

Tips for Online Classes



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WINNIPEG

Online classes are a great option and can add a degree of flexibility and convenience to your degree planning.

However, there are some key differences between online classes and an in-person classroom experience. It's important to understand these differences and plan ahead so that you can get the most out of your online courses. To help you with this, we've created a list of things to consider before you start your online classes and to help you be as successful as possible.



1. Create Your Own Classroom

- › **Don't watch lectures in bed.** It's not great for energy or focus. If possible, find a space where you can sit up at a table or desk, with enough space to take notes as you would normally do in a classroom setting.
- › **Let people who share your space know about your needs.** You may very well be surrounded by people who do not share your need for quiet or concentration during your lectures. It's a good idea to have a conversation to establish boundaries during set times.
- › **Try to follow basic ergonomic principles.** Your back may feel fine hunched over at your kitchen table, but how you treat it now will affect how it feels in the future. Sit up at a 90-degree angle, avoid staring at your computer uninterrupted for long periods of time, and make sure to move around throughout the day. You can find more advice on ergonomics [here](#).



2. Limit Your Distractions

- › **Position yourself somewhere you can't see other screens or activities.** It may feel weird to have your back turned on your family, or to position yourself facing a wall, but limiting visual distractions will help you focus on the lecture, and reduce the amount of times you may need to rewind to catch what your professor just said.
- › **Use headphones to listen to your lecture.** Don't let your noisy roommates interrupt your class time; try to block them out with whatever technology you have available.
- › **Put your phone in a different room (or at least on silent).** With no instructor in the room to stare at you when a notification sounds, it will be extremely tempting to check your phone throughout your lecture. While it may seem harmless to check a text message or see who has liked your most recent photo on Instagram, breaking your focus on the lecture can mean missing important information or interrupting your learning process.



3. Take Advantage of the Online Format

- › **Give yourself a schedule that works for you.** If your class gives you the option of watching your lectures at your own convenience, make sure to schedule them for a time where you feel the most productive. If you feel most awake and attentive at 7:00 a.m., then use that time to get the most out of your online learning. Whatever works best for you, you should still login at a regular, scheduled time. It is important to be consistent and treat your online course as if you were attending in person classes. It will keep up your motivation and help you succeed in the course.
- › **Pause if you need to (and if you can).** Many of us have difficulty maintaining focus on a single task for long periods of time. This can be exacerbated in a setting where we are not used to focusing on a single subject for over an hour. If you find yourself losing concentration, plan to take some breaks to get up, grab some water, and stretch during the lecture. Then come back and pick up where you left off.
- › **Get involved online.** Introduce yourself on the discussion boards and ask for help from your peers. This will help you engage in your course. You will discover others may have similar questions or be facing similar challenges as you.
- › **Create virtual study groups.** There are many online platforms such as Zoom, Skype, WhatsApp, etc., that will allow you to have virtual meetings with your peers online. This is a good way to have face to face contact and allows you to study with your peers and stay on top of your classes.



4. Don't Forget

- › **Keep up with communication.** Regularly check your UWinnipeg email and any updates from professors on Nexus. The more you know, the better informed you will be.
- › **Keep your instructors/professors informed.** If you are having issues logging in, you cannot access materials, or you are going to miss a deadline for any reason, let your instructor know right away. Please give them time to respond as they are helping many students.
- › **Respect others.** This goes without saying but you are still talking to real people online. Sometimes, when you're reading an email or discussion boards, it is hard to interpret the meaning. If you need clarification, ask before responding. Try not to interrupt others or be discourteous in your comments. Do not expect immediate responses from your instructors or peers; it may take a while for them to respond.
- › **Visit the UWinnipeg Library (from home).** The Library's extensive online catalog is a great tool, but did you know that there are other Library services that you can access remotely? Library staff are available and ready to help you find the sources you need to ace all your research projects. Make sure to visit library.uwinnipeg.ca for more information.
- › **Check the UWinnipeg website.** Although it is always okay to ask for help, try and find the answers yourself before emailing someone else. The University of Winnipeg website is full of information. Visit uwinnipeg.ca for the latest updates.

Need Help With Nexus?

UWinnipeg's Student Learning Technologies Support site has a ton of helpful information relating to Nexus, UWinnipeg's Online Learning Management System.

- › If you are just getting started with Nexus, we recommend reviewing the introductory videos [here](#).
- › If you prefer written instructions, we've got you covered – those can be reviewed [here](#).
- › If you are ever having issues with the Nexus platform, you can email nexus@uwinnipeg.ca for assistance, or complete the online form [here](#).

