

Distance Education

Frequently Asked Questions

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What is Distance Education? Can anyone take these classes?

Distance Education courses are designed for the student who desires flexibility and convenience in their studies. Our courses are fully accredited and are considered equivalent to on-campus courses. Anyone who is eligible to take regular courses on campus may enroll in Distance Education courses. Consult the ECC-Compton Center Schedule of Classes for registration information.

How do these courses work? How will I interact with my instructor?

Students in online courses communicate with their instructor and classmates electronically via a course Website and email. The instructor posts such things as lectures, assignments, announcements, and other information to the site. The class may respond with questions, comments, etc. Some of our instructors are using a course management programs such as ETUDES, Web CT, Course Compass and others to communicate with their students.

Will I be required to attend class meetings on campus?

This is determined by the course instructor. Many instructors have on-campus meetings, but some do not. As mentioned earlier, many instructors hold a first class meeting at the start of the semester (details are in the ECC-Compton Center Schedule of Classes). If you are taking a course that has a scheduled first class meeting, your instructor will give you a course syllabus at that time. Instructors teaching entirely online will provide you with a syllabus online. The syllabus will include the course requirements and information about any on-campus sessions you will be expected to attend.

If my instructor holds a first class meeting, and plans to hold additional on-campus meetings later in the semester, will they be on the same day and at the same time as the first class meeting?

Usually, yes. We encourage our instructors to schedule all class meetings on the same day and at the same time as the first meeting. Check with your course instructor for information.

The first class meeting conflicts with another course I want to take. What should I do?

The orientations for distance education classes are not mandatory; however, it is recommended that a student should try to attend the orientation. Some online courses are hybrid; hybrid courses have more than one class meeting during a session/semester and includes online assignments. If your class is a hybrid class, you must attend the first class meeting. In addition, if you are enrolled in two or more hybrid classes and the times conflict, you will need to drop one or more of the classes that conflict.

How are examinations administered?

Again, this is determined by the course instructor. Some instructors administer exams at on-campus meetings, while others administer them online. Your instructor will provide you with details.

What software and hardware do I need?

You must have at a minimum:

- **Regular access to the Internet**
- **A Computer – either a PC with Windows and a Pentium processor or a Macintosh with at least System 9.0**
- **A recent version of a Web browser such as Netscape Navigator or Microsoft Explorer**
- **An Internet Service Provider (56K minimum is required. DSL or cable modem strongly advised.)**
- **An E-mail Address (All El Camino College students are issued an email address. Go to MyECC located on the website: www.compton.edu)**
- **Current Word Processing Software as required by the instructor**

Some courses may have additional requirements. Your instructor will give you more information.

I don't have a computer at home. Can I still take an online course?

Yes, as long as you're sure you'll have regular access to a computer that's connected to the Internet. Some of our students use computers they have at work. There are also computer labs on campus with Internet access. (These are in the Learning Center, room G-39, Library or VT212A.)

What kind of computer skills should I have?

In order to succeed in this type of course, you must be computer literate and have experience in computer communication. That is, you should have good word processing skills, and be familiar with sending and receiving e-mail. You should also feel comfortable navigating the World Wide Web. It is very important that you have these skills before enrolling in an online course, because it will take some time for you to become accustomed to the way an online course works. Before you know it, you will need to concentrate on the course material, and you won't have much time to deal with technical matters. Check the "Skills You'll Need" section later in the Distance Education Handbook. It will help you determine whether or not you're ready for an online course.

I think I have the technical skills I need, but I've never taken a course like this. How do I know if this is right for me?

In order to succeed in a Distance Education course, you must be self-motivated and be able to work well independently with minimum supervision. You do not meet regularly with your instructor in the classroom, so you must be able to manage your time effectively and stay on track with your coursework. It's also important that you have strong reading and writing skills. (See the "Tips for Success" section later in the Distance Education Handbook.)

Distance Education courses are every bit as challenging as on-campus courses. In fact, surveys we've conducted reveal that some students find Distance Education courses *more* difficult.

Will I have to be online at a particular time?

Some instructors require students to be online at a particular time to take quizzes or exams, or to participate in chat sessions. You may contact your instructor for details.

What do I do if I need help?

It's very important that you get in touch with your instructor as soon as possible if you're having trouble. You may contact them by phone or by e-mail. Our full-time instructors hold weekly office hours, so you can visit them in person, if you wish. A Faculty Directory is available at our office and on our Web site.

If you find you need assistance, you may visit the Distance Education Office located in G-38 or call 310.900.1600, extension 2137 or 2540.

What do I do if I can't access my course online?

If for some reason you cannot access your course, e-mail or call your instructor or the Distance Education Office. We will get in touch with our Information Technology Services department and find out what the problem is. In the future we hope to have a "Technical Help Number" students can call, but until that time, we will contact ITS on your behalf.

Will I have to buy books for the course?

Yes. Your instructor will give you information about the text materials you'll need for your course. They are available in the El Camino College Compton Educational Center Bookstore. Online textbook purchasing is also available.

Do Distance Education courses transfer to other schools?

We advise you to check with a counselor at the school you plan to transfer to so you are sure the course will be accepted. Many schools accept our courses, but some do not.

What if I find I can't continue in my course? Can I withdraw from it?

Yes, but in order to receive a "W" (Withdrawal), you must apply before the deadline. Consult the current ECC-Compton Center Schedule of Classes. Please note that dropping a course is your responsibility – your instructor is not responsible for dropping you from your course!

I have more questions! Who can I talk to?

Contact the Distance Education Office located in G-38 or call 310.900.1600, extension 2137 or 2540.
We are here to help you!