Technical Suggestions for Online Teaching and Learning

Students enrolled in online or hybrid courses should be aware of the technical recommendations for succeeding in these courses.

General recommendations:

- While students have access to campus computers with internet access, if they are mostly enrolled in web-based courses—it is important to have their own computer with consistent, broadband (cable) internet access.
- **Mobile devices (smartphones and tablets) are not recommended as sole devices for web-based courses.**
- It is not recommended that students plan to use only campus computers or only the public library due to the time required for completing an online or hybrid course.
- It is important that **you log into your student email regularly**. All school communication will use this address, not your personal home email address (unless changed in your PeopleSoft settings).
- Most modern computers (1-3 years old) will be able to access Blackboard courses without issue.
- **Students should use an** operating system and browser that is fully compatible **with Blackboard 9.1 2014 Release.**
- Some courses have live instructional sessions that require **speakers and a microphone or a microphone-headset**. Standard microphone-headsets are generally supported and should work fine but here is a recommendation: [Logitech ClearChat Comfort USB Headset](#)

Recommended Operating Systems for Blackboard Learn:

- **Windows 7** (recommended), Windows 8, Windows XP (SP3 for 32-bit, SP2 for 64-bit)
- **Mac OS X 10.6** (Snow Leopard) and higher supports most online course materials. Some applications may require a Windows environment. *If you are using a Mac, you should be able to run a Windows virtual environment such as [Parallels Desktop](#) or [vmWare fusion](#).*

Recommended Browsers for Blackboard Learn:

In order of the most consistent and preferred—

- Firefox (24 – ESR channel and 28 – stable channel)
- Chrome 34 (stable channel)
- Internet Explorer (IE9, IE10, and IE11)
- Safari for Apple (6 and 7) – NOTE: Safari for Windows is unsupported.

(*continued*)

Recommended and/or Required Plugins:

For the best experience, *the most recent version of the following plug-ins* is required for many of the resources available in your online courses:

- [Java v7 or higher](#) **Required for Blackboard Collaborate and more*
- [Adobe Flash Player](#)
- [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#)
- [RealPlayer (Basic)](#)
- [Apple QuickTime Player](#)
- [Citrix Online Plug-in/Receiver](#)

Importance of a Consistent Broadband/Cable Internet Connection

Most web-based courses feature **streaming video and/or audio**. **Due to the nature of streaming media, we recommend cable/broadband internet with a minimum speed of 1.5Mbps.** Higher bandwidth and speed will greatly assist you in your online courses and minimize playback issues.

We strongly suggest that you have consistent access to a cable modem connection or higher. **Streaming video playback functionality may be limited with DSL or cable modem connections.** Some courses/programs are not functionally feasible to take with a dial-up connection; so please be aware of limitations that come with lower-speed internet connections.

Recommended Computer Skills

It is essential that an online student already has the skills to navigate the internet, as well understands basic computing applications, email functions, and word processing.

Online students need to be comfortable using a computer and have a rudimentary understanding of computers and internet-based systems:

- Download and install software, browser and plug-ins (and subsequent updates)
- Use email, including attaching and downloading documents/files from emails
- Save files in commonly used word processing formats (.doc, .docx, .rtf)
- Copy and paste text and other items on a computer
- Save and retrieve documents and files on your computer
- Locate information on the internet using search engines.