

## MUOnline Handbook, 2011-12

Welcome to Millersville University's Online Learning Environment ...

MUOnline is the distance learning program at Millersville University. Please look at [our web site](#) for resources and more information about distance learning.

Here we'll provide an [overview](#) of distance learning, give you [some thoughts](#) about distance learning that you might want to consider, and answer some [frequently-asked questions](#), outline the [technology requirements](#) of online education, and show you how to [get connected](#) to our virtual learning environment (VLE).

We'll also give you information on how to [get help](#) if you need it, other [university resources](#) available to you, and a review of Millersville's [academic policies](#).

### An Overview of Distance Learning

Distance learning describes student and teacher interaction in which the aim is to deliver education to students who are not physically "on site." Rather than attending classes in person, teachers and students communicate at times of their own choosing (asynchronously) by exchanging printed or electronic media, or through technology that allows them to communicate in real time and by live (synchronous) "chatting."

At Millersville, some distance education courses require physical, on-site presence for specific, and limited, periods; these are called "blended" courses or programs. MUOnline courses use several technologies to facilitate the teaching and learning experience. The majority of our courses are offered in a web-based [virtual learning environment \(VLE\)](#) called Desire2Learn (or just "D2L").

Other technologies that we use for distance learning include videoconferencing, off-campus sites and low-residency programs.

A growing number of students are attending classes that are independent of the

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for future reference!

Our contact information:

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Graduate and Professional Studies  
Distance Learning & Off-Campus Programs  
Lyle Hall, PO Box 1002  
Millersville, PA 17551

Phone: +1 (717) 872-3030

Fax: +1 (717) 872-3453

Email: [profdev@millersville.edu](mailto:profdev@millersville.edu)



**Welcome ....  
to anywhere you want to be ...  
with MUOnline.**

MUOnline, Millersville University's distance learning program, provides an opportunity for people in Pennsylvania, across the country and around the world to take university courses at their own convenience. Connecting through the world-wide web, students receive instruction, ask questions of their instructors and each other, discuss issues, and actively participate in their classes -- all from their homes or offices at times of their own choosing.

constraints of time or place. MUOnline enables student to do that while encouraging high levels of interaction with their instructor and classmates. Collaborative projects and frequent communication ensure meaningful interaction between and among faculty and students.

MUOnline is an administrative and user support office, but it is not an academic program. All the courses, certificates and degrees available through MUOnline are developed, supervised and taught by the same Millersville faculty, working through their departments and schools, as on campus in traditional face-to-face classes.

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## Some General Thoughts about Distance Learning

There are several factors that you should consider as you approach your first distance learning class. You will want to think about your learning style, self-discipline and motivation for taking an online class, and you'll want to find out what kind of time requirements the course will have. Some classes may require you to visit campus and meet with faculty or attend video conferences. Although there is ample opportunity for faculty-student interaction as well as collaborative group learning, much of the coursework is done independently.

*How do you feel about computers? Do you feel comfortable with the technology?* Basic computer literacy is required for online learning. If you're unsure of your skills and understanding of your computer (PC or Mac), not fully conversant with the features of your word processing program (including cutting and pasting), or if you aren't up to speed with current email technology (you need to have and know how to access and use your Millersville email account), you may want to take some tutorials or other education to develop these basic skills.

*How do you feel about interaction with your instructor?* Think about whether you are a good independent worker who is comfortable asking for help or feedback when you need it. Distance learning (DL) requires a great deal of self-motivation and independent work; nonetheless, distance learning is right for you if you do value teacher feedback and are comfortable knowing that help is available when you need it.

*How do you feel about doing course work at home or elsewhere, out of a traditional classroom?* A successful distance learning student should have an area to work that is conducive to learning (desk at home or office). Think about how you feel about working or studying while you are at home. Is there too much going on that would be distracting and make it too difficult to concentrate and stay on course? Do you prefer to get out of the house and into a classroom with other students, in order to learn?

*Can you set your own schedule for homework and class participation?* Distance learning is great for people who require a lot of flexibility in their schedule, and enjoy working at their own pace. But you'll need to be self-directed: you will need to monitor your study habits and create and manage your own plan to complete projects on time. If you enjoy having control over your timetable and pace, then distance learning is a good choice for you.

*How do you feel about communicating in writing and using live online chats?* Would

MUOnline courses are traditional university courses -- the method of interaction is the only major difference. Learning in a VLE (virtual learning environment) is not complicated or difficult. You work independently as you read, write, and think about the subject you are studying. You log on frequently (three to five times per week) to be "in class."

MUOnline is easy to find on the web; just point your web browser (Firefox recommended) to <http://millersville.desire2learn.com>.

Participation in courses requires a user ID and password, which we will send you as soon as your registration is complete. The only technical requirements are a personal computer (PC or Mac) and an Internet connection. **Note that all students are responsible for obtaining and maintaining their own Internet connections.**

you find it exciting to try alternative technologies for learning? Are your written messages clear and easy to understand? If you feel comfortable typing at a personal computer, then online classes are a good choice for you! Online courses can actually help you to gain practical writing experience. You will be translating your thoughts and ideas into effective communication that works well for a global audience. People who take online courses also often develop skills in problem solving and time management.

*Are you comfortable sharing your experiences?* The online learning experience is often a very open environment where students share their experiences. It can work well for people who are outgoing or shy, because you can often reflect upon your responses before your reply.

For more information and frequently asked questions, visit the [MUOnline web site](#).

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## Frequently-Asked Questions

*I have never taken an online course. How different is it from face to face courses?*

Although the content and the course objectives are indeed the same as a regular on-campus class, the teaching format and techniques are different. Students and faculty do not meet face-to-face in a classroom.

The meeting place is in an online classroom where lectures are posted and discussions take place in writing.

The benefit of using the online format is the flexibility in schedule and convenience of learning from home or office. You can work at your own pace. You will have the opportunity to meet classmates online and you will also have interaction with your professor through online group discussions and personal responses.

The challenge of learning online is that you must be motivated and self-disciplined so that you can keep yourself on track! Don't put things off because you are not meeting face-to-face! You need to stay focused in order to get your assignments done and to complete your quizzes and exams at the required times.

*How much time should I expect to spend on an online class?*

You should expect to spend as much time on distance learning courses as you would expect to spend in a live classroom. Just like a regular on-campus class that meets each week requires several hours of work in addition to class time, you will be spending similar amounts of time for an online course. For online courses, you can expect to spend three to five hours each week for every credit you are taking.

*I work full-time and won't be able to log in during faculty virtual office hours. Does that mean I'm on my own?*

Of course not! All you have to do is send your instructor an e-mail and he or she will respond to you. You will also be able to reach your instructor by phone. If you are located nearby, you can schedule time to meet faculty members in their MU offices.

*I am not a current Millersville student; how can I register for an online class?*

In order to register for an MUOnline class, you need to have an MU student ID. You



can apply for admission to Millersville University as a degree student, a visiting student or a non-degree student. Once you are admitted, we'll mail you your student ID and the information you will need to register for classes online, using the Millersville [online registration system \(MAX\)](#). For more information and an application form, please contact the Graduate and Professional Studies office at (717) 872-3030, via e-mail at [profdev@millersville.edu](mailto:profdev@millersville.edu), or visit our website at <http://www.millersville.edu/~muonline> and click on "Student Services" and "Getting Started".

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## Technology Requirements

In order to connect to our system, you'll need:


- A computer with internet access; the more memory and the faster your computer's processor, the faster your connection will run. However any personal computer – PC or Mac – will work.
- A web browser. We recommend you use the [Firefox](#) browser, which is the most compatible with our VLE, Desire2Learn. Free versions of this product can be downloaded for the PC or Mac from <http://www.mozilla.org>.
- You should have AV software, such as [Realplayer](#) or [Quicktime](#), both of which are free, as the [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#) which you will also need.
- Finally, although you can use the rudimentary text processor that comes with your computer for drafting comments and writing papers (these would be Notepad in Windows or TextEdit in Mac OS), you'll have a much easier time of it if you install an office productivity suite such as [Microsoft Office](#) or [WordPerfect Office](#), both of which include a full-featured word processor as well as spreadsheet, presentation and other applications.

You'll also need to be fairly proficient with basic computer skills, such as using an email program and a word processing program.

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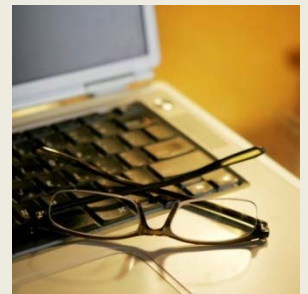
## Getting Connected

Log in to your Course

Point your Internet web browser to <http://www.millersville.edu/infotech/resources/academicresources/d2l/> and follow the link (  ) to the login screen, where you first run the system checker to be sure your browser is properly configured. Then you should enter the username and password you've received from us in the mail. Once you login, you'll be able to change your password. You should see the names all the courses you're taking in the D2L online format. For example, if you are taking two online courses, both courses will be listed when you login to D2L.

Course Materials

Once you enter your course(s), you'll have access to materials that your instructor(s) has/have posted for you to read or view (lectures, video, etc). Your fellow students and your instructor will use the communication tools and chat rooms in D2L to discuss materials, assignments and questions.



## Study Teams

Some online classes may use study teams in order to foster a collaborative environment for learning. It's a great experience to work on a team.

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## Getting Help

Your first step if you're having computer or connection problems: call the Help Desk at (717) 871-2371 or toll-free (800) 509-9605. The Millersville Help Desk can provide answers on many computer problems, Internet access issues as well as answer general questions about access and logging into D2L.

If you need help with your academic program or in the classroom, contact Graduate and Professional Studies at (717) 872-3030 or email [profdev@millersville.edu](mailto:profdev@millersville.edu).

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## University Resources

**Admissions** (Lyle Hall), open Monday through Friday, 8am to 5pm

- Undergraduate: Telephone (717) 872-3371; web [www.millersville.edu/~admit](http://www.millersville.edu/~admit)
- Graduate: Telephone (717) 872-3099; web [www.millersville.edu/~graduate](http://www.millersville.edu/~graduate)

**Advisement** (Lyle Hall), open Monday through Friday, 8am to 5pm

- Telephone (717) 872-3257; web <http://www.millersville.edu/advisement/>
- Email [adviser@millersville.edu](mailto:adviser@millersville.edu)

**Books** (University Store), open hours vary throughout the semester, please call

- Telephone (717) 872-3716; web <http://www.studentservicesinc.com/>
- Email [textbooks@ssi.millersville.edu](mailto:textbooks@ssi.millersville.edu)
- Textbooks may be ordered online at [www.studentservicesinc.com/book-room/](http://www.studentservicesinc.com/book-room/).

Have your credit card ready and be prepared to indicate:

- Course number(s) and section(s)
- Titles of any optional books you would like to order
- Credit card information
- Shipping address (shipping charges will apply)
- Your telephone number

**Bursar** (Dilworth Hall), open Monday through Friday, 8am to 5pm

- Telephone (717) 872-3641, -3683; web [www.millersville.edu/~bursar](http://www.millersville.edu/~bursar)
- Email [bursar@millersville.edu](mailto:bursar@millersville.edu)

**Financial Aid** (Lyle Hall), open Monday through Friday, 8am to 4:30pm

- Telephone (717) 872-3026; web [www.millersville.edu/~finaid](http://www.millersville.edu/~finaid)
- Email [famail@millersville.edu](mailto:famail@millersville.edu)

**Grades** (online)

- Telephone: (717) 872-3999; MAX on the web [www.millersville.edu](http://www.millersville.edu)

**Library** (Ganser Library), open hours vary throughout the semester, please call

- Telephone (717) 872-3665; web <http://library.millersville.edu>
- Email [library@millersville.edu](mailto:library@millersville.edu)



**Registrar** (Lyle Hall), open Monday through Friday, 8am to 5pm

- Telephone (717) 872-3035; web [www.millersville.edu/~registrar](http://www.millersville.edu/~registrar)
- Email [registrar@millersville.edu](mailto:registrar@millersville.edu)

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## Academic Policies

*Student Standard for Online Conduct.* Students in the online classroom are expected to show respect for other students and faculty members through their diplomatic and courteous communication in the online classroom.

*A Student's Right to Privacy.* [The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 \(FERPA\)](#), also known as the Buckley Amendment, is a federal law that provides students with the right to review their academic records, the right to challenge the contents of the records, and the right to confidentiality of records. The University policy on the confidentiality of student records is available for students in the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs.

*Academic Honesty Policy.* Students of the University are expected to be honest and forthright in their academic endeavors. To falsify the results of one's research, to steal the words or ideas of another, to cheat on an examination, to allow another person to commit, or assist another in committing an act of academic dishonesty, corrupt the essential process by which knowledge is advanced. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. It is defined as the inclusion of someone else's words, ideas, or data as one's own work. When an individual submits work that includes the words, ideas, or data of others, the source of that information must be acknowledged through complete, accurate, and specific references. If verbatim statements are included, then quotation marks or other accepted citation practices must be used.

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Millersville University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, or disability in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs and activities. This includes Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Coordinators: Services for Students with Disabilities—Mrs. Sherlynn Bessick, Director, Office of Learning Services, Lyle Hall, 717-872-3178; Title VI and Title IX—Ms. Patricia Hopson-Shelton, Assistant to the President for Social Equity and Diversity, Delaware House, 717-872-3787; ADA Coordinator—Mr. Dale McCloud, Associate Vice President for Human Resources, Dilworth Building, 717-872-3017. Policy on Auxiliary Aids Millersville University does not discriminate on the basis of disability status in admission or access to its programs and activities. Individuals are encouraged to make the University aware of any permanent or temporary disability. Arrangements will be made to secure auxiliary aids and services, when necessary, to ensure that such students are not denied the benefits of, excluded from participation in, or otherwise subjected to discrimination under programs and/or activities at Millersville University. This policy extends to full-time, part-time and non-degree students and students enrolled in both credit and noncredit courses. Millersville University is a constituent institution of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education.