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## Online Courses: Information for Academic Advisors

Because online education is still relatively new at the University of Denver, students should be advised of the challenges and benefits of this method of learning to set the right expectations and allow them to be successful.

**Online/Distance:** A course in which all or nearly all of the organized instruction is conducted online or by distance learning methodologies.

Note that the **Schedule Type** in the registration system for online courses is “**Online/Distance**” and the schedule type for Hybrid or Blended courses is “**Combined/Hybrid Methodologies**.”

### What students should know about online courses

- **Online courses are not easier than on-campus courses.** This is a common misconception. In fact, many students find online courses to be more time consuming because they are required to actively log in, contribute, and participate on a regular basis. Students should be advised against registering for multiple online courses under the assumption that they are less work.
- **Online courses are not self-paced.** The courses offered at DU are instructor-led, cohort-based courses where the students and instructor work through the material together. Most of the courses are offered asynchronously (everyone is online at different times during the day) although some courses may hold live online sessions.
- **Online courses require self-directed and active engagement.** Online courses involve completing assigned readings, participating in online discussions, working with peers in group projects, contributing to blogs or wikis, taking quizzes or exams, writing papers, or other activities depending upon the subject matter. There are deadlines, but because there are no set times to attend class, students need to be responsible for getting their work done and keeping up in class.
- **Students with poor writing or technical skills can feel frustrated with online courses.** Because most interaction in an online course occurs in writing, rather than verbally, students who are able to express themselves well in a written format tend to have a more positive view of online courses. Similarly, online courses require a base level of technological competence to be successful.
- **Most summer online courses are offered in a condensed format.** Students should be aware that condensed online courses will be very intensive, often requiring hours of daily work. For example, a 5-week, 4-credit-hour course might require students to spend **20 hours per week** on the course.

Comments from past DU online students indicate that they appreciated the convenience and flexibility of being able to complete course work on their own schedule. However, the biggest challenges were the ability to keep up with course assignments and the lack of direct access to the instructor.

If you would like more information about online courses at DU, please contact Kathy Keairns ([kkeairns@du.edu](mailto:kkeairns@du.edu)) in the Office of Teaching and Learning.