Important Information and Tips for Taking Online Classes

**Timing of Online Classes**
Online classes are not self-paced. There will be deadlines for assignments, threaded discussions, quizzes, tests and projects. You will have flexibility of working on your coursework as it fits in your daily schedule.

**What You Should Do First**
The first thing you should do when starting an online class is log into the course on the first day and read the syllabus and course schedule. This will tell you what the instructor expects from you, the grading scale and deadlines for coursework.

**Textbooks**
Textbooks are extremely important when taking an online class - make sure to purchase or rent your textbooks before the class starts. Many instructors will have readings and assignments due the first week of classes. Iowa Lakes Community College does have a bookstore on the Emmetsburg, Estherville and Spencer campuses with services available to the Algona and Spirit Lake campuses. For more information about the Iowa Lakes Bookstore, please visit [http://www.iowalakes.edu/student_services/bookstore/](http://www.iowalakes.edu/student_services/bookstore/).

**Contacting Your Instructor**
The instructor is a great resource for you. If you have questions or are struggling with the content of the course, contact your instructor. They are here to help you. Your instructors contact information is on the syllabus, usually at the top of the first page. You can also contact them through the email tool in your course. Please pay attention to the response time listed in your syllabus, don't expect a response immediately.

**What to Do if You Are Going to Miss “Class”**
If you know that you will not be able to turn in an assignment, complete the discussion questions or complete a quiz/test on time, please let your instructor know. Most of the time you will be able to submit an assignment or complete a threaded discussion ahead of the deadline. However, quizzes and tests may only be open for a certain amount of time. By contacting your instructor ahead of time, you may be able to work something out where you can still complete the assignment, quiz or test.

**Threaded Discussions**
Threaded discussions take the place of in class discussion. Pay special attention to this section in your syllabus. Many instructors require that you post your initial response to the discussion one day and then respond to your classmates on a different day. Many instructors require that you respond to two classmates in order to receive all of the points.

**Assignment Submission**
Pay close attention to how your assignments are to be submitted. Most instructors want you to use the “Dropbox” to submit assignments. However, there are occasions where they would like you to use email to submit your assignments. Please refer to the syllabus and the instructions
for each assignment. The most important thing to assignment submission is to TURN IT IN ON TIME! Many instructors will not take late assignments – some points are better than zero points!

**Tips for Keeping Track of Due Dates**

Some students have found it a little difficult to keep track of due dates with their online classes, because they don’t attend a regular class with an instructor reminding them when things are due. At the start of each class, you could put all due dates in your planner according to the syllabus or course schedule. Another way to keep track, would be to put up a calendar, with all due dates, somewhere in your house or apartment that you will see every day. This will help remind you what is due that day and tomorrow.

**Quizzes and Tests**

Most quizzes and tests will be taken online, are timed and can only be taken once. Before starting each quiz or test note the time limit that you have and plan to dedicate that amount of time to taking the quiz or test.

**Notifications**

Instructors will use this option to update students on any changes to the schedule or as a reminder for upcoming deadlines. Be sure to check this area for any new messages every time you log into your courses.

**Email**

Be sure to check your email at least once a week. Check both your Iowa Lakes email and the one you have provided the college. Instructors and the college will send out important information to you through email.

**Proctored Tests**

It is your responsibility to find and schedule a proctor for each proctored quiz or test. Each of the partnered colleges has a testing center with proctors. The proctor and testing center must be approved by the instructor. You can enter in this information through the “My Proctor” link within the course or as directed in your syllabus.

**Tutoring and Paper Proofreading**

Each student has 15 hours of tutoring for the academic year (August-July) available through Smartthinking. There are a few different ways to get help with your classes, you can talk with an e-instructor or a tutor, submit a paper for proofing, access academic resources and the voice + whiteboard tutoring. You will receive an answer to your questions within 24 hours. Other tutoring websites include www.khanacademy.org, www.oercommons.org, www.academicearth.org, or www.hippocampus.org.

**Student Services On Campus**

Just because you are taking your classes online, doesn’t mean that you can’t utilize the on campus services. Check with your campus to see what services are available to you. You can find contact information for student services at http://www.iowalakes.edu/student_services/
Library
You can access online resources through the Iowa Lakes Library. The Library has many resources that you can access for completing your coursework. You can access the databases by going to http://www.iowalakes.edu/student_services/library/ and select what type of media you are looking for on the left.

Financial Aid
Financial Aid is available to those who qualify for it to help pay for your classes. More information and links to the FAFSA and scholarships is found at http://www.iowalakes.edu/financial_aid/

Degree Audits
Degree Audits are a tool for the student and advisor to review the student’s progress towards meeting graduation requirements. Students should review this at least once every semester with their advisor. A walk through of how to read the Degree Audit can be found http://www.iowalakes.edu/media/cms/Academic_Evaluation_Degree_Audit_P_EE4A852F565BC.pdf.

Advising
You will be assigned an advisor to help guide you through picking classes, transferring and graduation requirements. These advisors are here to help you with any questions you have regarding your educational career. You can find out who your advisor is by looking at the top of your degree audit. You can find their contact information on our directory at http://www.iowalakes.edu/directories/staff_directory/.

Registering for Classes
After reviewing your degree audit with your advisor and selecting the classes that you need to meet graduation requirements you will need to register for them. There are many walk throughs about the registration process on right hand side of http://www.iowalakes.edu/current_students/technology-training/.

Graduation
In your last semester at Iowa Lakes, you will need to complete the application for graduation, found at https://www.iowalakes.edu/registrar/apply_for_graduation/index.cfm. All students are encouraged to attend the graduation ceremony. Students who are graduating in the fall or spring semesters will attend the ceremony on the Estherville campus in May. Students graduating in the summer semester will attend the ceremony on the Emmetsburg campus in July.

Transferring Credits to another Institution
Students wishing to transfer the credits they earned at Iowa Lakes Community College will need to complete a transcript request form and return it to the Records office. The transcript request form can be found at http://www.iowalakes.edu/media/cms/Transcript_Request_Form_2_28_14_A24CD4CFE84BC.pdf. There currently is no charge for transcripts. Students should also request an official copy of their transcripts, after all grades are posted, for their own records.