



## DISTANCE EDUCATION

### ONLINE LEARNING

College of the Mainland provides a secure online environment for students who wish to enhance their educational experience. Many classes, both credit and non-credit, are offered in Internet only or a blending of Internet and traditional class formats. Additional fees for online classes will be charged at the rate listed under Tuition and Fees.

#### Internet (IN)

An Internet (online) class is an asynchronous format conducted almost, if not entirely online. Some courses may require that students come to campus to take tests in an approved testing location, attend field trips and/or complete other course requirements. 100 percent of classroom time in an Internet class is in an online, virtual classroom. Students must have access to the Internet and be familiar with e-mail, the web, creating and saving documents and uploading files. Students may be required to attend a class orientation prior to the start of the class.

#### Hybrid (HY)

Hybrid courses combine both an online and classroom component. These courses require that students spend 50 percent of the scheduled class time in a traditional classroom setting with the remaining 50 percent of the class being held in a virtual online classroom. Students must have access to the Internet and be familiar with e-mail, the web, creating and saving documents and uploading files. Students may be required to attend a class orientation prior to the start of the class.

#### Web-enhanced (WE)

Web-enhanced classes are traditional synchronous courses that require students to attend the entire scheduled class on campus. These courses are enriched by the addition of an online component and require that students be actively engaged in that online component. (This online component may be hosted on our course management system or other web locations.) Students must have access to the Internet and be familiar with e-mail, the web, creating and saving documents and uploading files.

### Required Student Training

College of the Mainland is committed to supporting our online learning community. All students who enroll in their first Internet (contains IN in the section number) or hybrid (contains HY in the section number) course at College of the Mainland must satisfactorily complete the Online Learner Workshop before registering for the Internet or hybrid class. Students must register for the Online Learner Workshop with the Admissions office or through WebAdvisor. The workshop is free. The course number for the workshop is WBCT 1003 (credit) and WBCT 1005 (non-credit). This workshop will provide instruction on how to navigate the course management software making the adjustment to a virtual classroom a successful one. Access instructions for the Online Learner Workshop can be found on the Distance Education Student web page: <http://www.com.edu/de/olw>. Successful completion of the Workshop will be posted to your student record.

### Support for Online Students

Students who have technical problems when accessing a course can get assistance by using the Live Chat feature located on the log on page of the Blackboard server or they may submit a Support Ticket at <http://com.parature.com>. Support Tickets will receive an e-mail response within 24 hours when received during regular business hours of 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday. Students should monitor their COM student e-mail account for solutions to Support Tickets.

### Advisement for Online Students

Being successful in an online learning environment requires that a student have strong time-management and study skills. To meet the unique advisement needs of our online students first time online students are urged to visit the Advisement and Counseling Center on the second floor of the Student Center or submit a request through the Advisement Services page of our web site at <http://www.com.edu/advisement/>. Students can also contact advisors at [advise@com.edu](mailto:advise@com.edu) or by calling 409-938-1211, ext. 297 for an appointment. Students should consult with an advisor to determine if they are good candidates for enrolling in distance learning courses. Advisors are also available to ensure that VCT courses apply to the student's declared degree requirements.

## Minimum Hardware Requirements

Students who enroll in an Internet, hybrid or web-enhanced course do not have to own a computer but they must have access to a computer with the following hardware requirements and access rights:

### PC Configuration \*:

- Pentium IV processor, 1 GHz or faster
- 512 Megabytes RAM (1 GB preferred)
- 6-Gigabyte space available on hard drive
- 15" or 17" Monitor
- Internet access: DSL or faster
- Windows 2000/XP/Vista/Windows 7
- Speakers

### Mac Configuration \*:

- G4 Processor, 1 GHz or faster
- 512 Megabytes RAM (1 GB preferred)
- 6 Gigabytes space available on hard drive
- Internet access: DSL or faster
- 15" or 17" Monitor
- Macintosh OS 10 or higher
- Safari version 3.0 or higher, Mozilla Firefox version 3.0 or higher preferred
- Speakers

\*Your course may have additional hardware requirements such as a microphone and/or web cam. Check with your instructor for information.

Students using older, slower computers may have difficulty accessing their online courses or some of the functions within the course may not function properly. Slower Internet speed will cause file uploads/downloads to take extended periods of time making it difficult to interact with the course material.

## Software Requirements

In addition to the hardware requirements outlined above students will also need additional software installed:

- Browser: Internet Explorer version 7 or higher, Mozilla Firefox version 3.0 or higher preferred, Safari version 3.0 or higher
- JAVA version 6.15 or later
- Flash Player
- Window Media Player (Mac users can download the Flip4Mac player to view Windows Media files)
- A word processing program – Microsoft Word preferred
- A presentation program – Microsoft PowerPoint Viewer
- Mac and Windows users can use Open Office as a free alternative to Microsoft Office

## Administrative Rights

If you are not using a computer provided by College of the Mainland, you must have the administrative rights necessary to download and install required programs and plug-ins on the computer you use to access your online courses.

Students accessing online courses from their place of employment may experience difficulty due to security restrictions on Internet access enforced by their employer.

