

ORGANIZE YOUR SEMESTER: HOW TO PREPARE FOR ONLINE COURSES

Organize Your Schedule

- **Set phone calendar alerts.** Once you have a syllabus available, make sure to find deadlines for homework, discussions posts, tests, and quizzes and put them into your phone calendar. Setting reminders will ensure that you plan to be in an area where you may successfully complete your online assignments.
- **Use an agenda/planner.** Any agenda or planner can be a useful tool in which to compile all tests, quizzes, discussion post deadlines, homework, and other activities for courses. This serves as a written reminder and will allow you to plan ahead, so you can identify times during which you may complete assignments without interruption and spaces in which you can do this as well.
- **Try apps/software.** There is a broad variety of useful apps for phones and software for computers to help organize your schedule, from simple reminder alerts for beginners to intricate scheduling apps for intermediate to expert users. Setting deadline alerts once your syllabi are available can help you plan for a successful semester.

Try the following apps to schedule your schoolwork:

- *MyHomework* (<https://myhomeworkapp.com/>): A free app that will help plan assignments and their due dates. This app works with mobile devices, Android, and iPad devices.
- *Studious* (<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.young.studious>): Another highly recommended app that can be downloaded to help schedule assignments and due dates. It also features a to-do list.
- *GTasks* (<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=org.dayup.gtask>): A great task manager supported by Google that allows you to set reminders. This app allows you to share tasks with classmates, orders tasks for you, and also has a to-do list and notepad tool.



Study Areas and Time Limitations

- **Take a peek.** Most professors will open courses earlier than the first day of class so students can take a look at their virtual classroom in advance of the official class start. A peek prior to your class start helps you become aware of where and how to turn in assignments, find quiz/exam links, read the syllabus, and get your textbooks early. You can also start early on reading assignments to get ahead.
- **Be aware.** Some courses may have specified times for taking exams for quizzes. Make sure to schedule these times in a quiet area where you will not be interrupted.
- **Schedule study time.** Taking online courses doesn't mean you study less, you need to put as much time studying for them as for traditionally taught courses. Set aside time to study, during lunch, early in the morning, or even when your kids are doing their own homework.
- **Login to your classes every day.** Just like in traditionally taught courses, you need to "attend" courses or you may find yourself behind schedule.
- **Don't procrastinate!** Try to complete assignments before their due dates. This will allow you to give your instructors enough time to thoroughly answer any questions you may have, and allows you to move onto the next area more efficiently.
- **Find designated areas to study.** Find a noise- and distraction-free zone, if possible. A "schoolwork only" area will help you maintain a neat, organized space that you can depend on in which to complete your work successfully.
- **Respond to discussion boards.** Learning from your peers and giving your peers your own perspective enhances learning and encourages classroom involvement. If there are areas you struggle in, post a question to your discussion board so your classmates and instructor can offer advice and insight.
- **Prioritize your work.** Be aware of deadlines and try to complete your work in advance. Difficult projects or assignments may be something to continually work on throughout the semester while finishing smaller projects and less time-consuming tasks.



- **Strive for your best work.** You can do it! Putting effort and time into your work can get you the grades you deserve. Get to know your instructors and classmates. Seek the tutoring that is available to you to answer questions and enhance learning.
- **Stay motivated.** Most students go through their work with lack of interest or motivation. Remember why you chose that field and what your goals are. Keep up with extracurricular current events and news. This will help you enjoy your studies.