



**Bay Path Online**

## **Overview – What is Online Learning?**

In many ways, online learning is no different from taking classes in the traditional way—in a classroom on campus. For example, online students at Bay Path College pay the same tuition and learn from the instructors who are highly qualified and who may also teach on campus. In addition, your transcripts are identical regardless of whether you take your courses on campus or online. Finally, online learners are required to learn the same material as face-to-face students do, but online learners do not learn by sitting in a classroom and listening to an instructor's lecture. Online students learn by:

- spending the time and the effort needed to read all resource materials, such as textbooks and study guides
- watching any required videos
- completing any written assignments
- participating in asynchronous weekly online discussions with their instructor and classmates
- satisfactorily completing any examinations.

Typically, there are no scheduled class sessions in a Bay Path College online course—you log in to your course site and participate according to your schedule each week! But be ready for extensive interaction—with your facilitator and other students through the internet.

- Expect to learn the same material that you would in a face-to-face class.
- Expect to spend on average 15 hours per week per course. Just because "classroom" time is greatly reduced, it does not mean that learning time is similarly reduced.
- Expect to have assistance from your instructor. Distance Learning does not mean that you are on your own. Your instructor is available and eager to assist and guide you in your learning and answer your questions throughout the course.

## **What to Expect as an Online Student**

As you think about becoming a Bay Path College Online student, it may be helpful to know the following details about our programs.

### **EXT 099: Orientation to Online Learning**

When you register for an on-line course, you will be automatically enrolled in EXT 099: Orientation. This non-credit, course can be accessed through the Manhattan link once you receive your username/password. The course is required of all graduate and undergraduate online learners. Students will become acquainted with effective online learning strategies and practices and will learn how to navigate the BP Road and the Manhattan course management system. Successful completion is required (with a grade of P) in order to enroll in an online course. This course is self-directed and takes approximately four hours to complete. If you have any questions, please contact Amber Vaill at [availl@baypath.edu](mailto:availl@baypath.edu).

## **Studying Online**

In most cases, Bay Path College online programs are completely online, which means students do not have to come to campus. Instead, we've designed an online environment which allows our faculty

members to interact with students through the use of a Web browser. Course content varies, but usually includes online videos, interactive animations, discussion boards, video/audio content, and more. Students submit regular assignments including homework, projects and papers, through the Web interface.

In most cases, students are required to formally apply for Bay Path College Online programs. Applicants are reviewed by an admissions panel and are held to the same academic standards as on-campus students.

Online learning can require a lot of written communication. Because you will be learning at your own location and during the times that you prefer, your primary means of communicating with instructors and other students will be through the use of internet technologies. In addition, most courses will ask that students engage regularly in online discussions and debates. As an online student, it will be important that you feel comfortable interacting with others from a distance, since you will not have the same face-to-face contact as a student learning on campus. You must be available to log on to your course 4 or 5 days each week to interact with your instructor and classmates.

Online students take an active role in their education. A greater degree of flexibility also means that you'll need to be disciplined in your approach to your studies—it will be up to you to make sure you log on to your course and meet your own deadlines, because your professor won't be in the room to remind you to do so.

Technology plays an integral role in online learning—it's what makes this all possible. To get started in a Bay Path College Online program or course, we recommend that students have basic computer skills, such as the ability to send e-mail, navigate the Internet, and install software. If you're unsure about your computer skills, we're happy to help you get up to speed.

Curious about what kind of technical components are required for online learning? You can find out what kind of computer, modem, and software you'll need by referring to the following:

### **Technology Requirements for Bay Path College Online Courses**

To take a Bay Path College Online course, you will need to make sure that your computer meets the

Plug-ins**	Windows Media Player 9	Windows Media Player 10
	Adobe Acrobat Reader 7	Adobe Acrobat Reader (latest version)
	Flash Player 8	Flash Player (latest version)
	Java 1.4.2 SE	Java 1.4.2 SE
	Quicktime	Quicktime
Peripherals	Video card and monitor display capable of 1024x768 pixel resolution	Video card and monitor display capable of 1024x768 (or higher) pixel resolution
	Speakers	
DVD Drive		

*Pop-up blockers will impede the ability to use Bay Path's online resources.*

\* Specific courses or programs may have additional requirements.

### PC Users:

PC*	Minimum	Recommended
Processor	2 GHz	2 GHz or more
Operating System	Windows XP	Windows XP Pro
RAM	2 GB	2 GB or more
Browser** (only 1 needed)	Microsoft Internet Explorer 6.0 SP1	Microsoft Internet Explorer 6.0 SP2 or above (required)
	Firefox 1.0	Firefox 2.0. or higher
Software	MS Word XP or above	MS Word XP or higher
		MS PowerPoint 2000 or higher
DVD Drive		

### Mac Users:

Macintosh*	Minimum	Recommended
Processor	2 GHz	2 GHz
Operating System	OS X (10.2)	OS X (10.4)
RAM	2 GB	2 GB or higher
Browser** (only 1 needed)	Firefox 1.0	Firefox 2.0 or higher

\* Bay Path College recommends that new learners use/purchase a computer with the recommended standards listed above at the beginning of their program and that learners review these technical standards on a regular basis.

\*\* While other browsers and platforms may perform adequately, Bay Path cannot provide technical support for browsers other than those listed above. Browsers listed first are Bay Path's first choice for best performance.

If courses require substantial media interface, may also need:

- Windows XP Pro or later.

- 200 GB of free hard disk space.
- Backup storage device.

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## Course Schedules

Most courses operate on an eight-week schedule. Though you can complete course assignments during the hours that work best for you on a day-to-day basis, you will be required to finish the course within the allotted time period.

Each course has built-in deadlines along the way to make sure that you progress at a manageable pace.

Students enrolled in Bay Path College Online programs are typically able to complete two courses per semester by taking one eight-week course at a time.

## Comparison Chart of Delivery Methods

The chart below shows examples of how a face-to-face course, and a more traditional online learning course might compare. Naturally, the information here is only an example, but it will give you an idea of the similarities and differences between the types of courses. Keep in mind that each course operates differently, depending on the material, instructor, and delivery method.

	Face-to-Face	Online DL
Course Name	Foundations of Nonprofit Management	Foundations of Nonprofit management
Course Number	NMP 600	NMP 600
Number of Credits	3	3
Meeting Times	Meets one evening per week from 6 – 10 pm	No face-to-face meetings
Instructor	Dr. Loughran	Dr. Morriss-Olson
Instructor's Office Hours	Wednesday: 10-2 (example)	Online w/24 hr. response Monday - Friday
Course Materials	Textbook plus other articles and resource materials	Textbook plus other articles and resource materials (all but the textbook are posted on the course site)
Class Activities	Lecture, classroom discussion and assignments as outlined in syllabus.	Lecture notes (if used) are available online in course site. Weekly class discussions will take place using the course site discussion forum. Groups of students may work together online on projects using the

		web to research and report out in the online course space.
Assignments	As outlined in syllabus.	Textbook readings. Discussions are worth a good portion of the grade - they will be graded for quality and thoroughness. A number of other homework assignments as outlined in syllabus.
Submitting Assignments	Hand-in in class	Submit over the web
Extra Help available	Tutoring Center on-campus, online tutoring, or from instructor.	Tutoring Center on-campus, online tutoring, or from instructor.

### What to Expect from Online Learning

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Online courses at Bay Path College have the same academic requirements as traditional, classroom-delivered courses, but are often more challenging because of the different learning environment. Students who are good candidates for online learning are self-motivated and good managers of their time (see below). They must also have unrestricted access to computers and software that meet the minimum technical requirements for online learning (see below).

Each course will have a syllabus that outlines the assignments, requirements and the grading criteria for the class. You may also email the instructor and request a sample syllabus for the course that you are considering. Note that the final syllabus may be different, but the sample gives you a good idea of what will be expected in this course.

Online classes are *not* completely self-paced or correspondence courses. Assignments are due weekly, based on the schedule in the syllabus, and most instructors do not accept late submissions. Just like the classroom, you can't "make-up" a week's discussion, and you will lose points if you don't participate over the course of the prescribed time frame.

Most online classes involve weekly participation in online group discussions. While similar to a classroom discussion, these discussions are sometimes more demanding because there is a lot of reading involved, and written participation is mandatory on a weekly basis. Instructors expect substantive input from students, not simply agreement with someone else's comments. Most online classes do not include instructor lectures. Students are responsible for their own learning, and instructors serve as coaches, providing resources, feedback and guidance to individual students and teams.

Communication in online courses is very different from communication in face-to-face classes. There is much less, if any, synchronous conversation between students and faculty, and between students in a class. This communication environment takes some getting used to, and effort is required to develop proficiency in the use of online discussion tools.

### What makes a good online learning candidate?

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Taking courses online sounds like an exciting alternative to traditional face-to-face classes, however, online classes are not right for everyone. Online classes are very different from traditional classes in terms

of the nature of class interaction, the presentation of materials and the overall learning experience. Even if you are an excellent student in traditional classes, you may find online classes not compatible with your learning style. Or, you may find that you don't have the essential computer skills to take courses online. Therefore, before you enroll in any online classes, make sure that online learning is right for you and you are ready for it. Taking the survey below may help you to decide.

How many of the following statements describe you?

1. I am self-disciplined. I can work on my own and not be easily distracted.
2. I am self-motivated to learn. I don't need stimulus from other students or being face to face with my instructor to motivate myself.
3. I have the time-management skills to balance online coursework with my professional and personal responsibilities.
4. I am willing to commit my time and effort to online courses (about 15 hours and up per week per course).
5. I have good writing and communication skills.
6. I find that I can take the time to organize my thoughts better when I write than when I talk.
7. I have good reading skills. I can read a book to learn how to do something.
8. I feel comfortable discussing issues and asking questions in an open forum.
9. I have strategies to get the most from the course study materials such as text book, study guide, syllabus, etc.
10. I can benefit from direct instructor feedback.
11. I like to have the freedom to choose when I attend class and when I study.

If you counted nine or more of these statements, you probably have the necessary skills to succeed in an online class. If you counted between six and nine of these statements, you should be aware of potential challenges which may affect your ability to do well in an online classroom. If you counted less than six statements, you may want to consider taking a traditional classroom-delivered course.

### **What makes a successful online student?**

1. Be open-minded about sharing life, work, and educational experiences as part of the learning process.

Students in online courses find that the online process requires them to utilize their experiences. This forum for communication eliminates the visual barriers that hinder some individuals in expressing themselves. Normally quiet students find that they have time to think through their responses and are often more comfortable sharing their views online. In addition, the student is given time to reflect on the information before responding. The online environment should be open and friendly.

2. Be able to communicate through writing.

In the virtual classroom, nearly all communication is written, so it is critical that students feel comfortable expressing themselves in writing. Many students have limited writing abilities, which should be addressed before or as part of the online experience. This may require remedial efforts on the part of the student.

3. Be self-motivated and self-disciplined.

With the freedom and flexibility of the online environment comes responsibility. The online process takes a real commitment and discipline to keep up with the flow of the process.

4. Be willing to "speak up" if problems arise.

Many of the non-verbal tools that instructors use to determine whether students are having problems (confusion, frustration, boredom, absence, etc.) do not exist in an online environment. If a student is experiencing difficulty on any level (either with the technology or with the course content), he or she must communicate this immediately. Otherwise the instructor will never know what is wrong.

5. Be willing and able to commit to 15 hours per week per course.

Online is not easier than the traditional educational process. In fact, many students will say it requires much more time and commitment.

6. Be able to meet the minimum requirements for the program.

The requirements for online are no less than that of any other quality educational program. The successful student will view online as a convenient way to receive their education – not an easier way.

7. Accept critical thinking and decision making as part of the learning process.

The learning process requires the student to make decisions based on facts as well as experience. Assimilating information and executing the right decisions requires critical thought.

8. Have consistent easy access to a computer and the internet.

All communication in online courses takes place via the computer; the student must have access to the necessary equipment. Do not rely on your work computer or the public library – you must have your own home computer in order to have enough computer time to complete your coursework.

9. Be able to think ideas through before responding.

Meaningful and quality input into the virtual classroom is an essential part of the learning process. You have the time to carefully think through your responses before posting – use it. Challenging the ideas of others and scholarly debates are encouraged.

10. Feel that high quality learning can take place without going to a traditional classroom.

Online is not for everybody. A student that wants to be on a traditional campus attending a traditional classroom is probably not going to be happy online. While the level of social interaction can be very high in the virtual classroom, it is not the same as living in a dorm on a campus.

The online learning process is normally accelerated and requires commitment on the student's part. Keeping up with the class and completing all work on time is vital.

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