

## What equipment/software do I need to take a Distance Learning course?

For **Internet** courses, the following is necessary:

1. Access to a multimedia computer with at least a 500 MHz processor, 128Mb of RAM, 56Kb modem, 8X CD-ROM drive, and a sound card with speakers. Optimally, you should have a computer with at least a 1 GHz processor, 256Mb of RAM, and a high speed Internet connection such as DSL or Cable.
2. Have a basic understanding on how to use the Internet, a Web browser, and e-mail in order to concentrate on the course study.
3. Full service connection to the Internet via an Internet service provider.
4. A current version of a Web browser such as Microsoft Internet Explorer 7 (version 7 recommended), Netscape 4.7 (version 7 recommended), Mozilla 1.2 (version 1.5 recommended), or other up to date browser. NOTE: Some courses have material, such as online PowerPoint presentations, that is accessible only with a current version of Microsoft Internet Explorer.
5. A current version of Adobe Acrobat Reader (version 7 or 8) and a Windows Media capable player (such as Windows Media Player, minimum version 7.0) to access supplemental material and reviews. These are free downloads available online and links are provided to download sites.
6. Some students using AOL browsers or who are behind firewalls have reported problems accessing certain parts of the course websites. It is recommended that students use a browser other than AOL (AOL Internet access can still be used by minimizing the AOL browser and using one of those recommended above), and that they not be behind a firewall.

All the software recommended is available as free downloads (links can be found on our [software and plug-ins page](#)).

## Coastline College Student Email Accounts

All email communication from Coastline College (including communication from your instructor) will go to your student email account, the one ending in @student.cccd.edu. You can access your student email account by going to the [Home] tab in MyCCC and clicking on the G-mail Account link. For instructions how to forward emails from your student G-mail account to a personal email account, refer to the following PDF file.

[Forwarding G-mail to an external email account](#)

## Do I need computer experience to take a Distance Learning class?

While you do not need to be a computer expert, you do need to know how to:

- Use a desktop or laptop computer for basic tasks.

- Use a word processing and printing program.
- Log onto the Internet (connect) from a home or office computer.
- Navigate the Internet using Explorer browser or Netscape Navigator program.
- Use email, including how to attach a file to an email message
- Download a program from the Internet and install it.
- Do a search on the web, locating and noting reference information.
- Use a streaming video/audio program for multimedia (Windows Media).
- Use an online bulletin board forum and chat room.

If a student is self-motivated and can follow instructions from the computer screen, an online course will be an enriching educational experience.

## **How to Download/Upload Files**

You may access the link below for instructions on how to download/upload files.

[http://dl.coastline.edu/module/henry/How To Download.html](http://dl.coastline.edu/module/henry/How_To_Download.html)

## **If I access content from home, how fast does my internet connection need to be to participate in this course?**

For minimum performance, you should have a connection from your local ISP (Internet service provider) of at least 56 KBPS for a regular phone dial-up connection. Of course your system will run faster and do a better job of displaying streaming media and audio files if you have a DSL or cable connection. If you are going to be a significant user of the Internet from home, we would recommend you consider high speed internet from one of the local ISP sources. Activities such as changing pages, loading pictures, and watching streaming video will be much, much quicker and more reliable with a high-speed connection. Prices are about \$10-20 a month higher than dial-up connections, but save considerable time. We recommend Windows Internet Explorer as a browser, but most all Internet browsers will work (though others may cause some formatting issues on-screen). Be cognizant of firewall and protection settings when accessing your course. Occasionally, when these settings are too high, your computer may restrict you from accessing activities like discussion forums or other interactive elements. Try setting your security lower when in the course site, then returning it to the higher setting for access to other general Internet locations you are not sure of.

## **I have had some computer problems. Is technical help available before or during the course?**

The College makes every effort to create courses that minimize the need for complex technical understanding in order to be successful online. However, occasionally some students may be unsure of the source of a problem they are encountering --- is it with

my computer, my internet provider, a setting on my computer, or perhaps a server somewhere that delivers content? To assist we have a technical/problem helpline number you may contact for assistance (see contact list). Other general questions, NOT of a technical nature may be addressed to the general military department number or e-mail (toll free 1-866-4CCCMIL or 1-866-422-2645) You may first wish to check the answers to many "technical" questions that are addressed throughout our website for distance learning students (downloading files, spam blocker problems, etc.). For academic/process questions, the faculty and military department can assist with these. For hardware or internet service problems, training or college technical staff may be able to give you advice, assistance, or referral by calling or contacting the "technical helpline" listed in our contact information.

## **How do I obtain technical assistance?**

We suggest you check out the "Self-Help" section, which can be accessed from <http://dl.coastline.edu/technicalhelp.htm> to review basic information needed to take an Online class. If you still need technical help, try our technical help call-back desk at (714) 241-6296 Mon-Fri 8:00-5:00 PM.

## **When I try to get into one of my courses, I get a message that says, "An error has occurred in the scripts on this page." What is wrong?**

This is usually an indication that your browser software is not up-to-date. We recommend that you use the latest version of your browser. We have tested most of our pages in, and therefore recommend, Microsoft Internet Explorer version 5 (or later), Netscape Navigator version 4 (or later), or Mozilla 1.2 (or later). We have also noticed some problems with AOL browsers not accessing or displaying pages properly. We recommend that AOL users log on to the Internet using the AOL software as needed, then switch to Internet Explorer, Netscape, or Mozilla to access their course sites.

## **How soon will course materials be available? What should I do first?**

Since courses need to be "rolled-over" and slightly re-formatted each term, you should find the content accurate for the start generally (1) week before the semester begin date. Please follow the starting directions in the "**How to Begin**" section located at each course site and review the introductory preview lesson.

## **How much reading is required for this course and do I need to read every chapter?**

An absolutely essential part of any course is the careful reading of the assigned chapters from the textbook. The course will cover chapters from the text and each exam will thoroughly cover the material in the chapters. It is critical that each student keep up

on the assigned readings, that you complete each reading assignment by its assigned date, and that you do not fall behind (and end up trying to read multiple chapters on the night before the exam). In order to complete courses successfully, study and reading time averages about 8 to 10 hours a week for each course.

## **How do I use the dropbox to turn in my assignments?**

The dropbox works like e-mail. After you click the dropbox link, a window will open asking for your name, e-mail address, and allow you to browse your system for your file. You must save and send your files in either Microsoft Office WORD, or an .rtf (rich text file) format. To send as an .rtf, simply type your document, and then use the drop down box to the appropriate file extension. Look for either .rtf or RTF and then save it and send it as an attachment. You need to clearly and completely fill out all the information requested. To send in your assignment, click Browse, and find the assignment on your computer, e.g., a Word document that you want to submit. Click on Upload (which does the same thing as attaching a file to an e-mail). You should then receive a confirmation that the upload was successful.

## **How do I get the right answers to the quizzes I have taken?**

Once you have taken the quiz, go to the quiz section again (like you are taking the quiz again), click the button that says, "Take Quiz/Exam", instead of the system letting you back into the quiz, it will show you the results page. Scroll to the bottom, it will list your correct and incorrect answers. Take note of the ones you have answered incorrectly, or toggle back and forth between "Preview" button (to see the entire question with the selection of answers) and the result page (or print it out). The results page only shows the question, and whether you answered it right or not. This is so you can research the correct answer.

## **After I took the quiz and submitted it, I received an error message. Do I need to retake the quiz?**

The first thing you need to do when this happens is check the gradebook. If you see a grade, then the quiz was submitted. If you do not see a grade in the gradebook, retake the quiz. If you are not allowed to retake it, email the course instructor.

## **What if the Viewing Lessons won't work on my computer?**

First make sure the proper media player is installed on your computer. Most of the viewing lessons are opened by Windows Media Player. If the downloading is slow, it might be the speed of your internet service provider or your computer. In the instance you cannot get the media to play completely, there are written transcripts of each lesson. Read the transcript and use that information to complete your assignments. Additional information regarding troubleshooting is located at:

[http://support.microsoft.com/gp/tshoot\\_wmp11\\_more](http://support.microsoft.com/gp/tshoot_wmp11_more). If you still need technical help, call (714) 241-6296 Mon-Fri 8:00-5:00 PM.

## Streaming Audio/Video

Some courses make use of video or audio materials that may be viewed or listened to on your local computer. The process of sending this audio-video file in near real-time is called "streaming". Streaming does **NOT** require you to wait for the whole file to arrive, or to be stored on your local hard-drive before you can view it. However, you do need a small software program (called a plug-in) in order to watch or hear this file. Of course you also need a multimedia capable computer with speakers and a sound card installed. Usually you need a 33.3-56k speed modem and a fast processor (at least 133 MHz) to watch the video in near real-time. Otherwise it looks like a slow moving slide show as the pictures are transferred over the Internet to your computer).

Follow the directions when you go to the site for the Windows Media download. A small file will be transferred to your computer, then you will need to expand (install) the file on your computer to make it run properly. Be sure you make a note of the folder/location that the file is being transferred to so that after the download you may click on the file to activate the player on your computer. Once the file self-installs it will pop-up automatically every time you click on a Windows Media file that is a part of any Website. This includes lots of other sites besides Coastline's that are using this streaming format. Since it is one of the most popular streaming audio/video formats on the Internet, it is well worth the effort to install the software for lots of media clips you will find on the Web. These clips are usually accompanied by the "Windows Media" icon to indicate they are a viewable file. See examples on our Web pages.

## Identifying Problems

Every instructor will give you the same advice. Contact them as soon as you are aware you are having, or think you will have a problem. Any instructor will be more understanding if you contact them BEFORE an assignment is due rather than afterward. They will be better able to help before you take a test rather than after. They may be able to allow you to schedule an alternative date, may allow more time to turn in work, or may be able to offer an alternative assignment that will meet the same course requirements. But don't abuse the professor's goodwill and discretion. Remember they often hear pleas for exceptions, and you need to have a compelling reason to be granted an exception to the requirements placed on other students.

## Academic Problems

Some courses are just hard. It may be the nature of the course work, or simply a subject matter that isn't your favorite. If you need help on a course there are several places to turn. First ask for assistance from the instructor, if you find you need more help, ask for referral to the school's tutoring process. Many schools are beginning to establish special

programs for students at a distance. Third, using a tried and true method for years, you may find assistance among other class members.

If you are struggling, try to identify exactly where your problem is. Is it a particular chapter, a concept, a type of problem? Note when you last understood the content. At what exact point did you begin to have difficulty? Have you used any self-help processes, looked at examples, reviewed your own notes? Is there another book you have access to that reviews the same material? Have you looked at it? Is there a video or other media materials you could look at?

When you talk to the instructor, another tutor, or even classmates, first be prepared to say what you have done to try to help yourself. They will better be able to target in on what to do to help you. And of course, (need it be said?) don't wait until you are HOPELESSLY lost before asking for help. It is easier to correct a few wrong turns than to backtrack over many, many problems.

## Contacting Your Instructor

All instructors have office hours, e-mail, phone hours, discussion forums, chat, postal mail or some other official way of assisting you in getting your course questions answered. Distance learning instructors are employed to assist students at a distance—and it is their job to do so! So, do not hesitate to ask for help. Instructors wonder why students wait until the last few weeks or few days of a course to express a need for assistance. By that time there is very little that can make up for an entire course of needs.

Most instructors have a policy of answering their e-mail twice a week. In some cases they may answer once a week. One of the most effective forums for communications that overcomes many problems is to post course questions and answers on a bulletin board or electronic discussion forum on the Web. That way, one student's question benefits the whole group with the answer. Also, course forums can be accessed anytime, anywhere and can even easily be updated from out of town or anywhere there is Internet access.

It is important for students to understand that instructors are not employed to provide a privately tutored class to each student. It makes sense doesn't it? Public education is predicated on a system of classroom-based efficiency. That cost effectiveness must extend to distance learning or the public (taxpayers) will not fund these courses. In most cases however distance learning IS very cost effective, and with the right course design it can be a win-win for both students and the institution. By providing proactive information about the course content, assignments, and policies, and by providing flexible options for students, convenience and access are enhanced while costs are kept down.

The information that should be provided to students is how often the instructor will be able to respond to questions and what the posted office hours, phone hours, chat-room hours or discussion forum postings will be.

Follow the instructor's lead on the preferred method of contact. In most cases e-mail or phone will be used more for private or personal messages, and the public electronic forums will be used for class-wide information. By the way, you should have an expectation of privacy, and should not expect your e-mail address, home address, course work, or other personal information to be distributed to others without your permission. (Note however that commenting on a bulletin board may include your e-mail address.)

## **Username & Password**

### **First-Time Users**

Your MyCCC username and password will be sent to you two ways:

- **E-Mail**  
Your login information will be sent to the email address you provided for Admissions and Records at the time of registration.
- **"Standard" Mail**  
Your login information will also be mailed to you at the address you provided for Admissions and Records at the time of registration.

If, for some reason, you cannot access either the e-mail or the mailing address that you used during registration, you must contact Admissions and Records for instructions on how to receive your information.

### **Forget Your Password?**

If you have forgotten your password, you can login by correctly answering your security questions. (You provided the answers to these questions at the time of registration.)  
[Click here to change your password.](#)

**Technical Support Help Desk:** Please call: 1-866-422-2645.

## **How do I graduate?**

Students are required to Petition for Graduation during the semester in which they will be completing their final requirement and during the published filing period. Associate in Arts degrees are not automatically awarded simply upon completion of the

requirements. Procedures for petitioning for graduation may be located at the following link: [http://military.coastline.edu/grad\\_procedures\\_and\\_dates.htm](http://military.coastline.edu/grad_procedures_and_dates.htm).

## **SOC Student Agreements**

Coastline is committed to providing our military students with an Official SOC Student Agreement upon completion of 6.0 units at Coastline. However, an Agreement can only be prepared if all necessary information has been submitted to the college. Detailed information regarding SOC Agreements may be located at:

[http://military.coastline.edu/soc\\_eval\\_req.htm](http://military.coastline.edu/soc_eval_req.htm).