

College Success Tips for Adult Learners

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5th Edition





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Contents



Introduction	1
Top 10 Reasons to Continue Your Education	3
Improve Your Skills with Peterson's Academic Skills Courses	5
Managing Finances to Make Room for College	11
Kinds of Colleges	19
Community Colleges	23
Graduate School	27
Accreditation Overview	29
What Is Distance Learning?	33
Surviving Standardized Tests	41
Credit by Examination	43
Choosing Classes	55
Study Tactics	59
How to Manage Time Well	63
Writing a Research Paper	65
Tips for Making a Presentation	71
Tips for Taking an Exam	73
Computers at College	75
Top 10 Myths About College	79

Introduction



You have decided to go to college (or to go back to college); however, you have questions. What are the different types of colleges? How do you get into the mindset of being a student? If you have been away from the classroom for a while, *College Success Tips for Adult Learners* can provide the advice and resources you need to help you ease your way back into the world of learning.

College Success Tips for Adult Learners sets you on your way and provides easy-to-use information to help you with the decisions you need to make in order to select a college right for you. In addition, this book includes great tips for taking exams, writing papers, and making presentations. There are also study tactics that can help you to stay on top of your courses and manage your time effectively.

As you join the ranks of the thousands of adult learners nationwide, this book can help put you on the right path to completing your degree. Remember, it is never too late to learn.

Top 10 Reasons to Continue Your Education



1. Fulfill a dream—or begin one

Make that wish a reality.

2. Have fun!

There are plenty of opportunities for some great times.

3. Make connections that can link you to future jobs

The friends, professors, and classmates you meet can provide valuable ties for future jobs and associations within the community.

4. Become part of a cultural stew

Being in college is a good way to expose yourself to many types of people from various backgrounds and geographic locations, with different viewpoints and opinions. You may discover that you like things you never knew existed.

5. Meet new people

By furthering your education, you will widen your circle of friends.

6. Do what you love doing and get paid for it

This is what happens when you combine education and training with the right job. Work becomes more like play, which is far more satisfying and rewarding.

7. Increase your sense of personal accomplishment

Exercise your mind—mental exercise keeps your mind free of cobwebs. Education holds the key to the most interesting and challenging information you can imagine. Explore your outer limits and become a lifelong learner.

8. Advance in your career and earn a higher income

Although money isn't everything, it is necessary for survival. A good education prepares you to become a solid member of society.

9. Learn critical-thinking and analytical skills

Furthering your learning will increase your ability to think critically, organize and analyze information, and write clearly.

10. Ensure that you won't get left behind

You always need to learn new skills in order to keep up with changes in industry, communications, and technology. Education and training can give you a solid background, enabling you to perform any occupation at a higher level of proficiency and professionalism.

Improve Your Skills with Peterson's Academic Skills Courses



Peterson's offers two academic skills courses to help prepare students for academic and career success: the Online Academic Skills Course (OASC) and College Placement Skills Training (CPST). Both courses are available at no charge, 24 hours a day, seven days a week; all Active Duty Military members (Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard), Reserve, National Guard, military family members, and DoD civilians and their families are eligible for this service.

What is OASC?

Peterson's Online Academic Skills Course (OASC) is a program for individuals who want to develop their math, vocabulary, and reading comprehension skills. The course will diagnose your current level of reading comprehension, vocabulary, and math abilities and teach the concepts and skills needed to increase proficiency in each of these academic areas. OASC is aligned to military standardized tests to help you score well and succeed in the military. The course includes 2 diagnostic tests, up to 71 lessons, 9 practice question banks, and 2 post-assessments.

What is CPST?

Peterson's College Placement Skills Training (CPST) is a program for individuals who want to prepare for college and the placement tests they will need to take. The training focuses on key areas like writing, reading comprehension, arithmetic, algebra, and college-level math. After identifying your strengths and weaknesses, the course will teach those subject areas in which you will profit from improvement. CPST is aligned to the most used college placement test, the ACCUPLACER®. The course includes four diagnostic tests, up to 122 lessons, and 3 full-length practice tests.

Who should take OASC and/or CPST?

Users who want to succeed in the military by scoring well on the math and English sections of military standardized tests should take OASC. Users who need to brush up on the skills assessed on college placement exams, like the ACCUPLACER®, or for college classes should take CPST. Users have access to both courses and are able to start each course at their own convenience.

What is the advantage of taking OASC and CPST?

Adequately preparing for a standardized test is a key to scoring well on the actual exam. While there are various types of preparation available, there are several advantages to taking OASC and CPST because both courses are customized for each individual. When you begin each course, a pre-assessment for each content area is presented. The lessons assigned are based on the results of a pre-assessment, so each person's course is tailored to his or her strengths and weaknesses. You won't waste time on material you already know, but you will focus on concepts that will improve your overall proficiency.

In addition, the course is self-paced, allowing each individual to take as much time as needed to master each new skill. You may complete as few or as many modules of the course as you want each time you log into the course, and lessons can be retaken. Within the math section of OASC, videos have been added to each lesson for additional help and mastery of subject material. These videos can be found on the main learning path page, as well as at the end of each quiz on each math lesson.

Users may access their course from any computer with an internet connection at any time of the day. Because both OASC and CPST are available 24/7, study time can easily fit into each individual's schedule. OASC and CPST are also available via a CD if there is no internet connection. Those without internet access should check with their education center for a copy of the CD to download to their computer. The courses in their entirety can then be accessed regardless of internet access.

Course administrators can monitor students' performance and progress at every stage of the course. Administrators must complete and pass administrator training found on www.petersons.com/DANTES prior to obtaining administrative access to the courses. Administrators also have access to the student side of each course and can review all lessons and practice tests found within the courses.

How do OASC and CPST work?

Once you register on petersons.com/dantes, you will first choose which course you would like to take: OASC or CPST. Upon entering the course of your choice, you will take a pre-assessment to determine your skill level, strengths, and weaknesses. Based on your pre-assessment results, a series of lessons will be created for you—specific lessons to improve your knowledge of math, vocabulary, reading comprehension, and writing concepts. The interactive aspect of each lesson addresses all learning styles and helps with the retention of new material. Each lesson is accompanied by quizzes

and practice questions, which will help you assess how well you are mastering the material. There are newly added videos for all math lessons found within OASC.

At the end of your course, you will have access to practice sets, practice tests, and post-assessments to measure your overall performance so you can see exactly how much you have improved. If there are still areas that need improvement, students can return to their learning path and retake lessons.

How long does it take to complete the course?

The exact time needed for the entire course depends on the skill level and the goals of each user. For OASC, it takes approximately 20 to 40 hours to complete the entire course, including the pre-assessment, all of the lessons, all quizzes and practice sets, and the post-assessment. It takes approximately 40 to 60 hours to complete CPST.

You may take each lesson as many times as you need to master the content. Another feature of the course is short, medium, and full-length course versions designed to accommodate your schedule and time constraints. For the best learning experience, it is recommended to take the full-length learning path, however, if time is limited, shortened versions of the course are available. These versions include the most important lessons to master, if only a short amount of study time is available.

What are the course components?

Both OASC and CPST are made up of pre-assessments: skill-based math, reading comprehension, vocabulary lessons, and quizzes. In addition, OASC includes math videos, practice sets, and post-assessments, while CPST offers practice tests that simulate a college placement exam. Once you have registered for the course, you will take the pre-assessment. From those results, your course will generate a Customized Learning Path™ of lessons. When you have completed all assigned lessons based on your skill level, you may test your knowledge by taking the practice tests/sets or take the post-assessment to evaluate your overall improvement.

What is the Customized Learning Path™?

Because every student comes to OASC and CPST with different strengths and weaknesses, the courses offer different lessons to each student. Based on your current skill level that is determined in the pre-assessments, your course designs a personalized set of lessons specifically for you—the Customized Learning Path™. This means that you don't have to spend time on concepts you already know, but can focus your study time on those areas where you need improvement.

What concepts and skills do the lessons include?

OASC includes a total of up to 71 lessons. Each lesson is approximately a 20-minute segment created to teach you a specific concept or skill. For example, the reading comprehension and vocabulary lessons teach you how to read and interpret text, build your vocabulary, and read for the author's tone. The math lessons teach percentages, rates, averages, basic geometry, how to solve equations, and many more concepts.

The pool of 122 CPST lessons are created to teach you skills that are tested on the ACCUPLACER® exams. The writing section aligns with the scoring rubric found in the WritePlacer® exam; the English section covers the skills and question types found in the Reading Comprehension and Sentence Skills ACCUPLACER® exam; the math section covers skills and question types found in the Arithmetic and Elementary Algebra ACCUPLACER® exam; and the college-level math lessons prepare you for the College-Level Math ACCUPLACER® exam.

How do OASC and CPST teach math, vocabulary, writing, and reading comprehension skills?

Each course addresses a variety of learning styles. Each lesson includes interactive examples and exercises with drag-and-drop matching, interactive game-style multiple-choice questions with instant feedback, and audio flash cards. With the flash cards, you'll get the definition of a word and an example of how to use it in a sentence. You can then mark the words that you've learned and print them for offline use. All practice questions come with detailed answer explanations to reinforce the concept that is taught in that question. Instant feedback ensures your complete understanding of the material. Additional math remediation is available in video format within the Math lessons of OASC.

How is your progress monitored?

Both OASC and CPST offer comprehensive reporting tools for the course administrator. The administrator may use the reporting functions to track overall progress and performance for an individual student or a group of students.

You are able to track your own progress and performance through the student's interface, so you know where you stand within the course. Your performance and scores are broken down by question type. You can track which course sections you have completed, your scores for all quizzes and practice questions, and quickly see how many lessons or tests you have not completed.

OASC Success

Whether you need to improve your math, reading comprehension, or vocabulary skills, OASC provides each individual with the precise amount of assessment and customized instruction required. You can use OASC to brush up on skills prior to taking standardized military exams.

CPST Success

Whether you feel ready for college or need to brush up your skills, CPST will prepare you for college placement exams and college itself. Completing this comprehensive online course will ensure that you are prepared in key areas like writing, reading comprehension, algebra, and college-level math.

Getting Started

To access OASC or CPST, ask your Military Education Office for instructions or visit www.petersons.com/dantes.

Managing Finances to Make Room for College



With a college education, the door to new financial possibilities opens wide. In the meantime, however, you'll be faced with managing your real-life finances while working, studying, and possibly juggling additional college costs and fees. By taking some time to organize, budget, and plan, you can free yourself from the stress of money worries, meet your household financial responsibilities, and continue your path toward higher education.

Getting Started

Focused money management starts by gathering all your financial documents and organizing them in a convenient spot. Don't forget to include:

- Monthly bills
- Student and other loan records
- Checking and savings account records
- Pay stubs from work
- Anything else related to your income and expenses

Creating a Budget

To understand where and how you're spending, make yourself a simple budget form to track your income from work, financial aid, family, etc. You also need to track your expenses:

- Fixed Expenses
Rent, utilities, cell phone and internet bills, credit card bills, health insurance, car insurance, gas, food, and child care
- School-Related Expenses
Tuition and fees, as well as books and other supplies

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- Variable Expenses

Everything else you spend, which may change from month to month, such as eating out or buying clothes

Estimate on average what you're likely to spend in a month. An effective budget is a personalized budget. Think of it as your financial self-portrait and include every detail as accurately as you can. If you know you spend \$50 every month eating lunch out, be sure to list that in your budget.

Evaluate Your Finances

Compare your income and expenses. Are you spending more than you're earning? If so, you're juggling—and that's a stressful and risky scenario. Think about how you might cut back on spending so you can make ends meet and perhaps save a little each month.

Use these tips to stabilize your household finances, so you can focus on your education:

Groceries

- Make a list before you shop and stick to it.
- Buy in bulk from a wholesaler (Sam's Club, Costco, etc.) IF you will use the extra amount you buy.
- Brew your coffee at home rather than stopping to buy a cup on your way out.
- Pack a lunch rather than eating out.
- Learn to cook—prepared foods are expensive.
- Compare prices. It's worth an extra few minutes in the market.
- Clip coupons or use an online coupon site.
- Take advantage of sales by buying multiples when the price is low IF you will use the extras you purchase.
- Remember that meat and animal products are more expensive than grains and fresh produce.

Clothes

- Avoid impulse buys. If you really want an item, wait a few days and then revisit the purchase.

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- Shop the sale and clearance racks.
- Shop online to compare prices.
- Look for classic styles that can be worn for more than one season.
- Don't replace clothing that can be repaired.
- Visit thrift stores.
- Don't go to the mall for entertainment.
- Don't use shopping as stress relief.

Power Bills

- Turn off appliances and lights.
- Lower your thermostat in winter.
- Try to limit the use of air conditioning.
- Buy energy-efficient appliances (look for ENERGY STAR® or similar ratings).
- Use energy-efficient light bulbs such as CFLs and LEDs.

Gasoline

- Find the cheapest gas station in your area. Prices really do vary among neighborhoods.
- Use the lowest-octane gas recommended for your car.
- Get regular maintenance check-ups to ensure fuel efficiency. Proper tire inflation is very important.
- Walk, bike, carpool, and use public transportation whenever you can.

Managing Your Money

Review Your Budget Regularly

Did you estimate correctly? Are you spending more on utilities than you originally thought, or did you get a better deal on car insurance? Be sure to recalculate based on any changes.

Keep Receipts and Payment Stubs

It's the best way to know how much you're spending. If you go over budget, just look at the receipts to figure out how you can cut back.

Cut Back on “Extras”

Bring your lunch instead of eating out. Rent a movie instead of going to the theater. Buy clothes only when you need them. Contact your cable/satellite provider and make sure you are getting the best price and package.

Go Easy with Credit Cards

Credit cards come with a lot of extra expense in the form of interest and sometimes hidden costs. If you can't afford to pay cash for something, then pass on it until you can.

Save a Little Each Month

With a tight budget it can seem impossible to build your savings account, but even a small amount every month can give you confidence and a sense of security.

Smart Saving

Even if you can't save much every month—save something! First, you'll need a fund that's just for emergencies and unforeseen circumstances. Once your emergency fund is in place, make the focus of your savings plan a short-term goal—such as a vacation— as well as a long-term goal—such as retirement, down payment on a house, or your children's education.

Real-World Savings Tips

- Employers often offer automatic deposits from your paycheck into your savings account, which can be easier than finding the discipline to make the deposit yourself every month. Remember, if it's not visible, there is more chance you won't spend it.
- If you don't have that option, use your bank's online service to make your own automatic transfers.
- Think of refunds, pay raises, or bonuses as extras and deposit them directly into your savings account.
- You may be able to start your savings fund by cutting out some current expenses. Can you live without a landline? Cable? Use public transportation sometimes? Shop for a better monthly phone or internet plan? Drink one fewer latte per week? (That's \$15 per month!)

Emergencies

Your emergency fund should be first on your list of savings goals. Most experts recommend setting aside three to six months' worth of expenses that you can draw on in case of unexpected circumstances. Keep your emergency fund in a regular savings account or money market account for quick access to your money. Leave it there until you need it. In the meantime, it will draw a little interest and pay big dividends for your peace of mind.

Control Your Debt

Most of us need the convenience and flexibility of a credit card, but if you're not careful, you can end up owing thousands of dollars that you can't pay back. To stay in control, make sure credit cards work for you—instead of you working for them.

Purchase	Interest Paid	Total Cost	Years to Pay Off	Minimum Payment
Smartphone (\$300)	\$59.45	\$359.45	2 years	\$15/month
Laptop (\$1,500)	\$785.41	\$2,285.41	5 years	\$38/month
Weekend Trip (\$850)	\$348.50	\$1,198.50	4 years	\$25/month

Interest Will Sneak Up on You

When you buy things on credit, the interest builds over time if you don't pay off the full amount. Consider these basic purchases charged at the average 18 percent interest, with only minimum payments made every month:

Stay Clear of Your Credit Limit

Your credit card limit is the most you're *allowed* to spend, not how much you *should* spend. When you reach the limit, you'll be denied further charges, and it gets even harder to pay down. It also counts against you on your credit report when your balance is maxed out.

Pay More than the Minimum

Otherwise, you'll virtually never pay off your account, and you'll always be paying a lot more for your purchases than they actually cost. Plan to:

- Buy things only if you can pay them off in a month or two
- Use your card only for emergencies

College Success Tips for Adult Learners

- Make at least twice the listed minimum payment if you get off track and charge more than you intended

Understand the Extra Fees

Be sure to read the fine print on credit card applications. Often, what looks like a great deal has hidden costs and transaction fees. Consider these common credit card charges:

- Late Fees
Make a late payment, pay a late fee—sometimes equal to the minimum monthly payment
- Annual Fees
A yearly charge just for having the credit card, generally around \$25–\$50
- Over-Limit Fees
A penalty charged for being over your credit limit
- Increased Interest
When you make multiple late payments—sometimes as few as two or three—the lender may increase your interest rate substantially.

Opt Out of New Offers

It's best to keep only one card with a low limit that you plan to use only for emergencies or purchases that you can pay off every month. If you have trouble staying with that plan, you may need to watch your spending more closely and cut back before you get into debt too deeply. To reduce the temptation of constant offers for new cards, remove your name from credit card mailing lists by opting out of unwanted offers by calling 1-888-5OPTOUT or visiting www.optoutprescreen.com.

Your Credit Report: Know What They're Saying About You

Having good credit is vital to your financial health. You can actually give yourself an annual check-up by reviewing your own credit report—it's a great way to find out what your creditors are saying about you, what your payment history says about you, and whether you need to take steps to improve your financial health. Each year you're entitled to one free report from each of three credit reporting agencies: Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion. It's important to take advantage of the free opportunity to review your report so you can see how your borrowing history is affecting your credit score (the better your history, the higher your score).

If you've had some late payments, a loan default, or a bankruptcy, your credit score will drop. With a lower score, you may have trouble getting more credit cards, renting an apartment, or buying a car or house. You may also be charged more interest by banks. The good news is that, even if your report shows you need to work on your credit history, you can improve it by making on-time payments and paying off your balances whenever possible.

Remember, balancing a career and studies, preparing for higher education, and managing your money doesn't have to be a juggling act. Taking time to plan and budget, watching your spending, and controlling your debt can free up the time and energy you need to focus on college. And if you find that you need a little help getting yourself onto good financial footing, don't hesitate to ask. Free credit counseling is out there. Call the Consumer Credit Counseling Service (CCCS) toll-free at 800-388-2227, or visit the CCCS online at www.nfcc.org.

Kinds of Colleges



Universities

A university is simply this: a large college. It is often state-supported and can be defined as containing several colleges, such as the College of Education, the College of Liberal Arts, or the College of Sciences.

Universities offer the following degrees:

- **Two-Year Degree**

Associate degrees include the Associate of Arts (A.A.), Associate of Science (A.S.), Associate in Applied Science (A.A.S.), and Associate of Occupational Studies (A.O.S.) degrees. Generally, you need to complete about 60 credit hours to receive an associate degree.

- **Four-Year Degree**

This is either a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) or a Bachelor of Science (B.S.). It is also called a baccalaureate or bachelor's degree and consists of 120 to 136 (but typically between 124 and 128) semester hours of credit or its quarter-hour equivalent.

- **Master's Degree**

This requires one or two years of academic credit past the bachelor's and usually results in either a Master of Arts (M.A.) or Master of Science (M.S.). It may or may not require a thesis. There are many variations as well, such as the Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.) and the Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.).

- **Professional Degree**

This degree is specific to a certain profession, such as medicine, law, pharmacy, optometry, theology, and veterinary medicine. It requires (1) completion of academic requirements to begin practice in the profession, (2) at least two years of college work prior to entering the program, and (3) a total of at least six academic years of college work to complete the degree program, including prior college work plus the length of the professional program itself.

College Success Tips for Adult Learners

In some cases, you should consider applying directly to a university. An alternative is to transfer to a university after you have completed two years at a community college. Generally, your two years of work will be accepted toward the bachelor's degree if you have planned your curriculum carefully during your freshman and sophomore years.

■ **Doctoral Degree**

This is the highest academic award a student can earn for graduate study. It is offered by many universities and usually results in a Ph.D. (Doctor of Philosophy) in a particular academic field. For example, you could earn a Ph.D. in math, history, engineering, or public administration. Other doctoral degrees include the Doctor of Education (Ed.D. or D.Ed.) and the Doctor of Engineering (D.Eng., Eng.D., or Dr.Eng.). A doctorate requires three or more years of graduate work beyond a master's degree and completion of a dissertation approved by faculty committee.

Colleges

Colleges tend to be smaller than universities, have a more restricted range of offerings, and are often specialized. Colleges usually offer only two- and four-year degrees.

■ **Liberal Arts Colleges**

Liberal arts colleges offer degrees with concentrations of study in such fields as English, psychology, history, political science, philosophy, literature, foreign languages, fine arts, and more.

■ **Scientific or Technical Colleges**

Scientific or technical colleges offer degrees with concentrations of study in such fields as mathematics, physics, engineering, astronomy, architecture, and so forth.

■ **Vocational Schools and Colleges**

Vocational schools and colleges train students in a highly specific career field such as accounting, architectural drafting and architectural CAD/CADD, automotive mechanics technology, carpentry, child care and support services management, computer programming, cosmetology, culinary arts and related services, emergency medical technology, massage therapy, medical radiation therapy, radio and television broadcasting technology, Web/multimedia management, welding technology, and many, many more. Most vocational schools and colleges are private and for-profit; therefore, the tuition may be high. Many vocational colleges are accredited, but many others have degrees not recognized by other colleges. Always thoroughly research a vocational college before enrolling there.

■ **Community Colleges**

Community colleges are usually fully accredited two-year institutions supported by a combination of state funds and local taxes. They offer a two-year program leading to either an Associate of Arts (A.A.) or an Associate of Science (A.S.) degree. The student who earns an associate degree can go on to complete a bachelor's degree in two more years at a four-year institution. See the Community Colleges section in this book for additional information.

Community Colleges



Why go to a community college?

Community colleges do just what their name says: they serve their communities. A community college is a two-year institution whose students are mostly commuters. Community colleges do not offer housing for students.

What are the strengths of a community college?

- Community colleges have smaller class sizes.
- You can attend part-time. A large percentage of community college students work on a full- or part-time basis.
- The college is probably small enough that you can get special attention.
- The tuition is lower than tuition at a four-year college. Legal residents of the state and military personnel stationed in that state usually pay less than nonresidents.
- It is easier to be admitted, since there are no admission test requirements. A high school diploma or its equivalent is generally the main admission requirement.

Most community colleges have three types of programs:

1. College preparatory or precollege programs

Not all of the students who enter community college are able to write, read, or do math at a college level. So most community colleges test incoming students in these areas. If you need a brush up or review, you can get it at your community college.

2. Vocational programs

Most community colleges offer two-year vocational programs that lead directly into the job market. Many colleges are known for certain types of such programs. For example, some community colleges specialize in the biomedical field, computer technology, culinary arts, drafting, automotive technology, and so on. Check out the vocational programs at your

College Success Tips for Adult Learners

community college. See if one of the fields interests you, especially if you are undecided about a new career path and the kind of education you will need to attain it.

When you complete a vocational program, you receive an Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.) degree. An A.A.S. cannot be used to transfer to a four-year university or college.

3. College transfer programs

A large number of students are enrolled in community colleges to get the first two years of their college career in a smaller, less stressful, and more economical environment. If you fall into this category, here are some quick tips:

- Plan your classes for your freshman and sophomore years to ensure you meet all the requirements.
- Make sure you are enrolling in transferable classes.
- Check out the transfer agreements between your college and the universities in the area.
- Get in touch with the university where you want to transfer and find out about any unusual requirements.

When you complete a college transfer program, you earn an Associate of Science (A.S.) or an Associate of Arts (A.A.) degree. Note that even if you are planning to transfer to a four-year college for your Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree, you still may want to consider an A.A. or an A.S. degree. It is great for putting on a resume or job application. Check out the requirements for an associate degree and then decide if you want to try to meet those requirements. Some students opt to transfer to start working toward their bachelor's degree and skip the associate degree.

Comprehensive Community Colleges

There are many community colleges that offer a more comprehensive approach to education. These schools have the previously mentioned precollege, vocational, and college transfer programs, but also include the following programs:

- Continuing education—for members of the community who wish to pursue non-credit courses for personal development and interest
- Industry training—for the employees of a local company to receive specific training paid for by that company

Comprehensive schools often have articulation agreements that provide prearranged acceptance for transfer education students into specific four-year institutions. At some comprehensive community colleges, the partnering four-year institution teaches the third- and fourth-year courses. This allows the students to remain at the community college while receiving their bachelor's degree.

What should you take advantage of while attending a community college?

Save Money for a Rainy Day

You are spending far less on a comparable education. Save now, so you will have a cushion when you need it, perhaps while pursuing a more expensive education.

Take Advantage of Smaller Classes and Smaller Student-Teacher Ratios

Community colleges are known as teaching, not research, institutions. The instructors are hired to teach, not bury themselves in the library. You will have small classes of approximately 25 to 35 students. These classes are taught by instructors who want to teach you. Take advantage of that and get to know them.

Meet Other Students

Community colleges have diverse student bodies. Make an effort to meet the students in your classes. Form study groups. Learn about other cultures. Listen to the experiences of people who have been out in the workforce longer than you have.

Graduate School



Why go to graduate school?

Unlike an undergraduate program, graduate school focuses more on academic work and research. It generally concentrates on a specific discipline or skill set. You are expected to do research in a particular field and have your work closely evaluated by professors and fellow students. In general, classes are smaller with much student interaction, and in addition to your class work, you might teach and do internships and focused research.

What types of graduate degrees are there?

A graduate degree follows an advanced program of study and is available in most subjects. There are three levels: Master, Specialist, and Doctorate.

- A master's degree usually takes two years to complete. Sometimes, it is an advanced degree for a profession, for example, a Master of Business Administration. Other times, the program is designed to lead to a doctoral degree.
- A specialist degree is usually earned in addition to a master's degree and requires extra coursework or practical experience. This type of degree usually earns the student a professional certification or fulfills a licensing requirement, for example, an Ed.S. for the position of school principal.
- A doctoral degree is the highest degree possible. It usually requires doing independent research and writing a dissertation. This degree might take four to eight years to complete.

What degree is right for me?

There is no easy answer to this question. It depends on your interests, motivation, field of study, and career goals. The value of a graduate degree varies by field. In business, a master's degree is often the norm and necessary for advancement. Most doctoral programs require a serious time commitment, but offer a variety of financial aid—from scholarships to loans and paid internships. Some doctoral candidates earn a master's degree "along the way."

Before you make a decision about which graduate program to apply for, read about your desired field of study and consult faculty advisors to learn more about your options. Consider the following:

College Success Tips for Adult Learners

- Are you interested enough in the subject to stay in school for a number of years?
- Are you interested in the types of jobs someone with a master's or doctoral degree holds?
- How much will the degree cost? Once you have the degree, will your earning potential offset the cost?
- Will earning a graduate degree offer you unique opportunities in your employment and career advancement?

How do I apply to graduate school?

Applying to graduate school is different from applying for an undergraduate degree. Grad school applications can be confusing and overwhelming. However, almost all grad school applications ask for the same basic components:

- A transcript of your previous course work. Based on your grades and grade point average, the admissions committee can tell whether you are seriously interested in your studies and would be a good fit for the graduate program you are applying to.
- Your test scores from an admissions test. Most graduate programs require taking a standardized admissions test like the GRE, LSAT, MCAT, or GMAT. Anyone of these exams tests your potential for graduate-level work rather than specific subject-matter knowledge. While few students enjoy taking a standardized test, taking it puts all applicants on the same level and allows them to be compared fairly. Exceptional test scores can open new educational opportunities and financial aid.
- Letters of recommendation. A letter of recommendation helps the admissions committee get to know you. Consequently, you should select your letter writers with care. A neutral letter from a professor who hardly knows you is worth less than a letter from a research partner who knows what sets you apart from other applicants.
- An admissions essay. This essay is your chance to introduce yourself to the admissions committee. Think carefully about how to structure your essay and how to present yourself. Be sure to write an essay that shows your interest in and dedication to your field of study.
- If you are among the finalists for a place in a graduate program, you might be invited for an interview. This is an opportunity not only for the admissions committee to meet you in person, but also an opportunity for you to find out if the program you are applying to is a good fit for you.

Accreditation Overview



What is accreditation, and why is it important?

The accreditation status of a college, university, or vocational institution gives you an indication of its general quality. It means that the school has undergone an in-depth review, met certain standards, and is found worthy of approval. Accreditation is performed by independent, nongovernmental agencies. It assists students in making decisions by identifying schools worthy of investment.

Seeking accreditation is entirely voluntary on the part of the institution. The initial accreditation process takes a long time—from two to six years or more—and it costs money. Most legitimate accrediting agencies require the school to be in operation for at least a few years before they begin the accreditation process. Being awarded candidacy status does not ensure that an institution will eventually be fully accredited.

There are many unrecognized or phony accrediting agencies. So if a school says it's accredited, the key question is "Accredited by whom?" The best advice is to attend a school accredited by an accrediting body recognized by the United States Department of Education.

Types of Accreditation

There are three basic types of recognized accreditation:

1. Regional institutional accreditation

Regional institutional accreditation is awarded to an institution by one of six regional accrediting agencies, each of which covers a specified portion of the United States and its territories. They are the Middle States, New England, North Central, Northwest, Southern, and Western associations.

If a college or university is regionally accredited, that means the institution as a whole has met the accrediting agency's standards. Most four-year universities, public and private, as well as two-year community colleges, are regionally accredited.

2. National institutional accreditation

National institutional accreditation is awarded to primarily private, for-profit schools that offer a wide diversity of subject matter and are national in their activities. There are fifty-two national accrediting bodies, including the Distance Education and Training Council

College Success Tips for Adult Learners

(DETC), the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges (ACCSC), the Council on Occupational Education (COE), and the Accrediting Council for Continuing Education and Training (ACCET).

3. Specialized accreditation

Specialized accreditation (sometimes called professional accreditation) applies to a single department or program within a larger institution of higher education, or it can apply to a school that only provides training in one specific field. The accredited unit may be as big as a college within a university or as small as a curriculum within a field of study. There are specialized/professional accrediting agencies in various fields, including acupuncture, health sciences, cosmetology, art and design, Bible college education, engineering, law, marriage and family therapy, nursing, and teacher education.

In some professional fields, you must have a degree or certificate from an accredited school or program in order to take qualifying exams or practice the profession.

What does accreditation mean to you?

There are several benefits of enrolling in a regionally accredited college or university:

- You are assured of a basic level of quality education and services.
- Credits you earn are more likely to be transferable to other regionally accredited institutions, although each institution makes its own decisions on transfer credits on a case-by-case basis.
- Any certificate or degree you earn is more likely to be recognized by employers as a legitimate credential.
- You may qualify for federal loans and grants because regionally accredited institutions, like nationally accredited institutions, are eligible to participate in federal financial aid programs.

Checking on a School and Its Accreditors

It's important to find out what role accreditation plays in your field, since it may affect your professional future as well as the quality of your education.

So how can you tell if the school or college in which you are interested is accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education?

- Check the U.S. Department of Education website. It has a complete list of recognized accrediting agencies. See <http://www2.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/index.html>.

College Success Tips for Adult Learners

- Take a look at *Accredited Institutions of Postsecondary Education*, a reference book published by the American Council on Education (ACE), which lists all accrediting agencies recognized by the Department of Education and the more than 7,000 schools accredited by these agencies.

Additional Points to Remember

- “Licensed by the state” and “accredited” are two different things. Some schools advertise that they are licensed by the state to blur the distinction between being licensed and having accreditation. All schools must have a license to operate; in some states, this is similar to a business license, meaning that all the school must do is fill out paperwork; other states have more rigorous requirements for licensure.
- If a school indicates that it is accredited, make sure you identify the accrediting agency. It may be an agency that is unrecognized or nonexistent.
- A school that indicates it's approved for G.I. bill benefits is NOT necessarily accredited. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) approves both accredited and nonaccredited institutions using a different set of criteria to approve schools.

What Is Distance Learning?



At one time, education programs were offered only in classrooms. To participate, you had to physically attend the program. This geographic restriction no longer applies, thanks to today's technology. Distance learning now allows you to obtain your education anywhere—even in the comfort of your own home. Distance education enables you to access courses without having to physically be in a classroom on a campus. Various technologies are used to deliver courses to off-campus sites, to the workplace, and to your home. Distance learning isn't right for everyone, because it requires a high level of discipline and self-motivation. However, if you're a self-starter who enjoys a great deal of flexibility and freedom, distance learning can be the perfect route to your degree.

Why should I consider a distance learning program?

Distance learning programs can help you meet prerequisites and complete your degree more quickly. It can also enable you to take courses not offered locally, and complete programs on your own schedule, when travel or work commitments make it hard to attend class. Distance education can be helpful if for any reason a traditional course is not an option for you.

Am I a good candidate for distance learning?

One of the biggest benefits of distance education is flexibility. Students are not confined to a classroom but instead can take courses that fit their unique situations. Some students thrive in these types of situations, whereas others suffer from the lack of structure. To assess whether you would be a good distance learner, ask yourself the following questions:

- Am I able to work independently? Or do I require more supervision?
- Do I enjoy working independently? Or do I prefer interaction with others?
- Can I resist distractions? Or do I easily get steered off course?
- Am I motivated to complete my course work? Or do I need to be motivated?
- Do I have clear educational goals? Or do I need help defining my goals?

College Success Tips for Adult Learners

- Are my reading and writing skills strong? Or do I struggle in these areas?
- Am I comfortable working on a computer? Or am I better with face-to-face interaction?
- Am I reliable at meeting deadlines? Or do I tend to procrastinate?
- Do I have a personal support system? Or do I look to my school community to provide that?

If you answered “yes” to most of the questions given first in each bullet point, then you might be a good distance learning candidate. If you answered “yes” to most of the second questions in each bullet point, you’d probably do better in a traditional classroom.

Be honest with yourself. It’s better to assess your qualities realistically than to commit to a program that doesn’t work for you.

Who offers distance learning?

Distance learning is widespread in today’s educational environment, and the demand for online study is steadily growing. The U.S. Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education currently recognize dozens of accredited online universities. These institutions offer hundreds of online degree programs. Chances are there’s a program that’s right for you! Some of the most popular courses are in the following areas:

- Information Technology & Computer Science
- Business Administration
- Criminal Justice
- Health Care Services
- Paralegal Studies
- Human Resource Management

These areas represent just a few of the disciplines taught through online learning. Many subject areas can be pursued with the benefit of new technologies.

How does distance learning work?

To establish distance learning programs, colleges and universities have formed partnerships with cable TV providers, public broadcasting services, satellite broadcasters, and online education companies. These partners enable the programs to deliver audio, video, and internet-based courses in addition to traditional course work.

College Success Tips for Adult Learners

To enroll in distance learning, you follow many of the same steps as you would to enroll in a traditional program.

- Obtain a catalog from the college(s) that you are considering.
- Apply for acceptance to the programs of your choice.
- After acceptance, you'll meet with an academic advisor and determine which courses will best assist you in achieving your specific goals.
- Next, apply for your classes and obtain the necessary materials. Just like with traditional courses, you'll need books, a syllabus, and any supplemental materials.
- Finally, confirm the requirements needed for off-site study. Requirements may include a high-speed internet connection, a computer with a certain level of operational capacity, and the ability to participate in chat room discussions or conference calls. Some requirements may be specific to the subject you are taking. Be sure you meet these requirements before class starts!

What type of programs can I take?

Distance learning programs can help you obtain college credit, continuing education units, or professional certifications. The type of program you choose depends on your academic needs.

Credit Programs

If credit courses are completed successfully, they may be applied toward a degree.

Noncredit Programs

If you take a course on a noncredit basis, you may earn continuing education units (CEUs). One CEU is defined as 10 contact hours of participation at a recognized continuing education program, with qualified instruction and sponsorship. In some professions, a certain number of CEUs must be earned each year as a requirement for continued licensure.

Professional Certification Programs

In addition to degree credit and CEUs, distance courses can also provide you with professional certifications. These programs help you acquire specialized knowledge in a specific field. They may prepare you for a new career or professional licensure. The certification programs at many universities are often created in cooperation with professional and trade associations, to ensure that the courses are based on real-life workforce needs.

How do I learn online?

If you have never taken an online class, you may wonder how the teaching occurs. Online classes are delivered in a variety of ways. The most common formats are described below.

Instructor-Led Classes

Most people are accustomed to instructor-led, on-campus classes. Students meet in a specified place for a given amount of time. Online learning classes that are instructor-led are no different. The teacher determines how the class is paced and sets a weekly schedule to which students must adhere.

During the class, students learn by listening to lectures and taking notes. In the past, a student's notes were normally the only record of class lectures. With online classes, and now in many traditional class settings, teachers post their lecture notes and slide presentations online so students can refer back to them. Everyone learns at the same time and at the same pace. Teaching in the online instructor-led classroom is supplemented by outside research and reading or by the contributions of guest presenters.

Instructor-Facilitated Classes

Instructor-facilitated classes differ from instructor-led classes based on the involvement and role of the teacher. In instructor-led classes, the teacher has primary responsibility for course direction. He or she teaches the class by actively directing it. In instructor-facilitated classes, on the other hand, the instructor is more of a guide, rather than a "chalk-and-talk" teacher. He or she is there to point students to sources, to assist with solving problems, and to help answer questions.

In instructor-facilitated classes, students are not "taught" by the instructor directly but instead learn on their own. They may learn from textbooks, materials that the teacher provides, and videos or resources outside the classroom. Students complete the required work on their own schedules and submit assignments on specified dates.

Self-Paced or Independent Learning

This type of distance learning is similar to instructor-facilitated classes, but students have even less contact with the teacher. Correspondence courses fall into this model. Students are given materials, directed to resources, and expected to learn independently.

Many independent learning courses have no set starting or ending date, such as a semester or a quarter. Students begin the courses at any time and progress through the material at their own pace. For instance, some students might choose to complete a ten-week course in six weeks by doing the reading, finishing the assignments, and taking the tests well before the class officially ends. The length of time students have to finish the materials could be weeks or months, depending on the subject

matter and instructors. Some correspondence courses require students to finish certain materials before proceeding to the next step.

Asynchronous Classes

In most cases, online learning is asynchronous—meaning that the instructor does not need to be online at the same time as the student in order to post messages or information. Asynchronous communication is the most common type of online class, since it enables students to find the most convenient and effective personal work and study schedule rather than sticking to assigned class meeting times. Students must have good reading and writing skills in order to communicate effectively in these types of classes. They must also be able to follow the rules that apply to this type of learning environment.

Synchronous Classes

When students and teachers meet together at the same time, synchronous learning is taking place. Communication occurs at a set time, using such technology as video conferencing, chat rooms, and conference calls. Compared to asynchronous classes, this form of learning isn't nearly as convenient for most distance learning students. Synchronous learning presents time constraints and is more reliant on computers with a high-speed internet connection, webcams and microphones, and other specialized software programs.

Computer-Based Training

Similar to independent learning, in computer-based training (CBT), the student learns through a computer program instead of interacting with an instructor. Students follow the predetermined curriculum on the computer. Grades are often based on assessment quizzes rather than on discussion boards and research papers.

Distance-Learning Methods

The following are just some of the ways instructors now share information with distance learners:

- Course (or content) management systems (CMS), learning management systems (LMS), or virtual learning environments (VLE)—such as Blackboard™, eCollege®, and Moodle™
- E-mail and Web conferencing
- Online chat rooms
- Streaming audio, video, and podcasts

- Digitized documents, such as .docx or .pdf
- CDs and DVDs
- Textbooks and printed materials

What if I'm not good with computers?

Some adults have concerns about distance learning because they don't feel comfortable working electronically. If you've always been a paper-and-pencil or classroom learner, fear not. Distance learning can still work for you if you take some steps to adjust.

■ **Talk with Your Instructor**

If you're taking an instructor-led class, rely on your teacher as a resource. Even facilitated classes have instructors there to assist you. If you need extra support, your teacher may provide it—or direct you to others who can.

■ **Seek Out Study Partners**

Don't assume you're the only one in your class who prefers face-to-face learning. Some students choose distance courses because they make the most sense for various reasons, but not all students thrive in these settings! If your course offers chat boards or the opportunity to connect with others, you may find peers who would like to form study groups. In some classes, the instructor may even assign research groups or suggest you collaborate with fellow students. You may be able to help them as much as they help you!

■ **Use Your Advisor's Help**

If your program offers the services of an academic advisor, take advantage of these. All advisors have different strengths—you never know how they might be able to help until you ask. Some advisors stick strictly with helping you choose the right courses. Others can help with a myriad of challenges, such as resolving technical issues or improving your study habits. Seek out your advisor and get to know the resources he or she provides.

How do I communicate with my instructor?

In traditional classrooms, teachers are easier to locate because you're right there with them. Talking to a teacher might be as simple as stopping him or her after class. With distance learning, on the other hand, you might never see an instructor in person unless you take steps to do so. Communication happens instead via online chat rooms, Web conferencing, e-mail, fax, or toll-free numbers. Interaction with your instructor—whether by computer, phone, or letter—can still be important for distance learning success. If you need to consult your instructor, you must take the initiative.

In today's electronic world, communication can often feel impersonal. If you're used to talking by phone, you may feel less comfortable writing messages to ask questions. Also, sometimes emotions are better expressed in person than in writing. Those who tend to be face-to-face communicators may have to take extra steps to stay in their comfort zones. If your teacher has office hours, take advantage of them!

What are the future trends in distance learning?

Though distance learning is changing in its form and prevalence, one thing is certain: this form of teaching is here to stay. The number of students enrolled in online courses continues to rise, and colleges and universities are increasing their use of internet-based instruction.

The 2015 Survey of Online Learning conducted by the Babson Survey Research Group found that more than one in four students (28%) now take at least one distance education course.

Some of the reasons behind this trend include unemployment, increasing fuel costs, and the economic downturn. Then there's also the fact that people of all ages are just more comfortable with technology in today's digital world. We do almost everything else using our gadgets while on the go, so it just makes sense that many people would want to use their gadgets and computers to take college courses. This virtual approach offers the ultimate in convenience and flexibility, as you can complete classes from anywhere at any time, as long as you have an electronic device and an internet connection.

Like everyone else, college students are busy—especially adult students who are also juggling work, family, and other responsibilities that make demands on their time. Taking courses remotely means that students can do their coursework after work or when their children go to bed. In addition, online learning eliminates some of the typical anxieties of the traditional classroom. Here, everyone is on an equal playing field—unless you want to share, no one will ever know whether you are 21 or 81.

Not surprisingly, there are some innovative and exciting developments on the horizon for online education. Among the trends: incorporating augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) into the online classroom experience. Gamification is also a hot topic in the distance education space—one that will be especially useful in attracting younger students, who are comfortable and familiar with gaming-style environments.

To help students feel more connected to classmates and allow for better collaboration, distance education programs are increasingly focused on tools and systems that encourage interaction, such as live chats, virtual meetings spaces, and shared cloud-based workspaces.

Surviving Standardized Tests



A Few Facts

The two major standardized tests students take are the ACT and the SAT (and SAT Subject Tests). Colleges across the country use these tests to get a sense of a student's readiness for admission. These are reasoning tests designed to evaluate the way you think. They assess the basic knowledge and skills you have gained through your classes in school and through outside experience.

Here are answers to some commonly asked questions.

Q: What is the ACT?

A: The ACT is a standardized college entrance examination that measures knowledge and skills in four sections: English, mathematics, reading, and science. There is also an optional writing test.

Q: What is the SAT?

A: The SAT measures developed verbal and mathematical reasoning abilities as they relate to successful performance in college. It supplements the secondary school record and other information about the student in assessing readiness for college.

Q: Should I take the ACT or the SAT?

A: It depends on the college you plan to attend. Most colleges now accept the results of both tests. Some institutions use test results for proper placement of students in English and math courses.

Q: What are the SAT Subject Tests?

A: SAT Subject Tests are required by some institutions for admission and/or placement in freshman-level courses. They are one-hour tests, primarily multiple choice, in specific subjects that measure students' knowledge of these subjects and their ability to apply that knowledge. The Subject Tests measure a student's academic achievement in high school and may indicate readiness for certain college programs.

Credit by Examination



Along with standardized tests, you may want to learn about the types of tests that provide college credit. These tests fall under the broad category of “Credit by Examination.” If you pass these tests, your school may offer you credit for one or more college courses.

Students graduating from high school may be able to obtain college credit for qualifying scores on Advanced Placement (AP) exams. For adult learners, or those who did not take AP courses, other testing options are available. The three most well-known credit-qualifying exams are the CLEP, DSST, and ECE tests.

You can find in-depth information about these three programs on the DANTES website at www.dantes.doded.mil/.

College-Level Examination Program (CLEP™)

The CLEP consists of a series of examinations that test college-level knowledge gained through course work, independent study, cultural pursuits, travel, special interests, military service schools, and professional development. Those taking the CLEP tests include military service members, adults returning to school, and traditional-age college students.

The CLEP includes both General examinations, which test a broad subject area, and Subject examinations, which focus on one particular area of study and usually correspond to a particular college course. In all, there are 33 introductory-level college subject examinations:

Business

- Financial Accounting
- Information Systems and Computer Applications
- Introductory Business Law
- Principles of Management
- Principles of Marketing

Composition and Literature

- American Literature
- Analyzing and Interpreting Literature College Composition

College Success Tips for Adult Learners

College Composition Modular

English Literature

Humanities

History and Social Sciences

American Government

History of the United States I: Early Colonization to 1877

History of the United States II: 1865 to the Present

Human Growth and Development

Introduction to Educational

Psychology

Introductory Psychology

Introductory Sociology

Principles of Macroeconomics

Principles of Microeconomics

Social Sciences and History

Western Civilization I: Ancient Near East to 1648

Western Civilization II: 1648 to the Present

Science and Mathematics

Biology

Calculus

Chemistry

College Algebra

College Mathematics

Natural Sciences

Precalculus

World Languages

French Language

German Language

Spanish Language

By receiving a satisfactory score on the CLEP™, students can earn 3 to 12 credits toward their college degree, depending on the exam subject and college policy. The American Council on Education (ACE) recommends a minimum score for awarding semester hours of credit; however, each institution determines its acceptable score and the amount of credit granted for each examination.

CLEP General and Subject examinations are accepted for credit by more than 2,900 colleges and universities. Prior to testing, make sure you know your institution's acceptance policy and passing score requirement! The CLEP is administered at more than 1,800 college and university test centers and on military bases. The College Board and DANTES have launched a program with college/university test centers that allows DANTES to fund the exam fee for eligible test-takers and waives the administrative fee.

National Test Center Options

On-Campus Testing

An "open" center agrees to test any examinee who pays the nonrefundable advance registration fee. Those centers designated by an American flag are military-friendly test centers and actively promote testing services to members of the U.S. Armed Forces. Military identification is required for DANTES-funded testing. For the nearest "open" National Test Center, visit <http://clep.collegeboard.org/search/test-centers>.

NOTE: Since December 2010, DANTES does not fund retesting on previously funded CLEP exams. However, service members may personally fund a retest after waiting six months, the normal wait time for retesting. When registering for a CLEP exam, service members are personally responsible for the nonrefundable administration exam fee collected by most test centers. Each test center establishes its own policy and may charge a different amount.

On-Base Testing

A growing number of military installations are contracting with National Test Centers to provide CLEP iBT (the internet-based CLEP test) testing through their on-base education centers. This option is currently available at some installations in the continental United States. Testing is free to eligible military and for a select group of civilian personnel. Check with your education center to see if this option is available.

Advantages of Testing at a National Test Center

- All 33 test titles are available. For a listing of all the test titles, visit <http://clep.collegeboard.org/exam>.
- Year-round testing on the CLEP College Composition Modular
- Instant scoring for all but the CLEP College Composition Modular

Please visit www.petersonsdodlibrary.com for in-depth CLEP study tools that are fully funded and provided to you by the DoD.

DSST

The DSST Program is a nationally-recognized testing program in college subject areas that are comparable to the final or end-of-course examinations in undergraduate courses. The DSST Program allows you to receive college credits for learning outside of the traditional classroom from on-the-job training or independent study. More than 1,900 colleges and universities nationwide accept DSST exams for credit.

DSST exams are given at schools and universities nationwide and on some military bases. Fees start at \$85 per exam, plus any administrative fees the testing site may require. DANTES funds exams for active duty military members and their spouses who meet eligibility requirements (funding is only provided for the first attempt at each test, but military members who wish to retake a test may do so at their own expense). Veterans who have benefits available through the GI Bill can be reimbursed for the cost of DSST exams.

DSST exams are internet-based and include approximately 100 multiple-choice questions. While test-takers are given two hours to complete each test, most finish in an average of 90 minutes or less. Accommodations are available if needed, but requests must be sent and approved in advance, and accommodations vary based on testing location. Free practice tests for each exam are available at www.getcollegetcredit.com.

Peterson's Practice Exams are also available for some DSST exams. Please visit **www.petersonsdodlibrary.com** for in-depth DSST study tools that are fully-funded and provided to you by the DoD.

Students who fail a DSST exam may retake an exam, but must wait at least 30 days after taking the initial test.

The DSST currently offers more than 30 exams in the areas of business, humanities, mathematics, physical science, social science, and technology.

Business

- Business Ethics and Society
- Business Mathematics
- Human Resource Management
- Introduction to Business
- Management Information Systems
- Money and Banking
- Organizational Behavior
- Personal Finance
- Principles of Finance
- Principles of Supervision

Humanities

- Ethics in America
- History of the Soviet Union
- Introduction to World Religions
- Math for Liberal Arts
- Principles of Advanced English Composition
- Principles of Public Speaking

Mathematics

- Computing and Information Technology
- Fundamentals of College Algebra
- Math for Liberal Arts
- Fundamentals of Statistics

Physical Science

- Environmental Science

College Success Tips for Adult Learners

Health & Human Development

Principles of Physical Science I

Social Sciences

A History of the Vietnam War

Art of the Western World

Criminal Justice

Foundations of Education

Fundamentals of Counseling

General Anthropology

History of the Soviet Union

Human/Cultural Geography

Introduction to Law Enforcement

Lifespan Developmental Psychology

Substance Abuse

The Civil War and Reconstruction

Technology

Computing and Information Technology

Fundamentals of Cybersecurity

Technical Writing

UExcel and Excelsior College Examinations (ECE)

Along with CLEP and DSST options, Excelsior College offers a third type of credit-by-examination program that allows test-takers to earn college credit. Exams previously known as ECEs in subjects other than Nursing Theory now carry a UExcel name. Nursing Theory exams designed for Excelsior College's associate and bachelor degree programs in nursing continue to carry the ECE name. UExcel and ECE exams are used to meet specific requirements of the Excelsior College degrees and are accepted for college credit by more than 900 colleges and universities.

College Success Tips for Adult Learners

Since October 1, 2011, DANTES no longer funds UExcel and ECE exams. However, service members may take exams on a self-funded basis at Pearson VUE and both commercial and on-base military National Testing Centers.

The following is a list of exams by category:

Business

Business Ethics

Business Information Systems

Business Law

Financial Accounting

Managerial Accounting

Human Resource Management

Introduction to Computer Programming Using Java

Introduction to Macroeconomics

Introduction to Microeconomics

Labor Relations

Operations Management

Organizational Behavior

Principles of Finance

Principles of Management

Principles of Marketing

Quantitative Analysis

Workplace Communication with Computers

Education

Literacy Instruction in the Elementary School

Humanities

- Bioethics: Philosophical Issues
- College Writing
- English Composition
- Ethics: Theory & Practice
- Introduction to Music
- Introduction to Philosophy
- Interpersonal Communication
- Spanish Language

Natural Sciences and Mathematics

- Anatomy & Physiology
- Anatomy & Physiology I
- Anatomy & Physiology II
- Basic Genetics
- Calculus
- Contemporary Mathematics
- Earth Science
- General Chemistry I
- Microbiology
- Pathophysiology
- Physics
- Precalculus Algebra
- Science of Nutrition
- Statistics
- Weather and Climate

Nursing

UExcel exams:

Adult Nursing

Community-Focused Nursing

Fundamentals of Nursing

Maternal & Child Nursing (Associate)

Maternal & Child Nursing (Baccalaureate)

Psychiatric/Mental Health Nursing

Research in Nursing

ECE exams:

Essentials of Nursing Care: Health Differences

Essentials of Nursing Care: Health Safety

Foundations in Nursing Practice

Health Differences Across the Life Span 1

Health Differences Across the Life Span 2

Health Differences Across the Life Span 3

Reproductive Health

Transition to the Professional Nurse Role

Social Sciences and History

Abnormal Psychology

Cultural Diversity

Foundations of Gerontology

Introduction to Psychology

Introduction to Sociology

Juvenile Delinquency

Life Span Developmental Psychology

Political Science

Psychology of Adulthood & Aging

Research Methods in Psychology

Social Psychology

World Conflicts Since 1900

World Population

Learn more about UExcel credit by exam at <https://www.excelsior.edu/exams/uexcel-home>

Why should I consider credit by examination?

Credit-by-examination programs can benefit both military and civilian students alike. All three of the programs discussed enable adult learners to accelerate their education. By earning college credit for exams taken, you can:

- Save time—complete your degree more quickly, with fewer actual classes taken
- Save money—pay for the cost of one exam instead of an entire course
- Focus on your interests—meet your general or introductory requirements through the tests and concentrate on advanced courses
- Gain a head start—complete basic requirements even before you start school, since the exams don't require college enrollment

Are there disadvantages to credit by examination? For many adult learners, the answer is no! But if you're an avid student, you may want to consider one factor. Credit by examination is just that—credit earned through passing tests. You miss out on the classroom experience when you don't take the course! If you believe you would benefit more from interacting with others in a learning environment, credit by examination may not be for you.

How do I prepare for these tests?

To get ready for the tests, you should review relevant material, such as math formulas and commonly tested vocabulary words, and know the directions for each question type or test section. Take at least one practice test and review your mistakes.

eBook Study Guide

One way to prepare for credit-by-examination tests is to use study guides. These guides contain practice tests as well as content reviews. Study guides for the most common tests are available in every major commercial, military, and college bookstore.

*Master the™ CLEP®**, published by Peterson's, is a comprehensive study guide covering the five general CLEP examinations:

1. College Composition
2. College Mathematics
3. Humanities
4. Natural Sciences
5. Social Sciences and History

This ebook features pre-tests and post-tests with answer explanations for each exam plus detailed subject overviews.

The *Official Guide to Mastering DSST Exams* and *Official Guide to Mastering DSST Exams (Part II)*, published by Peterson's, are comprehensive study guides covering the most popular DSST titles. These ebooks feature diagnostic tests and post-tests with answer explanations for each exam plus detailed subject reviews. The following titles are included in the *Official Guide to Mastering DSST Exams*.

- Business Math
- Ethics in America
- Fundamentals of College Algebra
- Introduction to Computing
- Principles of Public Speaking
- Principles of Supervision
- Substance Abuse
- Technical Writing

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College Success Tips for Adult Learners

The following titles are included in the *Official Guide to Mastering DSST Exams (Part II)*:

- The Civil War and Reconstruction
- Environment and Humanity
- Here's to Your Health
- Human Resource Management
- Introduction to Business
- Introduction to World Religion
- Organizational Behavior
- Personal Finance

Both study guides are available as ebooks.

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Choosing Classes



Fifteen Tips on Choosing Classes

1. **Don't overburden yourself**

Don't take a gigantic course load. At the same time, don't take such a light course load that you won't be challenged.

2. **Don't sign up for three reading-intensive courses**

Try to vary the type of courses you take. Balance your class load between courses with a lot of reading and courses that have problem sets.

Math and science courses include algebra, biology, chemistry, physics, and geometry; these classes will usually have problem sets for homework.

Humanities or reading-intensive courses include classes in anthropology, English, history, political science, psychology, and various other social sciences.

3. **Sample a variety of subject areas**

It's okay to lean toward a specific major, but don't rule out other subject areas without giving them a chance.

Subjects you enjoyed in high school may not interest you in college. You may find academic happiness in a totally random subject area. Come to college with an open mind; you can always switch back to your original academic plans at a later date.

4. **Choose professors, not titles**

A professor makes a course—not the other way around. Find out who the best professors are and take their classes, especially if they are in your field. You should always try to get into classes with the best teachers.

5. **Get your requirements out of the way early**

Most schools have general education requirements that make it mandatory for each student to take courses in a variety of areas.

It's a great way to sample various fields. These requirements often turn out to be really interesting courses, which may take your education in a totally different direction.

6. If you have problems, seek human (not computer) assistance

Most larger schools now register students via the internet. While this method often simplifies the process, don't hesitate to call the registrar's office if you have a problem. This applies to any concerns with registration. Don't wait until classes start to find out that you are not enrolled in the right courses—or that you aren't enrolled at all!

7. Don't worry about a major just yet

Nobody will be asking you to declare a major as soon as you get to college. As a matter of fact, most advisers will discourage it.

You need to answer many questions before choosing a major.

What kind of job are you planning on? Do you want to attend graduate school? What interests you?

These questions can be answered after your freshman courses, after you have decided what you like, and after you have figured out the subjects in which you excel. Keep in mind that your major does not necessarily dictate your future career.

8. Read your college catalog

It contains (a) required courses, (b) majors offered and curricula to follow, and (c) course prerequisites and descriptions.

9. Make sure you discuss transferring course work with your academic adviser

To talk with that person, first make an appointment. Be prepared by being familiar with the catalog.

10. Find out if you must take a refresher course

Many colleges require placement tests in English and math. The results will indicate whether you must take a refresher course before beginning freshman-level courses. Refresher courses are usually numbered 0–100. You receive credit for them, but they do not transfer to other institutions.

11. Improve your writing skills

Take an English refresher course if necessary. Learning to write term papers and themes will be a major task in college, but your reward will be a valuable lifetime asset. Exams, research papers, and term papers will be evaluated on grammar, punctuation, clarity, organization, logic, creativity, and your ability to gather, analyze, and communicate knowledge successfully.

12. If you withdraw from a class, make sure you do it within the official add-drop period

Otherwise, if you just quit going to class without notifying the school, you will receive an “F.” If you withdraw within the official add-drop period, you usually can receive a refund or partial refund from the school. Regardless of the reason, always fill out the official withdrawal papers.

13. Take a speech class

Speaking effectively is a major advantage in today's world. Many universities require students to take a public speaking course. If your school doesn't, try to sign up for one. It will help you no matter what major you eventually select.

14. Put it in writing!

An academic adviser or dean may give you permission to take an advanced course or waive a degree requirement, but at some point, that person may no longer be at the college. Any exceptions granted you from the published procedures should be noted in writing and placed in your permanent file.

15. Make sure you fulfill your school's residency requirements

This means you must complete a certain number of courses with the school from which you're seeking a degree. Some schools require the last year of college work to be done in residence. The residency requirement may be 15 semester hours for an associate degree and 30 semester hours for a bachelor's degree.

Study Tactics



Classwork: What to Expect

The days when teachers looked over your shoulder and nagged you about homework and tests are gone. Teachers assume you can keep up with your work without individual attention.

The structure of college courses reflects this philosophy. Instead of daily graded assignments and monthly tests, most college professors evaluate students solely on the basis of two or three assessments—most probably, a midterm, final, term project, or several papers. Just as often, the professor will not say anything about assignments but will rely on the syllabus given to each student the first day of class. This item—the syllabus—is invaluable; keep it in a safe place, refer to it often, and transfer dates of exams and when assignments are due to your calendar.

With class work structured in this way, falling behind haunts any student with the slightest lazy streak. The laid-back student may find himself approaching the midterm or even the final without having read or written anything. Time management plays a large role in your college career.

Homework: How to Stay on Top

Self-discipline and organization are the keys.

Plot Your Time with a Calendar

Set daily and weekly goals. Study daily. Learn to take careful notes. Expect to spend at least two nights studying for any significant exam. Papers may require more time if research is needed. And don't make the mistake of waiting until 5 minutes before a paper is due to print it out. Inevitably, the printer will jam when you need it most.

Don't get behind in your other classes while concentrating on one.

Attend Class

College professors assume students are disciplined enough to attend class on a regular basis. Class attendance is critical to college success.

Copying notes from a more disciplined friend will not suffice. Notes should be used as an outline, reminding you of key concepts and theories. Borrowed notes will give you facts and figures but won't paint the complete picture.

College Success Tips for Adult Learners

If you have time, read your lecture notes at the end of each day or at least the end of the week. Review, rewrite, and discuss classwork. The more you work with the material, the more you will remember.

Learn How to Study Effectively

Find a suitable study environment. Some like soft music in the background. Some need people around. For most, however, a comfortable chair in a quiet room works best. Regardless, make sure you are in a place free of the temptation to socialize.

- Don't study in bed.
- Use breaks as incentives. A good rule is to work for 50 minutes and break for 10.
- Remember to highlight important points in what you read. It makes studying before an exam so much easier.

Procrastination: Avoid the Inevitable

At one time or another, every college student will get behind in his or her work—no matter how disciplined or diligent they are. Although the struggle to stay afloat in the sea of academia challenges every student, it should not be an excuse to drown.

Keep Up with Your Reading

Review—review—review.

Do Not Plagiarize

This means do not write a paper with words you took from another source. Your writing must be your own. Be warned—there are computer programs available to professors that can detect plagiarism.

Maintain a High Grade-Point Average (GPA)

Grades of “D” and “F” will not transfer to another institution. If you have an “incomplete,” make up the required work in time to receive a passing grade; otherwise, it will become an “F.”

Learn How to Use the Library or Internet to Do Research

The more you know about where to find information in your library and on the internet, the easier your research will be.

Keep Copies of All Assigned Projects, Term Papers, and Returned Tests

Keep them until you receive your grade at the end of the course.

How to Manage Time Well



It takes a conscious effort to manage time well, but it is a skill that can be learned. With practice, you will become comfortable organizing, prioritizing, and succeeding in your goals. Here are some general time-management strategies:

- **Stop Taking on Too Much at Once**

Limit your responsibilities and lighten your burden.

- **Learn to Cope with Your Own Personality**

If you are high-strung and induce much of your own time pressure, decide that you don't have to be the victim of yourself.

- **Reject Perfectionism**

Decide that you have a right to be imperfect. There are times to have high standards, to strive for excellence, but in order to protect your mental and emotional health, there are also times to say, "This is good enough."

- **Cope with Procrastination**

If chronic procrastination is one of your problems, develop a strategy for dealing with it.

- **Make a To-Do List**

A written list helps you identify what needs to get done and serves as a reminder to stay on schedule.

- **Assign Priorities to Your Tasks**

Don't feel guilty about tasks that you neglect for a few days because of more urgent demands.

College Success Tips for Adult Learners

The following time-management strategies focus exclusively on your studies:

- **Plan Your Semester**

Review your syllabi and make a note of when and how many assignments are due. Use a calendar to record all of your due dates.

- **Make a Weekly and Monthly Schedule**

Record times for all of your commitments for the upcoming week and month. Schedule blocks of time for study and review. Plan effectively to avoid last-minute scrambling.

- **Set Up a Routine**

Developing a pattern for efficient and effective learning will help you feel in control and meet deadlines in good time.

- **Review Your Notes**

Reviewing notes and readings just before class may prompt a question about something you don't quite understand. Reviewing lecture material immediately after class helps retain new information.

Writing a Research Paper



Q: What is a research paper?

A: A research paper offers your unique perspective on a specific topic. It is a relatively long report that investigates and evaluates primary and secondary sources with the intent to interpret them. A research paper is often submitted to satisfy a course requirement—both in undergraduate and graduate programs.

Q: Are there different types of research papers?

A: Yes, there are argumentative research papers and analytical research papers. Argumentative research papers start with an introduction in which the writer introduces the topic and the stance he or she is going to take. The goal of this type of research paper is to persuade the reader. Analytical research papers usually begin with a question the writer intends to answer. The goal of this type of research paper is to interpret one or several existing sources.

In general, research papers for a graduate degree require more time, research, and preparation than a paper written for an undergraduate degree.

Q: Why are research papers assigned at all?

A: Research papers are assigned to prove you can make connections between concepts, do research, synthesize and organize ideas, and express your thoughts in a clear form. It also helps the instructor to evaluate your grasp of the subject.

Q: What kinds of courses require research papers?

A: Research papers are likely to be required in social science and humanities courses such as English literature, psychology, philosophy, anthropology, sociology, and history. A research paper is seldom required in life science or physical science courses such as biology, anatomy, physiology, astronomy, and physics. Research papers are often not required in applied courses such as accounting, marketing, real estate, statistics, or business mathematics.

Q: How does a research paper differ from a thesis or a dissertation?

A: A research paper, whether written for an undergraduate or a graduate course, is much shorter than a thesis or a dissertation, which tend to resemble book-length manuscripts. A thesis is submitted to satisfy one of the requirements for a master's degree, and a dissertation is submitted to satisfy one of the requirements for a doctoral degree.

Q: I've heard that a research paper must have a thesis. Can you clarify?

A: The term *thesis* can be used in two ways. To say that you are writing a thesis means you are writing a long report or essay for an undergraduate honors program or a master's degree. To say that your research paper must have a thesis means it must make a point; it must have some central idea. It is a good idea to set out this point or idea early in the paper, then bring forth evidence that either supports or rejects it.

Q: How long should a research paper be?

A: Professors may provide you with a required word count or length. Generally, an undergraduate research paper is about 10 to 15 pages long, while a graduate research paper might cover 20 pages or more.

Q: How do you do research for a research paper?

A: Learn to use the library's reference resources. Look up the subject you have picked and then find books and articles that contain information on your topic. The indexes and bibliographies of books and articles will often suggest other sources. If your library doesn't have a particular publication, request it through an interlibrary loan.

Another source of information is the internet. You can do a search by the subject name of your paper and find links to websites containing information for your paper. Be sure to cite your sources as you would cite book sources. Professors often have a preference for how a source should be cited. Make sure you know how to cite your sources.

It is important that you cite primary sources as well as secondary ones in a research paper. A *primary source* of information is a first, or basic, source. A *secondary source* of information is one that has been derived from primary ones.

Q: How do I put a research paper into a proper form?

A: First, find out if your school or professor prefers a particular style guide. If so, you need to become familiar with it and use it to organize your material, create a table of contents, and cite your sources accordingly.

There are many good style guides available in bookstores and at the library. One example is *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, written by Kate L. Turabian and revised by Wayne C. Bath, Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph M. Williams, and the University of Chicago Press. You will also find many helpful articles online. If your school has a writing lab, take advantage of the help you will find there.

How to Find a Topic

First, make sure you understand the assignment. If you have any questions, ask your instructor before you start your research. Otherwise, you might waste valuable time.

Your instructor will either provide you with a list of topics to choose from or let you select a topic. In this case, check with your instructor to make sure your topic is acceptable before you start working. Your topic should be relatively easy to research, fit within the course subject, and excite interest in you and your writing.

If you are left to pick your own topic, approach the course with an open mind and be on the lookout for a topic that might interest you. Don't wait until the last minute to pick a topic. Instead, jot down possibilities as you think of them and then narrow down your list.

Use the Four Stages of Creative Thinking

There are four basic stages in creative thinking:

1. Preparation
2. Incubation
3. Illumination
4. Verification

For a concrete example of the four stages, let's turn to a sample research paper called "The Mild, Mild West" in which we assert that the Old West wasn't as wild as it has been said to have been.

Preparation

Perhaps you have read two or three Western novels by such authors as Zane Grey, Max Brand, or Louis L'Amour. Then, using the library's resources, find books and articles on the way people lived approximately 100 years ago in such states as Texas, Arizona, Nevada, and California. Read only the material pertinent to your topic. Use the bibliographies of the first books to suggest additional books and articles. Take plenty of notes. Put these on index cards of a standard size to arrange and rearrange your material. Also, make photocopies of key pages.

Incubation

Set aside your notes for a week or two. Incubation in creative thinking is a mental process involving learning and growth at a subconscious level. Although you do not give conscious attention to the subject matter, some process of connecting facts and ideas goes on outside your voluntary control. It is a very real phenomenon, one you can count on. Note that time is involved, however. Work on the term paper, including preparation and incubation, should be spread out over a three- to four-week period. For this reason, it is important to get an early start and not procrastinate.

Illumination

After the incubation period, come back to the material. You will be pleasantly surprised to find that it tends to organize itself easily and you have some good ideas about how to write it. For example, you see that a gunfight from a Western novel can be quoted briefly in an introduction. This gets the paper off to an interesting start. The following four topic headings come naturally to mind:

1. The Popular View
2. A Realistic View
3. An Evaluation
4. A Personal Viewpoint

Verification

The last step involves actually writing the research paper. You are verifying your ideas and your method of organization, turning mental musings into actual sentences and paragraphs on paper. Verification is a trial-and-error process. It is for good reason that a first draft is also called a *rough draft*. After something is down on paper, it is relatively easy to go back over it to improve the overall quality.

Revising, Editing, and Proofreading

Very few people can write a first draft of a research paper—or any type of paper—without having to revise it at some point. Revising means evaluating the entire draft and making changes to paragraphs, sentences, and sometimes even the entire project. The goal is to produce a cohesive paper that effectively supports your thesis.

Editing means evaluating the general appearance of your paper. You are looking for a consistent voice that is appropriate for your audience and a logical flow of thought between your ideas and paragraphs.

The final step is to proofread your paper. It means closely reading your text and correcting any grammar or spelling mistakes that you have previously missed.

Specific Tips and Writing Strategies

- **Start Your Paper with an Example, a Quotation, or an Anecdote That Is Intrinsically Interesting and Attention-Getting**

Help to lift your paper out of the pile of dull and uninspired research papers your instructor plows through at the end of each semester.

- **Keep the Writing Clear and to the Point**

Use relatively short sentences ranging in length from 10 to 14 words. If a sentence has too many clauses and subclauses and approaches a length of 20 or more words, break it down into two shorter sentences. Use a vocabulary that is appropriate to your subject, but don't show off by using obscure words when more familiar, workable words will do.

- **Use Headings and Subheadings**

Give your research paper about four or five main headings. Use subheadings if the material can be further categorized. Be sure you have at least two subheadings, if you use them at all, under a main heading. The use of headings and subheadings makes your paper logical and organized. Twelve pages of writing without headings may look like a big lump of indigestible mental oatmeal. But always check with your instructor and be sure to follow his or her style guidelines.

- **Limit Your References**

Don't go overboard on research for a research paper. Remember, it is not a thesis or a dissertation. If your research paper is 12 pages in length, then 10 to 14 references will be about right. If you have too few references, your paper will not be adequately documented. If you have too many references, your paper will seem cluttered, as if it were written from index cards. Be sure you rely mainly on *primary* references of high quality.

- **Summarize All References in a Bibliography**

A bibliography is a real showcase for your research. It is often the first item an instructor turns to, so be sure that it is neat, accurate, and presented in the correct form; this will really help to move your paper up your professor's grading scale. There are many free online resources to help you with creating a bibliography: CitationMachine.net, easybib.com, citefast.com, and bibme.org are all helpful tools.

- **Edit the Paper Carefully**

Double-check and triple-check your paper for spelling, grammar, and general syntax errors. Another set of eyes is always a good idea, so try to find someone to proofread your paper.

■ **Pay Attention to the Paper's General Appearance**

A whole grade point can often be gained or lost on a research paper because of its overall look. Make sure you check font sizes, margins, and pagination for consistency before you submit your paper.

■ **Use Some Direct Quotations**

Direct quotations, properly referenced, lend weight and authority to your paper. Be sure they are interesting, insightful, and pertinent to the content. Three or four quotations here and there, in a standard-length research paper, are about the right number.

■ **Remember That Writing Is Rewriting**

Write the first draft relatively rapidly, then rewrite and edit at a more leisurely pace.

Tips for Making a Presentation

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Have an Attention-Grabbing Introduction

Try to think of some way to hook your audience. An anecdote, a clever quotation, a news item, or a reference to a celebrity is innately interesting to an audience.

Make Eye Contact

Use the principle of *roving eye contact*. Make it, hold it for 20 or 30 seconds, and then move on to someone else at random. Make sure that you include people at the back of the room.

Use a Visual Aid or a Handout

A handout can be either an outline or a list of key questions that you plan to address. Members of an audience tend to cling to handouts.

Speak So You Can Be Heard

Some students insist on giving a talk in soft, whispery tones. This can come from anxiety. You are *supposed* to be the center of attention. Will yourself to speak up. A little too loud is better than a little too quiet.

Make Some Movements

Take a few steps forward or to the side once in a while. Change your position. Come out from behind the lectern for a few moments. Walk over to the white board. Point at your visual aid. Motion automatically commands attention. It involuntarily makes all eyes focus on the body in motion and brings the audience together.

Use Natural Hand Gestures

The appropriate body language that comes naturally to you from your cultural background gives color and personality to what you have to say. Let your hands be spontaneously expressive.

Use a Key-Questions Format

Draw up a series of four to seven key questions. Read the first question to the group, then look up and answer the question informally. Proceed through the other questions in the same way. The key-questions format is effective because questions automatically alert the mind and induce a natural interest.

Talk with Feeling

Some students deliver a talk in a dull monotone. Often, their faces seem to go blank and they lack expression. Conversely, other students vary the pitch of their voices. Their eyes and facial expression convey feeling, a degree of emotional intensity. The content of two talks can be almost the same, but the one delivered with feeling and liveliness will go over far better with an audience.

Allow Some Time for a Question-and-Answer Period

It is always gracious and a courtesy to invite some questions from the audience. It also conveys the impression that you are the master of your material. No more than two or three questions need to be accepted. The quality of your answers is really not as important as the confidence with which you present them. Keep your answers relatively short. And remember, in a question-and-answer format, you have a right to the last word. In your momentary role as speaker, you are the authority on the subject in question.

Tips for Taking an Exam



Multiple-Choice Tests

- Be sure you answer every question. Go over the test if you have time at the end and double-check your answers.
- After you have completed the test, reevaluate the difficult questions and consider changing answers. You may pick up overall points from double-checking and making changes.
- Use the process of elimination. If you can rule out a few wrong answers, your chance of picking the correct answer grows.
- If there is no penalty for a wrong answer, leave no question unanswered. Even by blindly guessing, you might pick up a few extra points.
- Many answer sheets these days are machine-graded. It is essential that all marks be dark and in accordance with instructions.
- Ask your instructor if you can use a standard dictionary. Often, looking up a single word will turn a difficult multiple-choice question into a clear one.
- If English is a second language for you, ask the instructor if you can bring in an English-foreign language dictionary. Don't hesitate to ask. This request is quite appropriate, and most instructors will agree to it.
- Study for multiple-choice tests by the recall method. Although a multiple-choice test is a recognition test, the general rule is this: *If you can recall an item, you can certainly recognize it.*

Essay Examinations

- Organize your essay. Don't just ramble and free associate. Decide what point or points you want to make and proceed to make them. If necessary, make an outline before you start writing.
- Don't strive for a literary style. The purpose of an essay examination is to assess learning. Say what you need to say as directly and as clearly as possible.

College Success Tips for Adult Learners

- An essay question measures your grasp of basic information and your capacity for critical thinking. Try to work into the essay all of the relevant, specific ideas or facts that you can muster. Use terms and names and define concepts. Also, make connections between concepts. Tie ideas together.
- Make your essay a good length. An essay that is too short will seem to be a minimal, feeble effort. An essay that is too long will seem to be padded. Student essays that run over 1000 words are usually too long. The typical student essay runs in the vicinity of 400 to 500 words.
- Make your essay as presentable as possible. Pay attention to spelling and grammar. Take some time to proofread your essay. Your essay will make a better impression if you make an effort to correct careless errors.

Five Quick Test-Taking Tips

1. Remember partial credit

Always show your work. If worse comes to worst, write *something* down, anything. Partial credit has salvaged more than a few test scores, especially in science courses where the median score is often 40 percent or lower.

2. Use key words and catch phrases

Take note of key words and catch phrases that your teacher might have used in class or that you've come across while studying the subject. Using them shows that you have paid attention.

3. Write clearly

Write with clarity and purpose. The object is to get down as much as possible in the most logical fashion.

4. Answer every question, if possible

Don't spend two hours answering the first question when you have five more of equal weight staring you in the face. Bide your time and make sure to completely answer those questions that are worth the most points.

5. Don't stress out

Getting uptight because you can't answer the first question is useless. Move on. If the rest of the test looks like Chinese when it's supposed to be Spanish, do the best you can. Excessive worrying only makes you less productive.

Computers at College



Questions to Consider Before You Buy a Computer

Q: Do I already own an adequate computer system?

A: The computer world changes so fast that it is hard to say what an adequate system is. The best rule of thumb is that any computer system that is more than two or three years old is probably about to reach dinosaur status, and if you can afford it, you should replace such a system.

Q: Does the school provide sufficient computer facilities?

A: Many colleges offer easily accessible computer facilities. For the student on a tight budget, it pays to investigate. If the computer facilities at your school are particularly good, you may not need your own computer.

Q: Does my major require a special computer?

A: Engineering and computer science students may have special computer needs, whereas English and history majors may need to use only simple word processing programs. A super expensive Mac or PC system may be overkill if all you have to do is crank out three papers a term and surf the Web.

Despite what you might think, you'll probably want your own computer as much for your English and history courses (to have privacy while you write) as for your science courses (which may use computers for writing labs or statistical analysis).

Use and Abuse of Computers

Save Your Work—Often

All word processing programs have a setting that allows you to program your machine to save your work automatically every few minutes. Make sure that you have the AutoSave function set.

If your computer does crash, don't panic! Your machine will probably recover your file when you reboot. If not, find a friend who knows how to access your "temp" files; it might be in there.

College Success Tips for Adult Learners

You can also use the “find file” command and then limit the search to files that were recently updated. Get help if you need it, because chances are that your material is not all lost.

Treat Your Computer with Care

Computers located too close to a vent or radiator may decide to take the day off due to heat exhaustion. Soft drinks, coffee, milk, and beer also have contributed to many a system's downfall. Magnets are a bad idea, too. Keep them far away from your computer.

Get to Know a Computer Guru

You know who they are. There is no magic involved—these folks really know what they're doing, and they're usually glad to help you out of a computer bind.

Keep Your Computer Running Smoothly

As an added precaution against breakdowns, have someone check up on your computer every year or so. Most computer service stores will do a diagnostic check that may save some hassles later.

Protect Against Viruses and Spyware

Be careful when you download material via the Web. You should make sure that your computer is equipped with good virus protection software and be sure to download all updates to that software as they become available. The newer the software, the more viruses it will be able to recognize. Anti-spyware programs are a good idea, too.

Don't Let the Computer Become an Enemy

Don't let that little glowing screen become an adversary. If you plan correctly and take all the necessary precautions, the computer will be your most useful tool at college—next to your brain.

Internet Glossary

Asynchronous courses	Classes that allow students to work according to their own schedule (within the course timeline), and don't require all students to be online or participate in coursework at the same specific time.
Browser	A type of software that allows you to access the World Wide Web, such as Google Chrome, Internet Explorer, and Firefox. Browsers assemble all the elements of Web pages to form a clear, coherent display.
Cloud Storage	Online file storage that allows users to upload files and then access them via the internet from a different computer, tablet, smartphone, or other network device.
Directories	These make sense of the internet's clamor by sorting and organizing information according to specific categories, such as Education, News, or Entertainment. Google and Yahoo! are popular directories.
Distance Education	A system that allows students to complete courses offsite from another location without requiring their physical presence on campus.
Home Page	This is the welcome mat for a website. It is usually the first page you see, and it could well be the only page. For bigger sites with lots of information, the home page functions as an index, telling you what else is on the site, with links to whisk you there.
HTML	HTML stands for HyperText Markup Language. This is the computer language used to build Web pages.
Internet	A massive public computer network of smaller computer networks linked globally by highspeed telephone lines.
Link	A connection to another website. Usually, you click on an underlined word or graphic to connect to the new site.

College Success Tips for Adult Learners

Online learning	Similar to distance education, this allows students to complete courses via their computers or other internet-ready devices.
Portable Storage Device	A flash or thumb drive that lets you carry your files with you so that they are accessible wherever you are.
Search Engine	Similar to a directory, a search engine searches for data when you provide key words.
Server	A computer linked to the internet that stores Web pages and responds to data requests.
Server Provider	An organization or company that provides a connection to the internet through its host computer..
Synchronous courses	Students are required to be online and logged into the "virtual classroom" at the same specific time, so they can participate in class exercises and interact with each other and the instructor.
URL	URL Stands for Uniform Resource Locator. This is an address identifying a file location on the Internet.
World Wide Web	A navigation system that lets you browse and retrieve text, graphics, video, and sound from a variety of linked sources. Many people think the Web and the internet are one and the same. They are not.

Top 10 Myths About College



1. College is only for unusually bright people.

College students do not need to be gifted, superior, or have unusual mental abilities. Most college graduates are perfectly ordinary people in terms of memory, attention span, arithmetical understanding, comprehension of concepts, and other abilities.

2. College is only for unusually creative people.

The last thing required in most college classes is creativity. You need to learn in college, not invent or create ideas.

3. You have to be young to go to college.

If you are 25 years or older, you will have plenty of companionship. At state universities and community colleges, older adults are the rule, not the exception. The average age of a part-time evening student is 29.

4. You have to have a lot of free time to go to college.

It is best, when attending college part-time, to take only two or three classes. If the class schedule is arranged in terms of your work or family responsibilities, you can generally find times and places to study.

5. It takes a lot of money to go to college.

The average community college is subsidized by state and local taxes, so fees are relatively low. If money is very tight, you can consult the college's financial aid office. There are both grants and loans available to most students. Those in the military can use in-service Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) education benefits and/or military tuition assistance.

6. It takes a long, long time to complete a college program.

If you are attending college part-time, it can take you longer to earn a degree. However, many schools have accelerated terms, allow students to earn credit by taking examinations such as the CLEP, and award those who are or have been in the military with credit for their job experience and military training. Many community colleges also offer certificate programs in trade and vocational areas, which can be completed in less than the equivalent of two full-time years.

7. You have to pass entrance examinations in order to go to college.

Although high scores on standardized examinations are required for admission to some state universities and selective private colleges, this is not true of community colleges. Many colleges and universities on military installations do not require entrance examinations.

The majority of community colleges have an open-door policy, meaning that all applicants are welcome. If you do your first two years of college work toward a bachelor's degree at a community college, your work can transfer to a four-year college or university without entrance examinations.

8. You need to know what you want.

If you don't know what area you want to pursue, declare a general major, such as liberal arts. If you are aiming toward a bachelor's degree, the first two years are general education courses. In most cases, it is not necessary to take more than two or three courses in your major in your first two years. You can change your major readily after you complete your first two years. Many students use the first two years of college as a way of *discovering* what they want to major in.

9. Professors tend to be hostile to the older, nontraditional student.

The great majority of college professors look upon their work as not merely a job but as a higher calling. Teachers live to teach. They want to help you succeed. If you demonstrate a genuine will to learn, the professor will usually find this both exciting and rewarding.

10. College graduates don't really earn that much more money.

The average college graduate earns about twice as much money per year as the average high school graduate.