CONTENTS

CONTENTS .......................................................... 2
CONTACT INFORMATION FOR DISTANCE LEARNING ........ 3
WELCOME! ............................................................... 4
IS DISTANCE LEARNING FOR YOU? ............................ 5
THE SUCCESSFUL DISTANCE LEARNER ...................... 7
TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS ....................................... 10
STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES ...................................... 14
IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR DISTANCE LEARNERS .... 14
LEARNING RESOURCES CENTER .................................. 18
HOW-TO-GUIDES .......................................................... 19
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ................................. 22
DISTANCE EDUCATION STAFF ..................................... 24
TECHNICAL SUPPORT ................................................... 24
DISTANCE EDUCATION STATEMENT OF PRIVACY ....... 25
CONTACT INFORMATION FOR DISTANCE LEARNING

Location:

The Distance Education office is located in H Building (Learning Resources Center) on the Person campus.

Office Hours:

8:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday
8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Friday (closed on Fridays during summer semester)

Staff:

Libbie McPhaul-Moore / 336-322-2220 / libbie.mcphaul-moore@piedmontcc.edu
Angela Vaughn / 336-322-2138 / angela.vaughn@piedmontcc.edu

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Piedmont Community College
Distance Education
P.O. Box 1197
Roxboro, NC 27573
Fax: (336) 599-9146

Web Address:

http://www.piedmontcc.edu/OnlineDistanceLearner.aspx
Dear Student,

The Distance Education Staff would like to welcome you to Distance Learning at PCC! Our courses offer an alternative approach to traditional learning. Students who are unable to attend on-campus classes are given the opportunity to pursue their education via distance learning.

It is very important that all students carefully read the material presented in this handbook. You will find information on how to retrieve your course syllabus using a web-based course management system called Blackboard. You will also be instructed on how to submit homework, when and where to take your exams, and other important information about your course.

Distance Education's primary function is to assist departments in the delivery of distance learning courses. It is important for you to know that while our group plays a role in administering courses, we do not play a role in deciding the content of courses, nor do we play a role in teaching courses. Those latter responsibilities are fully assumed by your PCC faculty instructor.

Knowing this difference is important because it means that you will contact your instructor for some things, while you will contact us for others. If you have any questions about the information in your syllabus, questions regarding your course work, or questions regarding your course grade, please contact your instructor directly (contact information will be listed in your syllabus). If, however, you have questions about Blackboard, questions about proctored exams, or questions about any of the information in this handbook, please call us at 336-322-2220 or 336-322-2138.

Have a good semester!

Distance Education Staff
**IS DISTANCE LEARNING FOR YOU?**

**WHAT IS DISTANCE LEARNING?**

Distance learning is any learning that takes place with the instructor and student separated from each other geographically or in terms of time. For example, an instructor may record a video tape or make a streaming media file with learning objectives and planned activities months or weeks before a student accesses the tape or the file to learn from it.

**DISTANCE EDUCATION MISSION**

The mission of Piedmont Community College’s distance learning courses is to provide increased access to education for busy people to accomplish educational goals. They enable students with demanding work hours, hectic schedules, or childcare difficulties the freedom and flexibility to obtain an education at their convenience at any time or any place.

**DELIVERY METHODS**

Distance Education at PCC is available in a number of delivery methods. Courses are offered via the Internet, Teleclasses (Videoconferencing), and Hybrid.

Internet courses give students access to their classes 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Once logged in, students are able to view their syllabus, course documents, assignments, and materials. The majority of tests are taken online. Some instructors, however, require that tests be taken on campus. Requirements include access to a personal computer capable of providing graphical access to the Web, as well as appropriate Web and e-mail software.

Teleclasses (Videoconferencing) are delivered in a video-conferencing environment with two-way interactive audio and video between the Person and Caswell County Campuses. Students attend class in the Distance Learning classrooms on the Person County Campus in Roxboro or the Caswell County Campus in Yanceyville. The instructor will be in one location, with the class televised to the other location. Students at the remote location are able to see and talk to the instructor.

Hybrid courses blend traditional class meetings with the World Wide Web, e-mail, and other Internet resources to provide opportunities for student-faculty and student-to-student interaction in person as well as online. Requirements typically include class meetings once a week and access to a computer capable of providing graphical access to the Web, as well as appropriate Web and e-mail software. This allows the student much more flexibility, while maintaining face-to-face contact with the instructor typical of traditional education.
### REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS FOR EACH DELIVERY METHOD

Below you will find a quick reference to help you know what you need to have, do, and know to complete courses at PCC. The information is presented according to type of course delivery.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Delivery</th>
<th>Hardware</th>
<th>Communications</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
<th>Level of Commitment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>You must have access to a computer for optimal learning. The computer should meet minimum requirements. You may also need certain software. Your instructor or Blackboard course will list specific software you will need.</td>
<td>Good written communications via e-mail or discussion boards are essential. Communicate early and often!</td>
<td>These courses do not usually require attendance, but there are a few exceptions. Check the course syllabus or with your instructor for specifics. For students new to distance learning, completing an orientation is mandatory.</td>
<td>Internet courses demand the most from you as an independent learner. You set your own schedule for studying and meeting paper and assignment deadlines. You will also have to manage your time in order to meet the course requirements. As you may be geographically more distant from the campus or the instructor, reliance on information posted to the course website or Blackboard will be your first resource for knowing what to do, when to do it and how it should be done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hybrid</td>
<td>You must have access to a computer for optimal learning. The computer should meet minimum requirements. You may also need certain software. You can get some</td>
<td>Good written communications outside of class (usually via e-mail) are essential. Communicate early and often!</td>
<td>Mandatory attendance is in force for these classes just as in classes that regularly meet face-to-face. The room where they meet is posted in the</td>
<td>These courses require you to be as independent and resourceful as any course taught face-to-face on campus. Regular class meetings set the pace.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of this software from the free downloads section. Your instructor or Blackboard course will list specific software you will need.

course brochure. An orientation is conducted the first day of class.

THE SUCCESSFUL DISTANCE LEARNER

Based on advice from experienced distance instructors and students, tips are provided to help you get the most out of distance learning.

GOOD STUDY HABITS AND ABILITIES

One way to be a successful distance learner is to develop good habits and abilities early. These habits and abilities are:

- check your e-mail at least once a day
- send copies of all project-related e-mail to the whole group (when working on a group project)
- depend on yourself as much as possible
- use resources available to you, including online help, tutorials, manuals, course syllabi, assignment directions, and the Internet
- monitor your own progress by noting where you are in the course, which assignments you have completed and which lie ahead
- communicate with your instructor and peers
  - reach out when you need someone to talk to, feel frustrated or need help remember you are not alone
  - contribute advice or ideas about the real-world as it applies to the subject matter you are studying

Learners who have good learning self-awareness usually have good strategies for better understanding new information and may be more successful in a distance learning environment. Learning self-awareness (metacognition) is your ability to be aware of how well you are learning; in other words, to know when you understand or don’t understand new information when you read it or it is presented.

LEARNING STYLE

When it comes to learning, everyone is different, having their own preferred approaches to new material and their own preferred style of learning. Assessing your skills and preferences will help you select the type of learning strategies that are most likely to keep you interested and help you reach your learning goals. Visit this site for a self-analysis and more information on learning
Another characteristic shared by successful distance learners is self-discipline. This characteristic is usually seen in the learner’s ability to stay current with class assignments, participate on a regular basis in online discussions, and develop and adhere to a schedule for class activities.

One thing you can do to promote self-discipline is to dedicate a place for studying. Your own space where you can shut the door, leave papers everywhere, and work in peace is necessary. If you try to share study space with the dining room or bedroom, food or sleep will take priority over studying.

Distance learners must have self-motivation. Unlike traditional courses in which the students and instructor meet face-to-face once or several times a week, most learning activities and communication in distance courses are asynchronous, meaning that class members participate and complete their assignments at different times throughout the day or week. This arrangement can allow you to do class work when it’s most convenient for you. However, with this increased freedom and flexibility comes responsibility. It will be up to you to motivate yourself to keep up with assignments.

**TIME MANAGEMENT**

Set aside a significant amount of time each week for class work. Distance education classes require as much time and effort as instructor-led classes, if not more. Develop a schedule and stick to it. Without the structure of weekly class meetings, you may be tempted to put off class work until the last minute. Instead, you should give yourself extra time to do your work, because technological difficulties and asynchronous communication can slow down the process.

To be prepared, read the syllabus and other course materials carefully to understand:

- class requirements assignment due dates
- the proper form assignments should take
- the time it will take to get assignments in the proper form, and
- contact information for your instructor and classmates in case you need help.
- Once you have the big picture, mark important dates on your calendar.

Technology is not all that we might expect and problems occur that are beyond our control. Servers go down, computers crash, programs freeze and work may be lost.

There are, however, things that are very much in your control. Plan ahead; allow time for downloading and installing software (such as plug-ins) that you need for class. Your instructor will often list these in your course syllabus. Download and install this software early, then practice using it. Software programs take time to learn, and the night before an assignment is due is not the time.

If you’ll be accessing the Internet from work, find out if your company has a firewall. A firewall may prevent you from accessing particular web sites or using browser plug-ins to view video...
and audio, and interfere with file transfers.

Expect and plan for glitches and delays by starting assignments early, backing up your work regularly and making contingency plans for chats or online exams. Don't wait until the last minute!

**TIME COMMITMENT**

Along with time management goes time commitment and perhaps creating your own study space away from outside distractions as mentioned above.

Completing course assignments and other learning activities can take from five to fifteen hours or more per week. And you may find that you need to be online almost every day. So before enrolling, be sure you can set aside enough time to keep up with your daily or weekly assignments.

**CLASS COMMUNICATION**

Distance classes require a great deal of communication with the instructor and fellow students for assignments and class activities. But without regular face-to-face meetings, it’s hard to develop personal relationships. In fact, it’s easy to get isolated and feel lonely. Get to know your instructor and classmates by sending e-mail, participating in discussions, and joining chat rooms. You’ll find that just like in regular classes, people are your greatest resource. They can give you help, advice and support when you need it, and help get you through the rough spots. You’ll also have a richer, more rewarding learning experience if you reach out.

Good communication skills for distance course participation include:

- Clearly expressing yourself in writing
- Thinking ideas through before responding
- Observing “netiquette,” remaining polite and respectful in your communications
- Asking for help when you need it

In distance courses, nearly all communication is written, so it is critical that you feel comfortable expressing yourself in writing. If you feel that you are weak in this area, try to brush up on your writing skills and find out how much writing is required for the course before enrolling.

Communicating clearly on the Internet without creating misunderstandings is a challenge. One problem is that you haven’t any facial expressions, body language, or environment to help you express yourself.

These guidelines should help you:

- Be clear. Make sure that the subject line or title matches your content.
- Always include a subject line with an e-mail message. The subject line should include, at the very least, the course ID as well as a description of what the e-mail is about. Include your first and last name.
- Think two or three times before responding to a posting in anger. Try writing out what you have to say, editing it and setting it aside for a few hours before rereading it again
and deciding to post it. Think to yourself, am I sure this is what the other person really meant with their posting? Could I have misinterpreted it? Better to ask for clarification before launching

- Do not use ALL CAPITAL LETTERS--it's equal to screaming. Avoid offensive language.
- Make a good impression. Your words and content represent you. Review and edit your words and images before sending.
- Be selective on what information you put in an e-mail. Information on the Internet is public and can be seen by anyone in the world, including future employers.
- Remember you are not anonymous. What you write in an e-mail can be traced back to you.
- Be brief. If your message is short, people will be more likely to read it.
- Be careful with humor and sarcasm. They come across differently online and can easily be misinterpreted. This does not mean to avoid humor. Humor has its place in any classroom, on-ground or online. Just be sure to identify humor as such to avoid misinterpretation.

**SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING**

As you explore the many avenues of learning available and begin to define your individual path, you will still need to work with your instructors to make sure you are meeting the requirements of the individual courses. Proving you understand the subject matter and can apply what is taught is still important.

**DEVELOP SELF-DISCIPLINE**

This need may seem fairly obvious, but without self-discipline, you cannot be a successful online learner. In residential classes, you have an instructor and peers with whom you interact on a regular basis. You also typically meet at a certain time and place each week. This interaction and schedule help to keep you on task in your coursework. In an online learning environment, especially if you do not meet at specific times, it’s much easier to put off assignments, discussion, and responsibilities. In this context, self-discipline means motivating yourself to pay regular and consistent attention to the work that needs to be done, and doing it without delay or procrastination. Even more than in a residential course, falling behind in an online class can jeopardize your likelihood of completing the course and earning the credit.

**TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS**

It will be essential for you to have access to a computer if you take a course delivered via the internet. You may also use the computers located in the Learning Resources Center on the Person or Caswell campus. Students are expected to check their e-mail on at least a weekly basis for communication with their instructors. Having your own computer may be more convenient, but having access to someone else’s computer (e.g., one provided in the Academic Success Center or the Learning Resources Center) will do.
COMPUTER SKILLS

You don’t need to be a computer geek or guru to succeed, but you do need to have some basic technology skills, such as word processing and using a web browser. If you don’t presently possess these skills, you will need to pick up on them fairly quickly. If you don’t think you can learn these technology skills easily, you may need to develop new skills, take a class or do some reading before enrolling.

You will need skills in:

- basic word processing
- how to send and receive e-mails uploading and downloading files
- how to send and receive attachments, and navigating and conducting research on the Web

Spend some time at your computer and on the Internet every day, getting comfortable with your equipment and surroundings. Practice your computing skills until you feel confident that you can complete class assignments.

HARDWARE

These requirements refer specifically to your computer hardware. Remember, it is okay if you satisfy or exceed the "Recommended" settings. "Minimum requirements" are meant for basic use of Blackboard. If you require any additional plug-in software applications, always check with the appropriate vendors as the "minimum requirements" may change.

You should also check with your instructor for any other hardware/software requirements specific to your course. Remember, always be prepared for your online class before it begins for the best learning experience!

Minimum System Requirements: Windows
Operating System - Windows XP SP 2 Home or Professional
Processor - 1 GHz
RAM - 256 MB
Free Hard Disk Space - 100 MB

Minimum System Requirements: Macintosh
Operating System - OS X (10.2)
Processor - G3 800 MHz
RAM - 256 MB
Free Hard Disk Space - 100 MB

Recommended System Requirements: Windows
Operating System Windows XP SP 2 (Home or Pro) or Windows Vista
Processor 2 GHz or higher
RAM 768 MB or more
Free Hard Disk Space - 500 MB or greater

Recommended System Requirements - Macintosh
Operating System OS X (10.4) or OS X (10.5)
Processor G4 1.25 GHz or higher
RAM 768 MB or more
Free Hard Disk Space - 500 MB or greater

BROWSERS AND REQUIREMENTS

Certified: fully tested and supported.
Compatible: partially tested but should function properly.
Provisional: future technologies considered supported by Blackboard Support.
Unsupported: either impossible or not tested.

Blackboard™ Learn Release 9.1 SP10 is tested with a variety of technologies.

Microsoft® Windows® Operating System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Windows® XP (32-bit)</th>
<th>Internet Explorer® 9</th>
<th>Internet Explorer® 8</th>
<th>Firefox (Final Release Channel)</th>
<th>Chrome (Stable Channel)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unsupported</td>
<td>Compatible</td>
<td>Compatible</td>
<td></td>
<td>Compatible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windows Vista® (32-bit)</td>
<td>Certified</td>
<td>Compatible</td>
<td>Certified</td>
<td>Compatible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windows Vista (64-bit)</td>
<td>Compatible</td>
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<tr>
<td>Windows 7 (32-bit)</td>
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<td>Windows 7 (64-bit)</td>
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Apple® Mac OS® Operating System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mac OS X 10.6 &quot;Snow Leopard®&quot;</th>
<th>Safari® 5.1</th>
<th>Safari 5.0</th>
<th>Safari 4.0</th>
<th>Firefox (Final Release Channel)</th>
<th>Chrome (Stable Channel)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Certified</td>
<td>Certified</td>
<td>Compatible</td>
<td>Certified</td>
<td>Certified</td>
<td>Certified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mac OS X 10.7 &quot;Lion®&quot;</td>
<td>Certified</td>
<td>Unsupported</td>
<td>Unsupported</td>
<td>Certified</td>
<td>Certified</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Blackboard strives to make all its products as accessible as possible. JAWS for Windows 11 and 12 were used during accessibility testing.

Blackboard Learn requires the latest version of Sun JRE 7. The JRE can be downloaded from http://java.sun.com/javase/downloads/index.jsp.

The following technologies are not supported:

- Internet Explorer 6 and Internet Explorer 7
- Firefox 1.x, 2.0, 3.0, and 3.5, and 3.6
- Safari 2.0, 3.x (or any version on Windows)
- Mac OS X 10.3, 10.4, 10.5
- Java 5
**JAVA**

Java is a program that allows many of the tools in Blackboard to function. You may already have one or more versions of Java on your computer. Blackboard 9.1 requires the latest version of Sun JRE 7. The JRE (Java Runtime Environment) can be downloaded from [http://www.java.com/en/download/index.jsp](http://www.java.com/en/download/index.jsp).

To find out which version of Java you’re running, click on the **Start** button, then click **Settings** and **Control Panel**. Look for **Java** on the list and double-click it. Click on the **About** button for details.

Having more than one version of Java on your computer has been found to cause problems in Blackboard. You should remove any versions of Java other than the required version. For information on how to do this, go to [http://www.java.com/en/download/faq/remove_oldversions.xml](http://www.java.com/en/download/faq/remove_oldversions.xml).

**FIREWALLS**

Many companies have firewalls installed to protect their networks and prevent unwanted installations of software and possible viruses.

Note: There are also software firewalls for home users. If you have installed such a firewall and are facing difficulties connecting to your Blackboard resources, contact your ISP or the manufacturer of your firewall to determine if your software firewall is causing these issues.

**POP-UP/SPAM BLOCKERS**

If you have installed pop-up/cookie/spam blockers on your computer, you may experience difficulties connecting to Blackboard resources. Please contact the appropriate Help Desk to determine if such software could be the cause of your difficulties.

**VIRUS SCANNERS**

You should have anti-virus software installed & running on your computer when connecting to any PCC resources. Some of the most popular virus scanners include McAfee VirusScan, Symantec (Norton) AntiVirus, Command Antivirus, Virex, and Sophos Anti-Virus.

There are thousands of computer viruses today. An effective way to reduce any possible damage/harm to your files is to have a virus scanner configured on your computer to constantly perform background system scans. This requirement is for your own protection and for the protection of all Blackboard users. Also, one of the most common methods of passing a virus is through the sharing of files (e.g. via web sites, e-mails, floppy disks, ZIP disks, or CD-ROMs). Always be cautious of whom you are downloading files from, and verify downloaded files are safe first before opening them.

**BROWSER PLUG-INS**

For some courses, you may be required to have one or more of these plug-in application programs. Generally, plug-in software should already be present on your computer. However, we recommend that you verify that (1) you have these plug-ins installed & configured on your web
browser, and (2) you have at least the minimum required version for each plug-in.

Some online courses may require additional software plug-ins. Below are some of the commonly used programs.

- **Adobe Acrobat Reader** (version 7 or higher recommended)
- **RealPlayer** (version 10 or higher recommended)
- **Adobe Flash Player** (version 8 or higher recommended)

Remember, all these plug-in software applications are FREE downloads from the vendors. For installation assistance with these plug-ins, please contact the technical support of the respective vendors.

**STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

In the distance learning environment, some responsibilities shift from the instructor to the student, given the independent nature of the learning experience. In addition to setting and sticking to your own schedule, reading all the assigned chapters and keeping up with due dates, you must do a few things to make the distance learning process work:

- Do not procrastinate!
- Make sure you keep a copy of every assignment you submit.
- Check with your instructor for the file format for assignments and how to submit them. Identify yourself in all e-mail messages using your actual name, as your e-mail address may not identify who you are.
- Evaluate the course delivery method as well as the course. Ask for help when you need it.

**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

Given the lack of face-to-face contact in the distance learning environment, instructors invest a great deal of trust in distance learning students. High expectations are held for the level of maturity and integrity in the distance student.

The following is taken from the PCC Plagiarism Policy:

Whether intentional or unintentional, plagiarism is “the wrongful act of taking the product of another person's mind and presenting it as one's own” (Alexander Lindey, Plagiarism and Originality, 1952).

To view the entire Plagiarism Policy, including definitions of academic dishonesty, refer to your instructor's syllabus.

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR DISTANCE LEARNERS**

As a distance learning student, you will likely have many questions about how to proceed once you have registered for your course(s). Information is provided here on completing assignments and turning them in, communicating with your fellow students and your instructor, and other important issues.
**BLACKBOARD LOGIN**

Internet courses will use web sites for the support and delivery of instruction. For these courses, PCC relies on Blackboard (Bb). You will have a website in Blackboard for each course you take each semester, including traditional face-to-face courses. In order to access Blackboard, you will need a username and password:

Point your browser to the PCC Blackboard Portal at http://courses.piedmontcc.edu .

For ALL students: Your username is a combination of your first initial, middle initial, last name, and the last 2 digits of your student identification number. Your password is your student ID number found on the form you received when you registered for class.

**Username:** d1student56
**Password:** 0123456 (your student identification number)

If you change your password in your student email account (the default password for student email is also your student ID number), it will automatically change your password in Blackboard. You will then use the same new password for both your student email account and Blackboard. You may not change your password in Blackboard.

Student ID numbers can be found at the top left hand side of the registration form. If you did not receive a registration form, please contact PCC's Student Development at 336-599-1181 ext. 272.

**I am sure I am typing the right password, why can't I log onto Blackboard?**

Since Blackboard hides the characters that you are typing, you will not know exactly what you have entered, so mistyping characters is common. Try logging on again.

Changes you make to your course schedule after the beginning of the semester take from 24 to 48 hours to be reflected in Blackboard's records. If you've just added a class to your schedule, try logging in again tomorrow morning after the system has updated.

Remember that Blackboard passwords are case sensitive (e.g. Uppercase "A" is not the same as lowercase "a"). Check to see if you have accidentally engaged the "Caps Lock" key.

If you use the numeric pad on your keyboard to enter numbers, make sure that you have engaged the "Num Lock" key. Otherwise Blackboard may be receiving strange characters.

Be sure you are at the correct website  [http://courses.piedmontcc.edu](http://courses.piedmontcc.edu)  (Note: This is the last page that can be bookmarked and still allow you access to your Blackboard courses at PCC - bookmarking any later pages will result in a security error and not allow access to the site.)

**What do I do if I can't remember my Blackboard password or can't log in?**

First try the "forgot your password?" link located under where you would normally enter your password. The instructions for resetting your password will be sent to your student e-mail account.
VIRTUAL OFFICE HOURS

Instructors may hold “virtual” office hours (when he or she can be reached by phone, in the Blackboard discussion board, in a chat room, etc.) especially around times when tests or projects are assigned or due.

SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS

Your instructor will supply directions for submitting assignments as well as due dates, rules and other conditions. Be sure to read over any directions he or she provides. These will likely be in the Assignments area posted in the course website in Blackboard.

Use Microsoft Word to create all the documents you send to your instructor unless instructed otherwise.

Using Rich Text Format (or 'RTF' as it is called) allows any word processing program to read the document without having to worry about 'translating' it into the proper format. We recommend that you send your file as a RTF file to make sure it can be read. To save a file in Rich Text Format, the steps generally are as follows:

- From the File menu select Save As
- A dialog box will pop up that gives you the option of where to save your document, what to name your document, and to determine the format of your document. Click on the down arrow in the format box and choose Rich Text Format.
- Type a "File name" for your document, if necessary. When naming your file, use all lowercase letters without any spaces or special characters (i.e. - @ # $ or %). For example, project1.rtf is an acceptable filename, while Project #1.RTF is not.
- Click the Save button.
- Your document will now have the extension .rtf instead of .doc.

EXAMS AND OTHER ASSESSMENTS OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Your instructor will inform you of how your performance will be assessed in his or her course. This will be expressed most likely in the Syllabus and/or in the Assignments area on the Blackboard site for your course. Instructors may choose from one of the following or devise their own method for determining your performance:

- In-person exams at a PCC campus (proctored)
- Internet-based testing/quizzing in Blackboard
- Take-home downloads from your Blackboard course (open-book)
- Research papers
- Course projects

If your instructor requires proctored exams and you cannot come to one of PCC’s campuses, discuss arrangements for a proctor. A proctor application form is available by going to https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?pli=1&formkey=dDVDSGlINXZBcU0teGhTRXZiOExYdI6MQ#gid=0

Your instructor will provide specific rules for the proctor of your test or exam.

To take a proctored exam on one of PCC’s campus, students must present a picture ID. Children
and food are not permitted in the testing areas. All cell phones and pagers must be turned off and placed in a locker during testing. Allow yourself enough time to take an exam.

**COURSE EVALUATION**

It is very important that you complete course evaluations at the middle and end of each semester. We provide convenient Internet-based surveys for you to do so. When a survey is available, you will receive an e-mail through your student e-mail account. Your instructor will use this information to gauge how they are doing and make improvements to courses and their delivery methods as needed. All responses are made anonymously. Your input is very important!

**COMMUNICATION FOR DISTANCE LEARNERS**

Communications between students, instructors and technical support staff are a vital component to your success in distance learning. PCC encourages contact to ensure that students will feel connected to the class and to help remove the “distance” in distance learning.

Keep in mind that your instructors are human and will not be available to you “online” 24 hours a day. Check the course syllabus for your instructor’s schedule and preferred method of communication.

Be sure to check your e-mail account regularly for messages from your instructor. If, after reviewing the course website and reading introductory e-mails from your instructor, you are unsure about any of the course requirements and policies, you must e-mail your instructor as soon as possible for clarification.

**STUDENT E-MAIL**

E-mail Address: For your e-mail address, the e-mail system will use a combination of your first name, middle name, and last name. The system will generate an e-mail address as follows:

- The first letter of your first name
- The first letter of your middle name
- All letters of your last name
- @students.piedmontcc.edu

Example: If your name is Joe Roger Smith, your e-mail address is jrmsmith@students.piedmontcc.edu.

Note: If you have no middle initial, use your first initial and last name. If you last name is hyphenated, include the hyphen.

Password: During account setup, your initial password is set to your student ID number. For assistance with your username and password, please contact Shawn O’Hara, 336-322-2233.

You will use the first part of your e-mail address to login to your Outlook Web Access account.
To receive your e-mail, go to: Outlook Web Access, https://students.piedmontcc.edu

BLACKBOARD COMMUNICATION AREA

The Communication area of Blackboard offers features for instructors to communicate with students and vice versa. The Send E-mail option will give you various options for e-mailing instructors and fellow students. The Discussion Board option allows you to post messages, questions, and comments where everyone in the class can read them.

LEARNING RESOURCES CENTER

The Learning Resources Center (LRC) has a variety of resources and services specially designed to support distance education faculty and students at Piedmont Community College. For complete information, visit http://www2.piedmontcc.edu/lrc

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LRC Sites</th>
<th>Person County LRC</th>
<th>599-1181, ext. 2246</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caswell LRC</td>
<td>694-5707, ext. 286</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LEARNING RESOURCES CENTER HOURS OF OPERATION

Person County Campus:  
Monday – Thursday  
7:30 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.  
7:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
Saturday  
8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Caswell County Campus:  
Monday – Thursday  
7:30 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.  
Friday  
7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.  
Saturday  
Closed

SELECTING AND CITING INTERNET INFORMATION

As you browse the many resources on the Internet, you will find web pages on just about any topic you can think of. If you are doing academic research, it is strongly recommended that you make use of the library as your primary source to research and collect articles and books on your topic. Resources found on the Internet can still be used; however, you must conscientiously evaluate the source and content of the Web page.
Some questions to ask yourself:

- Who is the intended audience of the Web page?
- What is the source type? Is this a memo, a letter, a personal page, an unpublished article, a conference proceeding?
- Is the author or publisher of the web page listed clearly? Is there an e-mail link to the author for questions or comments?
- Is the author or publisher a professional, or an expert in the web page topic? Is the URL appropriate to the content of the page?
- .edu and .org sites are hosted by educational institutions. Example: http://www.unf.edu. Personal web pages at an academic site (student and faculty pages) usually contain a username in the URL.
- .gov sites are hosted by the government. Example: http://www.ed.gov
- .com and .net sites are hosted by commercial interests. Many personal home pages are hosted commercially.
- Does the site indicate the last page update? Has the site been updated recently? Read the Web page content critically. Is there evidence of bias?
- Are links from the page current and relevant?

**HOW-TO-GUIDES**

**LOG IN TO THE PCC BLACKBOARD PORTAL**

1. Use a computer to get to the Internet.
2. Once on the Internet, go to the PCC Blackboard site http://courses.piedmontcc.edu.
3. Click on the Blackboard Log-In button.
4. Enter your username and password. For assistance with your username and password, visit the Log-in FAQ page, http://www2.piedmont.cc.nc.us/DL/Accessing%20Blackboard/login.htm or refer to page 19 in this handbook.
5. Then click on the Log In button or hit the enter key on the keyboard.
6. You should now be at the “My PCC” screen.

Each course has a separate site with materials. To enter the Blackboard site of one of the courses you are enrolled in that uses Blackboard, simply click on the name of that course under MY COURSES (far right side of the screen). You will go to the location of that course site.

Then, check out each of the course areas by clicking on the test links or buttons located on the left side of the screen.

IMPORTANT: Be sure to read the announcements on each course site at least twice weekly. If you miss checking, click on the tab that says "View Last 30 Days" to find older announcements.

When leaving Blackboard, click on the "Logout" button at the top center of the screen to prevent others from accessing your account.
To send e-mail from within Bb you must first click on the Communication Button located on the navigation panel on the left side of the course screen.

Next click on Send E-mail.

Now you really have a lot of choices in your Bb e-mail environment. Do you want to send a message to a classmate or to your instructor? Do you want to send the message to everyone in the class? Would you like to receive a copy of this message? How about attaching a picture?

Here's a list of the choices that you have and what they mean to you:

- **All Users:** This will set up an e-mail form with the e-mail addresses for everyone in the course, including instructors.
- **All Groups:** This will set up an e-mail form with the e-mail addresses for every student in any group that has been created by the instructor. You have access only to the group that you have been assigned to.
- **All Teaching Assistants:** This will set up an e-mail form with the e-mail addresses for all of the Teaching Assistants in your course.
- **Selected Users:** This will set up an e-mail form allowing you to choose any number of students, Teaching Assistants or Instructors simply by checking the box next to the desired recipient's name.
- **Selected Groups:** This will set up an e-mail form allowing you to choose any number of groups that have been created by the instructor.

Choosing All Users brings up an e-mail form with the "TO" section already filled out with all of the participants in this course. You must fill out the Subject line (as in regular e-mail) and place your message in the Message box. You can check to send a copy to yourself if you like.

If you are not sending an attachment with the e-mail message, Select Submit.

If you are sending an attachment with your e-mail message, select Add under Add Attachments.

Click on Browse to locate the file that you want to attach to your message. NOTE: You should then see a list of your files.

Locate and select the file that you want to attach to your message.

Click on Open to attach the file to your Blackboard e-mail. NOTE: Your file should now be located in the File box to the left of Browse as shown below.

Click the Submit button. This returns you to your e-mail text box.

Click on Submit to send the e-mail message and attachment.

When you click on Send your message will be delivered to the e-mail boxes of the chosen recipients and you will get a message telling you that your message was sent.
**POSTING TO THE DISCUSSION BOARD**

To leave a message:

1. Go to your Blackboard course
2. Click Communication and the link for the Discussion Board OR click the Discussion Board button if it is listed
3. Click the link for the forum in which you wish to add a message
4. Click the button labeled Add New Thread
5. Type in a subject and the text of the message
6. Leave the default setting of ´Smart Text´ at the bottom of the message window
7. If you have an attachment, click Browse beside the ´Attachment´ window, find the file on your own computer and click Open
8. After you have attached your file or you have completed typing in your message (you may also cut and paste from another document), click the Submit button
9. click Okay

To respond to a message or question already posted:

1. Click Communication and the link for the Discussion Board OR click the Discussion Board button
2. Click the link for the forum in which you wish to reply to a message
3. Click the subject link for the message (not the sender, this will e-mail them directly)
4. Read the message
5. Click Reply
6. Type in a subject and the text of the message
7. If you have an attachment, click Browse beside the ´Attachment´ window, find the file on your own computer and click Open
8. After you have attached your file or you have completed typing in your message (you may also cut and paste from another document), click the Submit button
9. click Okay

**TIPS FOR TAKING ASSESSMENTS IN BLACKBOARD**

Do not take the quiz until you are ready.
Close down all other programs running on the computer. Having multiple programs open may cause problems that result in loss of quiz data.
Use Internet Explorer 7.0 (or higher) or Firefox to take the quiz. Other browsers can cause problems.
Do not resize or refresh the screen after loading the quiz; make sure it is the size you want before going into the quiz. Most browsers refresh the page when you refresh the screen. This means it will try to reload the quiz and prohibit you from taking the test.
- Do not wait until the last minute to take the quiz. If something goes wrong there will not be enough time to resolve the issue.
- Do not click on the Save button after each question unless the test can be taken multiple times.
- When entering the quiz, click only once. Sometimes it takes a while to load the quiz. If you click twice, you will get a message saying you already took the quiz and will be prohibited from completing it.
- Do not use the back and forward buttons while taking a quiz.
• Do not click on the Submit button until you are either done or have run out of time. Fill-in-the-blank questions are case sensitive. Your instructor will review these types of questions and manually award points accordingly.
• If you are working on a dial-up connection, make sure your ISP time-out settings are set to the maximum allowed time.
• Turn off any Instant Messaging or e-mail notification. If you receive an Instant Message, Blackboard may assume that you have abandoned the quiz and erase any answers you have entered.
• If you use a "dial-up modem" to connect to the Internet, turn off "call waiting". If you receive a phone call and call waiting is on, Blackboard will assume that you have abandoned the quiz and erase any answers you have entered.
• If you are using AOL to access the Internet, minimize the AOL window and use a different browser. However, you may find that AOL may not consider using a separate browser "online activity" and may terminate your connection without warning. If this occurs your quiz answers will be erased, and you should consider alternative access to the Internet to properly complete your quiz/test.
• When you are finished answering all items, click the "Submit" button at the end of the quiz/test (scroll to the bottom of the page).
• Note: Once you submit the answers you cannot make any changes.
• If you encounter any problems taking the quiz/test, contact your instructor immediately.

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

What do I do if one of my courses does not appear in the “My Courses” box?

If you successfully login to Blackboard and see either no course(s) listed, only your old course(s) listed or not the course(s) you’re looking for, the access problem is likely due to one of the following:

• You are using an older username and password to login.
• Blackboard does not yet have a record of your enrollment in the course in question. Registrar information takes 24-48 hours from time of enrollment (not counting weekend days) to be reflected in Blackboard
• The instructor of the course you are looking for has not made the course available.

Are distance learning courses easier than taking the class on campus?

Students have different opinions about the difficulty of distance learning classes. The course content and objectives are the same as in face-to-face courses. The reading requirement can be intensive. All agree distance learning courses require a lot of discipline. You must be your own motivator.

Is there an orientation that I can take that will familiarize me with Blackboard?

To access the online orientation and demo course, please go to PCC’s Blackboard login page, [https://courses.piedmontcc.edu](https://courses.piedmontcc.edu). The username for the orientation is *online* and the password is *student*.
Who is responsible for initial contact, the student or the instructor?

Unless otherwise instructed, the student should access the course on the first day of classes, just as you would attend class on the first day in a traditional classroom.

How do I drop/add a distance learning class?

The procedure for dropping or adding a course is the same as the procedure for dropping or adding a traditional on-campus class.

What about exam proctoring for students living too far from campus?

Proctoring arrangements may be available to students living at a distance from PCC. It is the responsibility of the student to obtain an instructor-approved proctor if you are unable to come to campus to take an exam. See https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?pli=1&formkey=dDVDSGlINXZBcU0teGhTRXZiOExYdlE6MQ#gid=0 for the necessary forms.

Can I work at my own pace or do I have to follow a weekly schedule when I take a distance education course?

Distance Learning courses vary greatly in terms of the flexibility they afford students. Most courses have some restrictions on how far ahead students may work, imposing weekly or biweekly deadlines on assignments and other activities. You may want to check your course syllabus before your course begins to determine whether or not class deadlines and requirements will meet your needs.

Am I ever required to come to campus for a distance education course?

Some distance learning courses may require trips to campus. To find out more about whether or not your course will require you to come to campus, please contact your course instructor before the add/drop period ends. Information about individual courses can be found by visiting the Online Services for Distance Learners web page, http://www2.piedmontcc.edu/DL/online_services.htm

Do distance education courses require less time to complete than regular on-campus courses?

No, in fact, research shows that they often take more time to complete.

Are there other students in my distance education course and will I be “aware” of them (will I know their names and will I be able to communicate with them)?

Student-to-student interactions will vary across courses. Some courses will require weekly interactions via an online discussion board, while other courses may require no student-to-student interactivity.

Will I get any help from the instructor during the semester, or am I on my own?

All distance education faculty are available via phone and e-mail. In any course, the level of one-
to-one interaction between faculty member and student varies. In a distance course, however, there is an added factor that shouldn’t be overlooked. Receiving help depends upon the extent to which the student seeks that help.

**DISTANCE EDUCATION STAFF**

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**TECHNICAL SUPPORT**

A Help Desk is now available to students enrolled in courses that utilize Blackboard. This 24-hours-per-day, 7-days-per-week service is available to provide assistance to Internet students who have questions about using Blackboard.

You can search the Knowledge Base for answers to commonly asked questions. You can also connect with a Blackboard support representative through several options. The live Chat option allows you to get answers quickly, while submitting a Ticket typically takes up the least amount of your time. Of course you can call and speak to a support representative too.


Toll-free Phone - 866-852-5588  
A technical support staff is in place at PCC to take care of various needs you will have when receiving instruction via distance technologies. Generally your needs can be taken care of by the DE Coordinator.
For help with login problems and other difficulties working with Blackboard: Visit the Distance Education staff in the Learning Resources Center, H Building, 8:00 am - 9:00 pm Monday-Thursday and 8:00 am - 5:00 pm Friday.

You may also contact Technical Support via e-mail at libbie.mcphaul-moore@piedmontcc.edu (Libbie McPhaul-Moore), angela.vaughn@piedmontcc.edu (Angela Vaughn), or earl.stenlund@piedmontcc.edu (Earl Stenlund).

Please provide the following information in your e-mail:

- Your complete name
- Your Blackboard username
- The Blackboard course in which you are enrolled
- A description of the problem, including which area of Blackboard you experienced it in, and what steps you followed that brought you to the problem.
- Any error messages you received. It is important that you provide the exact error message. One easy way to do this is by selecting, copying and pasting the message into an e-mail message that you send to Technical Support.
- Where you are experiencing the problem (e.g. on campus in the LRC, at home, at work etc.).
- If you are at home, how you are connecting to the Internet (e.g. using a dial up modem or a cable modem) and the name of your Internet Service Provider.
- When the problem occurred.
- Your Web browser (e.g. Microsoft Internet Explorer or Firefox) and version. You can locate this information from within your browser by clicking on "Help" and then clicking on "About....".
- Your operating system (e.g. Windows XP, etc).
- The software you are using when the problem occurred and the version.
- Any troubleshooting steps you have already attempted and the results.

DISTANCE EDUCATION STATEMENT OF PRIVACY

Piedmont Community College is committed to protecting your privacy, employing technology that gives you a powerful and safe online experience. This Statement of Privacy applies to Piedmont Community College’s Web sites, and governs data collection and use at all Piedmont Community College sites and services. Please read the complete Statement of Privacy to learn additional details about how some of these sites and services protect your personal information.

Personal Information

Piedmont Community College will not disclose your personal information, except as required to do so by law, or in the good faith belief that such action is necessary to: (a) conform to the edicts of the law or comply with legal process served on Piedmont Community College; (b) protect and defend the rights or property of Piedmont Community College or (c) act under exigent circumstances to protect the personal safety of users of Piedmont Community Colleges, its Web sites, or the public.
Under the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, a Student’s academic and financial files at Piedmont Community College will not be released to any third party without the written consent of the Student.

**Use of Cookies and Web Beacons**
Cookies may be used to uniquely identify a user and they may be used to track individual preferences and other information about a web user. Blackboard products use this technology to provide secure learning experiences, track usage and manage application performance. PCC will not use cookies to run programs or deliver viruses to your computer.

Content and Tools used in conjunction with Blackboard products may install additional cookies on your computer. This third party content may include cookies from the content issuer. These third party sites have separate and independent privacy policies. Piedmont Community College therefore has no responsibility or liability for the content and activities of these linked sites. For your protection, Piedmont Community College suggests you review the privacy and security policies of the company websites for each link.

Most Web browsers automatically accept cookies, but you can usually modify your browser setting to decline cookies if you prefer. If you choose to decline cookies, you may not be able to fully experience the interactive features of Blackboard or other Web sites you visit.

**Links to Other Websites**
Piedmont Community College provides links to other websites that may be useful for our students and/or customers. Piedmont Community College cannot make any representation of guarantee regarding the linked sites, their content or their security. For your protection, Piedmont Community College suggests that you review the privacy and security policies of the company websites for each link.

**Security of your Personal Information**
Piedmont Community College secures your personal information from unauthorized access, use or disclosure. Piedmont Community College secures the personally identifiable information you provide on computer servers in a controlled environment protected from unauthorized access, use or disclosure. These measures include Secure Socket Layer (SSL) software during the transmission of your information, which encrypts this data. However, we cannot guarantee that your submissions to our website, any content residing on our servers, or any transmissions from our server will be completely secure.

WebAdvisor, Blackboard, and online exams can only be accessed with a valid student identification number. DATATEL assigns distance learning students a unique student ID at the point of application or inquiry. All students enrolled in Piedmont Community College's distance learning courses receive individual secure login and pass codes (student ID number) to the learning management system. Students are responsible for
keeping their student number secret and confidential, and for notifying the College if they believe that their student number has been stolen or might otherwise be misused.

**Changes to this Statement**
Piedmont Community College may occasionally update this Statement of Privacy, and encourages you to periodically review this Statement to remain informed of how Piedmont Community College is protecting your information.

Good luck with your classes and let us know if we can help you in any way!