

A-BTech Online: Instructional Support

Getting Started as an Online Student

This short document contains many useful tips that you may want to refer to when taking your online courses. It will help you get started, submit assignments, take online tests, and review your grades.

How to Succeed as a Online Student

- Be sure to log in to your courses the first day of class. Complete all first week activities in a timely manner since some of these may be necessary for you to be officially registered as “In Attendance”.
- Navigate the entire course site and be sure you understand the course syllabus, policies, and schedule.
- Always ask questions when you are not sure about something.
- Stay ahead. Check your course schedule regularly. When you have an assignment to complete, read the assignment instructions as soon as possible, ask the instructor if you have questions, then plan how much time you need to complete and submit the assignment by the due date
- When you have an online test to complete, set aside sufficient time to complete the test. Be sure you have a quiet time and location. Let other people around you know that you should not be interrupted. If you need to visit other Web site while taking the test, open a separate window or browser. **If the Force Completion message in the test heading indicates that the test must be completed now, do not use the Save buttons. Instead complete the entire test and submit when you are done.**
- Take responsibility for your own learning. Structure your time and allocate sufficient time to stay on track.

Communicating with your Instructor

Check Staff Information or Instructor Information to learn how to contact your instructor. Your instructor should tell you his or her preferred means of communication. Most instructors will also indicate the best times to get in touch, including office hours if they have an office on campus. (online instructors may not be able to meet on campus).

You should always feel comfortable communicating with your instructor when you have questions about the learning materials, or about completing a learning activity, or if you have any problems associated with the course.

Do not leave it to the last minute if you have questions or problems. Communicate with your instructor early so she or he can help you before your situation becomes urgent.

Where are my course materials usually located?

Each course is designed a little differently. Always take time to look over your entire course (go through each menu item) so that you are familiar with the nature and location of all your course materials. Contact your instructor if you are unsure about anything.

Most courses follow a fairly consistent organization for common course materials:

- Course announcements can be found under **Announcements**. Your instructor may post announcements regularly so be sure to check these at least two or three times a week.
- Course materials such as the course syllabus and schedule, are usually located under **Course Information**.
- Learning activities such as reading/research assignments, exercises, tests, projects, and reports are usually listed under **Assignments**.
- Your grades can be found under **My Grades**
- Discussion activities may be located under the **Discussion Board** or under **Assignments**.

Taking a Test in Blackboard

When you click your test, you will be asked to click OK when you are ready to begin the test. When you click OK, be sure to read the test instructions at the top of the test page. If you see the following message:

Force Completion This Test can be saved and resumed later.

That means that you can save your answers as you work through the test (there is a **Save** button next to each question), and return to the test at a later time to complete it (you can even logout and come back

to your test on another day). When you have completed the test, click the **Submit** button to submit the test for grading.

BUT if you see the following message:

Force Completion This Test must be completed now.

This means that you **MUST** complete the test in one sitting. Even though you will still see Save buttons, these will not be active. You must complete the entire test and then click the **Submit** button to submit the test for grading. **If you move away from the test or log off without submitting the test, your work will be lost.**

IMPORTANT: If you need to visit other Web sites while taking your test, do not do this in the same browser window that you are using to take the test! Instead either open a separate browser window to visit other sites, or start a new browser for that purpose.

After you click the **Submit** button, you will be asked to confirm that you are ready to submit the test. You will then be told that your test has been submitted and you will see an **OK** button that you can click to see your test results. If you receive an error message, contact your instructor.

Reviewing your Test Grade and your Test Answers

You can check your test grade and your performance at any time. Just go **My Grades** to view your test score. You can click the test score to review your performance.

NOTE: If your test score shows an exclamation mark (!) instead of a grade, that means one of two things:

The test included questions that the instructor has to grade (for example essay questions)

The test was timed and you went over the time limit (the instructor will review this and decide how to handle it based on the course policies).

If your test score shows a padlock, that indicates there was a problem - contact your instructor.

How do I Submit an Assignment?

Assignments are usually listed on the **Assignments** page (or under a folder that is located on the Assignments page).

Click the **View/Complete Assignment** link under your assignment and look at the section with the title **(1) Assignment Information** for complete instructions and to download any documents or files associated with the assignment.

When you have completed the assignment, return to the assignment and click the **View/Complete Assignment** link again. This time go to the section with the title **(2) Assignment Materials**. You can browse to the file that contains your assignment on your disk, and click **Submit** to submit the assignment to your instructor. You may also add any comments you want to send to the instructor.

If your assignment was submitted correctly you will see an exclamation mark (!) in **My Grades**. This indicates that the assignment has been submitted but has not yet been graded. If you see a padlock, that indicates there was a problem - contact your instructor.

Reviewing your Assignment Grade and Feedback from your Instructor

You can check your assignment grade and your performance at any time. Just go to **My Grades** to view your assignment. You can click the assignment to review any comments that were provided by your instructor when he or she graded your assignment.

If you see an exclamation mark (!) in My Grades, that means that the assignment has been submitted but has not yet been graded..

If your assignment score shows a padlock, that indicates there was a problem - contact your instructor.

Need more Help?

Visit **ABTech Online** at: <http://www.abtech.edu/vcampus>

This site provides answers to many common questions, and also provides 24 x 7 Help Desk information and other useful resources. We also welcome your feedback and suggestions – see the Web site for details.