.

*Cherif, A., Movahedzadeh, F., Adams, G., & Martyn, M. (2017). Higher Learning Commission Conference, Chicago, IL*