

Online Programs: Helpful Hints

Welcome to the Department of Leadership Studies online programs introduction and information webpage. The Department offers online programs in five areas: Educational Leadership (EdS degree and a Post-Graduate Certificate in District Administration), Instructional Technology (MS degree and Graduate Certificate programs), Library Media and Informational Technology (MS degree), School Counseling (MS degree), and School Leadership, Management, and Administration (MS degree and Graduate Certificate programs).

The Department has used distance learning alternatives for over a decade. The faculty and staff recognize the importance of providing these alternatives to assist students in achieving personal and professional learning goals. All online programs are designed to integrate the most desirable features of distance learning technology and face-to-face learning to create a rigorous and collaborative learning environment. We strive to create an environment whereby students experience simultaneously the benefits of high tech and high faculty interaction. This blending of learning formats represents best practices, and is accomplished in the following ways:

- A campus-based orientation is offered each semester for all new students, typically held the Saturday after the start of semester courses. (We recommend strongly that students attend.)
- Use of synchronous delivery as the primary format for courses including seminars for practicum and internship classes (each class meets on a specified day and time as noted in the course schedule).
- Use of Blackboard/Blackboard Collaborate as the primary delivery platform.
- Limited use of campus based face-to-face sessions for specific courses. (Campus sessions are held on pre-announced Saturdays and typically last 4 – 6 hours.) Click on the link to the Program of Study for the individual program to see the courses that have face-to-face requirements.

Recommendations for Students

Online learning has many advantages for students: comfort of working from your personally designed learning environment, convenience of limited campus visits, immediate access to tools and resources needed for learning (websites, UCA Library Resources, etc.), and the opportunity to interact with faculty members and colleagues through online conversations, discussion boards, chat rooms, group projects, and occasional face-to-face interactions. To maximize the benefits of an online learning environment, we offer the following tips:

- Insure that you have a high-speed internet connection
- Insure that you have a current model computer that meets minimum specification (Links on Recommended Technology posted below)
- Use headphones and an external microphone for your synchronous class sessions
- Create a quiet and distraction-free learning environment for synchronous sessions
- Sign-in early for each synchronous session and run the set-up wizard each time you log on to Collaborate to insure your equipment is functioning properly
- Remember, Collaborate sessions are recorded and professors will review your participation

- Remember, all activities are logged while you are using Blackboard. Professors will run reports to view your participation to insure that you are interacting with course materials
- Treat colleagues, faculty members, and staff with respect and dignity

Again, welcome to the Department of Leadership Studies' Online programs. If assistance is needed, please contact your professor, the department chair, and/or the UCA Online Help Desk (helpdesk@uca.edu or 501-450-5240).

Links to Recommended Technology

UCA Supported Computers

<http://uca.edu/it/supported-computer-models/>

Browser Support for Blackboard

http://help.blackboard.com/en-us/Learn/9.1_2014_04/Student/015_Browser_Support/015_Browser_Support_for_April_2014

Browser Checker outside of Blackboard

http://help.blackboard.com/en-us/Learn/9.1_2014_04/Student/015_Browser_Support/Browser_Checker

Collaborate

<http://library.blackboard.com/ref/6c7319cd-8454-42f8-914c-376cd547af21/index.htm>